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PRADESH VIKAS

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बागमती प्रदेश सरकार

प्रदेश नीति तथा योजना आयोग

हेटौंडा, नेपाल

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सम्पादक मण्डल

प्रधान सम्पादक

हेमराज भुसाल

सम्पादकहरू

श्री पुष्कल श्रेष्ठ

श्री अमृत कुमार श्रेष्ठ

श्री वीरवहादुर खत्री



प्रकाशक

बागमती प्रदेश सरकार

प्रदेश नीति तथा योजना आयोग,

हेटौंडा, नेपाल

यस जर्नलमा प्रकाशित लेखहरूमा व्यक्त विचारहरू सम्बन्धित लेखकहरूका निजी विचारहरू हुन् र सोले बागमती प्रदेश सरकार प्रदेश नीति तथा योजना आयोगको विचारको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्दैनन्।

(Opinions expressed in the articles published in this Journal are the views of respective authors and do not represent the views of Bagamati Province Government Province Policy and Planning Commission.)

सम्पादकीय

सङ्घ, प्रदेश र स्थानीय तहलाई नीति, योजना र कार्यक्रम तय गर्न सहयोग पुग्ने अनुसन्धानात्मक लेख रचनाहरू प्रकाशन गर्ने हाम्रो मुख्य लक्ष्य हो।

प्रदेश विकास जर्नलको यस अङ्कमा पाँच ओटा अङ्ग्रेजी र दुई ओटा नेपाली भाषाका गरी जम्मा सात ओटा लेखहरू समावेश गरिएका छन्। यस अङ्कमा जेन्ज जेड युगमा नेपालको सङ्घीय शासन प्रणाली, राष्ट्रिय शिक्षा नीतिलाई विश्वव्यापी विषयसँग जोड्ने कार्य, कृषि क्षेत्रमा नीति तथा बजेटको प्रभाव, खाद्य सुरक्षा तथा पोषणको अवस्था, बागमती प्रदेशको आर्थिक तथा सामाजिक रूपान्तरणका अवसर र चुनौतीहरू, व्यवसायिक शासन र नेपालमा यसको अवस्था, नेपालको सन्दर्भमा अधिकारमुखी विकासको अवधारणा र मानव पूँजी योजना ढाँचासँग सम्बन्धित लेखहरू समावेश गरिएका छन्। हाम्रो आग्रहलाई स्वीकार गरी आफ्ना अमूल्य लेख रचना मार्फत सहयोग पुऱ्याउनु हुने विद्वान लेखकहरूप्रति सम्पादक मण्डल हार्दिक कृतज्ञता व्यक्त गर्दछ।

यस जर्नलमा प्रकाशित लेखहरू तीनै तहका सरकारका नेतृत्व वर्ग, योजनाकार, उच्च अधिकारी, विश्वविद्यालय, अनुसन्धानात्मक संस्थाहरू, अध्येताहरू, निजी क्षेत्र, सहकारी, विकास साझेदार, नागरिक समाज, सञ्चार जगत, गैरसरकारी संस्था र विकासमा चासो राख्ने सबैका लागि उपयोगी हुन सक्दछ।

यस अङ्कमा केही कमजोरीहरू रहेका हुन सक्छन्। ती कमजोरीहरू औल्याइ दिनुहुन र आगामी अङ्कलाई थप स्तरीय बनाउन उपयुक्त सुझाव तथा सहयोग उपलब्ध गराई दिनुहुन विद्वान पाठक र लेखकहरूमा सम्पादक मण्डल हार्दिक अनुरोध गर्दछ।

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Nepal's Federal System in the Gen-Z Age: A Planning Perspective

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Abstract

Nepal's transition to a federal governance system following the Constitution of 2015 represents one of the most significant political and administrative transformations in the nation's history. The restructuring of the state into federal, provincial, and local tiers aims to decentralize power, promote inclusive governance, and enable more responsive development planning. This period of institutional change has coincided with the rise of Generation Z (Gen-Z): a demographic shaped by rapid technological advancement, digital literacy, and global interconnectedness. Growing up in an era of social media and constant information flows, Gen-Z possesses unique potential to influence governance, policy discourse, and development priorities.

In a regional planning perspective, the intersection of federalization and the emergence of Gen-Z presents both opportunities and challenges. While institutional adjustments, capacity gaps at subnational levels, and coordination issues continue to shape Nepal's federal transition, youth engagement offers promising avenues for innovation and accountability. Gen-Z's familiarity with digital tools and collaborative platforms can strengthen participatory governance, enhance transparency, and support locally grounded development initiatives.

This paper examines the evolving relationship between Nepal's federal restructuring and the growing civic presence of Gen-Z. It highlights the potential of youth engagement in governance, innovation in regional and local planning, and the strengthening of institutional capacity at provincial and municipal levels. Ultimately, it argues that the meaningful inclusion of Gen-Z in policy dialogue and development planning is essential for realizing the transformative promise of Nepal's federal system and fostering a more participatory and forward-looking governance framework.

Keywords: Decentralization, Engagement, Governance, Institutional capacity & Regional Planning

1. Introduction

Nepal's adoption of a federal democratic republic through the Constitution of Nepal 2015 marked a historic shift toward decentralized governance, inclusive representation, and balanced regional development (World Bank, 2019). The federal system established three constitutionally defined tiers of government: federal, provincial, and local. Concurrently, Nepal is experiencing a demographic transition with the rise of Generation Z—generally defined as individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s. This generation has grown up in an era of rapid technological advancement, globalization, and expanded access to education.

The intersection of federal governance reform and youth transformation presents both opportunities and challenges for Nepal's development trajectory (United Nations Development Programme, 2021). From a regional planning perspective, harnessing the energy, innovation, and aspirations of Gen-Z can strengthen governance processes, enhance civic participation, and contribute to more inclusive and responsive development outcomes.

2. Federalization in Nepal

Federalization in Nepal represents a major restructuring of the state aimed at addressing long-standing issues such as centralized decision-making, regional disparities, and limited local autonomy. The promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal 2015 established a federal democratic republic with three levels of government: federal, provincial, and local. This institutional transformation seeks to bring governance closer to citizens, encourage inclusive political participation, and ensure that development planning reflects the country's diverse social, cultural, and geographic contexts. The establishment of seven provinces and 753 local governments has significantly reshaped Nepal's administrative and development planning framework. Municipalities and rural municipalities now play a central role in implementing development programs, managing local resources, and facilitating citizen participation in planning processes. This restructuring has created opportunities for participatory governance, local innovation, and context-specific development strategies. However, the implementation of federalism has also revealed several institutional and administrative challenges. Many provincial and local governments continue to face technical and capacity constraints in the early stages of federal implementation (World Bank, 2019; United Nations Development Programme,

2021). Coordination among federal, provincial, and local institutions remains complex, sometimes resulting in overlapping mandates and delays in policy implementation. Moreover, variations in institutional capacity among local governments can affect the effectiveness and equity of development outcomes. The key objectives of federalization include:

- *Decentralization of power to provincial and local governments, enabling greater authority over planning, budgeting, and service delivery.*
- *Improved service delivery through governance structures that are more responsive to local needs.*
- *Balanced regional development, addressing long-standing disparities across regions and between urban and rural areas.*
- *Inclusive participation in governance and decision-making, particularly for historically marginalized groups such as women, ethnic minorities, and disadvantaged communities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020).*

Despite these challenges, federalization provides an important foundation for strengthening democratic governance and promoting regionally balanced development. With continued institutional reforms, capacity-building efforts, and active civic engagement—particularly from younger generations the federal system has the potential to significantly transform governance and development planning in Nepal.

3. Regional Planning for Federal Nepal

The Regional planning is: strategic, long-term coordination of land use, infrastructure, and economic development across a broad geographical area to balance urban and rural growth. It maintains and manages resources, reduce regional disparities, and foster sustainable development by bridging the gap between local and national planning. It plays a critical role in ensuring balanced development across provinces and local governments. Those key priorities include:

- *Integrated infrastructure planning*
- *Spatial planning for sustainable urbanization*
- *Regional economic corridors*
- *Climate-resilient development strategies*
- *Balanced rural–urban development*

From a regional planner's perspective, federalization must be supported by evidence-based planning, strong data systems, and participatory governance mechanisms. Gen-Z can support this process through technological innovation, research, and civic engagement.

4. Generation Z in Nepal: Characteristics and Potential

In September 2025, Nepalese Gen-Z uprising has challenged the old-elite political system. Gen-Z protests, prominent in places like Nepal, are driven by widespread anger over corruption, elite privilege (like #NepoKids), lack of economic opportunity, and stifled freedoms, especially concerning social media access. It was triggered by specific by social media bans, these youth-led movements use digital platforms to demand systemic change, greater accountability from unresponsive governments, and reforms addressing inequality. They represent a transformative force in Nepal's society and economy. Key characteristics are:

- *High digital literacy*
- *Strong social and environmental awareness*
- *Global exposure through technology and migration*
- *Interest in entrepreneurship and innovation*
- *Demand for transparency and accountability*

These traits reflect broader global patterns where younger generations demonstrate higher digital engagement, entrepreneurial aspirations, and stronger demands for transparency in governance (United Nations Development Programme, 2021). Gen-Z is particularly active in areas such as: digital entrepreneurship, social media-based civic engagement, environmental activism. technological innovation. These qualities position Gen-Z as an important stakeholder in shaping Nepal's federal future.

5. Challenges in Nepal's Federal Transition

5.1 Public Perception of Federalism

Despite its transformative goals, the implementation of federalism in Nepal has faced growing public skepticism. The creation of provincial governments has increased administrative costs, and many citizens perceive the system as expensive, especially when improvements in public service delivery remain limited. Provinces also continue to rely heavily on fiscal transfers from the federal government, raising concerns about their financial independence and practical relevance. In addition, critics argue that the shift to federalism occurred rapidly, with limited institutional preparation and long-term planning. Ambiguities in the division of powers among federal, provincial, and local governments have further created coordination challenges and administrative overlap.

5.2 Institutional Capacity and Coordination

Many provincial and local governments still face shortages of skilled personnel, technical expertise, and institutional capacity. These limitations affect planning, policy implementation, and service delivery. Weak coordination mechanisms among different levels of government can also lead to delays, duplication of responsibilities, and occasional administrative conflicts.

5.3 Fiscal Federalism and Regional Development

The effectiveness of federalism depends largely on a well-functioning fiscal system. However, issues related to revenue generation, fiscal autonomy, and equitable distribution of resources remain major concerns. Some provinces and local governments continue to experience structural disadvantages in infrastructure, economic opportunities, and human development. Fiscal sustainability and intergovernmental coordination remain central challenges for newly established federal systems, particularly in developing economies (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020).

5.4 Youth Migration and Brain Drain

A significant number of young Nepalis migrate abroad for employment and education, which limits the country's ability to fully utilize its youthful workforce and innovative potential. Overall, these institutional and operational challenges have contributed to public frustration, as many citizens feel that federalism has not yet delivered the expected improvements in governance, inclusiveness, and development, while also adding additional layers of bureaucracy.

6. Opportunities for Strengthening Federalism

Gen-Z want to end corruption and economic inequality in Nepal, and therefore consider possible reforms of the Constitution and partly of regular legislation. Some want to enforce the federal aspects of Nepal, including decentralised control over the budget and the civil service. Others voice the opposite view, to abolish the provincial structure. The way provinces are constructed may contribute to economic development. But for the federal system to be an even better part of the solution, we suggest allocating more authority to the provinces, strengthening the National Natural Resources and Fiscal

Commission and revising the role of political parties. Federalization provides a unique platform for youth participation in governance and development.

6.1 Youth Participation in Local Governance and Digital Transformation

Local governments provide the closest interface between citizens and the state. Youth participation in municipal planning committees, community organizations, and local innovation initiatives can improve governance outcomes. Also Gen-Z can contribute significantly to the modernization of government through digital tools such as:

- *e-governance platforms*
- *open data initiatives*
- *digital public services*
- *civic technology innovations*

Youth participation in governance and digital innovation has increasingly been recognized as an important driver of democratic accountability and inclusive development (United Nations Development Programme, 2021).

6.2 Leadership on Local Economic Development and Environmental Protection

Youth-led enterprises in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, information technology, and creative industries can stimulate regional economies. Additionally, Nepal faces growing climate-related challenges. Young people are increasingly engaged in environmental protection likely climate advocacy, sustainable development, and environmental protection initiatives.

7. Conclusion

Nepal's federal transition presents a historic opportunity to establish a more inclusive, decentralized, and development-oriented governance system. While federalization remains an evolving process, challenges persist in intergovernmental coordination, institutional capacity at provincial and local levels, and the integration of regional planning within the federal framework. Addressing these issues requires continuous policy refinement, capacity development, and clearer mechanisms for collaboration across government tiers.

Simultaneously, Gen-Z offers new energy, creativity, and technological fluency that can enhance governance innovation, transparency, and sustainable development. Supporting youth participation within inclusive policy and regional planning frameworks can

strengthen democratic institutions and promote balanced regional development. Ultimately, the success of Nepal's federal system will hinge on integrating robust governance structures, strategic development planning, and meaningful engagement of young citizens in shaping the nation's future.

8. Strategic Way Forward

Strengthening the effectiveness of Nepal's federal system requires targeted institutional and policy reforms that improve coordination, efficiency, and accountability across federal, provincial, and local governments. Clearer division of powers among the three tiers of government is essential to reduce administrative overlap and strengthen policy implementation. At the same time, enhancing institutional capacity—particularly at provincial and local levels through skilled staffing, technical training, and improved administrative systems will be critical for effective governance and development planning. Fiscal reforms that promote greater financial autonomy and accountability for subnational governments can further support sustainable and responsive governance. At the structural level, periodic institutional review and evidence-based reforms may be necessary to ensure that governance structures remain efficient and responsive. This includes improving intergovernmental coordination mechanisms, strengthening planning institutions, and ensuring that administrative frameworks are aligned with the evolving needs of Nepal's federal system. Key strategic priorities include:

- *Strengthening Institutional Capacity: Invest in professional training, technical expertise, and administrative systems at provincial and local levels.*
- *Expanding Youth Participation: Establish formal platforms for youth engagement in governance, policy dialogue, and local planning processes.*
- *Promoting Digital Governance: Utilize digital technologies to improve transparency, efficiency, and citizen participation in public services.*
- *Supporting Youth Entrepreneurship: Encourage youth-led enterprises through supportive policies, innovation ecosystems, and access to financing.*
- *Enhancing Regional Planning Systems: Strengthen provincial and local planning institutions with better data systems, spatial planning tools, and interdisciplinary expertise.*

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Aligning National Education Priorities with Global agenda in Nepal

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Abstract

Nepal's transition to a federal system has created both opportunities and challenges for aligning national education priorities with global commitments to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which emphasizes inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. This study examines the extent to which Nepal's education policies, periodic plans, and sectoral strategies aligned with SDG 4 during the period 2015–2025. Using a Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) approach, the study reviewed national policy documents, periodic plans, education-sector plans, government reports, and relevant evidence-based studies. The findings show that Nepal's policy framework has increasingly incorporated SDG 4 priorities, particularly universal access, gender equity, inclusion, technical and vocational education, and improved learning outcomes. National and local policies have contributed to expanding educational access, including in rural and marginalized communities.

