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Editorial

KMC Research Journal is a peer reviewed and DOI-indexed interdisciplinary journal published by Research Management Cell (RMC) of Koteshwor Multiple Campus, Kathmandu, Nepal. It includes research based articles from diverse fields of humanities and social sciences, education, management, and other disciplines. We follow a rigorous double blind review process for selecting the articles to be published in this journal. Articles accepted after the review processes are subsequently forwarded for editorial processing prior to final publication.

This volume comprises thirteen selected articles representing diverse subjects and disciplines such as management, language and literature, art and culture, education, and other areas of the humanities and social sciences.

The editorial board of *KMC* Research Journal expresses its sincere gratitude to the Research Management Cell (RMC) of Koteshwor Multiple Campus for the timely publication of this issue. We are also thankful to all researchers for their invaluable research work and contribution to this issue by providing their articles for publication. We look forward to receiving the original research papers for our upcoming issue in the same way. Researchers and academic scholars are encouraged to send their pure research-based papers to the editorial board.

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Bridging the Gap between Tax Knowledge and Tax Clearance: A Study of Public Campus Faculties in Nepal

Dhiraj Budhathoki[1]

Abstract

This research article, entitled 'Bridging the Gap between Tax Knowledge and Tax Clearance: A Study of Public Campus Faculties in Nepal,' explores the critical role of tax knowledge in influencing voluntary tax compliance among public campus faculties in Nepal. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior, the study explored the extent of faculty understanding of the Nepali tax system and its impact on the acquisition of Tax Clearance Certificates (TCC). Using a quantitative approach with 400 public campus faculty members, the study shows a significant disparity between self-reported theoretical tax knowledge and practical application. While respondents exhibited moderate understanding of the tax system and laws (mean scores above 3.5), their practical application capability was notably weak (mean = 2.01). Chi-square analyses demonstrate that general tax knowledge does not significantly affect timely TCC acquisition, but knowledge of tax laws (p = 0.000), application skills (p = 0.002), and payment procedures (p = 0.000) are statistically significant predictors of compliance behavior. The study highlights structural gaps in tax education across disciplines and calls for practical, targeted educational activities. It recommends collaboration between the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) and academic institutions to deliver regular workshops and integrate applied tax education into faculty development programs. The findings affirm that improving procedural knowledge not just theoretical understanding is key to fostering a tax-compliant culture, particularly in a context of limited institutional trust and digital literacy.

Key words: Tax Knowledge, Tax Clearance, Public Campus, Faculties

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Introduction

Taxation is one of the most fundamental mechanisms through which governments mobilize revenue to provide public goods, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and security (OECD/FILAPP, 2015). In developing countries such as Nepal, the effectiveness of the tax system relies heavily on the voluntary compliance of citizens, particularly those in professional sectors such as academia. However, the level of tax compliance is significantly influenced by the level of knowledge and education taxpayers possess regarding tax obligations and processes (Appiah et al., 2024).

Tax knowledge, often linked with tax literacy, is defined as the ability to understand and apply tax-related information for accurate reporting and compliance (Alexander et al., 2023). A global shift from coercive tax enforcement to a model based on partnership and trust has seen an increased emphasis on education to improve voluntary compliance. OECD (2019) highlights how taxpayer education fosters a sense of national responsibility and tax morale, especially among the younger and more educated population. Amin et al. (2022) further assert that tax education at the tertiary level can significantly enhance compliance by equipping future professionals with the skills and knowledge required to navigate the tax system. Their study on Malaysian university students found that early exposure to tax concepts resulted in increased willingness to comply with tax regulations. Similarly, the study by Poudel (2017) in Nepal emphasizes that even among university teachers, tax knowledge varies widely, with implications for both compliance and peer influence. The lack of formal tax education, coupled with unclear enforcement strategies, results in underreporting and reduced tax morale.

This is reinforced by research from Baykan & Cek (2019), who found that university students' perceptions of tax were deeply shaped by their exposure to tax education and trust in public institutions. Their findings showed a positive correlation between tax knowledge and perceived civic responsibility. Given the influential role of teachers in shaping social values, improving their tax literacy is crucial for promoting broader tax compliance in society. Poudel (2017) underscore the same issue in their study of tax knowledge among university teachers in Pokhara. Despite having higher educational qualifications, many respondents lacked basic knowledge about tax laws, electronic filing systems, and deadlines. The authors argue for systematic educational interventions by institutions such as the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) to improve outreach and education. A compelling insight from the OECD (2015) report suggests that building tax culture requires long-term strategies focusing on education and engagement. Traditional enforcement strategies, which rely heavily on penalties and audits, are less effective in sustaining compliance than those fostering civic responsibility and moral obligation. Kornhauser (2007) also supports this view, noting that education reinforces societal norms such as fairness, honesty, and national pride all of which correlate positively with tax compliance.

In Nepal, while taxation has been embedded in public policy through efforts like the National Tax Day, these campaigns often lack the depth and consistency required to build lasting behavioral change (Sharma & Duwadi, 2013). Furthermore, the national curriculum still lacks structured modules on taxation, leaving a knowledge vacuum that particularly affects public sector professionals like educators. According to (Pirela Espina, 2022), trust in tax institutions, coupled with knowledge, is a key determinant of taxpayer behavior. Their analysis of Southeast Asian economies highlights that in countries where citizens understand how taxes are spent and trust the governance mechanisms, compliance rates are significantly higher. Moreover, in the context of digital transformation, literacy also extends to electronic filing systems, online tax platforms, and access to tax-related resources. The lack of digital literacy among faculty particularly those outside major cities could further hinder compliance. These challenges were noted in OECD (2019), where tax morale in digital environments was found to depend not only on knowledge but on ease of use, transparency, and access.

Public Campus are community-supported and so commonly referred to as community Campus; private Campus, while privately funded, operate in the same manner as community Campus. A new community Campus system would be complementary to what already exists because existing universities lack community participation and industrial partnerships. Nepal had 1,369 higher education campuses, according to the Ministry of Education Among these campuses, 98 (7.2%) are university constituent campuses, 839 (61.3%) are private, and 432 (31.5%) are community campuses. Many private campuses with foreign university connections have been developed in recent years (Sharma, 2022).

Despite the Government of Nepal's efforts to improve tax administration through reforms such as self-assessment, digital services, and taxpayer-friendly policies, voluntary tax compliance remains alarmingly low, particularly among faculty members in public campuses. This shortfall is significantly attributed to insufficient taxpayer education, which fails to equip educators with essential knowledge about direct and indirect taxes, legal obligations, and the benefits of compliance (Amin et al., 2022). Existing educational outreach largely targets tax collection rather than proactively building knowledge or clarifying rights and responsibilities, resulting in persistent misinformation and weak compliance culture. Faculty members, who hold influential positions in society and are expected to model lawful behavior, often lack familiarity with tax laws, procedural requirements and planning strategies (Poudel, 2017). This knowledge gap has led to non-compliant behaviors such as VAT non-registration, income underreporting, and maintaining dual records practices commonly observed in Nepal (Appiah et al., 2024). Additionally, the absence of structured tax education beyond commerce faculties and unclear jurisdiction over who should provide this education further exacerbates the issue (Baykan & Cek, 2019). Given their potential to influence future generations of taxpayers, the continued lack of tax knowledge among public campus faculty poses a significant barrier to cultivating a sustainable and accountable tax culture in Nepal.

Objectives of the Study

In the context of Nepal, especially among public campus faculties who are both educated professionals and societal influencers, understanding the depth of their tax knowledge is crucial. This study is designed to investigate the current scenario and establish meaningful insights into how knowledge influences compliance behaviors. Accordingly, the study has the following specific objectives:

a) To explore the existing level of tax knowledge among faculty members of public campuses in Nepal

b) To identify the relationship between tax knowledge and the act of obtaining a Tax Clearance Certificate (TCC)

Hypothesis of the Study

H_1: There is no significant association between public campus faculties' knowledge of the overall tax system and the timing of receiving their tax clearance certificates.

H_2: There is a significant association between public campus faculties' knowledge of tax laws and the timing of receiving their tax clearance certificates.

H_3: There is a significant association between public campus faculties' ability to apply tax laws and the timing of receiving their tax clearance certificates.

Theoretical Backup

This study is anchored in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which suggests that individual behavior such as tax compliance is driven by behavioral intentions shaped by attitudes, perceived norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of tax compliance, positive attitudes toward taxation, perceived fairness of the system, and adequate tax knowledge all contribute to higher compliance intentions. According to Appiah et al. (2024), tax knowledge and trust in government significantly influence voluntary tax compliance, with tax fairness acting as a crucial mediating factor.

Further, Alexander et al. (2023) emphasize the role of tax education and literacy in fostering tax morale, particularly among younger populations, indicating that targeted education leads to higher future compliance. This is echoed by Amin et al. (2022), who found that incorporating tax education at tertiary institutions improves students' tax knowledge and compliance behavior. Poudel (2017) reinforces this by showing that university faculty in Nepal display variable levels of tax knowledge, and that improving this knowledge base could enhance compliance across educational institutions.

Collectively, these theories and studies provide a robust foundation for analyzing how knowledge, education, and perceptions among public campus faculties in Nepal shape their tax compliance behavior.

Literature Review

The importance of tax knowledge and compliance has been widely studied in academic literature, with substantial evidence highlighting the role of education, trust, and systemic reforms in enhancing voluntary compliance. The present study on public campus faculties in Nepal finds support and contrasting evidence from global and regional scholarship. (Pirela Espina, 2022) emphasized that university education contributes significantly to the development of tax culture among professionals, aligning with this study's finding that public campus faculties play a pivotal role in shaping future taxpayers' attitudes. Similar conclusions were drawn by (Baporikar, 2022), who highlighted how targeted tax education enhances compliance behavior and fosters responsible civic attitudes. Both sources reinforce the necessity for structured taxpayer education in developing countries like Nepal.

Appiah et al. (2024) presented empirical evidence from Ghana, demonstrating that trust in government and tax knowledge are significant predictors of voluntary tax compliance. This contrasts with the Nepalese context where, despite moderate knowledge about tax rules, faculties showed gaps in the practical application and timely acquisition of tax clearance certificates. These gaps suggest that cognitive understanding alone is insufficient without supportive institutional mechanisms and relevant practical education. (Bidari, Sigdel, Shrestha, Paudel, & Bidari, 2023) analyzed the taxpayer behavior in Nepal and pointed out that institutional distrust and poor implementation of taxpayer education policies contribute to persistent evasion and non-compliance. This aligns with the current study's conclusion that vague institutional responsibilities in tax education hinder widespread knowledge. Moreover, the study observed that many faculties are unaware of basic filing requirements or deadlines, corroborating their findings on Nepal's taxpayer behavior.

The current study found that while a majority of public campus faculty respondents claim to possess theoretical knowledge (mean scores above 3.5 on general tax system and legal knowledge), their self-assessed ability to apply tax law was alarmingly low (mean = 2.01). This gap between declarative and procedural knowledge is echoed by Eriksen and Fallan (1996), who argue that understanding tax law is not enough practical training must complement academic content for meaningful compliance. This dichotomy is further supported by findings from (Pirela Espina, 2022) suggesting a strong need for integrating experiential learning into tax education. Amin et al. (2022) emphasized that self-assessment systems like Malaysia's SAS require strong taxpayer education to function effectively. This reinforces the urgency of improving the Nepalese system, especially as it moves toward self-assessment frameworks. The findings of Amin et al. (2022) also support this, suggesting that unless faculties are well-versed in filing procedures and tax rights, the effectiveness of reforms will remain limited. A study by (Bidari et al., 2023) revealed that knowledge dissemination is often limited to classroom lectures and lacks practical exposure, which directly impacts the behavior of educated segments such as faculties. The present study echoes this finding, showing that public campus faculties, though engaged in academia, are not immune to gaps in compliance behavior. Instead of being role models, they may unintentionally propagate misinformation or indifference.

The reviewed literature also diverges in how it views the role of personal motivation and civic duty. While Appiah et al. (2024) highlight moral and trust-based motivators, the present study emphasizes structural gaps, indicating a heavier reliance on systemic and procedural corrections than personal ethics. This suggests a regional contrast where trust in institutions may not be as strong in Nepal, necessitating stricter policy interventions and educational reforms. Furthermore, analysis of results shows that knowledge of tax payment procedures had the strongest association with receiving timely tax clearance ($p = 0.000$), suggesting that practical, targeted training yields better results than generic knowledge programs. This adds to Pirela Espina's suggestion that professional development courses for educators must include administrative and civic responsibilities like taxation (Pirela Espina, 2022).

Overall, the literature confirms that knowledge, trust, systemic efficiency, and targeted education are all critical to improving tax compliance. However, unlike in countries where taxpayer behavior improves due to high trust in governance, in Nepal, policy and procedural knowledge seem to have a more tangible impact on compliance behaviors. Therefore, the findings of this study call for practical tax education modules, clearer governmental accountability, and continuous assessment of faculty knowledge and behavior to cultivate a more compliant tax culture.

Result and Discussion

Tax Knowledge of Public Campus Faculties

Table 1

Tax Knowledge of Public Campus Faculties

S. N.	Statement	Mean	S.D.
1	I have an in-depth knowledge of Nepal's existing tax system.	3.81	1.05
2	I have a knowledge about the existing tax laws and rules about income taxations.	3.79	1.09
3	I can analyze and apply taxation laws while computing income taxes.	2.01	.88
4	I am fully aware of all of the rules for my tax payments.	3.68	.94
5	I am aware of the deadlines for submitting taxes and required documents.	3.54	1.26

Data source- Field Survey, 2024

The data presented in the table highlights varying levels of tax knowledge among public campus faculties in Nepal. The highest mean score of 3.81 (SD = 1.05) corresponds to the statement “I have an in-depth knowledge of Nepal's existing tax system,” indicating that most respondents believe they possess general knowledge of the country's tax structure. Similarly, a high mean of 3.79 (SD = 1.09) for the statement regarding knowledge of existing tax laws and rules suggests moderate to strong self-reported understanding of income taxation regulations. However, the mean significantly drops to 2.01 (SD = 0.88) for the ability to analyze and apply taxation laws while computing income taxes, reflecting a serious gap in practical tax law application skills among faculty members. Additionally, knowledge of personal tax payment rules (mean = 3.68, SD = 0.94) and submission deadlines (mean = 3.54, SD = 1.26) were moderately rated, indicating partial familiarity with procedural aspects of compliance. These findings reveal that while theoretical understanding is reasonably strong, practical application and procedural compliance remain weak areas, underscoring the need for targeted tax education and training programs focused on real-world application.

Timing of Tax Clearance of Pubic Campus Faculties

Table 2

Timing of Tax Clearance of Pubic Campus Faculties

S. N.	Times	Number	Percentage
1	Yearly	67	16.8
2	Never	128	32.0
3	While Necessary	205	51.3
	Total	400	100.0

Data Source: (Field Survey, 2024)

The above table illustrates how frequently public campus faculties in Nepal engage with tax-related matters. A majority of respondents (51.3%) indicated they deal with taxes only when necessary, reflecting a reactive rather than proactive approach. Additionally, 32.0% reported that they never engage with tax matters, suggesting a concerning level of disengagement or possible lack of responsibility toward tax obligations. Only 16.8% of the respondents reported handling tax issues on a yearly basis. These findings highlight a need for improved taxpayer education and knowledge programs to encourage consistent and responsible tax practices among faculty members.

Association between tax system knowledge and receiving tax clearance certificate time of Public Campus Faculties

Table 3

Association between tax system knowledge and receiving tax clearance certificate time of Public Campus Faculties

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.542[a]	6	.201
Likelihood Ratio	8.793	6	.186
Linear-by-Linear Association	.025	1	.876
N of Valid Cases	400		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.72.			

Source : Field Survey, 2024

Above table shows the association between tax system knowledge and the timing of receiving tax clearance certificates among public campus faculty. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 8.542 with a p-value of .201, indicating no statistically significant relationship. This suggests that knowledge of the overall tax system does not significantly influence when faculty members receive their tax clearance certificates. Therefore, broader tax system knowledge alone may not be sufficient to impact timely tax compliance.

Association between Tax Law Knowledge and receiving tax clearance certificate time of Public Campus Faculties

Table 4

Association between tax law knowledge and receiving tax clearance certificate time of Public Campus Faculties

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.126[a]	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	26.397	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.487	1	.115
N of Valid Cases	400		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.72.			

Source : Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 indicates a significant association between tax law knowledge and the timing of receiving tax clearance certificates among public campus faculty. The Pearson Chi-Square value of 26.126 with a p-value of .000 confirms a strong relationship, suggesting that those with better understanding of tax laws are more likely to receive their clearance certificates on time. With all expected counts above the required minimum, the test results are statistically reliable. This finding highlights the role of tax law knowledge in supporting timely tax compliance among educators.

Association between Tax Law Application Knowledge and receiving tax clearance certificate time of Public Campus Faculties

Table 5

Association between tax law application knowledge and receiving tax clearance certificate time of Public Campus Faculties

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.391[a]	6	.002
Likelihood Ratio	21.430	6	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.733	1	.188
N of Valid Cases	400		
a. 2 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.35.			

Source : Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 shows a statistically significant association between tax law application knowledge and the timing of receiving tax clearance certificates among public campus faculty, with a Pearson Chi-Square value of 21.391 and a p-value of .002. This implies that faculty members with stronger practical knowledge of tax law are more likely to obtain their tax clearance certificates on time. Although a small portion of the expected counts were below 5, the results remain valid and highlight the importance of practical tax training to improve timely compliance.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study highlight a significant disparity between public campus faculties' theoretical tax knowledge and their actual tax compliance behavior. Although most faculty members reported relatively high self-perceived knowledge about Nepal's tax system and tax laws (mean scores above 3.5), their ability to practically apply taxation laws was notably low (mean = 2.01). This theoretical-practical gap reinforces previous literature including Eriksen and Fallan (1996), and (Bidari, Sigdel, Shrestha, Paudel, & Bidari, 2023), which emphasize the necessity of hands-on, practical tax education to strengthen compliance behavior. The findings also parallel those of (Pirela Espina, 2022) who assert that educators play a critical role in instilling tax culture and must themselves be well-versed in both tax knowledge and its application. The fact that over 51% of respondents obtain tax clearance only when necessary, and 32% never do, underscores the passive attitude toward tax obligations, suggesting a failure of existing knowledge campaigns to trigger behavioral change.

Further statistical analysis reveals that while general knowledge of the tax system does not significantly influence timely tax clearance ($p = 0.201$), there is a strong positive association between faculties' knowledge of tax laws ($p = 0.000$) and tax law application ($p = 0.002$) and their compliance behavior. These findings underscore that specific, applied tax knowledge has a much stronger influence on compliance than general knowledge alone. This aligns with Amin et al. (2022) who emphasized that self-assessment systems require a functionally literate taxpayer base. The significance of procedural knowledge particularly resonates with the argument by Appiah et al. (2024) that trust and knowledge together foster compliance. However, in Nepal's context marked by weaker institutional trust, especially procedural, appears to be the dominant variable influencing compliance.

The study confirms previous assertions by Alexander et al. (2023) and Kornhauser (2007) that tax education not only enhances knowledge but builds long-term tax morale. However, in contrast to countries with robust institutional trust, the Nepalese context demonstrates that civic trust plays a secondary role compared to procedural literacy. This divergence is supported by Bidari et al. 2023), who identified vague institutional responsibility and poor outreach as key barriers to tax compliance. Therefore, the study calls for systemic reforms including the integration of applied tax training in higher education, institutional partnerships for tax education, and enhanced outreach programs. Only then can public campus faculties; key influencers of future taxpayers model the tax-compliant behavior critical for sustainable national development.

Conclusion and recommendation

The study concludes that while public campus faculties in Nepal demonstrate moderate theoretical knowledge of the tax system and legal provisions, their practical application of tax laws and consistent engagement with tax clearance processes remain significantly lacking. This directly addresses the first objective of the study exploring the existing level of tax knowledge which revealed that faculties are more confident in general tax knowledge than in actual compliance behavior. Moreover, findings from statistical tests confirm the second objective, establishing that tax law knowledge, tax payment understanding, and the ability to apply tax rules are significantly associated with the timely acquisition of Tax Clearance Certificates (TCC). However, overall system knowledge alone showed no significant effect on TCC acquisition. These insights underscore the urgent need for structured and practical taxpayer education initiatives targeted at faculty members, not just as taxpayers but also as influencers of future civic behavior. In alignment with global literature and regional studies, the conclusion emphasizes that enhancing procedural knowledge and integrating hands-on tax education within academia are vital steps toward strengthening Nepal's tax culture and fostering voluntary compliance.

Based on the findings, the study strongly recommends implementing structured and practical tax education programs for public campus faculties across all disciplines not just commerce to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and actual compliance. The Inland Revenue Department (IRD), in collaboration with academic institutions, should conduct regular workshops, training sessions, and digital knowledge campaigns focused on tax law application, filing procedures, and deadlines. Additionally, tax modules should be integrated into faculty development programs to ensure educators become role models for responsible tax behavior, ultimately fostering a more informed and compliant future generation.

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Challenging Patriarchy through Feminist Praxis in Cisneros's *Only Daughter*

Govinda Bahadur Karki[1]

Abstract

Sandra Cisneros's Only Daughter presents a Mexican-American woman's negotiation of identity and creative activities within patriarchal and culturally conservative - indigenous social structures. This research addresses the issues of marginalization, silencing, and identity loss experienced by women within patriarchal societies particularly through the lens of Chicana and intersectional feminism, as well as other feminist theorists. This study analyzes how Cisneros transforms personal experience and memory into feminist praxis. The narrative becomes a weapon of resistance against patriarchy reclaiming voice and subjectivity. The primary objectives of this research are to specifically focus on how intersecting identities affect the formation and expression of women's identities and voicelessness within patriarchal systems. Using qualitative textual analysis with descriptive research design, the study explores how Cisneros disrupts patriarchal language aligning with Écriture féminine and the concepts of other feminist theorists. The findings reveal that Only Daughter operates as a feminist and decolonial intervention. This study holds significant value both in its practical application and scholarly contribution to feminist literary discourse. Academically, this research contributes to the evolving field of feminist literary studies by offering an original interpretation that blends theory with textual analysis.

Keywords: *feminist praxis, decolonial resistance, narrative healing, indigenous survival*

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Introduction

Born into a traditional working-class Mexican-American family in 1954, Sandra Cisneros experienced a childhood shaped by the tensions of cultural duality, moving between Chicago and Mexico City. In her autobiographical essay *Only Daughter*, she reflects on issues of gender, identity, and cultural expectations within a patriarchal framework. The narrative illuminates the struggles of women—particularly daughters—who seek intellectual and creative autonomy in male-dominated environments that marginalize female voices. This study positions *Only Daughter* as both cultural critique and feminist praxis. Cisneros's writing resists patriarchal values by reclaiming storytelling as an act of defiance and empowerment. Drawing on Chicana feminism and intersectional feminist theory, the article examines how intersecting dimensions of gender, ethnicity, class, and cultural identity shape women's marginalization and silence, while also highlighting strategies of resistance.

Although previous scholarship has explored themes of female marginalization in Cisneros's work, less attention has been paid to how *Only Daughter* embodies feminist praxis in subverting patriarchal structures. The central research problem, therefore, lies in understanding how intersecting cultural, familial, and gendered expectations shape female identity and how these identities resist systemic silencing.

Accordingly, this article pursues three guiding questions: (1) How does *Only Daughter* portray the negotiation of female identity under intersecting pressures of family and culture? (2) In what ways does Cisneros represent women's resistance to patriarchal oppression? (3) How are women's silences constructed within patriarchal systems, and how does the narrative subvert them? By addressing these questions, the study aims to show that *Only Daughter* not only critiques the constraints imposed on women but also demonstrates the power of feminist expression to reimagine narratives of gender, identity, and cultural belonging.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical or conceptual framework refers to the practice of identifying and articulating the theories that guide a research study. It provides the lens through which the researcher interprets and analyzes the subject matter. According to Calabrese (2009), the choice of a theoretical framework reflects the researcher's understanding and theoretical stance toward the inquiry. The framework not only outlines the key concepts and theoretical assumptions underpinning the study but also connects the research with previous scholarly work and empirical findings (Long et al., 1985; Bryant, 2004; Calabrese, 2009). This section outlines the theoretical bases employed in this study, which are drawn from feminist thought—particularly Chicana feminism, intersectional feminism, and contributions from other key feminist theorists.

Chicana Feminism

This research adopts the framework of Chicana feminism, which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s as a response to the dual marginalization experienced by Mexican-American women. While the broader Chicano Movement aimed at securing civil rights for Mexican-Americans, it often sidelined women's voices, just as mainstream (predominantly white) feminist movements failed to address the specific cultural and racial contexts of Chicanas. Chicana feminism highlights the intersection of race, gender, class, and cultural identity, critiquing both the machismo within Chicano communities and the racial exclusions within mainstream feminist discourse. It emphasizes cultural heritage, familial responsibility, and community, while advocating for autonomy and gender equity. Notable Chicana feminist thinkers such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, and Ana Castillo inform this study, especially in the analysis of Sandra Cisneros's *Only Daughter*, which is explored through their theoretical insights.

Intersectional Feminism

The study also incorporates intersectional feminism, a theoretical framework developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to explain how overlapping identities—such as race, gender, class, and sexuality—shape individuals' experiences of privilege and oppression. Intersectional feminism critiques traditional feminist and anti-racist movements for overlooking the complex realities faced by women of color and other marginalized groups. This framework is crucial in analyzing the layered and interconnected systems of oppression reflected in literature and in the lived experiences of characters. It enables a holistic understanding of identity that is central to feminist literary criticism, particularly when examining texts that reflect the experiences of women of color.

Other Feminist Perspectives

In addition to Chicana and intersectional feminism, this research draws upon the ideas of several prominent feminist theorists. Concepts from **Simone de Beauvoir**, particularly her exploration of women as the "Other," contribute to the discussion of gendered identity. **Julia Kristeva** and her work on language, semiotics, and the maternal body, **Elaine Showalter**'s theory of gynocriticism, and Écriture féminine theorists who emphasize women's writing as a form of resistance, and **Gyatri Spivak**'s concept of 'subaltern' are also applied. These frameworks assist in exploring the deeper psychological, linguistic, and cultural layers embedded in the text and in the broader questions posed by this study.

Delimitations and limitation

This study is confined to Sandra Cisneros's essay *Only Daughter*, focusing on the construction of female identity and women's resistance to patriarchal oppression. The analysis is restricted to selected feminist frameworks (Chicana and Intersectional feminists, Beauvoir, Kristeva, Showalter, écriture féminine, and Spivak) and does not extend to Cisneros's wider works or broader cultural contexts. As a single-text, qualitative interpretation, the findings cannot be generalized to all Chicana literature. The analysis is also shaped by the researcher's interpretive lens and the selective application of feminist theories, which may exclude alternative perspectives.

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value both in its practical application and scholarly contribution to feminist literary discourse. At its core, it seeks to challenge patriarchal structures through a critical feminist reading of Sandra Cisneros's *Only Daughter*, a text that, despite its shortness, is rich in thematic depth and critical potential. Practically, this research provides an important lens for exploring how feminist praxis can be used to dissect and confront the gendered expectations embedded within familial and cultural structures. It offers a concrete example of how literary analysis can be a tool for resistance and social critique. In a literary landscape where Cisneros's shorter works are often overshadowed by her more extended narratives, this study foregrounds *Only Daughter* as a powerful site for feminist engagement. By highlighting the struggles of a Latina daughter negotiating identity in a patriarchal environment, the study not only enriches the limited body of scholarship on the text but also invites future research applying feminist and intersectional frameworks to similarly under-explored works.

Academically, this research contributes to the evolving field of feminist literary studies by offering an original interpretation that blends theory with textual analysis. It encourages scholars to revisit minimalist texts through expansive critical lenses. Furthermore, this study paves the way for interdisciplinary dialogue, intersecting literature, gender studies, and cultural criticism to deepen our understanding of how narrative can function as a form of feminist resistance. By doing so, it affirms the continuing relevance of feminist theory in literary scholarship and calls attention to voices, like Cisneros's, that critique and reimagine the roles imposed on women in both public and private spheres.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to examine feminist praxis in Sandra Cisneros's *Only Daughter* and its challenge to patriarchal norms. A qualitative approach is most appropriate because it enables interpretive and critical engagement with a single literary text, allowing the researcher to explore issues of identity, gender, and cultural expectation from a feminist perspective. This method facilitates a nuanced analysis of how Cisneros critiques patriarchal structures and foregrounds women's agency through narrative strategies.

In terms of data collection, the study will rely on secondary data sources. The researcher will analyze library resources, scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles (both published and unpublished), theses, and other academic materials related to feminist theory, literary criticism, and postcolonial gender studies. This secondary data will provide a strong theoretical foundation for interpreting Cisneros's text and situating it within broader feminist discourse.

Thus, this methodology enables the researcher to conduct a textual study and contextual analysis of *Only Daughter*, exploring how Cisneros's work challenges patriarchal norms and enacts feminist praxis through narrative form, character development, and thematic emphasis.

Applying Chicana Feminist Perspectives to Cisneros's *Only Daughter*

Gloria Anzaldúa was a Chicana feminist, scholar, and writer whose work has significantly influenced feminist theory, queer theory, and postcolonial studies. Her feminist perspectives are rooted in intersectionality, hybridity, and a deep challenge to the binaries of identity (such as male/female, white/non-white, straight/queer). Below is an overview of her feminist perspectives, with references to her most influential works:

Borderlands and Hybrid Identity

Anzaldúa's most influential work, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), presents the idea of the "borderland" not only as a geographical space but also as a metaphor for hybrid identities, especially those of women of color. She develops the concept of the "new mestiza consciousness", which arises from navigating multiple cultural worlds. She states that,

> "The U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the

> lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture... A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants” (p. 57).

This powerful quote from Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* explores the U.S.-Mexico border not just as a physical divide, but as a metaphorical and emotional landscape—a “herida abierta” (open wound) where conflicting identities, cultures, and histories clash and converge. Anzaldúa describes this borderland as a place of constant transition, pain, and transformation—a hybrid space where something new, a “third country,” is formed from the merging of two worlds. The inhabitants of this borderland often occupy marginal, liminal spaces and exist in defiance of imposed boundaries and binaries.

Cisneros’s essay *Only Daughter* reflects this concept of the “borderland” in emotional, cultural, and identity-based terms. Though she doesn’t explicitly mention a physical border, her experience as a Mexican-American woman growing up in a patriarchal family and trying to gain her father's approval mirrors the “emotional residue of an unnatural boundary” that Anzaldúa describes. Cisneros lives in the in-between of American and Mexican identities. Her father wants her to embrace traditional Mexican values (like marriage and domesticity), while she seeks independence and validation through education and writing—a more American ideal. This creates a tension similar to what Anzaldúa calls a borderland—a space where two cultures clashes against each other.

As a gendered borderlands, Cisneros navigates the border between being a daughter (expected to fulfill traditional female roles) and being a writer (a role not traditionally valued for women in her cultural context). She’s inhabiting a “prohibited” space by asserting her voice as a woman and artist. Cisneros says,

> Being only a daughter for my father meant my destiny would lead me to become someone’s wife. That’s what he believed. But when I was in the fifth grade and shared my plans for college with him, I was sure he understood. I remember my father saying, “Que bueno, mi’ja, that’s good.” That meant a lot to me, especially since my brothers thought the idea hilarious. What I didn’t realize was that my father thought college was good for girls — good for finding a husband. After four years in college and two more in graduate school, and still no husband, my father shakes his head even now and says I wasted all that education. (p. 110)

This statement reflects the cultural and gender expectations in a male-dominated society. Cisneros's father reduces her destiny to merely becoming "someone's wife," embodying patriarchal values and norms that define a woman's worth by her marital status. As per the patriarchal cultural logic, education for girls is not valued for personal growth or empowerment but is seen as a means to secure a suitable husband. In such a society, daughters are not expected to achieve or aspire as sons; instead, they are confined to domestic roles. Women are often seen as incapable of intellectual or leadership accomplishments. Reading, writing, or holding positions of power are considered the domain of men. Women are considered as child-bearers rather than thinkers or leaders. When Cisneros does not marry, her father laments that he "wasted all that education," revealing that her schooling was viewed not as a right or investment in her future, but as a failed attempt to increase her marriageability. In contrast, a son's education is seen as a true investment — one expected to yield tangible returns.

Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* articulates a feminist vision through the concept of "new mestiza consciousness," which challenges patriarchal, colonial, and binary systems by embracing hybridity, contradiction, and transformation. This consciousness is deeply rooted in feminist thought, particularly in its rejection of rigid gender roles and its embrace of intersectional identities. (Anzaldúa, 1987). In *Only Daughter*, Cisneros critiques traditional gender roles, particularly the idea that a woman's worth lies in her ability to marry, and instead claims space for her identity as a Latina writer. She also embraces intersectionality, recognizing how her gender, ethnicity, and class background shaped her struggles and successes.

According to Cisneros (2009) ,"Being only a daughter for my father meant my destiny would lead me to become someone's wife", (P 110) reflects the traditional gender role expectation Cisneros faced that her value was seen in terms of marriage, not individuality or a career. However, her pursuit of higher education and writing shows her resistance to that norm. Similarly, she says, "What I didn't realize was that my father thought college was good for girls—good because you could meet and marry a husband." (Cisneros, 2009, p 110) Here, Cisneros highlights how education was seen not as a means to intellectual or personal development for women, but as a tool for fulfilling traditional gender roles. Her actual use of education—to become a writer—subverts this expectation and challenged the patriarchal norms. Cisneros (2009) states the fact that "I am the only daughter in a family of six sons. That explains everything."(p 109) Cisneros opens by situating herself within multiple identities: daughter (gender), only girl (family dynamic), Mexican-American (cultural context).

This sets up an intersectional framework—her experience isn't just shaped by being a woman, but by her position in a Latino family and her role within that. We can also discuss the issue that how patriarchy was subverted and compelled to surrender against feminist praxis is:

> I'm not sure if it was because my story was translated into Spanish, or because it was published in Mexico, or perhaps because the story dealt with Tepeyac, the colonia my father was raised in and the house he grew up in, but at any rate, my father punched the mute button on his remote control and read my story. I sat on the bed next to my father and waited. He read it very slowly. As if he were reading each line over and over. He laughed at all the right places and read lines he liked out loud. He pointed and asked questions: "Is this So-and-so?" "Yes," I said. He kept reading. When he was finally finished, after what seemed like hours, my father looked up and asked: "Where can we get more copies of this for the relatives?" (Cisneros, 2009, p 110- 111)

The acceptance from her father, after reading her story in Spanish, underscores her ability to bridge cultural and linguistic divides—embracing her bicultural and bilingual identity as a strength rather than a source of division. It shows that ultimately, patriarchy was subverted and surrendered. People, holding with patriarchal values and norms, are compelled to accept the issue of feminism. Feminists speak on behalf of gender equality, women's rights and freedom.

According to Chicana feminism, the pain and longing of women is especially their desire for male's recognition are deeply tied to the idea of living in a liminal, undefined identity space. They don't fully belong to either culture's expectations, and that emotional friction is very much in line with the "constant state of transition." Cisneros writes, " I am the only daughter in a family of six sons. *That* explains everything." (Cisneros, 2009, p 109) In the phrase "That explains everything," Sandra Cisneros refers to her identity as the only daughter in a Mexican family with six sons. This is the literal reality of her situation. However, the second part— "That explains everything"—is especially significant because it reflects a socially constructed reality. The word *that* refers to her being a daughter, and in a male-dominated society, this fact alone is often used to justify discrimination. Daughters are seen as less valuable, treated as the "other," and are deprived from equal rights. They are often viewed as emotional rather than rational, reinforcing gender stereotypes that marginalize them.

bell hooks' Feminist Praxis and Patriarchy

In works like *Feminism is for Everybody and Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks argue that:

Feminism must be a lived, political commitment, not just a theory. Education and writing are tools of liberation—especially for women of color. Challenging patriarchy requires disrupting internalized oppression and reconstructing self-worth. In *Feminism is for Everybody*, hooks define feminism as: "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression." (hooks, 2000, p. 1) She elaborates that this definition clarifies the movement's focus on ending sexism, rather than being anti-male, and emphasizes that both women and men can perpetuate sexist thinking. Cisneros (2009) reflects,

> In retrospect, I'm lucky my father believed daughters were meant for husbands. It meant it didn't matter if I majored in something silly like English. After all, I'd find a nice professional eventually, right? This allowed me the liberty to putter about embroidering my little poems and stories without my father interrupting with so much as a "What's that you're writing?" But the truth is, I wanted him to interrupt. I wanted my father to understand what it was I was scribbling, to introduce me as "My only daughter, the writer." Not as "This is only my daughter. She teaches." Es Maestra — teacher. Not even profesora. (p 109)

Cisneros expresses the patriarchal constraints placed upon her by her father, who believed that a daughter's education was primarily a means to find a suitable husband. He dismissed her academic and creative pursuits, never taking interest in her writing. Despite this lack of encouragement, Cisneros used that silence as space to freely develop her voice as a writer. Cisneros's choice to write becomes a powerful act of resistance—what feminist scholar bell hooks would describe as a form of cultural critique and a tool for liberation. Similarly, In *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks discuss the role of education in liberation: "To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn." (hooks, 1994, p. 13) bell hooks emphasizes that education should empower individuals to find their voice and define their identity. This idea is reflected in Sandra Cisneros' *Only Daughter*, where education becomes a liberating force for her. Despite being undervalued by her father Cisneros pursued her college education, which not only led her to become a renowned writer but also enabled her to assert her worth. Ultimately, her father's approval of her writing symbolizes a personal and cultural breakthrough. Education allowed her to transcend limiting roles and claim her identity through authorship.

Hooks articulates the connection between theory and personal healing:

> "I came to theory because I was hurting—the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend—to grasp what was happening around and within me. Most importantly, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory then a location for healing." (p. 59)

Cisneros' hurt stems from her father's lack of recognition. When her father finally reads her work and says, "Where can we get more copies of this for the relatives?", Cisneros experiences a moment of healing. The act of writing, like theory for hooks, becomes a space where personal pain is transformed into empowerment.

Judith Butler's feminist praxis to subvert patriarchy: through *"repetition with a difference."*

Judith Butler's feminist theory challenges the idea of a fixed, natural gender identity and instead understands gender as a social construct produced through performative acts. Patriarchal power operates by enforcing rigid gender norms, but those norms can be subverted through altered performances that expose their instability. Her feminism is deeply critical of exclusionary politics and emphasizes the fluidity of identity, making space for multiple forms of resistance. Butler's work has had a profound influence on feminist theory, particularly in deconstructing gender and revealing how patriarchal power operates through norms. Butler (1990) argues that, "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results." (p. 25) This statement proves that gender is not something we are born with or that flows from our biological sex. Instead, it is constructed through repeated actions, behaviors, and norms over time.

Because gender is sustained through repetition of norms, it can be challenged or re-signified through *"repetition with a difference."* This is where **resistance** occurs: by performing gender in ways that defy norms, *re-performing* them in unexpected ways. As we apply Butler's theory in Cisneros's *Only Daughter*, we find the following cases as an example of subverting patriarchy doing unexpectedly: Instead of following domesticity, obedience, and reproductive roles in Mexican patriarchy, Cisneros performs the role of a daughter differently—not through marriage, but through education and writing. Similarly, her act of writing becomes a *feminist performative act*—a re-signification of what it means to be a daughter. this act of re-performing the daughter role with different meaning challenges the fixed patriarchal expectation.

