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Editor-in- Chief
Sajan Paudel

Editorial Board

Sajan Paudel (Coordinator)
Cell number: 9852660875
Email: paudelsajan@gmail.com

Mansingh Rai (Member)
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Email: nachhiringmansingh@gmail.com

Shanti Ram Nepal (Member)
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Email: Snepal402@gmail.com

Editorial Board

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Email: ghanshyambhattarai014@gmail.com

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Cell number: 9842792519
Email: rkbtpj12@gmail.com

Mahendra Kumar Anchangbo Limbu (Member)
Cell number: 98427925192000
Email: mk91@gmail.com

Printed at

SR Graphic Design
Kirtipur, Kathmandu
+977 9843399001
Email: srgraphicdesign2081@gmail.com



Pathibhara Journal of Multidisciplinary Research

Pathibhara Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (PJMR) is a peer reviewed Journal published annually by Pathivara Multiple Campus, has been widely accepted by Nepalese researchers and academicians. The objective of the publication is to review the current researches, encourage novice researches for academic publication, analysis development processes from multidisciplinary viewpoints and suggest measures for addressing contemporary development issues.

PJMR is open to all types of contributions dealing with all regions or countries of the development world. However, the publication focuses in the policy application of innovative theory and

research towards the promotion of inclusive and sustainable development. Preference will be given to thought provoking issues, interdisciplinary analysis, empirical research, field work or case studies having significant implications for meaningful development planning and policy.

Finally, editorial board emphasizes the publications in simple, commandable language with valuable articles so as so to make each issue accessible and useful to various background readers. PJMR also welcomes comments, suggestions from all sectors for improving quality of academic publication.

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Pathibhara Journal of Multidisciplinary Research

Publication of Pathibhara Multiple Campus

A Peer Reviewed Journal

Editorial

It is with great pleasure that we present first volume of our multidisciplinary Journal, a publication dedicated to fostering academic discourse and informing policy perspectives within Nepal. This issue assembles twelve insightful research articles, each undergoing a rigorous peer-review process. Together, they reflect significant contributions within Nepal's academic community and address socio-cultural, economic, environmental and educational issues in Nepalese context and beyond.

First article, by Man Singh Rai, opens the volume with a vital ethnographic study on the Nachhiring cultures and festivals of the Kirat people residing in Solukhumbu. It provides a heartbreaking expression at an indigenous community's struggle to preserve its identity against the gravities of modernization, education, and governmental neglect.

Second article by Mahendra Anchangbo Limbu shifts focus to the financial sector, analyzing the mixed impacts of mergers and acquisitions on the performance of Nepalese commercial banks. The study underlines that while consolidation can bolster institutions, success is not guaranteed and depends on factors beyond the merger itself. Third article, Raj Kumar Baniya examines socio-economic dynamics of large cardamom farming in Taplejung. Highlighting its role in improving rural livelihoods, the study suggest for implementing coordinated policy responses, including price stabilization and financial literacy programs, to ensure the sector's long-term sustainability.

Fourth article, by Indra Bahadur Gurung, presents a case study of Gurung community residing in Funcling, detailing its socio-cultural

practices and economic situations. The study captures dynamic changes in the community's traditions as it navigates the influences of Hinduism, migration, and modernization.

Fifth article, Nawaraj Acharya, explores role of motivation in enhancing English speaking skills. Through action research in a secondary school, it demonstrates the constructive impact of motivational strategies, positive teacher-student interactions, and technology, offering valuable insights for language educators.

Sixth article, by Rajan Kumar KC and Hemant Bahadur Thapa, assesses distributed leadership practices among head teachers in the Kathmandu Valley. Their quantitative study reveals significant correlations between leadership practices and factors like training and qualifications, arguing that collaborative leadership is essential for enhancing school productivity.

Seventh article, by Rahul Aryal and Prashant Shrestha, examines poverty reduction efforts from the perspective of slum residents in Kathmandu. Using a rights-based approach, the study finds that despite some improvements, structural barriers and weak participation perpetuate poverty, calling for more integrated and accountable governance.

Eighth article, by Basanta Rai and Pardeep Raj Kapadi provides a critical investigation into corruption allegations within the Nepal Red Cross Society following the 2015 earthquake. The research highlights a critical deficiency in integrity and compliance, urging for urgent reforms to restore trust in this key humanitarian organization.

Ninth article, by Sushmita Shrestha and Nanda Kumari Kathyat, offers a critical review of how

psychology is integrated into social work across global, South Asian, and Nepalese contexts. It advocates for moving towards decolonized, culturally grounded approaches in Nepal that influence community-based resources.

Tenth article, by Dhanya Prasad Poudel, appraised Nepalese women's struggle, identity and motherhood in '*Teen Ghumti*', Nobel. The study found contemporary capabilities of Nepali women, arguing that through self-awareness and empowerment, they can achieve lasting independence and contribute meaningfully to all state mechanisms.

Eleventh article, by Ghanashyam Bhattarai, is a literary analysis of the novel *Chuli* by Sarubhakta. It explores the theme of life's struggle, drawing parallels between the physical challenge of scaling Mount Everest and the existential journey of human life, concluding that struggle is an inherent and essential part of living.

Twelfth and final article, by Shantiram Nepal, evaluates the implementation of the Mid-day Meal Program in a community school in

Taplejung. While acknowledging its goals of improving nutrition and attendance, the research identifies practical challenges in management and funding that hinder the program from meeting its full potential.

Together, these twelve articles form a rich needlepoint of inquiry, reflecting on Nepal's journey at the intersection of tradition and modernity, policy and practice, and local challenges with global discourses. They reinforce the imperative of evidence-based, inclusive, and context-sensitive approaches of development. On behalf of the editorial board, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the authors for their valuable contributions. I am equally grateful to the reviewers and editorial team members for their purposeful academic efforts. The views expressed in these articles belong solely to the authors. With this volume, our journal reaffirms its pledge to be a committed platform for scholarly exchange, dedicated to nurturing academic excellence and policy innovations necessary for inclusive development.

Sajan Paudel
Editor-in-Chief

Table of Contents

Nachhiring Cultures and Festivals: Implications for the Community and Identity of Kiratis in Nepal Man Singh Rai.....	1-9
Merger Impacts on Commercial Banks in Nepal: A Study of Two Merged Commercial Banks Mahendra Anchangbo Limbu	10-22
Dynamics of Large Cardamom Farming in Taplejung District, Nepal Raj Kumar Baniya	23-37
Assessing Socio-cultural Practices and Economic Situations of Gurung Community in Phungling Municipality-8, Taplejung District, Nepal Indra Bahadur Gurung	38-48
Role of Motivation in Enhancing Speaking Skills in the English Language Classroom in Nepal Nawaraj Acharya.....	49-58
Assessing Head Teachers' Distributed Leadership Practices in Public Secondary Schools of Kathmandu Valley Rajan Kumar KC and Hemant Bahadur Thapa	59-69
Stakeholder's Perspective on Poverty Reduction: A Study of Slum Areas in Kathmandu Metropolitan City-14, Nepal Rahul Aryal and Prashant Shrestha	70-81
Corruption in Nepal Red Cross: Addressing Lack of Integrity and Anti-Corruption Compliance Basanta Rai and Pardeep Raj Kapadi	82-91
Re/viewing Application of Psychology in Social Work: Comparative Analysis of Global, South Asian and Nepalese Contexts Sushmita Shrestha and Nanda Kuamri Kathyat	92-100
नारी-सङ्घर्ष, अस्मिता र मातृत्वका केन्द्रमा 'तीनघुम्ती' धान्यप्रसाद पौडेल	101-105
चुली उपन्यास सङ्घर्षमय जीवनका निमित्त प्रेरणा घनश्याम भट्टराई	106-111
विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम: कार्यान्वयनको अवस्था शान्तिराम नेपाल	112-120

Nachhiring Cultures and Festivals: Implications for the Community and Identity of Kiratis in Nepal

Man Singh Rai

Asst. Prof. and Assistant Campus Chief
Pathibhara Multiple Campus, Taplejung
Email: nachhiringmansingh@gmail.com

Abstract

Culture is the heart of human civilization and the distinct identity of any ethnic group. Festivals are the continuation of civilization because they preserve cultural heritage, transmit traditions across generations, and sustain social cohesion. The day culture and values disappear from a person's life, that person can no longer be considered truly human. This research finds out the current status of Nachhiring cultures and festivals, which belong to the Kirat ethnic group in Nepal. It applies qualitative research methodology, using the ethnographic method. Participants include individuals from Sotang Rural Municipality, Solukhumbu district. Findings show that Nachhiring cultures and festivals are rapidly disappearing. Only the senior Nachhiring people are used to explaining the Nachhiring cultures and festivals and are worried about their innate extinction. Due to the modern education system, over-social network inclination, and governmental reluctance, minor ethnic treasures have been pushed to the margin. Realizing this harsh reality deeply, this research has been prepared with the objective of highlighting the importance and necessity of Nachhiring culture and festivals in the lives of today's modern young students and youngsters.

Keywords: *Nachhiring, Tos, yangkhulu, sakhumbu, masimi, nokchho*

Introduction

Nachhiring belongs to Kirat ethnic groups in Nepal (Grollmann, 2018). Just as each ethnic group has its own geographical settlement, the Nachhiring people primarily live in the eastern region of Nepal, especially in places like Sotang and Mahakulung Rural Municipalities of Solukhumbu and Rakha-Bangdel-Bakachol-Sungdel-Patheka-Aiselukharka of Khotang district (Rai, 2020a). They have also been inhabiting other districts like Taplejung, Panchthar, Terhathum, Sankhuwasabha, Bhojpur, Udaypur, Sunsari, Jhapa, Morang, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur; and outside Nepal in India, Bhutan, Hong Kong, UK, Australia, USA, and so on.

In a scholarly context, the term "Nachhiring" refers to a caste, a sub-caste, and denotes a group

of people. There is not much evidence found in written materials such as books or articles that thoroughly study the word Nachhiring from a linguistic or ethnographic perspective. Some writers have used the term "Nachhiring" in poems, essays, or other literary works, but no extensive study has been done yet. The name "Nachhiring" is mainly used by people of the Nachhiring lineage themselves. There have been various assumptions and interpretations about the origin of the Nachhiring word from a sociological and anthropological viewpoint. The senior sociologist Dor Bahadur Bista has viewed Nachhiring as 'Sotang' and 'Pelmang'. Prof. Sueyoshi Toba has opined the term as "Nachhiring" or "Kulung". The senior sociologist Dr. Om Gurung has stated Nachhiring as "Nacheri". Some sociologists have related it to "Wangdel," "Parali," or "Rakhali". When

studied linguistically, it is understood that the word Nachhiring might have originated from a deviation or transformation of some earlier word (see Rai, 2024).

Being an insider from the Kirat ethnic group, I have witnessed that Nachhiring people have their own traditional customs, rituals, and culture with unique moral significances that have been passed down through generations through oral transmission of moral, religious, social, and cultural functions. From one generation to the next, these traditions have been inherited, and it is found that the Nachhiring community completes all life-cycle rituals, such as birth and death rites, through these moral teachings and Mundhum. Moreover, they have customary ways of celebrating festivals like Dashain, Tihar, Saune Sakranti, and Maghe Sakranti with their own traditional methods. They worship various deities such as Sitakhau Purbya, Nwagi, Nagi, Tos, Saipom, Kheplem Therma, Sahalma, Shikari, Sansari, Wayu pooja, streams and rivulets pooja (Kholanala pooja), land pooja (Bhume pooja), forest pooja, new crops offering pooja, etc.

According to the 2021 Nepal National Census, by population by caste/ethnicity and sex, the total population of the Nachhiring community is 7,300 out of a total 29,164,578 population (National Statistics Office, 2023). The Nachhiring population was 7,154 by caste/ethnicity and sex in 2011 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The low percentage (0.025%) of this community in the 2021 census shows its endangered status in Nepal's ethnic demographic. Those who belong to the Kirat community have experienced a gradual decline in Nachhiring culture, rituals, and festivals, which raises concerns for the sustainable preservation and promotion of Nachhiring heritage. Thus, the purpose of this research is to find out the current status of Nachhiring cultures and festivals and to accustom the Nachhiring youngsters with their implications in this digital world.

Literature Review

Indigenous knowledge and culture in Nepal

preserve identity, language, and the environment. Rai (2025) found that Mangsuk is an oral Kirati tradition, which is the oral teaching of the Yamphu mother tongue. It combines ritual, learning, and community practices. The formal education system should recognize it to support indigenous culture and language. Mammadova and Abdullayev (2025) mentioned that preserving cultural heritage boosts economic benefits like tourism and jobs. There must be policies that include heritage in economic planning. Lama (2021) found that Nepal's indigenous knowledge helps preserve culture and the environment. This is passed through language, art, and traditions. Lama also stressed that future research is needed to scientifically validate the applications of these knowledge systems. Subba (2023) argued that Kirat identity is diverse and shaped by history, culture, and language. There is a need for a broader view to promote the inclusion and fairness of this knowledge system. There exist smaller Kirat groups in different areas who have shared cultural identity and heritage aspects in common. Rai and Rai (2021) included that Mangsuk and Mundhum teach Yamphu knowledge, values, and beliefs to younger generations. However, the modern education system sidelines these indigenous traditions. Indigenous learning should be preserved through the formal education system. Rai (2020b) included that Rai people follow Mundhum and Suptulung rituals to teach culture and knowledge. These practices are connected to nature and identity. The formal education system has not recognized their educational meaning. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples mentioned, "Recognizing that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment" (United Nations, 2007, p. 4).

Research highlights that indigenous knowledge in Nepal faces challenges from migration, weak institutions, and limited legal protection. Malla and Adhikari (2025) explored that migration of people from villages and weak institutional support in Nepal have made conserving

indigenous knowledge difficult. They argued that community events and respecting senior citizens can help pass knowledge to younger generations. Policies need to officially recognize these citizens as culture bearers. In Nepal, the Guthi system of Newar people has supported sustainable tourism by combining culture and economy (Shrestha et al., 2024). Collaboration strengthens social ties and the identity of the community. Indigenous practices should guide the development of tourism by respecting their century-old traditions. Hossain and Ballardini (2021) stress that current laws do not fully protect indigenous knowledge and rights. The prevailing legal frameworks have gaps in cultural rights and self-determination. They suggested that a principle-based approach combining human rights and property concepts could improve protection. Dawson et al. (2021) indicated that indigenous knowledge protection is insufficient under current laws. This can be made effective by combining human rights with property principles, which can offer better protection. It is important to note that ethical principles like fairness and cultural rights are key in the initiation of indigenous peoples' movements and advocacy.

The above research highlights that indigenous knowledge and culture are important, but little is known about Nachhiring cultures and festivals. These traditions need to be preserved for younger generations. This research aims to fill this gap by conducting an empirical study by interacting with elderly people from Nachhiring culture in Nepal's eastern hills and by observing their cultural practices and rituals.

Methodology

In this study, qualitative research design was used to explore an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the research topic (Makateng & Mokala, 2025). I applied the ethnographic research method to unpack Nachhiring cultures, festivals, and their implications in the present context (O'Reilly, 2012). I conducted in-depth interviews with four Nachhiring senior citizens and observed their cultural practices and rituals. The narrative findings and observation data

have been interpreted through thematic analysis (Ahmed et al., 2025). The participants included [P1], age 70; [P2], age 73; [P3], age 67; [P4], age 78; and [P5], age 76. They were purposively chosen (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024) as they are community leaders and senior citizens who have ample traditional knowledge of Nachhiring cultures.

The research area is mainly based in Sotang Rural Municipality, Solukhumbu district. The district consists of 2,785 Nachhiring people according to the population by caste/ethnicity and sex data of the 2021 Census (National Statistics Office, 2023). Nachhiring cultures and festivals are solely celebrated in this region. It is inhabited by these ethnic people who have traditionally preserved their practices.

Ethical procedures were applied by seeking informed consent from participants, maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of their identities throughout the research (Al Habsi, 2024). I paid special attention to cultural sensitivity, respectful participation in rituals, and ongoing consent during the prolonged interactions (Iphofen, 2021). This research's trustworthiness is ensured through bringing rich interview narration from the field through in-depth interviews. Observational data complemented the qualitative texts. My reflection as a representative of the Kirat community has maintained reflexivity to minimize bias and ensure rigor in this study (Tariq, 2025).

Findings

I found the diverse current cultural and festive situations of Nachhiring people in the study area. I have presented them under thematic headings: Sakhumbu/Poorkha, Mauke, Masimi, Nokchho/Dhami, and Tos.

Sakhumbu/Poorkha

[P1] is the Sakhumbu or Poorkha in the Nachhiring community. Sakhumbu is supposed to be the knower of Nachhiring culture and sacrament. Sakhumbu is the principal actor in performing all rites and rituals throughout the year. Upon interaction, I found that each and

every single ritualistic activity is completed under his direct guidance and supervision. [P1] shared, “I don't have spiritual power like the wizards or shamans. They have life-long cultural and sacramental experience for performing each and every Nachhiring mundhumi function.” Even the three kinds of Nokchhos/Dhami – who are not all-knowers – ask him for the cultural and sacramental completion. During a festival, I saw him teach a young Dhami the proper offering and chants, showing how cultural knowledge is passed down.

Mauke

[P2] is the "Mauke" in the Nachhiring community. The term "Mauke" is derived from the term "Mauka" – special food or holy food – which is forbidden to eat even by Sakhumbu, Nokchho, and laymen. The Nachhiring community prepares varieties of holy food in the course of performing all ritual functions. Among them, Mauka is one of the major blessed foods (Prasad). [P2] explained, “Only one person is allowed to eat this holy food 'Mauka'. In the long run, this Mauka eater began to be recognized as Mauke.” This person is prohibited from using common people’s utensils, mates, tools, bed, quilt, pillow, chair, plate, etc., and even green vegetables. He has to abide strictly by these communal laws. [P2] further elaborated, “There is a belief that if I breach them, I might die or become deeply sick. Likely, if ordinary people eat this food, they might feel their mouth twisted, become lame, limped, sickened, and weak enough to die.” That’s why only Mauke is allowed to taste this holy food. During a ritual, [P2] carefully prepared the Mauka and warned a young member not to touch it, showing the Mauke’s sacred authority and responsibility.

Masimi

[P3] (Masimi) has a significant role in the Nachhiring community while performing dance in Tosh culture. In Tosh, the dance activities proceed only under the supervision of Masimi. During Tosh Pooja, Nokchho can't enter the Yankhulu (Bhumesthan) before Masimi's

entrance. Masimi takes Silim (a stripe type of wood) and Buyem (Yak's tail) in his hand and enters the Yankhulu by dancing around the Simal tree (a holy tree in Nachhiring). Nokchho and other performers follow his footsteps. [P3] explained, “A Masimi is chosen on the basis of ritual knowledge (Mundhumi gyan) and cultural dancing ability.” During Tosh Pooja, I observed [P3] lead the dance, with performers following his steps, showing how ritual authority and cultural knowledge are passed on.

Nokchho/Dhami

The Nachhiring community is incomplete without the presence of Nokchho. They have a great impact on the community from birth to death. [P4] detailed, “There are three types of Nokchho for performing Nachhiring cultures and sacraments: Selemi Nokchho, Khu Nokchho, and Tos Nokchho.”

According to [P4], Selemi Nokchho's major responsibility is to heal sick people and make their house free of problems, sufferings, threats, and tensions. In other words, their core role is to create a peaceful environment within the hosting house. Through rice speculation, they remove bad stars’ marks, sanctify the oven, and heal the sick people. Another responsibility is to guarantee the accidental dead's soul reaches Pomlalong (heaven). To foretell, they cut the layers of halbei (a kind of kachur) into pieces and set them into pairs.

Likewise, Khu Nokchho performs nwagi pooja, nagi pooja, dedam pooja, chhidam pooja, etc. They offer special food to please their ancestors for blessings, offer chhorsa (pig's tail part), and perform other sacramental activities. They are highly respected in this community because there is a belief that a whole family's year-long prosperity, happiness, peacefulness, and success depend on their satisfactory performance. While performing Dedam, they also forecast by cutting chiribei (a kind of kachur) into pieces and setting them into pairs.

Similarly, Tos Nokchho or Shibu Nokchho performs all the Tos-related activities. This

Nokchho is nominated through the Sarbhukham process (a group of people who know every step of all kinds of Tos). Every Nachhiring highly respects the Tos Nokchho. Nachhiring people celebrate seven Tos in the entire year. The Tosh Nokchho has to perform all these seven Tos.

During my observation, the three Nokchhos performed their rituals carefully, showing how their roles sustain Nachhiring cultural and spiritual life.

Tos

Tos is the heart of Nachhiring culture and civilization. [P5] highlighted that there are seven different Tos, which Nachhiring people celebrate in seven different time-frames, spaces, and for seven different purposes. All Nachhiring people gather in specific holy places to gleefully and frantically enjoy and celebrate them. As per conversation with [P5], the seven different Tos are briefed as follows:

Soskha Tos

The literal meaning of "Soskha" in the Nachhiring language is – "throw away or put aside." This Tos is celebrated on the previous day of Falgun Poornima. While celebrating it, all the prevailing diseases, infections, or negativities on the earth, in nature, in society, and in flora and fauna are supposed to be put aside through the Tos Nokchho. After celebrating this Tos, Nachhiring people look forward positively, conceiving that the whole year will be full of joys and prosperity. Their life would prosper. With the positive vibes, they begin to cultivate their lands. Also, this Tos is celebrated with the determination that a good season is to come and that it is the appropriate time to start preparing the farm. This Tos is performed collectively at Yankhulu (Bhumesthan). Before this Tos is hosted, one kilogram of grain is collected and stored in different toles for making jaand (a kind of alcohol).

Banchhyor Tos

Another equally essential Tos in the Nachhiring community is Banchhyor Tos. The literal meaning of the term "Banchhyor" in the Nachhiring language is – "to cut or clear the

bushes." This Tos is celebrated on the previous day, or "the day of Chaturdashi," of Chaitra Poornima. This celebration reminds the initial practice of living by clearing the bushes or way of life in the jungle at that time. The purpose of celebrating this Tos is to invoke the almighty for a happy, healthy, and prosperous life without difficulties and catastrophes. On this very day, Nachhiring people uproot weeds in the field, put them aside, and chop trees as per reminiscence. They also wish to have germless crops on this occasion. It is also regarded as the indication of the planting season.

Rumul Tos

The third equally significant Tos in the Nachhiring community is Rumul Tos. The meaning of Rumul in the Nachhiring language is – to consult or to discuss. According to Nachhiring belief, it was instigated as preparation for war. This Tos is celebrated on the previous day of Ngerya Tos. It is hosted on the Triyadashi of Jestha Poornima. It came into existence as preparedness for war. According to local ancestors, there had been a terrible war between the Thulung King called Dharme of Deusa and the Nachhiring of Sotang. Nachhiring battled valiantly and conquered the Thulung Dynasty. After the war, there was drought, famine, heavy rainfall and no rainfall, and low grain production. When all the Nokchhos were requested to find a solution, they suggested Ngerya Tos. Therefore, Rumul Tos was conceived. It is mainly celebrated in Sotang Rural Municipality of Solukhumbu district. In addition, Rumul Tos is also regarded as the supplementary Tos of Ngerya Tos.

Ngerya Tos

The most indispensable Tos in the Nachhiring community is Ngerya Tos. In a word, it is the Tos of pride and victory. The term "Ngerya" is derived from "Nger." The literal meaning of "Nger" in the Nachhiring language is – war or battle. Ngerya Tos is celebrated on the Chaturdashi, or the previous day of Jestha Poornima. According to Nachhiring ancestors, this Tos evolved from a battlefield background. According to Sakhumbu Bal Kumar Nachhiring,

it has not been too long since its commemoration commenced. He further added that there had been the kingdom of Nachhiring, and across the Dudhkoshi River in Deusa, there had been the kingdom of Thulung King, Dharme. According to Mr. Nachhiring, the Thulung King Dharme came up to Budhi Danda (from where Sotang is clearly seen), erected a large, elongated-shaped stone, and offered a bull buffalo with the pledge of invading and capturing Sotang. That stone still exists there. Unfortunately, King Dharme lost the war and hid in the den of Chaplikom, Sotang. The Nachhiring warriors revealed him while he was drinking jaand (a grain-made special alcohol) and eating fried corn flour. First, he requested them to let him finish and suddenly jumped down from the den to his death. His head was pierced through with a bamboo spear and set up at Hitising, Sotang. His eastward-facing mouth was always turned toward Deusa in the morning. This caused many catastrophes in Sotang, like drought, famine, and heavy rainfall. To get rid of these precarious situations, the Nokchhos suggested burying his head with commemoration. Only then could happiness and prosperity return. Eventually, the Ngerya Tos originated.

Chalim Tos

Chalim Tos is the fifth major Tos of Nachhiring people. The term "Chalim" is the derivative form of the Nachhiring word "Chalei," which means "Seed" or "Seedling." The purpose of celebrating Chalim Tos is to worship the grain seed and the seedlings. Henceforth, Chalim Tos came into existence. This Tos is celebrated on the previous day of Asar Poornima. In addition, this Tos is also celebrated invoking to ward off diseases from the plants.

Sama Tos

Sama Tos is another equally crucial Tos for Nachhiring people. The literal meaning of "Sama" in the Nachhiring language is "Diseases or Sickness." Hence, Sama Tos developed from Sama. To ward off diseases, evil ghosts, invisible powers, and sufferings, this Tos is compulsorily celebrated on the last day of Shrawan Masanta

(last day of Shrawan month). This Tos is performed not at Yankhulu but at Tos Nokchho's house collectively. According to Nachhiring convention, the time after Chalim Tos is performed and before Sairum Tos is completed is called the most critical time. People suffer a lot from various evil spirits or powers. Therefore, this Tos is conducted to free people from all sorts of troubles during it.

Sairum Tos

The last but equally significant Tos in Nachhiring is Sairum Tos. The literal meaning of "Sairum" in Nepali language is "Sheer uthaunu." This is the supplementary Tos of all Tos. There is a belief that when all Tos are completed successfully, this final Tos is performed invoking enough power and strength for all to combat against evil spirits, diseases, and troubles. This Tos is also not performed at Yankhulu but at Tos Nokchho's house. This Tos is performed on the fifth day of Jamare Aunshi (Aswin Shukla Panchami). After the Sairum Tos worship is completed, the way to conduct any good work is open. With the successful completion of it, everybody feels free of sufferings, haunts, troubles, and negativities. In summary, the seven Tos are key rituals in Nachhiring culture. The community follows the Tos Nokchho to keep traditions and well-being. Together, these practices sustain Nachhiring identity and cultural harmony.

Discussion

Culture includes knowledge, belief, and habits people share in the society (Tylor, 1889). This indicates that culture is learned and shared, not innate or biological, and the Nachhiring community is no exception. Culture often originates from or is attributed to a specific region, making it the heart of a society or community. The study reveals that Nachhiring cultural and festive practices are maintained through key roles such as Sakhumbu, Mauke, Masimi, and the three types of Nokchho/Dhami. Sakhumbu acts as the principal custodian of cultural knowledge, supervising all rituals throughout the year and guiding other ritual performers. Mauke holds sacred authority over holy food, while Masimi

leads dance rituals during Tosh celebrations. The Nokchhos ensure spiritual and social well-being, performing essential sacraments and forecasting auspicious outcomes. The seven Tos festivals structure the Nachhiring calendar, promoting identity, cohesion, and continuity of cultural traditions. These findings align with Rai (2025), Rai and Rai (2021), and Rai (2020b), who highlight those oral traditions and rituals are vital for preserving indigenous knowledge, yet are often marginalized by modern education systems.

These findings resonate with broader literature on indigenous knowledge in Nepal, which emphasizes challenges such as migration, weak institutional support, and limited legal recognition (Malla & Adhikari, 2025; Hossain & Ballardini, 2021; Dawson et al., 2021). Experiences from the Guthi system of Newars illustrate that community collaboration can preserve cultural heritage while promoting social cohesion and sustainable tourism (Shrestha et al., 2024; Mammadova & Abdullayev, 2025). Additionally, studies by Lama (2021) and Subba (2023) underscore that indigenous knowledge sustains language, environment, and cultural identity but requires validation and broader recognition to support inclusion and fairness. Today, Nachhiring people, with pride, can assert themselves as a unique community. Tosh and Yangkhulu are treasured cultural assets, and while urban and semi-urban members may be alienated from their pristine practices, the significance and spiritual connection of names, rituals, and festivals cannot be separated from lineage. Cultural and spiritual connections distinguish individuals and preserve the community's identity, even amid modern adaptation or digital influences.

Despite these insights, little research exists specifically on Nachhiring cultures and festivals. The study confirms that these traditions are rapidly disappearing, primarily preserved only by senior community members. Overreliance on digital devices and social media alienates younger Nachhiring from their cultural

heritage. The research addresses this gap by documenting Nachhiring rituals and festivals through interactions with elders and direct observation, highlighting the urgency to connect modern youth with ancestral origins. Preserving these practices ensures continuity of cultural knowledge, festivals, and language, sustaining spiritual, social, and cultural harmony within the community (United Nations, 2007; Rai, 2025; Rai & Rai, 2020). The emotional concern of elders over declining participation demonstrates the community's collective recognition of cultural preservation as essential for future generations.

Conclusion

This study shows that Nachhiring cultural and festival practices, led by Sakhumbu, Mauke, Masimi, and Nokchho/Dhami, are crucial to preserve and promote community identity and cohesion. Unfortunately, these traditions are rapidly declining as they are only preserved by elders. Young people are increasingly disconnected from these heritages due to modern education, urban life, and technological influences. This needs to be reformed through awareness, education, and youth participation. Limitations of the study are that it is restricted to a specific area and relies on small qualitative interviews and observations. Future scope of the study includes exploring other regions, including quantitative research, and examining ways to integrate these practices in educational and community programs. Thus, preserving Nachhiring culture is essential to maintain identity, heritage, and continuity of indigenous practices for future generations.

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Merger Impacts on Commercial Banks in Nepal: A Study of Two Merged Commercial Banks

Mahendra Anchangbo Limbu
Pathivara Multiple Campus, Taplejung

Email: 2000.mk91@gmail.com

Abstract

This research investigates the impact of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) on the financial performance of commercial banks in Nepal, a topic of growing relevance in the country's evolving financial landscape. Drawing on a period characterized by significant policy changes and consolidation efforts by the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the study analyzes pre- and post-merger financial indicators, specifically focusing on profitability and risk. Utilizing a descriptive/causal-comparative research design, the study selected two merged Nepalese commercial banks, NIC ASIA Bank Limited and Global IME Bank Limited, as sample cases, examining their annual financial reports over a fourteen-year period. Key financial ratios such as Return on Assets, Return on Equity, Net Profit Margin, Earnings Per Share, and Market Price Per Share were analyzed using statistical tools including mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and regression analysis. The findings present mixed outcomes: while Global IME Bank demonstrated improved profitability and reduced risk volatility post-merger, NIC ASIA Bank experienced a decline in average profitability ratios, despite increased overall profit, and an increase in risk volatility. This heterogeneity in outcomes suggests that, while mergers and acquisitions can bolster financial institutions, their success is contingent on various factors beyond mere consolidation.

Keywords: Merger, Acquisition, Economies of Scale, Economies of Scope

Introduction

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) have been a recurring phenomenon in the global economic landscape, typically appearing in "waves" characterized by bursts of activity interspersed with periods of relative inactivity (Vasilaki, 2009). Historically, these merger waves, five of which are commonly recognized since 1890, have often concluded with major wars or economic crises. While the initial waves primarily impacted the US market, later waves, particularly the fifth, demonstrated significant geographical dispersion, extending to the UK, continental Europe, and Asia (Cho & Chung, 2022). Despite their prevalence, a singular conclusive theory explaining M&A waves remains elusive, though industry-specific factors

appear to be significant triggers.

Globally, M&A activities are often driven by demands from regulatory bodies or attempts to enhance competitive advantage and expand operations (Kalanoski et al., 2025). However, nearly half of all M&A initiatives fail to meet their initial expectations. Previous studies on the impact of M&A on firm performance have shown varied results, with some indicating success and others pointing to failures.

In Nepal, the concept of M&A was relatively novel to Banking and Financial Institutions (BFIs) until the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the central bank and regulatory body, issued merger by-laws in May 2011 (Adhikari, 2025; Baniya & Adhikari, 2018). Prior to this, Nepal's banking

sector experienced rapid and often unguided growth, with the NRB issuing numerous licenses, especially between 2007 and 2012, leading to an unnecessarily high number of BFIs (211 by the end of 2012) for the size of the economy. This resulted in unhealthy competition in deposit collection and loan disbursement, limited capacity to finance large-scale projects, high interest rate sensitivity, and an increase in non-performing loans (Acharya, 2020).

The NRB's abrupt shift in policy, particularly the four-fold hike in minimum paid-up capital for commercial banks announced in the 2015 monetary policy, significantly incentivized the M&A process (Tiwari, 2024). This policy aimed to reduce the number of BFIs, strengthen capital bases, increase lending capacity, mitigate interest rate sensitivity through economies of scale, and restrain unhealthy competition. By June 2016, 96 BFIs had merged into 35 entities (Kharel, 2024).

In this context, in 2012, Global Bank Limited merged with IME Financial Institution Limited and Lord Buddha Finance Limited, and then became Global IME Bank Limited (Global IME Bank, 2026a). Likewise, NIC Bank and Bank of Asia merged on 30th June 2013 to form NIC ASIA Bank (NIC ASIA Bank Limited, 2026c). This study explores the impacts of mergers on these two commercial banks in Nepal. It seeks to analyze pre- and post-merger risk and assess the changes in ROA, ROE, NPM, EPS, and MPS ratios.

Literature Review

A thorough review of existing literature is crucial for establishing a theoretical and conceptual framework, identifying previous findings, and pinpointing research gaps. This section explores established M&A theories, common merger types, merger by-laws, and synthesizes prior empirical studies on the financial performance impact of M&A.

Theoretical Review

Several theories attempt to explain why firms engage in M&A activities:

Power Theory. This theory suggests that

M&A can lead to a reduction in the number of market participants, thereby increasing market concentration and enabling merged entities to exert greater market power. In the banking sector, this can translate to increased pricing power and the potential for higher, more stable profits, thus improving the performance of both the acquiring and target firms (Malik & Kumar, 2025).

Resource Theory or Synergy Theory. The core idea here is that a merger creates more economic value than the sum of the individual firms. Synergy can arise from various sources.

- **Economies of Scale:** Enlarging firm size leads to cost reductions and efficiency gains.
- **Economies of Scope:** Specific combinations of merged firms can create unique advantages.
- **Revenue Increases:** Through cross-selling or up-selling opportunities.
- **Cost Reduction:** From operational efficiencies.
- **Tax Savings:** Exploiting new tax opportunities.

This theory predicts an improvement in the performance of both target and bidding firms post-merger (Bauer & Friesl, 2022).

Eat or Be Eaten Theory. This theory posits that managers prefer to maintain their firm's independence and may undertake acquisitions to increase their firm's size, thereby reducing the likelihood of being taken over by a larger entity. Managers of acquired firms often face subordinated roles or job loss. Mergers under this theory can be defensive, driven by a desire to protect managerial jobs and company independence (Gorton et al., 2005).

Agency Theory & Hubris Theory. These theories suggest that managers might pursue M&A for personal benefits rather than purely economic reasons. Managers may seek to increase their firm's size to gain more power and control, which often correlates with increased compensation. Hubris theory specifically suggests that bidding firm management may

overpay for target banks due to excessive confidence in their ability to identify undervalued targets. Under these theories, the performance of bidders is generally expected to decrease (Johnson & Scherstén, 2022).

In summary, firms pursue M&A for various reasons: to gain market power (Power Theory), create synergies and cost efficiencies (Resource/Synergy Theory), defend against takeovers (Eat-or-Be-Eaten Theory), or for managerial self-interest (Agency/Hubris Theories). While these theories explain motivations, they often overlook the long-term post-merger performance in Nepalese commercial banks, indicating a gap in contextual evidence on actual outcomes.

Mergers Types

Mergers and acquisitions can take various forms, each with distinct strategic objectives and implications for firm performance.

Horizontal Mergers. Occur when two or more competitors operating in the same line of business combine. These are often undertaken to gain competitive advantage and market power but can face antitrust scrutiny if they lead to anticompetitive effects (Hay, 2002). In Nepal, horizontal mergers have been the most prevalent form, particularly within the financial sector.

Vertical Mergers. Involve firms at successive stages of a production process. The objective is to gain efficiency in the business supply chain and improve profitability through economies of scale (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2007).

Conglomerate Mergers. Happen when companies that are not competitors and do not have buyer-seller relationships combine. This strategy is often driven by diversification aims (OECD, 2020). Thus, mergers can be horizontal, vertical, or conglomerate, but there is little research on how these types affect the performance of Nepalese banks.

Merger By-Laws of NRB 2011

Nepal's financial sector faced a "crucial period" around 2010, marked by excessive liquidity, high

operating expenses, insufficient working capital, unhealthy competition, and mismanagement. The NRB, recognizing the deteriorating health of BFIs, introduced the Merger Bylaw 2011 as a "compulsion strategy" rather than a mere choice, aiming to increase capital and strengthen their capacity to face a competitive market (Adhikari, 2014).

Key guidelines and conditions under the 2011 Bylaws included:

- Mandatory merger for BFIs operated or owned by the same business family, relatives, or groups.
- Forced merger for BFIs with a capital shortfall, specifically those failing to maintain minimum Capital Adequacy Ratios (CAR) of 10% for commercial banks and 11% for development banks.
- Mergers could also be mandated if BFIs received three or more reformatory punishments, were unable to meet payment responsibilities due to systemic risks, or if a merger would yield better financial results for the country (Baniya & Adhikari, 2018; Karki, 2022).

The NRB 2011 Merger Bylaws mandate bank consolidations, but little is known about their actual impact on performance and stability.

Review of Previous Studies

The existing body of literature on M&A's impact on financial performance presents mixed evidence. Some studies, suggest a positive impact on banking efficiency. Acharya and Sharma (2024) found positive and long-lasting effects on bank performance and cost efficiency, particularly for small banks. Resti (1998, cited in Chalise, 2017) observed increased efficiency in merged banks, especially when deals involved banks of similar size operating in the same local markets. Beitel and Schiereck (2001) found European bank mergers to be significantly value-creating for shareholders from a combined view of target and bidder. Paposki (2007) highlighted the value of synergy in mergers, particularly in the insurance industry. Abdul-Rahman and Ayorinde (2013) found improved performance

in Nigerian commercial banks regarding ROE, ROA, and net profit margin. Rani et al. (2013) concluded that M&A benefited acquiring Indian firms in the long run, improving profitability. Neupane (2013) found merged Nepalese firms enhanced loan attraction ability, employee productivity, and net assets growth.

Conversely, some research found blended or unclear relationships. Yeh and Hoshino (2002) observed positive stock market reactions to M&A announcements but a downward change in profitability from pre- to post-merger periods for Taiwanese corporations. Gjirja (2003) found no significant improvement in technical efficiency in the Swedish banking industry post-merger. Mylonidis and Kelnikola (2005) indicated that Greek banks' profits, operating efficiency, and labor productivity ratios did not improve after merger, and found a negative impact on liquidity. Akben-Selcuk and Altiok-Yilmaz (2011) weakly supported the hypothesis that acquirer companies were negatively affected by M&A in Turkey. Appah and Sophia (2011) found no significant difference in Return on Equity for Nigerian banks pre and post-merger. Satapathy and Kaushik (2022) found no improvement in financial performance for acquiring companies after merger across various industries in India.

In Nepal's context, Bhandari and Pradhan (2024) noted the good intentions of M&A in developing countries like Nepal but highlighted difficulties in achieving objectives. Thapa Magar (2019) highlighted that organizational climate, recognition, work, pay, and motivation all impact employee performance especially during M & As. Dhakal (2018) found mixed results: employees were satisfied with work conditions but worried about HR issues like cultural clash, while customers desired more innovative services; overall financial data, however, showed improvement in the merged bank, increasing shareholder wealth.

Taken together, these literature on M&A impacts shows mixed results, and in Nepal, there is limited evidence on how mergers affect long-term financial performance and efficiency in banks.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a descriptive/causal-comparative research design (Cantrell, 2011) to analyze the pre- and post-merger performance of commercial banks in Nepal. The total population for this research comprised all merged commercial banks in Nepal, numbering 20. From this population, two merged commercial banks, NIC ASIA Bank Limited and Global IME Bank Limited, were selected as the sample.

The financial and accounting data for these sample banks were collected from their annual reports. For NIC ASIA Bank, six years of pre-merger data (2006/07 to 2012/13) and eight years of post-merger data (2013/14 to 2019/20) were used (NIC Asia Bank, 2026a). For Global IME Bank, five years of pre-merger data (2006/07 to 2010/11) and nine years of post-merger data (2011/12 to 2019/20) were used (Global IME Bank, 2026a).

The research relied exclusively on secondary data to analyze the impact of M&A on financial performance. Data were acquired from various sources, including:

- Annual reports published by the central bank (NRB). (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2026a).
- Economic surveys published by NRB. (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2026b).
- Annual reports of SEBON (Securities Board of Nepal [SEBON], 2026).
- Newspapers, journals, magazines, and online resources

Data collected was systematically recorded and presented using tables, graphs, and charts.