However, the study identifies persistent gaps between policy commitments and implementation, mainly due to inadequate and uneven financing, limited institutional and technical capacity, weak intergovernmental coordination, and complexities in federal governance. Although national planning and SDG monitoring mechanisms provide strategic direction, the implementation of education policies depends largely on the coordinated roles of federal, provincial, and local governments. The study concludes that stronger evidence-based budgeting, improved coordination, and enhanced local implementation capacity are essential to achieve quality, equitable, and sustainable education in Nepal.

Keywords: *SDG 4, Nepal, federalism, educational planning, policy alignment, qualitative document analysis, school education.*

1. Introduction

The year 2015 marked a dual turning point for Nepal's educational landscape, focused by the declaration of a new federal Constitution and the global acceptance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a participant to the 2030 Agenda, Nepal also committed to SDG 4, which commands equitable, inclusive, and quality education for all (United Nations, 2015; Manandhar & Silwal, Empowering Youth for Sustainable Development Through Mathematical Knowledge: A Quantitative Perspective, 2026). This global mandate required a radical shift in how the state take school education in different circumstances as moving beyond the simple physical access focusing on measurable learning outcomes and lifelong education. But the successful localization of such ambitious international goals depends heavily on the tactical "bridge" provided by national planning frameworks. In the context of Nepal, the National Planning Commission (NPC) serves as the central specialized body for articulating development plans and policies under the common umbrella of the "National Vision," currently expressed through the long-term goal of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali" (National Planning Commission, 2019).

However, a critical gap still remains in understanding the macro-level strategic alignment between commitments in international forum and national budgetary priorities. While the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) functions as the primary implementer, it is the NPC that orchestrates the fiscal and strategic architecture of the Periodic Plans, which dictate the trajectory of school education (Sahani, 2025). The transition from the 14th to the 15th Periodic Plan occurred during a volatile period of political restructuring, where the shift to a federal structure transferred school management to 753 local government units. This transition created a complex governance landscape where the NPC's role in "bridging" national ambitions with global standards became more critical than ever.

The importance of this study lies in its examination of planning efficacy during a decade of transition (2015–2025). Many existing studies focus on school-level challenges or specific pedagogical interventions, yet few analyze the high-level policy coherence between the NPC's strategic documents and global educational mandates (Acharya & Sigdel, 2024). By employing a secondary data analysis, this article evaluates how effectively the NPC has translated the global rhetoric of SDG 4 into actionable national strategies. It argues that while Nepal has made significant strides in aligning its policy language with global mandates, the "bridge" remains fragile due to structural bottlenecks

in resource allocation and the complexities of federalized educational governance. Ultimately, this research provides a vital perspective on the role of central planning bodies in ensuring that global educational goals do not remain mere aspirational documents but are integrated into the heart of national development.

2. Objectives of the study

- Analyze the fiscal coherence and "decoupling" between strategic education goals and budgetary allocations.

3. Limitations

This study primarily focuses on the one decade (2015-2025) of Nepal's efforts in aligning national education priorities with the global agenda. Hence, the recommendations are heavily depended on the review on the policies and data of the same decade.

4. Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it examines how Nepal's national education priorities align with SDG 4 within the federal governance system. It highlights the relationship between policy commitments, education-sector planning, fiscal arrangements, and implementation at federal, provincial, and local levels. The study also identifies gaps between policy intentions and educational outcomes, providing useful insights for strengthening coordination, evidence-based budgeting, local capacity, equity, inclusion, and quality education in Nepal.

5. Literature Review

5.1 Theoretical Framework

This study evaluates the National Planning Commission's (NPC) role through a multi-dimensional framework synthesizing Policy Diffusion Theory, The Planning Nexus, and Principal-Agent Dynamics. Drawing on Policy Diffusion (Simmons et al., 2006), the framework posits that global mandates like SDG 4 function as normative pressures that necessitate "localization" a process where the NPC acts as a strategic translator, re-coding international benchmarks into the domestic "National Vision" (Acharya & Sigdel, 2024). This translation occurs within the Planning Nexus, which distinguishes between the NPC's macro-level strategic oversight and the operational implementation carried out by line ministries. A critical component of this nexus is Policy Coherence, ensuring that long-term educational aspirations are not "decoupled" from the reality of fiscal allocations. Finally, within the context of Nepal's 2017 federal transition, the study employs Principal-Agent

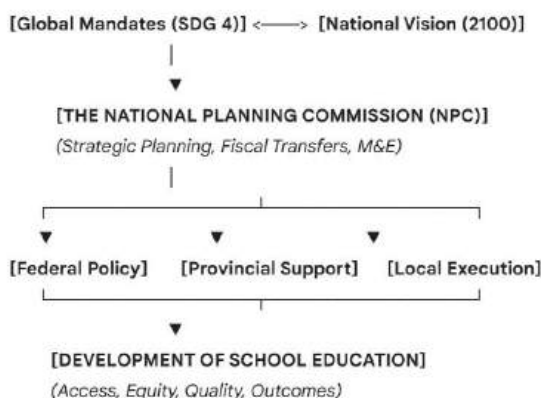
Theory to analyze how the NPC (the principal) utilizes conditional grants and national guidelines to steer 753 local government units (the Agents) toward unified national targets. By integrating these theories, the study moves beyond a descriptive account of planning to a rigorous analysis of how a central authority maintains strategic alignment in a decentralized, globally-influenced educational landscape.

5.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework positions the National Planning Commission (NPC) as the strategic mediator bridging Global Mandates (SDG 4) and the National Image. It maps how international benchmarks are filtered through NPC Periodic Plans and fiscal transfers to drive realized outcomes in school education, such as enrollment, equity, and qualitative learning metrics.

Figure 1

Conceptual Linkages



5.3 Global Mandates and the Localization of SDG 4 in Nepal

The integration of global educational agendas into national policy frameworks is a complex process often described in development literature as "localization." At the heart of this process in Nepal is the tension between Global Mandates, primarily represented by Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), and the National Vision, which seeks to transition the country into a middle-income economy by 2030 (Sahani, 2025). SDG 4 shifts the international focus from the Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) emphasis on primary school "access" to a broader mandate of "quality" and "equity" (UNESCO, 2020). Scholarly discourse suggests that for developing nations, these global goals often act as

"soft law," influencing national priorities through international aid conditionality and global benchmarking (Edwards Jr et al., 2018). In Nepal, this influence is visible in the evolution of the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), which directly mirrored the SDG targets to ensure continued support from the Joint Financing Partners.

5.4 Policy Coherence and the "Apex" Role

The National Planning Commission (NPC) occupies a unique theoretical space as the "Apex Body" for policy coordination. Unlike line ministries that manage day-to-day operations, the NPC is tasked with ensuring "Policy Coherence"- the alignment of sectoral plans with the broader national economic strategy (Policy Research Institute, 2024).

Literature on educational planning in post-conflict and transitional societies emphasizes that the success of such bodies depends on their ability to synchronize diverse interests. In Nepal's case, the National Vision of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepal" provides the philosophical framework for this synchronization, aiming to produce a skilled workforce capable of driving industrial and agricultural growth (National Planning Commission, 2019).

However, Poudel (2021) argues that the NPC often faces a "decoupling" effect, where high-level policy documents align perfectly with global rhetoric, but the actual implementation at the local level remains underfunded and poorly monitored.

Furthermore, the literature highlights a significant shift in the planning paradigm following the 2017 federal elections. The devolution of power to 753 local levels has challenged the traditional, top-down planning model historically championed by the NPC.

As Parajuli (2020) notes, while the Constitution of Nepal (2015) grants local governments the authority to manage basic and secondary education, the NPC still holds the mandate for macro-level targets and "Inter-governmental Fiscal Transfers." This creates a dual-planning environment where the NPC must bridge not only global and national goals but also the interests of central and sub-national governments. Understanding the NPC's role during the 2015–2025 period requires an analysis of how it has navigated these "governance gaps" to ensure that global educational mandates do not get lost in the complexities of domestic federalization.

5. Methodology

6.1 Methods

This study employs a Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) design, grounded in the interpretive paradigm. QDA is particularly suited for this research as it allows for the longitudinal tracking of policy evolution and institutional discourse within the National Planning Commission (NPC) without the fluctuations of primary field bias as well as exploratory research design partially within an interpretivist model to explore the related factors (Biswokarma, 2021; Manandhar, 2026).

6.2 Data Selection and Sources

To operationalize the Conceptual Framework, secondary data was purposively sampled from three hierarchical layers of governance between 2015 and 2025:

- Macro-Strategic Level: The 14th and 15th Periodic Plans and the NPC SDG Status and Roadmap (2016-2030) to identify "Global-National Alignment."
- Sectoral-Operational Level: The School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) and School Education Sector Plan (SESP), which serve as the NPC-vetted bridges for implementation.
- Outcome & Fiscal Level: Economic Surveys and National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) reports to evaluate the "Realized Outcomes" of the planning process.

6.3 Analytical Procedure

Data analysis followed a deductive thematic approach, using the components of the conceptual framework as primary codes. The process involved three distinct phases:

1. Content Mapping: Tracking the verbatim inclusion of SDG 4 language within the NPC's "National Vision" documents.
2. Fiscal Consistency Check: Comparing the NPC's proposed education targets against actual budgetary outturns in the Ministry of Finance's annual Economic Surveys.
3. Governance Synthesis: Analyzing the NPC's federal guidelines to determine how "Global Mandates" are filtered down to the 753 local government units.

6.4 Trustworthiness and Validity

To ensure content validity, the study utilized data triangulation by cross-referencing NPC reports with independent assessments from international agencies (UNESCO, JICA, World Bank). This ensures that the analysis captures not only the "rhetoric of the bridge" but also the "structural reality" of educational development in Nepal (Karki, 2021).

6. Results

7.1 Strategic Alignment of SDG 4 with the National Vision

The analysis of secondary data reveals a deliberate and systematic effort by the National Planning Commission (NPC) to align Nepal's educational targets with the global mandates of SDG 4. During the transition from the 14th Periodic Plan (2016/17–2018/19) to the 15th Periodic Plan (2019/20–2023/24), the NPC shifted its focus from basic literacy to "quality and equitable access," directly mirroring the language of the Incheon Declaration.

According to the 15th Plan, the NPC set a national target to reach a 99% net enrollment rate at the basic level (grades 1–8) and a 65% enrollment rate at the secondary level (grades 9–12) by 2024, which aligns with the SDG 4.1 indicator for universal secondary education (National Planning Commission, 2019).

This strategic synchronization is not merely rhetorical; the NPC's SDG Status and Roadmap (2016–2030) identifies 47 specific indicators for education, demonstrating a high degree of "policy mapping" where global targets are translated into national milestones.

However, the "bridge" between global mandates and national revelation shows a significant emphasis on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a driver for economic prosperity. While SDG 4 emphasizes holistic education, alignment strategy heavily prioritizes "Human Capital Development" to fulfill the national vision of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali." As documented by the CEHRD (2021), the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), which was vetted and approved by the NPC, integrated global equity markets such as the Gender Parity Index (GPI), which successfully reached 1.0 at the primary level by 2020 (CEHRD, 2021).

Yet, the Ministry of Finance (2023) indicates secondary data a tension in resource allocation; while policy documents show 100% alignment in "intent," the national budget for education has fluctuated between 10% and 13% of the total budget, falling short of the international global mandate of 20% recommended by UNESCO.

Furthermore, the alignment process reveals a "Quality-Access Paradox." The NPC's reports indicate that while the "Access" mandate of the MDG era has been successfully bridged into the SDG era, the "Quality" mandate remains elusive. According to the Education Review Office (ERO, 2022),

The National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) reports, frequently cited in NPC evaluation documents, show that learning outcomes in Mathematics and Science have not improved at the same rate as enrollment. This suggests that while the NPC has been effective in administrative alignment-ensuring that national plans "look like" the SDGs to satisfy international donors and global reporting requirements-the functional alignment required to translate these plans into classroom-level quality remains a work in progress. The NPC's role has thus been characterized by high-level strategic integration, but with a lingering gap in ensuring that the "National Vision" for a skilled workforce matches the "Global Mandate" for high-quality, equitable learning.

7.2 Fiscal Decoupling and the Planning-Budgeting Gap

The transition from a unitary to a federal structure following the 2015 Constitution fundamentally altered the National Planning Commission's (NPC) operational mandate in the education sector. Secondary data analysis indicates that while the Constitution granted 753 local government units (LGUs) the executive authority over basic and secondary education, the NPC maintained a critical role as the architect of the Inter-governmental Fiscal Transfer system.

According to the 15th Periodic Plan, the NPC was forced to pivot from a "command-and-control" planning model to one of "strategic facilitation," developing the Local Level Plan Formulation Guideline to ensure that decentralized school management did not diverge from national standards (National Planning Commission, 2019).

This transition was marked by a significant "governance friction," where the NPC had to balance the constitutional autonomy of local levels with the need for a unified "National Vision."

A key finding from the NPC's SDG Localization Resource Book (2020) is the strategic use of conditional grants to maintain policy coherence across the three tiers of government. Because local levels rely heavily on federal transfers for teacher salaries and school infrastructure, the NPC integrated "Global Mandates" into the criteria for these transfers. This ensured that even in a decentralized environment, local school plans remained

aligned with SDG 4 indicators such as "Safe School Environments" and "Inclusion of Marginalized Communities."

However, secondary reports from The Asia Foundation (The Asia Foundation, 2021) suggests that this transition created an "information asymmetry." While the NPC set macro-targets for 2025, many local governments lacked the statistical capacity to track these indicators, leading to a fragmented reporting system where national progress often appeared more robust on paper than in the classroom.

7.3 NPC's Role in Federal Coordination and Local Consistency

The federal transition necessitated the establishment of Provincial Planning Commissions (PPCs), which the NPC mentored to bridge the gap between federal strategy and local execution. Secondary analysis of the Bagmati and Gandaki Province Periodic Plans shows a high degree of "vertical alignment," where provincial goals for vocational education were directly mapped from the NPC's 15th Plan (UNPOG, 2025). Despite this, the JICA Data Collection Survey (2023) highlights that the NPC's oversight role became increasingly complex due to the "multi-layered planning" process. The challenge for the NPC during this period was ensuring that the "National Vision" for education did not become diluted as it passed through provincial filters down to the local level. Ultimately, the NPC's role in the federal era has been to act as a policy anchor, preventing the education system from becoming a collection of 753 disconnected local experiments and keeping it tethered to global quality standards.

7. Discussions

The analysis of secondary data reveals a complex and multifaceted "bridge" constructed by the National Planning Commission (NPC) between 2015 and 2025. This discussion evaluates the efficacy of this bridge through three critical lenses: policy coherence, the fiscal reality of planning, and the structural tensions of federalism. While the NPC has been highly successful in administrative alignment-ensuring that Nepal's national documents reflect the sophisticated language of SDG 4, the functional translation of these mandates into improved school-level outcomes remains inconsistent.

8.1 The Success of Policy Coherence

The NPC has successfully moved Nepal beyond the "Access" obsession of the Millennium Development Goal era. By embedding the "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali" vision into the 15th Periodic Plan, the NPC transformed education from a social welfare service into a strategic economic pillar (National Planning Commission, 2019).

