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(A Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Journal)

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## **Editorial**

It is the matter of immense pleasure that Tikapur Multiple Campus, Research Management Cell (RMC) has been able to release the seventh volume of 'Journal of Tikapur Multiple Campus, Vol. 7' among the valued readers. This issue is another affirmation of our unflinching commitment to bring out the latent capabilities of academics and professionals to speeding up research hunt and to hone professional knowledge, skill and development. Our attempt has awakened the professionals engaged in higher education and poked them to research, write and disseminate. It is our fervent belief that such ongoing endeavors and practices could add significant impetus to research culture among the teaching professionals and research scholars. This volume has been the product of rigorous process of double blind review, intensive editing and copy editing by the group of scholars in the respective genre.

This volume consists of seventeen articles from diverse field of study in Nepali and English language. The area of papers ranges from Economics, Health Science, Development Studies, Agriculture Science, Language Education, Literature, and Social Sciences. The majority of the articles are based on primary information and research based. At the same time, some papers are literature based and more close to feature articles. The issues that the authors have raised and discussed are significant to add the base of knowledge in respective genre. The research based informed knowledge in the field such as economics, agriculture science, language, literature and social science certainly will help the policy makers, planners, curriculum designers, teacher educators, experts and new scholars of the field. More importantly, the valued papers from interdisciplinary area will be an addition of a brick in a building, though not perfect, towards reform in existing knowledge.

We extend our gratitude to Far Western University, Kanchanpur and University Grants Commission, Sanothimi Bhaktapur for magnanimous support for the growth of Tikapur Multiple Campus and publication of this journal. We are indebted to Tikapur Multiple Campus for this academic initiative, priority to this scholarly task and financial support. We express our gratitude to Mr. Dhavindra Rawal, Campus Chief; Prof. Lal Prasad Amgain (PhD), Director of the Research Division, UGC. We thank the young and energetic team of RMC, Tikapur Multiple Campus for giving the opportunity to collaborate in this academic work. We are indebted to the scholars who have provided us with their valuable articles for dissemination through this channel, reviewers for their act of rigorous review, the members of editorial board, and the copy editor for their untiring effort. At last but not the least, the words of appreciation go to Mr. Sanjog Sapkota for attractive setting and layout.

We have left no stone unturned to bring the issue errorless. However, the chances of human error cannot be denied. We will heartily appreciate and welcome comments and suggestions for the improvements in the next issue from the valued readers.

**Editorial Board**  
**January 25, 2024**

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**Teachers' Perceptions on Participatory Action Research in Classroom for English Language Teaching and Learning**

**Krishna Kumari Mahara**

M.Phil. leading to Ph.D. (TESOL) Scholar, Far Western University, Nepal

Email: [mahar Krishna2271@gmail.com](mailto:mahar Krishna2271@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is widely acknowledged for its substantial role in the field of English Language Teaching and Learning (ELT), fostering collaborative and active engagement, and a culture of reflective practice. This study explores the perceptions held by English teachers regarding the contribution of PAR to the efficacy of English language teaching and learning. Additionally, the study seeks to scrutinize the strategies employed by teachers in implementing PAR to augment the teaching and learning of English within the classrooms. Through the discussion of data obtained from in-depth interviews conducted with three English language teachers from three secondary level schools of Kailali district and a comprehensive review of theoretical and empirical literature, this paper reveals the intricate challenges associated with the implementation of PAR, despite the positive disposition of teachers towards this approach. The findings highlight the belief held by English language teachers that PAR not only facilitates proficient teaching and learning of English as a foreign or second language but also assumes a pivotal role in the ongoing professional development of educators. Moreover, this paper accentuates the significance of PAR in ELT, emphasizing its capacity to empower both teachers and learners, instill contextual relevance, promote a sense of community, address equity concerns, and contribute substantively to the perpetual enhancement of language teaching and learning practices.

**Keywords:** Participatory, action research, teachers' perspectives

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## Introduction

Participatory action research was initially introduced by Lewin (1946, 1952) and is characterized as a form of social research, denoted as 'active research', with the primary aim of effecting positive change. Elliott (1991) conceptualizes action research as an investigative approach directed towards enhancing a given situation. Rather than solely producing knowledge, the overarching objectives involve enhancing both practical application and comprehension of practice through a deliberate combination of systematic reflection and strategic innovation. According to Noffke and Somekh (2009), action research fundamentally entails reflexivity, with an emphasis on theory-in-practice directed at altering social practices and relations, fostering reflective analysis of the efficacy of change efforts, followed by iterative reconsideration and reapplication. In contrast to conventional research methodologies, Participatory Action Research (PAR) advocates for the generation of knowledge in collaboration with local experts and the incorporation of the perspectives of those possessing firsthand knowledge. Similarly, Gaventa and Cornwall (2001) assert that knowledge is conceived as emerging from collective processes wherein individuals come together to exchange experiences through a dynamic sequence of activities, reflection, and collaborative inquiry.

Similarly, Stringer (1999) contends that the processes involved in participatory action research must be both rigorously empirical and reflective (or interpretative), engaging individuals as active participants in the research process, and yielding practical outcomes relevant to their activities. It is emphasized that a collaborative approach from the inception of the PAR process is imperative, as participants must exhibit a meaningful level of investment in the study to facilitate substantial social change at the local level (Cockburn & Trentham, 2002). Similarly, Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) assert that participatory action research investigates actual practices, eschewing abstract approaches. Within the realm of educational reform, particularly in the domain of instructor development and instructional methodologies, participatory action research has played a pivotal role (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Elliott, 1991). Carr and Kemmis (1986) describe a "teacher as researcher movement," wherein educators engage in research encompassing school-based curriculum development, research-based in-service education, and professional self-evaluation projects (p.1). The responses of teachers to political forces, social circumstances, and professional objectives were commonly characterized as disjointed, pragmatic, and opportunistic (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Moreover, Participatory Action Research (PAR), as highlighted by Kemmis et al. (2013), is a collaborative approach where individuals collectively strive to transform practices within a shared social context for both individual and communal self-formation. McTaggart (1991) emphasizes PAR as a qualitative method fostering participant-researcher collaboration, promoting learning, and enhancing potential. Serving as an educational process and social research approach, PAR, according to Hall (1981), addresses the issues of groups or communities. McIntyre (2008) distinguishes PAR by its commitment to integrating participation, action, and research, keeping these aspects in focus for effective implementation. Unlike traditional research, PAR aims to facilitate understanding for transformative change in specific cases rather than establishing generalizations (Rowell et al., 2017). Critical participatory action research, according to Kemmis et al. (2014), involves iterative cycles of individual and collective self-reflection, encompassing planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and re-planning. In essence, PAR involves problem identification, data analysis, and a repetitive cycle of review. Embury (2015, cited in Chevalier & Buckles, 2019) underscores PAR as a medium and method for change, striving to integrate research, knowledge growth, social history, participation ethics, and democracy through active engagement with the community.

Research on Participatory Action Research (PAR) in the English language teaching context of Nepal is crucial for several reasons. Research on PAR in Nepal can explore how participatory approaches can be tailored to the unique cultural and linguistic context, ensuring that teaching methods resonate with the local community (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Similarly, PAR can provide a platform for teachers, students, and community members to collaboratively develop strategies that cater to the diverse learning needs in Nepal (Canagarajah, 2005). PAR can contribute to the continuous professional development of English language teachers in Nepal by involving them as active participants in research aimed at improving teaching practices (Farrell, 2018). Thus, it seems that conducting research on Participatory Action Research in the context of English language teaching in Nepal is imperative to ensure culturally sensitive, locally relevant, and empowering pedagogies that address the diverse needs of the community and contribute to the professional development of teachers. Even though PAR in classroom is significant for both teachers' professional development and successful language teaching and learning,

it is observed that teachers seem to be less motivated to involve in research which is creating problem in implementation level and influencing ELT in the context of Nepal.

Drawing upon the significance of PAR and issues regarding its practices and implementation discussed in the above section, the study aims to explore English language teachers' perception on participatory action research practices in English language classroom and to investigate how participatory action research in English language classroom contribute successful teaching and learning of English language in the context of Nepal. To incorporate these aims, the study basically deals with the following research questions:

1. How do the English language teachers perceive the significance of participatory action research in language teaching and learning?
2. What are the major challenges the English language teachers face in conducting participatory action research?
3. How does participatory action research contribute to teachers' professional development English language teaching and learning?

## **Literature Review**

### **Conceptualizing PAR**

According to McTaggart (1991), PAR is a qualitative research method that encourages participants and researchers to work together. PAR is so empowering since it encourages all participants to learn and increase their potential. PAR has been described as an educational process, a method of social study, and a strategy for dealing with difficulties and concerns in communities and groups of people (Hall, 1981). However, Nugent (2019) argues that due to the collaborative, dialogic, and self-driven nature of the workshop sessions, the participants in this study were able to make significant steps in their understanding of teaching culture. Nugent (2019) further states that teachers will acquire the skills needed to prepare students to interact effectively with diverse people from various language and cultural backgrounds when teachers' needs are considered, and professional development is designed to present theoretical knowledge in conjunction with practical teaching strategies that model target language use in a dialogic environment.

Similarly, Khan et al. (2013) argue that if justice is to triumph in developing nations where governmental mechanisms are not pro-poor and democracy is at best shaky, PAR can be established as a normative approach. Then, social transformation isn't a matter of chance or waiting for it to come to the downtrodden and disenfranchised majority. It was suggested that the concept of change, and particularly how it is understood, determines the agenda's overall value orientation. Stapleton (2018) examines a method for doing PAR with teachers that considers the challenges that teachers of low-income, underperforming students encounter in today's high-stakes accountability climate. TPAR can be a valuable framework for teachers who work with underprivileged adolescents since it has the potential to both highlight and help to improve teachers' problems by giving them professional respect and a voice in research. Overworked teachers may benefit from TPAR as a place to vent their problems and receive support. Stapleton (2018) emphasizes the necessity of allowing instructors to build projects on their own rather than relying on a central plan or one prepared by a researcher. However, the most basic problem was determining how to work with an already overworked populace in a way that aided rather than contributed to their already heavy loads and another difficulty was determining how much I could or should intervene in the instructors' efforts. Zakwani (2020) on the other hand, reveals that teachers should take on various roles depending on the context in which they operate, the task at hand, the pupils they are working with, and other considerations. They can act as controllers, buddies, facilitators, participants, assessors, feedback providers, guides, or even a source of knowledge, depending on the scenario. Similarly, Dutta (2017) reveals that young people's participation in the initiative allows them to connect with local community concerns outside of polarized ethnic identification narratives. Engagement in social critique, reconfiguration of a more inclusive researcher identity, and adoption of a language of potential were all encouraged by this involvement. As a result of this involvement, several important outcomes connected to the production of alternate possibilities emerge.

### **PAR in Classroom for Successful Teaching and Learning**

In EFL contexts, a participatory method can benefit students and teachers in a variety of ways, including developing democratic stances, reflection, action, and critical thinking. Furthermore, Ordem (2017) argues that teachers should not shy away from discussing current events in the classroom. Rather, teachers should

bring these themes into the classroom and encourage students to debate them in a discourse. Because critical pedagogy considers education as profoundly political, practitioners should address the issues it raises. Teachers should be seen as teacher-students, and students should be seen as student-learners. Similarly, Santelli et al. (2016) reveal that PAR endeavors take longer than projects performed in isolation because they are democratic. In addition to the increased time required for PAR, additional financing is required to cover the additional planning meetings and conference calls that are critical to continuing communication. In another context, Shirley and Irit Sasson (2020) state that most teachers recognized the opportunity to perform PAR, collaborated with colleagues, adjusted their teaching practices, and believed that they would continue to do so in the future. PAR methodology provides them with a productive platform on which to change their teaching methods and perceptions about teaching and learning. However, Shirley and Irit Sasson (2020) also argue that participants who are not used to working in group feel difficulty to work in group, and executing a work plan and frequent absence of participants create problem in conducting PAR.

Regarding teachers' ability to develop their skills, Ayaya et al. (2020) assert that teachers were able to discuss and develop their own understandings of these topics through PAR engagement. Furthermore, the study found that teachers in a full-service school must be thoughtful, critical, and imaginative in their teaching practices in order to meet the different needs of students in the classroom, abilities that are essential for improving inclusive teaching and learning. PAR was found to be a valid change technique for teaching for inclusion in the study. Finally, Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2007) state that PAR provides opportunities empower the silent group, provide collective support, facilitate change in a practical sense, development of a sense of agency and voice, and becoming critical and reflective on own practice. However, they further argue that developing a sound dialectic between participants can be considered as both the most difficult and the most rewarding task.

### **English Language Teachers' Practices and Perceptions on PAR in the Context of Nepal**

The exploration of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and its implications in the Nepalese educational contexts has been a subject of growing interest among researchers. The background for the ensuing studies can be traced back to Rai's foundational work in 2011, where the efficacy of the participatory approach

in teaching communicative functions of English at the secondary level was demonstrated. Building upon this groundwork, Rai (2011) demonstrated the efficacy of the participatory approach in imparting communicative functions of English at the secondary level. Subsequently, Rai (2021) investigated the perceptions and practices of community school teachers in implementing Participatory Action Research (PAR) in their classrooms. The findings indicated that a majority of teachers exhibited a commendable familiarity with PAR, held positive perceptions towards it, and consistently engaged in classroom-based research. However, a minority of teachers lacked awareness of PAR, viewing action research as time-consuming and challenging.

Khatri (2022) asserted the expansive nature of action research within the social sciences, emphasizing its cyclic occurrence. Given its prominence in education, particularly in the realm of English as a foreign language teaching, practitioners are encouraged to integrate action research to enhance both teaching-learning processes and professional development in nonnative English settings.

Similarly, Acharya et al. (2022) disclosed positive impacts of school gardening activities conducted through PAR projects on students' comprehension of scientific concepts. Another study by Acharya et al. (2022) underscored the utility and productivity of school gardening activities in teaching and learning, providing valuable insights for policymakers seeking to reshape the school science curriculum. The findings highlighted collaborative knowledge production in the contextual school environment, an aspect often overlooked in community school teaching and learning.

Wagle et al. (2023) investigated the potential of participatory approaches in contextualized teaching and learning. They identified the necessity for pedagogical innovations to navigate pre-existing schooling cultures within bureaucratic structures, such as those observed in Nepal. The study argued that any shift in individual and group perspectives must be accompanied by a transformation in regular schooling design, moving from linear closedness to ecological openness, to ensure the sustainability of innovations in contextualized teaching and learning.

Moreover, Kandel and Kandel (2023) demonstrated that Participatory Action Research significantly enhanced students' writing and presentation skills. Collaborative tasks, model presentations, discussions, and feedback played pivotal roles in refining these skills. Conversely, Sunar et al. (2023) contended that

participation and collaboration, integral to PAR, could catalyze transformative changes in educational practices, school communities, and society at large. Despite its merits, the implementation of PAR poses inherent challenges.

The examined studies collectively highlight the significance of Participatory Action Research (PAR) in diverse educational contexts. The research findings highlight the positive impact of PAR on language teaching, professional development, and scientific comprehension through innovative approaches like school gardening. Despite its proven merits, the successful implementation of PAR is acknowledged to be accompanied by challenges. The studies emphasize the need for continued efforts to integrate PAR into educational practices, promoting collaborative knowledge production and transformative changes in teaching and learning methodologies.

The review of literature on PAR practices and perceptions highlights the significant influence of PAR on teachers' professional development and the teaching and learning process. Specifically, PAR is identified as a catalyst for fostering collaborative group dynamics, empowering each group member, cultivating critical and reflective thinking, and facilitating collaborative problem-solving. Despite the theoretical benefits outlined in the literature, the practical implementation of these PAR principles is notably challenging in our specific teaching learning context. This disparity raises a critical research gap, as there is a scarcity of empirical investigations into the challenges teachers encounter when attempting to integrate PAR into their instructional practices. The inadequacy of such research contributes to a noteworthy gap between the intended outcomes of teachers' professional development and the practical application of PAR in the context of English as a second language instruction. Therefore, an in-depth exploration of the reasons behind the challenges faced by teachers during PAR implementation is imperative for bridging this gap and enhancing the effectiveness of PAR in the realm of language education.

## **Methods**

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological narrative inquiry research approach. The research was conducted within the context of Godawari Municipality in Kailali, encompassing three secondary level schools. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select three English language teachers from

each school as research participants. Prior to data collection, explicit permission for participation was obtained through direct communication with the selected individuals. Subsequently, individual interviews, each lasting for a duration of 25 minutes, were conducted with the participants. Additionally, supplementary information was gathered through telephonic conversations. The interviews were conducted exclusively in the English language. The obtained data were meticulously documented, recorded, and transcribed into written format. Subsequently, a qualitative analysis was performed on the data, organized thematically based on the research questions. To uphold ethical considerations, the schools were anonymized as A, B, C and participants from each school were coded as P1, P2, P3 respectively.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The discussion of the findings of the study is based on the three research questions: How the English language teachers perceive the significance of participatory action research in language teaching and learning; what major challenges the English language teachers face in conducting participatory action research; and how participatory action research contributes to teachers' professional development and successful English language teaching and learning. The responses of the research participants obtained from the in-depth interview are discussed under three sub-themes derived from the research questions: teachers' perception on Participatory Action Research (PAR); role of PAR in teaching and learning of English; and challenges in implementing PAR in the classroom.

#### **Teachers' Perception on Participatory Action Research (PAR)**

In this study, interviews were conducted with four secondary level English language teachers from schools A, B, and C. Among the participants, two teachers reported that they have engaged in Participatory Action Research (PAR), while one exclusively conducted action research. When discussing their perspectives on PAR, all respondents exhibited a positive orientation towards this methodology. They conceptualized participatory action research as a collaborative research endeavor involving multiple researchers who observe and provide feedback on each other's work. In this context, all the participants (P1, P2, and P3) combinedly exposed their views as:

It's a kind of applied research implemented in real classroom situation to overcome the obstacles of pedagogic activities in collaboration with students and teachers.

Participatory action research is characterized as an applied research approach implemented in authentic classroom settings to address pedagogical challenges collaboratively with students and fellow educators. It facilitates the smooth and effective operation of classes by resolving day-to-day challenges encountered in the classroom. While acknowledging its theoretical appeal, participants emphasized the practical challenges of identifying and mapping out solutions to such issues in real-world educational settings.

Participatory action research (PAR) holds significant relevance in the educational landscape of our context, particularly in the realm of English language instruction. This approach within the field of education not only cultivates heightened levels of student engagement but also promotes a collaborative ethos towards societal transformation, thereby amplifying the voices of individuals and groups that often find themselves marginalized. PAR functions as a research methodology wherein both participants and researchers collaborate to identify educational challenges and proffer solutions rooted in research. Addressing the inquiry into the insignificance of participatory action research in the context of English language teaching in Nepal, the participant denoted as P1 articulated the following perspective:

It is important to know the way of teaching of our colleagues and to suggest them with some feedback on their teaching methods. We can develop new strategies for teaching, and it helps other teachers to involve in group discussion. It reflects our own practice which helps us to improve our weaknesses and helps in professional development of the participants as well. Collaboration always leads toward success. (P1)

The view of the participants shows that understanding the instructional methodologies employed colleagues and offering constructive feedback is crucial. Engaging in this collaborative process facilitates the formulation of innovative teaching strategies, fostering group discussions among the teachers. The reflective nature of this practice enables self-assessment, thereby addressing individual weaknesses and contributing to the professional development of participants. P1 emphasizes the pivotal role of collaboration in achieving success.

Similarly, the teacher from school B, identified as P2, posited that: What I think is participatory action research accelerates the rate of finding solution. Speaking simply “More heads more thoughts (solutions)”. Through

collaboration we can imagine the better teaching practices according to the students need. It helps to improve teaching and learning activities according to diverse language and cultural backgrounds students and also the professional development of teacher. (P2)

Participatory action research serves as a catalyst in expediting the problem-solving process, adhering to the adage "More heads, more thoughts (solutions)." Collaboration within this framework allows for the envisioning of improved teaching practices tailored to the diverse needs of students. P2 underscores the consequential impact of PAR on enhancing both teaching and learning activities, catering to the linguistic and cultural diversities of students, while also nurturing the professional growth of the teachers.

Furthermore, the perspective offered by the teacher from school C, labeled as P3, can be encapsulated as follows:

PAR is important in the context of Nepal for teaching English because it helps to develop collaborative skills which are important in learning English. Participatory action research allowed teachers to examine and reflect on their teaching practices, which improved teacher professionalism and effectiveness. It means PAR helps to identify better teaching strategies and help to identify the needs that are needed for professional development of teacher. (P3)

In the Nepalese context, PAR emerges as pivotal for English language instruction by fostering the development of collaborative skills integral to language learning. The participatory action research framework empowers educators to scrutinize and reflect upon their pedagogical practices, thereby elevating their professionalism and effectiveness. P3 contends that PAR serves as a conduit for identifying optimal teaching strategies and addressing the prerequisites for the professional advancement of educators.

The responses of all teachers' shows that the entire teacher have positive attitude towards PAR. It seems that all the teachers are aware of importance of PAR. These responses reveal that participatory action research is very much important for developing new teaching strategies according to the need of learners. It helps to improve the weaknesses of each other and find the better solution for that. After having discussion in group provide multiple solutions for the problem which leads people towards success. Furthermore, PAR helps in professional development of teacher. This is also reflected in the study of Nugent (2019), and McTaggart (1991)

## **Role of PAR in Teaching and Learning of English**

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an approach to research that involves active collaboration between researchers and participants in the research process. In the context of teaching and learning English, PAR can play a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of language education. PAR empowers both teachers and students by involving them actively in the research process (Moss, 2014). This empowerment can lead to increased engagement and motivation in the learning of English (Hart & Bond, 1995). Similarly, PAR allows for the investigation of specific contexts within the English learning environment, making the research outcomes more relevant and applicable to the participants (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). This contextualized approach can contribute to a more meaningful and effective English language teaching (Noffke & Somekh, 2009). Moreover, PAR can serve as a tool for ongoing teacher professional development in the field of English language education (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Through collaborative inquiry, teachers can reflect on their teaching practices and implement improvements based on their research findings (Kemmis, 2009).

A participatory action research process aims to improve a program, process, or practice, as well as to solve real-world problems.

In response to the question, how participatory action research help in teaching and learning of English, respondents associated with school A (referred to as P1) articulated the following perspectives:

Participatory action research improves the teaching style. Teacher can implement according to the purpose and need of the learner. It helps to learn several weak points about us and classroom activities. It encourages students to work in groups where weaker students also improve themselves. It improves relationship and leaning between learner. It focuses on the problems to be solved during the classroom. It facilitates effective learning. (P1)

This exposition of the participant underlies that PAR serves to enhance pedagogical methodologies, allowing educators to tailor their approaches based on the specific objectives and requirements of individual learners. It facilitates a comprehensive understanding of both personal and classroom-related shortcomings, thereby contributing to a nuanced awareness of areas for improvement. Furthermore, PAR fosters collaborative group work, providing a platform for the enhancement of

weaker students, thus contributing to the amelioration of their academic performance. Additionally, the application of PAR is noted to fortify interpersonal relationships and the learning dynamics among students. Its emphasis on problem-oriented inquiry within the classroom setting directs attention towards resolving challenges, ultimately promoting an environment conducive to effective learning.

In addressing the inquiry regarding the efficacy of participatory action research in the pedagogy of English language instruction, a respondent (P2) from School B articulated the following insights:

Participatory action research helps teacher to find out the appropriate strategies. Then, teacher can implement according to the purpose and need of the learner. It encourages group activities and group work during the classroom. It develops the concept of collaboration. It is practice based and facilitates effective learning. The students or teachers who are silent get chance to learn in better way in group. (P2)

From this view, it can be inferred that PARP functions as a tool for teachers to identify optimal instructional strategies. Subsequently, instructors can adeptly implement these strategies in alignment with the specific objectives and requirements of learners. This research methodology fosters collaborative endeavors and group activities within the classroom, thereby cultivating a sense of cooperation. Its inherent focus on practical application contributes to the enhancement of the learning experience, particularly for individuals who may be reticent in traditional settings, as they find opportunities for improved comprehension within group dynamics.

In a similar vein, a respondent from school C (P3) responded that participatory action research contributes to the enhancement of instructional methodologies and the identification of various individual and collective weaknesses in both learners and classroom activities.

Participatory action research improves the teaching style and helps to learn several weak points about us and classroom activities. It encourages students to work in groups which helps to find out each other's weak point. It focuses on the problems to be solved during the classroom. It engages all the participants in work. Therefore, it facilitates effective learning. Participatory action research helps teacher to find out the appropriate strategies which are effective for students and can implement according to the purpose and need of

the learner. All the participants equally get chance to learn everything. Both types of students: talent and weak get chance to learn. Collaboration enhances learning. (P3)

Through the remarks of this participant, it is evident that PAR fosters collaborative group work among students, enabling the identification of individual weaknesses within the group dynamic. Notably, participatory action research directs attention towards pertinent issues within the classroom setting, thereby engaging all participants in a collective effort towards problem resolution and fostering effective learning outcomes. Furthermore, it empowers educators to discern and implement tailored instructional strategies that prove efficacious for diverse student needs. Importantly, this methodology ensures equitable learning opportunities for all participants, irrespective of their academic proficiency, as collaboration emerges as a catalyst for enriched learning experiences.

The responses from the participants on the role of PAR in teaching and learning of English language highlight that PAR emerges as a valuable approach in the context of teaching and learning English, fostering active collaboration between researchers and participants. The empowerment of both teachers and students through active involvement in the research process contributes to increased engagement and motivation in English language education. The research discussions from participants in schools A, B, and C collectively emphasize role of PAR in improving teaching methodologies, identifying weaknesses, promoting collaborative group work, and facilitating effective learning. This collaborative approach not only aids in addressing individual and collective shortcomings but also ensures equitable learning opportunities, emphasizing the importance of collaboration in enhancing the overall learning experience in English language education.

However, the response of the participants also reflects that the weaknesses of PAR can be known through the research and appropriate methodology can be used. The use of appropriate methodology, as Shirley and Irit (2020), Nurgent (2019) and Hall (1981) assert, helps in better learning. PAR appears to provide teacher researchers with a deeper and clearer awareness of their surroundings, which is vital for better teaching and learning too. The teacher should teach according to the purpose and need of the learner. PAR also encourages the collaborative learning. Through collaboration participants get chances of learning more. Additionally, PAR focus on research based and student-centered learning which have directly positive impact on learning outcome.

## Challenges in Implementing PAR in the Classroom

Implementing Participatory Action Research (PAR) in the classroom presents various challenges, reflecting the dynamic nature of this research approach. Teachers often face time constraints due to the demanding nature of their responsibilities within the classroom. Engaging in PAR may require additional time for collaboration, data collection, and reflection (Ozer et al., 2017). Similarly, resistance from educators who may be unfamiliar with or resistant to the collaborative and reflective nature of PAR can pose a significant barrier. Overcoming resistance requires professional development and a shift in the organizational culture (Feldman, 2018). Limited access to resources, both human and material, can impede the effective implementation of PAR. Adequate support in terms of training, funding, and access to necessary tools is essential (Stringer, 2014). Moreover, maintaining the momentum of PAR initiatives over time can be difficult. Ensuring sustained commitment from all stakeholders and integrating PAR into ongoing professional development efforts is essential for long-term success (Ozer et al., 2017).

Regarding the question related to the types of challenges the participants are facing while conducting and implementing participatory research, participants from school A (P1) responded that engaging in participatory research occasions feelings of vulnerability, as researchers find themselves compelled to disclose and confront deficiencies in their work to their peers. This potential discomfort arises from the anticipation of limited constructive feedback, possibly attributable to inadequacies in the evaluators' competencies, confidence levels, and substantive knowledge.

Sometimes it brings the feeling of embarrassment in the researcher to get weak points from their colleague. Similarly, there may be slim chances of receiving comments on our work from our colleagues, may be due to lack of competency, confidence in providing feedback and knowledge. Furthermore, lack of motivation, lack of resources, no sufficient time, lack of knowledge about arrangements of research activities and the lack of support of the authorities where I am working creates problem in conducting PAR. (P1)

Furthermore, the experience of the participant shows several impediments hindering the successful implementation of participatory action research (PAR). These obstacles encompass a lack of motivation, insufficient resources, constrained temporal availability, inadequate understanding of the logistical intricacies associated with research activities, and an absence of support from institutional authorities

where the research is being conducted. Cumulatively, these factors contribute to the challenges inherent in executing PAR within the context of English language teaching and learning.

In the context of issues related to the challenges encountered by participants engaged in the execution and application of participatory research, the perspective of a participant from school B (referred to as P2) reveals a comprehensive elucidation. P2 expounds that participatory action research (PAR) is characterized by a substantial temporal investment. In this context, participant from school B (P2) said:

PAR is time consuming. There are many challenges like: problem on selecting the best alternative, prioritizing the alternatives, motivation, relationship between participants, role of co-researcher and other participants, experience of the participants, not sufficient resources, negative attitude of concerned authorities or no support from them. The main issues are related to funding. It is really difficult to continue researcher based and student-based learning classes in our context. (P2)

The multifaceted challenges encompass dilemmas associated with the identification of optimal alternatives, the prioritization of these alternatives, the sustenance of motivation, the intricacies of participant relationships, the delineation of roles among co-researchers and other participants, the accrued experiences of the participants, inadequacy of resources, and the adverse attitudes or lack of support from relevant authorities. This participant underscores the centrality of financial constraints as the predominant issues, emphasizing the formidable difficulties encountered in perpetuating researcher-driven and student-centric learning initiatives within their particular contextual framework. This assertion underscores the critical role of funding as a pivotal determinant influencing the viability and continuity of participatory research endeavors and educational initiatives.

In relation to question concerning the challenges inherent in the execution and application of participatory research, Participant 3 (P3) from School C articulated the following perspectives.

While conducting PAR, we face different types of challenges like lack of smart technology, not appropriate resources for diverse classroom, lack of motivation, lack of needed support from the authorities. The main challenge is that there is no one to provide appropriate feedback. Some students remain

passive all through the time. They do not cooperate with teachers in carrying out the research. Similarly, overcrowding in classes was a problem for the research team, which made professors less enthusiastic about their work. (P3)

This response from the participant (P3) shows that the participants encountered diverse challenges, encompassing an absence of advanced technological infrastructure, inadequacy of resources tailored to accommodate a heterogeneous classroom environment, diminished motivation, and a dearth of requisite support from authoritative figures during the course of participatory action research (PAR). A primary impediment identified pertained to the absence of a structured mechanism for furnishing constructive feedback. The issue of student passivity was underscored, manifesting as a reluctance to engage with educators in the research process. Additionally, the adverse impact of classroom overcrowding on the research team's efficacy was highlighted, contributing to a diminished enthusiasm among professors for their scholarly undertakings (P3). This elucidation underscores the multifaceted challenges inherent in the implementation of participatory research within educational settings.

The responses of all teachers reflect that participants have to face different types of problems while conducting participatory research. The main challenges, as also highlighted by Stapleton (2018), and Santelli et al. (2016), all the participants have faced is due to lack of resources, funding and motivation. Similarly, they further reflect that lack of competency, lack of sufficient time, lack of support of concerned authorities, lack of knowledge about arrangements of research activities, less experience, negative attitude of peoples, no help from the teacher and student side or lack of cooperation etc. Normally, in our context there is no culture if working in group or together which directly create problem while working in group. This is also reflected in the study of Nugent (2019), Dutta (2017), Shirley and Sassoon (2020), and Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2007). However, the participants reflect that those challenges can be solved through the planning along with time frame, by taking help on selecting the best alternative by acting according to priority order. The concerned authority and participants need talk face to face to make clear about importance of PAR and its positive effects on teaching and learning activities and teachers' professional development

## Conclusion

The study explored English language teachers' perceptions of participatory action research (PAR) in language teaching, the major challenges they face in conducting PAR, and how PAR contributes to professional development and successful English language teaching and learning. The study shows that teachers uniformly expressed positive attitudes toward PAR, viewing it as an applied research approach conducted collaboratively in real classroom situations to address pedagogical challenges. The participants highlighted the significance of PAR in developing new teaching strategies, fostering collaborative skills, and contributing to professional development. Similarly, the role of PAR in teaching and learning of English was discussed in terms of active collaboration between researchers and participants. The study highlights the potential of PAR to enhance language education by empowering both teachers and students. The methodology was seen as promoting engagement, motivation, and context-specific research outcomes, contributing to more meaningful and effective English language teaching. However, the study identifies some challenges in implementing PAR, including time constraints, resistance from educators unfamiliar with collaborative approaches, and limited access to resources. The study highlights the multifaceted challenges encountered during PAR, ranging from technological limitations to student passivity and classroom overcrowding. It underscored the importance of addressing these challenges through strategic planning, clear communication with authorities, and a commitment to fostering a culture of collaboration. The findings echo existing research, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies to overcome barriers and maximize the benefits of participatory research in language education.

This research contributes some insights into the positive perceptions of PAR among English language teachers, its role in enhancing language education, and the challenges that necessitate thoughtful consideration for successful implementation. The identified challenges provide a foundation for future research and practical interventions aimed at optimizing the integration of participatory action research in language teaching contexts. Even though it is a small-scale research output, it can be helpful for the researcher who want to do further research related to PAR and it can be helpful for the concerned people who directly and indirectly play vital role while conducting PAR and for the concerned authority who want to make improvement on issues related to PAR.

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**Lived Experiences of Faculty with Disabilities in Higher Education: A  
Hermeneutic Phenomenological Method**

**Mahendra Kumar Budhathoki, PhD**

Bishwa Bhasa Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

E-mail: [mahendratunp@gmail.com](mailto:mahendratunp@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

The number of faculty members with disabilities has increased nowadays in the university because of the inclusive recruitment policy. The faculties with disabilities still struggle with the disable-unfriendly environments in universities, and they are excluded from the research fields in Nepal although there are some research done on school children with disabilities and people with disabilities in family and society. University faculty members with disabilities need to be studied in order to truly address the real-life problems. This study explores the lived experiences of faculty members with disabilities perceived at Tribhuvan University, Nepal. A hermeneutic phenomenological research method within qualitative approach was exploited. Purposive sampling technique was used to select five teachers with disabilities in the study. Disability studies theory was used as a theoretical tool. The major findings are that the disabled faculty encountered mainly infrastructure/physical structure barriers, university policy and practice barriers, the university executives' (un)conscious/ (un)intentional ignorance and attitude barriers in the campuses. The teachers with vision impairment and motor impairment endured through difficulty of disable-unfriendly physical structures, university policy and practices. The findings mean the university environments were unfriendly, hostile and adverse to the disabled faculty. This study may motivate the executives to modify the policy, practices and attitudes to the disabled ones at the university which may impact the quality of the university.

**Keywords:** environment, disability studies, disabled faculty, executives' attitude, lived experience



## Introduction

The number of the faculty members with disabilities in higher education is increasing nowadays because of the provisions of legislations and policy for the inclusive recruitment of people with disability. “As the number of teachers with disabilities increases, education will benefit from the wisdom imparted by their historically disqualified knowledges” (Anderson, 2006, p.373). The faculty with disabilities grapple and suffer more due to partly the conditions of their bodies and partly the structures and attitudes of executives, other teachers and students at the university. “Conversations about disabled faculty and staff on university campuses are rare” (Evans et al., 2017, p.198) and “the experience of academics with disabilities is an underresearched topic in the literature, and it was felt that there was a potentially widespread exclusion in universities that was poorly understood and infrequently recognized” (Barton & Hayhoe, 2022, p. 21). The experiences and values of the teachers with disabilities in universities of Nepal need to be explored for the true implementation of social justice. “The experience of disability is relevant to all marginalized groups – for all groups have people with disabilities in them” (Anderson, 2006, p.367). Studies on students with disabilities have been done, and disabled people have been researched for years. But the issue of the disabled teachers at university has been left to study.

Even the university faculty with disability have been struggling for the justice; they “still fight for a place at the table in academe” (Anderson, 2006, p.367). The universities deploy a great influence on social justice and academic achievements. The universities would be models of having disabled-friendly environments. But it lacks. The experiences of disabled faculties is inattentive for the discourse at the university. The university can truly implement social justice and reduce the struggles of the disabled teachers due to the consequences of the structures and negative attitudes in the universities. The university and campus practices can impact the lives of the teachers with disabilities. “The focus on experience is not arbitrary to the ruling but required” (Siebers, 2011, p.121). Therefore it is important to consider the real voices of the faculty members with disabilities regarding the lived experiences acquired within the university. What are the lived experiences of faculty with disabilities in the university? Why are the structural phenomena as they are? How do the teachers with disabilities adjudge the campus phenomena? Do the lived experiences of faculty members with disabilities expose the exclusion and ableism

in the Tribhuvan University? Their lived experiences cross-examine the executers' attitudes, university policy and educational practices at the university; the findings of this study assist the university executives to overcome the problems and difficulties encountered by the faculty members with disabilities.

The study explores the lived experiences of faculty with disabilities within Tribhuvan University. It attempts to discuss the entire college experiences of the faculty with disabilities.

### **Disability Studies: Theoretical Underpinning**

Disability theory mainly illustrates the issue of disability with social meaning in the societies and communities, but here the reviews of pertinent literature briefly encapsulate disability theory substantially in the context of education.

Disability studies discusses the conditions, consequences and meanings of disability in social contexts. "Disability theory emanates from the perspective that disability is a sociological, economic and cultural thing" (Goodley, 2014, p.3). Disability studies examines the real experiences of people with disability in particular contexts. Juárez-Almendros (2017) mentions, "disability studies is an area of intellectual inquiry that originated in the social sciences and in political movements from the 1970s and that has since been adopted by the humanities" (p.1). Disability generally refers to the disabled bodies that hinder to perform the activities as the abled-bodies do in the society. "Disability is neither a fossilized, neutral thing nor an inherent flaw" (Iannacci, 2018, p.19). The concept of disability is constructed by socio-cultural environments. "Disability studies does not treat disease or disability, hoping to cure or avoid them; it studies the social meanings, symbols, and stigmas attached to disability identity and asks how they relate to enforced systems of exclusion and oppression, attacking the widespread belief that having an able body and mind determines whether one is a quality human being" (Siebears, 2011, pp. 3-4). The human made structures and attitudes make more difficulties and complexities in the society for disabled people. "Disability is now regarded in policy circles as not simply a medical issue but also a human rights concern. A major catalyst for this development has been the social model emphasis on the material and structural causes of disabled people's disadvantages" (Watson & Vehmas, 2020, p.26). Faculty and students with disabilities are contrary to the ableist paradigms in the university.

The university is also a public place constructed by people. The executives with able-body play significant roles to establish the university, and they ignore the necessities of disabled people in the university. “Ableism’s psychological, social, economic, cultural character normatively privileges able-bodiedness; promotes smooth forms of personhood and smooth health; creates space fit for normative citizens; encourages an institutional bias towards autonomous, independent bodies; and lends support to economic and material dependence on neoliberal and hyper-capitalist forms of production” (Goodley, 2014, p.21). University teachers, staffs and students with disabilities struggle with ableism. ”A social justice approach explicitly recognizes and challenges the ableism present in individuals, institutions, and society” (Evans et al., 2017, p.1). Able-bodied people discriminate even in institutions of higher education.

We examine institutional structures, programs, and policies as these are the institutional manifestations of ableism. Additionally, we argue for approaches to disability on campus that recognize the ways in which all members of the higher education community, those with and without disability, have been socialized to view disability and the ways that socialization is reflected in the organizational systems, norms, and assumptions that shape higher education. (Evans et al., 2017, pp. 2-3).

Disabled people have limitations due to their bodies in the university. “Disabled staff and faculty face multiple challenges on campus; they also have the ability to provide counternarratives about the place of people with disabilities in the world” (p.199). They suffer more because of the man-made structures in the campuses. According to Anderson (2006), university teachers with disabilities “engage the political by living with inaccessible buildings, attitudes, and policies... Teachers with disabilities live out a highly personal and embodied politics of resistance while serving as a guide to students in the classroom” (p.375). The faculty with disability face hostile environments in the campuses. They hesitate to return to workplaces due to the structural and attitudinal barriers of the campuses.

Loisel and Côté (2013) argued that the ability and willingness to return to work is the result of an interaction of multiple factors: (a) employees’ psychosocial traits (e.g., self-efficacy, coping strategies, social support); (b) attitudinal, organizational, and physical aspects of the workplace; (c) health care–related factors (e.g., the impairment itself, medical practitioners’

attitudes about the impairment and return to work); and (d) laws, policies, and regulations regarding insurance (both medical and disability) and disability documentation. (cited in Evans, et al, 2017, p.200).

Faculty members with disabilities encounters the organizational, attitudinal and policy impediment. “Academics with disabilities were being put at a severe disadvantage compared to able-bodied academics” (Barton & Hayhoe, 2022, p.21). Brown and Leigh say, “Academics with chronic illness, disabilities or neurodiversity are practically unseen and starkly under-represented in comparison to students with disabilities or disabled people in the general public (cited in Brown & Leigh, 2020, p. 5). Teachers and students with disabilities are taken as a problem in educational institutions by the ableists. “Disability itself has come to mean “unable to work”” (Finkelstein, 1991, p. 8) and Oliver (1999) argues that ‘exclusion from the world of work is the most important factor in what happens to us and the way we are treated by society” (p. 7). Neupane and Niure (2023) “explored the knowledge and awareness of the teachers of special schools regarding the inclusive education policy of Nepal” (p. 83). Lamichhane (2013) discussed barriers encountered by Nepalis with disabilities for school education. The infrastructures and academic environments and activities are not disable-friendly even in Nepali universities. The Nepali university executives do not hear the voices of the disabled faculty members. Although they know the disable-unfriendly environments in the universities, they ignore the issues while making infrastructures and policy in the universities. This study explores the real-life situations that the faculty members with disabilities have experienced at the university. This study examines what and how faculty members with disabilities perceive the university environments, executives’ attitudes and policy.

## **Methods**

The study utilized interpretative qualitative approach; hermeneutic phenomenological method was exploited as the philosophical methodology. It is necessary to explore the lived experiences of the faculty with disabilities in the campuses and university. Disability studies was adopted as a theoretical tool to analyze the lived experiences of faculty with disabilities in the university.

The primary sources for data collection were the faculty with disabilities from the different constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University. The discourse of disability is found in societies, literary texts and public places like university. Here,

the real-life experiences of the teachers with disabilities were taken as the primary data. The secondary sources were books and journals related to disability studies.

The faculty with disabilities from the constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University were the population for this research. Five teachers with disabilities (two vision impaired, two motor impaired and one one-hand impaired) were sampled through purposive sampling from the constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University. The researcher did not find other serious types of faculty members with disabilities in Tribhuvan university. Among the selected teachers with disabilities, two were from outside the Kathmandu valley, and three were from the Kathmandu valley; one teacher was a female and four were males. The required data saturation was reached with the five participants.

A semi-structured interview as a data collection tool was used to direct the conversations with the informants. The interviews took place in the surroundings of the campuses; the probing questions were asked until the required data obtained.

Assent and consent from the campus administration and the participants are adopted for the interviews. The research strictly conveyed the principles of autonomy, privacy and data confidentiality.

The collected data/lived experiences were presented and interpreted with the nature of disabilities of the faculty members. The themes and interpretations of the lived experiences of the disabled faculties were connected with the structures, attitudes and policies of the university moving back and forth. The data were interpreted connecting with disability theory.

## **Results**

### **Exposition of Real-Life Experiences of Faculty with Disabilities**

The objective of the study was to explore the lived experiences of faculty with disabilities in Tribhuvan University; to achieve this objective, five teachers from the constituent campuses of the University were selected with purposive sampling. The University has the inclusive policy in the recruiting process. The researcher found mainly three types of faculty with disability: teachers with visual impairment, teachers with motor impairment and teachers with a hand-impairment. Many faculty who were recruited as the persons with disability have minor disability. Among the faculty with disability, two teachers with visual impairment, two teachers with motor impairment and one teacher with a hand impairment were individually interviewed

for the collection of data. Among those five faculty, two faculty were from outside the Kathmandu Valley and three were from Kathmandu valley.

The teacher 1 and 2 with visual impairment were Assistant Professors of Nepali Education and Nepali at Tribhuvan University. Both the teachers 1 and 2 with visual impairment agreed that Tribhuvan University has passed over the unsighted teachers; the University has recruited some disabled faculty due to the governmental inclusive policy, but neglected the needs of the unsighted teachers in teaching learning contexts in the University (Interviews, December 2021). The unsighted teacher 1 stated that he had to depend upon either other faculty co-workers or students to read the textbooks and reference books for the preparation of the classes; he took notes in braille lipi and lectured in the classes. The teacher 2 with visual impairment expressed that he took help for reading from family members like brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews and students for the class preparation. The unsighted teachers 1 and 2 asserted that they cannot see themselves what new books and new research papers are published in the market and academic areas, they have to depend on other faculty members of the colleges. They expected that at least textbooks could be transformed into audio forms, so that teachers and students with visual impairment could study. They questioned why the University executives have neglected such works for blind teachers and students; the executives' attitudes and behaviours were the (un)intentional discrimination to the teachers with disability as well as the unsighted students.

The teacher 1 with visual impairment stated that while he entered the class, the students felt very odd and doubted about his subject knowledge and teaching skills in the classrooms at the first day. The teacher 2 with blindness confessed that he could not write on the board, and students felt difficulty to note down the lectures at the beginning, and later they have become habituated to take notes from his lectures. Both the teachers 1 and 2 with blindness said that they spoke a bit slow so that the students were able to write some major points of the lessons in the classrooms. Both the teachers expressed their satisfaction to their students that the students showed their behaviours and respects to the teachers; they assisted by reading textbooks in the classrooms and by bringing necessary reading materials from the campus library and other places. The teacher 2 with unsighted said that his some students read some texts at home and told summary to him, and then he explained what the texts have given messages. Such activities enhanced the knowledge and skills of both students

and teachers. The teacher 1 recounted that in a class, two students silently went outside without taking permission, and wanted to come back into the class at the same manner. But he did not allow them getting into the classroom: they assumed that the teacher could not see their activities. The next day the same students asked him how he did know they were going out. The teacher 1 said, “I have lost visual perception but no other sensory perceptions.” It shows general people’s prejudice and misconceptions about the capabilities of blind people in order to know what is happening at the surroundings.

The teacher 2 complained that some employers were reluctant to hire him knowing that he was blind, and he affirmed that Tribhuvan University also compelled to give him teaching job due to the government inclusive policy and his qualifications. Both the teachers 1 and 2 with blindness claimed that they were capable teachers at the University. They expressed their satisfaction that sometimes the campus administrations have assisted them in the context of teaching learning activities; the campus general library was no useful for them.

Both the teachers 1 and 2 with blindness agreed that the buildings of the campus were unfriendly to persons with disability; even new buildings were hostile for the disabled people. The teacher 1 complained denounced that the recently built classroom building had three stairs but no one is disability friendly; such activities were disgusting and discouraging for the teachers and students with disability. He added that the office of the Campus Chief was on the third floor, and he had to meet the Campus Chief on the ground. The teacher 2 complained about the narrow passages in the buildings, and bumpy and stony grounds through which he had to move from one building to another. He added that students assisted him moving from office to the classrooms. The teacher 1 said that students and office helpers assisted him going into the classes. The teacher 2 also complained the even the recently constructed buildings of the offices of the Vice-Chancellor, the Rector, Deans were unfriendly to disabled people. The teacher 2 also connected the difficulty experienced at the building of University Grants Commission, Sanothimi.

Regarding the professional development, the teachers 1 and 2 showed their dissatisfaction to the University; the visual-impaired teachers could be prioritised in professional development. This would not provide benefits only to the concerned teachers but also to the students with disability of the University. The teacher 1 shared that he registered a research proposal for Doctor of Philosophy at Tribhuvan

University, but relinquished his PhD study because he could not manage an assistant to collect the necessary books, journal articles and related materials, and read aloud the collected materials for him; he could not pay for the assistant. He added that he had no extra income besides the regular income of the post lecturer; such circumstances discouraged him to complete his PhD study and do other research publications. The teacher 2 with visual impairment received a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Nepali entitled “*Pragatibadi Khandakabyaka Prabritti*”. He complained that the University Grants Commission did not provide scholarship for PhD study although he was selected. He said it discouraged him to go to UGC, Nepal. Although there were many obstacles to do research works, he shared, he has been publishing some research papers in journals. The visual-impaired teachers 1 and 2 expected some extra facilities like an audio library to promote their profession. The teacher 1 stated that the Evaluation of Committee of Tribhuvan University Service Commission underjudged and underrated him in promotion due to their deep-rooted perceptions on persons with disability; such biases come under intentional discriminations. The teacher 2 seemed more hopeful in promotion than the teacher 1. Both teachers stated that there were no visual-impaired teacher in decision making bodies of the University, and other normal persons had ignored the needs of the teachers and students with disabilities at the University.

The vision-impaired teacher 2 said that he advocated the rights of vision impaired people through writing along with his teaching and other activities. He informed that he has started an Audio Library for persons with vision impairment; his commitment to establish the audio library stemmed from his personal bitter experiences. He said that he made some recorded books and other documents for the blind readers, and he accepted he could not do enough recorded materials due to lacking budgets and volunteers. He expressed that he had submitted many proposals to different governmental and non-governmental organizations; they appreciated the proposals but had not sponsored for the audio library. He said that he proposed to establish the audio library in the Tribhuvan University Central Library, Kritipur, but it did not start. Instead, the TU Central Library asked him for the recorded materials, but it did not work anything about the project. He charged that physically abled persons never realized the significant necessity of an audio library. This is also a discrimination to the teachers with disabilities in the sense of human rights and human value in the twenty-first century.

The unsighted teachers 1 and 2 affirmed that they had to repeatedly prove high performance expectations from students and other faculty in the campuses; the teacher 2 said that he rebuked a teacher for underrating his performance in the class. From the interviews, it can be concluded that the teachers 1 and 2 needed human support for library or field study and taking notes, transports, social security, and technical aids like laptops.

The second serious disability is motor impairment that impedes people's movement or sensation within specific areas: the people with motor impairment have loss or limited functions in their movement or muscle control. In this study, the researcher met a teacher 3 with spinal cord injury who could not move even a single step on feet, and next teacher 4 with loss of limbs who hardly moved fifty meter on flat and smooth path but could not walk on stepped stairs. The teacher 3 communicated that his spinal cord was damaged due to a fall from the roof of a building at the time of completing his master's degree. The spinal cord injury stopped him feel sensations and move his body, and resulted in paraplegia. The teacher 4 had very limited functions in his movement since birth. Both the selected teachers 3 and 4 have used wheelchairs to move from one place to another place.

Both the motor impaired teachers 3 and 4 expressed that they could not get into a building with stepped access. They stated that they could not go up to second or higher floor of the campus buildings. The teacher 3 with paraplegia could move only into the ground floors of the administration building and a recently built building; there were no stair disable friendly in the campus. He added that the entrance passage of the campus was stony, uneven, sloppy way to reach the administrative building: that caused obstacles for his wheelchair. The teacher 4 recounted his bitter experience at the campus, "my wheelchair slipped and turned over on the muddy ground in the rainy season, and next time a tier was punctured when I was getting down from the stepped way in the campus." He was infuriated with the campus administration that the campus could construct flat and smooth passages to the classrooms. The behaviours of the physically normal campus chiefs and teachers agitated him extremely. The teacher 4 said that the campus administrators did not have a feeling of humanity. Both the teachers 3 and 4 spoke that the buildings were unfriendly to disable teachers and students; the structures of buildings and passages on the ground irritated and frustrated the teachers and students with disabilities. They called such irresponsible behaviours as unintentional discrimination, and educated people indirectly did such unintentional discrimination.

The teachers 3 and 4 stated that they could not use the campus library because the library has been managed on either the ground floor with many stepped structure or second floor with stepped stairs. They said that such structures demotivated them to use the campus library. The teacher 4 shared his pain that he could not reach at the mid area of the board to write on the board: the teacher 3 also expressed his irritation to the campus administration regarding the placement of the boards in the classrooms. Both teachers 3 and 4 complained that the arrangements of the desk and benches obstructed them to move around in the classrooms. The faculty 3 showed his satisfaction with the students for their helping him inside and outside the classrooms. He added that there were no proper toilet in the campus for the person with paralysis of legs; he has to return to own home for toilet. He again recounted his resentful experience of visiting the Dean's office of the Faculty of Education, TU; he reached on the third floor with the help of people. He stated that he can open and shut the doors of his home, can go into toilet alone at his home, and he himself can move to the second floor at home. An individual can build disability friendly structures; he questioned why the University did not construct disabled-friendly stairs although there were two stairs and enough space. He affirmed that the university executives have conscious disability bias and intentional negligence to the needs of the teachers and students with disabilities. The researcher also observed the newly constructed buildings like Deans' offices, Vice-Chancellor and Rector were having stepped stairs, but not disabled-friendly infrastructures in the University. He questioned where the humanity is in the University.

The teachers 3 and 4 with motor impairment felt guilty regarding the professional development in the University; their motor-impaired body discouraged and limited them to participate in different academic programmes and research works. They said that they could not do research works and professional enhancement compared with their abled faculty, but still they have been doing reading and writing activities. The teacher 3 informed that he was doing Master of Philosophy in English Education from Nepal Open University, and the teacher 4 completed a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economics from Open University, India.

They stated that the University research centres, Deans' offices, and even UGC call various research proposals and ask to submit hard copy forms and proposals, and determine physical presence for research defences. The teachers 3

and 4 said that it is difficult to visit the concerned offices and manage the assistants many times – first to submit proposal, second for proposal defence, third to submit progress reports, fourth to submit final copy for viva voice and fifth final viva voice (research defence); these provisions demotivated them to participate in different research activities. They interrogated to the UGC, universities’ research centres, deans’ offices and the university executives why they did not allow the technology (email for submissions and virtual/online meeting for viva voice/interviews) for these processes; the use of technology makes easier not only for the disabled but also the physically abled people. The teacher 3 said that the executives know the national disability-inclusive policy, disability rights, social justice, etc., but they coconsciously neglect and exclude the disabled teachers and students from the academic activities. He questioned that why they made rules only for physically abled people friendly; the rules and practices can be modified but the executives are unwilling to change them. The teachers 3 and 4 stated that thus the university as well as UGC segregated the disabled.

The teacher 3 catechized UGC about the rejections of online and distance learning programmes for further studies like MPhil and PhD degrees; in the name of ensuring quality education, UGC has become hostile not only to Open University but also the disabled teachers and students. He asserted that the UGC’ executives consciously made the policy, rules and regulations to segregate and exclude the disabled teachers and students from academic, intellectual and professional development. He hoped that after this research the UGC will rethink about its provision of acceptance/rejection and equivalent of MPhil and PhD degrees completed from open distance learning programmes of the universities and from Open University. Both the teachers 3 and 4 stated that educated people like university executives, faculty, staff and students did not overtly show their biases and discriminations but performed (un)intentional biases to the students and teachers with disabilities in the University.

The third informant was a faculty without a hand in the study, and it was caused by an accident, but not by birth. The teacher 5 without a hand affirmed that she did not feel bad of having disability in the context of reading and teaching activities although she experienced some difficulty while doing other household works. The teacher 5 with a shoulder disarticulation stated that she could walk, speak, listen, read and write well as the general people. She asserted that the co-

workers and students behaved her as the physically abled persons; but sometimes few people have obliquely made fun of her hand. She shared in the interview that other general teachers and students showed their unconscious bias to her gender role and disability. The teacher 5 without a hand revealed that a few girls assumed her as an inspirational idol for their lives. She said

I became aware of having disability when I was doing something heavy works and I had to do all works with a hand; the increased workload for the hand sometimes had minor aches and pains; and doctors suggested to avoid the heavy workload to save the remaining hand and shoulder problem.

But she did not disclose any problem of overuses of the remaining hand in teaching learning activities in the campus. During the interview, she expressed that when she had to copy few lines from books or lecture notes on the board, she put them on a table, and she had to repeatedly move to the table and the board. As the teachers 1, 2, 3 and 4, she (teacher 5) had full self-confidence in her professional skills- “I can”, and they considered themselves as successful professionals in the University.

### **Discussion of the Lived Experiences of Faculty Members with Disabilities**

The issue of disability is concerned with the value of humanity, human thoughts and social justice. “Humans make in interpreting and expressing the meanings of their lived-in experiences” (Kundu & Nayar, 2009, p.2). The interviewees presented the human conditions of the University teachers with disabilities through their subjective experiences. From the viewpoints of the informants (five teachers with disabilities), the educated people have worked and studied in the University and they knew that it is unfair to discriminate and segregate with disability biases. But still the general students, teachers and staff did (un)conscious disability biases to the disabled teachers. All the interviewees affirmed that general persons’ (un)intentional and automatic mental biases stem from the unconscious assimilation with traditions, cultures, values and experience in their surroundings. Discrimination and conscious disability bias in the campuses mainly hindered to inclusive education and professional development of the teachers with disabilities in the University. The respondents stated that inherent disability bias in recruitment and promotion was a major problem in the University; the teachers

with disabilities adjust themselves with the university inaccessible structures and unfriendly policies and attitudes.

The respondents suggested that the University executives and the campus administrators can take steps to counteract disability biases and other biases in the University. Infrastructures, practices and invisible attitude barriers in the University held the students and teachers with disabilities back, rather than their physical impairments: despite having a little progress on disability equality and justice, the faculty with disabilities have been still held back by the University practices, infrastructures that were bias toward the disabled teachers. The teachers with disabilities mentioned that inherent disability bias in the mindsets of the University administrators prevented to make disabled-friendly environments and to achieve the key positions in the University. The teachers with disabilities expressed that the process of performance evaluation of the teachers with disabilities are the same as for general teachers in the university practices and systems; the abled-friendly criteria constructed for the performance evaluation in the University make the disabled teachers worse, and covertly impede them reaching at opportunities.

The University mechanisms usually provide more decision-making assignments, training, research works to the general faculty rather than the disabled teachers; it may be happened due to (un)conscious bias and stereotypes inherited by the administrators. The teachers with disabilities complained that the University's performance management policy and procedure place the disabled persons worse. The general faculty and the disabled faculty rarely have equal access to participation in different activities in the University. Such university policy and norms hinder the teachers' professional development. The informants suggested that the University needs to review the institutional practices and procedures for the teachers with disabilities.

The teachers with disabilities recommended that the University can make the well-planned infrastructures, buildings, libraries, stairs, toilets, etc. that will be easier for both general and disabled students and teachers. The campus administrations and the offices of the Campus Chiefs should be on the ground floor, so that the disabled persons can easily access and take services. The linking paths between buildings inside the campuses should be flat and smooth for the persons with vision and

motor impairment. For vision impaired teachers, and also students, the University can manage audio books, proper electronic support and technological access at the University.

The administrators should be positive to provide various opportunities available in the University. Regarding the facilities that the University has provided to the disabled teachers, the administrators can make easier. The teachers with disabilities do not entertain the general executives' and faculty's complimenting on their academic and professional achievements in the university- "*yasto saaririk kathinaika baabajut ...*": the university executives attempted to show their empathy/sympathy but ignored the needs inside the university. They affirmed that the University must eliminate the (un)conscious and (un)intentional disability bias and stereotypes and prejudices about the teachers with disabilities in the university; then only it will uplift the standard of Tribhuvan University.

### **Conclusion**

The faculty members with disabilities unmask their negative experiences and understanding at the campuses and university. They lived through various obstructing factors like inaccessible infrastructures, unfriendly teaching learning environment, educational materials and pedagogy, limited institutional support, limited cooperative friends, etc. at the university. The discussion of the lived experiences of the teachers with disabilities of Tribhuvan University deduced that they suffer mainly infrastructure barriers, university policy and practice barriers and attitude barriers for their academic performance in the campuses. The faculty have suffered more due to the university structures and executives' attitudes rather than their body conditions; disability studies interprets the people with disabilities agonize more because of institutional and societal unfriendly behaviors. These barriers and negative experiences sometimes frustrated and obstructed their intellectual, academic and social integration at the university. They interrogated the university executives why the infrastructures and practices are as they are, why even the recently constructed structures and practices have been disabled-unfriendly in the university. They responded themselves that the major causes are conscious negligence and ignorance of the executives. Neglecting the teachers with disabilities in the university gives adverse effects on the performance of the university, national goal (disability education and justice) and society. A few modifications on the structures, practices

and executive's thoughts can improve the performances of the teachers with disabilities as well as the university itself.

Although this study provide significant insight into the lived experiences of teachers with disability at the university, there are also limitations in this study. This study has included only five teachers having blindness, leg-impairments (wheel chair users) and one hand disabilities; it lacks other serious types of disabilities like intellectual disability, hearing disability, dwarfism because there were no other types of teachers with disabilities except those three types in the university. These three types of disabilities do not reflect the diversity of the lived experiences of teachers with disabilities at the university. The study included the lived experiences of the teachers with disabilities inside the constituent colleges of Tribhuvan University but not in other colleges and other universities, families and societies. Therefore, the findings of the study are not generalizable to the lived experiences of all people with all types' disabilities.

The lived experiences of the selected faculty with disabilities expose the complexities encountered by the disabled teachers at the university. Ordinary environments at the university vituperate the professors with disabilities. More researches on the voices of disabilities and other minorities must be conducted inside the university to enhance the academia. The lived experiences and stories happened within the university help to create disable-friendly environments and praxis in the universities in Nepal. The inquiry on the voices of the teachers with disability help revamp the policies, attitudes, buildings and other structures at the university. There is a saying- nothing for us without us. Therefore, the universities should involve the disabled teachers in decision-making processes. This study will have a great effect on the university executives in terms of thinking about teachers with disabilities.

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## **Does Work-Life Balance Predict Job Satisfaction?**

**Ujjwal Adhikari<sup>1</sup>, MPhil, Santosh Gyawali<sup>2</sup>, PhD**

<sup>1</sup>Siddhartha Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

<sup>2</sup>Butwal Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

### **Abstract**

The study aims to identify the relationship between determinants of work-life balance (work flexibility, job design, and leave provision) with job satisfaction of bank employees. To portray the relation between variables, a quantitative approach based on descriptive research design is used with a close-ended, structured questionnaire-based primary data survey among bank employees in the Kapilvastu district. A convenience sampling technique was administered to obtain 154 valid responses. The collected data is procured with EFA and multiple regression analysis. There is a significant effect of work-flexibility and leave provision on job satisfaction while job design has no significant effect. The study proposes a framework for work-life balance and job satisfaction with an extensive literature review and statistical analysis. The result can be generalized for the improved performance of employees and to make a better working environment in the organization.

**Keywords:** Leave provision, work flexibility, job design, work-life, working environment

### **Introduction**

An essential component of a productive workplace is work-life balance. Retaining a sound work-life balance reduces stress and so prevents office burnout. Companies could be able to save costs associated with hiring, interviewing, and training while simultaneously boosting employee satisfaction if they could keep competent and valued employees (Parajuli, 2021). The work-life balance considers

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professional and personal lives as complementary rather than conflicting. Initiatives and cultures focused on promoting work-life balance are meant to persuade companies to implement measures that will help employees better balance work and personal obligations (Campo et al., 2021). The antecedents of work-life balance i.e; working hours, career options, job design, and managerial support create a crucial connection with commitments and perceptions of the employee toward the job (Batt & Valcour, 2003). Work-life balance and satisfaction are real concerns for practitioners and scholars alike. Different theories and models propose several factors that affect work-life balance and satisfaction. This study has analyzed the relationship of job satisfaction with work flexibility, leave provision, and job design.

There is a large number of empirical evidence that claims the linkage between work-life balance and job satisfaction of employees. Among the various determinants of job satisfaction, one of the causes is a sound work-life balance that decreases job stress and ultimately reduces the turnover intention of employees (Lenka et al., 2009; Seiders et al., 2007). Job satisfaction in terms of work-life balance symbolizes stress and anxiety, work freedom, and positive social values, which signifies employee retention (Alfayad & Arif, 2017; Pinar et al., 2012; Thies & Serratt, 2018). The issues of work-life balance and job satisfaction of bank employees are raised globally because of the heterogeneity and diversity of job nature (Yazdi & Abdi, 2017; Owen et al., 2018; Ramanathan et al., 2016). Thus, the work-life balance and job satisfaction of bank employees is a prominent researchable issue in the Nepalese context.

The 'World Happiness Report 2021' published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network claimed that Nepal is the happiest country in the whole of South Asia ("Building a Positive Workplace Culture," 2022). Controversially, Giri et al. (2022) claimed intense psychological stress on Nepalese healthcare professionals. Such mental stress may lead to weaker job performance and build up demotivation towards the job as a result dissatisfaction and turnover may occur. Both scenarios exhibited the contradictory psychology of employees towards work life, family life, and balance between them, which offered the logic for current research. Moreover, long-standing scholarly interests are observed about the work-life balance, its incidents, and its consequences (Kelliher et al., 2019). Many big business houses practiced disruptive ways of human resource management and its effect on employees' psychology. As an example, Microsoft has been declared the

best global workplace culture company as per the report of comparably annual best global company culture (Dhimal, 2022). Which placed a strong emphasis on remote and flexible employment arrangements. With this background, it is clear that work-life balance is an important concern even for the Nepalese Banking industry that in turn improves employee satisfaction and organizational performance.

Do work flexibility, leave provision and job design affect employees' job satisfaction? is the key research question so the study aims to explore the effect of work-life balance on job satisfaction of bank employees.

### **Literature Review**

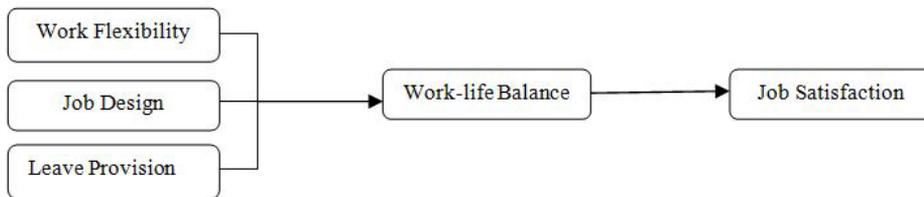
Academia has a huge interest in the topic of WLB, specifically what it is, how to ensure it, similarly the consequences and developing the supporting policies of WLB (Kelliher et al., 2019). Nasution and Ali (2020) define Work-life balance as the freedom of employees which create the working hours creatively and balance the work with the rest of the responsibilities. As a result of implementing work-life balance programs in the organization, employees are not only made to spend time accomplishing their work. However, employees have additional responsibilities outside of the organization such as families, friend circles, and other social involvement, Consequently, it establishes a balance that will make workers happier and more content with their work lives. In a more specific context, Haar (2013) has highlighted the work-life balance between the job and the family, furthermore author provided more insight into WLB as managing multiple roles in an employee's life including work, family, as well as other responsibilities. So, WLB is considered as the balance between work and family outcomes.

The WLB literature covered many theories such as compensation theory, Enrichment theory, Spillover theory, Facilitation theory, and Border and Boundary theory (Khateeb, 2021). Moreover, the most researched panorama within the WLB is concerned with a female's life balance between family and job (Lewis et al., 2007). Work and family were kept separate before but now they are accepted as mutually inclusive domains in case of emphasizing each other (Abolina & Veselova, 2022). The study also incorporated the effect of work on family and also the effect of family on job life.

Out of its practical aspects, it has been designed to encourage the employee to adopt the balance between job life and private life as a motivator factor. The concept of work-life balance is rooted in the belief that endeavors for work and private lives should not be viewed as competing but rather as complementary facets of life (de Janasz et al., 2013). This may be realized by using a strategy that is envisioned as multiple processes that include a reflected image of the needs of both employers and employees, furthermore, the authors stated that work-life balance is a key component of a productive workplace. Maintaining a sound work-life balance lessens stress and prevents burnout in the office. Prolonged stress can even have a bad effect on mental health because it raises the risk of sadness, nervousness, and sleeplessness. Most Nepalese pieces of literature have been focused on financial aspects as determinants of job satisfaction, this study emphasizes non-financial predictors (WLB) of job satisfaction. Based on the above literature review, the research framework is presented in Figure 1.

### Figure 1

#### *Research Framework*



### **Work flexibility and Job Satisfaction**

Work flexibilities have various dimensions. Creating flexible work hours, alternative work schedules, working shifts, and working modes also represent the flexibility policy (Wheatley, 2008). After the COVID situation, working from home has also been viable and getting practiced.

For the good management of employees, a flexibility policy is considered an innovative practice (Agufana, 2015) which leads to satisfied employees and employers as well. The researcher further claims reducing job stress leads to better work-life and work-family balance and ultimately to job satisfaction. The literature has acted as the foundation for setting up the connection between flexibility policy and the job satisfaction of employees. The flexibility of work policy also plays a role in developing professionalism in the job by balancing the other activities

(Casper & Harris, 2008). Furthermore, the research reveals how to lessen the friction between work and home life, which leads to improved employee productivity and effectiveness in terms of dedication and contentment.

For the individual, more satisfaction and work-family balance, and for organizations, longer work hours and effective performance be achieved via flexible working practices (Carlson et al., 2010).

Based on the literature, the study examined the relationship between work flexibility with job satisfaction of banking employees of the Kapilvastu district.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between flexibility policy and the job satisfaction of employees.

### **Job Design and Job Satisfaction**

Job design implies the roadmap of accomplishing the job in their prospective ways. It specifies the activities as per the role of the individual or group involved in day-to-day activities (Oldham & Fried, 2016). Many scholars studied job design in the prospectives of job satisfaction and work-life balance. Kornhauser (1965) addressed the influence of job design on employee behavior in terms of providing the chance to use their abilities. Similarly,

Ben and Moruf (2012) also claimed a significant relationship between job design and employee attitude toward job and organization as well. Furthermore, the study argued for the long-term survival of an organization with a job design by explaining absenteeism, high turnover of labor, and low performance with improper job design.