FINANCIAL AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS TOOLS

The study used the following financial ratios and statistical methods to analyze performance and relationships

- Financial Tools Ratio analysis was the primary financial tool employed to measure performance, including:
- Return on Equity (ROE): Net Profit

- Shareholder's Equity, indicating profitability relative to equity. Return on Assets (ROA): $\text{Net Profit} / \text{Total Assets}$, measuring asset utilization efficiency.
- Net Profit Margin (NPM): $\text{Net Profit} / \text{Total Revenue}$, showing profit generated per unit of revenue.
- Earnings Per Share (EPS): $\text{Net Income} / \text{Outstanding Shares}$, representing profit per common share.
- Market Price Per Share (MPS): The stock's most recent trading price, influenced by market forces.
- Statistical Tools Statistical methods were used to describe relationships between variables and interpret results:
- Mean: The arithmetic average values.
- Standard Deviation (SD): Measures the dispersion or variability of data points around the mean, indicating absolute risk.
- Coefficient of Variation (CV): $\text{SD} / \text{Mean} \times 100$, a relative measure of variability or risk per unit of return. Higher CV indicates greater volatility.
- Regression Analysis: Used to estimate relationships between a dependent variable (MPS) and independent variables (ROA, ROE, NPM, EPS), assessing the strength and direction of these relationships.

Results

This section presents the results of financial data for NIC ASIA Bank Limited (see Dhanuk, 2025; Karki, 2020; Kunwar & Paudel, 2023; NEPSE Trading, 2026; NIC Asia Bank Limited, 2014; NIC Asia Bank Limited, 2018; NIC Asia Bank, 2026a; Poudel, 2025; Shrestha, 2021) and Global IME Bank Limited (see Bizshala, 2026; Dhakal, 2019; Global IME Bank Ltd, 2026b), comparing their financial performance before and after their respective mergers. This section

is structured into four themes: profitability and risk comparison; analysis of ROA, ROE, NPM, and MPs; regression analysis; and contrasting market perception.

Profitability and Risk Comparison (Based on Annual Profit)

NIC ASIA Bank

Profitability (Mean). The average annual profit (mean) of NIC ASIA Bank significantly increased after the merger, rising from 342.63 (pre-merger) to 1550.14 (post-merger).

Risk (SD & CV). The standard deviation (SD) of annual profit increased substantially from 127.9 (pre-merger) to 1054.75 (post-merger), indicating higher total risk after the merger. Similarly, the Coefficient of Variation (CV) rose from 37.33 to 68.04, signifying a higher degree of volatility or risk per unit of profit post-merger.

Global IME Bank

Profitability (Mean). Global IME Bank also experienced a significant increase in average annual profit after its merger, with the mean rising from 101.61 (pre-merger) to 1749.25 (post-merger). This indicates a positive impact of the merger on overall profit.

Risk (SD & CV). The standard deviation (SD) of annual profit increased from 118.78 (pre-merger) to 966.46 (post-merger), indicating higher total risk post-merger, similar to NIC ASIA Bank. However, the Coefficient of Variation (CV) decreased from 116.89 (pre-merger) to 55.25 (post-merger), suggesting improved consistency or lower volatility relative to the mean profit after the merger.

Shareholder Value Analysis

NIC ASIA Bank Limited

Return on Assets. Average post-merger ROA (1.46%) was slightly lower than the pre-merger average (1.85%). While the SD of ROA decreased (from 0.39 to 0.28), the CV also slightly decreased (from 21.08 to 19.18), indicating a marginal improvement in consistency. The trend showed fluctuations, with a decrease after 2010/11 and continued volatility post-merger.

Return on Equity. The average post-merger ROE (16.38%) was lower than the pre-merger average (23.61%). The SD of ROE was similar pre- and post-merger (3.56 vs 3.41), but the CV increased (15.08 to 20.82), suggesting lower consistency in equity returns after the merger.

Net Profit Margin. Average post-merger NPM (35.09%) decreased compared to the pre-merger average (42.02%). The SD of NPM significantly increased (from 3.73 to 6.56), and the CV also rose (from 8.88 to 18.69), indicating higher variability and lower consistency in profit margins post-merger.

Earnings per Share. The average post-merger EPS (30.39 NPR) was slightly higher than the pre-merger average (29.99 NPR), indicating a marginal positive impact on earnings per share. However, the SD increased (from 5.25 to 9.32) and CV increased (from 17.5 to 30.67), reflecting higher volatility in EPS post-merger.

Market Price per Share. Average post-merger MPS (587.63 NPR) was lower than the pre-merger average (829 NPR). While the SD of MPS decreased (339.7 to 209.52), the CV decreased (40.98 to 35.65 – note: source shows CV decreasing from 40.98 to 35.65 but states CV increased in Major Findings section), suggesting a mixed impact on price stability relative to its mean.

Global IME Bank Limited

Return on Assets. The average post-merger ROA (1.43%) significantly increased compared to the pre-merger average (0.3020%). Both the SD (0.906 to 0.33) and CV (300 to 23.08) decreased substantially, indicating more efficient management of assets and higher consistency in ROA post-merger.

Return on Equity. Average post-merger ROE (14.47%) substantially increased from the pre-merger average (4.202%). Both SD (7.89 to 2.66) and CV (187.77 to 18.38) decreased, reflecting improved consistency and efficiency in generating returns for shareholders post-merger.

Net Profit Margin. The bank had a negative average NPM (-9.68%) pre-merger, which rapidly increased to a positive average (34.84%) post-

merger. The SD (55.67 to 7) and CV (-575.92 to 20.09 – note: CV sign flip due to negative mean pre-merger) decreased significantly, indicating a vast improvement in profit margins and their consistency.

Earnings per Share. Average post-merger EPS (19.22 NPR) increased rapidly from the pre-merger average (4.52 NPR). The SD (8.21 to 4.43) decreased, while the CV slightly increased (181.64 to 23.04 – note: CV sign flip due to negative mean pre-merger in NPM, but positive in EPS). The source says CV decreased for NPM but increased for EPS in major findings, though the tables show a large positive to small positive change after merger for NPM CV and a large positive to small positive for EPS CV, implying increased consistency post-merger for both.). This suggests overall better profitability per share.

Market Price per Share. The average post-merger MPS (382 NPR) was higher than the pre-merger average (207.8 NPR). While the SD of MPS increased (234.67 to 150.82 – note: source states SD increased in Major Findings, but the table shows it decreased), the CV decreased (112.93 to 39.48), suggesting improved stability of market price relative to its mean and a positive impact on shareholder value.

Regression Analysis (Impact on Market Price per Share - MPS)

Regression analysis aimed to determine the relationship between MPS (dependent variable) and profitability ratios (independent variables: ROA, ROE, NPM, EPS).

NIC ASIA Bank

For NIC ASIA Bank, the regression analysis consistently showed positive correlation coefficients between MPS and all independent variables (ROA, ROE, NPM, EPS). This indicates that as the values of ROA, ROE, NPM, and EPS increased, the Market Price per Share also tended to increase. For example, a 1% increase in ROA was associated with a 586-unit increase in MPS, and a 1% increase in EPS was associated with a 20-unit increase in MPS. This suggests that the market reacted positively

to improved profitability metrics for NIC ASIA Bank.

Global IME Bank

In contrast, for Global IME Bank, the regression analysis revealed negative correlation coefficients between MPS and all independent variables (ROA, ROE, NPM, EPS). This implies that an increase in ROA, ROE, NPM, or EPS was associated with a decrease in MPS. For instance, a 1% increase in ROA was linked to a -180.49 unit decrease in MPS, and a 1-unit increase in EPS was associated with a -11.04 unit decrease in MPS. This counter-intuitive negative relationship suggests that factors other than direct profitability metrics (e.g., integration challenges, market skepticism regarding long-term gains, or external market dynamics) might have influenced the market's perception of Global IME Bank's stock price post-merger, despite the observed improvements in average profitability ratios.

The study's major findings indicate:

- **Overall Profit Increase:** Both NIC ASIA Bank and Global IME Bank experienced a significant increase in their total annual profit after merger.
- **Mixed Risk Profile:** NIC ASIA Bank showed higher total risk (SD) and volatility (CV) in profit post-merger. Global IME Bank also had higher total risk (SD) but improved consistency (lower CV) in profit after merger.

Divergent Profitability Ratio Trends

NIC ASIA Bank. Average ROA, ROE, and NPM decreased post-merger, while EPS marginally increased. Consistency (CV) for ROA improved slightly, but for ROE and NPM, it worsened. MPS also decreased on average.

Global IME Bank. All average profitability ratios (ROA, ROE, NPM, EPS) increased rapidly post-merger, and their consistency (CV) generally improved significantly. MPS also increased on average.

Contrasting Market Perceptions (Regression)

NIC ASIA Bank. Showed positive correlations between profitability ratios (ROA, ROE, NPM, EPS) and MPS, indicating market confidence in its profitability.

Global IME Bank. Exhibited negative correlations between profitability ratios and MPS, suggesting that increases in these metrics were paradoxically associated with a decrease in market price, possibly due to other unmeasured factors or market skepticism.

In conclusion, mergers raised total profits for both banks, but NIC ASIA Bank showed higher risk and lower profitability, while Global IME Bank performed better. Market reactions varied, highlighting the importance of effective integration and management.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide robust empirical evidence on the impact of mergers and acquisitions in the Nepalese banking sector, aligning with the “mixed results” observed in previous global literature. Overall, mergers and acquisitions have generally led to increased total profits for the merged entities, consistent with prior research suggesting that consolidation can enhance operational scale, resource allocation, and market presence (Acharya, 2020; Neupane, 2013). Both NIC ASIA Bank and Global IME Bank showed substantial growth in annual profits post-merger, reflecting the positive effect of consolidation on absolute earnings. This outcome is in line with the Synergy Theory, which posits that mergers are expected to raise future cash flow, increase firm value, and generate efficiency gains through economies of scale and scope (Bauer & Friesl, 2022; Masood et al., 2025). The Nepal Rastra Bank’s regulatory objectives of reducing excessive competition among financial institutions and strengthening capital bases further support the strategic rationale behind these mergers (Adhikari, 2014; Tiwari, 2024). The general increase in total profits indicates that the policy-driven impetus by the NRB successfully encouraged consolidation and strengthened the banking sector’s operational and financial capacity.

However, a closer examination of profitability ratios and risk profiles reveals a more nuanced picture. NIC ASIA Bank experienced declines in average return on assets (ROA), return on equity (ROE), and net profit margin (NPM), alongside increased profit volatility (CV) post-merger, despite the growth in absolute profits. These findings suggest that increased size does not automatically lead to higher efficiency or consistent returns. They also align with aspects of Agency Theory, which highlights that managerial inefficiencies, suboptimal integration, or challenges in harmonizing diverse corporate cultures can result in substandard operational performance, even when the bank achieves scale (Yeh & Hoshino, 2002; Gjirja, 2003; Dhakal, 2018). The positive regression correlation between profitability ratios and market price per share (MPS) for NIC ASIA Bank indicates that the market responded favorably to improved performance metrics. Nonetheless, the decline in average profitability ratios signals underlying operational or strategic issues that may have hindered the full realization of merger benefits.

In contrast, Global IME Bank's post-merger performance largely supports the Synergy Theory. The bank demonstrated consistent improvements across all profitability ratios (ROA, ROE, NPM, EPS) and a significant reduction in relative risk (CV), indicating successful integration and effective realization of synergistic benefits. These outcomes suggest enhanced operational efficiency, better asset utilization, and improved shareholder returns (Johnson & Scherstén, 2022; Poposki, 2007). Interestingly, the regression analysis for Global IME Bank revealed negative correlations between profitability ratios and MPS, despite the observed improvements in accounting-based performance. This counterintuitive market response suggests that investors may have factored in other considerations, such as integration risks, capital requirements, or external market dynamics, which could have tempered positive expectations regarding post-merger performance (Satapathy & Kaushik, 2022; Bhandari & Pradhan, 2024).

The heterogeneous outcomes between NIC ASIA Bank and Global IME Bank highlight that M & As are not universally beneficial. The quality of integration, managerial effectiveness, and firm-specific circumstances play a critical role in determining post-merger success. While mergers can increase absolute profits, enhance operational scale, and support strategic objectives, they also pose challenges related to efficiency, consistency of returns, and market perception. Policymakers and bank management should, therefore, focus on careful integration planning, strengthening operational execution, and monitoring market sentiment to ensure that the full potential of mergers is realized. Future research could examine non-financial performance, technology use, stakeholder responses, and, according to Tamang and Adhikari (2025), the impact of merged banks' digital services and innovation on enterprise development in Nepal.

Conclusions

This study investigated the financial performance of NIC ASIA Bank and Global IME Bank before and after their mergers in Nepal, employing financial ratios and statistical tools to assess profitability and risk. The findings indicate that while mergers led to an increase in total profit for both banks, their impact on financial performance ratios and risk profiles varied. Global IME Bank leveraged mergers effectively, while NIC ASIA Bank faced challenges in translating scale into consistent profitability. Investigation into the long-term implications of cross-border mergers and the ability of Nepalese banks to compete internationally is also recommended. Future studies should utilize alternative measures of performance beyond traditional financial ratios, potentially incorporating non-financial metrics, qualitative data on managerial efficiency, technological integration, and customer satisfaction to provide a more holistic view. Overall, effective implementation of merger by-laws, strategic integration, and a focus on long-term efficiency and market perception are paramount for these consolidations to truly benefit stakeholders and the broader economy.

Recommendations

This study recommends the following measures to strengthen mergers and post-merger performance in Nepalese banks.

NRB Policies:

- Have successfully driven consolidation and increased the capital base of BFIs, contributing to a more stable financial system and enabling financing of larger projects.
- Mixed outcomes highlight the need for a nuanced approach to merger regulation. Policies should not only compel mergers but also provide guidance for effective post-merger integration, especially in operational efficiency, cultural alignment, and human resource management.
- Should monitor long-term impacts beyond capital accumulation, focusing on financial performance quality, service delivery, and market stability. The negative correlation in Global IME Bank's regression indicates the need to investigate market sentiment post-merger.

Banking and Financial Institutions:

- Should recognize that mergers are not a guaranteed solution; while they may increase capital and profit, careful strategic planning and robust integration are essential to realize synergies and protect profitability ratios and market value.
- Should optimize asset mobilization and utilization to enhance performance and customer satisfaction.
- Must address HR issues, cultural clashes, and ensure fair treatment of employees from merged entities to maintain internal efficiency and morale.

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Dynamics of Large Cardamom Farming in Taplejung District, Nepal

Raj Kumar Baniya

Pathibhara Multiple Campus, Taplejung

Email: - rkbtpj12@gmail.com

Abstract

Large cardamom is a pivotal high-value cash crop for the eastern Himalayan region of Nepal, particularly in Taplejung, due to its agronomic and economic resilience. This study, conducted in 2017 in Sirijangha Rural Municipality, Taplejung, analyzes the socio-economic dynamics and sustainability of large cardamom farming. Employing a mixed-methods approach, primary data was gathered from 86 purposively selected households, supplemented by field observations, interviews, and group discussions. The findings show that large cardamom farming significantly improves rural livelihoods. However, its long-term sustainability depends on addressing climate, market, and policy challenges. Key policy implications advocate for the establishment of price stabilization mechanisms, such as cooperative marketing, and the implementation of financial literacy programs to promote productive investment. A coordinated, multi-level response integrating on-ground support with enabling policies is crucial to secure the socio-economic wellbeing of dependent communities and ensure the sector's future viability.

Keywords: Large cardamom, cash crop, price volatility, family income, improved household facilities

Introduction

Large cardamom (*Amomum subulatum*), also known as black cardamom, is a high-value spice crop native to the Eastern Himalayas. It is not only a significant flavouring agent but also holds important medicinal value in traditions like Ayurveda, known for its carminative, diuretic, and stimulant properties (Ojha, 1992; Limbu, 1996). This shade-loving, perennial crop thrives in the humid subtropical climate of Nepal's hills, particularly at altitudes between 400 and 2350 meters, making it an ideal agro-forestry crop for the region (Ministry of Agriculture Development, 2014). Nepal is a leading global producer and exporter of large cardamom, with cultivation spread across 42 districts. Taplejung District stands as the nation's largest producer, where cardamom farming is a cornerstone of

the rural economy and a primary source of cash income for smallholder farmers (Ministry of Agriculture Development, 2014). The crop was introduced to Nepal (Ilam) in 1865 by returning migrant laborers from Sikkim, with planned development beginning after the establishment of the Cardamom Development Centre in Fikkal, Ilam in 1975. Despite its economic importance, the sector faces challenges. The pricing of Nepalese cardamom is heavily influenced by the international market, primarily determined in Siliguri, India—the global trading hub for the commodity. Prices fluctuate based on grade, size, and quality, directly impacting farmer incomes. Furthermore, while government plans have recognized cardamom as a major commercial crop, a dedicated policy framework is lacking, with development relying on broader strategies

like the Nepal Trade Integration Strategy (NTIS) (GoN, Ministry of Commerce, 2016).

In Taplejung, while the area under cultivation has expanded, productivity has stagnated due to aging plantations, disease, and poor management practices. More critically, the substantial income generated from this "green gold" is often channelled into unproductive or demonstrative expenditures (like luxury goods and real estate) rather than productive reinvestment, which can limit long-term socioeconomic transformation and even foster negative social impacts.

Accordingly, this study examined the socio-economic impact of large cardamom farming in Taplejung district, Nepal. Specifically, it assessed the status of farming, analyzed how farmers utilize their cardamom income, compared the crop's role in changing socio-economic conditions over the past decade, and identified the major challenges farmers face in using their income for productive purposes. The findings are intended to provide valuable insights for farmers, economists, and policymakers to enhance the sustainability and positive developmental impact of this critical cash crops.

Literature Review

Large cardamom (*Amomum subulatum* Roxb.) is a high-value perennial spice crop widely cultivated in the humid sub-tropical regions of the eastern sub-Himalayan belt. As a shade-loving, semi-evergreen plant, it thrives at elevations ranging from 400 to 2,350 meters above mean sea level under well-distributed annual rainfall of approximately 3,000–3,500 mm (Shrestha et al., 2018). The crop is traditionally integrated into agroforestry systems and remains an important component of subsistence and commercial farming in Nepal's mid-hill regions. In addition to its economic importance, large cardamom has long been recognized for its medicinal properties in Ayurvedic practice, functioning as a carminative, diuretic, and cardiac stimulant, and as a remedy for respiratory and gastrointestinal ailments (Limbu, 1996).

Historically, large cardamom was introduced

to Nepal in 1865 in Ilam district by Nepalese laborers returning from Sikkim, although its commercial cultivation began later in 1953. The establishment of the Cardamom Development Centre in Fikkal in 1975 marked a turning point in promoting its systematic production and expansion (Ojha, 1992). At present, the crop is cultivated in more than 40 districts across Nepal, particularly in eastern hill districts such as Taplejung, Panchthar, Sankhuwasabha, and Ilam, as well as in selected districts of the central and western regions (Ministry of Agriculture Development, 2014). Nepal has emerged as one of the leading global producers of large cardamom, with a significant proportion of its produce exported primarily to India and subsequently to international markets (Khatiwada, et al., 2019).

The market dynamics of large cardamom are influenced by global demand, quality grading, and international trade linkages. Price fluctuations are common and depend on capsule size, moisture content, and post-harvest processing practices. Despite its high export potential and importance as a foreign exchange-earning commodity, policy frameworks specific to large cardamom development remain limited. However, broader initiatives such as the Agribusiness Promotion Policy (2006) and the National Trade Integration Strategy (Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, 2006; GoN, Ministry of Commerce, 2016) have indirectly supported the production and marketing of the crop.

Empirical studies indicate that large cardamom cultivation has significantly contributed to rural livelihood improvement and socio-economic upliftment in Nepal's hill communities. Income generated from cardamom farming is commonly allocated to essential household needs such as education, healthcare, food, and clothing, thereby enhancing overall living standards (Limbu, 1996). Similarly, Jimée (1997) concluded that cardamom cultivation has flourished particularly in eastern Nepal and has gradually improved the living standards of farming households. As a high-value, low-volume crop suitable for

sloping land, its cultivation has helped reduce rural outmigration and promoted income diversification among smallholder farmers (Khatiwada et al., 2024; Pandeya, 2025).

However, challenges associated with climate change, pest infestation, declining productivity, and environmental concerns such as biodiversity loss due to monoculture practices have been increasingly reported (Pandeya, 2025; Swar et al., 2023; Yadav, 2013). Research highlights the need for climate-smart agricultural practices, including soil and water management, disease-resistant cultivars, and improved knowledge dissemination among farmers to ensure sustainable production (Sharma et al., 2017b). Therefore, while large cardamom farming presents substantial economic opportunities, its long-term sustainability depends on adaptive farming practices, institutional support, and effective income utilization strategies among farming households. Many studies have examined large cardamom farming in Nepal at a general or national level. However, few studies focus specifically on Taplejung District. There is limited understanding of how local farming practices, climate challenges, and market conditions affect farmers in this area. Therefore, this research aimed to fill this gap. The objective of this study was to analyze the dynamics of large cardamom farming by examining its status in 2017, assessing major income utilization patterns, comparing its role in changing the socio-economic status of farmers over the past decade, and identifying the major challenges farmers faced in utilizing their income for productive purposes.

Methods of the Study

This study employed convergent mixed-methods approach (Katz-Buonincontro, 2024). Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Quantitative data were obtained through a complete census of 86 cardamom-farming households involved in the Himalica Pilot Project using structured questionnaires. Qualitative

data were obtained through interviews with three participants, including a youth, a mid-career adult, and an established elder, as well as through field observations. Quantitative data related to farming status and income utilization were analyzed using simple statistical methods, while qualitative data on existing challenges were examined descriptively. The fieldwork was conducted in 2017 in Sirijangha Rural Municipality, Taplejung District, as part of a thesis to fulfill the requirements for a Master's degree in Rural Development at Tribhuvan University. Ethical procedures were strictly applied at field by seeking informed consent from all participants, maintaining their anonymity and confidentiality, and ensuring voluntary participation (Fang et al., 2024).

Findings

This section presents the findings under the following headings: demographic and socio-economic status; status of large cardamom farming; economics of production; changing socio-economic status; improved household facilities; changes in asset composition; challenges in the productive use of income from cardamom; and narrative analysis and cross-case synthesis.

Demographic and Socio-economic Status of the Study Area

Taplejung District, located in the former Mechi Zone of eastern Nepal, is one of the seventy-seven districts of the country. Phungling serves as the district headquarters. The district exhibits considerable altitudinal variation, ranging from 310 meters to 8,586 meters above mean sea level. Geographically, Taplejung is bordered by Sikkim (India) to the east, Terhathum and Panchthar districts to the south, Sankhuwasabha district to the west, and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China to the north. Previously, the district was administratively divided into 48 Village Development Committees (VDCs) and one municipality; however, following the federal restructuring of Nepal, it currently consists of eight rural municipalities and one municipality.

Taplejung District covers a total area of approximately 3,646 square kilometers. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2012), the total population of the district was 127,461, comprising 60,552 males (47.51%) and 66,909 females (52.49%), with a sex ratio of 90.50. The population density was recorded at 35 persons per square kilometer, with an annual average population growth rate of 0.07 percent. The district contained 26,471 households, with an average household size of 4.81 persons (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

Sikaicha, formerly a Village Development Committee and currently Ward No. 3 of Sirijangha Rural Municipality, is situated in the southern part of Taplejung District, approximately 15 kilometers east of the district headquarters. The area is surrounded by Sinam, Ambegudin, Tellok, Mamangkhe, Phawakhol, Tiringe, Tapethok, and

Thechambu. The locality is predominantly rural, with limited access to basic infrastructure such as electricity, road connectivity, safe drinking water, and healthcare facilities.

Sikaicha had a total population of 2,250, consisting of 1,066 males (44.66%) and 1,184 females (55.34%), residing in 417 households (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The major ethnic groups in the area include Brahmin, Chhetri, Limbu, Kami, Damai, and Sarki. Agriculture is the primary occupation of the local population, with large cardamom serving as the dominant cash crop alongside maize, millet, and paddy. Livestock rearing—including buffalo, cattle, goats, pigs, and poultry—also constitutes an integral component of the local livelihood system

Table 1. Socialdemographics of the

Respondents

Dimension	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	15 - 60 years	75	87.20
	Above 60 years	11	12.80
Caste/Ethnicity	Brahmins/Chhetris	44	51.20
	Janajatis (Rai/Limbu/Khas)	40	46.50
	Dalits	2	2.30
Literacy Status	Illiterate	1	1.20
	Literate (Total)	85	98.80
	Breakdown of Literate Farmers		
	a) Can read & write only	15	17.40
	b) Primary Level Pass	15	17.40
	c) Lower Secondary Pass	34	39.50
	d) Secondary Level Pass	15	17.40
	e) Intermediate Pass	5	5.80
f) Bachelor's & above	1	1.20	
Total		86	100.00

Table 1 shows that the age distribution of cardamom farmers indicates more than 87 percent fall within the economically active age group of 15 to 60 years. This demographic

structure is favorable for agricultural activities, as it reflects the availability of a productive labor force capable of undertaking the physically demanding tasks associated with

cardamom cultivation. The study also reveals a notable disparity in participation in cardamom farming across caste groups. A majority of the farmers (over 51%) belong to Brahmin/Chhetri communities, followed by Janajati groups (46.5%), while Dalits constitute only about 2 percent of the total farming population. This low level of participation among Dalit households is largely associated with limited land ownership, as cardamom cultivation typically requires access to cultivable land.

Furthermore, the literacy level within the farming community is remarkably high, at nearly 99 percent. Most farmers possess basic reading and writing skills, with a substantial proportion having attained secondary-level education. This high literacy rate represents a significant advantage for the adoption of improved agricultural practices, as it enhances farmers' capacity to understand technical knowledge and participate effectively in training programs aimed at promoting modern farming techniques

and sustainable production practices.

Status of Large Cardamom Farming

This section presents the status of large cardamom farming in the study area. It includes key aspects such as ownership of cardamom farms, production levels, market price, cost of production, income derived from cardamom farming, major species cultivated, and availability of irrigation facilities. Among these factors, land ownership plays a crucial role in determining the extent and sustainability of cardamom cultivation, as access to cultivable land is a prerequisite for engaging in commercial farming practices (see Table 2).

The ownership structure of cardamom farmland varies across households and significantly influences production capacity and income generation from the crop. Therefore, information regarding the ownership status of land used for cardamom farming was collected through field surveys and is presented in tabular form for further analysis

S.N.	Ownership of Cardamom Farm Land	Area in Ropani [1 Ropani= 508.72 m ²)	Area in percent
1	Own land Self Farming	1143	87.99
2	Lease out	98	7.55
3	Lease in	58	4.46
4	Share Farming	0	0.00
5	Total Areas	1299	100.00
6	Average Cultivated Area per Household	15.10	

Table 2. Ownership and Cultivated Area of Cardamom Farming

The data indicate that a total of 1,299 ropani of land in the study area is under large cardamom cultivation. Of this, 87.99 percent is self-owned by farmers, while 7.55 percent is leased out and 4.46 percent is leased in by farmers who do not possess ownership of the land. The study found no evidence of a sharecropping system in cardamom farming within the study area. On average, each household cultivates approximately 15.10 ropani

of land under large cardamom.

These findings suggest that the majority of cardamom farmers operate on their own land, which enhances the stability and sustainability of cardamom cultivation practices. The dominance of self-owned landholdings indicates favorable conditions for the promotion and expansion of cardamom farming. At the same time, the presence of land leasing practices highlights potential opportunities for increasing cultivation through the leasehold system, particularly for

farmers with limited land ownership.

Economics of Production, Price, and Cost of Cardamom

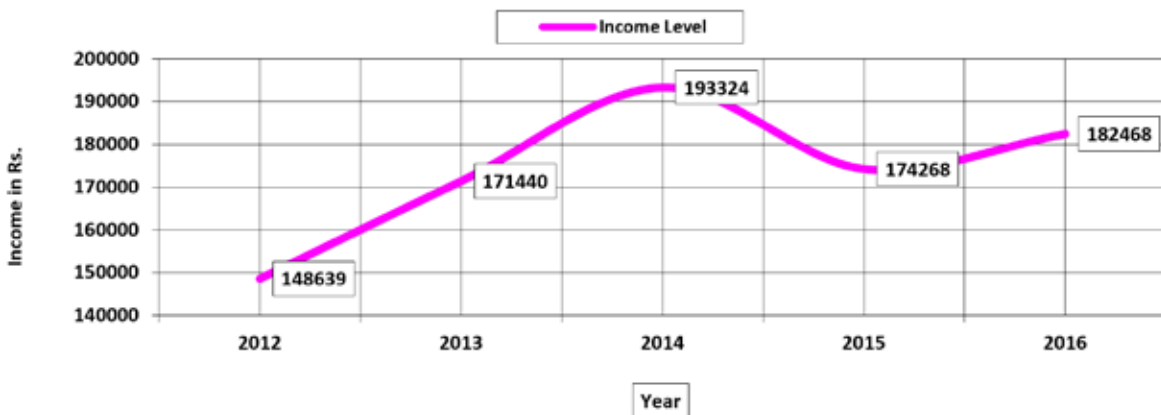
Cardamom production in the study area exhibited considerable fluctuation between 2012 and 2016. Production increased from 7,955 kg in 2012 to 8,810 kg in 2013, but declined in 2014 and 2015 to 7,938 kg, before rising sharply to 11,095 kg in 2016. These variations can be attributed to changing climatic conditions, particularly low rainfall during 2014–2015, as well as the positive impact of climate-resilient farming practices introduced through the Himalica Pilot Project in 2016. This trend underscores the importance of consistent farm management practices including irrigation, manuring, and pest control in stabilizing production levels.

Similarly, the market price of cardamom demonstrated significant volatility during the same period. The average price per kilogram increased from Rs. 1,607 in 2012 to Rs. 1,925 in 2014, before declining to Rs. 1,888 in 2015 and dropping sharply to Rs. 1,414 in 2016. Such price fluctuations are influenced by both domestic and international market trends, government policies, and variations in global production levels. In this context, diversification through intercropping or integrated farming systems may help reduce farmers’ exposure to market risks.

Production costs followed an unstable trend, rising from Rs. 129.26 per kilogram in 2012 to Rs. 184.08 in 2015, primarily due to increased labor and input costs. However, the cost declined to Rs. 142.44 per kilogram in 2016, likely due to improved productivity and efficiency gains associated with the adoption of climate-resilient practices promoted by the Himalica Pilot Project. The use of improved drying technologies and climate-smart farming techniques can further reduce production costs and enhance net returns.

The average household income from cardamom farming also varied over the study period. It increased from Rs. 148,639 in 2012 to Rs. 171,440 in 2013 and Rs. 193,324 in 2014, before declining to Rs. 174,268 in 2015 and subsequently rising to Rs. 182,468 in 2016. The increase in income from 2012 to 2014 was largely driven by higher production and favorable market prices, whereas the decline in 2015 resulted from reduced production and price alongside increased production costs. Despite the continued decline in prices from 2015 to 2016, the substantial increase in production contributed to a moderate rise in household income (see Figure 1). Overall, these findings indicate noticeable fluctuations in income from large cardamom farming, largely influenced by changes in production, market price, and cost of cultivation

Figure 1. Trend of Average Household Income



The findings reveal a significant interrelationship between production, cost of production, market price, and income derived from cardamom farming. An increase in production is generally associated with a rise in production costs, primarily due to inflationary pressures on labor and input markets. At the same time, higher production levels often coincide with fluctuations in market prices driven by supply-demand dynamics and market volatility. Despite these variations, increased production tends to result in higher overall household income from cardamom farming. Thus, the relationship among production, cost of production, price, and income is interdependent and triangular in nature, with each factor exerting a direct or indirect influence on the others.

Changing Socio-Economic Status through Cardamom Farming

Cardamom farming has significantly influenced the socio-economic structure of the study area, particularly in terms of occupational patterns and household income sources. Prior to the expansion of cardamom cultivation, approximately 54 percent of the population was engaged in traditional agricultural activities. Following

the increased adoption of cardamom farming, this proportion slightly declined to 51 percent, while the percentage of individuals involved in educational pursuits increased from 29 percent to 34 percent. In contrast, participation in foreign employment and small-scale business activities showed a marginal decline. This shift suggests that the profitability of cardamom farming has encouraged youth to remain engaged in local agricultural practices and has enabled households to invest more in education, thereby reducing reliance on overseas employment opportunities.

The economic contribution of cardamom farming is further reflected in changes in household income composition. The share of agriculture in total household income increased substantially from 42 percent to 63 percent, establishing it as the primary source of livelihood in the study area. At the same time, dependence on remittances from foreign employment declined sharply from 27 percent to 15 percent. These findings indicate that income generated from cardamom farming has reduced economic dependence on migration and reoriented the local economy toward a more agriculture-based income structure centered on this high-value cash crop.

Table 3. Increased Family Income

S.N.	Major Income Source	Changes from the cardamom Farming in Agricultural Activities of Total Family			
		Before Cardamom Farming		After Cardamom Farming	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Livestock	8,74,000	43.66	16,21,000	7.88
2	Cardamom Farming	0	0.00	1,71,00,000	83.09
3	Rice	64,000	3.20	45,000	0.22
4	Maize	2,26,000	11.29	1,50,000	0.73
5	Millet	3,11,000	15.53	2,11,000	1.03
6	Wheat	22,000	1.10	38,000	0.18
7	Bee Keeping	19,000	0.95	2,28,000	1.11
8	Forest Product	32,000	1.60	1,46,000	0.71
9	Cash Crop	2,99,000	14.94	6,48,000	3.15
10	Others	1,55,000	7.74	3,92,000	1.90
11	Total	20,02,000	100	2,05,79,000	100.00

Table 3 illustrates the role of cardamom farming in transforming agricultural income sources in the study area. The data indicate that prior to the expansion of cardamom cultivation, livestock was the primary source of agricultural income, accounting for 43.66 percent, followed by millet farming (15.53%), cash crops (14.94%), maize farming (11.29%), other crops (7.74%), rice (3.20%), forest products (1.60%), wheat (1.10%), and bee-keeping (0.95%).

However, following the adoption of large cardamom farming, the income structure shifted markedly. Cardamom emerged as the dominant source of agricultural income, contributing 83.09 percent of total income from agricultural activities. In contrast, the contribution of livestock declined to 7.88 percent, followed by cash crops (3.15%), other crops (1.90%), beekeeping (1.11%), millet (1.03%), maize (0.73%), forest products (0.71%), rice (0.22%), and wheat (0.18%). These findings highlight the significant shift from diversified traditional farming practices toward a more specialized, cardamom-centered agricultural system.

Improved Household Facilities and Declined Family Food Sufficiency

Cardamom farming has contributed to notable improvements in housing conditions, sanitation, and healthcare facilities in the study area, although it has also introduced emerging challenges related to household food security. Housing conditions have improved significantly, with a gradual shift from traditional construction materials to more durable modern alternatives. Previously, all house foundations were constructed using mud stone; however, approximately 8 percent of households now utilize reinforced cement concrete (RCC). Similarly, the use of galvanized iron (GI) tin roofing increased substantially from 20 percent to over 95 percent. Income generated from cardamom farming was identified as the primary factor driving these improvements in housing infrastructure, accounting for approximately 68 percent of such changes.

Significant progress has also been observed in health, education, and sanitation facilities.

Access to household toilets increased from 26 percent to 100 percent, while tap water coverage also reached full accessibility. These improvements were achieved through collaboration with development programs, with cardamom income playing a supportive role—contributing approximately 56 percent toward toilet construction and 30 percent toward access to safe drinking water. Healthcare access improved markedly, with the proportion of households seeking hospital treatment increasing from 45 percent to over 95 percent.

Despite these socio-economic advancements, household food sufficiency has declined following the expansion of cardamom cultivation. The proportion of households maintaining food security for 9–12 months decreased from 51 percent to 15 percent, as agricultural land previously allocated for staple food crops was increasingly converted to cardamom farming. This trend highlights the need for integrated farming practices that balance cash crop production with subsistence food cultivation.

On average, households in the study area earn an annual income of approximately Rs. 182,468 from cardamom farming. The expenditure pattern of this income reveals a mixed trend. Nearly 48 percent of the income is utilized for productive purposes, including savings, land purchase, education, and reinvestment in farming activities. However, around 18 percent is allocated to less productive expenditures such as non-essential consumption, ornaments, and social or cultural celebrations. Although a substantial portion of income is directed toward asset formation and savings, there remains potential for reallocating discretionary spending toward more productive investments to enhance long-term financial security and capital accumulation.

Changes in Assets Composition

Cardamom farming has significantly influenced the composition of household assets in the study area. Fixed assets, particularly land and housing structures, experienced notable growth over time. The total landholding increased by approximately 17 percent, while the number of

houses rose by 18 percent, with income from cardamom farming contributing substantially (74%) to this expansion. However, the considerable increase in the monetary value of these assets exceeding 900 percent for land and 866 percent for housing is largely attributable to general market appreciation and inflationary trends, with cardamom income playing a relatively limited direct role in value escalation (see Table 4).

Similarly, liquid assets, including cash savings

and jewellery, showed a marked increase in their overall value. Although cardamom farming contributed to this growth (approximately 43%), broader macroeconomic factors, such as rising market prices and the passage of time, were identified as the primary drivers behind the increase in asset valuation. These findings suggest that while cardamom farming has enhanced household asset accumulation, external economic conditions have also played a significant role in determining the monetary value of these assets.

Table 4. Changes in Household Assets Attributed to Cardamom Farming

Asset Category	Name of Assets	Before Cardamom Farming (Rs.)	After Cardamom Farming	Percentage Change (%)
Fixed Assets	Land	84.02Ha 1,96,68,000	98.26Ha 21,51,00,000	Quantity: +16.94% Price: +933.65%
	House	91Units 27,00,000	107Units 2,60,90,000	Quantity: +17.58% Price: +866.29%
	Sub-Total (Fixed)	2,23,68,000	24,11,90,000	—
Liquid Assets	Cash	7,86,500	1,00,09,000	Price: +1172.60%
	Jewellery	13,26,000	1,06,15,000	Price: +700.52%
	Sub-Total (Liquid)	21,12,500	2,06,24,000	—
Grand Total	All Assets	2,44,80,500	26,18,14,000	—

The findings indicate that cardamom farming has acted as a key catalyst in enhancing both the quantity and quality of household assets, with its influence being particularly evident in the acquisition of physical and modern assets rather than in driving general price inflation. A significant transition has been observed from the ownership of basic household furniture to the acquisition of modern consumer assets such as mobile phones, televisions, and motorcycles, with a combined estimated value of nearly Rs. 1 crore. Income generated from cardamom farming accounted for more than half (52%) of these asset purchases.

Challenges of Productive Use of Income from Cardamom Farming

During the field study, information regarding the challenges faced by cardamom farmers in the productive utilization of income derived from cardamom farming was collected through focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), field observations, and challenge analysis. These methods were employed to ensure the triangulation and reliability of the collected data. The primary objective was to identify the constraints that limit farmers' ability to allocate their income toward productive investments and long-term economic development.

The major findings derived from the field survey are presented in Table 5 and are further discussed in detail in the subsequent sections.

Table 5. Challenges Analysis

Major Challenges	Low Level of Awareness	Insufficient Financial Institute	Absence of investment Friendly Environment	Demonstration Effects	Price Fluctuation
Low Level of Awareness		Low Level of Awareness	Low Level of Awareness	Demonstration Effects	Price Fluctuation
Insufficient Financial Institute			Insufficient Financial Institute	Demonstration Effects	Price Fluctuation
Absence of investment Friendly Environment				Absence of investment Friendly Environment	Price Fluctuation
Demonstration Effects					Price Fluctuation
Price Fluctuation					
Total Value	2	1	1	2	4

The matrix analysis in Table 5 highlights the major challenges associated with the productive utilization of income derived from large cardamom farming. Among the identified constraints, price fluctuation emerged as the most significant challenge, with a value score of 4, followed by low levels of awareness and demonstration effects, each with a value score of 2. Insufficient financial institutions and the absence of an investment-friendly environment were also identified as constraints, each with a value score of 1.

The findings indicate that price volatility in the cardamom market is the primary obstacle to the productive use of farm income. Cardamom prices are highly influenced by both national and international market demand and supply dynamics, including import–export regulations, government policies, global trade conditions, and broader economic fluctuations. Such instability directly affects farmers' income, expenditure, savings, and investment capacity. In many cases, unpredictable market prices compel farmers to store their produce for extended periods in anticipation of favourable market conditions,

thereby immobilizing financial resources that could otherwise be invested productively.

Additionally, a low level of financial awareness among farmers limits their ability to utilize earnings effectively for business development or long-term investment. Social influences further contribute to unproductive spending patterns through demonstration effects, where income is often allocated to non-essential consumption such as social ceremonies and luxury goods rather than savings or reinvestment. The limited presence of financial institutions in the study area restricts access to formal savings, credit, and investment services that could facilitate improved financial management practices. Furthermore, the prevailing social, political, and economic environment is not conducive to investment, discouraging entrepreneurial initiatives and the creation of local employment opportunities. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts at both community and policy levels to promote financial literacy, strengthen institutional support, and create a more favourable investment climate.

Narrative Analysis and Cross Case Synthesis

Based on three interviews (with participants A, B, and C) conducted in the study area, the successful cultivation of large cardamom has

emerged as a transformative approach to rural development. The details are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Interview Findings

Themes	A: Youth	B: Mid-Career Adult	C: Established Elder	Implication
Demographics & Motivation	26-year-old youth; attracted from early age; rejected foreign migration.	45-year-old; shifted from traditional millet farming.	60-year-old; achieved success in old age after long-term effort.	Diverse Pathways: Cardamom farming attracts and rewards individuals across different life stages youth, mid-career changers, and experienced elders.
Institutional Support & Leadership	Selected as a Demo Farmer by the HIMALICA program (ECDF/ICIMOD) via a farmer's group.	Member of a Cardamom Farmer's Group since 2007.	Founder and President of his own Cardamom Farmer's Group; proactive in knowledge transfer.	Collective Empowerment: Formal and informal farmer groups, coupled with external project support, are critical for knowledge sharing, technical aid, and building farmer agency.
Land Use & Crop Strategy	27 Ropani dedicated to cardamom; diversified with kiwi, soybean, silam, vegetables, and herbs.	Converted 35 Ropani from millet/maize fields to cardamom; also uses diversified intercropping.	Expanded to 61 Ropani (35 self-cultivated, 26 by others); shifted from pasture/cereal to cardamom on cultivable land.	Agro-economic Transition: A clear shift from subsistence cereal farming (millet, maize) and traditional pasture to high-value cash crops (cardamom) with associated diversification for resilience and income.
Challenges Highlighted	Not explicitly mentioned in the case (implies initial need for support).	Pests, irrigation problems, and drastic production volatility (22 to 4 MAN).	Initially, there was a lack of innovative technologies for processing (drying/plucking); family skepticism.	Risk and Vulnerability: Farmers face significant production risks (pests, climate/irrigation) and post-harvest challenges. Success requires overcoming technical and knowledge gaps.