The data shows a clear "vertical integration" where global mandates for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) were prioritized as a national necessity to graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) status. This suggests that the NPC is not merely a passive recipient of global goals but an active architect that recontextualizes international standards to fit the domestic economic agenda. The bridge, in this sense, is architecturally sound at the macro-level.

8.2 The Fiscal Gap: Planning vs. Budgeting

However, a critical point of discussion is the persistent "decoupling" between the NPC's strategic plans and the Ministry of Finance's budgetary reality. While the NPC's SDG Roadmap (2016–2030) calls for an increase in education spending to meet the 20% global benchmark, the actual expenditure has stagnated near 11-12% (NPC, 2017; MoF, 2023).

This fiscal disconnect suggests that the "Global Mandate" for quality education is often compromised by competing national priorities, such as infrastructure and energy. In this context, the NPC acts as a visionary that sets the "ceiling" for aspirations, but the "floor" of implementation is often lowered by fiscal constraints. This leads to a scenario where policy documents are "world-class," but the resources available to 35,000 schools remain "resource-constrained" (Acharya & Sigdel, 2024).

8.3 Federalism and the "Double-Bridge" Challenge

The most significant shift in the NPC's role during this decade has been navigating the federal transition. The NPC now faces a "Double-Bridge" challenge: it must bridge global goals to the national level, and then bridge those national goals down to 753 local governments. The findings indicate that while the NPC uses conditional grants as a mechanism for alignment, this top-down approach occasionally clashes with the constitutional autonomy of local units. As highlighted in the JICA (2023) report, the transition has created a "planning vacuum" where local levels are eager to innovate but lack the technical data-driven framework provided by the NPC. The discussion here shifts toward whether the NPC should remain a "Central Planner" or evolve into a "National Knowledge Hub" that empowers local governments to achieve SDG 4 targets independently.

8.4 Quality vs. Access: The Unfinished Agenda

Finally, the discussion must address the "Quality Gap." Education Review Office (2022) reports that enrollment does not equal learning. The NPC's focus has historically been on quantifiable indicators (enrollment, literacy rates, parity indices) because these are easier

to report to global bodies like UNESCO. However, the "Global Mandate" for Quality Education requires a shift toward qualitative assessments such as teacher competency, pedagogical innovation, and digital equity. As Nepal enters the latter half of the 2020s, the NPC's role must shift from monitoring *inputs* (how many students are in school) to evaluating *outcomes* (what those students are actually learning). The bridge between the "National Vision" of a skilled workforce and the "Global Mandate" of quality education will only be fully realized when the NPC's planning mechanisms prioritize classroom-level quality over high-level statistics.

8.5 Province, LG's and development

Due to diversity and lack of consistence awareness of local and Provincial Planners, the opportunity and challenges of each province are distinct. Nepal geography is enough to deal with three distinct plane and diversity with rural –Urban gap is enough to demonstrate the challenges of development at local Levels to the provincial set up. Yet, the Provincial role is high but the inter coordination mechanism with Province and LGs is minimal and challenges due to role and ToR of the Government. In this periphery, the NPC leading role is still challenging not covering the requirement and demands which is uncovered and without this bottom-top approach the overall development either education sector or any economic of global affiliations o commitment tis not possible to execute and sustain. Thus, education execution (Provincial ministries, Directorates, DEoC, LGs education sections) at the local level is the best approach for the policy implementation as well from the sustainable perspectives. Local Resource utilization and local Planning Process from the bottom-top is the requirement but federalism steps more superiors to the Top to bottom and Province somehow is either hidden or effort is yet to push. Thus, this shows that the NPC role in the policy and global implementation is no doubt aligning to manage the global development process but the approach and Steps are still need to be reviewed and change.

8. Conclusions

The period from 2015 to 2025 was a significant phase for education planning in Nepal, shaped by the transition to federal governance and the country's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). The study finds that Nepal's national plans, education-sector strategies, and policy frameworks have increasingly reflected global priorities related to equitable access, inclusion, quality learning, technical and vocational education, and human capital development. The 14th and 15th Periodic Plans, along with

sectoral education plans, have provided strategic direction for integrating these priorities into national development planning.

However, the study also finds a persistent gap between policy commitments and implementation. Limited and uneven budget allocation, weak coordination among federal, provincial, and local governments, inadequate technical and institutional capacity, and challenges in monitoring and reporting have affected the effective delivery of quality education. While national planning and SDG monitoring mechanisms provide an important policy framework, the implementation of education policies depends primarily on coordinated action by federal line ministries, provincial governments, local governments, schools, and development partners. Therefore, achieving SDG 4 in Nepal requires stronger evidence-based budgeting, improved intergovernmental coordination, enhanced local planning and implementation capacity, and greater focus on measurable learning outcomes, equity, and inclusion.

9. Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the 2015–2025 decade, this study recommends to give priorities for effective implementation of evidence-based budgeting that reduces the gap between the policy priority and budget allocation, digitalization, diversity promotions, and Inter-government coordination and sharing of resources and ideas essential for the systemic improvement and achieving the sustainable educational outcomes.

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Did existing Agriculture policy and budget contribute to the sluggish agriculture growth: A case study analysis of Nepal?

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture is the primary occupation in Nepal and its diverse climate manages livelihood and creates immense opportunities for farming activities. Agriculture has played a revolutionary role in farmer's lives from ancient times, but gradually state policy and allocation of resources have weakened agriculture. This study analyzes, how agriculture policy and allocation have weakened farming practices through mixed methods analyzing last two decades of statistics and a recent field survey in 2025.

The data illustrate that the 2004 agriculture policy initiation and strategies gradually reduced budget allocation within two decades in Nepal due to several reasons. The first cause was low budget and allocation by the government. Furthermore, dependencies on imports, poor market conditions, low return, weak policies and lack of commercialization have weakened agriculture practice and created low interest in farming in Nepal. Globalization and import promotion by state reduced the local production. The study concluded that weak policies, lower allocation of resources and unfavorable socio-political factors have jointly discouraged the farmers. It suggests to promote local production by increasing investment in agriculture sector.

Keywords: *Agriculture, Policy, food security, livelihood, agriculture growth, Production.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Nepalese context, Poverty rate recorded 27 percent in Rural Nepal is higher than Urban 15 percent (CBS, 2010). Agricultural growth is considered to be effective in reducing poverty than is industrial growth, somehow policy is responsible for the development (GoN, 2014). It was found that the Nepalese has less interest in the agricultural sector because it is less attractive in terms of getting cash and it resulted in migration flow from rural to urban (IoM, 2012; CBS, 2011). Review shows that most of the household members of rural Nepal have been in abroad for foreign employment leaving farming at local level due to no cash at local level and remittance flow (FED, 2011).

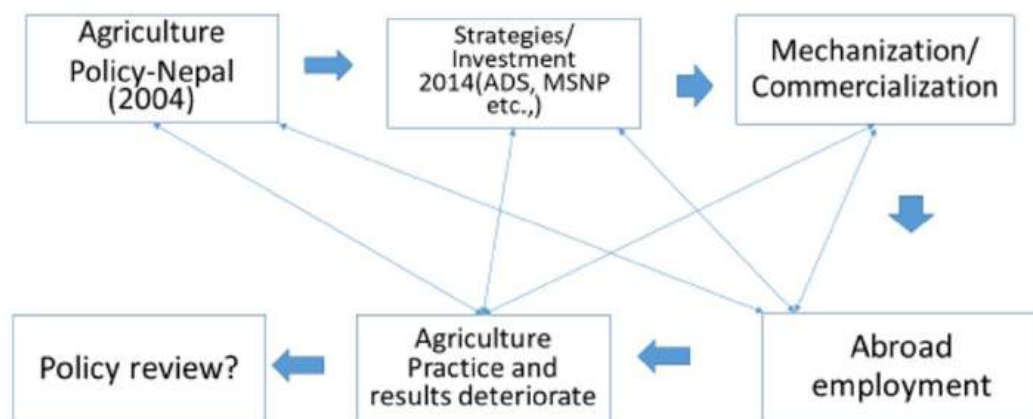
Nepal launched Agriculture Policy during 2004 using article 51-e as per constitution (Law Commission, 2004), MoALD became umbrella organization of the Government of Nepal for agriculture development, cooperative and Policies, Agriculture census conducted. Both male and female abroad migration rapidly increased and agriculture sector become challenging to the policy makers, the youth absence left challenges to the old people in farm areas (MoALD, 2021, Rising Nepal, 2020).

The National Agriculture Policy, 2004 focuses on enabling an environment for agriculture rural development. Small-resource poor and big farmer categorized (MoALD, 2004). It aims economic growth through commercial agriculture system contributing to food security and poverty reduction. In Nepal, the ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development-MoALD developed (ADS) 2014, a strategic strategies to implement policies including a 10-year Action Plan and Roadmap and a rationale vision "A self-reliant, sustainable, competitive, and inclusive agricultural sector that drives economic growth and contributes to improved livelihoods and food and nutrition security." (NPC, 2017). The 14th plan of Nepal (2016/17 – 2018/19) is given high priority for entire agricultural and rural development spectrum— agriculture, irrigation and water control, livestock, forestry, environment, agribusiness, credit, and institutions—as well as related rural development topics, including gender issues, roads, power, and the environment.

Mechanization and Commercialization rapidly increased in agriculture sector, Investment in hydropower and service sector increased during 2018. (MOFA, 2018). The Government act and Policies has given freedom and equal access to Women and Marginal, Ethnic ensured equal Livelihood and access and opportunity through Agriculture/ Social development (MoALD, 2022; GoN, 2020; Law Commission, 2020). Ethnic migration gradually increased. Substantial farming dropped mechanization increased and market dependency soared day by day.

From the series of review, farming practices is down, youth migration is high due to low returning and lack of input and various policy reactions have increased the market dependencies. All three-tiers of Government focused on distributions than production increasing. Import trend is high and economy is questionable. Existing policy need a serious revision for all. Resource poor marginal are getting poor day-by-day and upcoming generations have low interest on farming.

(Figure-1, Conceptual framework of this study)



(Source: Self-prepared)

The frame shows that Agriculture policy 2004, Gradually accelerate and Mechanization, and many local and national level activities were promoted through ADS on which various farming support were allocated and carefully reviewed. As a part of agriculture promotion, gradually production range was deteriorated and farming interest and commercialization was dropped and migration recorded due to various reason. Hence, frame questioning a policy review and to find out the impact of policy and budget allocation. The principal objective of the study is to analyses the agriculture policy and budget impact on the Nepalese agriculture.

2. METHODS

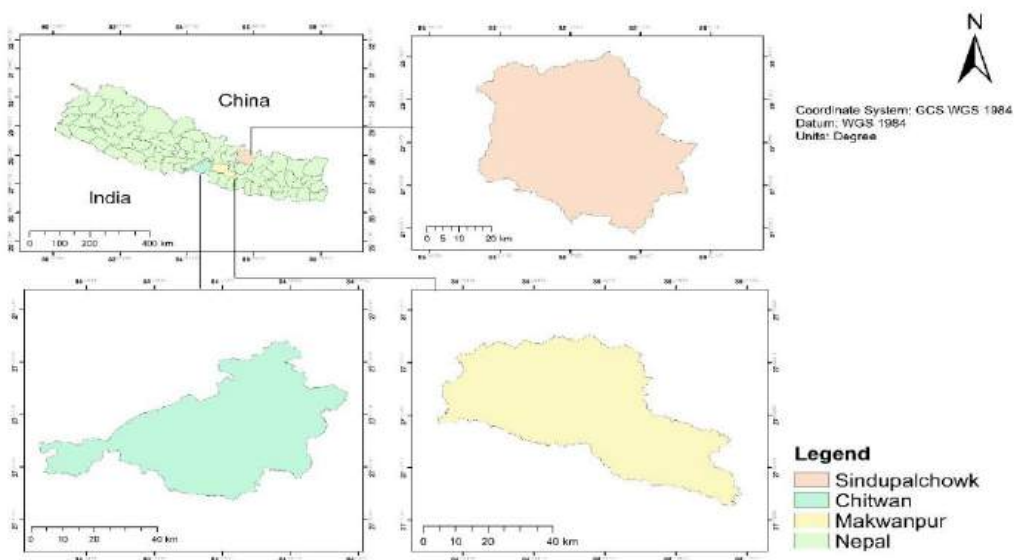
Both descriptive and analytical research design were used in this study. Three representative districts, namely, Sindhupalchok (Helambu-1), Makwanpur (Hetauda-Padampokhari-14) and Terai Chitwan (Meghauli-27) Figure-1 were randomly selected. Altogether 89 households (Makwanpur-30, Chitwan-38 and Sindhupalchok-21) were chosen for the HHs interview in 2025.

Stratified Purposive sampling design (Farmers with at least 5 kattha Land) were stratified for this survey. 6 FGD (two in each district) were conducted. KII with Lead agriculture agencies (MoALD, ADD, LGs, Farmers, commercial producers) were interviewed. Pre-test was conducted and finalized the questionnaires in November 2025, and Field survey conducted in December 2025. The value of Cronbach Alpha found 0.89 which is highly

reliable and significant value and data were analyzed through SPSS, ATLAS AI qualitative tools.

As part of secondary review, Agriculture Policy-2004 by (MoALD, 2004); Local Governance Policy (2010); Nepal Living Standard Survey (2022/ 23); Migration Policy; Gender and Inclusion Policy (GoN, 2017); ADS-2014 (CBS, 2014, MoALD, 2014); MSNP 1-2, FSM (UN, 2018, WB, 2020) were reviewed. In addition, Document and Data from National Population and Housing Census-NPHC-2011, 2021(Housing Characteristics, Dead and Absentee Population; Demographic Dividend in Nepal, Housing and HHs dynamics; and International Migration). (2011- 2021); National Sample Census of Agriculture-NSCA 2021/ 22; Department of Customs, (GoN, 2011-2021); Food Security Altus-NPC, WB, WFP (2011-2022); Journal, Thesis, Reports, Books (2002-2024) were reviewed and verified.

(Figure-1, study area map)



(Source: Self Prepared GIS map, 2026)

3. RESULTS

Agriculture Policy-BS 2061(2004 AD): Nepal Government Policies towards Agriculture is based on the Constitution of Nepal (Article 51-e) emphasize agriculture development: protecting and promoting rights and interests of peasants and utilizing the land use policy

for increasing production and productivity of agriculture and for commercialization (*Law Commission, 2004, MoALD*). The basic objective was set to increase the agriculture production and Productivity; Commercial and competitive farming's, and natural resource management & management of local environment and bio-diversity. The Policy emphasis to-agriculture production and productivity; special target to the target groups, development of a commercial and competitive farming systems, Conservation promotion and utilizations of Natural resources and monitoring arrangement were highly prioritized.

Strategies-2014 : ADS and various national and International Strategies have taken so far. The Basic objective of strategies was to increase agricultural growth rate; eliminate poverty and uplift livelihood by creating employment opportunities; to encourage commercial agriculture rather than just subsistence agriculture; to fulfill the prerequisites of agriculture expanding the possibilities for economic. (*Source: MoALD, NPC, Law Commission*)

Initiatives/Activities: The following initiatives were taken through as Zero Hunger Initiatives-By 2030 the Poverty level will eliminate. MSNP Promotion-Food Security and Nutritional activities, KISAN, SUHARA, Food security Monitoring and Analysis System and many other activities were initiates that support in strengthening. It was found that PMAMP-2016/017-Largest budget of agriculture sector yearly that support Rural electrification, trade and marketing support. IN addition, expansion and extension in agriculture sector were privileged in production area through extension expansion.