Fahr (2011) highlighted the evidence of increasing job satisfaction with job design and redesign. Verhofstadt et al. (2007) have shown that the key qualities of autonomy, variation, task identity, and feedback are highly valued among employees who are willing to put their best effort into performing a task which all are assumed as the output of the job design. With these all, it can be hypothesized that job design is a determinant of the work-life balance and have an association with job satisfaction.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between job design and the job satisfaction of employees.

## **Leave Provisions and Job Satisfaction**

Leave provisions cover many dimensions of leave and its practices such as leave permission, paid and unpaid leaves, leave accrual payment, and also cover types of leave such as annual leave, public holidays, sick leave, maternity leave, and parental leave. The connection between leave provision and affective organizational commitment resulted in decreased turnover intention (Casper & Harris, 2008). The study further argued the leave provision has a significant relationship with work-life balance and hence with job satisfaction. A similar fact has also been proposed by (Faroque et al., 2019) more over it, the research explored the connection between employee intention toward leave provision. The literature covered by this study shows that organization policy regarding festival holidays, parental leaves, weekly holidays, and casual leaves has a vital role in the job satisfaction of the employees.

These findings, therefore, show that employees who receive more generous leave benefits from their employer are indirectly more satisfied as they have fewer plans to leave the company.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant relationship between leave provision and the job satisfaction of employees.

## **Methods**

### **Research Design**

Research design is a strategy of obtaining information to conduct a study and generalizing and also providing the answer to various research questions (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). A primary data-based causal-comparative research design has been adopted in this research study. This design enables the generalization of findings in a large population.

### **Population and Sample**

In a recent scenario, Nepalese banks are engaged in merging and acquisition practices. So almost 45 bank branches are operated in 5 main cities of Kapilvastu district. Among these branches altogether 154 permanent employees were taken into consideration as a sample. This study used convenience sampling for survey research

as respondents were selected based on their availability and convenience (Creswell et al., 2003).

### **Data Collection Methods**

The primary data collection method was through a closed-ended questionnaire survey in different sub-urban areas of the Kapilvastu district. A five-point Likert scale was employed to collect the data. The self-administered questionnaire survey was conducted and questionnaires were distributed face-to-face and via e-mail.

### **Instruments**

The questionnaire included two sections named a demographic and content section. The items of the content section were developed on a five-point Likert scale (1 to 5), varying between strongly disagree (1) to strongly Agree (5). The study covers four variables termed as work flexibility, job design, leave provision, and job satisfaction. work-life balance is utilized as a mediating variable between the first three variables and job satisfaction. work flexibility is categorized as scheduled and workplace flexibility. Out of both categories, five items were used to collect the responses of respondents regarding the flexibility policy. Among five, three items were used from (Rothausen, 1994) and (Pagani, 2008). Rest two items were obtained from (Kelliher et al., 2019). To measure the job design, six items were used based on the literature of Menezes and Wood (2006) and Rai and Maheshwari (2020). Leave provision defined by four instruments Andresen et al. (2007) and White et al. (2003). For job satisfaction, three items were self-constructed as per the literature and the rest of the three items were adopted from Weiss et al. (1967) and Lakatamitou et al. (2020). The study used descriptive and inferential statistics for presenting and analyzing the data. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to improve the reliability and validity of the existing scales.

### **Results**

This section presents the analysis of data to reach to conclusion of the study. demographic detail analysis and content analysis are presented here.

**Table 1***Demographic Profile of Respondents*

N=154			
Demographical variable	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 20 yrs	6	3.9
	21 to 30 yrs	108	70.1
	31 to 45 yrs	40	26.0
	46 and above	0	0
Gender	Male	118	76.6
	Female	36	23.4
	Others	0	0
Marital status	Married	94	61.0
	Unmarried	60	39.0
Experience	Below 2 yrs	48	31.2
	2 to 6 yrs	78	50.6
	7 to 12 yrs	26	16.9
	13 and above	2	1.3

The study covers four demographical variables with proper classification termed age, gender, marital status, and experience. A large number of respondents of the age group 21 to 30 years in age-wise and male in gender. Most of the respondents have work experience of 2 to 6 years followed by experience having less than 2 years. The number of respondents with an experience of more than 13 years is comparatively negligible and of ages more than 46 years is zero.

Before proceeding with EFA, as the basic requirement of data, the KMO and Barlett tests were calculated. The value of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.691, the value is more than 0.6 which is an acceptable value for running the factor analysis source. The measure of the statistical probability that the correlation matrix has significant correlations among some of its components is measured by Bartlett's test of sphericity. The value was significant,  $\chi^2 (78) = 886.11$  ( $P < 0.01$ ), which also reflects the suitability for factor analysis. Another parameter of EFA was eigenvalues. The four factors were incorporated in the model having an eigenvalue of more than 1.00. To analyze the job satisfaction variable, those four factors altogether are responsible for 72.028% of the total variance.

**Table 2***Rotated Component Matrix*

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
FP1				0.714
FP2				0.825
FP3				0.794
JD1	0.759			
JD2	0.787			
JD3	0.911			
JD4	0.772			
LP2		0.846		
LP3		0.877		
LP4		0.795		
JS4			0.774	
JS5			0.856	
JS6			0.848	

For the commonalities, the extraction value ranges from 0.610 to 0.836 which is more than the 0.5 threshold, which showed that EFA extracted large amounts of the variance in the variables. The resulting factors were given labels with the acceptable factor solution, as shown in Table no 2, The labeling was done by Hair et al.'s (2010) recommendation that labels should represent factor loadings. The rotated component matrix has proceeded with the extraction method of Principal component analysis and rotation method of varimax with Kaiser-normalization.

**Regression Analysis****Table 3***ANOVA*

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	15.797	3	5.266	6.82 1	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	115.788	150	0.772		
Total	131.584	153			

Table no 3 shows that the  $F(3,150) = 6.821$ , P-value = .000 i.e., P-value < .01 means the regression model of selected variables is a good fit for the data and the independent variables significantly predict the dependent variable named as job satisfaction of the employee.

**Table 4**  
*Regression Coefficient*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.596	0.526		4.939	0
FP_COM	0.218	0.079	0.228	2.779	0.006
JD_COM	-0.098	0.074	-0.109	-1.33	0.186
LP_COM	0.31	0.087	0.274	3.573	0

The estimated model coefficient with significance value is presented as

$$JS = \text{Constant} + \beta_1 FP + \beta_2 JD + \beta_3 LP$$

$$JS = 2.596 + 0.218FP - 0.098JD + 0.31LP$$

To test the hypothesis, the use of a standardized regression coefficient is preferable which enables the regression coefficient more comparable (Ho, 2006). The regression analysis showed 3 independent variables termed work flexibility, job design, and leave provision to determine the dependent variable termed job satisfaction of employees whose standardized (beta) coefficients were 0.228, -0.109, and 0.274 with P-values 0.006, 0.186, and 0.000 respectively. Among them, the P-value for work flexibility is less than the alpha value (0.05), and the P-value for leave provision is also less than the alpha value (0.05) but the P-value for job design is more than the alpha value (0.05). With this connection of statistics, the research hypothesis stated for job satisfaction with work flexibility and leave provision was supported and the hypothesis stated for job satisfaction with job design was not supported.

## Discussion

The discussion over the findings of the study will exist here in terms of stated hypotheses. Among them, the first hypothesis assumed the relationship between work flexibility and job satisfaction. Work-life balance and flexible working arrangements have gotten significant attention (Cannon, 2017). Similarly, the finding of this study also revealed the positive relationship between work flexibility and job satisfaction. On the contrary of the finding, intense activity cause adversely impacts work-life balance mediating in job satisfaction of employees (Rubery et al., 2016). Good working circumstances are key to the growth of employees' well-being and the general success of a firm. However, it might be challenging to manage working circumstances with the right factors. The work environment is facing disrupted modification based on technology, workforce diversity, and globally changing schools of thought over the working environment (Koontz et al., 1976). Hence, working organizations need to be continuously integrated with their concern determinants to access the satisfied human resources and overall growth of organizations.

Another independent variable leave provision is tested with job satisfaction and obtained a positive significant relationship between them. The finding is in a similar path to many empirical research findings. Casper and Harris (2008) claimed the justifiable relationship between leave provision and job satisfaction by keeping work-life balance as a mediating variable. Empirical evidence is not only for leave provision and job satisfaction but also for the intention of retention of job (Faroque et al., 2019). This study claimed the relationship between job design and job satisfaction of banking employees is insignificant relation. The finding may be generalized as there is low attention of respondents towards job design to determine job satisfaction. They do not consider the methods and techniques of doing the job to be responsible for satisfaction. Ben and Moruf (2012) claimed a significant relationship between job design and employee attitude toward satisfaction, which is contradictory to the findings of this study. Furthermore, the study argued for the long-term survival of an organization with a job design by explaining absenteeism, high turnover of labor, and low performance with improper job design. Also, Fahr (2011) highlighted the evidence of increasing job satisfaction with job design and redesign. With these contradictory findings with global empirical reviews, it may recommend for further researchers in Nepalese context.

## Conclusion

The study concluded by confirming the relationships between the work-life balance and job satisfaction of employees. To determine the job satisfaction of bank employees adjustable working mechanisms and rules and regulations have a positive relationship. In addition, the leave provision has a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Employees celebrate the leave as a special occasion and can balance family issues. However, the methods of doing a job i.e. job design have no more determining role on job satisfaction. Overall, the work-life balance has a meaningful determining role in the job satisfaction of bank employees.

Academically, the study proposed a framework for work-life balance and job satisfaction with an extensive literature review and statistical analysis. The connection between variables is justified literally and statistically. The results of the study have important implications for managerial decisions and the well-being of employees. It is essential to comprehend how work-life balance affects job satisfaction when developing treatments and policies that support a healthy workplace, which may boost employee morale, lower burnout, and enhance productivity. Commercial banks can benefit from a deeper knowledge of the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction since they are dynamic, fast-paced workplaces. This knowledge may be used to create employee-centered tactics that provide a more uplifting and durable work environment.

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### Impact of Indirect Tax on the Gross Domestic Product of Nepalese Economy

**Shiva Dutta Chapagai**

Jananyoti Campus, Tanahun, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Email: [shivachapagai@janajyot-campus.edu.np](mailto:shivachapagai@janajyot-campus.edu.np)

#### Abstract

This study investigated the impact of indirect tax on GDP in Nepal from fiscal year 2057/2058 to 2078/2079 based on empirical evidence. Descriptive and analysis research designed was used. To meet this objective, time series macroeconomic data of GDP and indirect tax were used. Data are collected from economic survey, ministry of finance. The ordinary Least Square technique was employed to test the hypotheses formulated. The result shows that indirect tax contributes significantly to GDP. During the periods under review, the growth rate of indirect tax revenue was 16.52 % on average and the average ratio of indirect tax revenue to that of GDP was 9.98 %. The coefficient of determination was 98.4 %. P-value is very low ( $p < 0.001$ ). The hypothesis suggests a positive relationship between indirect tax revenue and GDP in Nepal. The regression model indicates significance, rejecting the null hypothesis. Indirect tax revenue plays a crucial role in Nepal's GDP. The findings also reveal that there is the existence of both a positive and strong relationship between indirect tax revenue and GDP. Hence, the Government of Nepal should search for a way to boost the revenue from indirect tax by mostly supporting the configurations of networks among all the agencies of government and taxing authorities of the federal level, each providence, and local bodies to meet the growth and to facilitate public services for the country.

**Keywords:** Government, revenue, significant, development, Nepal

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## Introduction

A modern government collects required funds through different sources, mainly from revenue and debt. Among different sources, tax is the most important source of government revenue. Taxes are revenue collected by the government to facilitate public services for the country and the operation of its administrative activities (Bhatia, 2009). Taxation is the most powerful instrument available to a Government to collect the required funds for the growth of a country. It is a powerful tool to control a country's economy. The main objectives of taxation are to raise revenues, regulate the economy, boost the economy, the equal distribution of national income, and remove provincial disparities (Dhakal et al., 2023). Tax on these goods and services is included in their prices. Taxpayers can easily shift the burden to consumers at large by selling these goods and services at higher prices (Kandel, 2006). People pay tax when they consume goods and services, and indirect tax is transferrable and does not affect taxpayers directly. There is mass participation because every person pays tax for the receipts of goods and services. It can charge a higher rate for harmful goods, such as cigarettes, tobacco, cigar, chewing tobacco, pan masala, alcohol, and beer to discourage them. The contribution of the indirect tax to Nepali's GDP, total revenue, and tax revenue has always been significant (Dangal, 2018). The tax can be classified into two categories direct tax and indirect tax. The tax that is levied directly on income is direct tax and the tax that is levied on the price of consumption is an indirect tax. Indirect tax is imposed on one person but the burden can shift to another person (Chapagai, 2021). Indirect taxes are taxes collected by intermediaries who bear the possible economic burden of the tax. It can be transferred by the taxpayer to another person. Indirect taxes can increase the price of goods, so consumers pay the tax by paying more for the product. Indirect taxes contribute substantially to government revenue in Nepal. Revenue collected from indirect taxes is an essential source of funding for public services and infrastructure development. The government relies on these revenue to finance its operations and (Dhakal et al., 2023). Gross domestic product (GDP) is the total monetary or market value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific period. As a broad measure of overall domestic production, it functions as a comprehensive scorecard of a given country's economic health (Adhikari et al., 2021). Ghimire (2019) found that GDP and government revenue have been strongly related to the direct tax and indirect revenue of Nepal. Shrestha (2000) shows that

the contribution of indirect tax to total revenue has a fluctuating trend, indirect Tax is found regressive the Nepalese tax system has reflected the overall dependency on indirect Tax. Dangal (2021) during the study periods, the percentage contribution of indirect taxes to gross domestic product was increasing trend from 6.60 to 14.45. Dangal (2022) during the study periods, direct tax seemed to fluctuate and increase. Mannan et al. (2022) argue that the higher indirect tax caused a negative relationship between tax revenue and national income. Honcharenko et al. (2023) indirect taxes are a significant source of Government revenue, it is a sample for the government to impose and collect since they are applied widely and automatically added to the cost of products and services. The above studies and results show that there are positive and negative relationships between indirect tax and GDP.

The role of indirect tax as a major source of revenue in Nepal has been growing over the years. The government of Nepal, in the national budget, increases its expenditure to a great extent. To meet the increase in expenditure, more emphasis was laid on indirect. So, a question arises here; is there a connection between indirect tax and GDP in Nepal? So the primary objective of this study was to determine the impact of indirect tax on GDP in Nepal by answering the following research question: what is the effect of indirect tax on GDP in Nepal? Or how does indirect tax impact the GDP growth of the economy?

### **Literature Review**

The studies examine the impact of indirect tax on the economic growth of Nigeria; the result revealed that has a negative and insignificant relationship between indirect tax and economic growth in Nigeria (Ilabora & Mgbame, 2012). The study examined the impact of indirect tax on the economic performance of Nigeria, the result revealed that value-added tax, has a positive and insignificant impact on the real gross domestic product while customs and excise duties have a positive and significant impact on the real gross domestic product of Nigeria (Akhor & Ekudayo, 2016; Nmesirionye et al., 2019; Laure, 2019). Gbata (2017) examines the impact of taxation on long-run growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, tax has no impact on growth over the long run, whereas indirect tax has a negative effect on growth over the short run. Bazgen (2018) indirect tax will positively affect the economic growth of the Romanian economy. Ahmad et al. (2018) investigated the empirical relationship between indirect taxes and economic growth in Pakistan, indirect tax has a long-

term, considerable negative impact on economic growth while its coefficients in the short run were insignificant. Odhiambo and Olushola (2018) examine the relationship between taxation and economic growth in a developed country the results reveals that taxation has a significant impact on GDP. Nwamuo (2019) the study analyzed the effect of tax revenue on economic growth in Nigeria using root test the results shows that profit tax, corporate income tax, custom duty and excise duty have a positive and insignificant effect on the economic growth and non-oil revenue has a positive and significant effect on the economy. All et al. (2018) the study examines the impact of tax revenue and economic growth of Kenya using the ordinary least square methods. The results reveal that tax revenue has a positive significant impact on economic growth. Adhikari (2019) investigates the impact of VAT on Nepal's GDP; the results indicate that the share of VAT to GDP is not satisfactory. Duravica-Todorovic et al. (2019) examine the linear link between direct tax and economic development in the OECD countries for the study period. The result indicates a statistically significant relationship between tax revenue and gross domestic product in OECD countries. Korkmaz et al. (2019) the study investigates the impact of taxation on economy growth in turkey by using the autoregressive distributed lag approach. The result shows a positive and significant impact of indirect taxes on economic growth and negative significant impact of direct tax revenue. Nguyen's (2019) analysis of how direct tax and indirect taxes impact Vietnam's economic growth reveals that indirect tax has a positive effect, whereas direct tax has no appreciable effect. Shrestha and Kautish (2020) examine the impact of Government revenue on the economic growth of Nepal, the results show that there is a positive relation between government revenue and economic development. Indirect tax and non-tax revenue positively effects economic development whereas direct tax on economic growth is insignificant. Kharel (2021) investigates the impact of tax revenue and total revenue on Nepal's GDP, the result indicates that both had a positive significant impact on GDP, and the tax revenue trend had indicated positive trends. Chapagai (2021) studies the contribution of VAT to the gross domestic product in Nepal from 2001 to 2019 by using the ordinary least square technique. The result reveals that there is a positive and strong relationship between VAT and GDP. The average ratio of VAT revenue to GDP was 4.38 percent. Oluwatobi et al. (2021) a causal –effect study was conducted between tax revenue, capital formation and economic growth, the result shows that tax revenue has a positive

impact on GDP and capital formation. Abd Hakim et al. (2022) the findings of this study indicate that developed and developing countries have distinct effects from direct and indirect taxes on economic growth. Based on the GDPPC of emerging countries, the results demonstrate a substantial negative correlation between direct and indirect taxes and economic progress. Direct taxes do, however, have a strong positive correlation with economic progress in developed countries. The findings indicate a negative correlation between GDPPC-measured economic progress and indirect taxation. These findings suggest that developing nations' tax systems do not contribute to their economies growing faster. It's interesting to note that in both developed and developing nations, the increase of GDP per capita is inversely connected with GST. This study suggests that, despite the fact that the majority of countries obtain their tax income primarily from indirect taxes, such as GST, society does not appear to profit economically from the introduction of the tax, especially in emerging nations. Karki et al. (2023) examined the relationship between indirect taxes and government expenditure in Nepal, the results showed that indirect tax has a favorable and statistically significant association with government expenditure during the study periods. Abata et al. (2023) examined the effect of direct and indirect tax on economic growth in Nigeria, the result shows that direct tax had a negative significant effect on economic growth while indirect tax had a positive significant effect on economic growth in Nigeria. Thus, the literature review reveals that the present research work is an addition to the existing work to analyze the contribution of indirect tax on GDP in Nepal.

## **Methods**

This comprehensive investigation employs a descriptive research design to analyze the contribution of indirect tax revenue to GDP in Nepal based on time series data covering the periods from 2057/20058 to 2078/2079. Secondary quantitative data were used. Such quantitative data were sourced mainly from the economy survey of the Ministry of Finance in Nepal. The study applies the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression and correlation coefficient to empirically estimate the relationships between GDP and indirect tax revenue. Descriptive statistics was employed to present the data through percentages and ratios. Additionally, the independent t-test was employed to validate the research hypotheses and interpret the result obtained from the OLS analysis.

## Model Specification

This paper examines the correlations between GDP and indirect tax to find out the contributions of indirect tax to the GDP of Nepal from 2057/20058 to 2078/2079. To that extent, the construction of a statistical model which inaugurates the relationships among the variables of the study was essential. The review of different empirical literatures existing in the area of indirect tax and GDP for different countries shows that the analysis of selected variables has a linear functional form in their general contexts. Hence, guided by the perceived functional relationship between the matrix of GDP and indirect tax revenue, the link is forged between these two variables. From sub-macro and micro-economic perspectives, the model for this work states that the GDP depends on the revenue collected from indirect tax. Accordingly, the purposeful relationships and resulting models are specified as follows:

$$\text{GDP} = f(X) \quad (1)$$

From the above functional relationships, the working model of the paper is specified below:

$$\text{GDP} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(X) + \mu \quad (2)$$

Where;

GDP= Gross domestic product,  $\beta_0$ = Autonomous (Intercept)

$\beta_1$ = Coefficient of indirect tax,  $\mu$  = Error term

X= Indirect tax revenue.

As the GDP is expected even when no revenue was collected from indirect tax, the 'p priori' expectation is that the model parameter is expected to be positively signed.

## Research Hypothesis

The review of different empirical previous research on this subject area shows that there were positive relationships between indirect tax and GDP for the economies of different countries. To that extent, the present study evaluates statistically by developing the following hypothesis:

H0: Indirect tax plays no significant role in Nepal's GDP.

H1: Indirect tax plays a crucial role in Nepal's GDP.

## Results and Discussion

The result revalues that GDP has increased over the study periods, with a minimum Rs. 4,415, 190 million in 2057/058 and a maximum of Rs. 49,337,000 million in year 2078/079, the mean GDP over the this period is Rs. 19,235,728 million. Indirect tax revenue has also increased over the periods, form Rs. 287, 057 to 7,247,728 million, the mean indirect tax is Rs. 2,287,704. The ratio of indirect tax to GDP has varied over the study periods. This percentage increases, from a low of 6.10 percent in 2059/060 to a high of 14.75 in 2077/078. The mean indirect tax to GDP ratio is 9.89 percent. The percentage increase in indirect tax revenue ranged from a decrease of 11.74 percent to a significant increase of 45.60 percent. The mean growth rate of indirect tax is 16.52 percent (Table 1). These variations indicate changes in the rate of growth of indirect tax revenue, which can be influenced by economic conditions of the country. Indirect tax to GDP ratio measure the proportion of indirect taxes relative to the GDP. It gives an idea of how much of the country's economic output is being collected as indirect taxes. Therefore indirect tax contributed its own share to enhance the GDP of Nepalese economy.

The multiple correlation coefficients (R) is 99.2 percent, indicating a strong positive correlation between indirect and GDP. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is 98.4 indicates that 98.4 percent of the variance in GDP explained by indirect tax suggesting a strong relationship. Adjusted  $R^2$  is also 98.4 percent, indicating that the model is a good fit even after considering the number of predictors. The regression findings also acquaint as F-ratio is 1265.70 and the associated p- valued (sig, F change is) very low (0.000), indication that addition of indirect tax significantly improved the model's fit, which is significant. (Table2). The result indicated that null hypothesis was rejected and assuming that indirect tax makes significant to the Nepalese economy and there is strong positive correlation between indirect tax and GDP.

The result shows that as the autonomous of the regression is positive which depicts that the economy will be having positive value of Rs.43416.961 as the GDP, due the existence of indirect tax during the study periods. There is a positive coefficient of indirect tax and GDP. To that extent, the result reveals as Rs. 1 increment of indirect tax will lead to in increment of about Rs. 6.510 in Nepal GDP. The unstandardized coefficients show the actual value of the coefficients in the

regression model is 43416.961. The coefficient for the indirect tax is 6.510. The Beta for Indirect tax is 0.992. This suggests that Indirect tax has a strong positive impact on the GDP in Nepal. The T-statistic measures the statistical significance of the coefficients. A higher absolute T-value indicates greater significance. For the constant (intercept), T is 7.575, and it is highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). For Indirect tax T is 35.577 and it is also highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) (Table3). The significance level (p-value) indicates whether the coefficients are statistically significant. A small p-value (typically less than 0.05) suggests that the indirect tax has a significant impact on the GDP. In both cases (constant and Indirect tax), the p-value is very low ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that both are highly significant.

The result indicated that null hypothesis was rejected this implies as indirect tax has statistically significant influence on GDP of Nepal during the study periods under considerations. The findings of this study is consists with Dangal (2018), Ghimire (2019) Shrestha (2000), Dangal (2021), Honcharenko et al., (2023), Bazgen (2018), Nguyen (2019), Akhor and Ekuda (2016), Nmesirionye et al. (2019), Laure (2019), Korkmaz et al. (2019), Shrestha and Kautish (2020), Kharel (2021), Chapagai (2021), Oluwatobi et al. (2021), Karki et al. (2023) and Abata et al. (2023) but Mannan et al., (2022), Ilabora and Mgbame (2012), Gbata (2017), Adhikari (2019), and Abd Hakim et al. (2022) is not consists with the finding of the study. Finally, result indicates that indirect tax has a positive significant impact on GDP.

### **Conclusion**

This study examines the correlations among GDP and indirect tax in order to find out the contributions impact of indirect tax to GDP of Nepal from 2057/20058 to 2078/2079 with the applications of the OLS method by using the annual quantitative time series secondary data. The GDP has been steadily increasing over the years, with substantial growth from 2057/058 to 2078/079, indicating overall economic growth. Indirect tax collected has also increased significantly over the study periods. This suggests that the governments' revenue from indirect taxes has grown in line the expending economy. The indirect tax as a percentage of GDP has shown fluctuations tends to increase in recent years. This indicates that the government in collecting a higher share of taxes relative to the GDP. GDP based on indirect tax. The R2 value of 98.4 indicates a strong relationship and the F change statistic's low p-value suggests that the model is significant and indirect tax directly impact on GDP

in Nepal. The result reveals that indirect tax revenue has increased over the study periods which has a positive influence by economic conditions of the country. The coefficients of determination model are good fit and the explanatory power of the variable within the model is high to make strong conclusions. Correlation coefficient (R) is the existence of both positive and strong relationship between indirect tax and GDP. The regression findings also acquaint as F-ratio is 1265.70 and the associated p- valued (sig, F change is) very low (0.000), indication that addition of indirect tax significantly improved the model's fit, which is significant. Indirect tax makes significant to the Nepalese economy and there is strong positive correlation between indirect tax and GDP. There is a positive coefficient of indirect tax and GDP. This suggests that Indirect tax has a strong positive impact on the GDP in Nepal. Indirect tax T is highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The significance level (p-value) indicates whether the coefficients are statistically significant. A small p-value (typically less than 0.05) suggests that the indirect tax has a significant impact on the GDP. In both cases (constant and Indirect tax), the p-value is very low ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that both are highly significant. So, the study concluded that indirect tax revenue plays an energetic role for the GDP in Nepal and it enables to succeed the current growth and transformations plan (GTP) of the country. The empirical investigation in the study reveals that indirect tax has a positive relationship with GDP and is contributing to the economic growth of the nation. Finding the positive relation is important to any economy for some reasons. GDP has increased over the study periods. It indicates economic development and prosperity over the years. The growth in indirect tax revenue is positive sign for GDP. Therefore, the paper recommends that the Nepal government should make a full effort to efficiently collect and effectively utilize such tax revenue through closing the door towards the issues of corruptions which can be possible through making the tax administrations more fashionable than ever before. The Government should ensure effective and efficient use of taxes since they have a direct bearing on the Development of the economy.

The study suggests that the Government of Nepal should focus on strategies to enhance revenue from indirect taxes. This can be achieved by fostering collaboration and coordination among various Government agencies, tax authorities at the federal, provincial and local levels. Strengthening these networks can not only encourage economic development but also facilitate the provision of public services for the benefit of the country.

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## Appendix

**Table 1**

*GDP and indirect tax*

"In Ten Million"

Year	GDP (Expenditure method) at current price	Total Indirect tax	Indirect tax to GDP	Percentage increase of indirect tax
2057/2058	44,151.90	2870.57	6.50	0.00
2058/2059	45,944.23	2872.43	6.25	0.06
2059/2060	49,223.13	3001.41	6.10	4.49
2060/2061	53,674.90	3626.04	6.76	20.81
2061/2062	58,941.20	4103.29	6.96	13.16
2062/2063	65,408.40	4346.23	6.64	5.92
2062/2064	72,782.70	5214.64	7.16	19.98
2064/2065	81,566.30	6206.78	7.61	19.03
2065/2066	98,827.20	8273.12	8.37	33.29
2066/2067	119,277.40	12045.3	10.10	45.60
2067/2068	136,695.40	13159.46	9.63	9.25
2068/2069	152,734.40	15527.54	10.17	18.00
2069/2070	169,501.10	18781.2	11.08	20.95
2070/2071	223,253.00	22770.66	10.20	21.24
2071/2072	242,364.00	25746.49	10.62	13.07
2072/2073	260,818.00	28953.94	11.10	12.46
2073/2074	307,714.00	38658.95	12.56	33.52
2074/2075	345,595.00	48027.14	13.90	24.23
2075/2076	385,893.00	54418.42	14.10	13.31
2076/2077	388,870.00	48031	12.35	-11.74

2077/2078	435,255.00	64182.96	14.75	33.63
2078/2079	493,370.00	72477.28	14.69	13.35
		Minimum	Maximum	Mean
GDP (Expenditure method) at current price (Rs.)		44151.90	493370.00	192357.28
Total Indirect tax (Rs.)		2870.57	72477.28	22877.038
Indirect tax to GDP (%)		6.10	14.75	9.89
Growth rate of indirect tax (%)		-11.74	45.60	16.52

Sources: Economy survey, Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal 2060/2061, 2067/2068, 2071/ 2072, 2075/2076 and 2078/2079)

**Table 2**

*Model Summary on the Relationship between Indirect Tax and GDP*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.992 <sup>a</sup>	.984	.984	18362.21807	.984	1265.703	1	20	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Total Indirect tax

b. Dependent Variable: GDP (Expenditure method) at current price

Sources: Calculation on the base of SPSS software

**Table 3**

*Model Specification*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	43416.961	5731.698		7.575	.000	31460.850	55373.073
<sup>1</sup> Total Indirect tax	6.510	.183	.992	35.577	.000	6.129	6.892

a. Dependent Variable: GDP (Expenditure method) at current price

Sources: Calculation on the base of SPSS software.

## **Construction of Skyscrapers: Boon or Bane from an Economic Perspective**

**Nitya Chaudhary**

University of Toledo, Ohio, USA

Email: [nityachau@gmail.com](mailto:nityachau@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

The main objective of this paper is to explore the influence of the construction of skyscrapers on a nation's economy. It explores how skyscrapers influence the economic status of the nation worldwide. Drawing from an extensive literature review and the researcher's insights, the article underscores the growth of Asian and Western skyscrapers and their influence on the nation's economic status. It places equal emphasis on the historical aspects, with a vital role regarding the nation's economy and the economic crisis due to the construction of skyscrapers. Thematically, the researcher analyzed the literature regarding the construction of skyscrapers and its impacts and challenges. Firstly, the role of skyscrapers on the economic growth of a nation is described in detail, and the data related to Asian and Western high-rise buildings is reviewed. It shows that skyscrapers play a vital role in developing the economic condition of some nations. Secondly, the influence of the construction of tall buildings is also reviewed deeply, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by the people and nation, like the economic crisis due to significant investments in skyscrapers. Overall, the high skyscrapers are the glory and identity of the nation. It enhances the nation's economic progress rather than being a burden.

**Keywords:** Skyscrapers, nations' glory, economic growth, nations' economy

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## Introduction

In the 19th century, the invention of the elevator based on hydraulic principles caused engineers to construct tall buildings (Ray & Roy, 2018). The development of highly advanced technology in the engineering field also forced to build the high skyscrapers. The ten-story home insurance building made of steel frames is considered the first skyscraper in Chicago, USA (Ali & Al-Kodmany, 2012). Further, they added that the progress in developing high-rise buildings was seen after World War II, especially in the USA and other European countries, including Middle Eastern Asia. Along with the advanced technology, the construction of tall buildings supports the preservation of the land utilized in various public places like parks, open spaces, etc. In urban planning, horizontal growth can deteriorate the land meant for public use, agriculture, and nature preservation. As a result, the government of any nation can effectively utilize space by constructing tall vertical buildings without taking up much physical land.

However, skyscrapers have always been a controversial issue since the 19th century. Having skyscrapers in major cities is vital to that country's economic growth. Some experts identify the skyscrapers as a measure of prosperity for the nation, and the construction of the skyscrapers preceded major financial corrections and turmoil in the economic institutions (As cited in Lawrence, 1999). However, other experts believe that the economic crisis occurs due to more investment in skyscrapers. Because of more investment, the relationship between the average size of the buildings and the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate is negative (Barr & Luo, 2021). From the literature, It is seen how the construction of skyscrapers destroys the appearance of the urban city and causes environmental pollution. Also, the perception trend towards the construction of skyscrapers and their influence on the economy differs in various chronological periods with reference to the nation's GDP. The ideas mentioned above on skyscrapers and their influence on several issues prompt the researcher to explore the influence of the construction of skyscrapers on the economy of the nation. As Oldfield and Wood (2009) denotes that the skyscrapers are considered to be the pride and prosperity of nations worldwide.

According to the information gathered during this research, It can be argued that constructing skyscrapers plays a vital role in the growth of a country's economy as it can be a sign of the nation's progress.

Defining skyscrapers is important to understand how they impact countries. Skyscrapers can be described as the construction of tall buildings with certain criteria of the nation. Sethi (2021) claims that the American system of classifying skyscrapers based on their height is accepted worldwide as “150 m to 300 m tall buildings” categorized as skyscrapers. Similarly, Pilch (2021) defines skyscrapers as multi-storied buildings whose height is more than 100 m. However, the definition of skyscrapers has been changing day by day. It is “the architectural output of the twentieth-century or modern capitalistic society” (Thornton, 2012). Besides, skyscrapers are classified into two categories - residential skyscrapers and commercial skyscrapers. Both types of skyscrapers support the economic activities of the city or the country. The skyscrapers index/skyscrapers effect is a financial indicator predicting severe economic changes, which Lawrence coined in 1999 (Thornton, 2012). Hence, skyscrapers are huge buildings in which the country has invested lots of money and time for construction.

In this modern architectural era, the aspiration of the people is to leave aside and reach the sky mind setup to enhance people’s attraction towards tall buildings. The vital reason behind the construction of skyscrapers is the demand of people due to the increment in the population of the city area. For this, vertical expansion of the building is more beneficial than horizontal expansion in urban areas. The main reason is that the horizontal expansion occupies more land and destroys the beauty of the city. Instead of this, the construction of megastructures helps to save time and fuel for the people who have to travel from one office or company to another. Besides, the other land can be used for various purposes like plazas, parks, playgrounds, and other community spaces. Finally, the skyscrapers become the glory of the nation and the main scaffolder for the nation's economic growth.

Based on the primary purpose of the tall buildings, they are categorized into four groups which are as follows:

**Table 1***Classification of Skyscrapers*

S.N.	Categories	Purpose	Remarks
1	Office buildings	Conduct of business	
2	Hotel Buildings	Comfortable lodging	Hotel residence
3	Residential and apartment buildings	Individual dwelling or living units	
4	Mix-use buildings	Offices, apartments, residences, and hotel rooms are in separate sections of the same building.	

Table 1 also justifies the reason behind the construction of the high skyscrapers; however, most of the nation wants to show the identity and glory of the nation in this world. Thus, there is various reason behind the tall buildings.

**Origin and Development of Skyscrapers**

The first skyscraper is a Home Insurance Building in Chicago with 138 feet, which was finished in 1885. From 1885 to now, 90 buildings have been categorized as skyscrapers. Out of the tallest buildings, the world's top ten tallest buildings are as follows:

**Table 2***World's Top Ten Tallest Building*

Rank	Name	Address	Height(m)	Floors	Year
1	Burj Khalifa	Dubai, UAE	828	163+2 below	2010
2	Merdeka 18	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	678.9	118+5 below	2023
3	Shanghai Tower	Shanghai, China	632	128+5 below	2015
4	Abraj Al-Bait Clock Tower	Mecca, Saudi Arabia	601	120 +3 below	2012
5	Ping An International Finance Tower	Shenzhen, China	599.1	115+5 below	2017
6	Lotte World Tower	Seoul, South Korea	554.5	123+6 below	2017
7	One World Trade Center	New York, US	541.3	94+ 5 below	2014

8	Guangzhou CTF Finance Center	Guangzhou, China	530	111+5 below	2016
8	Tianjin CTF Finance Center	Tianjin	530	97+4 below	2019
10	China Zun	Beijing, China	527.7	119+8 below	2018

Source: *Top 10 Tallest Buildings in The World 2023*, March 8, 2023, <https://tinyurl.com/2p8trssf>

The aforementioned top ten tallest-rise buildings are modern in terms of architectural design, structure, and materials used for construction. The topmost building is Burj Khalifa, with 163 floors and 2 below ground, completed in 2010, whereas the tenth building is China Zun, located in Beijing, China, completed in 2018. The Latest skyscraper (678.9 m in height) was completed in 2023, which is located in Malaysia.

In the late 19th and mid-20th centuries, economic activities became more concentrated in urban areas, despite the annexation of large rural tracts into existing urban areas (Kim, 2002). In this regard, Helsley and Strange (2008) claims that ego-driven motives can result in a competition for height with the victor claiming the coveted title of "tallest building." Supertall structures also play a crucial role in regional or national redevelopment plans, as evidenced by iconic landmarks like the Twin Towers in New York, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, and the Petronas Towers in Malaysia. These impressive buildings serve as a beacon to attract tourism, local investment, and job opportunities, signaling to the world that the region is ready and open for business. Similarly, Barr et al. (2014) shows extreme building height is often a leading indicator of economic growth, with the tallest buildings typically completed near the peak of a cycle.

In this context, the construction of tall buildings in various countries takes on added significance to the nations' economy. It becomes a vital step in addressing the economic challenges the country faces and aligning the business practices with the principles of vertical expansion of the buildings in stead of the horizontal expansion. The researcher was curious to find out either the skyscrapers are boon or bane to the nations as well as individual people of the nation. This study seeks to explore the role of skyscrapers in economic growth of the nation. By examining the influence of the skyscrapers, this paper aims to shed light on the influence of the constructed tall

buildings regarding economic crisis and other adverse impacts of the skyscrapers. Finally, the challenges and opportunities of the constructed high-rise buildings in the selected area.

## **Methods**

The research paper utilized a combination of literature review and the researcher's personal insights to develop its conceptual parts. Firstly, the researcher extensively searched the academic articles and e-books through google scholar and other websites. This makes the researcher conceptually clear about the major issues of the article. By applying purposive sampling method to select the representative research papers, whose main criteria was the relevancy of the contents with the research themes and sub-themes. The sampled papers were critically aligned with the focus of the study.

The research approach primarily included a comprehensive and analytical review of the selected literature. The researcher critically analyzed the article for extracting the influence of the construction of the tall buildings in the Asian and Western world. The overarching goal of this paper was to analyze the influence of constructed tall buildings within Asian and western nations. By drawing from the specific context of some Asian Countries and Western countries, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into the role of skyscrapers in developing economic condition of the particular nations and the adverse impact of the construction of skyscrapers in terms of economic crisis and others. The selected literatures were classified and analyzed them thematically- Role of skyscrapers on economic growth, influence of skyscrapers and challenges and opportunities of the high-rise buildings.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Role of Skyscrapers on Economic Growth**

Skyscrapers have a significant role in the nation's economic growth and prosperity by fulfilling the huge demand for residential and commercial lease space. In this context, Sethi argues that the skyscrapers' verticality is the city's economic prosperity and acts as an artistic expression of a magnificent scale. The cities like Mumbai, Dubai, and Beijing have a high population density and no excess land for horizontal expansion. The residential skyscrapers of those cities act as a fundamental

force for the increment of economic prosperity, whereas commercial skyscrapers act as an attraction for tourists. For example, The Empire State Building is the symbol of American ingenuity and power, the Park venue (residential skyscraper), the Lotte world tower of Korea is an important tourist spot, etc. For these reasons, constructing skyscrapers makes the nation economically sound, strengthening the city's prosperity and its citizens' aspirations.

Additionally, the growth of a nation's economy increases due to the determinants (population density, GDP) behind the construction of skyscrapers. The drivers behind the building may be internal or external, which plays a decisive role in its construction. As Barr and Luo (2021) indicate, the drivers behind China's recent boom in skyscraper construction are economic fundamentals and political incentives, strategic interaction, population density, and the nation's GDP. In addition, the country's political stability and strategies, including interaction with the cross-city, also enhance the construction of the skylines. In the first phase, I agree with the determinants indicated by Barr and Jingshu, which have an essential role in constructing skyscrapers. Due to the determinants mentioned above of the skyscrapers, the construction of many skyscrapers is possible in the nation. So, with the completion of several skyscrapers, citizens, and foreigners will get the maximum opportunity for the business cycle, enhancing the nation's economy.

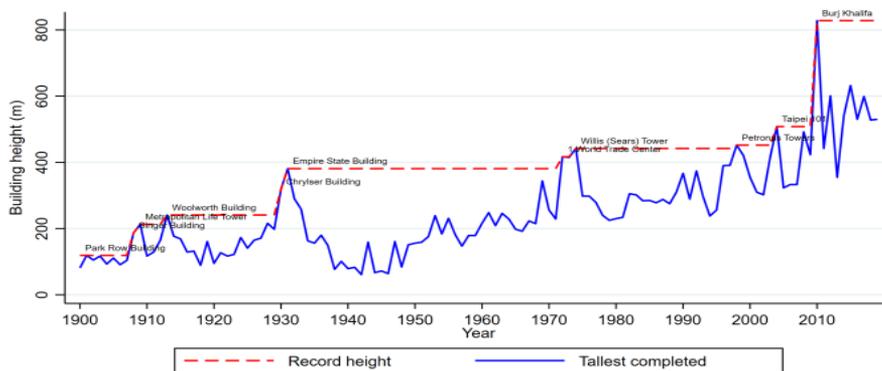
As skyscrapers reflect the nation's glory, they parallel the country's economic cycle. The mega-tall buildings are constructed to “advance the world status and increase competitiveness on the global stage” (Oldfield & Wood, 2009). Most of the world's tallest buildings are named in the name of the city and country in which they exist, such as the Burj Dubai, Shanghai Tower, Chicago Spire, etc. Along with this, there is a close relationship between the nation's economic cycle and the construction of skyscrapers. They analytically prove in the paper that the skyscrapers were completed in 2008 despite the global economic recession. Although the economic slowdown affects the construction of tall buildings worldwide, “history indicates that the world will come out of recession, and it does so, confidence in the construction of markets will return” (Oldfield & Wood, 2009). Hence, after the skyscrapers' completion, the country's economic upliftment is possible with its advanced glory.

Moreover, the role of skyscrapers, especially in the city areas, is important in overcoming the problems raised by the crowded city, the destruction of agricultural

land, and the lack of residential land. The developed cities face problems like population density and the need to create vertical residence expansion. As The construction of skyscrapers was a lucrative and exciting development for the US as a growing capitalist nation. Besides, skyscrapers positively impact emerging markets, employment, the attraction of foreign investors in the market, and so on. Pilch (2021) concludes, “skyscrapers are seen as an image of proper management in the economic sphere and socio-economic development of the country”. This proves that skyscrapers are symbols of success and development in the country's socioeconomic status. Likewise, the completed number of skyscrapers positively influences the GDP of a country like France. In addition, the well-managed tall buildings attract business and tourists (Ahlfeldt & Barr, 2021). Hence, we can say that well-designed skyscrapers can enhance the socioeconomic status of the nation. As shown in Figure 1. The economic growth in the case of North America and Asia.

**Figure 1**

*Tallest Skyscraper Building in North America and Asia*



Note: Source: <https://www.skyscrapercenter.com/>

### **Influence of Skyscrapers**

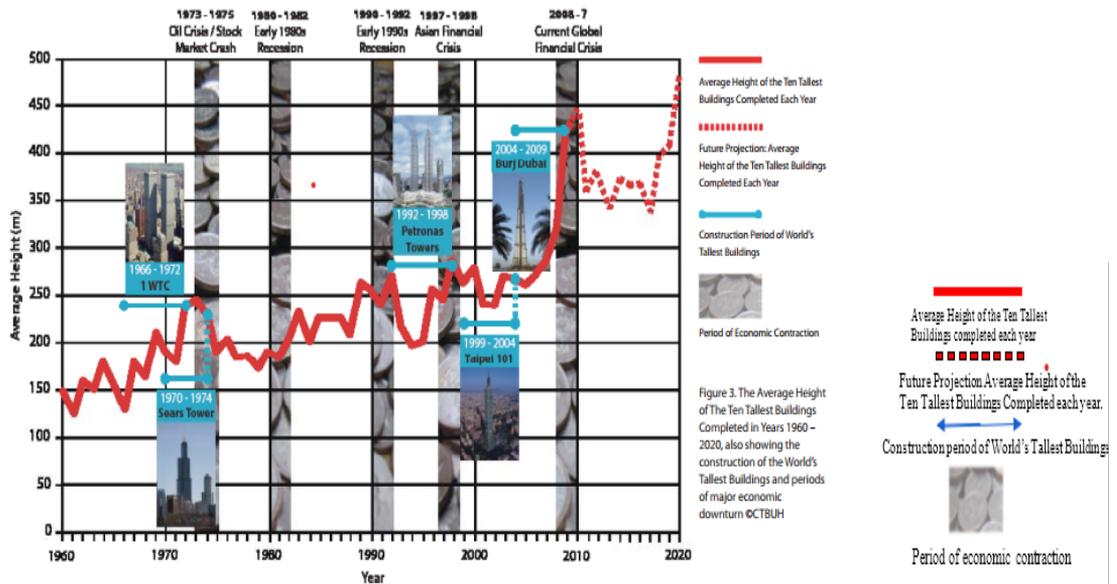
Admittedly, many people believe skyscrapers have structural vulnerabilities and risks that outweigh their benefits. Although technology keeps improving its resilience to earthquakes and other natural calamities, skyscrapers are challenging to handle. Due to their vastness and the difficulty in evacuating people, fire is a particular issue. Some people argue that the construction of skyscrapers is the basis for the socioeconomic aspects of the nation. However, skyscrapers may cause harm

to the system of economic conditions like the business cycle, GDP, environment, etc. (Thornton, 2012) agrees that “The initiation of construction of a new record-breaking skyscraper preceded major financial corrections and turmoil in economic institutions” (cited in Lawrence, 1999).

Further, the economic crisis has been pointed out by Thornton chronologically with the construction of the world's tallest buildings. An economic crisis means a downturn in “financial markets, economic recession or depression, and significant increases in unemployment” (Thornton, 2012). The effects of skyscrapers in some countries negatively impact the economic growth and lifestyles of the citizens. However, with innovations of new technology in the engineering sector, risks of natural calamities have been reduced, and skyscrapers are becoming the secure place where most economic activities can be continued.

**Figure 2**

*Economic Crisis around the World after the Completion of Skyscrapers*



Note: *The average height of the 10 tallest buildings completed in years from 1960 -2020, Source: (Oldfield & Wood, 2009).*

The above figure clearly shows the construction of the world's tallest building and the period of a major economic downturn. It presents the stock market crash in the 1970s, the economic recession during the 1980s and 1990s, the Asian financial crisis in 2000, and the global financial crisis in 2004-2009. During some decades, adverse effects can be observed in the aforementioned periods of time. As Vijayasree (2019) Observing the urban landscape and social surroundings while soaring in a skyscraper can create a sense of connectedness. The experience can be stimulating and exciting, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

The topography of New York and Chicago's natural surroundings is generally flat. Nevertheless, the urban landscape is now dominated by skyscrapers and high-rise buildings, transforming the cities into towering mountains and canyons. The earlier architecture of average and low-rise buildings has been overshadowed by these towering structures, completely altering the landscape. This trend in urban planning has rapidly spread worldwide over time (Golovina & Oblasov, 2018).

High-rise buildings are commonly associated with high resource consumption. They require large amounts of building materials during construction, significant amounts of energy for building operations, and result in huge waste amounts when demolished at the end of their life cycle (Ahmad et al., 2017). Similarly, Gifford (2007) review of research on high-rise buildings reveals that they are typically less satisfactory for residents than other housing forms. Social relations are impersonal, crime rates are higher, and helping behavior is less common. Additionally, high-rises are suboptimal for children's wellbeing. In this way, the High-rise residences evoke fears of falling, being trapped during a fire, building collapse due to an earthquake, attack, crime, lack of social support, absence of community, and communicable diseases.

After analyzing the aforementioned description on role and influences of the skyscrapers on the economy of the nations, some of the challenges and opportunities regarding construction tall buildings can be summarized as follows.

### ***Difficult to Manage Operational Costs***

Tall buildings often come with higher operational costs, which can include expenses related to energy consumption, elevator maintenance, and emergency response preparedness, among others. Additionally, during tough economic times, skyscrapers may not generate enough sales or rental value to recover their high design, material, and detailing costs, which in turn also support their mortgage and operational expenses.

### ***Environmental Issues***

Tall buildings can have adverse effects on the microclimate due to wind funneling and turbulence around their base, which can cause inconvenience for pedestrians. Additionally, tall buildings can cast large shadows that block sunlight and affect adjacent properties. Towers can also be environmentally damaging if they fail to incorporate energy-efficient design solutions in their heating, cooling, and ventilation systems. However, tall buildings can also have potential environmental advantages, such as ample access to sunlight and wind for the incorporation of solar panels, photovoltaic cells, and wind turbines. Ahmad et al. (2017) indicated that high-rise buildings have positive effects on the effectiveness of both the building and natural systems, but can have negative impacts on human psychological needs.

### ***Public Problems***

Tall buildings have the potential to cause problems, such as overcrowding in the surrounding areas which can lead to a decrease in the overall quality of life. Therefore, it is essential to plan for the building's long-term function to mitigate these issues. One of the major issues associated with tall buildings is an increase in demand on transportation and infrastructure. To address this, it may be necessary to expand traffic capacities on roads and intersections and to increase the number of public transit options. However, these solutions require significant public works and construction.

### ***Social Concerns***

High-rise buildings have a negative impact on human beings as they tend to isolate people from each other, which is a significant factor in the increasing crime rate. Children are affected even more as they lose their direct connection with nature and other children. High-rise buildings also work against society as they hinder the

functioning of social units such as families and neighborhoods, which can no longer operate as naturally and normally as before. In Hong

Kong, a high-rise, high-density city, interview results suggest that the overall sense of residential community is low (Forrest et al., 2002). Similarly, Gifford and Lacombe (2006) that found a strong link between housing conditions and child behavioral problems.

### ***Safety Concerns***

Ensuring safety in tall buildings during emergencies is challenging. Many people are afraid of getting trapped during a fire in the upper floors of a tall building. Despite such natural feelings of danger, it is comforting, however, to know that available data and statistics reveal relatively small percentages of injuries and property damage caused by fire in tall buildings.

## **Opportunities Created by the High-rise Buildings**

### ***Accommodation for Migrated Population***

One of the biggest challenges facing urban areas around the world is the rapid increase in population, particularly in areas like Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Such population can't be accommodate in horizontal expansion of the buildings and high rise buildings are the solutions (Al-Kodmany, 2018). As more people move to cities and accumulate wealth, the need for more living space becomes critical. The horizontal expansion of cities is becoming more and more difficult, leaving us with no option but to build taller buildings to accommodate the growing population.

### ***Local to Globalization***

Globalization has greatly contributed to the growth of local economies, resulting in the construction of tall buildings. In the 1970s, the City of Shenzhen in China was a small fishing village. However, due to global forces and foreign investment, it has transformed into a modern city with skyscrapers dominating the skyline (Al-Kodmany, 2018). Shun Hing Square, one of the tallest towers in the world, is a testament to this transformation and it competes with the nearby towers of Hong Kong. Foreign investors have poured billions of dollars into building factories and forming joint ventures in the city.

### ***Land Preservation***

Tall buildings have the ability to accommodate a large number of people on a smaller land area compared to low-rise buildings. This makes them an ideal solution for preserving open and natural spaces. By expanding vertically, tall buildings help in maintaining public space, agricultural lands, and wilderness. They also maximize building area while occupying a minimum physical footprint. As Murphy et al. (2008) indicated that accommodating the same number of people in a tall building of 50 stories versus five stories requires about one-tenth of the land.

### ***Economy for Transportation and Infrastructure***

Tall buildings are often considered as an effective form of compact development that can help reduce travel distances and carbon emissions. Compact development is necessary because the expansion of cities into suburbs has led to an increase in travel time and energy consumption. Compact development also provides more opportunities for combining journeys. For instance, lunch breaks and commutes to and from work can be utilized for running errands such as shopping, banking, and going to the library or dry cleaners. This way, people can make the most of their journeys. A concentration of multi-story buildings reduces the costs and energy required for transportation and urban services. As Oldfield et al. (2009) identified that it reduces 20%-40% driving in US.

### ***Utilization of Emerging Technologies***

With the evolution of tall buildings, engineering and technology have made significant strides. As technology continues to advance, architects now have the opportunity to construct even taller buildings with the latest and most beautiful designs. Developers and architects aim to enhance their business and reputation by utilizing new technologies and aesthetics. Through innovative projects and technology, they are pushing the boundaries of architecture and expanding its potential for unconventional designs while changing how society perceives architecture. Al-Kodmany (2018) illustrated that "The prevalent green movement has propelled the design of high-performance tall buildings by employing intelligent technologies and smart materials."

## Conclusion

Despite having so many controversies, the construction of skyscrapers is beneficial to the country and its citizens. Skyscrapers are considered the pride and prosperity of the nation across the world. Most countries have invested in the construction of tall buildings for their identity worldwide. Additionally, the drivers behind the construction play a decisive role in its construction. We have been familiar with the upliftment and downturn economically of the nation around the world. Similarly, skyscrapers are the symbol of success and development along with economic growth. However, economic turmoil, economic recession or depression, and increased unemployment are the skyscrapers' negative impacts. The construction of skyscrapers generates many more challenges and opportunities for the public as well as the nation itself regarding economic, environmental, globalization and engineering perspectives. The challenges like social concerns- people may shows unsocial behaviour due to multi-storied building which detach people from each other. Similarly, difficult to overcome extra operational cost of the skyscrapers, difficult to manage overcrowded public near single building, inconvenience for pedestrians and perception of people from safety concerns. It is concluded that there are many more opportunities for individual as well as nations to support their economic and other aspects of development such as transformation of local cities to global, utilization of new technologies in the engineering sector, play as a hub for accommodation of migrated people, land preservation due to vertical expansion and low cost for employee to spend in transportation.

Finally, I concluded that skyscrapers can enhance the country's socio-economic condition and development. For this, the skyscrapers should be well-designed and well-managed with innovations and new technology developed in the engineering sector. The research findings will be useful for the people to change the positive perception and attitude towards the high-rise buildings of the developed countries. It also encourages the researchers to find out the relationships between the skyscrapers and the daily life activities of the common people. Hence, more research and developments should be done to make skyscrapers beneficial to the country and the citizens.

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**Quest on Determinants of Stock Price in Nepal: Evidence of Microfinance Sector Share Listed in NEPSE**

**Khem Raj Subedi**

Tikapur Multiple Campus, Far Western University, Nepal

Email: [khem7434@gmail.com](mailto:khem7434@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

Stock markets are crucial for economic prosperity, capital formation, and sustainable economic growth. It facilitates resource flow, investment opportunities, pooling funds, sharing risk, and wealth transfer between savers and users. This paper investigates the determinants of stock price traded in Nepal's secondary market through NEPSE, focusing on the microfinance sector. The study uses descriptive, analytical, and inferential research to analyze the determinants of microfinance companies' market prices. The econometric model's coefficient of variation value is 0.90, indicating that 90 per cent change in the market price of the microfinance company is defined by the explanatory variables included in the model. Market price per share is positively correlated with earnings per share, return on equity, price-earnings ratio, and book value, while inversely correlated with floating share size. Independent variables like earnings per share, price-to-earnings ratio, and floating shares are statistically significant. However, other fundamental aspects of equity, such as book value per share and return on equity, are not statistically significant. This highlights the importance of considering company-specific factors in investment decisions in Nepalese capital markets. In conclusion, there is serious gap of financial literacy from the part of vast majority of market participant lacking investment optimization.

**Keywords:** Market price per share, earning per share, price earnings ratio, book value per share, return on equity, number of floating shares, investment optimization

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## Introduction

Financial market is a marketplace, where creation and trading of financial assets like shares, debentures, bonds, derivatives, currencies and so forth takes place. It plays very important role in allocating scarce resources in the economy of the country (Security Exchange board of Nepal, 2020). Capital market is one of the major components of financial market of any economy where long term investible funds are traded between savers and users. The history of Capital market is not too long in Nepal. Equity share investment is one of the key investment paths that provide significant returns for investors. But, unusual stock price instability makes confusion for them, as well as troubles for policymakers and the government authorities (Wagle, 2021). Stock markets operate as an intermediary between savers and users of capital by means of pooling funds, sharing risk, and transferring wealth (Almumani, 2014). Financial market plays key role to establish linkage between financial resource savers and users. In the modern financial world, stock market framework is popular intermediary to establish institutional relation between savers and users of financial resources (Subedi, 2022).

Determinants of share price are a topic of debate among scholars and academia. Economists and investors differ on the pricing of shares, with instability and volatility causing confusion for investors. This confusion affects market participants, policymakers, and government authorities. Research on key factors related to stock price is crucial. The Efficient Market Hypothesis (EMH) suggests that share prices reflect information about a company's share and trade at fair market value (Borges, 2008). Fundamental factors like dividend per share (DPS), earnings per share (EPS), dividend payout ratio, dividend yield, net worth, and firm size determine share prices. Fundamental analysts use stock valuation ratios to estimate future share prices. If fair value is not equal to current price, the stock is either over or under valued, leading to a market price drop (Sundaram, 2016).

This investigation is focused on the determinants of microfinance share price traded in the NEPSE, the Nepalese share trading intermediary in the secondary market. This study adopts microeconomic approach to identify the possible determinants of the microfinance stock price. Microfinance sector share price is observed to be more volatile than other sectors. This volatility is due to crucial factors like demand and supply. Theoretically, share price depends on the internal

and external factors such as earning per share, dividend policy, price to earnings ratio, and book value per share. The study uses the 365-day moving average price of the microfinances companies having at least 365 day moving average as a dependent variable whereas the independent variables were earnings per share, price earnings ratio, return on equity, book value per share, and number of floating shares as independent variables. The main objective is to identify the determinants of market share price of the microfinance sector companies that are listed in Nepal's secondary market intermediary institution NEPSE.

Microfinance is the provision of broad range financial services to the poor who are traditionally not served by the conventional financial institutions (Ledgerwood, 1999; Hartarska, 2005). But in the Nepalese stock market context, most of microfinance companies are low capital base there less supply of floating shares. This created high degree of speculation and high volatility is seen. This is rationale of selecting this sector of the NEPSE listed share of stock market of Nepal. The main objective of this study is to identify determinants of market share price of microfinance sector market price traded in NEPSE an emerging capital market of Nepal. The specific objective is to examine the effect of EPS, PE ratio, return on equity (RoE), book value per share (BVPS) and number of floating shares (NFS) on stock price of Microfinance sector and to explore better understanding for safeguarding investment interest of market participants.

## **Literature Review**

The capital market plays a significant role in financial mobilization, procuring long-term funds, and optimizing investible funds. This study aims to provide a comprehensive theoretical and empirical review pertaining to drivers of price in stock markets, focusing on fundamental and technical factors influencing market reactions and sentiments. It aims to fill a gap in literature. Several studies have carried around the world to explored the determinants stock price. They are summarized hereunder:

### **Theoretical Review**

The classical theory of asset pricing is intrinsic value which is based on the labour theory of value developed by classical economists. This posits that the actual value of a company or an asset is based on an underlying perception of its true value. This value includes all aspects of the business, regarding both tangible and intangible

factors. This value may or may not be the same as the current market value. Value investors use a variety of analytical techniques to estimate the intrinsic value of securities in hopes of finding investments where the true value of the investment exceeds its current market value (Shaikh, 1998).

Charles Dow developed the Dow Theory in the late 1800s which is based on the idea that the price in the stock market moves in three trends: the primary trend, the secondary trend, and the minor trend. The primary trend is the overall direction of the market, which can last for several years. The secondary trend is a correction to the primary trend, which can last for several months. The minor trend is a short-term fluctuation in the market, which can last for several days. This theory also emphasizes the importance of volume in confirming price movements. If one of the prices are rising in high volume, it is considered to be a bullish sign. On the other hand, if prices are falling on high volume, it is considered to be a bearish sign. Dow's Theory also emphasizes the importance of trend confirmation (Brown et al., 1998).

Gordon and Shapiro developed the dividend discount model of stock price determination publishing their renowned book in 1938 titled "The Theory of Investment Value." The dividend discount model (DDM) is a method of valuing a company's stock based on the net present value of future dividend payments. Essentially, DDM is a valuation model that focuses on the present value of expected future dividends. According to this model, the intrinsic value of a stock is the present value of all future expected dividends (Penman, 1998).

The Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM) was developed by William F. Sharpe, John Lintner, and Jan Mossin independently in the early 1960s. William Sharpe introduced the model in his seminal paper "Capital Asset Prices: A Theory of Market Equilibrium under Conditions of Risk," which was published in the Journal of Finance in 1964. Since then, the model has become a fundamental tool in finance for estimating the expected return on an investment based on its systematic risk. CAPM is a model that establishes a relationship between the expected return of an investment and its risk. It suggests that the expected return of a stock is equal to the risk-free rate plus a risk premium based on the stock's systematic risk (Elbannan, 2015).

Elliott Wave Theory is a technical analysis approach to financial market forecasting that was developed by Ralph Nelson Elliott in the 1930s. It is based on

the idea that market prices move in repeating patterns or cycles, and these patterns can be identified and used to predict future price movements. The theory is widely used by traders and analysts in the field of technical analysis (Subedi, 2022).

The efficient market hypothesis (EMH) is one of the milestones in the modern financial theory. It was developed independently by Samuelson (1965) and Fama (1965), and in a short time, it became a guiding light not only to practitioners, but also to academics. The EMH posits that share prices reflect all available information, making consistent alpha generation impossible. It suggests that it's impossible to outperform the market through expert stock selection or market timing, requiring riskier investments for higher returns.

Another theory on determinants of stock price is Random walk theory (RWT). RWT was popularized by Malkiel in his 1973 book titled "A Random Walk Down Wall Street." Random walk theory suggests that market prices are unpredictable and unpredictable, limiting investors' opportunities for substantial returns. Market efficiency allows rational decision-making, as taking advantage of market irregularities is the only way to achieve above-average profits. Although markets may never be entirely efficient, investors always have a chance to profit (Agwuegbo et al., 2010).

Stephen Ross developed the Arbitrage pricing theory (APT) in 1976 as an alternative to the capital asset pricing model (CAPM). APT is a multi-factor asset pricing model that predicts an asset's returns using the linear relationship between expected return and macroeconomic variables, aiming to capitalize on market mispricing deviations from fair market value (Roll & Ross, 1984).

Market microstructure is a finance branch that studies market exchange processes, focusing on real or financial assets. It examines how market processes affect transaction costs, prices, quotes, volume, and trading behavior. In the 21st century, it explores market abuse, insider trading, manipulation, and broker-client conflict (Madhaban, 2000).

Behavioral finance suggests that people often make financial decisions based on emotions and cognitive biases, rather than rationality. This can lead to investors holding losing positions and buying in bull markets, but has not yet produced future strategy insights. In other words, behavioral finance incorporates insights from psychology to explain stock price movements. It suggests that investor behavior,

emotions, and cognitive biases can influence market outcomes. Behavioral finance challenges the assumption of rationality in traditional finance theories (Brooks & Byrne, 2008).

The theories summarized above are not mutually exclusive, and investors often use a combination of approaches to make investment decisions. Additionally, the efficiency of markets and the factors influencing stock prices can vary over time and across different market conditions.

### **Empirical Review**

Singhania (2006) study based on stock market of India book value, dividend, dividend cover, dividend yield, earnings and price earnings ratio. Pradhan (2006) concluded that large stocks have large PE ratios and large ratios of the market value to book of equity and smaller dividends. PE ratios and dividend ratio are more variable for smaller stocks whereas market value to book value of equity is more variable for the large stocks. He further concluded that large stocks also have lower liquidity, higher leverage, lower profitability, and lower assets turnover interest coverage stocks.

Al-Omar and Al-Mutairi (2008) asserted that stock prices in an efficient market measure a firm's performance and value. Understanding the main variables influencing stock market prices helps corporate owners and investors make informed decisions. The capital market plays a significant role in financial mobilization, procuring long-term funds, and optimizing investible funds. Stock price movements are influenced by macroeconomic factors, social events, market sentiments, and policy announcements.

Singh (2010) stated that stock price movements are influenced by macroeconomic factors, social or political events, market sentiments / expectations about future economic growth trajectory, monetary and fiscal policy announcements, among others.

Al- Shubiri (2010) investigated the relationship of microeconomic factors with the stock price using simple and multiple regression analysis. In this study, 14 commercial banks of Amman Stock Exchange, for the period of 2005 -2008, were selected as sample. The study found highly positive significant relationship between market price of stocks and net asset value per share; market price of stock dividend percentage respective shares.

Sharma (2011) studied the impact of equity share prices on various variables from 1993-94 to 2008-09. Results showed earnings per share, dividend per share, and book value significantly affect share market prices. The strongest determinants were dividend per share and earnings per share, supporting liberal dividend policies.

Joshi (2012) studied dividends' impact on stock price in Nepal found that dividends had a stronger effect than retained earnings. The study used secondary data and a multivariate linear regression analysis to examine the implications for the banking and non-banking sectors. The findings suggest dividends have a more significant effect on market stock prices.

Lundholm and Sloan (2012) argue stocks are equities that investors invest in companies for higher returns. Malhotra and Tandon (2013) highlight the dynamic nature of the stock market, requiring accurate forecasting for optimal returns. Shares offer liquidity and the potential to beat the market. Investment in shares offers the benefit of liquidity as well as the opportunity to beat the market and earn high returns. Financial transactions are of tremendous important to a country's economy performance. Investing in equity shares is regarded as popular way to achieve a decent return of money, which are the most prevalent and actively traded securities (Arkan, 2016).

Pradhan and Dahal (2016) investigated factors influencing Nepali commercial banks' share price, finding earnings per share, price-earnings proportion, dividends, book value, return on assets, and size as the most important determinants. Size was found to be the most influential variable.

Velankar et al. (2017) studied the impact of EPS and DPS on stock price of Indian public sector banks over nine years (2006/07 – 2014/15). Their results showed a significant effect of EPS and DPS on stock price, suggesting other factors may influence it.

Ghimire and Mishra (2018) underscore that stock market provides market place for all range of investors small and big to optimize their investment. Nowadays, vast majority of people are interested in investment in the stock market, though they are aware of its price volatility.

Bhattarai (2018) studied the impact of microeconomic and macroeconomic variables on stock price of banks and insurance companies in Nepal. Results showed

a positive correlation between earnings per share, dividend per share, price-earnings ratio, firm size, GDP, and exchange. However, return on equity, return on assets, and money supply had a negative correlation. All individual variables had a significant effect on stock price. Neupane (2019) concluded that there is correlation among the variables ROE, DPS, PE ratio and BPS have average correlation with market price but EPS is higher positive correlation.

Silwal and Napit (2019) found that stock price in Nepali commercial banks is positively correlated with price-earnings ratio, book value per share, and return on equity. Dividend yield influences stock price, while size has a negative link. Financial market plays a crucial role in allocating resources. Maskey (2022) investigated the factors affecting market share prices of life insurance companies listed on the Nepal Stock Exchange (NEPSE). The finding that earnings per share, dividend per share, price-earnings ratio, company age, and dividend yield are major determinants of share price. The study concludes that dividends significantly influence Nepalese investors' investment decisions and that company dividend policies significantly influence these decisions.

Dhodary (2023) analyzed the determinants of stock price in Nepalese commercial banks using a quantitative method and descriptive research. The price-earning (P/E) ratio is nil in some years due to no earnings per share. Share price is positively correlated to BVPS, PE, ROE, and dividend payout ratio, while negative with firm size.

The summary of literature presented above clearly indicates the stock price is influenced by multiple factors, including earnings, dividends, price-earnings ratio, book value, and return on equity. However, Nepalese stock market research lacks proper analysis, leading to a gap between theory and practice. The special consideration is on number of floating shares of microfinance sector. That has given rise to high speculation to rise in the price without any financial performance and fundamental root as the researcher's insight. Stating alternatively, companies with lower floating share volumes are more volatile, especially in microfinance share prices. In this context, the researcher proceeds to examine whether number of floating shares impacts the market price per share in microfinance sector.

## **Methods**

This study has adopted descriptive and analytical. The panel regression model was applied to fulfill objectives. In NEPSE more than 234 scripts are listed for secondary market trading purpose (Security Board of Nepal, 2022). These scripts belong to 13 sector as categorized by NEPSE and Security Board of Nepal as per the nature of Nepalese economy. The researcher has selected share price of microfinance cluster as a sample for carrying out this study. The rationale of selecting microfinance is due its most volatility in the stock price of this sector. The microfinance having at least 365-days moving average price is selected for the year 2022. Based on the time and cross sectional character of data, it is a panel data. The secondary data were obtained from the NEPSE, Nepal Rastra Bank, Security Exchange Board of Nepal and Financial report of sample microfinance companies.

## **Variables, Model Fit and Hypothesis**

Several studies have been conducted to explore the determinants of stock market price (SMP). These studies have identified earning per share (EPS), dividend per share (DPS), Return on Equity (RoE), price earnings ratio (P/E Ratio), book value per share (BVPS), size of floating share (NFS). Some of them have been reviewed in this study in order to avoid possible duplication and bridge the gap. Stock price is determined by various internal and external factors. There are so many factors which determine the price of share which are as follows:

### **Stock Market Price**

The most significant factor for investors to identify optimal price of individual company to optimize investment. Generally, the share price is an indicator of a company's overall strength; if it goes up and up, it means the companies are doing well. Therefore, investors try identify point of entry and exit to buy and sell share of particular company (Gill et al., 2012).