Adoption of Innovation	Utilizes traditional knowledge modernized with project-supported techniques.	Transitioned from small-scale/jungle planting to systematic farming in former grain fields.	Introduced improved species (<i>Saune</i> from Ilam); established a nursery for high-quality seedlings.	Knowledge and Technology Integration: Success hinges on blending traditional knowledge with improved planting material, systematic cultivation methods, and better post-harvest technologies.
Economic & Social Outcomes	Increased production (400kg to 480kg); bought land and built a house in Terai; advocates for youth involvement.	Despite current challenges, sees cardamom as a superior livelihood source compared to traditional cereals.	Major asset accumulation (bought 15 Kathha land + house worth NPR 37 lakh); production increased (712kg to 870kg).	Substantive Livelihood Improvement: Successful cardamom farming leads to significant capital formation, intergenerational asset building (land/house in Terai), and a viable alternative to labor migration.
Advocacy & Future Vision	Actively suggests youth stop foreign migration and invest in cardamom farming.	Concludes farmers should not be dependent on cereal crops if they can adopt cash crops like cardamom.	Serves as a living example of late-career success, inspiring through action and group leadership.	Model for Rural Transformation: All cases position commercial cardamom farming as a sustainable, prestigious, and economically superior model for rural development and youth retention.

The qualitative data provides a viable and dignified alternative to foreign employment, particularly for youth, by generating substantial local income and livelihood opportunities. This success is largely supported by collective action through farmer groups and external development programs, which facilitate access to technical knowledge, improved inputs, and institutional resources.

The findings indicate a gradual transition among farmers from subsistence-based agriculture to more intensified, diversified, and market-oriented farming systems. The adoption of improved farming techniques and resilient cardamom species has enhanced farmers' capacity to

cope with environmental and market-related challenges. Consequently, income generated from cardamom farming has contributed to asset accumulation and strengthened long-term livelihood security, thereby supporting intergenerational economic stability among farming households.

Discussion

Findings present cardamom farming as a viable and lucrative alternative to foreign employment, a finding strongly supported by existing literature. Jimee (1997) highlights the improvement in farmers' living standards resulting from cardamom cultivation, while Limbu (1996) explains how income generated

from this crop is allocated across essential household sectors such as education, healthcare, and food consumption. A government report (Ministry of Agriculture Development, 2014) identifies Nepal as one of the world's leading producers of large cardamom, emphasizing its economic importance. Furthermore, cardamom cultivation has been recognized as a factor in reducing migration from hill regions and as a major contributor to foreign currency earnings (Buckingham & Petheram, 2004).

However, the experiences documented in this study also reflect broader sectoral vulnerabilities. Production challenges related to pest infestation and irrigation variability correspond with constraints identified in previous studies (Yadav, 2013). Climate change has been recognized as a significant threat, contributing to declining productivity and income instability among marginal farmers (Pasa et al., 2024; Sharma et al., 2017b; Swar et al., 2023). Additionally, environmental concerns associated with cardamom cultivation, such as forest degradation, biodiversity loss, and the development of monoculture systems, have been documented in earlier research (Buckingham & Petheram, 2004; Yadav, 2013; Yongge, 2000). Market dependency remains another critical issue, as Nepal's cardamom exports have historically been concentrated in a limited number of destinations, primarily India (Acharya et al., 2021).

The study also demonstrates the importance of adopting improved farming techniques and resilient species to enhance productivity. This aligns with the climate-smart agricultural framework proposed by ICIMOD (Thomas et al., 2024), which emphasizes weather-smart, soil-smart, knowledge-smart, water-smart, and energy-smart practices to ensure sustainable production. The success of local cultivars such as Seremna and Dzongu Golsai in Sikkim (Pratap et al., 2014) parallels the introduction of improved varieties in the study area, highlighting the importance of both indigenous and scientifically developed planting materials.

While the study indicates a shift from cereal-

based subsistence farming to cardamom cultivation, existing literature underscores that this transition often involves trade-offs. Cardamom is recognized as a high-value, low-volume crop that requires minimal external inputs and is well suited to sloping land (Bhandari, 2023). Nevertheless, its expansion has sometimes occurred at the expense of forest ecosystems, as farmers clear undergrowth to establish plantations (Buckingham & Petheram, 2004). This highlights the tension between economic advancement and environmental sustainability.

Finally, although national development plans have identified large cardamom as a major agro-commercial crop, the absence of targeted policies and programs remains a concern (Sharma et al., 2017a). This policy gap underscores the critical role of development initiatives such as HIMALICA, along with farmer groups and non-state actors, in facilitating technological adoption, capacity building, and collective action in cardamom farming communities.

Conclusion

This study concludes that large cardamom farming has emerged as a cornerstone of the local economy in Taplejung, contributing significantly to improvements in livelihoods, employment opportunities, and regional economic development. The sector demonstrates considerable potential for expansion and increased household participation; however, its long-term sustainability is constrained by several critical challenges. Farmers continue to face unpredictable market price fluctuations and often lack adequate financial literacy to utilize their earnings productively, resulting in capital being either immobilized or diverted toward non-essential expenditures.

The findings underscore the need for a coordinated and multi-level response to address these challenges. At the local level, farmers require targeted support through financial literacy programs and training in climate-resilient agricultural practices to enhance risk management and income utilization. At the policy

level, institutional interventions are necessary to stabilize market prices through mechanisms such as cooperative marketing systems and improved storage facilities, as well as to expand access to rural banking and microfinance services. Such measures would foster an enabling environment for savings mobilization and reinvestment in productive activities.

Furthermore, the study identifies existing gaps in understanding the broader cardamom value chain, including production, processing, and market access. Future research should adopt an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to develop comprehensive strategies that ensure the long-term sustainability of cardamom farming and enhance the socio-economic well-being of farming communities dependent on this high-value cash crop.

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Assessing Socio-cultural Practices and Economic Situations of Gurung Community in Phungling Municipality-8, Taplejung District, Nepal

Indra Bahadur Gurung
Pathivara Multiple Campus, Taplejung
Email: rggindra938@gmail.com

Abstract

This study assesses socio-cultural practices and economic situation of Gurung community in Phungling Municipality Ward No. 8, Taplejung district, Nepal. The objectives were to examine socialdemographic, socio-cultural practices as well as economic situations of the respondents residing in the study area. The study used descriptive research design and case study method for assessing daily life and livelihoods of Gurung community within its real-life context. Required numerical data were collected from 40 married youths (aged 20-60 years) selected randomly. Likewise, required narratives information were generated from nine articulating participants selected purposively. Data was collected through self-administered household surveys questionnaires and in-depth interview guideline. The findings reveal that the community maintains rich cultural traditions including life-cycle rituals (Nawaran, Pasni, Chhaewar, Gunyo-Choli, marriage, death ceremonies) where astrologers determine auspicious dates and the maternal uncle plays a significant role. However, traditional performing arts like Ghatu dance are declining due to fading oral traditions and geographic displacement from the Gurung heartland. Economically, the community exhibits diversified livelihoods with agriculture (40%) and foreign employment (35%) as primary occupations, followed by government service (20%) and business (5%). All households practice livestock rearing, with many engaging in seasonal migration for grazing. Income distribution reveals economic differentiation, with foreign employment creating both opportunities and disparities. The study concludes that the Gurung community in Taplejung crosses between preserving cultural identity and adapting to modern socio-economic realities, facing challenges of cultural erosion, limited higher education access, and economic inequality. Policy implications include cultural preservation programs, access and continuing higher educational and improving economic situation through agro-tourism based livelihood strategies.

Key words: Ethnic group, Gurung, socio-cultural practices, economic situation, Phungling municipality

Introduction

Nepal is rich in ethnic and cultural diversity. The country has about 142 distinct castes and 125 ethnic groups (NSO, 2021). Nepalese ethnic diversity boasts several unique features including biodiversity, unique socio – cultural structure, daily life style and distinct cultural heritage. The ethnic diversity including

indigenous communities have their own socio-cultural practices and economic situations. Indigenous communities are distinct social and culture groups who are the original inhabitants of given region, often with unique languages, traditions and close ties to their ancestral lands. They are frequently marginalized and faced challenges related to cultural preservation, land

right and social and economic opportunities. The indigenous communities were largely autonomous before the unification of Nepal initiated by Prithivi Narayan Shah (Nakarmi, 2022).

Gurung people are one of the indigenous groups in Nepal. It is believed that Gurungs are originated from the Qiang people of Qiang, China (Gurung, 2024). They migrated from the upper reaches of the yellow River around eight thousand years ago. They migrated in Tibet area before 100 B. C. Then they migrated in Nepal more than two thousand years ago. Kwholasothar is believed to be the origin of the Gurung (Tamu) people's civilization in Nepal. According to the historical evidence, the Gurung people established their first settlement there around 1200 – 1500 years ago. This settlement is located in south part of Annapurna and Lamjung ranges. From this origin areas, Gurung people again migrated in Kaski, Lamjung, Manang, Gorkha, Tanahun, Syangia and Parbat. They also migrated in Khotang, Sankhuwasabha, Okhaldhunga, Ilam, Jhapa, Terthum, Pachthar and Taplejung (Bista, 2004).

Gurung culture seems similar to Tibetan Mongolian customs and a strong connection to the Himalayan landscape. The oral tradition of Gurung is Pe – ta Lhu – ta (Gurung 2019). Gurung house are typically rectangular or oval, two story structures built with locally sourced stone and timber featuring pitched thatch or state roofs. The traditional Gurung dress for men includes a wrap – round skirt called Kachhad, a vest called Bhoto and cap called Topi. Women's attire typically features a blouse and a wrap round skirt often adorned with intricate embroidery and vibrant colors, Jewelry like Dhungri, Naugedi, Jantar and Potey are also common accessories for Gurung women. The Gurungs have their own language which is called Tamuki. It belongs to the Tibeto – Burman family. The Gurung population speaks the Gurung language

when looking at Nepal's history closely. It is clear that as the Gorkha Kingdom expanded the Khas language later known as Nepali language was given priority and protection, while other local and indigenous language were gradually included and marginalized. The Nepali language became the national and official language (Gurung et al, 2014). King had given Gotra to stay into the palace, similarly, Bhardwaj Gotra, gave to lama. Atri gotra gave to Gotane, Garga gotra Lamichhane and Kasyap gotra for other Gurungs. Even few year history, Sikles had allowed to Lamichhane as priesthood, from that period Gurungs had been recognized as high ranking military warrior is Hindu King's palace, Hindu caste system and Dashain has strongly followed by Gurungs. Military identity was established in Gurung since that time, by the result, Gurung warriors had strongly supported in Gorkha, while Drabya Shaha was the first founder King. That was the beginning history of Military Identity in Gurung. They had been widely dispersed from Gorkha after King Prithivi Narayan Shaha unified Nepal.

Politically, Gurung (2025) explained that Yesobramha Shaha, Lamjung King had decided to power sharing in Gurungs King Ghale by organizing lamjung Dharmashava. That plan was also like in Ghale King Lam (Lama), Lem (Lamichhane), Kone (Ghotane) was the major warrior of Ghale King, so that Ghale King (1) Lama (2) Lamichhane, (1) Gotane had participated in that Dharma Shava. Though, Dharmashava was the indirect defeat of Gurung, but other side, if they did not do so, many things might be lost in the future. Those moments were not power – sharing history in Gurung but also a culture sharing between them, for the cultural acceptance to the Gurungs. Gurung (1977) states that Namrashi juraune, Chhaithi, Nweran, Pasni, Putpute, Chhewar, Bibah are the foremost. In Gurung culture marriage is the further rites of passage of their life to be performed. The Gurung traditional cultural identity has been

closely related with their ethnic identity. The cultural practices of Gurung that the Gurung are mainly followers of the Bon religion. The Gurung later came to adopt Buddhism. Some Gurung of eastern Nepal have also been influenced by the Hindu religion. The Gurung celebrate their feast and festivals accordance with the Bon and Buddhist religions. Women are given more authority to money and property (Gurung 1999). Anders (1976) has explained about the Gurung cultural practice Rodhi that it is a socially organized institution for evening gathering of the Gurung youth. In the evening the Rodhi houses consists mainly of music making. The singing, dancing and playing occasionally dancing usually just until after midnights. Although there have been discussions about the moral nature of the Rodhi and in places attempts were made to finish this tradition at least in Lamjung it still seems to flourish.

Gurung community in Nepal traditionally practices mixed farming system combining agriculture with livestock farming. Gurung's occupations are diverse ranging from traditional animal herding to modern role in the military, business and entertainment sectors. Many Gurungs are known for their service in the British and Indian Gurkha regiment and Singapore Police Force. Moisola's (1985) has explained that the Gurung people mostly depend on agriculture. Animal husbandry and military services. They also raised sheep for meat and wool. They cultivate potatoes, rice, and wheat. Corn and millet. The pension and salaries of the family members who serve in the army are an important source of income for the majority of Gurung families. Misserschmidt (1976) has explain about the 'Rodhi' that Rodhi as a demonstration of the Gurung traditional culture where young men and women gathered for communal activities, which also served as a setting for the transmission of skills to the younger generation, reinforcing the community's internal cohesion. According to Pigede (1993). The Gurungs language which belongs to the

Tibeto - Burman family. The Gurung linguistic and genetic heritage links them to the Tibeto – Burman group, which migrated from the Tibetan Plateau. Their language a part of the Sino – Tibetan family, their ancestors were likely nomadic or Semi – nomadic people who moved south into the hills of Nepal, seeking better grazing lands and climates. At present, Gurung people have settle in foreign countries, particularly the India, Bhautan, Myanmar, Thailand, UK, Singapore and other different countries. Gurung people speak Tamu Kyi which is a Sino – Tibetan language derived from the Tibeto – Berman language family.

Despite the existing literature documenting the historical origins, traditional customs, and migration patterns of the Gurung community, significant research gaps remain in understanding their contemporary socio-cultural dynamics. There is limited scholarly examination of how globalization, urbanization, and out-migration for foreign employment are transforming traditional Gurung institutions such as the *Rodhi* system, indigenous religious practices like Pye-ta Lhu-ta, and intergenerational transmission of the Tamuki language. Furthermore, while historical accounts emphasize military service and agriculture as primary occupations, updated research is needed on current livelihood diversification and emerging economic disparities. The evolving role of Gurung women in modern socio-economic contexts, beyond traditional descriptions of their authority and cultural practices, also remains underexplored. Additionally, there is insufficient investigation to assess socio-cultural practices and economic situations of the Gurung people residing in Phungling Municipality-8, Taplejung district.

Objectives and Methodology

The objectives of this study were to assess socio-cultural practices and economic situations of the Gurung community residing in Taplejung district. The study used descriptive research design and case study method to gain an in-depth understanding of this Gurung community within

its real-life context (Yin, 2014). The study was conducted in Phungling Municipality Ward No. 8, which was purposively selected from among the eleven wards. This location is particularly significant as it serves as the district headquarters of Taplejung, a region renowned for its rich bio-cultural diversity and tourism attractions. Mount Kanchenjunga and Pathibhara Devi Temple, providing a unique backdrop for understanding Gurung community dynamics. From the total Gurung population of 326 HHs in the ward, a sample of 40 married individuals aged between 20 and 60 years were selected randomly (Municipal Profile, 2024). The study also selected nine participants representing elected members, elderly people and members purposively to generate detailed insights into cultural aspects of the community (Palinkas et al., 2015). Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources to address research objectives. Primary data were collected through household surveys using structured questionnaires administered to the selected respondents, focusing on variables such as education, occupation, income, and asset ownership. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants using semi-structured guides to explore cultural traditions, social norms, and cultural expressions. Secondary data were collected from published and unpublished sources including books, journal articles, government documents, municipal profiles. The analysis employed descriptive statistical tools to present quantitative findings whereas qualitative information were analyzed thematically by mapping interface between socio-cultural practices and economic implications. Throughout the research process, strict ethical considerations were maintained, including obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, guaranteeing voluntary participation, and respecting the local customs and traditions of the Gurung community.

Result and Discussion

Socialdemographics of the Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents provides essential background for understanding the socio-cultural and economic conditions of the Gurung community in Phungling. This section presents data focusing on key variables such as age distribution and educational attainment (Table 1).

Table 1. Age and Educational Status of the Respondents

Category	Sub-Category	N	%
Age Group	20-29	4	10.00
	30-39	16	40.00
	40-49	14	35.00
	50-60	6	15.00
Education Level	Literate (Basic)	16	40.00
	SLC	14	35.00
	10+2	5	12.50
	Higher education	5	12.50
Total		40	100.00

Table 1 reveals that the majority belong to the middle-age categories, with 40 percent falling within the 30-39 age group and 35 percent within the 40-49 age group. This indicates that sampled population primarily consists of economically active adults who are likely engaged in various livelihood activities and hold responsibilities within their households and community. The relatively smaller proportions in the younger (20-29) and older (50-60) age groups, at 10 percent and 15 percent respectively, suggest that study captured perspectives primarily from the established adult population, who are often the primary decision-makers in family and community matters concerning cultural practices and economic activities. Regarding educational attainment, data shows that 40 percent of respondents are literate at a basic level, indicating foundational reading and writing skills without formal certification. Those with School Leaving Certificate completion account for 35 percent, representing a significant portion with secondary

education. Higher secondary (10+2) and higher education each comprise 12.5 percent of the respondents. This distribution reveals that while basic literacy is common among the community, access to higher education remains limited, with only one-quarter of respondents pursuing education beyond the secondary level. This educational profile has important implications for employment opportunities, economic mobility, and the community's engagement with modern socio-economic systems while potentially preserving traditional livelihoods and cultural practices.

Socio-Cultural Practices of the Respondents

Cultural practices of the Gurung community reflect their rich and distinct identity, encompassing various aspects of daily life,

rituals, and celebrations that have been preserved through generations. This section presents overview of cultural elements observed among the Gurung people in Phungling. It highlights traditional dress and ornaments, folk dances, life-cycle rituals from birth to death, festivals, and musical instruments (Table 2). These cultural expressions not only distinguish the Gurung community from other ethnic groups but also serve as important markers of their social structure, beliefs, and values. The following table summarizes the major cultural aspects documented during the fieldwork, providing detailed descriptions of each practice along with their significance and key characteristics.

Table 2. Socio-cultural Practices of Gurung Community

Cultural Aspect	Description	Key Details
Dress and Ornaments	Traditional attire and accessories worn by Gurung men and women.	Men: White <i>Kachhad</i> (wrap-around skirt), <i>Bhoto</i> (vest), <i>Bhangra</i> (white chest cloth). Women: Velvet <i>Choli</i> <i>Makhamal</i> (blouse), <i>Phariya/Lehenga</i> (skirt), <i>Ghalek</i> (body sling), <i>Patuka</i> (belt/sash). Ornaments: <i>Sirbaudi</i> , <i>Bulki</i> , <i>Jantar</i> , <i>Potey</i> , <i>Phuli</i> , <i>Dungri</i> , <i>Kantha</i> , <i>Tilhari</i> , <i>Peehru</i> , Bangles.
Dance	Traditional folk dances of the Gurung community.	Ghatu Dance: Performed during Baisakhi Purnima; tells tragic story of King Parshuram and Queen Hyamaudi. Other Dances: Sorathi, Khyali, Kauda, rhythmic dances prevalent in Gandaki province. Note: Less practiced in Eastern Nepal due to fading oral traditions and modernization.
Birth Ritual (Nawaran)	Naming ceremony for newborns.	Celebrated on the ninth day after birth by consulting an astrologer.
Pasni	Rice-feeding ceremony for infants.	Organized at five or six months of age after consulting an astrologer. Involves feast, blessings, and gifts (money, clothes) from family and relatives.
Chhaewar (Kraprehiba)	Initial hair-cutting ceremony for boys.	Performed at odd ages: five, seven, nine, or eleven years. Date set by astrologer; cannot take place in an even month or age.
Gunyo-Choli	Coming-of-age ceremony for girls.	Performed when a girl reaches seven, nine, or eleven years. Girl is given traditional women's dress (<i>Gunyu</i> and <i>Choli</i>), marking entry into adulthood.

Marriage	Customs and systems of matrimony.	Types: Arranged marriage (formal family arrangement), marriage by elopement (intimate, couple-focused). Rules: Clan exogamy, caste endogamy, traditional preference for cross-cousin marriage (now declining). Rituals: <i>Pung</i> (pre-wedding ceremony), significant role of maternal uncle (<i>mama</i>) who receives offerings and gives blessings.
Death Ritual	Funeral and ancestral worship practices.	Name: <i>Pai</i> or <i>Arghum</i> . Priests: <i>Ghepren, Pachyu, Kiepri, Lama</i> . Timing: Held after 3, 13, or 45 days depending on family/region. Ancestor Worship: <i>Bayupuja</i> performed annually on Mangsir Purnima and Baishakh. Maternal Uncle Role: Essential presence (<i>Ashonmai</i>) for ritual success, offering consolation and guiding the soul.
Festivals	Major celebrations observed by Gurung people.	Tamu Lhosar: Main festival (New Year) celebrated on 15th Poush; 12-year cycle with animal symbols (garuda, serpent, horse, sheep, monkey, bird, dog, deer, mouse, cow, tiger, cat). Other Festivals: Dashain, Tihar, Maghe Sakranti, Saune Sakranti.
Traditional Instruments	Musical instruments integral to Gurung culture.	Tungna: Plucked string instrument; played by shepherds; used in dances (Ghatu, Sorathi) and special occasions. Chhetu Baza: Played during Tamu Lhosar and marriage ceremonies.

Table 2 shows rich and well-preserved cultural heritage of Gurung community. The traditional dress and ornaments, with distinct dress for men and women along with various ornaments, indicate a strong visual identity that distinguishes the Gurung community, though these are now primarily worn during festivals and special occasions rather than daily life. Life-cycle rituals, including birth (Nawaran), rice-feeding (Pasni), hair-cutting (Chhaewar), coming-of-age (Gunyo-Choli), marriage, and death ceremonies, demonstrate the community's deep adherence to tradition and the continuing influence of astrologers in determining auspicious dates. The consistent involvement of the maternal uncle (*mama*) across multiple rituals—particularly in marriage and death ceremonies—highlights the importance of matrilineal kinship ties within this patrilineal society, serving as a crucial element of social cohesion. Regarding performing arts, the study notes that traditional dances like

Ghatu are less practiced in Eastern Nepal due to declining oral traditions. Gurung community in Taplejung might be experiencing cultural erosion compared to their counterparts in Gandaki province. However, the preservation of musical instruments like the Tungna and their association with specific dances and occasions indicates that some cultural expressions remain exciting. Festivals such as Tamu Lhosar continue to serve as important markers of Gurung identity, while the adoption of national festivals like Dashain and Tihar reflects the community's integration into broader Nepali society.

Economic Situations of the Respondents

Economic profile of the respondents provides essential insights into the livelihood patterns and financial well-being of the Gurung community in Phungling. This section presents data on occupational status, livestock rearing practices, and annual household income of the respondents. These economic indicators reflect

how the community sustains its livelihood through a mix of traditional agriculture, foreign employment, government service, and business, while also maintaining cultural practices like

animal husbandry (Table 3). Understanding these dimensions is crucial for assessing the community's economic stability and living standards.

Table 3. Occupational Status and Family Income

Economic Aspect	Sub-Category	Frequency (n=40)	Percentage (%)	Key Details
Occupational Status	Agriculture	16	40	Engaged in farming and agricultural activities
	Foreign Employment	14	35	Working abroad, mainly in Gulf countries, Malaysia, and India
	Government Job	8	20	Employed in civil service, teaching, or security forces
	Business	2	5	Involved in local trade, shops, or small enterprises
Livestock Rearing	Households Keeping Livestock	40	100	Traditional practice of animal husbandry: Sheep, goats, cattle, and yaks (in higher altitudes)
	Seasonal Migration	28	70	Movement to high-altitude pastures in summer and lower valleys in winter
Annual Income (NPR)	Below 200,000	10	25	Low-income households, primarily small-scale farmers
	200,000 - 400,000	16	40	Middle-income households, mix of agriculture and foreign remittance
	400,000 - 600,000	8	20	Upper-middle income, government jobs and established businesses
	Above 600,000	6	15	High-income households, foreign employment and large-scale business
	Total	40	100	Annual income crucial for economic well-being and living standards

Table 3 shows that agriculture (40%) and foreign employment (35%) are the primary livelihood sources for the Gurung community, while government jobs (20%) and business (5%) have limited representation. Gurung community in Nepal traditionally practice animal husbandry herding sheep and yaks moving seasonally to high – altitude alpine pastures in summer and

descending to lower valleys in winter for fresh grazing land. Economic activities of this study area includes traditional agriculture like growing crops such as maize, rice, potatoes, barley, millet, cardamom and animal husbandry such as sheep, goat, yak, cow buffalo etc. Gurung community people also involving in various business, trade including tourism activities.

Youth generations are involved in military service in the British, Indian army, Singapore Police, Nepal army, Police, Government official service and foreign employment. This indicates a community balancing traditional farming with modern migration-based income strategies. All households (100%) practice livestock rearing, reflecting its deep cultural and economic significance, with 70 percent still engaging in seasonal migration for grazing. The annual income distribution reveals that 40 percent of households fall in the middle-income bracket (NPR 200,000-400,000), while 25 percent remain below NPR 200,000, indicating persistent poverty among small-scale farmers. The 15 percent earning above NPR 600,000 are primarily those in foreign employment, highlighting how overseas migration creates economic differentiation within the community.

Discussions of Findings

Profile of Gurung youths in Phungling with about 75 percent economically active 30-49 age group and only 12.5 percent pursuing higher secondary education, converges with Gurung's (2023) observation that many Gurung youth discontinue education to join foreign forces rather than pursuing advanced studies. This pattern confirms Macfarlane's (1972) early documentation that education levels significantly influence employment opportunities beyond traditional livelihoods, creating a self-perpetuating cycle where the promise of foreign employment limits educational investment. However, when viewed through Pasa's (2021a) educational pattern represents a divergence from potential alternative pathways—the strategic interface between education and local development opportunities demonstrated in Panchmul remains unrealized in Phungling, suggesting that educational outcomes are not predetermined but shaped by local opportunity structures and aspirations.

Culturally, the findings reveal both preservation and erosion that invite comparative analysis. The persistence of life-cycle rituals (Nawaran,

Pasni, Chhaewar) with astrologers consulted and maternal uncles playing crucial roles confirms Pignede's (1993) observations about matrilineal kinship within this patrilineal society, demonstrating remarkable continuity. However, the finding that traditional dances like Ghatu are less practiced in Eastern Nepal due to disappearing oral traditions diverges sharply from Kuikel's (2025) report of vibrant Ghantu dance in Lamjung. Supporting Macfarlane's (1972) findings, geographic displacement from the Gandaki heartland accelerates cultural erosion. This geographic divergence suggests that cultural preservation is not uniform across Gurung settlements but mediated by proximity to traditional centers and the vitality of oral transmission mechanisms. Religious syncretism documented—combining Bon shamanism, Buddhism, and Hindu influences—converges with the Nepal Tourism Board's (2023) description while demonstrating how ritual practice maintains distinct identity even as communities integrate into broader Nepali society.

Economic profile reveals a community in significant transition, with agriculture primary for 40 percent while foreign employment accounts for 35 percent, reflecting what Bista (2004) identified as the Gurung tradition of service in foreign forces. This converges with Gurung's (2023) analysis of "Lahure culture" as both economic backbone and rooted social practice. However, Dhungel's (2024) crucial caveat—that many Gurungs depend on blue-collar work in India trapped in poverty cycles—finds partial confirmation in the income distribution showing 25 percent below NPR 200,000, primarily small-scale farmers without foreign employment access. All the households are rearing livestock with 70 percent engaging in seasonal migration demonstrates remarkable convergence with Strickland's (1984) documents of traditional pastoral practices, suggesting animal husbandry represents deeply embedded cultural practice resistant to transformation. About 15 percent

earning above NPR 600,000, primarily those who are involving in foreign employment, confirms Lama's (2024) characterization of "remittance culture" creating economic disparities while increasing market dependency.

Migration patterns evident in Phungling must be understood within the deeper historical trajectory documented by Gurung (2024, 2025)—from Kwholasothar settlement 1200-1500 years ago through Gandaki heartland to eastern districts. This historical depth discloses what might be termed "mobility as tradition," the continuity of movement itself even as destinations evolve from Gorkha unification campaigns (Gurung, 2025) to contemporary labor migration. Transnational linkages created by 35 percent foreign employment are reshaping local social fabric in ways that converge with Gurung et al.'s (2018) analysis of how communities interact with broader socio-economic changes. Yet Gurung's (2014) examination of social inclusion reminds us that these benefits are unevenly distributed, with Kunwar's (2006) study of Gurung women suggesting that remittance benefits are mediated by gender and economic position.

When analyzed through Pasa's (2021b) framework of tourism-rural development interfaces, Phungling represents a divergence from potentially transformative pathways. While Panchmul demonstrates how tourism can build social capital, develop infrastructure, and maintain community well-being by mobilizing skilled local youth, Phungling's cultural and economic assets remain oriented toward foreign employment rather than locally rooted development. The challenge, as Pasa's (2021a) strategic interface model suggests, lies in aligning educational investment, cultural preservation, and economic diversification. Whether Phungling's Gurungs can achieve such alignment depends on community agency and policy support, but the reasonable evidence suggests that without intentional intervention, the pattern documented by Macfarlane (1972)

and confirmed by Gurung (2023)—of education condensed by foreign employment aspirations, creating dependency rather than local development—will likely persist.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This study concludes that socio-cultural practices and economic situations of Gurung community has been changing in Eastern Nepal. Culturally, the Gurung community maintains a rich heritage through life-cycle rituals including birth ceremonies, rice-feeding, hair-cutting, coming-of-age, marriage, and death rituals, all of which continue to involve astrologers and emphasize the significant role of the maternal uncle. However, traditional performing arts, particularly dances like Ghatu, are less practiced in Eastern Nepal due to fading oral traditions, suggesting that geographical displacement from the traditional Gurung heartland accelerates cultural erosion. Festivals such as Tamu Lhosar continue to serve as important markers of Gurung identity, while the adoption of national festivals reflects integration into broader Nepali society. Economically, the community exhibits a diversified livelihood pattern combining traditional agriculture with foreign employment, government service, and limited business engagement. All households practice livestock rearing, with many still engaging in seasonal migration for grazing, demonstrating remarkable cultural resilience. The income distribution reveals economic differentiation, with foreign employment creating both opportunities and disparities. This economic transition, rooted in the community's historical military identity, reflects both opportunities and challenges as the Gurung community adapts to contemporary socio-economic realities while striving to preserve their distinct cultural identity. Therefore, local government should establish cultural preservation programs documenting Gurung performing arts, oral traditions, and rituals. Annual cultural festivals and integration of Gurung music and dance into school curricula can ensure transmission to younger generations.

Agricultural modernization programs, training in improved farming techniques, and support for value-added products like cardamom processing can enhance income.

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Role of Motivation in Enhancing Speaking Skills in the English Language Classroom in Nepal

Nawaraj Acharya

Pathibhara Multiple campus, Taplejung

Email: acharyanawarajt@gmail.com

Abstract

Motivation is crucial for second language learners. It impacts learners' engagement, confidence, and willingness to learn. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of motivation in enhancing speaking skills in English language classrooms in Nepal. The present study attempts to explore the role of motivational strategies such as role-play, picture describing, and conversation in developing students' speaking skills. I adopted an action research design, which was qualitative in nature. The steps of the research included 1) planning, 2) implementing, 3) observing, and 4) evaluating or reflecting. The required data were collected through tests. The sample size included twenty-eight students from grade 10 in Shree Siddhakali Secondary School in the Taplejung district of Nepal. The test scores of all four tests showed significant increments, which indicates that motivational strategies played a constructive role in developing students' speaking ability. The findings underscore the significance of positive teacher-student interactions, technology integration, and addressing language anxiety in nurturing learners' motivation. This research provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and language learning institutions to design effective strategies that foster a supportive and motivating learning environment, ultimately empowering ESL learners to achieve their language learning goals.

Keywords: motivation, strategies, competence, influences, factors, ESL

Introduction

English has become a widely used international language in today's globalized world. It has been taught in schools, colleges, and universities as a compulsory subject (Ly, 2022). Motivation is crucial for students to engage in activities and develop language skills (Adhikari, 2025). Motivation, in the context of language learning, refers to the inner drive and desire that pushes learners to engage, persist, and excel in acquiring a new language (Beyene et al., 2024).

Motivation is a pivotal factor in successful second language acquisition (SLA), particularly regarding speaking skills among secondary-level students (Nurhidayah, 2020). It directly

influences learners' willingness to communicate (WTC), engagement, effort, and persistence, which are essential for developing oral proficiency (Aladini & Gheisari, 2025). It is a central concept in psychology that drives behavior, influences cognitive processes, and ultimately shapes an individual's actions, goals, and desires. It is the internal mechanism that initiates, guides, and sustains goal-oriented behavior (Filgona et al., 2020). Understanding motivation is crucial for explaining why individuals engage in certain behaviors and how they prioritize their goals. Motivation is often defined as the psychological process that influences the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of behavior. It can be broadly understood as the "why" behind any

action. Various psychological theories have defined motivation in different ways, but most definitions converge on the idea that motivation is a force that drives individuals to fulfill their needs, desires, or goals (Braver et al., 2014).

Motivation acts as the driving force that encourages learners to practice speaking, overcome hesitation, and take risks in communication (Duyen & Hao, 2023). Speaking is one of the most essential skills in language learning, as it enables learners to express ideas, share experiences, and engage in meaningful communication (Al-Khresheh, 2024). However, developing strong speaking skills often requires more than just linguistic knowledge—it demands confidence, persistence, and active participation. This is where motivation plays a crucial role (Buesaquillo Buesaquillo & Rodríguez Velásquez, 2018). It can be intrinsic, arising from personal interest, enjoyment, or a desire for self-improvement, or extrinsic, driven by external rewards such as grades, recognition, or career opportunities. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors play crucial roles, and the classroom environment, teacher practices, tasks, and peer interactions significantly mediate its effects (Asadpour et al., 2025). When learners are motivated, they are more likely to engage in conversations, seek feedback, and consistently work on improving their fluency and accuracy. In the context of language learning, motivation not only boosts the willingness to speak but also helps reduce anxiety, build self-confidence, and sustain long-term progress (Welesilassie & Nikolov, 2022). Therefore, understanding and fostering motivation is essential for teachers, trainers, and learners to create an environment where speaking skills can flourish naturally and effectively.

Language learning, particularly in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL), is a multifaceted process influenced by various factors. Among these, motivation stands out as a crucial element. Motivation is not just the driving force behind the decision to learn a new language; it also plays a significant role in

the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning process (Lapadat & Lapadat, 2024). Motivation in language learning can be defined as the learner's desire, willingness, and effort to learn and master a language. It's a complex blend of the learner's internal desires and external factors that push them towards achieving their language learning goals (Papi & Hiver, 2020). The importance of motivation cannot be overstated – it directly influences the learner's persistence, attitude, and ultimately, their success in acquiring a new language.

English language is prioritized in Nepal's schooling education (Bista, 2011; Shrestha & Gautam, 2022). However, learners' speaking skills remain limited, emphasizing the role of motivation. This research aims to explore the role of motivation in enhancing speaking skills in the English language classroom in Nepal. This article identifies the different aspects of motivation in language learning, its types, impacts, and strategies to enhance it.

Literature Review

The review section is structured into: types of motivation and motivation theories, suggesting gaps that lay the foundation to conduct this research.

Types of Motivation

Amotivation is often seen as a lack of motivation or a complete absence of intention, and it is typically the result of low self-efficacy or a mismatch between an individual's goals and their perceived ability to achieve them (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Based on the source or nature of the driving force, motivation can be categorized into intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and a motivational state. More nuanced types of motivation have been introduced through specific theoretical models, such as achievement motivation and social motivation.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for its inherent satisfaction, enjoyment, or personal interest (Oudeyer & Kaplan, 2007).

It is driven by internal factors, such as a sense of accomplishment, personal growth, or the pleasure derived from the activity itself. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated perform tasks because they find them interesting, engaging, or fulfilling, rather than to receive external rewards (Morris et al., 2022).

For example, a person who enjoys reading for pleasure is intrinsically motivated because they derive satisfaction from the activity itself, rather than from any tangible reward. Similarly, an artist may engage in painting purely for the enjoyment of expressing their creativity. According to Ryan & Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation is characterized by autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When individuals feel they are in control of their actions (autonomy), capable of achieving their goals (competence), and connected to others (relatedness), they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated (Bandhu et al., 2024).

Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation, in contrast, refers to engaging in an activity not because it is inherently enjoyable, but because it leads to external rewards or outcomes (Legault et al., 2020). These rewards can be tangible, such as money or prizes, or intangible, such as praise, recognition, or approval from others. Extrinsic motivation involves performing a task to achieve a specific outcome, such as getting a promotion, passing a test, or avoiding punishment (Hennessey et al., 2015).

For instance, a student may study hard to get a good grade or receive a scholarship, rather than out of genuine interest in the subject. Similarly, an employee may work overtime to earn a bonus or to avoid criticism from their boss. In Self-Determination Theory (SDT), extrinsic motivation is divided into different types, ranging from more controlled to more autonomous forms of motivation:

- **External regulation:** This is the most controlled form of extrinsic motivation, where behavior is driven by external

demands, rewards, or punishments.

- **Introjected regulation:** In this form, individuals perform an activity to avoid guilt or anxiety, or to gain approval from others.
- **Identified regulation:** Here, individuals recognize the value of an activity and engage in it for personal reasons, even if they don't enjoy the activity itself.
- **Integrated regulation:** This is the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation, where the activity is fully integrated into one's values and beliefs, making it more intrinsically motivating (Thøgersen-Ntoumani & Ntoumanis, 2006).

Achievement Motivation

Achievement motivation is a form of motivation that drives individuals to pursue success and accomplishment in competitive and goal-oriented environments. People with high achievement motivation are driven by the desire to achieve excellence, overcome challenges, and attain mastery in specific domains, such as academics, sports, or work (Werdhiastutie et al., 2020). The concept of achievement motivation was first introduced by David McClelland (1961, cited in Ogunbiyi-Davies et al., 2023), who argued that individuals differ in their need for achievement, which can be defined as the drive to accomplish goals, meet standards, and succeed in challenging tasks.

Social Motivation

Social motivation involves the desire to establish and maintain relationships, connect with others, and gain social approval or belonging. It is driven by the need to feel accepted, loved, and supported by others. Social motivation can include the desire for friendship, family connections, romantic relationships, and social recognition (Chevallier et al., 2012).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) outlines social motivation as one of the key factors in human behavior, placed at the third level of the pyramid, following physiological and safety

needs. According to Maslow, once basic survival needs are met, individuals are motivated to seek love, belonging, and social connections, which are critical for psychological well-being (Kaze et al., 2024; Maslow, 1943).

Although motivation has been studied extensively through intrinsic, extrinsic, achievement, and social perspectives (Chevallier et al., 2012; Maslow, 1943; McClelland, 1961, cited in Ogunbiyi-Davies et al., 2023; Ryan & Deci, 2000), there is limited research on how these types of motivation influence English speaking skills in Nepalese classrooms. Most studies focus on general learning outcomes or Western contexts, neglecting the unique socio-cultural and pedagogical environment in Nepal, such as teacher-centered instruction and limited English exposure. Furthermore, the interaction of different motivational types and their specific effects on students' oral communication skills remains underexplored. This research addresses this gap by examining how various motivational factors enhance speaking proficiency among Nepali learners of English.

Motivation Theories

Several key theories of motivation have helped shape our understanding of the different types of motivation and how they influence human behavior. Some of the most influential theories include:

- **Self-Determination Theory (SDT)** (Ryan & Deci, 2000): This theory differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, emphasizing the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering motivation. SDT suggests that individuals are more motivated when they feel in control of their actions and when those actions align with their values and interests.
- **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs** (Maslow, 1943): This theory posits that humans are motivated by a hierarchy of needs, ranging from basic physiological needs to self-actualization. Motivation progresses as individuals satisfy their lower-order needs

(e.g., food, safety) and move toward higher-order needs, such as social connection and self-fulfillment.

- **Expectancy Theory** (Vroom, 1964, cited in Permzadian & Shen, 2024): According to this theory, individuals are motivated by the expected outcomes of their actions. Motivation is determined by the perceived probability that effort will lead to a desired outcome (expectancy), the value placed on the outcome (valence), and the belief that the outcome will lead to rewards (instrumentality).
- **Goal-Setting Theory** (Locke & Latham, 2002): This theory suggests that individuals are motivated by setting specific and challenging goals. According to Locke and Latham, goal commitment, feedback, and task complexity are important factors in achieving motivation through goal-setting.
- **Attribution Theory** (Weiner, 1985): This theory focuses on how individuals attribute their successes or failures to various causes, such as ability, effort, task difficulty, or luck. These attributions influence motivation, as individuals tend to be more motivated when they believe that success is within their control.

Many theories explain motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Maslow, 1943; Vroom, 1964; Locke & Latham, 2002; Weiner, 1985). However, few studies focus on speaking skills in Nepal. English classrooms in Nepal have teacher-centered methods and limited English practice. We do not know which motivational strategies help students speak better. This research gap is addressed in this study.