Similarly, Irrigation and trade; Cooperatives support and Subsidy, as well as National/ International Exposure and multi sectoral promotion and grant management to individual and cooperatives were increased after the PMAMP initiation and budget allocations (*Source: MoALD, CBS, MoF*).

Local Government Operation Act, 2017): It commits municipalities for the promotion, preservation, and protection of language, religion, culture of indigenous people and their welfare in the municipal area. The Act empowers municipalities to formulate and implement periodical and annual plans within their own jurisdiction. Periodic plans integrate different thematic plans according to social, economic, environment, physical, financial, and institutional aspects (*Law Commission, 2020*).

The ILO Convention no. 169 of 1989 is the most comprehensive legally binding treaty on the rights of marginal peoples. The Convention includes provisions on cultural integrity, land and resource rights and non-discrimination, and instructs states to consult indigenous peoples in all decisions affecting them. (UN, 2007).

(Table-1, Budget allocation in Agriculture Sector 2011 to 2021)

Fiscal Year (AD)	Agriculture Sector Budget (NRS million)	Total Budget (NRS) millions	% of agri budget in the total Budget
2011/12	12.43	389.9	3.23
2012/13	12.29	404.82	3.04
2013/14	21.4	517.24	4.14
2014/15	23.28	618.1	3.77
2015/16	26.68	819.46	3.25
2016/17	35.86	1048.92	3.41
2017/18	30.4	1278.99	2.37
2018/19	32.74	1315.16	2.49
2019/20	34.8	1532.96	2.27
2020/21	41.4	1474.64	2.8

(Source: MoALD, 2011 to 2021)

An analysis of last two decade data is clear that the Government is **not serious** on agriculture and unwilling in budget allocation (Table-1). Agriculture is least priority and the budget allocation is decreasing day-by-day.

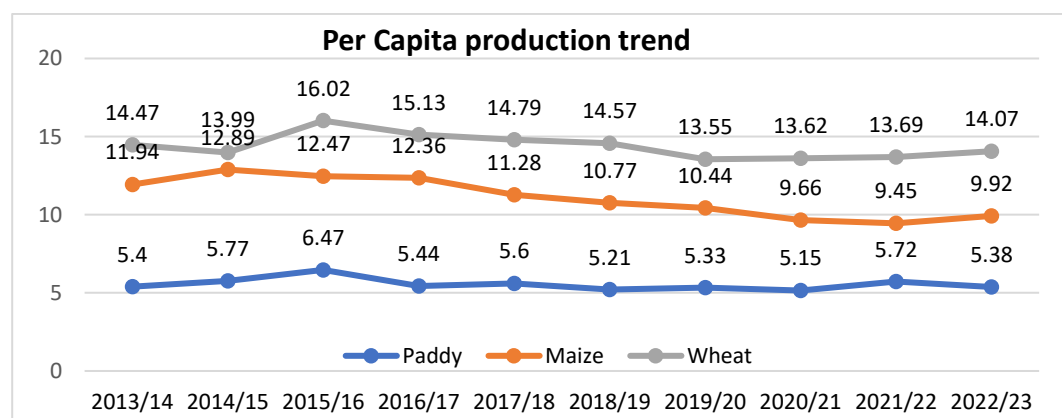
In Summary, all acts and policies are clear and supportive towards agriculture production and supportive to marginal but still many causes are still need to answer the reason behind lower production and lack of Interest on agriculture system. It was found that the existing agriculture policy, Budget allocations and following multi sectoral allotment during a decade do not strengthened farming system. Instead, migration and youth overseas evidence. This shows that existing farmers have limited farming tools, skills and mechanizations and frequent changing of government and ongoing policy increase import and dependencies increased and overall farming system getting slow.

Various FGD added that the *farmer's contribution is high in production but market networking and cooperatives are totally under the control of political system and bios and farmers are no health farmer's completions and rewards are recorded.*

KII with Various farmers groups states that *the Government is non responsive and not supportive to farmers. Politics is high on agriculture, a true farmers is not rewarded and overall budget is low and speech of the policy makers are high and loid but the action is low is the prime reason of sluggish agriculture system.*

FGD with targeted groups added that *the farmers farm gate price are decided by the middle man and traders shows that farming policy is not in the hand of Market and controlling by few people in Nepal. They added that youth migration and lack of production are the prime reason of low agriculture production in Nepal.*

(Figure-2, Agriculture Production (Cereal, Legumes, Oilseeds, Vegetables))



(Source: MoALD, 2024)

Paddy is considering the staple price highly consumable cereal are stable and ongoing trend whereas, Maize and wheat trend is declining as per statistics of few some previous years. The trend indicating that the production is not increasing and stable this also indicate that the existing system is unsupportive and lack of farmers availability and interest in the main reason for this.

FGD added that *the young farmers are in gulf countries and old people can't promote agriculture and the available youth at village are not interested for agriculture promotion because if No market and skills.*

(Table-2, Farm land owning of the surveyed communities)

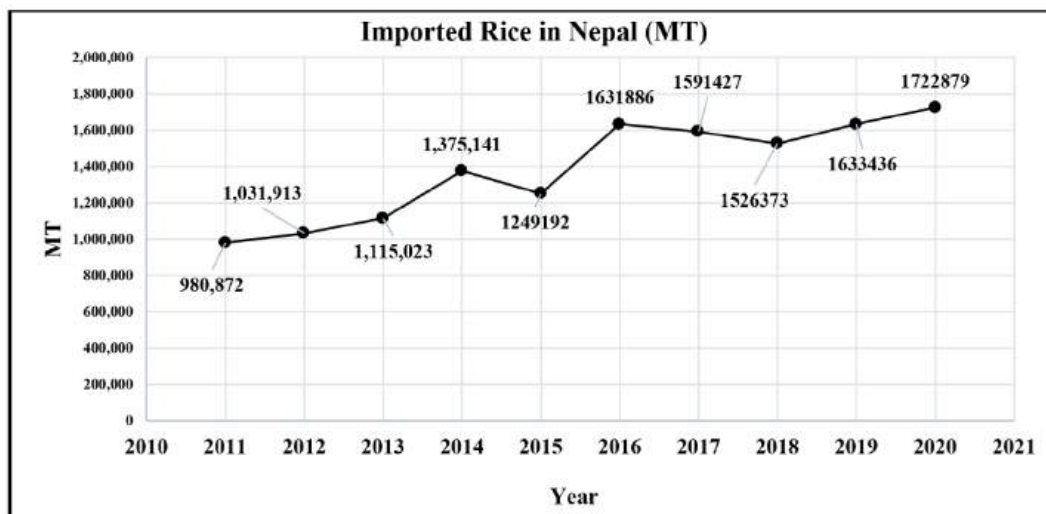
Agriculture area of Respondents (Kattha)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	More than 10
Makwanpur	0	0	0	1	17	0	12	0	0	0
Chitwan	7	6	2	4	2	7	2	1	1	6
Sindhupalchok	0	0	0	0	12	1	8	0	0	0
Total	7	6	2	5	31	8	22	1	1	6

(Source: Field survey, 2025)

Field study shows that 49 % surveyed houses holds 5 Kattha of farming land. The old age respondents are high/ Physical Presence in interview (51 to 60 years old are high as a respondents).NPHS added 7.5 % women migrated in 2021-Increasing trend.

KII and FDG added that in Chitwan district commercial farmers are intensively working in Paddy area where as the trend is decreasing in Sindhupalchok and Makwanpur as the farmers trend is declining due to no human and lack of interest on agriculture due to no instant cash returning from farming practices and limited skills are the major reasons of lower production and interest.

(Figure-3, Trend of Imported Rice)

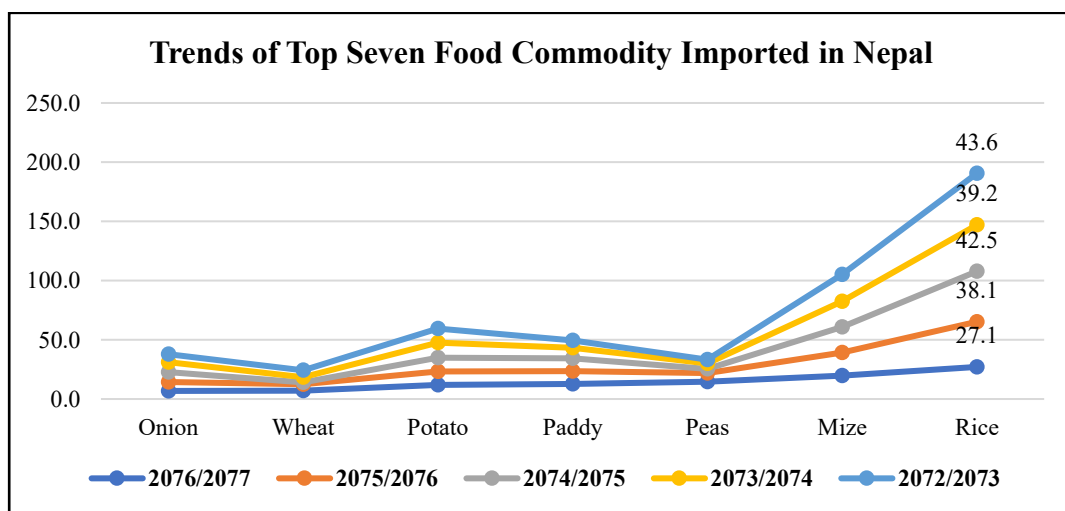


(Source: MoALD, 2010 to 2022)

The trend is clear to draw that import trend is high and accelerating day-by-day. The reason is dependencies, no youth available, low interest and lack of skills and mechanizations are the primary reason of import.

India and China are the major importer for Nepal and nearly 48 percent rice coming. The consumption demand is high and existing policy is unsupportive to Nepal, Political distribution and mechanization is limited and bios are the primary reason of low production in own land and import dependencies added by FGD and KII participants

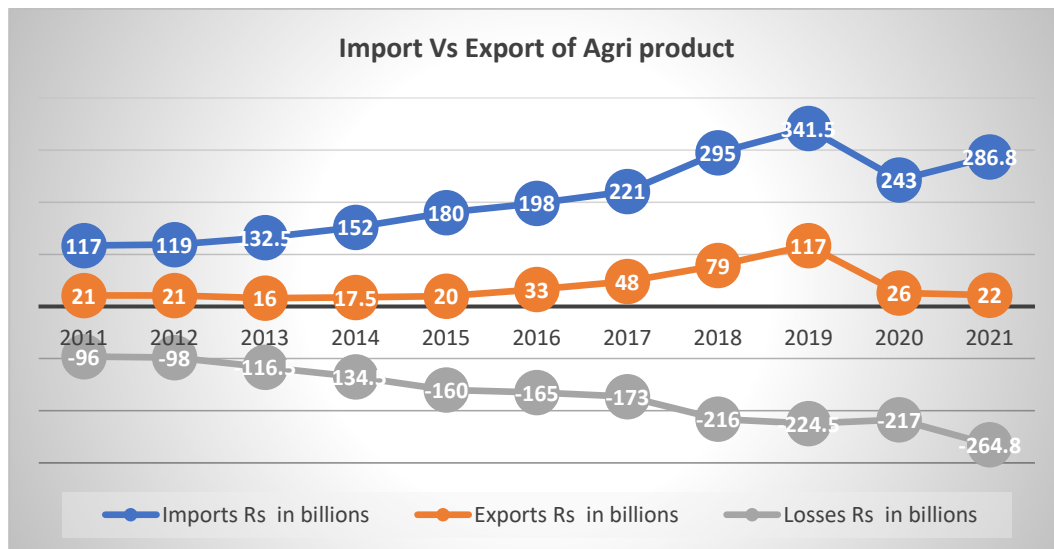
(Figure-4, Food Commodity imported trend)



(Source: MoALD, Custom Department, 2067 to 2073)

The trend is clear to interpret that rice largely imported (Figure-4) through India and China and other daily consumable foods are accelerating import and this indicating a silence dependencies for Nepalese in future. The lack of policy and budgetary support are the prime reason that state supportive to import and local farmers and market chain is unsupportive.

(Figure-5, Import Vs Export of agriculture Product in Nepal)



(Source; MoALD, Custom- 2011 to 2021)

The figure is enough to justify that Import is high and -264.8 billion are the losses recorded, this indicate that Nepalese production is insufficient to meet the local demands and import has no alternatives to meet the demands. In addition, the existing policy and strategies are just on paper and still import are the prime reason that people feed members by paying money that earning from other sources and for those who are sufficient from the production are using local production or sale and buying from local markets.

Investment on agriculture sectors

MoF added that 9400.19 million NPR. Investment from GoN during 2011 to 2021 on agriculture (MoF). IFAD Nepal added shows through a report that USD 261.8 Million investment by IFAD from 1978 in Nepal (IFAD CO Nepal, 2020).

Around USD 659 million signed between GoN and USA for the five year Agriculture development (USAID, MoALD). USD 1200 million integrated fund for recovery and agriculture support activities by Joint UN system. (UN Nepal). USD 120 Million supported by EU and 150 USD million support by DFID and various private sector models investment (EU, DFID, GoN, 2020).

USD 121 million support by US Government through KISAN Project from 2011 to till now, this is phase out now (USAID, MoALD, 2021).

The summary of Investment is clear that millions of amount has invested in the agriculture system since last two decades and after all such efforts still the farming revolution is not recorded.

Empirical Analysis

Study suggest that the lack of Improved and advanced-agricultural technologies include improved seed varieties, fertilizers, and technical support. The price for the agriculture production and market are found to be complex (Chaudhary, 2018; NARC, 2020; MoALD, 2018). The price-fixing mechanism is not realistic as it ignores the participation of farmers. and harvesting time. Normally, the **price** is fixed after harvesting period and farmers are not paid timely. Regional countries decided the price and supply mechanism in there hands. (Block & Lindauer, 2013)(My Republica, 2018). The government could not fix the price of paddy timely and farmers could get more benefit. The delay in fixing the price, farmers across the country have apparently been selling paddy at a price that is lower than the base price of last year (The Himalayan Times, 2017). Untimely fertilizer. Input dependencies increased and suppliers became the powerful in agriculture development (The Himalaya times, 2017). Unplanned and ID are not as per need-based. The lack of physical access has adverse impacts on the delivery of agricultural inputs on a regular basis. Nepal faces the shortage of agriculture **storage centers**. Another problem is **land** (USAID, UN, 2010).

About 70 % of the population of Nepal depends on the forests for daily fuelwood supply; therefore, the agro-forest concept may be the one option for agriculture development to cope with the problem arising due to climate change impact and Cold wave in Nepal in 1997/98 had negative impacts on agricultural productivity and showed a reduction in the production of crops by 27.8 in potato (NARC, 1998, 2012, 2020)

The agriculture policies not economic friendly and supports traders and middleman. No value and discrimination of local products youth migration is prime reason of lack of Potential in agriculture Sectors (WB, 2020)

New Federal Structure limited agriculture extensions and lack of coordination in between stake holders. Climate change and devastations are another issue in policies failures (PPPC, Bagamati, 2022). Marginal Development is limited **migration** has become the best

earning sources. *Other sectoral policy* failure chances became high. Abroad study increasing and old people unable to perform hard work (MoSD, 2023).