### **Earnings Per Share**

EPS is the share of a stock on a company's earnings, measuring the return of equity shareholders and indicating the profitability of shareholders' investments. It reflects the profitability of banks on a per share basis, with higher earnings indicating better performance. It can be presented symbolically as:

$$\text{EPS} = \frac{\text{Total Earnings available to common shareholders}}{\text{Number Outstanding of Shares}}$$

The previous studies around revealed a positive linear relationship between earning per share and market stock price (Uddin, 2009; Al- Shubiri, 2010; Sharma,2011; Khan & Amanullah, 2012; Srinivasan, 2012). The higher the earning per share, higher will be the market price. In this research, researcher has used trailing twelve month EPS of 42 microfinances. The literatures from previous studies depicted a positive signification relationship between dividend per share and market stock price (Irfan & Nishat, 2000; Sharma, 2011). Srinivasan (2012) discovered a negative significant relationship between dividend per share and market stock price of Manufacturing, Pharmaceutical, Energy, and Infrastructure Company.

### **Price Earnings Ratio**

The Price Earnings Ratio is a stock's market price divided by its earnings per share (EPS), comparing market value to earnings per share. It is widely used to assess potential investments and positively impacts a company's stock price. A high PE encourages investors to buy shares, leading to a higher market price (Molodovsky, 1995; Tandon & Malhotra, 2013). It can be presented symbolically as:

$$\text{Price Earning Ratio} = \frac{\text{Market price per Share}}{\text{Earnings Per Share}}$$

The higher the PE ratio, overvalued company and lower the PE ratio, cheaper stock price. In this research, researcher has used PE of 42 microfinances.

### **Book Value Per Share**

Book value per share (BVPS) is the ratio of equity available to common shareholders divided by outstanding shares, providing insight into a company's stock valuation. It has a positive relationship with market price (AL-Omar & AL-Mutairi, 2008; Uddin, 2009; Al- Shubiri, 2010; Srinivasan, 2012; Malhotra & Tandon, 2013; Almunani, 2014). Book value per share (BVPS) indicates a company's stock's value and future market price; higher BVPS indicates better company value, while lower

BVPS weakens it. The formula for calculating the book value per share is given as follows:

$$\text{BVPS} = \frac{\text{Total Shareholder's Equity} - \text{Preferred Equity}}{\text{Total Outstanding Common Shares}}$$

### **Return on Equity**

Return on Equity (RoE) is the measure of a company's net income divided by its shareholders' equity. It is a gauge of a corporation's profitability and how efficiently it generates those profits. The higher the RoE, the better a company is at converting its equity financing into profits. Neupane (2019) found a correlation between RoE and market price, with higher RoE indicating better financial position, and lower RoE weaker. The formula for calculating the book value per share is given as follows:

$$\text{RoE} = \frac{\text{Company's net income}}{\text{Shareholders equity}}$$

### **Number of Floating Share**

Number of Floating Share (NFS) represents a company's available shares for trading in the open market, while free float represents outstanding shares minus restricted shares, primarily held by strategic investors (Çalışkan & Kerestecioğlu, 2013). In other words, to calculate a company's floating stock, subtract its restricted stock and closely held shares from its total number of outstanding shares. Faruk and Saim's (1997) study investigates the impact of free float ratios on Turkey's stock market performance. Results show that higher floating ratios result in higher average daily closing prices and trading activity. However, price volatility increases with higher free float ratios.

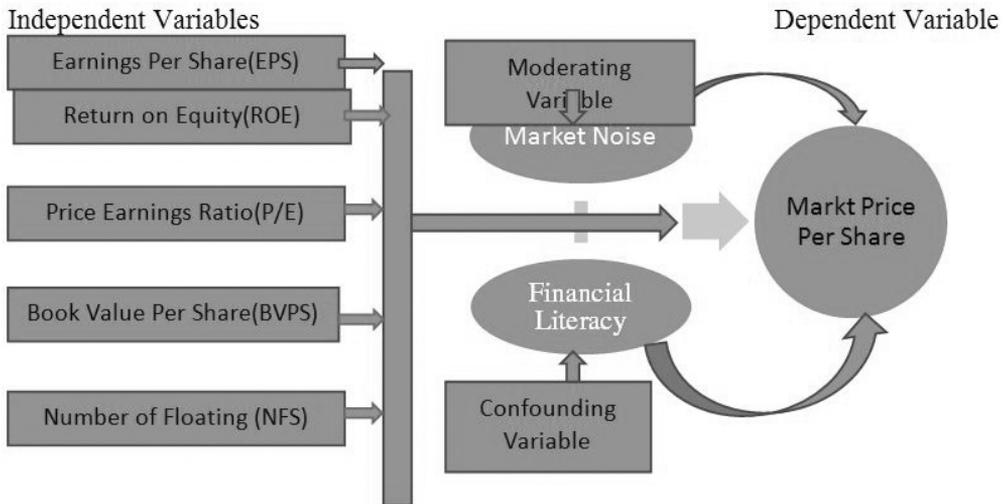
### **Conceptual Framework**

Based on the literature review, the researcher has developed the following conceptual framework for the current investigation. In other words, the researcher proposes market price of the micro finance per share is the function of earning per share, return on equity, price earnings ratio, book value per share, number of floating share. Essentially, the market noise as the moderating variable and financial literacy as the confounding variable are also expected to influence the market price of the

share. But, this does take date relating these. Therefore, acknowledge their influence but does not account them as determinants. This can be presented as follows:

**Figure 1**

*Schematic Diagram showing Conceptual Framework*



**Note:** This figure displays relation between dependent variable market price share with its determinants developed by author based on the insight from literature review.

### Hypothesis of the Study

Research hypothesis is essentially, gives direction to the current investigation. Based on the proposed conceptual framework, following research hypothesis is set:

**H<sub>0</sub>: ( $\beta=0$ )** Market price of share (MPS) microfinance sector is not significantly influenced by the independent variables such as BVPS (book value per share), EPS (earning price per share), return on equity (RoE), price earnings ratio (PE ratio) and number of floating shares (NFS).

**H<sub>1</sub>: ( $\beta\neq 0$ )** Market price of share (MPS) microfinance sector is significantly influenced by independent variables such as BVPS (book value per share), EPS (earning price per share), return on equity (RoE), price earnings ratio (PE ratio) and number of floating shares (NFS).

## Specification of the Model

Based the literature review researcher has proposed following econometric model for testing hypothesis of the research:

$$MPS_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EPS_{it} + \beta_2 P/E_{it} + \beta_3 RoE_{it} + \beta_4 BVPS_{it} + \beta_5 NFS_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad \dots \quad (1)$$

Where,

$MPS_{it}$  = Market price of the share 'i' th company for time 't'.

$EPS_{it}$  = Earnings per share 'i' th company for time 't'.

$P/E_{it}$  = Price earnings ratio per share 'i' th company for time t.

$ROE_{it}$  = Return on equity of 'i' th company for time 't'.

$BVPS_{it}$  = Book value per share of 'i' th company for time 't'.

$NFS_{it}$  = Number of floating shares of 'i' th company for time 't'.

$\varepsilon_{it}$  = Error terms.

$\beta_0$  = Intercept term to be estimated

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_5$  = Slope coefficient to be estimated

## Results and Discussion

This section interprets the estimated output result of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), descriptive statistics of key variables, correlation matrix and regression output result. They outlined here under:

### Analysis of Variance

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) provides information about levels of variability within a regression model and form a basis for tests of significance. In other words, it gives about model fit summary information for proposed regression model. Multiple linear regression attempts to fit a regression line for a response variable using more than one explanatory variable. In Table 1, the calculated F-value for ANOVA is less than 0.01, it implies that we can reject null hypothesis that slope coefficients are zero and accept research hypothesis that market price of share(MPS) microfinance sector is significantly influenced by the independent variables included in the model such as BVPS (book value per share), EPS (earning price per share), return on equity(RoE), price earnings ratio (PE ratio) and number of floating shares(NFS).

**Table 1***Analysis of Variance*

Source of variation	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	5	1983948.143	396789.60	6.084	0.000
Residual	36	2347736.429	65214.90		
Total	41	4331684.571			

Note: This table shows Analysis of Variance result based on researcher's calculation.

**Correlation Matrix of the Variables**

The included variables were tested for multi-collinearity. According to Ratner (2009) if an absolute value of correlation between the variables is more than 0.8 (except principal diagonal) signifies multi-collinearity. The correlation matrix displayed in Table 2 shows no correlation value higher than 0.75, which is quite lower than 0.8 indicate that multi-collinearity is not a problem in the proposed econometric model. All the variables could initially be included in the analysis.

**Table 2***Correlation Matrix of the Variables*

Variables	LTP	Book Value	EPS	ROE	PE	NFS
LTP	1	0.259	0.410	0.277	0.107	-0.216
Book Value	0.259	1	0.750	0.328	-0.479	0.490
EPS	0.410	0.750	1	0.701	-0.560	0.409
ROE	0.277	0.328	0.701	1	-0.442	0.217
PE	0.107	-0.479	-0.560	-0.442	1	-0.381
NFS	-0.216	0.490	0.409	0.217	-0.381	1

Note: This table shows correlation matrix of variables used in regression model based on researcher's calculation.

## Descriptive Statics of the Variables

This table describes the mean, median, standard deviation, minimum and maximum value for the dependent i.e. market price microfinance company and independent variables EPS, PE ratio, RoE, BVPS and NFS of microfinance companies. The mean stock price for the forty-two microfinance companies is 1327.71 and standard deviation is 325.04 based on 365 moving average price. The minimum stock price is 725 and maximum is 2352. The PE ratio has the mean of 36.22 and standard deviation of 16.20. The minimum PE ratio is 19.3 and maximum is 95.80. The mean EPS is 35.34 with standard deviation of 15.99. The minimum EPS is 10.78 and maximum is 100.11. The mean RoE is 19.31 and standard deviation of 8.73. The minimum ROE is -5 and maximum is 37. The mean BVPS is 186.31 and standard deviation of 49.37. The minimum BVPS is 122.79 and maximum is 318.83. Likewise, the mean NFS is 2182121 and standard deviation of 8.73. The minimum NFS is 257400 and maximum is 11388090.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables*

Variables	Mean	Median	Maximum	Minimum	Standard Deviation
MPS (Rs.)	1327.71	1271.00	2352.00	725.00	325.04
EPS (Rs.)	35.34	35.98	100.11	10.78	15.99
PE (times)	36.22	30.85	95.3	19.8	16.20
ROE (%)	19.31	20.00	37.00	-5.00	8.73
NFS (unit)	2182121	1152330	11388090	257400	2453697
BVPS (Rs)	186.31	167.75	318.83	122.79	49.37

Note: The table above shows descriptive statistics of the variable used in the model based on researcher's calculation.

## Result of Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is considered extremely important in the research which helps to estimate the rate of change in dependent variable due to the corresponding change in independent variables. Gallo (2015) states that regression

analysis usage of statistical technique for organizing as to which variable can indeed have an impact. The estimated output result of proposed regression model shows  $R^2$  value 0.905 meaning that more than 90 percent in the variation in market price is defined by independent variables included in the model. D-W statistic value 1.73 implies there is no autocorrelation problem. The result also depicts that MPS is positively correlated with EPS, RoE, PE ratio and BVPS and inversely correlated with NFS. The inverse correlation between MPS and NFS implies that lower the size of floating share or public issues lower the supply size and higher the price. As normally, this happens in commodity market too. According to behavioral finance, the lower supply creates speculative components in equity market. Likewise, coefficients of independent variables EPS, PE ratio and NFS are statistically significant at 5 percent and 1 percent. However, BVPS and RoE are not statistically significant. This implies that generally investors do not consider the BVPS and RoE in investment decision in Nepalese context.

**Table 4**

*Estimated Output Result of Regression Model*

Dependent Variable: Market Price Per Share of Micro finance sector (MPS)				
Variables	Coefficients	Standard Error	t-Stat	p-value
Constant	482.30	273.488	1.76	0.086*
BVPS	0.799	1.411	0.567	0.574
EPS	14.442	5.554	2.600	0.013**
ROE	0.333	7.123	0.046	0.963
PE Ratio	8.234	3.067	2.684	0.011**
NFS	-0.000	0.000	-2.864	0.007***
$R^2$	0.905			
Adjusted R-squared	0.895			
D-W Statistics	1.73			
Prob.(F-stat)	0.000			

\*, \*\*, \*\*\*Significance of coefficient at 10 percent, 5 percent and 1 percent level of significance.

Note: This table shows the estimated regression model output result based on researcher's calculation using

Based on the result of regression model estimated result above, estimated regression equation can be written as:

$$\text{MPS} = 482.30 + 0.799 \cdot \text{BVPS} + 8.234 \cdot \text{P/E} + 0.333 \cdot \text{RoE} + 0.799 \cdot \text{BVPS} - 0.000054 \cdot \text{NFS} \dots (2)$$

The output results are given in equation (2). These results are consistent with the several earlier research that is summarized in the literature review section above. The result shows a positive relationship between market price and BVPS which is consistent with the other studies such as AL-Omar and AL-Mutairi (2008), Uddin (2009), Al- Shubiri (2010), Srinivasan (2012) Malhotra and Tandon (2013) and Almumani (2014). Similarly, other coefficients sign relating to EPS, PE ratio, RoE and are consistent with previous studies such as Uddin (2009), Sharma (2011), Khan and Amanullah (2012), Srinivasan (2012), Molodovsky (1995), Tandon and Malhotra (2013). But statistical significance of two important variables viz., BVPS and RoE is not found. This is the critical matter to be taken into consideration as per the analysis result. However, the researcher wants to underscore the significance of the current investigation in two points. Firstly, the current research has detected the ignorance of Nepalese stock market participant towards intrinsic value concept of companies of microfinance sector listed in NEPSE. Secondly, public floating size of a listed company as a significant determinants of market price of share. This implies microfinance companies with fewer floated shares may experience price skyrockets in short trading days.

### **Conclusion**

The statistical analysis reveals that the stock price of microfinance sector listed company shares in NEPSE is determined by EPS, PE ratio, RoE, BVPS, and NFS. However, only EPS, PE ratio, and number of floating share are statistically significant. But, the most important fundamental aspects of the price of share viz., book value per share and return on equity are not statistically significant. This evidence shows that the market participants have overlooked this important fundamental aspect. But, Why? Theoretically, book value per share and return on equity are the true representative of intrinsic value of company. This is the contradictory with the several theories relation to stock price determination. Intuitively, it is clear that often retail market participants lack organized information

and rely on market noise, and ignore the intrinsic value of company that cause severe risk in their investment. Therefore, further inquiry is desirable regarding the financial literacy among NEPSE stock market participants, assessing their level knowledge and awareness on BVPS and RoE of stock price. A rigorous qualitative inquiry using primary data is essential to fill this knowledge gap. In conclusion, there is serious gap of financial literacy from the part of vast majority of market participant lacking investment optimization in Nepalese context.

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### Feminist Narrativization of trauma in Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies*

**Nabraj Pandey**

PhD Scholar in English, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Email: [nabrajpandey36@gmail.com](mailto:nabrajpandey36@gmail.com)

#### Abstract

The study explores on the feminist standpoint of trauma narration in Julia Alvarez's magnum opus, *In the Time of the Butterflies*. Set against the tragic backdrop of the Mirabel sisters' 1960 massacre and the pervasive exploitation of women during Trujillo's cruel reign in the Dominican Republic, Alvarez intricately weaves personal and political struggles. In this backdrop, the research focuses on Alvarez's use of storytelling techniques to illuminate the traumatic experiences of women, particularly highlighting Dede Mirabel as a testimonial figure in the broader feminist strife. So, the study purposes to unravel the complex layers of feminist discourse within the novel. Utilizing a descriptive based qualitative approach grounded in narrative procedures, this research integrates insights from trauma studies scholars such as Leigh Gilmore, Cathy Caruth, Laura Stark, Hawkins et al., and Jeffrey C. Alexander. The overarching goal is to develop a theoretical framework that elucidates how the novel depicts traumatic experiences within patriarchal structures. This research is significant as it uncovers the intersection of gender and historical trauma, offering a subtle understanding of women steering their experiences amid political oppression. The findings are expected to deepen our grasp of the novel's feminist dimensions and serve as a foundation for future inquiries into the juncture of feminist literature encouraging further exploration of how women's stories shape societal perceptions. Thus, this study lays the groundwork for future research in similar themes across trauma literature.

**Keywords:** Feminist discourse, traumatic memory, Mirabel sisters, resisting patriarchy, intersectionality

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## Introduction

Julia Alvarez's 1994 novel "In the Time of the Butterflies" recounts the brutal violence under General Trujillo's regime, focusing on the unspeakable massacre of the three Mirabel sisters— Patria, Minerva and María Teresa Mirabal, in 1960. Alvarez tries to highlight the massacre of Mirabel sisters to liven the terrifying trauma and exploitation using Dede, the surviving Mirabel sister, as a witnessing tool for the event. In this backdrop, the title frames an in-depth study of how Alvarez utilizes a feminist perspective to narrate the sisters' historical struggles, underscoring the enduring effects of trauma on women.

Alvarez's novel is fictionalized account of the story of the three Mirabel sisters— Patria, Minerva and Maria Teresa (Mete), who were brutally massacred by the Dictator Rafael Trujilo on November 25, 1960, shortly after the Alvarez family fled to the United States. The novel plays a crucial role in publicizing the traumatic plight of women under the oppressive regime where "they were raped, tortured and ultimately killed as the soldiers killed their opponents" (Silva Sirias, 2001, p.71). Dede serves as an onlooker to the brutal regime, contributing to the broader narrative of the Mirabal sisters' sacrifice, narrating the harrowing impact of tyranny on women in a society gripped by patriarchal oppression. She becomes a symbol of resistance trauma testimony.

The study intends to uncover on how Alvarez unravels the layers of narrativization of women trauma that goes beyond the mere documentation of events. Again, this study tries to illuminate the ways in which the narrative strategies contribute to a feminist discourse on trauma, exploitation, and resistance. The study applies a research design that uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach for the analysis of textual data. This study is important for ongoing discussion on the intersectionality of women's experiences and the importance of feminist storytelling in challenging oppressive systems. As a whole, the study finds that Julia Alvarez strategically utilizes Dede Mirabal in her novel as a testimonial tool to depict Trujillo's atrocities via a mediatization and storytelling process for recounting memories and highlighting the profound impact of trauma on both survivors and those who hear their stories.

The research is structured into five main sections, beginning with an introduction that covers title specifications, the problematic, and an overview of

the text, objectives, theoretical justification, sources, tools, and the significance and anticipated findings of the study. The second section focuses on a review of secondary sources to provide a comprehensive literature review. The third section outlines the methods and procedures employed in the research. The fourth section is dedicated to discussions and findings, while the fifth and final section presents concluding remarks.

### **Literature Review**

The examination of feminist narrativization in literature, specifically focusing on Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies* has gained significant scholarly attention and criticisms. This review searches the existing research, identifies key themes, and pinpoints research gaps within this specific scope.

Feminist literary criticism has evolved to encompass a wide array of perspectives and methodologies. Scholars such as Gilbert and Gubar (1979) in their book, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* have laid the foundation for feminist critique by emphasizing the role of women in literature. This foundational work is crucial in understanding the broader context of feminist narrativization. However, the study intends to theorize trauma intensely incorporating with patriarchal havoc to broaden and politicize the traumatic experiences of victim women. This is what, the researcher finds lacking in Gilbert and Gubar's aforesaid criticism.

Likewise, Alvarez's work, particularly *In the Time of the Butterflies*, has been a focal point in discussions on feminist storytelling. Alvarez (1994) intricately weaves the narrative around the Mirabal sisters and their sisterhood providing a nuanced portrayal of their lives and struggles in the Dominican Republic during the Trujillo regime. Although, the novel revolves round the tormenting stories and attributes of sisterhood of Mirabel sisters but what I feel lacking here is on the way Mirable sisters resisted against the cruel Trujilo's reign to maintain the same level of freedom and right as men possessed.

Further, Tegan Zimmerman (2020) in his article "Unauthorized Storytelling: Reevaluating Racial Politics in Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies*" revisits Julia Alvarez's critically acclaimed historical novel as "historiographic metafiction and its depiction of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo's regime (1930-61)" (p.

96). Zimmerman's way of analyzing the novel is appreciable but he has overlooked the real voices of pain and exploitation raised by the female characters in his study. Additionally, as to Sandra Aravena de Herron writes, Julia Alvarez in her novel *In the Time of the Butterflies*, "by immersing herself in both cultures, United States and Dominican, overcomes all the adjustments a foreigner generally faces in becoming multicultural" (2003, p.406). Through this analysis, she can make deliberate and self-aware literary decisions to effectively convey her message to audiences from both cultures but remains close in the case of publicizing the traumatic cases of victim women and the sacrifice of three Mirabel sisters.

In addition, Smith (2002) argues that Alvarez's novel empowers female characters, presenting a feminist narrative that challenges traditional gender roles. This perspective is supported by Jones (2005), who highlights the flexibility of the Mirabel sisters as they direct oppressive societal structures. Both Smith and Jones seem near to the problematic issue of the study, however, they remain partially disclose in overshadowing the oppression and domination of patriarchy on women.

The literature highlights a research gap in analyzing the Mirabel sisters' resistance against Trujillo's regime and their pursuit of gender equality. Notably, there is a lack of exploration of intersectionality in Alvarez's work. Scholars like Zimmerman and Aravena de Herron touch on aspects but overlook explicit voices of pain from female characters. Smith and Jones acknowledge female empowerment but partially reveal the oppressive impact of patriarchy. This study aims to fill these gaps through an intersectional approach, examining how the Mirabel sisters' feminist struggles intersect with their identity. A scarcity of contemporary analyses emphasizes the need for updated perspectives on Alvarez's relevance in current feminist discourses, covering women's exploitation, patriarchy, and trauma politics.

### **Methods**

Utilizing the narrative techniques as textual analysis for the novel, the study employs a feminist viewpoint. This approach is complemented by a descriptive method, which intensively searches the echoes of trauma within the text. Drawing upon key scholars in trauma studies such as Leigh Gilmore, Cathy Caruth, Laura Stark, Hawkins et al., and Jeffrey C. Alexander, the study seeks to theorize how the novel engages with and represents traumatic experiences, particularly within the context of patriarchal structures.

Gilmore's *The Limits of Autobiography* (2001) and Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, and the Possibility of History* (1996) provide foundational insights into the complexities of trauma and testimony. The insights emphasize on the analysis of the inherent challenges and limitations in representing trauma through biographical vein. Contrarily, Stark in her *The Limits of Patriarchy* (2016) contributes to the examination of patriarchal structures, adding a dimension to the analysis by exploring how gendered power dynamics may shape and limit the expression of trauma. In the same line, *Undressing Patriarchy: Redressing Inequalities* by Hawkins et al. offers a multidimensional perspective on patriarchy and inequalities. Moreover, Alexander's *Cultural Trauma: A Social Theory* (2012) becomes a tool for analyzing how the novel addresses collective experiences of trauma within a feminist narrative.

This study uses a qualitative approach as a research design for secondary data-based textual analysis. It is employed to delve into the nuanced and subjective aspects of trauma representation in the novel. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of the feminist dimensions of trauma. The primary method involves a close textual analysis of the novel. This includes identifying instances of trauma, examining narrative techniques, and analyzing character perspectives to unveil the feminist undertones in the representation of trauma.

## **Results and Discussion**

In *In the Time of the Butterflies*, Julia Alvarez masterfully weaves a narrative that describes the unspeakable experiences of Dede, the surviving Mirable, on being a witness for the massacre of three Mirabal sisters— Patria Mirabal, Minerva Mirabal, and Maria Teresa Mirabal, in 1960 under the animalistic regime of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. Alvarez uses strategic narrativization to highlight the impact of trauma on individuals and society, stressing the role of memory and testimonial narratives. The novel unveils the patriarchal norms perpetuated by Trujillo, illustrating women's struggles and resistance against exploitation. Thus, she skillfully intertwines historical events with personal stories, creating a powerful portrayal of resilience, political activism, and the enduring legacy of the Mirabel sisters.

Alvarez begins the novel with "gringa dominicana" (p. 1) signaling the concept of an American Dominican. This term identifies the strong Mirabel sisters and their

bold challenge to American notions of superiority. Through her narrative, she takes a feminist stance, even though she herself is American Dominican. It illuminates the sense that even female like her can also publicize women's pang and via many fictional and non-fictional narratives in excellent English. Besides, Alvarez making Dede as a witness of the brutal assassination of other Mirabel sisters is to collectivize and politicize the series of death, exploitation and pain that has been victimized the women of Trujillo reign.

Strategically, Alvarez establishes a contextual backdrop for Dede by posing a series of pertinent inquiries, akin to the approach endorsed by Gilmore, with the aim of eliciting a comprehensive understanding of her historical experiences of trauma. In this vein, Gilmore (2001) opines—"memoire" as an evidence of any sort of historical event which can be emerged by redrawing the biographical memory" (p.2). Dede's cognitive landscape is densely occupied with distressing recollections, wherein she possesses an intricate and vivid recall of each detail. In an effort to mitigate and contextualize her trauma, Alvarez guides the interviewer through a mediatization process as:

I'll tell myself, Dede, in your memory it is such and such a day, and I start over, playing the happy moment in my head. This is my movies—I have no television here. "It works?" "Of course", Dede says, almost fiercely. And when it doesn't work, she thinks, I get stuck playing the same bad moment. But why speak of that. (p.3)

Alvarez tactically employs Dede to transform the victim's memory into a testimonial instrument, narrativizing the traumatic event. According to Gilmore (2001), "memoir" of the surviving witness acts as "culture of confession" and "culture of testimony"(pp.1-2) for traumatic events. Dede, haunted by the brutal massacre and Trujillo's atrocities, recognizes the deceased sisters' historical impact on the living through the medium of memory, likened to cinematic narratives.

Moreover, Alvarez directs her attention towards the preservation of the surviving character's memory, aiming to enhance the veracity and vitality of traumatic events within the narrative. She states such reference as "The impact of trauma in our male dominated society falls upon surviving victims and listeners,- women who listens to the surviving character" (p.67). Further, Dede Mirabal, the surviving sister from the Mirabal family, engages in Alvarez's interview strategy. The

inaugural interview unfolds at the Mirabal familial residence situated in Ojo de Agua, serving as the house of Dede, venue for disclosing a painful memory of the massacre. The phrase "THE SISTER WHO SURVIVED" (p.5) indicates Dede, the living martyr of the massacre 1960 and the entire letter in the phrase are capitalized to make her as an agency for communicating the harrowing sight of trauma.

Likewise, the novel also historicizes the reign of Trujillo in the form terrific event with no peace and security where victims shatter by their traumatic memory. Such events, as Cathy Caruth (1996), "describes an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events in which the response to the events occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrences of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (p.181). Dede's memorial witness activates Alvarez's thought to historicize the marked events of trauma from feminist standpoint that stresses on the profound and lasting impact of traumatic events on women's experiences. The line Alvarez quotes as "Dede often loves to be in the same garden where she and the other murdered sisters used to play and enjoy in their childhood" (p.98) is her literary plot of turning back to the memory of terrific history of 1960 massacre that alienated Dede from her sisters. Further, her connotative tactics of historicizing horrendous memory of the massacre of Mirable sisters, so far I comprehend, becomes the tool for solidifying victim women with a binary dissection —sympathy over victim women and outrage over animalistic reign of Trujillo.

The novel has not only established Dede as an agency dedicated to recovering the collective memories of women but also endowed her with the role of a woman adhering to the values of a patriarchal society. The society focuses on "the rights and responsibilities assigned to the married couple, with the husband enjoying more rights and privileges than the wife (Laura Stark, 2016, p.18). This theory underscores Dede's unwavering commitment to honesty in her relationship with her husband and devotion to traditional socio-cultural ethics. So, Alvarez indirectly foregrounds this scenario in the words of Dede's father as: "Yes, of course, our Dede here is going to be the millionaire in the family... You, *mi napita*, you will be our little coquette. You'll make a lot of men's... a lot of men's mouths water" (p. 4). Consequently, Dede, distinct among her sisters, embodies a peacekeeping character, rejecting war and bloodshed. In depicting Trujilato patriarchy, Alvarez discloses societal norms subjugating women, illustrating Dede as a symbol of traditional female victimhood and conformity to patriarchal values.

Additionally, Minerva's growing body indicates the state of insecurity and fear in the reign of dictator like Trujillo that possesses extreme patriarchy. Extreme patriarchy, as analyzed in his "Feminist Narrativization of Patriarchy in Swosthani Vrata Katha", Nabraj Pandey (2022) "is mainly concerned with the idea of sex differences that culturally emboldens male dominance. Yet, it blocks women from their rights and makes them dependent on men" (p.92) mainly for their sexual contentment. Referring Minerva's case, Alvarez narrativizes the shared fear of women in the novel. More from the quotes:

I could feel my breath coming short again. At first, I had thought it was caused by the cotton bandages. I had started trying around my chest so my breasts wouldn't grow. I wanted to be sure that what had happened to Lina Lovation would never happen to me but every time I'd hear one more secret about Trujilo. I could feel the tightening in my chest even when I was not wearing bandages. (p. 23)

In this setting of the whole chapter described by Minerva, the development in her concerns about Trujillo is telling. She has moved from the innocent doubt she felt at the age of twelve, first hearing of his misdeeds, to a very real fear of becoming a reluctant object of sexual suppression by the Dictator.

Alvarez again unmasks the cruel patriarchy of Dominican Republic referring the ending paragraph of Minerva's Part I. "Cruel patriarchy emphasizes on power dynamics, social constructions of gender, and the intersectionality of oppression" (Hawkins et al., 2013). Alvarez notes:

On the way home, Sor Ausncion scolded us. "You were not the ornament of the nation. You did not obey my epistle." As the road darkened, the beams of our headlights filled with hundreds of blinded moths. Where they hit the windshield, they left blurry marks, until it seemed like I was looking at the world through a curtain of tears. (p.15)

When Minerva rejects to fulfill Trujillo's sexual appetite, many males of the community pronounce Minerva as a disobedient female because for patriarchal male, "women are compared with beautiful ornament and easy commodity (Stark, 2016, p. 21). Sor Ausncion, a civilian of Trujilian reign, is just an example of living with rooted patriarchal ideology. In this way, Alvarez narrativizes such unspeakable women trauma.

Furthermore, Alvarez exposes the perpetration of patriarchy in the form open sexual exploitation on the young body of Women during Trujillato. She bridges the claim tying the way Minerva's friend Sinita hears Trujillo's saying about his secrecy in her interview as:

According to Sinita, Trujillo became president in a sneaky way... all the people who were above him kept disappearing in the night ... the head general was fallen in love with another man's wife...under the bridge in Santiago where people meet to do bad things. (p. 9)

Alvarez highlights the sexually charged manner of the men, aligning with Minerva's description of Trujillo's secrecy when she confides in her friend Sinita. This serves as a reference point to discuss sexual exploitation within her narrative of trauma.

Likewise, Alvarez crystalizes the violence on the young body of women that stagnate them from their growing political awareness in the contemporary male-driven society. Such political awareness against trauma occurs "when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a dreadful event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (Alexander, 2012, p.6). The subsequent vignette approves Alvarez's stance as:

Bad things? Minerva interrupted. 'Trujillo was doing bad things?' It was as if I had just heard Jesus had slapped a baby or Our Blessed Mother had not conceived Him the Immaculate Conception way. 'That can't be true,' I said, but in my heart, I felt a china-crack of doubt. (p.17)

This way, the bad things that Trujillo had been doing are top-secret and of collective concern as the truth behind the girls' sexual bodies embody. Yet, Minerva's interruption while saying Trujillo's top-secret on her young body unfolds the savage image of male imposition where women had to be politically aware and matured for struggling.

In addition to it, the narrative illuminates facets of Minerva's life during pivotal stages at the ages of twelve, fifteen, and eighteen. In an anecdote entitled "*Pobrecita!*", Minerva's growing age is thematically muddled as her escalating anxieties about Trujillo coincide with her admiration for her classmate Lina Lovatón, whose beauty and sweet character attract the dictator's attention. Her friends quickly become aware that she has joined the ranks of his numerous female companions,

each assigned residences dispersed across the island. Subsequently, Minerva discovers that, due to the dictator's possessive spouse, Lina was moved to Miami where she lives "all alone now, waiting for him to call her up" (23). In this way, Alvarez politicizes collective trauma of women issuing the reference of Minerva's body exploitation.

The voice of Patria Mirabel, on the other hand, is quite distinct from that of Minerva, contributing to the magical voices in the novel that together conveys the experience of living under Trujillo's regime. The fearful and harrowing reign, as Alexander (2012) "severely causes pain" in her "psyche with grow of vengeance" (p.21) against such perpetration. Patria ultimately commits herself to the resistance through realizing the dictatorship's threat to the most important parts of her life, the church and her family. The many episodes that Patria recounts in each chapter illuminate the nature of her psychological Trauma and its growth: as she reflects at one point, "I got braver like a crab going sideways; I inched towards courage the best way I could, help out with the little things" (p.54). This is why that Patria solidifies and becomes dangerous like a crab.

The bold and conspicuous depiction of Minerva Mirabel's role as an underground rebellion for overthrowing Trujillato in her narrative signposts Alvarez tones of resistance against women trauma. To be more specific, what Alvarez dares to argue is resisting trauma for "politics of transformation". To substantiate such tone and theory, these lines become supportive as:

Minerva and her husband led the forming of an opposition cell in 1957.

Minerva's chapters are interlinked with a chronology of traumatic stories and her heroic deeds. I mean in my head after I got to Inmaculada and met Sinita and saw what happened to Lina and realized that I'd just left a small cage to go into a bigger one, the size of our whole country (p. 122).

Alvarez, thus, makes Minerva an agent for "feminist politics of trauma" that is "a resistance to objectification of women in society, in literature, art and culture" (Alexander, 2012, p.13).

Alvarez asserts that political life of women becomes so threatening and unsafe than their personal life in the rule of dictator. Minerva's involvement in the underground revolution ruins her personal life. In such situation, "balancing

between one's personal life and political life becomes very much frightening and risky" (Alexander, 2012, p. 64). Minerva reminds such situation as: "I'd argue with myself. What's more important, romance or revolution? But a little voice kept saying, *both, both, I want both*. Back and forth, my mind went, weaving a 'yes' by night, and unraveling it by day to a no" (p.86). For Minerva, her conjugal struggles are closely linked to her political struggles. When Minerva and her husband Manolo reconcile after he was seeing another woman, Minerva tells Mate, "The struggle's brought us together again" (140). Thus, Minerva's inner struggle is difficult for others to perceive. When she requests Patria to look after her son Manolito while she is away handling revolutionary matters, Patria finally comprehends the emotional difficulty Minerva experiences in making personal sacrifices for the sake of political involvement.

Additionally, Alvarez exposes the women's poignant pain and torture bringing the case of Mete, the youngest Mirable sister. Mete becomes the focal point of attention in Trujillo due to her exceptionally romantic nature among the sisters. She experiences various forms of bodily torment on her young body. When the men of Trujillo prohibit her journal, Mate senses emptiness as she bids farewell to her cherished writing: "Minerva was right. My soul has gotten deeper since I started writing in you. But this is what I want to know that not even Minerva knows. What do I do now to fill up that hole?" (p. 43). This episode indicates Mate's later sacrifices. She pledges to repair the hole left by Trujillo's heinous acts. Mete tragically endures the loss of her child in confinement, a result of an imposed miscarriage. Mete recounts her own sorrowful and distressing narrative as, "Still very weak, but the bleeding has stopped. I cannot bear to tell the story yet. Just this—I have either bled a baby or had a period. And no one had to do a thing about it after the SIM got to me" (p.140). The entries in her journal detailing the events are missing, and they are only revisited and reconstructed towards the conclusion of the chapter. Reading through these segments of her diary is a deeply emotional and distressing experience.

In her epilogue, Dede convinces Alvarez on her memorial series which she mentions that her mind is overwhelmed with a vivid and distressing reel of traumatic experiences, likening it to a complete disc of distressing movie as "this is my movie—I have no television here" (p. 3), recounts again in the final paragraph of her epilogue chapter. In Caruth's word, the witnessing sights of any terrific memory akin

to Dede "leaves a recurring and overwhelming mark in the mind of trauma victim" (Caruth, 2001, p. 38). Here, Alvarez testifies Dede's series of memory as witnessing device for the massacre of her sisters in 1960 and publicizes the trauma and atrocity of brutal Trujillo.

Ultimately, Julia Alvarez hints up on the demythifying role of the murdered Mirabel sisters vocalizing as a female tone in the postscript of her novel. Alvarez patterns Mirabel sisters in the front line of feminist politics. She wills for "the spirit of the real Mirabel's" (p. 174) for she says "I want to immerse my readers in an epoch in the life of the Dominican Republic" and stops her pen with a slogan as "*Vivian las Mariposas!*" (The Mirabel's/the butterflies) (p.174).

Overall, the findings of the study shows that in her novel, Julia Alvarez strategically employs Dede Mirabal as a testimonial instrument to narrativize the traumatic events of the 1960 massacre and Trujillo's atrocities. Through a mediatization process, Alvarez makes Dede an agency for recounting memories, emphasizing the impact of trauma on surviving victims and listeners. Dede, representing the living martyr, becomes a living witness to the devastating events. Alvarez unveils patriarchal norms, portraying Dede as a symbol of traditional female victimhood and conformity to societal values. Thus, the novel underscores the intersectionality of oppression and the collective trauma experienced by women under Trujillo's regime, underlining resistance and political engagement for feminist transformation.

### **Conclusion**

Julia Alvarez's novel *In the Time of the Butterflies* explores the intersection of feminism and trauma. The narrative delves into the lives and massacre of the three Mirabel sisters– Patria, Minerva and Maria Teresa (Mete), who resisted the brutality of Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic. She uses Dede Mirabel as a witnessing tool for the trauma narrativization. Focused on a feminist perspective, the analysis scrutinizes how the novel portrays the female experience of political violence, patriarchy and the resultant trauma. Alvarez employs a feminist lens to depict the characters' struggles, emphasizing the resilience and agency of women in the face of adversity. Through this lens, the narrative not only unfolds the historical events but also illuminates the intricate dynamics of gendered trauma, offering a comprehensive grasp of the sisters' intricacies and contributing to a broader discourse on feminist

literature and the depiction of trauma in fiction. Thus, this study not only contributes to the understanding of trauma narratives but also provides a valuable resource for future researchers interested in the intense search of women's voices and experiences in the context of trauma literature.

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## **Interplay of Learning Theories in the Development of Reading Skills**

**Bishnu Kumar Khadka**

Mid-West University, Surkhet, Nepal

Email: [luckybishnu@gmail.com](mailto:luckybishnu@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

The development of reading skills is a complex process influenced by various learning theories. This interplay of learning theories encompasses several prominent perspectives, including behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, and social learning theories, among others. In this regard, this paper aims to explore the interplay of different learning theories—such as behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and social learning—and their collective roles on the acquisition and enhancement of reading skills. Based on the related literature review, this paper focused on the relationship between learning theories and reading skill development in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. It argues that the convergence of these theories enriches our understanding of the intricate process of reading comprehension. The key findings claim that in the dynamic interplay of these learning theories, behaviourism provides foundational skills, cognitivism explores mental processes, constructivism emphasizes the meaning-making process, and social learning theories highlight interactive experiences. The study suggests avenues for future research, encouraging scholars to delve deeper into the dynamic relationship between learning theories and the intricate process of developing reading skills.

**Keywords:** Behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, social learning, reading skills, relationship



## Introduction

The term "theory" has its origins in the Greek word *theōria* (θεωρία), which, in translation, conveys meanings such as "a looking at, viewing, contemplation, speculation, also a sight, a spectacle" (McPherson, 2012, as cited in Unrau & Alvermann, 2013). In its contemporary usage, theory is characterized as a set of generalizations, explanations, and belief systems that are typically rooted in extensive research and databases. These theories are often subjected to study, testing, and prolonged debate, shaping the way descriptions of phenomena are formulated and elucidated (Tracey & Morrow, 2017; Gee, 2012). This multifaceted understanding underscores the dynamic and evolving nature of theories, emphasizing their role in interpreting and making sense of diverse aspects of the world through systematic inquiry and contemplation.

At its most fundamental level, a theory is a collection of statements that seeks to explain why natural phenomena occur as they do (VanPatten et al., 2020). These explanations, grounded in belief systems, are typically supported by extensive research and databases and often find acceptance among large groups of people (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). In essence, a theory is a framework of statements or principles crafted to elucidate a set of facts or phenomena, particularly those that have been repeatedly tested or widely accepted. The essence of a theory lies in its capacity to provide systematic understanding and interpretation of the observed world, offering a structured explanation for the occurrences within it.

The term "theory" is often used interchangeably with the term "model," as asserted by various scholars (Manzo & Manzo, 1990; Rosenblatt, 1994; Thomas, 1996; Unrau & Alvermann, 2013; Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Cohen et al. (2018) emphasize that both terms are sometimes employed interchangeably as "explanatory devices or schemes having a broadly conceptual framework." However, Ruddell et al. (1994) provide a distinct differentiation between theories and models, stating that a theory serves as an explanation of a phenomenon, such as the reading process, while a model functions as a metaphor to elucidate and represent a theory (p. 812). This nuanced understanding highlights the potential interchangeability of the terms, while also recognizing the subtle distinctions in their conceptual roles within academic discourse.

A theory is characterized as a set of principles, assumptions, rules, or laws that collectively form a verbal or mathematical description of a notable phenomenon, offering an explanation of how or why the phenomenon occurs. It defines the essential characteristics of a phenomenon, which are then integrated into a model representing the major working parts of a real-life process, such as reading (Rayner et al., 2012). While both theories and models aim to explain phenomena, there exists some disagreement within the field of education regarding the interchangeability of the terms "theory" and "model" (Kezar, 2001, as cited in Tracey & Morrow, 2017). In succinct terms, Grabe (2009) concludes that models can be seen as synthesis statements (p. 83). This recognition underscores the nuances in their usage and highlights that, while related, theories and models may serve slightly different roles in the academic discourse, with models often encapsulating a synthesis of theoretical principles.

The history of theories and models related to reading is deeply intertwined with the broader history of reading and writing. Theories like Mental Discipline theory, Associationism, and Unfoldment theory emerged as non-experimental, general philosophies intended to be applicable across various educational domains. In contrast, the specific study of reading found its historical roots within the early development of cognitive psychology situated within an experimental, structuralist theoretical framework (Tracey & Morrow, 2017).

The initial exploration of reading occurred in Wilhelm Wundt's (1832–1920) experimental psychology laboratory, where aspects of the reading process, such as letter and word recognition, print legibility, and attention span, were investigated. Wundt's work is associated with the structuralist perspective, marking a foundational contribution to the study of reading (Venezky, 1984 as cited in Tracey & Morrow, 2017). The late 1800s and early 1900s witnessed further contributions to the development of a cognitive processing theoretical orientation to reading. Acknowledging the complexity of the learning process, it is contended that understanding how individuals acquire reading skills in a second language necessitates a multifaceted approach. Thus, this paper explores leading learning theories, including behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, social learning theories, and others, to unveil their respective roles in shaping the process of reading skill development in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The following section discusses theoretical reviews of prominent learning theories in relation to reading.

## **Behaviourist Theories and Reading**

Behaviorism is a theory that seeks to explain both animal and human behavior without reference to mental events or internal processes. Instead, it posits that all behavior can be elucidated solely by considering external factors in the environment (VanPatten & Williams, 2014). The central tenet of behaviorism is a focus on observable changes in behavior, neglecting the examination of mental processing. According to this theory, information is believed to be transferred and conveyed from a more knowledgeable individual to a less knowledgeable person (Zuriff, 1985; Tracey & Morrow, 2017; Aldhanhani & Abu-Ayyash, 2020). In essence, behaviorism provides an explanation of behavior grounded in environmental stimuli and responses, with a primary emphasis on observable actions rather than internal mental processes. In accordance with behaviorism, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) follows a similar pattern. The theory suggests that to acquire a second language (L2), individuals must engage in repetitive imitation of correct language models (VanPatten & Williams, 2014). This perspective transforms the depiction of reading from one involving perceptual processing to one that views reading as a behavior comprising isolated skills, each of which can be reinforced to enhance student achievement. Behaviorism continues to hold significance in contemporary education, particularly as the theoretical foundation associated with direct instruction methodologies (Carnine et al., 2004, as cited in Tracey & Morrow, 2017). The emphasis on repetition, reinforcement, and observable behaviors aligns with behaviorist principles in language learning and instructional approaches.

In the context of behaviorism, the act of reading is conceptualized as the competent and properly sequenced performance of a chain of discrete skills. This perspective is concerned with structuring and controlling materials effectively to deliver environmental stimulation and provide opportunities for practice (Glaser, 1978; Monaghan & Saul, 1987, as cited in Alexander & Fox, 2004). Reading, according to this view, is seen as the mastery and sequential execution of individual skills, with a focus on arranging materials in a manner that optimizes environmental stimuli and facilitates practice for learners. According to Tracey and Morrow (2017),

“Behaviorism created a new perception of the task of reading as a complex act consisting of component parts. The component parts of reading were viewed as visual discrimination (the ability to discriminate shapes and letters), auditory

discrimination (the ability to discriminate the sounds of the alphabet), left-to-right progression during reading, vocabulary (word knowledge), and comprehension (understanding what you have read). This understanding of reading led to a sub-skills approach to reading (p. 39).

According to behaviourist theories, reading is perceived as a process that progresses from the parts to the whole, often referred to as a "bottom-up" approach. In this view, readers are expected to master the mechanical and technical aspects of written language before shifting their focus to comprehension and understanding. Once learners have successfully acquired these foundational skills, they are considered capable of reading (Joubert et al., 2008, p. 71). This perspective reflects a sequential and step-by-step approach to reading skill development, aligning with the behaviorist notion of breaking down tasks into manageable components for mastery. On the other hand, it's worth noting that the reductionist aspect of behaviorism, with its emphasis on a bottom-up assembly of linked sets of behaviors to create a coherent activity like learning to read, contrasts with the Gestalt theory. The Gestalt theory, which opposes reductionism, emphasizes the holistic perception of patterns and configurations, suggesting a different perspective on the learning process (Wertheimer, 1945/1959, as cited in Alexander & Fox, 2004). This highlights the theoretical tensions between behaviorism and other cognitive approaches that emphasize a more holistic view of learning.

The theory of behaviorism, in relation to reading, posits that reading is essentially a word-recognition response to the stimuli presented by printed words, without attributing a significant role to the reader's mind in the process. From this perspective, guided reading, direct instruction, practice, and repeated reading approaches, as advocated by LaBerge and Samuels (1974), are highlighted as influential reading strategies within a behaviorist framework (Tracey & Morrow, 2017, as cited in Aldhanhani & Abu-Ayyash, 2020). Within the behaviorist paradigm, the learner, or reader, is seen as a passive recipient of information from the text. The individual reader's knowledge and experiences are considered inconsequential, as the focus is primarily on their response to external stimuli. In this view, only perceptual information and the decoding process are deemed significant.

The impact of behaviorism in the field of reading extends to shaping how the task of reading is understood, influencing perceptions of how reading instruction should proceed, contributing to the creation of reading materials, and influencing

the assessment of reading progress (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). This comprehensive influence underscores the far-reaching implications of behaviorist principles on various aspects of reading education.

Behaviorism has left a profound imprint on reading instruction, contributing to the emergence of sub-skills approaches that deconstruct the reading process into distinct components. These components encompass visual discrimination, auditory discrimination, left-to-right progression, vocabulary, and comprehension. This subdivision of reading into sub-skills aligns with behaviorist principles of breaking down complex tasks into manageable parts for explicit teaching and reinforcement (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Furthermore, behaviorism serves as the theoretical foundation for direct instruction methods, guided reading, and repeated reading approaches. In these instructional strategies, there is a strong emphasis on explicit teaching, repetitive practice, and reinforcement of specific reading skills. The behaviorist perspective, emphasizing external stimuli and observable behaviors, tends to neglect the role of internal cognitive processes in reading.

### **Constructivist Theories and Reading**

Constructivism is a widely embraced learning theory that delineates how knowledge and meanings are constructed through active engagement rather than being passively transmitted or absorbed (Unrau et al., 2018). At its core, constructivism underscores the active role of individuals in the construction of knowledge, asserting that learning transpires when new information is integrated with pre-existing knowledge. This integration, it contends, is only achievable when learners are actively engaged in the learning process (Gunning, 2010). The theory posits that humans generate knowledge and meaning through the interplay of their experiences and ideas (Woolfolk, 1998; Tracey & Morrow, 2012; Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Learning, within the constructivist framework, is viewed as a dynamic process wherein individuals actively engage with their surroundings, draw connections between new and existing knowledge, and derive meaning from these interactions. The emphasis on active participation and the integration of diverse experiences aligns with the foundational principles of constructivism.

Constructivism is a widely applied theory of learning that explains how knowledge and meanings are constructed, rather than transmitted or absorbed, through our interaction with others and the environment (Unrau & Alvermann, 2013,

pp. 55-57). It is a theory that covers several interrelated theoretical frameworks for the investigation and understanding of reading and reading processes. In this regard, schema theory and psycholinguistics share the central concepts of constructivism and demonstrate the active role that learners have in the acquisition and application of knowledge that contributes to the development of reading and readers. Likewise, Tracey & Morrow (2012) argues that because of constructivism, in the reading process, the reader constructs his or her messages while reading.

The concept of constructivism and its implications in the context of reading have emerged through the contributions of diverse educators and psychologists (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Prominent figures such as Dewey (1916), Bartlett (1932), Goodman (1967), Smith (1971), Brown (1978), Flavell (1978), Rosenblatt (1978), Anderson & Pearson (1984), Pressley (2000), Guthrie (2004), and others have played a significant role in shaping the theories associated with constructivism and its reading application.

Dewey (1916) developed the theory of "Inquiry Learning", where the importance of problem-solving, social collaboration, and motivation was emphasized and based on interest and curiosity in learning reading. "Consistent with a constructivist perspective, Dewey's work also focused on a problem-based learning approach to education, central to which was motivating learner's interest" (Woolfolk, 1998, as cited in Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p.49).

To be more specific, two theories or frameworks under the umbrella of constructivism and applicable to the investigation of reading demonstrate the broad and deep importance of this perspective: schema theory and psycholinguistics (Unrau et al., 2018). The Schema Theory, first suggested by Bartlett (1932) and later expanded by Anderson and Pearson (1984), conceptualized how knowledge is organized in the brain, and the implications of that organization for learning and reading (Bartlett, 1932; Anderson & Pearson, 1984). According to Schema theory, people organize everything they know into schemata, or knowledge structures (Gunning, 2010). In this regard, Tracey and Morrow (2012) conclude that in Schema Theory, students actively construct and revise their schemas as they read and learn.

Furthermore, as they read and learn, students use their existing schemas for language and content to assist with new reading and learning experiences (p. 53). In addition to having schemata for content (e.g., people, places, and things), readers have schemata for reading processes (e.g., decoding, skimming, inferencing,

and summarizing) and for different types of text structures (e.g., narrative texts, expository texts) (Anderson & Pearson, 1984, as cited in Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Rosenblatt (1978) further extended the application of Schema Theory to the field of reading (Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p.55). In sum, in Schema theory, students use their existing schemata for language and content to assist with new reading and learning experiences. Furthermore, they actively construct and revise their schemata as they read and learn (Tracey & Morrow, 2017).

Another theory related to constructivist perspective, *Transactional/Reader Response Theory*, put forth by Rosenblatt (1978) argues that all readers have unique responses to reading texts due to the unique nature of their background schemas. The notion that all readers have individualized reading experiences because each reader has unique background schemata forms the cornerstone of Rosenblatt's Transactional / Reader Response theory (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). It is constructivist in nature because it emphasizes the active role of the reader in meaning-making. According to Rosenblatt (1978), readers construct literary meaning using the text merely as a blueprint. When reading for aesthetic purposes, readers fill in gaps by focusing on the unique images, impressions, feelings, and reactions they bring to mind while reading.

The Psycholinguistic Theory is another constructivist theory, which emphasizes that readers are active participants who try to construct a coherent, meaningful interpretation of the text as they read. At the core of the psycholinguistic perspective on reading Goodman (1967, 1970, 1976; Smith, 1971) emphasizes the role of language in the reading process and argues that readers use their knowledge about language, and the world in general, to drive their thinking as they engage in the reading process.

A central component of the Psycholinguistic Theory of reading is that readers rely on language cueing systems to help them rapidly read text, i.e., the systems of syntactic, semantic, and graphophonic information (Tracey & Morrow, 2012, p. 57). The syntactic cues are related to the grammatical structure or syntax of the language that enables readers to predict the next words in the text. The semantic cues are related to the meaning of the words and sentences that allow readers to predict the next words in the text and the graphophonic cues are derived from the visual patterns of letters and words and their corresponding sounds that, again, allow readers to predict the next words in the text. Based on the perception of reading as a process of confirming and rejecting hypotheses, Goodman (1967) described reading as a “psycholinguistic guessing game.”

The concept of metacognition, when applied to the field of reading, contributes to a constructivist understanding of how reading comprehension occurs, as well as to a body of knowledge regarding instructional strategies that can be used to facilitate reading comprehension (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). In this regards, Flavell (1976) and Brown (1978) introduced the general concept of metacognition in the mid-1970s in reading which stresses the importance of specific types of mental engagement during the reading process to ensure accurate comprehension and comprehension monitoring experiences.

Finally, Engagement Theory (Guthrie, 2004; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997, 2000) incorporates the central features of metacognitive theory that engaged readers, who are intrinsically motivated to read, therefore read frequently, are mentally active, and use metacognitive strategies to build their understanding of the conceptual content of reading texts (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Constructivism, based on Dewey's foundational work, has had a powerful impact both on how the reading process is understood and how reading instruction is implemented in classrooms. As a result of Constructivism, educators can view the reading process as one in which the reader constructs his or her messages while reading. Hence, constructivism as a theory covers several interrelated theoretical frameworks for the investigation and understanding of reading and reading processes ((Unrau et al., 2018).

Constructivist theories have significantly influenced our understanding of reading as an active and dynamic process of knowledge construction. These theories emphasize that learners are not passive recipients of information but active participants who actively build meaning and understanding through their interactions with the text and the environment. By recognizing the importance of learners' prior knowledge, engagement, and metacognitive abilities, educators can design more effective reading instruction that fosters deeper comprehension and a love for reading. In classrooms, constructivist approaches encourage interactive and collaborative learning environments, providing students with opportunities to construct knowledge through meaningful interactions with texts, peers, and teachers. By embracing the constructivist paradigm, educators can empower students to become active, engaged, and proficient readers, enabling them to navigate the complexities of the written word and derive meaning from the vast array of texts.

## **Cognitive Theories and Reading**

For cognitive theorists and researchers, the main areas of inquiry include memory, information processing approaches, attention and noticing (Samar & Dehqan, 2013). In this regard, Claros (2008) claims, “Cognitive theorists conceived language learning as a cognitive and individual process in which knowledge is constructed as the learner is exposed to comprehensible input, are given opportunities to both, negotiate meaning and receive negative feedback” (p.145).

The information processing or cognitive perspective of reading emerged as a dominant force in research from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s and continues to influence theories and models today. Slavin (1997) succinctly defines information processing theory as "the cognitive theory of learning that describes the processing, storage, and retrieval of knowledge from the mind" (p. 185). Scholars adopting this theoretical framework within reading research aimed to uncover and elucidate how individual readers engage with printed material to construct meaning (Unrau & Alvermann, 2013, p. 62). Cognitive-processing perspectives in reading seek to unravel the underlying mental processes inherent in the act of reading (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). This approach delves into the intricate cognitive mechanisms that readers employ as they interact with written text, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mental operations involved in the comprehension and interpretation of written language.

Tracey and Morrow (2006) provided an overview of cognitive processing theories and models about reading, spanning from the 1950s to the 1970s. These include the Substrata-Factor Theory of Reading (Holmes, 1953), the Information Processing Model (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968), Rauding Theory (Carver, 1977), Gough’s Model (Gough, 1972), the Automatic Information Processing Model (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974), and the Interactive Model (Rumelhart, 1994). Moving into the 1980s, other notable cognitive theories and models emerged, such as the Interactive–Compensatory Model (Stanovich, 1980), the Orthographic Processing Perspective (Ehri, 1980), the Verbal Efficiency Theory (Perfetti, 1985), the Construction–Integration Model (Kintsch, 1994), and the Phonological–Core Variable Difference Model (Stanovich, 1988). Presently, there are four noteworthy cognitive processing theories concerning reading. These include the Parallel Distributed Processing Model (Rumelhart & McClelland, 1986; Seidenberg &

McClelland, 1989), the Dual-Route Cascaded Model (Coltheart et al., 1993; Coltheart & Rastle, 1994), the Double-Deficit Hypothesis (Wolf & Bowers, 1999), and the Neuro-scientific perspective (Goswami, 2004).

The first theory based on information processing was the Substrata-Factor Theory of Reading (Holmes, 1953) which specifically claimed that sub-variables in the categories of cognitive ability, verbal ability, fine motor skills, eye movements, and personality factors to predict the speed and power of reading ability. In 1972, Gough proposed a reading model based on an information processing perspective. Early cognitive models of reading such as Gough's became known as "bottom-up" Information-processing Models because they depicted the cognitive processing of information as proceeding from lower-order to higher-order stages (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Gough's Model (1972) is exemplary of the cognitive-processing perspective applied to the field of reading due to its focus on explaining unobservable, underlying cognitive processes during the reading process (ibid) and is famous for being the first reading model to incorporate the stage theory of the information processing perspective.

The Automatic Information Processing Model (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974), another "bottom-up" cognitive-processing model that emerged in the 1970s, integrated the concepts of internal attention, external attention, and automaticity into the information processing perspective of reading which has five major components: visual memory, phonological memory, episodic memory, semantic memory, and attention (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Following the visual processing of text, the LaBerge–Samuels model proposes that information is then processed in the phonological memory (PM), where sounds are attached to the visual images. Episodic memory (EM), where the target information is recorded and all kinds of other knowledge are then stored in the semantic memory (SM). The fifth, and central, component is attention (A): internal attention (unobservable attention—refers to what is happening inside an individual's mind, regardless of the way the individual's external attention appears) and external attention (i.e., directly observable attention—the obvious behaviour of using one's eyes and ears to gather information efficiently and effectively).

According to Samuels (1994), "It is assumed in the theory—as well as by many who study reading—that getting meaning from printed words involves a two-step process: first, the printed words must be decoded; second, the decoded words

must be comprehended” (p. 820). The beginner comprehends by switching his or her attention (of which there is a limited capacity) back and forth between the two processes of decoding and comprehending. In contrast, the fluent reader needs little internal attention to decode text because he or she can decode most, or all, of the words of the text with automaticity (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). For the beginning reader, this process can be slow, laborious, and frustrating and comprehension can often be compromised, whereas for fluent readers, little or no attention is needed to decode the words, and, as a result, most or all of their attention is available for comprehension.

The Interactive Model (Rumelhart, 1977) proposed the first nonlinear representation of the reading process in which four cognitive processors (orthographic, semantic, syntactic, and lexical) simultaneously converge to create the most probable interpretation of text. Rumelhart’s Interactive Model (1977, 1994) is consistent with a cognitive processing theoretical orientation to reading because it hypothesizes about unobservable, underlying cognitive processes that take place during the reading process and it uses a stage-by-stage conceptualization of the reading process (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). It is considered interactive rather than “bottomup,” however, because it depicts multiple processors converging on visual input simultaneously rather than in a linear, sequential manner. So, it can be claimed that Rumelhart’s (1977) Interactive Model was the first reading model to propose a nonlinear, simultaneous view of information processing.

In the Interactive–Compensatory Model, Stanovich (1980) extended the Interactive Model presented by Rumelhart in 1977 by arguing that texts processors are not only interactive and nonlinear, but also compensatory, i.e., if one processor is not working well, or has insufficient data, the other processors compensate for it. Like Rumelhart’s (1977) Interactive Model, Stanovich’s (1980) Interactive–Compensatory Model is compatible with both cognitive processing and information-processing orientations to reading (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Similarly, Ehri (1980) identified how orthographic forms (words) are captured in memory, and reported that words are encoded as separate letters “bearing systematic relationships to phonological properties of the word” (p. 313).

Likewise, Perfetti (1985) outlined the Verbal Efficiency Theory that attempted to explain individual differences in reading ability based on three assumptions: (1) that word recognition skills during reading are related to speech access; (2) that the

amount of time it takes to read an isolated word aloud is an indication of how well the reader knows the word; and (3) that a reader's decoding skill will determine how quickly he or she can identify words when reading isolated words.

The Construction– Integration Model (Kintsch, 1994), suggests that during reading, representations occur at several levels: the linguistic level (a representation of the words themselves), the conceptual level (a representation of what the words and sentences mean), and the situational level (a representation of the text integrated with the general knowledge in the person's mind). In this regard, Stanovich's (1988) Phonological–Core Variable Difference Model presents the primary difference between normal and dyslexic individuals as determined by deficits in the phonological realm of cognitive functioning.

According to the Parallel Distributed Processing Model (Rumelhart & McClelland, 1986; Seidenberg & McClelland, 1989), successful reading is dependent on a reader's abilities in four areas: automatic letter recognition, accurate phonemic processing, strong vocabulary knowledge, and the ability to construct meaningful messages during reading. The information within and between each of these processors is organized according to connectionist principles. Furthermore, the processors are all interactive and compensatory (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). The model is representative of a cognitive-processing perspective because it explains cognitive structures and systems inherent in reading.

In contrast to the Parallel Distributed Processing Model, the Dual-Route Cascaded Model (Coltheart et al., 1993; Coltheart & Rastle, 1994) suggests two routes for processing text input: one path for handling words that are already known to the reader/computer and another path for handling unknown words and non-words. Likewise, Wolf and Bowers's (1999) Double-Deficit Hypothesis is a theory used to explain the cause of reading disabilities. According to Wolf and Bowers's model, reading-disabled children fall into one of three categories: children for whom phonological deficits are the core of their reading disability, children for whom naming speed deficits are the core of their reading disability, and children for whom both phonological deficits and naming speed deficits are problematic. The neuro-scientific lens examines patterns of brain functioning during reading through the use of brain imaging technology (Goswami, 2004).

In conclusion, cognitive theories have significantly influenced the understanding of reading and its underlying processes. These theories emphasize

the role of cognitive abilities, information processing, and memory in the reading experience. Overall, cognitive theories have been a cornerstone in the study of reading, offering a valuable framework to comprehend the cognitive processes that underlie this fundamental skill and contributing to the broader goal of enhancing literacy education for learners of all ages.

### **Social Learning Theories and Reading**

The social learning theories emphasize the significant role of social interaction in knowledge development and learning. When applied to reading, they highlight the influence of social factors and interactions on literacy learning (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Some of these theories include the Sociolinguistic Theory (Bernstein, 1972a, 1972b; Bloom & Green, 1984; Heath, 1982), Socio-Cultural Theory (Au, 1997; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Moll, 1992, 1994), Social Constructivism/Socio-Historical Theory (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986), and Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986).

As the name suggests, from the sociolinguistic perspective, reading is viewed as both a social and a linguistic process. In this regard, Bloom and Green (1984) write, “As a social process, reading is used to establish, structure, and maintain social relationships between and among people. As a linguistic process, reading is used to communicate intentions and meanings, not only between an author and a reader, but also between people involved in a reading event” (p. 395). To be more specific, sociolinguistic theory emphasizes the role of individuals’ language in reading acquisition and reading ability. Furthermore, it asserts that language is learned as a result of people’s social interactions with each other. Varying patterns of social and language interactions subsequently lead to differences in individual reading skills (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

The socio-cultural perspective has its roots in the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) which emphasizes the roles of social, cultural, and historical factors in the human experience, emphasizes the social aspect of learning and focuses more on the broader concept of culture, which includes, but is not limited to, language (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). According to Au (1997), Socio-Cultural Theory emphasizes the idea that “the human experience is mediated by culture” (p. 183) and claims that “when children learn to read, or fail to learn to read, they do so in a particular social, cultural, and historical environment” (p. 184). Social Constructivism/

Socio-Historical Theory (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1986) describes how knowledge is constructed within individuals as a result of social interaction, and Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) describes the central role of modeling in human learning (Tracey & Morrow, 2006).

Hence, social learning theories play a crucial role in understanding the process of reading and literacy learning. These theories highlight the significance of social interactions and cultural influences in shaping individuals' reading abilities and language development. The sociolinguistic perspective recognizes reading as both a social and linguistic activity, emphasizing the use of reading to establish and maintain social relationships while communicating intentions and meanings.

### **Conclusion**

Reading theories, like other educational theories, have evolved, with historical roots in general philosophies and cognitive psychology. Behaviourist theories view reading as a behaviour composed of isolated skills reinforced to increase achievement. In contrast, constructivist theories emphasize active knowledge construction by integrating new knowledge with existing knowledge. Cognitive theories focus on underlying mental processes during reading, such as memory, information processing, and attention. Social learning theories highlight the role of social interaction and language in reading acquisition and ability. Sociolinguistic theory views reading as a social and linguistic process, while socio-cultural and socio-historical theories emphasize the influence of social, cultural, and historical factors on reading development. Social constructivism emphasizes knowledge construction through social interaction, while social cognitive theory highlights modeling's role in learning. Overall, understanding the diverse perspectives on reading theories provides valuable insights into how individuals comprehend and interact with written texts.

In conclusion, this paper endeavours to bridge the gap between theoretical perspectives on learning and practical applications for enhancing reading comprehension in SLA. By examining the contributions of various learning theories to the acquisition of reading skills, this study aspires to empower educators and researchers in their quest to foster proficient and confident readers in diverse linguistic and cultural settings.

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## Aging Trend and Pattern in Nepal

Hom Nath Chalise, *PhD*

Central Department of Population Studies, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Email: [chalisehkpp@gmail.com](mailto:chalisehkpp@gmail.com)

### Abstract

Population aging is taking place rapidly in Nepal. The purpose of this article is to present the aging situation in Nepal. Data from different published sources are used in this article. There are 29.1 million older people in Nepal as of the 2021 census. The proportion of older people 60 years and older reached 10.12 percent of the total population. The older population growth rate is 3.29%. The proportion of older people increased by 38% in the last decade. Mountain and Hill have a higher proportion of older people while Terai has a slightly low. The proportion of older people living in rural areas is higher than in urban areas. Gandaki, Koshi, and Bagmati provinces have a higher proportion of older people compared to the national average. On the other hand, Madhesh, Lumbini, Sudurpashchim and Karnali provinces have a lower proportion of older people. Understanding these geographical variations through the National level study is necessary. Such a study can aid in formulating targeted policies and services to cater to the specific needs of older populations in each area. By taking proper actions through policies, Nepal can ensure that its aging population continues to live healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives.

**Keywords:** Aging, older people, living arrangement, social security

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## Introduction

Population aging, denoting the rise in the elderly within the total population, remains a key global focus in the 21st century. The world's aging population is increasing substantially due to declining birth rates and improved life expectancy (Chalise & Brightman, 2006). The global elderly population reached 771 million individuals aged 65 and above in 2022, accounting for nearly 10% of the global populace. Projections indicate a substantial growth to 16% by 2050 and potentially 24% by 2100. By 2050, 80% of older people will be living in low- and middle-income countries (WHO, 2022).

Aging is a continuous biological and social process from conception to death, aging involves maturation and declining functional abilities of bodily organs due to physiological changes (Chalise, 2019). Typically, these changes result in reduced work capacity among older individuals (Chalise & Rosenberg, 2020; Rinsky-Halivni et al., 2022). Aging encompasses three stages: 'growth and development' in infancy, 'maturation' in adolescence, and 'senescence' beyond thirty years of age, which are essential elements in aging studies (Chalise, 2019). It is important to note that aging is a natural process that affects everyone differently. While some people may experience certain changes or challenges as they age, others may not. It is also important to remember that aging is not a disease, but rather a natural part of the human life cycle.

Defining the elderly population can be challenging. While developed countries often consider individuals aged 65 and above as seniors, in developing nations like Nepal, the benchmark is often set at 60 years (Elderly Act, 2063). In Nepal, with its unique demographic and national context characterized by spatial disparities, poverty, limited resources, and health challenges, even a small rise in the elderly population presents significant hurdles (Subedi, 1999). Despite the advantages of modernization for the youth, it does not equally benefit the elderly population, especially in Nepal (Chalise, 2021).

The aging population has created gaps in the job market in developed countries like Japan and some European countries. Business and public services are lacking workforce and skills. It has also created pressure on health care and social services. There is a huge burden of funding public services and social housing and utilizing larger numbers of older persons' experience and creativity for national

development (Lai et al., 2022). However, the experience and creativity of older persons can be utilized for national development.

In Nepal, individuals aged 60 and above are categorized as older persons. Over recent decades, life expectancy in Nepal has notably increased (Chalise, 2020; Chalise, 2023), leading to a higher growth rate among the elderly compared to the total population (Chalise, 2023). Forecasts suggest a rapid increase in the elderly population (Chalise, 2018). Families in Nepal predominantly shoulder the responsibility of caring for the elderly, but this support system is facing challenges due to shifting norms, reduced family sizes, and increased youth migration in pursuit of better opportunities. This article aims to scrutinize the a) aging trends of Nepal and b) aging situation of older individuals in Nepal, drawing on the 2021 census data.

### **Methods**

This paper has utilized the aging-related data obtained from the Census Bureau of Statistics of Nepal. Data from the latest census data published by the Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal (CBS, 2021) is utilized here. Further, many published articles focusing on issues of older people from Nepal including the author himself are included while discussing this paper. The focus of this article is to present the aging situation in the National, ecological, and provincial regions.