Research Methodology

This research applied action research (Tripathi, 2022) in grade 10 of Shree Siddhakali Secondary Public School, Phungling Municipality-8, Taplejung. The population of this study was secondary level students (class 10 students), with a sample of twenty-eight students. Among them,

17 were girls and 11 were boys from class 10. Usually, action research consists of four steps: 1) planning, 2) implementing, 3) observing, and 4) evaluating or reflecting (Indriyanti & Prasetyo, 2018). I also followed the same to explore the Role of Motivation in Enhancing Speaking Skills in the English Language Classroom in Nepal. Ethical guidelines were ensured by seeking permission from the school administration to conduct the research. I sought informed consent, maintained participants' anonymity and confidentiality, and ensured voluntary participation of researchers (Ederio et al., 2023).

Analysis and Result

This section is structured into four parts: planning, implementing, observing, and evaluating/reflecting.

Planning

In this study, four aspects for English language speaking are analyzed i.e. vocabulary, grammar, content and pronunciation. English vocabulary refers to the lexical knowledge that encompasses the words and their meanings in English language. Grammar is the system of rules governing how words, phrases, and clauses are structured to form meaningful communication in speech and writing. Content refers to the information, subjects or materials contained with something written, said, created or represented something. Pronunciation refers to the way a word or language is spoken, involving the production of sounds, stress, rhythm and intonation.

After selecting the sample, a pre-test was administered. It was done to find out an existing speaking ability of the learners. The result showed that students speaking ability was not satisfactory. Then, I used to motivational techniques and intervened the students for four weeks. I motivated the students by generating students' interest, encouraging positive retrospective and self-evaluation during my actions. I conducted two progress tests in the interval of four weeks. The progress tests result showed the progress of the students' in speaking ability. After completion of 14 lessons, I conducted post-test. Later the score of all four

tests were compared with each other. In the research the questionnaire, describing pictures, providing content were used as research tools for collecting data. Real data was collected through the circulation of questionnaire, describing pictures, and providing contents.

Implementing

Students were tested after motivating and result was found in the following:

Table 1. Analysis of Speaking in four aspects

S.N.	Item	Result in Percent
1	Vocabulary	23.40
2	Grammar	25.00
3	Content	32.60
4	Pronunciation	19.00

Table 1 shows the average score achieved by all the students in four different language items. Their average score in vocabulary was 23.4. Similarly, their average score in grammar was 25, On the other hand, their average score in content 32.6, Likewise, their average score in pronunciation was 19. As seen, pronunciation and vocabulary were the weak points for the students as they achieved the lowest average of 19 and 23.4 respectively. After the test, it was found that the students were strong in content. So, it was found that most of the English language learners were weak in pronunciation and vocabulary but they were able to express themselves in given content and situations. The use of vocabulary of students from class 10 of this school also was poor. They did not have a wide range of vocabulary. There was wrong use of vocabulary as well. It was found that only few active vocabularies were known to them. There was very less use of conjunctions, phrasal verbs, phrase and even the use of parts of speech like adjectives, adverbs, pronoun, etc. was not proper. Due to the lack of vocabulary exposure, they were limited in expression. Students had difficulties in proper use of demonstrative pronouns as well. They were mixing present, past and future tense in same type of sentences or same in language environment. They were found

using wrong subject-verb agreement as well. They seemed to have lack of exposure towards the proper use of singular and plural subjects and their verb agreement.

Observing

It was found that the most of the students were poor in pronunciation and vocabulary. They were poor in pronunciation. Most of the words they pronounced wrong. They were relatively poorer in vocabulary as they were repeating some of the words time and again to express themselves in the given situations. In grammar, they use past and present without considering time. They missed using subjective verbs and agreements too. So they were even seen poor in grammar too. They were seen comparatively active for speaking with contents. However, motivation empowered students for speaking freely. It was found that the students were good on content. Most of them were able to express themselves on given content even though sometimes they were misleading. Most of the students were not able to pronounce the words correctly. The findings of the study reveals that students' motivation is largely ignored at intermediate level. Furthermore, the researcher noticed that the intermediate level students' motivations are generally based as extrinsic not intrinsic. Teacher's role is mandatory for motivating students for encouraging them to speak English language. It has found that the students faced problems in pronouncing some of the words while describing the pictures or answering the questions. The major issue was lack of English speakers to interact with. Another problem was the use of students' mother tongue in the classroom. Due to that they often hesitated to speak English language. So, motivation helps for reducing hesitation for speaking skill.

Evaluating/Reflecting

Speaking is an act of making vocal sounds. We can say that speaking means to converse, or express ones thought and feeling in spoken language. Speaking skill allows the speaker to convey his/her message thoughtfully and in convincing manner. My focus in this study was to find out the

students' performance and challenges in speaking skill in terms of vocabulary, grammar, contents and pronunciation. To attain the objectives, I selected 28 students from the public schools. The students were good at contents, they were not so good at grammar and they were also not able to pronounce many of the words correctly. It is seen that the performance of the students was not so good in many aspects of English. So, it is very important to focus on all aspects of language equally to get a complete mastery over it. Even though the prime focus of my research study was on speaking performance of students, it also gives an account for the comparison of different aspects of language. In addition to this, my study tried to find out the level of students in terms of their vocabulary, grammar, contents and pronunciation. It can be said that motivation plays vital role in development of speaking skill of language. So, we have to involve learners for fostering a supportive, engaging environment by connecting lessons to their lives providing positive and specific feedback on their effort.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing students' speaking skills in the English classroom in Nepal. Students performed better in content but struggled with pronunciation and vocabulary. This aligns with previous studies that emphasize the importance of motivation in language learning, especially for oral skills (Adhikari & Pasa, 2021; Adhikari, 2025; Beyene et al., 2024). Motivated students were more willing to participate, express their ideas, and take risks in speaking. The use of motivational techniques, such as generating interest and encouraging self-evaluation, helped students speak more freely and reduced hesitation. This supports the idea that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are necessary to engage learners actively in communication (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Asadpour et al., 2025).

The study also shows that grammar and vocabulary errors were common among learners, which limited their ability to communicate

accurately. Motivation influenced their effort to use language correctly and attempt new words, even if mistakes occurred. These findings agree with previous research highlighting that motivation is linked to learners' willingness to communicate (Nurhidayah, 2020; Aladini & Gheisari, 2025). The results suggest that motivation not only encourages participation but also supports learners in practicing and improving specific language aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Filgona et al., 2020; Welesilassie & Nikolov, 2022).

Finally, the classroom environment and teacher support were found to be critical in motivating students. Teacher encouragement, providing meaningful tasks, and creating opportunities for English use helped students engage more in speaking activities (Ly, 2022; Buesaquillo Buesaquillo & Rodríguez Velásquez, 2018). However, challenges such as limited English exposure and the use of mother tongue in class affected students' confidence. This confirms the research gap identified in the literature, where the interaction of different motivational types and their effects on speaking skills in Nepalese classrooms remains underexplored (Ryan & Deci, 2000; McClelland, 1961 as cited in Ogunbiyi-Davies et al., 2023; Maslow, 1943; Chevallier et al., 2012). Overall, motivation is a key factor that teachers need to foster to enhance English speaking proficiency effectively.

Conclusion

This study found that motivation significantly enhances students' English-speaking skills. Students performed best in content but struggled with pronunciation and vocabulary, while grammar was moderate. Motivational techniques, such as generating interest, self-evaluation, and positive feedback, helped students speak more confidently. The study was limited by a small sample size, a single school setting, and a four-week intervention. Future research could explore different types of motivation over longer periods and across multiple schools. The findings imply that teachers should use motivational strategies,

create engaging English-speaking opportunities, and provide feedback to improve learners' oral skills. Overall, motivation is key to developing speaking proficiency and confidence in English.

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Assessing Head Teachers' Distributed Leadership Practices in Public Secondary Schools of Kathmandu Valley

Rajan Kumar KC¹, Hemant Bahadur Thapa²

¹Kathmandu University, School of Education

Email: rajankc.kc@gmail.com; <http://orcid.org/0009-0007-7687-2023>

²Teacher, Tri-Padma Vidyashram Secondary School, Lalitpur

Email: hemanthapa2020@gmail.com; <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6295-6312>

Abstract

This study examines the distributed leadership practices of head teachers in public secondary schools within the Kathmandu valley. The objective of study was to assess relationship between demographical variables of head teachers and their distributed leadership. In doing so, the study adopted survey research approach within a quantitative research design based on the post-positivism philosophical paradigm. Required data for the study were collected from 165 head teachers; including 97 from Kathmandu, 41 from Lalitpur and 27 from Bhaktapur selected randomly by using self-administered survey questionnaires. The research instrument comprised two sections: a demographic questionnaire and a 43-item five-point Likert scale measuring five distributed leadership attributes—sharing (9 items), collective (9 items), collaborative (8 items), co-leader (7 items), and democratic practices (10 items)—adapted from previous studies. The study foregrounds significant differences between head teachers' distributed leadership practice and demographic variables in qualification and training status. The training status was found significant difference in collaborative, coleader, collective and distributed leadership where p-value was found < 0.05. The level of HTs' found moderate in gender, experience in position, districts wise leadership, teaching experience, training days and attributes wise leadership. The Head Teachers' distributed leadership supports the holistic schools' productivity and progress in terms of quality education. Head Teachers can no longer do their jobs alone. The Head Teachers' distributed leadership can enhance the better result of Schools.

Keywords: Distributed Leadership, Public S. Schools, Kathmandu Valley, Demographical Variables, Quality education

Introduction

Distributed leadership perform by head teachers is a key determinant of quality education. UNESCO (2015) Education-2030 framework stressed strengthening international cooperation and developing teacher qualifications through inclusive management. Distributed leadership emphasizing communication between school teachers and head teachers as they collaboratively develop knowledge and enhance human capacities, leading to instructional innovations

(Harris & Spillane, 2008; Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Healey, 2010). Danielson (2007) concluded that expanded activities develop teacher ability by utilizing head teachers' sources. The traditional model of leadership by a single individual is diminishing, potentially increasing inclusive democracy in schools (Yukl, 2010; Pierro et al., 2020). Harris (2008) defined distributed leadership as sharing similarities with participatory, democratic, and collaborative leadership concepts. Elmore (2000) suggested

that multiple persons in schools should develop through distributing leadership attributes.

Goksoy (2016) found that shared leadership encompasses activities where head teachers and teachers in which head teachers and teachers collaborate through both formal and informal decision-making processes. Spillane (2006) categorized distributed leadership into four components: (1) communication for tackling school development tasks; (2) alignment between teachers' claimed actions and head teachers' actual practices; (3) appropriate distribution of responsibilities; and (4) leadership distribution through coordinated, collective, or collaborative approaches. Group work strengthens head teachers (Marzano et al., 2005). Byfield (2007) recommended shifting from traditional leadership toward collaborative decision-making. Maltempo et al. (2019) emphasized that teachers and staff must develop trust cultures enabling risk-taking and shared accountability. Teacher leaders transform school culture when they communicate and collaborate, creating inclusive democratic environments (Luff, 2011). Hattie (2009) found teachers perform significant roles in distributed work structures that helped to ensure quality education.

Leadership divides into different bases - some leaders share and collaborate, others follow democratic behaviors, while some focus on group leadership (Shava & Tlou, 2018). Distributed leadership represents an ancient notion that has gained contemporary prominence (Day et al., 2007). Northouse (2007) noted leaders must perform multiple roles through communication processes. DeFlaminis (2013) emphasized leadership functions requiring cooperation, participation, and teacher commitment within school culture. Constitution of Nepal (2015), Article 31, guarantees free basic education through government-aided schools. Nepal Education Sector Analysis (2017) highlighted head teachers' essential skills in distributing duties across local, provincial, and federal systems. SSRP (2009-2015) aimed to enhance

school learning through strengthened leadership capacities and teacher competencies (Ministry of Education, 2009). SSDP (2016-2023) identified challenges including teacher management, unbalanced distribution, inadequate monitoring, and insufficient training implementation (MOE, 2016). National Education Policy (2019) emphasized leadership strengthening, parent ownership, and active participation for transforming public education.

In global context, Aboudahr (2019) found strong associations between school DL and teacher performance. Pierro (2020) demonstrated positive student outcomes through distributed practices, though DL did not significantly impact NJSLA scores despite high principal perceptions. Goksoy (2016) found medium-level leadership attributes across all dimensions. Velasquez (2021) identified demographic variations in teacher perceptions of DL. In Nepal, Subedi (2017) found positive associations between head teachers' leadership attributes and school climate, though gaps existed between desired and actual situations. Rai (2019) demonstrated head teachers' leadership plays vital roles in school improvement, recommending reviews of education policies focusing on leadership roles. Kandel (2020) found community school teachers demonstrated high organizational commitment, with transformational leadership predicted by age and education level. Dulal (2020) identified transformational leadership practiced at higher levels in community schools, though correlation with student achievement remained low ($r = 0.091$ to 0.164). Previous Nepali studies (Subedi, 2017; Rai, 2019; Kandel, 2020; Dulal, 2020) addressed leadership attributes, school climate, and organizational commitment but did not specifically examine relationships between head teachers' distributed leadership and students' learning achievement in public secondary schools.

The Secondary Education Examination (SEE) Report (2022) indicates inconsistent achievement in public schools. Mathema (2007) identified

teacher irregularity, inadequate training, and low motivation as contributing factors. Nepal High Level Commission (2018) noted challenges in school management, leadership selection, authority, and accountability without specifically addressing distributed leadership. This study addresses the gap by examining head teachers' distributed leadership and its relationship with student achievement in public secondary schools of Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur districts, responding to Bolden's (2011) call for meaningful connections between DL theory and practitioner experiences within Nepal's federal education system.

Objectives and Methodology

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between head teachers' distributed leadership practices and their demographic variables, and to assess the extent to which these leadership practices are demonstrated in public secondary schools. The study used quantitative research design grounded in the post-positivism paradigm to examine the relationship between head teachers' distributed leadership and students' learning achievement in public secondary schools of Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur districts. A cross-sectional survey approach was used, with data collected from 165 head teachers including 97 from Kathmandu, 41 from Lalitpur and 27 from Bhaktapur selected through simple random sampling from a total population of 281, determined using Yamane's (1976) formula at a 5% margin of error.

The research instrument comprised two sections: a demographic questionnaire and a 43-item five-point Likert scale measuring five distributed leadership attributes—sharing (9 items), collective (9 items), collaborative (8 items), co-leader (7 items), and democratic practices (10 items)—adapted from previous studies (Bolden, 2011; Pierro, 2020; Subedi, 2017; Velasquez, 2021) and refined through expert consultation. Pilot testing with 17 head teachers (10% of the sample) established reliability with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.62 to 0.94 across

attributes, meeting acceptable thresholds (Cohen, 2018). Content, construct, and criterion validity were established through expert judgment, statistical procedures, and comparison with similar studies (Kumar, 2011). Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25, employing descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and regression analysis to test relationships between independent variable (social demographics) and dependent variable (distributed leadership). Ethical protocols including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

Results and Discussions

This section presents demographic information of the head teachers related to their qualifications, age, gender, teaching experience, subject specialization, tenure as head teacher, and training completed.

Qualification and Subject Specification

This section provides a descriptive analysis of head teachers' qualifications alongside their corresponding distributed leadership practices scores, demonstrating how leadership attributes differ across varying levels of educational attainment (Table 1).

Table 1. Head Teachers' Qualifications

Qualification	Frequency	Mean	SD
SLC	2	3.20	0.09
BEd	6	3.44	0.12
BBA	1	3.31	-
BSC	2	3.28	0.23
BA	11	3.41	0.16
MEd	78	3.52	0.19
MA	29	3.51	0.19
MBA	6	3.46	0.16
MSC	17	3.42	0.14
MPhil	12	3.55	0.15
PhD	1	3.47	-
Total	165	3.49	0.18

The above table shows the academic qualifications of head teachers' and their average scores in distributed leadership practices. Out of total 165 respondents, most head teachers have an M.Ed. degree (78), followed by M.A. (29) and M.Sc. (17), which indicates that the majority hold master's level qualifications. The average leadership scores range from 3.20 to 3.55 across different qualification groups. Head teachers with an M.Phil. Degree have the highest average score (3.55), followed those with M.Ed. (3.52) and M.A. (3.51). This indicates that head teacher with higher academic degrees tend to show slightly better distributed leadership practice that those with bachelor's degree (B.Ed. 3.44 and B.A. 3.41). The small standard deviation values (between 0.09 and 0.23) show that responses within each qualification group are quite similar. However, results for categories with very few respondents such as SLC 2, BBA 1 and PhD 1 should be interpreted carefully because they may not represent the wider population. Overall, the findings suggest a positive relationship between higher academic qualifications and stronger distributed leadership practices among head teachers.

Demographic Characteristics

This section presents a descriptive analysis of these demographic variables based on their corresponding distributed leadership practice scores thereby illustrating how leadership attributes vary across different demographic categories (Table 2).

Table 2. Head Teachers' Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	N	Mean	SD
Gender	Male	138	3.47	0.18
	Female	27	3.54	0.17
Age	30-40 years	6	3.52	0.21
	40-50 years	34	3.51	0.20
	50-60 years	125	3.48	0.17
Training (Days)	1-90 days	30	3.38	0.15
	91-180 days	129	3.51	0.18
	181-270 days	3	3.61	0.24
	270-365 days	3	3.59	0.32

Analysis of demographic characteristics reveals notable patterns in distributed leadership practices among the 165 head teachers surveyed. Female head teachers (n=27) demonstrated slightly higher distributed leadership scores (Mean=3.54, SD=0.17) compared to their male counterparts (n=138, Mean=3.47, SD=0.18) thereby suggesting women may employ more collaborative approaches despite being significantly underrepresented in leadership positions. Regarding age distribution, head teachers aged 50-60 years constituted the majority (n=125, Mean=3.48, SD=0.17), while the smaller 30-40 years age group (n=6) exhibited marginally higher scores (Mean=3.52, SD=0.21), indicating younger leaders might be more receptive to distributed practices. Most notably, training duration represents a positive association with distributed leadership, as head teachers with 181-270 days of training achieved the highest mean score (Mean=3.61, SD=0.24), followed closely by those with 270-365 days (Mean=3.59, SD=0.32), while those with minimal training (1-90 days) scored lowest (Mean=3.38, SD=0.15), underscoring the value of extended professional development in fostering collaborative leadership approaches, though findings for higher training categories require cautious interpretation due to small sample sizes.

Leadership duration and Teaching Experience

This section presents a descriptive analysis of two experience categories and their distributed leadership practice scores. It shows leadership qualities differ at different level of professional experience. (Table 3).

Table 3. Head Teachers' Experience

Experience Type	Years	N	Mean	SD
Teaching Experience	11-20 years	2	3.55	0.09
	21-30 years	21	3.53	0.21
	31-40 years	76	3.47	0.18
	41+ years	66	3.49	0.17

Position Experience	1-10 years	2	3.45	0.11
	11-20 years	115	3.49	0.18
	21-30 years	34	3.50	0.18
	31-40 years	12	3.43	0.20
	41+ years	2	3.39	0.19

The analysis shows different patterns of distributed leadership practices based on head teachers' professional experience. In terms of teaching experience, head teachers with 11-20 years ($n=2$, $Mean=3.55$) and 21-30 years ($n=21$, $Mean=3.53$) have highest leadership scores. Those with 31-40 years of experience ($n=76$, $Mean=3.47$) have slightly lower scores thereby suggesting a small decline in collaborative practices after many years of teaching. Regarding experience in the head teacher position, those serving for 11-20 years ($n=115$, $Mean=3.49$) and 21-30 years ($n=34$, $Mean=3.50$) show the highest scores. Head teachers with very low (41+ years, $n=2$, $Mean=3.39$) and very short experience (1-10 years, $n=2$, $Mean=3.45$) have lower scores. This indicates that distributed leadership is strongest during mid-career stages. Overall, moderate levels of experience support better distributed leadership practices, but results from groups with very small sample sizes should be interpreted carefully.

Distributed Leadership Attributes Based on Demographic Information

This section describes five attributes of head teachers' distributed leadership: sharing, collective, collaborative, co-leader, and democratic practices. A 43-item questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) was administered to 165 head teachers in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur districts. The instrument comprised 9 items for sharing, 9 for collective, 8 for collaborative, 7 for co-leader, and 10 for democratic attributes. The data were collected to examine the relationship between distributed leadership attributes and the demographic characteristics of head teachers in public secondary schools.

Assumption Tested for Parametric Test

This section presents the normality tests conducted to ensure the data met the assumptions for parametric statistical analysis (Table 4). Normality testing is essential for determining whether data follows a normal distribution, which is a prerequisite for statistical tests such as t-tests and ANOVA (Sujianto, 2009).

Table 4. Normality Test of Attributes Using Skewness and Kurtosis

Attributes	Z Value of Skewness	Z Value of Kurtosis
Sharing	-1.81	-0.93
Collective	-0.80	-1.40
Collaborative	1.02	-1.99
Co-leader	1.96	0.27
Democratic	-1.48	0.97
Distributed Leadership	0.89	-0.91

The Z-values for both Skewness and Kurtosis for all attributes fell within the acceptable range of +2 to -2 thereby confirming that the collected data were normally distributed (Garson, 2012). This normal distribution justifies the use of parametric tests for further analysis. The random selection of 165 head teachers from a population of 281 in three districts satisfied additional parametric assumptions, including random sampling and equivalent variance across populations (Wilcox, 1995; Hecke, 2010). Notably, collaborative attribute showed kurtosis of -1.99, while co-leader attribute showed Skewness of 1.96, both remaining within acceptable limits.

Attribute-Wise Test of Homogeneity of Variances

This section presents the attribute-wise analysis of head teachers' distributed leadership practices across the five components: sharing, collective, collaborative, co-leader, and democratic attributes (Table 5). Based on data collected from head teachers across Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur districts, mean scores and standard deviations were calculated to determine the level

of distributed leadership demonstration. The level classification follows Lindell's (1997) criteria to categorize the extent to which head teachers practice distributed leadership in their schools. The following table provides a comprehensive overview of the mean scores for each attribute and overall distributed leadership.

Table 5. Attribute-Wise Level of Head Teachers' Distributed Leadership

Attributes	Mean	SD	Level
Sharing	3.61	0.220	Moderate
Collective	3.42	0.262	Moderate
Collaborative	3.43	0.239	Moderate
Co-leader	3.47	0.167	Moderate
Democratic	3.48	0.296	Moderate
Distributed Leadership	3.45	0.232	Moderate

Note: Low (1.00-2.33), Moderate (2.34-3.66), High (3.67-5.00) (Lindell's, 1997)

The table shows the mean scores and standard deviations for the five attributes of distributed leadership along with the overall distributed leadership composite score. All attributes fall within the moderate level based on Lindell's (1997) classification criteria (2.34-3.66). Among the five attributes, sharing shows the highest mean score (3.61) thereby indicating the head teachers most frequently engage in practices related to distributing responsibilities and sharing leadership roles with teachers. It suggests that sharing leadership tasks is the most developed aspect of distributed leadership in public secondary schools. Conversely, collective leadership shows the lowest mean score (3.42), implying that head teachers are relatively less inclined toward fully collective decision-making processes where all staff members participate equally in leadership functions. Collaborative (3.43), co-leader (3.47), and democratic (3.48) attributes cluster closely together, reflecting consistent moderate engagement across these dimensions. The overall distributed leadership mean of 3.45 confirms that head teachers demonstrate a moderate level of distributed

leadership practices. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.167 to 0.296, indicate relatively consistent responses among head teachers, with co-leader showing the least variation and democratic showing the most variation in practice. These findings suggest that while head teachers have embraced the concept of distributed leadership to some extent, there remains considerable opportunity for strengthening collaborative and collective leadership practices to achieve higher levels of distributed leadership in public secondary schools.

District-Wise Level of Head Teachers' Distributed Leadership

This section deals with the district-wise analysis of head teachers' distributed leadership in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur districts. The following table presents the mean scores, standard deviations, and level of distributed leadership for each district (Table 6):

Table 6. District-Wise Level of Head Teachers' Distributed Leadership

District	N	Mean	SD	Level
Kathmandu	97	3.45	0.16	Moderate
Lalitpur	41	3.52	0.23	Moderate
Bhaktapur	27	3.56	0.15	Moderate
Total	165	3.49	0.18	Moderate

The district-wise analysis reveals that head teachers across all three districts demonstrate a moderate level of distributed leadership, with mean scores ranging from 3.45 to 3.56. Bhaktapur district exhibits the highest mean score (3.56), suggesting that head teachers in this district practice distributed leadership slightly more frequently than their counterparts in Lalitpur (3.52) and Kathmandu (3.45). The lower standard deviation in Bhaktapur (0.15) indicates greater consistency in distributed leadership practices among head teachers in this district. Lalitpur shows the highest standard deviation (0.23), reflecting somewhat greater variability in leadership practices. Kathmandu, despite having the largest sample size (97), records the lowest mean score (3.45). It indicates relatively less engagement in distributed leadership practices.

Despite these minor variations, all districts fall within the moderate range thereby confirming that distributed leadership is neither exceptionally high nor critically low across the three districts. The overall mean of 3.49 reinforces that head teachers in the Kathmandu Valley have adopted distributed leadership to a moderate extent, with opportunities for further development toward higher levels of collaborative leadership practices.

Demographic Variable-Wise Level of Distributed Leadership

This section presents the demographic variable-wise analysis of head teachers' distributed leadership across gender, position experience, teaching experience, and training duration. The following table displays the mean scores, standard deviations, and level of distributed leadership for each demographic category (Table 7):

Table 7. Demographic Variable-Wise Level of Distributed Leadership

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	Level
Gender	Male	138	3.48	0.18	Moderate
	Female	27	3.54	0.17	Moderate
Position Experience	1-10 years	2	3.45	0.11	Moderate
	11-20 years	115	3.49	0.18	Moderate
	21-30 years	34	3.50	0.18	Moderate
	31-40 years	12	3.43	0.20	Moderate
	41+ years	2	3.39	0.19	Moderate
Teaching Experience	11-20 years	2	3.55	0.09	Moderate
	21-30 years	21	3.53	0.21	Moderate
	31-40 years	76	3.47	0.18	Moderate
	41+ years	66	3.49	0.17	Moderate
Training (Days)	1-90 days	30	3.38	0.15	Moderate
	91-180 days	129	3.51	0.18	Moderate
	181-270 days	3	3.61	0.24	Moderate
	270-365 days	3	3.59	0.32	Moderate

The demographic analysis shows moderate level of distributed leadership across all variables. Female head teachers (Mean=3.54) shows slightly higher practices than male head teachers (Mean 3.48). Position experience follows an inverted U-shaped. Head teachers with 21-30 years of experience have the highest score (3.50), while

those with over 41 years have the lowest (3.39). Teaching experience shows a similar trend, with 11-20 years (3.55) and 21-30 years (3.53) having the highest averages. Training duration has a positive relationship with distributed leadership. Head teachers who received 181-270 days of training have the highest score (3.61). Those with only 1-90 days of training have the lowest score (3.38). This highlights the importance of longer professional training. However, results from groups with small sample sizes should be interpreted carefully.

Discussion of the Finding

The findings postulate the significant differences in distributed leadership practices across two demographic variables: qualification and training status. Academic qualification shows the significant differences in collective leadership ($p=.035$), co-leader attribute ($p=.022$), and overall distributed leadership ($p=.046$). Teachers training status shows significant differences in collaborative ($p=.000$), collective ($p=.005$), co-leader ($p=.027$), and overall distributed leadership ($p=.003$). These findings align with Triegaardt (2013), who reported that 85 percent of respondents supported distributed leadership as sharing responsibilities to achieve school goals. Similarly, Goksoy (2016) identified significant relationships between sharing leadership and distributed leadership scales. The significant relationship between collective and collaborative characteristics with distributed leadership corroborates findings by Grenda (2011), who found that collaborative nature of middle schools supports distributed leadership, and Chamverland (2009), who emphasized that distributed leadership plays a vital role in school environments where staff select meaningful roles connected to teaching and learning. The co-leader attribute's significance ($p=.022$) supports Triegaardt's (2013) assertion that distributed leadership enhances school performance through co-leader interaction. However, this finding contradicts Bolden (2011), who emphasized democratic leadership's significance with

distributed leadership. These results connect with Spillane's (2006) assertion that concurrent practice by administrators and teachers yields affective organizational performance. Elmore (2000) emphasized strong leader influence on teachers, while Leithwood (2008) measured teachers' abilities producing acceptable outcomes. Grootemboer (2018), drawing from Gronn (2002), supported distributed leadership as mediating school leadership functions.

The study concluded that head teachers moderate levels of distributed leadership across all attributes: sharing (Mean=3.61), collective (3.42), collaborative (3.43), co-leader (3.47), democratic (3.48), and overall distributed leadership (3.45). District-wise analysis showed Bhaktapur highest (3.56), followed by Lalitpur (3.52) and Kathmandu (3.45). Gender analysis revealed female head teachers (3.54) scored slightly higher than males (3.48). Training duration positively correlated with distributed leadership: head teachers with 181-270 days training scored highest (3.61), while those with 1-90 days scored lowest (3.38). These levels were classified using Lindell's (1997) criteria: Low (1.00-2.33), Moderate (2.34-3.66), and High (3.67-5.00). These findings align with Goksoy (2016), who reported medium-level positive perspectives on distributed leadership. Subedi (2017) similarly found head teachers' leadership attributes at an acceptable level in Nepali public schools. The Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research (2018) study with 462 teachers concluded moderate level distributed leadership. Velasquez (2021) also observed moderate status levels of distributed leadership and demographic attributes. However, contrasting findings emerged from Dulal (2020), who found community school head teachers in Kathmandu practicing transformational leadership at higher levels. Oyugi and Gogo (2019) noted that autocratic leadership was preferred over democratic styles in some contexts, though democratic styles produced significantly better results. Achimugu and Obaka

(2019) found authoritarian leadership dominant in public schools, suggesting this might explain moderate rather than high distributed leadership levels.

The study revealed that democratic leadership style was not prominently practiced across the three districts. While democratic leadership correlates with better student outcomes (Oyugi & Gogo, 2019), its limited application may contribute to inconsistent student achievement in public schools. Schools exercising democratic participation demonstrated better performance in the SEE 2022 examinations. Multiple factors influence student achievement beyond head teachers' leadership. Misty and Laura (2011) emphasized socioeconomic status impacts academic achievement. Chiu and Khoo (2005) advocated for equal opportunities in learning facilities, noting that privileged students achieve higher outcomes. Gratz and Wiborg (2022) demonstrated associations between parents' economic resources and children's school grades. Private schools generally possess better infrastructure, resources, and student selection mechanisms, contributing to their superior performance compared to public schools. Chang (2021) found distributed leadership positively influenced both academic optimism and student learning achievement. This study similarly identified low positive correlation between distributed leadership and achievement in public secondary schools. Chukwusa (2018) cautioned that autocratic leadership prevents creative problem-solving, suggesting leaders should exercise restraint in its use. For public schools where head teachers lack authority over teacher appointment, termination, and salary—key motivational factors present in private schools—distributed leadership becomes crucial for motivating teachers through shared responsibilities and leadership opportunities.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This study examined distributed leadership among head teachers in public secondary schools and its relationship with students' learning

achievement. Distributed leadership includes five key attributes: sharing, collective, collaborative, co-leader, and democratic practices. Head teachers play an important role school leader who apply these practices according to national education policies and constitutional provisions. The findings shows that female head teachers practiced distributed leadership at slightly more than male teachers. Head teachers aged 30-40 showed slightly higher leadership practices than other age groups. Significant differences were found between distributed leadership and academic qualifications, especially in co-leader practices. However, no significant difference was found between distributed leadership and teaching experience. Overall, distributed leadership levels in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur districts were moderate. All categories by attribute, gender, position, teaching experience and training also showed moderate levels. The relationship between distributed leadership and students' learning achievement was positive but moderate, meaning leadership helps student performance but other factors also play a role. Strengthening distributed leadership practices may help improve students' learning achievement in public secondary schools.

The findings of this study have important implications for educational policy and school leadership practice. For policy implication, this study provides useful ideas for policymakers in Nepal's Ministry of Education to strengthen distributed leadership among head teachers. Current policies, such as the Education Act, regulations, and teacher code of conduct, address some duties of head teachers, but more detailed provisions are needed. The results can help policymakers review the present conditions of school leadership and develop policies that promote distributed leadership. Such policies should give head teachers sufficient authority under government supervision to achieve national education goals and improve student achievement. Policies should also support head teachers in sharing leadership roles with

teachers. For school leadership practice, this study is helpful for head teachers who want to improve their leadership skills. The findings support head teachers in understanding school challenges and developing policies that align with government programs. The study also helps them prepare annual academic plans and solve leadership related problems. Distributed leadership promotes positive relationships among head teachers, teachers, and students, which can improve academic achievement. head teachers can work collaboratively with School Management Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations to implement plans and government regulations. By creating clear rules and sharing leadership responsibilities, head teachers can use school resources effectively and support sustainable school improvement and better student outcomes.

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Stakeholder's Perspective on Poverty Reduction: A Study of Slum Areas in Kathmandu Metropolitan City-14, Nepal

Rahul Aryal¹, Prashant Shrestha²

¹Research Assistant at Small World, Kathmandu

Email: aryalrahul853@gmail.com; <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1794-8378>

²Videographer, Editor and Independent Researcher

Email: prashant1shrestha11@gmail.com

Abstract

This study assesses stakeholders' perspective on poverty reduction in slum areas of Kathmandu metropolitan city through a survey of 120 randomly selected slum dwellers. Using self-administered structured questionnaires, it examines socio-economic backgrounds, health, security, community participation, and program effectiveness. Quantitative analysis with SPSS and Excel provides insights into the impact of current poverty alleviation efforts. The study found that slum residents experience poverty as an interlocking crisis of social, economic, and spatial deprivations. Demographically, a working-age population remains trapped in informal labor with alarmingly low educational attainment. Chronic food insecurity affects 96.7 percent of households, while healthcare services and public infrastructure remain critically inadequate. Despite Nepal's progressive policy landscape, including constitutional mandates and the Local Government Operation Act (2017), a cavernous implementation gap exists between policy intent and ground-level reality. Government and NGO programs are rated as ineffective, characterized by fragmented, short-term interventions lacking community engagement. The study concludes that stakeholders' effort have helped with service delivery and some economic support to the slum dwellers. However, sustainable poverty reduction requires integrated, participatory approaches that address root causes, strengthen local governance accountability, and align strategies with human rights principles. Recommendations include increased investment in education, healthcare, livelihood creation, and stronger coordination between local governments, NGOs, and communities to ensure inclusive and equitable development.

Keywords: - Poverty Reduction, Urban Slums, Stakeholder Perspectives, Rights-Based Approach

Introduction

Poverty is a complex and persistent global challenge and a condition that define the state where individuals or households lack the resources and assets to meet basic human needs. World Bank (2024) quantifies and determine the extreme and acute poverty using an international threshold and portal of US\$ 3.25 per person per day (2017 prices), yet also highlight the multidimensional nature of poverty, which expands beyond income to surround the

deprivations and hardship in education, health, and living standards. In spite of global progress, poverty remains entrenched and established, exacerbated and aggravate by contemporary crises and mess including the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, and climate change. With in this context, identifying effective and successful pathways for poverty reduction is critical and analytic. Tourism is recognized and accepts a sector with significant and notable potential to contribute and give to sustainable

development, intersecting and bisect with key points of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) (Türkmenbaş & Hassan, 2024, UN, 2025). But, realizing and register this potential need for vital roles that requires strategical and planning for the approaches, such as social marketing that is align and set a stakeholder actions and behaviors toward poverty alleviation (Hassan et al., 2024). Policy frameworks and design for poverty alleviation have evolved and develop to adopt localized and limited, multidimensional strategies and plan that are course of action. International organizations and institution like the UNDP, through and down tools like the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), advocate and advise for policies that address and pointout the health, education, and living standards alongside and at the side of income (UNDP, 2021). In context of the Nepal, this is reflected and given back in a succession and series of national plans and constitutional mandates and direction. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) guarantees and promise the rights to marginalized groups and devolves significant and important the responsibility to local governments for inclusive development. Subsequent and succeeding policies, such as the Poverty Alleviation Policy (2019), set ambitious and active targets, aiming and focus to reduce poverty to 5% by 2030 through coordinated and shared efforts and improved service and delivery access (PAP, 2019). The Local Government Operation Act (2017) legally and regulation ulempowers and motivate to allow local bodies to identify and recognize poor households, address squatter and low settlements, and formulate by generating localized poverty reduction plans and strategy, thereby institutionalizing and confine decentralized approach (MoFAGA, 2017). The government's fiscal priorities and precedence, such as the FY 2080/81 budget allocations and addressing for youth agriculture startups and education, further demonstrate and shows a

strategic commitment to human capital and rural development (Republica, 2023). In spite of all these robust policies, implementation challenges and impacts, including fragmented programs and coordination gaps, hinder their full effectiveness and efficienceness.

Theoretical understandings and facts of poverty provide and supply a foundation for these policies. Early conceptualizations and opinion, like those of Townsend (1970), Shows the well distinguish between absolute, relative, and subjective poverty. Sen's (1999) capability approach and speak to shifted focus and centre to the deprivation and poverty of freedoms and opportunities, while Lister (2004) highlighted the role of social exclusion and barring. These theories and assumptions inform governance models critical and reproving for implementation. The citizen-centered local government model and fact that emphasizes participatory decentralization and accountability, placing and addressing the citizens at the core and main of service delivery and decision-making to enhance and process of the responsiveness (Matthew & Shah, 2005). The aligns and line up with a rights-based approach to poverty reduction, and making lower which frames access and entrance to basic services as fundamental human rights, requiring and need principles of accountability, non-discrimination, and participation (Schutter, 2022). Furthermore, historical analyses, such as George's (2009) critique and analysis of unequal wealth distribution underscore that economic advancement and progress alone is insufficient where it must be coupled with mechanisms and apparatus for equitable distribution and social justice to genuinely alleviate poverty.

Empirical research underscores and reinforce the critical importance of multi-stakeholder engagement and affiancing in translating policy and theory into effective and successful practice. Studies and finding consistently show and reflect that community-based organizations and local governments, being closest and not far from to the ground, are essential and vital key for identifying needs and ensuring the

relevance of interventions (Chambers, 1997). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often fill and pack service delivery gaps and advocate for marginalized groups and people using rights-based frameworks (Brock et al., 2002). The private sector's role and part in job creation and innovation is vital role, though it requires and needed supportive policies to maximize and enhance social impact (Jenkins, 2005). Empirical evidence and proofs also highlights the power and dignity of participatory mechanisms; for instance and example, community monitoring and observing of services in Uganda improved and better health outcomes and accountability (Björkman et al., 2009), while women's self-help groups and class in India enhanced and increase both economic standing and collective political agency and company (Kabeer & Sulaiman, 2015). However, challenges and dare of persist, including tokenistic and superficial stakeholder consultations, political interference and intrusion, and weak institutional capacity and capability, which can undermine and determine collaborative efforts (World Bank, 2004; Bwalya et al., 2004).

In spite of the comprehensive policies and a wealth of theoretical and empirical knowledge, ideas, significant and important research gaps remain, particularly in the Nepali context. First, while the MPI shows and describe the national progress in reducing and lessen multidimensional poverty (from 30.1% in 2014 to 17.4% in 2021), stark geographic disparities and inequality persist, with provinces like Karnali and Sudurpashchim experiencing and observing the much higher rates (UNDP, 2021). This indicates and shows a need for research and studies into the localized barriers preventing equitable and fair poverty reduction. Second, however the role and responsibilities of stakeholders is acknowledged and address, there is limited research and studies in that systematically investigates and research the perspectives, interactions, interplay and power dynamics between all relevant and applicable stakeholders including government bodies, NGOs, community leaders,

and the poor themselves within specific, high-poverty contexts like urban slums. Third, while innovative and inventive approaches and also the well planning like design thinking are being promoted and focuses for their human-centered, collaborative and mutual problem-solving potential (Pira et al., 2024), their practical application and effectiveness in Nepal's poverty alleviation ecosystem are underexplored and undetermine. Finally, the specific potential and likely of sectors like tourism, coupled with behavioral change strategies and Planning like social marketing, to address and label the urban poverty in Nepal remains a nascent or emergent field of inquiry (Hassan et al., 2024).

This study addresses and label these gaps by focusing and sighted on the stakeholder perspectives on poverty reduction initiatives and lead within the slum areas of Kathmandu Metropolitan City Ward No. 14. Urban slums in Nepal represent and shows whole critical and reproving poverty hotspots characterized, indicate, and mark by acute deprivations and poverty in housing, sanitation, water, healthcare, and education, often intensified and boost by rural-urban migration (UN, 2025). The research and study will critically evaluate and judge the effectiveness of existing poverty and deprivation alleviation strategies and planning in this setting. By adopting a qualitative approach and strategies informed by stakeholder theory, it will map and analyze the roles, perceptions, ideas and collaborative dynamics of key actors, including and plus local government units, NGOs, community-based organizations, and slum residents and locals. The study aims and point to move beyond and past a generic and common assessment to provide nuanced and nice, context-specific insights and actionable recommendations and advice for designing more coherent, logical, participatory, and effective multi-stakeholder interventions and arbitration to break and intrusion the cycle of urban poverty in Nepal.

Objectives and Methodology

This study aims to examine the views of different

stakeholders on programs designed to reduce poverty in the slum areas. To achieve this, the research has three specific objectives: first, to understand the socio-economic backgrounds of the respondents; second, to assess health, security and community participation of the respondents; and third, to analyze how effective stakeholders' efforts have been in reducing poverty. The research used quantitative approach and cross-sectional survey methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Required data were collected from 120 slum dwellers selected randomly. The primary tools were structured household surveys, which used a five-point Likert scale, and in-depth interviews. he collected and calm data and then analyzed and examine using statistical software (SPSS and Excel) to calculate frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, blending and flowing with review insights and intuition.