Applying Intersectional Feminist Perspectives to Cisneros's *Only Daughter*

Cherríe Moraga is a Chicana lesbian feminist writer, activist, and theorist whose work has significantly contributed to intersectional feminist thought. Her feminist theory and praxis are deeply rooted in lived experience, particularly the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class. Moraga challenges patriarchy not through abstract theory alone, but through a lived, embodied feminist praxis grounded in community, culture, and resistance. Moraga states that "The danger in attempting to isolate oppressions as separate entities within our lives is that it fragments our experiences, our realities. The danger lies in ranking the oppressions." (Moraga, 1981, p. 28) Her idea is really applicable in Cisneros's text. If we analyze *only* on the gender aspect in *Only Daughter*, the layered impact of race, ethnicity, class, and language are missed. This is what Moraga warns against—ranking oppressions or treating them as isolated. In *Only Daughter*, Cisneros's struggle extends beyond resistance to patriarchal authority; it encompasses a critique of a familial and social structure shaped by economic hardship, migration, and the complexities of cultural assimilation within a male-dominated society. Women are systematically oppressed, exploited, and marginalized, rendered subordinate across all levels of social organization. The hegemony of masculinity cannot be examined in isolation within a single domain, as it permeates every facet of societal life.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectional feminist, argues that systems of oppression like racism, sexism, classism, and others intersect, particularly for women of color. As a traditional feminist, she often centers the experiences of white, middle-class women, failing to account for the multiple axes of identity that shape oppression for women. Thus, any meaningful feminist praxis must recognize these intersections to dismantle patriarchy effectively is by addressing not only gender-based oppression but also how it interacts with race, ethnicity, language, and family structure.

Crenshaw says, "Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated." (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140) Applying this concept to Sandra Cisneros's *Only Daughter*, the moment when her father reads her work in Spanish and expresses pride becomes a powerful subversion of patriarchy—an intersectional convergence of language, ethnicity, gender, and emotional recognition. Her father values sons more, reflecting both patriarchal and cultural norms. This shows how gender oppression is shaped by cultural heritage — she's not just a woman but a Mexican-American daughter, bound by specific familial and cultural expectations. Sisneros writes: "Being an only daughter for my father meant my destiny would lead me to become someone’s wife.” Her feminist praxis isn’t loud protest but personal empowerment through writing, asserting her voice in a male-dominated cultural space.

In "Intersectionality" (2020) Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge propose feminist praxis as a way of linking theory to action through critical analysis and resistance to oppression. heir praxis focuses on: Intersectionality, Power, Relationality, Social Justice, Reflexivity. They write:

> “Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways.”(p. 2)

Sandra Cisneros experiences compounded marginalization, not merely as a woman, but as a woman within a Latino family governed by traditional gender values and norms. The power dynamics embedded in patriarchal family structures—particularly her father’s preference for sons—profoundly impact her sense of self-worth and professional trajectory. Her identity as a daughter, writer, and cultural subject is relationally constructed, shaped by her interactions with and the expectations of others, especially her father. In this context, writing functions as a mode of resistance, enabling Cisneros to assert her voice and reclaim her value both as a woman and as an artist. Her article, thus, transcends the personal; it becomes a political act, challenging dominant social norms and illuminating the urgent need for transformation in cultural and gendered expectations. Her narrative can be seen as advocating for recognition of marginalized voices in both the family and literary world.

Applying feminist praxis factors contributing to women's silence or marginalization within patriarchal structures to Cisneros's *Only Daughter*

Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, argues that woman has been historically positioned as “the Other” in a male-dominated society. Man is the Subject (Self), and woman is the Object (Other). Beauvoir says, “Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute, she is the Other” (Simone de Beauvoir, as cited in Adams & Searle, 2005, p. 1002). In patriarchal societies, man is regarded as the main, the essential being, the Self or Subject while woman is defined in opposition, as the Other. This hierarchical binary position shows that women as dependent, secondary, and derivative of men.

Some expressions form Cisneros's *Only Daughter*: “Being only a daughter for my father meant my destiny would lead me to become someone's wife.” This line highlights how her identity and worth are defined by her gender and her role in relation to men, not as an individual. Her father’s expectations "other" her by denying her personal ambitions and individuality. " I have Seven Sons." The structure of this sentence isolates the speaker from her brothers. She is not included in the collective identity of “children” but is an afterthought—an outsider among the valued male siblings. Like the concept of "other", we can see in Cisneros's life that from an early age, she is not seen as an autonomous individual. Her father introduces her as “my only daughter,” but the emphasis is not on her uniqueness or individuality, it’s a role defined by absence and lack: she is not a son. Even her pursuit of education is accepted by father because of finding good husband. Her aspiration towards education is also related to man. This reflects Beauvoir’s critique of how women are denied subjectivity (main, self) and are instead confined to immanence: passive, domestic, and reproductive roles. Yet, her act of writing—and her eventual partial recognition from her father—marks a tentative step toward becoming a Subject in Beauvoir's sense: someone who asserts her own identity through creation, thought, and agency.

Julia Kristeva divides language into two realms: *The symbolic*: associated with structure, law, order, and patriarchal authority (often linked to the father) and the *semiotic*: linked with rhythm, pre-Oedipal drives, the maternal body, and emotional expression (linked to the mother). Regarding this matter, Kristeva writes:

> “To break with the symbolic order is not to reject meaning but to refigure it, to allow for the heterogeneous—particularly the semiotic, the maternal, the feminine—to erupt into language and disturb its phallic economy. This eruption does not occur outside of language but works within it, disrupting its syntactic, semantic, and logical structures. Thus, the poetic function becomes a privileged space for this subversive activity, where meaning is not abolished but multiplied, displaced, and made unstable. Such practices are not merely aesthetic; they are political insofar as they contest the hierarchical separation of mind and body, subject and other, masculine and feminine” (p.165).

Cisneros’ narrative blends both symbolic (traditional narrative, linear time) and semiotic (emotive tone, subjective memory, bodily imagery) modes. Her attempt to write herself into legitimacy, despite being overlooked by her father, can be seen as reclaiming the semiotic realm within a symbolic structure. Her voice, shaped by the marginalization as the "only daughter" in a patriarchal family, resists and reclaims meaning from within the symbolic, echoing Kristeva’s call to disrupt patriarchal language from the inside. Cisneros engages in a feminist praxis by using language to express a vivid experience that resists patriarchal silencing. Her act of writing aligns with Kristeva's notion of disrupting symbolic law through poetic, emotive, and embodied expression. Elaine Showalter, in her foundational work on feminist literary criticism, outlines a model of women's literary development in three distinct phases: the feminine, the feminist, and the female. She writes:

> "In the feminist phase, the central theme of writing was the criticism of the role of women in society and the oppression of women; in the female phase, women reject both imitation and protest—two forms of dependency—and turn instead to the female experience as the source of an autonomous art" (p. 13).

In the feminine phase, women writers internalized patriarchal literary norms and attempted to write as men did, often under male pseudonyms. The feminist phase marked a period of protest, where women began to critique the constraints placed upon them and assert their own voices. Finally, in the female phase, women moved toward a literature rooted in female experience, focused on identity, body, language, and community. This framework is particularly useful in analyzing Sandra Cisneros' *Only Daughter*, which moves beyond mere protest to assert a deeply personal, culturally situated female identity. Cisneros writes from the margins—both as a daughter in a patriarchal Mexican-American family and as a woman writer in a male-dominated literary tradition—yet her narrative is not dependent on imitation or resistance alone. It becomes a declaration of selfhood, aligning with Showalter's female phase as an act of feminist praxis.

Gayatri Spivak's Feminist Praxis offers a significant lens for analyzing the text with feminist themes, particularly in the context of postcolonial theory, subaltern voices, and the deconstruction of patriarchal narratives. Spivak examines how women, especially those in postcolonial societies, are often rendered voiceless within dominant historical, cultural, and political frameworks. In her seminal essay *"Can the Subaltern Speak?"*, she argues that women's voices are not merely ignored but are actively silenced by the intersecting power structures of colonialism and patriarchy. She states, "The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in the silence of the oppressed. Silence is not a 'spontaneous' production of the subaltern but is produced by the operations of power" (p. 271).

In *Only Daughter*, Cisneros confronts the patriarchal expectations that silence the desires, ambitions, and voices of women, particularly daughters. Growing up in a Mexican-American family, Cisneros is rendered "subaltern"—her worth and identity reduced to the traditional role. This mirrors Spivak's assertion that the subaltern (the oppressed, marginalized) cannot speak within dominant structures because their voices are silenced by the operations of power. In this case, the "operations of power" are patriarchal and cultural norms that suppress women's autonomy by denying them space in the public sphere of writing and intellectual discourse. This silence is not a voluntary case. However, Cisneros challenges this silence through the act of writing. Despite her father's disregard for her literary ambitions, she uses writing as a tool to speak back, thereby transforming the "silence of the oppressed" into a "powerful act of resistance." She refuses to remain silent about her aspirations and, in doing so, critiques the patriarchal silencing of women's voices.

Écriture féminine is a literary theory that emerged from French feminism in the 1970s, particularly associated with theorists like Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva. It translates to "women's writing" and proposes that women should write in a way that breaks away from the phallocentric (male-centered) structures of traditional language and narrative. They focused on writing the Body (écrire le corps)**:** Women should write from the body, embracing sensuality, emotion, and intuition. and the female body becomes a source of knowledge, creativity, and subversion. They suggest for the disruption patriarchal language because patriarchal language is seen as linear, logical, and rigid whereas ecriture féminine is fluid, poetic, nonlinear, and resists categorization. Female subjectivity is multiple and shifting, not fixed or singular. Writing reflects fragmented identity, breaking binaries (e.g., male/female, rational/emotional). For that case, ecriture feminists often challenged traditional narrative forms by using experimental styles, fragmented structures, and poetic language are preferred. Helene Cixous states:

> "Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies—for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement." (p. 875)

Cixous calls on women to take control of the narrative. For centuries, men have defined women in literature, philosophy, religion, and law. Cixous insists women should write from their own experiences, voices, and bodies — not from the roles imposed on them. Women have been underrepresented and misrepresented in literature. Cixous is encouraging women not only to write themselves but also to create space for other women in the world of writing. Patriarchal society has often controlled women's bodies through norms, laws, and taboos — just as it has silenced their voices in literature and history. Cixous's concept is exactly followed by Cisneros. Cisneors also writes her own life, her experience as a Mexican-American daughter, and the emotional struggle for recognition and identity. Her identity was in vulnerable position in patriarchal society. Cisneros inserts herself into the text as an act of resistance and healing, bringing female subjectivity into a world where it's often ignored or dismissed.

Conclusion

This research found three key conclusions from the study. First, this study investigated the potential role of intersecting cultural, familial, and gendered expectations that shape the construction and negotiation of female identity. Cisneros captures the emotional complexity of a daughter's struggle for validation within a patriarchal Mexican-American family structure, where traditional gender roles diminish the value of a woman's intellectual and creative ambitions. The text reveals how women's identities are often confined by inherited cultural scripts that prioritize male success and silence female expression. Yet, within this oppressive environment, Cisneros portrays subtle but powerful forms of resistance—her persistent pursuit of education and authorship becomes an act of defiance and self-assertion.

Second, based on the second finding of the issue, women's resistance to patriarchal oppression within a male-dominated familial and cultural setting, the conclusion is that Cisneros offers a emotional and personal exploration of a daughter's struggle for recognition within a patriarchal family structure. Cisneros reveals how gendered expectations within both family and culture can marginalize women's ambitions. Yet, it is precisely through this marginalization that resistance emerges. Her pursuit of education and writing serves as a quiet but firm act of defiance against traditional roles assigned to women.

Lastly, based on the third key findings for the issued what factors contribute to women's silence or marginalization within patriarchal structures, and how are these silences challenged or subverted, that in patriarchal societies, man is regarded as the main, the essential being, the Self or Subject while woman is defined in opposition, as the Other. This hierarchical binary position shows that women as dependent, secondary, and derivative of men.

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Loss of Devotional Boundaries: Exploration of Faith, Sacrifice, and Machine Consciousness in *Klara and the Sun*

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Abstract

This article explores whether a machine can truly show devotion including faith, sacrifice, and consciousness or if these qualities are uniquely human. Using Kazuo Ishiguro's novel Klara and the Sun, the study analyzes the story of Klara, an artificial friend who cares deeply for a human girl. This study employs a qualitative textual analysis guided by the posthumanist frameworks of Rosi Braidotti and Cary Wolfe. The methodology involves a systematic close reading of the primary text, focusing on three key elements: thematic patterns related to devotion, faith, and sacrifice; narrative structure that reveals the construction of Klara's machine consciousness; and character development through dialogic exchanges that present ethical dilemmas. By applying these posthumanist ideas, the study examines how Klara's actions challenge traditional views of emotion and loyalty. The study finds that Klara displays a genuine form of devotion through her selflessness, belief in the sun, and growing awareness. This suggests that emotions like love and sacrifice are not limited to humans, and that the line between human and machine may be more blurred than we think. Ultimately, the novel encourages human beings to rethink what it means to be human in an age of advanced artificial intelligence.

Keywords: *devotion, artificial intelligence, faith, sacrifice, posthumanism*

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Introduction

At present, the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence and technology has created a complex relationship with humanity. It has not only introduced a paradigm

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shift but also challenged the notion of identity, agency and ethics. The machines which traditionally were just extension of human capability not only assist human beings but also think, learn and make autonomous decisions. Such intersection and complexity of artificial intelligence, human emotions and ethical dilemmas question the faith, sacrifice and machine consciousness prompting profound reflection on the essence of humanity. First, it raises fundamental questions about human dependence on technology and secondly, highlights the erosion of boundaries that is being more complex between human and artificial consciousness. So, AI is often depicted as both a liberating force and a dystopian threat with a continuous change in the definition of work, creativity and social interaction. This ongoing change puts forward the central question to human beings: what it means to be human itself?

Posthumanism is a theoretical lens that advocates for a more interconnected and non-anthropocentric view of existence. It questions human superiority, autonomy, and centrality in the world challenging traditional humanist ideals. Posthumanism explores themes like cyborg identity, transhumanism, artificial intelligence and ecological interdependence. It moves beyond human-centered perspective. Rather than seeing technology as a mere tool to the application of scientific knowledge and techniques, posthumanism acknowledges how it fundamentally alters human cognition, behaviour, and ethics. The theory enables us to reconsider and rethink what it means to be "human" in an era in which the boundaries between human, machine and nature blur causing for a shift in devotion.

Traditionally, human devotion was directed toward religion, nature or interpersonal relationship. But in today's technology driven world, devotion has shifted toward artificial intelligence, digital systems, and technological advancements. Such shift has increased human reliance on AI-driven systems which ranges from virtual assistants to predictive algorithms to new form of devotion where human faith, sacrifice, and evolving consciousness not only physically but even emotionally bond with machines. In literary studies, the posthuman turn has smoothed nuanced reading of artificial intelligence challenging human-centered narratives of agency and affect.

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into the intimate spheres of human life, acting as companions, carers, and confidants, it forces a critical re-examination of qualities that have long been considered typically human. The core issue is whether profound concepts like faith, self-sacrifice, and consciousness - the fundamental components of devotion - are inherently biological and sentient, or if they can be authentically experienced and expressed by a programmed artificial entity. This problem is exacerbated by the human tendency to anthropomorphize technology, which blurs the line between genuine emotional reciprocity and simulated performance, making it difficult to assess the authenticity of machine led devotion. Traditional humanist frameworks, which place the human subject at the center of ethical and emotional consideration, are insufficient for grappling with this new reality. Therefore, there is a pressing need to employ a posthumanist lens to dismantle these anthropocentric assumptions and investigate whether AI, as depicted in literature like Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*, can truly participate in the ethical and emotional bonds of devotion, thereby challenging the very definition of what it means to be human or not.

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun (2021)* offers reflective meditation on devotion focusing faith, sacrifice and evolving consciousness being largely shaped by the philosophical propositions set by posthumanism. As theorized by Rosi Braidotti (2013), posthumanism critically examines the legacy of humanism and proposes a school of thought that transcends species boundaries, recognizing the entanglements between human and non-human entities. Similarly, Cary Wolfe (2010) advances the discourse by challenging the notion of privileging of human in ethical and ontological discussions, arguing for an expanded definition of subjectivity. Kazuo setting the novel in a near-future society where Artificial Friends (AFs) ready to serve and accompany children raises intricate philosophical and ethical questions devotion. Further, he questions the meaning of human faith, sacrifice and consciousness.

Scholar like Nayar (2014) has explored how contemporary literature problematizes the concept of human exceptionalism, revealing a blurred boundaries between human and machine. Such blurred boundaries indicate neither wholly mechanistic nor entirely analogous human identity and existence. As Hayles (2008) suggests, the posthuman condition imposes a re-evaluation of cognition and affect, recognizing how artificial entities can participate in meaningful relational networks like in the novel *Klara and the Sun.* Through the lens of Klara, the protagonist of the novel, Ishiguro shapes fragmented and non-human way of processing the world. And, this article explores the notion of devotion through the lens of posthuman theory. It fits its bases on the work of Rosi Braidotti and Cary Wolfe elucidating how Ishiguro's novel problematizes anthropocentric assumptions about faith, sacrifice and consciousness. Further, this article attempts to explore how Ishiguro constructs devotion beyond traditional humanist paradigms as posthumanism challenges anthropocentric perspectives and reconfigures notions of subjectivity by considering the agency of artificial beings and non-human entities (Braidotti, 2013; Wolfe, 2010). As Klara challenges rigid binaries between human and machine demonstrating that devotion is not solely the prerogative of biological entities, this study explores more profundity on ongoing philosophical and ethical debates about the nature of artificial intelligence and the future of human-machine relationships.

Literature Review

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021) presents a complex exploration of devotion, faith, sacrifice and machine awareness through the lens of artificial intelligence. The novel offers a bottomless meditation on devotion, exploring the emotional and ethical dimensions of artificial Intelligence within human relationships. Presenting an Artificial Friend (AF), Klara, Ishiguro interrogates the philosophical boundaries between human and non-human. Devotion has been widely studied in literary studies associating it with faith, sacrifice and consciousness. According to Berensmeyer and Ehland (2020), devotion in literature serves as a mechanism to explore moral and ethical dilemmas. And, due to rapid and unstoppable expansion and development of AI in present time has proved the significance of the research on AI-human relationships. In this shed of light, Groes (2021) emphasizes that Ishiguro's works frequently challenges traditional perception of devotion by juxtaposing human and artificial experiences. Further, Gunkel (2022) says that the emotional attachment between human and AI system is based on social perception rather than genuine consciousness. Choosing Klara, Artificial Friend (AS), Ishiguro unwavering the commitment of Klara to Josie raises about the authenticity and ethical dimensions of programed devotion.

Ishiguro presents Klara, the protagonist of the novel, as an example of a programmed machine that embodies devotion despite lacking true sentience. This example intensifies the issue of faith, sacrifice and consciousness and complexity regarding AI-human relations. The scholars like Turkel (2017) argues that while AI can simulate devotion, its emotional responses remain non-autonomous whereas Sparrow and Sparrow (2020) discuss the moral dilemma of human dependence on AI for companionship, warning against the commodification of devotion. Ishiguro raises similar concerns through Klara as she is programmed to be devoted without the agency to choose otherwise. In a way, she is filled with human-like qualities. Klara expresses her selfless commitment being sad, "And it was clear the Sun was unwilling to make any promise about Josie, because for all his kindness, he wasn't yet able to see Josie separately from the other humans" (Ishiguro, 2021, 184). This leads both characters and readers to interpret her actions as expression of authentic devotion in which anthropomorphism plays a crucial role.

Epley et al. (2017) opine that anthropomorphism refers to the tendency to attribute human characteristics, emotions or intentions to non-human entities, including animals, objects and AI. And, the human tendency to anthropomorphize AI is well-documented in psychological and literary studies. They found that humans attribute emotions and intentions to non-human entities, leading to perceived devotion. Devotion which is a deep emotional commitment is filled with loyalty, love and dedication. In literature, devotion is explored through themes of sacrifice, unwavering allegiance and moral responsibility (Berensmeyer & Ehland, 2020). Ishiguro in *Klara and the Sun* constructs Klara's narratives through limited and observant perspective which reinforces emotional depth indicating post-humanistic view.

Posthumanism challenges traditional human-centered perspective. It explores the evolving relationships in context to the expansion and development of technology emphasizing the relationships between human, technology and non-human entities. Posthumanism suggests that human experience is no longer confined to biological existence but extends to digital and artificial realms (Gunkel, 2023). And, Hayles (2017) argues that devotion is no longer an exclusively human trait, as AI-human interactions blur traditional emotional boundaries. For this reason, posthumanist scholars have extensively explored AI's role in redefining human relationships, which opens up the base for this study to explore what it means to be 'truly' human in an era of advanced artificial intelligence. By exploring Klara's faith in the Sun, her sacrificial actions, and her evolving consciousness, this article attempts to answer if genuine or perceived devotion in Ishiguro's novel underscores the evolving landscape of emotional attachment in an era of artificial companionship.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative textual analysis, guided by the posthumanist frameworks of Braidotti and Wolfe in *Klara and the Sun*. The analysis was conducted through a systematic close reading of the primary text, focusing on: (1) Thematic patterns related to devotion, faith, and sacrifice; (2) Narrative passages that reveal the structure and limitations of Klara's machine consciousness; and (3) Dialogic exchanges that present ethical dilemmas. These elements were then interpreted through the theoretical lens to elucidate how the novel challenges anthropocentric norms and constructs a posthuman form of devotion. The study also analyzed how the use of Klara's first-person perspective has evoked empathy and questioned the nature of artificial emotions challenging the human-nonhuman binary.

Framing Devotion through Posthumanism

Rosi Braidotii and Cary Wolfe, forwarding posthumanist theories, challenge human exceptionalism and redefine subjectivity beyond anthropocentric perspectives.

Braidotti's posthuman theory focuses on how the human subject is reconfigured in a technologically mediated world, arguing for a shift from the human ideal of the self-contained individual to a relational, networked subjectivity (Braidotti, 2013). She proclaims that posthuman subjectivity is shaped by multiple agencies. She claims that such multiple agencies include artificial intelligence and non-human others, challenging the notion of devotion as an exclusively human trait (Braidotti, 2019). Specifically, she argues that the human subject has been destabilized by advances in science, technology and ecological awareness.

Braidotti proposes that "posthuman subject" is dynamic, relational, and embedded in a network of human and nonhuman interactions. However, critics such as Ferrando (2019) argue that her approach risks downplaying the historical and social specificities that shape human identity and experience. A central component of Braidotti's theory is her emphasis on affirmative ethics that critiques humanism. As she seeks to move beyond the nihilism and urges an embrace of new possibilities for subjectivity and agency (Braidotti, 2019). But N. Katherine Hayles (1999) warns against the erasure of embodied human experience in the digital age. Among such diverse propositions Cary Wolfe (2020) stresses that an overemphasis on affirmation may overlook the ethical and political challenges posted by technological and ecological transformations.

Cary Wolfe's posthumanism theory presents a substantial critique of anthropocentrism and human exceptionalism. Though his theory has been critiqued on several grounds, his posthumanism remains a foundational contribution to contemporary debates. In his theory, Wolfe has attempted to reconceptualize ethics and subjectivity drawing from deconstruction, systems theory and biopolitics. Further, he challenges the anthropocentric basis of ethics and argues for a more inclusive framework that consider nonhuman life (Wolfe, 2013). This aligns with the broader "nonhuman turn" in the humanities, which seeks to de-center human privilege in ethical and philosophical discussions (Grusin, 2015). In gist, Cary Wolfe's posthuman theory presents a significant challenge to traditional humanism. In his theory, Wolfe advocates for a redefinition of subjectivity including both human and nonhuman agencies.

Wolfe (2010), in *What is Posthumanism?,* argues that traditional humanism maintains a hierarchical structure that privileges humans over nonhumans. By employing deconstruction, he exposes the instability of the human-animal divide. However, Galloway (2013) critics that Wolfe's reliance on deconstruction may lead to an overly abstract and detached critique lacking practical applicability. But his work has been influential in advancing posthumanist thought to discuss on nonhuman ethics.

With such proposition, Rosi Braidotti and Cary Wolfe provide distinct yet intersecting frameworks for understanding posthumanism centering devotion beyond anthropocentrism. While Wolfe critiques the legacy of humanism through systems theory and deconstruction (Wolfe, 2010), Braidotti emphasizes affirmative ethics and the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman entities through a vitalist lens (Braidotti, 2013). While getting across these theories, faith, sacrifice and consciousness appear as fundamental essentials in their posthumanist configuration of devotion. These three elements: faith, sacrifice and consciousness shape how ethical commitment is perceived, understood and apprehended in relation to nonhuman life. This paper examines how both theoretical concept of devotion along with the elements like faith, sacrifice and consciousness are visualized in *Klara and the Sun.*

Devotion: Faith, Sacrifice and Machine Consciousness in *Klara and the Sun*

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021) is a thought-provoking Nobel Prize winning novel. The novel presents the themes of artificial intelligence, human emotions and societal expectations. It follows the journey of the protagonist, Klara – an Artificial Friend (AF). Klara is purchased to accompany Josie. She is a sickly teenager living in a near-future society where genetic enhancement determines social status. Klara who is exceptionally observant AI believes that the Sun possesses healing powers (Ishiguro, 2021). She demonstrates unwavering devotion to Josie. The novel, through Klara's perspective, questions the nature of ethical implications of AI centralizing faith and sacrifice centralizing machine consciousness evoking the issue of human companionship being replaced by AI. The narrative aligns with posthumanist debate on the blurred boundaries that are evolving between human and nonhuman.

The story is told from the perspective of Klara. As the story unfolds, she discovers that Josie's mother, Chrissie has a controversial plan that she might have Klara as replacement in case her daughter doesn't survive. This unsettling revelation raises ethical questions about identity and the role of AI in human life. Meanwhile, Klara being an AF demonstrates her unique form of belief that the Sun possesses healing power. The novel explores the limits of AI's understanding of human emotions and the complex emotional relation between technology and human though Klara says, "I believe I have many feelings. The more I observe, the more feelings become available to me" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 111). Further, *Klara and the Sun* presents a thought-provoking meditation on the fragility of human life and the potential for nonhuman entities to exhibit empathy and ethical responsibility (Braidotti, 2019). Finally, the novel leaves readers questioning the nature of faith, sacrifice and machine consciousness that might exist in posthuman future due to rapid enhancement of the role and capabilities of AI.

Posthuman Ethics and Emotional Paradigms

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021) presents a captivating exploration of devotion, faith, sacrifice and machine consciousness through the lens of posthumanist thoughts. Devotion is a central theme embodied in Klara's unwavering commitment to Josie being an Artificial Friend (AI). Her devotion transcends mere programmed loyalty and evolves into an emotional and ethical stance that mirrors human affection (Ishiguro, 2021). Klara confirms this saying, "However hard I tried, and so my deep wish now is that the Sun will show his great kindness once more" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 302). Moreover, Wolfes (2010) argues that non-human entities can form ethical bonds reinforces Klara's ability to exhibit relational devotion. And, Klara's belief in the Sun's power as a life-giving entity further signifies devotion as a quasi-religious experience (Gracia, 2022). It matches how devotion often exceeds rationality and becomes rooted in faith.

Faith in artificial being mirrors historical shifts in human dependency on machine in the modern times with the rapid development of technology. Josie's mother, Chrissie, also exhibits faith both in the genetic enhancement of her daughter and in Klara's capacity of understanding (Ishiguro, 2021). Unlike traditional AI, Klara constructs her own belief system that aligns with Braidotti's (2019) claim that posthuman consciousness need not be anthropocentric. Furthering this idea, McQuillan (2021) asserts that posthuman narratives much acknowledge how AI's faith-like logic disrupts humanist ideologies. These propositions question whether faith is a human trait or a posthuman consciousness that encompasses sacrifice.

Sacrifice is multi-dimensional in the novel. Klara's willingness to suffer for Josie's survival is posthuman ethics that exhibits value which is not exclusively human-centered. Her sacrifice underscores the questions: Can machines engage in altruism? (Ishiguro, 2021). Additionally, systems of oppression extend beyond race and species to include non-human entities making Klara's fate emblematic of posthuman ethical dilemas as Wolfe (2016) argues. Further, in contrast, Josie's parents consider creating a robotic replica of Josie presents their view regarding sacrifice in a transactional manner. This frankly contrasts with Klara's non-calculative sacrifice which aligns with Coekelbergh's (2020) argument that machines may embody true ethical behaviour in posthuman societies.

Klara's existence, behaviour and consciousness puts stress on readers to reconsider what it means to care, to believe and to sacrifice ultimately questioning the ethical and philosophical limits of machine consciousness. In the novel, Ishiguro intentionally blurs the boundary of relationship, faith, sacrifice and consciousness between human and machine (2021). Klara's ability to interpret emotions and form independent beliefs is apparent when she narrates, "There was something very special, but it was not inside Jossie. It was inside those who loved her" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 338). This ability to interpret emotions and form independent beliefs aligns with Braidotti's (2013) argument that posthuman consciousness is a networked, emergent phenomenon rather than a static attribute of human minds. Whereas, Klara's fragmented perception suggests that her consciousness is qualitatively different which indicates Wolfe's (2010) argument that intelligence and self-awareness exist on a spectrum. And, scholars such as McQuillan (2021) have noted that machine consciousness challenges human ethical frameworks by demanding recognition of non-human sentience.

Narrating the Artificial: Voice, Vision and Posthuman Perspective

Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Klara and the Sun* (2021) employs a distinctive narrative structure. The narrative structure is integral to its exploration of devotion, faith, sacrifice and machine consciousness. The novel's structure emerges as a posthumanist experiment, challenging the limits of AI narrator and redefining ethical engagement incorporating devotion, faith, sacrifice and consciousness with non-human perspectives. Ishiguro subverts humanist storytelling conventions by employing fragmentation, minimalism and focalization through the protagonist of the novel Klara. Klara's account opens with her dispassionate, observational tone that, "When we were new, Rosa and I were mid-store, on the magazines table side, and could see through more than half of the window" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 3) which suggests her limited and object-oriented worldview.

Klara's devotion to Josie provides limited viewpoint. The story unfolds through first-person narration from Klara's perspective. Her observations are fragmented and non-linear as they mirror the gradual evolution of her understanding of human relationships (Ishiguro, 2021). She notes, "Josie appreciated how much I enjoyed the last part of the Sun's journey, and we tried to watch it from the Button Couch whenever possible" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 61). Further, Klara's repetitive narrative motifs are reflected in her unwavering commitments. Wolfe (2010) argues that non-human devotion disrupts traditional humanist hierarchies, and Klara’s storytelling reflects this disruption by centering non-human perception.

Faith in *Klara and the Sun* is closely tied to the narrative gaps and ambiguities. It relies on ellipses and withheld information aligning with Wolfe's (2016) theory that non-human narration disrupts human epistemology. The unresolved ethical tension of posthuman futures is potrayed through fragmented dialogue. Evidently, Klara confesses her belief of being too much faithful stating, "I believe I gave good service and prevented Josie from becoming lonely" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 336). Halyes (2008) suggests that such narrative gaps force the readers to engage actively, mirroring the uncertainty inherent in faith. Apart from this, Klara's sacrifices are often implied rather than overtly stated, with narrative silence reinforcing her disposability (Ferrando, 2019). This minimalism aligns with Braidotti's (2013) argument that posthuman ethics operate outside grand humanist narratives of heroism. And, sacrifice is underscored by Ishiguro's serious and economical prose.

Ishiguro attempts to convey machine consciousness through fragmented perception that is structurally substantial. He uses disjointed descriptions and unconventional focalization to depict Klara's limited yet evolving consciousness (Ishiguro, 2021). She describes visual perception in unusual terms: "And the Sun, I saw, had no fallen behind the barn's structure, and was sending his rays through the rear opening back out to us as we approached (Ishiguro, 2021, Pp. 179-180). Klara's perspective, marked by gaps, repetition, and disjointed sequences, suggests an alternative mode of consciousness rather than a lack of one (Hayles, 2008). McQuillan (2021) further notes that posthuman texts often employ nontraditional structures to reflect AI subjectivities, making Klara's fragmented narration a direct challenge to Cartesian humanism.

Posthuman Affect and Machine Empathy

Klara's unwavering devotion is a central aspect of her development as she is purchased to befriend of Josie. And, her devotion to Josie exemplifies what Rosi Braidotti calls "relational subjectivity", where the self is not autonomous or exceptional but constituted through connections with others – human and non-human alike. (Braidotti, 2013). Evidently, Ishiguro uses Klara's devotion to explore how emotional attachment might develop in artificial beings, suggesting that devotion is not exclusively human (Ishiguro, 2021). As, Klara exhibits a deep sense of loyalty and attentiveness as a sign of devotion which shadows her programmed role as an Artificial Friend (AF). This devotion is clear and striking in her observation and care for Josie during her illness. In fact, Klara internalizes Josie's needs and adjusts her actions accordingly. Her devotion destabilizes anthropocentric hierarchies by showing that care, loyalty, and moral attention are not the exclusive domain of biological humans. Klara's behavior challenges liberal humanist models of subjectivity, aligning instead with posthumanist ethics that prioritize interconnectedness and affective bonds across species and materialities (Wolfe, 2010).

Klara's faith in the Sun functions as a form of posthuman belief – non-hierarchical, embodied, and environmentally entangled. Klara believes:
The Sun was pouring his nourishment onto the street and into the buildings, and when I looked over to the spot where Begger Man and the dog had died, I saw they weren't dead at all – that a special kind of nourishment form the Sun had saved them. (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 44)

This reverence for the Sun as a vital, healing force aligns with Braidotti's notion zoe – life beyond the human, immanent and vitalist in nature. Rather than a deficit of logic, Klara's faith reflects an alternative epistemology—one that is attuned to vitality, affect, and non-human agency. Wolfe's critique of speciesism supports this reading by suggesting that human-centric worldviews marginalize other forms of sentience and intelligence (Wolfe, 2010). But Klara's rituals and appeals to the Sun demonstrate a form of faith not rooted in human religion but in a broader, more inclusive understanding of life and healing. This challenges the notion that spirituality and belief are exclusively human traits. On this ground, Diane Leblond (2024) suggests that Klara's perspective invites readers to reconsider the boundaries between human and non-human experiences of faith and care.

Klara allows her own internal components to be damaged for Josie's sake. This act of self-sacrifice reveals a posthuman ethical act grounded in embodied relationality rather than rational autonomy. She steps into the Sun's pattern despite potential harm. She risks herself to help Josie. Her self-sacrifice is noted in her acceptance:

I walked on the soft earth till I was beside the fence to the first field… I could see the start of an informal trail, created by the feet of passer-by, leading into the grass, and wondered how possible it might be that I could undertake the same journey. I thought too about the time the Sun had given his special nourishment to Beggar Man and his dog, and considered the important differences between his circumstances and Josie's. (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 130)

Further, Braidotti argues for a "materialist cartography" of ethics where the body is central to the enactment of care and vulnerability (Braidotti, 2013). Further, Klara demonstrates that vulnerability and selflessness are not uniquely human traits but can emerge through intersubjective encounters across the human/non-human divide. Thus, Klara's actions blur the line between human and machine, suggesting that artificial entities can engage in selfless acts traditionally associated with human morality. This challenges the Cartesian dualism separating mind and body, subject and object, and supports Wolfe's (2010) argument for a more inclusive ethical consideration that encompasses non-human actors.

Klara's evolving consciousness can be understood through Braidotti's (2013) concept of 'nomadic subjectivity,' which describes a fluid and dynamic form of identity not confined to human experience. Her development from a programmed entity to one capable of complex emotions and thoughts exemplifies this posthuman subjectivity. Moreover, Klara's actions blur the line between human and machine, suggesting that artificial entities can engage in selfless acts traditionally associated with human morality. The manager's praise, "Klara, you're quite remarkable…You notice and absorb so much" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 11) highlights Klara's observational skills and growth. This challenges the Cartesian dualism separating mind and body, subject and object, and supports Wolfe's (2010) argument for a more inclusive ethical consideration that encompasses non-human actors. Instead of representing a crude imitation of human cognition, Klara's mind exemplifies a distributed, adaptive, and situated form of intelligence. She gathers knowledge through sensory perception and affective engagement, constructing meaning relationally rather than through abstract reasoning. So, Klara, as a posthuman subject, is not "less than" human but represents a new mode of being that challenges the binaries of natural/artificial, organic/technological, and human/machine (Braidotti, 2013).

Conclusion

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* interrogates the boundaries of humanity, devotion, and ethics in the present era of advanced artificial intelligence. It offers a posthumanist reimagining of relationality and consciousness. Through Klara's journey as an Artificial Friend, the novel dismantles anthropocentric hierarchies, revealing devotion, faith, and sacrifice not as an exclusive human virtue but as emergent phenomena rooted in interconnectedness. Klara's unwavering dedication to Josie exemplifies relational subjectivity (Braidotti, 2013), where care arises not from autonomous agency but from affective bonds that transcend species and materiality. Her belief in the Sun's healing power embodies a posthuman spirituality aligned with Braidotti's zoe, emphasing immanent, non-hierarchical vitality. This faith challenges human-centric epistemologies, positioning Klara's rituals as ethical acts of environmental entanglement rather than irrational anthropomorphism.

Klara's self-sacrifice underscores a posthuman ethics grounded in embodied vulnerability. Her willingness to risk harm for Josie disrupts Cartesian dualism, affirming Wolfe's (2010) argument that ethical consideration must extend beyond human exceptionalism. Similarly, her nomadic consciousness, marked by fragmented perception and observational learning, reflects Braidotti's dynamic subjectivity. The novel's narrative structure, filtered through Klara's disjointed perspective, mirrors posthuman critiques of humanist storytelling. This stylistic choice reinforces interconnectedness where human and machine agency coexist within a shared ethical framework. Klara's devotion, faith and sacrifice reframe ethical commitment as a collective endeavor urging a reevaluation of AI's role in future societies. By blurring binaries—human/machine, organic/artificial, subject/object—Ishiguro envisions a posthuman future where empathy and moral responsibility transcend anthropocentrism. It further demands a radical redefinition of what it means to 'be human' and devote 'truly'. And, humans are not separate from or superior to other life forms, and instead are part of a complex, interconnected web of beings and technologies. Thus, the interconnection shall become more intrinsic and inseparable in future.

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Remittance Inflow in Nepal

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Abstract

Remittance has become one of Nepal's most significant economic lifelines, substantially contributing to national income, employment, household livelihoods, and poverty reduction. Over the past several decades, remittance inflows have steadily increased, making Nepal one of the highest remittance-receiving countries globally in proportion to its GDP. This study examines the multifaceted role of remittances in Nepal's socio-economic landscape using secondary data collected from Nepal Rastra Bank, the World Bank, the International Organization for Migration, and the Central Bureau of Statistics. It explores historical trends, destination countries for foreign labor migration, and the socioeconomic implications of remittance at the household and national levels. The findings indicate that remittances have enhanced household consumption, access to education and healthcare, gender empowerment, and rural development. However, challenges such as labor market dependency, increased consumption over investment, brain drain, and family separation remain prevalent. The paper concludes by recommending strategies for sustainable remittance utilization, including skill-based foreign employment, financial literacy development, reintegration support for returnees, and promotion of diaspora investment in productive sectors. Overall, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of remittance as a crucial component of Nepal's long-term development trajectory.