### **Results**

#### **Fertility, Mortality, and Life Expectancy**

Table 1 shows the fertility, mortality, and life expectancy trends in Nepal from 1952 to 2021. Crude Birth Rate (CBR), Total Fertility Rate (TFR), Crude Death Rate (CDR), and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) are decreasing rapidly. In the last 70 years, CBR decreased from 45.0 to 20.0 live births per thousand population. CDR decreased from 36.7 to 6.3 per thousand population. IMR also decreased rapidly from as high as 250 to approximately 23 per thousand live births in a year. The family size of Nepalese people also decreased from 5.4 to 4.4 i.e., by one member in the last 70 years. The life expectancy of Nepalese was around 27-28 years in 1952 which increased to nearly 72 years in 2021. It shows the life expectancy of Nepalese increased by 42 years in the last 70 years. In other words, Nepalese gain life expectancy by 2 years in every 3.5 years. If the latest life expectancy from 1991-2021 is analyzed, in the last 30 years it has increased by nearly 16 years.

**Table 1***Decreasing Fertility, Mortality, and Increasing Life Expectancy in Nepal*

Census Year	CBR <sup>1</sup>	TFR <sup>2</sup>	CDR <sup>3</sup>	IMR <sup>4</sup>	Family size	Life Expectancy	
						Male	Female
1952	45.0	-	36.7	250	5.4	27.1	28.5
1961	47.0	-	27	-	5.3	37.0	39.9
1971	43.0	6.3	21.4	-	5.5	42.1	40.0
1981	44.0	6.3	13.5	117	5.8	50.9	48.1
1991	41.6	5.6	13.3	97	5.6	55.0	53.5
2001	34.0	4.1	10.3	64	5.4	60.8	61.0
2011	24.0	2.5	7.3	40.5	4.9	66.6	67.9
2021*	20.0	1.8	6.3	23	4.4	71.0	73.0

\* Some data for 2021 are estimated from different sources

<sup>1</sup>Crude Birth Rate, <sup>2</sup>Total Fertility Rate, <sup>3</sup>Crude Death Rate and <sup>4</sup>Infant Mortality Rate

### **Growth Rate of the Population and Older Population of Nepal**

Table 1 illustrates the trajectory of population growth and the increase in the number of older individuals in Nepal over the past seven decades. Both the total population and the elderly demographic have exhibited continuous growth. The total population has surged by 253%, while the older population has experienced a notable increase of 627%. According to the 2021 census of Nepal, the intercensal decade recorded a total population growth rate of 0.92%, marking a comparatively low rate in the history of Nepal's scientific census spanning 70 years. Conversely, the growth rate among the elderly population stands notably higher at 3.29%. Moreover, the difference between these two population groups is at its peak over the past 70 years, with a substantial margin of 2.7 ( $3.29 - 0.92 = 2.7$ ).

Additionally, the proportion of individuals aged 60 and above continues to rise steadily. In the preceding decade, the older population exhibited a remarkable surge of 38%. Current data highlights that the percentage of older individuals stands at 10.21% in Nepal, marking the highest figure recorded in Nepal's history.

**Table 2***Total Population Size and Elderly Population Size and Growth Rate of Nepal, 1952-2021*

Census Year	Population		% of older Population	Population growth rate	
	Total	Elderly		Total	Elderly
1952	8256625	409761	5.00	-	-
1961	9412996	489346	5.20	1.65	1.79
1971	11555983	621597	5.40	2.07	2.42
1981	15022839	857061	5.70	2.66	3.26
1991	18491097	1071234	5.80	2.10	2.26
2001	23151423	1,504,311	6.50	2.24	3.40
2011	26494504	2154003	8.13	1.35	3.59
2021	29164578	2977318	10.21	0.92	3.29

### **Proportion of Older People in Urban and Rural and Ecological Zones of Nepal Area in Nepal**

In terms of the proportion of older people (aged 60 and above) in Nepal, the percentages vary across different categories. The overall percentage of older individuals in the total population of Nepal stands at approximately 10.21%, with slightly more females (10.28%) than males (10.13%).

When examining the rural-urban divide, the data shows that rural areas have a higher proportion of older individuals compared to urban areas. Rural regions have an average of 11.04% older individuals compared to 9.78% in urban areas. This trend is consistent for both males and females, with a higher percentage of older people residing in rural settings.

Further analysis based on ecological zones reveals that the Mountain and Hill regions tend to have a higher proportion of older individuals compared to the Terai (plain) region. The Mountain region shows the highest percentage of older people at around 11.06%, followed closely by the Hill region at 11.08%. Conversely, the Terai region has a comparatively lower percentage of older individuals at 9.46%.

Overall, this data suggests that older individuals are proportionally more prevalent in rural areas and certain ecological zones, specifically the Mountain and Hill regions, compared to urban areas and the Terai region. Understanding these

demographic patterns is crucial for policymakers and organizations to tailor specific interventions and services catering to the needs of older populations in different areas and ecological zones within Nepal.

Area	Total		Male	Female
Nepal	Population	2977318	1443907	1533411
	Percentage	10.21	10.13	10.28
Rural / Urban				
Urban	Population	1887684	911076	976608
	Percentage	9.78	9.64	9.92
Rural	Population	1089634	532831	556803
	Percentage	11.04	11.10	10.98
Ecological zones				
Mountain	Population	196055	94304	101751
	Percentage	11.06	10.79	11.32
Hill	Population	1302965	615891	687074
	Percentage	11.08	10.77	11.37
Terai	Population	1478298	733712	744586
	Percentage	9.46	9.58	9.34

### **Distribution of Older Population in Seven Provinces of Nepal**

The overall percentage of older individuals in Nepal is approximately 10.21%, with slightly more females (10.28%) than males (10.13%). Analyzing the provincial distribution, significant variations in the proportion of older individuals among the provinces are evident:

**Koshi Province:** With a population of 556,464, this province has a relatively high percentage of older individuals, accounting for approximately 11.22% of its population. Both male and female percentages are relatively similar, around 11.28% and 11.15%, respectively.

**Madhesh Province:** This province, with a population of 559,107, shows a percentage of older individuals at 9.14%. Notably, the female older population percentage (8.92%) is slightly lower compared to males (9.37%).

**Bagmati Province:** With a population of 653,849, this province has a higher percentage of older individuals, reaching approximately 10.69%. Females in this province have a slightly higher percentage (11.11%) compared to males (10.26%).

Gandaki Province: This province, comprising a population of 329,107, has the highest older population percentage of about 13.34%. Both male and female percentages are relatively close, around 13.10% and 13.56%, respectively.

Lumbini Province: With a population of 489,759, this province displays an older population percentage of 9.56%. The male older population percentage (9.70%) is slightly higher than females (9.43%).

Karnali Province: This province, with a population of 134,482, has a comparatively lower older population percentage at around 7.96%. The female older population percentage (8.06%) is slightly higher compared to males (7.87%).

Sudurpashchim Province: With a population of 254,550, this province demonstrates an older population percentage of approximately 9.45%. The female older population percentage (9.84%) is slightly higher than males (9.01%).

These variations in the distribution of older individuals among provinces indicate differing demographic trends, potentially influenced by regional factors such as healthcare, lifestyle, and socio-economic conditions. Understanding these variations can aid in formulating targeted policies and services to cater to the specific needs of older populations in each province.

Area	Total		Male	Female	Provincial Percentage
Nepal	Population	2977318	1443907	1533411	
	Percentage	10.21	10.13	10.28	
Provinces of Nepal					
Koshi	Population	556464	272795	271823	18.69
	Percentage	11.22	11.28	11.15	
Madhesh	Population	559107	287284	271823	18.78
	Percentage	9.14	9.37	8.92	
Bagmati	Population	653849	312857	340992	21.96
	Percentage	10.69	10.26	11.11	
Gandaki	Population	329107	153361	175746	11.05
	Percentage	13.34	13.10	13.56	
Lumbini	Population	489759	238114	251645	16.45
	Percentage	9.56	9.70	9.43	
Karnali	Population	134482	64823	69659	4.52
	Percentage	7.96	7.87	8.06	
Sudurpashchim	Population	254550	114673	139877	8.55
	Percentage	9.45	9.01	9.84	

## Discussion

According to the 2021 census of Nepal, the Proportion of older people 60 years and older is 10.21 percent. Mountain and Hill have a higher proportion of older people while Terai has a slightly low. The proportion of older people living in rural areas is higher than in urban areas in Nepal. Gandaki, Koshi, and Bagmati provinces have a higher proportion of older people compared to the national average of 10.21%. Lumbini, Sudurpashchim, Madhesh, and Karnali have lower proportions of older persons compared to the National average. In terms of the population of older people, Bagmati provinces have the highest number of older people followed by Madhesh, Koshi, Lumbini, Gandaki, Sudurpashchim and lowest in Karnali province. These variations in the distribution of older individuals among provinces indicate differing demographic trends, potentially influenced by regional factors such as healthcare, lifestyle, and socio-economic conditions. Understanding these variations can aid in formulating targeted policies and services to cater to the specific needs of older populations in each province.

In Nepal, the elderly population is experiencing rapid growth (Chalise, 2006; Chalise, 2012; Chalise, 2020; Chalise, 2023), and this trend is anticipated to continue in the foreseeable future (Chalise, 2018). Research indicates that older individuals tend to have weakened immune systems, making them more susceptible to various ailments as they age (Chalise & Rosenberg, 2019). With the escalating number of elderly citizens, Nepal may encounter forthcoming challenges across social, demographic, economic, and healthcare domains, particularly in the care of the elderly (Chalise, 2021).

Several factors have contributed to Nepal's aging population. One of the most significant factors is the decline in fertility rates. In the 1950s, the total fertility rate (TFR) in Nepal was around 6 children per woman (Chalise, 2006; Chalise, 2023). However, by 2023, the TFR is expected to fall to below replacement level, at 1.8 children per woman (Chalise, 2023). This means that the average Nepali woman no longer has enough children to replace herself and her partner in the population.

Another factor contributing to Nepal's aging population is the increase in life expectancy. In the 1950s, the average life expectancy in Nepal was only around 28 years (Chalise & Bightman, 2006). However, by 2020, life expectancy had increased to around 70 years (Chalise & Ghimire, 2018; Chalise, 2023). This substantial

increase, over 65 years, signifies a significant advancement facilitated by improved healthcare, accessibility to antibiotics, and better nutrition throughout the twentieth century (Chalise, 2023).

Now Nepal has a 63% working age population (15-60 yrs). The proportion of the child population (<15 years) is 27%. The migration of young people either for work or study abroad and later their intention to live in the developed country permanently is the latest trend seen in Nepal. It will help to decrease the number working-age population in the coming decades due to political instability and the unemployment situation in Nepal. On the other hand, the proportion of older people will increase because older people have less possibility to migrate to foreign countries permanently.

In Nepali society, the family plays a pivotal role as the primary support system for older members, aiding them in daily activities and providing diverse forms of assistance (Khanal & Chalise, 2020; Chalise & Khanal, 2020). Most Nepalese follow Hinduism, a belief system structured around the concept of life comprising four stages (ashramas) and driven by four goals: Brahmacharya (a student's life or sexual abstinence), Grihastha (marital life or householder), Vanaprastha (retreat to the forest), and Sannyasa (renunciation). Each stage prepares individuals for the subsequent phase, ultimately seeking spiritual enlightenment and liberation (moksha) from the cycle of rebirth. In the final stage, sannyasa, individuals are expected to relinquish worldly ties to attain inner spirituality (Chalise, 2021, Chalise, 2010). Hinduism significantly influences Nepali values through the concept of Dharma, which pertains to one's responsibilities based on their place within the life cycle (Chalise, 2021; Fruzzetti, 1982). Adherence to customs and norms is not only expected by family members but also by the wider community (Chalise, 2010; Chalise, 2021; Miltiades, 2002). However, some variations are found according to the caste system of Nepal (Chalise & Rai, 2013; Pandit & Chalise, 2023; Pandit et al., 2023).

The declining fertility rate in Nepal has not garnered significant attention from policymakers. Recent estimates reveal that Nepal's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has fallen below replacement levels, which often leads to a natural decline in fertility. Consequently, the population pyramid indicates a rapid decrease in the child population compared to two decades prior. This demographic shift suggests

a potential acceleration in the aging population or an imminent increase in aging. As the percentage of older individuals rises and younger populations migrate out of the country, traditional caregiving systems may face challenges (Chalise & Khanal, 2021; Khanal & Chalise, 2022; Chalise, 2021).

The aging of Nepal's population presents several challenges for the country. Increased life expectancy among Nepalese is accompanied by a higher prevalence of various age-related diseases (Chalise & Rosenberg, 2019). Studies conducted in Nepal have highlighted issues such as loneliness (Chalise et al., 2007), depression (Chalise, 2014), anxiety (Suwal & Chalise, 2023), sleep disorders (Chalise & Lamsal, 2017), functional disabilities (Chalise, 2012; Chalise & Khanal, 2020), elder abuse (Chalise & Basnet, 2017; Rai et al., 2018; Chalise & Paudel, 2020], chronic illnesses (Mishra & Chalise, 2019; Mishra & Chalise, 2019), and a diminished quality of life among older individuals (Maharjan et al., 2018; Joshi et al., 2018). These health concerns are associated with an augmented likelihood of limitations in daily activities, consequently amplifying the caregiving responsibilities placed on older individuals (Chalise & Khanal, 2021). This could lead to an increase in healthcare costs and a decrease in the quality of life for older people.

Moreover, the traditional living arrangements of elderly Nepalis are changing (Singh et al., 2021). The living situations of the elderly are contingent upon the support they receive, particularly from their spouses or children, which significantly impacts the well-being of the frail or very old (Chalise et al., 2022). Current community studies in Nepal indicate that the majority of older individuals reside with their sons and daughters-in-law (66.3%), followed by those living with a spouse (11.6%), alone (6.2%), or with other family members (Singh et al., 2021). As Nepal's social security system remains underdeveloped (Chalise et al., 2022; Malakar & Chalise, 2019), sustaining healthy aging and ensuring a high quality of life for the elderly may pose further challenges (Joshi & Chalise, 2022; Chalise, 2022; Chalise, 2023).

Developed countries have experienced gaps in the job market in due to a shortage of young people. Business and public services are lacking workforce and skills. It has also created pressure on health care and social services (Lai et al., 2022). There is a huge burden of funding public services and social housing and utilizing larger numbers of older persons' experience and creativity for national

development. However, the experience and creativity of older persons can be utilized for national development. Nepal needs to learn from today's Aging countries like Japan and Western countries and need to learn how to make older people healthy and active to promote healthy aging (Chalise, 2022; Chalise, 2023). Healthier older people can still contribute to social and national development.

### **Recommendations for Addressing Nepal's Aging Population**

To address the challenges of Nepal's aging population, the government and other stakeholders can take several actions to make older people healthy following the UN Decade of Healthy Aging guidelines. These include (Acharya et al., 2023):

- Developing and implementing policies that support healthy aging [15]. This includes promoting healthy lifestyles, providing access to affordable healthcare, and investing in research on aging.
- Strengthening the social security system. This includes increasing pensions, providing more support for older people who live alone, and expanding access to long-term care services.
- Creating more age-friendly communities. This includes making it easier for older people to get around, providing access to public transportation, and creating more opportunities for social interaction.

### **Conclusion**

Population aging is taking place rapidly in Nepal in recent decades. The proportion of older people 60 years and older increased by 38% in the last decade. The aging pattern is different in ecological zones, provinces, and rural-urban. More impact of aging will be seen in the mountain and rural areas in the coming days. These variations in the distribution of older individuals among different regions indicate differing demographic trends, potentially influenced by regional factors such as healthcare, lifestyle, and socio-economic conditions. Understanding these variations through proper research can aid in formulating targeted policies and services to cater to the specific needs of older populations in each province. By taking proper actions through policies, Nepal can ensure that its aging population continues to live healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives.

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### Practices and Perceptions of Teacher Educators on Learner Autonomy

**Ram Bahadur Mouni**

Durgalaxmi Multiple Campus, Far Western University, Nepal

Email: [ram.fwu3886@fwu.edu.np](mailto:ram.fwu3886@fwu.edu.np)

#### Abstract

This study explores practices and perception of English language teacher educator on learner autonomy. It aimed to identify the ways through which teacher educators practice autonomy in students learning and encourage them be autonomous. Using qualitative narrative inquiry research design, the data were collected through interviews with the five English language teacher educators teaching at undergraduate level, of Far Western University, Nepal. The findings of the study highlight a shared understanding of learner autonomy, emphasizing independent learning, self-direction, and responsibility. Teacher educators stress the pivotal role of instructors in promoting autonomy, advocating for a shift from traditional to student-centered methods. Despite a common understanding, challenges persist, including psychological factors, institutional constraints, and socio-cultural beliefs. The study also suggests the need to address these challenges through targeted strategies for successful promotion of learner autonomy in English language classrooms. Moreover, the study shows that even though it is challenging, teacher educators are making efforts to encourage students be autonomous in providing choices, goal-setting, encouraging self-evaluation, finding out the resources, preparing assignments, having class presentations into classroom practice using different strategies.

**Keywords:** Learner autonomy, challenges, perception, practice, teacher educators

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## Introduction

Learner autonomy refers to the ability of learners to take control of their own learning processes and make independent decisions about what, how, and when they learn. It involves learners actively engaging in the learning process, taking responsibility for their education, and becoming self-directed learners. Scholars such as Henry Holec, David Little, Phil Benson and Terry Lamb have differently interpreted learner autonomy (LA), however, they have common characteristics. These interpretations of learner autonomy entail the ability of learners to take control of their own learning process (Holec, 1981), make decisions, set goals, (Little, 2004) and regulate their learning activities independently (Benson, 2011). The role of learner autonomy in learning in general and language learning in particular is pivotal in giving learners opportunities to take responsibility of their own learning. Little (2004), Lamb (2008), Benson (2011), Ushioda (2011), Ismail et al. (2018), Borg and Alshumaimeri (2019), Chang (2020) and Alrabai (2021) opine that autonomy in learning has consistently been recognized as a crucial factor in determining the effectiveness of language learning. As emphasized in the fourth objective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as explained by Rosa et al. (2019), learner autonomy plays a vital role in ensuring high-quality education and equal opportunities, particularly in promoting lifelong learning for everyone. The United Nations recognizes this goal as a means to cultivate the skills and knowledge necessary to support future industries and sustain them by the year 2030. As documented by scholars such as Benson (2011), Little (1991), and Smith (2003), for over 30 years, the concept of learner autonomy (LA) has been a significant focus in foreign language education. However, how to practice the LA principles in teaching and learning invites further study and discussions. There has been limited attention given to the obstacles that may prevent its widespread adoption. This lack of consideration regarding the practicality of LA has caused a delay in its implementation. This gap between principles of learner autonomy and their implementation in language teaching and learning is relatable to the English language teaching and learning in the context of Nepal as well.

Negi and Laudari (2023) argue that English Language Teaching (ELT) experts are making efforts to implement new methods and strategies such as Task-Based Language Teaching, Peer Collaboration Flipped Classroom, Project-Based Learning for teaching English. While these methods and techniques offer ways

to improve instructional practices in ELT, students' overall proficiency in English remains relatively low, particularly in remote and under-resourced regions. They further argue that in developing countries like Nepal, many schools and colleges lack sufficient language learning materials and resources. Additionally, classrooms tend to be crowded, and access to learning technologies such as computers, the internet, and e-resources is limited. Consequently, teachers might have difficulties to provide differentiated instruction to accommodate learners with diverse needs. In such a condition, developing English language competencies, maintaining motivation in learners and promoting learner autonomy remains challenging.

Although recent efforts have been made to promote autonomous language learning, English teaching is still predominantly teacher-directed. Scholars such as Nunan (1999) and Richards (2006) have highlighted the need for a shift from traditional teacher-centered practices to more interactive and student-focused pedagogies. Similarly, Borg (2011, 2015), Stockwell (2017), and Farrell (2018), accept the prevalence of teacher-directed instruction and advocate for the incorporation of student-centered strategies to enhance language learning outcomes. These representative evidences indicate that teacher-centered learning is influencing in the practice of autonomous teaching and learning in different EFL/ESL contexts, including Nepal. The research works on exploring the status and challenges of learner autonomy are scarce in the Nepalese EFL/ESL context. Moreover, no significant attention has been paid in the area of autonomy and autonomous practices in Far Western University. Thus, this study attempted to explore practices and perceptions of English language teacher educators on learner autonomy in Far Western University. More specifically, the study attempts to explore the perceptions and practices, challenges and teachers' efforts in creating autonomous learning. The study also aimed to bring a clear picture of autonomy in terms of what teacher educators say and what they are doing in classes.

To explore the practices and perceptions, challenges and teachers' efforts in creating autonomous learning regarding learner autonomy, the study dealt with following research questions:

1. How do teacher educators perceive learner autonomy?
2. What challenges do teacher educators have in creating autonomous English language learning classes?
3. What efforts do teacher educators make use/adopt to develop autonomy of the students while learning English?

## Literature Review

### Conceptualizing Autonomy and Autonomy in Learning

Holec's (1981) definition of Learner autonomy is a significant and widely recognized contribution to the field. According to Holec, learner autonomy can be understood as the “ability to take charge of one’s own learning” In other words, it refers to the individual's capability to take control of and manage their learning process independently. In the words of Holec (1981) the term ability means:

to have and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e., determining the objectives; defining the contents and progressions; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.); evaluating what has been acquired (p. 3).

Similarly, Benson (2011) has defined LA with technical, psychological and political variations in terminology and foci and Dam (1995) included the dimension of “willingness,” irrespective of learner’s capacity. Autonomous learners, according to Dickinson (1994) and Lin and Reinder (2019), exhibit qualities of responsibility, persistence, resourcefulness, and initiative when it comes to making and executing decisions related to their language learning journey. They do not rely solely on their teachers and instead demonstrate independence. This self-reliance contributes to the effectiveness of their learning process compared to situations where they heavily depend on their teachers (Rao, 2018). Consequently, this reduces the need for students to rely on their teachers and, at the same time, improves their capacity for self-reflection, which proves to be an effective method for learning from both successes and failures (Crabbe, 1993).

The different definitions of learner autonomy enable me to infer the meaning that learner autonomy involves a self-directed learning approach, wherein learners take charge of their learning by planning, establishing goals, assuming greater learning responsibilities, and engaging in self-reflection throughout the learning process. Even though the definitions and principles of LA and concept of learner autonomy (LA) have been a significant focus in foreign language education, in discussions about how to apply LA principles, there has been limited attention given to the obstacles that may prevent its widespread adoption. This lack of consideration regarding the practicality of LA has caused a delay in its implementation.

## **Challenges in Implementing the Principles of Learner Autonomy in Practices**

Learner autonomy, a concept rooted in educational theory, emphasizes the learner's active role in their own learning process. Drawing from the works of influential scholars such as Holec (1981) and Knowles (1975), learner autonomy is characterized by learners taking initiative, responsibility, and control over their learning goals, methods, and evaluation. This principle encourages learners to engage in self-directed learning, enabling them to choose what, when, and how they learn, fostering a sense of independence and intrinsic motivation (Little, 1991; Benson, 2001). Autonomy is not a complete abandonment of guidance but rather an empowering collaboration between learners and educators, aligning with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (1978), wherein learners actively construct knowledge with the support of their social environment. The principles of learner autonomy also resonate with contemporary educational paradigms, such as constructivism and connectivism, underscoring the importance of personalized and collaborative learning experiences (Siemens, 2004; Jonassen, 1999). Embracing learner autonomy not only enhances cognitive skills but also nurtures lifelong learners capable of adapting to an ever-evolving knowledge landscape (Candy, 1991).

Regarding the challenges in the promotion of LA, majority of studies investigate the factors that limit the involvement of learners have primarily focused on adult participants (Cross, 1991; Saar et al., 2014). The research in this area has predominantly centered on psychological factors (Blair et al., 1995), with some studies also exploring social aspects (Babchuk & Courtney, 1995; Gooderham, 1993) and others delving into the influence of the educational institution (Jung & Cervero 2002; Saar et al., 2014). Similarly, the majority of research on Learner Autonomy has examined a combination of these aspects within their primary investigations (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Nga, 2014).

Cross (1991) conducted a prominent study that identified three primary categories of barriers hindering learner engagement: situational, dispositional, and institutional. The situational barriers were linked to individual life circumstances such as limited time or financial constraints, while dispositional barriers were associated with personal traits and concerns like lack of confidence or motivation towards learning. On the other hand, institutional barriers pertained to practices within educational settings that impeded learner participation. However, Saar et al. (2014) further explored these barriers and highlighted that external institutional

barriers were the most amenable to removal through adjustments in the education system. Other researchers, like Benson (2000), categorized barriers based on their relevance to policy, institutions, the conception of language, or language teaching methodologies. Alternatively, some researchers, such as Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012), classified barriers as being linked to teachers, learners, or institutions.

Irrespective of the criteria used for categorization, numerous challenges have been identified in various previous research studies. Among these challenges, several common issues stand out. These include teachers expressing a lack of confidence in their learners' abilities and experiencing limited autonomy in their teaching practices. Learners often face obstacles such as a lack of prior experience in autonomous learning, insufficient incentives to engage in autonomous learning, and an excessive reliance on their teachers (Farahani, 2014). Additionally, learners' limited exposure to English beyond the classroom, their primary focus on test performance, and the scarcity of relevant resources for both teachers and learners contribute to the challenges (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). Furthermore, the rigid curriculum, the dynamics of teacher-learner interactions, and the examination system also emerged as significant hurdles (Jing, 2005). Additionally, constraints like limited time availability, adherence to traditional teaching practices, and educational policies further impede the advancement of Learner Autonomy (Nguyen, 2014). Both categories of constraints intersect with the crucial influence of culture on the learning process. Learners' cultural background can either be perceived as a hindrance to learner autonomy (Smith, 2003) or, conversely, as an opportunity for promoting their autonomy (Nasri et al., 2015).

Similarly, some recent studies carried out in the field of LA reveal a number challenges for teachers in fostering learner autonomy in EFL classes. Pasaribu (2020) in his research revealed that even though online tasks motivate learners to engage in meaningful language learning experience and nurture social dimensions of autonomy, Syafryadin et al. (2022) in their study, found some challenges faced by teachers, including poor internet connection, students' different characteristics, and lack support from school policymakers. Wiraningsih and Santosa (2020) found out that some policy constraint due to the school zoning system; institutional constraint due to the unscheduled events; language teaching methodology constraints due to the lack of knowledge of teaching strategy and different characteristics of students. Similarly, Le, and Nguyen (2022) revealed that the students were not very confident

with their learner autonomy, and they have a lot of difficulties when conducting their learning on their own outside the classroom. Mansooji et al. (2022) indicated that challenges in promoting learner autonomy are caused by students' passive learning styles and low levels of motivation and the pressure that the teaching demands place on the teachers.

Even though several research works have been carried out to identify the challenges in promoting language learner autonomy, some studies also suggest some ways to respond to the challenges. Le and Nguyen, (2022) suggested that learner autonomy can be promoted through learner's self-regulating skills, strengthening their interactions with teachers and friends, and receiving more support from society. Syafryadin et al. (2022) argue that LA can be promoted through ICT-based English learning; giving and freedom for the students to access different online resources according to their interest. Finally, Mansooji et al. (2022) suggested that teachers can foster autonomy for learners in their teaching process through suitable learning styles, high levels of motivation and minimizing the pressure that the teaching demands place on the teachers.

There are some studies carried out on learner autonomy in the English language teaching and learning context of Nepal. Such studies primarily entail perceptions, practices and challenges of promotion of learner autonomy. Joshi (2011), Paudel (2013) and Neupane (2019), found positive attitudes of university teachers and learners towards autonomous learning. Bhattarai (2021) explored the awareness of teachers on the promotion of learner autonomy. Similarly, Khadka (2015) argues that giving the learners opportunity to participate in designing activities and materials can be a helpful technique in a large and low resource classes. Dhakal (2017), Bidari (2021) and Rana and Rana (2022) explored role of group interaction, presentation, simulation, role playing; interview storytelling techniques developing autonomy. Gharti (2019) and Karki (2020) explored that Self-Directed Learning (SDL) helps learners to achieve better achievement and effective learning.

Some studies have also been carried out on learner autonomy that explore role of technology and tools in creating autonomous learning classes. Pantha (2017) found use of smartphones; Gautam and Sarwar (2018) highlight the role of various tools, techniques and strategies; Neupane (2019) found use of Moodle; Joshi and Poudel (2019) showed use of ICTs; Shrestha (2020) suggests use of newspapers; and Paudel and Rana (2022) suggested that video games can be an assistive tool to engage teenage learners in collaborative and autonomous learning activities.

The studies on learner autonomy practices show various causes of challenges in promoting learner autonomy in the classrooms. Pant (2019) and (2019) found deep-rooted social practices and myths; Nepal and KC (2020) revealed lack of sufficient knowledge of teachers; Negi and Laudari (2022) revealed students' over-dependence on their teachers, and teachers and spoon-feed teaching to students during their instructional practices as the major challenges in promoting LA in language classrooms.

The review of literature basically revealed the presence of two research gaps. Firstly, a substantial portion of the studies relied on survey-based methodologies, which has raised concerns about the limitations of employing surveys as an exploratory instrument. It is suggested that alternative instruments or study designs might be better suited to unveil a broader range of aspects that cannot be captured solely through predetermined codes. Secondly, the geographical scope of the literature's research was predominantly focused on other regions of the world such as Europe, Africa and Arab, and other countries than Nepal which creates research a gap in the understanding of the subject within the specific context being investigated. Third, most of the studies are confined to the challenges but practice part is still shadowed and the actual observation of autonomous strategies of teachers and activities of the students are lacking in the context of teaching and learning English as a second language, Nepal differs from European, American and Arab context English teaching and learning. Thus, this study aims to delve into teachers' beliefs concerning the potential promotion and practices of Learner Autonomy (LA) and discern the major challenges that may impede the development of LA in the Nepalese context.

## **Methods**

Qualitative narrative inquiry research design has been followed in this study. The interpretive research paradigm was employed for the discussion where emphasis was given to the social relationships and processes. The participants selected for this study were 4 English language teacher educators out of 58 who were faculty members at the undergraduate and graduate level in 4 constituent campuses of Far Western university, Nepal. The participants were selected on the basis of longer experiences in presupposition that teachers they have better experience of the learner autonomy practices. Four constituent campuses out of 16 of Far Western University were chosen as the target because they are the oldest campuses and have large

number of students studying at undergraduate and graduate level. This selection also offers a wider range of geographic and demographic diversity.

Prior to the collection of data, the participants were personally approached and informed about the research and data collection. Then the participants were interviewed and for supplementary data open-ended questions were developed and provided to the participants through google forms and telephone conversations. To ensure a more natural and adaptable interview process, the sequence and phrasing of questions were made flexible, following the guidance of Bailey (2007). This approach allowed for a deeper exploration of each individual's insights and experiences. The interview questions were formulated by drawing upon relevant literature in the field of learner autonomy (LA). The interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed for analysis. The data were presented and discussed on three themes derived on the basis of research questions.

To maintain ethical considerations in this study, the researchers, prior to data collection, ensured that all participants were fully informed about the study's objectives, the chosen research methods, and the voluntary nature of their involvement. To protect the participants' confidentiality, codes for teacher educators (TE1, TE2...) were assigned instead of using their real names.

## **Findings and Discussion**

From the interviews, information elicited through questionnaire from google docs and telephone conversations, three primary themes have been generated. The themes are in line with the three research questions: how the teacher educators perceive learner autonomy; what challenges the teacher educators have in creating autonomous English language learning classes; and what efforts the teacher educators make to develop autonomy of the students while learning English. The themes include: perceptions of teacher educators on learner autonomy, challenges in using autonomous activities in students' learning of English and autonomous learning strategies practiced in teaching and learning of English.

### **Perceptions of Teacher Educators on Learner Autonomy**

The findings of the study reveal a comprehensive understanding among the study participants regarding the fundamental concepts, theoretical underpinnings, and principles associated with learner autonomy. In response to inquiries probing

their perceptions of learner autonomy, all participants, consistent with established principles proposed by Holec (1981), Little (2004), and Benson (2011), expounded that learner autonomy encompasses the ability to learn, independence in the learning process, and assuming responsibility for one's own learning and evaluation. An illustrative quotation from the participant (TE1) highlights this viewpoint:

If applied, learner autonomy is a good practice for self-pace in learning. Learners can be aware of their own learning and progress through this practice. Our campuses should work towards promoting it in case English language teaching. (TE1)

TE1's perspective accentuates the perceived benefits of learner autonomy, positing it as a constructive practice fostering self-directed learning and advocating for its promotion within the context of English language teaching and learning. This recommendation underscores the potential role of learner autonomy in augmenting self-directed learning practices among students.

The other participants, TE2, TE3 and TE4, on the other hand, describe learner autonomy as building independent learning capacity, taking charge of their learner's own learning, deciding goals of their learning and evaluating their own learning. On perception of learner autonomy, they reflected:

Learner autonomy is the capacity of learning independently with the ESA (Engage, Study and Activate) process, means capacity of setting goal, study, and self-evaluation of the learning. It is learner need and interest-based learning from input to output. (TE2)

It's learner's ability to take charge of their own learning. Learner autonomy is an independent learning process where the learners plan them. (TE3)

Learning, set learning goals, take more learning responsibilities, and self-reflect on the learning process. (TE4)

Even though the participants describe their understanding of learner autonomy in different words, their perception on learner autonomy is almost similar. All of them reflect that learner autonomy encompasses developing capacity to learn, taking responsibility, setting goals and involving in self-evaluation. However, TE2 focuses more on capacity of independent learning. TE2 further links the role of engage-study-activate (ESA) sequence of learning to autonomous and independent learning. TE3, on the other hand, emphasizes on importance of making the plans for learning

and taking the charge of their own learning. Similarly, TE4 adds importance of self-reflection in learner autonomy.

Apart from the theoretical understanding of learner autonomy, the participants also describe the importance of teacher's role in promoting learner autonomy in English language learning classes. In response to the question, how they perceive the role of teachers in promoting language learner autonomy, all the participants responded:

Teachers should work towards promoting learner autonomy, but I believe no teacher is doing so. We often have traditional way of teaching and learning. To empower the learners and make our teaching student-centered, learner autonomy can be one of the good practices in campuses.

TE1 opines that a teacher's role is essential in promoting learner autonomy and empowering the learners to become self-learner. However, he/she believes that teachers in different campuses are not making efforts to promote learner autonomy since they follow the traditional methods of language teaching and learning.

Regarding the question, the teachers engage students in self-directed learning and how they act while engaging them in self-directed learning, the participants, TE2, TE3 and TE4 have similar views. They respond:

The role of teacher should be as an organizer or facilitator, teachers help their students to be more responsible for their own learning. (TE2)

I take the role of facilitator, confidence developer and help students to take interest in autonomous learning. (TE3)

Teachers play an essential role in negotiating learners' participation in planning for learning, putting the plans into action, monitoring, and evaluating their learning to carry out the learning tasks autonomously. In most cases, the success of language learning depends on the teachers, how they teach, and what learning opportunities they provide to their students by creating various learning contexts as facilitators, counsellor, and resource persons. (TE4)

All the participants, TE2, TE3 and TE4, believe that a teacher in the class should work as organizer, facilitator, helper, confidence developer, participant, monitor, evaluator, counselor and resource person. They also believe that such activities of the teacher are significant in creating autonomous learning environment in the class

and promoting language learner autonomy. TE4 further adds to his/her response that success of language learning depends on the autonomous activities the teachers bring into the classroom practice; how they teach; and what learning opportunities they provide to their students by creating various learning contexts. Similarly, the participants also highlighted that along with the roles a teacher plays for the sake of learner autonomy promotion, a teacher should supply various resources to make their learning autonomous. In this regard, they reflected:

Our classrooms should be well facilitated with technology with internet access. Learners should have laptop and computer literacy. Teachers should also have digital literacy to promote learner autonomy. (TE1)

Need based and contextual resources are required to facilitate learner autonomy in the classroom. (TE2)

Give a lot of materials to read, provide opportunities to share their ideas, ask them what they want to learn, let them present in the class, let them lead, set learning environment, self-assessment, reflection, give chance to take risk. (TE3)

Adequate self-access resources for the students. (TE4)

The participants of the study emphasize that modern ICT technology is essential for fostering learner autonomy. TE1 insists that autonomous classes should equip with computer and internet technology and the teachers should have digital literacy as well. However, the other participants, TE2, TE3 and TE4 believe that providing contextual and need-based materials and resources to the learners is beneficial for providing learners the opportunities for interaction, collaboration self-assessment, reflection, giving them chance to take risk.

The participants of the study expressed a number of ways of encouraging to learners for autonomous learning. They also mention that there are some psychological factors associated with students learning behaviours. Regarding the question of encouragement and feeling of the learners, all the participants responded:

I often suggest the learners to have much more self-study, go to the library for study, and ask them to search google to find any relevant information so that they can learn in a better way. (TE1)

Then students also feel encouraged when I ask them to promote their own learning.

Students are encouraged by giving them chance to express their learning interest and feedback to themselves rather than from others. (TE2)

I provide them some clues and assignments related to the topic, which they have to search and prepare notes. Some students feel it as a tiring job while others take it as a motivational one. (TE3)

Giving opportunities to plan their learning, set learning goals, take more learning responsibilities, and self-reflect on the learning process. (TE4)

More or less, all the participants state that they use similar strategies such as self-study, self-feedback, freedom in learning, assignments, self-planning, and self-reflection, for promoting learner autonomy in the classroom. However, TE1 focuses more on self-learning activities than other strategies. Similarly, TE2 believes that self-feedback encourages the learners make autonomous learner. TE3, on the other hand, encourages learners to take responsibility of their learning by giving regular assignments and notes on various topics. Finally, TE4 encourages learners to be autonomous by allowing them to plan their learning by themselves, asking the learners to set their learning goals, take responsibility of their own learning and reflecting on the learning process.

### **Challenges in Using Autonomous Activities in Students' Learning of English**

In response to the second research question: What challenges have teachers been facing while engaging students in self-paced learning, the participants expressed the diversified opinions. Regarding the inquiry of the key factors that hinder students' willingness to take initiative and be autonomous in their learning process, the participants, TE1, TE2, TE3 and TE4 replied:

There are some psychological factors that hinder students' willingness to have learner autonomy. One is traditional mindset that teacher is the source of every knowledge. Second is the lack of that kind of learning environment. (TE1)

TE1 opines that there are two major psychological factors that generate difficulty in creating autonomous learning: first, traditional mindset of learners; students still believe that students' learning is solely the responsibility of the teachers. Hence, students have less motivation to take responsibility of their own learning. Second, is the lack of access to the autonomous learning environment. Since the teachers both have traditional mindset of teaching and learning, getting them into autonomous learning becomes challenging. Similarly, the other participant (T2) reflected:

Students' interest and readiness, Students' ability, family encouragement, teachers' motivation and encouragement are the main factors that play vital role in students' learning autonomy, due to the lack of such factors it is impacted. (TE2)

The other participant, TE2, on the other hand, feels that the psychological factors such as, learner's interest, readiness, ability to learning, family encouragement, teacher motivation are the primary factors that obstruct in creating autonomous environment for language learning. He/she expresses that such factors are almost absent in all campus. Thus, creating autonomous classes is impractical.

Some financial and institutional factors such as teacher, learning resources, motivation, self-confidence, environment, tasks are some of the key factors that hinder students' willingness to take initiative and be autonomous learner. (TE3)

Teachers' spoon-feeding pedagogy and lack of opportunities to become autonomous. (TE4)

However, different from the view of TE2, the other participant, T3 stated psychological, financial and institutional factors are major challenges in implementing autonomous learning. The factors such as lack of learning resources, motivation, self- confidence, learning environment are some major factors that hinder autonomous learning in language learning classes. However, participant TE4 opines that 'spoon-feed pedagogy' and lack of opportunities create challenges in making teaching and learning autonomous. But he/she doesn't clearly mention the types of opportunities that are barriers for creating autonomous learning environment.

Apart from these challenges of promoting learner autonomy, the participants also show some practical challenges that impose difficulty in fostering learner autonomy. In relation to practical issues the teacher encounter in English language classes, the participants expressed:

[...] no habit of studying the subject matters, [...] because of Facebook and TikTok, they pass most of their time in such social media rather than searching things to learn more. (TE1)

Students are not eager to take learning responsibility, they depend upon teachers and prescribed materials only. (TE2)

Limited time, class size, learning resources, learning environment, tasks, teacher student relationship, materials, learner's readiness are some of the difficulties that I have faced in fostering learner autonomy in the class. (TE3)

Lack of resources and students' overdependence on the teachers. (TE4)

The responses from the participants, TE1, TE3 and TE4, showed mixture of psychological, social, financial and institutional challenges in promoting and practicing learner autonomy in the class. Such factors involve students' learning habit, learners' interest in taking learning responsibility, unnecessary use of social media, time limitation, class size, learning resources, learning environment, tasks, teacher student relationship etc. are major challenges the teacher face while promoting learner autonomy in the classroom. In this line, TE1 emphasizes that mis/overuse of social media such as TikTok has impaired students' learning habit. TE2, and TE4 on the other hand, view that learners are overly dependent on the teachers and prescribed materials and course of study. Thus, the learners seem to be reluctant to take initiatives of learning in their own.

Moreover, the participants of the study also experience some socio-cultural challenges that create difficulty in the promotion of learner autonomy in the language classroom. The participants in this context replied:

Our students often have traditional mindset that teachers should teach everything and impart knowledge. Our context is like that. So, it is difficult to avoid this kind of mindset at once. (TE1)

Yes, socio-cultural and the contextual factors pose the challenges to the development of learner autonomy, the traditional beliefs, cultural beliefs and the principle of obeying the superior and following the seniors create the challenges. (TE2)

Yes. Student's social environment and sociocultural context creates challenges in learner autonomy. (TE3)

All of the participants agree that there are some social and cultural factors that pose challenges in the promotion of learner autonomy in the class. As TE1 reflects, learner's mindset is shaped by traditional socio-cultural ideology i.e., teacher is the source of knowledge and students are only the recipients. This ideology is responsible for continuing teacher centered teaching and learning practices. Both of the participants, TE2 and TE3 also agree with the view of TE1. They further say that most of the students come from the social contexts which still accepts the superior role of teacher in teaching and learning. Because of such socio-cultural beliefs of the learners, the participants believe that it is difficult to change the teaching learning system. Thus, developing and promoting learner autonomy is quite challenging.

## **Autonomous Learning Strategies Practiced in Teaching and Learning of English**

The participants of this study not only indicate the challenges on learner autonomy, but also expose how they overcome the challenges to create autonomous learning environment. They reported that they use a number of strategies to convert traditional classes into autonomous platforms for learning. Such strategies included making choices and decisions for learning, giving freedom to learn and evaluate, collaboration, assistance from the institution and individual treatment of needy learners.

Regarding the question of freedom, making choice, setting goals and decision for learning and evaluation, the participants responded:

In case of making choices, I often let my students to do so. But while making decisions about any issue, we often have compromise about what to do. I don't keep students free to make decisions. (TE1)

Students are given chances to make their own decisions and choices in learning on the basis of the content and exercises (TE2)

I always give them freedom to choose learning styles and make their own decisions for learning (TE3)

Most often students I motivate my students to make choices and evaluate their own work. (TE4)

Regarding the freedom the teachers give to their students for making choices for learning the content, TE3 and TE4 explicitly said that they allow their students for making choices. However, they do not mention how often and on which situation they allow their learners to make choices. Similarly, TE1 responds that he/she often lets the learners in making choices for their learning. However, if there is any issue in making choices, the teacher and students work together to settle the problem. TE2 mentions that he/she only allow students make choices on the basis of the content and exercises. In line with making the choices for learning items and making decisions for learning, another issue of learner autonomy is setting the learning goals by the learners. To the question if teachers allow the students to set their own learning goals, the participants reported:

Yes. (TE1)

Usually, I don't let my students set their learning goals. I make them clear about what they have to do in any task and work. (TE2)

The goals are already determined in the syllabus, so the freedom is not given to the students. (TE3)

Yes. (TE4)

In case of students' freedom to set the goals of learning, TE1 and TE4 say that they allow their learners to set their learning goals. However, they don't clarify the contexts in which the students are free to set their goals or objectives of language learning. They also do not mention that how the students involve in goal setting process. TE2 on the other hand, mentions that he/she doesn't let the students to set the goals; instead, he/she himself/herself describes the goals of learning to the students. Similarly, TE3 explicitly denies the freedom of students in setting the goals. He/she mentions that students have nothing to do with learning goals since they have to follow the syllabus; the course of study designed by the university clearly mention the goals of learning and the course structure doesn't allow students to set the goals in their own.

The other strategy of enhancing learner autonomy is enabling learners to evaluate their own learning. Regarding the question if teachers allow their learners to evaluate their own work to promote learner autonomy, the participants reply:

Yes. (TE1)

Obviously not. Evaluation is often done through tasks and assignment and term exams. (TE2)

Students do not habit of evaluating themselves though they are given freedom contextually, they only wait for teachers' response. (TE3)

Yes. (TE4)

Even though they do not mention the context and situation in which they allow their learners to evaluate their own learning, the participants, TE1 and TE4 say that they try to promote learner autonomy by asking the learners to evaluate their own learning activities. However, other participants, TE2 and TE3 opine that making evaluation of learners' work is not the part of students learning; instead, evaluation is done through the tasks and assignments in terminal and final exams. Moreover, they explicate that students do not habit of evaluating themselves. Even though they are given freedom contextually, they only wait for teachers' response. Thus, it shows that this strategy does not seem to be effective in promoting learner autonomy.

Apart from the application of principles of learner autonomy in fostering learner autonomy in the class, the participants also expose some other efforts for enhancing autonomous learning. The first is collaboration with colleagues. To a question if they work with their colleagues to help learners in making autonomous learners, the participants reply:

We often don't have that kind of environment. Our colleagues do not work together to promote learner autonomy. (TE1)

Yes, I work but students are fully depended on teachers (TE2)

Sometimes. (TE3)

Yes. (TE4)

Majority of the participants, TE2, TE3E4 agree that they work with their colleagues to promote learner autonomy. However, they do not mention the frequency, process and strategies of collaboration they do with their colleagues. Nevertheless, they show positive attitudes on the role of collaboration with colleagues to promote learner autonomy. In contrast, TE1 clearly mentions that he/she does not have favourable environment for working with colleagues because the teachers in his/her campus do not work or even discuss about the promotion of learner autonomy.

To the questions regarding if the institution they work in and the society they live in make any effort to encourage teachers in promoting learner autonomy, all of the participants share that the campuses and even the university do not have trend of encouraging teachers for promoting learner autonomy. However, the institutions have provided internet and computer facility to the teachers and students which is indirectly helping in learners autonomous. Similarly, the participants also mention that society and parents do not have the culture of communication about the teaching and learning. The participants share that they do not have any experience of communicating with society about learner autonomy practices.

Finally, in a question what suggestions they like to share to for fostering autonomous learning in the classroom, the participants of this study suggest various strategies that can be helpful in promoting learner autonomy. On this question, they responded:

First thing is that we need to change our mindset that teaching is teacher centred. Rather than lecture method, other student centred methods and techniques should be used by the teachers. (TE1)

In my experience convincing learners that they are capable of greater independence for learning, helping, encouraging and engaging in planning can be the effective strategies. (TE2)

Ask students about their preference in relation to tasks, offer student choice e.g., Group work, pair work, materials, learning environment etc. Let learner take initiative, inspire, set clear goals, active learning strategies etc. can be effective in overcoming barriers to learner autonomy. (TE3)

Giving opportunities to the students to plan their learning, set learning goals, take more learning responsibilities, and self-reflect on the learning process. (TE4)

The responses of the participants on the promotion of learner autonomy seem to be promising. Even though there are some psychological, social, financial and institutional limitations, the participants believe that fostering learner autonomy is essential for better learning. For that the participants share a number of suggestions. TE1 shared that traditional mindset of the teachers and students should be changed and teacher-centered teaching methods should be replaced by the learner-centered ones. Similarly, TE2 felt that convincing the students about their capacity of learning, enhancing their self-confidence for self-learning, helping and encouraging in self-learning and making them independent learners would be better strategies for the promotion of learner autonomy. In line with other participants, TE3 and TE4 suggested that understanding the needs and choices of the learners, encouraging learners to take responsibility of learning, engaging learners in making choices, decisions and setting goals of learning, encouraging them in collaborative learning and inspiring them with different strategies can be useful strategies for promoting learner autonomy in English language classrooms. However, none of the participants mentions that what role the institution, society and parents should play to foster autonomous learning.

### **Conclusion**

The results of the study delve into three key themes aligned with the research questions, providing valuable insights into teacher educators' perceptions of learner autonomy, challenges faced in implementing autonomous English language learning classes, and efforts made to promote learner autonomy in English language education. The findings reveal a consistent understanding among teacher educators

regarding the conceptualization of learner autonomy, encompassing the ability to learn independently, taking charge of one's learning, and assuming responsibility for learning and evaluation. The study participants emphasize the importance of teachers in promoting learner autonomy, acknowledging the need for a shift from traditional teaching methods to more student-centered practices. Despite a shared understanding of learner autonomy, challenges persist, including psychological factors, institutional constraints, and socio-cultural beliefs that hinder the transition to autonomous learning environments. Teacher educators employ diverse strategies to foster learner autonomy, such as providing choices, setting goals, and encouraging self-evaluation. Collaboration with colleagues and institutional support are acknowledged as facilitating factors, though societal and parental involvement remains limited. Recommendations for fostering learner autonomy include changing the mindset towards learner-centered teaching, enhancing students' self-confidence, and adopting strategies that actively engage students in the learning process. The study underscores the importance of addressing multifaceted challenges and implementing targeted strategies to successfully promote learner autonomy in English language classrooms.

Even though this study covers limited landscape and participants, the findings of the study can have wide range of implications. First, this study has explored learner autonomy in relations to English language teaching and learning in the local context. However, learner autonomy is not only confined to language; the finding can be beneficial for the researchers working in various disciplines other than English language. Second, the study has brought insights to all the teachers ranging from basic to university level. Third, the study seems useful to make further investigation for the researchers working nationally and internationally. Fourth, it will be equally helpful for all learners to understand and practice learner autonomy in their real classrooms. Finally, it can be significant for English Education Department of/ and Far Western University to make policies for promoting learner autonomy in its constituent campus. This is a small-scale research work that reveals perceptions of teachers on learner autonomy. More rigorous further research works would explore more on how learner autonomy really works to enhance effective teaching and learning.

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## Government Capacity: Evidence from Nepal

Prajwal Man Pradhan<sup>1</sup>, Suman Kharel<sup>2</sup>, PhD

<sup>1</sup>Central Department of Rural Development, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

<sup>2</sup>Central Department of Rural Development, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Corresponding Author's Email: [prajwal.pradhan@cdrd.tu.edu.np](mailto:prajwal.pradhan@cdrd.tu.edu.np)

### Abstract

Autonomous local governments are essential for maintaining stable economic and social development mechanisms and democratic regimes. The prime objective of the article is to examine the impact of pressure-capacity variables on local governance. Two sources of data, such as NPHC 2021 and LISA are used. Overall local government of Nepal has still weak performance as only 38 percent of total municipals have secured good ranking status. Based on PCP framework, total score of 10 composite indicators generated by LISA and some population management related characteristics (e.g., sex ratio, population density, literacy, household size, and two food coping strategy related variables) have been examined using multiple regression to understand interrelationship response and explanatory variables. The statistical analysis shows that there is a string relationship between pressure and capacity variables. Individually, three population related variables such as sex ratio, literacy and household size are positively correlated with total score of 10 indicators with low coefficient of determination. In addition to strengthening existing gender status, educational level and population growth, more socioeconomic and environment related variables as explanatory variables are necessary to link government capacity and its performance in Nepal.

**Keywords:** *Local governance, management capacity, performance, population*

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## Introduction

Across the world, local governments are in charge of overseeing and providing essential public services. These groups are always at the forefront of creating and implementing creative solutions to brand-new, urgent social issues, from picking up garbage and maintaining clean streets to offering education and assistance to the elderly and disadvantaged. Not only do local governments lead the way in delivering the public services that residents depend on, but they are frequently the state's most visible representation in the public eye. Through their encounters with customers and service users, "street-level bureaucrats" who provide local public services significantly contribute to the construction of citizen identity (Walker & Andrews, 2013; Vinzant & Crothers, 1998). The management and performance of local governments is thus an issue of both timely and enduring importance. In this context, the article is about to examine Nepal's government capacity and its performance. For this purpose, pressure-capacity-performance framework is used.

### Concept of Capacity

Concept of capacity is ambiguous. According to Oxford Companion to Philosophy (Honderich, 2005, p.125), a capacity is a power or ability (either natural or acquired) of a thing or person, and as such one of its real (because causally effective) properties. For "ability," the two concepts—capability and capacity—have the same dictionary meaning. Most of the research conducted in political science and public administration define the two concepts interchangeably as either the ability or the power of the government. The work of Choi (2016, 2021) considered capability as the rules or equilibrium that are devised and restricted by political choice, an institution, and the rule of law—adopting the perspective of New Institutional Economics. In addition, from the carrying capacity point of view, it has its roots in the demography (Malthus, 1986) and ecology (Ehrlich, 1971; Seidl & Tisdell, 1999) domains. It was also defined in relation to the impending constraints on resource consumption and environmental deterioration brought on by excessive human activity (Ehrlich & Holdren, 1971). In the 200 years since its inception, carrying capacity research has evolved from studies of the biotic population growth law to comprehensive research covering the demands of human development and the endowments of natural resources (Holdren & Ehrlich, 1974). Applications for carrying capacity have broadened in scope, including carrying capacity for

comprehensive resources and the environment, carrying capacity for land, water, and cultural resources, as well as ecological and environmental carrying capacities (Bao et al., 2020). Carrying capacity is now a key indicator for measuring sustainable development and is used extensively in planning, resource management, and environmental management.

### **Conceptualization of Government Capacity**

The conceptualization of government capacity (GC) occurred in a number of pioneering studies (Burgess, 1975; Bowman, 1988; Donahue et al., 2000; Gargon, 1981). Autonomous local governments play a vital role in developing democratic regimes and establishing stable mechanism for economic and social development. From management point of view, the Office of Management and Budget (Executive Office of the President of the United States) Interagency Study Committee on Policy Management Assistance defined the local management capacity and capability in three general areas (Burgess, 1975, p.709; Gargan, 1981, p.650) :

- Policy Management-"performance on an integrated, cross-cutting basis of the needs assessment, goal setting, and evaluation functions of management: the establishment of priorities; the mobilization and allocation of resources; and the initiation and guidance of the planning, development, and implementation of policies, strategies, and programs."
- Resource Management-"creation and support of the basic administrative tools or support functions which constitute an organization's basic capabilities and bottom line assets. Resource Management cross-cuts functional departments and units and includes personnel administration; property management; ... information management; . . . and financial management...."
- Program Management-"performance of the administrative functions and tactical requirements of executing specific policy by undertaking programs, activities, or services. Program Management provides leadership for the specific functional units of government that provide public services...."

As a member of Study Committee, Burgess notes that local capability in policy, resource, and program management is increasingly important in the implementation of policies which involve a general jurisdictional rather than a specific functional approach to problems (Burgess, 1975).

Donahue et al. (2000, p.577) pointed out that management capacity indicates “government’s intrinsic ability to marshal, develop, direct, and control its human, physical, and information capital to support the discharge of its policy directions”. Similarly, Donahue et al. (2000, p.384) described management capacity as a “government’s ability to develop, direct, and control its resources to support the discharge of its policy and program responsibilities”. Second movers adopted the former studies’ conceptualization and expanded or applied capacity according to research focuses. Van Slyke (2003, p. 296) showed management capacity as “personnel, oversight and program audit capabilities, and the necessary communication and political skills”. Particularly, for management capacity, personnel must possess “contract management experience, policy expertise, negotiation, bargaining, and mediation skills”.

However, Gargan (1981, p. 651) rejects the idea that management theory should be the only way to understand local government capability. From the standpoint of national government, he believes that three are particularly significant: federal policy makers and bureaucrats; local political leaders and bureaucrats; and constituencies or users of public services. Any of these might consider what a local government is capable of. From public policy perspective, Honadle (1981, p.577) defined capacity as “the ability to anticipate and influence change; make informed, intelligent decisions about policy; develop programs to implement policy; attract and absorb resources; manage resources; and evaluate current activities to guide future actions.”

Hou et al. (2003, p.300) classified GC as “the administrative capacity approach” and “the governance capability approach.” The former refers to aspects of the administration that considers “the importance of policies, procedures, and resources governing administrative action”. The latter approach embraces external aspects such as political influences.

Some link it to the “infrastructural power” of the state (Fukuyama, 2013), others to the extent to which governance resembles a Weberian bureaucracy (Evans & Rauch, 1999) or to the “quality of government” (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008) or to “formal structural and procedural features of the governmental administrative apparatus with informal elements” (Christensen et al., 2016).

As Lodge and Weigrich (2014) pointed out that the four categories of capacity which are as follows:

- coordination capacity (CC): bringing together disparate organizations to engage in joint action;
- analytical capacity (AC): analyzing information and offering advice in addition to risk and vulnerability assessments;
- regulation capacity (RC): control, surveillance, oversight, and auditing;
- delivery capacity (DC): managing the crisis, exercising power, and actually providing public services.

The paper will pay special attention to AC from management perspective.

### **Theoretical and Empirical Frameworks**

Several well-known ideas on public sector management have been tested in the setting of local government. Local governments and population-environment interactions have been studied using system theories, economic theories of effective service production, contingency theories about organizational design, and resource-based arguments about the capacity and capabilities required for success (Bertalanffy, 1968a, 1968b; Burgess 1975; Honadle, 1981; Malthus, 1986).

### **Local Government Management Approaches**

Table 1 represents the primary management practices associated with each perspective. The potential relationships between the various local government management techniques and local government performance, along with how each strategy may be integrated into O'Toole and Meier's public management model, which offers a concise justification for combining the various management action results. According to their method, public managers must do four basic tasks before deciding how to allocate their resources, which include both money and time. The first is maintaining and making changes to the processes and structures that are presently in place (M1). The second is formulating and implementing a purposeful plan for overseeing the surroundings in which a firm operates (M2). This tactic therefore takes the shape of finding a middle ground between attempting to capitalize on environmental changes and shielding the organization from them (M3/M4) (O'Toole & Meier, 1999). The paper analyzes the local government studies that are under examination using this conceptual framework as a foundation. In the right-

hand column of Table 1 that sees the management techniques that are included in the final analysis.

**Table 1**

*Local Government Management Approaches*

Theory	Key Concept	O'Toole and Meier	Anticipated Performance
System Theory	Open system	M1, M3/M4	+
	Closed system	M1, M3/M4	+
Economic	Organization size	M1, M3/M4	+
	Contracting out	M3/M4	- or +
	Competition	M3/M4	- or+
	Collaboration	M3/M4	+
	Coproduction	M3/M4	-
	Contingency	Administrative intensity	M1
Centralization		M1	+
Integration		M1	+
Strategy content		M3/M4	+
Planning		M1	+
Resource-Based	Management system	M1	+
	Staff quality	M1	+
	Personnel stability	M1	+
	Leadership	M1	+
	Human resource management practices	M1	+
	Representing bureaucracy	M3/M4	+
	Networking	M3/M4	+
Population-Ecology	Population Growth	M3/M4	+
	Environment deterioration	M3/M4	+

Adopted from Walker and Andrews (2015)

**Population Management**

A country's long-term social, economic, and political structure is determined by demographics (e.g., fertility, mortality, and migration). These demographics shape a wide range of intricate issues and possibilities that societies encounter, many of which are important for the expansion and advancement of the economy. Changes in

technology, cultural norms, and behavior, as well as institutional and governmental reforms, can all have an impact on demographic trajectories and the implications they have for development.

Changes in the population can affect the economy's structural productivity growth, living standards, savings rates, investment, and underlying growth rate. Additionally, the long-term Government's financial management, public service delivery, social inclusion can all be impacted by demographic shifts. Furthermore, it is reasonable to anticipate that variations in national demographic trends will have an impact on physical infrastructure development. Therefore, understanding shifting demographics and the difficulties they present is helpful in defining the relationship between socioeconomic growth and capacity.

The public service administration and the growth rate of potential output will probably experience downward pressure due to changes in the population. Because they depend on complex social dynamics, the timing and amount of these effects are unclear. Changes in the population may also have an impact on the business cycle and the mechanism used to transmit financial policy. The optimal course of action will need monetary authorities to continuously assess these structural and cyclical implications. Fiscal and financial management will be faced with obstacles by demographic developments as well. It is anticipated that growing fiscal imbalances will result in larger levels of government debt relative to GDP, which could push interest rates higher and discourage profitable investment. However, there are methods that can be taken to somewhat counteract the negative effects of changing demographics on the economy.

Three fundamental factors—population growth, variations in fertility and mortality, and related shifts in the age structure of the population—are driving the Nepalese demographic transition.

## **Public Policy**

Developmental and redistributive policies are the two basic categories of public policy. Redistributive policies deal with the reallocation of resources within society, while developmental policies deal with the various indicators as shown in conceptual framework to support economic growth. In terms of policy design, redistributive policies are typically overseen by the national government in many nations. This is because, regardless of where they reside, all citizens of a nation

should, at the very least, be entitled to the same minimal welfare benefits. Local governments are responsible for developing policies since local developments have unique characteristics that must be taken into account when designing and implementing them. Furthermore, Shahi (2023) emphasized that monitoring mechanism should be institutionalized to increase effective service delivery, accountability and transparency of local governments.

### **Development Plans (1956-2024)**

Throughout the sixty years of history of development plans in Nepal, nine five-year and five three-year plans have been put into action. The political landscape saw multiple transformational shifts during this time, but the gains made in the fields of infrastructure development, modern transportation, economics, and society have not materialized as anticipated. Nepalis, meanwhile, are comparatively more conscious now than they were previously. Modern society has evolved. Although they haven't eliminated, discrimination, inequality, and exclusion on the basis of class, gender, and ethnicity are declining gradually. During this time, significant advancements have been made in social security, drinking water, health, and education. Urban infrastructure, communication and information technology, and road transportation have all made substantial strides in the infrastructure industry. Nonetheless, further work has to be done in the other infrastructure sectors, such as air transportation and hydroelectricity. To meet the public's rising expectations and advance as a wealthy and developed country, result-oriented execution through short-, medium-, and long-term plans is required. A sizable portion of the population still lives below the poverty line, despite a notable decline in both absolute and multidimensional poverty. Until quite recently there has been a trend of young people going abroad in search of job because of lack of employment opportunities in country of origin. The industrial sector's economic contribution has decreased, although the trade imbalance has remained significant. In the fields of social security, inclusiveness, and environmental protection, significant progress has been accomplished. The plan's objectives in the areas of industrialization, economic growth, production and productivity, excellent governance, high-quality healthcare and education, and a clean and pollution-free environment have not been met (GoN, 2023).

## Conceptual Framework for Government Capacity

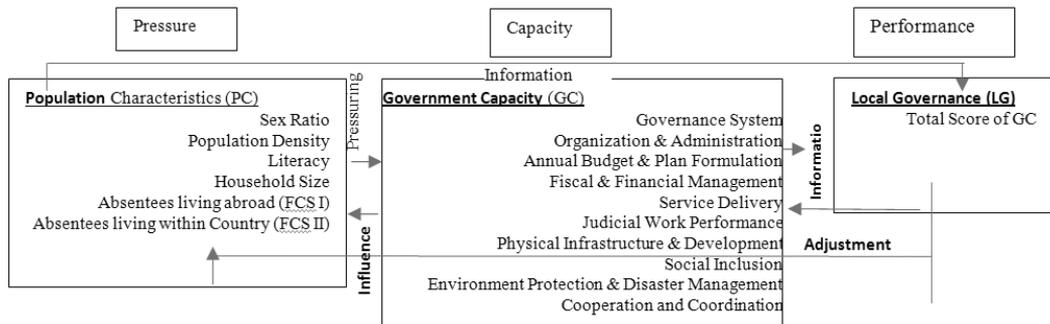
The work of Choi (2021) showed that population characteristics as pressure variables have positive association with government capacity and its performance. Thus, this study builds a pressure-capacity-performance (PCP) conceptual framework to examine a relationship between indicators as shown in Figure 1. With the economic development, during the process of human resource use, when people's irrational activities exceed the GC, such problems related to food security may exert 'pressure' on the GC. With pressure, the original system is bound to take performance measures according to various capacity indicators.

To investigate the link between various types of indicators, this study develops a pressure-capacity-performance (PCP) conceptual framework. As the economy grows and human resources are used, and irrational behavior surpasses the growth curve, issues pertaining to food security may put "pressure" on the growth curve. Under duress, the original system will inevitably use other capacity indicators to determine performance. Thus, the systemic pressure may be released by devising strategies and utilizing technical innovation to unleash the potential of GC. Performance metrics will then result in additional pressure, which will modify the state of GC systems. Performance metrics ought to be updated as a result. A PCP model for government capacity is created by this cycle of "action-feedback-action."

PC represents the strain that socioeconomic and demographic factors—such as the sex ratio, population density, literacy rate, and migration as a means of coping with the growing population—have on GC. The resources supporting Nepal's socioeconomic growth are reflected in the status of GC. LG is a reflection of the good deeds that people have done to better the GC, such establishing sensible policies and enhancing the governance structure. The prospective government capability and future direction of municipal in Nepal are assessed in this study by a coupling analysis of PC, GC, and LG. Therefore, the systematic strain may be alleviated by developing strategies and utilizing technical innovation to release resources and environmental potential carrying capacity.

**Figure 1**

*Pressure-Capacity-Performance (PCP) Conceptual Framework*



## Data and Method

Two types of data sources are used to analyze the government capacity in Nepal. They are LISA (<https://lisa.mofaga.gov.np/home>) and National Population and Housing Census 2021 (<https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results>).

## Introduction to LISA

In order to guarantee economic equality, prosperity, and social justice, Nepal enacted a new constitution in 2015, changing from a centralized unitary state to a federated nation. With the passage of the new constitution, Nepal's sub-national governments (SNGs) system, structure, and operation have undergone a profound paradigm change. The federal government, located at the center of the country, the seven provincial governments that supervise each province, and the 753 local governments (in 293 municipalities and 460 rural municipalities) are the three levels of government defined by the constitution.

The constitution provides exclusive and concurrent rights and responsibilities, as outlined in schedules five through nine, to ensure basic devolution of authority to the various levels of government. The three tiers of government are envisioned by the constitution to have a non-hierarchical relationship based on the concepts of coexistence, cooperation, and collaboration. The three tiers of government are treated as independent full governments (exclusive functions) that are dependent on one another via common "Rules" (concurrent functions) under the federalism envisioned by the constitution. All sectors are included in the comprehensive devolution.

A score includes an average score of 10 thematic indicators. They are physical infrastructure development, social inclusion, environment protection and disaster management, organization and administration, annual budget and plan formation, fiscal and financial management, service delivery, judicial work performance, and collaboration & coordination. (see also, McDonald, 2020). To evaluate government capacity, 100 questions were formulated through the self-assessment of these thematic areas. The weightage of each question is given as per Local Level Institutional Capacity Self-Assessment) Guidelines 2019 (2077).

Evaluation Process	Weightage (%)	Result analysis and basis for weightage
Overall scenario*	21	Four conditions are assigned for overall scenario. The head of the Department/Division/Branch of the concerned local level must select the condition of the work done by his office. In this scenario, zero marks are given for condition 1, 0.5 marks for condition 2, 0.75 marks for condition 3, and 1 mark for condition 4.
Procedural scenario**	34	Within this scenario, three (weak, normal, and excellent) conditions are assigned, and zero points are given for weak, 0.5 points for normal and 1 point for excellent.
Quantitative scenario***	45	Within this scenario, there are three conditions for each indicator (weak, normal and excellent) are assigned, and zero is given for weak, 0.5 for normal and 1 for excellent.

Source: LISA Guidelines, 2019 (<https://lisa.mofaga.gov.np/home>)

Note: \* Indicators showing the overall condition of the local level, \*\* Public administration and service delivery that address local concerns day-to-day, \*\*\* Resultant indicators that can be compared, measured, and quantified.

Based on the weightage mentioned above, each indicator was evaluated through a number of questions as follows.

Thematic Area	Total Score	No. of questions for each scenario			Total Questions
		Overall	Procedural	Quantitative	
Governance System	9	3	4	2	9
Organization and Administration	8	2	3	3	8
Annual Budget and Plan Formulation	11	2	4	5	11
Fiscal and Financial Management	11	2	4	5	11
Service Delivery	16	2	4	9	16
Judicial Work Performance	7	1	3	3	7
Physical Infrastructure and Development	13	3	4	6	13
Social Inclusion	10	2	4	4	10
Environment Protection and Disaster Management	9	1	3	5	9
Collaboration and coordination	6	2	1	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

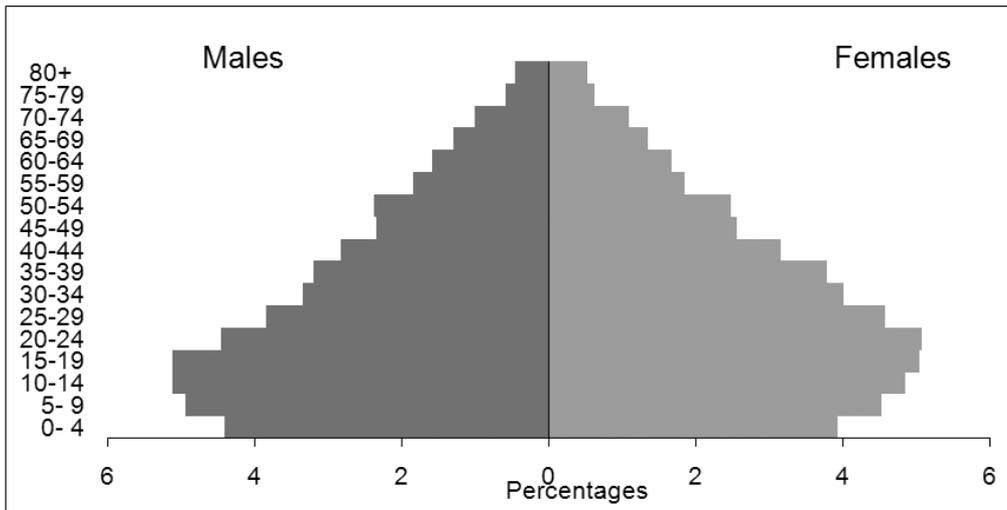
Source: LISA Guidelines, 2019 (<https://lisa.mofaga.gov.np/home>)

### **Introduction to NPHS**

According to the 2021 National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) (NSO, 2023), Nepal has 29,164,578 people in total, with 14,253,551 (48.98 percent) men and 14,911,027 (51.02 percent) women. Consequently, sex ratio is 95.59 which is slightly higher than in 2011 (94.16). Similarly, the population density is 198 in 2021, which was 180 in 2011.