Results: Demographic Characteristics

A rights-based approach (RBA) to poverty reduction insists and holds on the recognition of all individuals as rights-holders and the state or duty-bearers as responsible and in charge of guaranteeing these rights and liberty. Within this framework, analyzing demographic indicators and measure becomes a pathway and route for understanding the structural inequalities and unmet needs within marginalized communities and groups (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Category	Response	Frequency	Percent
Age	11-20	1	0.8
	21-30	30	24.6
	31-40	31	25.4
	41-50	28	23.0
	51-60	17	13.9
	61-70	11	9.0
	71-80	4	3.3
Gender	Female	64	52.5
	Male	58	47.5

Marital status	Married	113	92.6
	Single	6	4.9
	windowed	3	2.5
Caste/ Ethnicity	Other/ Janjati	58	47.5
	Indigenous	32	26.2
	Bishwokarma	15	12.3
	Chhetri	11	9.0
	Brahmin	6	4.9
Religion	Hindu	50	41.0
	Christian	42	34.4
	Bouddha	21	17.2
	Others	4	3.3
	Kirat	3	2.5
	Muslim	2	1.6
Family System	Small/ Nuclear Family	109	89.3
	Joint Family	13	10.7
Total		122	100.00

Looking at the people in this study, most of them fall between 21 and 50 years old, which is about 73 percent. That seems like the main group for work and stuff, so it makes sense to focus on jobs and training to help them out. But then there are the older folks at 12.3 percent, and even a tiny bit of youth at just 0.8 percent. For those, you need things like protection programs, health care, and schooling to make sure they get what they deserve in terms of security. Gender wise, there are a bit more women, 52.5 percent. I think that points to needing policies that really consider what women need day to day, plus ways for them to get involved in decisions. It feels like without that, a lot gets missed. On marriage, almost everyone is married, 92.6 percent. Supporting families is key here, but widows stand out as more vulnerable, so something has to cover that too. The group is pretty mixed in terms of caste and ethnicity, with 47.5 percent from Janjati and other groups that have been left out before. This diversity means affirmative actions are important to break down barriers and let everyone access services equally. Some people might argue it is

not as bad, but the numbers suggest otherwise. Overall, the profile shows how a rights approach can target poverty better, though it is not always straightforward. Religious diversity (Hindu 41%, Christian 34.4%, Bouddha 17.2%) requires and need culturally sensitive, norms and value of non-discriminatory programs. The dominance and power of nuclear families (89.3%) calls for urban policies that ensure adequate housing, childcare, and health services tailored to smaller households.

Educational Status of Parents and Children

Education is not only a basic human right but also a foundational pillar for achieving other rights, needs and escaping poverty. As outlined and the overview in international human rights frameworks and design such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4), access to inclusive, equitable, and quality education is necessary for individual and community progress. However, the findings and study expose the gaps in realizing and taken in this right among marginalized urban populations (Table 2).

Table 2: Educational Status of the Respondents and their Children

Category	Response	Frequency	Percent
Education Status	Illiterate	58	47.5
	Primary	46	37.7
	Secondary	12	9.8
	Higher	6	4.9
Higher Education Subject specifications	Others	63	51.6
	No Facility	45	36.9
	Management	8	6.6
	Sciences and Technology	3	2.5
	Arts and Humanities	2	1.6
	Education	1	0.8

Children Going to Government School	1	35	28.7
	2	52	42.6
	3	25	20.5
	4	6	4.9
	5	1	0.8
	6	1	0.8
Private School	1	111	91.0
	2	7	5.7
	3	3	2.5
	4	1	0.8
Total		122	100.00

Above findings and study reveal a critical deficit and short fall in educational attainment and feat, with nearly half of all respondents (47.5%) being illiterate and 37.7% having only primary-level education. Only 14.7% had reached and get to secondary or higher education. This widespread and general lack of education constitutes a serious violation and breach of the right to education and fuels the intergenerational and familial cycle of poverty, severely limiting and curb opportunities for skilled employment and meaningful social participation and involvement. For the small minority who accessed and gain higher education, opportunities and chance were severely constrained and unnatural. Over half (51.6%) pursued and go after unspecified "other" subjects, while 36.9% cited a complete and fully lack of facilities. Specialized and limited fields like management, sciences, and arts were pursued and followed by less than 11% combined. The way things are set up for education really points to some big failures in giving kids real options, like paths that are accessible and actually good quality, diverse enough to make a difference in their lives. Data from the surveys on where children go to school shows how much people depend on these public places that do not have enough resources. About 42.6 percent of the households had at least one kid in a government school. But then, 91 percent did not have any in private ones at all. That is a huge gap, I think it highlights how unequal things

are. Especially for kids living in slum areas, they end up stuck mostly in public schools that are not well kept up, and that takes away their chance at something better, more empowering. It feels like the system just locks them into these underfunded spots without much choice. Some might argue there are ways around it, but from what the numbers say, it does not look that way. The reliance on public institutions is so heavy, and it keeps repeating this cycle of not enough support.

Economic Situations of the Respondents

The analysis and survey of family occupation, food sufficiency, income, expenditure, and land ownership among slum dwellers reveals and tell a deeply entrenched and fixed pattern of economic vulnerability and systemic exclusion. Within the framework of the Rights-Based Approach (RBA), poverty is understood and realized not merely as a lack of income or material goods but as a denial of fundamental human rights, including the right for work, enough food, housing, and social protection. The findings from the field survey serve to expose how these rights remain unrealized for most respondents, pointing to critical policy gaps and the urgent need for inclusive, people-centered development (Table 3).

Table 3: Family Occupation, Food Sufficiency, Annual Income/Expenditure and Land Holding

Category	Response	Frequency	Percent
Family Occupation	Labor work	80	65.56
	Private job	12	9.84
	Business	12	9.84
	Unemployed	9	7.38
	Agriculture	5	4.1
	Enterprises	3	2.46
	Remittance	1	0.82
Food Sufficiency	<3-6 months	4	3.3
	<3 months	118	96.7

Annual Income of the Family	100001-500000	98	80.3
	500001-1000000	14	11.5
	1000001-5000000	10	8.2
Annual Expenditure of the Family	5000-1000	6	4.9
	10000-50000	20	16.4
	50001-100000	10	8.2
	100001-500000	52	42.6
	500001-1000000	19	15.6
	1000001-5000000	15	12.3
Land Holding	1-18 Ropani	7	4.8
	1-10 Aana	4	1.6
	2 Biga	1	0.8
	1-18 Dhur	5	4.0
	1-1.5 Kathha	4	3.2
Total		122	100.00

The economic data and facts reveal and shows the severe vulnerabilities and sensitivity. Livelihoods are overwhelming and spreading dependent on informal, unskilled labor (65.56%), highlighting and emphasizing a lack of dignified and noble, stable and fixed employment. Other sources and funds like private jobs, business, and agriculture are minimal and least, and 7.38% are unemployed, indicating scant and limited economic diversity where a failure and defeat to uphold the right to decent and well good work. Food insecurity is acute and dire, with 96.7% of families having sufficient and enough food for less than three months a year, a direct violation and non-observance of the right to food. Income levels and range are critically and desperately low, with 80.3% earning NPR 100,001–500,000 annually, which is insufficient and in short supplu for Kathmandu's high cost of living. Expenditure patterns and design suggest families may rely and depend on debt to

cover basic needs. Furthermore, land ownership is negligible and minor, with most residents holding marginal or no land, reflecting profound tenure, insecurity and economic exclusion.

Health, Security and Community Participation

The socio-cultural and economic conditions of slum communities are vital and key essentials indicators of inclusion and addition in the development process. The Rights-Based Approach (RBA) asserts and declares state that all individuals inherently possess rights to essentials and necessities such as health, education, clothing, work, safety, and water. These rights and liberty place obligations and duty on the state to ensure equitable and fair access and uphold dignity and nobility through policies, institutional accountability, and citizen participation and engagement. (Table 4).

Table 4: Items for health, Security and Community Participation

Item	Min-Max	Mean (\bar{X})	Std. Dev. (σ)	Skewness
Basic health-care services	1-5	1.62	0.96	1.94
Good educational facilities	1-5	2.11	1.01	0.45
Neighborhood safety	1-5	1.90	1.04	0.98
Enough income for daily needs	1-5	1.90	1.04	0.98
Adequate job opportunities	1-5	2.14	1.25	0.77
Access to clean drinking water	1-5	2.34	0.99	0.85
Community cultural activities	1-5	3.75	1.45	-0.39

Strong social relationships	1-5	3.46	1.60	-0.19
Local decision-making processes	1-5	2.66	1.47	0.01

The findings and discovery are severe deficits and shortfall in the fulfillment of basic socio-economic rights fair enough. Residents and locals reported the lowest satisfaction and compensation with access to basic healthcare (Mean=1.62) and neighborhood safety and income sufficiency (both Mean=1.90), highlighting more about the critical failures and less amount of the public service delivery and social protection. Poor and unproductive ratings for educational facilities and services (Mean=2.11) and job opportunities (Mean=2.14) further reflect and consider the systemic exclusion and preclusion from quality education and dignified work. Even access and ingress to clean water (Mean=2.34) remains inadequate and insufficient for that area people. Through a rights-based lens, these are not merely and nothing but a service gaps but violations of fundamental entitlements, rights, demanding accountable governance and inclusive policy reform and correction.

In contrast and difference, the community shows and present strong internal cohesion, with active participation and engagement in cultural activities (Mean=3.75) and strong social relationships (Mean=3.46). Moreover, engagement in formal decision-making (Mean=2.66) is weak, indicating and showing a lack of institutional channels for civic influence and preference. The persistently and resolutely low perception of safety (Mean=1.90) further restricts residents and locals especially women and vulnerable groups from exercising and exercise their full social and political rights and reach. Therefore, strengthening and reinforcement participatory local governance and ensuring physical safety are essential and important to translating community resilience into meaningful empowerment and rights-based

development.

Stakeholders Role in Poverty Reduction

The effectiveness and success of poverty reduction initiatives and ambition in the study area was evaluated and took by surveying residents' perceptions and point of view across key dimensions of development. This assessment and evaluation sought to measure the perceived and noted impact of various interventions and intercessions ranging and roving from healthcare and education to job training, financial aid, and infrastructure on improving living conditions and overall well-being. The following analysis and examination presents stakeholder feedback on whether these programs have successfully addressed core needs and contributed to tangible enhancements in quality of life (Table 5).

Table 5: Poverty Reduction through livelihood Services Programs

Items	Min-Max	\bar{x}	σ'	Skewness
Improve living conditions.	1-5	2.41	1.45	0.39
Benefit healthcare services.	1-5	2.70	1.38	0.79
Improved access to education.	1-5	2.54	1.15	1.03
Job training programs	1-5	2.31	1.26	1.02
Improved our living standards.	1-5	2.61	1.20	1.18
Received financial aid schemes.	1-5	2.75	1.21	0.95
Support policies for businesses.	1-5	2.78	1.21	0.71
Provide essential services	1-5	2.72	1.28	1.04

Impact on children education	1-5	1.89	1.39	1.18
Received healthcare support	1-5	2.17	1.17	0.31
Community infrastructure initiatives	1-5	1.99	1.22	0.65
Improved quality of life	1-5	2.17	1.13	1.21

The assessment of poverty reduction programs and events shows mixed results and outcomes. While respondents reported and noted the moderate improvements in areas like healthcare access (Mean=2.70), living standards (Mean=2.61), and financial aid (Mean=2.75), significantly and considerably lower scores were given to the impact and collision on children's education (Mean=1.89) and community infrastructure initiatives (Mean=1.99). This indicates and shows that while basic support and hola is being provided as long as, critical long-term and structural interventions are lacking and having low insufficient. From a rights-based perspective and theroy, these uneven and rought outcomes further more reflected and returned in positive skewness across most items and stuff reveal that entitlements and rights to education, infrastructure, and an adequate standard in living are not being equitably and fairly realized. To ensure all rights and need must be fulfilled and comfortable delighted, interventions and actions must become more and more inclusive, participatory, and targeted, with strengthened and reinforced accountability between governments, NGOs, and the community.

Discussions of Findings

The results show that slum residents experience deep poverty in many ways. This is not merely a lack of income but a deep, interlocking crisis where social, economic, and spatial deprivations reinforce one another in a relentless cycle.

Demographically, a reservoir of potential labor the majority population in their prime working years remains tragically untapped, trapped in informal work and crippled by an "alarmingly low" educational foundation where illiteracy is the norm. This stark reality embodies Amartya Sen's (1999) capability approach in its most negative form: these communities are systematically deprived of the fundamental freedoms and opportunities to be nourished, educated, and healthy that define true development. The chronic food insecurity reported by 96.7% of households and the dismal satisfaction with crumbling healthcare services are not just statistics; they are direct indictments of a system failing to convert human potential into well-being, confirming the World Bank's (2024) emphasis on poverty's multidimensional nature.

This lived deprivation wants and need pverty exists in jarring contrast to the progressive and wellmanagedpolicylandscape of Nepal, exposing and revealing a cavernous implementation gap and break. In spite of, a constitutional mandate and order to ruling for rights and the devolved powers granted and indeed to local governments by the Local Government Operation Act (2017), the study and findings reveals a state apparatus and tools are unable to fulfill its most basic obligations and tasks. The right to education, enshrined and elevated in law, remains a phantom promise and pledge in under-resourced government schools. The right to adequate and acceptable food and health, as framed and mounted by a rights-based approach and plans (Schutter, 2018), is breached daily or day by day. This chasm and void between policy intent and ground-level failure and loss underscores a breakdown or segrigrates in the citizen-centered local governance model (Andrews et al., 2006), where accountability and responsiveness are absent and unavailable Government and NGO programs are rated as ineffective, vain the reflecting the "fragmented, short-term" interventions and actions the study and findings

are notes a far cry from the coordinated, localized strategy and planning of envisioned by national plans like the Poverty Alleviation Policy (2019). In addition, the findings and Study reveal a poignant social paradox strong internal bonds and relationship of community cohesion and unity exist alongside profound official political and civic exclusion factoring out of ruling. While cultural ties and binds provide a fragile buffer and error sometime, residents and locals of the areas feel entirely sidelined from the decision-making processes and policies that shape their lives. This illustrates and confirms the concept of social exclusion articulated and spoken by Lister (2004), where poverty is not just about material and substance lack but about being shut out and bar from the levers of power and recognition. These disconnects and separates highlight why conventional poverty programs fail, they operate and work in a top-down vacuum, ignoring and oversight the very social capital and participatory potential that approaches and strategies like design thinking seek to harness (Pira et al., 2024). The near-total dependence and addiction on precarious and insecure informal labor, with minimal entrepreneurial or skilled work, points to another missing link the private sector's and institution's role in generating inclusive and overall growth, a challenge noted by Jenkins (2005).

All in all, the description and total explanation underscores that the path and way forward must be as multifaceted and versatile as the problem itself. The study's and findins empirical evidence and a well proof that strengthens the call for moving beyond fragmented and uneven projects toward integrated and equal approaches and planning. This could involve leveraging and taking advantage of innovative, human-centered methods and ways to design interventions and involvements with communities, not for them, and strategically harnessing and utilizing sectors like tourism through social marketing (Hassan et al., 2024) to create and made a decent work. The challenge and dare invitation is to bridge the huge

and high gap between robust policy and barren reality of the slum areas, transforming the strong social fabric and cloth of these communities in a foundation and base for economic inclusion and political voice, ensuring that progress and advance is both equitable and real.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

The study concludes and desists deeply rooted in structural inequality and difference among the urban slum dwellers in Kathmandu Metropolitan city. Despite being home to a significant and importance proportion of Nepal's urban labor force, these communities lack and gap in the access to essential and needed rights and services. Low educational attainment, presence in the classroom, food insecurity, informal employment, and inadequate public infrastructure continue and keep to undermine their development potential and likely. Although however both government and non-governmental organizations have implemented and prepared a well poverty reduction programs and planned policies, their effectiveness is limited by poor coordination or cooperation, lack of community engagement and participation, and failure to address root causes of deprivation and destitution. A rights-based perspective on poverty reduction highlights and shows that these shortcomings and short results are not simply developmental inefficiencies and inappropriate but violations of basic human rights and needs. For instance, poor access to education, healthcare, and safe housing in the slum areas constitutes a breach and gap of citizens' rights to dignity, equality, equity, engagement and participation. The limited and less impact of job training, livelihood support, provide of materails, goods and welfare schemes further emphasizes and shows that many programs are not tailored and customised to the actual needs and capacities of marginalized groups in the slum areas. These programs and policies often fall short and less impact due to weak implementation, a top-down approach, and insufficient investment and less helpful program in long-term capacity building. To

achieve and get the well and proper sustainable poverty reduction, the study and research calls for an inclusive and participatory model of development and run the government well in the related country. This includes and shows more increased investment in public education, healthcare, job opportunity creation, and urban infrastructure, empowerment of women and minority groups, and stronger collaboration and coordination between local governments, NGOs, and communities. Policies and well programs must be designed and created based on local needs and ensure the active involvement and participation of stakeholders at every stage from strategic planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Only by aligning poverty alleviation strategies and planning with the principles and facts of human rights, equity, and accountability can Kathmandu's urban slum communities and a group of marginalized people be meaningfully integrated and inclusive into Nepal's broader development agenda.

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Corruption in Nepal Red Cross: Addressing Lack of Integrity and Anti-Corruption Compliance

Basanta Rai¹, Pardeep Raj Kapadi²

¹ National Volunteer - DRR & CSO Accountability Coordinator
Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO Nepal)

Email: basantarai2000@gmail.com

²MPhil Scholar in Inclusive Education, Tribhuvan University, Faculty of Education

Email: pardeepbhatt999@gmail.com

National Volunteer –DRR & CSO Accountability Coordinator
Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO Nepal)

Abstract

Nepal is highly vulnerable to natural disasters due to its geographic structure. It has been receiving significant aid to respond to the disaster's relief, reconstruction, and rehabilitation. Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) is the primary international aid recipient. This study employs a qualitative case study methodology, focusing primarily on the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) and its corruption scandal that emerged after the 2015 Nepal earthquake. It is solely conducted by desk research for comprehensive secondary data such as literature, inquiry reports, media coverage, and official documents related to the NRCS. To understand financial anomalies and their origins, the study scans multiple sources. The objective of this study is to link NRCS wrongdoing to humanitarian aid misuse. After the 2015 earthquake, several NGOs, including the NRCS, engaged in such a chaotic competition for humanitarian support. Among them, the NRCS benefited most from these payments. Multiple government authorities found evidence of nearly RS 16 billion in foreign aid misappropriation by the NRCS. The study indicates that NRCS implemented 98 different projects costing Rs 5.044 billion without obtaining prior approval from the Social Welfare Council (SWC). According to the identified reports, NRCS spent 15 billion, 61 million, 18 million, seven thousand, three hundred, and 74 rupees. The latest recorded data shows total recoverable amounting to Rs 19.41 m have not been recorded in the NRCS accounts. Likewise, outstanding rent fees amounting to Rs 20.19m from various individuals and firms have not been collected, with some pending since the fiscal year 2020/21. The findings indicate that NRCS exhibits a deficiency in integrity and does not uphold anti-corruption compliance. Transparency and accountability are essential for the ethical and effective utilization of international aid. This research highlights NRCS's urgent need for compliance, maintenance, and re-establishing trust as a humanitarian recipient organization.

Key Words: Humanitarian, NRCS, Corruption, Governance, Earthquake

Introduction

Conflicts and natural disasters require humanitarian aid to save lives and reduce suffering. Despite these good intentions, aid

distribution often meets corruption. In settings where national capacities are stretched, aid is supplied, and rapid disbursement puts tremendous demand on organizations. The abrupt growth of program scope and urgency make aid

delivery prone to corruption (Harvey, Savage & Bailey, 2008). Corruption can occur at almost every stage of humanitarian aid delivery. It impacts humanitarian, development, and public sector programs. Aid in fragile regions with poor infrastructure, governance, and security worsens the issue (Harvey, Savage & Bailey, 2008). Transparency International (TI) defines corruption as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain," including fraud, kickbacks, nepotism, and favoritism. Crisis situations, where action is needed fast, highlight these concerns (Harvey, Savage & Bailey, 2008). A study on Northern Ugandan internally displaced persons (IDPs)' views of corruption shows that aid distribution may be favored and inefficient. Nepotism, when personal relationships influence aid access, may affect resource allocation (Transparency International, 2010). Some societies consider nepotism as survival mechanisms, not corruption. Favoritism towards family or close friends during a crisis is seen as social solidarity, not power abuse (Harvey, Savage & Bailey, 2008).

Cultural acceptance of such methods can distort aid delivery and harm humanitarian efforts. Most nations suffer from such corruption. However, corruption disproportionately impacts developing countries, hindering resource use and development. Despite anti-corruption initiatives, Nepalese people pay more for corruption every day. Local, national, and independent organizations and agencies are corrupt (Panta, 2016). The related governance level sees corruption. The 1963-founded Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) mobilizes national and international humanitarian help in Nepal. Since 1964, NRCS has evolved into the country's largest humanitarian organization, recognized by the ICRC and linked with the IFRC. NRCS coordinates emergency aid and development across Nepal through district chapters, subchapters, and cooperation committees in all 77 districts. This network is crucial for distributing humanitarian aid quickly and effectively after

earthquakes, floods, and landslides. Its main purpose is to mobilize national resources and volunteers and route IFRC and other worldwide humanitarian relief.

NRCS integrates foreign relief efforts with local initiatives with government and non-government organizations to maximize their impact. Through its 6,500 junior and Youth Red Cross Circles, the organization engages youth in crucial relief efforts and develops humanitarian leaders. Volunteers often deliver crucial services and supplies to disaster victims first. NRCS helps military and civilians throughout wartime in accordance with international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. It mobilizes international aid during disasters to ensure impartial relief for the needy. NRCS also promotes health, disease prevention, and public welfare projects in Nepal, collaborating with global health organizations to meet immediate and long-term health needs. The NRCS's ability to mobilize national and international aid makes it vital to Nepal's humanitarian efforts. NRCS ensures that humanitarian help reaches all parts of Nepal by building partnerships and efficiently managing relief activities (Nepal Red Cross Society, n.d.).

Nepal first received foreign aid in 1951 through a four-point program agreement with the United States, receiving Rs. 22,000. Initially, grants constituted around 70% of the foreign aid provided to Nepal during the 1960s and 1970s. In the fiscal year 2000/2001, loans represented 64.07% of total aid, while grants decreased to 35.93%. In the fiscal year 2009/2010, the percentage of grants increased to 77.4%, but loans decreased to 22.6% in Nepal. According to Pandey (2017), currently, loans from international institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and ADB are increasing, while grants from both bilateral and multilateral sources are markedly declining. The vast history of humanitarian assistance in Nepal has been shaped by the country's socioeconomic needs, political obstacles, and geographical vulnerabilities. Political instability, poverty,

natural catastrophes, and sporadic conflict have been the principal catalysts for the acceptance of humanitarian help in Nepal. Nepal has mostly received assistance to tackle its physical and environmental issues, including susceptibility to earthquakes, flooding, landslides, and climate change. It confronts significant challenges, including poverty, social inequality, and disparities among socioeconomic and ethnic groups. The concerns encompass political instability, violence, international humanitarian aid, post-conflict reconstruction, and pandemics. Nepal's susceptibility to natural disasters, socioeconomic challenges, and political history profoundly influences the delivery of humanitarian aid in the nation. Recently, humanitarian operations have evolved toward enhanced transparency and collaboration. Nonetheless, persistent concerns like climate change, poverty, and political instability continue to influence the trajectory of national assistance. To enhance effectiveness in humanitarian operations in Nepal, it is crucial to improve readiness, bolster local capacity, and optimize coordination systems. The National Integrity System and Anti-Corruption Compliance are essential elements in the prevention of financial crime. Governments globally, in both advanced and emerging nations, are diligently addressing systematic corruption. Numerous developing nations have applied public financial management reforms to enhance financial controls, transparency, accountability, and governance in public-sector organisations. These reforms are crucial for guaranteeing accurate financial reporting and supervision. Systematic corruption is considered a significant impediment to economic and political advancement, particularly in nations where it is deeply ingrained (Bhul, 2023). Corruption has been a salient topic on Nepal's political agenda for several decades, gaining increased prominence in recent years. Corruption is often acknowledged as a significant factor contributing to Nepal's underdevelopment. It emerges in diverse forms and affects all societal strata, with

the bureaucracy, political arena, and economic sector being the most impacted (Upadhaya, 2003).

Liu and Lin (2012) assert that government auditing is an essential instrument in contemporary governance for oversight and accountability assurance. Government audits are essential for mitigating the misuse of authority and resources by examining operational actions, particularly the allocation of public resources. Jeppesen (2018) further asserts that audits enhance accountability and mitigate corruption. Corruption in Nepal presents a substantial obstacle to the nation's stability and socioeconomic development. Corruption in Nepal manifests in various forms, including the misuse of public funds, bribery, and nepotism. Corrupt behaviours undermine public confidence in governmental institutions, result in inequitable resource allocation, restrict investment prospects, and obstruct equitable regional development. The Nepal National Governance Survey (2017-18) offers additional details about popular attitudes regarding corruption. Fifty-five percent of Nepalis feel the government has the capability to combat corruption, whereas thirty-eight percent contend that the government either lacks the will or ability to tackle concerns such as money laundering. Moreover, almost fifty percent of respondents believe that the judiciary and law enforcement participate in bribes.

Literature review: Global Standard of Red Cross Code

Humanitarian aid delivery is guided by several key international standards and best practices to ensure quality, accountability, and ethical management. One of the most significant frameworks is the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS), which outlines nine commitments designed to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian responses. These commitments ensure that aid is delivered in a way that is principled, transparent, and respectful of the communities affected by crises (Core Humanitarian Standard, 2014, p. 2). The CHS

also promotes greater accountability by enabling communities to hold humanitarian organisations to the standards they commit to. Among these commitments, Commitment 2 emphasises that people and communities must receive timely and effective support that meets their specific needs. This ensures that aid is responsive and relevant, addressing the immediate and long-term impacts of crises (Core Humanitarian Standard, 2014, p. 11). Additionally, Commitment 8 stresses the importance of competent and well-managed staff and volunteers, highlighting that humanitarian worker should adhere to the organisation's mandate, policies, and ethical standards (Core Humanitarian Standard, 2014, p. 17). Furthermore, Commitment 9 emphasizes transparency, efficient use of funds, and the prevention of corruption, ensuring the ethical and responsible management of resources. This commitment is critical in humanitarian settings where the misuse of resources can have dire consequences for vulnerable populations (Core Humanitarian Standard, 2014, p. 18). Together, these standards promote a humanitarian response that not only addresses immediate needs but also fosters long-term resilience and accountability. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) also plays a key role in coordinating large-scale humanitarian efforts. It can call for system-wide scale-ups to strengthen in-country capacities when the scale of a disaster requires a significant international response. This coordination ensures that aid is delivered effectively and avoids duplication of efforts (Core Humanitarian Standard, 2014, p. 3). In summary, international standards like the CHS and IASC principles ensure that humanitarian aid is provided in a manner that is timely, ethical, and accountable, with a focus on meeting the needs of affected communities while maintaining high standards of integrity and resource management.

Ethical Standards in Humanitarian Aid

The voluntary 'Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent

Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief' ensures independence, impartiality, and effectiveness in humanitarian response. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other NGOs created it to promote humanitarian ethics (The Code of Conduct, 1994, p. 2). The code's ten principles prioritize humanitarianism, non-discrimination, and political and religious neutrality. Aid is based on need, not race, religion, or nationality, and attempts to alleviate human suffering without promoting political or religious agendas (The Code of Conduct, 1994, p. 3).

Humanitarian groups must respect local customs, not use them for foreign policy, and guarantee that disaster aid builds local capacity (The Code of Conduct, 1994, p. 4). Accountability to aid recipients and funders is another key element of the Code. Organizations must be transparent and professional to reduce resource waste. To promote sustained recovery and avoid future vulnerabilities, aid programs must involve the community. Finally, the Code promotes disaster victims' dignity by encouraging public communication that shows their resilience rather than treating them as objects of pity (The Code of Conduct, 1994, p. 5).

Factors Contributing to Corruption

Corruption, as a global issue, undermines not only the economic development of nations but also their social and political fabric. According to Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) News in 2014, the President of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim, remarked that corruption poses a greater threat to humanity than terrorism, syphoning off an estimated US\$1 trillion from developing countries through bribery, money laundering, tax evasion, extortion, and other financial crimes. This assertion underscores the pervasive nature of corruption and its far-reaching consequences. People commonly understand corruption as the dishonest exploitation of power for personal gain, despite the lack of a universally agreed-upon definition. The World

Bank defines corruption as "the abuse of public office for private gain," while TI defines it as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain." These definitions underscore the dual nature of corruption, where the misuse of power serves personal interests instead of the public good.

McCusker (2006) asserts that practices like bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and cronyism often facilitate corruption. "Grand" and "petty" corruptions subdivide it, impacting both the private and public sectors. Grand corruption typically involves the misappropriation of public assets or large-scale financial crimes at the highest levels of government, while petty corruption refers to smaller forms of abuse, such as the provision of 'gifts' or favours in exchange for preferential treatment. We can also classify corruption into incidental, institutional, and systemic forms, along with political and bureaucratic types. This wide range of classifications reflects the complexity of the phenomenon, making it a challenge for governance and accountability frameworks to effectively address it. Several factors contribute to the prevalence of corruption, making it a multi-dimensional problem that requires a holistic approach to combat. Key elements identified by Rose-Ackerman (1997) include the level of public benefits available, the discretionary power of officials, the risks associated with corrupt deals, and the bargaining power between the corruptor and the corrupted. These dynamics illustrate how both systemic vulnerabilities and individual decisions can drive corrupt practices.

A variety of sociopolitical factors have contributed to Nepal's pro-corruption situation. Political instability affects long-term anti-corruption efforts, while insufficient transparency conceals wrongdoing from public scrutiny. Inadequate civil society organizations fail to advocate for integrity, whereas centralized power consolidates control without enough supervision. Cultural forces, such as materialism and the desire for quick growth, encourage unethical shortcuts, while low public sector pay

increase the temptation to bribe. Limited public awareness reduces the desire for accountability. Finally, the elite's control of political and economic areas institutionalizes corruption, making significant reform extremely difficult. These factors not only highlight the wide array of conditions that foster corruption but also point out the need for comprehensive strategies that address both governance weaknesses and societal attitudes towards power and wealth.

Impact of Corruption on Aid Effectiveness

The implications of corruption extend beyond national borders. In developing countries, corruption erodes public trust and deters foreign investment, contributing to poverty and inequality. Furthermore, because money laundering and other financial crimes transcend national borders, corrupt practices in one country often have global ripple effects. The global community, including organisations like the World Bank and Transparency International, has recognised the urgency of addressing corruption as a priority for sustainable development. Despite the challenges, there have been efforts to combat corruption through anti-corruption strategies, international conventions, and domestic reforms. However, entrenched political interests, a lack of political will, and the complexity of corruption as a deeply embedded societal issue often undermine these efforts. Corruption remains one of the most complex challenges facing nations today. It is a multi-faceted issue that thrives in environments where transparency, accountability, and governance are weak. The various factors contributing to corruption, from political instability to economic inequality, highlight the difficulty in finding a one-size-fits-all solution. However, continued research and reform efforts are essential in developing strategies to reduce corruption and its devastating impact on both developing and developed nations.

Corruption remains a pervasive issue across the globe, affecting both developed and developing countries. Over recent decades, heightened

attention to corruption has emerged due to high-profile cases in industrialised nations and a growing awareness of the widespread costs of corrupt practices. Corruption manifests in various forms, from petty bribery that obstructs routine bureaucratic procedures to large-scale corruption involving substantial sums for preferential access or treatment. These practices permeate political, economic, and administrative spheres, significantly hampering governance, public trust, and economic stability (Kharel, 2021). In many developing nations, corruption represents a key barrier to progress, undermining developmental initiatives and contributing to economic stagnation. This is especially true in countries like Nepal, where corruption has become deeply ingrained in political and social structures. Despite numerous strategies aimed at combating corruption, results have been limited, and the phenomenon persists as a major obstacle to positive governance and sustainable development. The failure of anti-corruption measures often stems from weak institutions, political patronage, and a lack of transparency within the public sector. Such environments normalize corruption, thereby eroding public trust, social values, and the overall effectiveness of government institutions (Kharel, 2021).

One of the most damaging consequences of corruption is its impact on economic development. Corruption decreases resource allocation efficiency by diverting funds away from productive uses, discouraging private investment, and reducing public sector efficiency. Development assistance and international aid are particularly vulnerable to corruption, as misappropriated funds can prevent aid from reaching its intended beneficiaries. This is especially problematic in developing countries where aid forms a significant part of national budgets. Corruption diminishes the impact of foreign aid by limiting its capacity to improve infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other critical sectors. In turn, this impedes long-term development, undermining efforts to combat

poverty and inequality.

Corruption and Aid Effectiveness in Nepal

The Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) follows its Statute of 1963 (amended in 2020) and key policies include the Health Policy and Strategy (2022), Risk Reduction Policy and Strategy (2019), and revised WASH Policy (2003). Kathmandu Administrative Office and Social Welfare Council supervise it. NRCS, the government, and the IFRC Disaster Law have improved disaster risk management (DRM) laws since 2008. Preparing for international disaster aid and incorporating DRR into national policy improves disaster governance and protects communities. Nepal's natural calamities, socioeconomic challenges, and political history influence humanitarian assistance. In recent years, humanitarian initiatives have become increasingly inclusive and coordinated. However, climate change, poverty, and political instability continue to influence national aid. We must enhance preparedness, local capacity, and cooperation to optimise humanitarian efforts in Nepal. The literature regarding corruption and aid effectiveness often highlights the importance of accountability and transparency; however, there is a lack of empirical data concerning the magnitude of corruption and its influence on help results. This research gap underscores the necessity for a more profound comprehension of corruption's impact on undermining aid initiatives and the implementation of robust anti-corruption legislation tailored to humanitarian and developmental sectors. These factors highlight the necessity of addressing structural concerns to mitigate corruption and improve the efficacy of help. Preventing corruption necessitates institutional strengthening, openness, and civic participation. Only such actions can mitigate the adverse effects of corruption on the efficacy of assistance and national development.

Corruption obstructs international assistance, particularly in developing countries like Nepal where institutional inadequacies and insufficient accountability facilitate the

proliferation of graft. This matter necessitates on going national and international initiatives to enhance governance, transparency, and combat corruption. To promote long-term growth and support the most vulnerable, we must combat corruption. In the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) published by TI, Nepal ranked 108th out of 180 countries, reflecting its on-going corruption issues. The 2023 CPI indicates varied levels of corruption among South Asian nations. Bhutan excels, attaining 26th place with a score of 68, signifying comparatively low corruption levels. India and the Maldives are jointly ranked 93rd, with scores of 39, indicating moderate corruption issues. Nepal and Sri Lanka occupy a mid-tier position; however, Pakistan and Bangladesh are ranked worse due to elevated levels of corruption. Afghanistan is ranked lowest at 162nd, with a score of 20, indicating significant corruption problems throughout the region (Table 1). Corruption continues to be a prominent concern in most South Asian nations.

Table 1. Situation of South Asian Countries in 2024

Countries	Rank	Score
Nepal	108/180	35
India	93/180	39
Sri Lanka	105/180	34
Bangladesh	149/180	24
Maldives	75/180	40
Pakistan	133/180	29
Bhutan	26/180	68
Afghanistan	162/180	20

Objectives and Methods

This study aims to carefully investigate the scope and features of financial malfeasance inside the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) following the 2015 earthquake, focusing on specific incidents of embezzlement and unlawful expenditures. It seeks to uncover internal control gaps and external regulatory failings that permitted corrupt activities, as well as to assess the broader implications of these integrity violations on aid

efficacy and public trust in Nepal's humanitarian sector.

This study adopts a descriptive research approach within the framework of a qualitative case study, supported by an extensive desk review of existing literature, investigation reports, and official documents. The primary objective is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the corruption issues within the NRCS and offer valuable insights to promote greater transparency and accountability in the Nepalese humanitarian aid sector. This study primarily used secondary data, which I gathered through a systematic review of literature from a variety of sources such as multiple media coverage, Google Scholar, SSRN, library resources, physical document analyses, and the official websites of NRCS and SWC. I also collected secondary data from various reputable institutions, including the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), Nepal, and other relevant organizations.

Discussions: Widespread Financial Misappropriation and Misuse

This case highlights the systematic misallocation of humanitarian resources away from their intended beneficiaries. According to the findings, cash set aside for disaster relief were regularly diverted for inappropriate administrative fees, expensive expenditures, and questionable land deals. The embezzlement of Rs 245 million and irregularities in a warehouse purchasing land of Rs 10.4 million are examples of elite capture in humanitarian situations. The alleged Rs 30 million kickback scheme and the undervalued sale of government-donated land expose institutional deficiencies that allowed private gain. These findings are consistent with extensive research on corruption in humanitarian assistance. According to Harvey, Savage, and Bailey (2008), emergency situations often weaken oversight systems, raising the possibility of financial misappropriation. Carr and Breau (2009) argue that humanitarian aid contexts are especially vulnerable to corruption due to quick

revenue mobilization and weak transparency systems. The NRCS example indicates how post-disaster urgency may have resulted in financial irregularities, supporting international research demonstrating that weak accountability procedures increase corruption risk.

Systemic Financial Mismanagement and Lack of Oversight

In addition to evident wrongdoing, the data suggests major systemic weaknesses in financial governance. The expenditure of Rs 15.95 billion without the necessary clearance from the Social Welfare Council (SWC) reveals institutional noncompliance with regulatory requirements. Other examples, such as anomalies in training programs and disproportionate construction expenses, testify to inefficient internal control systems and spending supervision. The rental of donor-funded infrastructure for private use represents a departure from humanitarian goals. These findings back up Graycar and Prenzler's (2013) conclusion that corruption thrives in environments where monitoring agencies lack enforcement capabilities. According to Jeppesen (2019), auditing procedures must be independent and enforced to prevent financial fraud. The absence of remedial consequences in this case reflects regulatory failure rather than isolated wrongdoing.

Governance Paralysis and Dual Leadership

The emergence of conflicting and competing central working committees in July 2023 resulted in significant institutional fragmentation for the organization. Both entities lacked official governmental recognition, causing administrative ambiguity and operational standstill. The absence of leadership severely impacted coordination processes and compromised organizational legitimacy. The breakdown in governance was most obvious during the Jajarkot earthquake response in November 2023, when international humanitarian organizations reportedly bypassed the national framework to aid. This is an example of legitimacy erosion, as defined by institutional

theory, in which formal authority structures lose functional capacity due to internal dispute and regulatory uncertainty (Rose-Ackerman, 1997). This story demonstrates how leadership conflicts can directly impair humanitarian efforts.

Political Interference and Division

The institutional issue was primarily explained by political influence within an entity that was intended to function impartially as a humanitarian organization. Leadership competitions were said to represent deeper party relationships, turning governance procedures into venues for political discussion. The formation of ad hoc committees under political pressure, as well as the allocation of leadership positions based on partisan links, go against the essential values of impartiality and independence specified in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Code of Conduct (2021). According to Panta (2016), the politicization of Nepal's public institutions tends to decentralize corruption rather than reduce it. The findings indicate that political capture harmed administrative coherence and compromised moral commitments to humanitarian impartiality.

Repeated Investigations with No Accountability

For many years, multiple government-appointed examining bodies investigated charges of financial misconduct within the institution. These investigations consistently revealed severe governance and financial concerns. Global reviews also asked for corrective actions. Nonetheless, the recommendations were not implemented, and no significant legal consequences occurred. This trend exemplifies what McCusker (2006) calls "symbolic accountability," in which investigative processes are established but do not result in enforcement consequences. Despite verified results, a lack of prosecution or institutional reform fosters public conceptions of impunity and undermines deterrence mechanisms.

Failure of the Legal and Regulatory Framework

The bigger institutional architecture exposes major regulatory problems. Despite being duly registered and subject to the SWC's jurisdiction, the monitoring measures are inadequate to ensure compliance. The dissolution of committees without any further legal action emphasizes the gap between investigation and enforcement. According to Kharel (2021), Nepal's anti-corruption frameworks typically lack political will and institutional cooperation. Judicial delays and unresolved leadership legitimacy issues show how procedural inefficiency fuels governance instability. Long-term mismanagement was made possible by a combination of ineffective oversight, partisanship, and enforcement inadequacies.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This analysis demonstrates that corruption inside the NRCS was not only infrequent, but also consistently ingrained, notably during post-2015 earthquake recovery. Financial misappropriation, fragmented governance, and political intervention all harmed humanitarian efficacy and public trust. The findings add to global concerns about corruption in humanitarian governance by demonstrating how emergency situations, insufficient monitoring procedures, and politicized leadership structures combine to create systemic accountability gaps. According to Transparency International's (2023) definition of corruption as the misuse of entrusted power for personal gain, the observed anomalies reflect both individual wrongdoing and systemic design defects. Addressing these difficulties demands systemic transformation rather than individual needs corrective actions. First, it should strengthen financial governance procedures by mandating independent audits, transparent procurement processes, and prompt public disclosure of significant expenditures. Second, regulatory monitoring bodies, such as the SWC, should be given institutional enforcement powers, including the ability to impose sanctions. Third,

governance reforms must shield humanitarian leaders' selection processes from partisan political interference, guaranteeing compliance with internationally accepted humanitarian standards. Transparency could also be enhanced by the establishment of an independent monitoring or compliance committee made up of donors, technical specialists, and members of civil society. Collaboration with international donor agencies on financial tracking measures would boost accountability. This study notes that it relies on secondary sources and public material, which may not have accurately reflected internal administrative processes. Future studies involving interviews with key stakeholders and primary institutional records would provide more in-depth analytical insights into organizational reform trajectories.