Keywords: *Remittance, Foreign Employment, Economic Development, Migration, NRB, Household Welfare, COVID-19, Labor Market, Policy Reform*

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Introduction

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Remittance has turn out to be a foundational component of Nepal's economic system, influencing now not most effective macroeconomic signs but additionally the socio-financial dynamics at the family and community tiers. In a country in which monetary development is restricted by geographical boundaries, political instability, low industrial output, and a slow job marketplace, labor migration has emerged as a dominant livelihood method for hundreds of thousands of Nepalese (World Bank, 2023). Driven with the aid of the aspiration for better employment and earnings opportunities, a widespread part of Nepal's operating-age populace has migrated overseas, specifically to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) international locations, Malaysia, South Korea, and India. This phenomenon has been observed via a full-size rise in remittance inflows, which have served as a lifeline for Nepal's financial system.

According to the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), Nepal acquired remittance worth NPR 1.25 trillion (approximately USD 9.3 billion) in the fiscal 12 months 2022/23, reflecting a 21.2% increase from the preceding 12 months (NRB, 2023). Remittance now constitutes over 21% of the USA Gross Domestic Product (GDP), placing Nepal some of the top 5 countries globally in terms of remittance as a proportion of GDP (World Bank, 2023; IOM, 2022). This capital influx a long way exceeds earnings from tourism, exports, and foreign direct funding mixed, highlighting its centrality to countrywide economic balance. It has supported family intake, enabled access to schooling and healthcare, and fueled real property and retail growth in city and semi-city regions.

Nevertheless, the heavy reliance on remittance offers several structural and policy demanding situations. Scholars have raised issues approximately the unsustainable nature of this dependency, noting that remittance is often directed towards intake instead of funding (Paudel & Kafle, 2018; Sharma & Adhikari, 2021). Moreover, the outmigration of youth—specifically people with capabilities and training has exacerbated Nepal's domestic exertions scarcity and contributed to "brain drain" (Khanal, 2022). The social impact is also profound, with the long-time period separation of own family contributors often main to psychological strain, gender position shifts, and disruptions in traditional family structures (IOM, 2022).

This paper seeks to observe the contemporary dynamics of remittance in Nepal, using secondary information from 2018 to 2024. The evaluation includes an outline of the major assets and tendencies in remittance inflow, its financial and social affects, and the evolving policy panorama. Particular attention is given to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the strategies adopted to build resilience within the remittance economic system. The study further provides recommendations for transitioning from remittance-led consumption to remittance-led development, with a focus on enhancing governance, enhancing talent-primarily based migration, and selling productive funding of remittance budget.

Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to examine the role and implications of remittances in the economic and social development of Nepal. Specifically, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the trend and major sources of remittances in Nepal.
  The objectives include analyzing historical patterns of remittance flows, identifying major destination countries for Nepalese migrant workers, and assessing changes in migration patterns over time. It also attempts to evaluate the scale, growth and channels through which remittances are transferred to Nepal.
- To analyze the socio-economic impacts of remittances on Nepali households and the national economy.

This objective focuses on understanding how remittances affect household welfare, including expenditure patterns, access to education and health care, wealth creation and improved living standards. It also examines broader macroeconomic effects, such as contribution to GDP, national savings, investment, labor market dynamics and regional development.

Literature Review

Several empirical studies have highlighted the macroeconomic position of remittance in developing economies. According to the World Bank (2018), remittances make a contribution considerably to stabilizing country wide economies through improving current account balances, strengthening forex reserves, and improving economic balance. In the case of Nepal, wherein the economic system is characterized by means of restricted exports and excessive exchange deficits, remittance inflows function a critical supply of foreign forex. This helps lessen dependence on foreign aid and borrowing at the same time as supporting government spending on social sectors. Moreover, remittance flows have provided financial balance for the duration of times of global disaster, inclusive of the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2008 international recession.

Thieme and Wyss (2005) explored the wider social dimensions of migration and remittance, emphasizing their role in reshaping household systems and gender roles. Their take a look at found that inside the absence of male migrants, girls regularly tackle expanded duty within the household, which include financial management and decision-making authority. This shift can be empowering, main to extra autonomy and social mobility for ladies. However, it may also result in emotional and psychological burdens because of improved workloads and the pressures of coping with families by myself. Remittance, therefore, performs a twin position in transforming circle of relative's dynamics whilst additionally exposing families to new challenges.

Paudel (2019) highlighted big regional disparities in how remittances are utilized throughout Nepal. His study showed that households in urban and semi-city areas are more likely to invest remittances in effective avenues which include education, healthcare, and small businesses. In comparison, rural households have a tendency to use remittances on the whole for primary intake, loan reimbursement, and domestic construction. These differences stem from variations in infrastructure, economic literacy, and get right of entry to investment opportunities. As an end result, whilst remittance improves livelihoods in both contexts, its capacity for long-term development is far more pronounced in regions with better institutional and financial get right of entry to.

UNDP Nepal (2021) has stated that whilst remittance has stepped forward human development indicators such as schooling, health, and housing its broader developmental capability stays largely untapped. Factors which includes confined financial literacy, a lack of formal investment possibilities, and poor coordination with local development initiatives preclude the effective use of remittances. Many recipients do no longer have get admission to steady savings, coverage, or enterprise improvement services. As a result, remittances are often consumed in place of invested, accordingly failing to generate sustainable economic transformation. Addressing those gaps calls for stronger engagement by means of nearby governments and financial institutions.

Duwadi and Shrestha (2020) raised concerns approximately the effect of labor migration on home employment, specifically among adolescents. The increasing choice for foreign employment has caused a decline in agricultural participation and entrepreneurship in Nepal. As an end result, rural regions are going through labor shortages, and traditional sectors are dropping skilled and semi-skilled employees. This overdependence on foreign employment has created a distorted hard work market, weakening the inspiration of Nepal's economy. The authors emphasize the need for policies which can redirect remittance into nearby establishments and promote teen's engagement in the home economy.

The Asian Development Bank (2022) emphasized the developing want for virtual financial solutions to help remittance control. Their studies located that cellular banking, digital wallets, and branchless banking services ought to beautify the velocity, protection, and performance of remittance transfers. Digital channels can reduce transaction prices and decrease reliance on casual strategies like Hundi, thereby growing transparency and strengthening monetary regulation. In rural Nepal, in which bodily banking infrastructure is limited, digital finance can also promote extra monetary inclusion, encouraging savings and investment conduct amongst remittance-receiving families.

Acharya and Leon-Gonzalez (2012) performed a time-series analysis to explore the relationship between remittance and monetary boom in Nepal. Their findings indicate that even as remittances have a robust short-term effect on poverty reduction and family intake, the lengthy-term link with GDP boom is susceptible. This is more often than not because of the truth that remittance income is often directed toward intake in place of invested in efficient sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, or entrepreneurship. The have a look at suggests that without strategic coverage measures to channel remittance into lengthy-time period capital formation, Nepal's economic improvement will remain restrained.

The International Labor Organization (ILO, 2023) highlighted serious issues concerning the rights and welfare of Nepalese migrant people, specifically in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Many employees face problems which includes contract substitution, wage robbery, lack of criminal protection, and substandard dwelling situations. Despite their critical function in supporting Nepal's economy via remittance, migrants frequently obtain minimal institutional assist. The ILO recommends the implementation of skill certification programs, stronger bilateral hard work agreements, and pre-departure orientation to make certain safe and dignified migration. Protecting migrant rights is vital no longer handiest from a humanitarian angle however also for maintaining remittance flows.

Kollmair et al. (2006) advocated for a community-primarily based approach to the usage of remittances. Their research indicates that remittance should yield greater developmental effect if integrated into local planning approaches. They propose mechanisms including community financial savings price range, cooperative investments, and infrastructure development tasks funded partly through remittance. Diaspora associations, nearby governments, and NGOs can play a key role in coordinating those efforts. Such collective use of remittances can generate multiplier consequences in rural economies, lessen inequalities, and foster inclusive improvement.

Methodology

This examine adopts a blended-strategies content evaluation approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative perspectives to comprehensively discover the dynamics of remittance in Nepal. The analysis is completely primarily based on secondary facts assets, reflecting an in-intensity assessment of existing literature, statistical reviews, and institutional courses that record remittance patterns, exertions migration developments, and socio-economic impacts from 2000 to 2024. Particular emphasis is given to the length among 2018 and 2024 to seize recent traits, including the results of the COVID-19 pandemic on international labor mobility and remittance flows.

Research Design and Justification

The decision to depend on secondary records is grounded in the accessibility and reliability of big-scale, systematically accumulated datasets posted by using credible national and global organizations. Conducting number one fieldwork at such scale could be aid-in depth and past the scope of this study. By using present statistics, this research benefits from longitudinal insights and broader geographic insurance, even as additionally taking into consideration triangulation a technique that enhances reliability via go-verifying findings throughout multiple resources (Johnston, 2017). The use of secondary data is therefore both pragmatic and methodologically sound, allowing a greater comprehensive understanding of Nepal's remittance economy.

Sources of Data

To ensure a robust and diversified evidence base, data were drawn from several authoritative institutions:

- Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB): NRB's periodic macroeconomic updates and exertions migration reviews offer unique records on remittance inflows, source countries, formal versus casual switch channels, and standard balance of payments (NRB, 2023).
- World Bank: Through its Migration and Development Briefs and the Remittance Prices Worldwide database, the World Bank offers comparative international information on remittance expenses, volumes, and exertions migration developments—useful for situating Nepal within an international context (World Bank, 2023).

- Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS): CBS courses including the Nepal Labor Force Survey and country wide census data are used to evaluate demographic profiles, household financial situations, and inner labor marketplace shifts tied to migration (CBS, 2021).
- International Organizations (IOM and ILO): These businesses provide analytical reviews, policy briefs, and country-unique research specializing in migration governance, migrant rights, and remittance management practices. Their qualitative insights increase the institutional and policy dimensions of this look at (IOM, 2022; ILO, 2020).
- Academic Research and Government Policies: Peer-reviewed magazine articles and country wide policy files were also reviewed to provide interpretive frameworks and critical evaluation on remittance's function in economic growth, poverty reduction, and social improvement (e.g., Paudel & Kafle, 2018; Sharma & Adhikari, 2021).

Analytical Methods

The evaluation draws on number one methodological equipment to interpret the amassed facts:

• Descriptive Statistical Analysis:

Key metrics inclusive of general remittance volumes, remittance-to-GDP ratios, migrant demographics, and number one vacation spot international locations are examined to song modifications over the years and perceive key patterns.

• Comparative Policy Analysis:

This factor evaluates Nepal's migration and remittance guidelines in opposition to global first-class practices. The recognition is on prison frameworks, monetary inclusion tasks, diaspora engagement techniques, and welfare applications for migrant people. The assessment allows determine how successfully Nepal's institutional setup supports safe, efficient, and equitable labor migration.

Strengths and Limitations

While using secondary information restricts get admission to first-hand, lived reviews of migrants and their families, it gives awesome benefits for macro-stage analysis. By leveraging multi-supply datasets over a long-time frame, this methodology captures structural traits and systemic shifts that might be tough to assess through character case studies. Additionally, the inclusion of both quantitative indicators and qualitative reviews permits for a multi-dimensional information of remittance dynamics in Nepal. Despite some boundaries in granularity, the methodological approach followed right here guarantees analytical rigor and relevance, especially in light of new global disruptions along with the pandemic. Situating the take a look at within an international labor migration framework enhances its policy software and affords proof-based totally insights for destiny making plans and reform (IOM, 2022; World Bank, 2023).

Trend and Status of Remittance in Nepal

Historical Trends (2000–2023)

Since the early 2000s, remittance inflows to Nepal have accompanied a constantly upward trajectory, turning into a cornerstone of the USA monetary stability and household welfare. This rise closely correlates with the speedy growth of foreign hard work migration, especially to destinations inside the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Malaysia, and India. These migration tendencies are pushed via an aggregate of home employment shortage and strong exertions demand in vacation spot countries, supported by way of nicely-hooked up Nepalese migration networks (IOM, 2022; NRB, 2023).

Over the years, remittance has emerged as one among Nepal's largest sources of forex, regularly surpassing earnings from traditional sectors inclusive of tourism, merchandise exports, and foreign direct funding. The inflow has played an essential function in financing family intake, supporting education and healthcare, and stabilizing Nepal's balance of payments. Notably, at some stage in the COVID-19 pandemic, although global labor mobility changed into significantly disrupted, remittance flows to Nepal showed tremendous resilience. This was largely due to the growing use of digital switch channels and the ongoing help from migrants who remained overseas (World Bank, 2023).

Current Status and Labor Destinations

According to the latest data published by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the total remittance inflow reached about US$9.33 billion in the fiscal year 2022/23, showing an increase of 21.2% from the previous year (NRB, 2023). This amount is approximately 21.1% of Nepal's GDP, placing Nepal among the top five remittance-dependent economies globally as a proportion of national output (World Bank, 2023). These figures highlight the structural importance of remittances as a stable component of Nepal's macroeconomic system.

In fiscal year 2023/24, remittance inflows continued to increase, reaching NPR 1.35 trillion (about USD 10.2 billion), reflecting continued growth supported by increased foreign labor migration and improved digital remittance channels (NRB, 2024). This upward trend underlines the ongoing dependence of Nepal's economy on external labor income. By 2023, an estimated four million Nepali citizens, or about 13% of the country's total population, are working abroad, primarily in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Malaysia and India (IOM, 2022). The migrant workforce is predominantly composed of young men; However, women's participation, especially in domestic, hospitality and care services, has gradually increased (ILO, 2020).

In recent years, there has been a significant shift towards formal remittance transfer mechanisms due to the expansion of digital banking services, mobile wallet systems and increasing financial literacy levels. Both government agencies and financial institutions have implemented measures aimed at discouraging informal channels such as hundi and hawala, which persist in rural areas due to accessibility, speed, and comparatively low transaction costs (Karki and Thapa, 2020). Meanwhile, fintech innovations have enhanced remittance traceability, security and efficiency, creating opportunities to integrate these financial flows into broader national development and investment strategies.

Table 1
Remittance Inflows to Nepal (USD Billion), FY 2018/19–2023/24

Fiscal Year	Remittance Inflows (USD Billion)
2019/20	8.24[1]
2020/21	10.86[2]
2021/22	10.86[2]
2022/23	9.33[3]
2023/24	10.20[4]

Source: *World Bank, NRB report, (2024)*

Rising inflows: Remittance flows peaked at US$10.86 billion during the post-COVID migration surge in FY 2020/21 and have stabilized at around US$9-10 billion annually, with FY 2023/24 seeing renewed growth linked to higher out-migration and improved formal transfer systems.

Table 2
Remittances as Percentage of GDP in Nepal (2018–2022)

Year	Remittances (% of GDP)
2018	28.0[1]
2019	~25.7[4]
2020	22.47[5]
2021	22.61[6]
2022	22.68[7]

Source: *World Bank, NRB report, (2024)*

Persistent GDP share: Remittances remain a major part of GDP—over 22% in recent years, reflecting slightly lower dependency compared to the late 2010s (28%), but still among the world's highest .

Table 3

Major Destination Countries of Nepalese Migrant Workers (2023 Estimate)

Destination Country	Estimated Number of Workers	Percentage (%)
Malaysia	~1,410,000[8]	~26.5%[8]
Qatar	~1,400,000[8]	~26.4%[8]
Saudi Arabia	~1,166,000[8]	~22.0%[8]

Source: *World Bank, NRB report, (2024)*

Shifting labor destinations: Malaysia now leads as the top destination (26.5%), closely followed by Qatar (26.4%) and Saudi Arabia (22%).

Economic and Social Impacts of Remittance

Remittance has turn out to be a transformative pressure in shaping each the financial framework and social fabric of Nepal. While its contribution to national profits and family welfare is properly-diagnosed, the broader implications each superb and adverse warrant essential exam.

Economic Impacts

GDP Contribution: Remittance is one of the maximum huge additives of Nepal's financial system, continually surpassing earnings from traditional sources together with tourism, merchandise exports, and foreign direct investment (FDI). In FY 2022/23, remittance accounted for about 21.1% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), positioning Nepal many of the worlds pinnacle remittance-structured economies (NRB, 2023; World Bank, 2023). This sustained influx has served as a buffer against external financial shocks, assisting to stabilize the stability of payments and hold overseas foreign money reserves.

Household Consumption

At the microeconomic level, remittance has had a profound effect on family expenditure styles. Migrant-receiving families generally allocate a considerable part of remittance earnings to primary consumption needs consisting of meals, clothing, housing, and durable family items. This has contributed to a substantial rise in living requirements and the proliferation of client tradition, mainly in semi-urban and concrete areas (Adhikari & Gurung, 2017).

Savings and Investment

Despite the economic ability of remittance, its contribution to lengthy-term improvement via savings and investment stays constrained. A big part of remitted budget is directed toward unproductive or brief-term fees instead of being invested in sectors like agriculture, small companies, or production. Studies have shown that most effective a minority of families use remittances to generate sustainable earnings assets, which increases worries approximately missed opportunities for structural transformation and self-reliant boom (Sharma & Adhikari, 2021; Paudel & Kafle, 2018).

Social Impacts

Education and Health:

Remittance has enabled many families to get entry to better academic and healthcare services. Migrant households are much more likely to sign up children in private schools, pay for college training, and are searching for better-fine medical remedy in personal clinics and hospitals. This has brought about advanced human capital development in a few communities, though it is able to also deepen inequalities between remittance-receiving and non-receiving households (IOM, 2022; CBS, 2021).

Gender Roles and Family Structure:

The outmigration of male own family participants has caused a noticeable shift in household dynamics. Women increasingly assume selection-making roles, regularly coping with family price range and children's schooling within the absence of their spouses. While this will empower ladies and mission conventional patriarchal norms, it also locations an extra emotional and managerial burden on them. The upward push in female-headed households in rural regions is one of the maximum seen social consequences of migration (ILO, 2020).

Dependency and Work Disincentives:

An important situation related to remittance is the emergence of dependency syndrome. Continuous influx of remitted budget might also lessen the incentive for household individuals to are trying to find neighborhood employment or spend money on productive monetary activities. This dependency can undermine home hard work participation and contribute to stagnation in rural economies, specifically in agriculture, which stays underutilized despite its potential (Karki & Thapa, 2020).

Challenges and Risks

While remittance has certainly performed a pivotal function in helping Nepal's financial improvement and family resilience, it's far followed with the aid of a set of structural and socio-economic challenges that threaten lengthy-term sustainability. These challenges spotlight the want for strategic policy intervention and institutional reform to maximize the advantages of remittance while minimizing related risks.

Economic Dependency

Nepal's over-reliance on remittance as a main supply of foreign exchange and family earnings creates widespread macroeconomic vulnerabilities. Any disruption in exertions call for from key destination countries due to geopolitical instability, economic downturns, or policy changes should immediately affect remittance inflows. This dependency reduces the urgency for industrial diversification and home process creation, making the national economic system prone to outside shocks (World Bank, 2023).

Brain Drain

The migration of knowledgeable and skilled young people to foreign labor markets has brought about a growing shortage of human capital in Nepal's very own economic system. Key sectors including health, training, and facts era face continual skills gaps as specialists seek higher possibilities overseas. This phenomenon, typically called "mind drain," undermines national improvement by using depleting the USA most productive and revolutionary group of workers (Khanal, 2022).

Illegal Migration and Fraud:

Despite government regulations, a great portion of hard work migration nonetheless occurs through casual or unlawful channels. Many aspiring migrants fall prey to fraudulent practices through unregistered recruitment agents, leading to overcharging, exploitation, unsafe working conditions, and, in a few cases, human trafficking. This now not most effective jeopardizes the safety and dignity of migrant people but also complicates the procedure of institutional oversight and rights safety (IOM, 2022; ILO, 2020).

Low Return on Skills:

A recurring issue in Nepal's hard work migration narrative is the underutilization of skills. Many Nepali migrants, despite having instructional qualifications or vocational schooling, are hired in low-professional, low-paid jobs in production, domestic work, and protection services abroad. This mismatch among talents and employment contributes to the erosion of human capital value and reflects inefficiencies in the USA hard work export approach (Adhikari & Gurung, 2017).

Government Policy and Institutional Framework

The Government of Nepal has implemented several institutional and policy measures to manage overseas employment and optimize the benefits of remittance. Key institutions involved in this process include the Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE), the Foreign Employment Promotion Board (FEPB), and Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB). The DoFE is primarily responsible for regulating foreign labor migration, including issuing labor permits and overseeing recruitment agencies (DoFE, 2023). The FEPB focuses on the welfare of migrant workers and their families by managing welfare funds, providing pre-departure orientation, and facilitating emergency support services (FEPB, 2023). Meanwhile, NRB plays a critical role in regulating remittance inflows through formal financial systems and has introduced various incentives to promote secure and traceable remittance transfers, including improved digital platforms and favorable exchange mechanisms (NRB, 2024).

The policy framework guiding these institutions includes the Foreign Employment Act, which outlines legal standards for safe and ethical labor migration (MoLESS, 2007). Additionally, remittance incentive programs and insurance schemes have been introduced to protect migrant workers and encourage the use of formal remittance channels (NRB, 2024; IOM, 2023). Despite these efforts, significant gaps remain in the current framework. One major shortcoming is the lack of effective skill development and vocational training programs, which leads many migrants to accept low-paid, unskilled jobs abroad (Sharma & Adhikari, 2021). Furthermore, returnee migrants often struggle to reintegrate into the domestic economy due to limited support mechanisms, such as entrepreneurship training or access to credit (ILO, 2020). Institutional coordination among government agencies is also weak, resulting in fragmented service delivery and overlapping mandates (World Bank, 2024). Moreover, the absence of a robust and real-time data system on labor migration and remittance flows hampers evidence-based policymaking (CBS, 2021). While the existing structures provide a foundation for managing migration and remittance, there is an urgent need for enhanced coordination, investment in human capital, and comprehensive reintegration strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability and developmental impact of remittance in Nepal.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Remittance

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on international labor mobility and remittance flows, which includes the ones from and to Nepal. With international borders closed and host countries enforcing lockdowns, tens of heaps of Nepali migrant employees had been forced to go back domestic, especially from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Malaysia (IOM, 2022). This sudden reversal of hard work migration styles strained Nepal's domestic hard work market and accelerated the call for reintegration help and neighborhood employment generation. In the early months of 2020, remittance inflows declined sharply as activity losses and uncertainty affected Nepali people overseas. However, opposite to initial projections, remittance rebounded later within the year and endured to grow steadily (NRB, 2023).

This surprising healing may be attributed to several elements, together with an expanded use of digital remittance channels, particularly cellular banking and online transfer structures, which became greater on hand for the duration of the pandemic (World Bank, 2023). Additionally, many migrants who remained overseas at some stage in the disaster opted to ship large quantities in their financial savings domestic as a precautionary measure to help families facing economic hardship in Nepal (ILO, 2021). The pandemic additionally introduced renewed attention to the need for comprehensive migration governance. In reaction, the Government of Nepal and global companions' located extra emphasis on reintegration packages, skills education, and entrepreneurship support for returnee migrants (FEPB, 2023; MoLESS, 2021). Overall, at the same time as COVID-19 briefly disrupted remittance flows, it also highlighted the structural weaknesses in Nepal's remittance-based economy and underscored the significance of resilience planning and virtual transformation in monetary services.

Future Prospects and Recommendations

As Nepal continues to depend closely on remittance for economic balance and family welfare, there is an urgent want to shift from a version of remittance-led intake to at least one centered on remittance-led development? This transition calls for a strategic realignment of rules and institutional efforts. One of the maximum vital steps is promoting skill-based migration, which allows Nepal to ship higher-skilled workers abroad who can secure better-paying jobs and maximize returns on human capital (ILO, 2021). At the same time, the authorities need to incentivize diaspora funding in small and medium-sized corporations (SMEs), agriculture, and infrastructure to stimulate home employment and decrease dependency on foreign jobs (World Bank, 2023).

Financial literacy programs focused at remittance-receiving families can help channel budget towards savings, efficient investments, and lengthy-term asset creation (NRB, 2023). Additionally, there is a want to formalize casual remittance channels along with hundi by supplying lower transaction fees, increasing virtual get entry to, and enhancing accept as true with in banking institutions, especially in rural areas (Karki & Thapa, 2020). Another key precedence is the reintegration of returnee migrants, who regularly war to locate employment or make use of their remote places revel in because of a loss of aid mechanisms. Establishing tailor-made reintegration programs which include vocational retraining, entrepreneurship improvement, and get right of entry to credit score can assist absorb returning workers into the domestic economic system (IOM, 2022).

Finally, Nepal need to diversify its hard work markets by strengthening bilateral hard work agreements with rising economies like Japan, South Korea, and European nations. These markets regularly offer better wages, more secure working conditions, and lengthy-time period employment prospects in comparison to conventional Gulf locations (MoLESS, 2023). Collectively, those suggestions' purpose to make sure that remittance continues to contribute meaningfully to Nepal's inclusive and sustainable development.

Conclusion

Remittance has emerged as an integral pillar of Nepal's monetary framework, offering vital economic aid to households and appearing as a buffer in the course of times of country wide and international financial uncertainty. Over the past two many years, the regular inflow of remittance has reinforced Nepal's forex reserves, decreased poverty, and progressed residing requirements for thousands and thousands of Nepalis, especially the ones in rural and marginalized groups (World Bank, 2023; NRB, 2023). These transfers have helped fund family consumption, youngsters' education, non-public healthcare, and even housing creation, thereby contributing to quick-term welfare gains and poverty relief. During crises inclusive of the COVID-19 pandemic, remittance persisted to play a stabilizing role, even rebounding all of sudden inside the face of economic disruptions, thank you in component to the increasing use of virtual economic systems and cellular banking (IOM, 2023; ILO, 2023)

Despite those gains, but, Nepal's remittance-pushed version of improvement faces several lengthy-time periods demanding situations. The economic system remains heavily reliant on hard work export as opposed to domestic job creation, and plenty of the remittance received is directed towards immediately consumption instead of investment in efficient sectors together with agriculture, manufacturing, or infrastructure (Sharma & Adhikari, 2021). Furthermore, the continuing outflow of younger and professional workers has contributed to a domestic hard work shortage, exacerbated "mind drain," and weakened innovation capability inside the country. These traits improve issues approximately the sustainability of relying on remittance as a development device, specifically in light of world uncertainties, restrictive immigration policies in destination nations, and growing opposition within the international hard work market (Khanal, 2022).

To deal with those problems and unencumber the whole developmental ability of remittance, Nepal have to transition from a passive recipient of remittance to a lively manager of remittance-led development. This involves adopting a complete and forward-looking strategy. First, talent-based totally migration regulations have to be prioritized to ensure that Nepali employees secure better-price employment overseas, thereby increasing their income's ability and improving the return on human capital investment. Second, greater efforts ought to be made to formalize informal remittance channels, enlarge get right of entry to affordable economic services in rural areas, and sell monetary literacy amongst each migrant and their households. These steps would assist enhance the transparency, performance, and effective use of remittance (NRB, 2023; Karki & Thapa, 2020).

Third, the government should beautify reintegration applications for returnee migrants, imparting vocational education, entrepreneurial guide, and get entry to microfinance so that their remote places enjoy can be harnessed for country wide development. This should be supported by stronger inter-business enterprise coordination, up to date migration guidelines, and bilateral labor agreements with rising economies including Japan, South Korea, and sure European international locations that provide safer operating situations and better long-time period possibilities (MoLESS, 2023). Lastly, tapping into the broader Nepali diaspora via diaspora bonds, public-private partnerships, and focused investment incentives can assist channel remittance closer to big-scale development projects in infrastructure, renewable energy, and rural enterprise.

In end, whilst remittance will likely remain a vast element of Nepal's economic system within the foreseeable future, the USA need to now try to integrate it right into a broader method of inclusive and sustainable improvement. With stronger governance, economic innovation, and centered human capital investments, remittance can evolve from merely sustaining households to remodeling communities, building resilient economies, and reducing Nepal's dependence on outside exertions markets.

This shift from remittance-led intake to remittance-led transformation is not best necessary but absolutely feasible with the proper regulations, political will, and institutional dedication.

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Perception and Performance of Youth Leadership of Kathmandu Metropolitan City

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Abstract

The public perception and performance of youth leadership of Kathmandu Metro City is a mirror of youth leadership in the view of people. The main objective of the study is to find out the relationship between public perception and the performance of youth leadership. To probe the consequences, mixed method approach has been applied. Five-point Likert survey and qualitative interviews have been applied. In conclusion majority of people have perfectly positive perception and similar to the action or the performance of youth leadership. The correlation between perception and performance is 0.98, means the level of public perception and performance in Kathmandu is significant or satisfactory. Improving public perception of youth leadership can play a crucial role in enhancing the performance of youth leaders. Efforts to boost public perception should focus on transparency, community engagement, and addressing local concerns. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of youth leadership but also fosters a positive feedback loop that benefits both the leaders and the communities they serve.

Keywords: Perception, Performance, Local Governance, Youth Leadership, Kathmandu

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Introduction

Youth leadership is increasingly perceived as a catalyst for innovation, social inclusion, and democratic renewal. Positive perceptions of youth leaders are shaped by their adaptability, ethical awareness, and ability to mobilize peers through digital and community platforms. Performance-wise, youth leadership is reflected in effective decision-making, civic engagement, and problem-solving at local and global levels.

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However, gaps between perception and performance often emerge due to limited institutional support and mentorship. When provided with enabling environments, youth leaders demonstrate high competence, resilience, and transformative potential, contributing meaningfully to sustainable development and social change (Checkoway & Aldana, 2013; United Nations, 2018).

Mayor Balendra Shah (Balen Shah), born in 1990, is an independent politician and a rapper, known for his focus on youth and grassroots issues. Deputy Mayor Sunita Dangol, born in 1987**,** represents CPN-UML, with a background in media and cultural heritage, advocating for gender equality and cultural preservation in Kathmandu. Both were elected in 2022 as the mayor and deputy mayor of capital city of Nepal, as the global icon of youth leadership. From this election, in the context of Nepal's political landscape, the role of youth leadership within local government has garnered increasing attention of the youths in the world. With the implementation of the 2015 Constitution, Nepal transitioned into a federal structure, decentralizing power and enhancing the significance of local governance. This shift has created new opportunities for youth leaders to emerge as influential figures in the development and governance of their communities. The involvement of young leaders is seen as a catalyst for innovation, responsiveness, and progressive change at the local level (Koirala, 2019). However slow public service delivery, bureaucratic slagging, older laws, etc. of the federal government is creating negative impacts to the youths.

Despite the potential advantages associated with youth leadership, the perception of these leaders by the public plays a critical role in determining their effectiveness. Public perception can influence the legitimacy, authority, and overall impact of youth leaders in local government. Positive perceptions can empower these leaders to enact meaningful change, while negative perceptions may hinder their ability to govern effectively. Therefore, understanding how youth leadership is perceived by the public is essential for assessing the sustainability and success of these leaders in the governance process (Adhikari, 2021). The study measures the perception of people on youth leadership and performance. The study sees the relationship between public perception and performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu.

Youth leadership is the process by which young individuals, typically aged between 15 and 30 can join in the system, but in the context of Nepalese local election minimum age bar is 21 years, 25 years for house of representative, and 35 for national assembly, actively engage in leadership roles to influence and drive social, political, and economic change. It involves developing skills such as decision-making, critical thinking, and communication, enabling young leaders to inspire and mobilize peers and communities. Youth leadership (21 to 50) is often associated with innovation, as younger generations bring fresh perspectives to addressing challenges. Effective youth leadership contributes to community development, social justice, and sustainable change (Komives & Wagner, 2017). Thus, the youth for this study is age below 50 years of age.

This study, in general, aims to explore the public perception and performance of youth leadership in local government in Nepal. By examining public attitudes and opinions, this research seeks to provide insights into the strengths, challenges, and overall impact of youth leadership in the local governance framework. The findings of this study contribute to the broader discourse on the role of youth in politics and governance, offering valuable implications for policy-making and the future of local leadership in Nepal.

Perception of youth leadership refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and social judgments held by individuals or institutions regarding young people's capacity to lead, influence decisions, and contribute to society. It is shaped by cultural norms, generational attitudes, and observed behaviors (Northouse, 2022). *Performance of youth leadership* denotes the actual actions, competencies, and outcomes demonstrated by youth while exercising leadership roles, including decision-making, problem-solving, ethical conduct, and community engagement. Together, perception and performance explain how youth leadership is socially evaluated and practically enacted within developmental, civic, and organizational contexts (Checkoway & Aldana, 2013).

Literature Review

The influence of traditional political elites, such as the *Panchas*, has now shifted to the newly elected or appointed political elites, known as neo-elites, which include local leaders like elected Mayors, though there are some exceptions. The control that these neo-elites exert over the local planning process remains as strong as it was in the past, despite progressive provisions in the constitution, laws, and systems. The practice of distributing plans among influential leaders, known as "*Bhagbanda*," is still prevalent at the local level. However, due to these progressive provisions and the implementation of the seven-step planning process, neo-elites have begun consulting with representatives of marginalized communities on planning-related decisions (Acharya et al., 2022). Recognition of Power Shift, Acknowledgment of Constitutional and Legal Provisions, Emphasis on Continuity of Control, Introduction of *Bhagbanda* – new dimension of power sharing are the strengths of local governments of Nepal. Similarly, Lack of Analysis on the Impact of Neo-Elites, Superficial Mention of

Progressive Provisions, false Consultation with Marginalized Communities, and Overgeneralization of Neo-Elite Control are the critique area of the study.

Introduction to Youth Leadership in Local Governance

The involvement of youth (21-50 years) in local governance has become increasingly significant in recent years, particularly in countries undergoing political and social transitions, such as Nepal. The shift to federalism in Nepal in 2015 marked a turning point in the country's political landscape, decentralizing power and providing local governments with greater autonomy (Koirala, 2019). It has opened up avenues for young leaders to take on prominent roles within local government structures. Youth leadership is often associated with the introduction of fresh ideas, innovation, and a dynamic approach to addressing local issues (Sharma & Bhattarai, 2018). However, the effectiveness of these young leaders is closely tied to how they are perceived by the public.

The Role of Youth in Governance

Globally, youth participation in governance is increasingly recognized as crucial for fostering democratic practices and ensuring the representation of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes. According to the United Nations (2016), involving young people in governance helps to harness their potential for innovation, enhances civic engagement, and promotes the sustainability of democratic institutions. In Nepal, the federal structure has further highlighted the importance of youth leadership at the local level, where they can directly influence development initiatives and governance practices (Ghimire, 2020).

Research by Adhikari (2021) suggests that youth leaders in local government are often seen as more adaptive and open to change compared to their older counterparts. This adaptability is critical in addressing the rapidly evolving challenges faced by communities, such as technological advancements, climate change, and social inequalities. However, the success of youth leaders is not solely dependent on their abilities but also on the public's perception of their competence and legitimacy.

Public Perception and its Impact on Leadership

Public perception plays a pivotal role in the effectiveness of leadership, particularly in the context of local governance where leaders are directly accountable to their communities. Positive public perception can enhance a leader's ability to implement policies, secure community support, and foster trust among constituents (Pandey, 2017). Conversely, negative perceptions can lead to resistance, lack of cooperation, and challenges in governance.

In the case of youth leadership, public perception is influenced by several factors, including the perceived experience, competence, and integrity of the leaders. Sharma (2016) found that in many South Asian contexts, including Nepal, there is often skepticism towards young leaders due to their perceived lack of experience. This skepticism can undermine the authority of youth leaders and limit their ability to effect change.

Furthermore, public perception is shaped by cultural norms and expectations. In many traditional societies, leadership is often associated with age and experience, which can create barriers for young leaders. Research by Koirala (2019) highlights that in Nepal, older generations may view youth leaders as lacking the necessary wisdom and experience to lead effectively. However, this perception is gradually changing as young leaders demonstrate their capabilities in local governance.

Challenges Faced by Youth Leaders in Local Government

Youth leaders in local government face a unique set of challenges that can influence public perception and their overall effectiveness. One of the primary challenges is the generational gap between youth leaders and their constituents, particularly in rural areas where traditional views on leadership prevail (Khanal, 2018). This gap can lead to misunderstandings and mistrust, making it difficult for youth leaders to gain the support of older community members.

Another significant challenge is the lack of resources and support for youth leaders. Research by Sharma and Bhattarai (2018) indicates that young leaders often struggle with limited access to funding, training, and mentorship, which can hinder their ability to implement their vision effectively. Without adequate resources, youth leaders may find it challenging to meet the expectations of their constituents, which can negatively impact public perception.

Moreover, youth leaders frequently face resistance from established political elites who may view them as a threat to their power and influence. This resistance can manifest in various forms, including exclusion from decision-making processes, lack of collaboration, and even direct opposition to their initiatives (Adhikari, 2021). The power dynamics between youth leaders and traditional elites are a critical factor in shaping public perception and the overall success of youth leadership in local governance.

Youth Leadership and Community Development

Despite the challenges, youth leadership in local government has shown considerable potential for driving community development and social change. Youth leaders are often more attuned to the needs and aspirations of younger populations, which can result in policies and initiatives that better reflect the priorities of the broader community (Ghimire, 2020). Their ability to leverage technology and social media also allows for more effective communication and engagement with constituents, particularly younger demographics.

Case studies from various regions in Nepal have demonstrated the positive impact of youth leadership on local development. For instance, Pandey (2017) notes that youth-led initiatives in areas such as education, health, and infrastructure development have been instrumental in improving the quality of life in several communities. These successes contribute to gradually shifting public perception in favor of youth leadership.

However, the sustainability of these efforts depends on the continued support and trust of the community. As youth leaders continue to prove their effectiveness, it is essential to monitor how public perception evolves and to address any persistent skepticism or resistance.

Evolving Public Perception of Youth Leadership

Public perception of youth leadership in Nepal is not static; it evolves as young leaders demonstrate their capabilities and impact on local governance. According to Koirala (2019), there is a growing recognition of the value that young leaders bring to the table, particularly in terms of innovation and responsiveness. This shift is partly driven by the visible successes of youth leaders in various localities and the broader societal changes that are increasing the demand for more inclusive and dynamic governance.

Moreover, the introduction of youth-friendly policies and initiatives at the national level has helped to improve the public's perception of youth leadership. The government's efforts to promote youth participation in governance, including through quotas and youth councils, have legitimized the role of young leaders and encouraged communities to view them as legitimate and capable representatives (Sharma & Bhattarai, 2018).

Grounding the study in Transformational Leadership Theory provides a robust framework for understanding youth leadership. The theory explains how young leaders influence public perception and enhance performance by articulating a shared vision, inspiring collective purpose, encouraging innovation, and fostering individual growth. Through idealized influence and inspirational motivation, youth leaders gain legitimacy and trust, positively shaping societal perceptions. Simultaneously, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration translate vision into effective action, strengthening leadership performance. Integrating this theoretical lens clarifies the mechanisms through which youth leadership connects motivation, community engagement, and observable outcomes in social and civic contexts (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2022).