**Figure 2**

*Population Pyramid Showing Nepal's Population Composition*



Nepal represents a lower population density than the average for Southern Asia (314 people per square kilometer). Nepal's population is very youthful, with 47.5 percent of people under 24 (NSO, 2023). By ecological belt, the highest population density is 460 in the Terai region, and the lowest is 34 in the Mountain region. Similarly, the average household size is recorded highest in the Terai (4.73), followed by Mountain (4.33) and Hill (3.99).

In 2022, MoHP et al. (2022) report that the overall fertility rate is 2.1 per woman and the net migration rate is -4.2 percent. The significant drop in fertility over the past 20 years and the relatively small percentage of elderly people (10.2 percent in 2021) who are 60 years of age or older are to blame for the low dependent ratio (42.3 percent) (NSO, 2023).

With a significant increase from 41.9 years in 1972 to 72.4 years in 2022, life expectancy has increased significantly (UNCB, 2023). According to MoHP et al. (2022), Nepal has also achieved significant progress in lowering the child death rate (under the age of five), which dropped from 256.7 in 1972 to 31.1 in 2022.

Nepal has a low level of education (5.1 years of schooling in 2021) and a poor HDI, ranking 143 out of 191 nations in 2021 (UNDP, 2022). Since 2002, Nepal's mean number of years of education has grown, although it is still low—roughly half of the median for the world (UNCB, 2023).

The World Bank has categorized Nepal as a lower middle-income nation, with a GDP purchasing power parity (PPP) per person of \$3,996.7 in 2020 (World Bank, 2022). Notwithstanding its achievements in reducing poverty and income inequality, Nepal continues to rank among the poorest nations in Asia due to its sluggish economic development (Cosic et al., 2017). Due to its geography and frequent natural catastrophes, which have a detrimental impact on economic growth, its GDP per capita growth rate is less than half of South Asia's average (2.4 percent against 7.1 percent in 2021).

Between 2014 and 2019, the percentage of people living in poverty fell from 30.1 to 17.4%, with the greatest concentration of poverty being in rural municipalities. According to GoN (2021), poverty rates are higher in rural municipalities (28%) than in urban municipalities (12.3%). Agriculture accounts for over one-third of the nation's GDP, and 57 percent of its population works in agriculture (FAO, 2023). Raising the financial returns from agriculture is challenging due to poor productivity, fragmentation, and degradation of the land, low per capita arable land availability (0.082 hectares per person, less than half of the world average) (FAO, 2023).

Remittances made up 23.1 percent of GDP in Nepal in 2022, compared to 7.9 percent in Pakistan, 5.1 percent in Sri Lanka, 4.7 percent in Bangladesh, and 3.3 percent in India. Nepal is one of the top ten nations with the highest percentages of remittances. (Chandra, 2023). In Nepal, 81.6 percent of households in urban areas and 77.7 percent in rural areas have access to sufficient drinking water when needed. More than 90 percent have access to improved sanitation (NSO, 2023).

Electricity is widely available, with 82.2 percent of homes in rural areas and 94.4 percent in urban areas having access to it. Less than half of the households in the province of Karnali (47.3 percent) have access to electricity, making it stand out. Regarding phone access, 78 percent of all households have one, although there is a difference in the percentage of rural (4.9 percent) and urban (19.9 percent) regions that have access to a computer and the internet (21.5 percent in rural, 45.7 percent in urban) (NSO, 2023).

With its varied terrain, which includes plains, hills, mountains, and wetlands, Nepal is prone to natural calamities. Based on the 2021 ND Gain indicator, Nepal is ranked 126<sup>th</sup> out of 182 countries, suggesting that it is not well prepared (120<sup>th</sup> most ready) and that it is very vulnerable (42<sup>nd</sup> most susceptible) (UND, 2022).

Urban municipalities have 66.17 percent of their total population, whilst rural municipalities have 33.83 percent. The population of urban and rural municipalities was 63.19 percent and 36.81 percent. The Terai area is home to 53.61 percent of the total population (15,634,006), followed by the Hill region (40.31 percent, or 11,757,624 people) and the Mountain region (6.08 percent, or 1,772,948 people) in 2021. About 76 percent of the nation's population who is five years of age or older is literate. The literacy rate for men is 83.6 percent, compared to 69.4 percent for women. The overall literacy rate in the 2011 census was 65.9 percent; the male literacy rate was higher at 75.1 percent than the female rate at 57.4 percent.

**Table 2**

*Some Population Management Variables with LISA's Total Score, 2023*

Place of Residence	Total Score*	Sex Ratio	Density	Literacy	Household Size	HDI	Food Coping Strategy (FCS)		
							Working outside home	Absentees living within country	Absentees living abroad
Nepal	0.644	95.59	198	0.762	4.37	0.602	0.382	0.133	0.234
Urban/Rural									
Urban	0.667	96.06	373	0.785	4.31	0.647	0.462	n/a	0.238
Rural	0.626	95.59	105	0.719	4.51	0.561	0.241	n/a	0.224
Ecological Belt									
Mountain	0.627	97.28	34	0.728	4.33	0.564	0.221	0.222	0.156
Hill	0.666	94.65	192	0.809	3.99	0.623	0.389	0.202	0.252
Terai	0.617	96.11	460	0.731	4.73	0.563	0.399	0.090	0.235
Province									
Koshi	0.661	95.02	192	0.797	4.16	0.580	0.322	0.129	0.227
Madhes	0.526	100.55	633	0.547	5.29	0.510	0.407	0.066	0.218
Bagmati	0.660	99.36	301	0.821	3.89	0.661	0.537	0.150	0.181
Gandaki	0.670	90.37	115	0.817	3.92	0.618	0.391	0.206	0.314
Lumbini	0.700	92.01	230	0.781	4.49	0.563	0.348	0.126	0.270
Karnali	0.644	95.27	60	0.761	4.61	0.538	0.231	0.142	0.171
Sudurpaschim	0.626	89.51	138	0.762	4.67	0.547	0.261	0.157	0.298

Source: <https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results>, \*<https://lisa.mofaga.gov.np/home>

According to the 2021 provincial population distribution, Bagmati province has the largest population share (20.97 percent) and Karnali province has the lowest (5.79 percent). Similarly, the province of Madhesh has the second-highest population. Comparably, in terms of population in 2021, Koshi, Lumbini, Sudurpaschim, and Gandaki Province rank third, fourth, fifth, and sixth, respectively.

One important tool for reducing household vulnerability or food insecurity is the food coping strategy (FCS). To do this, households send their economically engaged member to the marketplace and business (both domestically and internationally), converting the family mode of production to the capital mode of production. Initially, a person hopes to find work close to their home. If unsuccessful, s/he would rather relocate inside the nation. In the event that neither effort succeeds, the person eventually looks for work overseas.

Those who are absent and reside overseas comprise 2,190,592 individuals, or 23.4 percent of 1,555,961 families. 1,799,675 (82.2 percent) men and 390,917 (17.8 percent) women make up the total number of absentees residing overseas. Nepal's food security score in the Global Food Security Index for 2022 was 74 out of 113, with the lowest score coming from the sustainability and adaptability facet. According to data from the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (MoHP et al., 2022), 14 percent of households experienced food insecurity in 2022. Compared to the national average, a greater number of families in rural regions (18.1%) experienced food insecurity; of the provinces, Karnali Province had the greatest rate (36.6%), while Gandaki Province had the lowest (8.7 percent). Of the 14,983,310 people who worked in the year before to the census, 61.8 percent were employed in the household sector, making it the biggest industry. Next in the row are non-financial corporations, 32.7 percent, 3.9 percent, 1.1 percent, and 0.4 percent correspondingly, the government, financial corporations, and non-profit institutions serving families. The institutional sector of 0.1 percent has not been disclosed.

## **Results and Discussion**

In the analysis, the general rule of thumb is that a self-assessment score of .70 and above is good, .80 and above is better, and .90 and above is best (highly influenced by the concept of Cronbach, 1951). Fourteen municipals (one municipality from Bagmati, and 13 (seven municipalities & six rural municipalities) from Madhes Province) have not assessed their organizational capacity self-assessment by the end of fiscal year 2022-23.

**Table 3***Organizational Capacity of Municipals by Urban-Rural*

Position	Score ranges	No. of Municipals		%
		Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Total
Excellent	90-100	11 (2.42)	12 (4.21)	23 (3.11)
Better	80-89	37 (8.15)	43 (15.09)	80 (10.83)
Good	70-79	97 (21.37)	77 (27.02)	174 (23.55)
Poor	0-69	309 (68.06)	153 (53.68)	462 (62.55)
		454 (100.00)	285 (100.00)	739 (100.00)

Source: <https://lisa.mofaga.gov.np/home>

About 33 percent of rural municipals are being able to meet the minimum level of performance level, which is 13 percent lower that of urban's performance. About 24 percent of municipals (174) met minimum criteria of being good. Around six in every 10 municipals have still low local government capacity.

**Table 4***Organizational Capacity of Provinces*

Thematic Areas	KH	MD	BG	GD	LB	KN	SP	Nepal
Governance System	85.40	75.88	84.58	87.48	88.58	83.97	84.15	84.09
Organization & Administration	71.85	63.24	72.06	75.04	73.85	76.98	71.16	71.58
Annual Budget & Plan Formulation	68.94	62.27	67.05	66.71	68.47	68.84	64.75	66.69
Fiscal & Financial Management	76.34	64.41	73.69	79.39	80.75	76.27	74.64	74.72
Service Delivery	73.93	62.44	70.22	75.2	76.81	72.49	68.87	71.24
Judicial Work	84.67	59.23	89.5	79.66	86.76	75.18	75.37	78.82
Performance Physical Infrastructure & Development	52.92	37.88	53.86	50.45	52.77	43.94	45.72	48.44
Social Inclusion	56.88	46.3	58.22	62.06	66.88	63.96	58.35	58.34
Environment Protection & Disaster Management	49.13	36.36	50.82	50.33	52.93	48.80	47.10	47.70
Cooperation & Coordination	36.31	21.14	40.89	44.46	52.33	30.27	27.56	36.13
Total Score	66.34	54.05	66.21	67.52	70.11	64.85	62.57	64.36
Overall Scenario	65.57	51.81	67.48	69.24	71.17	64.83	63.97	64.56
1Procedural Scenario	61.14	45.95	61.03	63.49	66.42	57.58	56.50	58.71

2Quantitative Scenario	70.62	61.23	68.53	69.75	72.41	70.37	66.49	68.53
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Source: <https://lisa.mofaga.gov.np/home>

Note: KH=Koshi, MD=Madhes, BG=Bagmati, GD=Gandaki, LB=Lumbina, KR=Karnali, SP=Sudurpaschim

## Determinants of Thematic Areas

The study has considered sex ratio, population density, literacy, household size, three food coping strategy (working outside home, absentees living within country and abroad) as major determinants of thematic areas mentioned above. All indicators mentioned above are normalized and used Cronbach' (1951) Alpha to test its reliability, suggesting all indicators have better (more than 0.80) data quality (see Table 5).

**Table 5**

*Some Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach's Alpha Value*

	Mean	SD	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis	SE	Alpha
Thematic Areas	0.65	0.18	0.67	-1.08	2.12	0.01	0.8326410
Governance System	0.82	0.17	0.89	-2.61	8.71	0.01	0.8443954
Organisation & Administration	0.70	0.23	0.75	-0.85	0.54	0.01	0.8414668
Annual Budget	0.65	0.19	0.68	-0.81	1.33	0.01	0.8414549
Financial Management	0.73	0.19	0.77	-1.33	2.72	0.01	0.8415841
Service Delivery	0.70	0.19	0.72	-1.18	2.05	0.01	0.8375714
Judicial Performance	0.77	0.25	0.86	-1.23	0.99	0.01	0.8439645
Infrastructure Development	0.47	0.23	0.48	-0.10	-0.47	0.01	0.8402416
Social Inclusion	0.57	0.26	0.60	-0.37	-0.67	0.01	0.8402104
Environment Management	0.47	0.22	0.44	0.04	-0.41	0.01	0.8405592
Coordination	0.35	0.32	0.29	0.57	-0.89	0.01	0.8498199
Population Management Variables							
Sex Ratio	0.34	0.12	0.35	-0.02	1.07	0.00	0.8737840
Density	0.03	0.06	0.01	9.20	112.60	0.00	0.8645460
Literacy	0.65	0.17	0.68	-0.73	0.39	0.01	0.8563730
Household Size	0.40	0.18	0.36	0.76	0.26	0.01	0.8859492
FCS I	0.41	0.21	0.38	0.42	-0.44	0.01	0.8702291
FCS II	0.26	0.18	0.21	1.44	2.36	0.01	0.8709288

As shown in Table 4, two thematic areas (governance, and organization and administration) are found effective comparatively as compared to other areas at provincial level. Only Lumbini province has satisfied the minimum level of threshold (0.70) for overall and quantitative scenarios. Overall, all three scenarios are observed below the threshold level in Nepal.

## Multiple Regression Analysis

Several explanatory variables are used in multiple linear regression, sometimes referred to as multiple regression, a statistical approach that predicts the value of a response variable. Multiple linear regression's main goal is to simulate the linear connection between the response (dependent) variables and the explanatory (independent) variables (Bluman, 2012).

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{i1} + \beta_2 X_{i2} + \dots + \beta_p X_{ip} + \epsilon$$

where, for  $i=n$  observations:

$Y_i$  = response variable (Total Score)

$X_i$  = explanatory variables (sex ratio, population density, literacy, household size, FCSs)

$\beta_0$  = y-intercept (constant term)

$\beta_p$  = slope coefficients for each explanatory variable

$\epsilon$  = the model's error term (also known as the residuals)

The output of multiple regression analysis is as follows.

Residuals:

Min	1Q	Median	3Q	Max
-0.56761	-0.08652	0.00737	0.09455	0.44057

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )
(Intercept)	0.62714	0.06171	10.162	< 2e-16 ***
Sex Ratio	-0.21776	0.09851	-2.211	0.0275 *
Density	-0.15838	0.13844	-1.144	0.2532
Literacy	0.28400	0.04745	5.985	4.03e-09 ***
FCS I	-0.05940	0.05103	-1.164	0.2449
Household size	-0.18862	0.04716	-4.000	7.26e-05 ***
FCS II	0.05163	0.05005	1.031	0.3028

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Signif. codes: 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 0.1578 on 520 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.2172, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2081

F-statistic: 24.04 on 6 and 520 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16

The regression analysis shows that there is a strong relationship between total performance of 10 composite indicators as a dependent variable and six pressure variables ( $p$ -value $<0.0001$ ). But the values of  $R^2$  is very low suggesting more confounding are needed to explain dependent variable on independent variables. When focusing on the single variable, only three pressure variables such as sex ratio, literacy and household size are positively correlated with government's capacity.

### Conclusion

Some population management related characteristics such as sex ratio, population density, literacy, household size, and two food coping strategy related variables (based on NPHC 2021) are examined to what extent the total score of 10 thematic indicators of LISA data (as response variable), generated by Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration/Nepal has been affected. Approximately 38 percent of total municipalities (Rural: 32 percent and Urban: 46 percent) has good government capacity. The multiple regression analysis is also used to examine the PCP framework that shows that sex ratio, literacy and household size are associated with the total score of 10 thematic areas of LISA.

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**Local Governance Principles in Nepal in Relation to Kautilya's  
Saptanga Theory**

**Bal Kumar Chaudhary**

Tikapur Multiple Campus, Far Western University, Nepal

Email: bkchaudharytkp@gmail.com

**Abstract**

Local governance is the decentralization and dispersed subordinate authority that delivers public services at the local level. The present governance policy is based on rich Eastern philosophical principles. Modern political theories and systems are developed or modified versions of classical theories. This paper explores the relevance of Kautilya's concept of Saptanga theory and the governance system in the local governments of Nepal. I have employed a qualitative approach as the methodology to achieve the objectives. Data and information have been collected from policy documents, research articles, and books relevant to the area of study. The analysis of the literature reveals that the Saptanga model is relevant to the principles of local governance in Nepal. The concept of an Absolute King forwarded by Kautilya having sovereign power resembles the concept and practice of an elected mayor at the local level. However, the Absolute King was assumed to have absolute power without having any controlling mechanism, but the elected local-level representatives are controlled by the constitution as the guiding principle. Despite the differences, the comparison of Local governance with the Saptanga theory of Kautilya encourages the local leaders to govern the local governance effectively and efficiently.

**Keywords:** Local governance principles, Saptanga Theory, local government, good governance



## Introduction

The local government (LG) is a core community-level organization in a small geographic area which is the most accessible institution to the local people (Acharya, 2018). In this regard, Badal (2019) also claimed that the local government is the closest government to the local people for their day-to-day life. Similarly, Awa (1981) focused on local government as a political authority by which political power is dispersed and decentralized in a nation or state as a subordinate authority. A state has many forms of public administrative bodies in which local government is the lowest tier of the organization under the state (UK Government, 2016).

Local governments are vital community-level public entities that govern the lowest tier of the government (Shah & Shah, 2006). They are the governments of the doorsteps and they are the nearest governments of the local citizens. In this context, Pradhan (2019) emphasized that local governments are the basis of democratic governance and they act as the government in the neighborhood. Thus, local citizens are in direct contact with the local government which provides many public services to the delineated territory. The structure of local government varies from nation to nation.

In the context of Nepal, the Constitution (2015) provisions three levels of government- national, provincial, and local. It includes Municipalities (293) and rural municipalities (460) that function as local governments mandated by the constitution of Nepal 2015. Local government units are further divided into 6,743 Wards in Nepal. The Constitution grants them a range of powers to be exercised with a degree of autonomy within their respective jurisdiction. Local Governments are committed to providing public services to the local citizens by executing 22 exclusive powers, and additional 15 concurrent powers in the constitution (Acharya, 2016). Such authorities are formed and conditioned especially by national-level provisions involving the separation of power, checks, and balances of legislative, executive, and judicial power.

Additionally, the provision of local government has been defined in the constitution that illustrates the major duties of Local Governments to deliver a range of specified services to the delineated territory. In developing countries, the existence of local government is considered for a two-fold purpose. First, they are playing key roles in funds, functions, and functionaries so that they deliver the services

(Mathew & Hooja, 2009); while next is that high level of public trust fosters to involve the citizens in democratic exercise, determining public needs, and maintain accountability (Sikhakane & Reddy, 2011).

In general, governance means the acts of leading, guiding, and making things happen process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented. As Rhodes (1997), claimed governance is the new technique to govern the society or it is the new procedure of governing the community. According to Gerry stocker (1998), governance includes mainly five attributes - a set of institutions and actors, boundaries and responsibilities, the presence of power dependence involved in the interrelationship between different institutions, autonomy, and self-governing networks of actors, and the ability of government to guide different actors. Thus, governance is relevant to the duties and responsibilities of the state by which decisions are implemented effectively.

Good governance is about using power, authority, and resources in a method that maximizes the welfare of the people. Aryal (2011) states that good governance is related to control and rule of administration of the state based on the laws of the state. Similarly, Rijal (2011) also highlights that good governance is considered a system that is based rule of law and includes accountability, transparency, responsibility, equity, and inclusiveness. It helps to establish a welfare state and provides services effectively and efficiently to the citizens. Likewise, Dahal (2020) focused that good governance is the implementation of the laws by the state which is related to control, rule or administration. At present, the United Nations Development Fund (UNDF) provides a good governance model which includes eight principles: participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable, inclusive, and follows the rule of law.

These principles resemble Kautilya's concept that highlights the need for good organizations to look after the welfare of the people. Kautilya's Arthashastra is the art of all levels of government and management, the main duties of the king's ministers and representatives, the art of diplomacy, etc. The basic pointer of good governance is that the ruler must capitulate to his own interest before the public interest of the people. A king is expected to perform in a most virtuous manner. The happiness and pleasure of the king lie in the public's happiness and the good of the society alone makes the good of the king. In the happiness of his focusses lies his happiness; in

their welfare, his welfare, so on pleases him, he shall not deliberate as good, but whatever makes his subject matter happy, he shall contemplate well.

The very much relevant and contingent perception of good governance can be adjoined to Kautilya's definition that is "in the happiness of the subjects lies the happiness of the king and in what is advantageous to the focusses his own advantage. What is dear to the king is not beneficial to him, but what is dear to the subjects is advantageous to him" (Kautilya, 1998, p.31). Here, Kautilya means focusing on the noncombatants or the public. He proclaims that good governance is for the people, not the ruler or the ruler. His oriental perspective regarding the gist of good governance harmonizes the proposed intention of my study too. Against this backdrop, to some extent, Kautilya's definition of good governance addresses what the study wants to seek.

In this paper, an attempt is made to reconstruct a governance model that brings together the Saptanga model of Kautilya and the modern principles of good governance. The Saptanga theory of governance offered by Kautilya in Book 6, Chapter1, Verse 1 of Arthashastra, has seven elements such as, "Swami, Amatya, Janapada, Durg, Kosha, Danda, Mitra i.e. The king, the minister, the state, the encouraged city (robust infrastructure), the treasury, the army, and the ally. This very model acknowledges the plurality of actors and institutions that are involved in the process of governance which is also a core characteristic of the modern conception of governance. The present paper aimed at exploring the relevance of Kautilya's concept of Saptanga theory and the governance system in the local government of Nepal. Against this backdrop, this paper aims at exploring the relevance of Kautilya's concept of Saptang theory and the governance system in the local government of Nepal. I tried to seek the answer to the questions: what is the relationship between local governance and Kautilya's governing system? How LG principles reflect the tenets of Saptanga Theory?

### **Literature Review**

Sharma (2005) analyses the Arthashastra of Kautilya, dealing with topics such as the relation of the king to the other factors of the national assembly, the plan of the prince's training on the foundation of simultaneous change of his intelligence and character, the employment and choice of the administrators, the technique of a king's

consultation with his ministers founded on a clear analysis of the value and requisites of counsel, and finally, the organization of the civil and the military administration based upon such considerations as the tendency of power to breed corruption and the danger of a unified military command from the standpoint of external security. In this paper, he focused on Kautilya's thoughts on war, diplomacy, and ethics.

Chandrasekaran (2006) compares Kautilya's concept with great philosophers like Plato and later ponders over why Machiavelli's work. Kautilya's task is then seen in the light of today's politics and ethics. Additionally, he decided that Machiavelli's task was harmless when equated to Kautilya's Arthashastra.

Acharya (2018) studied the capacity of local governance in Nepal. He claims that Local governments are units of government closest to the grassroots. The fundamental aspects of their responsibility constitute core goals in most governmental systems. In Nepal, however, as in many other countries, the goals are only partially pursued and met, despite relevant institutional arrangements have been put in place. Accordingly, as highlighted in the debate, there is much still to be done to confirm local governments have the necessary capacity to strategies, plan, and deliver services and infrastructure of immediate local significance.

Joshi (2018) believes that it is a pre-condition for human welfare and today has been hailed as the ultimate telos of the decision-makers. Kautilya is too suitable for a idea of governance that basically aims at Yogkshem of the people to be achieved through Sushashan (Good Governance), able and constant leadership or authority. This paper significances revisits the ideological and philosophical contributions of Arthashastra and tries to contextualize them with modern challenges, changes, and choices in the way of governing or may not governing.

Acharya (2018) focuses on local government restructuring in Nepal in which the Nepali community remains unsatisfied and displeased at the inhabitant level, and dishonesty in the domestic political and official domain as these characteristics have formed a high risk to the capacity development of the local governments. Against this viewpoint, the study aims to address a key research question: to what extent local governments are able to execute the constitutional granted excellent and parallel rights to transform the local peoples, which is a sign of governance transformation from the government to local government. Conclusions show that more capacity is essential to institutionalize the restructuring process of local governance, increase

citizen engagement in the local governance system, shape new firms in changing framework, boost methodological, managerial, and economic capacity for effective and efficient public service delivery, and make the necessary rule and regulations. Nonetheless, some main opinions such usefulness of local sovereignty, political differences primarily identity-based problems and issues, the creative role of outsiders, and democratization of governmental confidence has been remained to be responded.

Eke et al. (2018) studied good governance at the local level in Nigeria. The research method was fundamentally examined and so, depends on secondary data for the inspection of questions of local government management and good governance. The interest in good governance at the local level of government arose out of the continued hue and cry of the weak of the third layer of government which has attracted many meetings, seminars, workshops, and dialogues about the future of the local level of government. This paper explored good governance and create it to cover three essential elements-active citizen participation, accountability towards the people, and transparent information. Analysis of official, structural, and constitutional measures“ put in place to confirm good governance at the local level of government, using institutional theory advise that institutional differences-organizational and constitutional led to crises during the implementation of the measures. These crises have radically reduced the understanding of the three perceptions of good governance-accountability, transparency, and citizen participation.

Pradhan (2019) studies local government with constitutional vision and present practices. The constitution has not any provision for the opposition party but it has an executive, legislative, and judiciary power allocation system for the organs of a government. To explore the vision and practice of local governance in Nepal, a study has been conducted. The method includes examining primary and secondary sources. Primary sources (data) have been gathered through field negotiations with the respondent.

Similarly, Lamichane (2021) analyses the good governance in Nepal and evokes that the Constitution of Nepal 2015, the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority Act 1991, The Prevention of Corruption Act 2002, especially Public Procurement Act 2007 and Rules 2008, Good Governance Act 2008, Right to Information Act 2007 and Rules 2009, Local Government Operation Act 2017, etc.

are the primary legislative measures to guarantee good governance in Nepal. Further, the author explores the concept and elements of good governance and descriptively analyzes various laws, case laws, and principles developed by the Supreme Court of Nepal on the issue of good governance. This paper also measures the strengths and weaknesses of these laws and legal performance from the internationally recognized good governance values and norms.

Nepal has a three-tier governance structure with one Federal government, seven provincial governments, seven hundred and fifty-three local governments, and seventy-seven districts. The third tier is the local government, also known as the local level. There is a bicameral parliament at the federal level – the House of Representatives (HoR) and the National Assembly (NA). The HoR has 275 members, including 165 elected through First Past the Post (FPTP) and 110 elected through the Proportional Representation (PR) system (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015: 41). The National Assembly has 59 members (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015: 42). At the provincial level, there are unicameral assemblies in each of the seven provinces. Altogether there are 550 members in the provincial assemblies – 330 members elected through FPTP and 220 elected through the PR system (Election Commission of Nepal, 2018).

There are local legislatures in each of 753 local level units. There are Village Assemblies in the Rural Municipalities and Municipal Assemblies in the Municipalities. The Constitution has provided lawmaking authority to all three levels of legislatures. The Constitution provides for the formation of the structure of the Village Executive including the election of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, ward chairperson, and members. It also provides for the inclusion of four women members, and two members from the Dalit or minority community. (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015).

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 promulgated by the elected constituent assembly established the local level as full-functional local government units. Article 56 of the constitution states the structure of the state and designates three tiers of governance - federal, provincial, and local levels. Article 56 (2) states, "The state power of Nepal shall be exercised by the federal, provincial and local level as per this constitution and laws." According to the Constitution, there has been mentioned in Part 17 provisions for Local Executive; Part 18 of the Constitution provides for Local

Legislative; Part 19 of the Constitution provides for Local Financial Management; and Part 20 provides for inter-relations among federal, provincial, and local levels. The local level currently has Rural Municipal and Municipal Executive, which functions as the executive branch; Rural Municipal and Municipal Assembly which functions as the legislative branch; and Rural Municipal and Municipal Judicial Committees which functions as the judicial branch.

Likewise, the Constitution provides for the formation of the structure of the Municipal Executive including the election of the chairperson, vice-chairperson, ward chairperson, and members. It also provides for the inclusion of five women members, and three members from Dalit or minority

A separate Local Government Operation Act, 2018 (LGOA) was formulated in 2018 after the elections. It laid down clear provisions on the formation process of Rural Municipality and Municipality; their functions, roles, and responsibilities; their rule of procedure, planning, implementation, and coordination; and the formation and rights of the judicial committees. These provisions have established legislative, executive, and judicial functions at the local level. The LGOA has 121 Clauses that range from the number and delimitation of rural municipalities and municipalities to their formation, nature, and functions (Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 2016). The LGOA states that the local level shall work in the spirit of cooperation, coexistence, and coordination to promote people's participation, accountability, and transparency in the delivery of quality service. It aims to ensure the proportional, inclusive, and judicious distribution of democratic dividends to consolidate the socialist-oriented federal democratic republican system from the local level. The main focus of the LGOA is on the development of local leadership to strengthen the local governance system through the exercise of local level executive, legislative as well as judicial powers. (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015: 99). They are expected to make laws in specified areas. Schedule 5 of the Constitution provides a list of 35 areas in which the federal legislature has the exclusive right to make laws (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015: 173). Likewise, Schedule 6 has provided a list of 11 areas where the provincial assemblies have the exclusive right to law-making (The Constitution of Nepal 2015: 175). Schedule 7 has provided a list of 21 areas where federal and provincial legislatures have concurrent rights for law-making (The Constitution of Nepal 2015: 176). Schedule 8 has provided a list of 22 areas in which the local legislatures have exclusive rights for law-making (The Constitution

of Nepal, 2015: 179). Schedule 9 has provided a list of 15 areas in which the federal, provincial, and local level legislatures have concurrent rights for law-making (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015: 181).

Schedule 8 of the Constitution describes the special rights of the local government. It states that there will be 22 areas under such local level jurisdiction. They include city police, co-operative, local taxes, management of local service, basic and secondary education, local-level development projects, basic health and sanitation, local road, distribution of land ownership credentials, farming and cattle managing, disaster management, and so on.

### **Methods**

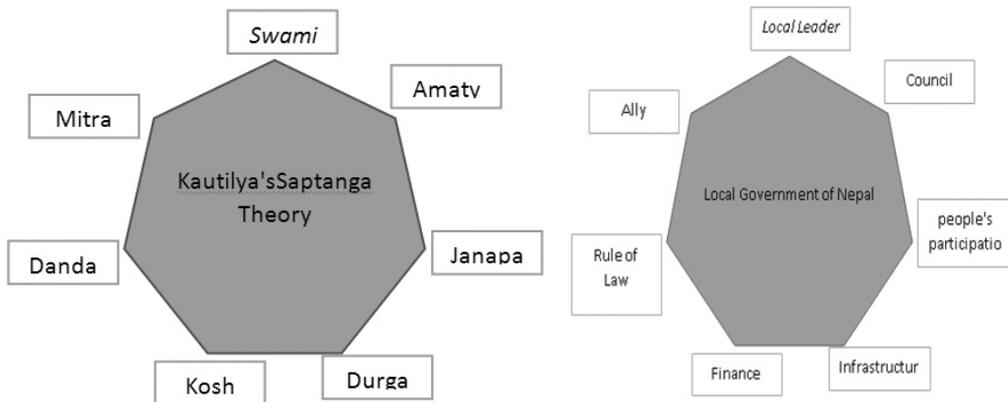
Fundamentally, this study is an academic and normative effort. In this paper, I have employed a qualitative approach following document analysis as the main tool of this research. Data and information have been collected from secondary sources i.e. two types of documents public records and personal documents (O'Leary, 2014) only. The Constitution and other laws, published research works, authorized books, journal articles, legal research databases such as Z-library, jstor, and various websites are retrieved from both printed and online sources. After collecting the list of documents, I interpreted the contents of the documents to give the meaning (Bowen, 2009). Due to the lack of time and constraints, I analyzed the limited sources 5 public records like policies of local governance and good governance of Nepal, and 17 personal documents regarding Kautilya's Saptang theory, practices of good governances in Nepal as a secondary resources for the triangulation of the study.

### **Results and Discussion**

The administration of the society revolves around the public and judicial administration withheld by the government and judicial people. Kautilya discussed the varied elements for the working of a proper and justified administration. It has been observed that the elements of the administration have the same existence but with a change of concept and recognition in the local governance of Nepal. Thus, the elements that Kautilya's Saptang theory finds necessary for the proper working of the state are as follows:

**Figure 1**

*Components of Saptanga Theory and Local Government of Nepal*



## Swami

Kautilya defined Swami as the head of the state and administration or king who occupies a prominent political position. Swami, the king, has the supreme power and all the activities revolve around him i.e., the king should have been a leader having the entire authority. The king has different powers and authority, being the principal of the whole governmental system. According to Kautilya, the king has used the Executive and Directorial Power, Legislative Power, Judicial Power, Financial Power, and Military Power as he was Commander in Chief of the army.

The king should have all the above authority and powers; indeed, the Kautilya's Head of the state resembles the modern Head of government, i.e., President, who is vested with all the power, authority, and duties. The difference exists concerning the elected head of the State. The President of Nepal is the head of the state who is appointed after the elections, not hierarchical, in a present condition that also has used the same powers, but the qualification is different. All the above qualifications are not compulsory for the present head. The swami actor is also relevant to the local government of Nepal as Joshi (2018) compares the swami as the leader, the provisions of the elected mayor and chairperson of the local bodies, and has entire executive authority to implement the legislative power (rules, regulations, policies, administrative) according to the constitution of Nepal. In this way, the first and most important elements of the saptang theory can be compared to the duties and responsibility of local elective representatives as the highest authority regarding administrative bodies.

## **Amatya**

This is the second element of the state. Kautilya said that Amatya is the meaning of council of ministers. In Arthashastra, the Amatya create an organized team of service from which all top offices such as Chief vicars, ministers, collectors, representatives, and the administrator of various branches are to be employed. According to him, these people are the wheels for the king's administration. Amatya does not control the ministers only. Indeed, it comprises the other persons, too. The king cannot accomplish tasks without the support of these ministers, and he wants to assign them for their guidance.

According to Joshi (2018), elected ministers or appointed bureaucrats played the role of Amatyas, as Kautilya assigns the functions of the amatyas within the local governance. This ensures the quality of good governance. Appointed bureaucrats implement the plans and policies, programs, service delivery, developmental activities, etc., in an efficient and effective way.

## **Janapada**

The third limb of Kautily's Saptanga model comprises the territory and population. Nevertheless, the Janapada is quite crucial for today's state, too. Definitely, the government has shifted the state into a state of well-being in which the ministers are the public employers and work for the advantage of the local government.

As Joshi (2018) claims, participatory Janapada is a crucial part of good governance, and civil society is another actor of Janapada. The third principle of the model is Janapada. The Arthashastra elaborates on how the Janapada should be organized. The Janapada in Saptanga model very well subsumes the modern ideal of people's participation through local actors like civil society organizations and voluntary or non-state actors. As the Local Government Act 2074 clearly states, the provision of the Janapada in the Constitution 2015, Article 295 (3), for the formation of rural municipalities and municipalities of Nepal. Thus, this Janapada is relevant to the local government, as stated in Saptanga's theory.

## **Durga**

Both Kautilya and local governance believe in the creation of a robust infrastructure, which is the fourth significant actor in the Kautilian Model. I know that no one today really debates the critical importance of infrastructure, and its

development is a priority for all governments. Then, what is doubtful is how it is allocated by the government. Hence, the Durga (Infrastructure) wants to be informed and directed by the philosophies of Equity and inclusiveness. Both the local governance and Kautilian theory of governance highlight infrastructure, but the local governance models add the dimension of being equitable and inclusive. This limb of the Kautilya's saptang theory can be seen as the 'Durga' as the key components for the development of the local level as the local governance act.

### **Kosh**

Finance is the number five important actor in the same model. All the developmental and state activities center around and depend on the finance and this is generated from the taxes and money collected from the people. Hence, the local governance model believes that the Kosha, i.e., the finance, has to be the most transparent and open aspect of governance. If there is any form of opaqueness in finance matters, they are unacceptable and disagreeable to local financial governance. This is also crucial to the survival of the rest of the elements like local bodies.

### **Danda**

According to Kautilya, Danda is the law of punishment or science of government. In the local government, the defaulter public servants are also punished for their defaults under the legislation to maintain peace and decorum in society. The defaulters other than public servants are punished under Nepal's judicial system, which can be identical to Kautilya's Arthashastra regarding justice. However, the way of punishing is not the same as in ancient times due to violating human rights. Danda of the Saptang model is directed and guided by the principle of the rule of law, which finds a place at the local level. Local representatives have the authority to dissolve the other committees and subcommittees for their disobedience of the code of conduct. Thus, the Dand is relevant to the punishment provision in the local governance rules and regulations.

### **Mitra**

The last important factor is the Mitra or the ally. The local governments must maintain relations with not only their neighboring municipalities, province, and central governments but also with the donor Non-governmental Organizations funding agencies. Hence, while working with them, the guiding principle should be

to reach a consensus and operate together to achieve peaceful co-existence. Each local body must maintain a relationship with the nearest local bodies and province, in some cases with the central government of Nepal.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, local governance can be articulated as guiding principles of the seven essential actors of the Saptanga model and this study set the goal of recreating a governance model. The principles that guide the local governance can very well be compared with the seven-element model of Kautilya. Thus, they guide and inform each other to make it relevant to the current problem, challenges, and changes that shape the modern-day organization and local governance. This paper suggests that the local representatives and others reconceptualize their perception of the Saptang Theory which can inspire the newly elected representatives.

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**Leadership of Private School Head Teachers for 21st Century:  
A Narrative Inquiry**

**Kapil Jung Pandey<sup>1</sup>, Sunita Tiwari<sup>2</sup>, Jashu Thapa<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Tarun Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Balaju, Kathmandu

<sup>2</sup>MPhil Scholar, Kathmandu University

<sup>3</sup>Principal, Prominent Kids School, Kathmandu

Corresponding Author's Email: [kapiljpnadey@gmail.com](mailto:kapiljpnadey@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

The twenty-first century has brought many challenges in the education sector along with entire other sectors. The issue of accelerating globalization and digitalization has influenced the educational sector a lot. The stakeholders have faced many challenges in implementing the issue in their organization. The particular study has focused on the perceptions and role of school leadership in 21st-century schools. The study has tried to explore school leaders' views. The particular research is based on the narratives of the school leaders based on their experiences, feelings, and expectations. Three school principals from private schools in Kathmandu were purposively chosen based on their execution of new practices in the school. They were interviewed physically and virtually and a conclusion was drawn from the process of coding, categorizing, thematizing, and meaning-making process. The school leaders have focused on organizational leadership, teamwork, and increased use of ICT as the major concern of schools and their leaders and they are found ready for every unpredictable situation that the school will be facing very soon in the complex, globalized, and culturally blended world making the educational organization service oriented. Still, there is room for development despite the great effort of head teachers.

**Keywords:** Twenty-first-century school, school leaders, complex world, ICT

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## Introduction

The first century has come with many challenges and issues in every sector along with the education sector. The concept of globalization and digitalization have drastically changed the education system of today's world (Nawi et al., 2012). Students in this century are seeking an environment that helps them to learn rather than memorize. They want to enhance themselves to be part of the learning process and develop connections that inspire them "learn to learn". Today is the era of digitalization. Young people of this time are the digital generation. People of their previous generations may be amazed looking at their ability to perform multi-task and the easy use of technology that is changing faster with the speed. In addition to that the students are compelled to develop skills that are needed to survive in this 21st century.

Implementing twenty-first-century skills in a school setting is found to be more challenging but essential. Students need to develop the skills; of effective communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity (Mutohhari et al., 2021) and digital literacy and leadership (Benek & Akcay, 2021), for the twenty-first century. Developing those skills in students and making the students able to deliver and express such skills is the responsibility of teachers and school leaders. But most of the teachers we have today have come from conventional teaching backgrounds. Their teaching style is also based on the traditional lecture methods. Teacher teacher-centered conventional method might be less supportive of developing such skills in students though it is an essential skill for life (Weeks et al., 2020). The teachers who came from the traditional method couldn't convert them into a new form of teaching-learning approach either. They are having difficulty developing those skills in students and supporting them for the same. On the other hand, parents of the same background of learning, are not habitual for a progressive pedagogical approach that supports twenty-first-century skills. Mutohhari et al., (2021) emphasize the need for transformation in the attitude and skills of teachers to implement those skills.

Like the global scenario, Nepali school also has to transform to the 21<sup>st</sup> century from this existing condition. In such a conventional condition, how the Nepalese schools can transform? It is a big question. It simply raises questions about leadership and who is the only authoritative person in a school setting as guided by the education act and education regulation (Rai, 2019). It is the role of school leaders to transform their schools. They have to think positively and adequately which can

lead their organizations toward the modern era. Leaders in the 21st century need to develop the skills that are necessary to thrive in the digital age, not just to survive (Mucharraz, 2016). The school leader must be able to transform those skills into students through teachers.

School leader plays a significant role in developing schools. A leader guides, governs, manages, and operates the organization based on its vision and mission. School leaders should be curious learners to develop leadership qualities for creating new prospects for enhancing school performance (Kin & Kareem, 2019). The head teacher, the leader, of the school, should have a clear vision for leading the school ahead and fulfilling its goals (Koirala, 2019). According to The Wallace Foundation (2013), the school leader must possess five key responsibilities; visionary, collaboration in the team for a better environment, developing leadership qualities in subordinates, supporting professional development programs, and updating generating data and processing it well for decision making and developing a healthy environment in the school organization. These are the requirements to be a transformative leader and leader of 21st-century schools.

The role of leadership is undoubtedly important in leading the school to the 21st century. We know that children of this generation use the internet daily for studying, playing games, communicating with friends, and so on. Now there is a rising issue of how school teaches this digital generation. Agreeing with the idea of Mucharraz (2016) educational leaders at all levels must acquire the skills and knowledge to lead the stakeholders to adopt 21st-century teaching and learning methods to empower students (future leaders). With 21st-century knowledge and skills, school leaders of this generation should be able to cope with all the complexities that arise along with the changing times. They should be very visionary, multi-dimensional, friendly, and technology-friendly, respect every individual's idea, and work together (Tian, 2009).

Students of this generation are smarter than the existing adult generation. Sometimes they can easily cope with the world of technology compared to us. There can be situations where we have to think, do we have students using computers easily? Are our teachers facing problems with technology where our students may have to assist them? Are there students talking about Artificial Intelligence (AI)? 21st-century school leaders have to realize such things that it is the quality that they

should possess. The pupils of this century are more focused on information and communication technology (ICT) which has become an integral part and powerful change agent in the educational world (Davies & Ellison, 2003). Those pupils are the learners of the schools and they are to be guided by school leaders.

The information on the role of leadership in twenty-first-century schools is not explained well by the previous research. The previous scholars have focused on behavior, attitude, academic gaps and recovery, relationships, and harmony among the students. Bayar (2016) has focused on attitudinal and behavioral lacking and challenges to handle by school principals. In addition to that, Bush (2022) has focused on the academic gaps faced by students after COVID-19. Lani and Pauzi (2023) focused on building character and harmony among the students. So, the limited reviews could not gather enough information regarding the role of school head teachers in the area of ICT skills, knowledge management, and pedagogical content.

This study concluded that how private school head teachers of Kathmandu express their roles and responsibilities in 21st-century schools. It also tries to explain how private school head teachers visualize school in the 21st century. Being all of us, first, second, and third authors, and educational practitioners in different educational institutions, this issue has come to our mind. Similarly, the issue is emerging and raised in many of the discussions and public forums. This issue was to be studied and explored to collect real ideas from school leaders. The findings will help the leaders to analyze their role and evaluate themselves in the new context.

The study was guided by these research questions

1. What key characteristics and responsibilities do private school head teachers associate with leading a 21st-century school?
2. How do private school leaders articulate and explain their unique role in shaping the educational experience for students in the context of the 21st century?

## **Methods**

This study was conducted to find the subjective reality (Antwi & Hamza, 2015) related to the perception of school leaders toward their role in twenty-first-century schools. The views collected might have been influenced by participants'

values, feelings, norms, and the researcher's values. The place, ambiance, and environment from where information was gathered might have some impacts on the data and in meaning-making.

Three school leaders, and school principals, from private schools in Kathmandu were interviewed selecting them purposively. Those participants represented three different schools; a normal secondary-level institutional school, a progressive secondary-level school, and a normal basic-level school. The accessibility to school and closeness with the school leaders made it easy for regular visits, thick discussions, and collecting authentic data. The main objective of selecting those participants is to gather the views from different perspectives as they represent different grounds and environments. The participants were contacted through telephone and email first and the appointment was fixed. Their views and ideas were collected with the help of open-ended questions followed by probing questions in virtual meetings and physical meetings. Three meetings were done with each of them to collect their views on reaching their schools. The responses of those participants were narrated and explained from their perspectives. For that, the researcher has applied narrative inquiry as research methodology so that we could interrogate values, assumptions, and perceptions making the research qualitative and interpretive. The collected stories were recorded and transcribed and meanings were generated through the rigorous process of coding, categorizing (Subedi, 2014), and thematizing. The anonymity and confidentiality were maintained and the participants were left with full authority over their perceptions and feelings (Subedi, 2014). The researchers have tried to avoid biases and partiality as well as influences on the participants. However, the researcher's educational background, space, and positionality might have affected the interpretation of the study.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Leadership for VUCA World**

Many issues are to be addressed by the school head at this time. The major issues of 21st-century schools can be written in the form of an acronym VUCA. That means vulnerability, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in the world (Mucharraz, 2016). Again, the challenges of the recent world and the accelerated evolution of technology have been accompanied by it. The school leaders have expressed that

the students are found more advanced and have more information regarding the worldwide context. They are well-updated and know about the present context of technological development and changes each day. To guide and facilitate them, the leaders must be hardworking and prepare all the supporting content required for new teaching and learning strategies. The leaders are found serious on that matter and they have realized that the teachers are not at the level for guiding their learners in achieving twenty-first-century skills. The teachers are not reading the curriculum and have not focused on its content, activities, and expected outcomes.

Teachers should be trained for the use of curriculum and the soft skills development to students that have mentioned and focused on it. The curriculum development center must be responsible for empowering teachers for making them ready. Teachers should be ready to learn all those things regarding collaboration, critical thinking, etc. The 21<sup>st</sup> century needs leaders that have knowledge of curriculum, hardworking, role models, must know the worldwide issue, are exemplary, focused on teamwork, and collaborative. (Principal, Secondary Level School)

School leaders explained that the curriculum designed by the government of Nepal is more focused on the changing world. The content they have offered is more relevant to 21st-century skills. They are designed to enhance the quality of education and to address the needs of future generations. Despite those good aspects of the curriculum, the teachers and schools are found just focusing on textbooks. The objectives of the curriculum are not well addressed by the school and teachers. That is all due to the lack of reading habits of teachers. The reading culture of teachers is one of the required skills that help teachers to identify newer developments in the developing context and also helps in adopting the required approaches in the classroom. All the school leaders have identified the issue that developing the reading habits of teachers is one of the basic roles of school leaders.

I know the twenty-first-century skills and their importance in students' lives very well. When I heard about it for the first time, I didn't take it seriously. Now I realize it is an integral part of life. Designing activities and projects, based on it, is so challenging task for teachers. But we are having a problem in grooming teachers for that. They came from the traditional approach of teaching and they feel difficulty in internalizing and implementing it. (Principal, Basic Level School)

Some schools have invested in teachers' professional development and making them capable of achieving the skills for guiding the students. The major focus comes in implementing and utilizing twenty-first-century skills. But still, there is difficulty in implementing critical thinking and creativity. It is also on the top level of learning explained by Bloom's Taxonomy.

The teachers prepare work design, plan to address 21st-century skills and other required skills and they implement them in class. When we talk about twenty-first-century skills we are very much back in the case of developing critical thinking and creativity skills. (Principal, Secondary Level School)

Predicting the future and planning it today has become very uncertain. The fastest-changing technological development, social phenomenon, and the changing attitude of students have made the future vaguer. All the head teachers are aware of the conditions that the teachers have to face in their classrooms very soon (Wallace Foundation, 2013). On the other hand, the challenges that the children will be facing soon are also unpredictable and uncertain. For that, the teacher has to be more advanced and skillful about 21st-century skills and the ways of implementing those in the classroom to make it lifelong learning for learners. The curriculum has mentioned and emphasized those skills. We must prepare our teachers to transform them in our classroom (Mutohhari et al., 2021). In this regard, proper implementation of policy and their proper monitoring have needed to be improved in the context of the Nepali school. Conducting training, creating awareness for teachers about the need, and motivating the teachers for the same should be prioritized by the policymakers side.

### **Facilitating Techno-Native Generation**

The role of the school head is challenging (Bottery, 2004). We feel that the world will be dominated shortly by techno-native generations who will have the whole world in their palm. We have that generation in our classroom right now and guiding them is a challenge for all of us. The school head teachers in Kathmandu perceive it as one of the major challenges and gaps between learners and facilitators. Most of the facilitators that the schools have, are from the traditional education system and are less aware and less habitual about technology. In contrast it, the students of this techno generation are found smarter and more aware of the changing status of the world. The study has found that school leaders and teachers

are struggling with the operation of technology for classroom purposes. The school leaders have realized that the pandemic of COVID-19 created a good opportunity for learning and practicing ICT in school programs. And now, after the normal situation, the trend of using ICT has stopped and returned to a traditional teaching approach.

..... It is the most necessary skill. Some teachers are avoiding ICT. Though some are using they are just using it for only making slides and presenting. There is no proper and optimum use of it in the classroom. Some schools might have practiced but we are not doing it properly. (Principal, Secondary Level School)

One of the school heads clearly understands the use of ICT in the classroom and its implications in the future. The head teachers have given priority and have focused on ICT integration in the classroom. The practices of implementing regular classes, and the plan of integrating ICT into other subjects give a clear image of the understanding of leaders regarding ICT uses and their importance (Davies & Ellison, 2003). Despite regular follow-up, guidance, motivation and support the teachers are not interested in ICT integration. Especially the teacher who came from the traditional school setting has felt more difficulty in implementation. Ferri et al., (2020) elaborates that teachers' interests, learning attitudes, family circumstances, and social backgrounds also have played roles in implementing and preparing teachers for techno-techno-friendly era. The school has tried to modify classroom teaching to screen teaching in school. Still, school leaders are having challenges in preparing teachers for ICT-based materials.

..... Some courses have integrated the part of ICT but that has been left and they are demanding an extra teacher for that particular course. Subject integration through ICT is a major challenge faced by our teachers. (Principal, Basic level School)

Implementing ICT-based pedagogy has become a challenge for school leaders in Kathmandu. Experienced and senior teachers are found less interested in learning and implementing ICT in the classroom (Junaidi, et.al. 2020) due to a lack of confidence, time consumption, and a traditional teaching mindset. The attitude of experienced teachers is more challenging for school leaders. Teaching and motivating them to change the world is a difficult task for school leaders. They are not accepting the changes happily and the change became a burden to those teachers. In addition, creating pressure for learning is unproductive and humiliating from the teachers' side, creating issues of teachers' retention.

.....Old teachers felt burdened on using such technology. (Principal, Secondary Level School)

Still, the head teachers are compelled to balance experienced traditionally trained teachers, today's conditions, the student's expectations, and future of the society. Olmedo (2012) explained that the world has become complex and leadership has great challenges in managing this situation as it is characterized by non-linear, supported by chaos theory and adaption and evolution. It has visualized that the world is unpredictable and forecasting is not possible which has made the world complex. In this complex world, the school leadership must be ready to cope and overcome such challenges.

### **Knowledge Management; the Emerging Issue**

Knowledge management skills involve creating knowledge from the interaction among colleagues (Nonaka et al., 1996), managing experiences (Ocolla, 2011), and managing the information from intellectual assets (Edosio, 2014). The school leaders have expressed that managing knowledge is one of the greater issues in the 21st-century school and the leaders must work on it. The school leaders are aware of the personal specialty and individualized expertise. Focusing on the inherent quality of each person is another challenge for the head teacher. Leaders must be ready to accept and internalize the knowledge of every student and facilitator. The leaders have to be informed about the advantages of knowledge management. Edosio (2014) clarifies that this can help in faster decision-making, innovation, and competitive advantage. It also helps in supporting parents' satisfaction and proper utilization of resources. The major ways to achieve knowledge management skills are collaborating with teachers and staff, integrating subjects, exploring the skills of teachers, and utilizing them. This will help in building new leaders from the group who are well-informed and well-adapted to the organization. For this, the knowledge management will be one easy strategy.

We should be ready to prepare new leaders behind the leaders and should focus on knowledge management. We should develop an intersubjective teaching approach to supporting each other. We are not focusing on the lower-level staff. We must upgrade our coworkers and make them ready for new situations. The present leaders should focus on soft skills. We have to focus on the inherent quality of individual and their skills. We must focus on

learning by doing not on learning by reading. We must be ready to learn new things from our staff as well as learners. (Principal, Progressive Secondary School)

School head teachers have realized that the teachers are with their peculiar skills and characters. The major issue is they are not well addressed and well supported in our school setting. Moreover, the school has focused on senior-level staff and their performances only. That has created a kind of glass ceiling for the lower-level staff though they have skills. The data explains that some of the head teachers are well known about the future scarcity of academic manpower that can be solved through knowledge management. The application of progressive pedagogy and the approach are also made easier through knowledge management.

Many schools are trying to implement progressive pedagogy. It is the need of time. That is a common understanding of all the participants. And the lack of skillful staff has come up with a major challenge. Mahdi, et.al, (2019) explain, knowledge management skills might be one of the proper ways of fulfilling the need. My experience says that education is the least preferred sector for a profession in Nepal. Attracting new generations in this field is a serious issue. So, the skills of knowledge management have become one of the good practices for fulfilling the needs of competent teachers in the 21st century.

We need to be progressive in every aspect. Now, we have to focus on knowledge management. Every individual has inherent skills and inborn qualities. The leaders must be able to recognize them and use them for organizational use. The lack of human resources can be managed and addressed by these knowledge management techniques. (Principal, Progressive Secondary School)

Experienced knowledge is also an equally important and guiding tool for all of us. I believe that the knowledge developed from the experience is long-lasting and sustainable. Most of the school leaders also believe the same. However, some school leaders express a different view on it. They have realized the experience as outdated knowledge concerning this time. Investing time and money in them is a waste rather than appointing new people as teachers. This technique is adapted widely being new people are more advanced, and technology friendly. They are groomed almost in the transitional time of change and they have somehow visualized the 21<sup>st</sup> century and can prepare students for the same.

The experience does not work. It is outdated in the case of education. We have to re-polish the experience through new knowledge.” New people, a new strategy, and new techniques should be prioritized for preparing 21st-century people. We seek new knowledge from new people rather than old experiences. The new teachers are more aware of the recent trend and concepts and they are found ready to change themselves and implement a new approach for working in a new way. (Principal, Basic Level School)

Another participant adds:

(As we are from the traditional method of teacher-centered approach, we could not reform ourselves to the new approach. In this regard and in implementing the new strategies and curriculum and for enhancing students’ skills, the experienced teachers are left behind than the new teachers. (Principal, Secondary Level School)

All of the school leaders seemed focused on fresher candidates to appoint them as teachers. The knowledge they have gained, their learning attitude, their awareness of the changing world, and their new perception to visualize the world are good assets for developing 21st-century people. The experiences of the teachers are another important part (De Chenne-Peters & Scheuermann, 2022) that must be revitalized and re-energized to address 21st-century skills rather than wasting them. These views might be different based on resources, challenges, and benefits.

Van den Bossche, et.al, (2006) states the school head believes in teamwork and collaborative work to achieve a common goal in the school setting. Own feelings and ownership of each staff play a vital role in organizational growth. They have focused on a shared vision. The activities like self-motivation, encouragement, and mutual understanding can do better in building a team for organizational growth. In addition to it, this collaborative work also helps in the personal growth of individuals.

In this era, we must believe in team and teamwork. The “we” feeling is so important for organizational growth. I have felt the importance of teamwork and its positive results rather than single-man leadership. Staff motivation, encouragement, and creating friendship are most needed in this time for organizational and personal growth. (Principal, Secondary Level School)

In the same way, another participant also focused on a shared vision and organizational leadership for the development of schools in the twenty-first century.

In this time, each person from gate to the top should have the same voice and vision for the growth and progress of an organization. The gate should reflect the same notion that the topmost chairs explain. (Principal, Progressive Secondary School)

The responses reflect that the school head teachers are aware of the importance of teamwork rather than one person working. As we say, the first impression is the last impression, all school members have to work as a single unit. De Matthews, et.al (2021) suggest that school heads must focus on their staff, and making them ready for a changing world is a must. The preparation of innovative kids in the twenty-first century is not an easy task when visualized through leaders' eyes. That has to be accomplished by the collaboration of every individual.

### **Conclusion**

The research among the three participants reveals the roles and responsibilities that school leaders in the 21st century should possess to cope with this competitive global world. The findings of the study emphasize that school leadership's team building, capacity enhancement, and organizational leadership strengthening are the key issues that need to be addressed. Furthermore, focusing on knowledge management and being ready to deal with complex situations at all times are also crucial areas that leaders should focus on. The use of ICT and its increasing use is also addressed by school leaders for the school to improvise over time. This world is changing and unpredictable, and leaders have to be well prepared to walk on with this changing digital world along with the transformation.

Though head teachers of each school have focused on organizational leadership, teamwork, and increased use of ICT as the major concern for the school's educational development, they are still struggling to uplift the organization because of the lack of shared vision, dedication, and passion of teachers (co-workers) towards reading and updating themselves with the globalized world. This research result might help all the school leaders in figuring out the issues they are having and their role in overcoming those issues. This finding will help community school leaders also for doing better in their organization but the situation may be different due to different organizational setting and structures.

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**Assessing Growth, Productivity, Profitability and Yield Gaps of Spring Maize  
Using Site Specific Nutrient Management Approaches in Kailali**

**R. Nayak<sup>1</sup>, L.P. Amgain<sup>1</sup>, S.R. Ghimire<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Agriculture, Far Western University, Tikapur, Kailali, Nepal

<sup>2</sup>Nepalese Association of Agriculture, Forestry and Environment Science in Australia

Corresponding Author's Email: [nayakrohit230@gmail.com](mailto:nayakrohit230@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

A field experiment was conducted during spring season of 2023 at the sub-tropical climate of Tikapur, Kailali to evaluate the impact of site-specific nutrient management on growth, productivity, profitability and yield gaps of spring maize. The experiment followed a Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) with six treatment combinations and four replications. Maize seeds were sown in four different farms on 27 February, 2023 with different site-specific nutrient management (SSNM) approaches viz. with Nutrient Expert®-Maize recommended dose (T1), three omission plots i.e., Omission of Nitrogen (T2), Omission of Phosphorus (T3), Omission of Potassium (T4), Government Recommended Dose (T5), and Farmer's Fertilizer Practices (T6). Using the Nutrient Expert® Maize model Computer Software, the SSNM+NE dose was recommended via a household survey in the respective farmer's field before the start-up of the experimentation. Various growth parameters, yield, yield attributing traits, and total cost of production of spring maize were recorded and subjected to analysis using Duncan's Multiple Range Test (DMRT) in R-studio. The results revealed that the highest grain yield (3.71 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) was achieved with SSNM+NE, which was statistically at par with the Government Recommendation Dose (3.12 t ha<sup>-1</sup>). Moreover, SSNM+NE showed significantly higher thousand grains weight (442.75 g) and straw yield (6.81 t ha<sup>-1</sup>), respectively. Notably, the straw yield, grain yield, and thousand grain weight of SSNM+NE were statistically

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comparable to those obtained with the government recommendation. Economic analysis showed higher benefit-cost ratio as well as increased net and gross returns in SSNM+NE as compared to the other nutrient management practices. The SSNM+NE and Governmental Recommended Fertilizer based treatments were about 231% and 178% advantageous over the Farmer's Fertilizer Practices. It could be suggested that SSNM+NE would be the best approach for increasing the growth, productivity and profitability of spring maize in the sub-tropical terai of Far Western Nepal.

**Keywords:** Growth, productivity, profitability and yield gaps, site-specific nutrient management, sub-tropical Far Western Terai

## Introduction

Site Specific Nutrient Management (SSNM) is a scientific approach of feeding the crop with particular nutrients as and when needed (Timsina et al., 2021, Amgain et al. 2022), wherein the application and management of plant nutrients are dynamically adjusted to crop needs of the specific location and season. The SSNM approach aims to increase profit through increased yield per unit of applied fertilizer and through reduced disease and insect damage (Jata et al., 2011). SSNM is based on 4-R principles i.e. (Right dose, Right time, Right method and Right source) to manage the fertilizers in the field. Nutrient Expert–Maize (NE), a computer-based decision support tool, enables the maize growing farmers to implement SSNM for their individual plots, utilizing the information given by the local experts to suggest meaningful yield for that location and formulate a fertilizer management strategy (IPNI, 2017, Ananda et al., 2017), and hence it symbolizes its valid applicability in rice, maize and wheat in the similar agro-climatic regions like in Nepalese context (Devkota et al., 2022 and 2016, Sapkota et al., 2021, Amgain et al., 2016).

Maize (*Zea mays* L.) is the third most important cereal crop after wheat and rice in global position. Due to the highest yield potential among all other cereals, it is known globally as queen of cereals (Ranum et al., 2014). Maize is also the second most important staple food crop of Nepal after rice in terms of area and production (MoALD, 2021) in which the total maize production and productivity have been reported 2999733 M.T and 3.06 t/ha, respectively (MoALD, 2021). In sub-tropical climate of Far Western Terai, spring maize is most commonly planted in around 6225 ha, and the adjoining region of Tikapur covered an area of 725 ha with productivity of 3.20 Mt/ha (MoALD, 2022). Several reasons are catering for this lower yield and

huge yield gaps of maize at Tikapur, among which balanced nutrient management ranked the top (Amgain et al., 2023). There are very scarce studies being done on SSNM approaches in this site mostly in spring crops and this study has been proposed to estimate the inherent nutrient supplying capacity of soil of Tikapur and the role of balanced fertilization on the growth, yield and economics of spring maize using site specific nutrient management approaches.

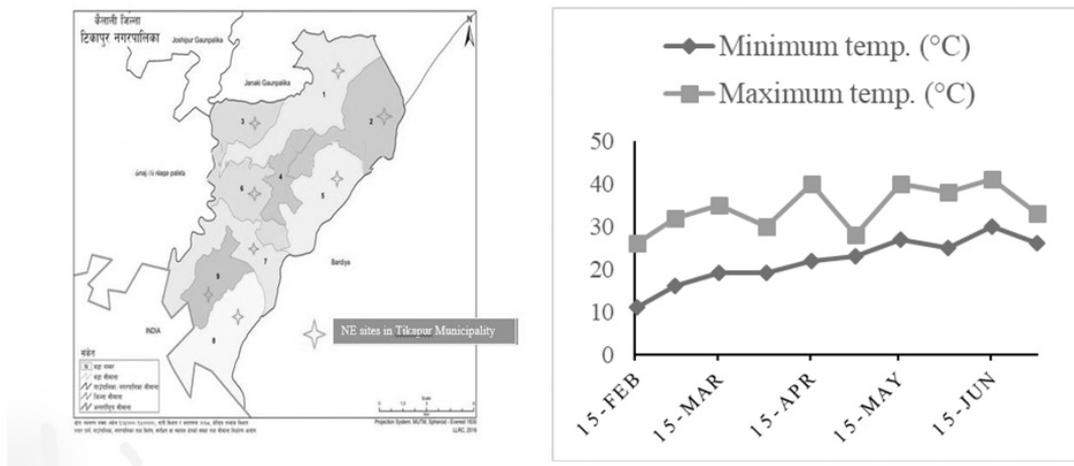
## Methods

### Site Selection for Nutrient Expert®-Maize, Soil and Weather Details

A field experiment was conducted in the field of four farmers at Tikapur Municipality (28° 30' N. 81° 6' 30" E and 156 masl.). The study site was fixed in ward # 1 (Bangaun), ward # 3 (Katanpur), ward # 4 (Asneri) and ward # 6 (Narayanpur) of Tikapur Municipality in Kailali district during the spring season of 2023 (Figure 1). The experimental soil was sandy loam in texture with sand (43.5%), silt (18.5%) and clay (16.43%) and the medium soil available phosphorus (53.87 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>) and potassium (178.04 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>) and the low amount of total nitrogen (0.09%) in the top soil layer. Weather variables mostly the maximum and minimum temperatures in the first and last weeks of February was 29°C and 11°C, and 37°C and 26°C in the last week of June found suitable for the growth and development of maize (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*NE- Maize Research Sites of Tikapur Municipality and Weather records during the Spring Maize Growing Period in 2023*



## **Selection of Farmers and Field Experimentations on NE<sup>®</sup>-Hybrid Maize Model**

While selecting the spring maize growing farmers, the purposive sampling was followed. The identification of innovative and progressive farmers were the major criteria in selection of participants in the study. The NE<sup>®</sup>-Hybrid Maize Model embedded questionnaires was filled for estimation of the NE<sup>®</sup>-driven fertilizer dose to the 4 spring maize growers in the four wards of Tikapur municipality. Maize seeds were sown in four different farms on 27 February, 2023 with different site-specific nutrient management (SSNM) approaches viz. with Nutrient Expert<sup>®</sup>-Maize recommended dose (T1), three omission plots i.e., Omission of Nitrogen (T2), Omission of Phosphorus (T3), and Omission of Potassium (T4), Government Recommended Dose (T5), and Farmer's Fertilizer Practice (T6). Using the Nutrient Expert<sup>®</sup> Maize model Computer Software, the SSNM+NE dose was recommended via a household survey in the respective farmer's field before the start-up of the experimentation. The government recommended fertilizer dose for hybrid (150:60:40 kg NPK/ha), and open pollinated maize (120:60:40kg NPK/ha) cultivars were calculated for 50 m<sup>2</sup> area in each farmer's field and were compared for the yield gaps between the treatments.

## **Data Observations and Statistical Tools Used**

Yield attributes of spring maize cultivars Kanchan as hybrid and Rampur Composite as FFP were recorded at the harvesting stage of crops as per the standard methods for maize (CIMMYT, 2009). Grain yield of the crop was recorded from the representative sampling areas at least from 25 m<sup>2</sup> area using the scientific techniques of crop cut survey (Reddy and Reddi, 2009). Grain yield and economics of various nutrient management options were compared to demonstrate the productivity and profitability of NE<sup>®</sup>-based recommendation to the level over the farmers' fertilizer practices. Yield gaps was analysed between the treatments tested from the data of NE<sup>®</sup> model trial. Various growth parameters, yield, yield attributing traits, and total cost of production of spring maize were recorded and subjected to analysis using Duncan's Multiple Range Test (DMRT) in R-studio.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Effect of Nutrient Management Practices on Phenological Stages of Maize**

Crop phenology is a critical factor in determining crop yield. The result on the phenological stages like knee high, tasseling, silking and physiological maturity stages

presented in Table 2 were found significantly superior under Nutrient Expert based on site- specific nutrient management (SSNM+NE). Among the nutrient management practices, Nutrient Expert based on site-specific nutrient management (SSNM+NE) recorded the lowest days (29.75 DAS) to reach knee high stage which was significantly superior to farmer fertilizer practice (32.13 DAS). It was also found that the minimum days to 50% tasseling was recorded from SSNM+NE (46.5 DAS) which was significantly superior to other nutrient management practices. The minimum days to reach silking stage (50.5 DAS) was recorded with Nutrient Expert based on site specific nutrient management (SSNM+NE) which was significantly superior than other nutrient management practices. The duration needed for the appearance of physiological maturity stage was significantly earlier in SSNM+NE (92.63 DAS) as compared to nutrient omission plots, FFP, and government recommended dose. Further, in FFP, crop took significantly longer duration (96.83 DAS) to attain physiological maturity. However, the days to reach physiological maturity in Government recommended dose (94.04 DAS) remained at par to three omission plots viz. N-omission (94.42 DAS), P-omission (94.88 DAS) and K-omission (95.11 DAS). Similar results were also advocated by Gautam et al. (2018), Khanal et al. (2017), Bogati et al. (2021).

**Table 1**

*Effect of Nutrient Management Practices on Phonological Stages of Spring Maize at Tikapur during 2023*

TREATMENTS	PHENOLOGICAL STAGES (DAS)			
	Knee high	Tasseling	Silking	Physiological maturity
SSNM+NE	29.75 <sup>c</sup>	46.50 <sup>d</sup>	50.50 <sup>d</sup>	92.63 <sup>c</sup>
NE-N	33.10 <sup>a</sup>	47.55 <sup>c</sup>	51.68 <sup>c</sup>	94.42 <sup>b</sup>
NE-P	32.31 <sup>ab</sup>	50.18 <sup>a</sup>	54.31 <sup>a</sup>	94.88 <sup>b</sup>
NE-K	31.42 <sup>abc</sup>	48.43 <sup>bc</sup>	52.33 <sup>bc</sup>	95.11 <sup>b</sup>
RD	30.88 <sup>bc</sup>	49.28 <sup>ab</sup>	52.98 <sup>b</sup>	94.04 <sup>b</sup>
FFP	32.13 <sup>c</sup>	48.40 <sup>bc</sup>	52.28 <sup>bc</sup>	96.83 <sup>a</sup>
LSD (0.05)	1.806	1.027	0.9199	1.3195
CV, %	3.792	1.408	1.166	0.925
GRAND MEAN	31.60	48.39	52.34	94.65

Means followed by the common letter (s) within each column are not significantly different at 5% level of significance by DMRT. DAS = Days after sowing

## Effect of Nutrient Management Practices on Growth Attributes of Maize

The cursory view of data on Table 2 exhibited that the values of plant height recorded at SSNM+NE (40.13 and 56.18 cm) were found to be significantly higher than other treatments at the beginning (30 and 60 DAS).