The local governance is imperative in order to implement agricultural development. The LG is **less emphasize** in agriculture and farm development in reality and Provincial and other sub sectors are less emphasizes (Chhetri et al., 2020).

ADS and supportive projects only benefited **commercial farmers** with political and social access and used for the Political reasons. Bios Marginal distribution recorded. Mechanizations and Commercialization supported big farmers (Pandit, 2016, LG, Provincial bulletins, civil societies etc.)

(Figure-6, Reason of drop in/ deteriorating agriculture policies in Nepal (FGD-6 site)



(Source: field visit, ATLAS Ai map)

Summary of FGD suggested and review added that low interest-limited *income, lack of Learning for new generations*. Limited farm gate price, lack of academic backgrounds of LGs and elected bodies, low healthy competitions, migrations increasing, political biasness and branding are the main reason of sluggish agriculture in Nepal. In addition, no research/ limited allocations, bios-distribution (Only vote bank target mechanism) and diversity are the prime reason of declining farming in Nepal. Policy and strategies failure is none part but still, demands are increasing and no proper plan based on farmer's requirement and convenient is not promoting from Local to federal levels. The Existing Provincial Level promotion is also following department instruction and forceful investment & not following the farmers need and innovations. In addition, Provincial coordination with other farming line ministries are weak and unsupportive as a result of this whole agriculture system is declining day-by-day.

4. CONCLUSION

Existing agriculture policy and budget allocations are clear that the lack of Interest and support on agriculture is the primary reason of sluggish farming system in Nepal. In addition, low interest, Migration, import from other country. Political interference and lack of coverage of farmer's choice and demands are the prime reason of low farming system in Nepal revealed dependencies and sluggish agriculture system. Ethnic substantial farming are break and depends on market and demands is increasing. Onset of climatic challenges, no youth and excessive unplanned investment in the unproductive sectors affecting agriculture sectors and Policy factors resulted insufficient production and income for ethnics and resource poor farmers. Agriculture Policy and limited access as well as demand somehow displaced people and kept low interest on national production and fallow land, Climatic variation, lack of trainings and technical support and untimely unequal distribution of resources challenges agriculture farming. Lack of research and political interferences raised question of existence agriculture policy. Market dependencies and unplanned agriculture investment resulted no prompt successes in the agriculture field whereas migrant's remittances are also not getting spaces in the Nepalese farm.

Intensive review of Agriculture policy and increase allocation of agriculture budget are suggested based on the priority and existing situation and diverse agriculture promotion are the major recommendations. LGs, Provincial role are hiding day by day and local government need to boost up agriculture policies and allocation from the local and provincial levels.

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Food Security and Nutritional Status of the Rural Community in Phikkal: Insights for Policy Reform

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Abstract

Rural food systems in Nepal are increasingly influenced by climate change, migration, market dependency, and changing dietary practices, affecting household food security and nutritional well-being. This study has assessed the food security status, nutritional conditions, and changing food systems of rural households in Phikkal Rural Municipality–1, Mahadevdanda. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining household surveys of 200 households with focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and comparative methods, while qualitative information was interpreted through thematic analysis. The study indicates the declining trend in traditional crop cultivation and livestock ownership over the past five years, reflecting reduced agricultural diversity and weakening indigenous food systems. A substantial proportion of households are experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity, while dietary diversity remains limited among many families. High market dependency and increasing consumption of packaged foods shows the ongoing shifting from traditional food practices toward commercially dependent consumption patterns. Climate-related challenges, including irregular rainfall, rising temperatures, crop loss, and declining water availability, were widely reported and significantly affecting agricultural productivity and household livelihoods. Out-migration and remittance-based livelihoods further contributed to declining agricultural engagement and reduced intergenerational transfer of indigenous food knowledge. The findings highlight the need for climate-resilient agriculture, nutrition-sensitive local policies, and the promotion of indigenous food systems to strengthen sustainable food security and community resilience.

Keywords: Food System, Food Security, Nutrition, Climate Change, Modernization, Acculturation, Indigenous Community, Traditional Knowledge, Forest Products.

5. Introduction

Food systems in Indigenous communities are deeply rooted in the traditional knowledge, cultural practices, biodiversity, and ecological balance. These systems not only provide food and nutrition to the community but also preserve cultural identity, social relations, and traditional health practices (FAO, 2021; CBD, 2019). Indigenous communities in rural Nepal, including the Sunuwar community, have historically relied on subsistence agriculture, livestock rearing, forest resources, and locally available foods for their livelihoods and well-being. Traditional diets commonly include the locally grown crops such as maize, millet, and legumes, along with wild edible plants, tubers, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, nettles, and herbal products collected from nearby forests. Many of these foods are valued not only for their nutritional value but also for their medicinal properties, particularly in maternal care, management of seasonal illnesses, and strengthening household resilience during the period of food shortage.

Seasonal reliance on forest products historically are playing an important role in maintaining household food security and dietary diversity, especially during periods of low agricultural production (FAO, 2021; Mirjam, 2008). Indigenous food knowledge, seed preservation practices, and locally adapted farming systems enabled communities to sustain relatively diverse and climate-resilient food systems for generations. However, these traditional systems have undergone rapid transformation due to the combined influences of modernization, migration, market integration, acculturation, and climate change.

The study area is a unique socio-cultural and ecological setting where traditional food systems are increasingly shaped by external socioeconomic and environmental factors (Sunuwar, 2019; NEFIN, 2016). Improved road access, expanded local markets, shifting consumption patterns, and exposure to urban lifestyles have accelerated the transition from locally produced and forest-based foods to commercially available, processed foods. As a result, indigenous food consumption has gradually declined, weakening the intergenerational transfer of traditional food knowledge and cultural practices.

Migration has further contributed to these transformations. Out-migration of economically active youth to urban centers within Nepal and foreign labor destinations has reduced agricultural labor availability and weakened household engagement in traditional farming systems (UNDP, 2021; Gurung, 1998). Remittance income has improved purchasing power and market access for some households; however, it has also increased dependence on purchased foods and reduced reliance on local food production.

In some areas, seasonal in-migration and increased interaction with external populations have introduced new food preferences, lifestyles, and consumption patterns, accelerating dietary transition and cultural change within the community.

At the same time, climate variability, including irregular rainfall, prolonged drought, shifting seasonal patterns, and declining water availability, has negatively affected agricultural productivity, crop diversity, and access to forest-based foods (ICIMOD, 2020; IPCC, 2023). These environmental changes have increased household vulnerability to seasonal food insecurity and reduced the resilience of traditional food systems. Although market access and remittance-based income opportunities have improved food availability for some households, concerns remain regarding declining dietary diversity, increasing consumption of processed foods, and the growing risk of long-term food insecurity among low-income and agriculture-dependent families. Despite growing national and global attention to food security and nutrition, limited empirical evidence exists on how migration, modernization, and climate change are collectively reshaping indigenous food systems and nutritional practices at the local level in Nepal. In particular, there remains insufficient policy-oriented research examining how these transformations affect indigenous communities such as the Sunuwar population in rural hill regions (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP & WHO, 2023).

This study aims to address this gap by analyzing changes in food systems, food security, and nutritional status over the past five years in the study area. The study specifically examines the impacts of out-migration, foreign employment, market dependency, and climate change on traditional food practices, dietary diversity, and household resilience. The findings are expected to provide important insights for local, provincial, and federal policy interventions related to climate-resilient agriculture, indigenous food systems, nutrition-sensitive development, and sustainable rural livelihoods. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of preserving indigenous food knowledge while promoting inclusive and context-sensitive policies that strengthen long-term food security and nutritional well-being in rural communities.

6. Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To assess changes in the local food system over the past five years
- To analyze the current status of household food security

- To examine changes in nutritional practices and outcomes
- To explore the impacts of climate change and modernization on food systems

7. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

A mixed-methods comparative study design was used, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture statistical trends and the community's lived experiences and perceptions (Creswell & Plano Kark, 2018). The study compared the current food system with conditions from five years ago to assess the nature and extent of changes in food production, consumption patterns, food security, and nutritional practices within the Sunuwar community of the study area.

The quantitative component measured changes in household food systems, crop diversity, livestock practices, dietary patterns, and food security indicators through structured household surveys. This approach enabled the study to identify measurable trends in agricultural production, seasonal food availability, market dependence, and nutritional practices over time. A comparative analysis assessed differences between the current situation and past conditions, particularly regarding climate variability, modernization, and evolving livelihood patterns.

The qualitative component was designed to explore local perceptions, traditional knowledge systems, and socio-cultural transformations that shape food and nutrition practices. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with community elders, farmers, women, local leaders, health workers, and other relevant stakeholders. These methods provided deeper insights into indigenous food traditions, the medicinal use of local foods, seasonal reliance on forest products, changing dietary habits, and the impacts of acculturation and modernization on traditional lifestyles (Creswell, Research Design:, 2014) (Creswell, 2014).

The mixed-methods approach enabled triangulation of findings by combining quantitative data with community narratives and contextual experiences. This helped ensure a more comprehensive understanding of how climate change, market integration, migration, and socio-cultural change are collectively reshaping indigenous food systems and nutritional well-being. The comparative design was particularly useful for documenting shifts over the past five years from traditional, diverse, and locally adapted food systems toward increasingly market-oriented and processed food consumption patterns.

3.2 Data Characteristics

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics

SN	Age group	Total
1	0-5	82
2	6-10	59
3	11-15	80
4	16-20	108
5	21-25	76
6	26-30	63
7	31-35	42
8	36-40	54
9	41-45	52
10	46-50	50
11	above 50	185
Total		851
<i>Data Source: HH Survey- 2082</i>		

A structured household survey was conducted with 200 households to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire consisted of 72 questions, systematically organized into 12 thematic areas to ensure comprehensive coverage of key issues. Before the full-scale survey, the tool was piloted with 10 households to assess clarity, relevance, and question sequencing. Based on the pilot findings, necessary revisions were made to improve the instrument's quality and reliability before final data collection.

The age distribution of the study population indicates a relatively young and economically active community (Gurung, 1998; MoHP et al., 2022). Out of the total population of 850 individuals, the largest proportion falls in the above 50 years age group (185 individuals), followed by the 16–20 years age group (108 individuals). Children under 15 years collectively account for 221 individuals, representing a substantial dependent population within the community. The working-age population (16–50

years) constitutes the majority of the population, indicating the availability of productive labor for agriculture and livelihood activities.

The comparatively high number of adolescents and youth suggests potential opportunities for local agricultural development and community engagement if adequate employment and livelihood opportunities are created. However, increasing migration trends among economically active youth may reduce local agricultural labor availability and weaken traditional farming systems (UNDP, 2021). The significant population above 50 years also indicates that many households may increasingly depend on elderly family

members for agricultural activities and the preservation of indigenous food knowledge and traditional practices.

Overall, the demographic structure reflects a rural agrarian community with a moderate dependency burden and a large productive-age population. This age composition has important implications for food security, labor availability, agricultural sustainability, migration patterns, and intergenerational transfer of indigenous knowledge within the community.

Table 2: Occupation

S.N.	Type	Number
1	Foreign Employer	10
2	Service	15
3	Farmers	175
Total		200

Data source: HH Survey 2082

Occupationally, farming dominates (88%), with smaller shares in foreign employment (5%) and service jobs (7%), reflecting a largely agrarian economy. The average household size is 5.25, indicating moderately large families. Overall, the data indicate a rural,

agriculture-based community with balanced gender representation but challenges in literacy and occupational diversity.

A total of 200 households (HHs), comprising 850 individuals, were included in the study. The mean household size was 4.25 ($\pm$ SD not specified), indicating moderately large family structures, typical in rural and indigenous communities.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

A total of 5 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to gather qualitative insights and community perspectives. Each FGD was guided by 10 semi-structured questions designed to explore shared experiences, perceptions, and local practices related to the study themes. The FGDs facilitated in-depth discussion and helped triangulate findings from the household survey.

3.2.2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with a diverse group of stakeholders to gather in-depth insights and contextual understanding of local food systems, nutrition practices, agricultural changes, and community dynamics. The respondents included

three Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), the Ward Chairperson and two Ward Members, three women farmers, three male farmers, and two representatives from local grocery shops. Including participants from different social and occupational backgrounds helped capture multiple perspectives on food security, dietary practices, agricultural production, market access, public service delivery, and socioeconomic changes within the community. The interviews also provided important information on the impacts of climate variability, modernization, and changing consumption patterns on indigenous food systems and household nutrition. In addition, institutional perspectives from local leaders and health volunteers contributed to understanding existing community support mechanisms, nutrition-related awareness, and local development challenges.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling

A total of 200 households were selected for the study using purposive and stratified sampling techniques to ensure adequate representation of different socioeconomic groups within the Sunuwar community of Phikkal Rural Municipality-1, Mahadevdanda. Purposive sampling targeted households belonging to the indigenous Sunuwar population, as the study primarily focused on understanding changes in their traditional food systems, food security, and nutritional practices. This approach allowed the study to include households with relevant experiences related to agriculture, forest dependence, indigenous food practices, and the impacts of modernization and climate change.

In addition, stratified sampling was used to categorize households into socioeconomic and livelihood groups to capture variation within the community. Households were selected from diverse economic backgrounds, family structures, landholding categories, and occupational groups, including farming, wage labor, migration-supported households, and small business operators. Special attention was given to including households with varying levels of agricultural involvement, market dependence, and access to local resources. This helped ensure that the study reflected diverse experiences related to food production, dietary diversity, seasonal food availability, and coping strategies during periods of food insecurity.

The combination of purposive and stratified sampling enhanced the representativeness and reliability of the findings by minimizing bias and enabling comparisons across household conditions. It also supported a more comprehensive understanding of how

socioeconomic status, environmental change, and modernization differentially influence food systems and nutritional well-being in the indigenous community.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and comparative methods to identify patterns, variations, and trends in food systems, food security, and nutritional practices over the past five years. Data from household surveys were organized and analyzed using frequency distributions, percentages, averages, and comparative tables to assess changes in crop diversity, livestock ownership, dietary practices, food availability, and household consumption patterns. Comparative analysis was used to examine differences between the current situation and past conditions, particularly the effects of climate variability, modernization, market dependency, and changing livelihood strategies. The quantitative analysis generated measurable evidence of shifts in agricultural production, seasonal food insecurity, and nutritional behavior within the community.

Qualitative data from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Participants' responses were carefully reviewed, categorized, and interpreted to identify recurring themes and patterns related to indigenous food systems, traditional knowledge, forest dependence, medicinal food practices, climate change impacts, and socio-cultural transformation. This approach captured community perceptions, lived experiences, local coping mechanisms, and intergenerational changes in food and nutrition practices. Integrating quantitative and qualitative findings enabled triangulation, enhancing the study's validity and depth by linking statistical trends to local experiences and contextual realities.