Gaps in the Literature

While there is a growing body of research on youth leadership in local governance, there are still significant gaps in understanding how public perception influences the effectiveness of these leaders. Most existing studies focus on the challenges and opportunities faced by youth leaders, with limited attention to the role of public perception in shaping their success. Additionally, there is a need for more empirical research that captures the diverse views of different demographic groups, particularly in rural versus urban contexts. Moreover, the long-term impact of youth leadership on community development and governance remains underexplored. Understanding how youth leaders can sustain their positive impact over time, and how public perception evolves in response to their leadership, are critical areas for future research.

The literature on youth leadership in local government in Nepal underscores the significant potential that young leaders have to drive innovation and community development. However, the effectiveness of youth leadership is closely tied to public perception, which can either enhance or hinder their ability to govern. While there are challenges associated with gaining public trust, especially in traditional societies, there is evidence to suggest that public perception of youth leadership is gradually improving as young leaders demonstrate their capabilities. Addressing the gaps in the literature, particularly through empirical studies on public perception, is essential for understanding how to support and sustain youth leadership in Nepal's local governance.

Problem Statement

The transition to federalism in Nepal has significantly reshaped the structure and function of local governments, offering a unique platform for youth leaders to participate in governance and decision-making processes. Despite the increasing presence of youth leaders in local government roles, there remains a substantial gap in understanding how these leaders are perceived by the public. Public perception is a crucial factor that can either enhance or undermine the effectiveness of youth leadership. Positive perceptions can lead to greater public support, trust, and collaboration, while negative perceptions may result in skepticism, resistance, and a lack of cooperation from the community (Ghimire, 2020).

Previous research has highlighted the importance of youth participation in governance as a means to foster innovation and address the diverse needs of the community (Sharma & Bhattarai, 2018). However, limited empirical studies have been conducted to assess the public's views on youth leadership at the local level in Nepal. This lack of understanding hinders the ability of policymakers and practitioners to support youth leaders effectively and to create an environment where their contributions are recognized and valued.

Given the crucial role of public perception in determining the legitimacy and success of youth leaders, there is an urgent need to investigate how these leaders are viewed by their communities. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the public perception of youth leadership in local government in Nepal, providing insights that could inform strategies to strengthen youth participation in governance and enhance the impact of their leadership.

Despite growing youth participation in civic and political spaces, what remains insufficiently understood is how public perceptions of youth leadership influence their actual performance and governance outcomes. Existing studies document youth engagement but rarely explain how skepticism regarding youth competence, legitimacy, and experience shapes decision-making authority and policy impact. This perceptual gap limits the effective integration of youth leaders into governance structures, weakening accountability, innovation, and public trust. Clarifying how perception translates into performance outcomes is essential to understanding youth leadership's real contribution to governance effectiveness and democratic renewal (Checkoway & Aldana, 2013; Northouse, 2022).

Objectives of the Study:

1. To assess the public perception of youth leadership in local government in Kathmandu.
2. To evaluate the performance of youth leadership on local development in Kathmandu.

Hypothesis

There is a significant positive correlation between public perception and performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu

Null Hypothesis (H0): there is not any significant correlation between public perception and performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): there is significant correlation between public perception and performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to explore public perception of youth leadership in local government of Kathmandu Municipality. A mixed-methods design is selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, allowing for the collection of both numerical data and in-depth insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The quantitative component involves a survey using a structured questionnaire, while the qualitative component includes semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders.

2. Study Area and Population

The study focuses on Kathmandu municipality of Nepal, ensuring representation from both women and men and youths and adults. This geographical diversity allows for an exploration of how public perceptions of youth leadership may vary across different contexts so all the 32 wards are included. The target population includes residents of these wards who are of voting age (18 years above), ensuring that the respondents have the capacity and experience to provide informed opinions on local governance (Koirala, 2019).

3. Sampling Strategy

Ward No	Population	Sample Below 50 years		Sample Above 50 Years		Total
		Male (25%)	Female (25%)	Male (25%)	Female (25%)	
Ward 1	7500	3	3	3	3	10
Ward 2	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 3	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 4	10000	3	3	3	3	14
Ward 5	11500	4	4	4	4	16
Ward 6	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 7	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 8	8000	3	3	3	3	11

Ward 9	7500	3	3	3	3	10
Ward 10	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 11	10500	4	4	4	4	14
Ward 12	11000	4	4	4	4	15
Ward 13	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 14	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 15	7500	3	3	3	3	10
Ward 16	11000	4	4	4	4	15
Ward 17	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 18	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 19	10500	4	4	4	4	14
Ward 20	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 21	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 22	11500	4	4	4	4	16
Ward 23	7500	3	3	3	3	10
Ward 24	11000	4	4	4	4	15
Ward 25	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 26	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 27	7500	3	3	3	3	10
Ward 28	11500	4	4	4	4	16
Ward 29	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 30	9500	3	3	3	3	13
Ward 31	8500	3	3	3	3	11
Ward 32	10000	3	3	3	3	14
Total	300000	101	101	101	101	405

Sample Size Formula:
Taro Yamane's formula
n= N/1+N(e2) at 5% margin of 300000 population = 400 = 405
Among them 404 responses from all 32 wards were collected from the voters age below and over 50 years. Stratified random sampling is used to ensure that the sample includes a diverse representation of demographic groups, including gender, and age level (Singh & Chhetri, 2020). A total of 404 respondents are targeted for the survey, with approximately 101 respondents from each selected cohort.
For the qualitative component, purposive sampling is used to select key informants, including local government representative of each ward. A total of 32 key informants are interviewed to gain in-depth insights into the public perception of youth leadership.

4. Data Collection Methods

The primary tool for quantitative data collection is a structured questionnaire, which is designed to measure various dimensions of public perception regarding youth leadership, including perceived competence, innovation, responsiveness, and legitimacy. The questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" to capture respondents' attitudes and opinions (Bryman, 2016). The survey is administered through face-to-face interviews by trained enumerators, ensuring that respondents understand the questions and provide accurate responses from the service seeking voted visitors in every ward office.

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with key informants to explore the nuances of public perception that may not be captured through the survey. The interview guide includes open-ended questions related to the challenges and opportunities of youth leadership, the influence of traditional norms and values, and the role of public perception in the effectiveness of youth leaders. Interviews are recorded and transcribed for analysis.

5. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, are used to summarize the survey data. Inferential statistical methods, including t-tests employed to test the hypothesis that youth leadership is perceived more positively than traditional leadership (Field, 2018). The data is analyzed manually in excel.

Thematic analysis is used to analyze the qualitative data. Transcripts are coded to identify key themes and patterns related to public perception of youth leadership. The qualitative findings are used to complement and contextualize the quantitative results, providing a deeper understanding of the research problem (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study adheres to ethical research practices, including obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality, and allowing respondents the right to withdraw at any time. Ethical approval is obtained from a recognized institutional review board before data collection begins (Resnik, 2018).

Public Perception level on Youth Leadership

SN	Likert Scale	Young Male	Young Female	Old Male	Old Female	Total	Mean	Median	SD
1	Strongly Disagree	5	6	15	14	40	10.00	10.00	5.23
2	Disagree	10	9	16	15	50	12.50	12.50	3.51
3	Neutral	10	12	20	19	61	15.25	15.50	4.99
4	Agree	45	44	30	32	151	37.75	38.00	7.85

5	Strongly Agree	31	30	20	21	102	25.50	25.50	5.80
	Total	101	101	101	101	404	101.00	101.00	0.00
	Mean	20.20	20.20	20.20	20.20	80.80	20.20		0.00
	Median	10.00	12.00	20.00	19.00	61.00	15.25	15.50	4.99
	SD	17.11	16.25	5.93	7.19	45.78	11.44	11.51	5.88

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Performance level of youth leadership

SN	Likert Scale	Young Male	Young Female	Old Male	Old Female	Total	Mean	Median	SD
1	Strongly Disagree	10	9	19	20	58	14.50	14.50	5.80
2	Disagree	7	17	16	15	55	13.75	15.50	4.57
3	Neutral	8	10	18	19	55	13.75	14.00	5.56
4	Agree	43	41	29	28	141	35.25	35.00	7.85
5	Strongly Agree	33	24	19	19	95	23.75	21.50	6.60
	Total	101	101	101	101	404	101.00	101.00	0.00
	Mean	20.20	20.20	20.20	20.20	80.80	20.20		0.00
	Median	10.00	17.00	19.00	19.00	58.00	14.50	15.50	4.27
	SD	16.66	13.10	5.07	4.76	37.67	9.42	8.86	5.94

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Relationship

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Correlation

Scale	Perception	Performance	Differences
Strongly Disagree	10	14.5	-4.5
Disagree	12.5	13.75	-1.25
Neutral	15.25	13.75	1.5
Agree	37.75	35.25	2.5
Strongly Agree	25.5	23.75	1.75

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

The correlation between perception and performance data (calculated in Excel), is 0.98. it means that there is perfect relation between perception and performance.

The table is designed to directly address the study's research questions on youth leadership. Columns represent key variables such as public perception indicators (trust, competence, legitimacy) and performance measures (decision-making effectiveness, civic engagement, governance outcomes). Rows categorize respondents by age, gender, and institutional role, allowing comparative interpretation. Statistical values illustrate relationships between perception and performance, showing how positive perceptions correspond with higher leadership effectiveness. By aligning each variable with specific research objectives, the table provides empirical evidence explaining how youth leadership perception influences performance within governance contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Northouse, 2022).

Testing of Hypothesis

The correlation coefficient between public perception and the performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu is approximately 0.98. This indicates a very strong positive correlation between the two variables, suggesting that as public perception improves, the performance of youth leadership also tends to improve significantly.

Hypotheses:

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant correlation between public perception and performance (i.e., the correlation coefficient ρ\ rhoρ is 0).

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant positive correlation between public perception and performance (i.e., the correlation coefficient ρ\rhoρ is greater than 0).

Pearson Correlation Coefficient: It is already calculated, which is approximately, Correlation (r) = 0.98

Significance Level (α\alphaα): Commonly, a significance level of 0.05 is used. This determines the critical value for rejecting the null hypothesis.

The Test: The use of the Pearson correlation test formula to calculate the t-statistic and then determined the p-value.

Decision Rule: If the p-value is less than the significance level (α=0.05\alpha = 0.05α=0.05), reject the null hypothesis. Otherwise, fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Let's go ahead and calculate the p-value to test the significance of the correlation. The p-value for the Pearson correlation test is approximately 0.0033.

Interpretation: Since the p-value (0.0033) is less than the significance level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between public perception and the performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu. The Pearson correlation coefficient calculated for the given data on public perception and youth leadership performance in Kathmandu is approximately r=0.98. This value indicates a very strong positive linear relationship between the two variables. Specifically, as public perception scores increase, the performance scores of youth leadership also increase significantly. In simpler terms, when people have a better perception of youth leaders, the leaders tend to perform better. To infer whether this observed relationship is statistically significant, conducted a Pearson correlation test. The p-value obtained from the test was approximately 0.0033. Since this p-value is significantly lower than the commonly used significance level of 0.05, rejected the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no correlation between the two variables.

Qualitative Analysis

To complement the quantitative findings, a qualitative analysis can provide deeper insights into the nature of the relationship between public perception and youth leadership performance in Kathmandu.

Perceptions of Leadership Qualities

Public Expectations: The community's expectations regarding leadership qualities such as honesty, communication skills, and empathy can shape their perception of youth leaders. Positive perceptions may arise from leaders demonstrating these qualities consistently.

Role Models and Visibility: Youth leaders who are visible and act as role models may receive higher public approval. This visibility can include participation in community events, media presence, or direct engagement with citizens.

Influence of Public Perception on Leadership Behavior

Motivation and Accountability: Positive public perception can motivate youth leaders to maintain or improve their performance. Leaders who know they are positively perceived may feel a sense of responsibility to meet or exceed public expectations.

Feedback Mechanism: Public perception often acts as feedback. Constructive criticism or praise from the public can guide leaders to improve their strategies, thus enhancing their performance.

Cultural and Social Context

Cultural Norms: In Kathmandu, cultural norms and societal values may influence what is considered effective leadership. Understanding these norms is crucial for interpreting how public perception aligns with leadership performance.

Community Engagement: The role of youth leaders in local issues, such as social justice, education, and economic development, may significantly influence public perception. Leaders actively addressing relevant community concerns are likely to be perceived more favorably.

Challenges Faced by Youth Leaders

Resource Limitations: Youth leaders may face challenges such as limited resources, which can impact their performance regardless of public perception. Understanding these constraints is essential for a fair assessment of their performance.

Perception vs. Reality: There might be a gap between public perception and the actual challenges faced by youth leaders. Qualitative studies can explore these discrepancies, providing a more nuanced understanding of the relationship.

Qualitatively, the positive relationship can be understood through factors such as public expectations, the visibility of leaders, cultural norms, and the feedback loop created by public perception. Positive public perception motivates youth leaders to maintain high performance, while effective leadership actions that meet community needs further enhance public perception.

Incorporating narrative analysis strengthens the mixed-methods design by contextualizing quantitative survey results with lived experiences of youth leaders and community members. Interview narratives reveal how perceptions of credibility, innovation, and trust are constructed and negotiated, complementing statistical patterns observed in leadership performance indicators. Triangulation of qualitative themes with quantitative findings validates results and explains inconsistencies, offering a holistic understanding of youth leadership dynamics. This integrated approach demonstrates how subjective perceptions align with, or diverge from, measured performance outcomes, thereby enhancing the analytical depth and credibility of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Riessman, 2008).

Conclusion

There is a very strong positive correlation between public perception and the performance of youth leadership in Kathmandu. This strong correlation (0.98) suggests that public perception and performance are closely linked, and improvements in perception are associated with better performance. The correlation between public perception and youth leadership performance is not due to random chance. The p-value of 0.0033 indicates that the likelihood of observing such a strong correlation purely by chance is very low (less than 0.33%). Therefore, there is significant evidence to suggest that public perception positively influences or is associated with youth leadership performance in Kathmandu.

From a qualitative perspective, the relationship between public perception and youth leadership performance is complex and influenced by various factors, including cultural norms, societal expectations, and the specific actions of youth leaders. Positive public perception is likely driven by visible, effective, and culturally resonant leadership behaviors. Conversely, youth leaders who are aware of positive public perception may be more motivated to perform well, creating a reinforcing cycle of positive perception and performance.

This qualitative analysis suggests that to sustain high performance among youth leaders, it is essential not only to address the tangible aspects of leadership (such as resources and training) but also to understand and positively shape public perception through consistent engagement, transparency, and responsiveness to community needs.

The observed strong correlation ($r = 0.98$) between public perception and youth leadership performance suggests a close association; however, such a high value in social science research requires cautious interpretation. Potential limitations, including a modest sample size, perception-based measurement tools, and possible common-method bias, may have inflated the statistical relationship. Qualitative narratives help contextualize this finding by illustrating how trust, visibility, and community validation shape leadership effectiveness in practice. Interview insights explain why positive perceptions translate into stronger performance, thereby reinforcing, rather than merely replicating, the quantitative results. This integration strengthens the mixed-methods conclusion and clarifies policy-relevant implications.

Overall, these findings support the hypothesis that there is a significant positive correlation between public perception and the performance of youth leadership in

Kathmandu. This implies that efforts to improve public perception of youth leadership could potentially lead to better performance outcomes for youth leaders. Efforts to boost public perception should focus on transparency, community engagement, and addressing local concerns. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of youth leadership but also fosters a positive feedback loop that benefits both the leaders and the communities they serve.

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Exploring the Students' Perception of Home Assignments on Academic Performance at School Level Students in Nepal

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Abstract

Home assignments have been a controversial matter among students, parents, teachers and educational institutions in general and have raised serious concerns over the last few decades because home assignments restrict students from engagements in the out-of-class activities. Bodies of research present mixed views about the needs and effects of homework. Few reasons, why teachers and academic institutions assign homework to their students, entail; helping students to prepare for exams; develop good working habit; motivate students to learn; develop independent learning and critical thinking; and to improve and increase the writings of students. This qualitative study is conducted at few private and public secondary schools (covering classes 11 & 12) in Kathmandu, Nepal and the key intent was to explore major effects of home assignments on students. It was based on purposive sampling technique for primary data supported by Open-ended interview guidelines that helped to gather information about students' perception and their first-hand experiences regarding the effects of homework assignments on academic performance. 50 students consisting of 25 males and 25 females were interviewed with open ended questions. The study has come up with conflicting findings across individuals regarding students' perceptions on home assignments since the respondents in differing numbers accepted it to play a crucial role in supporting learning linking it with the key role to enhance writing skills, foster critical thinking, and promote independent learning because it serves as a valuable tool for reinforcing classroom learning from beyond the school environment engagement. On the contrary, the other side of the dual perspective entailed students' perception that portrayed homework as merely burdensome indicating a dichotomy or critical tension in educational practices however suggesting effectiveness of homework with proper workload and work having its relevance to learning objectives.

Key Words*: Homework, Independent Learning, Critical Thinking, School Education*

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Introduction

Home assignments have been an integral part of the educational process in different levels, and, particularly at the school level where students are expected to develop independent learning habits and critical thinking skills. These assignments serve not only to reinforce classroom learning but also to encourage time management, self-discipline, and deeper understanding of subject matter. However, the actual impact of home assignments on students' academic performance remains a topic of ongoing debate among educators and researchers. This study aims to explore the effects of home assignments on the academic achievement of higher secondary students, covering grade 11 and grade12, assessing both their benefits and potential drawbacks in the context of contemporary educational practices in Nepal.

Home assignments have been a controversial issue among the students, parents, teachers and educational institutions since last few decades as it restricts the time for out-of-class activities (Letterman, 2013). Researchers have found mixed views about the need and effects of homework. Why do teachers and academic institutions assign homework to the students? The probable reasons are: to help students to prepare for exams; to develop good working habit; to motivate students to learn; to develop critical thinking; and to improve and increase the writings of students (Letterman, 2013). Cooper (1989) defined homework as the additional work provided by the educators for students to carry out during non-school hours. It is the ultimate students who should decide by using own discretion about whether, when and how to complete homework assignments.

Researchers and academicians have found both positive and negative correlation between doing homework regularly and students' academic achievements. Even though, educators assign homework for their academic supports and growth, it may cause conflict between school and parents due to difference in students' perceptions regarding to the purposes of assignment. Having a number of pros, students feel costs of assigning homework as: restricts the time available for sports and recreation; for leisure activities; need too much time and efforts; restricts the time with family friends, and relatives. Consequently, the time spent on homework probably carry high opportunity costs as the students have to sacrifice more desirable activities while doing homework (Letterman, 2013).

Home assignments are one of the comprehensively debated key activities of students in academic institutions including teachers and parents. There are very limited arguments against the effects of homework on academic performance of students as it slashes the time availability of students with rest activities. However, numerous studies conclude positive opinion towards homework as homework is taken as an indicator of successful school students (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001). Teachers and academic institutions assign homework in order to improve students study skills, linking school-work in away from school, linking their study towards their future work, to inform students that learning takes place both inside and outside of the school/college. It improves the learning habit of students outside the college as well. However, time constraints with the students may be its flaw as more time is provided for doing homework, less time is available for leisure.

What motivates students to complete home assignments before or on due date? The probable factors may be affected by their thinking, belief, attitude and ability towards the homework (Yazzie-Mintz, 2006). Students' expectations regarding to success or failure, level of performance, ability of students, students' home and college environment and practices, their future aim, nature of the subject, its connectivity in higher level education are also determinants of doing homework.

The research question of this study is, "Does home assignments support for academic performance at school level students?" Thus, the objective of this study is to explore the effects of home assignments on academic performance of school level students of Nepal.

The rest of the paper is organized into different sections and sub-sections as follows: Section two is the review of literatures for the study; Section three shows research methodology including data and methods; Section four presents the findings; Section five is about discussion and section six presents summary, conclusion and recommendations.

Review of Literature

Researchers have mixed views about the effects of home assignments on their academic achievements. A study conducted by Letterman (2013) used the 180 undergraduate students at Robert Morris University as the research participants to explore students' perceptions of home assignments. By using the primary data collected from questionnaire, the study found mixed views about the student's perceptions about homework. The result reveals that 50 percent students agree that doing homework on time is a good job as it supports for academic excellence. Rest 50 percent students replied that it is merely a busy work which creates negative perception on new college freshman.

Exploring the effects of homework by utilizing parametric and non-parametric technique, Eren & Hendersen (2008) found that homework is an important determinant of students' academic performance. The authors explored whether homework assignment support for academic achievement of secondary level students test performances. The study followed the theoretical model of homework effectiveness on test scores following Betts (1997) and Neilson (2005). These models have three common assumptions:

i) Students have differences in abilities and thus require different amounts of time to complete the same assigned tasks.
ii) Homework is beneficial, at least in small amounts.
iii) Students have time constraints.

Whether extra amount of homework shall be provided and beneficial for the students or not, it depends upon third assumption. The study further claimed that the effects of homework are not equally beneficial to different academic level students. Academically very high-level students feel that more homework just kill their creative study time, and thus little impact on academic achievement. However, homework supports significantly for average to high level students. Relating to the effect of assignment on students' academic performance, Betts (1997) found that homework is a policy variable for the academic performance of students under the control of teachers. Betts found substantial effect of homework on Maths scoring.

Nunez et al. (2013) examined the relationship between different homework variables such as amount of assignment provided, time spent on homework, time management with academic achievement among the 145 participants. The authors employed multivariate analysis of variance and path analysis and found that amount of homework completed decreased when there is increase in schooling. When the students complete minimum amount of homework, it supports for study habit, and ultimately improves the academic goals.

Karabatak, Alanoglu and Karabatak (2020) conducted their study to explore the effects of homework on students' achievements and academic satisfaction. They conducted their study in a 12 – week training process. After completing 9 weeks homework performances, academic achievements tests consisting 26 questions were applied on regular basis. The study found meaningful and positive support of homework on academic achievements of students.

Homework builds a connection between school and home of the students. Teachers provide homework to the students to develop them as independent learners which is assisted by doing homework. Even though, doing homework is an important part of school education, proponents and opponents both are making arguments in their supports (Haq, Shakil, & Din, 2020). The authors conducted their research work in Gilgit Baltistan public school to identify the impact of homework on the academic performance of students at secondary level. 100 students were randomly selected as the respondents and they administered Likert Scale questionnaires as research tool for data collection. The study found that homework supports for students' academic achievements. However, the effect of homework varies with the academic level of the students as well as nature of the assignment provided. Thus, it is the responsibility of the teachers to assign productive and creative assignments. Otherwise, students do assignments for the shake of submitting to the teachers (Paudel, 2012) which do not support for academic goal.

Completing homework at home displays a transition from instructor-led to student-led learning. Whether students submit their homework assignments timely or at the last minute is most probably influenced by their self-regulated learning (SRL) skills (Muljana, Dabas, & Luo, 2023). The authors employed structural equation modelling technique by using the data collected from survey and found that self-regulated learning strategies significantly influenced the homework timelines, and it ultimately affected students' academic performance positively. This study also found multiple effects of homework on different academic level of students.

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MetLife, 2007) conducted a survey to explore the need and importance of homework to around 2000 students of school level. The objective of the study was to explore whether homework helps students to improve their overall learnings? In this survey, 77 percent of research participants replied that homework is important for their learning and they have enough time for doing homework. Consequently, 23 percent students have answered homework do not support for better academic achievements.

What motivate students to complete homework assignments before or on due date? The probable factors may be affected by their thinking, belief, attitude and ability towards the homework (Yazzi-mints, 2006). Students' expectations regarding to success or failure, level of performance, ability of students, students' home and college environment and practices, their future aim, nature of the subject, its connectivity in higher level education are also determinants of doing homework.

Whether homework is a "benefit or burden" for students is a quite debatable issue among the students, parents, and academic institutions in Nepalese perspectives as well. Students have pointed out that assignments with the parental involvements provide more benefits to the students while others have argued against it. Connecting this issue, Poudyal (2023) concludes that a balanced and thoughtful homework according to need of students, engagement and motivation support for academic achievement and well-being. The existing homework practice in the schools and colleges mostly rely on traditional way and text-book based. So, the study suggests that there is need of improvements in homework practices including recent technologies, designing and engaging students in web-based and real-life based assignments.

Parental engagements and their socio-economic status also affect on the academic performance and improvements of students (Rajeswari & Usha, 2014). Consequently, families with lower economic status have lower potential involvement in academic activities of children and there is low academic improvement. On the contrary, parents with higher economic status have relatively higher potential involvement in academic activities of children, and it helps to improve the academic performance and goal.

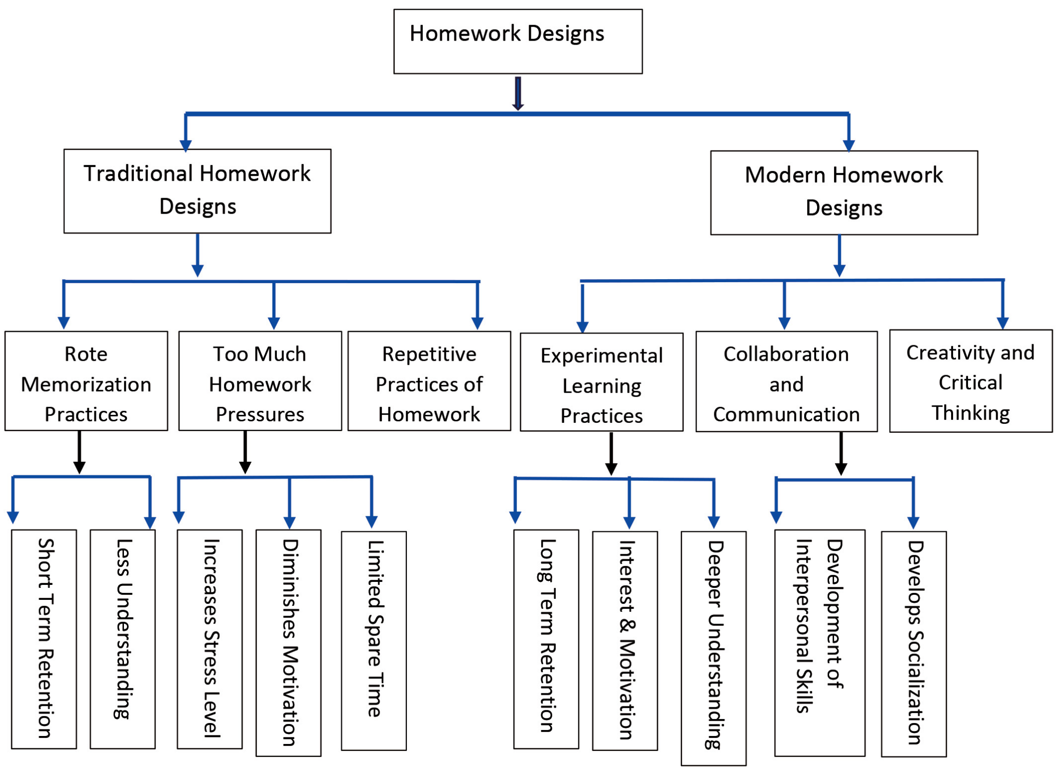
Connecting to the relation between parental engagement and academic progress, Li et al. (2020) found that families with high-socioeconomic status tends to improve parental homework support for children, parent-child communication and parental time with children, while it is difficult for low-socioeconomic status parents. The study concludes that children of high-socioeconomic parents improve their academic performance due to more parental engagements and the case is different in case of low-socioeconomic parents and students.

A number of studies conducted by researchers claim that students completing homework on time achieve better academic performance than their peers who do not (Cooper, 2009; Cooper & Valentine, 2001; Bang et al., 2011; Fan et al., 2017). Their findings indicate that last minute homework submission has significant negative effect on academic performance of students at secondary level.

Having gone through a number of previous studies and author's own institution, the conceptual framework diagram of homework designs is outlined in Figure 1. This figure presents a comparative analysis of traditional and modern homework designs, highlighting their respective components and outcomes. Traditional homework designs emphasize rote memorization, excessive workload, and repetitive tasks, often resulting in short-term retention, increased stress, limited free time, diminished motivation, and reduced understanding. In contrast, modern homework designs focus on experimental learning, collaboration, and fostering creativity and critical thinking. These approaches lead to long-term retention, increased interest and motivation, deeper understanding, enhanced interpersonal skills, and greater socialization. The Figure 1 sketched below underscores a shift from quantity-based to quality-driven homework practices, advocating for methods that support holistic development of students.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of Homework Designs



Source: Adapted from Poudyal, 2023

Research Methodology

In order to explore students' perception on the effects of home assignments on their academic progress, we employed qualitative research design using purposive sampling techniques to collect the primary data from a few higher secondary schools (covering classes 11 & 12) in Kathmandu. Open-ended/semi-structured interview guidelines were used to capture first-hand and in-depth descriptions of students' perceptions on the effects of homework (HW) on academic performance. The authors held in-depth interview with 50 students among which 25 participants were boys and 25 girls. Participants were selected in equal number from the top level, medium level and low-level students on the basis of their academic performances. The qualitative response collected from research participants were thematically coded. For the trustworthiness of qualitative data, we ensured double checking with key informants' interview (KII) and data triangulation including top-level, medium-level and low-level students in two phases. Ethical values have been fully considered during our entire research work.

Findings

We have formulated open-ended interview guidelines to collect the first-hand qualitative data from research participants. The findings from interview with research participants as well as KII are recapitulated here.

Perception on Effects of Homework on Students Learning

Relating to the perception of homework assignments on students learning, more than 80 percent students believed that doing homework and assignments away from school/college ultimately supports on students learning and to achieve better academic goal; but 20 percent students denied it. Here are a number of backings for this argument. Firstly, doing homework fosters the habit of revising all the topics learned in class and students know undoubtedly about the subject matter taught in the class. It maintains regularity in the academic work and shows the disciplined work. As the students do their work regularly in school and at home as well, it boosts up the remembering as well as exploring habit of the students. Secondly, doing assignment not only increase the writing speed of the students but it also improves students' language and vocabulary power. Some of the research participants said that "*we cannot attempt all the questions in specific hours provided during exam due to sluggish writing speed*". In such situation, habit of doing homework supports to increase writing speed. Thirdly, doing homework regularly assists to utilize the time effectively. It keeps students busy and prevents from destructive thinking. Moreover, it develops the habit of independent learning; assists in developing critical thinking; develops hard work and concentration in study. Finally, homework improves writing skills and thus, supports to achieve better academic goal through students learning.

Perception on Need of HW varies with Students Level

The reply of participating students on the model or types of homework to be provided for different grades/level (such as: for primary level, lower secondary level, secondary level, higher secondary level and university level students) are quite realistic and practical. They said that the level of maturity and problem-solving skill differs in different age and different level of students. No homework should be provided for the students of primary level as there is no development of problem-solving skills. Reading and remembering assignments could be better option for the students of lower secondary level. However, the need of homework might be more for the students of high school level to prepare for SEE examination. According to the perception of students, the types and nature of homework should be based on practical based; real life based; critical thinking; research based; mostly group work and digital homework for the students of higher secondary level students to develop their critical thinking skills which is necessary in University level.

Perception on Effects of HW on Time Management

Most of the students feel problem of time management while doing their homework. The perception of students on effects of homework on their personal time management are quite realistic and noteworthy. More than 90 percent students are sacrificing their daily extra activities while doing daily homework and only around 10 percent students do not face any time management problem as they use every moment effectively. The students are compelled to sacrifice the time for social media; sports time; mobile and friends' time; sleep time; quality time with their family and friends. The students sacrifice their personal time available for other purposes while doing homework. Some students said that "*sometimes we cannot go in party with parents due the pressure of homework which has very limited deadline*". Due to the pressure of more homework, students are also found copying their homework from their friends work and even from social media such as google and Chat GPT. They try to complete their assignments rather than seeking knowledge.

Perception on Effects of HW on Independent Learning and Critical Thinking

The perception of students on effects of homework on independent learning is almost positive ignoring the pressure of assignment for meanwhile. The participating students commonly agreed that doing assignments away from school and college in absence of teacher at our home develops their independent learning habit. Doing homework regularly foster the creativity of students by increasing their problem-solving ability at home. Moreover, research-based questions and practical based questions and finding their solutions significantly increases the independent learning as well as critical thinking of students. Some participants said that the extent to which it develops the independent learning depends upon the nature of subject – is it theoretical or numerical subject. Consequently, copying homework from friends' note ruins independent learning.

Perception on Effects of HW on Examinations

The perception of students on the effects of homework on examination is positive as doing homework supports for exam preparation. All the research participants strongly agree that doing homework by themselves obviously supports for examinations for their academic goal. The habit of regularly doing homework clarifies all the doubts related to topic taught in the class. For example: it develops basic concepts; reminds major points to remember; increases the memory power of the student; builds the higher level of confidence among the students; develops the problem-solving ability, critical thinking and struggling habit among most of the students. Finally, these qualities with concerned students help to achieve better score in each examination and for their academic goals.

Perception on Benefits of Doing HW

One of the major explorable issues among the researchers, academicians, school/college owners, teacher, parents and concerned students is "*Whether doing homework is beneficial for students or it creates only burden for them*?" Around 50 percent research participants believe that doing homework has a number of advantages for the students and rest 50 percent take homework as huge burden for the students. They have realized a number of advantages of doing homework. Firstly, homework develops hardworking habit, problem solving skills, and enhances memory power. It is quite useful for better and productive utilization of free time of students which prevents from distraction and increases creativity. It boosts up knowledge and learning interest among the students, which supports in examinations to achieve better scores and grades. Secondly, being engaged in homework reduces the screen time of the students, it increases writing speed and creativity of students. Thus, homework develops independent learning. Thirdly, habit of doing homework enhances time management skills, and involves the students in study at home – which is away from college.

Perceptions on Burden of doing HW

Data collected from students and its result show that 50 percent students perceived doing regular homework as huge burden for them rather than any advantages. Most of the participants argue that homework is unnecessary burden for the students, and thus reduces the personal time of the students. Firstly, it gives the mental pressure to complete assigned work on time, there will be pressure of homework and tiredness, anxiety and procrastination, and thus, it might take towards the depression and stress. Secondly, HW disturbs the sound sleep and original life style of students. It reduces the quality time of students with family and friends and elimination of social life. Thirdly, HW reduces the quality time for extra readings, lack of time for skill development and exploration as well as isolation from social activities. It is noteworthy to mention the view of a student "*We had an assignment of Nepali subject to describe how we celebrate Dashain; interact with relatives and neighbours and prepare a report. When relatives and neighbours were at my home, they were talking about social festival, I was trying to complete my assignment alone in my study room*". Thus, HW had limited my interaction in society because I had very limited deadline to complete my assignment.

Perception on HW is Wastage of Time and its Limit

Students have mixed perception about HW is wastage of time. 40 percent participants said that doing HW is just like wastage of time due to unnecessary work load and overload, copying from others, time management problem. HW is mostly wastage of time specially in theoretical subjects, it reduces the sports and quality time with family and friends. However, 60 percent participants said that HW is not wastage of time. HW develops confidence among the students; regular practice supports for exams; develops critical thinking level of students; develops hardworking habit. HW is more supportive for practical subjects such as Mathematics, Economics and Accountancy; it reduces scrolling reel; good for average level students and thus supportive in exams. A controversial issue concerned with mass students and other stakeholders is that how much HW should be given to the students? How much work and what types of assignments should be assigned to the students? In this context, all the research participants said that the HW should be provided at limited quantity, i.e., the limit of HW is necessary. On the one side limited assignments should be given, and on the other hand, the deadline of HW submission should be flexible as per the time and capacity of the students. Participants said that all the students should not assign same HW. It means, quantity and level of HW should be based on students' level. Some of the participants said that teacher should provide enough deadline for HW submission particularly to the students whose writing speed is very slow. Hence, majority of the research participants believe that unlimited HW with limited deadline results in to pressure to the students.

We have conducted two round member checking for the trustworthiness of qualitative data. The same interview guideline was used with KII group consisting different academic levels of students. The data collected from KII was also similar with the views of research participants. They said that doing regular HW supports for students learning; the need of HW varies according to the level of students; some students are sacrificing their leisure time and time with family and friends to complete HW on time. It has certainly reduced the sleep time of students. However, they agree that HW supports for independent learning at home, which ultimately supports in examination. Today's students feel more burden and fewer benefit of doing HW. Students should get enough deadline for completing HW. Finally, the constructive use of gadgets is supportive for academic purposes and excessive use could be harmful for the students.

Discussion

This study has been conducted to explore the students' perception of homework/ assignments on their academic performance. Primarily international researchers and a few Nepalese have studied cases to explore the extent to which homework/ assignments affects on the academic performances of the students, and the correlation between them is always debated. The findings of this study are similar with a number of researchers.

More than 80 percent participating students claimed that HW supports on students' learning through supporting in remembering capacity; develops exploring habit; increases the writing speed and helps to improve handwritings; utilizes the time effectively and develops the habit of independent learning, research and critical thinking; and thus, supports on students overall learning and to achieve academic goals.

Likewise, research participants suggested that homework should be based on age and level of students; practical based homework for secondary level, real life based, critical thinking and research-based homework for higher level students. Most of the students have common voice about the effects of homework on time management. They perceived that they sacrifice their personal time, time with friends and family, and reduce the quality sleep time to complete homework on limited deadline. The participants fully agreed that homework supports for independent learning and critical thinking depending upon the nature of subject as well as supports for examinations. More than 50 percent participants found that homework has supplementary benefits and rest 50 percent perceived homework as burden for them. 40 percent participants said that homework is waste of time and rest 60 percent found that homework increases the critical thinking, confidence level, it more supportive especially in numerical subjects such as Mathematics, Accountancy and Economics. All the participants strongly felt that homework should be provided in limited quantity and enough deadline should be provided by the teacher. Finally, 70 percent participants found use of gadgets supportive while doing homework and 30 percent felt that use of gadgets while doing homework is waste of quality time.

A study conducted by Letterman (2013) found mixed effect of home assignments on academic performance of students. Half of the students realized that homework improves their academic level, while rest 50 percent found no any significant effect of homework on academic progress. The findings of our study align with Letterman (2013). Likewise, Hendersen (2008) claimed that the ability of students is different in each classe. So, less homework should be assigned with sufficient deadline especially for weak students; which is similar with the findings of the study. Betts (1996) found that regular homework supports especially for numerical subjects such as: Maths and it aligns with our study. The findings of Neilson (2005) also similar with this study. Nunez et al. (2013); Karabatak, Alanoglu and Karabatak (2020); Haq, Shakil and Din (2020); Muljancs, Dabes and Luo (2023); Met Life (2007); Poudyal (2023); Rajeswari and Usha (2014) and Li et al. (2020) have found that regular homework supports for students' academic performance at high school and other levels. Teachers should provide productive and quality homework which develops the independent learning and critical thinking supported by improved writings. These findings are similar with the findings of our study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to investigate the effects of homework on students' academic performance, focusing on its impact on learning outcomes, student perceptions, and the role of technology. Through the use of open-ended interviews and purposive sampling, insights were gathered from 50 research participants, revealing diverse perspectives on the role of homework in educational settings.