**Table 2**

*Effect of Nutrient Management Practices on Plant Height and Plant Population of Spring of Maize at Tikapur during 2022*

TREATMENT	PLANT HEIGHT (CM)				PLANT POPULATION AT HARVEST (HA <sup>-1</sup> )
	30 DAS	60 DAS	90 DAS	At harvest	
SSNM+NE	40.13 <sup>a</sup>	56.18 <sup>a</sup>	188.43 <sup>a</sup>	201.50 <sup>a</sup>	62750
NE-N	35.50 <sup>c</sup>	49.10 <sup>d</sup>	178.30 <sup>d</sup>	191.95 <sup>d</sup>	58500
NE-P	38.28 <sup>b</sup>	49.63 <sup>d</sup>	183.15 <sup>bc</sup>	194.08 <sup>cd</sup>	60250
NE-K	35.73 <sup>c</sup>	50.48 <sup>cd</sup>	182.48 <sup>c</sup>	194.43 <sup>c</sup>	57250
RD	39.05 <sup>ab</sup>	53.10 <sup>b</sup>	185.10 <sup>b</sup>	198.60 <sup>b</sup>	61000
FFP	30.85 <sup>d</sup>	51.55 <sup>bc</sup>	177.08 <sup>d</sup>	192.00 <sup>d</sup>	57000
LSD (0.05)	1.487	1.583	2.237	2.412	Ns
CV, %	2.697	2.033	0.814	0.819	1.533
GRAND MEAN	36.59	51.67	182.42	195.43	59458.33

Means followed by the common letter (s) within each column are not significantly different at 5% level of significance by DMRT. DAS = Days after sowing

Further, at 90 DAS and at harvest, significantly higher plant height was reported in SSNM+NE (188.43 and 201.50 cm). At 90 DAS, significantly lower plant height was observed in FFP (177.08 cm) which was at par with N-omission plot (178.30 cm). Similarly, at harvest significantly lower plant height was recorded in N-omission plots (191.95 cm) which was at par with FFP (192 cm). Due to significant differences in soil fertility among farmer fields, plant height in maize varies in nutrient requirements from one field to the next. As a consequence, giving all fields the same nutritional recommendation might not be the best way to increase

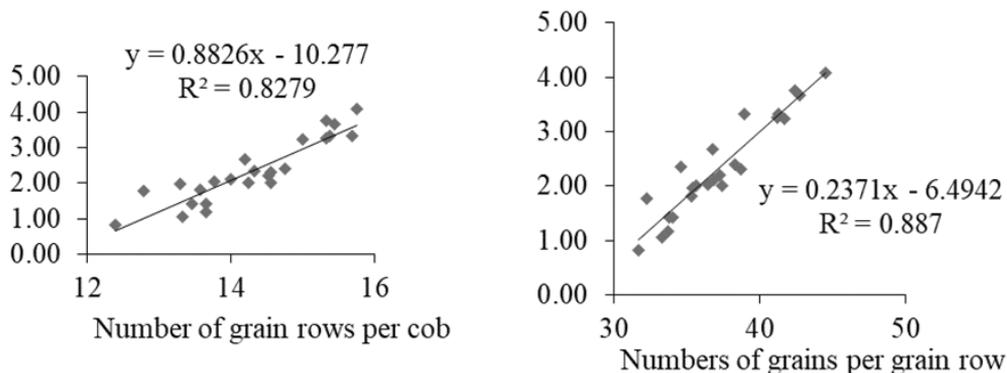
maize yields (Jat et al., 2013). The data further revealed that different nutrient management practices failed to cause significant variation in plant population at harvest. However, relatively higher plant population was recorded in SSNM+NE (62750). This result was corroborated with the findings of Bhatta et al (2020).

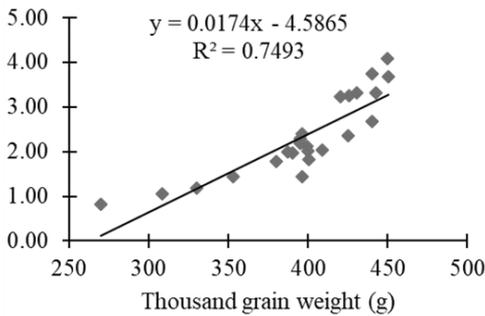
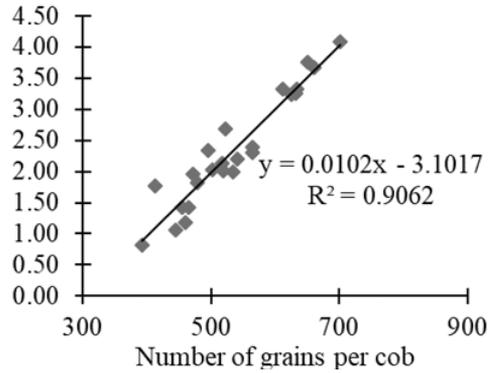
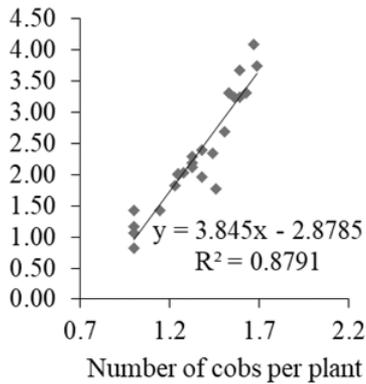
### Effect of Nutrient Management Practices on Yield Attributes of Maize

Table 3 and Figure 2 indicated the positive and strong correlation between the yield attributing traits and the grain yield of spring maize. The contribution of number of cobs per plant in grain yield formation was 87.9%. The similar results were also reported by Singh et al. (2019) and Khanal et al. (2017). Singh et al. (2019) also obtained significantly higher number of grains per row in SSNM-NE (18.8) as compared to FFP (16.4) which was at par with RD (17.8). The contribution of number of grain rows per cob for the increase in grain yield was 82.79% as shown in Figure 2. It is also obvious that the contribution of numbers of grain per row on grain yield was 88.7%. It means they are positively correlated with each other. Thus, higher number of grain rows per cob and grains per row together helps to increase number of grains per cob. Similar result was also reported by Bogati et al. (2021). Number of grains per cob gives 90.62% contribution to the grain yield formation. It was also remarked that 75% contribution of thousand grain weight on grain yield formation. Similarly, Acharya et al. (2020) also obtained significantly higher thousand grain weight of maize in SSNM (328.2 g) than FFP (274.1 g). The significant and positive correlation with all yield attributes and yield of maize has also been reported by Dahal et al. (2018) and Pant et al. (2022).

**Figure 2**

*Correlation between the Major Yield Attributes of Spring Maize and Grain Yield*





**Table 3**

*Correlation Coefficients among Yield and Yield Attributes of Spring Maize at Tikapur*

	SY	GY	HI	SP	Cob/pl	KR/cob	K/row	G/cob	Tw
SY	1								
GY	0.98	1							
HI	0.843	0.914	1						
SP	0.733	0.747	0.715	1					
Cob/pl	0.925	0.938	0.893	0.822	1				
KR/cob	0.894	0.910	0.842	0.553	0.767	1			
K/row	0.908	0.942	0.867	0.574	0.802	0.914	1		
G/cob	0.925	0.952	0.868	0.583	0.808	0.964	0.988	1	
Tw	0.875	0.866	0.870	0.687	0.838	0.790	0.761	0.780	1

Note: SY = Stover yield, GY = Grain yield, HI = Harvest index, SP = Standard plant populations, Cob/pl = Cob/plant, KR/cob = Kernel rows/cob, K/row = Kernels/kernel row, G/cob = Grains/cob, Tw= Thousand Grain Weight (g)

The ANOVA result further indicated that the SSNM+NE had produced significantly higher number of cobs per plant, number of grains row per cob, number of grains per grain row, number of grains per cob, thousand grain weight (g) and shelling percentage than other nutrient management practices. Numbers of cobs per plant recorded in SSNM+NE based nutrient management practice (1.65) was found to be significantly higher than that of FFP (1.04), NE-N (1.24), NE-P (1.35) and NE-K (1.34). Number of grain rows per cob was affected significantly by different nutrient management practices. SSNM+NE (15.56) recorded significantly higher number of grain rows per cob as compared to FFP (13.22) and NE- N (13.57), but remained at par with RD (14.98). Number of grains per row was significantly higher in SSNM+NE (42.19) than other treatments but remained at par with RD (40.24). Number of grains per cob differ significantly with the change in the nutrient management practices. Thousand grain weight (g) was found to differ significantly with the change in the nutrient management practices. SSNM+NE recorded significantly higher (442.75 g) thousand grain weight than FFP (315.25 g) but remained at par with RD (432.17 g). Among the nutrient omission plots, potassium omission plot (407.03 g) recorded significantly higher thousand grain weight than phosphorus omission plot (395.40 g) and nitrogen omission plot (390.96 g). Shelling percentage was not affected significantly by nutrient management practices. However, it was slightly greater in SSNM+NE (83.54%) as compared to FFP (80.44%), RD (82.87%), NE-N (81.29%), NE-P (81.82%) and NE-K (82.20%). Higher number of rows together with greater number of grains per row assisted to increase the number of grains per cob and consequently the grain yield. The higher number of cobs per plant assisted to increase the grain yield. Similar result was obtained by Khanal et al. (2017).

### **Effect of Nutrient Management Practices on Yield and Yield Components of Maize**

The average grain yield of spring maize recorded in the experiment was 2.34 t ha<sup>-1</sup> and ranged from 1.12 to 3.71 t ha<sup>-1</sup>. It is obvious from the data (Table 4) that grain yield of maize differed significantly due to nutrient management practices.

**Table 4***Effect of Nutrient Management Practices on Yield and Yield Components of Maize*

TREATMENTS	GRAIN YIELD (THA <sup>-1</sup> )	YIELD GAP (%) OVER THE FFP	STOVER YIELD (THA <sup>-1</sup> )	HARVEST INDEX
SSNM+NE	3.71 <sup>a</sup>	231.3	5.67 <sup>a</sup>	0.395 <sup>a</sup>
NE-N	1.76 <sup>d</sup>	57.1	3.73 <sup>c</sup>	0.319 <sup>d</sup>
NE-P	2.14 <sup>c</sup>	91.1	3.83 <sup>c</sup>	0.359 <sup>c</sup>
NE-K	2.20 <sup>c</sup>	96.4	3.80 <sup>c</sup>	0.367 <sup>bc</sup>
RD	3.12 <sup>b</sup>	178.6	5.10 <sup>b</sup>	0.380 <sup>b</sup>
FFP	1.12 <sup>e</sup>	-	2.70 <sup>d</sup>	0.292 <sup>e</sup>
LSD (0.05)	0.302	-	0.464	0.016
CV, %	8.561	-	7.444	2.938
YIELD GAP (%) ON SSNM +NE	Over N	Over P	Over K	
	110.8	73.4	68.4	

Means followed by the common letter (s) within each column are not significantly different at 5% level of significance by DMRT. DAS = Days after sowing

Site specific nutrient management produced significantly higher grain yield (3.71 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) than farmer fertilizer practice (1.12 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) which was at par with government recommended dose of fertilizer (3.12 t ha<sup>-1</sup>). On the other hand, among the nutrient omission plots the grain yield observed in nitrogen omission plot (1.76 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) was significantly lower than potassium (2.20 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) and phosphorus omission plot (2.14 t ha<sup>-1</sup>). Further, all three-omission plot recorded higher grain yield than FFP but was significantly lower as compared to SSNM+NE and RD. Similarly, stover yield was significantly higher in SSNM+NE (5.61 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) as compared to FFP (2.70 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) and the three omission plots viz. NE-N (3.73 t ha<sup>-1</sup>), NE-P (3.83 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) and NE-K (3.80 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) but remained at par with RD (5.10 t ha<sup>-1</sup>). The average harvest index of spring maize reported in the experiment was 0.352 and ranged from 0.292 to 0.395 depending upon treatments (Table 3). Harvest index was significantly higher in SSNM+NE (0.395) than FFP (0.292), NE-N (0.319), NE-P (0.359) and NE-K (0.367), but remained at par with RD (0.38). Also, the three omission plots viz. NE-N, NE-P and NE-K were at par with each other.

The yield gap analysis between the treatments SSNM+NE, NE-N, NE-P, NE-K and RD over the FFP was found to be 231.3, 57.1, 91.1, 96.4 and 178.6 % respectively. Similarly, the advantage in yield due to SSNM+NE model was 110.8, 73.4 and 68.4%,

respectively to NE- N, NE-P and NE-K (Table 4). It indicates that for achieving the higher yields the SSNM based NE- Maize model would be beneficial to the farmers. The maximum yield gaps were also recorded due to devoid of N, followed by P and then K nutrients at the research sites of Tikapur Municipality. Maize farmers are therefore suggested to use the balanced amount of NPK for achieving the higher grain yields of maize in sub-tropical far western terai region of Nepal. Similar results in spring maize and Chaite rice grown at Rani Jamara Kulariya Irrigation Command Areas of Tikapur was also noticed by Amgain et al. (2023).

### Economic Analysis

The data for cost of cultivation, gross return, net return and B: C ratio is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Effect of Nutrient Management Practices on Economics of Spring Maize*

TREATMENTS	TOTAL COST (NRS HA <sup>-1</sup> )	GROSS RETURNS (NRS HA <sup>-1</sup> )	NET RETURNS (NRS HA <sup>-1</sup> )	B:C
SSNM+NE	59971.25 <sup>c</sup>	120981.5 <sup>a</sup>	61010.25 <sup>a</sup>	2.03 <sup>a</sup>
NE-N	60595.00 <sup>c</sup>	69865.00 <sup>de</sup>	9270 <sup>d</sup>	1.15 <sup>c</sup>
NE-P	70828.75 <sup>a</sup>	82387.5 <sup>c</sup>	11558.75 <sup>cd</sup>	1.16 <sup>c</sup>
NE-K	59452.5 <sup>c</sup>	73855 <sup>d</sup>	14402.5 <sup>c</sup>	1.24 <sup>c</sup>
RD	64707.5 <sup>b</sup>	106882.5 <sup>b</sup>	42115 <sup>b</sup>	1.65 <sup>b</sup>
FFP	58796.25 <sup>c</sup>	66425 <sup>e</sup>	7628.75 <sup>d</sup>	1.13 <sup>c</sup>
LSD (0.05)	3706.71	4879.33	4870.75	0.117
CV (%)	3.942	3.733	13.282	5.552

Means followed by the common letter (s) within each column are not significantly different at 5% level of significance by DMRT. DAS = Days after sowing

The gross return, net return and B:C ratio is significantly higher in SSNM+NE. Cost of cultivation was significantly higher in P-omission plot than other treatments. The average B:C ratio in spring maize production was 1.39 and ranged from 1.13 to 2.03 depending upon the treatments. With respect to nutrient management practices, significantly lower B:C ratio was obtained with FFP (1.13) as compared to SSNM-NE (2.03) and RD (1.65) but remained at par with NE-N (1.15), NE-P (1.16) and NE-K (1.24). Similar results were obtained by Khanal et al. (2017).

## Conclusion

NE<sup>®</sup>- Hybrid Maize model have fairly predicted the Spring Maize yields and predicted the satisfactory economics with sound profitability after assuring the steadily increasing level of actual attainable yield over the farmer's fertilizer practice. Hence, the adoption of NE<sup>®</sup>- Hybrid Maize model is suggested to adopt as a sound decision support system (DSS) tool to manage the soil fertility and crop productivity in the project command areas of Tikapur, Kailali. Under the prevailing conditions, it is highly expected that there would be spill-over effects of this project activity to the nearby areas of Tikapur, and the NE<sup>®</sup> tool could potentially be used by national, provincial, agriculture knowledge centre and village-level stakeholders to provide fertilizer recommendations to many other farmers' field from Kailali to Kanchanpur, Bardiya and Banke districts. However, it is suggested that for more valid and reliable conclusion, the multi-locational trials at least for 2-3 years would be continued with increasing number of farmers.

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**Effect of Sowing Date on Growth and Yield of Different Carrot Varieties  
(*Daucus carota* L.)**

**D. Giri<sup>1</sup>, A. Srivastava<sup>1</sup>, A. K. Shrestha<sup>1</sup>, S. K. Raut<sup>2</sup>, H. N. Giri<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Agriculture and Forestry University, Nepal

<sup>2</sup>Far Western University, Nepal

Corresponding Author's Email: [sanjay.raut@fwu.edu.np](mailto:sanjay.raut@fwu.edu.np)

**Abstract**

A study was conducted at Agriculture and Forestry University, Rampur, Chitwan, from October 2019 to March 2020 to evaluate the effect of sowing date on the growth and yield of four different carrots (*Daucus carota* L.) varieties. The experimental treatments were three different sowing dates (19<sup>th</sup> October, 13<sup>th</sup> November, and 8<sup>th</sup> December) and four varieties (New Kuroda, Nepa Dream, SK3, and Taki) which constituted 12 treatments. The experiment was set up using a randomized complete block design with three replications. The results revealed that sowing dates and varieties significantly influenced the growth and yield of carrots. But interaction effect was not significant. Maximum plant height, number of leaves per plant, leaf length, leaf breadth, canopy diameter, root length (15.37 cm), root diameter (2.74 cm), and fresh root weight (133 g) were obtained with Nepa Dream variety. Similarly, the highest plant height, number of leaves per plant, leaf breadth, canopy diameter, root diameter (3.27 cm), root length (16.23 cm), and fresh root weight (162.60 g) was obtained with first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October) which might be due to favorable condition available during the growing condition and also early sowing possibly attributed to maximum photosynthesis with longer growth period than the later sowing. The combined effect of sowing date and varieties was significant with the number of leaves per plant, cortex diameter, and core-to-cortex ratio. So based on the results of the experiment, Nepa Dream sown on 19<sup>th</sup> October was economically better for the optimum yield and quality production in Chitwan, Nepal.

**Keywords:** Agro-morphological traits, crop performance, variety selection, harvest time

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## Introduction

Carrot (*Daucus carota* L.) is one of the most common herbaceous annual for fresh root and biennial plants for seed production belonging to the family Apiaceae. It is mainly a temperate crop grown during spring through autumn in temperate countries and during winter in tropical and subtropical countries of the world (Bose et al., 1993).

Carrot is used as salad, in cooked vegetables, in soup, stew, and curries also used for the preparation of pickles, jam, sweet dishes and also available in the market as a canned product (Kabir et al., 2000).

Bose et al. (1993) reported the nutritive content of carrots per 100 g edible portion as carbohydrates (10.6 g), protein (0.9 g), fat (0.2 g), niacin (0.5 mg), riboflavin (0.02 mg), carotene (1890 µg), vitamin-A (16706 IU), vitamin-C (3 mg), vitamin-K (13.2 µg), potassium (320 mg), Ca (80 mg), Fe (2.2 mg) and phosphorus (30 mg). Carrot roots are rich in carotene and play an important role to protect against blindness in children. It helps in the elimination of uric acid from the body. It has medicinal value as essential oil extracted from carrot roots has antibacterial properties (Bose et al., 1993). Zhang & Hamazu (2004) reported that the consumption of carrot minimizes the risk of heart diseases, stomach diseases, and many types of cancer. It is also reported that carrot has anti-diabetic, cholesterol-lowering, anti-hypertensive, hepatoprotective, cardiovascular disease reducing and wound-healing benefits.

The total cultivated area of carrot in Nepal is about 2,898 ha with a production of 32,308 mt and a productivity of 11.15 mt/ha (MoALD, 2020/021). In Chitwan, carrot is heavily produced i.e. cultivated on 150 ha with a production of 2025 mt and productivity of 13.50 mt/ha (MoALD, 2020/021).

According to Latha et al. (2015), carrot is very sensitive to temperature and photoperiod and concluded that the root yield has been greatly affected by different sowing date. The environmental conditions in the different crop seasons and locations may influence the adaptability as well as stability of varieties.

Extending the availability of carrot during the early and late period of the growing season and sowing date may play a critical role. Selection of the right varieties for sowing at the optimum date is the key factor for successful carrot production.

The varieties fail to give the best performance if there is a slight deviation in their sowing date. Proper sowing date depends on the varieties and prevailing environmental conditions. Therefore, the present investigation was to find out the optimum sowing time and suitable variety for high yields under Chitwan.

### **Methods**

The experiment was conducted at Rampur (27° 37' N; 84° 25' E), Chitwan. The soil was sandy loam with a pH of 5.6. The soil is medium in organic matter content (3.91 %), available nitrogen content (0.15 %), and phosphorous content (33.3 kg/ ha) but high in available potassium content (395.3 kg/ ha).

Two factorial experiments were laid out in Randomized complete block design (RCBD) with three replications. There were twelve treatment combinations comprising four varieties (New Kuroda, Nepa Dream, SK3 and Taki) with three dates of sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October, 13<sup>th</sup> November and 8<sup>th</sup> December). The net size of each plot was 1.8 m<sup>2</sup> (1.8 m × 1 m) with 6 rows having 10 plants in each row. The net experimental area was 64.8 m<sup>2</sup>. The space between the plots and replications was 0.5 m and 1m respectively.

The recommended dose of manure and fertilizer @1500 kg FYM, 5:5:5 kg Urea, DAP and MoP per ropani were applied in the experimental field. Line sowing @ 300 g seed per ropani was done with the spacing of 30 cm × 10 cm on three different dates. The sprinkler irrigation system was used for the irrigation of plants. *Krishi Diary*, (2079)

Data regarding days to germination, plant height, number of leaves per plant, leaf length, leaf breadth, edible root length, root diameter, yield, and root-to-shoot ratio were determined.

Data were entered in Microsoft Excel and analysis was done by using the software GEN STAT 18<sup>th</sup> edition. The significant difference between treatments mean was compared by Duncan`s Multiple Range Test (DMRT) at 5% level of significance.

## Results

The result is presented with necessary tables for discussion, comprehension and understanding.

### Days to Germination

The result of statistical analysis showed that there was a significant effect of sowing dates and varieties on days to germination (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Effect of Sowing Date and Varieties on Days to Germination of Carrot*

Treatments	Days to germination	
	50% germination	80% germination
Factor A (Sowing date)		
19 <sup>th</sup> October	4.67 <sup>c</sup>	5.52 <sup>c</sup>
13 <sup>th</sup> November	5.42 <sup>b</sup>	6.24 <sup>b</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup> December	6.59 <sup>a</sup>	7.42 <sup>a</sup>
SEM ( $\pm$ )	0.06	0.09
F-test	**	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	0.19	0.27
Factor B (Variety)		
New Kuroda	5.03 <sup>c</sup>	5.88 <sup>c</sup>
Nepa Dream	5.03 <sup>c</sup>	5.83 <sup>c</sup>
SK3	6.36 <sup>a</sup>	7.23 <sup>a</sup>
Taki	5.80 <sup>b</sup>	6.62 <sup>b</sup>
SEM ( $\pm$ )	0.07	0.11
F-test	**	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	0.22	0.32
CV (%)	4.10	5.20
Grand mean	5.55	6.39

Means with the same letter in the column are not significantly different at  $p = 0.05$  by DMRT. \*significant at 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ), and \*\*significant at 1% ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 5% ( $p > 0.05$ ). SEM = Standard error of mean, LSD = Least significant difference and CV = Coefficient of variation.

Among sowing dates, the seed sown on 19<sup>th</sup> October took minimum days to germinate i.e. 4.66 and 5.52 days to 50 % and 80 % germination respectively followed by sowing on 13<sup>th</sup> November.

Days to germination differed significantly among the varieties at  $p < 0.01$ . For 50% germination, significantly maximum days (6.36 days) were recorded in SK3 whereas significantly minimum days (5.03 days) were recorded in New Kuroda. Similarly, for 80 % germination significantly maximum days were noted in SK3 (7.243 days) whereas significantly minimum days were noted in Nepa Dream (5.83 days).

## Plant Height

The plant height of the carrots at various growth stages is influenced by the sowing date and varieties as displayed in Table 2. At 40 DAS, plant height was significantly taller on 19<sup>th</sup> October, (24.83 cm). At 60 DAS, plant height was significantly taller on 19<sup>th</sup> October, (40.42 cm). At 80 DAS, the plant height was significantly taller at first sowing (43.37 cm). Similarly, at harvest, plant height was significantly taller at the first sowing (45.43 cm) followed by the second sowing (34.73 cm).

**Table 2**

*Effect of Sowing Date and Varieties on Plant Height of Carrot*

Treatments	Plant height (cm)			
	40 DAS	60 DAS	80 DAS	At harvest
Factor A (Sowing date)				
19 <sup>th</sup> October	24.83 <sup>a</sup>	40.42 <sup>a</sup>	43.37 <sup>a</sup>	45.43 <sup>a</sup>
13 <sup>th</sup> November	11.16 <sup>b</sup>	19.22 <sup>b</sup>	32.26 <sup>b</sup>	34.73 <sup>b</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup> December	5.42 <sup>c</sup>	13.02 <sup>c</sup>	30.53 <sup>b</sup>	34.53 <sup>b</sup>
SEM ( $\pm$ )	0.39	0.63	0.81	0.76
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	1.14	1.84	2.39	2.25
F-test	**	**	**	**
Factor B (Variety)				
New Kuroda	12.84 <sup>b</sup>	24.09 <sup>ab</sup>	35.92 <sup>a</sup>	38.63 <sup>a</sup>
Nepa Dream	14.71 <sup>a</sup>	25.41 <sup>a</sup>	36.47 <sup>a</sup>	40.86 <sup>a</sup>
SK3	13.13 <sup>b</sup>	22.15 <sup>b</sup>	31.47 <sup>b</sup>	34.24 <sup>b</sup>
Taki	14.54 <sup>a</sup>	25.24 <sup>a</sup>	35.65 <sup>a</sup>	39.20 <sup>a</sup>
SEM ( $\pm$ )	0.45	0.72	0.94	0.88
F-test	*	*	**	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	1.32	2.13	2.77	2.60
CV (%)	9.80	9.00	8.00	7.00
Grand mean	13.81	24.22	35.38	38.23

Means with same letter in column are not significantly different at  $p = 0.05$  by DMRT. \*significant at 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ) and \*\*significant at 1% ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 5% ( $p > 0.05$ ). SEM = Standard error of mean, LSD = Least significant difference, CV = Coefficient of variation and DAS = Days after sowing

Plant height differed significantly at  $p < 0.01$  among the varieties on days to sowing. At 40 DAS significantly taller (14.71 cm) was recorded in Nepa Dream whereas significantly shorter plant height (12.84 cm) was recorded in New Kuroda. At 60 DAS, significantly taller (25.41 cm) was recorded in Nepa Dream whereas significantly shorter plant height (22.15 cm) was recorded in SK3. Likewise, at 80 DAS significantly taller height was recorded in Nepa Dream (36.47 cm) and significantly shorter height (31.47 cm) was recorded in SK3. Similarly at harvest, significantly taller height (40.86 cm) was recorded in Nepa Dream which was statistically similar to Taki (39.20 cm) whereas significantly shorter plant height (34.24 cm) was recorded in SK3.

### **Leaf Length and Breadth**

The result showed significant effect of sowing dates and varieties on leaf length and breadth (Table 3). At 40 DAS, leaf length (12.31 cm) and breadth (11.55 cm) values were significantly higher with the first sowing, 19<sup>th</sup> October whereas significantly lower values for leaf length (2.49 cm) and breadth (2.43) were recorded on 8<sup>th</sup> December. A similar result was seen in 60 DAS, 80 DAS, and at harvesting where higher values for leaf length and breadth were seen with the first sowing, 19<sup>th</sup> October and the least value on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

Leaf length and breadth differed significantly at  $p < 0.01$  among the varieties on days to sowing. At 40 DAS significantly longer (7.47 cm) and wider leaf (6.97) was recorded in Nepa Dream whereas less value for the length (6.06 cm) and width (5.59 cm) was recorded in New Kuroda. At 60 DAS significantly longer (14.87 cm) and wider (11.06 cm) leaf was recorded in Nepa Dream whereas shorter and narrower leaf was recorded in SK3 with a value of 12.97 cm and 9.70 cm respectively. Likewise, at 80 DAS significantly longer leaf was recorded in New Kuroda (21.63 cm) followed by Taki (20.03 cm) whereas a shorter leaf was recorded in SK3 (18.22 cm) and a wider leaf was recorded in Taki (15.21 cm) whereas narrower leaf was recorded in SK3 (10.90 cm). Similarly, at harvest, the significantly longer leaf was recorded in Nepa Dream (22.81 cm) whereas a shorter leaf was recorded in SK3 (18.62 cm) and a wider leaf breadth was recorded in Taki (15.30 cm) whereas a narrower leaf was recorded in SK3 (11.93 cm).

**Table 3***Effect of Sowing Date and Varieties on Leaf Length and Breadth of Carrot*

Treatments	Leaf length (cm)				Leaf breadth (cm)			
	40 DAS	60 DAS	80 DAS	At harvest	40 DAS	60 DAS	80 DAS	At harvest
Factor A (Sowing date)								
19 <sup>th</sup> October	12.31 <sup>a</sup>	22.80 <sup>a</sup>	24.81 <sup>a</sup>	25.38 <sup>a</sup>	11.55 <sup>a</sup>	19.07 <sup>a</sup>	17.57 <sup>a</sup>	17.75 <sup>a</sup>
13 <sup>th</sup> November	4.90 <sup>b</sup>	11.58 <sup>b</sup>	18.12 <sup>b</sup>	20.08 <sup>b</sup>	4.63 <sup>b</sup>	7.30 <sup>b</sup>	11.28 <sup>b</sup>	11.31 <sup>b</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup> December	2.49 <sup>c</sup>	7.31 <sup>c</sup>	17.18 <sup>b</sup>	19.21 <sup>b</sup>	2.43 <sup>c</sup>	5.65 <sup>c</sup>	10.32 <sup>b</sup>	10.32 <sup>b</sup>
SEM ( $\pm$ )	0.18	0.37	0.43	0.51	0.25	0.29	0.40	0.57
F-test	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	0.54	1.099	1.261	1.484	0.74	0.85	1.18	1.67
Factor B (Variety)								
New Kuroda	6.06 <sup>b</sup>	14.19 <sup>ab</sup>	21.63 <sup>a</sup>	22.77 <sup>a</sup>	5.59 <sup>b</sup>	10.86 <sup>b</sup>	13.59 <sup>b</sup>	12.90 <sup>b</sup>
Nepa Dream	7.47 <sup>a</sup>	14.87 <sup>a</sup>	20.01 <sup>b</sup>	22.81 <sup>a</sup>	6.97 <sup>a</sup>	11.06 <sup>a</sup>	12.53 <sup>b</sup>	12.37 <sup>b</sup>
SK3	6.37 <sup>b</sup>	12.97 <sup>ab</sup>	18.22 <sup>c</sup>	18.62 <sup>c</sup>	6.00 <sup>b</sup>	9.70 <sup>b</sup>	10.90 <sup>c</sup>	11.93 <sup>b</sup>
Taki	6.38 <sup>b</sup>	13.56 <sup>b</sup>	20.03 <sup>b</sup>	21.03 <sup>b</sup>	6.27 <sup>ab</sup>	11.02 <sup>a</sup>	15.21 <sup>a</sup>	15.30 <sup>a</sup>
SEM ( $\pm$ )	0.21	0.43	0.49	0.58	0.29	0.34	0.46	0.66
F-test	**	*	**	**	*	*	**	*
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	0.62	1.26	1.45	1.71	0.85	0.98	1.36	1.93
CV (%)	9.70	9.30	7.40	8.10	14.10	9.50	10.70	15.10
Grand mean	6.57	13.90	20.03	21.56	6.21	10.67	13.06	13.13

Means with same letter in column are not significantly different at  $p = 0.05$  by DMRT. \*significant at 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ) and \*\*significant at 1% ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 5% ( $p > 0.05$ ). SEM = Standard error of mean, LSD = Least significant difference, CV = Coefficient of variation and DAS = Days after sowing

### Number of Leaves Per Plant

The effect of the sowing date on the number of leaves per plant was significant at all the growth stages of carrot as displayed in Table 4. At 40 DAS, significantly higher number of leaves per plant was recorded with first sowing (5.19). At 60 DAS, significantly higher number of leaves per plant was recorded with the first sowing (7.97) whereas significantly lower number of leaves (5.63) was noticed with the third

sowing (8<sup>th</sup> December). Similarly, at 80 DAS significantly higher number of leaves per plant was recorded in the first sowing (9.81) which was statistically at par with the second sowing (9.53). Likewise, at harvest, significantly higher number of leaves per plant was recorded with the first sowing (12.06) whereas the lower number of leaves was recorded with the third sowing (9.87) which was statistically similar with the second sowing (10.49).

The effect of varieties on the number of leaves per plant was non-significant at 40 DAS. At 60 DAS, the maximum number of leaves was recorded in Taki (7.40) being statistically at par with Nepa Dream (7.03) whereas a minimum number of leaves (6.37) was recorded in SK3. Similarly, at 80 DAS maximum number of leaves was recorded in Taki (9.74) being statistically at par with New Kuroda (9.45). Likewise, at harvest, maximum number of plants was recorded in Taki (11.65) being statistically similar to New Kuroda (11.40) and Nepa Dream (10.80).

**Table 4**

*Effect of Sowing Date and Varieties on the Number of Leaves per Plant of Carrot*

Treatments	Number of leaves per plant			
	40 DAS	60 DAS	80 DAS	At harvest
Factor A (Sowing date)				
19 <sup>th</sup> October	5.19 <sup>a</sup>	7.97 <sup>a</sup>	9.81 <sup>a</sup>	12.06 <sup>a</sup>
13 <sup>th</sup> November	3.72 <sup>b</sup>	7.17 <sup>b</sup>	9.53 <sup>a</sup>	10.49 <sup>b</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup> December	2.58 <sup>c</sup>	5.63 <sup>c</sup>	8.50 <sup>b</sup>	9.87 <sup>b</sup>
SEM (±)	0.07	0.10	0.18	0.29
F-test	**	**	**	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	0.21	0.30	0.53	0.87
Factor B (Variety)				
New Kuroda	3.74	6.90 <sup>b</sup>	9.45 <sup>a</sup>	11.40 <sup>a</sup>
Nepa Dream	3.94	7.03 <sup>a</sup>	9.17 <sup>ab</sup>	10.80 <sup>a</sup>
SK3	3.76	6.37 <sup>c</sup>	8.76 <sup>b</sup>	9.38 <sup>b</sup>
Taki	3.87	7.40 <sup>a</sup>	9.74 <sup>a</sup>	11.65 <sup>a</sup>
SEM (±)	0.08	0.11	0.20	0.34
F-test	Ns	**	*	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>		0.34	0.61	1.00
CV (%)	6.60	5.10	6.70	9.50
Grand mean	3.83	6.92	9.29	10.80

Means with same letter in column are not significantly different at  $p = 0.05$  by DMRT. \*significant at 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ), \*\*significant at 1% ( $p < 0.01$ ) and ns: not significantly different at 5% ( $p > 0.05$ ). SEM = Standard error of mean, LSD = Least significant difference, CV = Coefficient of variation and DAS = Days after sowing

Interaction effects of sowing date and variety on the number of leaves were non-significant at 40 DAS and at harvest as displayed in Table 5. At 60 DAS, a significantly higher number of leaves was recorded in variety Taki (8.70) with first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October). Similarly, at 80 DAS, a significantly higher number of leaves was recorded in Taki (10.43) with the first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October).

**Table 5**

*Interaction Effect of Sowing Date and Varieties on the Number of Leaves per Plant of Carrot*

Interaction effect of sowing date and variety	Number of leaves per plant			
	40 DAS	60 DAS	80 DAS	At harvest
19 <sup>th</sup> October × New Kuroda	5.20	8.23 <sup>ab</sup>	10.23 <sup>ab</sup>	13.33
19 <sup>th</sup> October × Nepa Dream	5.43	8.06 <sup>b</sup>	9.83 <sup>abc</sup>	9.28
19 <sup>th</sup> October × SK3	5.16	6.90 <sup>c</sup>	8.76 <sup>cde</sup>	12.33
19 <sup>th</sup> October × Taki	4.10	8.70 <sup>a</sup>	10.43 <sup>a</sup>	13.31
13 <sup>th</sup> November × New Kuroda	3.56	7.00 <sup>c</sup>	8.76 <sup>cdef</sup>	10.33
13 <sup>th</sup> November × Nepa Dream	3.53	6.86 <sup>c</sup>	9.53 <sup>abc</sup>	9.33
13 <sup>th</sup> November × SK3	3.70	7.40 <sup>c</sup>	10.06 <sup>ab</sup>	10.94
13 <sup>th</sup> November × Taki	2.70	7.43 <sup>c</sup>	9.76 <sup>abc</sup>	11.33
8 <sup>th</sup> December × New Kuroda	2.46	5.46 <sup>de</sup>	9.36 <sup>abc</sup>	10.52
8 <sup>th</sup> December × Nepa Dream	2.70	5.63 <sup>de</sup>	8.00 <sup>defg</sup>	9.53
8 <sup>th</sup> December × SK3	2.60	5.36 <sup>e</sup>	7.63 <sup>eg</sup>	9.12
8 <sup>th</sup> December × Taki	2.56	6.06 <sup>d</sup>	9.03 <sup>bcd</sup>	10.30
SEM (±)	0.14	0.20	0.36	0.59
F-test	Ns	*	*	Ns
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	-	0.60	1.06	-

Means with same letter in column are not significantly different at  $p = 0.05$  by DMRT. \*significant at 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ), \*\*significant at 1% ( $p < 0.01$ ) and ns: not significantly different at 5% ( $p > 0.05$ ). SEM = Standard error of mean, LSD = Least significant difference, CV = Coefficient of variation, DAS= Days after sowing

## Edible Root Length

The result showed that there was a significant effect of sowing dates and varieties on edible root length (Table 6). Maximum root length (16.23 cm) was observed under the first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October). The minimum edible root length (11.35 cm) was observed on the third sowing (8<sup>th</sup> December).

Similarly, a significantly longer root was recorded in Nepa Dream (15.37 cm), followed by New Kuroda (13.83 cm) and whereas a significantly shorter root was recorded in SK3 (12.64 cm)

## Root Diameter

Root diameter differed significantly at  $p < 0.01$  among the different sowing dates and varieties as displayed in Table 6. At the first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October), a significantly higher root diameter (3.27 cm) was recorded whereas a significantly lower root diameter (1.87 cm) was recorded at the third sowing (8<sup>th</sup> December).

**Table 6**

*Effect of Sowing Date and Varieties on Root Length and Root Diameter of Carrot*

Treatments	Root length (cm)	Root diameter (cm)
Factor A (Sowing date)		
19 <sup>th</sup> October	16.23 <sup>a</sup>	3.27 <sup>a</sup>
13 <sup>th</sup> November	14.02 <sup>b</sup>	2.38 <sup>b</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup> December	11.35 <sup>c</sup>	1.87 <sup>c</sup>
SEM ( $\pm$ )	0.15	0.03
F-test	**	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	0.46	0.09
Factor B (Variety)		
New Kuroda	13.83 <sup>b</sup>	2.46 <sup>b</sup>
Nepa Dream	15.37 <sup>a</sup>	2.74 <sup>a</sup>
SK3	12.64 <sup>c</sup>	2.35 <sup>c</sup>
Taki	13.61 <sup>b</sup>	2.49 <sup>b</sup>
SEM ( $\pm$ )	0.18	0.03
F-test	**	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	0.54	0.11
CV (%)	4.50	4.50
Grand mean	13.86	2.51

Means with same letter in column are not significantly different at  $p = 0.05$  by DMRT. \*significant at 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ) and \*\*significant at 1% ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 5% ( $p > 0.05$ ). SEM = Standard error of mean, LSD = Least significant difference and CV = Coefficient of variation

Significantly higher root diameter (2.74 cm) was recorded in Nepa Dream. Significantly lower root diameter (2.35 cm) was recorded in SK3.

### Fresh Root Weight per Plant

The result showed fresh root weight differed significantly at  $p < 0.01$  among the different sowing dates and varieties (Table 7). At the first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October), a significantly higher fresh root weight (162.60 g) was recorded whereas a significantly lower fresh root weight (103.30 g) was recorded in the third sowing (8<sup>th</sup> December).

A significantly higher fresh root weight (133.50 g) was recorded in Nepa Dream. A significantly lower fresh root weight (124.30 g) was recorded in SK3.

### Fresh Leaf Weight per Plant

Fresh leaf weight differed significantly at  $p < 0.01$  among the different sowing dates and varieties (Table 7). At first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October), a significantly higher fresh leaf weight (66.24 g) was recorded. It was followed by the second sowing (37.83 g) which was statistically at par with the third sowing (32.81 g).

Significantly higher fresh leaf weight (54.54 g) was recorded in SK3 followed by New Kuroda (47.84 g) which was statistically at par with Taki (45.62 g). Significantly lower fresh leaf weight (34.51 g) was recorded in Nepa Dream.

### Root-to-shoot ratio

Root to shoot ratio of the carrots at harvest differed significantly at  $p < 0.01$  among the different sowing dates and varieties as displayed in Table 7. At first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October), a significantly higher root to shoot ratio (3.40) was recorded. A significantly lower ratio (2.58) was recorded in the third sowing (8<sup>th</sup> December).

A significantly higher root to shoot ratio (4.07) was recorded in Nepa Dream followed by Taki (3.04) which was statistically similar to New Kuroda (2.81).

**Table 7**

*Effect of Sowing date and Varieties on Yield Parameters per Plant of Carrot*

Treatments	Yield parameter per plant		
	Root weight (g)	Leaf weight (g)	Root to shoot ratio
Factor A (Sowing date)			
19 <sup>th</sup> October	162.60 <sup>a</sup>	66.24 <sup>a</sup>	3.40 <sup>a</sup>
13 <sup>th</sup> November	121.40 <sup>b</sup>	37.83 <sup>b</sup>	3.23 <sup>a</sup>

8 <sup>th</sup> December	103.30 <sup>c</sup>	32.81 <sup>b</sup>	2.58 <sup>b</sup>
SEM ( $\pm$ )	1.83	1.85	0.11
F-tesR	**	**	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	5.38	5.43	0.35
Factor B (Variety)			
New Kuroda	129.10 <sup>ab</sup>	47.84 <sup>b</sup>	2.81 <sup>b</sup>
Nepa Dream	133.50 <sup>a</sup>	34.51 <sup>c</sup>	4.07 <sup>a</sup>
SK3	124.30 <sup>b</sup>	54.54 <sup>a</sup>	2.35 <sup>c</sup>
Taki	129.50 <sup>ab</sup>	45.62 <sup>b</sup>	3.04 <sup>b</sup>
SEM ( $\pm$ )	2.12	2.14	0.13
F-test	*	**	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	6.21	6.27	0.40
CV (%)	4.90	14.10	13.50
Grand mean	129.10	45.60	3.07

Means with same letter in column are not significantly different at  $p = 0.05$  by DMRT. \*significant at 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ) and \*\*significant at 1% ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 5% ( $p > 0.05$ ). SEM = Standard error of mean, LSD = Least significant difference and CV = Coefficient of variation

## Yield

The yield of the carrots at harvest time is influenced by the sowing date and varieties as displayed in Table 8. At the first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October), a significantly higher biological yield (44.82 mt/ha) was recorded and a lower biological yield (26.07 mt/ha) was recorded at the third sowing (8<sup>th</sup> December). Similarly, a significantly higher economic yield (34.27 mt/ha) was recorded in the first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October) and a low economic yield (19.28 mt/ha) was recorded in the third sowing (8<sup>th</sup> December).

Biological yield and economic yield differed significantly at  $p < 0.01$  among the different varieties. A significantly high biological yield (36.71 mt/ha) was recorded in Nepa Dream and a lower biological yield (30 mt/ha) was recorded in SK3.

**Table 8***Effect of Sowing date and Varieties on Yield of Carrot*

Treatments	Yield (mt/ha)	
	Biological	Economic
Factor A (Sowing date)		
19 <sup>th</sup> October	44.82 <sup>a</sup>	34.27 <sup>a</sup>
13 <sup>th</sup> November	29.48 <sup>b</sup>	21.87 <sup>b</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup> December	26.07 <sup>c</sup>	19.28 <sup>c</sup>
SEM (±)	1.07	0.73
F-test	**	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	3.16	2.14
Factor B (Variety)		
New Kuroda	32.77 <sup>bc</sup>	24.34 <sup>b</sup>
Nepa Dream	36.71 <sup>a</sup>	29.67 <sup>a</sup>
SK3	30.00 <sup>c</sup>	20.58 <sup>c</sup>
Taki	34.35 <sup>ab</sup>	25.97 <sup>b</sup>
SEM (±)	1.24	0.84
F-test	*	**
LSD <sub>0.05</sub>	3.65	2.48
CV (%)	11.20	10.10
Grand mean	33.46	25.14

Means with same letter in column are not significantly different at  $p = 0.05$  by DMRT. \*significant at 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ) and \*\*significant at 1% ( $p < 0.01$ ) at 5% ( $p > 0.05$ ). SEM = Standard error of mean, LSD = Least significant difference and CV = Coefficient of variation

## Discussion

### Effect of Sowing date on Growth Parameters

The results in Table 1 revealed that there was a significant influence of the sowing date on days to germination. Seed sown on 19<sup>th</sup> October took fewer days to germinate whereas delayed sowing took more days to germinate. This variation in germination might be due to environmental conditions, especially temperature. This result *is per* the finding of Sumrah *et al.*, (2003) in Beet root, Lavanya *et al.* (2014) in radish.

The results in Table 2 explained that there was a significant influence of different sowing dates on plant height. A significantly taller plant was obtained in the

first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October). There was a decrease in plant height from 19<sup>th</sup> October to 8<sup>th</sup> December. The increase in plant height in early sowing might be due to optimum environmental conditions, especially temperature. This result is similar to the finding of Sahu et al. (2018) who observed a higher plant height (32.26 cm) when the seed was sown on 25<sup>th</sup> October. Similar results were reported by Sumrah et al. (2013) in Beet root.

The result in Table 3 revealed that there was a significant influence of different sowing dates on leaf length as well as on leaf breadth at all the growth stages. Significantly longer and wider leaves were obtained in the first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October) whereas leaf length and breadth decreased thereafter. This result *is per* the finding of Ali et al. (2016) who reported that increase in leaf length (46.4 cm) and leaf width (1 cm) when seeds were sown on 26<sup>th</sup> October in Onion. A similar result was reported by Ebrahim et al. (2013) in radish.

The result in Table 4 revealed that there was a significant influence of different sowing dates on the number of leaves per plant. A significantly higher number of leaves per plant was obtained at first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October) and the number of leaves per plant decreased at later sowing. The variation in a number of leaves per plant as affected by the sowing date might be due to variations in environmental conditions during the growing period (Kabir et al., 2013) and also this result is following the finding of Sahu et al. (2010) in radish.

### **Effect of Varieties on Growth Parameters**

The results in Table 1 revealed that there was a significant influence of variety on days taken to germination. The germination in Nepa Dream was earlier than the other varieties. The variation in germination might be due to varieties responding differently to environmental factors based on genetic makeup and their adaptation ability (Kabir et al., 2013). This result is following the finding of Verma (2014).

There was an increase in plant height with the advancement of the growth period, variety Nepa Dream recorded a significantly taller plant height at all stages of growth whereas a significantly shorter plant height was recorded in SK3. The difference in plant height might be due to the genetic makeup of varieties. This result is following the finding of Latha et al. (2011) in carrot and Malek et al. (2011) in radishes which reported a significant influence of varieties on plant height.

The result revealed a significant effect of varieties on leaf length and leaf breadth (Table 3). Variety Nepa Dream recorded significantly longer and wider leaves than other varieties. The differences in the leaf length and leaf breadth among the varieties might be due to the differences in their genetic traits. Similar results were reported by Alam et al. (2010) and Ibrahim et al. (2013) in radish.

The effect of varieties on the number of leaves per plant was significant (Table 4). Variety Nepa Dream at 60 DAS and Taki at 80 DAS and harvest time recorded a significantly higher number of leaves per plant compared to other varieties. The difference in the number of leaves might be due to varieties responding differently to environmental factors based on genetic makeup and their adaptation ability Kabir et al. (2013). This finding is in accordance with Pervez et al. (2003) in radish and Amur et al. (2019) in radish.

### **Combined Effect of Sowing date and Variety on Growth Parameters**

The combined effect of sowing date and varieties indicated a non-significant influence on plant height, days to germination, canopy diameter, leaf length and breadth.

Interaction effects of the date of sowing and variety on the number of leaves were significant at 60 DAS and 80 DAS. The significantly higher number of leaves was recorded in Taki with the first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October) whereas a significantly lower number of leaves was noted in SK3 with the third sowing (13<sup>th</sup> November). This result is following the finding of Ebrahim et al. (2013) in radish.

### **Effect of Sowing date on Yield and Yield Parameters**

The results presented in Table 7 revealed that there was a significant influence of sowing date on the edible root length of carrot. The first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October) was significantly superior over other sowing dates in terms of edible root length. This might be due to favorable conditions available during the growing conditions and also early sowing possibly attributed to maximum photosynthesis with a longer growth periods than the later sowing (Ladumor et al. 2020). The present result conforms with the finding of Dhaiya et al. (2007) and Latha et al. (2012) on carrot.

Similarly, the results presented in Table 7 indicated that there was a significant influence of the sowing date on the root diameter of carrot. The first sowing (19<sup>th</sup>

October) was significantly superior in root diameter of carrot over another date. The rapid increase in the root diameter of carrot might be due to more vegetative growth in earlier sowing which supply more photosynthates from leaf to root (Ladumor et al., 2020). A similar finding was reported by Latha et al. (2014) in carrot.

Leaf fresh weight is one of the most important yield contributing parameters that indicates the leafage of the plant. The leafage, in turn, indicates the size of the photosynthetic system. Significantly highest fresh leaf weight of carrot was obtained on 19<sup>th</sup> October and the lowest fresh leaf weight was obtained on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

Early sowing resulted in higher fresh root weight because of the congenial growing conditions leading to a higher volume of root (Laudmor et al., 2020). This result is per the finding of Kabir et al. (2013) in carrot. A significantly higher root-to-shoot ratio was obtained on 19<sup>th</sup> October whereas a lower root-to-shoot ratio was obtained on 8<sup>th</sup> December. This conforms with the finding of Arora et al. (1969) and Madhavi Latha et al. (2015) on carrot.

The result presented in Table 8 indicated that there was a significant influence of the sowing date on yield. The significantly higher biological as well as economic yield in first sowing (19<sup>th</sup> October) might be due to better plant stand and favorable environmental conditions for growth and development of root as well as leaf (Lavanya et al. 2014). The similar findings had been reported by Dhaiya et al. (2007), Latha et al. (2014) and Ladumor et al. (2020) in carrot.

### **Effect of Varieties on Yield and yield Parameters**

The result revealed that there was a significant effect of varieties on edible root length, root diameter, root weight as well as root-to-shoot ratio (Table 7 and Table 8). Variety Nepa Dream recorded significantly longer edible root lengths and wider root diameters than other varieties. This difference might be due to genetic composition in the expression of growth potentials. Similar variation in root length and diameter among the varieties was reported by Latha et al. (2014) and Lauumor et al. (2020) in carrot.

Significantly higher root weight was recorded in Nepa Dream followed by Taki and New Kuroda. Higher root length and diameter might have resulted in higher fresh root weight. Similar findings were reported by Pervez et al. (2003) and

Ladumor et al. (2020) in carrot and Ebrahim et al. (2013) in radish. A significantly higher root-to-shoot ratio was obtained in Nepa Dream and this might be due to the high fresh root weight. This result conforms with the finding of Arora et al. (1969) and Verma (2014) in radish.

The result presented in Table 8 revealed that there was a significant influence of varieties on yield. Nepa Dream was significantly superior in terms of biological as well as economic yield. This varietal difference is attributed due to the growth and potential genetic makeup of the variety (Latha et. al., 2014). This result is following the finding of Pervez et al. (2003) and Ladumor et al. (2020) in carrot.

### **Combined Effect of Sowing date and Variety on Yield and Yield Parameters**

Combined effects of sowing date and varieties revealed a non-significant influence on edible root length, root diameter, and fresh root weight as well as root to shoot ratio of carrot. Similarly, combined effects of sowing date and varieties had a non-significant influence on biological as well as economic yield. Lath et al. (2014) studies the effect of various sowing dates on the growth and yield of carrot variety where no significant interaction of sowing date and variety on yield parameters was noted. Similar results were observed by Al-Harbi et al. (1997) in carrot.

### **Conclusion**

Seed sown on 19<sup>th</sup> October produced higher vegetative growth as compared to other sowing dates. As the root yield is directly related to plant growth. Seed sowing on 19<sup>th</sup> October produced high root length, root diameter and economic yield than other sowing dates. Root yield was decreased from 34.27 mt/ha to 19.28 mt/ha as the sowing date was delayed from 19<sup>th</sup> October to 8<sup>th</sup> December (43.74 % yield decreased). Root qualities were in decreasing trend when seeds were sown from 19<sup>th</sup> October to 8<sup>th</sup> December.

Among varieties, the performance of Nepa Dream was found to be superior in terms of growth, yield and quality parameters followed by Taki, New Kuroda and SK3. The combined effect of sowing date and varieties was significant only with the number of leaves per plant, cortex diameter and core-to-cortex ratio.

Thus, the exploitation of Nepa Dream in further yield trials will contribute to the national carrot breeding programs of Nepal.

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**कालमहिमा कवितामा काव्यहेतु, प्रयोजन र शब्दशक्ति**

अनिल अधिकारी<sup>१</sup>, माया घिमिरे<sup>२</sup>

<sup>१</sup> महेन्द्र मोरङ आदर्श बहुमुखी क्याम्पस, विराटनगर

<sup>२</sup> राममणि बहुमुखी क्याम्पस, रूपन्देही

Corresponding Author's Email: aniladhikaribhojpur@gmail.com

**लेखसार**

प्रस्तुत लेखमा काल-महिमा कविताको स्रष्टा, सिर्जना र शब्दार्थ सम्बन्धका आधारमा विश्लेषण भएको छ । सामग्रीको सङ्कलन पुस्कालयबाट भएको यस लेखमा मूलसमस्या र शोधप्रश्नको समाधानका लागि पाठविश्लेषणमा आधारित गुणात्मक अनुसन्धानपद्धति तथा व्यवस्थात्मक र विश्लेषणात्मक विधिको प्रयोग भएको छ । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा काव्यको भावसौन्दर्य तथा कलासौन्दर्यसँग सम्बन्धित काव्यहेतु, काव्यप्रयोजन, शब्दशक्ति, रस, ध्वनि, गुण, रीति, अलङ्कार, औचित्य, वक्रोक्तिजस्ता विषयका आधारमा विश्लेषण हुनेगर्दछ । यस लेखमा कविताको विश्लेषण काव्यहेतु, काव्य-प्रयोजन र शब्दशक्तिसम्बन्धी सिद्धान्तका आलोकमा कालमहिमा कविताको विश्लेषण भएको छ । यस लेखमा सिर्जनाको कारक बनी स्रष्टा र सिर्जना बीचको अन्तर्सम्बन्धलाई बोध गराउने काव्यहेतु तथा सिर्जनाको लक्ष्य वा उद्देश्यलाई बोध गराउन आउने काव्यप्रयोजन तथा शब्दार्थ सम्बन्धका आधारमा साहित्यको अर्थ निर्धारण गर्ने शब्दवृत्तिसँग सम्बन्धित काव्यचिन्तनलाई सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणका रूपमा उपयोग भएको छ । प्रस्तुत कालमहिमा कवितामा अदृश्य तथा अमूर्त अवस्थामा रहेको कालका शाश्वत सत्यता, निरपेक्षता, निरन्तरता, गतिशीलता, निर्भिकताजस्ता प्रवृत्तिलाई कविप्रतिभा, शास्त्रज्ञान तथा अनुभव र अनुभूतिजन्य ज्ञानका आधारमा आध्यात्मिक भाव तथा कलासौन्दर्य काव्यहेतुका रूपमा प्रस्तुत भएको छ । यो कविता चतुर्वर्ग फलप्राप्तिका साथै लोकोपकारी तथा व्यावहारिक ज्ञानको प्रयोजन अभिव्यञ्जित भएको तथ्यका साथै आध्यात्मिक चिन्तनलाई भावजलधीमा तरल रूपमा प्रवाहित भएको वाच्यार्थमा शक्तिशाली रहँदै यही वाच्यार्थका माध्यमबाट लक्ष्यार्थ र व्यङ्ग्यार्थसमेत अभिव्यञ्जित भएको विषयमा विमर्श भएको छ ।

**शब्दकुञ्जी** : काव्यहेतु, प्रतिभा, व्युत्पत्ति, अभ्यास, काव्यप्रयोजन, शब्दशक्ति



## विषयपरिचय

प्रस्तुत लेख 'काल-महिमा' कविताको संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनअन्तर्गत स्रष्टा, सिर्जना र शब्दार्थ सम्बन्धको विश्लेषणमा आधारित छ। यस लेखमा कवितामा अभिव्यञ्जित भावसौन्दर्य तथा कलासौन्दर्य दुवै पक्षको अध्ययन तथा विश्लेषण गरिएको छ। प्रस्तुत कविताका स्रष्टा लेखनाथ पौड्याल (१९४१-२०२२) आधुनिक नेपाली कविताको सूत्रपात गर्ने परिष्कारवादी भावधाराका कवि हुन्। कविता विधाका माध्यमबाट आफ्नो पहिचान बनाई त्यसैका माध्यमबाट प्रसिद्धि हासिल गरेका लेखनाथ पौड्याल १९६२ सालमा 'श्रृङ्गार पच्छिसी' र 'मानसार्कषिणी' कविता प्रकाशन गरी लेखी साहित्यिक क्षेत्रमा प्रवेश गरेका हुन्। यिनलाई कविव्यक्तित्व प्रदान गर्ने मुख्य कृतिहरू *लालित्य भाग १* (२०१०), *लालित्य भाग २* (२०२५), कविशिरोमणि लेखनाथ पौड्यालका प्रतिनिधि कविता (२०४१), कविता सङ्ग्रह, *ऋतुविचार* (१९७३), *बुद्धिविनोद* (१९७३), *सत्यकली सम्वाद* (१९७६), *तरुण तपसी* (२०११) लगायत काव्यकृति प्रकाशित छन्। संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनबाट प्रेरित र प्रभावित भई कविता सिर्जना गर्ने पौड्यालका कवितामा अभिव्यञ्जित जीवनदृष्टि आध्यात्मिक चिन्तन र चेतनाका माध्यमबाट मानवीय मनमस्तिष्कलाई विरेचन र सामाजिक आचारको नियमन गर्ने विशेषताका छन्। पूर्वीय साङ्ख्य तथा वेदान्त दर्शनबाट प्रभावित लेखनाथका कवितामा मानवतावादी आध्यात्मिक चिन्तन, अलङ्कार तथा विम्बको उचित संयोजन, प्रकृतिको मानवीकरण, मात्रिक र वर्णमात्रिक छन्दको प्रयोग, कला र भावको उचित प्रयोग, बौद्धिकता, सामाजिक विकृति विसङ्गतिप्रति व्यङ्ग्यात्मकता, वस्तुपरकता, दार्शनिकता, नैतिकताजस्ता मूलभूत प्रवृत्ति अन्तर्निहित छन्।

प्रस्तुत कविताको रचनासन्दर्भगत अवस्थालाई नियाल्दा लेखनाथको काव्ययात्राको दोस्रो चरणअन्तर्गत कविता १९९१ सालमा प्रथमपटक प्रकाशित भई *लालित्य भाग १* (२०१०) मा सङ्गृहीत कृति हो। राणा शासनअन्तर्गत जुद्धशमशेरको शासनकाल, पुस्तकालय पर्वले लेखकमा सिर्जना गरेको त्रासदी, मानव बन्धकको उत्कर्ष अवधि, स्वतन्त्रताविहीन जीवन तथा अभिव्यक्तिमा राज्यको नियन्त्रण रहेको समयमा रचित यस कवितामा मृत्युजन्य सत्य र त्यसको चैतन्यलाई सत्यापित गर्नुपर्ने अवस्थाबोधको अभिव्यक्ति भएको छ। प्रस्तुत कवितामा कवि निपूणता जीवनको स्थायी सत्य कालजस्तो अदृश्य र अमूर्त विषयलाई कथ्यका रूपमा लिई त्यसमा काव्यात्मक भाव प्रसार गर्ने लोकपर्यवेक्षणको वास्तविक आभाष दिने यस कवितामा कालको शाश्वत सत्य र गतिशीलतालाई कुशलतापूर्वक कला तथा भावात्मक अभिव्यक्तिका माध्यमबाट मूर्त बोध अभिव्यञ्जित भएको छ। कालको शाश्वततालाई तत्त्वमीमांसाका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गर्ने यस कवितामा कालप्रतिको त्रसित धारणामा परिवर्तन ल्याउनु पर्ने भाव अभिव्यक्त भएको छ। कवितामा कालको महिमा गान गरी जीवनजगत्प्रतिको यथार्थता, देहको नश्वरता र पुनर्जन्मको सङ्केत भएको छ। कालको शाश्वत स्वरूपलाई कथ्यविषय र सन्देशका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गर्ने यो कविता संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनअन्तर्गत स्रष्टा, सिर्जना र शब्दार्थसम्बन्धका आधारमा अध्ययनीय शोधक्षेत्र हो।

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा स्रष्टा, सिर्जना र शब्दार्थसम्बन्धका आधारमा कृतिको विश्लेषण गर्ने स्थापित सिद्धान्त निर्माण भएको छ भने यसका आधारमा शोध गर्नसकिने आधार प्राप्त छ । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा स्रष्टा र सिर्जना सम्बन्धका रूपमा काव्यहेतु र काव्यप्रयोजन तथा शब्दार्थसम्बन्धका आधारमा शब्दशक्तिको सिद्धान्त स्थापित छ । काव्यहेतु सिर्जना स्रष्टाको प्रतिभा, व्युत्पत्ति र अभ्यास कुन आधारमा अभिव्यक्त भएको छ भन्ने पक्षका आधारमा कृतिको मूल्यनिरूपण का साथै स्रष्टा र सिर्जनाको सम्बन्ध खोजी गर्ने सिद्धान्त हो । कवि जीवनजगतको बाह्यान्तरिक पक्षलाई सूक्ष्म पर्यवेक्षण गरी निरन्तरको साधनाबाट कलात्मकता प्रदान गर्ने माध्यम रहेकाले कलात्मक, रागात्मक र भावात्मक र चनाका लागि प्रतिभा, व्युत्पत्ति र अभ्यासको त्रिपक्षीय अन्वय कवितामा कसरी अभिव्यञ्जित भएको छ भन्ने पक्षको खोजी काव्यहेतुको सैद्धान्तिक मानक हो । काव्य वा साहित्य लेखिनुको कारण र त्यसको आधारसँग सम्बन्धित काव्यप्रयोजन कृतिचरनाबाट लोकजीवनका लागि प्राप्त हुने विषय र लेखकीय लाभको अन्तर्सम्बन्धको विवेचना गर्ने काव्यचिन्तनको मानक हो । कृतिलाई वाच्य, लक्ष्य र व्यङ्ग्य तिनै आधारमा विषय र भावबोध गरी काव्यिक कलाको आस्वादन गर्ने आधार शब्दशक्तिको मूलभूत प्रस्थापन हो । प्रस्तुत 'काल-महिमा' कविता संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनका सबै सिद्धान्त र तिनका प्रतिमानका आधारमा अध्ययनीय छ । यस लेखमा संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनअन्तर्गत स्रष्टा र सिर्जनावीचको अन्तर्सम्बन्धका आधारमा काव्यहेतु र काव्यप्रयोजन तथा शब्दार्थ सम्बन्धद्योतक शब्दशक्तिका आधारमा विश्लेषण र अर्थपन हुने यस लेखले यस विषयका आधारमा कृतिविश्लेषणसँग सम्बन्धित पाठक र अध्येताका लागि विषयगत आधार र संज्ञान प्रदान गर्ने भएकाले यसको प्राज्ञिक औचित्य पनि पुष्टि हुन्छ ।

प्रस्तुत लेखको मुख्यसमस्या 'काल-महिमा' कविताको स्रष्टा सिर्जना र शब्दार्थ सम्बन्धका आधारमा विश्लेषण गर्नु नै हो । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनका रससिद्धान्त, अलङ्कारवाद, रीतिवाद, गुण, वक्रोक्ति, औचित्यवाद, वक्रोक्तिवादजस्ता सिद्धान्तका साथै स्रष्टा र सिर्जना सम्बन्धद्योतक काव्यहेतु र काव्यप्रयोजन तथा शब्दार्थसम्बन्ध शब्दशक्तिजस्ता सिद्धान्त र यिनका विभिन्न सूक्ष्म मानकका आधारमा कृतिविश्लेषण हुनेगर्दछ । यस लेखमा संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनका स्रष्टा, सिर्जना र शब्दार्थसम्बन्धका आधारमा 'काल-महिमा' कविताको विश्लेषणका लागि निम्नलिखितअनुसारका शोधप्रश्न निर्माण भएका छन् ।

- (क) काल-महिमा कवितामा काव्यहेतु केकस्तो छ ?
- (ख) काल-महिमा कवितामा काव्यप्रयोजन कसरी प्रस्तुत भएको छ ?
- (ग) काल-महिमा कवितामा शब्दशक्ति किन छ ?