8. Results and Findings

4.1 Changes in Food System

Table 3: Crop Diversity (Now vs 5 Years Ago)

S.N.	Crop Type	Now (%)	5 Years Ago (%)
1	Maize	50	70
2	Millet	30	50
3	Rice	20	30

4	Vegetables (Specially Legume)	90	95
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Data Source: HH Survey, 2082

The crop diversity analysis shows a decline in the cultivation of major

crops over the past five years, indicating a gradual reduction in agricultural diversity at the household level (FAO, 2018; FAO, 2021). Traditional staple crops such as maize and millet have seen the largest declines, each down 20 percentage points, suggesting reduced reliance on these indigenous and climate-resilient crops. Rice cultivation also declined by 10 percentage points, reflecting a moderate reduction in production. In contrast, vegetable cultivation, particularly legumes, remained relatively stable, with only a slight 5 percentage-point decline. This suggests that households continue to prioritize vegetable production, likely due to its nutritional importance and market demand.

The comparative assessment of current and past cropping patterns shows a consistent decline across all crop categories (FAO, 2021)., with an average reduction of 13.75 percentage points, indicating that households are cultivating fewer crop varieties than they did five years ago. Although a formal paired statistical analysis was not possible due to the lack of household-level longitudinal data, the consistent downward trend across crop types strongly suggests a systematic and meaningful decline in agricultural diversity.

Likewise, the findings indicate a significant transformation in local food systems, marked by a shift from traditional subsistence-based agriculture to a more market-oriented food system. Historically, households relied heavily on locally cultivated crops such as millet, maize, and traditional vegetables for daily consumption. However, over the past five years, dependence on market-purchased foods, including rice, packaged snacks, and processed foods, has increased markedly. Traditional food practices, such as seasonal food consumption, the use of indigenous crops, and forest-based food collection, have gradually declined. This transition appears to be influenced by several interconnected factors, including improved market access, changing lifestyles and food preferences, climate-related agricultural challenges, and declining agricultural productivity. These changes raise concerns about the sustainability of local food systems, dietary diversity, and long-term nutritional outcomes among rural households (FAO et al., 2023; WHO, 2021).

Table 4: Livestock Comparison

SN	Livestock Type	Now (mean)	5 Years Ago(mean)	Change
1	Cattle	20	60	40
2	Goat	65	95	30
3	Poultry	92	98	6
4	Pig	25	75	50

Data Source: HH Survey, 2082

The livestock comparison shows a substantial decline across all major livestock categories over the past five years(MoALD, 2021; FAO, 2018), suggesting significant shifts in

livelihood strategies and reduced dependence on traditional animal-based farming systems within the community. Cattle ownership has fallen sharply from a mean of 60 to 20 per household, a decline of 40 animals. This reduction may reflect decreasing reliance on traditional draft power and dairy production, as well as challenges such as rising feed and maintenance costs, shrinking grazing land, labor shortages, and changing agricultural practices. Similarly, goat rearing has declined from 95 to 65, a reduction of 30, indicating a contraction in small ruminant farming, which has traditionally been an important source of household income, nutrition, and financial security in rural communities.

Pig rearing has seen the most significant decline, dropping from 75 to 25, a decrease of 50 animals over the five-year period. This sharp reduction may be linked to shifting cultural preferences, reduced labor availability, disease risks, rising production costs, or fluctuations in market demand. In contrast, poultry farming has declined only slightly, from 98 to 92, indicating that it remains relatively stable and a preferred livelihood option for many households. The relative stability of poultry production may be attributed to its lower investment requirements, easier management, shorter production cycle, and quicker economic returns compared with larger livestock. Overall, the decline in livestock ownership reflects broader socioeconomic and environmental transformations, including modernization, migration, reduced agricultural dependency, and the growing influence of market-based livelihoods within the community (UNDP, 2021; IPCC, 2022).

4.2 Food Security Status

Table 6: HFIAS Score Distribution

S.N.	HFIAS Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	0–5	10	5
2	6–10	45	22.5
3	11–15	67	33.5
4	16–27	78	39
	Total	200	100

Data Source: HH Survey, 2082

The distribution of Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) scores indicates that food insecurity is a significant concern

among households in

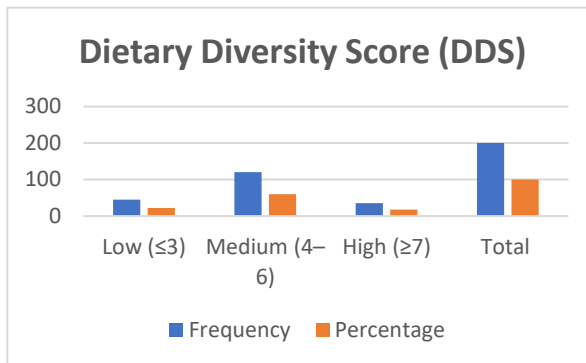
the study area (FAO et al., 2023; UNICEF, 2019). Only a small proportion of households, 5% (10 households), fall within the lowest score range of 0–5, suggesting minimal or no food insecurity and relatively stable access to sufficient food. Approximately 22.5% (45 households) fall within the 6–10 range, indicating mild food insecurity, with households frequently worrying about food availability and occasionally compromising the quality or variety of foods consumed. A larger proportion, 33.5% (67 households), falls within the 11–15 range, reflecting moderate food insecurity. These households are more likely to experience reduced food quantity, limited dietary diversity, and disruptions in normal eating patterns during certain periods of the year.

The largest share of households, 39% (78 households), falls within the highest HFIAS score range of 16–27, indicating severe food insecurity. Households in this category are likely experiencing serious food shortages, frequent meal skipping, smaller portions, and periods without food due to limited access to resources. The high proportion of severely food-insecure households highlights the community's growing vulnerability and reflects the combined impacts of declining agricultural productivity, climate variability, economic constraints, reduced traditional food resources, and increasing dependence on market-based food systems (ICIMOD, 2020; IPCC, 2022). These findings suggest that food insecurity remains a major challenge in the area and underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to strengthen local food production, improve dietary resilience, and support sustainable livelihood opportunities.

4.3 Nutritional Status and Dietary Changes

Table 8: Dietary Diversity Score (DDS)

The Dietary Diversity Score (DDS) analysis shows that most households fall into the medium diversity category (WHO, 2021; UNICEF, 2019), with 120 households (60%) scoring 4–6. This indicates that most families consume a moderately varied diet, though they may still lack full nutritional adequacy. A smaller proportion, 45 households (22.5%),



Data Source: HH Survey, 2082

fall into the low DDS category (≤ 3), suggesting limited dietary diversity and a higher risk of nutrient deficiencies. This group is particularly vulnerable, often relying on a narrow range of foods that lack essential micronutrients. Meanwhile, only 35 households (17.5%) are in the high DDS category (≥ 7), representing a relatively small segment of the population with access to a diverse and nutritionally balanced diet. Overall, these findings highlight that while moderate dietary diversity is common, a significant portion of households experience poor dietary intake, and only a limited number achieve optimal nutrition, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to improve access to diverse, nutrient-rich foods, especially for those in the low DDS category.

Table 9: Nutrition Status

S.N	Indicator	Normal	Low	High
1	BMI (Women)	35	10	5
2	Underweight (%)	49	1	1
3	Stunting (%)	45	4	2
4	Wasting (%)	49	1	1

Data Source: HH Survey, 2082

The results show that most women fall within the normal BMI range, which is encouraging and suggests a generally healthy weight status in the study area. Nonetheless, 10 cases of low BMI highlight chronic energy deficiency among some women, while 5 cases of high BMI point to emerging concerns about

overweight and overnutrition, though these remain less prevalent. Overall, the predominance of normal BMI values indicates a relatively low prevalence of underweight compared with other nutritional indicators. Among children, stunting, reflecting chronic malnutrition, was observed in 4 cases, signaling long-term nutritional deprivation in a segment of the population and underscoring the importance of sustained interventions during the critical first 1,000 days. Wasting, an indicator of acute malnutrition, was minimal, suggesting limited short-term nutritional shocks and relative stability in acute malnutrition. However, dietary patterns have shifted from traditional, nutrient-rich diets to more monotonous, processed foods, leading to reduced dietary diversity despite improved caloric intake. This dual burden of under-nutrition and emerging over-nutrition reflects a nutrition transition, with women and children remaining particularly vulnerable to deficiencies, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies to promote diverse, balanced diets and strengthen maternal and child nutrition (MoHP et al., 2022; WHO, 2021).

4.4 Impacts of Climate Change

Table 10: Climate Change Perception

The data reveal a strong consensus among respondents regarding the adverse impacts of climate change on local livelihoods and food systems (IPCC,2022; ICIMOD,2020). A

SN	Indicator	% of Respondents
1	Rainfall decreased	80
2	Rainfall irregular	89
3	Temperature increased	90
4	Crop loss experienced	87
5	Water availability decreased	98

significant majority (80%) perceive a decline in rainfall, and an even larger share (89%) reports that rainfall patterns have become increasingly irregular. This irregularity, coupled with reduced precipitation, has direct implications for agricultural productivity and water resource management. Similarly, 90% of

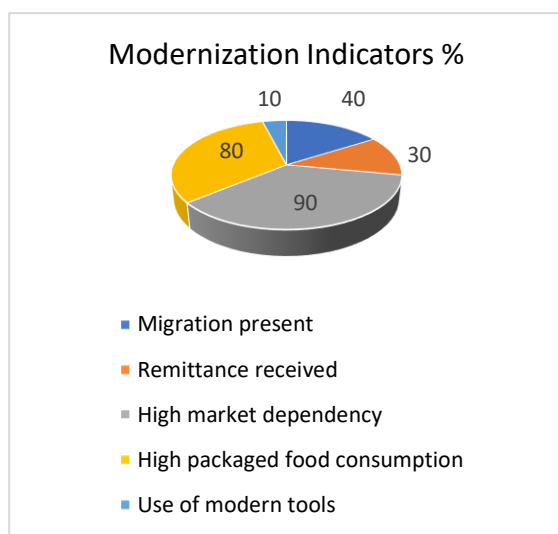
respondents report rising temperatures, which exacerbate crop stress and accelerate soil moisture loss. The consequences of these climatic shifts are evident in the fact that 87% of households have experienced crop losses, underscoring the vulnerability of traditional farming systems to environmental variability. Most strikingly, 98% of respondents report

decreased water availability, highlighting a critical challenge for both agriculture and household consumption.

Taken together, these findings show that communities are acutely aware of the multifaceted impacts of climate change. The convergence of reduced rainfall, irregular precipitation, rising temperatures, crop losses, and declining water availability points to a compounded threat to food security and nutrition. This perception data underscores the urgent need for climate-resilient agricultural practices, improved water management strategies, and the preservation of indigenous food systems to safeguard household nutrition and food security in vulnerable rural areas(IPCC, 2022; FAO, 2021).

4.5 Impacts of Modernization

Table 11: Modernization Indicators



Data Source: HH Survey, 2082

The data highlight uneven impacts of modernization on rural households. Migration is evident in 40% of households, and 30% receive remittances. However, these modest shares suggest migration has not yet become the dominant livelihood strategy (UNDP, 2021; FAO, 2018). A striking finding is the high degree of market dependence (90%), indicating that households rely heavily on external markets rather than local production to meet their food needs. This reliance is reinforced by the high consumption of

packaged foods (80%), pointing to a dietary transition away from traditional, diverse food systems toward processed, less nutritious options. In contrast, the use of modern agricultural tools remains very low (10%), indicating that technological modernization in farming practices has not kept pace with changes in consumption and market reliance. This imbalance, with high dependence on markets and processed foods but low adoption of modern tools, creates vulnerabilities in food security and nutrition.

To address these challenges, households and local governments should prioritize climate-resilient and indigenous food practices by cultivating traditional crops and supporting community seed banks. Strengthening local production through investments in irrigation, storage, and cooperatives can reduce over reliance on markets. At the same time, balanced modernization in agriculture through training, subsidies, and eco-friendly mechanization can boost productivity without eroding traditional systems. At the same time, nutrition awareness campaigns and school-based programs are essential to curb rising consumption of packaged foods and promote dietary diversity. Remittances should also be directed toward productive investments in agriculture, nutrition, and small enterprises, ensuring that financial inflows contribute to long-term food security and improved nutritional outcomes rather than short-term consumption.

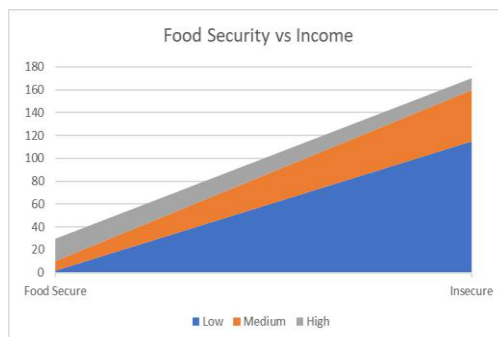
4.6. Cross-analysis table

4.6.1. Food Security vs Income

Table 12: Food Security vs Income

Income Level	Food Secure	Insecure	Total
Low	2	115	117
Medium	8	45	53
High	20	10	30

Source: HH survey, 2082



The table shows a strong association between household income levels and food security status. Among low-income households, only 2 are food secure, compared with 115 who are insecure, indicating that poverty is a major driver of food insecurity. In the medium-income group, 8 households are food secure, while 45 remain insecure, suggesting some improvement but still high vulnerability. In contrast, high-income households show a markedly different pattern: 20 are food secure, and only 10 are insecure, indicating that higher income substantially enhances food security.

This distribution shows a clear gradient. Food security improves as income rises, while food insecurity is concentrated among low-income households. The imbalance between secure and insecure households within the low-income group underscores the structural challenges poorer families face in accessing adequate and diverse food.

4.6.2. Interpretation of income level and Food security

A chi-square test of independence was used to assess whether income level and food security status are statistically associated. The observed frequencies (low, medium, and high income vs. secure/insecure) were compared with the expected frequencies under the assumption of independence. The chi-square statistic was large and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the relationship between income and food security is not due to chance.

In other words, income level significantly affects food security status: households with higher incomes are far more likely to be food secure, while those with lower incomes are disproportionately food insecure.

4.6.3. DDS vs Market Dependency

Table 13: DDS vs Market Dependency

Market Dependency	Low DDS	Medium DDS	High DDS
Low	85	25	10
Medium	42	25	20
High	45	20	30

The data indicate a strong relationship between market dependency and dietary diversity scores (DDS). Among households with low market dependency, most (85) fall into the low DDS category, with only a small proportion achieving medium (25)

Data Source: HH Survey, 2082

or high DDS (10). This suggests that households relying less on markets tend to have limited dietary diversity, likely due to reliance on subsistence farming and limited food choices.

In the medium market dependency group, the distribution is more balanced: 42 households have low DDS, 25 have medium DDS, and 20 have high DDS. This pattern

reflects a transitional stage in which moderate market engagement provides access to a wider range of foods, thereby improving dietary diversity for some households.

Among households with high market dependence, the picture changes significantly. Although 45 households still report low DDS, a notable number achieve medium (20) and high DDS (30). This indicates that greater reliance on markets can enhance dietary diversity by expanding access to a broader selection of foods. However, the persistence of low DDS among a substantial share of high-dependency households suggests that market reliance alone does not guarantee improved nutrition. Factors such as income, food preferences, and affordability also play critical roles.