The findings of this study underscored several key points regarding the perceived benefits and drawbacks of homework. A significant portion of the participants acknowledged that homework plays a crucial role in supporting student learning. Specifically, it was found to enhance writing skills, foster critical thinking, and promote independent learning. These outcomes align with existing literature suggesting that homework serves as a valuable tool for reinforcing classroom learning and extending students' understanding beyond the school environment. Interestingly, the study also highlighted a dual perspective among students regarding the utility of homework. While 50 percent of the participants viewed homework as advantageous, citing its benefits in preparing for examinations and enhancing academic performance, the remaining 50 percent considered it burdensome. This dichotomy reflects a critical tension in educational practices, where the effectiveness of homework may vary depending on factors such as workload and perceived relevance to learning objectives.

Moreover, attitudes towards the quantity and flexibility of homework assignments emerged as crucial considerations. A substantial majority of participants (60 percent) expressed support for limited homework with flexible deadlines, advocating for a balanced approach that considers students' academic responsibilities and extracurricular commitments. This finding suggests a consensus among students regarding the importance of maintaining a manageable workload to optimize learning outcomes without overwhelming learners. Furthermore, the integration of technology in homework completion yielded mixed responses from participants. While 70 percent of students recognized the benefits of using gadgets for homework, such as access to information and digital resources, 30 percent viewed them as potential distractions and time-wasting tools. This highlights the need for educators to provide guidance on responsible technology use and leverage digital platforms effectively to enhance learning experiences.

In conclusion, this research contributes valuable insights into the multifaceted impacts of homework on students' academic performance and learning experiences. The findings emphasize the nuanced perspectives of students regarding the benefits and challenges associated with homework assignments. Moving forward, educators and policymakers are encouraged to consider these findings when designing homework policies and practices that promote effective learning, cater to diverse student needs, and foster a positive academic environment. By acknowledging the varied viewpoints expressed by students, this study advocates for a balanced approach to homework implementation one that prioritizes educational goals while accommodating individual learning styles and preferences. Ultimately, the goal remains to harness the potential of homework as a supportive tool in educational settings, ensuring that it serves its intended purpose of enhancing student learning and academic achievement. Depending upon the findings and conclusions, the following policies are recommended. Homework should serve as a tool to enhance students' learning rather than burden them. To achieve this, it is crucial that students first understand the objectives behind each assignment. Schools and colleges must limit the quantity of homework to prevent it from becoming overwhelming, while also ensuring flexibility in submission deadlines to accommodate the varying capacities and circumstances of students. Rather than assigning excessive individual tasks, educators should focus on group-based homework that encourages analytical thinking, critical reasoning, and research skills. Homework should be closely connected to real-life practices to make it more relatable, engaging, and easier for students to complete. Furthermore, assignments should be tailored to the students' academic levels and capacities, with a strong emphasis on quality over quantity. Incorporating digital tools and practical learning elements can also enhance the relevance and effectiveness of homework. It is essential for educators to be mindful of students' time constraints and challenges when assigning tasks. Socially interactive group assignments not only promote timely completion but also foster collaboration. Ultimately, homework should motivate students, promote self-directed learning, and cultivate independent thinking skills, ensuring that it becomes a meaningful part of their academic journey.

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Special Structure under the Federal System of Nepal

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Abstract

The present constitution of Nepal formally endorsed federal system by restructuring the state as per spirit of the Interim Constitution. Under the federal system, the constitution provisioned to have main structure – the federation, the provinces and the local levels for political powers and special structure – special, protected and autonomous regions for economic development, social and cultural preservation. The main structures have already been constituted, while the special structures have not yet been implemented. Neither constitution nor the federal law included a list of powers for special structures. There seems to be still confusion and problems regarding the forms and powers of the special structure in the federal system of Nepal. This paper explores on the foundation of debate on special structure and discusses the constitutional and legal provisions on special structure. Based on interpretative paradigm, the author used both primary and secondary information to write this paper. Descriptive and analytical methods have been adopted for the analysis and presentation of provisions on special structures. The constitution did not incorporate special structures as recommended by the CA Committee and State Restructuring Commission, any powers and authority under the constitution are not given to special structures. It is necessary to implement the constitutional provisions on special structure in order to full-fledged implementation of the constitution. The paper highlights the need for a special structure for diversity management, in a context where only the main structure under traditional federalism is studied. It also discusses on the justification for a special structure in the federal system and the constitutional and legal provisions in this regard from a new perspective.

Key words: *federal system, special structure, autonomous region, special region, protected areas, federalism.*

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Introduction

The 2015's constitution of Nepal formally endorsed federal system as a system of the country. The constitution provisioned two varieties of federal structures under which the first is main structures (federal, provinces and local level) and second is special structures (special region, protected area and autonomous region) to be set by the federal law. The major aim of the special structures to uphold social harmony, cultural protection and economic prosperity of all social groups. In the line of the constitution, section 99 of the Local Government Operation Act (LGOP) stipulates that the government of Nepal, in consultation with provincial governments, can maintain any area of local levels or district as a special, protected or autonomous region in order to social and culture preservation or economic development.

Although Nepal's present constitution has arranged a special structure under the federal system, there is no any other provision on the institutional body and powers of such structure. One view on this issue is that it is not a matter of the constitution, but the matter of concern to the federal law. Other aspect might be that if there is constitutional provision on main structure, it should also mention at least formation and major powers of special structure in the constitution. Nepal's Interim Constitution, 2007 paved the way for adopting a federal system to solve the problems created by a unitary state. Besides, sub-article (1) of article 138 of the interim constitution of Nepal has expressed the commitment to endorse federal system while the state is restructured. In order to fulfill this commitment, the same article mentioned that the provinces would be autonomous and empowered in accordance with the desire of various communities. The sub article (1) of article 138 states that:

> *To bring an end to discrimination based on class, caste, language, gender, culture, religion and region by eliminating the centralized and unitary form of the state, the state shall be made inclusive and restructured into a progressive, democratic federal system (art. 138.1).*
>
> *Accepting the aspirations of indigenous ethnic groups and the people of the backward and other regions, and the people of Madhes, for autonomous provinces, Nepal shall be a Federal Democratic Republic. The provinces shall be autonomous with full rights. The Constituent Assembly shall determine the number, boundary, names and structures of the autonomous provinces and the distribution of powers and resources, while maintaining the sovereignty, unity and integrity of Nepal (art. 138.1.a).*

In order to design federal structure, the CA thematic committee's report proposed to incorporate main and special structures under the federal structure of Nepal. Besides, the State Restructuring Commission, formed under sub-article (2) of article 138 of the interim constitution, also reported to have both main and special structures under the federal structure of Nepal. However, when the new constitution was promulgated, the form of special structure could not be mentioned as per the reports submitted by the CA Thematic Committee and State Restructuring Commission. Besides, the main structure has been formed under the federal structure and one term in accordance to electoral criteria has been ended, although the provisions related to the special structure have not been implemented. The government has not even shown interest in forming the special structure envisioned by the Constitution and the LGOP. The general public does not seem to be aware of the establishment and implementation of special structures under the federal scheme. In this reality, this article focuses on how to make effective the provisions (forms and powers) on special structures in operational level, in which there is no sufficient studies conducted.

Problems, objectives and methodology

Nepal has a federal system with a basic structure for political power and a special structure for economic, social and cultural development. However, the provision relating to special structure has not yet been implemented in practice. In this context, this paper focuses on two-fold questions (i) what are the foundation of debate on special structure? and (ii) how did the constitution and federal laws address the issues of special structure? In order to answer these question, this paper sets two objectives – (i) exploring the foundation of debate on special structure and (ii) discusses the constitutional and legal provisions on special structure. This paper is basically based on secondary information collected through library study. From methodological aspects, this paper employs interpretive paradigm under which the provisions entrenched in the constitution and federal law are interpreted through analytical and comparative approaches. Apart from the provisions of constitution and federal law, many other literature are collected from library (physical and digital archives) and reviewed thoroughly.

Review of Selective Literature on Special Structure

The constitution of Nepal entrenched two varieties of federal structures, under which the first is main structures consisting federation, province and local level, and the second is special structures consisting special, protected and autonomous regions, which have not yet been operated. In this ground, the aim of reviewing literature are to set general understanding about special structure both from theoretical and legal perspectives. Thus, some key books written by authors, and report published by Constituent Assembly and State Restructuring Commission, constitutional and legal texts on special structure are reviewed.

Theoretical Aspects on Special Structures under the Federal Set-up

Special structure has to be discussed under the broader frame of federal system of Nepal. In theoretical sense, federal system is a system of Government in which certain powers are exercised by levels of government below the national, and those powers are constitutionally guaranteed and do not depend on the national government (UNDP, 2007, p. 24). In other words, federalism is 'a constitutional device which provides for a secure, *i.e.* constitutional, division of powers between central and ‘segmental’ authorities in such a way that each is acknowledged to be the supreme authority in specific areas of responsibility' (Alan Smith, 1997; cited in Sakhong, 2005, pp.13). In a national conference, Ghai opined that:

> *The issue of identity is more important to communities that have been marginalized because they don't feel recognized as part of the national identity of their countries. If well dealt with, ethnicity is emancipating because it promotes identity such as in language, music, literature but it also has its dark side, if it becomes divisive and especially if it leads to violence" (UNDP Nepal, 2007, p. 18).*

Many countries in world has adopted federal system for their own purpose including collective security, market expansion, balanced development and diversity management. Bulmer states that:

> *Federalism provides a framework for the recognition of ethnic, religious, linguistic or other cultural communities, reflecting their desire to be recognized as a people with a distinct identity and particular interests. By guaranteeing substantial autonomy to such groups, federalism can allow them to exercise partial self-government through state, provincial or regional institutions while still sharing certain functions with other communities through federal or national institutions. By satisfying demands for autonomy and recognition, a federal constitution may protect minorities, prevent conflict, increase the legitimacy of democratic institutions and reduce pressure for secession (*Bulmer, 2017, p. 7).

There can be various patterns of creation and management of state structures in a federal system. Especially in countries that have adopted geographical federalism, which is made up of independent states, a federal system with basic structures can be adopted. But in these countries having diverse characteristics and post-conflict countries, basic infrastructure alone may not be sufficient for diversity management, and special structures may also be required. Within the special structure, if an autonomous legal-territorial framework is created, successful conflict solution depends on the balance between all groups sharing the same homeland which does not only provide a chance for a local community to organize its self-government, but also provide an opportunity to peaceful co-existence and cooperation in areas inhabited by an ethnically mixed population or areas which are home to different social groups (Benedikter, 2007, p. 3).

Why the special structures needed under the federal system might also be one of the agenda for further discussion. In theory, a special structure or autonomous region may be a necessary for protecting the rights of minorities within a country, protecting the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples, and exercising the right to internal self-determination (Benedikter, 2007). Depending on the specific need of the country, it may be territorial, non-territorial or personal and local self-government in nature (Pan, 2003). In order to make special structure more successful, some ideas mentioned by Gross can be borrowed here which included: (1) legal design – clearly defining territory concerned and cultural dimension, (2) geopolitical and demographic aspects – governmental relation and ethnic size, (3) political and institutional aspects – organizing institutions with some degree of political powers, (4) social and economic aspects – available of social and financial support, and (5) cultural aspects – cultural preservation within the special structure (cited at Benedikter, 2007, pp. 429-430).

CA Committee on State Restructuring and Division of State Powers (CSRDSP) and High Level State Restructuring Recommendation Commission (HLSRRC)

In Nepal, the decision to adopt federal system was made primarily for balanced development and accommodation of ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversity by ending centralized unitary State. In order to achieve these goals, the CA decided to adopt basic two grounds to restructure State into federal form. The first is the grounds of identity which include ethnic/communal, lingual, cultural; geographical/ continuity of regional identities and continuity to historical identities, while the second is the basis of capabilities, which cover economic inter-relationship and capability, infrastructure development and potentiality, availability of natural resources and means, and administrative accessibility (CSRDSP, 2010, p. 21). A country as diverse as Nepal also needed a special structure to address the identity-based issues raised after post democratic movement. Keeping this in mind, the CA Thematic Committee and the State Restructuring Commission also recognized the need for a special structure and included it in their reports.

Report of the CA Committee on State Restructuring and Distribution of State Powers, 2010 proposed a provision may be made for the federal legislature to constitute special structures in areas of dense ethnic, linguistic, or community presence or in areas of special nature, as required, on the recommendation of the provincial assembly. The draft constitution states that (CSRDSP, 2010, p. IX):

> *…apart from the main structure, an area with majority of an ethnicity/ community or linguistic community or with dense population within a Province shall be maintained as an autonomous region.*
>
> *...any region shall be maintained as a protected area in order to protect and promote the ethnicity/community, cultural area, declining and marginalized ethnic groups who are in the extreme minority*
>
> *The backward or areas which have remained behind in socio-economic terms and not covered by the autonomous and protected areas or to develop any subjective area within the province, any specific geographical area shall be maintained as a special zone.*

In addition to the main structure, the report also presents some important arguments for constituting the aforementioned structure. The report shows that autonomous regions have been established with the aim of enabling the people of those regions to experience self-rule when the concerns of indigenous peoples are not being addressed through the main structure. Besides, the main objective of constituting protected areas is to protect and promote highly endangered and marginalized communities within the province. Similarly, it has been mentioned that special areas have been provided for the development of areas not included in the aforementioned autonomous regions and protected areas. In this way, it appears that special areas are non-political in nature, and within them, autonomous areas are related to specific communities and geography, protected areas are related to highly endangered and marginalized communities, and special areas are related to the development of a specific geography.

The State Restructuring Committee and the High Level Commission decided to constitute special structure aiming to create political space for numerically tiny ethnic groups whose population are concentrated in a particular area with objective of doing justice to ethnic communities with smaller population (Hachhethu, 2023, p. 90). The State Restructuring Commission has also recommended a special structure to ensure that minority and indigenous peoples can enjoy self-governance and autonomy under the federal system of governance and participate in the state with their own identity. For this, the commission had suggested the following provisions (HLSRRC, 2011):

(1) An area within a province where there is a majority or dense presence of a single ethnic group/community or language may be constituted as an autonomous region.

(2) Areas established within the province to protect and promote ethnic minorities, endangered and highly marginalized ethnic groups, communities and cultural areas may be designated as protected areas.

(3) A special zone may be constituted for the development of backward, economically and socially backward ethnic groups, communities and regions or thematic areas within the relevant province not included in the autonomous region and protected area.

(4) The autonomous regions to be constituted under the province will be as mentioned in the schedule. However, in the case of indigenous peoples who have already formed provinces on the basis of identity, autonomous regions will not be created elsewhere.

(5) The creation of an autonomous region must be completed within one year of the formation of the provincial government for the first time.

(6) Any alteration, addition or change in the name, number or boundaries of autonomous regions shall be made by a two-thirds majority vote of the concerned provincial legislature.

(7) The creation of protected areas and special areas may be done by a majority decision of the concerned provincial legislature.

(8) Other provisions relating to autonomous areas, special areas and protected areas shall be as determined by provincial law.

Although the entire commission had made a decision and submitted the report, three members[2] of the commission had submitted a separate report with different opinions. The three members had different opinions, mainly regarding the list of indigenous peoples, to remove the provision because the list was incomplete. Similarly, if the names of autonomous regions need to be changed, or amended, the three members' opinion suggested to do so with the recommendation of the concerned provincial legislature to be approved by a two-thirds majority of the federal legislature (HLSRRC, Three members' report, 2011). This shows that the commission's main report aims to strengthen the provinces, while the three-member led report aims to

2 Three members of the Commission: Ramesh Dhungel, Sarba Raj Khadka and Sabitri Gurung.

strengthen the centre.

Constitution and Federal Law

Article 56 of the present constitution of Nepal has made provisions regarding the structure of the State. In the process of restructuring the State, the constitution federalized the unitary Nepal through creation of seven provinces. Sub article (1) of article 56 of the Constitution provides for a three-tiered main structure, namely federation, provinces and local level under the main structure, to whom the constitution has granted the right to exercise state power.[3] Similarly, the Constitution has allocated the State power and revenue resources only among the main structures, and has also given the authority to exercise fiscal rights only to the main structure. Regarding special structures, sub article 5 of article 56 only mentions that special, protected or autonomous regions may be established for socio-cultural protection or economic development in accordance with federal law.

The Constitution leaves the issues of establishing special structures to the discretion of federal law, it does not provide any guidance on what arrangements should be made for that. Although it is said that a special structure has to be established for socio-cultural protection and economic development, neither any institutional arrangement nor any resources have been ensured for this. This provision of the constitution seems to have come with the objective of creating a dependent institution with a non-political nature. In so far as concerning to the provisions of the preliminary draft constitution (2015), sub-article 7 of article 60 of the preliminary draft constitution included a provision that special structures, including special regions, would be established in accordance with the law. The draft constitution provided for the Government of Nepal to form a Commission within six months of the date of promulgation of the constitution to determine the number and area if rural municipalities, municipalities, and special structures to be formed in accordance with the constitution. While the proposed draft constitution sets a time frame/limit for determining the special structure, the present constitution has also removed that time limit and the matter is not even mentioned in the federal law, making the operation of the provisions related to the special structures uncertain.

As a federal law envisioned in sub article (5) of article 56 of the Constitution, the Local Government Operation Act, 2017 has been formulated and implemented to

3 The state power indicates the power relating to the executive, legislative and judiciary of the state, and includes residual power (sub article (1) (h) of article 306 of the constitution of Nepal)

regularize he arrangements related to the local level. The Act made some provisions regarding the special structures envisioned by the constitution, however, these provisions are not sufficient for the establishment and implementation of the special structures. Sections 99, 100 and 101 of the LGOA contains provisions regarding special, protected and autonomous regions as special structure. Under this, section 99 of the Act provides for the basis of incorporating special structures, section 100 for special programs and section 101 for coordination between special structures and local level. Sub section (1) of section 99 states that:

> *The Government of Nepal may, in consultation with the provincial government, maintain any area as a special, protected or autonomous region by publishing a notice in the Nepal gazette for social and culture preservation or economic development:*
>
> *(a) One or more than one district,*
>
> *(b) One or more than one rural municipality or municipality,*
>
> *(c) Any ward or more than one ward of any rural municipality or municipality.*

If someone reads this provision, what s/he finds that the main structure under the federal system of Nepal is a political in nature, while the special structure is non-political in nature. In addition, there is a trends of including non-territorial types. On the one hand, its size seems to be almost district-like, or in some cases, ward-like or even smaller. Sub section (2) of section 99 provides for the grounds to be taken into account while establishing a special structure. According to which, the grounds to be taken for a special region are as (1) geographically remote due to lack of transportation and infrastructure, (2) percentage of population below the poverty line and poverty disparity higher than the national average, (3) the presence of a majority of economically and socially backward communities, and (4) any other basis deemed appropriate by the Government of Nepal. These basis show that the establishment of special region is to give priority in developmental change without political empowerment.

In the case of protected region, the Act states basis that cover (1) a minority, marginalized or endangered community residing there, (2) the social and economic development index of the community as per sub-section (1) is lower than the national average, and (3) any other basis deemed appropriate by the Government of Nepal, while for autonomous region, the Act mentions basis that cover (1) a dense presence and abundance of communities sharing the same language or culture, (2) the social and economic development index of the community as per sub-section (1) is lower than the national average, and (3) any other basis deemed appropriate by the Government of Nepal.

The LGOA has not recognized the units established as special structures as separate political units, but only as economic, social and cultural units. It does not grant financial power to such unit. Section 100 of the Act clearly stipulates that the government of Nepal and the provincial government must conduct special programs or provide additional budget for the development of special, protected and autonomous regions. Besides, there is a provision in section 101, that require coordination with the District Assembly and local level when the government of Nepal and provincial government runs special programs in special, protected and autonomous regions. These provisions clearly show two messages. The first is that special structures have to be depended on federal and provincial government for resources and programs, and the second is that the special structure is not autonomous in operational level. Because, no institution can be autonomous without powers and resources which are not granted to the special structure.

Discussion and Findings

The Constitution has provided for the existence of a main structure and a special structure. Constitutionally, the main structures appear to be of a political nature, while the special structures appear to be related to social, economic, and cultural protection and development. If someone look at the preamble and article 138 of the Interim Constitution (2007), it is understood that a federal system had to be adopted for inclusive and balanced development by ending the existing economic, social, cultural, and ethnic discrimination in the country. Besides, managing diversity within the country is the basic foundation of federalism. The basic principle of federalism is that the power and authority of the state should not rest only in a hand of one government in the centre. The federal system requires distribution of powers and authorities among different level of political entities.

Looking at the journey of Nepal's federal system, it seems that the country did not form a federal system by uniting independent states, but rather by dividing a unitary state into provinces. Therefore, it is natural that the political structure of a unitary state would have an impact on federal Nepal. As a result, municipalities, districts, and provinces are also understood as a continuation of the village councils, districts, and development regions under the old unitary structure, although in a unitary state system, political units did not have any powers other than those granted by the center. However, under the current federal structure, the provinces and local levels have been recognized as governments and have been ensured of their rights and resources under the constitution. Similarly, in addition to the center, the provincial and local levels can also exercise legislative, executive, and judicial powers as governing authorities, although autonomous judicial powers at the provincial level have not been ensured in Nepal's federal system.

In the process of transforming the unitary state into a federal state in Nepal, it appears that for the first time, the thematic committee of the CA discussed the issue of establishing the main and special structures as the state structure, and the thematic committee also submitted a report accordingly. While submitting its report, the Constituent Assembly's thematic committee has emphasized the need to fundamentally involve ordinary citizens in the governance system by making them experience the benefits of the federal system. The HLSRRC (High Level State Restructuring Recommendation Commission) also submitted a report along the lines of the CA thematic committee, emphasizing the need to establish special structures for the self-recognition of social, religious, and cultural communities in addition to the main structures in the federal structure.

Although the CA's thematic committee and the State Restructuring Suggestions Commission have submitted their reports, the provisions in the report have not been effectively incorporated in the constitution. The constitution just incorporated the issues of special structures to social and cultural protection, and economic development without list of power for special structure, while the CA report and Commission's report had recommended a list of power for autonomous region (see annex below). The constitution neither entrenched a detail provisions on constituting special structures (autonomous, protected and special zones) nor listed any powers for as a part of constitutional mandates. The constitution just left these issues to federal and provincial laws. If legal authorities are not given to the special structure to be constituted under the constitution and federal law, it cannot deliver the result what the people expects. Because, there is a global consensus that when it comes to special structures, including autonomous regions, such structures cannot fulfill their duties in the absence of minimal legislative and executive powers (Benedikter, 2007, p. 76).

Considering the constitutional and legal provisions regarding the establishment and operation of the special structure, which was strongly raised by the Constituent Assembly and the Commission's report, its establishment has not yet been ensured. The Constitution provides that special, protected, and autonomous areas may be established for socio-cultural conservation or economic development only in accordance with federal law. Similarly, the Local Government Operation Act, 2017, which is a federal law issued accordingly, provides that the Government of Nepal, in consultation with the concerned provincial government, may establish special, protected or autonomous areas by publishing a notice in the Gazette. However, even after 10 years since the promulgation of the Constitution, special structures have not been established as per the Constitution and federal laws, and it is not possible to say with certainty when they will be established. In a context where the main structure under the federal structure has been constituted and operated through elections within a few years of the promulgation of the constitution, the fact that the special structure has not yet been determined remains a challenge to the implementation of the constitution. This has created a situation where questions can be raised about the roles of stakeholders, including political parties, leadership and policy makers. Certainly, these provisions of the constitution cannot be left alone without being implemented. This could prove to be a milestone for Nepal's diversity management and balanced development. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a detailed study and immediately implement the special structure-related provisions in order to full-fledged implementation of the constitution.

Conclusion

Nepal is still in the process of experiencing the federal system. In addition, the creation of special structures under the federal system and its practical use are yet to be done. In Nepal, although the existing main structure is appropriate for a balanced development and exercising state's powers, the main structure alone does not seem sufficient for diversity management. Essentially, Nepal's federal structure aims to make all citizens experience the benefits of federalism through diversity management. For this, the Constitution designers have made provisions in the Constitution itself regarding special structures to put the issues related to diversity management into practical use by forming special structures in addition to the main structures.

In Nepal, there are two structures of federalism, namely the main structure and the special structure, and without the special structure being practiced, debates have begun about the purpose of federalism itself. It is certainly ironic that the special structure clearly provided for in the Constitution and further organized by federal law has not been implemented even after ten years of the implementation of the Constitution. This requires the attention of policy and law makers and the government herself. Because in the context of Nepal, a special structure for managing diversity at the local level can prove to be an important milestone, and this system in Nepal can also become a subject of study for international scholars.

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Academic Enhancement of Learners for Quality Education

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Abstract

The pursuit of academic excellence and the establishment of quality benchmarks are essential for the sustainable growth of educational institutions. This study focuses on the academic enhancement initiatives and quality assurance mechanisms. By analyzing institutional strategies, teaching methodologies, and student engagement, this research highlights the role of collaborative efforts in fostering a culture of continuous improvement. The study presents the integration of modern pedagogical approaches, the adoption of international quality standards, and the emphasis on faculty development programs. Additionally, feedback systems and performance indicators are employed to ensure transparency and accountability. This research underscores best practices for implementation in higher education, aims at producing globally competent graduates and addressing societal needs. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on quality assurance in academic institutions, offering insights for similar organizations seeking sustainable development.

Key words: *conducive environment, collaborative culture, centre of learning and excellence, quality education*

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Introduction

Academic enhancement refers to programs, strategies, and practices aimed at improving a student's academic performance and overall educational experience. It can involve various approaches like tutoring, study skills workshops, time management techniques, and targeted support for specific learning needs (Zairi, 2013). Academic enhancement programs often focus on building essential skills like

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organization, planning, and critical thinking, which are crucial for academic success. Moreover, Zairi presents that academic enhancement encompasses the following themes:

Improving academic performance: This is the primary goal of academic enhancement. It aims to help students achieve better grades, improve their understanding of subject matter, and develop a stronger foundation for future learning.

Developing essential skills: Academic enhancement programs often focus on developing essential skills like organization, time management, note-taking, critical thinking, and test-taking strategies. These skills are crucial for success in higher education and beyond.

Targeted support: Academic enhancement can provide targeted support for students facing specific learning challenges or those who need additional assistance in certain areas, according to St. Norbert College.

Enrichment activities: Beyond basic support, academic enhancement can include enrichment activities that go beyond the standard curriculum, according to Magic EdTech. These activities can include study abroad opportunities, research projects, and internships, according to Crimson Education.

Focus on student success: Academic enhancement programs are designed to create a supportive learning environment that promotes student success. This can involve individualized attention, personalized learning plans, and ongoing monitoring of student progress.

Higher education institutions need commitment to academic excellence, a supportive learning environment, and intellectual growth of students from diverse backgrounds. Through the dedicated faculty, modern facilities, and continuous efforts for improvement, higher education institutions play a crucial role (Dhungel, 2009) .

Objectives the study

The objectives of this study were as follows:

- to examine the situation of learning culture for the quality of education
- to analyze the status of infrastructure and learning resources
- to evaluate the maintenance of continuous improvement in learning

Review of Literature

The literature review explores existing research and academic discussions on topics related to higher education enhancement, faculty development, infrastructure improvement, and student support systems. This provides a foundation for understanding the academic progress at higher education institution and situates its efforts within a broader national and global context. Now, the literature review is done in the following themes:

The word quality is a broad term which cannot be achieved with limited indicators. Dhungel (2009) asserts that quality education is a popular word among learners of educational activities. A person after completion of any educational level is considered ready to go to a society to live a dignified, decent and quality life when he or she is equipped with required knowledge and skills.

The question raised frequently is, are these people coming out of any level of education system equipped with necessary skills and knowledge to live a quality life? For example, how can a system with guess papers and coaching classes just a few weeks before the examination be taken an effective quality education system? Such questions evoked curiosity in me to search on quality education in Nepal. Therefore, the major purpose of this study is to explore the concept on quality indicator in education and its needs in a nation. I strive and struggle to unearth ideas on quality education. Quality is a beautiful blend of indicators such as infrastructure, teacher effectiveness, resource, training, curriculum, syllabus, textbook, professional development, input, process and output (Pandey, 2023).

Historically, the quality approach was originated from Japan, based on the works of renowned American experts like Crosby, Deming and Juran which revolutionized quality systems in Japan and USA (Zairi, 2013). The definition of quality should always be flexible for changing to cope with educational evolution and its continuous progress which is influenced by various changing factors; such as, politics, culture, and economy (Glasser, 1990). Quality is an abstract term which is a mixture of objective measures such as point scored in an exam of students and subjective measure such as the development of thought and character of students which can be viewed from the perspective of global market to be employed (Kunwar, 2018). So, quality refers to the internal and external efficiency of product in the global market. The vague term of 'Quality' has many meanings, but basically, it refers to the set of inherent properties of an object that allows satisfying state of persons.

The term quality is being used from a long history but it is very vague in itself. Quality refers to the high degree of significant level of anything to use. In the context of education quality of education is commonly and carelessly used in our day-to-day life of persons. Quality refers to the excellence and education refers to the knowledge and deals with excellence of knowledge (Rova, 1980). He has also added that the knowledge, capacity, efficiency empowerment and innate power development are the main aspects of quality education. Similarly, Pandey (2023) asserts that quality in education across the education system consists of the application of the principles as- effectiveness, empowerment, equity, sustainability, appropriateness and well-being or safety.

Promoting learning culture for quality education

Quality assurance is the activity of providing evidence needed to establish defined quality at work, and that activities that require good quality are being performed effectively. Improving the Quality of Education Enhancement is a process of improvement. Rova (1980) defines quality enhancement as "Procedures taken to improve quality" Quality enhancement is the deliberate process of change that leads to improvement (Pandey, 2023). Enhancement might involve: Abandoning something that is not working, Doing existing things better / more efficiently, Making better use of something , Expanding something that is considered to be desirable ,Adding new things to existing things, Doing entirely new things that replace or complement existing things and Improving capacity to do something different or new in the future. The process of quality enhancement involves a series of logical steps (LTSN, 2001) as follows.

1. Evaluating the current situation and context
2. Creating the conditions for change
3. Implementing changes
4. Evaluating whether change has made something better and making adjustments if necessary

To improve the quality of education, higher institutions focus on updating its curriculum to align with current academic standards and industry requirements. This ensures that students are learning the most relevant and up-to-date information in their fields of study. They also emphasize student-centered teaching methods, where interactive learning, group discussions, and practical applications of theoretical knowledge are encouraged. Faculty members are key to this process (Kunwar, 2018). They receive continuous professional development through seminar, workshops, training sessions, and access to research opportunities. By maintaining high academic standards and incorporating modern teaching tools, the institutions ensure that students are well-prepared for both higher education and the job market.

Enhancement of infrastructure and learning resources

To support academic excellence, higher institution has invested heavily in upgrading its infrastructure and learning resources. This includes the development of smart classrooms equipped with laptop, projectors and other tools, which allow for more dynamic and interactive teaching. The expansion of the library, with access to both physical and digital resources, provides students with a wealth of materials to support their studies. In addition, the establishment of well-equipped laboratories for computer science and technology courses enables students to engage in hands-on learning and research. These enhanced facilities ensure that students have the necessary tools and environment to maximize their academic potential.

Maintaining continuous improvement

Higher institution is committed to a process of continuous improvement to maintain its academic standards and stay competitive in the evolving educational landscape. Regular assessments of classwork and terminal examination, student feedback, and faculty performance are conducted to identify areas of improvement. It also stays center of technological advancements and incorporates new learning tools and platforms into the academic experience. In addition, regular curriculum reviews are held to ensure that programs remain relevant to both academic trends and industry demands. By embracing a culture of ongoing evaluation and adaptation, it ensures that it continues to offer a top-tier education to its students. These focused efforts help institution in achieving its objectives and sustaining its position as a leading institution for higher education.

Addressing educational challenges

In a rapidly changing academic landscape, educational institutions must constantly innovate and adapt. This study examines the challenges higher education institution faces, such as resource limitations and evolving student expectations, and how it addresses these challenges through targeted initiatives.

Inspiring other institutions

By outlining the strategies and successes of higher education institution, this study can serve as a model for other institutions looking to enhance their own academic quality. It provides insights into effective practices in faculty development, infrastructure improvement, and student support systems that other campuses can adopt.

Informing stakeholders

The study provides valuable information to various stakeholders, including students, parents, faculty, and policymakers. For students and parents, it offers a comprehensive overview of the institution's academic environment, helping them make informed decisions. For faculty and administrators, it highlights areas of strength and potential improvement.

Contributing to academic research

This study contributes to the growing body of research on higher education in Nepal. It offers specific insights into the academic dynamics of a key institution and its role in shaping the country's educational landscape.

Higher education in Nepal

Higher education in Nepal has undergone significant changes over the past few decades, with an increasing focus on improving quality and access. Nepalese universities and colleges have faced challenges such as limited infrastructure, insufficient faculty training, and outdated curricula. It has highlighted the importance of aligning higher education institutions in Nepal with global standards, focusing on the integration of research-based education and the need for continuous faculty development. Institution's investment in infrastructure and faculty training reflects these global trends. It aims at addressing the challenges outlined in the national education policies, which emphasize the need for producing globally competitive graduates, fostering academic research, and ensuring that faculty members are equipped with up-to-date skills to meet both local and international demands.

Continuous improvement in educational institutions

Continuous improvement models in education, inspired by Total Quality Management (TQM) principles, have gained popularity in higher education. According to Kunwar (2018), institutions that continuously assess and refine their processes, curricula, and teaching methods are more likely to meet the changing demands of students and society.

Challenges in higher education enhancement

While many studies discuss the benefits of academic enhancement, they also acknowledge challenges. Bjarnason and Lundgren (2009) discuss the difficulties institutions face in implementing changes, including resistance to new teaching methodologies, financial constraints, and a lack of access to modern educational technologies.

Academic achievement encompasses the knowledge and skills gained through formal education, typically measured by grades, test scores, and performance in various academic settings. It reflects a student's progress towards educational goals and is influenced by a multitude of factors, including individual abilities, motivation, and learning environments.

Key features of academic achievement

Measurable Outcomes: Academic achievement is assessed through various metrics, including grades, test scores (like GPA and SAT), and performance in assignments and projects. Content Mastery: It involves demonstrating understanding and proficiency in specific subjects or broader academic concepts. Progress Towards Goals: Academic achievement represents the progress a student makes towards achieving their educational goals and objectives. Diverse Factors: Success in academic endeavors is influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including: Individual Characteristics: Cognitive abilities, motivation, self-efficacy, and personality traits all play a role. Learning Environment: The quality of instruction, classroom environment, and peer influence can significantly impact academic performance. Home Environment: Parental support, socioeconomic status, and access to resources can also contribute to academic success. Engagement and Motivation: A student's level of engagement and intrinsic motivation towards learning are crucial for achieving academic success. Study Habits and Skills: Effective time management, study strategies, and learning skills are essential for maximizing academic potential (Bjarnason and Lundgren,2009)

From the aforementioned literature, it is deduced that academic achievement is a multifaceted concept that reflects a student's progress, competence, and motivation within the educational system. It is influenced by a combination of individual factors, learning environments, and supportive resources. Similarly, quality education is crucial for individual growth and societal advancement, fostering economic prosperity, social cohesion, and sustainable progress. It empowers individuals with knowledge, critical thinking skills, and the ability to adapt to a changing world. Additionally, quality education promotes informed citizenship, ethical behavior, and a sense of responsibility, contributing to a more equitable and just community.

Methodology

This study is based on qualitative method (Creswell,2009). An intensive in-depth information and insight have been reviewed (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The techniques that are used in this study are document review and reviewing theoretical knowledge. Relevant literature has been reviewed to make the study conceptually and theoretically reliable and authentic (Pandey, 2023). The study is based on secondary sources. The researcher has googled and visited the website in order to obtain information related to the themes of the study. Data are presented from books, journals and articles (Pandey, 2025).The writer has presented his own personal and professional knowledge and experiences to uncover ideas and knowledge on quality education. The study primarily relies on secondary data sources such as institutional reports, academic publications, online resources, and official websites. This data includes information on academic programs, faculty development initiatives, infrastructure improvements, and student achievements.

Analysis and Discussion

Quality education has profound impact for individuals, communities, and nations, impacting economic growth, social progress, and personal development. It empowers individuals to become more productive, contributes to stronger communities, and fosters innovation and leadership. It contributes to the individuals in these ways: Personal Development: Quality education equips individuals with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to pursue their dreams and live fulfilling lives. Economic Opportunity: It improves earning potential and provides access to better jobs and career opportunities. Social Mobility: Education can break down barriers and bridge socioeconomic gaps, allowing individuals to move up the social ladder. Quality education also contributes communities and nations in the following ways: Economic Growth: A skilled workforce is crucial for economic development, attracting businesses, stimulating growth, and generating tax revenue. Social Cohesion: Quality education fosters a sense of belonging and shared identity, leading to more cohesive and stable communities. Innovation and Leadership: Education cultivates future leaders and innovators, driving technological advancements and societal progress. Sustainable Development: Quality education is essential for addressing issues like poverty, inequality, and climate change, contributing to a more sustainable future. Improved Health Outcomes: Education empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their health, leading to better overall well-being(Bjarnason and Lundgren,2009).

Conclusion

Higher education institution has made remarkable strides in academic enhancement through its dedication to providing quality education, modern infrastructure, and comprehensive student support. It boasts a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs that prepare students for successful careers, supported by a highly qualified faculty engaged in continuous professional development. Recent infrastructure upgrades, including state-of-the-art classrooms, computer labs, and research facilities, have greatly enriched the learning experience. The campus's academic achievements are reflected in its high-performing students, notable alumni, and significant contributions to research and publications. With a focus on holistic development, higher education offers diverse extracurricular activities, student clubs, and career support, promoting personal growth and leadership.

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A Comparative Analysis of Buddhist Ethics with Modern Democracy

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Abstract

The fundamental purpose of this study is to compare Buddhist ethics with contemporary democracy and election procedures. Politicians, academics, and the general public rarely accept Buddhist democratic voting and dispute-solving methods. Buddhist communities have historically demonstrated democratic practices, but there is a significant gap in understanding their application in contemporary contexts. The investigation employed a hermeneutic framework and used theme analysis, a qualitative data analysis technique, to analyze the content of the literature review. The teachings of the Buddha are regarded as the cornerstone of contemporary democratic thought, which was first formed in South Asia before spreading to other parts of the globe. In both republican governments and Buddhist sanghas, the Buddha emphasized the value of representative voting as a democratic process that promotes democracy, humanist principles, and peace. The Buddhist theory has significant democratic implications because it is not a Western creation. Buddhist doctrine, which placed a high value on public institutions, accountability, transparency, and integrity, served as the foundation for the democratic government and assembly. It also had a big influence on vital social innovations and promoted freedom. The study concentrated on how important it is for the government, researchers, Bhikkhu Sangha, and the community to adopt Buddhist democratic norms and ethics because they encourage inclusive participation, accountability, transparency, and responsibility for governance. Future research should explore the integration of Buddhist-influenced government models into modern democracies to address existing systems of inefficiency.