प्रस्तुत लेख प्रथमतः स्रष्टा र सिर्जना र शब्दार्थसम्बन्धका आधारमा 'काल-महिमा' कविताको विश्लेषण गर्ने उद्देश्यमा केन्द्रित छ । स्रष्टा र सिर्जना सम्बन्धका आधारमा कवितामा काव्यहेतु र काव्यप्रयोजनका आधारमा निरूपण हुने यस लेखमा शब्दार्थसम्बन्ध अन्तर्गत कवितामा वाच्यार्थ, लक्ष्यार्थ र व्यङ्ग्यार्थसमेतका आधारमा कविताको मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने उद्देश्य छ । प्रस्तुत लेखको विषयगत सीमाङ्कन 'काल-महिमा' कविता हो भने काव्यहेतु, काव्यप्रयोजन र शब्दशक्तिका अतिरिक्त संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनका अन्य सिद्धान्त यस लेखका सैद्धान्तिक सीमाङ्कन हुन् ।

## अध्ययनविधि

प्रस्तुत लेखका लागि शोधक्षेत्र, सामग्री सङ्कलन, विश्लेषण र अर्थापनसँग सम्बन्धित शोधविधि निम्नलिखितअनुसार छन् ।

### सामग्री सङ्कलन र विश्लेषण विधि

प्रस्तुत लेखको विषयगत शोधक्षेत्र आधुनिक नेपाली कविताअन्तर्गत लेखनाथ पौड्यालको 'काल-महिमा' कविता तथा सिद्धान्त र अवधारणात्मक शोधक्षेत्र संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनअन्तर्गत काव्यहेतु, काव्यप्रयोजन र शब्दशक्ति हो । यस लेखमा प्राथमिक र द्वितीयक दुवै स्रोतका सामग्रीको उपयोग भएको छ । प्राथमिक स्रोतको सामग्रीका रूपमा कवि लेखनाथ पौड्यालको 'काल-महिमा' कविता रहेको छ भने द्वितीयक स्रोतको सामग्रीका रूपमा यस कविताका बारेमा लेखिएका विभिन्न लेख, अनुसन्धानात्मक ग्रन्थ, समालोचना, पुस्तक तथा अध्ययनको लागि आवश्यक सिद्धान्तसँग सम्बन्धित अनुसन्धानात्मक लेख, ग्रन्थ रहेका छन् । यस लेखका सामग्री पुस्तकालयबाट सङ्कलन भएकाले यो पुस्तकालय कार्य हो ।

यस लेखमा सामग्री विश्लेषणका लागि पाठविश्लेषणमा आधारित गुणात्मक पद्धतिको उपयोग भएको छ । अध्ययनमा स्रष्टा, सिर्जना र शब्दार्थसँग सम्बन्धित संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनले अधिसारेका आधारभूत प्रस्थापनहरू सैद्धान्तिक आधार रहने यस लेखलाई निष्कर्षमा पुऱ्याउन विश्लेषणात्मक विधिको प्रयोग भएको छ ।

### सैद्धान्तिक आधार

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तन साहित्यको भावसौन्दर्य, कलासौन्दर्य तथा सिर्जनाका कारक, प्रयोजन र शब्दार्थ सम्बन्धका आधारमा कृतिको अध्ययन, मनन, विश्लेषण र मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने सुदीर्घ परम्परा स्थापित छ । यसका आधारमा कृतिमा अन्तर्निहित भावसौन्दर्यको विश्लेषण र मूल्याङ्कन रस, गुण, ध्वनि, वक्रोक्ति आदिका आधारमा गरिन्छ भने कलासौन्दर्यको विश्लेषण तथा मूल्याङ्कन अलङ्कार, रीति, छन्द आदिका आधारमा गरिन्छ । काव्यमा काव्यतत्त्वको संयोजनको उचित अनुचितको विश्लेषण तथा मूल्याङ्कन समय, संस्कार, स्थान, भाव आदिका आधारमा औचित्यले गर्दछ भने काव्यको रचना गर्ने स्रष्टाद्वारा रचित सिर्जनाका कारक, प्रयोजन तथा त्यस काव्यमा प्रयुक्त शब्दार्थ सम्बन्धलाई समन्वित र सम्बन्धित तुल्याउँदै विश्लेषण र मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने काम काव्यहेतु, काव्यप्रयोजन तथा शब्दशक्तिले गर्दछन् ।

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा काव्यहेतु काव्य/साहित्य सिर्जनाको कारक हो । पूर्वीय काव्यचिन्तनकै सापेक्षमा पाश्चात्य काव्य/साहित्य चिन्तनले पनि सृजना निर्मापक कारकको सैद्धान्तिक मापदण्ड निर्धारण गरेका छन् । साहित्य/काव्य हेतु भनेको मूलभूत रूपमा साहित्य सृजना गर्ने कारक नै हो जसले साहित्यकार, उसको मानसिकता, उसमा अवशिष्ट ज्ञान र उक्त ज्ञानको कलात्मक भाषिक सञ्चरणका लागि कसरी कलासौन्दर्य र भावसौन्दर्यको संयोजन गरेको छ भन्ने विषयमाथि प्रकाश

पार्ने साहित्यिक कृतिको मूल्यनिर्णय गर्ने प्रतिमान हो (अधिकारी र अधिकारी, २०८०, पृ. ८७) । त्यसैले यसलाई काव्यको कारक वा प्रेरक तत्त्व मानिन्छ । प्रतिभासम्पन्न कविले सूक्ष्म लोकपर्यवेक्षणबाट प्राप्त ज्ञानलाई कलात्मक सिञ्चन साधनाद्वारा सिर्जनालाई विशेष तुल्याउने अभिलक्षण काव्यहेतु हो (भामह, सन् २०१०, पृ. ३) । काव्यहेतु श्रष्टाका शास्त्र र काव्यका रूपमा अभिव्यक्त वाणीमा आधारित हुन्छ । शास्त्र प्रज्ञामा आधारित चिन्तनमूलक हुन्छ भने काव्य प्रतिभा आदि उत्पन्न गराउने भावमा आधारित हुन्छ । त्यसैले यो बाहिरी वस्तुगत उपकरण नभई कवि हृदयगत अन्तश्चेत र साधनागत अभ्यास तथा लोक, व्यवहार र शास्त्रीय निरीक्षण विशेषमा सम्बद्ध अनुभव हो (सुवेदी, २०५५, पृ. २३४) । यो श्रष्टाको मानसिकता, उसले आर्जन गरेको शास्त्रज्ञान र उक्त ज्ञानको भाषिक प्रस्तुतिका लागि गरिने कलासौन्दर्य र भावसौन्दर्यको संयोजन गरी काव्यको मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने प्रतिमान हो । काव्यशास्त्रमा काव्यहेतुको पारिभाषिक अर्थ काव्य निर्माणको साधन भन्ने स्पष्ट उल्लेख छ ।

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा काव्यहेतुका बारेमा गम्भीर रूपमा चिन्तनमनन भएको छ । आचार्य भामहदेखि आरम्भ भएको यो परम्परा सत्रौं शताब्दीका आचार्य जगन्नाथसम्म अविच्छिन्न रूपमा प्रवाहित भए पनि सबै आचार्यहरूका मतमा एकता पाइँदैन । यी आचार्यहरूका बीचमा काव्यहेतु केके हुन् र तिनको सङ्ख्या कति छ भन्ने सन्दर्भमा मतैक्यता रहेको छ भने काव्यहेतुमध्ये कुनलाई बढी महत्त्व दिने भन्ने सन्दर्भमा मतभेद छ । काव्यहेतुका बारेमा अभिव्यक्त मतहरूलाई मूलतः दुई वर्गमा विभाजन गरिएको छ । एकथरी आचार्यहरूले प्रतिभालाई प्रमुख काव्यहेतु मानी व्युत्पत्ति र अभ्यासलाई प्रतिभाका संस्कारक तत्त्वका रूपमा उल्लेख गरेका छन् । यो अवधारणा व्यक्त गर्ने काव्यशास्त्रीहरूमा आनन्दवर्धन, राजशेखर, जगन्नाथ, हेमचन्द्र, वाग्वट, जयदेव, आदि पर्दछन् भने अर्काथरी आचार्यहरूले प्रतिभा, व्युत्पत्ति र अभ्यास तीनवटै हेतुलाई समान महत्त्व दिएका छन् । वामन, दण्डी, रूद्रट, वाग्भट, मम्मट आदिले प्रतिभा, व्युत्पत्ति र अभ्यास तीनवटैलाई समान महत्त्व दिएका छन् ।

काव्यप्रयोजनले काव्यको लक्ष्य वा उद्देश्यलाई बोध गराउँछ । यसले श्रष्टाले किन र केको लागि काव्य सिर्जना गर्छ भन्ने कुरालाई स्पष्ट पार्दछ । संस्कृत काव्य परम्परामा काव्यप्रयोजनका सम्बन्धमा पनि मतैक्यता पाइँदैन तापनि आचार्य भरतमुनिदेखि विश्वनाथसम्मका आचार्यहरूले आआफ्नो समयमा आआफ्ना धारणा व्यक्त गरेका छन् । काव्यप्रयोजनको सार्विक विशेषता भन्नु नै धर्म, अर्थ, काम, मोक्ष, प्रीति र दण्डबाट रक्षा र आनन्दको प्राप्ति हो (भामह, सन् २०१०, पृ. ३) । काव्य निश्चित उद्देश्य प्राप्तिका लागि लेखिन्छ भन्ने मत नै काव्यप्रयोजनको अन्तर्वस्तु हो । संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्रीय परम्पराले यश, धन, लोकव्यवहार, शिवेतर वा अमङ्गलको क्षति (कल्याणकारी भाव) धर्म, अर्थ काम मोक्षरूपी चतुर्वर्गफल प्राप्ति मानसिक आह्लाद, आनन्द र कान्तासम्मित उपदेश (रम्यता र लोकेपयोगिताको समीकरण) कलाकौशल काव्य प्रयोजन हुन् (त्रिपाठी, २०५५, पृ. २१४) । काव्यप्रयोजन मूलभूत रूपमा मानवीय संवेदना र त्यसको लेखकीय सम्बन्धका आधारमा काव्य वा साहित्यको विवेचना गर्ने सिद्धान्त हो । सुखात्मक वा दुःखात्मक भावविधानद्वारा सहृदयको हृदय परिष्कृत र परिशोधित गरेर काव्यकर्ताको र पाठक वा दर्शकको हृदयको एकाकार वृत्तिद्वारा सुखात्मक अलौकिक आनन्दानुभूति

हुनु काव्यको मुख्य प्रयोजन हो (भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. २४) । काव्यप्रयोजनलाई निरूपण गर्ने सन्दर्भमा अभिव्यक्त विचारहरूलाई तुलनात्मक रूपमा अध्ययन गर्दा सामन्वयवादी आचार्य मम्मटको विचार सर्वोपरि महत्त्वपूर्ण र सम्यक रहेको छ । काव्यप्रयोजन मूलतः यश वा कृति प्राप्ति, अर्थ प्राप्ति, व्यावहारिक ज्ञान, अनिष्ट निवारण, आनन्द प्राप्ति र मृदल उपदेश प्राप्ति हो (मम्मट, सन् १९८३, पृ. ३) । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा प्रतिपाद्य काव्यप्रयोजन स्रष्टा र सिर्जनाका आधारमा समाजलाई दिग्दर्शन, लोकहित र स्रष्टालाई अभिनव व्यक्तित्व दिने विशेषतालाई पुष्टि गर्ने सिद्धान्त रहेको संज्ञान प्राप्त गर्नसकिन्छ ।

साहित्यमा शब्दशक्ति प्राविधिक शब्दका रूपमा प्रचलित छ । शब्दमा निहित अर्थ र त्यसको सम्बन्ध नै शब्दशक्ति हो । यो सम्पूर्ण वाङ्मयमा प्रयोगमा आउने शब्द हो । यसलाई वृत्ति, व्यापार र शक्ति पनि भनिन्छ । काव्यमा कुनै पनि शब्दले प्रकट गर्ने एकभन्दा बढी अर्थ पत्ता लगाई शब्द र अर्थका विच अन्तर्निहित सम्बन्ध खुट्याउने व्यापार शब्दशक्ति हो । (श्रेष्ठ, २०६२, पृ. २७) । यसको संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा साहित्य, व्याकरण, मीमांसा, न्याय, योगशास्त्रलगायतका सिद्धान्तलाई प्रभावित तुल्याएको सुदीर्घ परम्परा छ । शब्दको अर्थ सम्पादन गर्ने सामर्थ्यका रूपमा अर्थ्याइएको शब्दशक्तिको गति, व्यापकता र स्तरलाई संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा आचार्यहरू विच व्यापक विचार विमर्श भए पनि शब्दका अभिधा, व्यञ्जना र लक्षणा शक्तिलाई मतैक्यताका साथ स्वीकारेका छन् ।

शब्दको प्रत्यक्ष, लोकप्रचलित वा कोशीय अर्थको बोध गराउने शब्दशक्ति अभिधा शब्दशक्ति हो । शब्दमा निहित वाच्यार्थ, लक्ष्यार्थ र व्याङ्ग्यार्थबोधक सामर्थ्यबाट नै अर्थको प्रतीति हुने भएकाले यिनै तीन किसिमका अर्थबोधका आधारमा प्राचीन तथा अर्वाचीन आचार्यहरूले शब्दशक्ति वर्गीकरण र तिनका विशेषतालाई सैद्धान्तीकरण गरेका छन् (पोखरेल, २०५९, पृ. ८८) । अभिधा शब्दशक्तिले बोध गराउने मुख्यार्थसँग सम्बन्धित अन्यार्थ बोध गराउने शब्दशक्ति लक्षणा हो भने मुख्यार्थ र लक्ष्यार्थले बोध गराउन नसकेको नयाँ स्वशासित अर्थ प्रतीति गराउने व्यञ्जना शब्दशक्ति हो । यसरी साहित्यमा शब्दको प्रयोग कुनै अवस्थामा सामान्य वा लोकप्रचलित अर्थबोधका लागि गरिन्छ भने कतिपय अवस्थामा मुख्यार्थसँग सम्बन्धित भई त्योभन्दा फरक अर्थबोध गराउन गरिन्छ र कहिले मुख्यार्थसँग सम्बन्ध नरहने प्रतीयमान अर्थको बोधको लागि गरिन्छ । यसप्रकार स्रष्टा र सिर्जनासम्बन्धलाई निरूपण गर्ने काव्यहेतु र काव्यप्रयोजन तथा शब्दमा निहित विशिष्ट अर्थका आधारमा निरूपण हुने शब्दशक्तिका आधारमा 'काल-महिमा' कविता विश्लेषणीय रहेको विषयमा तलका सन्दर्भमा प्रस्तुत भएका छन् ।

### विश्लेषण र नतिजा

प्रस्तुत 'काल-महिमा' कविता १९९१ सालमा प्रथम पटक प्रकाशित भई लालित्य भाग १ (२०१०) कविता सङ्ग्रहमा सङ्गृहीत छ । यो कविता पाठ्यक्रम परिपूर्तिका प्रयोजनको लागि निर्माण भएका त्रि.वि का पाठ्यपुस्तकमा पटकपटक प्रकाशित छ । कवितामा अदृश्य तथा अमूर्त मृत्युको शाश्वत सत्य क्रियाकलापलाई तत्त्व मीमांसाका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । साख्य तथा वेदान्त

दर्शनबाट प्रभावित कवि लेखनाथको दीर्घ साधना र आध्यात्मिक चिन्तनको प्राप्तिका रूपमा रहेको यस कवितामा कालको मानवीकरण गरिएको छ । समय र मृत्युलाई एकसाथ सङ्केत गरिएको यस कवितामा सम्पूर्ण प्राणीलाई सापेक्ष सत्यबाट पलायन हुँदै मानसिक रूपमा शाश्वत सत्यतर्फ मार्गनिर्देश गरिएको छ । जन्म र मृत्यु जीवनका दुई पाटा हुनाले यो जगत्मा जन्म लिएका प्राणी मृत्युदेखि निर्भिक हुनुपर्ने विषयलाई शार्दूलविक्रीडित छन्दका चार श्लोकमा कलात्मक शैलीमा काव्यमा उतारेका छन् । यस कवितामा अभिव्यक्त स्रष्टा, सिर्जना र शब्दार्थसम्बन्धलाई यसरी प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

### कालमहिमा कवितामा काव्यहेतु

काव्यसिर्जनाका कारक तत्त्व हेतु हुन् । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा विमर्श गरिएका तीन प्रकारमा हेतुलाई यस कविताका सन्दर्भमा यसरी विमर्श गरिएको छ ।

### प्रतिभा

पूर्वीय काव्य परम्परामा प्रतिभालाई सबै आचार्यहरूले प्रमुख हेतुका रूपमा स्वीकार गरेका छन् । आचार्य भामहले यसलाई बोध गराउन स्फोट र शक्ति शब्दको प्रयोग गरेका छन् । काव्यहेतुमा प्रतिभा सिर्जनाका लागि प्रगम चेतना हो (भामह, सन् २०१०, पृ. ३) । प्रतिभाका सम्बन्धमा आचार्य भट्टतौत प्रतिभा भनेको नयाँ नयाँ कुराको स्फुरण गराइरहने प्रज्ञा तथा आचार्य रूद्रट एकाग्र चित्तमा अनेक प्रकारका भाव उत्पन्न गराउने शक्तिका रूपमा परिभाषित गर्दछन् (थापा, २०७३, पृ. ८) । आचार्य वामन काव्यहेतुलाई काव्याङ्गका रूपमा चर्चा गरी प्रतिभालाई कवित्वको कारण तथा आचार्य दण्डी, वामन र अभिनव गुप्तले प्रतिभालाई अलौकिक तत्त्वको रूपमा चर्चा गर्ने यी आचार्यको मतमा प्रतिभा जन्मजन्मान्तरको संस्कार विशेषका रूपमा परिभाषित गर्दछन् (सुवेदी, २०५५, पृ. २३५) । प्रतिभाका सम्बन्धमा वक्रोक्तिवादी आचार्य कुन्तक अनौठो काव्य शक्तिका रूपमा यस विषयलाई प्रस्तुत गर्दछन् । कवितमा रहेका प्रातिभ प्रतिभा वा प्रकृति निर्मित विशिष्ट क्षमता प्रतिभा नै हो जसले सिर्जनाका माध्यमबाट स्रष्टालाई महान् बनाउँछ (मम्मट, सन् १९८३, पृ. ११) । प्रतिभा कवित्वको बीजभूत संस्कार विशेषका रूपमा प्राकृत शक्ति हो । आचार्य जगन्नाथले काव्यहेतुको मूल कारण कविमा रहने प्रतिभा हो र त्यो प्रतिभा कतै कुनै देवता, महापुरूष आदिको प्रसादले उत्पन्न अदृश्य हुन्छ भने कतै विलक्षण, व्युत्पत्ति र काव्य रचनाभ्यास नै हुनसक्छ (सुवेदी, २०५५, पृ. २३७) । यसरी प्रतिभा भनेको विशिष्ट प्रज्ञा वा संस्कार हो । यो काव्य रचनामा बीज बनेर रहेको हुन्छ । प्रतिभा जन्मजात संस्कारका रूपमा पनि आउन सक्छ र आनुवंशिक रूपमा पनि रहन सक्छ भने निरन्तर रूपमा गरिने अभ्यासबाट पनि उत्पन्न हुन सक्छ । मूलतः काव्यहेतु मानव मानसिकतामा अवशिष्ट प्राकृत द्वन्द्वात्मक विचारको स्फुरण वा कल्पना तत्त्वलाई समन्वय गरी सम्यक र सन्तुलित रूपमा संयोजन गरी अभिव्यञ्जना गर्नसक्ने स्रष्टाको वस्तुजगत विषयक बृहत् अध्ययन, लोकपर्यवेक्षण र साहित्याध्ययनबाट प्राप्त ज्ञानलाई अभ्यासको निरन्तर शृङ्खलासँग जोडिने स्फुरण, ज्ञान र साधनाको त्रिपक्षीय अन्वय हो (अधिकारी र अधिकारी, २०८०, पृ. ८८) । यो काव्यको प्रमुख हेतु हो । प्रतिभारूपी बीजविना शास्त्रज्ञान र अभ्यासले मात्र सफल काव्य रचना गर्न सकिँदैन ।

प्रस्तुत 'काल-महिमा' कविता मृत्युको शाश्वत चिन्तनसँग कविप्रतिभाको संयोजन गरी संरचित छ । शार्दूलविक्रीडित छन्दका चार श्लोक र सोह्र पङ्क्तिपुञ्जमा संरचित यस कवितामा मृत्युजस्तो सबै प्राणीको जन्मसँगैको भौतिक शरीरको नाशवान प्रक्रियामा देखिने र भोगिने त्रासद अवस्थालाई आध्यात्मिक चिन्तनका आधारमा त्यसको महिमा गायन गर्नुले कविमा अन्तर्निहित नैसर्गिक प्रतिभा र कलात्मक चिन्तनलाई एकसाथ पुष्टि गरेको छ । यस आधारमा कविमा सहजा र आहार्या प्रतिभा अन्तर्निहित रहेको देखिन्छ । प्राणी जगत्मा अमूर्त तथा अदृश्य अवस्थामा रहेको मृत्यु (काल) लाई कविको कल्पनाले मानवीकरण र मूर्तीकरण गर्नु पनि कारयित्री प्रतिभाको प्रतिफल हो । सृष्टिको आरम्भसँगै निरन्तर रूपमा सार्वभौम, सर्वव्यापक र निर्भिक बनी गतिशील बनेको काल (मृत्यु) को शाश्वतता र देहको नश्वरतालाई पूर्वीय साङ्ख्य र वेदान्त दर्शनका आधारमा शान्त रसलाई रसोत्कर्षमा पुर्याउनु कविमा अन्तर्निहित उत्पाद्य प्रतिभा शसक्त र सबल हुनुको प्रतिफल हो । प्राणीजगत्को कालप्रतिको दृष्टिकोण, कालका नियमित र निरपेक्ष क्रियाकलाप, जीवन र जगत्प्रतिको कालको प्रभुत्वलाई काव्यात्मक रूपमा वर्णन र विस्तार गर्नु कविका नैसर्गिक प्रतिभाको उपज हो । त्यसैले यस कविताको बीज कविको अन्तश्चेतनामा रहेको मृत्युसम्बन्धी ज्ञान हो । कविको प्रतिभा यस कविताका पङ्क्तिपङ्क्तिमा अन्तर्निहित भएर आएको छ । जसलाई यसरी प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ :

राजा रङ्क सबै समान उसका वैषम्य गर्दैन त्यो ।

आयो, टप्प टिप्यो, लग्यो मिति पुग्यो ,टारेर टर्दैन त्यो ॥

लाखौ औषधि अस्त्रशस्त्रमहिमा देखेर डर्दैन त्यो ।

व्याधातुल्य लुकेर चल्दछ सदा मारेर मर्दैन त्यो ।

(पौडचाल, २०३१, पृ. ३१)

कविताको प्रस्तुत सन्दर्भमा कालको निरपेक्ष, निर्भिक, अदृश्य, निरन्तर, सदाबहार शक्तिसम्पन्न भई गतिशील हुने प्रवृत्तिलाई काव्यात्मक रूपमा व्यक्त भएको छ । काव्यांशमा कविमा अन्तर्निहित नैसर्गिक प्रतिभाका कारण कालको अविभेदकारी आचरणलाई विषयवस्तुका रूपमा प्रस्तुत भएको हो । अमूर्त मृत्युका बारेमा दिइएको सूचना कविको प्रतिभाबाट निश्चृत भएको हो र यही प्रतिभा निश्चृत काव्यको बीजबाट कविताको पूर्ण संरचना भएको छ । प्रस्तुत कविताका सन्दर्भमा समालोचक वासुदेव त्रिपाठीद्वारा काव्यहेतुका सम्बन्धमा प्रस्तुत अवधारणाकै तुलनीय यस कवितामा कविका मृत्युसम्बन्धी अवधारणाको बीजमा कविको शास्त्रज्ञान र निरन्तर भएको साधनाले यसमा भावसौन्दर्य र कलासौन्दर्य उच्चतम बिन्दुमा पुगी आग्रह न्यूनतम अवस्थामा रहेको छ । यो कविता कविको कारयित्री काव्यप्रतिभाको उपज हो । मृत्यु र समयलाई एकसाथ सङ्केत गर्दै कालको महिमा गान भएको यस कविताको स्वरूप यही कालको निर्भिक, निरन्तर, निरपेक्ष, अदृश्य गतिशील हुने प्रवृत्तिमा केन्द्रित रहेको छ । प्राणी जातिलाई सधैं तर्साउने काललाई मानवीकरण गरी यसको सार्वभौमिकता, सर्वव्यापकता, शाश्वतता, निर्भिकता, अमरता कारयित्री प्रतिभाको बीज अनुभूतिमा अन्तर्धुलन भएपछि कविताले विवरणात्मक रूप प्राप्त गरेको छ । मृत्युजस्तो शाश्वत, सार्वभौम र सार्वकालिक विषयले

कविताको रूप ग्रहण गर्नु कविमा अन्तर्निहित प्रतिभाको उपज हो । प्रस्तुत कवितामा कालसम्बन्धी सर्वकालीक र सार्वभौम मान्यताको उपर्युक्त भावाभिव्यक्ति प्रस्तुत हुनुको कारक स्रष्टामा अवशिष्ट प्रतिभाका कारण सम्भव भएको प्रष्ट छ ।

### व्युत्पत्ति

संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्रमा व्युत्पत्तिलाई दोस्रो काव्यहेतुका रूपमा स्वीकार भएको छ । कतिपय आचार्यहरूले व्युत्पत्तिको लागि निपुणता शब्दको प्रयोग गरेका छन् । शास्त्रज्ञान, विद्या, लोकव्यवहार, अनुभव आदिबाट स्रष्टाको योग्यता र दक्षता अभिवृद्धि हुन्छ । यही ज्ञानलाई व्युत्पत्ति भनिन्छ । स्रष्टालाई यस व्यापक संसारको जति बढी ज्ञान हुन्छ, त्यसलाई त्यति नै व्युत्पन्न कवि भनिन्छ । काव्य सिर्जनामा ज्ञान र अनुभवको संयोजन व्युत्पत्ति हो (मम्मट, सन् १९८३, पृ. ११) । आचार्य भामहले प्रतिभाका साथै स्रष्टालाई छन्द, कोश, व्याकरण, लोकव्यवहार, तर्कशास्त्र, कला आदिको पनि ज्ञान हुनुपर्ने कुरा उल्लेख गरेका छन् । संस्कृत काव्य परम्परामा समन्वयवादी आचार्यका रूपमा परिचित मम्मटले लोकव्यवहार, शास्त्रज्ञान, काव्यादिको पर्यालोचनबाट उत्पन्न खुबीलाई व्युत्पत्ति भनेका छन् (सुवेदी, २०५५, पृ. २२६) । यसरी विभिन्न किसिमका शास्त्र तथा साहित्यिक रचनाहरूको अध्ययन अवलोकनबाट प्राप्त ज्ञान, लोकव्यवहारबाट प्राप्त निपुणता र ज्ञान कुशलता नै व्युत्पत्ति हो । स्रष्टामा अन्तर्निहित व्युत्पत्तिगत ज्ञानबाट नै स्रष्टाको सिर्जनामा काव्यसौन्दर्य सम्भव हुन्छ, काव्य प्रौढ, मौलिक र उत्तम बन्न सक्छ । काव्यलाई पददोष, रसदोष, वाक्यदोष जस्ता दोषबाट मुक्ति दिलाउन पनि व्युत्पत्तिगत ज्ञान आवश्यक पर्दछ ।

प्रस्तुत 'काल-महिमा' कवितामा परिष्कारवादी कविको अन्तस्करणबाट निसृतः कालरूपी बीजलाई कविको करिब तीस वर्षको काव्यसाधनाले आवश्यक मलजल गरेको छ । कविले लोकपर्यवेक्षण गरी उमारेको काव्य बीजलाई उनले आर्जन गरेको शास्त्रज्ञान, अध्ययन, अवलोकनबाट प्राप्त अनुभूति, अनुभवले उनलाई काव्यशिल्पी बनाउनुका साथै कविता परिष्कृत र परिमार्जित बनेको छ । कवितामा अन्तर्निहित भावसौन्दर्यमा कविले आर्जन गरेको ज्ञानका कारण कलासौन्दर्य थपिएको छ । यही भाव र कलाको उचित संयोजनले शान्त रस परिपाकको अवस्थामा पुगेको छ, कविताले अभिधेयार्थका साथै लक्ष्यार्थ र व्यङ्ग्यार्थ जस्ता प्रतीयमान अनेकार्थ बोध गराएको छ । यस कवितामा शार्दूलविक्रीडित छन्दको प्रयोग, शान्तरस परिपाकको अवस्था, सापेक्ष सत्यबाट पलायन हुँदै निरपेक्ष शाश्वत सत्यानुभूतिको प्रस्तुति शास्त्रज्ञानका उपज बनेर आएका छन् । कवितामा कालसम्बन्धी चिन्तन कविको प्रतिभाका उपज हो भने त्यसको महिमा गान शास्त्रज्ञानको परावर्तन कविताका निम्नलिखित पङ्क्तिमा प्रस्तुत भएको छ :

जे जे मिल्छ, सुलुक्क निल्छ, मुखमा हाली चपाउन्न त्यो ।

थाल्यो च्याम्म सबै चपाउन भने आहार पाउन्न त्यो ॥

जती निल्छ, उती उकेल्दछ, पनी, केही पचाउन्न त्यो ।

यै चालासित कल्प कल्प कहिल्यै खाई अघाउन्न त्यो ।

(पौड्याल, २०३१, पृ. ३१)

यस कवितांशले कालको विशिष्ट प्रवृत्तिलाई सङ्केत गरेको छ । कविले आर्जन गरेको वेदान्त दर्शनको प्रभाव उपर्युक्त काव्यांशमा परेको छ । यहाँ कसैसँग नडराउने कालले जति निल्ल उति उकेल्ल भन्दै मानवको पुनर्जन्मलाई सङ्केत भएको छ । सम्पूर्ण जीवात्मालाई अधीनमा राख्ने कालले मिलेको सबै नचपाइकन खाने र चपाउन थाल्दा आहारा नपाउने कुराले जन्मसँगैको मृत्यु र मृत्युसँगैको पुनर्जन्मलाई सङ्केत गरेको छ । पूर्वीय अध्यात्म, साङ्ख्य र वेदान्त दर्शनका अध्येता कवि लेखनाथको शास्त्रज्ञानका कारण कविता कलात्मक बनेको छ र मृत्युमा भौतिक शरीर नाश भए पनि आत्मा अमर रहने पूर्वीय आध्यात्मिक चिन्तन प्रतिबिम्बित भएको छ । शास्त्रीय नियमानुसार कविता सिर्जना गर्ने स्रष्टाले वैदर्भी, पाञ्चाली आदि रीति, माधुर्य, प्रसाद आदि गुण तथा अनुप्रास, रूपक, उपमादि अलङ्कारको प्रयोग गर्नु पनि शास्त्रज्ञानको उपज हो (अधिकारी र अधिकारी, २०८०, पृ. ८७) । कवितामा भएको शब्द चयन र कलात्मक शैलीशिल्पको प्रयोगले कविको व्युत्पत्तिगत ज्ञानलाई पुष्टि गरेको छ । यसकै कारण कवितामा आध्यात्मिक दर्शनका माध्यमबाट जीवनमा आइपर्ने दुःख, कष्ट, असहज परिस्थितिलाई पार गर्दै मृत्युलाई वरण गर्नु भनेको पुनर्जन्मकै प्रतीक्षामा रही सत्यलाई स्वीकार्नु पर्ने सत्याभास भएको छ । यस कवितांशले शान्त रसमा अन्तर्निहित वैराग्य भावलाई परिपाकको अवस्थामा पुऱ्याएको छ ।

### अभ्यास

प्रतिभा र व्युत्पत्तिगत ज्ञानलाई परिपूर्ण र प्रौढ बनाउने काव्यहेतु अभ्यास हो । आचार्य भामह काव्य रचनामा प्रतिभाको साथै निरन्तर अभ्यासलाई पनि विशेष महत्त्व दिने पक्षमा छन् । उनले शब्दार्थ स्वरूपको ज्ञानलाई राम्ररी राखेर सतत अभ्यास गर्नुपर्छ भन्दछन् । आचार्य दण्डीले पनि अभ्यास नै साधनाको महत्त्वपूर्ण कडी हो भन्दै प्रतिभा र व्युत्पत्तिको अभावमा पनि सतत अभ्यासशील बने काव्योत्पत्ति सम्भव छ (सुवेदी, २०५५, पृ. २३५) भन्दछन् । निरन्तर लेखनको अभ्यासले काव्यलाई मौलिक, परपक्व र स्तरीय बनाउँछ । निरन्तर रूपमा गरिने प्रयासबाट नै प्रतिभा र व्युत्पत्तिगत ज्ञान परिष्कृत र परिमार्जित हुन्छ । कृति रचनाका लागि गरिने योजना, विमर्श, साधना र चिन्तन अभ्यास हुन् (मम्मट, सन् १९८३, पृ. ११) । काव्यज्ञबाट विधिवत शिक्षा लिएर निरन्तर काव्य निर्माणको आवृत्ति गर्ने वा त्यसमा निरन्तर प्रवृत्त हुनु नै अभ्यास हो । पूर्वीय काव्यशास्त्रमा प्रतिभा प्रमुख काव्यहेतुका रूपमा रहेको छ भने त्यसलाई उजिल्याउने काव्यहेतु व्युत्पत्ति र अभ्यास हुन् । त्यसैले साहित्य सिर्जनाका सन्दर्भमा व्युत्पत्ति र अभ्यासको पनि आफ्नै महत्त्व रहेको छ । आचार्य वाग्भटले भने भैं प्रतिभा काव्य रचनाको कारक, व्युत्पत्ति त्यसको भूषण र अभ्यास काव्य रचना गर्ने प्रयास हो । प्रतिभाको बीजमाला निपुणताको माटोमा, अभ्यासको पानीका साथ कविता लतामा परिणत हुन्छ भन्ने निष्कर्ष काव्यहेतुबाट प्रकट हुन्छ । (त्रिपाठी, २०५२, पृ. ३८) भनेका छन् । काव्य रचनाका सन्दर्भमा प्रतिभा बीऊ वा बीज नै हो भने त्यो प्रतिभारूपी बीऊलाई शास्त्रज्ञानरूपी निपुणताको माटोमा रोपेर अभ्यासको पानीमा अन्तरघुलन गरी काव्यरूपी लता उमार्न सकिन्छ । अतः शक्ति, निपुणता र अभ्यासबाट प्राप्त समष्टिगत कवि योग्यता नै काव्यहेतु हो ।

प्रस्तुत 'काल-महिमा' कविता भावसौन्दर्य, कलासौन्दर्य र स्तरीयता कवित्व कविका निरन्तर अभ्यासको प्रतिफल हो । कविको कल्पनामा उम्रिएको यस कविताको बीऊलाई शास्त्रज्ञान, अनुभव र अनुभूतिका कारण काव्यकला ओजिलो बनेको छ भने निरन्तर रूपमा भएको प्रयत्नले उच्च सौन्दर्यानुभूति भएको छ र आग्रह न्यून रहेको छ । शास्त्रीयतावादी कविको शास्त्रको अनुसरण काव्यमा यसरी भएको छ :

जे जे मिल्छ, सुलुक्क निल्छ, मुखमा हाली चपाउन्न त्यो ।  
 थाल्यो च्वाम्म सबै चपाउन भने आहार पाउन्न त्यो ॥  
 जती निल्छ उती उकेल्दछ पनी, केही पचाउन्न त्यो ।  
 यै चालासित कल्प कल्प कहिल्यै खाई अघाउन्न त्यो ।

(पौडचाल, २०३१, पृ. ३१)

आधुनिक नेपाली कवितामा परिष्कारवादी धाराको प्रवर्तन गर्ने कविशिरोमणि लेखनाथको काव्ययात्राको दोस्रो चरणमा लेखिएको यो कविता कविको लगभग तीस वर्षको काव्यसाधना गरेपछि लेखिएको कविता हो । कविको निरन्तर प्रयासका कारण कवितामा छन्द, रस, गुण, अलङ्कार, रीति, वक्रोक्ति जस्ता काव्य तत्त्वको उचित संयोजन भएको छ । यसका साथै कविमा अन्तर्निहित प्रतिभा र शास्त्र ज्ञानसहित भएको निरन्तर प्रयासले कविता परिष्कृत तथा परिमार्जित भएको छ । फलस्वरूप कला सौन्दर्य र भाव सौन्दर्यको उचित संयोजन भएको छ । उपर्युक्त काव्यांशमा प्रयुक्त उचित पद, पदावली, अन्त्यानुप्रास, प्रसाद गुण, पाञ्चाली रीतिलगायत शास्त्रीय छन्दको प्रयोग कविका निरन्तर अभ्यासका प्रतिफल हुन् ।

### काव्यप्रयोजन

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा काव्यप्रयोजनका सम्बन्धमा भरतमुनिदेखि विश्वनाथसम्मका आचार्यहरूले सूत्रबद्ध रूपमा आआफ्ना धारणा व्यक्त भएका छन् । धर्म, अर्थ, काम, मृक्षजस्ता चतुर्वर्ग फलप्राप्तिका साथै प्रीति, कीर्ति र धन्यवाद मुख्य काव्य प्रयोजन हुन् (भामह, सन् २०१०, पृ. ३) । काव्यप्रयोजनका सम्बन्धमा विभिन्न मतमतान्तर स्थापित भए पनि आचार्य मम्मटको मत सबैभन्दा उपयुक्त, सम्यक र सबैका धारणालाई समेटेको छ । आचार्य मम्मटले आफ्नो ग्रन्थ काव्यप्रकाशमा काव्यको प्रयोजनलाई सम्बन्धी अवधारणालाई यसप्रकार प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् - काव्यको प्रयोजन भन्नु नै यशवृद्धि, व्यवहार मर्मज्ञता, शिवेतरक्षति, सद्यपरिनिर्वृत्त र कान्तासम्मित उपदेश नै हो (मम्मट, सन् १९८३, पृ. ३) । स्रष्टा तथा सहृदयी सबैलाई मध्यनजर गरी उल्लेख भएको मम्मटको यही काव्यप्रयोजनका आधारमा 'काल-महिमा' कविताको काव्यप्रयोजन तलका उपशीर्षकमा सविस्तार निम्नालिखित अनुसार विश्लेषण भएको छ ।

## कीर्तिको प्रयोजन

कविले काव्य रचना गरी प्रतिष्ठा वा कीर्तिलाभ गर्दछ। त्यसैले यो लेखकसँग सम्बन्धित हुन्छ। कविशिरोमणि लेखनाथ पौडेलले आफ्नो काव्य यात्राको द्वितीय चरण (१९९१) मा लेखेको यस कवितामा अध्यात्मवादी दर्शनका माध्यमबाट काल महान्, शक्तिशाली, अर्मूत र सर्वव्यापक छ भन्ने चिन्तनलाई विस्तार गरेका छन्। मृत्युको शाश्वत सत्यलाई स्वीकार्दै कालको महिमा गान भएको यो कविताले आम भावकहरूका मन मस्तिष्कमा अमिट छाप पारेको छ। यस कविताले कवि पौडेललाई लोकसमाजमा प्रतिष्ठा दिलाएको छ। वि. सं १९९१ मा रचित यो कविता प्रत्येक नेपालीका जनजिब्रामा संरक्षित भएर रहनु र विश्वविद्यालयजस्तो उच्च तहको पाठ्यक्रममा समावेश गरी पठनपाठन गराइनुले पनि कविको कीर्ति अभिवृद्धि भइ प्रतिष्ठा बढेको छ। कविले संसार छाडेको छ दशक पुग्न थाले पनि उनको यस रचनाले उनलाई अमर बनाएको छ। हरेक प्राणीको जन्मसँग जोडिएर आउने शाश्वत सत्यका रूपमा रहेको काल (मृत्युलाई) लाई कविकौशलताका कारण युगान्तकारी रचना सिर्जना भएकाले यस रचनाले नेपाली साहित्याकाशमा कविव्यक्तित्वलाई उच्च तुल्याएको छ।

राजा रङ्क सबै समान उसका वैषम्य गर्दैन त्यो ।

आयो, टप्प टिप्यो, लग्यो मिति पुग्यो ,टारेर टर्दैन त्यो ॥

लाखौ औषधि अस्त्रशस्त्रमहिमा देखेर डर्दैन त्यो ।

व्याधातुल्य लुकेर चल्दछ सदा मारेर मर्दैन त्यो । (पौडेल, २०३१, पृ. ३१)

जन्मसँगै मृत्युलाई आत्मसात् गरी जीवनयापन गर्ने हरेक मानवमा धेरै बाँच्ने चाहना भए पनि यो चाहना उसको अधीनमा हुँदैन। यस कविताका हरेक पङ्क्तिले पाठकको मनमस्तिष्कलाई पगाल्न सक्छन्। मृत्युको शाश्वत सत्य, कालको निरपेक्ष व्यवहार र निरन्तर गतिशीलता उल्लेख भएको यस कवितांशले कविको प्रतिष्ठा बढाएको छ। उनले कवितामा सृष्टिको निरन्तरतालाई कायम गर्दै अध्यात्मवादको माध्यमबाट मुक्तिको मार्ग पहिल्याएका छन्। शाश्वत सत्यको सन्देशवाहक बनेको यस कविताको रचना गरी कविले प्रसिद्धि प्राप्त गरेका छन्। कसैलाई विभेद नगरी निर्भिक र निडर बन्दै व्याधातुल्य लुकेर गतिशील हुने कालको महिमा गान भएको कविताको भाव पनि शाश्वत सत्यलाई उजागर गरेको छ। हिजो, आज र भोलिका दिनमा पनि कालको अवस्था यही निरन्तरतामा आधारित हुने हुनाले यस कविताले कविको यश अभिवृद्धि भएको छ। कवितामा अभिव्यञ्जित तत्त्वज्ञानले आध्यात्मिक दर्शन र चिन्तनलाई परिपाकमा पुऱ्याएको छ। कालले कसैलाई छाड्दैन र विभेद पनि गर्दैन। यसले राजारैती, उचोनिचो, बच्चाबूढा केही भन्दैन, उधिनेर, रोजेर, छानेर खाने पनि होइन। यसको कसैसँग दुश्मनी छैन र पनि मूर्त र दृश्य रूपमा कतै देखिदैन। अरूदेखि नडराउने सचेत प्राणी मानव पनि कालको स्मरणमा डराउँछन्। सिकारीजस्तै लुकेर हिँड्ने काल पद, पैसा, औषधी केहीसँग

डराउँदैन । यसले संसारको जुनसुकै स्थानमा हिजो, आज र भोलि पनि समान व्यवहार देखाउने हुनाले यो सार्वभौम जीवन दर्शनका माध्यमबाट सबैलाई सचेत बनाएका छन् । यस्तो शाश्वत सत्य विषयलाई तत्त्वमीमांसाका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरिएकाले यस कविताले उनमा अन्तर्निहित चेतना र चिन्तनको विस्तारका कारण प्रतिष्ठा बढेको छ । प्राणीजगत्मा विस्तारित कालको शाश्वत र निरन्तर गतिशील हुने निर्भिक प्रवृत्तिलाई वर्णमात्रिक छन्दमा भावानुकूलको कलाको संयोजन गरी लेखिएको यस कविताका माध्यमबाट कविको पहिचान स्थापित भएको छ । उनी नरहे पनि उनका रचनाले उनलाई जीवित तुल्याउनु भनेको उनको कीर्ति बढ्नु हो ।

### धनलाभको प्रयोजन

यो प्रयोजन पनि श्रष्टासँग सम्बन्धित छ । कविले आफ्नो रचनाका माध्यमबाट अर्थलाभ गरी जीविकोपार्जन गर्नसक्छन् । लेखनाथको यो कविता आयामका दृष्टिले फुटकर भए पनि यस कवितामा अभिव्यक्त दार्शनिक चिन्तनका कारण सङ्गृहीत लालित्य भाग १ कवितासङ्ग्रह नै बढी बिक्री वितरण भएको छ । यस कविताको रचना भएको नौ दशकसम्म पनि परिवारका सदस्यहरूले आर्थिक लाभ प्राप्त गरिरहेका छन् । कविले यस कवितामा सामान्य तर शाश्वत र सार्वभौम विषयलाई कविकौशलतामा यसरी सजाएका छन् :

भाका भूल दया, क्षमा र ममता सन्तोष जान्दैन त्यो ।

इन्द्रै बिलिन् गरून् भुकेर पदमा त्यो बिलिन् मान्दैन त्यो ॥

थुप्रोमा उधिनी मिठो र नमिठो छुट्याइ छान्दैन त्यो ।

खाता जाँचि सबै दुरूस्त नबुझी बिसेर हान्दैन त्यो ॥ (ऐजन, पृ. ३१)

कविताका यी पङ्क्तिमा वर्तमान जीवनजगत्को प्रतिबिम्ब मात्र अभिव्यक्त नभई सम्पूर्ण मानव सभ्यता र संस्कृतिको प्रतिबिम्ब उतारिएको छ । कविताका यी पङ्क्तिबाट लेखक र पाठक दुवैले व्यावहारिक ज्ञान प्राप्त गरेका छन् । साहित्यानुरागी, अन्वेषक र विश्लेषकले यसलाई विभिन्न कोणबाट अध्ययन गरी व्याख्या विश्लेषण गरेका छन्, जुन जीवन भोगाइका क्रममा आउने अर्मूत चिन्तन पक्षसँग सम्बन्धित छ । यहाँ कालले निष्पक्ष व्यवहार गरेको छ, मिठो र नमिठो छानेको, बिनको छैन, उसको निल्ले र ओकल्ने प्रक्रियाबाट संसार गतिशील र सिर्जनशील बनेको छ । यसले कसैको अनुनय विनयलाई सुन्दैन, शक्तिको पछि लाग्दैन, तटस्थ रूपमा आफ्नो कर्ममा लाग्ने व्यावहारिक सन्देश कविताका हरेक पङ्क्तिबाट प्राप्त हुन्छ । काल निर्मोही, निष्ठुरी र व्याधा जस्तो लुकेर हिँड्ने भए पनि उसले विधिको विधानलाई निर्भिक रूपमा सञ्चालन गर्ने हुनाले यसको सामर्थ्य र शक्ति अपरम्पार छ । कविताका हरेक पङ्क्तिमा अन्तर्निहित व्यावहारिक, आध्यात्मिक, दार्शनिक ज्ञानका कारण कविता चर्चित र सङ्गृहीत बनेको छ भने पाठक वा भावकले व्यावहारिक ज्ञान प्राप्त गरेका छन् । कवितालाई गहन

अध्यात्मवादी दार्शनिक दृष्टिले मूल्याङ्कन गर्दा भौतिक जीवनको नश्वरतालाई बोध गरेपछि, मानवीय मनमा निर्वेदको भाव अभिव्यक्त हुन्छ, मोक्ष प्राप्तिका मार्गहरू खुल्दछन्, चेतनामा परिवर्तन आउँछ । यसरी यस कविताका हरेक पङ्क्तिमा प्रस्तुत भावले प्राणी जातिलाई क्षणभङ्गुर सांसारिक माया मोहरूपी जालोबाट मुक्ति प्राप्त गरी कल्याणकारी भावनासहित जीवनयापनमा समर्पित हुनुपर्ने व्यावहारिक ज्ञान प्रदान गरेका छन् । जीवन दर्शनसम्बन्धी ज्ञान आर्जनको स्रोतका रूपमा रहेको संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनलाई आधार मानेर सिर्जना भएको यस कवितामा आएको विषयवस्तुको भाव र कला दुबै युगान्तकारी हुनाले यो कविता सबैका लागि सधैं नित्य छ, नवीन छ र सङ्ग्रहणीय बनेको छ । कविता रचना भएको नौ दशक पार भइरहँदा पनि यो कविता सङ्गृहीत कविता सङ्ग्रह विक्रीवितरण हुने क्रम निरन्तर गतिशील हुनाले धनलाभको प्रयोजनलाई पुष्टि गरेको छ ।

### शिवेतर रक्षा वा अनर्थ निवारण

शिवेतर रक्षा र अनर्थ निवारणको प्रयोजन पनि लेखक र पाठकसँग सम्बन्धित छ । काव्यको यो प्रयोजन भौतिकवादी आजको युगमा समय सन्दर्भिक नभए पनि अध्यात्मवादी जीवन दर्शनलाई उत्कर्षमा पुऱ्याइएको हुनाले यसमा कल्याणकारी भाव अभिव्यक्त भएको छ । भौतिकवादी जीवन दर्शनलाई आत्मसात् भएको यस कवितामा जीवनको गन्तव्य मृत्यु हो भन्ने शाश्वत सत्यबोधले मानव जातिलाई कल्याणकारी कार्यमा समर्पित हुन अभिप्रेरित गरेको प्रयोजन निम्नलिखित कवितांशका माध्यमबाट भएको छ ।

जे जो मिल्छ, सुलुक्क निल्ल, मुखमा हाली चपाउन्न त्यो ।  
 थाल्यो च्चाम्म सबै चपाउन भने आहार पाउन्न त्यो ॥  
 जत्ती निल्ल, उती उकेल्दछ, पनी, केही पचाउन्न त्यो ।  
 यै चालासित कल्प कल्प कहिल्यै खाई अघाउन्न त्यो । (ऐजन, पृ. ३१)

प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा सबै जीवको जीवनको नियमित निरन्तर सत्याभासलाई अभिव्यञ्जित गर्दै जीवविज्ञानको आध्यात्मिक हेराइ र त्यसको शाश्वत सत्यलाई उद्घाटन भएको छ । मर्नु जन्मकै निरन्तरता हो तापनि मानव मृत्युदेखि त्रसित छ । कालले जति निल्ल, उति ओकल्छ, भन्दै मानवको पुनर्जन्मलाई सङ्केत भएको यस कवितामा अध्यात्मका माध्यमबाट जीवनमा आइपर्ने दुख, कष्ट, असहज परिस्थितिलाई पार गर्न पुनर्जन्मकै प्रतीक्षामा रही सत्यलाई स्वीकार्नु पर्ने सत्याभास व्यक्त भएको छ । मृत्युबाट त्रसित र पलायन नभई सम्पूर्ण मानव जातिलाई सत् मार्गमा अवतरित भए मात्र कल्याणकारी भावोदय हुने सार्वभौम सत्यलाई स्वीकार्ने क्षमताले नै अनर्थ निवारण हुन्छ भन्ने सन्देश प्रस्तुत भएको छ । जीवन नाशवान छ, त्यसैले रिस, राग, द्वेष, घमण्ड, स्वार्थ आदिबाट मुक्त

हुनुपर्ने कल्याणकारी भावलाई आत्मसात् गरी जीवनयापनमा लाग्दा भलो हुने कुरा व्यञ्जना व्यापारका माध्यमबाट अभिव्यक्त भएको छ ।

### आनन्दानुभूतिको प्रयोजन

यो पनि लेखक र पाठकसँग सम्बन्धित काव्यप्रयोजन हो । यो प्रयोजन काव्यको रसास्वादनसँग सम्बन्धित छ । काव्य लेखेर, पढेर, सुनेर, बुझेर, लेखक र भावकलाई जुन किसिमको आनन्द प्राप्त हुन्छ त्यही नै काव्यको सर्वोत्कृष्ट प्रयोजन हो । कवि लेखनाथको यो कविता शार्दूलविक्रीडित छन्दमा रचना भएको छ । शास्त्रीय छन्दमा रचित यस कविताको वाचन र श्रवणबाट पनि आनन्दानुभूति प्राप्त हुन्छ । यस कवितामा प्रस्तुत आध्यात्मिक चिन्तन र त्यही चिन्तनका आधारमा प्राणीको मृत्युबोध सम्बन्धी सार्वभौम सिद्धान्त, निर्गुण भक्तिभाव आदिका आधारमा तत्त्वज्ञान अभिव्यक्त भएको छ । यस कवितामा स्रष्टा, द्रष्टा र श्रोताले हरेक पङ्क्तिपुञ्जबाट शाश्वत सत्यको बोध भए पनि निम्नलिखित अनुच्छेदमा आनन्दानुभूतिको प्रयोजन सशक्त छ ।

आँसुका दहमा नुहाउँछ चिसो पानी रचाउन्न त्यो ।

सुखवा जर्जर अस्थिपञ्जर विना शइया रूचाउन्न त्यो ॥

मैलो भस्म सिवाय अङ्गभरमा केही लगाउन्न त्यो ।

हाहाकार सरी मिठो अरू कुनै सङ्गीत गाउन्न त्यो ॥ (एजेन, पृ. ३१)

भौतिक संसार र त्यो संसारका जीवात्मालाई अधीनमा राखी गतिशील हुने काललाई मानवीकरण भएको यस कविताका हरेक पङ्क्तिमा मृत्युबोधको शाश्वत सत्यलाई उद्बोध भएको छ । माया, दया, करुणा केही नभएको काल जीवका आँसुमा पौडी खेली अस्थिपञ्जरमा शयन गर्न रूचाउँछ । कालको हाहाकारसरी अभिव्यक्त हुने मानवीय आलापविलापको सङ्गीतमा रमाउने विचित्रको स्वभाव छ । जीवन भोगाइसँग सम्बन्धित कटु सत्यलाई अभिव्यक्त भएको यस काव्यांशले व्यञ्जना व्यापारका माध्यमबाट आनन्दानुभूति प्रदान गरेको छ । यहाँ अभिधेयार्थले कालको निडर, निर्मोही, व्याधाको स्वरूपलाई उल्लेख गरेपनि प्रतीयमान अर्थबाट रसानुभूतिको अवस्थामा पुगी आह्लादकत्व प्राप्त हुन्छ । काव्यले पूर्ण रूपमा भावबोध गर्दा मृत्युबाट उत्पन्न हुने व्यथातिरेकको अवस्थाभन्दा शाश्वत सत्यानुभूतिबाट हर्षातिरेकको अवस्थामा अवतरित गराउँछ । यही अवस्थामा अलौकिक आनन्दको अनुभूति हुन्छ । शास्त्रीय छन्दमा संरचित यस कविताको वाचन, श्रवण, मनन यी सबै प्रक्रियाबाट आनन्दानुभूति गर्नसकिन्छ ।

## कान्तासम्मित उपदेशको प्रयोजन

कान्तासम्मित उपदेशको प्रयोजन सहृदयी पाठकसँग सम्बन्धित छ । 'काल-महिमा' कविता पठन र श्रवणका माध्यमबाट प्राप्त सन्देश प्रियाको वाणीजस्तै आनन्ददायी, मुदुल र कोमल छ । यसले सारा प्राणीजगत्लाई हित गर्ने काम गर्छ । कवितामा तल उल्लिखित अंशमा अभिव्यक्त आध्यात्मिक, नैतिक, मूल्यमान्यता र सन्देश रसमय छन्, प्रेयसीका सुमधुर वाणीजस्तै छन् । काव्यमा आएका हरेक शब्द र तिनमा अन्तर्निहित भावले कलात्मक कुशलतालाई प्रष्फुटन गर्दै सौन्दर्यानुभूति गरेका छन् ।

भाका भूल दया, क्षमा र ममता सन्तोष जान्दैन त्यो ।

इन्द्रै विन्ति गरून् भुकेर पदमा त्यो विन्ति मान्दैन त्यो ॥

थुप्रोमा उधिनी मिठो र नमिठो छुट्याइ छान्दैन त्यो ।

खाता जाँचि सबै दुरूस्त नबुझी बिसेर हान्दैन त्यो ॥ (ऐजन, पृ. ३१)

उपर्युक्त कवितांशमा व्यक्त आध्यात्मिक चिन्तनलाई व्यञ्जना व्यापारका माध्यमबाट अभिव्यक्त गरिएका काव्यानुभूति अत्यन्त श्रुतिमधुर छन्, प्रियाका वाणीजस्तै छन् । भाव र कलाको उचित संयोजन भएको यो कविता शार्दूविक्रीडित छन्दमा संरचित छ । जातीय छन्दका रूपमा आफ्नो पहिचान बनाएको यस छन्दलाई गति र यति मिलाएर पददा अलौकिक श्रुतिमाधुर्यताको आनन्दानुभूति गर्न सकिन्छ । कला र भावको उचित संयोजन भएको यस कविताको वाचन तथा श्रवणमा वाचक तथा श्रोतालाई अपूर्व आनन्दानुभूति हुन्छ । यस्तो अनुभूति स्रष्टा, पाठक र श्रोता सबैले गर्नसक्छन् ।

### कवितामा शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध

शब्दार्थ सम्बन्धका आधारमा कविताको अभिधेयार्थ, लक्ष्यार्थ र व्यङ्ग्यार्थ सम्बन्धलाई अलगअलग उपशीर्षकमा तलका सन्दर्भमा विश्लेषण भएको छ ।

### कवितामा अभिधा

काव्यमा अन्तर्निहित प्रत्यक्ष वा पहिलो स्तरको कोशीय अर्थबोध गराउने शब्दशक्ति अभिधा शब्दशक्ति हो यसले बोध गराउने अर्थ वाच्यार्थ हो र वाच्यार्थको बोध गराउन आउने शब्द वाचक शब्द हो । सुन्नासाथ अर्थिने वक्ता र स्रोताको सहज ज्ञानमा आश्रित वाचक शब्दद्वारा बोध्य अर्थ नै वाच्यार्थ हो (गौतम, २०५५, पृ. ४४) । अभिधेयार्थ पनि रूढ, यौगिक र योगरूढ गरी तीन किसिमको हुन्छ । लोकप्रचलन वा व्यवहार अनुसार भन्दै र मानिदै आएको अर्थसङ्केत रूढि वाच्यार्थ हो भने वाचक शब्दका अवयवलाई योग गरी निर्माण भएको शब्दले बोध गराउने वाच्यार्थ यौगिक वाच्यार्थ हो । यौगिक शब्दको अर्थ निश्चित वा स्तरीकृत भई संभावित अन्य अर्थहरू भई कुनै भावविशेषमा अभिधेयार्थ रूढ हुने वाच्यार्थ योगरूढ वाच्यार्थ हो ( गौतम, २०५५, पृ. ४४-४५) । यसरी रूढि

अभिधेयार्थ बोध गराउने शब्द प्रकृति प्रत्ययरहित हुन्छ । प्रकृतिप्रत्ययको योगबाट निर्मित वाचक शब्दले यौगिक वाच्यार्थ बोध गराउँछ । प्रकृतिप्रत्ययको योगबाट निर्मित वाचक शब्दले लोकप्रसिद्धिका आधारमा विशिष्ट अर्थबोध गराउँछ भने त्यो योगरूढ वाच्यार्थ हो । कविशिरोमणि लेखनाथ पौड्यालको 'काल-महिमा' कविताको शीर्षकले योगरूढ वाच्यार्थको प्रतीति गराएको छ । शादूलविक्रीडित छन्दका चार श्लोकमा संरचित यस कवितामा काव्यप्रतिभाले जीवनको उत्तरार्द्ध चरणमा आइपुग्दा लोकपर्यवेक्षण गरी आफूले भोगेका शाश्वत अनुभवजन्य अनुभूतिलाई शास्त्रज्ञानसँग समन्वय गरी काव्यका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् ।

राजा रङ्क सबै समान उसका वैषम्य गर्दैन त्यो ।

आयो, टप्प टिप्यो, लग्यो मिति पुग्यो, टारेर टर्दैन त्यो ॥

लाखौ औषधि अस्त्रशस्त्र महिमा देखेर डर्दैन त्यो ।

व्याघातुल्य लुकेर चल्दछ सदा मारेर मर्दैन त्यो ।

(पौड्याल, २०३१, पृ. ३१)

यस कवितांशले सोभो अर्थमा कालको निरपेक्ष र निर्भिक व्यवहार तथा अमर र अदृश्य प्रवृत्तिको बोध गराएको छ । कालले कसैलाई भेद गर्दैन, यो कसैको वहानामा अल्बिदैन र यो कसैको अनुरोधमा रोकिदैन । यो निर्भिक छ, अस्त्रशस्त्र र औषधीले पनि यसको गति रोक्नसक्दैन । अरूलाई मार्ने काल सदा अमर र अदृश्य छ, यो यस कविताको सोभो अर्थ हो । कविताको मूल भाव यसैसँग सम्बन्धित हुनाले कवितामा वाच्यार्थ प्रमुख बनेर आएको छ । कवितामा यही वाच्यार्थको बोधबाट अर्थका अन्य तहलाई बोध गर्न सकिन्छ । यसले कवितामा वाच्यार्थ शसक्त र सबल बनेर आएको पुष्टि गरेको छ । कविले यही अर्थका आधारमा आध्यात्मिक वेदान्त दर्शनलाई प्रस्तुत गरी शान्त रस परिपाकको अवस्थामा पुर्याका छन् । यस कवितामा 'काल-महिमा' शीर्षकले नै योगरूढ वाच्यार्थको प्रतीति गराएको छ । शादूलविक्रीडित छन्दका चार श्लोकमा संरचित यस कवितामा कविको काव्यप्रतिभाले जीवनको उत्तरार्द्ध चरणमा आइपुग्दा लोकपर्यवेक्षण गर्दा भोगेका शाश्वत अनुभवजन्य अनुभूतिलाई शास्त्रज्ञानसँग समन्वय गरी काव्यका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । उपर्युक्त काव्यांशको यही सोभो अर्थले कवितामा वाच्यार्थप्रधान बनेर रहेको पुष्टि भएको छ ।

### कवितामा लक्षणा

मुख्यार्थबाट अर्थ स्पष्ट हुन बाधा भएपछि त्यससँग सम्बन्धित अन्यार्थ बोध गराउने शब्दशक्ति लक्षणा शब्दशक्ति हो । यस शक्तिको बोध गराउन आउने शब्द लक्षक शब्द हो यसले बोध गराउने अर्थ लक्ष्यार्थ हो । मुख्यार्थ बाधित हुँदा र त्यससँग सम्बद्ध रहँदा रूढि, प्रसिद्धि वा प्रयोजनका आधारमा जुन

वृत्ति वा शब्दशक्तिद्वारा अन्य अर्थको प्रतीति हुन्छ त्यो कल्पित व्यापार नै लक्षणा हो (चापागाई, २०५५, पृ. ७२२) । लक्ष्यार्थको बोध हुँदा मुख्यार्थमा बाधा हुन्छ र त्यससँग सम्बन्धित रूढि वा प्रयोजनका आधारमा अर्को अर्थको बोध हुन्छ । यसै आधारमा संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा आचार्यहरूले लक्षणालाई रूढि र प्रयोजनवती दुई प्रकारमा वर्गीकरण गरेका छन् । जुन लक्षणामा रूढि वा लोकप्रसिद्धिका कारण मुख्यार्थलाई छाडेर अन्यार्थलाई ग्रहण गरिन्छ त्यो लक्षणामा रूढि लक्षणा हो । यसमा चामत्कारिक अर्थ नरहने हुनाले अभिधेयार्थको स्तरमा राखिएको हुन्छ । विशेष प्रयोजन वा अभिप्रायले मुख्यार्थलाई छाडेर अन्यर्थ ग्रहण गरिन्छ त्यो लक्ष्यार्थ हो (चापागाई, २०५५, पृ. ७२३) । प्रयोजनवती लक्षणालाई पनि आचार्यहरूले शुद्धा र गौडी गरी भेदोपभेद गर्दै मम्मटले आठ र विश्वनाथले असी पुर्याए पनि मम्मटले गरेको वर्गीकरणलाई उत्तरवर्ती आचार्यहरूले स्वीकारेका छन् । यसको प्रयोग तथा प्रसिद्धि प्राचीन लोकसाहित्य उखानटुक्कादेखि अर्वाचीन साहित्यसम्म रहेको छ ।

जे जो मिल्छ, सुलुक्क निल्ल्छ, मुखमा हाली चपाउन्न त्यो ।

थाल्यो च्वाम्म सबै चपाउन भने आहार पाउन्न त्यो ॥

जती निल्ल्छ उती उकेल्दछ पनी, केही पचाउन्न त्यो ।

यै चालासित कल्प कल्प कहिल्यै खाई अघाउन्न त्यो ।

(पौडचाल, २०३१, पृ. ३१)

उपर्युक्त कविताशंमा कालको नित्य निरन्तर गतिशील हुने प्रवृत्तिको अभिधेयार्थ बोध पछि त्यसबाट अर्थ स्पष्ट हुन बाधा भएपछि मुख्यार्थसँग सम्बन्धित वेदान्त दर्शनमा आधारित शाश्वत सत्यका रूपमा अभिव्यञ्जित पुनर्जन्मको निरन्तरतालाई लक्ष्यार्थका रूपमा बोध भएको छ । काव्यांशमा राजादेखि रङ्कसम्मका जनता कसैलाई पनि नछाड्ने कालले चपाएर नखाने र खाएको सबै ओकल्ने तथा खाएर कहिल्यै नअघाउने खन्चुवा प्रवृत्तिको रहेको विषयलाई उल्लेख भएको छ । यही अभिधेयार्थका माध्यमबाट कालले पनि सृष्टिको निरन्तरतालाई अवरूद्ध वा उल्लङ्घन गर्न नपाउने तत्त्वमीमांसा अभिव्यञ्जित भएको छ । कालले निलेको सबै ओकल्ने र खाएर कहिल्यै नअघाउने प्रवृत्तिका कारण संसार र सृष्टि आआफ्नै गतिमा गतिशील छन् । यसरी यस काव्यांशले सार्वभौम पद्धतिका रूपमा गतिशील मृत्युबोधबाट मानिस जतिसुकै त्रसित र विचलित भए पनि मृत्युबाट मुक्ति सम्भव नभएको यथार्थको आभास गराउँदै त्यसबाट मुक्ति पाउनु भनेको मृत्युलाई स्वीकार्नु र पुनर्जन्मको अपेक्षा गर्नु हो भनेका छन् ।

### कवितामा व्यञ्जना

काव्यमा अभिधा तथा लक्षणा शब्दशक्तिले बोध गराउन नसकेको तेस्रो अर्थ बोध गराउन आउने शब्दशक्ति व्यञ्जना शक्ति हो । यस शक्तिको बोध व्यञ्जक शब्दले गराउँछन् र यिनले बोध

गराउने अर्थलाई व्यङ्ग्यार्थ भनिन्छ । व्यञ्जना एक किसिमको अञ्जन, ध्वनन, अवगमन, वा द्योतन हो जसले अभिधा लक्षणा आदि शब्दशक्तिकाद्वारा अप्रकाशित अर्थको प्रकाशन गर्दछ (पोखरेल, २०५९, पृ. ९६) । अभिधा र लक्षणा शब्दशक्तिको सम्बन्ध शब्दसँग मात्र हुन्छ भने यस शक्तिले शब्द र अर्थ दुवैसँग सम्बन्ध राख्दै शब्द, वाक्य वा प्रकरणमा लुकेर रहेको गूढार्थलाई प्रतीति गराउँछ । व्यञ्जना व्यापारबाट बोध गराउने अर्थले देश, काल, सन्दर्भ, परिस्थितिअनुसार एउटै कथनबाट अनेक अर्थ बोध गराउनसक्छ । आचार्य मम्मटले यसलाई शाब्दी व्यञ्जना र आर्थी व्यञ्जना गरी दुई प्रकारमा वर्गीकरण गरी त्यसका पनि विभिन्न भेदोपभेद गरेका छन् । साहित्यमा व्यङ्ग्यार्थ प्रधान काव्यलाई उत्तम काव्यको संज्ञा दिइएको छ । यसैका आधारमा ध्वनिवादको महल अडिएको छ । रस, ध्वनि, भाव, रसाभास, भावाभास आदिको प्रतीति पनि यसैका आधारमा हुने हुनाले अन्य शक्तिको तुलनामा साहित्यमा यसको महत्त्व बढेको छ ।

आँसुका दहमा नुहाउँछ चिसो पानी रूचाउन्न त्यो ।  
सुख्खा जर्जर अस्थिपञ्जर विना शैया रूचाउन्न त्यो ॥  
मैलो भस्म सिवाय अङ्गभरमा केही लगाउन्न त्यो ।  
हाहाकार सरी मिठो अरू कुनै सङ्गीत गाउन्न त्यो ॥

(पौड्याल, २०३१, पृ. ३१)

यस कविताशमा कालले आँसुका तलाउमा नुहाउँछ भन्ने वाच्यार्थको बोध गराएपछि भस्म लेपन गरेर हिँड्ने योगीको बोध गराउँदा पनि अर्थ स्पष्ट नभएपछि त्यो भन्दा पर पुगेर मृतात्मा, दैत्य, भूत वा राक्षस भन्ने प्रतीयमान अर्थको प्रतीति गराउँछ, यही अर्थ नै व्यङ्ग्यार्थ हो, यसको बोध व्यञ्जना व्यापारबाट भएको छ । यस्तो राक्षसको स्वरूप धारण गरेको काललाई मानवीय आँसुको तातो कुण्डमा नुहाउँदा, मानवका नजलेका र नगलेका हड्डीको विस्तारामा शयन गर्दा, मानवलाई जलाएको खरानीलाई वस्त्रका रूपमा धारण गर्दा र मानवको रूवाबासको कोलाहलयुक्त परिवेशले मात्र आनन्द दिने भावानुभूति व्यक्त भएको छ । त्यसैले यहाँ यही गूढार्थको प्रतीति हुनु व्यङ्ग्यार्थ हो । यस कवितामा वाच्यार्थ, लक्ष्यार्थ र व्यङ्ग्यार्थ शब्दार्थ सम्बन्धको प्रतीति भए पनि कविले लोकपर्यवेक्षण गरी कालको शाश्वत सत्य प्रवृत्तिलाई अनुभवजन्य शास्त्रज्ञानका माध्यमबाट निरन्तर प्रयत्नको प्राप्तिका रूपमा रहेको छ ।

### निष्कर्ष

प्रस्तुत 'काल-महिमा' कविता लेखनाथ पौडेल (१९४१-२०२२) को काव्ययात्राको दोस्रो चरण (१९९१) मा प्रकाशित भई लालित्य (२०१०) मा सङ्गृहीत भई पुनः प्रकाशित भएको कविता हो । यस अध्ययनमा कविताको कला र भाव पक्षसँग सम्बन्धित संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनका काव्यहेतु, प्रयोजन र

शब्दार्थसम्बन्धका आधारमा कविताको विश्लेषण गर्दा मुख्य प्राप्तिका रूपमा अमूर्त र अदृश्य कालको मानवीकरणद्वारा मूर्तीकरण गरी कालको शाश्वत सत्य प्रवृत्तिलाई जन्म, मृत्यु र पुनर्जन्मको निरन्तर प्रक्रियाको बोध गराउनु हो । कवितामा कविकल्पित प्रतिभामा लोकपर्यवेक्षण, शास्त्रज्ञान र कविको दीर्घसाधनागत व्युत्पत्तिगत ज्ञानले कालको महिमा गान भएको यस कवितामा अन्तर्निष्ठ र बहिर्निष्ठ पद्धतिबाट अर्थबोध भएको छ । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनका सबैजसो काव्यसिद्धान्तका आधारमा अध्ययनीय यस कवितामा परिष्कारवादी कविले शास्त्रीय पद्धतिको पूर्ण रूपमा पालना गरी निरन्तर रूपमा गरेको दीर्घसाधनाले रस, छन्द, ध्वनि, अलङ्कार, गुण, शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध आदिको उचित संयोजन भई कलासौन्दर्य र भावसौन्दर्य चरमोत्कर्षमा पुगेको छ ।

पूर्वीय वेदान्त दर्शनका अध्येता लेखनाथ पौडेलको जन्मजात आर्जित ज्ञान, संस्कारादिका कारण प्राप्त आध्यात्मिक चिन्तन र लोकपर्यवेक्षणका रूपमा मनमप्तिस्कमा उब्जिएका भाव कारयित्री प्रतिभा हो । अझ त्यसमा पनि कविको अनुभव, अनुभूति तथा लोकपर्यवेक्षणबाट प्राप्त ज्ञानमा उत्पाद्य ज्ञान अभिव्यञ्जित भएको छ । यही प्रतिभाबाट निसृत काव्यबीजमा शास्त्रज्ञान, निपुणता र निरन्तर अभ्यासका कारण सफल कविताको रचना भएको छ । प्रस्तुत कवितामा कीर्तिलाभ, धनलाभ, आनन्दानुभूति जस्ता प्रयोजनलाई पुष्टि भएको छ, तापनि पूर्वीय वेदान्त दर्शनलाई आध्यात्मिक चिन्तनका माध्यमबाट प्रस्तुत भएको यस कवितामा कीर्तिलाभ, अनर्थनिवारण र शिवेतरक्षत अर्थात् मृत्युका माध्यमबाट मोक्षको मार्गदर्शन गर्नु प्रमुख प्रयोजन बनेर आएको छ । कवितामा व्युत्पत्तिगत ज्ञान सशक्त हुनुका कारण शास्त्रीय नियमको पूर्ण पालना भएको छ । कवितामा शब्दवैविध्य र परिष्कारवादी शैलीका कारण कविताले कलात्मक उचाइ प्राप्त गरेको छ । अभिधा शक्तिले कवितामा काव्यार्थको आधार तयार गरी अर्थबोधको ढोका खोलेको छ, मृत्युबाट उत्पन्न त्रासले मानवको मनमुटु हल्लएको छ, कालका महिमा गानमा आएका प्रवृत्तिले समय वा मृत्यु बोध गराएको छ, बहिर्निष्ठ अर्थबोध गराएको छ भने कवितामा अन्तर्निहित व्यञ्जना व्यापारबाट प्राप्त प्रतीयमान अर्थले कविताको भाव सौन्दर्यलाई उद्दीप्त पारेको छ । मृत्युसम्बन्धी आध्यात्मिक चिन्तनलाई कालको परिणतिमा अन्तर्निष्ठ गरेको छ, मृत्यु शाश्वत सत्य हो र यसले पुनर्जन्मका माध्यमबाट मोक्ष प्राप्तिलाई मार्गनिर्देश गरेको छ । प्रस्तुत कविता तीनै तहका शब्दशक्तिको प्रयोग भए पनि अभिधार्थमा नै शक्तिशाली रहेको तथा लक्षणा र व्यञ्जना यसमा अभिव्यक्त वाच्यार्थलाई पुष्टि गर्ने प्रयोजनका लागि उपस्थित भएको निष्कर्ष प्राप्त गर्नसकिन्छ ।