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Re/viewing Application of Psychology in Social Work: Comparative Analysis of Global, South Asian and Nepalese Contexts

Sushmita Shrestha¹, Nanda Kumari Kathayat²

¹Teacher at Samriddhi School, Kathmandu

Email: sushmitashrestha127@gmail.com

²Teacher at Laxmi Shikshya Sadan Secondary School

Teku, Kathmandu

Email: nandakathayat1149@gmail.com

Abstract

Despite being a complex process deeply shaped by cultural and socio-political contexts, integrating psychology in social work has become a fundamental concern for improving human well-being. This study reviewed empirical studies to examine the application of psychology in social work across global, South Asian, and Nepalese contexts. In doing so, the study used library-based research methods and reviewed peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and institutional reports. The literature was analyzed thematically to compare how psychological concepts are integrated into social work theories and practices. It seeks to identify common themes, contextual variations, and the specific challenges and opportunities present in Nepal. The study found that global literature demonstrates a well-established integration of psychology into social work, with increasing attention to humanitarian and cross-cultural applications. South Asian context reveals a critical movement towards decolonization and indigenization, emphasizing the centrality of family, spirituality, and community. Nepalese context, while emerging, shows promising developments in culturally adapting psychosocial interventions, yet grapples with challenges of professional identity, limited resources, and the dominance of Western models. In conclusion, application of psychology in Nepalese social work requires a thoughtful effort towards decolonized, culturally grounded approaches. This involves adapting interventions to local ethnopsychology, leveraging community-based resources, and addressing systemic barriers through policy integration and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Keywords: Psychology, social work, South Asia, Nepal, decolonization, cultural adaptation, psychosocial intervention

Introduction

Integrating psychology in social work is becoming fundamental concern for improving human well-being. Psychology offers scientific study of behavior and mental processes for examining how individuals think, feel, and act. Social work applies this understanding within broader social contexts that helps to address problems and promote change at individual, family, and community levels. Applied psychological perspectives are, thus,

essential for social workers to understand human development, behavior, and functioning within social environments, enabling them to move beyond surface-level issues to address underlying psychological needs (Misca & Unwin, 2017). However, application of psychology in social work varies significantly across cultural and geographical contexts. In global context, where both disciplines have long-established histories, the integration is often assumed and deeply embedded in practice frameworks, educational curricula, and professional standards. Kool and

Agrawal (2006) reveal that social psychology addresses universal human concerns, from cloning to gene banks to selective breeding, that have significant psychological and social implications worldwide, highlighting how psychological concepts remain crucial for grappling with modern, transnational ethical dilemmas.

In humanitarian settings globally, integration of psychological interventions has become increasingly recognized as essential. Psychological interventions in humanitarian crisis settings have been implemented through integration into programming outside formal healthcare delivery (Ndlovu et al., 2024). Besides, interventions targeting conflict-affected, displaced, and disaster-affected populations demonstrated moderate success in reducing psychological distress and enhancing disaster preparedness. However, social work and psychology operate within contexts marked by diverse cultural traditions, spiritual worldviews, family-centered social structures, and the legacies of colonialism in south Asian context. Das et al. (2023) argue that social work knowledge, as currently taught and practiced in South Asia, is a product of Western influence, which can be incongruent with the lived experiences and cultural contexts of South Asian communities. This recognition has spurred calls for decolonization, a conscious effort to move beyond imported frameworks toward practice models grounded in indigenous epistemologies.

Pulla, Das, and Nikku (2020) thus explore the potential for "blended" or indigenous models of social work that are better equipped to address the region's specific socioeconomic and psychological problems. Movement toward indigenization is evident across the subcontinent. A recent commentary on social casework in India documents efforts to create a uniquely Indian casework technique based on classical concepts such as *karma*, *ashramas*, *purusharthas*, *syadvada*, and *Ayurvedic* principles. This emergent paradigm emphasizes a decolonized, culturally embedded practice model rooted in Indian philosophical, spiritual, and ethical

traditions including *seva* (selfless service), *danam* (altruism), and *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (universal family). The authors argue for urgent need to transcend Western individualistic ideas and engage with the spiritual and community ethos inherent in Indian culture.

In Nepal, the situation is both similar and unique. Social work is a relatively young profession, with formal education programs established only in the 1990s. Yadav (2019) explicitly addresses this developmental stage by proposing a "decolonized and developmental" model of social work for Nepal, arguing that Western models with their psychological underpinnings often lack relevance in the Nepali context. This struggle for a distinct professional identity is echoed by Dangal, Khanal, and Pyakurel (2021) and Shrestha (2023), who note that social work in Nepal is still defining its scope and often borrows from disciplines like sociology and psychology without a clear, indigenous framework. Need for culturally appropriate psychological applications in Nepal is pressing. Nepal experienced decades of armed conflict (1996–2006), devastating natural disasters (notably the 2015 earthquakes), and ongoing rampant political instability. These events have created widespread psychological distress and trauma. Yet mental health resources remain severely limited. Sharma et al. (2024) estimate that there are only 250 psychiatrists, 37 psychologists, 75 psychiatric nurses, and approximately 1,300 para-professional counselors serving a population of 30 million, with most specialists concentrated in urban centers. In this context, social workers are often on the front lines of providing psychosocial support, yet they must do so with limited training and without the guidance of locally developed practice models.

Objectives and Methodology

Overall objectives of the study were to examine application of psychology in social work across Western, South Asian, and Nepalese contexts; to identify key themes, challenges, and innovations which can be applied in Nepalese context. In doing so, the study used library-based research design and systematic review method for

re/viewing application of psychology in social work across Global, South Asian, and Nepalese contexts. More so, academic databases were explored and studied, including PubMed, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar. Search terms included combinations of psychology, social work, psychosocial intervention, mental health, cultural adaptation, decolonization in Global, South Asian and Nepalese contexts. The articles were also hand-searched to identify additional relevant studies. From each study, data were analyzed thematically, with themes emerging both deductively from the research questions and inductively. Themes were compared across the three contextual levels to identify convergences, divergences, and unique insights relevant to Nepal. This review is limited by its reliance on English-language publications, which may exclude relevant literature in Nepali or other South Asian languages. Additionally, the scarceness of empirical research specifically on psychology-social work integration in Nepal means that some findings are drawn from related fields such as mental health, counseling, or community psychology.

Discussions of Findings

The findings reveals distinct patterns in how psychology is applied in social work across Global, South Asian, and Nepalese contexts. This section thus discusses following key themes emerging from each context and draws comparative insights:

Global Context: Established Integration and Humanitarian Applications

Foundational Integration. Misca and Unwin (2017) provide complete framework for applying psychological perspectives essential for social work. They argue that understanding human development, behavior, and functioning within social contexts enables social workers to address psychological needs rather than merely surface-level issues. This foundational perspective is boomed across Western social work education, where psychology courses are standard components of curricula. Kool and Agrawal (2006) broaden this perspective

by situating applied social psychology within global concerns. Their work addresses universal human issues—cloning, gene banks, selective breeding—that have significant psychological and social implications worldwide. This highlights how psychological concepts remain crucial for grappling with modern, transnational ethical dilemmas that social workers increasingly encounter.

Humanitarian and Cross-Cultural Practice.

Kagee (2018) identifies linkage between social work and community psychology in psychosocial humanitarian interventions. The author argues that for populations affected by conflict and disaster, both professions share concern for mental health and well-being. This involves applying psychological principles to design interventions addressing trauma, promoting resilience, and supporting community healing within specific cultural contexts. Ndlovu et al. (2024) again provide recent analysis of psychological intervention integration in humanitarian settings. Their review of eight studies found that interventions targeting conflict-affected, displaced, and disaster-affected populations demonstrated moderate success in reducing psychological distress and enhancing disaster preparedness. Key implementation outcomes investigated include acceptability, feasibility, and relevance—factors that become even more crucial during interventions across cultural boundaries. The review also emphasized integration processes involving task shifting—training non-specialists to deliver psychological interventions—with emphases on adaptation, partnership creation, and capacity development. However, Ndlovu et al. (2024) argue that there is little rigorous research documenting the processes and experiences of integrating psychological interventions with non-health interventions. They call for urgent further research into integrated multi-sectoral interventions, particularly research that understands how social, cultural, and environmental contexts affect what is acceptable and feasible to deliver.

Contextualization within Global Realities.

Global literature recognizes that effective application of psychology in social work is not a one-size-fits-all model. Palattiyil, et al. (2015) discuss challenges of redefining social work in global context, where service users often come from disenfranchised sectors of society. Understanding their psychological state—shaped by poverty, oppression, and marginalization—is paramount. Ornellas, et al. (2018) noted that the global definition of social work incorporates multiple ontologies, meaning that practice in any given setting may use a mixture of psychological and other theoretical approaches tailored to local realities. Ife (2001) also argues that repositioning social work as a human rights profession requires social workers to use skills rooted in psychological understanding of communication and empowerment to build community and validate human experience.

Historical Evolution. Historical evolution of social work as an international profession has always been intertwined with psychological concepts. Midgley (1997) notes that growth of international social work was boosted by the need to address psychological trauma experienced by soldiers and civilians during wartime. This historical link underscores long-standing recognition that social welfare problems are intrinsically linked to psychological well-being. Cox and Pawar (2006) provide comprehensive overview of international social work, framing it within a complex global context demanding that practitioners understand psychological impacts of global issues.

South Asian Context: Decolonization, Indigenization, and Cultural Embeddedness

South Asian literature presents a fundamentally different picture. It is characterized by critical examination of Western models and active efforts to develop culturally appropriate alternatives.

Imperative of Decolonization. Social work knowledge practicing in South Asia is often a product of Western influence, incongruent with lived experiences and cultural context (Das et al., 2023; Sharma, et al., 2024). This necessitates sensible effort to decolonize curriculum and

practice. Call for decolonization goes beyond simple adaptation of Western models. It requires fundamental re-examination of assumptions about human behavior, well-being, and helping relationships. Pulla et al. (2020) explore potential for "blended" or indigenous models of social work better equipped to address region's specific socioeconomic and psychological problems. This move towards indigenization is not merely academic exercise but practical requirement for effective intervention. The recent commentary on social casework in India builds directly on this foundation, examining efforts to create unique casework techniques based on classical Indian concepts (Sehgal, 2025).

Centrality of Family, Spirituality, and Culture. Psychological well-being and social work interventions cannot be understood without acknowledging profound influence of family and spirituality. Whipple et al. (2015) highlight that for Southeast Asian refugee populations, culturally sensitive practice must incorporate teachings of Confucius and other spiritual traditions, applying these culturally significant resources as forms of support. Pandya (2015) makes compelling case for including spirituality in social work curriculum, noting that in South Asian context, spirituality is key resource for counseling, aging research, and positive psychology. This contrasts sharply with Western models that often separate spirituality from professional practice or treat it as private matter rather than communal resource. The family, as primary social unit, is another critical factor. Islam (2026) reveals that social workers in South Asia must engage with complex family dynamics. Shaligram et al. (2022) also emphasize that understanding these cultural contexts is essential for clinicians to effectively engage South Asian youth and address their psychological distress. The high rates of psychological distress among youth underscore need for culturally competent mental health services

Challenges in Cross-Cultural and Migrant Practice. Application of psychological principles has been becoming complex when working with migrant or minority South Asian populations.

Kwok et al. (2018) examine multicultural social work practice with South Asian migrants in Hong Kong, finding that application of such practice is often met with dilemmas and obstacles. This offers concrete example of challenges in cross-cultural contexts. Inman et al. (2014), in their content analysis of psychological research on South Asian Americans, encourage use of diverse South Asian samples and culturally focused theoretical frameworks, reinforcing idea that psychology must be contextualized to be valid and useful. This research highlights that even within diaspora communities, Western psychological frameworks may not adequately capture experiences of South Asian populations.

Addressing Specific Socio-Psychological

Issues: South Asian social workers apply psychological understanding to wide range of specific issues. Sultana (2012), in comparison between West and Bangladesh, identifies that one core function of social work is "relief of psychological distress and material need"—a dual mandate particularly acute in developing countries. Social work in South Asia increasingly engages with systemic issues through psychological lens. Nikku and Rafique (2019) discuss role of "political social work" in South Asia, applying framework that considers psychological impact of domestic politics, institutional power, and disempowerment on individuals and communities. This signifies important expansion of psychological applications beyond individual clinical focus to address structural determinants of mental health (Shaligram et al., 2022).

Nepalese Context: Cultural Negotiation and Emergent Practice

Nepalese literature reveals a profession in formative stage, actively negotiating its identity and struggling to apply psychological principles in ways relevant and effective within country's unique socio-cultural landscape.

Challenge of Decolonization and Professional Identity. A central theme in Nepalese context is tension between Western-educated or influenced models and realities of Nepali society. Yadav

(2019) explicitly addresses this by proposing "decolonised and developmental" model of social work for Nepal, arguing Western models with their psychological underpinnings often lack relevance. His work, based on interviews with Nepali social workers, utilizes rigorous bottom-up, grounded theory method to develop new model applicable to wide range of countries and cultures. Yadav's analysis reveals that unlike Western contexts where "heavy psychological base" is often assumed, social work in Nepal faces challenge of adapting and indigenizing concepts to fit local ethnopsychology, cultural norms, and resource-limited settings. Dangal et al. (2021) and Shrestha (2023) argue that social work in Nepal is still defining its scope and often borrows from disciplines like sociology and psychology without clear, indigenous framework. The lack of solidified identity directly impacts how—and how effectively—psychological knowledge can be integrated and applied.

Cultural Adaptation of Psychosocial

Interventions: Counseling and trauma care, regarded as most significant determinants, focus on cultural adaptation of psychosocial interventions. Tol et al. (2005) provide seminal insights into cultural challenges of psychosocial counseling in Nepal due to Western counseling techniques that clash with local communication styles and help-seeking behaviors. Kohrt and Hruschka (2010) explore Nepali concepts of psychological trauma, demonstrating that local idioms of distress, ethnopsychology, and ethnophysiology offer less stigmatizing frameworks for understanding suffering than direct application of Western Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Their research highlights that effective psychological application requires practitioners to work with local belief systems rather than imposing external ones. Recent adaptation of Thinking Healthy Program (THP) for perinatal depression in Nepal provides exemplary model of cultural adaptation. Subba et al. (2026) applied mental health Cultural Adaptation and Contextualization for Implementation (mhCACI) framework. It is a 10-step participatory process involving

multidisciplinary team to adapt both content and implementation strategies. The key adaptations included; selecting female community health volunteers (FCHVS) as delivery agents—trusted community-based providers already embedded in Nepal's health system, reducing number of sessions from 16 to 8 to enhance feasibility, integrating additional 2.5-day foundational helping skills training, revising manuals with simplified language, cultural idioms, visual aids, and locally relevant examples and including referral pathways for gender-based violence, suicide, and severe mental illness. The adapted THP was well received by providers and recipients, demonstrating how global interventions can be contextually tailored for low-resource settings while preserving therapeutic integrity. This offers scalable model for community-based mental health care in Nepal.

Application in Specific Practice Areas. Vaidya (2017) argue that better outcomes are achieved when both psychological and social factors are addressed, requiring social workers to use current research to support students. In disaster contexts, Paudel (2017) addresses crucial but often neglected area of "emotional care," arguing that psychological injuries are as significant as physical ones and must be core component of social work practice, especially in disaster-prone Nepal. This aligns with global recognition of psychosocial needs in humanitarian settings. The Centre for Mental Health and Counselling-Nepal (CMC-Nepal) has been implementing four-year project titled "Psychosocial Counselling for Community Integration of Conflict Victims" since 2021. This intervention aims to restore psychosocial stability among conflict victims and enhance capacity of local and provincial governments to meet MHPSS needs. The project has expanded from pilot in two districts to 13 municipalities across three provinces, encompassing training health workers and psychosocial counselors, community awareness programs, advocacy efforts, and policy-level integration. Implementation of science research accompanying this project examines

acceptability, appropriateness, adoption, fidelity, feasibility, cost, penetration, and sustainability of community-based MHPSS interventions. This represents significant effort to generate local evidence. Furthermore, integration of psychology is inevitable for interdisciplinary coordination. Adhikari (2022) and Adhikari et al. (2022) envision future for Nepalese psychology involving meaningful collaboration with public health experts and social workers to apply psychology as integral part of national development and well-being of the people.

Fieldwork, Education, and Systemic Barriers. Practical application of psychology is hindered by challenges in social work education and fieldwork. Woli (2023) explores ethical issues arising in fieldwork practice, where students struggle to apply theoretical knowledge—including psychological theory—in complex real-world situations. Nikku (2010) identifies both opportunities and challenges in social work education, noting that professional landscape often requires social workers to be present alongside psychologists, but integration of their roles is not always seamless. Use of culturally applicable methods, such as rituals, is suggested as way to bridge gap and make psychosocial support more acceptable. The severe shortage of mental health professionals in Nepal—with most specialists concentrated in cities—means that social workers are often de facto mental health providers. Yet they receive limited training in psychological interventions and lack supervision and support systems available in Western contexts.

Comparative Analysis: Convergence, Divergence and Critical Reflection

Convergence. Despite differences in development and cultural frameworks; global, South Asian, and Nepalese contexts share fundamental convergences in how psychology is applied within social work. Owing to that importance of psychology for understanding and addressing human suffering, recognizing that effective social work intervention requires insight into individual and collective behavioral and emotional processes. There is universal

understanding that interventions must be contextually appropriate—whether adapting to Western humanitarian settings, South Asian family systems, or Nepali ethnopsychology—with cultural relevance emerging as a non-negotiable prerequisite for effectiveness. All these contexts also face persistent challenges in integrating psychological knowledge with social work for balancing clinical individual focus with structural, community-oriented approaches. Finally, each demonstrates increasing attention to humanitarian and disaster settings, reflecting global recognition that psychological injuries are as significant as physical ones and must be central to social work practice in conflict, displacement, and natural disaster situations.

Divergences. There are three levels of divergences in their primary concerns and developmental trajectories. First, global context assumes established integration of psychology into social work and focuses predominantly on refinement of existing models and their application in humanitarian settings. Second, South Asian context places decolonization and indigenization at the center of discourse, critically examining the relevance of Western frameworks and actively developing culturally embedded alternatives rooted in family systems, spirituality, and indigenous epistemologies. Third, Nepalese context reveals most acute tension between imported models and local realities, characterized by the least developed professional infrastructure alongside the most urgent need for culturally grounded approaches. This country is marked by the dual identity of a developing nation and a region scarred by prolonged conflict and recurring disasters. This unique combination of challenges requires mental health solutions that are tailored to its specific context, rather than simply adopting approaches from elsewhere.

Critical Reflection. This study highlights four fundamental issues in applying psychology to Nepalese social work. First, decolonization requires moving beyond theory to concrete actions—centering local knowledge, developing culturally grounded assessment tools, and

challenging Western epistemic privilege. Second, the individualistic assumptions of Western psychology clash with Nepal's collectivist culture, requiring interventions that address relational, family, and spiritual dimensions of distress. Third, social work's unclear professional identity—oscillating between clinical, developmental, and psychosocial roles—shapes how psychological knowledge is applied. Fourth, severe resource shortages necessitate task-shifting to community workers, but scalability and quality maintenance remain uncertain. Implementation research (CMC-Nepal) addressing these sustainability factors is essential for building evidence-based, culturally appropriate services.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

The study concludes that psychology provides essential frameworks for understanding human behavior and addressing suffering, with increasing attention to humanitarian applications and cross-cultural practices globally. In South Asia, the dominant theme is decolonization—moving beyond Western frameworks towards practice models grounded in indigenous epistemologies, family systems, and spiritual traditions. In Nepal, social work as a young profession struggles with identity while facing urgent needs from conflict, disaster, and widespread psychosocial distress. Promising developments like the Thinking Healthy Program adaptation demonstrate cultural adaptation potential, yet persistent challenges remain including limited resources, Western dominance in education, and insufficient indigenous research. However, significant research gaps exist in empirical studies on psychology-social work integration in Nepal. Most available literature focuses on mental health interventions rather than broader social work practice, with limited research examining how social workers actually use psychological knowledge in daily practice, navigate tensions between Western and local frameworks. Effective application of psychology in Nepalese social work thus requires moving beyond uncritical adoption of Western models toward decolonized, culturally

grounded approaches. It works with local understandings, leverages community resources, and addresses both individual suffering and its social determinants.

Finally, the study highlights three levels of implications of the study. First, for educational level, social work courses must be decolonized by using fewer Western textbooks and more Nepali scholarship. Psychology classes should teach students the ways to adapt their skills to local culture using Nepali case studies. Fieldwork supervision must be strengthened to help students manage the conflict between Western theories and local realities. For practice level, culturally adapted programs like the Thinking Healthy Program should be expanded using community participation. Task-shifting to community workers must continue with strong training and support systems. Psychological services need to be integrated into health, education, and social protection sectors to address the root causes of mental health issues. For policy level, mental health services included in Nepal's universal health coverage must be enforced with enough staff and accountability. Government mechanism must support researching in these sectors to find out which mental health interventions work best in Nepal. Clear roles must be established for social workers, psychologists, and health workers to work together effectively.

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नारी-सङ्घर्ष, अस्मिता र मातृत्वका केन्द्रमा 'तीनघुम्ती'

धान्यप्रसाद पौडेल

फु.न.पा-२, ताप्लेजुड

पाथीभरा क्याम्पस

Email: dhanyapdpaul@gmail.com

लेखसार

साहित्यकार विश्वेश्वर प्रसाद कोइरालाका उपन्यासमा मुख्य रूपमा मनोविश्लेषण र अस्तित्ववादको प्रयोग पाइन्छ । उनको आख्यानक्षेत्र प्रमुख भए पनि कविता, निबन्ध आदि क्षेत्र सशक्त कलम चलेको छ । उनी कार्लमार्क्सको द्वन्द्वात्मक भौतिकवाद, डार्विनको विकासवाद, सिगमण्ड फ्रायडको मनोविश्लेषणवाद जस्ता दार्शनिक विचारबाट प्रभावित भई नेपाली साहित्यमा स्थापित भएका छन् । कथा र उपन्यासका क्षेत्रमा फ्रायडको मनोविश्लेषणसँग सम्बद्ध विषयवस्तुका रूपमा रहेका छन् । तीन घुम्ती उपन्यासको औपन्यासिक तत्वको अध्ययन तथा विश्लेषण गर्नु र नारी संघर्ष, अस्मिता र मातृत्वको विश्लेषण गर्नु यस अध्ययनको मुख्य उद्देश्य रहेको छ । यहाँ विश्वेश्वर प्रसाद कोइरालाद्वारा लिखित तीन घुम्ती उपन्यासको अध्ययनका आधारमा प्राप्त तथ्याङ्कहरूलाई तार्किक विधिका माध्यमबाट अध्ययन गरिएको छ । आजका नारी दुर्बल, एक्ला र निरीह छैनन् बरु आफ्ना सन्तानको जिम्मा लिएर एकलै बसेर पनि अभिभावकत्व प्रदान गर्न सक्छन् भन्ने धारणा उपन्यासमा रहेको पाइन्छ । तत्कालीन पुरुषप्रधान समाजको सामाजिक मर्यादालाई भङ्ग गर्न इन्द्रमाया पात्रका माध्यमबाट कोइराला सफल भएका छन् । नेपाली नारीहरूले पनि स्वविवेकको प्रयोग गरेर आफ्ना दुर्बलतालाई तोड्दै अस्तित्ववादी जीवन दृष्टिको हुँकार गर्न सक्छन् र मातृत्व नै नारीहरूको अन्तिम इच्छा हो र यसको परिपूर्तिका लागि नारीहरूले जस्तोसुकै संघर्ष गर्न पनि सक्छन् भन्नेकुरा माथि प्रस्तुत अध्ययन केन्द्रित छ । उपन्यासका तीन घटना तथा मोडहरूमा इन्द्रमायाको मनोवैज्ञानिकताको इद, इगो र सुपरइगोको सफल प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ ।

मुख्य पद / पदावली : यौन मनोविज्ञान, स्वच्छन्दतावादी, अचेत वाद, जीव तत्ववाद, जीवनवृत्त, मातृत्व, नारी अस्मिता

विषयप्रवेश

विश्वेश्वर प्रसाद कोइराला (सन् १९७२) नेपाली साहित्यका बहुआयामिक व्यक्तित्व हुन् । कोइरालाले आधा दर्जन उपन्यास लेखेका छन् । उनको पहिलो प्रकाशित उपन्यास नै तीन घुम्ती (२०२५) रहेको छ भने क्रमशः सुम्निमा, नरेन्द्र दाइ, मोदि आइन, हिटलर र यहूदी तथा बाबु, आमा र छोरा रहेका छन् । यौन मनोविज्ञान, नारी संघर्ष, अस्मिता र मातृत्वलाई समावेश गर्दै मनोविश्लेषणलाई उठान गरी प्रयोग गर्ने कार्य कोइरालाबाट भएको पाइन्छ । कोइरालाको

साहित्यिक वातावरण श्रृजनामा हिन्दी साहित्यका स्वच्छन्दवादी कवि तथा समालोचक शान्ति प्रिय द्विवेदीको प्रमुख भूमिका रहेको छ । (शर्मा, पृ. १८) द्विवेदीले आफूलाई दिएको प्रेरणा र हौसलालाई पनि कथाकारले यसरी सम्भिएका छन् । “खूब राम्रो लेख्दा रहेछौ । ल्याउ-ल्याउ अरु पनि हेरौ । छपाउनु पर्छ । बिसु तिमीमा साहित्यिक रुचि छ भन्ने मलाई थाहा थियो । तिमी लेखक, कवि, कथाकार हुन सक्छौ ।” (शर्मा, पृ. १९) यसबाट द्विवेदीले हौसला मात्र दिएनन् कोइरालाको साहित्यिक भविष्यवाणी पनि गरेर

साहित्यिक आत्मविश्वास लेखकमा भरिदिएका छन् । कोइरालाले हिन्दी नाम 'वहाँ' दिएर प्रथम लघुकथा 'त्यहाँ' (१९८७) लेखेका छन् । यही नै उनको साहित्य साधनाको प्रथम रचना भनिएको छ ।

यसैगरी चौध वर्षको उमेरदेखि उनले हिन्दी भाषामा कथा लेखनको प्रारम्भ गरेका हुन् । वि.सं. १९९२ मा 'चन्द्रवदन' कथाबाट नेपाली कथा यात्रा प्रारम्भ गरेका थिए (ढकाल, पृ. ८२) । नेपाली भाषामा भने 'कथा कुसुम' (१९९५ सूर्य विक्रम ज्ञवाली) मा कथा प्रकाशन भएका छन् । 'चन्द्रवदन' पछिका कथाहरूमा चाहिँ पूरै फ्रायडवादी प्रवृत्तिको प्रयोग पाइन्छ । साथै कल्पनाशीलता, सामाजिक अनुभूति, कारुणिक संवेगात्मक प्रभाव, बाल तथा यौन मनोविश्लेषण आदि उनका साहित्यिक प्रवृत्ति हुन् ।

कोइरालाको 'तीन घुम्ती' (२०२५), 'नरेन्द्र दाइ' (२०२६), 'सुम्निमा' (२०२७), 'मोदि आइन्' (२०३६), 'हितलर र यहूदी' (२०४०), तथा 'बाबु, आमा र छोरा' (२०४५) गरी ६ वटा उपन्यास प्रकाशन भएका छन् । प्रकाशनका दृष्टिले 'तीन घुम्ती' नै उनको प्रथम उपन्यास रहेको छ । फ्रान्सेली उपन्यासकारहरू फ्रायड, एडलल, युड आदिबाट प्रभावित कोइरालाले मानव मनको दमित मनोभावनालाई प्रकट गर्नु नै उनको प्रमुख साहित्यिक विशेषता मानिएको छ । उनका उपन्यासमा नारी अस्मितासँग सम्बन्धित घटना र मुख्य पात्रसँग केन्द्रित रही चर्चा गर्ने प्रयास गरिएको छ ।

अध्ययनको उद्देश्य

विश्वेश्वर प्रसाद कोइरालाले लेखेका छ वटा उपन्यास मध्ये पहिलो उपन्यास तीन घुम्ती उपन्यासको औपन्यासिक तत्वको अध्ययन तथा विश्लेषण गर्नु र नारी संघर्ष, अस्मिता र मातृत्वको विश्लेषण गर्नु यस अध्ययनको मुख्य उद्देश्य रहेको छ ।

अध्ययन विधि

यस अध्ययनको मुख्य आधार सहायक स्रोत वा द्वितीय स्रोतको अध्ययन नै हो । विभिन्न लेखकहरूका लेख

रचनाहरूको अध्ययन, विश्वेश्वर प्रसाद कोइरालाद्वारा लिखित तीन घुम्ती उपन्यासको अध्ययनका आधारमा प्राप्त तथ्याङ्कहरूलाई तार्किक विधिका माध्यमबाट अध्ययन विश्लेषण गरी निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ । यस अध्ययनमा अन्तर्वाता, प्रश्नावली जस्ता विधिको प्रयोग गरी अध्ययन विश्लेषण गरिएको गरिएको छैन । सहायक स्रोतको उपयोग गरी निष्कर्ष खोज्ने प्रयत्न गरिएको छ ।

अध्ययनको औचित्य

विश्वेश्वर प्रसाद कोइरालाद्वारा लेखिएका उपन्यासहरूको अध्ययन तथा विश्लेषण विभिन्न ढंगले गरिएको पाइएता पनि मुलभूत रूपमा तीन घुम्ती उपन्यासका सम्बन्धमा नारी संघर्ष, अस्मिता र मातृत्वको विषयमा आफ्ना दृष्टिकोणहरू प्रस्तुत गर्न र नारी संघर्षको चर्चा गर्न आवश्यक देखिएकोले यो अध्ययन औचित्यपूर्ण हुनेछ भन्ने अपेक्षा गरिएको छ ।

उपन्यासको विश्लेषण

कथावस्तु

भिनो कथावस्तु लिएर नारीको जीवनमा घटेका र घट्न सक्ने तीन वटा महत्त्वपूर्ण मोडहरूलाई मुख्य रूपमा लिइएको छ । ४५ वर्ष पुगेपछि फर्किएर आफ्नो जिन्दगीलाई नियाल्न पुगेकी नारी पात्र इन्द्रमायाकै वरिपरि उनी आफैँले भोगेको अतीतलाई स्मृतिको अमर रेखाङ्कन गरिएको छ । इन्द्रमायाले लिएका निर्णयबाट अत्यन्त दुःखद र अत्यन्त सुखद क्षणको स्मरण गर्दै प्राप्ति तथा अप्राप्तिको विश्लेषण नै यस उपन्यासको कथावस्तु हो । उपन्यासभित्र नारी पात्र इन्द्रमायाले १६ वर्षको उमेरमा पितामाताको इच्छा विपरीत कलेजको सहपाठीलाई पति वरण गर्नु पहिलो घुम्ती हो । दोस्रो घुम्तीका रूपमा २५ वर्षको उमेरमा पति पीताम्बर राजनैतिक बन्दी भएका बखत पीताम्बरकै साथी रमेशसँग यौन सम्बन्ध राख्नु रहेको छ भने छोरी जन्मिएका दिन पीताम्बर जेलबाट छुट्नु तथा इन्द्रमाया र पीताम्बर बिच सम्बन्ध बिग्रन्छ । "तिमीले छोरी पन्छायौ भने हाम्रो सम्बन्ध फेरि सहज भएर

जान्छ ।” पीताम्बरले भनेपछि इन्द्रमायाको मातृत्व भावनाले विजय गर्छ र ऊ छोरी च्यापेर विदीर्ण हृदयले पीताम्बरको घर छोडेर हिँड्छे त्यो तेस्रो घुम्ती हो । यसरी नारी पात्र इन्द्रमायाले १६, २५ र २७ वर्षको उमेरमा गरेका तीन वटा निर्णय नै तीन घुम्ती उपन्यासका तीनवटा मोड वा घुम्तीहरु हुन् । उपन्यासमा केन्द्रीय नारी चरित्र इन्द्रमायाको जीवनवृत्त स्वयंकै तर्कपूर्ण विचारले निर्दिष्ट रहको छ त्यसैले यो उपन्यास नारी मनोविश्लेषणात्मक तथा अस्तित्ववादको पृष्ठभूमिमा रचित छ । (दाहाल, २०७४)

चरित्र चित्रण

नारी अस्मितालाई स्थापित गर्न मान्छेका आन्तरिक र दबिएका चाहनाहरु अवसर प्राप्त हुने बित्तिकै प्रफुटन हुन्छन् भनी नारी पात्र इन्द्रमायालाई प्रमुख भूमिकामा लिएका छन् भने पीताम्बर, रमेश, पसले, बुढीआमा र रमालाई क्रियाशील पात्रका रूपमा तय गरिएको छ साथै अन्य पात्रहरु पनि रहेका छन् । प्रमुख पात्रका रूपमा रहेकी इन्द्रमाया समाजप्रति विद्रोह गरी नारी अस्तित्वका लागि दर्वीलो उदाहरण बनेर प्रस्तुत भएकी छन् । इन्द्रमायाले १६ वर्षकी हुँदा लिएको पहिलो निर्णयमा (घुम्ती) प्रेमिका, दोस्रो निर्णयमा पत्नी र तेस्रो निर्णयमा मातृत्वको बोझ उठाउनु नारी मनोविश्लेषणात्मक तथा अस्तित्ववादको उदाहरण हो र उनी वात्सल्यमयी आमा बन्न पुगेकी छन् र छोरी लिएर आफ्नो यात्रा तय गरेकी छन् ।

परिवेश

तीन घुम्ती उपन्यासको परिवेश करिब ६, ७ घण्टा जति पनि छैन भने स्थानीय परिवेश पनि इन्द्रमाया बसेको कोठामा देखाइएको छ । ४५ वर्षको जीवनयात्रा तय गरेकी इन्द्रमायाको अतीत सिंहावलोकन गराएका छन् कथाकारले । ४५ वर्षको प्रौढा इन्द्रमाया आज तृतीय प्रहरमा आफ्नो एकान्त कोठामा यस्तै कुरा सोचेर लेटिरहेकी छ । ... जीवन यही हो । ... कोठा अँध्यारो भइसकेको छ । साँझ भ्रमकक छोपिसकेको थियो । इन्द्रमाया ओछ्यानबाट उठी । आँखामा रसाएर

थोपा बन्न थालेको आँसु पुछी उसले । हतारिएर भ्याल उधारी अनि बत्तीको स्वच थिची । (तीन घुम्ती, २०६४)

तीस वर्षको कालिक परिवेश र रक्तकाली देखि टुँडिखेलसम्मको सडकको गल्ली, पुतलीसडक, रामशाहपथ, कालीथान र नजिकको पीताम्बरको घर तथा बारी, पशुपति मन्दिर, सिंहदरवार, नारायणगढ, अस्पताल, विद्यालय आदि । बौद्धिक परिवेशमा सामाजिक, राजनैतिक चेतनाद्वारा परिचालित पात्र संयोजन गरिएको पाइन्छ । चरित्र विधानका दृष्टिले बौद्धिक परिवेश सबल रहेको छ ।

पीताम्बर र उसका साथीहरुका सम्पूर्ण छलफल एवं तदनुकूलका गतिविधिद्वारा समातिनु आदि सबै राजनैतिक परिवेश हुन् भने रमेशसँग स्थापित यौनाचार बाहेक इन्द्रमायाका सम्पूर्ण कृत्यहरु हाम्रो रुढिग्रस्त समाजका लागि सशक्त चुनौती हुन् । (ढकाल, २०६०)

भाषाशैली

प्रथम र तृतीय पुरुषको प्रयोग भएको यस उपन्यासको भाषाशैली कोइरालाका अन्य उपन्यासभन्दा सरल रहेको छ तापनि केही नेपाली इतर भाषा प्रयोगले गर्दा गतिरोध भएको पनि पाइन्छ ।

आकार

नारी समस्यामूलक उपन्यास ‘तीन घुम्ती’ साभा प्रकाशन : २०६४ मा ७४ पृष्ठ, तीन भागभित्र प्रथम भाग २१ पृष्ठमा, द्वितीय भाग २२ देखि ५० पृष्ठमा र तृतीय भाग ५१ देखि ७४ पृष्ठमा पूरा भएको छ । उपन्यासकी केन्द्रीय पात्र इन्द्रमायाले १६, २५ र २७ वर्षमा गरेका तीन वटा निर्णयहरु नै क्रमशः भाग एक, दुई र तीनमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

शीर्षक चयन

‘तीन घुम्ती’ उपन्यासकी केन्द्रीय चरित्र इन्द्रमायाको प्रेम घुम्ती, यौन घुम्ती र मातृ घुम्तीका रूपमा प्रेमिका, पत्नी र आमाका रूपमा नारी अस्तित्वको व्याख्या गरिएको छ । नारीको पूर्णता मातृत्वमा मात्र पूरा हुन्छ भन्ने यथार्थता उपन्यासमा देखाइएको छ । इन्द्रमायाले

लिएका तीन निर्णयहरू नै उसका जीवनका तीन घुम्ती हुन् । जसबाट उपन्यासकारले सिङ्गो उपन्यास सफल बनाएका छन् । सम्पूर्ण उपन्यास नै इन्द्रमायाको बाल, युवा र प्रौढ मनको विश्लेषण हो । त्यसैले १६वर्षमा पीताम्बरकी प्रेमिका, २५ वर्षमा रमेशकी पत्नी र २७ वर्षमा पति भन्दापनि सन्तानको महत्व र ममतालाई स्वीकारेर मातृ रूपमा समर्पित हुनु नै उनको अन्तिम निर्णय हो । यिनै तीन वटा निर्णय नै इन्द्रमायाका जीवनका तीन घुम्ती हुन् जसले उपन्यासकै तीनवटा घुम्तीलाई पूर्णता दिएको छ । त्यसैले यस उपन्यासको शीर्षक सार्थक छ ।

नारीमूलक उपन्यास

उपन्यासकार कोइरालाले 'तीन घुम्ती' उपन्यासमा नारी पात्र इन्द्रमायाका तीन स्वैच्छिक निर्णयलाई महत्त्वका साथ प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । यसमा अस्तित्ववादका साथै यौन मनोविज्ञान समेत समावेश छ । औपन्यासिक क्षेत्रमा नयाँ प्रयोगका रूपमा आएको यस उपन्यासमा फ्रायडको अचेतवाद, डार्विनको जीवतत्ववादलाई समेत प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । कोइरालाले एक यस्ती नारी पात्रको चयन गरे जो नियतिवश अवचेतनमनद्वारा प्रेरित भएर जैविक आकाङ्क्षाले प्रेरित भएपनि चेतन मनबाट आफू सही भएको दावी गर्न पुग्छे । यौन मनोविज्ञानका सन्दर्भमा नारी अस्तित्वको औचित्यप्रति सिद्धता प्राप्त गरेको ठहर गर्छे । नारी पात्रकै केन्द्रीयतामा रहेर गरिएको महत्त्वपूर्ण निर्णयको थालनी र अन्त्यबाट यो उपन्यास नारीमूलक उपन्यास हो भन्न सकिन्छ ।

नारी संघर्ष, अस्मिता र मातृत्व

यौन मनोविज्ञानमा आधारित नारी अस्तित्वलाई स्थापित गराउनुमा नै यो उपन्यास केन्द्रित रहेको छ । पीताम्बर थुनिनुभन्दा अघिल्लो रात चरम मातृत्वको लालसाले आग्रह गर्छे, इन्द्रमायाले मृदु स्वरमा भनी "सन्तान भनेको पति पत्नीको सम्मिलित सहयोगको सुन्दर रचना हो । खोइ यता त्यो सहयोग ?" पीताम्बरले कोल्टे फर्केर भन्यो, "आज म असाध्यै थाकेको छु ।" (कोइराला, २०६४) त्यसपछि पीताम्बर

जेल पर्छ । त्यसैले इन्द्रमाया पत्नीत्व भन्दा मातृत्व नै ग्रहण गर्ने निर्णयमा पुग्छे, नारी अस्तित्वको रक्षार्थ । "नारीको पूर्णतापरक गरिमामय स्वरूप मातृत्व हो ।" (ढकाल, २०६०) साहसी नारी पात्र इन्द्रमायाको निर्णय नेपाली उपन्यासमा नवीन प्रयोग हो भन्न सकिन्छ । जसमा नारी पात्र मार्फत यौन सम्बन्धी धारणा र नारी अस्तित्ववादको विचार सशक्त रूपमा उठाइएका छन् । "पीताम्बरको प्रेम सुख पाउन खोज्दा समाजलाई त्याग्नु परेको थियो उसले । रमेशबाट रमाइलो पाउन खोज्दा आस्थाको सन्तोष त्याग्नु परेको थियो ; र माताको सन्तोष पाउन खोज्दा पतिको सुख त्याग्नु पर्यो । जीवनको साटोनापो बराबर । इन्द्रमायाले सोची ।" (कोइराला, २०६७) कोइरालाले नारी संघर्षलाई अभूत रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । रमेशद्वारा गर्भवती भएकी इन्द्रमाया बच्चा जन्माउन अस्पताल गएकै अवस्थामा पीताम्बर जेलमुक्त हुन्छ र अस्पताल पुगेर इन्द्रमायालाई भेट्छ तर केही नबोली फर्कन्छ (भट्टराई, २०७७)