4.6.4. Gender Perspective in Household Decision-Making

Table 14: Gender vs Decision-Making

Decision Maker	Male	Female	Both
Food purchase	65	35	30
Farming	70	30	20

Data Source: HH Survey-2082

The data show clear gendered patterns in household and farming decision-making. For food purchases, men dominate (65), women account for 35, and joint decision-making is reported in 30 households. This indicates that although women are actively involved, their role is secondary to men's, and shared decision-making

is less common. From a gender perspective, this reflects persistent gender norms in which men are perceived as primary financial decision-makers, even in areas such as food purchases that directly affect household nutrition and well-being.

In farming decisions, the imbalance is even more pronounced: 70 decisions are made by men, compared with 30 by women, and only 20 are reported as joint. This highlights structural inequalities in access to and control over productive resources. Women's limited role in farming decisions suggests barriers such as restricted land ownership, limited access to modern tools, and cultural norms that prioritize men's authority in agriculture.

The Gender perspective lens highlights persistent inequalities in household and agricultural decision-making. Women's participation in food purchasing and farming decisions remains limited, reflecting unequal power dynamics and entrenched male dominance. Although disability and other marginalized groups are not explicitly addressed, the low representation of women suggests broader barriers to inclusion for socially excluded populations. These patterns underscore how cultural norms continue to restrict women's agency across both consumption and production spheres, reinforcing systemic inequities.

4.6.4. Climate Impact vs Crop Production

Table 15: Climate Impact vs Crop Production

Climate Impact	Crop Decrease	No Change	Increase
Yes	80	30	10
No	20	80	5

Data Source: HH Survey-2082

This table shows a clear link between climate impacts and crop production outcomes. When climate impacts are present, most cases (80) report decreased crop yields, with only a small number showing no change (30) or an increase (10). In contrast, when climate impacts are not reported,

most cases (80) show no change, while decreases are far fewer (20), and increases remain minimal (5). Overall, the data suggest that climate impacts are strongly associated with reduced crop production, highlighting the vulnerability of agricultural systems to changing environmental conditions.

4.7. Food security, Nutrition status, and Family livelihood status

Table 16: Food security, Nutrition status, and Family livelihood status

SN	Status	High	Medium	Low	Dispute-related food and livelihood-related issue
1	Food Security	70	100	30	Low
2	Nutrition status	65	50	85	High

3	Livelihood status	65	50	85	High
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Data Source: HH Survey, 2082

This data suggests a mixed picture across dimensions of well-being. Food security appears relatively stable, with most households in the medium or high categories and only a small share facing very low levels, indicating minor vulnerability and low conflict. However, nutrition and livelihood status show sharp disparities, with significant portions of the population experiencing low outcomes compared with those with high outcomes. This polarization points to unequal access to resources and opportunities, which in turn fuels higher levels of disputes in these areas. In short, while food security is less contentious, inequalities in nutrition and livelihoods are major drivers of social conflict.

Viewing the data through a conflict and peace lens, it is clear that food security is relatively stable, with most households in the medium or high categories, laying a foundation for peace, as fewer disputes arise when basic needs are met. However, sharp inequalities in nutrition and livelihood status generate tension and conflict, as unequal access to resources often fuels frustration, competition, and social division. This polarization can undermine community cohesion and trust, making peace harder to sustain. In essence, while food security helps reduce conflict, disparities in nutrition and livelihoods act as pressure points that threaten stability, showing that peace is closely tied not only to food availability but also to fairness in resource distribution.

9. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a complex, interconnected relationship among modernization, acculturation, and climate change in shaping the food systems, food security, and nutritional practices of the Sunuwar community in the study area (FAO et al., 2023; IPCC, 2022). The growing shift from traditional subsistence-based food systems toward market-oriented consumption reflects broader socioeconomic transformations, including improved road access, migration, exposure to external cultures, and expanding market integration. While these changes have improved access to commercially available foods and diversified income opportunities for some households, they have also increased dependence on purchased and processed foods, raising concerns about dietary quality, nutritional balance, and long-term sustainability.

The gradual decline of traditional food practices and indigenous agricultural systems signals an erosion of cultural heritage, local food knowledge, and community resilience

(Sunuwar, 2019; FAO, 2021). Traditional foods, once widely consumed for their nutritional and medicinal value, such as millet-based foods, wild vegetables, fermented products, and forest-derived foods, are becoming less common among younger generations. The weakening intergenerational transfer of indigenous knowledge, combined with shifting food preferences and lifestyles, has reduced consumption of locally adapted, nutrient-rich foods that historically supported household food security and cultural identity.

At the same time, climate change is intensifying existing vulnerabilities by affecting agricultural productivity, seasonal crop patterns, water availability, and access to forest resources (ICIMOD, 2020; IPCC, 2022). Irregular rainfall, prolonged dry spells, and shifting seasonal patterns have reduced crop yields and limited the availability of wild edible plants and forest products that have traditionally supplemented household diets during periods of food shortage. These environmental changes have increased the risk of seasonal food insecurity and reduced the adaptive capacity of households that rely heavily on agriculture and natural resources.

The findings of this study align with broader trends across many rural and indigenous communities, where traditional food systems are rapidly transforming under the combined pressures of globalization, modernization, sociocultural change, and environmental stress. While these transitions may create new economic opportunities and improve market access, they also pose significant challenges to nutritional well-being, cultural preservation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable livelihoods. The study therefore underscores the importance of strengthening indigenous food systems, promoting climate-resilient and nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and preserving traditional knowledge as part of long-term strategies for community resilience and sustainable development. (FAO, 2021, FAO et al., 2023).

10. Conclusion

The study concludes that the Sunuwar community's food systems in the study area are undergoing significant transformation under the combined influences of modernization, acculturation, and climate change (Sunuwar, 2019; FAO, 2021). Traditional food systems, once strongly based on subsistence agriculture, indigenous crops, forest resources, and locally available foods, are gradually shifting toward more market-oriented, commercially dependent consumption patterns. Although improved road access, market integration, and income opportunities have increased food availability for some households, important concerns remain regarding dietary diversity, nutritional quality, cultural sustainability, and long-term community resilience. (Sunuwar, 2019; FAO, 2021)

The study further reveals that the decline in traditional agricultural practices, reduced consumption of indigenous foods, and the erosion of local knowledge transfer are eroding cultural identity and food sovereignty within the community. At the same time, climate variability, including irregular rainfall, shifting seasonal patterns, and declining agricultural productivity, is increasing household vulnerability to seasonal food insecurity and reducing the availability of traditional forest-based food resources (ICIMOD, 2020; IPCC, 2022). These combined pressures are reshaping local food habits, livelihood systems, and nutritional practices in ways that may negatively affect both human and environmental well-being over time.

The findings underscore the urgent need for integrated, culturally sensitive interventions that promote climate-resilient, nutrition-sensitive agriculture while preserving indigenous food systems and traditional ecological knowledge (NPC, 2020; MoALD, 2021; FAO et al., 2023). Strengthening local seed systems, promoting indigenous crops and traditional foods, supporting sustainable forest resource management, and enhancing community-based nutrition awareness programs are essential to improving food security and nutritional well-being. In addition, policies and development interventions should recognize the value of indigenous knowledge and community practices in building resilient, sustainable, and equitable food systems for future generations. (NPC, 2020; MoALD, 2021)

11. Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest that coordinated efforts from communities and all levels of government are essential to reduce future risks of food insecurity and nutritional vulnerability in the study area. At the community level, promoting indigenous crops, traditional farming systems, kitchen gardening, local seed preservation, and nutrition awareness can strengthen dietary diversity and preserve indigenous food knowledge. Local governments should prioritize climate-resilient agriculture, irrigation, agricultural extension services, and nutrition-sensitive development programs while supporting women farmers and vulnerable households. Provincial governments should strengthen investment in rural infrastructure, climate adaptation, agricultural value chains, and local employment opportunities to reduce the negative impacts of out-migration and agricultural decline. At the federal level, policies should recognize the importance of indigenous food systems and support sustainable agriculture, food security, and nutrition through integrated and climate-sensitive development strategies. Overall, long-term policy interventions should focus on strengthening local food systems, reducing excessive

market dependency, improving agricultural resilience, and promoting inclusive rural livelihoods to enhance sustainable food security and nutritional well-being in indigenous communities.

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बागमती प्रदेशको आर्थिक तथा सामाजिक रूपान्तरण: अवसर र चुनौतीहरू

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सारांश

यस अध्ययनको उद्देश्य नेपालको तीन संरचनात्मक आर्थिक संकट पहिल्याउँदै बागमती प्रदेशको आर्थिक तथा सामाजिक रूपान्तरणका अवसर र चुनौतीहरूको विश्लेषण गर्नु हो । यस अध्ययन गर्दा अवलोकन, जानिफकार व्यक्तिसंग विचार विमर्श, विद्यमान दस्तावेजहरूको समीक्षा विधि अपनाइएको छ । नेपालको अर्थतन्त्रको विरोधाभास भनेको प्रचुर प्राकृतिक स्रोत र सम्भावना हुँदाहुँदै पनि गरिब र परनिर्भर रहनु हो । यसको अर्थतन्त्र विदेशबाट आउने विप्रेषण आप्रवाहमा निर्भर छ । नेपाल तीनवटा संरचनात्मक आर्थिक सङ्कटहरू—खाद्य असुरक्षा, फराकिलो व्यापार असंतुलन र मौसमी ऊर्जा असुरक्षाले ग्रस्त छ । जसले सामूहिक रूपमा राष्ट्रिय विकासमा बाधा पुऱ्याएको छ । नेपालको संरचनात्मक आर्थिक सङ्कटलाई पार गर्न कृषि उत्पादकता, निर्यात सञ्चालित औद्योगिकीकरण र नवीकरणीय ऊर्जाको विविधीकरणमा लक्षित सुधार आवश्यक छ । बागमती प्रदेश नेपालको आर्थिक केन्द्र हो, जसले राष्ट्रिय कुल गार्हस्थ्य उत्पादनमा (३६.७%) योगदान पुर्याउँछ । यस प्रदेशको आर्थिक रूपान्तरण मुख्यतया सहरी सेवा क्षेत्रहरूद्वारा सञ्चालित छ, जसमा थोक र खुद्रा व्यापार, वित्त र बिमा, घर जग्गा र आवास, र काठमाडौँ उपत्यकामा केन्द्रित प्रशासनिक सेवाहरू हुन् । दिगो आर्थिक तथा सामाजिक रूपान्तरणका लागि पर्यटन, ऊर्जा र सूचना प्रविधि जस्ता सम्भावनाहरूको पूर्ण उपयोग गर्नुपर्ने देखिन्छ । यद्यपि, द्रुत शहरीकरणले निम्त्याएको अव्यवस्थित बसोबास, क्षेत्रीय असमानता, र उत्पादनमूलक उद्योगहरूको संकुचन जस्ता चुनौतीहरूलाई सम्बोधन गर्न एकीकृत योजना र प्रभावकारी नीति कार्यान्वयन आवश्यक छ ।

मूल शब्दहरू: आर्थिक संकट, आर्थिक रूपान्तरण, विप्रेषण, उत्पादनमूलक उद्योग, एकीकृत योजना

१. परिचय

१.१ पृष्ठभूमि

नेपालको राजधानी समेत रहेको बागमती प्रदेश नेपालका सात प्रदेशहरूमध्ये महत्वपूर्ण प्रदेश मानिन्छ । नेपालको कुल जनसङ्ख्याको २०.९७ प्रतिशत (करिब ६१ लाख १६ हजार) यस प्रदेशमा बसोबास गर्दछन् । बागमती प्रदेशको दोस्रो आवधिक योजनाले यसलाई आर्थिक रूपले समृद्ध, औद्योगिक र पर्यटकीय केन्द्रको रूपमा विकास गर्ने लक्ष्य राखेको पाइन्छ । बागमती प्रदेश नेपालको मध्य भागमा अवस्थित रहेको छ । यसले नेपालको कुल क्षेत्रफलको १३.७९ प्रतिशत अर्थात् २०,३०० वर्ग किलोमिटर भू-भाग ओगटेको छ । यो प्रदेश समुद्री सतहबाट १४१ मिटर (चितवनको गोलाघाट) देखि ७,४२२ मिटर (गणेश हिमाल) को उचाइसम्म फैलिएको छ । यस प्रदेशमा १३ वटा जिल्लाहरू रहेका छन्, जसमा पाँचवटा हिमाली, दुईवटा पहाडी, तीनवटा उपत्यका (काठमाडौँ, ललितपुर, भक्तपुर) र तीनवटा भित्री मधेसका जिल्लाहरू पर्दछन् (प्र.नी.यो.आ. २०८१) । नेपालको राष्ट्रिय जनगणना २०७८ को नतिजा अनुसार बागमती प्रदेशको जनसङ्ख्या ६१,१६,८६६ जसमा ४९.८४ प्रतिशत पुरुष र ५०.१६ प्रतिशत महिला छन् । प्रति वर्ग किलोमिटर ३०१ जना रहेको पाइन्छ जुन राष्ट्रिय औसतभन्दा माथि हो । यस प्रदेशमा तामाङ, बाहुन, क्षेत्री, नेवार र मगरको बाहुल्यता छ । बोल्ने मुख्य भाषाहरूमा नेपाली, तामाङ र नेवार हुन् । बागमती प्रदेशको साक्षरता दर ८२.०६ प्रतिशत छ (रा.त.का., २०७८) ।

१.२ वर्षा छायाँ क्षेत्र

नेपालको काभ्रेपलाञ्चोक, सिन्धुली, रामेछापका केही भागहरू जस्ता वर्षा छायाँ क्षेत्रहरू पहाड (महाभारत पर्वतमाला) को छेउमा (डाउनवइन्ड) सुक्खा क्षेत्रहरू हुन् जहाँ ओसले भरिएको मनसुनी हावा उठ्छ । वर्षा छायाँ पर्वत श्रृङ्खलाको लवार्ड (सुरक्षित, डाउनवइन्ड) छेउमा सुक्खा क्षेत्र हो, जसले हावाको छेउको तुलनामा उल्लेखनीय रूपमा कम वर्षा हुन्छ । यो ओरोग्राफिक लिफ्टको कारण हुन्छ: ओसिलो हावालाई पहाडले बाध्य पार्छ, चिसो पार्छ, र हावाको छेउमा वर्षा वा हिउँ छोड्छ भने सुक्खा हावालाई अर्को छेउमा तल झार्छ । ओरोग्राफिक लिफ्टिङ तब हुन्छ जब चलिरहेको हावाको द्रव्यमानलाई भौगोलिक अवरोधमाथि उकास्न बाध्य पारिन्छ, जस्तै पहाड, जसले यसलाई चिसो बनाउँछ, घनीभूत गर्दछ, बादलहरू बनाउँछ, र प्रायः हावाको छेउमा वर्षा छोड्छ । एक हरियाली, भिजेको अवस्था सिर्जना गर्दछ, जबकि लवार्ड पक्ष धेरै सुक्खा हुन्छ, “वर्षा छायाँ” बनाउँछ । महाभारत श्रृङ्खलाले बङ्गालको खाडीबाट आउने ओसले भरिएको मनसुनी हावालाई रोक्ने विशाल पर्खालको रूपमा काम गर्दछ । त्यसैले सुनकोसी