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जीवन श्रेष्ठ, पिएचडी

पाटन सयुक्त क्याम्पस, त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय, नेपाल

Email: [jistha@gmail.com](mailto:jistha@gmail.com)

### लेखसार

'आफर' (२०७३) कवितासङ्ग्रहमा सङ्गृहीत कवितामा अभिव्यक्त दलित प्रतिरोधको अध्ययनलाई प्रस्तुत लेखमा विषय बनाइएको छ । 'आफर' दलित प्रतिरोधी आवाज व्यक्त भएका कविताहरूको सङ्कालो हो । यहाँ दलितहरूमाथि भएको उत्पीडनको केकस्तो प्रतिरोध गरिएको छ भन्ने जिज्ञासाको समाधान खोजिएको छ । यस अध्ययनका लागि आवश्यक प्राथमिक तथा द्वितीयक स्रोतका सामग्रीहरू पुस्तकालयीय कार्यवाट सङ्कलन गरिएका छन् । प्रस्तुत अध्ययनका लागि 'आफर' सङ्ग्रहका ३३ ओटा कवितावाट सोद्देश्य नमुना छनोट गरी आठ जना कविका एक एकका दरले आठओटा कविता लिइएका छन् । अध्ययनका लागि चमनलाल, ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि, शरणकुमार लिम्बाले, मिचेल फुको तथा राजेन्द्र महर्जन र यामबहादुर किसानका धारणालाई सैद्धान्तिक पर्याधारका रूपमा लिई तर्क तथा विश्लेषण विधिका माध्यमले निष्कर्षसम्म पुग्ने प्रयास गरिएको छ । यस अध्ययनमा 'आफर' सङ्ग्रहका कविताले नेपाली समाजमा सदियौँदेखि विद्यमान दलितमाथिका आर्थिक, सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, धार्मिकसांस्कृतिक एवम् वर्णवादजन्य उत्पीडनका विरुद्ध सशक्त प्रतिरोधी आवाज व्यक्त गरेको निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ ।

शब्दकुञ्जी: वर्णवाद, प्रतिरोध, जातव्यवस्था, सांस्कृतिक, किनारीकृत

### विषयपरिचय

प्रस्तुत शोधलेखमा आफर (२०७३) कवितासङ्ग्रहमा सङ्कलित कविताहरूको दलित प्रतिरोधका परिप्रेक्ष्यवाट अध्ययन गरिएको छ । यस सङ्ग्रहमा केवल बिनाबी, केशरी अम्गाई, केशव सिलवाल, प्रकाश गुरागाई, माधव घिमिरे 'अटल', मुक्तान थेवा, राजु स्याङ्तान र हरिशरण परियार गरी आठ जना

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कविहरूका ३३ ओटा दलित चेतनायुक्त कविताहरू सङ्गृहीत छन् । शीर्षकमा आएको 'दलित प्रतिरोध' पदावलीको 'दलित' शब्दले सामान्यतः 'दलनमा पारिएका, थिचिएका, हेपिएका वा शोषित' भन्ने अर्थ बुझाउँछ । विशेषतः इतिहासको लामो कालखण्डदेखि अस्पृश्यको दर्जा दिई उत्पीडित तुल्याइएका समुदायलाई बुझाउनका लागि दलित शब्द प्रयोगमा ल्याइएको छ । 'प्रतिरोध' को अर्थ 'आफ्नो बचाउका लागि प्रकट गरिने असहमति वा विरोध' हो । यस अर्थमा दलनविरुद्ध उनीहरूको अस्तित्वरक्षार्थ गरिने प्रयास नै दलित प्रतिरोध हो ।

साहित्य समाजको प्रतिबिम्ब हो । साहित्यकारले समाजबाट विषय लिई त्यसलाई रागात्मक रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरेका हुन्छन् । नेपाली समाजमा इतिहासको लामो कालखण्डदेखि एउटा समुदायलाई अछुतको कित्तामा पारियो । उनीहरूलाई सांस्कृतिक, आर्थिक आदि अधिकारबाट पनि वञ्चित तुल्याइयो । विगतमा शूद्र भनिएको यस समुदायलाई बुझाउन पछिल्लो समयमा दलित शब्द प्रयोगमा ल्याइएको छ । यिनै दलित समुदायले इतिहासको लामो कालखण्डदेखि प्रभुत्वशाली वर्गबाट भोगिरहेका अनेक उत्पीडन र त्यसविरुद्धको प्रतिरोध साहित्यमार्फत् प्रकट हुन थाले । यही सिलसिलामा दलित चेतनायुक्त कविता पनि लेखिए । सोही क्रममा यही चेतनालाई केन्द्रमा राखेर आफर (२०७३) कवितासङ्ग्रह प्रकाशनमा आएको छ । यस कवितासङ्ग्रहका ३३ कवितामध्ये ३१ ओटा कविताहरू दलित प्रतिरोधी चेतनाले युक्त छन् । त्यसैले यहाँ उक्त कवितासङ्ग्रहका कविताहरूलाई दलित प्रतिरोधका दृष्टिले अध्ययनीय विषयका रूपमा लिइएको हो ।

### सैद्धान्तिक पर्याधार

'दलित' हिन्दुधार्मिक समाजमा अछुत कहलिएका समुदायविशेषलाई बुझाउन प्रयोगमा ल्याइएको शब्द हो । हिन्दु समाजव्यवस्थाको प्राचीन कालमा यस समुदायलाई 'शूद्र' नामले सम्बोधन गर्ने गरेको पाइएको छ । हिन्दुधार्मिक ग्रन्थ वेदमा मानवको सृष्टिबारे व्याख्या गर्ने क्रममा शूद्र जातिको सृष्टि ब्रह्माका पाउबाट भएको बताइएको छ (शुक्लयजुर्वेद, १९४४, ३१/११) । तिनै शूद्र नै हालका दलित भएबाट वैदिक कालदेखि नै दलितहरू उपेक्षित रहेको पाइएको छ । यस तथ्यलाई नियाल्दा दलितमाथिको दलनको इतिहास निकै पुरानो रहेको देखिएको छ । अझ मनुले यस समुदायलाई आर्थिक अधिकारबाट समेत वञ्चित तुल्याई शूद्रले उक्त जातिभन्दा माथिका मानिसको सेवा गर्ने सरसफाइ गर्ने, मृत पशुका छाला काठी जुत्ता बनाउने, घाटमा मुर्दा जलाउने आदि काम तोकेकाले यस्ता हेय कामकै कारण यो समुदाय अस्पृश्य कहलियो (चमनलाल, सन् २००९, पृ. ९०) । यसरी मनुले श्रमविभाजनको थिति बाँध्ने क्रममा दलित समुदायप्रति कठोर नीति अवलम्बन गरेको पाइएको छ । अझ तोकिएबाहेकका काम गरे र पेसा परिवर्तन गरे दण्डको भागीदार हुनुपर्ने मनुको व्यवस्था दलितहरूप्रति उत्पीडनकारी देखिएको छ ।

नेपालमा छुवाछुतको चलन लिच्छवी कालबाट सुरु भएको हो । यसपछि नेपालमा शासक र शासन व्यवस्थामा धेरै परिवर्तन भए तर छुवाछुत भने यथावत् रहिरह्यो । विस्तारै दलित उत्पीडनविरुद्ध

मानिसहरू जागरुक हुन थाले । यस क्रममा भगत सर्वजित विश्वकर्माका अग्रसरतामा दलित जागरण अभियान थालियो (महर्जन र किसान, २०७०, पृ.१९) । फलस्वरूप नेपाली साहित्यमा दलनविरोधी आवाजले स्थान लिन थाल्यो । यस प्रभावलाई नेपाली कविताले पनि ग्रहण गर्‍यो ।

साहित्यमा अभिव्यक्त विचारले मानवीय चेतनालाई जागृत गराउँछ । यस परिप्रेक्ष्यमा दलित साहित्य दलित उत्पीडनविरोधी आन्दोलनकै एउटा अङ्गका रूपमा देखा परेको छ । खास गरी दलित आन्दोलन दलितमाथि भएको उत्पीडनविरुद्धको प्रतिरोध हो । प्रतिरोध शक्तिसङ्घर्षसँग सम्बन्धित छ । शक्तिका दृष्टिले समाज केन्द्र र परिधि वा माथि र तलको संरचनामा आबद्ध हुन्छ । केन्द्रको शक्तिले आफूअनुकूलको ज्ञान निर्माण गर्छ र परिधिमा रहेका मानिसमाथि दमन गर्न थाल्छ । जब केन्द्रबाट परिधिमाथि यसरी दमन हुन थाल्छ, तब परिधिमा छरिएर रहेको शक्ति एकत्रित हुन्छ, र उसले स्वत्वको रक्षाका लागि केन्द्रको दमनकारी शक्तिविरुद्ध प्रतिरोध सुरु गर्छ । परिधिको प्रतिरोधले समाजमा विद्यमान मूल्यप्रणालीमा परिवर्तन आउने र कतिपय अवस्थामा पुरानो सामाजिक संरचना पुरै भत्केर नयाँ सामाजिक संरचनाको निर्माण पनि हुन सक्छ । यसरी प्रतिरोधको सम्बन्ध शक्तिसँग रहेको देखिन्छ । त्यसैले फुकोले यसलाई जहाँ शक्ति हुन्छ, त्यहाँ प्रतिरोध हुन्छ, भनेर प्रस्तुत खोजेका छन् (फुको, सन् १९८० पृ. १४२) । यसरी फुकोका दृष्टिमा शक्ति र प्रतिरोध एकआपसमा अन्तरसम्बन्धित छन् ।

दलित समुदायका मानिसहरू सदियौंदेखि वर्णवादी शक्तिबाट शोषित, उत्पीडित र किनारीकृत हुँदै आएका छन् । वर्णव्यवस्थालाई जातव्यवस्थामा रूपान्तर गरेपछि दलित समस्याको आरम्भ भएको हो । शूद्र समुदायलाई अछुतको दर्जा दिई किनारीकृत गरिएपछि यो समस्या उत्पीडनकारी बन्यो । यसले वर्णवादका आडमा दलितमाथि सांस्कृतिक, आर्थिक, सामाजिक, शैक्षिक आदि अनेक उत्पीडन सुरु गर्‍यो । यसका प्रतिरोधमा दलित जागरण अभियान सुरु भए । दलित साहित्य यही दलित उत्पीडनविरुद्धको प्रतिरोधकै एक रूप हो (वाल्मीकि, २००९, पृ. १०६) । यसरी दलित समस्याको उपज हिन्दुशास्त्रीय वर्णवाद भएकाले दलित प्रतिरोध पनि वर्णवादविरुद्ध अग्रसर रहेको छ ।

समाजको स्वरूप परिवर्तनशील छ । जब यो स्वरूपलाई यथास्थितिमा राख्न खोजिन्छ, तब प्रतिरोधले जन्म लिन्छ । दलित समस्याका सन्दर्भमा जब इतिहासको लामो कालखण्डदेखि एउटा समुदायलाई अमानवीय र अन्यायपूर्ण व्यवस्था लादियो, तब दलितहरूले प्रतिरोध सुरु गरे । नेपालका दलितहरूमाथिको दलन र उनीहरूले गरेको प्रतिरोधको इतिहास केलाउने क्रममा दलित प्रतिरोधबारे राजेन्द्र महर्जन र यामबहादुर किसानले भनेका छन् :

जहाँ दमन, उत्पीडन र दलन हुन्छ, त्यहाँ, द्वन्द्व, सङ्घर्ष र प्रतिरोध पनि हुन्छ । कुनै पनि वस्तु र विचारमा सकारात्मक र नकारात्मक पक्षबिच द्वन्द्व, एकता र रूपान्तरण भइरहेको हुन्छ । यसरी प्रकृतिमा जस्तै समाजमा पनि द्वन्द्व, एकता र रूपान्तरणको प्रक्रिया जारी रहेको छ । यही प्रक्रियाका कारण हिन्दुवर्णव्यवस्थाले पनि आफ्नो जन्मसँगै आफ्नो प्रतिरोधी पक्ष पनि जन्माएको जीवित इतिहास छ । दक्षिण एसियाली उपमहाद्वीपमा हिन्दु वर्णव्यवस्थाअन्तर्गत वर्ण, जात, लिङ्ग, सम्प्रदायका आधारमा विभेद, उत्पीडन र दलन सुरु भएदेखि नै त्यसको प्रतिरोध हुन थालेको इतिहास छ ।

(महर्जन र किसान, २०७०, पृ. १५)

प्रतिरोध जहिले पनि निरपेक्ष नभई सत्ताशक्तिको सापेक्षमा हुन्छ । जब सत्तासीन शक्तिले अन्य वर्ग वा समुदायउपर उत्पीडन सुरु गर्छ, तब प्रतिरोध जन्मन्छ भन्ने महर्जन र किसानको मत रहेको छ । दलित प्रतिरोधका सन्दर्भमा भन्नुपर्दा वर्णव्यवस्थाका आधारमा आफूलाई श्रेष्ठ र उच्च अनि अरूलाई निम्न र निच ठानी निरन्तर उत्पीडनमा पार्ने ब्राह्मणवादी शासन पद्धति वा यसका पक्षधर शासक वर्ग र तिनका पक्षपोषक नै दलित प्रतिरोधका जनक रहेका छन् ।

### आफर कवितासङ्ग्रहका कवितामा व्यक्त दलित प्रतिरोध

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनमा आफर कवितासङ्ग्रहमा सङ्गृहीत ३३ ओटा कविताहरूमध्ये सोदेश्य नमुना छनोटका आधारमा आठओटा कविता लिइएका छन् । अध्ययनका लागि चयन गरिएका कविताहरू क्रमशः केवल विनाबीको 'शूद्र शम्बुक', केशरी अम्गाईको 'घौला', केशव सिलवालको 'धार', प्रकाश गुरागाईको 'हजुरको बुट', माधव घिमिरे 'अटल'को 'सास्तीको सर्ग', मुक्तान थेबाको 'आगोको वर्षा', राजु स्याङ्तानको 'आरन र डम्फु' तथा हरिशरण परियारको 'कैँची रहेका छन् । यी कविताहरूमा इतिहासको लामो कालखण्डदेखि दलितहरूले कथित उच्च जातका मानिसहरूबाट भोग्दै आएका उत्पीडनलाई यथार्थपरक र मार्मिक ढङ्गले प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । साथै यी कविताहरूमा दलितहरूले सदियौँदेखि भोग्दै आएका उत्पीडनविरुद्ध सशक्त प्रतिरोध पनि प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । कवितामा व्यक्त उक्त प्रतिरोधलाई वर्णवादविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध, शैक्षिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध, धार्मिकसांस्कृतिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध, सामाजिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध, आर्थिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध र राजनीतिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध उपशीर्षकमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छ ।

### वर्णवादविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध

वर्णवाद हिन्दुधार्मिक वर्णव्यवस्थामा आधारित शासनपद्धति हो । यसले मानिसलाई प्रमुख चार समूहमा विभाजन गरेको छ । आरम्भमा यसको उद्देश्य श्रमविभाजन थियो । कालान्तरमा यसलाई जातका रूपमा स्थापित गरियो । वर्णव्यवस्थाको चौथो समूहलाई शूद्र भनिएको थियो र सिप तथा सेवामूलक काम गर्ने यस समूहका मानिसलाई निम्न दर्जामा राखेर अछुतसमेत तुल्याई उत्पीडन गरियो । यस अमानवीय व्यवस्थासँगै दलित उत्पीडन आरम्भ भयो । दलित उत्पीडनले लामो कालखण्ड पार गर्दै जाँदा यस वर्णवादविरुद्ध प्रतिरोध सुरु भयो । समकालीन नेपाली कविहरूले पनि कवितामार्फत दलित समस्याको प्रमुख जड रहेको वर्णवादविरुद्ध प्रतिरोधी आवाज प्रस्तुत गर्न थाले ।

आफर कविता सङ्ग्रहको 'शूद्र शम्बुक' कवितामा कवि केवल विनाबीले वेदमा वर्णित मानव सृष्टिको प्रसङ्गलाई उद्धृत गरेका छन् । मानव सृष्टिवारे बयान गरिएको वेदको उक्त उद्घोष उत्पीडनकारी रहेकाले त्यसलाई कविले अस्वीकार गरेका छन् । यस प्रसङ्गमा कविले भनेका छन् :

वेदमा बयान गरिए भैं  
भूट नै सही

मानौं तिम्रा पुर्खाहरू  
मुखबाटै जन्मिएछन् रे  
मेरा पुर्खाहरू पाउबाटै जन्मिएछन् रे  
तर अफसोच !  
तिम्री आमा र मेरी आमाको  
उस्तै अङ्गबाट जन्मिएका हामी  
आखिर किन  
तिमी जस्तै म अछूत  
र म जस्तै तिमी छूत ।

(पृ. १२-१३)

प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा चित्रित विषय वेदमा वर्णित मानव सृष्टिको कथासँग जोडिएको छ । वेदमा मान्छेलाई ब्राह्मण, क्षत्री, वैश्य र शूद्र गरी चार समूहमा वर्गीकरण गरिएको छ । यी चार समूहका मान्छेमध्ये शूद्र ब्रह्माका पाउबाट जन्मेको कथालाई कविले प्रस्तुत कवितामा भुट ठानेका छन् । उक्त भुटलाई एकछिन सही मानेर कविले छलफल गरेका छन् । वेदमा भनिए भौं उहिलेका पुर्खाहरू कोही ब्रह्माका मुखबाट र कोही ब्रह्माका पाउबाटै सृष्टि भएको मानौं तर अहिलेका मान्छेको जन्मक्रममा त कुनै भिन्नता छैन । अहिले ब्रह्माका भिन्न भिन्न अङ्गबाट नभई आआफ्नी आमाका उस्तै अङ्गबाट सबै मान्छेले जन्म पाउँछ । तथापि कोही छुत र कोही अछुत किन हुन्छ भनी कविद्वारा तार्किक प्रश्नका माध्यमबाट वर्णवादले थोपरेको छुवाछुतजन्य उत्पीडनविरुद्ध प्रखर वाचाल प्रतिरोध प्रकट गरिएको छ ।

### शैक्षिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध

शिक्षा मानवीय उन्नतिको प्रमुख माध्यम हो । यही शिक्षा वा ज्ञानका माध्यमले नै मानिसले यस संसारमा अकल्पनीय परिवर्तन ल्याएको छ । हरेक व्यक्तिको सुखसमृद्धिको स्रोत पनि शिक्षा नै बन्न पुगेको छ । शिक्षाको यस्तो महत्त्व बुझेको मानिसले प्राचीन कालदेखि नै ज्ञानपरम्पराको विकास गर्‍यो । यो ज्ञानपरम्परामा सामेल हुनबाट दलितहरूलाई निषेध गरियो । यो दलितहरूमाथिको आरम्भ कालदेखिकै शैक्षिक उत्पीडन थियो । यस्तो उत्पीडनविरुद्ध पछि गएर दलित जातीय जागरण सुरु भयो । जसलाई कविसाहित्यकारहरूले पनि साथ दिन थाले । फलस्वरूप समकालीन नेपाली कवितामा पनि यस्तो शैक्षिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध प्रतिरोधी आवाज प्रकट हुन थाले ।

कवि केवल विनावीद्वारा रचना गरिएको 'शूद्र शम्बुक' कविताले प्राचीन कालदेखि दलितहरूमाथि लादिएको शैक्षिक उत्पीडनलाई विषय बनाएको छ र उक्त उत्पीडनविरुद्ध प्रतिरोध प्रकट गरेको छ । प्रस्तुत कवितामा प्राचीनकालीन मिथकीय सन्दर्भको प्रयोग गर्दै दलितहरूमाथि भइरहेको शैक्षिक उत्पीडनलाई उजागर गरिएको छ । यससँगै दलितहरूमा आफ्नो अस्तित्व चेत जागृत भएको र आफूमाथि भइरहेको दलनविरुद्ध उनीहरूले प्रतिरोध गर्न थालेको विषयलाई पनि प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

प्रस्तुत कवितामा 'म' र 'तिमी' पात्र प्रयोग भएका छन् । 'तिमी' पात्रलाई 'राम' भनेर पनि सम्बोधन गरिएको छ । कवितामा आएको 'म' ले दलित समुदायको प्रतिनिधित्व गरेको छ । उक्त 'म'ले आफूलाई शम्बुकका रूपमा उभ्याएको छ । शम्बुक वाल्मीकि रामायणको पात्र हो । उसले शूद्र कुलमा जन्म पाएको थियो । शूद्रहरूलाई शिक्षाबाट वञ्चित गरिएको तत्कालीन अवस्थामा शम्बुक एकलव्यले भैं ज्ञान र तप साधनाबाट सिद्धि प्राप्त गरी ऋषि बन्न सफल भएको हुन्छ । यसै बिच शम्बुक उँधो मुन्टो पारेर रुखमा झुन्डिई तपस्या गरिरहेको हुन्छ । त्यसै बखत राम त्यहाँ पुग्छन् । उनले त्यस तपस्यारत व्यक्तिको परिचय माग्छन् र तपस्याको उद्देश्य सोध्छन् । जवाफमा शम्बुकले सशरीर स्वर्ग गई देवत्व प्राप्त गर्न तपस्या गरेको र आफू शूद्र कुलमा जन्म पाएको व्यक्ति भएको बताउँछ । शूद्र कुलको मानिसले सशरीर स्वर्ग जान तपस्या गरेको जानकारी पाउनासाथ रामले तत्काल तरबार प्रहार गरी उसको हत्या गरिदिन्छन् । (वाल्मीकि, २०७९, पृ. ८५९-८६०) शम्बुक पात्रका माध्यमबाट कविले दलितहरूले केवल दलित भएकै आधारमा बिना गल्ती ज्यान गुमाउनुपरेको विषयलाई प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । यस पौराणिक सन्दर्भको प्रयोग गर्दै कविले दलितमाथिको उत्पीडनको इतिहास अत्यन्त लामो रहेको वास्तविकताको पनि खुलासा गरेका छन् ।

कविका अनुसार सबै मानिस एउटै मानव वंशवृक्षका उपज हुन् तथापि समाजमा मानव मानवविच असहनीय विभेद छ । कविले यस्तो विभेदविरुद्ध असहमति जनाउँदै भनेका छन् :

मानव वंशवृक्षमा  
 एउटा अनुहार तिमी  
 मानव वंशवृक्षकै  
 एउटा अनुहार म पनि  
 हेर त  
 उस्तै लाम्चो नाक  
 उस्तै उस्तै आँखा  
 आँखामा उस्तै उस्तै सपना  
 अनि उस्तै उस्तै बुनोट  
 आखिर किन  
 वेद पढ्न हुँदैन शूद्रले ?  
 आखिर किन  
 वेद सुन्न हुँदैन शूद्रले ?  
 आखिर किन  
 जीवन हुँदैन शूद्रको ?  
 हो ! राम  
 म उही शूद्र शम्बुक  
 तिम्रो रामराज्यको  
 एक अछूत ।

(पृ.११-१२)

यस कवितांशमा कविले दलितप्रति भइरहेको विभेदको विरोध गरेका छन् । कविका अनुसार शूद्रहरू पनि एउटै मानव वंशवृक्षबाट विकसित भएका हुन् । उनीहरूका पनि कथित छुतहरूका भैं लाम्चा नाक, उस्तै उस्तै आँखा अनि आँखामा उस्तै सपना छन् । यसरी शारीरिक बनोट र जीवनका सपनाहरूमा उस्तो भिन्नता नभए पनि शूद्रहरूलाई अछुतका कित्तामा पुऱ्याई किन विभेद गरिंदै छ भनी कविले प्रश्नात्मक वाक्यढाँचाका माध्यमबाट प्रतिरोधी आवाज प्रकट गरेका छन् । यहाँ शूद्रहरूलाई वेद अध्ययन गर्नबाट वञ्चित तुल्याइएको प्रसङ्ग छ । वेद प्राचीन कालको सम्पूर्ण ज्ञानको सङ्ग्रह थियो । त्यस समयमा वेद पढ्न बन्देज गर्नु भनेको ज्ञानबाट वञ्चित गर्नु हो । ज्ञान नै मानिसको शक्ति भएकाले यसबाट कसैलाई वञ्चित गर्नु भनेको उसलाई शक्तिहीन तुल्याउनु हो । लोककल्याणकारी राज्यका रूपमा नाम कहलाएको रामराज्यमा शूद्रहरूले किन वेद पढ्न नपाएका हुन् भनी कविले शैक्षिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध प्रश्नात्मक वाक्यढाँचाका माध्यमले वाचाल प्रतिरोध प्रकट गरेका छन् ।

कविले महाभारत कालीन घटनालाई उद्धृत गर्दै शूद्र भएकै कारण एकलव्यले शैक्षिक उत्पीडन भोग्नुपरेको जनाएका छन् । एकलव्यले गुरु द्रोणाचार्यबाट शिक्षा त पाएन नै उल्टो गुरुदक्षिणाका नाममा औँला काटेर चढाउन बाध्य पारियो । कविले यस पौराणिक घटनाको खुलासा गर्दै भनेका छन् :

गुरु द्रोणाचार्यको कमण्डलुको पीँधबाट  
तप तप तप्किरहेको  
एकलव्यको आलो रगतले  
आखिर कहिलेसम्म गाइरहन सक्छ  
गुरुभक्तिको गीत  
आखिर कहिलेसम्म  
औँला रेटिरहन्छन् एकलव्यहरू  
र प्रथम घोषित भइरहन्छन् अर्जुनहरू

(पृ. १२)

द्रोणाचार्य उसबेलाका प्रसिद्ध गुरु थिए । एकलव्य ज्ञानको भोको रहेकाले ऊ धनुर्विद्या सिक्न द्रोणाचार्यकहाँ पुग्यो । द्रोणाचार्यले एकलव्य शूद्रवर्णको भएकै कारण उसलाई शिक्षा दिन अस्वीकार गरे । यसपछि एकलव्यले वन गई द्रोणाचार्यलाई नै गुरु थापी धनुर्विद्यामा सिद्धता प्राप्त गर्‍यो । यो सब थाहा पाएपछि द्रोणाचार्यले गुरुदक्षिणास्वरूप एकलव्यको दाहिने हातको बुढीऔँला काटेर दिन माग गरे । एकलव्यले औँला काटेर दियो पनि । अर्जुनलाई सर्वश्रेष्ठ धनुर्धारी तुल्याउन एकलव्यप्रति भएको यो अन्यायलाई कविले दलितका पुर्खामाथि भएको अन्यायका रूपमा लिएका छन् र दलितहरूले कथित उच्च वर्गबाट आफूमाथि हुने यस्ता उत्पीडनहरू कहिलेसम्म सहनुपर्ने हो भनी प्रश्नात्मक प्रतिरोध प्रकट गरेका छन् ।

## धार्मिकसांस्कृतिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध

हिन्दुधर्मावलम्बी मानिसहरू एउटै वंशवृक्षबाट विकास भई आएका हुन् । हिन्दुधार्मिक वर्णविभाजनको चौथो वर्ग शूद्रलाई नै दलित शब्दले जनाउन थालिएबाट दलित पनि हिन्दुपरिवारकै देखिन्छन् । तथापि यो वर्गलाई प्रभुत्वशाली वर्गले निरन्तर धार्मिकसांस्कृतिक उत्पीडनमा पाउँ आएको छ । यस्तो उत्पीडनविरुद्ध समकालीन कविहरूले कवितामार्फत जोडदार रूपमा प्रतिरोधी आवाज प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । यही सिलसिलामा 'धौला' कविता प्रकाशनमा आएको छ ।

'धौला' केशरी अम्गाईद्वारा रचना गरिएको कविता हो । यस कवितामा नेवार समुदायमा दलित कहलिएको देउला जातिमाथि भएका धार्मिकसांस्कृतिक उत्पीडनको खुलासा गर्नुका साथै त्यस्तो उत्पीडनका विरुद्ध प्रतिरोध पनि प्रकट गरिएको छ । पेसाले सरसफाइको काम गर्ने यस जातिलाई पोडे नामले पनि सम्बोधन गर्ने गरिएको छ । यो जाति नेवार समुदायमा अछुत कहलिएको छ । कथित उच्च जातिबाट धौलाहरूमाथि गरिएका उत्पीडनको विरोधमा प्रस्तुत कवितामा तीव्र आवाज गुन्जाइएको छ ।

कविका अनुसार विगतमा देउलाहरू देवताहरूका पुजारी र पहरेदार थिए । देवताहरूको पहरे हुँदाहुँदै आफ्नै पहरा दिन नसक्दा यो जाति एक्कासि पिँधमा खसालियो । यस जातिका हातमा भाडु थमाइयो र सरसफाइमा खटाइयो । जब यस जातिले अह्नाएखटाएअनुरूप फोहोरको सफाइ सुरु गर्‍यो, तब यसलाई फोहोर भै छि छि, र दुर दुर गर्न अनि अछुत ठान्न थालियो । यति मात्र नभई यस जातिका मानिसलाई जल्लाद बनाइएको विषयलाई कविले प्रस्तुत कवितामा उल्लेख गरेका छन् :

इतिहासको पदचापमा  
मेरा बराजुहरूलाई  
अपराधी नै किन नहून्  
जबरजस्ती गर्दन गिँड्न लगाएर  
बनायौं जल्लादको वंशज ।

जल्लादका रूपमा  
समाजमा बदनाम बनाएको देख्दा  
आगो ओकल्छ, मभिन्नको स्वाभिमान  
र, थन्क्याइएको बाजेको तरवार  
उजिल्याउँदै फेरि  
लगाउँ जस्तो लाग्छ साँध ।

(पृ. २५)

विगतका शासकहरूले कसैलाई मृत्युदण्ड दिनुपरे देउलाहरूलाई प्रयोग गर्ने गरेको ऐतिहासिक सन्दर्भलाई यहाँ उठाइएको छ । मृत्युदण्डका भागीदार अपराधी नै भए पनि तत्कालीन शासकहरूले पटक पटक देउलालाई नै टाउको गिँड्न लगाउँदा देउलाहरू अनाहकमा जल्लादका वंशज भनी अपहेलित भए । यसबाट उनीहरूले कहिल्यै नमेटिने जातीय कलङ्क बोकिरहनुपऱ्यो । कुनै शासकको क्षणिक लाभका लागि देउलाहरू यसरी युगौँयुग बदनाम भइरहे । यतिवेला उनीहरूभित्रको स्वाभिमानले प्रतिरोधस्वरूप आगो ओकल्ल थालेको कुरा कवितामा उल्लेख गरिएको छ ।

पुरानो समाजशास्त्र सर्वजनहितमा थिएन । त्यसो भएकाले एउटै समाजका बासिन्दा भएर पनि कोही दमक र कोही दमित भए । अब समय बदलिइसकेको हुँदा त्यस्तो समाजशास्त्रलाई बदल्ल कवितामा यसरी हाँक दिइएको छ :

आह्वान गर्छु म यही चोकमा उभिएर-  
 ए, समाजका ठेकेदारहरू हो !  
 फेर, तिम्रा समाजशास्त्रका चस्माहरू  
 र हेर संस्कृतिलाई आफ्नै ऐनामा  
 को हुन् अष्टमातृकाहरू ?  
 त्यही शक्तिपीठको पुजारी मलाई  
 कसरी ठान्यौ सधैं चौला ?

(पृ. २६)

अष्टमातृका हिन्दुशास्त्रमा वर्णित आठ देवीहरू हुन् । गुणकामदेवले आफ्नो देशको रक्षा र जनताको भलाइका लागि मन्दिरहरू बनाई तन्त्रविधिसे अष्टमातृकाको स्थापना गरे । नेवारी संस्कृतिमा यी अष्टमातृकालाई अजिमा नामले पुकारिन्छ । प्रारम्भमा यिनै शक्तिपीठका सम्मानित पुजारी जो थिए, तिनलाई नै पछि गएर देउला अर्थात् पोडेका नामले अपमानित गरियो । कामका आधारमा मान र अपमानको यस्तो व्याख्या गर्ने समाजका ठेकेदारहरूलाई उनीहरूको त्यस्तो समाजशास्त्र फेर्न कवितामा आह्वान गरिएको छ । यससँगै आफ्नो संस्कृतिका अष्टमातृका को हुन् भनी प्रश्न गरिएको छ । देश र जनताको हितका लागि भनेर अष्टमातृकाको स्थापना गरिए पनि जनतालाई अनेक ढङ्गले उत्पीडित तुल्याइन्छ, भने त्यस्ता विभेदकारी देवतालाई विश्वास नगर्ने प्रतिरोधी उद्घोष पनि कवितामा प्रकट गरिएको छ ।

**सामाजिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध**

कुनै पनि समाज भिन्न जाति, वर्ग, लिङ्ग, धर्म आदिका मानिसहरूको साझा थलोका रूपमा विकसित भएको हुन्छ । समाज सबैको साझा थलो हुँदाहुँदै पनि त्यहाँका प्रभुत्वशाली वर्गले आफू शक्तिशाली भइराख्न र अरूलाई कमजोर तुल्याइराख्न आफूअनुकूलको ज्ञान निर्माण गरी अनेक थिति बाँधेका हुन्छन् । समाजमा बाँधिएको छुवाछुतको थिति दलितमाथि थोपरिएको सामाजिक उत्पीडन

हो । थितिका नामको यस्तो बेथितिका विरुद्ध राज्यले कानुन नै बनाएर लागु गरे पनि दलितहरू यस उत्पीडनबाट मुक्त हुन सकेका छैनन् र उनीहरूले यस बेथितिका विरुद्ध प्रतिरोध जारी राखेका छन् । समकालीन नेपाली कविहरूले पनि आफ्ना कवितामा यस्तो बेथितिविरुद्ध प्रतिरोधी आवाज दिएका छन् । यस सन्दर्भमा 'धार' कविता विश्लेषणीय छ ।

'धार' कवि केशव सिलवालद्वारा रचना गरिएको कविता हो । लौहकर्मीका अनुभूतिहरूलाई विषय बनाउँदै लेखिएको यस कवितामा दलित प्रतिरोधी दृढ आवाज प्रकट भएको छ । प्रस्तुत कविताको प्रारम्भमै दलितहरूप्रतिको गैरदलित वर्गको दृष्टिकोणलाई प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । दलितहरूले समाजमा कथित उच्च जातिका मानिसहरूबाट घृणापूर्ण व्यवहार सहनुपरेको पीडालाई कविताको आरम्भमै प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । दलितहरू समाजका अपरिहार्य श्रमिक र शिल्पी हुन् । उनीहरूले अत्यावश्यकिय सामान उत्पादन नगर्ने र अरूले धिन मान्ने काम उनीहरूले नगर्ने हो भने समाजमा गम्भीर समस्या उत्पन्न हुन्छ । समाजका लागि यस्ता जरुरी आवश्यकताका काम गर्ने शिल्पीहरूले स्नेह र सम्मान पाउनुपर्नेमा उल्टो दुर दुर सहनुपरेको कुरा कवितामा व्यक्त गरिएको छ । कवितामा अरूहरूले जति दुत्कारे पनि धार लगाउने कामबाट आफू कहिल्यै पछि नहट्ने दृढता म पात्रबाट प्रकट गरिएको छ । त्यसरी दुत्कार्दै डुक्रनेहरूलाई म पात्रले दैत्यको संज्ञा दिएको छ । त्यस्ता दैत्यहरूको डुक्राइ कायम रहुन्जेल आफूले खुकुरी, खुँडा र तरवार बनाइरहने उद्घोष पनि उसले गरेको छ । समाजमा विद्यमान अव्यवस्थाका भाडी नफाँडेसम्म हँसिया, खुर्पा र बन्चरो बनाइरहने दृढता पनि म पात्रले प्रकट गरेको छ । उपेक्षाका बाबजुद आफू कर्तव्यबाट विचलित नहुने म पात्रको विश्वासलाई कवितामा यसरी व्यक्त गरिएको छ :

पस्नै नदिइयोस् घरभित्र  
कालो कानुन बनाएर  
या पारियोस् भोकभोकै  
रोक्दिनँ म मेरो काम ।

आरनमा तताएर काँचो फलाम  
म घनले पिटिरहेछु पिटिरहेछु  
मानौँ सँगसँगै  
हिक्राइरहेछु तिनीहरूको टाउकामा ।

(पृ. ३५)

यतिबेलाका दलितहरू उहिलेका जस्तो जति दलनमा पारे पनि बिनाप्रतिक्रिया सहेर बसिरहने सोच र स्वभावका छैनन् । समयको परिवर्तनले उनीहरूमा पनि परिवर्तन ल्याइसकेको छ । आफूमाथि भइरहेको दलनलाई अब उनीहरू बुझ्न सक्ने भइसकेका छन् । माथिको कवितांशमा कथित उच्च जातिका मानिसका घरमा पस्न नदिने चलनलाई म पात्रले कालो कानुनको संज्ञा दिनुले कवितामा उक्त

कानूनप्रति उसको अस्वीकृति प्रस्ट रूपमा भल्केको देखिएको छ । यहाँ दलितहरूलाई भोकभोकै पारिएको कुरा पनि म पात्रले उठाएको छ । विगतमा दलितहरूलाई धनोपार्जन र यसको सङ्ग्रह गर्न निषेध गरिएको थियो । न्यूनतम आजीविकाका लागि बालीघरे प्रथा चलाइएको थियो । कथित उच्च जातका मानिसहरूले वर्ष वर्षमा र विभिन्न चाडपर्वमा दिने न्यूनतम भागबाट उनीहरूले गुजारा चलाउनुपर्थो । यस्तो परिपाटीले उनीहरूलाई भोकै पाथ्यो तापनि दलितहरूले समाजप्रतिको आफ्नो पेसागत दायित्वलाई निरन्तरता दिइराखे भन्दै दलितहरूको श्रमको मूल्यमा भएको ठगीको घुमाउरो ढङ्गले विरोध गरिएको छ ।

कविताको शीर्षकका रूपमा आएको 'धार' कुनै हतियार विशेषको सामान्य धार होइन । यो त समाजमा विद्यमान जातीय उचनीचको सामाजिक विभेदलाई समूल नष्ट गर्ने धार हो । कवितामा म पात्रले मानिसका विवेकहरू र पाइलाहरू एक दिन धारिला बन्ने विश्वास व्यक्त गरेको छ । माटाका कण कण धारिला भएका दिन र सडकमा धारिला मानिसहरू चम्केका दिन पहाडसमेत धारसँग भुक्ने छ भन्ने कुरामा म पात्र विश्वस्त छ । त्यसैले जतिसुकै सामाजिक उत्पीडन खप्नुपरे पनि हतियार बनाउने र त्यसमा धार लगाउने कामबाट कहिल्यै पछि नहट्ने प्रतिरोधी चेतनायुक्त अठोट म पात्रका माध्यमबाट व्यक्त गरिएको छ ।

'हजुरको बुट' कविताले पनि सामाजिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध प्रतिरोधी आवाज प्रस्तुत गरेको छ । प्रकाश गुरागाईँद्वारा रचना गरिएको यस सार्की जातिका मानिसले कथित उच्च जातिका मानिसबाट भोगिरहेको दलनलाई विषय बनाइएको छ र त्यस्तो दलनबाट आजित दलित पात्र सार्कीले व्यक्त गरेको सामाजिक उत्पीडनविरुद्धको प्रतिरोधलाई कवितामा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

समाजको संरचनालाई नियाल्दा यो कसैको पनि निजी हुन सक्ने देखिँदैन । तथापि समाजका प्रभुत्वशाली वर्गले समाजलाई निजी भैँ ठानी आफ्नो अनुकूलका अनेक सामाजिक कानून लागु गरेको हुन्छ । त्यस्ता सामाजिक कानूनबाट समाजका अरू मानिसले दमनअपमान भोग्नुपरिरहेको हुन्छ तर सारमा मानिस कोही पनि अपमानित जिन्दगी बिताउन चाहँदैन । जोकोही किन नहोस् मानिस सम्मानको अपेक्षा गर्छ । सबै मानिसमा यस्तो अपेक्षा भइरहँदा हाम्रो समाजका दलितहरू भने अनाहकमा निरन्तर अपमान भोग्न बाध्य छन् । 'हजुरको बुट' कविताको आरम्भमै दलितहरूले भोगिरहेको अपमानबारे यसो भनिएको छ :

हजुरको बुट सुम्सुम्याइरहँदा

म सोचिरहन्छु

किन मान्छे कसैको जुत्ताजति पनि सम्मानित हुन सक्दैन ?

(पृ. ४३)

जुत्ता मानिसले जमिनमा टेक्नलाई लगाउँछ। जुत्ताले टेक्ने भुइँ कुनै न कुनै रूपमा धुलो आदि फोहोरले ढाकिएको हुन्छ। जुत्तालाई मरमत गर्नुपर्दा वा टल्काउनुपर्दा कुनै पनि जुत्ताधारकले सफा पारेर चर्मकारकहाँ ल्याउँदैन। आखिर आफूलाई स्वघोषित उच्च ठान्ने मानिसले ल्याएको फोहोर त्यही दलित चर्मकारले सफा गरिदिन्छ र जुत्ता चम्काइदिन्छ तर यस्तो गुन लगाउने मानिसलाई भने उच्च भनाउँदा मानिसहरू किन तुच्छ ठान्छन् भनी प्रश्नात्मक प्रतिरोधी आवाज कवितामा प्रकट गरिएको छ। समाजका कथित उच्च जातिका मानिसबाट चर्मकार दलितले भोगिरहेको सामाजिक उत्पीडनलाई कवितामा यसरी प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ :

जुत्ता खोलेपछि  
 अलि पर तर्केर बस्नुहुन्छ  
 ताकि नछोइयोस् हजुरलाई  
 यी जुत्ता छोएका हातले  
 नलागोस् पालिसको रङ  
 हजुरको सफेद पोशाकमा  
 नआओस् पसिनाको गन्ध  
 हजुरले चपाएको पानमा मिसिएर  
 र देख्नु नपरोस्  
 आफ्नै जुत्ताले कति धेरै फोहोर टेकेर जोगाउँछ हजुरलाई ।

(पृ. ४४)

राज्यले छुवाछुतविरुद्धको कानून बनाई लागु गरेको सदियौँ भइसकेको छ। यता समाजमा चलनका रूपमा यस छुवाछुतले जरा गाडिरहेको छ। प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा दलितसँग काम लिने तर उनीहरूप्रति अछुतको व्यवहार गर्ने सामाजिक बेथितिको विरोध गरिएको छ। कविताको 'हजुर' पात्र जुत्ता पालिस गराउने क्रममा छोइन्छ कि भनी 'म' पात्रबाट अलग्गै बसेको छ। ऊ जुत्ताबाट अलग बसेको होइन। फोहोरबाट पनि अलग बसेको होइन किनकि जुत्ता र फोहोर 'हजुर' पात्रकै हुन्। ऊ अलग बस्न खोजेको 'म' पात्रसँग हो किनकि 'हजुर' पात्रका नजरमा 'म' पात्र दलित हो। दलितहरू यसरी अस्पृश्यताका नाममा समाजमा कस्तोसम्म उत्पीडन भोगिरहेका छन् भन्ने कुरा माथिको कवितांशमा सङ्केत गरिएको छ।

मानिसको जैविक स्वरूपलाई नियाल्ने हो भने कोही उच्च र कोही निच हुनुपर्ने कुनै कारण छैन। मानव सभ्यताको विकासका क्रममा शक्तिशाली वर्गले आफू रहेको समाजका अरू मानिसलाई कमजोर पारेर शक्तिमा आफू टिकिरहनका लागि अनेक प्रचलनहरू चलाए। त्यसैको एउटा उदाहरण छुवाछुत पनि हो। यही छुवाछुतको भावनाले दलितहरूलाई कथित उच्च जातिका मानिसका घरमा प्रवेश निषेध गरियो। कवितामा यस विषयलाई यसरी प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ :

हजुर जस्तै भाग्यमानी छन् यी जुत्ता  
घर पुग्नेवित्तिकै हजुरसँगै भित्रै जान्छन्  
मै'सापले आफ्नै हातले जतनसाथ खोलिदिनुहुन्छ  
र मिलाएर राखिदिनुहुन्छ न्याकमाथि  
जहाँ पालिस दल्ने मान्छे कहिल्यै जान सकेन ।  
माफ गर्नुहोला हजुर  
धेरै वर्षपछि आज मलाई  
यो कालो पालिस  
हजुरकै अनुहारमा पोत्न मन लागेको छ ।

(पृ. ४४-४५)

जुत्ता र मान्छेको तुलना शोभनीय हुँदैन तथापि 'हजुरको बटु' कविताको 'म' पात्रले 'हजुर' पात्रको जुत्तासँग आफ्नो तुलना गरेको छ । तुलनाका क्रममा उसले जुत्तालाई निकै भाग्यमानी पाएको छ । उसले आफूभन्दा जुत्तालाई भाग्यमानी पाउनुको पहिलो कारण 'हजुर' पात्रसँगै जुत्ताले पनि घरमा निर्बाध प्रवेश पाउँछ । दोस्रो कारण त्यस जुत्तालाई 'हजुर' पात्रकी मै'सापले जतनसाथ खोलिदिन्छन् र मिलाएर न्याकमा राखिदिन्छन् । यहाँ जुत्ता 'म' पात्रभन्दा यस मानेमा भाग्यमानी ठानियो कि जुत्ताले मै'सापको स्नेहपूर्ण स्पर्श पनि पायो तर के 'म' पात्रले ऊ बाँचेको समाजमा कथित उच्च वर्गबाट कहिल्यै यस्तो स्नेह र सम्मान पायो त ? अहँ कहिल्यै पाएन । त्यसैले ऊ जुत्ता जति पनि भाग्यमानी ठहरिएन । यसो भन्नुको आशय नेपाली समाजका कथित उच्च वर्गका मानिसहरूले निम्न जाति कहलिएका मानिसहरूलाई जुत्ताभन्दा पनि निच ठान्ने गरेका छन् र उनीहरूको चरम अवमूल्यन गर्ने गरेका छन् भन्ने हो । यस्तो बेथितिका सर्जक, पालक र संरक्षक अरू कोही नभएर कवितामा आएको 'हजुर' वर्ग नै हो । यो गुप्त रहस्यको बोध कविताको दलित पात्र 'म'लाई भइसकेको छ । अब ऊ यस्तो दलनविरुद्ध सचेत मात्र होइन जागरुक पनि भइसकेको छ । त्यसैले ऊ जुत्तामा दल्ने कालो पालिस 'हजुर' सर्वनामले सम्बोधित दलक वर्गको अनुहारमा दल्ने तयारीमा छ । यसरी दलक वर्गको अनुहारमा कालो पोत्न तयार हुनुले उक्त कवितामा दलितका तर्फबाट सामाजिक उत्पीडनविरुद्धको प्रतिरोध प्रखर रूपमा प्रकट भएको प्रस्ट हुन्छ ।

आफरमा सङ्गृहीत 'आरन र डम्फू' सामाजिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध प्रतिरोधी चेतनाले सशक्त अर्को एक कविता हो । यसका रचनाकार कवि राजु स्याङ्तान हुन् । यस कवितामा कविले समाजका उत्पीडित दलितहरूप्रति सहानुभूति व्यक्त गरेका छन् । साथसाथै दलित उत्पीडनका विरुद्ध आवाज पनि दिएका छन् ।

प्रस्तुत कवितामा दलितहरूलाई 'तिमी' शब्दले सम्बोधन गरिएको छ । 'म' पात्रका रूपमा भने कवि स्वयम् उपस्थित छन् । कवितामा कामी, दमाई र मुसहर जातिका दलितहरूको समाजप्रतिको त्याग र उनीहरूको स्वभावबारे चर्चा गर्दै उनीहरूलाई दलनविरुद्ध जागरुक हुन उत्प्रेरणा दिइएको छ ।

कविताभर दलितहरू मौन छन् तर कवि भने एकोहोरो उत्प्रेरक भई प्रस्तुत भएका छन् । कविताको आरम्भमा कविले कामी पात्रलाई आगाको सन्तान भनेका छन् र कामी समुदायका मानिसहरू आगासँग खेल्दाखेल्दै रापिलो कोइला जस्तै भइसकेको बताएका छन् । अझै आगो डराएको आफूले नसुनेको विचार पनि कविले प्रकट गरेका छन् । कविले यसरी कविताको सम्बोधित पात्र 'तिमी' अर्थात् कामी पात्रलाई उसको शक्ति र स्वभावका बारेमा बताउँदै उत्प्रेरित गरेका छन् ।

प्रस्तुत कवितामा कविले दलित समुदायको अर्को पात्र दमाईलाई लिएका छन् । उसलाई पनि कविले 'तिमी' भनेरै सम्बोधन गरेका छन् । कविले सम्बोधितलाई आफ्नो जिन्दगी सियोको टुप्पामा उनेर अमानवीयताको धारसँग खेल्दाखेल्दै सियोभन्दा तिखो सङ्गिन भएको बताएका छन् । सङ्गिन लत्रेको आजसम्म नदेखेको भन्दै कविले सम्बोधितलाई समाजमा सङ्गिन भैँ जुभारु बन्न उत्साह दिएका छन् । कवितामा कविले मुसहर पात्रलाई पनि लिएका छन् । प्रस्ट रूपमा मुसहर भनेर उल्लेख नगरिए पनि तराईमा मुसहर जातिका मानिस हली र माटो काटी गरा सम्प्याउने श्रमिक भई खट्ने गरेका छन् । कवितामा यस्तै कामको उल्लेख गरिएकाले सम्बोधित पात्र मुसहर रहेको स्पष्ट हुन्छ । मुसहरहरू पनि समाजमा दलित समुदायकै मानिएका छन् । उनीहरू पनि समाजका कथित उच्च वर्गबाट छुवाछुतजन्य उत्पीडन भोगिरहेका छन् । कविले सम्बोधितलाई जमिनदारका गरा सम्प्याउन माटासँग खेल्दाखेल्दै माटाजस्तै भइसकेको एक पहाड मानेका छन् । पहाड कहिल्यै नभुक्ने हुनाले समाजसामु दलितहरूले पनि भुक्न नहुने आशय व्यक्त गरेका छन् । दलितहरूले पनि समाजमा स्वाभिमानको शिर उच्च पारी बाँचन पाउनुपर्ने भए पनि मनुस्मृतिका पानाहरूले उनीहरूलाई थिचिरहेको कविले खुलासा गरेका छन् । मनुस्मृति मनु ऋषिका विचारहरू समेटिएको ग्रन्थ हो । सामाजिक थिति बाँध्ने उद्देश्यले तयार पारिएको उक्त ग्रन्थमा शास्त्रीय विधान खडा गरी शूद्र अर्थात् दलितहरूमाथि निर्मम प्रहार गरिएकाले अब दलितहरूले मानिस भएर बाँचन पाउने अधिकारको रक्षाका लागि विभेदकारी मनुस्मृतिका पानाहरू च्यात्नुपर्छ भन्दै कविले सम्बोधित पात्रमा प्रतिरोधी चेतना पैदा गर्ने प्रयास गरेका छन् ।

एउटै समाजमा बसेपछि उत्पीडितहरूबिच एकता र सहकार्य हुनुपर्छ । त्यसो भयो भने कुनै उत्पीडितले एकलो महसुस गर्नुपर्दैन र जस्तोसुकै उत्पीडनविरुद्ध डटेर सङ्घर्ष गर्न सकिन्छ । कविताको 'म' पात्र सम्बोधितलाई यसरी ढाडस दिँदै छ :

यो मानिस बन्ने लडाइँमा  
तिमी एकलै छैनौ साथी  
बिलकुल तिमी एकलै छैनौ ।

इतिहासमा मासिन नसकेको  
एउटा राष्ट्र  
जसलाई विभेद गराउन सिकायो तिमीमाथि  
र अन्जानमै गरायो छोइछिटो  
म उही राष्ट्रको एक अनागरिक  
अब डम्फुभिन्न वारुद बोकेर ल्याउँछु  
तिमी आगो बनेर सल्किदिनू ।

(पृ. ८०)

प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा 'म' पात्र दलितहरूमाथि भइरहेको सामाजिक उत्पीडनको प्रतिरोधका लागि साथ दिन तयार भएको छ । उसले आफू पनि राज्यबाट अनागरिक बनाइएको अनुभव गरेको छ । राज्यले आफूलाई पनि विभेद गर्न सिकाएको र आफूले विगतमा दलितहरूप्रति अनजानमा त्यसो गरेको खुलाउँदै त्यस्तो छुवाछुतजन्य सामाजिक विभेदविरुद्ध लडाइँ गर्नुपर्ने आवश्यकता 'म' पात्रले औँल्याएको छ । त्यस्तो लडाइँका लागि आफू पनि त्याग गर्न तत्पर रहेकाले दलितहरू एक्लो नभएको भनी 'म' पात्रले साहस प्रदान गरेको छ । लडाइँका लागि 'म' पात्र डम्फुभिन्न वारुद बोकेर आउने र सम्बोधित 'तिमी' पात्रलाई आगो भएर सल्किदिन आग्रह गरेकाले कवि जैविक बुद्धिजीवीका रूपमा उपस्थित भएका छन् र दलितका आवाज बोलिदिएर दलनविरुद्धको प्रतिरोधमा साथ दिएका छन् ।

आफर सङ्ग्रहमा सङ्कलित 'कैँची' दलित उत्पीडनविरुद्ध प्रतिरोधी आवाज मुखरित भएको अर्को कविता हो । प्रस्तुत कविता कवि हरिशरण परियारले रचना गरेका हुन् । कैँची दमाई जातिका मानिसहरूको एक पेसासम्बद्ध औजार हो । दमाई जातिका मानिसहरूले सदियौँदेखि कपडा सिउने पेसा अवलम्बन गर्दै आएका छन् । छुवाछुतजन्य विभेदमा पारिएका दमाईहरू समाजमा दलित कहलिएका छन् । सामाजिक उत्पीडनको प्रहारले किनारामा पुऱ्याइएका यस जातिका मानिसमा बिस्तारै उत्पीडनविरोधी चेतना जागृत हुँदै गएको कवितामा खुलासा गरिएको छ ।

'कैँची' कवितामा कुनै पनि आकारलाई एउटा सिर्जना मानिएको छ । आकार निर्माणमा कैँचीको भूमिका महत्त्वपूर्ण हुन्छ । तसर्थ कैँची एउटा सिर्जनाका लागि प्रयोग गरिने हतियार हो । यसले कहिले दायाँ, कहिले बायाँ, कहिले माथि अनि कहिले अर्धगोलाकार रूपमा दौडेर मूर्त आकार निर्माण गर्छ । यसले निर्माण गर्ने मूर्त आकार भनेको वस्त्रको हो । जुन वस्त्रधारणले आजको सभ्य मानिएका मानिसको लाज ढाकिएको हुन्छ । कवितामा कैँचीले कपडाका थानमा दौडेर ढाकाटोपी, कुर्तापाइजामा आदि पोसाकका साथै राष्ट्रिय भन्डाको आकारसमेत निर्माण गर्न सक्छ भनिएको छ । यस्तो हतियार कैँची चलाउने शिल्पी दमाईहरूको पेसा महान् हुनुपर्ने हो किनकि मानव सभ्यतालाई जीवन्त

तुल्याउनमा दमाईहरूको भूमिका महत्त्वपूर्ण छ तर उनीहरूको मान र महत्त्व मानव समाजले कहिल्यै बुझ्न सकेन । उल्टै उत्पीडनमा पारिरह्यो भन्ने कविको आशय हो ।

कैँची आफ्नो धारसँग अनभिज्ञ हुन्छ । यो औँलाद्वारा निर्देशित हुन्छ, परिचालित हुन्छ । कविका अनुसार दमाईहरू पनि कैँचीको धार भैँ शक्तिशाली भएर पनि आफ्नो शक्तिसँग अनभिज्ञ रहे । उनीहरू समाजका प्रभुत्वशाली वर्गबाट निर्देशित भइरहे, परिचालित भइरहे । यसको परिणामले उनीहरूमा उत्पीडन ल्यायो । उनीहरूका कर्मका सिमाना कोरिए । उनीहरूले समाजका कथित उच्च वर्गको निर्देशनमा दमाईलाई तोकिएको कामबाहेक अरु काम गर्न पाएनन् । दमाईमाथि भएको यो अमानवीय दलन र घेराबन्दीविरुद्ध कविले भनेका छन् :

आज थाहा छ मलाई,  
अरु जस्तै अमानवीय बन्यो भने कैँची  
काटिन सक्छ लाजको वस्त्र

(पृ. ९२)

दलितहरूले इतिहासको लामो कालखण्डदेखि घोर अमानवीय उत्पीडन भोग्दै आए । उनीहरूलाई समाजका अन्य मानिसले भोगिरहेका अधिकारबाट वञ्चित गरियो । विगतका दलितहरूले यो दुर्व्यवहार लाई बाध्यवश सह्ये । अब यस्तो दलन जारी रहे दलितहरू आफ्नो अस्तित्वरक्षार्थ प्रतिरोधका लागि तयार रहेको आशय माथिको कवितांशमा व्यक्त गरिएको छ । अरु अर्थात् कथित उच्च वर्ग त दलितप्रति सदियौँदेखि अमानवीय बन्दै आयो । यदि कैँची पनि त्यसरी नै अमानवीय बन्यो भने समाजका दलकहरूका लाजका वस्त्र काटिन सक्ने चेतावनीपूर्ण प्रतिरोधी आवाज माथिको कवितांशमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

### आर्थिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध

सभ्यताको विकाससँगै मानिसले अर्थ वा धन सञ्चयमा ध्यान पुऱ्याउन थाल्यो । यतिबेलासम्म आइपुग्दा यो मानिसको जीवन बाँच्ने मुख्य आधार बन्यो र यसले सम्पन्न मानिस समाजको शक्तिशालीसमेत बन्ने भयो । धनहीन मानिस भने कमजोर बन्ने भयो । यस्तो वस्तु धनको उपाजन गर्न र सञ्चय गर्न दलितलाई निषेध गरियो । यसबाट सदियौँदेखि उनीहरू आर्थिक उत्पीडनमा परे । आफर कविता सङ्ग्रहमा सङ्कलित 'सास्तीको सर्ग' कविताले दलितमाथि थोपरिएको यस आर्थिक उत्पीडनलाई विषय बनाएको छ । यसको रचना कवि माधव घिमिरे 'अटल'ले गरेका हुन् । यस कवितामा कामी समुदायका दलितको व्यथावेदनालाई व्यक्त गर्दै दलितमाथि भएको उत्पीडनविरुद्धको प्रतिरोध पनि प्रकट गरिएको छ ।

कवितामा 'जसे' नाम गरेको पात्र छ । ऊ आफ्नो आरनमा नियमित काममा तल्लीन छ । आरनमा हुरहुराइरहेको अग्निज्वालाले एकाएक जसेको जोसमा पाइन भरेको भान हुन्छ । यो पाइन भनेको हतियारमा भरिने शक्ति हो । हतियारमा यसलाई आगाले होइन कि पानीले भरिन्छ । पाइन भरेपछि फलाममा नरमपना हटेर कडापन सिर्जना हुन्छ । कवितामा हतियारमा नभई मान्छेमा पाइन भरिएको कुरा छ । यो पाइन हुरहुराउँदो अग्निज्वालाले जसेमा अचानक भरेको कुरा छ । यसको आशय आगाका संसर्गले जसेमा अचानक जोस उत्पन्न भयो भन्नु हो । जसेमा उत्पन्न भएको जोस भनेको दलनविरुद्धको जोस हो । जसेहरू निरन्तर उत्पीडनमा छन् । यस्तो उत्पीडनले उनीहरू आहत छन् । अतः त्यस्तो उत्पीडनबाट मुक्त हुन जसेहरूलाई पाइनको आवश्यकता छ । कवितामा जसेहरूको उत्पीडनलाई उसका बराजु बार बार बरबराएको घटनाको स्मरण गर्दै यसरी प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ :

बरबराउँथे बराजु बारबार-

किन भइयो भीरको भकुन्डो ?

न एक चिम्टी मुस्कान ओठमा

न एउटा लैनो गाई गोठमा

न एक धरो वस्त्र आडमा

न एक त्यान्द्रो पराल मचानमा ।

(पृ. ५९)

जसेहरूसँग आपत्मा काम चलाउने सञ्चित धन केही पनि छैन । न त उनीहरूका हाँ गोठमा एउटा लैनो गाई छ, न त मचानमा एक त्यान्द्रो पराल नै । न त उनीहरूले एक धरो वस्त्र नै आडमा राम्ररी लगाउन पाएका छन् । यस्तो अभावै अभावमा जिन्दगी विताउनुपर्दा उनीहरूका ओठमा एक चिम्टी मुस्कान पनि छैन । उनीहरूका लागि यो सर्ग अर्थात् सृष्टि सास्तीको छ । यही सृष्टि अरूलाई भने मस्तीको लागि रहेको हुँदो हो । दलितहरूलाई यस्तो अवस्थामा पुऱ्याउने मुख्य कारक भनेको समाजमा विद्यमान कुरीति नै हो । दलितहरूले अर्थोपार्जनका काम गर्न नपाएका कारण र धन सञ्चयका काम गर्न नपाएका कारण उनीहरू विपन्न भए । उनीहरू कथित उच्च जातिका मानिसले वर्ष वर्षमा दिने बालीमा मात्र निर्भर हुनुपर्ने सामाजिक व्यवस्थाका कारण उनीहरूले जहिल्यै अभावमा पिल्सिनुपर्थो । दलितहरूले आर्थिक विपन्नताबाट माथि उठ्न अन्य पेसा गर्न सक्थे तर उनीहरूलाई पेसा परिवर्तन गर्न प्रभुत्वशाली वर्गले निषेध गरेको थियो । दलितहरू यसरी अभावग्रस्त बन्नुको कारण उनीहरू आफू होइनन् भन्ने आशय कवितामा व्यक्त गरिएको छ । यसका माध्यमबाट कवितामा दलितहरूलाई आर्थिक रूपले किनारामा पुऱ्याउने रीतिको प्रतिरोध गरिएको छ ।

## राजनीतिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध दलित प्रतिरोध

यो संसारमा जन्म लिएका हरेक मानिसको उचित स्थान र मान हुनुपर्छ । यदि कसैले कसैलाई उसको स्थानबाट विस्थापित गर्न खोज्छ र मान मेट्न खोज्छ भने प्रतिरक्षाको प्राकृतिक अधिकार सबैलाई हुन्छ । मानिसले आफूमाथि भएका शोषण, दमन, उत्पीडन, अधिकारहरूबाट वञ्चितीकरण आदिका विरुद्ध सङ्घर्ष गर्छ । यस्ता गतिविधि गर्ने मञ्च वा माध्यम राजनीति बनेको छ । यही राजनीतिका कारण समाजले परिवर्तन हासिल गर्न सकेको पनि छ । यस्तो परिवर्तनका लागि मानिसहरूले ज्यानसमेत गुमाएका पनि छन् । कतिपय यस्ता परिवर्तनका लागि जनताको सहयोग लिएर पछि नेतृत्ववर्ग बेखबर बनेका र जनताका समस्या भने ज्यूँका त्युँ रहेको अवस्था पनि छ । दलित समस्याका सन्दर्भमा यस्तै भएको छ । समाज परिवर्तनका कैयौँ आन्दोलनमा दलितहरू प्रयोग गरिए तर परिवर्तित राजनीतिले दलितका समस्यालाई सम्बोधन गर्न नसकेको यथार्थलाई 'आगोको बर्षा' कविताले प्रस्ट्याउन खोजेको छ । 'आगोको बर्षा' कवि मुक्तान थेबाद्वारा रचना गरिएको कविता हो । यस कवितामा विगतका परिवर्तनका लागि भएका आन्दोलनहरूमा दलितहरूको पनि जागरुक सहभागिता भएको तर ती परिवर्तनहरू जनअपेक्षा पूरा गर्न असमर्थ रहेको कुरा कवितामा यसरी व्यक्त गरिएको छ :

यो थिचोमिचो, शोषण, दलन  
अभाव, छुवाछुत र भोक  
यही भुङ्ग्रोमा गालेर  
उभ्याउनु छ मलाई पनि  
उन्मुक्तिको सगरमाथा ।

(पृ. ६८)

प्रस्तुत साक्ष्यमा ख्याकुलेको चेतना दलनविरुद्ध जागृत भइसकेको छ । आफूमाथि भइरहेको थिचोमिचो, शोषण र दलनलाई अनि अभाव, छुवाछुत र भोकलाई उसको आरानकै भुङ्ग्रामा गालेर उसलाई उन्मुक्तिको सगरमाथा उभ्याउन मन लागेको छ । ख्याकुलेको यो अभिव्यक्तिलाई नियाल्दा ऊ निरन्तरको दलनबाट आजित छ र आक्रोशित पनि छ । त्यसैले उसको चेतना दलनविरुद्ध उभइसकेको छ । अरू मानिसको भैं उसको पनि स्वाभिमान छ र ऊ पनि उन्मुक्तिका साथ बाँच्न चाहन्छ । उन्मुक्तिको चाहना भए पनि ऊ उपायहीन थियो । संयोगवश राजनीतिकर्मी नेता पुष्पे ख्याकुलेकै मनका कुरा भन्न आउँदा ऊ उत्साही भयो । ख्याकुलेले मुक्तिसङ्घर्षका लागि कान्छो छोरो सुम्पे भनेको छ :

ऊ...मेरो कान्छालाई लैजा  
तर याद राख पुष्पे

हारेर आइस् भने

यो घन

बज्जिने छ तेरो टाउकामा ।

(पृ. ६९)

प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा समाजमा विद्यमान बेथितिविरुद्ध सङ्घर्ष गर्न ख्याकुलेले आफ्नो कान्छो छोरो नै सुम्पेको छ । उसले सङ्घर्षका लागि छोरो सुम्पेको मात्र छैन कि उक्त नेतालाई हारेर नआउन पनि सचेत गराएको छ । सँगसँगै यदि हारेर आएमा आफ्नो फलाम पिट्ने घन पुष्पेका टाउकामा बजार्ने घोषणासमेत गरेको छ । ख्याकुलेको यो अभिव्यक्ति र उत्पीडनविरुद्धको सङ्घर्षका लागि कान्छो छोरो सुम्पेको घटनालाई दृष्टिगत गर्दा उसमा राजनीतिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध प्रतिरोधी चेतना प्रखर रूपमा जागृत भएको देखिन्छ ।

### निष्कर्ष

आफर दलितमाथि भएका उत्पीडनका विरुद्धको प्रतिरोधी चेतनालाई केन्द्रमा राखेर रचना गरिएका कविताहरूको सङ्ग्रह हो । छुवाछुतलगायत अनेक उत्पीडनका सिकार बनेका दलितहरूमा विस्तारै जातीय चेतना जागृत हुँदै गयो । उनीहरूले अस्तित्व रक्षाका लागि प्रकट गर्न थालेको प्रतिरोधी आवाजको प्रभाव नेपाली कवितामा पनि पऱ्यो र आफर कवितासङ्ग्रहका कवितामा पनि यही दलित उत्पीडनविरुद्ध सशक्त प्रतिरोध प्रकट गरिएको छ ।

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनका लागि सोदेश्य छनोट गरिएका कविताका दलित पात्रहरू कोही स्वयम् वाचाल छन् । कोही भने मौन देखिन्छन् । तिनका लागि कविले जैविक बुद्धिजीवीका रूपमा सहानुभूतिका आवाज प्रकट गरेका छन् । अध्ययनका लागि लिइएका कविताहरूमध्ये 'शूद्र शम्बुक' कवितामा मिथकीय सन्दर्भका माध्यमले वर्णवाद तथा शैक्षिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध बलशाली प्रतिरोधी आवाज प्रकट गरिएको छ । 'घौला' कवितामा नेवार समुदायमा विद्यमान जातीय उत्पीडनको सिकार बनेका पोडे जातिले भोगेको सांस्कृतिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध वाचाल प्रतिरोध प्रकट गरिएको छ । 'धार', 'हजुरको बुट' कैँची कवितामा नेपाली समाजका फलामका शिल्पी कामी, सार्की दमाई जातिका मानिसमाथि भएका आर्थिकसामाजिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध प्रतिरोधी आवाज सशक्त पारिएको छ । 'सास्तीको सर्ग' कवितामा दलितहरूमाथि भएको आर्थिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध वाचाल प्रतिरोध प्रकट गरिएको छ । 'आरान र डम्फू' कवितामा दलित पात्र मौन छ तर कविले जैविक बुद्धिजीवीका रूपमा उपस्थित भई दलितमाथिको सामाजिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध सहानुभूतिपूर्वक प्रतिरोधी आवाज प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । 'आगोको वर्षा' कवितामा दलित समस्यालाई सत्तारोहणको भन्दा मात्र बनाइएको विषयप्रति आक्रोश व्यक्त गर्दै त्यस्तो राजनीतिक उत्पीडनविरुद्ध

आगोको वर्षा गराउने प्रतिरोधी आवाज प्रकट गरिएको छ । यस सङ्ग्रहमा दलित र गैरदलित दुई थरी कविका कविताहरू सङ्गृहीत छन् । यस दृष्टिले कवितामा व्यक्त विचारहरू द्रष्टा र भोक्ता गरी दुई रूपमा प्रस्तुत भएका छन् । गैरदलित कविका कवितामा द्रष्टा विचार प्रस्तुत भएका छन् । यसै गरी दलितहरू दलनका स्वयम् भोक्ता भएकाले दलित कविका कवितामा भोक्ता विचार प्रस्तुत भएका छन् । समग्रमा यस सङ्ग्रहका कविताहरू दलित प्रतिरोधी चेतनाका दृष्टिले सशक्त रहेका छन् ।

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