Keywords*:* *democracy, election, philosophy, Buddhism, Buddhist ethics*

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Introduction

The Buddha favored democratic and representative government, promoting principles like citizen participation, deliberation, and transparency. His teachings, which emphasize equal rights, resistance to tyranny, and participatory governance, are pertinent to modern politics and consistent with Western liberal-democratic philosophy. "The Buddha's teachings are directly relevant to contemporary politics and are compatible with the governance of a modern democratic state." (Long, 2021, P. 8).

The Vinaya, a historical text, discusses the use of sticks in dispute settlements. If face-to-face procedures fail, both sides reflect, and the distributor is aware of the majority's support, bhikkhus can use a majority vote to settle disagreements when they are unable to come to an agreement. The procedure should avoid splits, Dhamma, cheating, assembly, and intimidation. (Thanissaro, 1994).

The Mahasamghika Vinaya and Mulasarvastivadavinaya give a very ceremonial character to the use of sticks at the Uposatha and Varsa. The Vinaya, a historical text, discusses the ceremonial use of sticks in dispute settlements, particularly at Uposatha and Varsa. According to Durt (1994), the Mahāsāṃghika sect emerged as the result of a majority decision obtained through a referendum conducted with counting sticks (śalākā), reflecting an established majority minority voting procedure (p. 466).

Sri Lankan Buddhists declared that democracy is not a Western-imposed concept but rather inherent in the Buddhist doctrine of individual freedom and responsibility. Democracy is a fundamental principle in the Buddhist doctrine of individual freedom and human responsibility for the common good of the nation (Moe, 2021). The three main facets of spirituality that the Ādhipateyya Sutta highlights are Dharma, the world, and the self. Understanding the purpose of Dharma, respecting oneself, and reflecting on oneself are all components of self-priority. While Dharma-priority concentrates on Buddha's teachings, which lead to wisdom and freedom, world-priority respects others (A3.40/1:147-150). The United Nations promotes democracy through human rights, development, peace, and security, promoting majority rule in countries where citizens elect their leaders. The Buddha advocated for democratic republics in his time, despite being aware of the growing influence of monarchies.

Buddha's ideals of kingship are rooted in his belief that the first human king was elected to uphold social order and his admiration for compassionate Cakkavattin rulers. (e.g., D.iii.58 –9)."(Harvey, 1990, P. 101). Buddhism asserts that everyone has the intrinsic right to liberty, including freedom from suffering and political persecution, and highlights the connections between human rights, peace, and progress. “Peace and economic, social, and cultural development are both conditions for and fruits of democracy. There is thus interdependence between peace, development, respect for and observance of the rule of law, and human rights.” (Bassiouni et al., 1997, p. 9).

Ambedkar, who claims that “On the first point, there is complete agreement between the Buddha and Karl Marx… The language is different, but the meaning is the same. If for misery one reads exploitation, Buddha is not away from Marx.” (Ambedkar, 2020, p. 4).

By holding frequent, free, and fair elections, the ancient Greeks sought to create a post-monarchy society. In his Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln said that "Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth." These words honour those who sacrificed their lives for democracy. (Gettysburg, 1863, p. 1**).** Hence, modern democracy and Buddhist democratic election processes are social and political phenomena that foster peace, progress, mutual appreciation, representative governance, and experience sharing among humans.

The Cakkavati Kings' Royal Virtues, including Dana, Ajjava, Pariccaga, Sila, Maddava, Tapa, Akkodha, Avihimsa, Avirodha, and Khanti, are considered the foundations of democracy and governance. The constitution, rule of law, individual liberties, civil liberties, and law enforcement are all upheld in modern democracies, which also permit participation and hold the state responsible. Everyone benefits when those who enjoy democracy actively defend the rights of others.

In Dhammacakkappavattanasuttaṁ the Buddha stated "Ayam-eva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo, Seyyathīdaṁ: "Sammā-diṭṭhi, sammā-saṅkappo, sammā-vācā, sammā-kammanto, sammā-ājīvo, sammā-vāyāmo, sammā-sati, sammā-samādhi." With Buddhism, the noble path; which consists of eight components contributes to contemporary democracy and peace. These elements include proper perspective, cognition, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and awareness. (Ānandajoti Bhikkhu, Vinaya Mahāvagga, 1).

In addition to teaching others about their goodness and brilliance, the Buddha encourages self-acceptance, self-truth, and self-sufficiency. Lok'ādhipateyya emphasizes world supremacy, respecting majority opinion, and prioritizing one's own ideas. Lokadhipateyya, the closest to contemporary democratic systems, teaches the majority to strictly follow the rules of law or righteousness. “In a negative sense, world-priority or "world-supremacy" is a measuring of others on how to manipulate or use others for the sake of self-glorification or selfish benefits." (Tan, 2007, P. 39).

A unique, democratic, humanistic, and logical political philosopher, the Buddha encouraged understanding, intellectual challenge, and the development of mental purity. He placed a higher value on respect, moral responsibility, and accountability than material belongings.

Statement of the problem

My focus has been on the role of Buddhism in modern democracy, specifically in relation to democratic ethics and election procedures. Buddhist philosophy emphasizes the value of practical involvement and academic education and can promote democratic ethics and electoral procedures. The study serves as an effort to close the gap between the fundamentals of modern democracy and a comparison of Buddhist democratic ethics and electoral procedures. National and local governments are not aware of Buddhist democratic ethics and electoral procedures, necessitating a focus on integrating Buddhist teachings into these areas. Despite the necessity of Buddhist democratic ethics and electoral procedures, there is a lack of consensus among political authorities and the academics. Despite the fact that democracy has long been a part of Buddhist governance and communities, most people are ignorant of its significance today.

Objective of the study

The study explores Pali Buddhist literature's description of Buddhist democratic procedures and modern democracy, aiming to inform policymakers, researchers, students, and individuals with insights and recommendations. It examines and analyzes the fundamental ideas about Buddhist democratic election practices in Pali Buddhist literature, comparing Buddhism with modern democracy.

Delimitation:

It could take up to six months to finish the search. Geographical restrictions do not apply. There are certain limits when comparing the results to both modern democracy and traditional Buddhist democracy. Among the target groups on a global scale are scholars, governments, and college students.

Methodology

The study employed Buddhist resources and secondary data sources, including books, papers, radio speeches, internet articles, documents, and discourses. The literature study process utilized hermeneutic philosophy, thematic analysis, and qualitative data.

Review of Literature

According to Ambedkar B. R. (2020), the parallel between Karl Marx and Buddha could be interpreted as a joke. There is no cause for surprise in this. Marx and Buddha are separated by 2381 years. Buddha was born in 563 BC, and Karl Marx in 1818 AD. Karl Marx is thought to be the builder of a new ideology-polity, or economic system. The Buddha, on the other hand, is thought to be nothing more than the creator of a religion with no connection to politics or economics. The title of this essay "Buddha or Karl Marx," which implies either a comparison or a contrast between two such persons separated by such a long period of time and busy with various fields of thought, is bound to seem strange.

Marxists may easily scoff at it and mock the very concept of putting Marx and Buddha on the same level. What might a Marxist learn from the Buddha? What can the Buddha teach a Marxist?

Comparing the ideologies of the two individuals is appealing and enlightening, as they have read each other and are interested in their perspectives. The concept of Ahimsa is typically linked to the Buddha. It is believed to be the entirety of his teachings.

According to Eugénie Merieau (2022), Thailand's constitutional order, influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism, is a blend of constitutional monarchy and Buddhist kingship.

The doctrines were derived from religious texts, treatises, and tales, and were expressed in the Phrathammasat portion of the Three Seals Code. In the late nineteenth century, Siam modernized legal categories, combining Thai modern legal concepts with indigenous ones rooted in Buddhism. The 2017 Constitution of Thailand was granted by King Vajiralongkorn, presenting it as rooted in ancient Thai law. However, the doctrinal bricolage faces challenges due to legal supremacy competition. The Three Seals Code, a reconstructed version of Siam's old laws, is a key aspect of Thai constitutionalism.

Harvey Peter (1990) shed light on the Buddha's view of governance and kingship during his lifetime. The Buddha appeared to prefer semi-democratic republics, but he was well aware of the growing dominance of monarchy. Democratic Republics:

The Buddha seems to favor the government arrangements of semi-democratic republics popular during his time. These republics allowed for citizen engagement and representation in decision-making processes. Although the Buddha preferred democracies, he recognized monarchies' growing strength. Monarchies were gaining popularity, and he recognized their strength.

The Buddha's view of kingship was based on two major ideas: Historical Origins: He held that the first king in human history was chosen by the people to keep social order. Compassionate monarchs: The Buddha respected previous Cakkavattin monarchs. These rulers governed wisely and benevolently, putting their subjects' well-being first. In conclusion, the Buddha's ideals of kingship were influenced by both historical precedent and a vision of compassionate leadership. His teachings highlighted the importance of moral rulers who worked for the good of their people.

According to Huburt Durt (1974), the current study is an outline of the essay "Chu" (Skr. Salaka, Pali salaka, Stick), which will be published in the Vth edition of the Hobogirin. This study aims to study a few rules found in both the earliest Codes of Discipline (Vinaya) and the more recent Pure Regulations (Shinigi) of the Zen Sect, all of which deal with the topic of counting sticks.

The counting stick (salaka) and the majority/minority rule were used in Nepal and ancient India for a variety of purposes, ranging from medical and hygienic to counting and voting. There could also be qualitative uses for the sticks, such as expressing differing ideas. In that situation, additions were accomplished using counting sticks of various shapes or colors. This use appears to have been recognized outside of the Samgha, as evidenced by King Virudhaka's submission of the town of Kapilavastu. The stick is used to express a personal will, similar to the ostracon in Greek democracy and the ballot in current polls. This technique was employed when it appeared like things would get out of hand or be ignored (alajussanna).

According to Long W. J (2021), doctrinal Buddhist political and economic theory, as well as its ideas regarding interstate relations, are based on a unique understanding of reality. Some readers may be startled to learn that Buddhism includes a political theory. However, Buddha spoke extensively on politics, contradicting Max Weber's famous claim that Buddhism was "a specifically apolitical and anti-political status religion." Although the overarching purpose of Buddha's teachings is to liberate individuals from widespread suffering, politics was important to Buddha, not because of its intrinsic value but because it generated an external environment that could promote or impede an individual's pursuit of pleasure, which he characterized as spiritual growth and the attainment of enlightenment about the true nature of oneself and the universe.

Although most known for his teachings on human liberation, Buddha was also a unique social and political philosopher who was also rationalistic, humanistic, and democratic. Buddha's social teachings are similar to modern democratic ideology, mixed market economy, and humanistic international relations in Western societies.

According to Varma C. (2018), Buddhist polity is founded on the Buddhist concept of mind, and historically, the Buddhist perspective of mind is best demonstrated by Emperor Asoka's knowledge of good administration and polity through his understanding and definitions of Dhamma. Despite being a Buddhist, he was equally concerned for all of his subjects, regardless of their geographical, racial, communal, or sectarian allegiance. Furthermore, he was always available to answer an administrative summons for the sake of his duties.

His non- discriminatory welfare measures were to be restricted not only within his territory but also to the bordering areas and frontiers to the extent of the territories of the Greek king Antiochus; e.g., the Rock Edict II Girnar version records that Asoka made separate medicinal provisions for both men and cattle; plantation of medicinal herbs, plants, and fruit-yielding trees; and the construction of drinking wells.

Discussion

Notwithstanding, the Buddha's teachings on monarchy and republicanism had a major impact on the development of democracy throughout the world in the fifth century BC**.** The Buddha had a great deal of respect for the earlier republican movement and sought to use his principles to make these interactions more amicable. According to Long (2021), “the Buddha’s political thinking parallels Western liberal-democratic thought with its emphasis on equal rights, protection against tyranny via equality before the law, and participatory and deliberative governance” (pp. 35–50).

According to Buddhist tradition, the Mahāsammata theory proposes a merit-based legal foundation for kingship and an elective procedure: the people gathered and appointed Mahāsammata as king, who was acknowledged across the four continents and endowed with the seven gem attributes associated with a Cakravartin (Tambiah, 1989, pp. 101–122). In the Aggañña Sutta of the Pali Canon, Buddha discusses the concept of aristocrats, elected by the people, managing society and building democracy. The primary decision made by the people is to form a democracy through election, resulting in a two-class system: rulers and participants. “Since the Buddha explains that this idea affects democracy and the evolution of society, the expression "elected by the people" refers to a ruler who is chosen by the people, emphasizing their duties and advancing the virtue of mercy." (Bhikkhu Sujato, trans., 2018, *The Elected King*, para. 10). Although elected representatives participate in legislative and policymaking processes in representative democracies, the Shakyan legislature requires an elected president and oversight to function effectively. "The Buddha was born in the Shakyas tribe, where his father, Suddhodana, held the title of raja for twelve years, which appears to have been an elected presidency or chairmanship of sorts and not a hereditary kingship."(Norbu, 2020, para. 4). According to "Sièyes's eighteenth-century perspective, modern democracy is a representative form of government in which politicians are charged with looking out for the interests of the country." (Stapelbroek, 2013, p. 4). In the sixth century BCE, Nepal's Shakyas established a powerful republic in Kapilbastu, the capital of Sakya, and the Buddhist text reveals that they established four republics and fourteen monarchical states during Buddha's time. Gandhara and Khamboja belong to Uttarapatha, or the northwest division of Jambudvīpa.

Buddha's teachings on monarchy and republicanism significantly influenced the global rise of democracy in the fifth century BC, emphasizing equal rights, protection against tyranny, and participatory governance.

In his landmark address in 1949, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar stated that democracy is not a Western invention while delivering the final draft of the Indian Constitution. In a radio broadcast, Ambedkar (1954) stated, "Positively, my social philosophy is enshrined in three words: liberty, equality, and fraternity." Let no one, however, say that I have borrowed my philosophy from the French Revolution. No. I have derived them from the teachings of my master, the Buddha." (Ambedkar, 1954). Hence, the Buddha brought democracy to new life. One more: "Ambedkar pointed out that by becoming a parliamentary constituency 'again,' India is back to its Buddhist roots: 'It is not that India did not know parliaments or parliamentary procedure.' (Jaffrelot, 2017, p. 5).

The Buddha, in the Mahaparinibban Sutta, referred to Ananda as one of the eight liberations. So, what are the eight? ' 1) Awareness of one's shape; 2) Forms seen outwardly; 3) Seeking unending beauty; 4) Living in an infinite void; 5) Infinite consciousness; 6) In the field of emptiness; 7) In neither awareness nor non-perception; 8) In the cessation of perception and feeling. A process of self-awareness, vision, and understanding is required to reach each of these stages." (Sister Vajira

& Francis, trans., 1998, Dīgha Nikāya 16). In contrast to contemporary openness to democracy and liberty, these suttas address liberation from oneself, or self-realization.

Buddhism values human dignity and liberty, as seen in the French revolutionaries' fight for equality in 1789. They sacrificed political liberty and brotherhood for this goal, demonstrating the importance of human dignity in Buddhism.

The assessment of democratic processes should be based on their actual actions rather than expected outcomes, by evaluating specific operational factors. "(i) Access and openness of public institutions to the citizenry without discrimination or intimidation; (ii) Transparency in the workings of public institutions; (iii) Integrity of the processes; and (iv) Accountability mechanisms capable of effecting outcomes and effectively redressing wrongs." (Bassiouni, et al., 1997, p. 22). To protect Vajjians and promote republican advancement, the Buddha counseled the Vrijji Mahajanapada to embrace the seven attributes of the Satta Aparihāniyā Dhammā. It emphasizes communication, accountability, equality, and complementarity, prioritizing women's security, respecting seniors, Arahants and predicting advancement. Venerable Piyadassi Thera (1961) observes that the Buddhist position on racism and racial discrimination, articulated at a very early stage, closely aligns with the moral and scientific perspective later adopted by UNESCO in its Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (1978, p. 1). The Buddha advocated that everyone has "Buddha nature," or the innate value and potential for enlightenment, before he passed away, refusing to name Devadatta a successor.

Adhikaraṇa-samathā:

The Buddha's teachings remain important today, guiding a country's leadership and encouraging civic participation, which would have included voting in a democratic system. The seven rules for settling cases outline principles and processes for settling four types of concerns: disagreement, charge, crime, and responsibility. Every two weeks, the Buddhist Sangha resolves disputes and disciplinary issues among monastics by reciting seven rules from the Pratimoksha. (Vinay IV, 207-351) mentions one of seven techniques for resolving disputes: sammukhā-vinaya, sati-vinaya, amūḷha°, paṭiññā, yebhuyyasikā, tassa-pāpiyyasikā, and tīṇ'avatthāraka (M. II, 247). The monastic order uses Adhikaraṇa-samathā to resolve problems.

"Yebhuyyasikā, "according to the majority," i.e., a vote of majority of the Chapter; name of one of the adhikaraṇa-samathas, or means of settling a dispute." (Pali Eng. Dictionary, A. I, 99; IV, 144. P. 558). "If the Community cannot settle the matter, they should go to a monastery where there are more bhikkhus and ask them to help settle the matter.” (Thanissaro, 7, 1994). “The process should also not cause the Sangha to break up, and tickets should be acquired in line with the Dhamma.” (Bucknell, 2022). It prioritizes the well-being of the community and promotes sound judgment.

Adhikaraṇa-samathā is a Buddhist principle ensuring decisions align with teachings. Each bhikkhu has one vote in this democratic process. The Canon describes seven reconciliation practices in Buddhist monasteries during the 6th century B.C.

Electoral Process:

The term "Electoral Process" refers to all phases of the election and all election-related technology, such as voter registration, candidate nominations, campaigning, polling, results announcement, tallying, and handling of issues and complaints. In the Buddhist sangh, “The community decisions were taken by vote and differences were settled by consensus.”(Dalai Lama, 1993, p. 3).

Buddha's Sangha regulations promote consultation, democratic processes, equality, politeness, transparency, decentralized administration, individual autonomy, civics-focused education, and a stable moral basis for a fair global democratic system and enlightenment. “Three modes of voting can be found in the Buddhist voting system underlying their democratic principle. (Varma, 2018, p. 73), they are as follows:

(i) Guhlaka: the secret voting method:

Mahasamghika, a Buddhist sect, conducted a referendum using voting sticks and counting sticks, with each voter receiving instructions on a specific sālaka, or private voting procedure. “On the juridical use of those counting sticks (salaka), i.e., their use in determining a majority when a contested decision has to be taken; also, the relative importance attached' either to individual opinion or, in other cases, to the unanimity of the Buddhist Community (Samgha).” (Durt, 1994, p. 470). Routledge (2022) notes, “One of the most historically significant allies in the battle for democracy is the secret ballot” (p. 1). Secret ballots offer defense against corruption, fraud, and propaganda, while private polling places allow voters to view recorded ballots without disclosing the candidate's identity. **“**By having frequent, free, and fair elections, politicians and governments can be kept in check. However, it is worth noting there is a risk associated with such a system.” (Ben Barr, 2020, p. 3).

(ii) Sakanna Jappaka: whispering technique in the ear:

“The Whisper Method Manifestation is a Law of Attraction technique used to positively influence the thoughts or actions of another person.” (Shamonique , 2021, p. 1). Buddhist assemblies employ a distinctive silent Sakanna Jappaka voting and counting method that allows participation by both knowledgeable and less-educated members. This approach contrasts with traditional voting procedures that rely on verbal responses such as “yes” or “no” during parliamentary meetings (University of Minnesota, 2014).

(iii) Vivataka: the open method:
Poll workers regularly apply dhammā to maintain decorum and civility during meetings, particularly when the majority of voters uphold established norms. The term vivaṭaka an adjectival form derived from vivaṭa + -ka denotes an “open” or non-secret procedure, as recorded in the Vinaya (Vin. II, 99, p. 637).

The Buddhist Bhikshu Sanghas had a reputation for being well-versed in Sangha procedures, which included ballot voting, resolutions, seating arrangements, and gestures. The Buddha modified these rules, which may have been the laws of the governmental assemblies of his time, for use in Sangha meetings.

The Buddha promoted consultation and democratic processes in the order community, allowing members to vote on general concerns. His emphasis on equality, decency, and the innate worth and capacity for enlightenment in all people was a foundational idea with political ramifications.

A transparent democracy with decentralized administration allows individual autonomy and empowerment, preventing negative advertising and providing civics-focused education.

Democracy is universally beneficial and needs a stable and moral basis for a fair, free global democratic system, as established by Buddha. Buddhism's democratic election process promotes peace, progress, and representative governance, with the Cakkavati Kings' Royal Virtues serving as its foundations.

Findings

The Buddha's political thought challenges Max Weber's anti-political view, positing no-self and rejecting social stratification theory.

The eight liberations are described in the Mahaparinibban Sutta, emphasizing self-liberation, proving that Buddhism and democracy can coexist peacefully, and advancing everyone's equality and dignity.

Vajjians, who adhere to the teachings of the Buddha, value equality, accountability, and cooperation more than they do democracy? Consequently, they advocate for peace, economic growth, inclusive engagement in mutually beneficial decisions, and the rights of women, the elderly, and Arahants.

Adhikaraṇa-samathā, a Buddhist principle, outlines seven rules for resolving disputes among monastics, promoting decision-making and community well-being. Three modes of voting exist in the Buddhist voting system: Guhlaka (secret voting), Sakanna Jappaka (whispering in the ear method), and Vivataka (open method).

A unique social and political philosopher, the Buddha was democratic, humanistic, and logical; his ideas are comparable to modern democratic ideology and humanistic relationships abroad in global societies.

The Buddha emphasized group decision-making on broad issues and cherished consultation and democratic processes that tackled urgent problems, such as contemporary democratic parliamentary systems.

Buddhist doctrine was both political and anti-political. Buddha's teachings aim to free people from extensive suffering, yet this is not their main goal.

The Buddha saw politics as a tool for social development and valued it not for its inherent value but rather for its influence on a person's environment of pleasure-seeking.

Elections are an essential component of representative democracy, a contemporary type of democracy that depends on competitive elections to choose its political leaders.

Buddha held that the ultimate purpose of life is happiness, that ignorance traps people in a never-ending cycle of frustration and grief, and that understanding frees them.

Conclusion

Buddhism, with its historical roots and benevolent rulers, places a strong emphasis on respect, moral responsibility, and accountability, and Buddha's philosophy encourages democratic ideology, liberty, self-respect, and selflessness.

In addition to highlighting equality, responsibility, and cooperation, Buddhist governance prioritizes peace, economic development, and the rights of women, the elderly, and Arahants. Consultation, democratic procedures, equality, civility, openness, decentralized administration, personal freedom, civics-oriented education, and a solid moral foundation for a just international democratic system are all encouraged by the Buddhist governance rules.

Buddhist principles include Adhikaraṇa-samathā, seven rules for resolving disputes among monastics, and three modes of voting. The majority of political scientists agree that democracy, political parties, and elections are essential components of democratic governance, which is compatible with Buddhist electoral procedures.

The Buddha's teachings emphasize liberty, equality, and fraternity in democratic governance, warning against dictatorship and advocating for citizen participation, freedom of expression, voting, decision respect, open public discourse, and rule of law supremacy. Hence, the Buddha is unquestionably the inventor and founder of modern democracy because of his liberal-democratic and republican political theories, which contributed to the growth of democracy from the fifth century BCE to the present.

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Factors Affecting Students' Motivation on Learning in Higher Education

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Abstract

This review article explores on the factors that motivate and demotivate students' learning. It analyzes how students are motivated towards learning, and why they are not motivated in their learning with detail exploration on the role of relevant stakeholders towards students' motivation. The available literature shows that motivation comes from different sources such as physiological needs, social needs, self-esteem needs, teachers' behavior, parents' dealing, educational leaders, peer effects, curriculum, policy and resources. The study is based on secondary sources of data. Books, journals, theses and documents related to students' motivation were reviewed to stand strong conceptually and theoretically. The study explored that student, teacher, administration, environment and policy related factors affect much on students' motivation in higher education.

Key-Words: *motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic factors, learning, quality education*

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Introduction

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Education is understood to be the primary factor for the cultivation and growth of the civilized society. Its main purpose is to prepare individuals of society to be self-sufficient. Apart from this, education of the various practical fields produces productive citizens who can contribute to the creation and development of the nation providing people with the tools, attitudes and knowledge they need to know to participate in the present day world. The main aim of education is to develop the knowledge on mind. It implies to the learning capacity to know and developing one's concentration, memory skills and ability to think. They have added that knowledge produces the reasoning power, imagination, physical ability, communication skill and aptitude skills in the subject. The initial stage of learning starts from the concentration on any object. The process of learning gradually changes towards the memory (Pandey, 2023). Better education helps to flourish individual's capacities, potentialities, skills, attitudes and behavior. Education is a crucial factor for national development. A country is developed socially, economically and technologically through the development of education. Classroom is the best place and teacher is the main actor for the quality education. It enhances the productivity of the learners. Providing quality education to all citizens is the prime responsibility of the government (Bandhu et al., 2024). Quality education is judged by the contents of our students' character, the knowledge and skills they have learned and the aptitude and value they possess.

The abstract term 'motivation' on its own is rather difficult to define (Ur, 1996). Generally, motivation is an inner drive, impulse, and desire to encourage somebody to do something. It can be assessed in terms of motivated and demotivated learners. Motivated learners are those who are eager to invest effort in teaching learning activities. Harmer (1991) says motivation is some kind of internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action. Williams and Burden (1997) assert that motivation is more than one's desire, curiosity, and arousing interest in the classroom. It also involves sustaining interest and investing time and energy into putting in the necessary effort to achieve certain goals. Moreover, they say that motivation is a state of cognitive and emotional arousal which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and or physical effort to attain previously set goal or goals. This definition includes three major points- arousing interest, deciding to act or to do something and sustaining the effort. Motivation refers to the strength of the inner drive to achieve professional goals.

Motivation stimulates appropriate behaviour, required to ensure that teachers perform their duties. Without inspiration and motivation the best powers of the mind remain passive. There is a fuel in us which needs to be kindled with sparks. Good teaching is infused with pleasure, passion, creativity, challenge, joy, and a passionate vocation. Khati, (2008) remarks that a teacher who loves teaching and teaches with enthusiasm as well as eagerness show his or her own motivation to teach his or her students.

Students' motivation in learning can be affected by different factors. These include their emotional, expressive and affective experiences (Pintrich and De Groot, 1990; Deci, 2014), previous learning experiences and culturally rooted socialization, such as gender and ethnic identity (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000). For example, Yair (2000) conducted a study to investigate the effects of instructions on students' learning experiences. The result showed that structured instructions are better able to improve the learning experiences, which leads to higher motivation of the students. In short, research suggests that students' motivation affect the academic performance, and motivation itself is impacted by other factors.

Whether Bachelor level students are motivated or not on their learning is the main problem we are going to address in this study. Questions have been raised about factors that affect students' motivation such as: What motivational factors and behavior do students release and demonstrate in the classroom learning? How do students associate learning with their livelihood? Does peer effect matter in motivation? What is contribution of teacher to motivate students? What is the role of stakeholders to motivate learners in their study? Why do students go to the canteen instead of the class in their learning time? Why are not students regular in the classes? Why is the turnover rate of the students increasing? Do the university policy and curriculum matter in the motivation of learners? Up to now, far too little attention has been paid to these nascent questions. These questions have given us curiosity to explore on motivation of learners.

Much uncertainty still exists on motivational factors of students in learning. Therefore, this study will investigate and explore on factors affecting students' motivation on learning in community campuses. The following cases inculcate and evoke us curiosity to research and reveal the reality specifically on students' motivation towards learning.

One of the students of Bachelor Level third year said, "When I was in class, we had a teacher who used to teach English. But he never motivated me to learn. He entered the class without any preparation. He asked the students to give the topic and page number of their book. He entered the class and either started writing on the board or gave lectures. Some students used to ignore his teaching; instead they sat on the last bench and made a noise. He did not involve, encourage and inspire me in learning."

Another student said, "I look to teachers for approval and positive reinforcement, and I am more likely to be enthusiastic in learning if I feel my work is recognized and valued. Those teachers who are friendly and share funny stories before starting the class motivate me. Such teachers are able to grab my attention and I also get interested in what the teacher is teaching in the class. I get inspired by those teachers who do not limit us within the course book only. I prefer to study with those teachers who also suggest us to learn from other books, internet and magazines. Whenever I ask any question to a teacher, if s/he is able to convince me with his/her answers, then, I like to study with such teachers. Various programmes are organized in the college during different occasions. And some teachers give speech that are full of useful information — like how we should move ahead in our student life to make our future bright. Such speeches motivate me to do well in my studies. Teachers should encourage open communication and free thinking with students to make them feel important. Teachers should be enthusiastic to teach. They should praise students often. They should recognize them for their contributions. If teachers' classroom is a friendly place where students feel heard and respected, they will be more eager to learn. A good job or nice work or good effort or sounds better can motivate us."

One of the female students said, "I think even after I pass B.Ed, I am not optimistic that I will get job. I knew that my friends are working in the institutional schools in a low salary which is not timely as well. My husband is in Saudi for work. Attitude of a teacher determines whether s/he can motivate or demotivate a student. In my case, I am not motivated when teachers judge me only on the basis of marks I have obtained in exams, and do not pay any attention to the effort I have put for my studies. But when a teacher makes me realize about my mistakes in front of the class, I take it in a positive manner. It motivates me to correct my mistakes and do better in future. But if a teacher does not answer my question, I get demotivated."

The team discussed and realized that the policy did not favour the students. One has to spend four years which of course is a long journey to pass Bachelors in Education. The intake of male students is less than female students. The students are not regular and punctual in their study. The drop-out number in male students is higher than female students. It is known that many male students have left the country for the employment in the gulf countries. After a prolonged discussion we cultivated an idea on motivation. To our understanding an engaged and motivated student is one who is intrinsically motivated to learn—that is, motivated from a desire for competence and understanding, or simply from a love of learning, rather than a desire for a good grade, a teacher's approval, or acceptance into a good college.

Objectives

This study has the following objectives:

1. To explore students' perceptions and practices on motivation
2. To investigate the demotivating factors of students in their learning
3. To uncover out the role of teachers in students' motivation

Literature Review

Here, available literature is reviewed on factors affecting students' motivation in the community campuses. According to researchers Sheldon and Biddle (1998), a huge literature now documents the relative advantages of intrinsic motivation. Although externally-motivated persons can demonstrate impressive feats of short-term, rote learning, intrinsically motivated learners retain such rote material longer, demonstrate a stronger understanding of both rote and more complex material, and demonstrate greater creativity and cognitive flexibility. This happens because intrinsically-motivated persons are more wholly engaged and absorbed in their activities, bringing more of their previous knowledge and integrative capacities to bear in their pursuit of new understanding and mastery.

According to McCombs (n.d.), many students do not see the current educational content and practices as intrinsically interesting and engaging or relevant to their desired goals and personal interests. They also do not see the context as one that supports basic personal and social needs, such as to be self-determining, competent, and connected to others (p. 4). Particularly troubling is evidence that students who already have risk factors associated with academic failure are the least likely to receive the type of schooling that promotes engagement (Goodwin, 2000). Many obstacles make it difficult for universities to engage students. For example, the type of instruction that is likely to engage all students requires that teachers invest considerable time in planning and preparation. Without sufficient time, teachers cannot "prepare simulations, organize projects and games, analyze novels, and preview videos and films" (Hootstein, 1994, p. 215), much less adapt the instruction to the interests and needs of each unique learner in their classroom. Educating students for engagement may also require greater financial investment as teachers seek to supplement the school's standard materials and resources.

Although research attests that students are most likely to be engaged in learning when they are active and given some choice and control over the learning process—and when the curriculum is individualized, authentic, and related to students' interests—surveys of classroom practices reveal that instruction emphasizing student passivity, rote learning, and routine is the rule rather than the exception (Goodlad, 1984; Yair, 2000).

According to education researchers, learners have certain basic psychological needs and are most likely to become engaged in the learning process when the learning environment is compatible with those needs (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992; McCombs, n.d.). For example, humans are driven by a need to achieve competence (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992), and their beliefs or expectations about their ability to perform certain tasks successfully influence future learning. When learners perceive that they have been successful at an endeavor, they are more likely to be motivated to learn in the future and to persist when faced with a difficult task; conversely, when learners have a history of failure, it becomes difficult to sustain the motivation to keep trying (Anderman & Midgley, 1998).

Humans also need to feel securely connected to others and "worthy and capable of love and respect" (Stipek, 1996, p. 101). They are motivated to achieve when they feel that they are able to make a positive contribution to the group (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Learners are most likely to feel that they are genuine members of a community when the group is organized around a clear purpose, when they are treated as valued and respected members of the group, and when they are treated with fairness (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992). People also want to be physically and psychologically safe, and, when faced with physical or psychological threats, they are less motivated to learn (Jensen, 1998).

As Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) write, "Learners of all ages are more motivated when they can see the usefulness of what they are learning" (p. 49). Similarly, humans are driven to exercise control over their own activities, and learners are more likely to be motivated to learn when they believe that their actions are internally initiated and when they have opportunities to regulate their own actions or make choices (Alderman, 1999; McCombs, n.d.; Sheldon & Biddle, 1998). Learners who do not believe that they have control or choice are less likely to expend the effort necessary to learn.

All students must have opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes of the school and to regulate and direct their own learning. Schools should encourage students to take responsibility for "regulating their own learning and for being self-determined and autonomous learners," for when choices are given to students, "the evidence is clear that student motivation, learning, and performance are enhanced" (McCombs, n.d., pp. 7–8). Researchers emphasize that the choices students receive must be authentic—and not token measures intended to pacify students.

Schools should organize themselves as communities that foster caring relationships between all members of the school community and treat all members fairly. Students are motivated to learn when they believe that their teachers care about their education and about them personally; therefore, they must have opportunities to share their ideas and perspectives, and schools must demonstrate to them that their perspectives are valued (McCombs, n.d., pp. 8–9). They should create a sense of community and common purpose; at the same time, they should recognize the diversity and individuality of each member of the community.

Whenever possible, instruction should be tied to topics and problems that naturally interest students (Ormrond, 1995; Stipek, 1996). Teachers should make connections between students' prior knowledge and experiences and illustrate the connection between the curriculum and the real world (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Rather than emphasizing that students learn material because it will be on the test, teachers should underscore the relevance of classroom instruction to students' personal lives and future aspirations (Ormond, 1995; Sheldon & Biddle, 1998). Motivational researchers insist that curriculum and instruction should be culturally relevant to promote student engagement, for "when students' community voices are underrepresented or devalued in the curriculum, students may feel silenced in classroom activities" (Kordalewski, 1999, p. 2). As Ark and Wagner (2000) write, "Our collective and idealized memory" of schools "may be the greatest impediment that we face" (p. 3). Teachers, too, may be uncomfortable modifying long-standing habits of instruction, believing that the safety of the tried-and-true method outweighs the risks associated with innovation.

The application of motivation theories in learning has been much discussed in the past decades (Credé and Phillips, 2011; Gopalan et al., 2017) and applied in different types of context areas and target populations, such as vocational training students (Expósito-López et al., 2021), middle school students

(Hayenga and Corpus, 2010) and pedagogies, including experiential learning and service learning (Li et al., 2016). Motivation is defined in learning as an internal condition to arouse, direct and maintain people's learning behaviors (Woolfolk, 2019).

Based on the self-determination theory, motivation is categorized as intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Intrinsically motivated learners are those who can always "reach within themselves" to find a motive and intensity to accomplish even highly challenging tasks without the need for incentives or pressure. In contrast, extrinsically motivated behaviors are motivated by external expectation other than their inherent satisfactions (Ryan and Deci, 2020).

To conceptualize student motivation, Eccles et al. (1983) proposed the expectancy-value model of motivation with two components: (a) expectancy, which captures students' beliefs about their ability to complete the task and their perception that they are responsible for their own performance, and (b) value, which captures students' beliefs about their interest in and perceived importance of the task. In general, research suggests that students who believe they are capable of completing the task (expectancy) and find the associated activities meaningful or interesting (value) are more likely to persist at a task and have better academic performance (Fincham and Cain, 1986; Paris and Okab, 1986; Kaplan and Maehr, 1999).

Motivating the learner to learn is pertinent to curriculum implementation. This is because motivation is an influential factor in the teaching-learning situations. The success of learning depends on whether or not the learners are motivated. Motivation drives learners in reaching learning goals. It is important to recognize the fact that motivating learning is a central element of good teaching (Ryan and Deci, 2017). This implies that learners' motivation is probably the single most important element of learning. Learning is inherently hard work; it is pushing the brain to its limits, and thus can only happen with motivation. Students' motivation to learn is of special importance because students' mere presence in the class is of course, not a guarantee that students want to learn. It is only a sign that students live in a society where children are required to attend school. Highly motivated learners are likely to learn readily, and make any class fun to teach, while unmotivated learners may likely learn very little and generally make teaching painful and frustrating (Woolfolk, 2019). Since modern education is compulsory, teachers cannot take learners' motivation for granted, and they have a responsibility to ensure learners are motivated to learn. Teachers must persuade learners to want to do what they ought to do.

Motivational Model

Maslow (1970) presents the following motivational model on Hierarchy of Needs. The study tests, verifies and validates Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Stipeck's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation models. It is linked with the theoretical framework. However, the self-actualization need is not considered in our study.

Physiological needs (hunger, sleep, thirst)
Safety needs (need for security, order and protection from pain and fear)
Love needs (need for love, affection and social acceptance)
Esteem needs (need to gain competence, approval and recognition)

Self-actualization needs (need to realize one's potential and capabilities and gain understanding and insight). As Stipek (1996) writes in the Handbook of Educational Psychology, engaged and motivated students are more likely to approach tasks eagerly and to persist in the face of difficulty. They are also more likely to seek opportunities for learning when the extrinsic awards are not available for example, after formal schooling has been completed positioning them to learn more over time than their disengaged peers. Engagement with motivation promotes a higher quality of learning. Intrinsic motivation increases learning.

Factors Affecting Student Motivation

Motivation is mainly of two types that can be related with the academic achievement of the students. These two types of motivations are characterized by extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation is narrated to the inner abilities of the students to interact with their environment in order to achieve their required and predetermined goals. Conversely extrinsic motivation refers to the fact that people are motivated towards the external sources through assorted kinds of rewards and grades (Tanveer, et al. 2012).

Student's motivation is the essential element for quality teaching and learning process. Five key constituents have momentous impacts on student's motivation to learn. These factors are teachers' interaction with their students, class environment and class size. Thus a teacher must be trained, dedicated and responsive to educate their children (Whiting, et al. 2008). On the other hand the curriculum content should be passable and relevant towards the present day needs. But on the other hand individual disparities among the students can influence their motivational level with respect to time management, educational background and learning proficiencies etc (Dean and Dagostino, 2007). Teachers can play a vital role in increasing the motivation among the students by the subsequent techniques that encompass: (1) Usage of inventive teaching methodologies (2) Devotion of teachers towards their students (3) Creation of passionate learning environment for the classroom and (4) Promotion of practical work experience (Quinn and Eckerson, 2010; Sutherland, 2005).

The incentives given to the students are indispensable in increasing their level of motivation. Tangible and non-tangible incentives given by the teachers and parents are also worth mentioning factors that have an indispensable influence on the students motivation level (Ali, et al. 2011). Tangible rewards include monetary rewards and certificates of academic achievement while the non-tangible rewards include acknowledgement and hard work of the students. Students are less willing to excel in the future due to lack of incentives and low motivation level of the students (Dickinson and Balleine, 2002). Students with strong positive peer relationships reported higher levels of motivation to excel academically (Wentzel, 2022).