तत्कालीन राजनैतिक अवस्थाको झल्को दिने यस उपन्यासमा नेपाली नारीको स्थिति, पारिवारिक, सामाजिक तथा मनोवैज्ञानिक पक्षको सशक्त ढंगले उजागर भएको पाइन्छ । पीताम्बर थुनिएपछि मेरो व्यस्तताको अन्त रहेन । त्यसदिन बिहानभरी मिलिटरीले घरको तलासी लिइ रहे । पीताम्बरले भने लुगा फेर्नेसम्म फुर्सद पाए, आदि सन्दर्भले तत्कालीन राजनैतिक अवस्थाको चित्रण गर्दछ । मानव जीवन संघर्ष र त्यागबाट मात्र आफ्नो अस्तित्वको रक्षा गर्न सकिन्छ । जीवन भनेकै संघर्ष हो । जताततै विकराल पहाडले छेकेको हुन्छ र तिनीहरूलाई उचित ढंगले फोर्दै जानु नै वास्तविक जीवन जिउनु हो । आज हरेक व्यक्तिले अस्तित्व कायम राख्न पहाड फोर्नु छ जसरी इन्द्रमायाले तीन घुम्ती उपन्यासमा ४५ वर्षको उमेरमा विगतका मुख्य तीन घटनालाई संघर्षका रूपमा सम्झिन पुगेकी छ । १६ वर्षको उमेरमा पीताम्बरसँग भएको प्रेम २५ वर्षमा घटेको दोस्रो घटना र २७ वर्षको उमेरमा

मातृत्वका लागि रमेशसँग गरिएको सहवास जस्ता तीनवटै निर्णयहरू नारी संघर्ष, अस्मिता र मातृत्वका पक्षमा देखापरेका सशक्त विद्रोही चेत हुन् । पतिको गृहत्याग गरेर आफ्नो सन्तानसँग अन्यत्रै जीवन यापन गर्ने निर्णय गरेर तत्कालीन पुरुषप्रधान समाजको सामाजिक मर्यादालाई तोड्न इन्द्रमाया पात्रका माध्यमबाट कोइराला सफल भएका छन् । यी तीन घटना तथा मोडहरूमा इन्द्रमायाको मनोवैज्ञानिकताको इद, इगो र सुपरइगोको सफल प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ ।

निष्कर्ष

नारीलाई प्रेमिका, पत्नी र आमाका तीन रूप मध्ये मातृत्वका पक्षमा निर्णय गरेर एउटी शिक्षित नारी पात्रले स्वतन्त्रतापूर्वक आफ्नै निर्णयमा जीवनलाई गुजार्न सक्छे भन्ने मान्यता बोकेको उपन्यास हो तीन घुम्ती । यस उपन्यासमा नारी संघर्ष, अस्मिता र मातृत्वलाई उजागर गरिएको छ । आजका नारी दुर्बल, एकला र निरीह छैनन् बरु आफ्ना सन्तानको जिम्म लिएर एकलै बसेर पनि अभिभावकत्व प्रदान गर्न सक्छन् भन्ने धारणा रहेको पाइन्छ । इन्द्रमायाले स्वविवेक र ज्ञानकै आधारमा पति चयन गरेको पनि रमेशसँगको सहवासबाट छोरी जन्माएको र पछिल्लिर पीताम्बरको गृह नै त्याग गरेको उसँग वियोग भएको देखिन्छ । दरवारमा काम गर्ने कर्मचारीकी छोरी नेवार समुदायमा हुर्केकी कन्या जो घर परिवारको स्वीकृति वेगर राजनैतिक व्यक्तित्व भएको आफ्नै सहपाठी ब्राह्मण कुलको पीताम्बरसँग बैबाहिक सम्बन्धमा बाँधिनु पहिलो घुम्ति वा निर्णय थियो भने पीताम्बरको अनुपस्थितिमा पीताम्बरको साथी रमेशसँग शारीरिक यौन क्रियाकलापमा संलग्न रहनु र सन्तान जन्माउनु दोस्रो निर्णय थियो जुनबेला पीताम्बर जेलमा रहेको थियो । पीताम्बरलाई त्यागी छोरीकै पालनपोषणमा लाग्नु इन्द्रमायाको तेस्रो निर्णय हो ।

यस उपन्यासमा हाम्रो तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजको धरातललाई कलात्मक पाराले प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् घर परिवार तथा बाबु आमाले रोजेको व्यक्तिलाई

छोरी दिनुपर्ने मान्यताको विरुद्ध इन्द्रमायाले आफ्नै पीताम्बर रोजेकी छे, त्यो पनि अन्तरजातीय, त्यसैगरी सन्तानोत्पादनको लागि पति हुनुपर्ने मान्यता तोडिएको छ र यहाँ रमेशसँगको सहवासको परिणामस्वरूप इन्द्रमायाले सन्तान उत्पादन गरेकी छे र जतिसुकै दुःख कष्ट सहेर भएपनि लोग्नेकै घरमा चाकडी गरेर बस्नुपर्ने सामाजिक मान्यतालाई तोड्दै इन्द्रमायाले पीताम्बरको रुखो र निरीह व्यवहार त्याग गर्दै पतिको गृहत्याग गरेर आफ्नो सन्तानसँग अन्यत्रै जीवन यापन गर्ने निर्णय गरेर तत्कालीन पुरुषप्रधान समाजको सामाजिक मर्यादालाई तोड्न इन्द्रमाया पात्रका माध्यमबाट कोइराला सफल भएका छन् । यी तीन घटना तथा मोडहरूमा इन्द्रमायाको मनोवैज्ञानिकताको इद, इगो र सुपरइगोको सफल प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ भने नारी संघर्ष, अस्मिता र मातृत्वको घनिभूत प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ ।

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चुली उपन्यास सङ्घर्षमय जीवनका निमित्त प्रेरणा

घनश्याम भट्टराई

शिक्षण सहायक, पाथीभरा बहुमुखी क्याम्पस, ताप्लेजुड

Email: ghanashyanbhattarai014@gmail.com

लेखसार

उपन्यासकार सरुभक्त (२०१२) द्वारा लिखित 'चुली' उपन्यास (२०६०) सँग सम्बन्धित प्रस्तुत लेख उक्त उपन्यासमा प्रयुक्त पात्रहरूको जीवन सङ्घर्षको विश्लेषणमा केन्द्रित छ । यस अध्ययनको मुख्य उद्देश्य उपन्यासकार सरुभक्तद्वारा लिखित चुली उपन्यासमा अभिव्यक्त जीवन सङ्घर्षका विविध पक्षहरूको पहिचान तथा विश्लेषण गर्नुका साथै उपन्यासमा प्रयुक्त जीवन सङ्घर्षको पहिचान गर्ने र वर्णित जीवन सङ्घर्षसँग मानव सम्बन्धको खोजी गर्नु रहेको छ । जीवन सङ्घर्ष खासगरी मानवीय क्रियाकलाप, सुख-दुःख र बाँच्नका लागि गरिने यावत् कसरतसँग सम्बन्धित हुन्छ । जीवन अभिसाप नभई सङ्घर्षको चुली हो र सङ्घर्षहीन जीवन मृत्युजस्तै हुन्छ भन्ने मान्यतालाई यसमा जोड दिइएको छ । जीवनको महान् यात्रामा हिँड्नेहरूले थाक्न, गल्न र हार मान्न मिल्दैन भन्ने धारणा प्रस्तुत गर्दै जीवन सङ्घर्षलाई आधार शिबिरदेखि सुरु हुने निरन्तर यात्राका रूपमा व्याख्या गरिएको छ । जीवन जोखिम र चुनौती दुवै हो; चुली आरोहणजस्तै जीवन आरोहण पनि कष्टसाध्य हुन्छ । जीवन सङ्घर्षका विविध क्षेत्रहरूमध्ये साहसिक यात्रा पनि एक हो र चुली उपन्यासमा विश्वको सर्वोच्च शिखर सगरमाथा आरोहणमा संलग्न आरोहीहरूको अनुभवलाई मुख्य विषयवस्तु बनाइएको छ । यसमा हिमाली सभ्यता र संस्कृतिलाई मानिसको जीवन सङ्घर्षसँग जोडेर हेरिएको छ । सगरमाथाको चुचुरोमा पुग्न जति कठिन छ, जीवनलाई अन्त्यसम्म घिसार्न पनि त्यति नै कठिन हुन्छ भन्ने यथार्थलाई प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

प्रस्तुत लेख जीवन बाँच्नका निमित्त गरिने सङ्घर्षको अध्ययनमा सीमित छ । निगमनात्मक विधिको प्रयोग गरी तयार पारिएको यस लेखमा प्राथमिक तथा द्वितीयक दुवै स्रोतका सामग्रीहरूको उपयोग गरिएको छ । जीवन सङ्घर्षको सैद्धान्तिक मान्यतामा आधारित यस अध्ययनमा मानवीय अहमको चुली यात्रा र सगरमाथाको चुली चढाइलाई समानान्तर रूपमा हेरिएको छ । मानिस समाजमा बसे पनि हिमाल भने एकलै चढनुपर्छ भन्ने यथार्थलाई आत्मसात् गर्दै दुर्घटनाहरूसित लुकामारी खेल्नु नै जीवन सङ्घर्ष हो भन्ने सन्दर्भमा गरिएको विश्लेषणले चुली उपन्यास मानवीय जीवन सङ्घर्षका दृष्टिले उपयुक्त कृति रहेको निष्कर्ष प्रस्तुत गरेको छ ।

मुख्य पद / पदावली : जीवन सङ्घर्ष, पोम्पोन पाइला, अन्तर्यात्रा, सगरमाथा आरोहण, हिमाली सभ्यता, मानवीय अस्तित्व, साहसिक यात्रा, सङ्घर्षशील जीवन

विषयप्रवेश

'चुली' उपन्यास सरुभक्त (भक्तमान श्रेष्ठ) ले रचना गरेका हुन् । यस उपन्यासको प्रकाशन वि.सं. २०६० सालमा भएको हो । यस उपन्यासमा हिमाली संस्कृति, र मानवीय जीवन सङ्घर्षको यथार्थ चित्रण गरिएको छ । विश्वको सर्वोच्च शिखर सगरमाथाको आरोहणसँग

सम्बन्धित घटनालाई मुख्य विषय बनाइएको छ । यसै क्रममा हिमाल आरोहणका जोखिम र चुनौतिहरू, आरोहीको साहसिक अनुभवलाई सरुभक्त ले जीवन सङ्घर्षको प्रक्रियासँग जोडेर हेरेका छन् । सगरमाथा आरोहण गर्ने व्यक्तिहरूमध्ये थोरै- मात्र चुलीमा पुग्न सफल भएजस्तै संसारमा एक युगमा एक-दुई

जनाले मात्र मानवताको चुली टेक्न सके ईश्वरको कल्पना गरिरहन पर्दैन भन्ने तर्क उपन्यासमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । जीवन सङ्घर्ष खास- गरी हरेक प्राणी र वनस्पतिको अस्तित्व रक्षा गर्ने विषयसँग सम्बन्धित छ । जीवन सङ्घर्ष अध्ययन भन्नाले बाँच्नका निम्ति आफ्नो अस्तित्वको खोजी र पहिचानको संरक्षणमा लाग्नु भन्ने बुझिन्छ । जीवन सङ्घर्षमा व्यक्ति, समुदाय, जाति, संस्कृति, धर्म र नैतिकताजस्ता विविध पक्षहरू समावेश भएका हुन्छन् । सफलता एकैदिन हात लाग्दैन तर एक दिन अवश्य लाग्छ । सङ्घर्ष जति कठिन हुन्छ, सफलता उति नै सानदार हुन्छ । असल व्यक्तिको जन्म आमाको कोखबाट नभई सङ्घर्षको मैदानबाट हुन्छ । जहाँ सङ्घर्ष हुन्छ, त्यहाँ केही पाउने अठोट हुन्छ भन्ने म्याक्सिम गोर्कीको भनाइलाई जीवन सङ्घर्षको रूपमा यस उपन्यासमा प्रस्तुत भएको गरिएको छ । जीवन सङ्घर्षको अध्ययनभित्र मानव र मानवजन्य क्रियाकलाप पर्दछन् । यो जैविक सिद्धान्तमा आधारित हुन्छ । जैविक सिद्धान्तका आधारमा जीवन सङ्घर्षको अध्ययन गर्न सकिन्छ । यसले साहित्यिक कृतिमा मानवीय जीवन सङ्घर्षलाई कसरी समेटिएको छ भन्ने विषयमा अध्ययन गर्दछ । अतः प्रस्तुत अध्ययन उपन्यासकार सरुभक्तद्वारा लिखित चुली उपन्यासमा प्रयुक्त जीवन सङ्घर्षको खोजी गर्ने विषयमा केन्द्रित रहेको छ ।

समस्याको कथन

चुली उपन्यासमा हिमाल आरोहणको प्रसङ्गलाई मुख्य विषयवस्तु बनाइएको छ । सगरमाथा आधार शिविरदेखि सगरमाथाको चुचुरोसम्मको कठिन यात्रामा लागेका आरोहीका अनुभव र अनुभूतिलाई समेटेर तयार पारिएको यस उपन्यासमा हिमाल आरोहणको कठिन सङ्घर्षलाई यथार्थ प्रतिबिम्बन गरिएको छ । 'जीवन सङ्घर्ष' शीर्षकको यस लेखमा खास गरी चुली उपन्यासमा प्रयुक्त जीवन सङ्घर्षको १५ चुली पहिचान कसरी गर्न सकिन्छ भन्ने कुरालाई मुख्य समस्या बनाइएको छ । उक्त समस्यालाई निम्न- लिखित प्रश्नावलीबाट अझ स्पष्ट पारिएको छ :

क) चुली उपन्यासमा कस्तो हिमाली यात्राको वर्णन गरिएको छ ?

ख) चुली उपन्यासमा हिमाल आरोहणलाई कसरी जीवन सङ्घर्षका रूपमा पहिचान गर्न सकिन्छ?

अध्ययनको उद्देश्य

यस अध्ययनको मुख्य उद्देश्य उपन्यासकार सरुभक्तद्वारा लिखित चुली उपन्यासमा अभिव्यक्त जीवन सङ्घर्षका विविध पक्षहरूको पहिचान तथा विश्लेषण गर्नुका साथै चुली उपन्यासमा प्रयुक्त जीवन सङ्घर्षको पहिचान गर्ने र उपन्यासमा वर्णित जीवन सङ्घर्षसँग मानव सम्बन्धको खोजी गर्ने रहेको छ ।

अध्ययन विधि

अध्ययन विधि अन्तर्गत व्याख्या तथा विश्लेषण विधि प्रमुख छन् । प्रस्तुत लेखमा खासगरी पुस्तकालयीय अध्ययन विधिको प्रयोग गरी आवश्यक सामग्रीको सङ्कलन र विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । त्यसक्रममा प्राथमिक स्रोत सामग्रीका रूपमा सरुभक्तद्वारा लिखित चुली उपन्यास तथा द्वितीयक स्रोत सामग्रीका रूपमा जीवन सङ्घर्षसँग सम्बन्धित भएर गरिएका पूर्वकार्यहरूलाई उपयोग गरिएको छ । अध्ययनलाई सार्थक बनाउन कृतिको विश्लेषणका सन्दर्भमा जीवन सङ्घर्षको सैद्धान्तिक मान्यतामा आधारित भएर निगमनात्मक विधिको प्रयोग गरिएको छ ।

अध्ययनको सीमाङ्कन

उपन्यासकार सरुभक्तद्वारा लिखित चुली उपन्यासलाई साहित्य समालोचनामा प्रचलित सिद्धान्तहरूको प्रयोग गरी अध्ययन गरिएको छ । प्रस्तुत अध्ययन मानवीय जीवन सङ्घर्षसँग सम्बन्धित छ । अतः यस उपन्यासमा कृति विश्लेषणका विभिन्न आधारहरू मध्ये जीवन सङ्घर्षको दृष्टिकोणबाट मात्र चुली उपन्यासको अध्ययन विश्लेषण गर्नु नै यस लेखको सीमा हो।

पूर्वकार्यको समीक्षा

चुली (२०६०) उपन्यासका बारेमा कुनैकुनै पुस्तकमा छिटपुट चर्चा गरिएको छ, जसको सङ्क्षिप्त विवरण कालक्रमिक रूपमा यहाँ देखाइन्छ :

कृष्णचन्द्र सिंह प्रधानले चुली उपन्यासको "यात्रै किन्तु गर्नुपर्छ, "मात्रै हिँडिरहनुपर्छ, प्रेम्पोन पाइलाहरू" शीर्षकमा चुली मानवीय जीवनको कष्टसाध्य सङ्घर्षको

कथाको नमुना हो भनेका छन् ।

‘नेत्र एटमले’ सीमान्त आकाशः स्रष्टासितको अन्तर्यात्रा (२०६१) पुस्तकको “अहङ्कारको चुलीमा सृजनात्मक सन्तुलन” शीर्षकमा चुलीका विशिष्ट पद्धतिहरू उद्धृत गर्दै चुलीको महत्व दर्शाएका छन् ।

प्रज्ञादेवी निरौलाले २०६३ सालमा गरेको कृतिपरक अध्ययनमा औपन्यासिक तत्वका आधारमा उपन्यासलाई चिनाउने काम भएको छ।

उक्त विवरणबाहेक पठनपाठनका निमित्त तत्वगत समीक्षाबाहेक चुली उपन्यासमा अन्य मानवीय जीवन सङ्घर्षको पाटोलाई देखाउने कार्य भएको छैन । अतः यस लेखमा चुली उपन्यासमा प्रयुक्त जीवन सङ्घर्षको चर्चा गरिएको छ ।

‘चुली’ उपन्यासः विषय र विश्लेषण

‘चुली’ उपन्यास विश्वको सर्वोच्च शिखर सगरमाथा र त्यसको आरोहणको सन्दर्भलाई आधार बनाएर लेखिएको जीवन सङ्घर्ष प्रस्तुत भएको कृति मानिएको हो । यसमा हिमाल आरोहणका क्रममा गरिएका सङ्घर्ष र शाहसलाई प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । ऊ नाम गरेको तृतीय पुरुष पात्र यस उपन्यासको नायक हो । उसकै केन्द्रियतामा उपन्यासको कथानक अगाडि बढेको छ । यहाँ चुलीलाई सफलताको प्रतीकका रूपमा चित्रण गरिएको छ । सगरमाथा आरोहण गर्ने अन्य आरोहण दलका सदस्य, भरिया र गाइडहरू यस उपन्यासमा गौण पात्रका रूपमा भूमिकामा उपस्थित देखिन्छन् । मानवेत्तर पात्रका रूपमा ‘कुकुर’ र मिथकीय बिम्बका रूपमा ‘भूत’ यस उपन्यासमा आएका छन् । उपन्यासमा सगरमाथाको आधार शिविरदेखि चुली पुग्दा र चुलीबाट फर्कदाका ऊ पात्रका जीवन सङ्घर्ष सम्बन्धि अनुभव र अनुभूतिलाई समेटिएको छ । नेपाली साहित्यमा सगरमाथा आरोहण र हिमाललाई मुख्य विषय बनाई जीवन सङ्घर्ष प्रस्तुत गरिएको यो पहिलो मानिएको छ । “हामीकहाँ हिमाल धेरै छन् तर हिमाल र हिमाल आरोहण सम्बन्धी साहित्य त्यति छैनन्” भन्ने लेखकीय भूमिकाबाट पनि उपन्यासकारले सचेत रूपमा हिमालको शाहसिक यात्रा र जीवन सङ्घर्षको महत्त्वलाई

उजागर गर्नको लागि यो उपन्यास रचना गरेको कुरा प्रष्ट हुन्छ । ६० पृष्ठको लघु आयाम भएपनि हिमाल चढ्दाका अनुभव र अनुभूतिले सिङ्गो मानव जीवन सङ्घर्षलाई यस उपन्यासले छोएको हुँदा यहाँ चुली उपन्यासको विश्लेषण प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

चुली उपन्यासमा प्रयुक्त जीवन सङ्घर्ष र मानव सम्बन्ध

नेपालको हिमाली पर्यावरणीय क्षेत्र र हिमाल आरोहणको विषयलाई उठान गरिएको यस उपन्यासमा सगरमाथाको आधार शिविरदेखि चुलीसम्मको मार्गलाई मुख्य कार्यक्षेत्रका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । विश्वकै सर्वोच्च चुली सगरमाथा र त्यसको आसपासका क्षेत्रलाई उपन्यासको परिवेशका रूपमा चित्रण गरिएको छ । विशेष गरी यसमा हिमाल आरोहण गर्दाका उत्साह र चुनौतिहरूको वर्णन छ । चुली उपन्यासमा लेखकका विचारको भोक्ता र वर्णनकर्ता ‘ऊ’ पात्र हो । आरोही ऊ पात्र पहिलो सात दिन नाम्चेमा, दोस्रो सातदिन थ्याङ्बोचेमा र तेस्रो सातदिन फेरिचे र लोबुचेमा बिताई सगरमाथाको आधार शिविरमा पुग्छ । ऊसँग गाइड र सहआरोहीहरू छैनन् । पाँच हजार तीन सय मिटरको आधार शिविरमा विदेशी आरोहीहरूको घुइँचो छ । अर्कोदिन ऊ खुम्बु आइसफलसम्म पुग्छ र पुनः आधारशिविरमै फर्किन्छ । केही दिन मौसमको प्रतीक्षा र आरोहणको अभ्यासपछि आइसफल पार गरी ऊ चार घण्टामै छ हजार एक सय मिटर उचाइमा रहेको क्याम्प क्षेत्रमा पुग्छ । त्यहाँबाट पनि ऊ एकलै छ हजार चार सय मिटर उचाइमा रहेको क्याम्पतर्फ लाग्छ । अनुकूल र प्रतिकूल मौसमको कुनै प्रवाह नगरी आधारशिविरबाट १५ घण्टामा ऊ प्रेयसी र सुखी परिवारको परिकल्पना गर्दै सात हजार तीन सय मिटरको उचाइमा रहेको क्याम्प तीन पार गरी माइन्स २५ डिग्री सेल्सियस तापक्रममा रहेको क्याम्प चारमा पुग्छ । मृत्युको ढोका मानिने विभिन्न स्टेपसमेत पार गर्दै २२ घण्टामा माइन्स ४० डिग्री सेल्सियस तापक्रमको आठ हजार आठ सय अड्चालिस मिटर उचाइमा रहेको चुली टेक्न सफल हुन्छ । त्यहाँबाट उसले थुप्रै हिमाल अवलोकन गर्छ । चुलीबाट फर्कने क्रममा उसको हिमपहिरोमा

परी मृत्यु हुन्छ। आधार शिविरबाट क्याम्प १,२,३,४ हुँदै सगरमाथाको चुलीसम्म पुग्न सफल भएर पनि फर्किने क्रममा उसको मृत्युको वर्णन एक जीवन सङ्घर्ष बन्न पुगेको छ।

यस उपन्यासमा हिमाली क्षेत्रमा बसोबास गर्ने भोटे र सेर्पा जाति एवम् उनीहरूको साहसिक शैली जीवनलाई प्राथमिकताका साथ उठाएको छ। हिमाल आरोहीहरूले आफ्नो आरोहण सफल होस् भन्नका लागि प्राकृतिक देवत्वको रूपमा हिमाली देवतालाई पूजा गर्दै सङ्घर्षशील जीवनलाई चुलीसम्म पु-याउन कामना गरेका छन्। यहाँ आरोहण गर्ने प्रत्येक आरोहीहरूले आफ्नो जीवनलाई सङ्घर्षको चुलीमा पु-याउन शाहस बटुलेर अगाडि बढेका छन्। सगरमाथाको चुलीमा पुगेर फर्किने अठोट गरी हिमाल आरोहणको यात्रामा एकलै निस्केको ऊ पात्र मौसम प्रतिकूल हुँदा समेत आफ्नो उचाइको यात्रामा विराम लगाउने पक्षमा देखिँदैन। उसको शाहसिक यात्राको अठोट र आत्मविश्वास देखेर उसका भरिया साथीहरू भन्छन् : तपाईंको यो ठूलो काम सफल होस् चोमोलुङमाको देवीले राम्रो गर्छ-गर्छ। (चुली, पृष्ठ १३) उसले आफ्नो जीवन सङ्घर्षको यात्रामा देखा परेका हरेक चुनौतिलाई एउटा महत्वपूर्ण आकर्षण र अवसरको रूपमा ग्रहण गरेको छ। यसै सन्दर्भमा ऊ पात्रले प्रस्तुत गरेको जुन तर्कमा अधारित सन्दर्भ छ त्यसमा जीवनसंघर्षका गाथा जोडिएका ५- “बुद्ध एक हिमाल हो, कृष्ण एक हिमाल हो, यशु एक हिमाल हो, मोहम्मद एक हिमाल हो। सुकरात, कन्फुसियस, लाओत्सु हिमाल हुन्, मार्क्स, डार्विन, फॉयड हिमाल हुन् हिमाल अरुपनि छन् जीवनमा कोही हिमाल चढेर आफैँ हिमाल बन्छन्। कोही दलदलमा फसेर आफैँ दलदल बन्छन्।” (चुली, पृ२३)

यस भनाइमा बुद्ध, कृष्ण, यशु, मार्क्स, डार्विन जस्ता व्यक्तिहरूले जीवनलाई सङ्घर्षको रूपमा लिएर जीवनको शाहसिक यात्रालाई पूर्ण गरेका कारण उनीहरू हिमाल जस्तै उच्च र सम्मानित छन्। अतः यहाँ जीवन सङ्घर्षको दार्शनिक पक्षको उद्घाटन गरी मानवलाई सफलताको चुली चुम्न कठिन सङ्घर्ष गर्नुपर्ने आग्रह गरिएको छ।

मानिसले जीवनका महान् लक्ष्य भेट्न निरन्तर सङ्घर्ष गर्नुपर्छ। मान्छेलाई सङ्घर्षले नै महान् बनाउँछ। अतः अप्ठ्याराहरूसँग जुध्न सक्नु नै वास्तविक जीवन हो, यो पवित्र र सिर्जनशील हुनु पर्दछ। जीवनलाई सही ढङ्गले बुझ्ने तथा जीवनका हिमाल सफलतापूर्वक आरोहण गर्न सक्नेहरू महान् बन्छन् भने नसक्नेहरू त्यत्तिकै विलाएर जान्छन् भन्ने विचार यसरी व्यक्त भएको छ : “कठिन सङ्घर्ष गरी जीवनमा सफलताक जसरी जोखिमहरूको पाउन व्यक्तिमा एक किसिमको अहङ्कार अस्तित्वका रूपमा हुनै पर्दछ। त्यसको अभावमा मानिसले नै त कठिन सङ्घर्ष गर्न सक्छ, न त आत्मविश्वासका साथ ठोस उपलब्धी हासिल गर्न सक्दछ।” यसरी जीवनमा सकारात्मक सोच र अस्तित्वबोध सदा जीवित रहनु पर्छ भन्ने विचार प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ।

जसरी माननीय जोखिमहरूको यात्रा केन्द्र सगरमाथा हिमाल हो; त्यसरी नै जीवनमा पनि त्यस्ता समस्यारूपी सगरमाथा धेरै हुन्छन्। यस्तो चुनौतिपूर्ण कार्य धर्तीको इतिहासमा थोरैले मात्र गर्न सक्छन्। जीवनमा सफलताका निमित्त प्रेमको कति ठूलो भूमिका हुन्छ भन्ने कुरालाई हिमाल आरोहीका माध्यमबाट अभिव्यक्त गरी सङ्घर्षलाई प्रेमको खाँचो पर्ने कुरा यसरी अभिव्यक्त गरिएको छ, “प्रेयसी ! मेरी प्रेयसी ! म चुली टेक्दै छु, म सगरमाथा आएँ, मैले सगरमाथा देखें, मैले सगरमाथा टेकेँ, यो तिमीलाई मेरो प्रेमको उपहार हो।” (पृ६१)

“प्रियसी!, म तिमीलाई सगरमाथा जति माया गर्छु, सगरमाथाको चुली जति नै माया गर्छु। अब यो पृथ्वीको इतिहासमा हाम्रो पनि प्रेमको इतिहास हुनुपर्छ, हाम्रो सभ्यता सबै सबै रचनुपर्छ।” (पृ६१) यसरी मानव जीवनको प्रेममय चुली र हिमालको चुली हाराहारीमा छन्, तीमाथि विजय प्राप्त गर्न कठिन सङ्घर्ष, अस्तित्ववादी चेतना, प्रेमभाव, दृढ, इच्छाशक्ति आवश्यक हुन्छन्। यिनै कुराहरूलाई आधार बनाई मानिसले अमरत्व प्राप्त गर्न सक्छ भन्ने भाव उपन्यासद्वारा अभिव्यक्त गराइएको छ।

हिमाल सम्बन्धी साहित्य रचना गर्ने अभिप्रायका साथ जन्मिएको ‘चुली’ मानव जीवन र मानव इतिहासका

महान् सङ्घर्षको गाथा बनेर उभिएको छ । मूलतः नेपाली भाषामा नेपालको पर्यावरणीय क्षेत्र र पर्वतीय शृङ्खलाहरूलाई विषयवस्तु बनाई साहित्य रचना नभईरहेको स्थितिमा सरुभक्तको चुली उपन्यासले यस सम्बन्धी अभाव पूरा गर्न पनि सङ्घर्ष गरेको छ । सङ्घर्ष सङ्घर्षशील जीवनका गाथाहरू, हिमालभित्रका रहस्यहरू, प्रेमको अमरता जीवनको सुन्दरता, प्रकृतिप्रतिको भरोसा, जीवन सङ्घर्ष र विश्वासलाई सुत्रात्मक ढङ्गले उपन्यासमा व्यक्त भएको गरिएको छ । हिमाल आरोहणका क्रममा विभिन्न किसिमका प्राकृतिक विपत्तिहरू देखा पर्न सक्ने सम्भावना र चुनौतिलाई यस उपन्यासमा जीवन सङ्घर्षका रूपमा चित्रण गरिएको छ

“हिमाल चढनुको अनुभव मान्छे पिच्छे फरक- फरक हुन्छन् । कसैका लागि हिमाल चढनु पेशा बन्छ भने कसैका लागि उद्देश्य” (चुली पृष्ठ ६) हिमाल आरोहणको लक्ष्य सबैको एउटै नभएजस्तै जीवन सङ्घर्षमा सङ्घर्ष गर्ने तरिका पनि भिन्नाभिन्नै हुन्छ । यहाँ हिमाल चढनु कसैका लागि बाध्यता बनेको छ भने कसैका निम्ति रहर बनेको छ । जीवनमा कोही कसैका लागि जन्मदैन र कोही कसैका लागि मर्ने पनि होइन । जीवनमा आफ्नो जीवनका लागि आफैँले सङ्घर्ष गर्दै जाने हो भन्ने विचार यस उपन्यासमा प्रस्तुत भएको छ ।

“यो मेरो मात्र होइन तिम्रो पनि विजय हो । त्यसैले म तिमीलाई हार्दिक बधाइ दिन्छु ।” (चुली पृ. ४४) यहाँ आफ्नो हिमाल आरोहणको सफलता सारा मानवको सफलता हो भन्ने विचार आएको छ । जीवन सङ्घर्षमा सधैं सफलता मात्र हात लाग्छ भन्ने हुँदैन । सङ्घर्ष गर्दै जानु नै जीवन हो । जसले सफलता प्राप्त गरे पनि हामी सबै मानवको सफलता बन्छ । यसबाट जीवन सङ्घर्ष र मानव जीवन सङ्घर्षसँग मानवको सम्बन्धको कुरा स्पष्ट भएको छ । यसरी चुली उपन्यासमा हिमाल आरोहणलाई जीवन सङ्घर्षका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । मानवको सङ्घर्ष जन्मनुभन्दा पहिले सुरु भई सास फेर्नुदेखि लिएर आर्थिक, सामाजिक सांस्कृतिक, आदि सङ्घर्षसँगै मृत्युसम्म रहन्छ । आरोही दलका भरिया, गाइड एवम् ऊ पात्रको जीवन सङ्घर्ष र व्यवहारबाट

मानवीय भावना र सम्बन्धहरूको विविध प्रसंग यस उपन्यासमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । प्रस्तुत उपन्यास जीवन सङ्घर्ष र मानव सम्बन्धका दृष्टिले उच्च स्थान लिन सफल छ ।

जीवन सङ्घर्षको प्रतीकात्मक अर्को नाम नै चुली हो । चुलीमा पुग्न आधार शिविरबाट यात्रा सुरु गर्नुपर्छ । यात्रामा थुप्रै जोखिमहरू हुन्छन्, ती जोखिमहरूसँग सिंगौरी खेल्दै आधार शिविरबाट यात्रा सुरु गरे जस्तै मानव जीवनको यात्रा जीवनदेखि हुन्छ । मानिस जन्मेदेखि मृत्युसम्म कठिन यात्रामा हुन्छ, हिमाल आरोहण जस्तै । चुली पुग्ने अठोटका साथ जसले यात्रा सुरु गर्छ उसले सफलता प्राप्त गर्छ । सफलता प्राप्त नभए सफलताको शिखर अवश्य प्राप्त गर्छ । जीवन हिमालको आरोहण जस्तै छ मानव जीवनमा पाइला पाइलामा जोखिमहरू छन् । जोखिमहरूको अर्को नाम नै सङ्घर्ष हो । सङ्घर्षमा जीवनले अनेक संघर्ष व्यहोर्नुपर्छ । सगरमाथा आधार शिविरदेखि सुरुभएको ‘म’ पात्रको यात्रा कठिन र चुनौतीपूर्ण बनेको छ नै, तर उसले हार पनि मानेको छैन । जीवनका यात्राहरू कठिन छन् तर हार मान्नु हुँदैन भन्ने सन्देश म पात्रले दिएको छ । सगरमाथाको चुलीमा पुगेर फर्कदा म पात्रले प्रतिकूल अवस्थाका कारण ज्यान गुमाएको छ तर उसले हार मानेन । जीवनमा कठिनाइ आउँछन्, त्यससँग सामना गर्नुपर्छ । जसले कठिनाइको सामना गर्दैन, त्यसबाट कुनै आशा र अपेक्षा गर्न सकिँदैन । हिमाल चढ्न कठिन छ सङ्घर्ष गर्नुपर्छ । शिखरमा पुगे सफलता प्राप्त हुन्छ पुग्न नसके प्रयास जारी राख्नु पर्छ । जीवनमा अभाव, कठिनाइ आइरहन्छन् तिनको सामना गर्नु नै सङ्घर्षशील मानव जीवन हो भन्ने प्रस्तुत भएको यस उपन्यासमा सङ्घर्षको पर्याय नै मानव जीवन हो भन्ने पुष्टि भएको छ ।

निष्कर्ष

चुली उपन्यासका रचनाकार सरुभक्त श्रेष्ठ हुन् । यसमा विश्वको सर्वोच्च शिखर सगरमाथा र सगरमाथा आरोहीको अनुभवलाई उपन्यासको मुख्य विषय बनाइएको छ । यसमा हिमाली सौन्दर्यका रूपमा हिमालको निश्छल र अटल स्वरूप प्रस्तुत गरिएको

छ । हिमालमा जीवनहरु हुन्छन् । हिमालमा भएका आकर्षण र खतराहरु मानव जीवनमा पनि रहेका हुन्छन् । हिमालका जोखिमहरु जस्तै मानव जीवनमा पनि जोखिमहरु रहेका हुन्छन् । यस उपन्यासले ऊ पात्रलाई एकै हिमाल चढाएर जीवन एकै गर्नुपर्ने सङ्घर्ष हो भन्ने कुरा देखाएका छन् । सफलताको चुलीमा पुग्न निकै सङ्घर्ष गर्नुपर्छ भन्ने कुरा पनि ऊ पात्रले हिमाल आरोहण गर्दा आइपरेका सङ्कट र सङ्घर्षले पुष्टि गरेका छन् । हिमाल आरोहण गर्दा ऊ पात्रले पार गरेका हरेक स्टेपहरु जीवनका विभिन्न मोडहरु हुन् र ती हरेक मोड पार गर्न उत्तिकै सङ्घर्ष गर्नु पर्छ । अदृश्य रूपमा आएको प्रेयसी ऊ पात्रलाई चुलीसम्म पु-याउने हौसला र प्रेरणा हो । जीवन सङ्घर्षमा उत्रिए पछि सानातिना बाधा व्यवधानसँग नडराई अगाडि बढ्नु पर्छ । सभ्य मानिस लक्ष्यका लागि लम्कन्छ तर लक्ष्यमा पुग्न सक्छ नै भन्ने केही छैन । यो कुरालाई ऊ पात्र सगरमाथाको आरोहण गरेर फर्कदा भएको दुर्घटनापछिको मृत्युले पुष्टि गरेको छ । यसैबाट जीवन सम्पूर्णता होइन अपूर्णता हो भन्ने जानकारी पनि मिल्छ । पृथ्वीको इतिहासमा एक युगमा एक दुई जनाले मात्र मानवताको चुली टेके भने मुक्तिका लागि मान्छेले ईश्वरको कल्पना गरिरहनु पर्दैन । जीवनमा सङ्घर्ष नै ईश्वर हो, चुली भनेको सगरमाथाको चुलीमात्र नभएर जीवन सङ्घर्षको चुली पनि हो भन्ने पुष्टि हुन्छ ।

यस उपन्यासमा प्राकृतिक सुन्दरताले स्थान पाउनुका साथै यसमा सगरमाथाका विकराल जोखिमहरु, दुर्घटनाहरु, मृत्यु आदिको जानकारी पाइन्छ । जीवन सङ्घर्षमय छ । सानातिना असफलताबाट विचलित नभई सङ्घर्ष गरिरहेमा अवश्य पनि एकदिन लक्ष्यमा पुग्न सकिन्छ भन्ने सन्देश यस उपन्यासले दिएको छ । आरोहण वृत्तान्तजस्तो लाग्ने यो उपन्यासमा सरल भाषाशैलीको प्रयोग छ भने कहिँ कतै बौद्धिक दार्शनिक शक्तिहरुको पनि प्रयोग गरिएको छ । यो उपन्यास जीवन र हिमालका कठिन चुलीहरु आरोहण गर्न चाहनेले अनेकौँ किसिमका कठिनाइहरु र सङ्घर्ष भोग्नुपर्छ, त्यसैले सङ्घर्ष नै जीवन हो भन्ने देखाइएको हुँदा जीवन सङ्घर्षका दृष्टिले उपन्यास उपयुक्त बनेको

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विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम: कार्यान्वयनको अवस्था

शान्तिराम नेपाल

उप-प्राध्यापक, पाथीभरा बहुमुखी क्याम्पस, ताप्लेजुङ

Email: snepal402@gmail.com

लेखसार

सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा प्रारम्भिक बालविकासदेखि कक्षा पाँचसम्म अध्ययनरत विद्यार्थीहरूका लागि नेपाल सरकारले सञ्चालन गरेको दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयनको अवस्था अध्ययन गरी यो लेख तयार पारिएको छ । यसको मुख्य उद्देश्य खाजा कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयनको वर्तमान अवस्था पहिचान गरी देखिएका समस्या समाधानको उपाय खोजी गर्नु रहेको छ । यो अध्ययन मुख्य रूपमा ताप्लेजुङ जिल्लाको फुडालिङ नगरपालिको वडा नं. २ मा सञ्चालित श्री विरेन्द्र माध्यमिक विद्यालयलाई नमुनाका रूपमा छनोट गरी अध्ययन गरिएको छ । अध्ययन सम्बन्धित क्षेत्रमा स्वयं अनुसन्धानकर्ताले स्थलगत अध्ययन अवलोकन गरी सरोकारवालासँग अन्तर्वार्ता, छलफल र प्रश्नावली भराई तथ्याङ्क लिई विश्लेषण गरिएकाले यो अध्ययन गुणात्मक ढाँचामा आधारित भई तयार पारिएको छ । विद्यालय बाहिर रहेका बालबालिकाहरूलाई विद्यालयमा ल्याई टिकाउ दर बढाउन समेत दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम ल्याएको हो । अध्ययनको सिलसिलामा सम्बन्धित विद्यालयमा प्रतिव्यक्ति रू. २० का दरले खाजा कार्यक्रमका लागि विनियोजित रकम सम्बन्धित विद्यार्थीलाई नै प्रदान गर्ने गरेको रहेछ । विद्यालयमा चमेनागृह सञ्चालन गर्न कोही इच्छुक नरहेको र विद्यालयले पनि दिवा खाजा विद्यालयमा व्यवस्थापन गर्न नसकेका कारण विद्यार्थीले घरबाट ल्याएर खाजा खाने गरेको पाइयो । दिवा खाजामा स्थानीय उत्पादनको अधिकतम प्रयोग भएको देखियो तर खाजा मापदण्डको विषयमा अभिभावक त्यति जानकार नभएको पाइयो । खाजा व्यवस्थापन पक्षमा देखिएका समस्या समाधान गर्न प्रति विद्यार्थी रू. २० का दरले उपलब्ध गराउँदै आएको रकमलाई समयानुकूल वृद्धि गर्न सकेमात्र राज्यले निर्धारण गरेको मापदण्ड अनुसार खाजा खुवाउन सकिने धारणा प्राप्त भयो । खाजा वापतको रकम कम भएका कारण नै चमेना गृह सञ्चालन हुन नसकेको जानकारी प्राप्त भयो । विद्यालयमा व्यवस्थित चमेनागृह हुनुपर्ने, मापदण्ड बमोजिम खाजा खुवाउनुपर्ने, खाद्यपदार्थको गुणस्तरको अनुगमन गरिनुपर्ने तथा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रमको व्यवस्थापनलाई प्रभावकारी बनाउन प्र.अ., शिक्षक, वि.व्य.स.का पदाधिकारी तथा अभिभावक समेतको प्रयास हुनुपर्ने देखिन्छ ।

मुख्य पद/पदावली : दिवा खाजा, पोषण, स्थानीय उत्पादन, चमेना गृह, खाजा मापदण्ड

विषयप्रवेश

बालबालिकाको वृद्धि र विकासका लागि पोषणयुक्त खाना आवश्यक हुन्छ । विद्यालयमा भर्ना भएका बालबालिकाहरूको पोषणयुक्त खाजा व्यवस्थापन गर्न प्रारम्भिक बालविकासदेखि कक्षा पाँचसम्म अध्ययनरत विद्यार्थीहरूका लागि नेपाल सरकारले सञ्चालन गरेको

दिवा खाजा एक राष्ट्रिय कार्यक्रम हो । यसका लागि राज्यले अरबौं बजेटको व्यवस्था गरेको छ । शिक्षा, विज्ञान तथा प्रविधि मन्त्रालय अन्तर्गत रहेको शिक्षा तथा मानव स्रोत विकास केन्द्रबाट स्थानीय तहमा दिवा खाजाको रकम ससर्त अनुदानका रूपमा निकास हुने गरेको छ । विद्यालयहरूले स्थानीय तहमा बजेट माग गरी विद्यार्थीहरूलाई खाजा खुवाउने व्यवस्था मिलाउनु

पछ। दिवा खाजाको बजेट नेपाल सरकारले स्थानीय तहमा पठाउने गरेको छ। पोषणयुक्त दिवा खाजाबाट बालबालिकाको शारीरिक र मानसिक विकास गराइ सबल र सक्षम बालबालिकाको विकासमा योगदान पुग्दछ। सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन गर्नुको मुख्य उद्देश्य बालबालिकाको पोषण र स्वास्थ्यमा सुधार ल्याउनु, विद्यार्थी भर्नादर र उपस्थिति बढाउनु, सिकाइ उपलब्धि सुधार गर्नु र स्थानीय उत्पादनको उपयोग गरी पोषणयुक्त खाजा उपलब्ध गराउनु हो।

आर्थिक वर्ष २०५२/०५३ सन १९९६ जनवरी १) देखि खाद्यान्न न्युन भएका तथा प्राथमिक तहमा विद्यार्थी भनां प्रतिशत कम भएका जिल्लाहरूका छात्रछात्राहरूको लागि दिवा खाजा व्यवस्था गर्ने गरी विश्व खाद्य कार्यक्रम र तत्कालीन श्री ५ को सरकारको संयुक्त लगानीमा प्राथमिक विद्यालय पौष्टिक आहार कार्यक्रम १८ महिनाको लागि सञ्चालन गरियो। पहिलो योजना ८ जिल्लाहरूमा डोटी, डडेल्धुरा, आछाम, दैलेख, रुपन्देही, रुकुम, पर्सा र धनुषामा संचालन गरिएको थियो। प्रत्येक वर्ष जिल्लाहरूमा थप गर्दै जाने क्रममा २०५५ सालमा सुर्खेत र सल्यान, २०५६ सालमा प्युठान वैतडी, २०५७ सालमा जाजरकोट, बझाङ बाजुरा र दार्चुला गरी २०५७ साल सम्ममा १६ जिल्लामा विस्तार गरेको थियो। यो कार्यक्रम ३० जिल्लामा संचालन भएको छ। शिक्षाको पहुँचमा सुधार गर्ने उद्देश्यले कर्णाली अञ्चलमा ५ ओटा जिल्लाका छनौटमा परेका सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा आर्थिक वर्ष २०६४/६५ बाट शिक्षा मन्त्रालय, शिक्षा विभाग मार्फत दिवाखाजा कार्यक्रम सुरु भएको थियो। यसलाई विस्तार गरेर २०६६/६७ सालमा ३० वटा जिल्लामा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम लागु भयो (तामाङ २०८०)।

बालबालिकाहरूमा शिक्षाको पहुँचमा सुधार गर्न सहयोग पुगोस् भन्ने उद्देश्यले शिक्षा विभागमार्फत कर्णाली अञ्चलका पाँचओटा जिल्लाका प्राथमिक तहका सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरूमा आर्थिक वर्ष २०६४/६५ बाट दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन भएको हो। आर्थिक वर्ष २०६६/६७ देखि अन्य जिल्लामा पनि यो

कार्यक्रम थप गरियो। आर्थिक वर्ष २०७१/७२ बाट लोपोन्मुख र अति सिमान्तकृत समुदायका बालबालिका लागि थप यो कार्यक्रम थप भयो। (सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा विद्यार्थीहरूका लागि दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन कार्यविधि २०७३)।

नेपाल सरकारले आर्थिक वर्ष २०७७/७८ बाट देशका सबै सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा प्रारम्भिक बालविकासदेखि कक्षा ५ सम्मका सबै विद्यार्थीका लागि दिवा खाजा व्यवस्था गरेको छ। त्यसो त, सन् १९६७ देखि नै यो कार्यक्रम केही जिल्लामा लागू भएको थियो (थापा २०७९)।

दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रमलाई आ.व. २०७९/०८० देखि कक्षा ६ मा पनि लागू भएकोमा आ.व. २०८०/०८१ को बजेट वक्तव्यबाट कक्षा ६ मा लागू गरिएको यो कार्यक्रमलाई कटौती गरी कक्षा ५ सम्म नै सीमित राखियो (अर्थ मन्त्रालय, २०८०)।

स्वस्थ शरीरमा स्वस्थ मष्तिष्क निर्माण हुन्छ, भन्ने मान्यताका साथ सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजाका लागि एक जना विद्यार्थीका लागि साविकको कर्णाली अञ्चलका ५ ओटा जिल्लाका विद्यालयका लागि दैनिक २० रुपियाँका दरले र अन्य सबै विद्यालयका लागि दैनिक १५ रुपियाँका दरले एक वर्षमा जम्मा १८० दिनका लागि बजेट पठाइएको हुन्छ। (शिक्षा तथा मानव स्रोत विकास केन्द्र २०७७)। हाल आएर चालु आर्थिक वर्ष २०८२/०८३ देखि दिवाखाजाको रकम वृद्धि गरी प्रतिविद्यार्थी रु. २० कायम गरिएको छ।

अध्ययनको उद्देश्य

सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा अध्ययनरत बालबालिकाहरूलाई नेपाल सरकारले दिवा खाजाको व्यवस्था गरेको छ, यसका लागि ठूलो बजेट छुट्याएको छ। जुन अपेक्षाबाट दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम देशव्यापी रूपमा लागू भएको छ, सोही अनुरूप यो कार्यक्रम प्रभावकारी रूपमा कार्यान्वयन हुन सके नसकेको अध्ययन गर्न आवश्यक छ। विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयनको वर्तमान अवस्था पहिचान गरी देखिएका समस्या समाधानको उपाय खोजी गर्नु यस अध्ययनको उद्देश्य रहेको छ।

अध्ययन विधि

कुनै पनि अनुसन्धानलाई तथ्याङ्कको सङ्कलनका आधारमा मात्रात्मक रूपमा वा गुणात्मक रूपमा अध्ययन तथा विश्लेषण गर्नुपर्ने हुन्छ । यो अनुसन्धान गुणात्मक अनुसन्धान भएकोले सूचना तथा जानकारीहरूलाई तार्किक विधिबाट विश्लेषण गरी निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ । छनौटमा परेका विद्यालयहरूको स्थलगत अध्ययन गरी, सरोकारवाला व्यक्तिहरूसँग अन्तर्वार्ता लिई, प्रश्नावली भरी आवश्यक सूचनाहरू सङ्कलन गरिएको र सोही अनुसार यसको तार्किक विश्लेषण गरिएकोले यो अनुसन्धानको ढाँचा गुणात्मक रहेको छ ।

यो अध्ययन विशेषगरी ताप्लेजुङ जिल्लाको फुडलिङ नगरपालिकाहरूको वडा नं. २ मा रहेका विद्यालयहरू मध्ये उद्देश्यमूलक नमुना छनौट विधिका आधारमा एक वटा विद्यालय श्री विरेन्द्र माध्यमिक विद्यालयलाई छनौट गरी त्यहाँका प्रधानाध्यापक, विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति अध्यक्ष, शिक्षक र विद्यार्थीसँग अन्तर्वार्ता लिइएको छ, प्रतिनिधिमूलक रूपमा विद्यार्थीका अभिभावक समेत छनौट गरी उनीहरूसँग छलफल गरी प्राथमिक स्रोतबाट तथ्याङ्क सङ्कलन गरिएको छ । यसैगरी विभिन्न प्रकारका जर्नल, शोध जर्नल पुस्तक र पत्रपत्रिकाहरूलाई द्वितीय स्रोतको रूपमा प्रयोग गरिएको छ ।

पूर्वसाहित्यको समीक्षा

परिचय

विद्यालय शिक्षा क्षेत्र योजना (School Education Sector Plan-SESP) ले स्थानीय उत्पादनमा आधारित पौष्टिक तथा स्वस्थकर विद्यालय दिवा खाजाको प्रबन्धबाट स्वास्थ्य तथा पोषणको अवस्थामा सुधार गरिने र यस कार्यक्रमबाट विद्यार्थीलाई विद्यालयमा ल्याउने, टिकाउने र सिकाउने जस्ता उपलब्धि हासिल गर्न दिवा खाजाको व्यवस्था गरेको छ (शिक्षा विज्ञान तथा प्रविधि मन्त्रालय २०८१) ।

शिक्षा मन्त्रालयले जारी गरेको सामुदायिक विद्यालयका विद्यार्थीहरूका लागि दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन

कार्यविधि २०७३ मा कार्यक्रमको प्रारम्भ र यसको निरन्तरता तथा उद्देश्य उल्लेख गरेको छ । यसैगरी दिवा खाजाको परिकार कार्बोहाइड्रेट, प्रोटीन, मिनरल, भिटामिन र चिल्लो पदार्थ समूहका खानेकुराहरू खुलाएको देखिन्छ । यसरी नै विद्यालय खाजा व्यवस्थापन समितिको गठन प्रक्रिया, खाद्य सामग्री खरिद गर्ने, भण्डारण गर्ने र संरक्षण गर्ने, खाजा पकाउने र खुवाउने जस्ता विधि र प्रक्रिया उल्लेख गरेको छ ।

नेपाल सरकार शिक्षा, विज्ञान तथा प्रविधि मन्त्रालय शिक्षा विज्ञान तथा मानव स्रोत विकास केन्द्रबाट जारी सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा मापदण्ड तथा कार्यक्रम सहजीकरण पुस्तिका २०७६ मा समेत दिवाखाजा कार्यक्रमको पृष्ठभूमि, यसका समस्या तथा चुनौती, औचित्य, उद्देश्य, मापदण्ड र गुणस्तर, पोषण स्तरको मापदण्ड, दिवा खाजा मेनु, तयारीका पूर्वाधार, भाँडावर्तन, खाजा तयारी कर्ताको मापदण्ड, सरसफाइ, फोहोर व्यवस्थापन, स्थानीय तह मार्फत खरिद व्यवस्थापन, क्याटरिङ मार्फत खरिद र वितरण तरिका लगायतका कुराहरू उल्लेख गरेको छ ।

नेपाल सरकार शिक्षा, विज्ञान तथा प्रविधि मन्त्रालय शिक्षा विज्ञान तथा मानव स्रोत विकास केन्द्रबाट जारी सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा व्यवस्थापन सहयोगी पुस्तिका २०७७ मा समेत दिवाखाजा कार्यक्रमको परिचय, यसको प्रभाव, बजेट, बजेट माग गर्ने प्रक्रिया, निकाशा, विद्यालयले गर्नुपर्ने तयारी, दिवा खाजा मेनु, खरिद योजना निर्माण, खाजा तयारी तथा वितरण लगायतका कुराहरू उल्लेख गरेको छ ।

नेपाल सरकार शिक्षा, विज्ञान तथा प्रविधि मन्त्रालय शिक्षा विज्ञान तथा मानव स्रोत विकास केन्द्रबाट जारी स्थानीय उत्पादनमा आधारित पोषणयुक्त विद्यालय दिवा खाजा प्रारूप २०८१ मा समेत दिवाखाजाको पृष्ठभूमि, नीतिगत व्यवस्था, प्रारूपको उद्देश्य, औचित्य, सिद्धान्त, चुनौति, कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयन संरचना, स्थानीय उत्पादन प्रवर्धन, भण्डारण, सुरक्षा, स्वच्छता, भण्डारण, भान्साघर, फोहोर व्यवस्थापन लगायतका कुराहरू उल्लेख गरेको छ ।

समीक्षा

अधिकारी (२०२३) ले विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रमको व्यवस्थापन शीर्षकमा लेखेको अनुसन्धानमूलक लेखमा अध्ययनको पृष्ठभूमि, विभिन्न स्रोतको अध्ययन, दाङ जिल्लाको दुईवटा विद्यालयमा गरेको खाद्य विवरण, खाद्य ढुवानी प्रक्रिया, गुणस्तर, भण्डारण, वितरण प्रक्रिया, व्यवस्थापनका समस्या लगायतका विषयमा अध्ययन गरी प्राप्त नतिजाका आधारमा अध्ययनको विश्लेषण गरेको देखिन्छ ।

लुइटेले (२०२४) ले विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रमको व्यवस्थापन शीर्षकमा लेखेको अर्को अनुसन्धानमूलक लेखमा अध्ययनको पृष्ठभूमि, विभिन्न स्रोतको अध्ययन, धनकुटा जिल्लाको एउटा विद्यालयमा गरेको खाद्य विवरण, खाजा वितरण प्रक्रिया, खाजाको गुणस्तर, खाजा भण्डारण, विद्यार्थी उपस्थितिको अवस्था, विद्यार्थी र अभिभावकको धारणा, विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको धारणा र यसको व्यवस्थापनमा देखिएका समस्या लगायतका विषयमा अध्ययन गरी प्राप्त नतिजाका आधारमा अध्ययनको विश्लेषण गरेको देखिन्छ ।

अधिकारी (२०७७) ले विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रमले बालबालिकाको भर्ना र नियमिततामा पारेको प्रभाव शीर्षकमा लेखेको अनुसन्धानमूलक लेखमा अध्ययनको पृष्ठभूमि, विभिन्न स्रोतको अध्ययन, दाङ जिल्लाको एक विद्यालयमा भएको खाद्य विवरण, खाद्य ढुवानी प्रक्रिया, गुणस्तर, भण्डारण, वितरण प्रक्रिया, सरसफाइ, खाजा कार्यक्रमले विद्यार्थी भर्ना र विद्यालय नियमिततामा पारेको प्रभाव विषयमा अध्ययन गरी प्राप्त नतिजाका आधारमा अध्ययनको विश्लेषण गरेको देखिन्छ ।

तामाङ (२०८०) ले तयार पारेको विद्यालय दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रमको गुणस्तर र यसले पारेको प्रभाव शीर्षकको एक शोधपत्रमा मोरङको केरावारी गाउँपालिकाको एक माध्यमिक विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रमको गुणस्तर र यसले पारेको प्रभावका विषयमा अध्ययन विश्लेषण गरेको देखिन्छ ।

अध्ययनको विश्लेषण प्राप्त र छलफल

यस अध्ययनका क्रममा प्राप्त तथ्याङ्कलाई विभिन्न शीर्षकहरूमा विभाजन गरी व्याख्या विश्लेषण गर्ने प्रयास गरिएको छ ।

कार्यान्वयन अवस्था

नेपाल सरकारले सामुदायिक विद्यालयका विद्यार्थीहरूलाई खाजा खुवानउका लागि विभिन्न किसिमका नीति निर्देशिकाहरू जारी गर्ने गरेको छ । दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन कार्यविधि २०७३, सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा मापदण्ड तथा कार्यक्रम सहजीकरण पुस्तिका २०७६, सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा व्यवस्थापन सहयोगी पुस्तिका २०७७, स्थानीय उत्पादनमा आधारित पोषणयुक्त विद्यालय दिवा खाजा प्रारूप २०८१, जारी गरेर दिवा खाजाको व्यवस्थापन र कार्यान्वयनमा सहजता सिर्जना गरिदिएको छ । दिवा खाजाको व्यवस्थापन र कार्यान्वयनको पक्ष भने विद्यालय प्रशासन, विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति, शिक्षक अभिभावक संघ लगायत सरोकारवाला निकायहरूको जिम्मेवारी रहेको हुन्छ त्यस विषयमा विभिन्न उपशीर्षकहरूमा तल अध्ययन गरिएको छ -

दिवा खाजा मापदण्ड

सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा व्यवस्थापन सहयोगी पुस्तिका २०७७ मा नेपाल सरकार, खाद्य प्रविधि तथा गुणस्तर नियन्त्रण विभागको अगुवाई तथा अमेरिकी सरकार, कृषि विभागको र विश्व खाद्य कार्यक्रम नेपाल तथा Partnership for Child Development (PCD), Imperial College London को प्राविधिक सहयोगमा यो क्षेत्रगत दिवा खाजा मेनु तयार गरिएको छ । कृषि उत्पादन, खाद्य सामग्रीको मूल्य, खाने चालचलन एवम् संस्कृतिका आधारमा विज्ञ समूहबाट देशको भूगोललाई १० वटा क्षेत्रमा विभाजन गरी मेनु समावेश गरेको हो । पूर्वी तराई-१, पूर्वी तराई-२, पश्चिम तराई-१, पश्चिम तराई-२, पूर्वी पहाड, मध्य पहाड, पश्चिम पहाड, पूर्वी हिमाल, मध्य हिमाल र पश्चिम हिमाल गरी विभाजन गरेको १० क्षेत्रका लागि एक एक हुने गरी १० ओटा मेनु सेट तयार गरेको छ । एउटा मेनु सेटमा ६ ओटा

छुट्टाछुट्टै खाजाहरु समावेश गरेर सबै क्षेत्रका गरी जम्मा ६० प्रकारका खाजाहरु तोकिएका छन् । पूर्वी हिमालअन्तर्गतका ताप्लेजुड, सोलुखुम्बु र संखुवासभा जिल्लाका लागि मेनु १ मासको जाउलो, मेनु २ मकैको खिर, मेनु ३ आलु बदाम, मेनु ४ फापरको ढिँडो र तरकारी मेनु ५ कोदोको पुवा र मेनु ६ मा क्वाटी गरी ६ प्रकारका मेनुहरू तोकिएको छ । तर तथ्याङ्क सङ्कलनका क्रममा निम्नानुसार रहेको पाइन्छ ।

दिवा खाजा सम्बन्धी धारणा

प्रस्तुत विषयमा यहाँ प्रधानाध्यापक, अभिभावक, व्यवस्थापन समिति, शिक्षाक विद्यार्थीको धारणाहरूमाथि प्रकाश पारिएको छ जुन निम्नानुसार प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ:-

दिवा खाजा सम्बन्धमा प्रधानाध्यापकको धारणा

राज्यको नीति तथा कार्यक्रम अनुसार सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा अध्ययनरत विद्यार्थीहरूलाई दिवा खाजा वापत प्रति विद्यार्थी रु. १५ का दरले वितरण गर्दै आएकोमा चालु आर्थिक वर्ष ०८२/८३ देखि रु. २० का दरले विद्यालयलाई स्थानीय तहले एकमुष्ट रकम निकाशा दिँदै आएको छ । छनोटमा परेको विद्यालयका प्रधानाध्यापकसँग दिवा खाजा सञ्चालन सम्बन्धमा भएको कुराकानी अनुसार राज्यले प्रदान गर्दै आएको उक्त रकममा विद्यालयले रकम थप गर्ने स्रोत नभएको र स्थानीय तहले पनि तोकिएको भन्दा अतिरिक्त रकम थप गर्न नसकेको हुँदा रु. २० को दिवा खाजा प्रदान गर्ने गरिएको बताउनु हुन्छ ।

विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजाको प्रबन्ध गर्न पटक पटक क्यान्टिन सञ्चालन गर्न इच्छुकहरूलाई सूचना गर्दा पनि कसैले क्यान्टिन सञ्चालन गर्न आवेदन नगरेको र विद्यालयले पनि खाजा व्यवस्थापन गर्न नसकेका कारण विद्यार्थीका लागि अभिभावकले आफैँ खाजाको व्यवस्था गरिदिएको र सो वापतको रकम विद्यालयले स्थानीय तहसँग रकम माग गरी विद्यार्थी तथा अभिभावकलाई प्रदान गर्ने गरेको बताउनु भयो । दिवा खाजाको मापदण्ड विषयमा आफू जानकार रहेको भएपनि विद्यालयको प्रत्यक्ष निगरानीमा खाजा खुवाउन

नसकेको हुँदा स्थानीय तहको उत्पादन खुवाउन र तयारी खाजा नखुवाउन अभिभावकलाई भन्ने गरेको प्रधानाध्यापक दावी गर्नुहुन्छ ।

विद्यार्थीले कस्तो खाजा खान्छन् भनी सोधिएको प्रश्नमा भुटेको मकै, गहुँको रोटी, कोदोको रोटी, भुटीभात लगायतका खानेकुरा खाने गरेको तर चिसिएको खाजा खान विद्यार्थीलाई कठिन भएको महसुस भएको बताउनु हुन्छ । खाजाको व्यवस्थापन सम्बन्धमा जिज्ञासा राख्दा प्रत्येक कक्षामा दराज राखिदिएको हुँदा सोही दराजमा खाजाका बट्टाहरू राख्ने गरेको र टिफिन समयमा उनीहरूले खाने गरेको प्रतिक्रिया दिनुभयो ।

दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम समयानुकूल रहेको, विद्यार्थी उपस्थितिलाई नियमित गराएको जस्ता सबल पक्षले यस कार्यक्रमको औचित्य पुष्टि भएको उहाँको धारणा रहेको छ । क्यान्टिन निर्माण गर्न देखि भाडा बर्तनको व्यवस्था, खाने ठाउँको व्यवस्था गर्न कतैबाट बजेट नआएको कारण विद्यालयले बनाएर विद्यार्थीलाई दिन नसकिएको, दिवा खाजाको रकम कम भएको कारण क्यान्टिन सञ्चालन गर्न कसैले इच्छा नराखेकोले दिवा खालाई व्यवस्थित र प्रभावकारी ढंगले सञ्चालन गर्न नसकिएको उहाँको धारणा रहेको पाइयो ।

दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम सम्बन्धमा अभिभावकको धारणा विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम विद्यार्थीको हितमा ल्याइएको कार्यक्रम हो । विद्यार्थीको पोषण र स्वास्थ्यको अवस्था सुधार गर्नु यसको मुख्य लक्ष्य हो । यसैगरी भोकका कारणले गर्दा बिचैमा पढाइ छोडेर आधा दिनमा फर्कनु पर्ने बाध्यतालाई कम गर्न यो कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन भएको हो । विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम कसरी सञ्चालन भएको छ र यसको प्रभाव कस्तो छ भनी अभिभावकसँग जिज्ञासा राख्दा अध्ययनको लागि नमुना छनौटमा परेका अभिभावकको भनाइ यस्तो रहेको पाइन्छ:-

स्थानीय तहले निकाशा दिँदै आएको रु. २० मा विद्यालयले रकम थप गर्ने स्रोत नभएको र स्थानीय तहले पनि तोकिएको भन्दा अतिरिक्त रकम थप गर्न नसकेको हुँदा रु. २० को दिवा खाजा प्राप्त हुने गरेको,

विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजाको प्रबन्ध गर्न पटक पटक क्यान्टिन सञ्चालन गर्न इच्छुकहरूलाई सूचना गर्दा थोरै रकमबाट क्यान्टिन सञ्चालन गर्न कोही अभिभावक इच्छुक नरहेको र विद्यालयले पनि खाजा व्यवस्थापन गर्न नसकेका कारण विद्यार्थीका लागि अभिभावकले आफैँ खाजाको व्यवस्था गरिदिएको बताउनु हुन्छ। दिवा खाजा वापतको रकम विद्यालयले स्थानीय तहसँग रकम माग गरी विद्यार्थी तथा अभिभावकलाई प्रदान गर्ने गरेको अभिभावकको प्रतिक्रिया रह्यो। दिवा खाजाको मापदण्ड विषयमा आफू जानकार नरहेको तर विद्यालय प्रशासनबाट स्थानीय उत्पादन खुवाउने र तयारी प्याकेटका वस्तुहरू नखुवाउने भनेपछि सोही अनुरूप खाजा बनाएर बढामा पठाउने गरेको जवाफ दिनुभयो।

विद्यार्थीले कस्तो खाजा खान्छन् भनी सोधिएको प्रश्नमा भुटेको मकै, गहुँको रोटी, आलु, अण्डा लगायतका खानेकुरा पठाउने गरेको, सिजन अनुसारको केरा, सुन्तला, आँप, लिची लगायत फलफूल पनि पठाउने गरेको बनाउनु भयो तर चिसिएको खाजा विद्यार्थी खान कठिन भएको महसुस गरेको उहाँले बताउनु भयो। खाजाको व्यवस्थापन सम्बन्धमा जिज्ञासा राख्दा प्रत्येक कक्षामा दराज राखिदिएको हुँदा सोही दराजमा खाजाका बट्टाहरू राख्ने गरेको र टिफिन समयमा कक्षामा नै शिक्षकको निगरानीमा विद्यार्थीले खाने गरेको प्रतिक्रिया दिनुभयो।

दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम राम्रो रहेको, विद्यार्थी उपस्थितिलाई नियमित गराउन सफल भएको जस्ता सबल पक्षले यस कार्यक्रमको औचित्य पुष्टि भएको उहाँको धारणा रहेको छ। क्यान्टिन निर्माण गर्न देखि भाडा बर्तनको व्यवस्था, खाने ठाउँको व्यवस्था स्थानीय तहले गरिदिएमा र दिवा खाजा वापतको रकम राज्यले वृद्धि गरेमा दिवा खाजा प्रभावकारी ढंगले सञ्चालन हुने उहाँको धारणा रह्यो। व्यवस्थापन समिति अध्यक्षको धारणा

विद्यालयमा दिवाखाजा कार्यक्रम कसरी सञ्चालन भएको छ ? प्रभावकारीता कस्तो छ ? लगायतका विषयमा जिज्ञासा राख्दा विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति

अध्यक्षले बताउनुभएको कुरा निम्नानुसार छ :-

दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम विद्यार्थीको हितमा सरकार ल्याएको राम्रो कार्यक्रम हो। यसले गर्दा विद्यालयमा विद्यार्थीको उपस्थिति दर र नियमितता बढेको छ। विद्यार्थीहरू विद्यालय आउन उत्साहित रहेको देखिन्छ। दिवा खाजा लागू हुनुका सबल पक्ष धेरै नै भएपनि विद्यालयको भौतिक अवस्था कमजोर भएको तथा चमेना गृह सञ्चालन गर्न कोही इच्छुक नरहेका कारण चमेना गृहलाई व्यवस्थित गर्न नसकिएको उहाँले बताउनु भयो। विद्यालयमा नै खाजा खुवाउन नसकेपछि घरेबाट खाजा बोकेर आउनुको विकल्प विद्यालयले दिन सकेको छैन उहाँको भनाइ थियो। चमेना गृहमानै विद्यार्थी संख्या अनुसार बसेर खाजा खाने गरी फर्निचर र ठाउँ मिलाउने हाम्रो इच्छा हो तर सो को व्यवस्था गर्न नसकिएको बरू खाजा भण्डारणको व्यवस्था चाहि कक्षा कक्षामा गरिएको उहाँले बताउनु भयो। दिवा खाजा वापतको रकम कम भएकै कारण चमेना गृह सञ्चालक भेट्न मुस्किल भएको हुँदा दिवा खाजा वापतको रकम वृद्धि हुनु पर्ने उहाँको भनाइ रह्यो।

दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रमप्रति शिक्षक, विद्यार्थीको धारणा विद्यार्थीको पोषण र स्वास्थ्यको अवस्था सुधार गर्नु र भोकका कारणले गर्दा बिचैमा पढाइ छोडेर आधा दिनमा फर्कनु पर्ने वाध्यतालाई कम गर्न यो कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन भएको हो। विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम कसरी सञ्चालन भएको छ र यसको प्रभाव कस्तो छ भनी शिक्षकसँग जिज्ञासा राख्दा अध्ययनको लागि नमुना छनौटमा परेका शिक्षकको भनाइ यस्तो रह्यो :- स्थानीय तहले निकाशा दिँदै आएको रू. २० मात्रै हो त्यसमा विद्यालयले रकम थप नसकेको र स्थानीय तहले पनि तोकिएको भन्दा अतिरिक्त रकम थप गर्न नसकेको हुँदा रू. २० को दिवा खाजा प्राप्त हुने गरेको, विद्यालयले क्यान्टिन सञ्चालन गर्न नसकेको र यही कारणले विद्यार्थीका लागि अभिभावकले आफैँ खाजाको व्यवस्था गरिदिएको शिक्षक बताउनु हुन्छ। दिवा खाजा वापतको रकम विद्यालयले स्थानीय तहसँग रकम माग गरी विद्यार्थी तथा अभिभावकलाई प्रदान गर्ने गरेको अभिभावकको प्रतिक्रिया रह्यो। दिवा खाजाको

मापदण्ड विषयमा आफू जानकार नरहेको तर विद्यालय प्रशासनबाट स्थानीय उत्पादन खुवाउने भनेपछि, सोही अनुरूप खाजा बनाएर बढामा पठाउने गरेको जवाफ दिनुभयो । विद्यार्थीले कस्तो खाजा खान्छन् भनी सोधिएको प्रश्नमा स्थानीय वस्तु नै प्रयोग गर्छन् तर चिसिएको खाजा विद्यार्थी खान कठिन भएको महसुस गरेको शिक्षकले बताउनु भयो । कतिपय विद्यार्थीले त चिसो खाजा खान नसकेर फर्काएर लाने गरेको उहाँको भनाइ छ । कक्षा कक्षाका दराजमा खाजाका बट्टाहरू राख्ने गरेको र टिफिन समयमा कक्षामा नै शिक्षकको निगरानीमा विद्यार्थीले खाने गरेको प्रतिक्रिया दिनुभयो । दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम राम्रो रहेको, विद्यार्थी उपस्थितिलाई नियमित गराउन सफल भएको भएता पनि दिवा खाजाको रकम न्यून हुनु, सरसफाइ तथा अन्य व्यवस्थापन कमजोर हुनु र क्यान्टिन सञ्चालन गर्न नसक्नु मुख्य समस्याको रूपमा देखिएको छ ।

यसैगरी खाजा व्यवस्थापन सम्बन्धमा विद्यार्थीले राखेको जवाफ भने यस्तो पाइयो -

दिवा खाजा घरैबाट ल्याएर हामीले खाने गरेका छौं, टिफिन बढामा खाजा बोकेर आउँछौं, कक्षामा दराज छ त्यहीँ राख्छौं र टिफिनकै समयमा खाने गरेका छौं तर खाजा खाने ठाउँ राम्रो छैन । कहिलेकाहीं धारामा पानी आउँदैन, सेलाएको खाजा त्यति मिठो हुँदैन बरू विद्यालयले क्यान्टिन बनाएर खाजाको व्यवस्था गरे राम्रो हुने थियो भन्ने जवाफ प्राप्त भयो । विद्यार्थीहरूलाई तिमीहरूले खाने खाजा के हो भनी सोधिएको प्रश्नमा घरमा बनेको खाद्य पदार्थ तथा स्थानीय उत्पादनका अतिरिक्त चाउचाउ र विस्कट पनि खाने गरेका छौं भनेको पनि पाइयो ।

दिवा खाजा व्यवस्थापनका मुख्य-मुख्य समस्याहरू

आर्थिक समस्या

दिवा खाजाको मुख्य समस्या भनेको यसका लागि विनियोजन गरिएको रकमको न्यूनता नै हो । आर्थिक वर्ष ०८२/८३ का लागि दिवा खाजा वापतको रकम बृद्धि गरेको भएपनि सो रुपैयाँले दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रमले राखेको उद्देश्य पूरा गर्न र अपेक्षा गरिए अनुसारको

नतिजा प्राप्त गर्ने कुरा असम्भव छ । विद्यालय दिवा खाजा व्यवस्थापन सहयोगी पुस्तिका २०७७ मा उल्लेख भएबमोजिमको मेनुमा आधारित रहेर दिवा खाजा व्यवस्थापन गर्न चुनौतिपूर्ण देखिन्छ । सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा व्यवस्थापन सहयोगी पुस्तिका २०७७ मा उल्लेख भए बमोजिम सन्तुलित दिवा खाजा व्यवस्थापन गर्न र कार्यान्वयन गर्न पनि चुनौतीपूर्ण देखिन्छ ।

व्यवस्थापकीय समस्या

दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम नेपाल सरकारले विद्यार्थीको पोषण र स्वास्थ्य सुधारका लागि ल्याएको अत्यन्तै राम्रो कार्यक्रम हो । यसको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयनसँग गाँसिएका विविध पक्षहरू मध्ये व्यवस्थापनसँग गाँसिएको पक्ष पनि महत्त्वपूर्ण पक्ष हो । क्यान्टिन निर्माण गर्ने, भाँडा वर्तनको व्यवस्थापन गर्ने, क्यान्टिनमा प्रयोगयोग्य फर्निचर निर्माण गर्ने धारा पानीको समुचित व्यवस्थापन गर्ने, फोहोर व्यवस्थापन गर्ने कार्य व्यवस्थापकीय कार्य हो । विद्यालयका प्रधानाध्यापक र विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिका अध्यक्षसँग गरिएको कुराकानीमा स्रोत व्यवस्थापन गर्ने नसकेका कारण दिवा खाजा सम्बन्धी व्यवस्थापकीय पक्ष कमजोर रहनु स्वाभाविक देखिन्छ ।

गुणस्तरमा समस्या

विद्यालयले क्यान्टिनको व्यवस्थापन र सञ्चालन गर्न नसकेका कारण विद्यार्थी सेलाएको तथा चिसो खाजा खान वाध्य छन् । कतिपय विद्यार्थीको खाजा बोक्ने बट्टा समेत सुरक्षित देखिएन । असुरक्षित तवरले ल्याएको खाजा र सेलाएको खाजाले विद्यार्थीको स्वास्थ्यलाई असर गर्नु स्वाभाविक हो । मापदण्ड अनुसारको गुणस्तरीय खाजा व्यवस्थापन गर्न निकै चुनौतिपूर्ण देखिन्छ ।

अनुगमन तथा निरीक्षणको कमी

यो विद्यालयमा ग्रामीण परिवेशका बालबालिका बढी आउँछन् । कामधन्दाको चटारोमा आफ्ना बालबालिकालाई कहिलेकाहीं अभिभावकले चाउचाउ र विस्कट खाजा पठाउने गरेको विद्यार्थीहरूको प्रतिक्रियाबाट बुझिन्छ । यसबाट के प्रष्ट हुन्छ भने खाजामा स्थानीय वस्तुको प्रयोग गर्ने पर्ने बाध्यता

सिर्जना हुन सकेको छैन । यसका लागि अनुगमन संयन्त्र राम्रो नभएको पाइयो । स्थानीय तहदेखि विद्यालय समेतले अनुगमन गरी राज्यको मापदण्ड अनुसारको दिवा खाजाको प्रबन्ध गर्न पनि चुनौतीपूर्ण देखिन्छ ।

समस्या समाधानका सम्भावित उपाय

यस विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रमको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयनका लागि केही सम्भावित उपायहरूको खोजी गर्ने काम गरिएको छ । दिवा खाजा वापत प्रति विद्यार्थी विद्यालयमा प्राप्त हुने १५ रुपैयाँ हेर्ने हो भने यस कार्यक्रमको महत्त्व कम देखिन सक्ला । तर राज्यले यस कार्यक्रमका लागि विनियोजन गरेको कूल बजेट हेर्ने हो भने यसलाई सानो कार्यक्रम मान्न सकिँदैन । तर यो १५ रुपैयाँले विद्यार्थीलाई गुणस्तरीय दिवाखाजाको प्रबन्ध गर्न कठिन छ । स्रोत व्यवस्थापन गर्नका लागि स्थानीय सरकार र विद्यालय तयार भएमा मापदण्ड अनुसारको दिवा खाजा व्यवस्थापन गर्न सकिन्छ । यस कार्यमा आफ्ना बालबच्चाका लागि केही आर्थिक योगदान आवश्यक हुन्छ ।

यसैगरी व्यवस्थापकीय क्षेत्रमा देखिएको समस्या पनि कम छैन । क्यान्टिन निर्माण गर्ने, भाँडा वर्तनको व्यवस्थापन गर्ने, क्यान्टिनमा प्रयोगयोग्य फर्निचर निर्माण गर्ने धारा पानीको समुचित व्यवस्थापन गर्ने, फोहोर व्यवस्थापन गर्ने स्थानीय सरकारसँग रकम माग गर्ने तथा भौतिक व्यवस्थापन गर्ने सकिन्छ । यसका लागि अभिभावकको पनि योगदान अवश्यक पर्दछ ।

विद्यालयले क्यान्टिनको व्यवस्थापन र सञ्चालन गर्न नसकेका कारण विद्यार्थी सेलाएको तथा चिसो खाजा खान बाध्य छन् । कतिपय विद्यार्थीको खाजा बोक्ने बट्टा समेत सुरक्षित देखिएन । असुरक्षित तवरले ल्याएको खाजा र सेलाएको खाजाले विद्यार्थीको स्वास्थ्यलाई असर गर्नु स्वाभाविक हो । बाल बच्चाको स्वास्थ्यमा आम नागरिक सचेत हुनु नै पर्दछ । यसको समाधानका लागि विद्यालयमा क्यान्टिन निर्माण गर्नु र सञ्चालन गर्नुको विकल्प देखिएन ।

यो विद्यालयमा ग्रामीण परिवेशका बालबालिका बढी आउने र कामधन्दाको चटारोमा आफ्ना बालबालिकालाई

कहिलेकाहीं अभिभावकले चाउचाउ र विस्कट खाजा पठाउने गरेको देखिएकोले स्थानीय तहदेखि विद्यालय समेतले अनुगमन गरी तयारी बस्तुको प्रयोगमा निरुत्साहित गर्नु पर्न देखिन्छ ।

स्थानीय स्तरमा उपलब्ध खाद्यान्नबाट खाद्य टोकरी निर्माण, उक्त टोकरीका आधारमा दैनिक खाजा मेन्यु निर्माण, सफा भान्सा घर व्यवस्थापन, अभिभावक र स्थानीय सरोकारवालाको सक्रिय परिचालन, अनुगमन संयन्त्रको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन, अहिलेकै २० रुपैयाँमा स्थानीय सरकारको थप स्रोत परिचालन, स्थानीय संघसंस्था, सहकारी, समाजसेवी, अभिभावक, परोपकारी दातालगायतको सहयोगमा दिवा खाजा व्यवस्थापनलाई प्रभावकारी बनाउन सकिने देखिन्छ ।

निष्कर्ष

विद्यालयमा भर्ना भएका बालबालिकाहरूको पोषणयुक्त खाजा व्यवस्थापन गर्न प्रारम्भिक बालविकासदेखि कक्षा पाँचसम्म अध्ययनरत विद्यार्थीहरूका लागि नेपाल सरकारले सञ्चालन गरेको दिवा खाजा एक राष्ट्रिय कार्यक्रम हो । सामुदायिक विद्यालयमा दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन गर्नुको मुख्य उद्देश्य बालबालिकाको पोषण र स्वास्थ्यमा सुधार ल्याउनु, विद्यार्थी भर्नादर र उपस्थिति बढाउनु, सिकाइ उपलब्धि सुधार गर्नु र स्थानीय उत्पादनको उपयोग गरी पोषणयुक्त खाजा उपलब्ध गराउनु हो । दिवा खाजा कार्यक्रमले बालबालिकाको शारीरिक र मानसिक विकास गराइ सबल र सक्षम बालबालिकाको विकासमा योगदान पुग्दछ । तर दिवा खाजा वापत रू. २० अत्यन्त न्यून रकम रहेको प्रतिक्रिया प्राप्त भएको छ । यस रकमले मापदण्डअनुसारको खाजा व्यवस्थापन गर्न नसक्ने र यही रकमबाट चमेनागृह सञ्चालक पनि राख्न नसक्ने प्रतिक्रिया प्राप्त भएको छ । छिटफुट बाहेक स्थानीय उत्पादनलाई खाजामा प्राथमिकता दिइएको भएपनि सेलाएको खाजा खान विद्यार्थी बाध्य भएको देखिन्छ । दिवा खाजाका सम्बन्धमा विभिन्न किसिमका समस्याहरू देखिएका छन् । दिवा खाजाका लागि रकम न्यून हुनु, क्यान्टिन निर्माण गर्ने, भाँडा वर्तनको व्यवस्थापन गर्ने, क्यान्टिनमा प्रयोगयोग्य फर्निचर

निर्माण गर्ने धारा पानीको समुचित व्यवस्थापन गर्ने, फोहोर व्यवस्थापन गर्ने कार्य व्यवस्थापकीय समस्या रहनु, दिवा खाजा गुणस्तरयुक्त नहुनु, चिसो खाजा खान बाध्य हुनु, असुरक्षित रूपमा विद्यार्थीले खाजा लिएर आउनु, अनुगमन तथा निरीक्षण राम्रो नहुनु जस्ता समस्या देखिन्छ । यसको समाधानका लागि विद्यालय, स्थानीय तहलगायतले स्रोत थप गरी गुणस्तरीय खाजा र यसको व्यवस्थापन गरी शैक्षिक सुनिश्चितता प्रदान गर्ने र प्रदान राज्यको नीति तथा कार्यक्रम अनुरूप अनिवार्य शिक्षा कार्यक्रमलाई सफल बनाउनु पर्ने देखिन्छ ।

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- Reference citations should be given in ascending alphabetically arranged at the end of the manuscript.
- For referencing style, follow the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition.
- Number of tables/figures should be kept to the minimum and which should not duplicate information given in the text.
- Follow the titles: Times New Roman 12, bold face and centered.
- Follow the subsection titles: Times New Roman 11, bold face and left aligned.
- Names of Author(s): Times New Roman 11, bold face and centered.
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Pathivara Multiple Campus

Phungling Municipality, Taplejung

Koshi Province, Nepal

Phone No: +977-024-460228 Fax: 024-460228

E-mail:- pathivara.campus@gmail.com

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