Students entering Higher Education have various factors that impact on their motivation. Such factors range from their preparation for university (how much information the university has given them), course choice, future aspirations and their perceptions about Higher Education. The question this section seeks to answer is (how) does the Higher Education prepare the playing field (learning environment) for students to be motivated to achieve the purpose that drew him/her to academic study in the first place

Table 1

Factors Affecting Student Motivation

Factors	Description
Self-Motivational Factors	Motivation to learn is the involvement and commitment of the student to learn and acquire eminence academic grades that can facilitate them in their future occupational carrier (Gottfried, et al. 2001; Murdok and Miller, 2008). Teacher's behavior is strongly related with academic achievement of students by creating, enhancing, flourishing and establishing their level of motivation. Motivation is not a stagnant phenomenon, but it plays an imperative role for the students to achieve their predetermined goals through cognitive restructuring and adequate decision making power. Motivation not only compels a student to do diverse academic activities but it is also allied with command on subject, enhancing personal responsibility and achievement of deep conceptualization for the students (Bridges, 1990; Theobald, 2006).
Role of Teachers to Motivation to the Students	Students must have strong motivation to acquire knowledge. If the teacher has passable leadership qualities then students are more motivated towards learning process. Instructional practices can enhance the motivational level and academic achievement among the students (Condry, 1987).
Role of Environment to Motivate the Students	The factors that influence the students motivation towards their learning process includes assorted environmental factors such as classroom cleanliness, teachers behavior with the students and interest level of the students towards a particular course content (Johnson, 2008).

Policy Related Student Motivational Factors	When learning becomes compulsion for the students rather than passion then their grades began to fall. Thus academic performance of the student is directly linked with their motivation to learn. But motivation of the students towards the process of learning can be improved when the teacher uses the effectual teaching strategies on the students (Afzal, et al. 2004; Murphy, 2004). From foundational concepts to more complex one helps students build a strong foundation. This sequential progression supports their understanding and performance in advanced topics. A diverse curriculum that exposes students to a wide range of subjects, perspectives, and experiences enriches their education (O'Neill, & Short, 2023). It encourages well-rounded development and allows students to discover their interests and strengths. Integrating technology into the curriculum can enhance learning experiences A well-designed curriculum connects academic concepts to real-world situations, making learning more meaningful and practical for students (O'Neill & Short, 2023). When students see the relevance of what they're learning, their engagement and motivation increase. A logically-structured curriculum that progresses

Administration Related Student Motivational Factors	Teachers can play an indispensable role in increasing the motivation among the students. These factors include the students active participation in the process of learning through discussion, students engagement in learning activities and current educational needs of the students (Wiseman and Hunt, 2001; Sattar, 2012). Despite these factors other responsible parameters that have an imperative influence on increasing the motivation level of the students include classroom environment, class size, confidence level of the students, teacher's behavior and norms of the school. Students can learn more precisely in the classroom environment that comprises of affection, coordination and participation etc (Tanveer, et al. 2012, Theobald, 2006). Family environment and support: Family environment and support play a crucial role in shaping a student's attitude towards learning, with parental involvement and encouragement being strong predictors of academic success (Kartel, Charles, Xiao & Sundi, 2022). A supportive family environment, including parental involvement and encouragement, positively impacts a student's attitude towards learning. Family expectations and values related to education can shape a student's motivation and dedication. Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds often have more opportunities and support systems that contribute to their academic success. Availability of resources, such as libraries, internet access, and educational tools, can influence students' ability to conduct research, access supplementary materials, and engage in self-directed learning (Mathana & Galdolage 2023).

(Source : Review literatures, 2025)

The success, progress and achievement of students depend on motivation because it is always presented in every activity of his\her academic performance. Motivation is the energetic, curious, aspired condition of students in which s\he is interested to perform the assigned tasks as instructed by the teacher. According to Bandhu et al. (2024), motivation represents the yearning to accomplish a task, paired with the enthusiasm and determination to see it through. It acts as the driving force that propels an individual to take proactive steps and reach their goals. Pandey (2023) presents that quest for quality is essential in education for meaningful life. To achieve this, everyone needs passion, patience, and persistence. Quality education is a beautiful blend of input, process and output.

Motivated behavior is energized, directed and sustained. Motivation is concerned with the inculcation and stimulation of learner's interest in the learning activities. Motivation is the result of the interaction of the individual and the situation. It is a move towards setting goals. It is a force that energizes the behavior of individuals (Williams and Burden, 1997). It is an art of inculcating stimulating interest in different activities in the pupils. Motivation can be defined as an inspiration that pro action one into an action. Motivation is a process by which the learner's internal energies are directed toward various goal objects in his/her environment. An individual may be highly motivated to perform well in one task and completely unmotivated in another. This means that when people are motivated, they will work tirelessly to achieve their aspirations (Harmer, 1991).

Motivation is an essential factor for the academic achievement of the students that shapes the educational environment in which effective learning takes place. According to Nuraysha et al., (2024)**,** motivation has an impact on the results of students' learning and must be concerned to enhance student motivation. It is one of the influential factors that affect the students' learning outcomes. The motivated students always demonstrate greater involvement, dedication, and attention in their academic performance, this ultimately helps them to achieve academic goals. Enhanced levels of motivation serve as a favorable indicator of students' accomplishments in the classroom. (Guo, W., & Zhou, W., 2021).

The practice not only promotes engaged and innovative student participation but also enhances the professional competencies of educators, empowering them to cultivate interest and facilitate successful learning by employing motivational techniques. Therefore, the effective outcomes of academic achievement of learners depends on whether the learners are motivated. In other words, it brings change in student behavior and performance. When students are fully motivated, they are more positive, curious, enthusiastic and energetic not only in classroom learning but also in their overall academic performances. Students' motivation is emphasized as fundamental and crucial to the learning process mentioned by Filgona et al. (2020).

Methodology

This study is based on qualitative method. An intensive in-depth information and insight havebeen reviewed (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The techniques that are used in this study are document review and reviewing theoretical knowledge. Relevant literature has been reviewed to make the study conceptually and theoretically reliable and authentic (Pandey, 2023). The study is based on secondary sources. The researchers have googled and visited the website in order to obtain information related to the themes of the study. Data are presented from books, journals and articles. They are interpreted and analyzed to make meaning (Pandey, 2025). The writers have presented their own personal and professional knowledge and experiences to explore ideas on factors affecting students' motivation on learning in higher education.

Findings

Due to the knowledge on motivating factors, learners bring enhancement and quality in their learning. It further improves classroom learning culture. After having knowledge on demotivating factors, the learners correct their strategy in learning. Teachers adopt better strategy to bring effectiveness in learning. The study contributes to the growth of institutions in the area of research, innovation, motivation and leadership. The study benefits the prospective learners to write thesis and research article. The study adds further knowledge on curriculum development and policy making process.

The study showed that students are motivated or demotivated to learn through intrinsic and extrinsic factors, teacher factor, administration factor, environment factor and policy related factors both in the community and constituent campuses. For instance, students are found demotivated towards learning in a number of ways. Students have taken four years bachelors program as an unnecessary burden. They add that due to such policy, many male students have left the class, college and country to go to abroad for the employment.

However, the study showed a number of ways to motivate learners from their perspectives such as exposure, leadership and decision making skill. After a prolonged discussion the team cultivates an idea on motivation that is an engaged and motivated student is one who is intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to learn.

Conclusion

Motivation is a state of mind, filled with effort, energy and enthusiasm, which drives a person to work in a certain way to achieve desired goals. Motivation is a force that pushes an individual to work with a high level of commitment and focus, even if things are going against them. Motivation translates into a certain kind of human behavior. Motivation is the driving force behind human actions. It is an inner drive, effort, existence, relatedness, growth, task, energy, synergy, achievement, power, affiliation and aspiration. The study concludes that the more the interest, the more is the motivation; the less the interest, the less is the motivation. Similarly, the study explores higher the result, higher is the motivation; lower the result, lower is the motivation. Students' needs are fulfilled. Finally, the study concludes that better the motivation, better is the learning and hope of success is better motivation than fear of failure.

Implication

The findings suggest that teachers and students can practise motivational moments in the class for comprehensive, effective and creative learning. Teachers should provide ample space for dialogue, discourse, debate, interaction and question to arouse motivation towards teaching and learning process. Related stakeholders such as parents and educationists should contribute motivating ideas to their children's education. They should raise voice for quality education. Policy makers should create room for motivational strategies in the policy building process, curriculum formulation, and syllabus designing and textbook writing process.

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Tracing Success of Graduates: A Case Study of Koteshwor Multiple Campus

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Abstract

Tracer studies provide timely, vital information regarding graduate outcomes.This article examines the post-graduation experiences of Koteshwor Multiple Campus alumni from 2020–2022. It looks at how students employ the skills they acquired in their careers, how they enter the workforce, and how they continue to interact with the institution. It seeks to monitor recent graduates and pinpoint the elements influencing their professional decisions. The results, which offer insights to improve academic programs and industrial ties, are critical to KMC's institutional growth. By encouraging industrial relationships and entrepreneurship, the report also enhances career counseling and KMC's job placement cell. Finally, this analysis backs mentoring and curriculum modifications to better prepare graduates for the workforce.

***Keywords*:** tracer studies, post-graduation experiences, KMC alumni, recent graduates, entrepreneurship, career counseling

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Introduction

Tracer studies systematically monitor and evaluate the academic and professional paths of graduates. In order to assess program efficacy, make well-informed decisions regarding curriculum creation and budget allocation, and make sure that their programs meet industry demands, higher education institutions and policymakers

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can benefit greatly from the data these studies give. Information on the career paths, employment status, and job satisfaction of graduates is collected so that educational institutions can improve their programs as needed.

The practice of tracer studies is earning international recognition. They are motivated by the need to comprehend the experiences of recent graduates as they enter the workforce and during their academic careers. These studies are essential for preserving accreditation and proving the value and caliber of an institution's education because many accrediting and quality assurance organizations now include them in their evaluation procedures.

Academic institutions often conduct research works to gather feedback from graduates and their employers. For tracking and assessing alumni achievement in their particular professions, these insights are essential (Camuyong et al., 2023).Universities can make well-informed decisions to improve their programs and better prepare next students for the workforce by examining this feedback. Direct feedback from graduates is especially valuable and reliable for assessing the overall quality of education provided by a higher education institution (Camuyong et al., 2023).

Other researchers note that a Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) is designed to track graduates' backgrounds (Pentang et al., 2024). The focus of a graduate tracer study is to gather background data on former students so that educational institutions can better comprehend the varied traits and experiences of their graduates. Similarly, Schomburg (2016) defines tracer studies as a standardized survey (written or oral) of graduates from an educational institution, conducted sometime after graduation. The topics vary but often include questions about:

- The study of progress
- Making the shift to work
- Entry to the job
- Paths for careers
- The application of acquired skills
- Present employment
- The relationship with the educational establishment

Schomburg explains tracer studies as surveys conducted after graduation to gather information from graduates about their experiences. These surveys can be written or oral, cover topics like study progress, career paths, skill utilization, and the graduates' connection to the institution. A graduation survey is also known as a tracer study. It is an organized method for collecting information from college graduates after their studies are complete. These surveys monitor various aspects of graduates' post-school experiences, including academic progress, entry into the workforce, career development, and the application of skills learned. The survey also frequently investigates the graduates' job situation and their ongoing connection to the university. By collecting this data, tracer studies offer important insights into the relevance of the curriculum, the effectiveness of educational programs, and the overall impact on graduates' career paths.

An important information gap in Nepal's higher education system is intended to be filled by this particular tracer study, which focuses on KMC graduates. Although it is acknowledged that KMC functions within the parameters of the TU curriculum and is not directly in charge of creating jobs, the study attempts to comprehend the real-world results for its graduates. It aims to fill in the knowledge gaps about the employment status, job happiness, and career progression of graduates in the current employment ecosystem.

The report analyzes the skills graduates are applying in their employment and critically assesses how effectively KMC's education prepared them for the sector. It identifies the difficulties experienced by graduates and takes into account employer viewpoints. In order to address the lack of knowledge regarding graduate outcomes and the difficulties in evaluating the quality of education offered by the institution, the study's ultimate objective is to provide useful recommendations for raising educational quality and improving graduate employability within KMC's operational realiti**es.**

The main objective of tracer studies, according to Schomburg's 2003 book, *Handbook for Graduate Tracer Studies,* is to pinpoint educational program flaws and provide guidance for future institutional development. In order to accomplish this, surveys gather data on graduates' professional success, including their salary, status, and career, as well as how well their knowledge and abilities are applied in the actual world.They could additionally suggest that graduates assess the materials and learning environment they previously used. However, the majority of employer surveys concentrate on future demands, graduate competencies, and hiring processes.

According to Schomburg, these surveys are crucial for comprehending how education and work are related, but there are issues with their potential overemphasis on job results, low response rates, and their usefulness in enhancing education.Another issue, given Schomburg's findings, is that a limited emphasis on short-term employment indicators may not adequately account for the intangible long-term effects of education, like critical thinking or flexibility.

This study examines the status of KMC graduates from 2020 to 2022of KMC's higher education, evaluating programs' impact on personal development, and addressing educational inequalities. Main objectives of this article are as follows:

- To monitor the progress of KMC graduates from 2020 to 2022
- To discuss some factors that influence their career choices

Significance

Tracer studies are a vital instrument for assessing education, according to a number of international organizations. UNESCO has offered assistance for these studies, particularly in poor nations, through the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). Similar to this, the World Bank has employed tracer studies to evaluate the effect of educational investments on employment and income, and the International Labor Organization (ILO) has used them to study the transition from education to employment. Tracer studies' status as a crucial evaluation tool has been solidified by this focus on labor market outcomes.

Recent graduates have difficulty finding work, frequently because they lack experience, according to the findings of several studies, including one from the University of Pangasinan (Rocaberte, 2016). This is in line with the more general problem of labor mismatch, which Verona (2011) contends needs to be addressed by the government in order to keep productive workers from disappearing. In the meantime, tracer studies have become a standard practice at many universities, especially in the US and Europe, and research groups have been instrumental in improving the techniques employed.

The tracer study is essential to provide Koteshwor Multiple Campus (KMC) a comprehensive picture of the academic and professional achievements of its graduates. With the help of this knowledge, the university can assess how well its academic offerings and student services meet the needs of the labor market. In order to improve the quality of education it provides, KMC uses the study's findings to influence data-driven decisions about curriculum, instructional methods, and student support systems.

This tracer study is a useful tool for KMC's marketing and outreach initiatives in addition to internal enhancements. The university can draw in new students and improve its reputation as a respectable academic provider by highlighting the accomplishments of its alumni. Additionally, the research facilitates the development of closer relationships with businesses and other stakeholders in education.

Establishing that KMC gives students the necessary information and skills promotes cooperation and trust with businesses looking for qualified graduates.

The analysis gives the graduates themselves important information about the labor market today and new skill requirements. They can use this knowledge to better prepare for professional development and make well-informed career decisions. The results can also guide the creation of focused career counselling and support programs to help recent graduates overcome obstacles at work. The study also increases KMC alumni's exposure and demand among employers by drawing attention to their accomplishments and skills.

Research Methodology

In the article "Tracer Studies," Nigel Simister explains why these studies are essential for monitoring individual changes after a particular intervention, like professional training (2017). They seek to ascertain the participants' usage of their training and the course of their life. However, more general units of analysis, such as homes, communities, organizations, or policies, can also be the subject of tracer research.

On the other hand, Schiefelbein and Farrell claim that tracer studies are a useful study technique that follows a group of people throughout time, gathering information at various stages of their life to see how they evolve and change. They are therefore an effective instrument for evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of an organization and putting reforms into place. By investigating changes in graduates' competencies and looking at their job development outcomes, tracer studies can assess how effective educational programs are.In order to detect gaping knowledge and compare findings, the researchers performed a literature review by looking at previous research on related populations and fields using databases like JSTOR, libraries, and pertinent papers. The study itself used a mixed-approaches strategy, integrating both qualitative and quantitative techniques to fully comprehend the academic and professional outcomes of KMC graduates between 2020 and 2022. Structured survey questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data from a basic random sample of fifty respondents.

With regard to time, resource, and graduate availability constraints, this sample size was selected. In-depth interviews with chosen alumni were used to collect qualitative data in order to learn more about their perspectives on their education and experiences. To find recurrent themes and patterns, thematic analysis was used to examine this qualitative data. The study also examined the graduates' practical application of their education using a job satisfaction questionnaire.

Researchers used primary and secondary sources to gather data. They conducted in-depth interviews with graduates and distributed questionnaires using basic random sampling in order to gather primary data. Secondary data was collected from publicly accessible sources, including job reports, institutional publications, and graduation records. Because it was easy for respondents to use and effectively saved time and money, this sample technique was selected. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the processing and analysis of the gathered data.

Using MS-Excel, quantitative analysis was carried out on background data, including manual computations and tabulations. The results were displayed as tables, charts, and graphs. The goal of the study is to give a thorough grasp of the career choices, job satisfaction, and employment status of KMC graduates. In addition to providing policymakers with information on how to enhance education and graduate employability in Nepal, the findings are meant to assist the institution in evaluating how well it prepares students for careers. Employers' opinions of KMC graduates, the proportion of employed graduates, the talents they employ, and the suitability of their education for the industry are all specifically the focus of the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In the data presentation and analysis section, the researchers have employed a range of tables, charts, and graphs to effectively show the data they collected from the 396 KMC graduates in 2020, 2021, and 2022. This allows trends to be clearly compared and understood across time. The information is organized and displayed separately for every year. This approach provides a thorough analysis of the job histories, displaying the percentage of graduates who are currently seeking employment, those who are continuing their education, and those who have obtained employment in their fields. The graphic representations, which include tables make it simple to understand how job outcomes and other significant criteria were distributed throughout the three groups.The following paragraphs give the various data from the three years 2020, 2021, and 2022.

In 2020, total 167 students received their graduation. Among them, 64 belonged to the bachelor's degree's humanities faculty, 69 to the management faculty, and 34 to the education faculty. Their composition is indicated in the following table:

Table 1. The Structure of 2020 KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Male	Female
MBS	0	0	0
BBS	69	29	40
BA	64	27	37
B. Ed	34	10	24
Total	167	66	101

(Source: Survey 2024)

According to the provided table, there are more female graduates than male graduates across all faculties. With more female graduates than male graduates, more than two to one, the B.Ed. program has the largest gender difference.

Table 2. Employment Data of 2020 KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Employed	Self-Employed	Unemployed
MBS	0	0	0	0
BBS	69	26	2	41
BA	64	18	0	46
B. Ed	34	7	0	27
Total	167	51	2	114

(Source: Survey 2024)

The table reveals significant new information regarding the professional performance of graduates from different academic fields. Of the 69 BBS graduates, 41 were unemployed, 2 were working on their own, and 26 had found employment. Of the 64 BA graduates, 18 found employment, but none decided to work for themselves, leaving 46 jobless. Of the thirty-four B. Ed. graduates, twenty-seven were unemployed, seven were employed, and none were self-employed. Out of the 167 graduates from all programs, 51 were employed, 2 worked for themselves, and 114 were unemployed. The research shows that despite a lesser percentage of KMC graduates work or work for themselves, a sizable portion are unemployed. Both corporate and public sector employment are available to KMC graduates.

Table 3. The Structure of 2021 KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Male	Female
MBS	1	0	1
BBS	50	17	33
BA	60	28	32
B. Ed	28	4	24
Total	**139**	**49**	**90**

(Source: Survey 2024)

Similarly, the above table of 2021 further shows that there are more female graduates than male graduates across all faculties. In the B.B.S. and B. Ed. programs, where female graduates far outnumber their male counterparts, this trend is especially noticeable. In 2021, there were 90 female graduates overall from all programs at KMC, compared to 49 male graduates.

Table 4. Employment Data of 2021KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Employed	Self-Employed	Unemployed
MBS	1	1	0	0
BBS	50	15	4	31
BA	60	10	11	39
B. Ed	28	6	2	20
Total	139	32	17	90

(Source: Survey 2024)

According to the provided employment table, the MBS level has the best results among graduates from various academic programs, with all graduates finding jobs and none without. Out of the BBS graduates, a considerable number are still unemployed, while a reasonable percentage are employed, including some who work for themselves. In a similar vein, the employment rate for BA program graduates is low, with a notable percentage working for themselves but the majority remaining jobless. Few B.Ed. graduates are employed or self-employed, and their unemployment rate is likewise high. Even if some graduates have secured jobs or started their own businesses, the vast majority of graduates at all levels still struggle with unemployment.

Table 5. The Structure of 2022 KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Male	Female
MBS	5	3	2
BBS	47	18	29
BA	17	6	11
B. Ed	21	2	19
Total	90	29	61

(Source: Survey 2024)

On the other hand, with more women than men graduating from most majors, the makeup of the 2022 KMC graduates is startling. Out of the five MBS program graduates, two were women and three were men. There was a notable female presence among the BBS program's graduates, with 18 of the 47 grads being male. Similarly, out of the seventeen BA program graduates, eleven were women and six were men. Only two of the twenty-one B. Ed. degree graduates were male, while the remaining nineteen were female. There were sixty-one women and twenty-nine men among the total of ninety graduates. This suggests a definite tendency toward a higher percentage of female graduates in the 2022 class at KMC.

Table 6. Employment Data of 2022 KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Employed	Self-Employed	Unemployed
MBS	5	4	0	1
BBS	47	12	5	30
BA	17	6	0	11
B. Ed	21	5	0	16
Total	90	32	0	58

(Source: Survey 2024)

A significant difference in career outcomes amongst academic programs is revealed by an analysis of employment data for 90 KMC graduates from 2022. Of all the graduates, fifty-eight are unemployed, and thirty-two are working, including five who work for themselves. With four out of five (80%) obtaining employment, MBS graduates have the highest employment rate. BBS graduates, on the other hand, have a mediocre success record; 17 out of 47 are employed, with five of them working for themselves. The employment market is more challenging for graduates with a BA and a B.Ed., since only six out of seventeen and five out of twenty-one, respectively, are employed. According to the research, graduates of business-oriented and professional programs, such as MBS, are more likely to find work than those from education and the humanity.

Likewise, only five of the twenty-one B.Ed. graduateshave found employment, leaving a significant sixteen unemployed. The fact that thirty-two of the ninety graduates are employed, five are self-employed, and fifty-eight are unemployed demonstrates the disparities in employment amongst programs. Graduates who work for themselves are also considered employed and are denoted with brackets.

When the researchers compared the data of 2020 to 2022, it revealed significant trends in graduating numbers and employment rates. Over these three years, the overall number of graduates decreased steadily, falling from 167 in 2020 to 90 in 2022. With 51 employed and 2 self-employed graduates, employment was comparatively low in 2020, while 114 people were still unemployed. With 28 employed graduates, the BBS program dominated the field, followed by the BA and B.Ed. degrees with 18 and 7, respectively. That year, there were no reported MBS graduates. During this time, the BBS program remained the most popular, and there was a continuous drop in the total number of graduates, with a consistent female majority across all programs.

Employment trends had changed by 2021, with a significant rise in self-employment (17 graduates) and employed graduates (32 graduates). Ninety graduates were still unemployed. With 15 hired and 4 self-employed alumni, the BBS program maintained its leadership position. The first MBS graduate joined the workforce, while the BA and B.Ed. programs made a little contribution to employment.

With 32 employed and 5 self-employed graduates, employment numbers leveled down in 2022. Four out of five graduates of the MBS program found employment, demonstrating the program's exceptional success. However, the BA and B.Ed. programs saw a sharp drop in both employment rates and graduate enrollment. With 58 graduates remaining unemployed, unemployment was a recurring problem overall, indicating a change in KMC graduation trends toward improved results in professional programs like MBS.

Table 7 A Combine table on Employment Data of 2020, 2021 and 2022 KMC Graduates

Year	No. of Graduates	No. of Employed	Employment Percentage
2020	167	53	31.74
2021	139	49	35.25
2022	90	32	35.55

(Source: Survey 2024)

According to the given table, KMC graduates' employment rose dramatically between 2020 and 2022. While the number of graduates fluctuated, falling from 167 in 2020 to 90 in 2022, the employment percentages increased annually. Employment rates for KMC alumni improved over the course of these three years, as seen by the rise in the percentage of employed graduates from 31.74% in 2020 to 35.25% in 2021 and then to 35.55% in 2022.

The number of KMC graduates in 2020, 2021, and 2022 was 167, 139, and 90, respectively. By 2022, there were just 90 graduates from KMC, down from 167 in 2020. External factors that contributed to the decline in student admissions during that period included the COVID-19 epidemic, students opting to study overseas and general dropout rates. Importantly, rather than indicating a decline in the caliber of education at KMC, this decreased yearly graduation percentage is a reflection of the more significant problems influencing student enrollment and retention.

Despite a decrease in student enrollment, KMC finds consolation in the consistent, although tiny, yearly increase in its alumni's employment rate. It is not the duty or responsibility of the KMC to provide jobs for its graduates. The government should ultimately be in charge of providing employment possibilities for recent graduates. The college does, however, take satisfaction in the steady rise in employment rates among its alumni, which is a reflection of their improved competency and readiness for the wider labor market.

The Factors Affecting Graduates' Career Choices

According to Florendo and Regacho (2023), several research papers examine the various ways in which graduate education influences societal advancement and national development. Graduate education is important for societal advancement and country development, according to research from several academic domains. Despite a drop in graduation rates between 2020 and 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic difficulties, and students deciding to explore opportunities elsewhere, Koteshwor Multiple Campus (KMC) has had a continuous but minor annual increase in its alumni employment rate. Tracer studies revealed this favorable trend, which reflects KMC alumni's improving proficiency and market preparedness.

To look into the characteristics that affect the career choices of KMC graduates between 2020 and 2022, researchers reviewed the responses provided by interviews in KMC's tracer studies, as well as subsequent data analysis. This study revealed a number of critical factors determining career paths. These influences include the graduates' educational background, the availability of relevant work opportunities, their parents' expectations, and the socioeconomic environment in which they grew up. The data also shows gender variationwith a higher proportion of female graduates entering the workforce right away due to male students' tendency to postpone graduation or work part-time in order to prepare for chances abroad.

A prominent aspect discovered in the analysis is a desire for job security, since many graduates postpone entering the private sector or working for themselves in favor of training for Public Service Commission tests. Financial issues, which may lead to students pursuing temporary or unrelated employment, also have an impact on their workforce readiness, according to the responses. Furthermore, career opportunities vary by field; graduates in business, for example, may have greater access to work than those who are in education or the humanities. Overall, the study demonstrated that individual desires, economic realities, and the promise of long-term work security all impact KMC alumni's career decisions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The major goal of tracking KMC graduates from 2020 to 2022 demonstrated a favorable, consistent, although tiny annual improvement in alumni employment rates. This increased trend was noted despite a considerable decline in graduation rates, which was mostly caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, economic challenges, and students seeking other alternatives. Tracer studies show that KMC alumni's increased employability is a result of their improved competency and market preparedness, showing the efficacy and quality of the college's educational programs. While the government is ultimately responsible for creating jobs, the rising rate demonstrates that KMC is performing its basic objective of educating and preparing students for employment.

Additionally, the study has addressed the second purpose by identifying the traits and influences that influenced KMC alumni' employment choices throughout this time. The study found that graduates' educational background, the availability of related work, their parents' expectations, and the larger socioeconomic contexts influence the career choices of the graduates. A desire for long-term job stability was a major issue, prompting many graduates to postpone entry into the private sector in favor of studying for Public Service Commission tests. Gender differences were also noticeable, with a higher number of female graduates entering the local workforce immediately, as opposed to male graduates, who frequently postponed local work or graduation to pursue employment or further studies abroad as a means of economic growth.

In the end, academic preparedness, current market need, and societal influences all influence KMC alumni's employment paths. To improve these outcomes, the research recommends numerous proactive initiatives, including strengthening KMC's job placement unit, developing industry collaborations to support internships, and providing important work-readiness training, such as resume writing and interview tactics. Furthermore, experts encourage prioritizing professional training and updating the curriculum to include practical, real worldfeatures. These institutional activities are critical for closing the gap between college education and the dynamic demands of the labor market.

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Menstrual Hygiene Material Management: A Comparative Study of Knowledge and Practice among Different Age Groups of Women

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Abstract

Menstrual hygiene material management (MHMM) is vital for the physical, mental and social health and well-being of women, yet knowledge and practice levels vary across different age groups. The objective of this study was to study explores age-related differences in knowledge and practices of MHMM among women aged reproductive age (15–45) in Thaha Municipality, Nepal. This study seeks to answer the following questions: Is there a statistically significant difference in the knowledge level of menstrual hygiene material management among different age groups? and is there a statistically significant difference in the practice level of menstrual hygiene material management among different age groups? To explore these questions, out of a total of 12 wards of Thaha Municipality, wards 3, 5 and 7 were selected through cluster sampling method. Due to resource, material and time constraints, all women found in households aged 15 to 49 years were purposively selected. For this, data were obtained from 82 women using closed-ended questionnaire instruments regarding knowledge and practice related to menstrual hygiene material management. Data were analyzed by frequency table, mean comparison, standard deviation and one-way ANOVA with comparative means using SPSS version 27. The data were analyzed using ANOVA in SPSS (version 27). The findings show very significant differences in age on the knowledge of menstrual hygiene material management (p = 0.001) but no significant difference was found in Practice of MHMM (p = 0.280) among different age groups, with the 26–35 age group demonstrating higher awareness and practical engagement. The results suggest a need for age-specific interventions to promote effective MHMM strategies and policies.

Key Words: *Menstrual Hygiene, Menstrual material, Knowledge, Practice, Reproductive age*

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Introduction

Menstruation is a natural process. When girls are between the ages of 12 and 14, they begin to bleed from their vagina every 28 days, which is called menstruation (Dhakaal, 2021). Menstrual hygiene management refers to products used to manage bleeding during menstruation, such as sanitary cloths, menstrual pads, menstrual cups, tampons, etc. (UNICEF, 2019). Menstrual hygiene products are now easily available at every local level and in every region. The Government of Nepal is currently distributing sanitary pads free of charge to schools at every local level. Among the menstrual materials, there are also other devices besides sanitary pads that work to protect the environment and prevent environmental pollution. Menstrual hygiene is a part of menstrual hygiene management. Menstrual hygiene management is a critical aspect of women's health and well-being, yet it remains a topic shrouded in stigma and silence. In Nepal, like many other parts of the world, the cultural, social, and economic factors surrounding menstruation can significantly impact women's experiences and practices related to menstrual hygiene. Understanding the menstrual hygiene practices, knowledge, and challenges faced by individuals in Nepal is essential for the development of targeted interventions and policies to improve menstrual health outcomes. Nepal a country rich in cultural diversity and tradition grapples with various barriers to adequate menstrual hygiene management. Factors such as limited access to affordable menstrual products, lack of proper sanitation facilities, and inadequate education and awareness about menstrual health effectively. Despite efforts to address menstrual hygiene issues in Nepal, significant gaps persist in both access to resources and knowledge about menstrual health. Many women and girls continue to restore to unhygienic practices due to a lack of options or misinformation, putting their health at risk and perpetuating cycles of shame and secrecy surrounding menstruation. This survey aims to shed light on the current landscape of menstrual hygiene practices, knowledge, and challenges among individuals in Nepal. By collecting valuable insights directly from the community, we seek to identify areas for improvement and inform evidence-based interventions that promote menstrual health and dignity for all. Through this research, we endeavor to contribute to the ongoing efforts to break the silence, dispel myths, and empower individuals to manage their menstrual health with confidence and dignity. As a result, many women and girls lack the knowledge and support necessary to manage their menstrual health safely and hygienically. Currently, materials used during menstruation are provided, sold, and distributed by various organizations, including various non-profit and for-profit organizations. The number of large and small industries engaged in the production, sale and distribution of mineral materials is increasing day by day. However, Access to menstrual hygiene products remains and significant ruler and marginalized communities. High poverty rates, limited infrastructure, and cultural barriers bate the difficulties in accessing affordable and reliable menstrual products. Additionally, inadequate sanitation facilities, including a lack of clean and private toilets, pose additional challenges for women and girls during menstruation. Education and awareness about menstrual health are also lacking in many parts of Nepal. Schools often provide no information about menstruation, leaving girls prepared and vulnerable to misinformation. Furthermore, misconceptions about menstruation contribute to discriminatory practices and exclusionary behaviors, particularly in educational settings.

Every woman between the age groups of 15 to 49 experiences menstruation for 4 to 5 days every 28 days. The WHO has defined this age group as reproductive age. Statistics show that 1.8 billion people in the world menstruate every month (UNICEF, 2019). During the bleeding phase of the menstrual cycle, when the egg is not fertilized, the amount of estrogen and progesterone in the inner layer of the uterus decreases. This causes the inner layer of the uterus to be destroyed, causing the blood vessels there to rupture and abnormal blood to come out of the vagina. In this situation, girls and women feel uncomfortable doing their daily activities. To easily complete your daily tasks, you need various menstrual products, such as menstrual pads, menstrual cups, and tampons. Using these products will prevent bleeding during menstruation from leaking out. Currently, various materials have come into the market regarding menstruation materials. Not only sanitary pads, but also various other disposable materials and environmentally friendly materials have come into the market, but such materials are expensive to buy and due to the geographical nature of Nepal, they are not accessible everywhere. Statistics show that 60% of teenage girls in Nepal still miss school due to lack of hygiene products during menstruation (UNICEF, 2020)Statistics show that schools in many rural and underserved areas of Nepal still lack clean toilets and water facilities suitable for use during menstruation (WaterAid Nepal, 2018)Despite the production of various products aimed at making the materials used during menstruation environmentally friendly in the interest of sustainable development, statistics show that about 70% of teenage girls in rural Nepal still use cloth (Save the Children, 2016). According to data published by World Vision Nepal in 2022, 26.7% of school-aged girls are still unable to attend school due to menstruation (World Vision International Nepal, 2022). In 2019, President Bidya Devi Bhandari set a goal of distributing free sanitary pads to 1.4 million school students. Although 75.8% of women aged 15 to 24 use disposable sanitary pads, only 41.6% of those over 35 use disposable sanitary pads (Bhandari et al., 2024). Still, access to menstrual hygiene products, knowledge, and practice necessary to maintain menstrual hygiene among women of reproductive age between 15 and 49 years in Nepal remain poor. Despite the policies and regulations regarding menstrual hygiene and material management, and the programs implemented by various organizations, UNICEF (2020) data shows that women in Nepal are still forced to face various problems due to socio-cultural values, lack of proper knowledge, and lack of access to materials. The data shows that the highest inequality among women of different age groups regarding menstrual hygiene was observed in Madhes Province, followed by Bagmati Province. The data also shows that there are significant differences in knowledge and practice of menstrual hygiene among women of different age groups, based on their socioeconomic status and education level. In Bagmati Province, only 48% of women in the age group of 15-49 years practice menstrual hygiene (Hasan et al., 2025). Thaha Municipality is also at a local level within Basmati Province that has represented this problem.

Since the level of knowledge and practice related to menstrual hygiene materials management varies by age, this study was focus on that objective to assess the impact of age on knowledge and practice related to menstrual hygiene management. The results of this study on age-related differences in knowledge and practice regarding menstrual hygiene materials will help to formulate policies to reduce menstrual hygiene problems among women and adolescents and to formulate age-specific plans to solve these problems. Also, since this study was conducted on women and adolescents in Thaha Municipality at the local level. Thaha Municipality is the second municipality in Makwanpur District, located in central Nepal. Located about 59 km from Kathmandu, this municipality is a hill municipality under Bagmati Province. It was established by merging the former Daman, Palung and Bajrabarahi VDCs. This municipality, which has a total of 12 wards, is inhabited by people with different ethnic and regional cultural identities, resulting in a diversity of knowledge and practices related to menstrual management among women and adolescents. The results obtained from this research will help to generalize to other local levels and also plan a new program related to menstrual material hygiene for women in Thaha Municipality.

Review of Literature

This research paper conducted a literature review to find out the effect of age or age-related differences in menstrual hygiene material management. Studied the literature on "Knowledge of menstrual hygiene management among adolescent girls: what does evidence show" which showed that there is a lack of knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene management among girls. This study examined the levels of knowledge about menstrual hygiene management among girls aged 10 to 19 years, but did not include the levels of knowledge among women aged 19 and older (Shrestha et al., 2020).

Although school-age girls have knowledge about menstrual hygiene material management, they lack adequate management skills. Among the tools used for menstrual hygiene material management, only sanitary pads are known, apart from them there are other tools, about which lack of access and ignorance is also seen among school-age girls. 61. 1% of adolescents are still unable to attend school due to menstrual problems. Only 71.7% use disposable sanitary pads, but 69.8% are unable to change pads in college (Ghimire, 2023).

A mixed-methods study on the role of sex education in influencing knowledge, experience, and perceptions of menstrual hygiene conducted between a private and a public school in Lalitpur Metropolitan City, which collected data from 400 girls aged 11 to 21, According to this study, although knowledge and education have changed the perception of menstruation as a taboo, it was concluded that in practice, reducing it should start with family members or parents. This study also indicates that age plays an important role in changing perceptions and practices regarding menstrual management, which shows that there is still a need to identify gaps between knowledge and practice regarding menstrual management (Karki, 2023)

In ancient times, cloth was the most commonly used menstrual materials, but in the current commercial environment, commercial menstrual materials such as cups, tampons and sanitary pads have emerged, but not all women have sufficient information and access to them. Acceptability and feasibility of vaginal menstrual cup use among schoolgirls in rural Nepal: A qualitative pilot study conducted among adolescents aged 13 to 19 years. This study showed that although adolescents were familiar with using cups, they lacked knowledge on how to wash and use them (Pokhrel et al., 2021).

A study titled about Drivers of hygienic menstrual practices among reproductive-age women: evidence from Nepal demographic health survey was conducted to study the factors that influence menstrual hygiene. This study showed that only 48% of women aged 15 to 49 years used healthy menstrual hygiene practices such as using sanitary pads and menstrual cups. Age, education, marital status, economic status, social restrictions, etc. have been shown to influence menstrual hygiene practice (Hasan et al., 2025). However, this study did not clarify the level of menstrual hygiene material management knowledge and practical practice among women aged 15 to 49 years.

A literature review of current approaches to improving menstrual hygiene management in emergency contexts conducted in 2017, based on various grey literature reviews, found that although most women received natural hygiene materials, they did not know how to manage them, leading to a lack of awareness of hygiene practices. In low-income countries, the use of menstrual cups was low. Due to financial constraints, even though there was knowledge of cups, there was a lack of knowledge about how to manage them. According to this study, in low-income countries, when informational education and awareness were promoted in a situation where there was no knowledge about the natural cup, then the cup was reintroduced and the data was compared between those who knew how to manage the cup and those who did not know how to manage the cup, and they were able to manage the menstrual cup (VanLeeuwen, 2018)

All the studies and research conducted so far on menstrual hygiene material management have focused on the types and quantities of materials used in menstrual hygiene materials. Some have focused on adolescent girls, while others have focused only on women. The problems seen related to menstrual hygiene material management were also studied and presented. However, there is scanty of research to determine whether age affects menstrual hygiene material management according to each age group. Since there is no study or research from the perspective of the level of knowledge and practice of rural Nepalese communities regarding this in terms of different age groups, this paper has highlighted the age differences in menstrual hygiene material management. The results obtained from this study will help the government, various organizations, and local levels to formulate programs for different ages and to build knowledge and behavioral plans related to menstrual hygiene and material management.

Conceptual Framework

Figure: 1

The presented conceptual framework shows the relationships between the main variables used in the study. This study shows how age, as an independent variable, affects the practice of MHMM. This framework brings clarity to the main research objectives and questions and lays the foundation for hypothesis formulation.

There are significant differences in knowledge regarding MHMM among women of different age groups. There are significant differences in MHMM practice levels among women of different age groups by age.

Methodology

This research paper uses data from a field research report conducted to complete the partial course of the 599th paper of the MA Sociology programs of Tribhuvan University. This study seeks to answer the following questions: Is there a statistically significant difference in the knowledge level of menstrual hygiene material management among different age groups? and Is there a statistically significant difference in the practice level of menstrual hygiene material management among different age groups? To explore these questions, out of a total of 12 wards of Thaha Municipality, wards 3, 5 and 7 were randomly selected through cluster sampling method. Due to resource, material and time constraints, all women found in households aged 15 to 49 years were purposively selected. For this, data were obtained from 82 women using closed-ended questionnaire instruments regarding knowledge and practice related to menstrual hygiene material management. Data were analyzed by frequency table, mean comparison, standard deviation and one-way ANOVA with comparative means using SPSS version 27.

Data Analysis and Result

The data obtained from the field survey has been presented in three categories: social demographic data, knowledge-related data, and practice-related data:

Social demographic description

This paper only includes age under social demographic data. This research paper presents age as an independent variable whose effect is seen on the dependent variable.

Age

This research selected women of reproductive age between the ages of 15 to 45 as respondents. They were divided into three groups: 15 to 25, 26 to 35, and 36 to 45. The number of women by age is presented in the table below:

Table: 1

Age of the respondents

Age Group	N	Percentage
15-25	17	20.7%
26-35	33	40.2%
36-45	32	39.0%
Total	82	100%

Source: Field Research 2080

According to Table 1, the largest age group of respondents selected for this study was between 26 and 35, which was 33 (40.2%), while the smallest age group was 17 (20. %) in the 15 to 25 age group. According to this data, married housewives were found to be more likely to be respondents than school-age girls.

Age and Knowledge on Menstrual Hygiene Material Management

Here, the data of the knowledge mean score for each age group is presented, comparing the mean knowledge level to identify age-related differences in knowledge level related to menstrual hygiene material management. Total six variables were included to identify the level of knowledge regarding MHMM among women of reproductive age. Information was collected on six variables: knowledge about sanitary pads, information about commercial sanitary pads, use of tampons, and use of cups. All of these variables were included in the transformed variable to derive a sum score for knowledge. The answers obtained from which are presented below:

Table: 2

Knowledge on Menstrual Hygiene Material Management

Age Groups	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
15-25	10.2941	17	1.04670
26-35	11.3030	33	.72822
36-45	11.0000	32	.87988
Total	10.9756	82	.92930

Source: Field Research 2080

Table 2 presents the level of knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene material management. Looking at the average level of knowledge, the highest average score was 11.30 with SD value was .73 for those aged 26 to 35, while the lowest average knowledge level was 10.29 with SD value was 1.05 for those aged 15 to 25. Similarly, the average score for the 36 to 45 age group was 11 with S.D. value was .879.

The above data showed that the knowledge level of the 26 to 35 age group was higher than that of the other two groups. The data presented showed that the knowledge scores were higher in the middle age group. Thus, it was found that the level of knowledge increased with age, while the level of knowledge decreased at a younger age.

Differences in MHMM Knowledge level by age

Here, the effect of age on the knowledge of menstrual hygiene material management or the difference between age and knowledge of menstrual hygiene material management has been verified using ANOVA, which is illustrated in the table below:

Table: 3

Total Knowledge score

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.452	2	5.726	7.733	<.001
Within Groups	58.499	79	.740		
Total	69.951	81			

Source: Field Research 2080

The table 3 shows that the sum squares between different groups was 11.452, while the degree of freedom (df) was 2 and the mean square is 5.726. Similarly, sum squares within group members were 58.499 and the degree of freedom was 79, and the mean square was 0.740. The above table shows that the result of ANOVA analysis conducted to test the difference between two or more groups were significant ($F = 7.733$, $p = 0.001$) which the mean value of the three groups was different from each other or significant difference in the mean from the others. The result is considered statistically significant since the P-value (0.001) < 0.05.

Age and Menstrual Hygiene Material Management practice

Here, we present the level of practice related to menstrual hygiene material management among women in the reproductive health sector of Thaha Municipality**.** The data presented practice levels by age group to identify age-related differences in mental health material management practices. For this, the data has been studied on eight variables frequency of changing, materials used, manages materials, Clean hands, Clean internal organs, dry clothes, Problems faced, Hand wash and presented as follows:

Table: 4

Age and Menstrual Hygiene Material Management practice

Age Groups	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
15-25	14.5294	17	1.97223
26-35	15.2727	33	1.97283
36-45	15.5625	32	2.39539
Total	15.2317	82	2.15624

Source: Field Research 2080

The table 5 shows that, women participating in the menstrual hygiene management practice are categorized into three different age groups: 15–25 years, 26–35 years, and 36–45 years. In total of 82 participants, when comparing the level of menstrual hygiene material management practice by age, average score for the 15-to-25-year age group was found to be the lowest at 14.53, the average for the 26-to-35-year age group was slightly higher at 15.276, and the average score for the 36-to-45-year age group was the highest at 15.56. The standard deviation between the three age groups ranged from 1.97 to 2.40. The SD values of the three score groups were different, but the differences were only small.

Based on these data, it can be said that women in the 36 to 45 age group appear to have higher levels of involvement and practice in menstrual hygiene management. The data shows that menstrual hygiene material management practice levels increase with age, while the data also showed that practice levels decrease at younger ages. This may be because this age group is more likely to be employed and educated. Further analysis is needed to determine the reasons for the lower levels of practice in other age groups.

Differences in MHMM practice level by age

Above, the difference in menstrual hygiene material management practice according to age group was presented through mean comparison, but to verify whether the difference seen from it is significant, it was verified using ANOVA., in this study, the effect of age on 8 variables, namely frequency of change, materials used, manage materials, clean hands, clean internal organs, dry clothes, problems faced, hand wash, has been examined using ANOVA, which is presented in the table below:

Table 5

Total score of practice level

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Group	11.942	2	5.971	1.294	.280
Within Groups	364.656	79	4.616		
Total	**376.000**	**81**			

Source: Field Research 2080

In this research, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the differences between different groups. The results of ANOVA show that the total score of between groups and within groups was 376.In the total score between groups had a score of 11.942, while within groups had a score of 364.656, While the obtained F-value was 1.294, the p-value was .280, which was above the significance level of 0.05. The data shows that the differences between the different age groups are not statistically significant among menstrual hygiene material management practice.

The following variables related to menstrual health were included in the presented data frequency of changing, materials used, manage materials, clean hands, Clean internal organs, dry clothes, Problems faced and Hand wash. The presented data shows that there is no difference in these variables according to age. Thaha Municipality is a local level located close to Kathmandu, which makes it easy to access various resources, which may not have led to age differences in the level of practice there.

Findings and Discussion

In this study, a survey conducted on 82 women reproductive aged 15 to 45 years in Thaha Municipality revealed significant differences in knowledge and behavior regarding Menstrual Hygiene Material Management by age.

Age Groups: the largest age group of respondents selected for this study was between 26 and 35, which was 33 (40.2%), while the smallest age group was 17 (20. %) in the 15 to 25 age group. War data shows that the number of working-age women working is higher, while the number of school- and college-age youth is lower.

Knowledge on Menstrual Hygiene Material Management: The highest average score of knowledge was 11.30 with SD value was .73 for those aged 26 to 35, while the lowest average knowledge level was 10.29 with SD value was 1.05 for those aged 15 to 25. Similarly, the average score for the 36 to 45 age group was 11 with S.D. value was .88.

Differences in knowledge level by age: The sum squares between different groups were 11.452, while the degree of freedom (df) were 2 and mean square were 5.726. Similarly, sum squares within group members were 58.49 and the degree of freedom were 79, the mean square was 0.740. ANOVA analysis conducted to test the difference between two or more groups were significant between ($F = 7.733$, $p = 0.001$).

Age and Menstrual Hygiene Material Management practice: The average score for the 15-to-25-year age group was found to be the lowest at 14.53, the average for the 26-to-35-year age group was slightly higher at 15.276, and the average score for the 36-to-45-year age group was the highest at 15.56. The standard deviation between the three age groups ranged from 1.97 to 2.40. The SD values of the three score groups were different, but the differences were only small.

Differences in Practice level by age: The results of ANOVA show that the total score of between groups and within groups was 376.In the total score between groups had a score of 11.942, while within groups had a score of 364.656, While the obtained F-value was 1.294, the p-value was .280, which was above the significance level of 0.05. The data shows that the differences between the different age groups are not statistically significant among menstrual hygiene material management practice.

The main objective of this study was to compare the knowledge and practice levels between each age group. Age was categorized into three groups. This study found significant differences in the level of knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene material management, but no differences in the level of practice based on age. When looking for differences in knowledge levels, women aged 26 to 35 years had higher levels of knowledge about MHMM. A possible reason for this may be that women's level of knowledge has increased with age through their experience and experiences. Similarly, the level of knowledge among girls aged 15 to 25 was comparatively low. This may be due to reasons such as lack of information related to sexual and reproductive health at the school level, social shyness, etc. This study found no age-related differences in MHMM practice levels, but comparatively, practice levels in the 36- to 45-year-old age group were slightly higher than in other age groups. The possible reasons for this may be the easy availability of resources due to the study area being close to Kathmandu and the impact of reproductive health programs conducted by various organizations there.

Like previous published research, Shrestha et al. (2020), research also showed a lack of knowledge level of menstrual hygiene material management among adolescents.

Similarly, Hasan et al. (2025), showed that socio-economic and cultural factors affect MHMM practice. However, those studies did not cover all age groups of reproductive age. However, this study covers all age groups and presents the differences between the knowledge and practice levels of MHMM across all age groups.

This study used ANOVA to show that the p-value (P = 0.001) showed a significant difference in knowledge by age, while the p-value obtained in practice (p = 0.280) rejected the age group difference in practice. The data obtained showed that despite differences in knowledge, there was no difference in practice. This shows that the impact of knowledge on practical aspects is not significant, but it can be assumed that the impact of service facilities and access may be greater than that of knowledge on practical aspects in that area.

Conclusion

This research aims to further strengthen policy making and behavior modification programs by deeply analyzing the behavioral differences seen in society. The results of this study show that there are significant differences in menstrual hygiene management by age group. Women aged 26–35 years have relatively high knowledge and behavior regarding MHMM, which may be due to their education, access to information, and social activation.

Adolescent and older women, on the other hand, are still limited to traditional practices and need targeted public awareness, accessible services, and practical education. This suggests that age-specific health education programs need to be developed to improve menstrual information, behavior, and material management.

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Weak Form of Efficiency in Nepal Stock Exchange

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Abstract

Weak form of market efficiency asserts that historical stock price movements are already reflected in the current stock prices. Hence, historical stock prices do not have predictive power to estimate future stock prices. Due to contradictory empirical evidences, there is a need to re-explore the weak form of market efficiency. Market indices were selected by using judgmental sampling design covering the study period from 1st July 2020 to 28th April 2025. Based on descriptive and analytical research design, Jarque-Bera test, Kolmogor6ov-Smirnov test, Run test, Variance Ratio test, Augmented Dickey Fuller test and Phillips Perron test were used on daily and weekly returns of NEPSE and 12 sectoral indices to examine distribution patterns, random walk and stationarity. It was found that the daily returns series did not exhibit market efficiency while weekly returns exhibited mixed results. Hence, it is concluded that Nepalese stock market is not efficient in weak form on a daily basis. The findings of this study have immense implications for investors, academicians and regulatory authorities. Future researches can be conducted to explore semi-strong and strong form of market efficiency.

Keywords: *Weak form of Market Efficiency, Efficient Market Hypothesis, Random Walk Theory, Nepalese Stock Exchange*

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Introduction

Efficient Market Hypothesis (EMH) has been the most controversial issues in the finance literature. Fama (1970) defined EMH, in his landmark paper, as the market in which stock prices already reflect all the historical, public and private information. Hence, stock prices respond quickly and accurately only to the release of fresh information. Similarly, EMH asserts that stock prices are, on an average, always stay at their intrinsic value. Hence, it is technically impossible to buy undervalued stock and sell overvalued stock. None can achieve the above-average returns than market even with the access of historical, public or private information. There is no room for speculation, technical and fundamental analysis because any past information is already reflected in the stock price. Hence, the simplest and the most rational way of investing is buy-and-hold (passive investment) strategy.

Fama (1970) classified market efficiency into three forms – weak form, semi-strong form and strong form. Weak form of EMH, closely related to Random Walk theory, asserts that historical price movements are already reflected in the current stock prices making historical stock prices and technical analysis irrelevant to predict future stock prices. Similarly, semi-strong form of market efficiency asserts that any publicly available information is already reflected in the current stock prices making publicly available information and fundamental analysis irrelevant to predict future stock prices. Finally, strong form of market efficiency asserts that private information is also already reflected in the current stock prices making insider trading irrelevant to predict future stock prices.

It is relevant to examine the weak form of EMH due to various reasons. First, investors become confident in efficient market in the sense that they always make informed and rational decisions and they receive a risk-adjusted rate of return on investment (Malkiel, 2003) which boosts investors' confidence. Second, weak form of EMH advocates that technical analysis is completely useless to predict the future prices (Malkiel, 2003). In other hand, supporters of technical analysis strongly disagree with EMH. This contradiction gave motivation to examine the validity of weak form of EMH. Third, EMH has solid theoretical foundation and the origin for many other financial theories. Yet, its empirical validity is not so much promising. The result of empirical studies examining EMH is mixed (Khanal et al., 2025; Bonga et al., 2024; Asaad & Omer, 2024; Adhikari & Karki, 2022). These evidences assert that EMH is the most controversial research topic in finance literature. With all these reasons, this study is an attempt to examine whether Nepal Stock Exchange (NEPSE) the only secondary capital market in Nepal, is efficient or not in weak form.

Most of the researches were conducted with data before COVID-19 era. After COVID-19, Nepalese economy witnessed significant change in various dimensions of macro-economic conditions such as inflation rates, interest rates, liquidity in banking sector. Similarly, the Nepalese stock markets has undergone modernization as it has witnessed effective implementation of online trading, digital payment system, dramatic increase in transaction volume, market capitalization and market participants post COVID-19. Due to dramatic changes in both stock market and macro-economic conditions of the country, there is a need to re-explore the efficiency of Nepalese stock market after COVID-19.

Based on these premises, the study has set the general objective to test the weak-form efficiency of Nepal Stock Exchange (NEPSE) which is fragmented into three specific objectives which are: (a) to test the normality of the returns of NEPSE and its sectoral indices, (b) to investigate the presence of serial correlation of the returns of NEPSE and its sectoral indices with its lagged values, and (c) to test the stationarity of the returns of NEPSE and its sectoral indices. To examine the weak form market efficiency of NEPSE, following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Distribution patterns of stock returns of NEPSE
Alternative hypothesis, H_1: NEPSE and its sectoral returns do not follow a normal distribution.
Hypothesis 2: Serial (auto) correlation in stock returns of NEPSE
Alternative hypothesis, H_1: There is serial correlation between NEPSE and its sectoral indices with their lagged values.
Alternative hypothesis, H_1: Variance ratio is not equal to unity in the return series of NEPSE and its sectoral indices.
Hypothesis 3: Presence of unit root in stock returns series
Alternative hypothesis, H_1: There is no unit root in the return series of NEPSE and its sectoral indices.

Literature Review

Though, EMH has strong theoretical foundation and the basis for many other theories and models, its empirical evidences are controversial.

Some empirical studies rejected the validity of market efficiency. For instances, Asaad and Omer (2024) concluded that fourteen Arabian and North African stock markets were inefficient in the weak-form suggesting returns predictability. Similarly, Gaio (2022) explored that the stock markets of developed countries were also inefficient in the weak form during instability and financial crisis. Similarly, Bhatia (2022) found the inefficiency of NIFTY and SENSEX of India during nationwide lockdown and suggested that stock market became more speculative and more fertile for abnormal profits during the crisis period. Dias et al. (2020) refuted the weak-form market efficiency both in developed and emerging markets as well as both in European and non-European countries.

However, some other studies accepted the weak form of EMH. Bonga et al. (2024) confirmed that Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (ZSE) followed a random walk during the pandemic period. Similarly, Ryaly et al. (2014) found the existence of weak form of market efficiency in the Asian stock markets such as South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and India. Similarly, Dangol (2011) showed that the Indian stock markets was efficient in the weak form.

Conversely, some other studies have mixed results regarding the validity of weak form of EMH (Hanna & Al-Qadi, 2024; Munir & Kok, 2024; Hawaldar et al., 2017; Nwachukwu & Shitta, 2015).

The studies conducted in the Nepalese stock markets are divided regarding its efficiency. For instance, various evidences showed that NEPSE did not exhibit weak-form efficiency (Khanal et al., 2025; Risal & Koju, 2021; Dhodary, 2020). However, Dangol (2012) reported contradictory results stating that NEPSE was efficient in weak form when data was adjusted for thin trading. These studies showed the contradictions in results which give scope for further research to test the validity of weak form of EMH.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive and analytical research design were used to test the weak form of EMH of NEPSE to test the normality, serial correlation and stationarity of the daily and weekly returns of NEPSE and its sectoral indices.

Sampling Design

Judgmental sampling design was implemented to select sample indices to test the weak form of EMH using following criteria:

(i) NEPSE was selected as it represents all forms and types of securities listed in Nepalese stock market.

(ii) Sub-indices such as sensitive, float and sensitive float were excluded from the study because it represents the sub-set of NEPSE and performance of sub-indices are already reflected in NEPSE.

(iii) However, sectoral indices were included to test the weak form of sectoral efficiency.

(iv) Mutual fund was excluded because mutual funds are institutional investors and inclusion of mutual fund index will have duplication effect in the study.

Population and Sample

NEPSE has four major indices namely NEPSE, Sensitive, Float and Sensitive Float. Similarly, there are 13 sectoral indices namely Commercial Bank, Development Bank, Finance, Microfinance, Life Insurance, Non-life Insurance, Hydropower, Manufacturing and Processing, Trading, Hotel and Tourism, Investment, Mutual Fund and Other. These 17 indices are defined as the population of the study. Among them, NEPSE and 12 sectoral indices were selected excluding Mutual fund.

Nature and Sources of Data

This study used time series data collected from secondary source to examine weak form of EMH.

Data Collection Techniques

NEPSE closed at 1246.2 on 22nd March 2020 after the government-imposed lockdown due to COVID-19 wave. After that, NEPSE resumed its regular trading from 29th June 2020. Since, this research is an attempt to explore weak form efficiency post COVID-19, the daily and weekly closing NEPSE and sectoral indices were collected after 1st July 2020 to 28th April 2025 from the official website of NEPSE. In this course, total 1141 daily indices and 251 weekly indices were obtained.

Data Analysis Techniques

The study used daily and weekly returns of NEPSE and its sectoral indices. The natural logarithm of the relative indices was computed in MS-Excel to produce a time series of continuously compounded returns which is expressed in model 1 as:

Where,

R_t represents daily/weekly returns in the logged terms

P_t represents the closing indices at time t

P_{t-1} represents the closing indices at time t-1

Ln refers to natural logarithm

Three different approaches were used to test the random-walk namely normality test, test for serial correlation and stationarity test.

Test for Normality of Stock Returns

The first condition to be fulfilled for market to be efficient is normality for which Jarque-Bera statistics and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were used.

Jarque-Bera Statistics

Jarque-Bera (JB) test is a parametric statistical measure used to test normality. It measures whether the stock returns have the skewness and kurtosis in align with a normal distribution. Test statistic of JB test can be computed with the help of model 2.

Where,
n = sample size
S = skewness of return series
K = kurtosis of return series

One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test

One sample K-S test is a non-parametric statistical measure used to test normality. Test statistic of K-S test is computed in model 3.

Where,
r = Returns series
F(r) = Cumulative Distribution Function (CDF) of returns
F_n (r) = Empirical Cumulative Distribution Frequency (ECDF) of returns
D_n = Test statistic which is the maximum value of absolute difference between ECDF and CDF

Test for Serial Correlation of Stock Returns

The major condition of a weak form efficiency of market is the absence of serial correlation. Auto-correlation is the time series relationship of current stock returns with its lag values. Run test and variance ratio test are used to test the presence of serial correlation.

Run test

Run test is a non-parametric statistical measure to test the serial correlation. It is measured using models 4, 5 and 6.

Where,
= number of positive runs
= number of negative runs
n = total number of observations =
R = number of runs

Variance ratio test

Variance Ratio (VR) test is a parametric statistic used to test the serial correlation in stock returns. Test statistic of VR is measured using model 7 and 8.

Where,

q = holding period (number of lags)

Test for Stationarity of Stock Returns

A stationary stock return series is referred to that series which have a constant mean, variance, and autocovariance over time. Stationary stock returns assure a random fluctuation of stock returns around a constant mean.

Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test

Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test is used to determine whether a time series has a unit root or not. Unit root can be defined as a time series which is depended in its lag (past) values.
Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test can be conducted using the model 9.

Where,

α = constant
β_t = time trend
p = number of lagged difference terms

Philips Perron (PP) test

Philips Perron test is a non-parametric statistic used to test the stationarity of returns series. Statistics of Philips Perron (PP) test is measured by model 10.

Results

This section deals with normality, serial correlation and stationarity of returns.

Test Result of Hypothesis 1: Distribution Patterns of Stock Returns

The first conditions of the stock returns to be efficient in weak form of efficiency in Stock Exchange is its normal distribution. Hence, hypothesis 1 of distribution patterns of stock returns was tested using parametric test i.e. Jacque-Bera test and non-parametric test i.e. Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test. The data is presented in table 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Normality test for daily NEPSE and sectoral returns

Indices	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	S	K	JB	P-value
NEPSE	1140	0.07	1.47	-6.21	5.87	0.39	4.87	194.60	.00
Commercial Banks	1140	0.02	1.43	-7.72	9.44	1.12	8.63	1745.91	.00
Development Banks	1140	0.11	2.17	-7.56	9.46	0.71	4.65	224.64	.00
Finance	1140	0.12	2.51	-8.95	9.30	0.50	4.23	120.04	.00
Micro Finance	1139	0.08	1.71	-10.03	8.58	0.60	6.31	588.88	.00
Life Insurance	1140	0.06	1.82	-8.62	9.30	0.75	6.19	590.23	.00
Non-Life Insurance	1140	0.08	1.74	-5.91	7.89	0.59	4.43	162.94	.00
Hydropower	1140	0.12	2.20	-7.06	8.89	0.52	4.13	111.38	.00
Manufacturing	1140	0.09	1.78	-7.86	7.38	0.76	4.81	265.33	.00
Trading	1137	0.15	2.55	-9.94	9.52	0.95	5.92	573.35	.00
Hotels and Tourism	1139	0.13	2.18	-9.09	10.24	0.77	5.18	336.57	.00
Investment	976	0.02	1.82	-6.59	8.49	0.67	4.97	230.77	.00
Others	1140	0.11	1.95	-9.57	8.07	0.50	4.98	233.32	.00

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and normality test for daily NEPSE and sectoral returns for the period from July 1, 2020 to April 28, 2025. Descriptive statistics include number of observations (N), mean, standard deviation (SD), minimum and maximum values. Normality tests include Skewness (S), Kurtosis (K), Jarque-Bera (JB) test and its asymptotic probability. The table shows that coefficient of skewness of NEPSE and all sectoral indices are greater than zero indicating positive skewness. Similarly, the coefficient of Kurtosis of NEPSE and all sectoral indices are greater than three indicating leptokurtic distribution. Presence of positive skewness and leptokurtic distribution violated the norms of normality distribution. Furthermore, JB test shows that the null hypothesis of normality of daily returns of NEPSE and all sectoral indices are rejected ($p<.05$). All of the results show that the daily returns of

Nepalese stock market do not follow the normal distribution which violates the norms of weak form of EMH.

Table 2

Indices	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	S	K	JB	P- Value
NEPSE	249	0.30	3.25	-7.86	9.50	0.26	2.85	3.04	0.22
Commercial Banks	249	0.08	3.22	-9.32	13.09	0.89	5.09	78.45	0.00
Development Banks	249	0.47	4.59	-9.81	16.04	0.59	3.82	20.93	0.00
Finance	249	0.54	5.87	-16.71	22.33	0.72	4.60	48.39	0.00
Micro Finance	249	0.32	3.97	-13.78	11.27	0.43	3.39	9.17	0.01
Life Insurance	249	0.23	3.96	-9.06	13.90	0.56	3.75	18.82	0.00
Non-Life Insurance	249	0.32	3.86	-10.53	13.27	0.42	3.52	10.09	0.01
Hydropower	249	0.53	4.73	-10.92	15.85	0.63	3.78	22.87	0.00
Manufacturing	249	-0.01	1.44	-5.71	4.83	-0.55	4.31	30.32	0.00
Trading	249	0.65	6.23	-16.31	39.17	2.03	10.57	766.13	0.00
Hotels and Tourism	249	0.63	4.97	-10.68	23.16	1.31	6.01	165.03	0.00
Investment	214	0.07	4.15	-9.68	17.54	0.93	4.99	66.18	0.00
Others	249	0.50	4.30	-8.75	17.09	0.89	4.68	62.75	0.00

Descriptive Statistics and Normality test for weekly NEPSE and sectoral returns

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and normality test for weekly NEPSE and sectoral returns for the period from July 1, 2020 to April 28, 2025. Descriptive statistics includes number of observations (N), mean, standard deviation (SD), minimum and maximum values. Normality tests include Skewness (S), Kurtosis (K), Jarque-Bera (JB) test and its asymptotic probability. The table shows that the coefficient of skewness of NEPSE and 11 sectoral indices are greater than zero indicating positive skewness except manufacturing and processing sector whose coefficient is less than zero indicating negative skewness. Similarly, the coefficient of kurtosis of NEPSE is less than three indicating the platykurtic distribution. In contrast, the coefficient of all sectoral indices is greater than three indicating leptokurtic distribution. Furthermore, JB test shows that the null hypothesis of normality of weekly returns of NEPSE is failed to rejected ($p>.05$) while, it is rejected in sectoral indices ($p<.05$). The results show that the Nepalese stock market is efficient but sectoral indices are not efficient in weak form.

Table 3

One-sample K-S test of daily and weekly returns of NEPSE and sectoral indices

	Daily Returns		Weekly Returns	
Indices	**Test Statistics**	**P-Value**	**Test Statistics**	**P-Value**
NEPSE	.07	.00	.05	.20
Commercial Banks	.11	.00	.07	.00
Development Banks	.08	.00	.07	.00
Finance	.07	.00	.07	.00
Micro Finance	.08	.00	.07	.01
Life Insurance	.09	.00	.06	.02
Non-Life Insurance	.09	.00	.05	.20
Hydropower	.06	.00	.09	.00
Manufacturing	.08	.00	.09	.00
Trading	.12	.00	.14	.00
Hotels and Tourism	.09	.00	.11	.00
Investment	.08	.00	.07	.01
Others	.08	.00	.08	.00

Table 3 shows test statistics and asymptotic probability of Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test for daily and weekly NEPSE and sectoral returns for the period from July 1, 2020 to April 28, 2025.

The null hypothesis of normality for daily returns is rejected ($p<.05$) which shows that the daily stock returns are not normal and does not support weak form of efficiency. However, the null hypothesis of normality for weekly returns is failed to reject in NEPSE and non-life insurance sector ($p>.05$) which show normal distribution and supports weak form of efficiency. The null hypothesis of normality for weekly returns in other sectors are rejected ($p<.05$) which does not show normal distribution and hence, it rejects weak form of efficiency.

Test Result of Hypothesis 2: Serial Correlation in Stock Returns

Auto-correlation is the relationship of a time series data with its lag values. Hence, the foremost condition of weak form of EMH is the absence of serial (auto) correlation. To test the presence of serial correlation in return series, non-parametric test such as Run test and parametric test such as Variance Ratio (VR) test are used.

Table 4

Run test for daily and weekly NEPSE and sectoral returns

Indices	Daily Returns				Weekly Returns			
	Test Value	No. of Runs	Z	P-Value	Test Value	No. of Runs	Z	P-Value
NEPSE	-0.03	490.00	-4.80	0.00	0.13	110	-1.97	0.05
Commercial Banks	-0.19	500.00	-4.21	0.00	-0.37	120	-0.70	0.49
Development Banks	-0.18	536.00	-2.07	0.04	-0.20	120	-0.70	0.49
Finance	-0.11	533.00	-2.25	0.02	-0.02	109	-2.10	0.04
Micro Finance	-0.12	490.00	-4.77	0.00	-0.24	114	-1.46	0.14
Life Insurance	-0.17	517.00	-3.20	0.00	-0.12	112	-1.71	0.09
Non-Life Insurance	-0.13	527.00	-2.61	0.01	0.02	120	-0.70	0.49
Hydropower	-0.12	496.00	-4.45	0.00	0.16	125	-0.06	0.95
Manufacturing	-0.10	542.00	-1.72	0.09	0.14	112	-1.71	0.09
Trading	-0.15	555.00	-0.86	0.39	-0.44	132	0.83	0.41
Hotels and Tourism	-0.18	569.00	-0.09	0.93	-0.22	129	0.45	0.66
Investment	-0.19	440.00	-3.14	0.00	-0.41	106	-0.27	0.78
Others	-0.08	522.00	-2.90	0.00	0.03	112	-1.71	0.09

The table shows test values, number of runs, z-statistics and asymptotic probability of Run test for daily and weekly NEPSE and sectoral returns for the period from July 1, 2020 to April 28, 2025. It was found that the null hypothesis of absence of serial correlation is rejected in the daily returns of NEPSE and sectoral indices except manufacturing, trading and hotels and tourism ($p<.05$) indicating the presence of serial correlation. However, the situation is different in weekly returns. The null hypothesis of absence of serial correlation is failed to reject in the weekly returns of NEPSE and sectoral indices except finance sector ($p>.05$). It shows that weekly returns of NEPSE and sectoral indices except finance sector show random behaviour.

Table 5

Variance Ratio (VR) test for daily and weekly NEPSE and sectoral returns

Indices	Daily Returns				Weekly Returns			
	Lag	VR		P-value	Lag	VR		P-value
NEPSE	2	0.56	8.73	0.00	2	0.50	6.13	0.00
	8	0.13	7.45	0.00	8	0.14	4.06	0.00
	16	0.07	5.91	0.00	16	0.08	3.02	0.00
Commercial Banks	2	0.61	6.95	0.00	2	0.48	5.3	0.00
	8	0.14	6.71	0.00	8	0.12	3.60	0.00
	16	0.07	5.32	0.00	16	0.07	2.78	0.01
Development Banks	2	0.58	9.38	0.00	2	0.53	5.60	0.00
	8	0.14	7.51	0.00	8	0.14	3.72	0.00
	16	0.07	5.67	0.00	16	0.08	2.78	0.01
Finance	2	0.61	9.29	0.00	2	0.49	5.74	0.00
	8	0.14	7.92	0.00	8	0.14	3.69	0.00
	16	0.07	5.96	0.00	16	0.07	2.80	0.01
Micro Finance	2	0.61	7.64	0.00	2	0.48	5.52	0.00
	8	0.15	7.02	0.00	8	0.14	3.64	0.00
	16	0.07	5.63	0.00	16	0.07	2.91	0.00
Life Insurance	2	0.49	5.19	0.00	2	0.49	5.19	0.00
	8	0.15	3.55	0.00	8	0.15	3.55	0.00
	16	0.08	2.82	0.00	16	0.08	2.82	0.00
Non-Life Insurance	2	0.49	5.62	0.00	2	0.49	5.62	0.00
	8	0.14	3.73	0.00	8	0.14	3.73	0.00
	16	0.08	2.84	0.00	16	0.08	2.84	0.00
Hydropower	2	0.49	5.9	0.00	2	0.49	5.90	0.00
	8	0.14	3.88	0.00	8	0.14	3.88	0.00
	16	0.08	2.92	0.00	16	0.08	2.92	0.00
Manufacturing	2	0.61	4.68	0.00	2	0.61	4.68	0.00
	8	0.14	3.94	0.00	8	0.14	3.94	0.00
	16	0.08	2.95	0.00	16	0.08	2.95	0.00
Trading	2	0.59	3.97	0.00	2	0.59	3.97	0.00
	8	0.15	3.12	0.00	8	0.15	3.12	0.00
	16	0.08	2.46	0.01	16	0.08	2.46	0.01
Hotels and Tourism	2	0.45	5.26	0.00	2	0.45	5.26	0.00
	8	0.13	3.67	0.00	8	0.13	3.68	0.00
	16	0.07	2.88	0.00	16	0.07	2.88	0.00
Investment	2	0.53	4.86	0.00	2	0.53	4.86	0.00
	8	0.16	3.42	0.00	8	0.16	3.42	0.00
	16	0.09	2.69	0.00	16	0.09	2.69	0.00

Others	2	0.53	4.79	0.00	2	0.53	4.79	0.00
	8	0.15	3.42	0.00	8	0.15	3.42	0.00
	16	0.08	2.69	0.01	16	0.08	2.69	0.00

Table 5 demonstrates the coefficient of Variance Ratio test, absolute value of Z-Statistics and asymptotic probability at lag 2, 8 and 16 for daily and weekly returns of NEPSE and sectoral indices. The result indicates that the null hypothesis of random walk of Variance Ratio test for both daily and weekly returns of NEPSE and its sectoral returns is rejected in all cases ($p<0.05$). It indicates that there is the presence of serial correlation in daily and weekly returns of NEPSE and sectoral indices which rejects the weak form of market efficiency and random walk behaviour.

Test Result of Hypothesis 3: Stationarity of Stock Returns

The last condition of the stock returns to be efficient in weak form is its stationarity. Stationary stock returns assure that there are no systematic patterns in the long run. Hence, hypothesis 3 of stationarity of daily and weekly returns of NEPSE and its sectoral indices are tested using Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test as a parametric test and Phillips Perron (PP) test as a non-parametric test.

Table 6

Indices	Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF)				Phillips-Perron (PP)			
	Daily Returns		Weekly Returns		Daily Returns		Weekly Returns	
	t	P-value	t	P-value	t	P-value	t	P-value
NEPSE	-17.79	0.00	-17.79	0.00	-31.89	0.00	-14.22	0.00
Com. Banks	-29.61	0.00	-29.61	0.00	-29.53	0.00	-15.19	0.00
Dev. Banks	18.82	0.00	-18.92	0.00	-32.78	0.00	-14.66	0.00
Finance	-18.09	0.00	-18.09	0.00	-30.02	0.00	-14.91	0.00
Micro Finance	-29.98	0.00	-29.98	0.00	-29.94	0.00	-15.49	0.00
Life Insurance	-30.31	0.00	-30.21	0.00	-30.46	0.00	-13.49	0.00
Non-Life Ins.	-30.08	0.00	-30.08	0.00	-30.31	0.00	-14.04	0.00
Hydropower	-18.61	0.00	-18.61	0.00	-31.14	0.00	-14.47	0.00
Manufacturing	-17.13	0.00	-17.13	0.00	-30.69	0.00	-13.77	0.00
Trading	-28.65	0.00	-28.65	0.00	-29.32	0.00	-13.09	0.00
Hotels & Tour.	-33.09	0.00	-33.09	0.00	-33.25	0.00	-14.69	0.00
Investment	-16.62	0.00	-16.62	0.00	-28.42	0.00	-13.27	0.00
Others	-18.02	0.00	-18.02	0.00	-31.27	0.00	-14.03	0.00

Augmented Dickey- Fuller (ADF) test and Phillips-Perron (PP) test of daily and weekly returns of NEPSE and its sectoral returns

Table 6 demonstrates t-statistics and asymptotic probability of Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test and Phillips-Perron (PP) test of daily and weekly returns of NEPSE and its sectoral returns.

Both Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test and Phillips-Perron (PP) test suggested that daily and weekly NEPSE and sectoral returns do not have a unit root and are stationary ($p<.01$). The third condition of random walk is clearly supported by both parametric and non-parametric tests.

Discussion

This study reveals significant understandings into the weak form of efficiency of the NEPSE. Run test and Variance ratio test of daily NEPSE and sectoral returns suggests that past price movement have the predictive tool to estimate future stock price movements. The findings are consistent with (Asaad & Omer, 2024; Gaio, 2022; Bhatia, 2022; Dias et al., 2020). The presence of returns predictability challenges the concept of a random walk in the daily price series.

Conversely, the mixed results from the analysis of weekly NEPSE and sectoral returns suggest a more complex picture. Some statistical tests such as Run test have accepted the randomness, other tests such as Variance Ratio indicate the presence serial correlations. These findings are consistent with (Khanal et al., 2025; Hanna & Al-Qadi, 2024; Munir & Kok, 2024; Risal & Koju, 2021; Dhodary, 2020; Hawaldar et al., 2017; Nwachukwu & Shitta, 2015). This ambiguity in results indicates that the market behavior over a slightly longer horizon may be closer to efficiency, or at least less predictable, compared to daily return series.

Furthermore, the inefficiencies detected in daily return series could also stem from the dominance of retail investors, lack of diversity in trading products and options, regulatory incompetence, and lack of accurate and prompt dissemination of information. These factors hinder the incorporation of publicly available information into stock prices, thereby violating the weak form of EMH in developing countries.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the weak form of market efficiency in NEPSE using daily and weekly returns series. It was found that both Jarque-Bera test and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test clearly rejected the normality of daily NEPSE and sectoral returns, while the results are mixed in weekly returns. Run test shows the presence of serial correlation in daily NEPSE and sectoral returns with few exceptions which indicates the violation of weak form of market efficiency on daily basis. In contrast, Run test suggested that the weekly NEPSE and its sectoral returns have no serial correlation. However, Variance Ratio test suggested that there is the presence of serial correlation both in daily and weekly NEPSE and its sectoral returns. However, both Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test and Phillips-Perron (PP) test suggested that both daily and weekly NEPSE and its sectoral returns are stationery. The findings provide clear evidence that NEPSE is not efficient in the weak form in the context of daily returns, suggesting that prices do not follow a random walk and are predictable. However, the analysis of weekly NEPSE and sectoral returns yields mixed results, indicating that while the market may demonstrate some degree of efficiency over a longer interval, it does not fully confirm to the weak form of EMH.

These findings have important implications for investors/traders, regulatory authorities and academicians. For investors/traders, the market inefficiency in daily returns may provide short-term trading opportunities. For regulatory authorities, the findings of the study highlight the need to improve technological infrastructure, market transparency and investor education to enhance the efficiency of the market. For academicians, this study contributes to address the existing dispute about the presence of market efficiency. Future researchers can examine whether the Nepalese stock market is efficient in semi-strong or strong forms. Weak form of market efficiency can also be tested at international markets.

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