नदीका आसपास प्रायः दोललालघाट देखि गर्तिर भेग झाङ्गाझोली रातमाटा, मूलकोट, खाल्टे चैनपुर, मन्थली, खुर्कोट, देउरालटार, ग्वालटार, बेतेनी, सेलेघाट, विर्ता, सान्ने, सिस्वा, भिरपानी, घुर्मी, आदि भूभाग वर्षा छायाँ क्षेत्रमा पर्दछन् (थापा, २०८३, वैशाख २८) ।

वर्षाको छाया प्रभाव नेपालको मध्य पहाडमा एक महत्वपूर्ण जलवायु विशेषता हो, जसले काभ्रेपलाञ्चोक, सिन्धुली, रामेछाप जस्ता जिल्लाहरूमा पानीको अभाव सिर्जना गर्दछ । दिगो समाधानहरू अनुकूलन र स्रोत दक्षतामा केन्द्रित गर्नु पर्ने हुन्छ । पानीको अभाव विरुद्ध लचिलोपन निर्माण गर्न र खाद्य सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित गर्न परम्परागत ज्ञानलाई आधुनिक प्रविधिहरूसँग संयोजन गरेर सुनकोसी, तामाकोसी जस्ता नदीबाट लिफ्ट सिंचाइको व्यवस्था गर्नु पर्छ । यस क्षेत्रमा बाह्रै मास बहने अटुट नदीहरू रहे पनि जनताको जीवनस्तर उकास्न ती नदीको खासै उपयोग हुन सकेको देखिदैन ।

१.३ अर्थसामाजिक परिवेश

बागमती प्रदेश नेपालको सबैभन्दा बढी औद्योगिकरण भएको अग्रणी प्रदेश हो । यस प्रदेशका मुख्य आर्थिक आधारहरूमा कृषि, पर्यटन, व्यापार र उत्पादनमूलक उद्योग हुन् । यहाँका १० वर्ष र सोभन्दा माथिका जनसङ्ख्यामध्ये ७५.३ प्रतिशत आर्थिक रूपले सक्रिय रहेको पाइन्छ । यो प्रदेशको मानव विकास सूचकांक ०.६६१ छ । आर्थिक वर्ष २०८१/८२ देखि २०८५/८६ सम्मका लागि तर्जुमा गरिएको बागमती प्रदेशको दोस्रो आवधिक योजनाले कृषि, पूर्वाधार, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, उद्योग र पर्यटनलाई विकासको प्रमुख संवाहक मानेको छ । यस योजनाले प्रदेशको आर्थिक वृद्धिदर ६.४ प्रतिशत पुऱ्याउने लक्ष्य राखेको देखिन्छ । योजनाको अन्त्यसम्ममा प्रतिव्यक्ति आय अमेरिकी डलर ३,५८० पुऱ्याउने र कुल गार्हस्थ्य उत्पादन वृद्धि गर्ने महत्वाकांक्षी लक्ष्य निर्धारण गरिएको छ । योजनाले गरिबी निवारण, दिगो विकास लक्ष्यको प्राप्ति, गुणस्तरीय सेवा प्रवाह र सुशासनलाई जोड दिँदै समाजवादउन्मुख अर्थतन्त्रको आधारशिला तयार गर्ने दिशामा केन्द्रित गरेको छ (प्र.नी.यो.आ.२०८१) । आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण (२०८२/८३) अनुसार कुल गार्हस्थ्य उत्पादनमा कृषि क्षेत्रको योगदान २४ प्रतिशत र गैर—कृषि क्षेत्रको ७६ प्रतिशत रहने अनुमान गरिएको छ । आर्थिक गतिविधिमा बागमती प्रदेश अग्र स्थानमा कायमै छ, जसले कुल गार्हस्थ्य उत्पादनमा ३६.७ प्रतिशत योगदान पुऱ्याएको छ (अर्थ मन्त्रालय, २०८३, ज्येष्ठ १३) ।

यस प्रदेशमा बसोबास गर्ने चेपाङ्ग, दलित, माझी, दनुवार, थारु, सुनुवार, मगर, तामाङ, जिरेल, थामी, पहरी, हायु, मुसहर, वनकरियाँ आदि जातीका बहुसंख्यक जनता चरम गरिबीमा बाँच्न विवश छन् । बागमती प्रदेशको महाभारत पर्वत शृङ्खला गरिबीको पकेट क्षेत्रको रूपमा रहेको छ । यहाँ बसोबास गर्ने अधिकांश जनता

गरिबीको रेखामुनी रहेका छन् । यस क्षेत्रमा विशेष आर्थिक कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन गर्न जरुरी छ । साथै ठूला शहरहरू जस्तै काठमाण्डौ, ललितपुर, भक्तपुर, बनेपा, धुलिखेल, भरतपुर, हेटौडा आदिमा सुकुमवासी तथा अति विपन्न वर्ग र दलित समुदायको बसोवास रहेको पाइन्छ । यीनीहरूको लागि छुट्टै विशेष आर्थिक तथा सामाजिक कार्यक्रम चलाउनु पर्ने हुन्छ । शहरी सुकुमवासी र अति विपन्न गरिब वर्ग शहरी अर्थतन्त्रका अभिन्न अङ्ग हुन् । उनीहरूप्रति बक्रदृष्टि राख्नु भनेको शहरी गरिबी, श्रमिकको आवश्यकता र शहरी समाजको विकासमा मजदूरहरूको योगदानप्रति अनदेखा गर्नु हो । यसको स्पष्ट अर्थ हो श्रमिकहरूको श्रमको सम्मान नगर्नु र अन्त्यमा मानवताको नै अपमान गर्नु हो ।

१.४ आर्थिक विरोधाभाष

नेपाली अर्थतन्त्रको विरोधाभाष भनेको स्रोत, साधन र अपार सम्भावनाले भरिपूर्ण भएर पनि देश आर्थिक रूपमा पछाडि पर्नु र नागरिकको जीवनस्तर तात्वीक रूपमा रूपान्तरण नहुनु हो । नेपालको अर्थतन्त्रको मुख्य विरोधाभास भनेको प्रचुर प्राकृतिक स्रोत र सम्भावना हुँदाहुँदै पनि गरिब र परनिर्भर रहनु हो । यसको मुख्य अर्थतन्त्र विदेशबाट आउने विप्रेषण आप्रवाहमा निर्भर छ, जसमा देशको उत्पादन, रोजगारी वा उद्योगभन्दा पनि लाखौं युवाहरूको विदेश पलायनले देशको उपभोग र अर्थतन्त्र धानिरहेको छ (थापा, २०८३, ज्येष्ठ १८) ।

नियोजित विकास र कृषिमा असफलता रहदै आएको छ । सन् १९५६ मा योजनाबद्ध विकासको सुरुवात भए पनि कृषि उत्पादन बढाउने र विविधीकरण गर्ने सरकारी लक्ष्य अधुरै रह्यो । सन् १९९० को दशकमा उदारीकरण अपनाइयो, जसले निर्यात बढाउनुको साटो उल्टै आयात र परनिर्भरता ह्यात्तै बढायो । २०४६ सालको राजनीतिक परिवर्तन, दशक लामो सशस्त्र द्वन्द्व, २०७२ को भूकम्प र कोभिड—१९ जस्ता महामारीले नेपालको आर्थिक प्रगतिको बाटोलाई पटक—पटक पछाडि धकेलेको छ । राजनीतिक व्यवस्थामा परिवर्तन आए पनि राजनीतिक नेतृत्वले ठालुपन, निहीत स्वार्थ र पारिवारीक भरण पोषण र आसेपासे अर्थतन्त्रको विकास गर्नमा नै मलजल पुऱ्याए । कसैले पनि स्वाधिन अर्थतन्त्रको विकास गर्न आर्थिक सामाजिक संरचनात्मक परिवर्तन गर्न खासै महत्वपूर्ण ध्यान पुऱ्याउन सकेनन् । त्यसैले ऐतिहासिक रूपमा नेपालले जुन तिब्र गतिमा आर्थिक विकास गर्नु पर्ने थियो त्यो जनचाहना अनुरूप हुन सकेन । यो आर्थिक विरोधाभाषको अवस्थाबाट बागमती प्रदेश पनि अलग रहन सकेन ।

आर्थिक विरोधाभाषका मूल कारणहरू

विप्रेषणमा अत्यधिक निर्भरता: विप्रेषण देशको अर्थतन्त्रको मुख्य आधार बनेको छ, जसले स्वदेशी उत्पादन, रोजगारी र उद्यमशीलताको विकासमा निरुत्साहित गरेको छ ।

नीतिगत अस्थिरता र सुशासनको अभाव: राजनीतिक परिवर्तनसँगै आर्थिक नीति फेरिने, कर्मचारीतन्त्रमा ढिलासुस्ती र सदाचारमा कमीले गर्दा स्वदेशी तथा विदेशी लगानी आकर्षित हुन सकेको छैन ।

उत्पादनमुखी अर्थतन्त्रको कमी: कूल गार्हस्थ्य उत्पादनमा उद्योग र उत्पादन क्षेत्रको योगदान घट्दै जानु र विप्रेषण आप्रवाहले उपभोग संस्कृति बढाउनु मुख्य समस्या हो ।

भौगोलिक विकटता र भूपरिवेष्टित अवस्था: ८३ प्रतिशत भू-भाग पहाडी र हिमाली हुनुका साथै भूपरिवेष्टित हुनुले पूर्वाधार निर्माणको लागत बढाएको छ र अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय व्यापारमा कठिनाई ल्याएको छ । तर देशको भौगोलिक अवस्थालाई दोष दिएर उम्कन मिल्दैन ।

१.५ उद्देश्यहरू

- नेपालका आर्थिक संकट पहिचान गरी ती संकट सम्बोधन गर्न आर्थिक तथा सामाजिक पक्षको पहिचान गर्ने ।
- बागमती प्रदेशको आर्थिक रूपान्तरणका मुख्य पक्षहरूको पहिचान गरी आर्थिक तथा सामाजिक विकासका अवसर र चुनौतीहरू विश्लेषण गर्ने ।

२. अध्ययन विधि

यस अध्ययनमा लैङ्गिक समानतासँग सम्बन्धित दृष्टिकोण र अर्थराजनीतिक अवधारणा आत्मसात गरिएको छ भने अवलोकन, जानिफकार व्यक्तिसंग विचार विमर्ष, विद्यमान दस्तावेजहरूको समीक्षा, इन्टरनेट आदिको प्रयोग गरिएको छ । यो अध्ययनमा विभिन्न कोणबाट सूचनाको विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । सूचना विश्लेषण अर्थ—राजनीतिक अवधारणामा आधारित छ । अर्थराजनीति सोंच भनेको स्रोत र साधनको वितरण कुन वर्ग र क्षेत्रमा के कति र कसरी वितरण भएको छ भनेर हेर्ने दृष्टिकोण हो । यस अध्ययनमा विशेषगरी बागमती प्रदेश आर्थिक विकासका अवसर र चुनौतीहरू केलाउने सन्दर्भमा अर्थराजनीतिक दृष्टिकोण प्रयोग गर्ने जमर्को गरिएको छ । आर्थिक विकास सम्बन्धी तथ्याङ्कहरूको संकलनमा राष्ट्रिय तथ्याङ्क कार्यालयका प्रकाशित दस्तावेजहरूलाई आधार मानिएको छ । शोध कार्यगर्दा विभिन्न पत्र—पत्रिका, शोधपत्र आदिको समीक्षा गरी महत्वपूर्ण ज्ञान उद्धरण गरिएको छ । यस क्षेत्रमा शोधकर्ता स्वयं

लामो समयसम्म आबद्ध रहेको हुँदा शोधकर्ताको व्यक्तिगत अनुभव समेत यस अध्ययनमा समावेश भएको छ ।

३. अध्ययनको नतिजा तथा विवेचना

३.१ नेपालको आर्थिक संकटहरू

नेपाल तीनवटा संरचनात्मक आर्थिक सङ्कटहरू—खाद्य असुरक्षा, फराकिलो व्यापार असंतुलन र मौसमी ऊर्जा असुरक्षाले पीडित छ । जसले सामूहिक रूपमा यसको राष्ट्रिय विकासमा बाधा पुऱ्याएको छ । अनियमित जलवायु ढाँचा र परिवर्तनशील विश्वव्यापी गतिशीलताका कारण यी सङ्कटहरू अझ गहिरिएका छन्, तर तिनीहरू शताब्दीयौंको राजनीतिक र आर्थिक अविकसिततामा गहिरो रूपमा जरा गाडिएका छन् । नेपालको अर्थतन्त्रमा खाद्य सुरक्षा, व्यापार घाटा र ऊर्जा संकट एकआपसमा जोडिएका संरचनात्मक समस्या हुन् । कृषिमा घट्दो उत्पादन, खुला बजारको नीतिपछिको आयातमुखी प्रवृत्ति, र आन्तरिक ऊर्जा स्रोतको ढिलो विकासले यी संकटहरू निम्त्याएका हुन् ।

३.२. तीन संरचनात्मक आर्थिक सङ्कटको विद्यमान अवस्था

३.२.१ खाद्य सुरक्षा सङ्कट

दुई तिहाइ जनसङ्ख्याले कृषिमा काम गरे तापनि नेपाल शुद्ध खाद्यान्न निर्यातकर्ताबाट विदेशी आयातमा धेरै निर्भर खाद्यान्न घाटाको राष्ट्रमा परिणत भएको छ । लगभग १३% जनसङ्ख्याले मध्यमदेखि गम्भीर खाद्य असुरक्षाको सामना गरिरहेको छ, कर्णाली प्रदेश जस्ता दुर्गम क्षेत्रहरूमा ३२% सम्म खाद्य संकट बढेको पाइन्छ । कम बाली उत्पादन, रासायनिक मलको तीव्र संरचनात्मक अभाव, सिँचाई पूर्वाधारको अभाव, र कामका लागि विदेशमा बसाइँ सरिरहेका युवा श्रमिकहरूको सामूहिक पलायनले कृषि भूमिको विशाल भूभाग त्यागेको छ । भन्सार विभागको वार्षिक व्यापार तथ्यांक अनुसार नेपालले पछिल्लो समय कृषिजन्य उत्पादन (चामल, गहुँ, मकै, तरकारी, फलफूल र बीउबिजन) को आयातमा मात्र वार्षिक करिब रु. ३ खर्ब ९४ अर्ब (झन्डै ४ खर्ब) खर्च गरेको छ (भन्सार विभाग, २०८३) ।

३.२.२ व्यापार असंतुलन संकट

नेपाल दीर्घकालीन र खतरनाक व्यापारिक व्यापार घाटाले ग्रस्त छ । अर्थतन्त्रले आफूले खपत गर्ने लगभग सबै वस्तुहरू आयात गर्दछ जबकि धेरै थोरै मूल्य वर्धित वस्तुहरू निर्यात गर्दछ । नेपालको

व्यापार घाटा आश्चर्यजनक रूपमा आर्थिक वर्ष २०२५/२६ को पहिलो नौ महिनामा १.२६८ ट्रिलियन रुपैया पुगेको छ । निर्यात—आयात कभरेज अनुपात कम छ । नेपालको वस्तु व्यापारमा निर्यात र आयातको अनुपात औसतम (१:१०) देखि (१:१२) सम्म रहेको छ । यसको अर्थ नेपालले जम्मा रु. १ को सामान निर्यात गर्दा रु. १० देखि रु. १२ बराबरको सामान आयात गर्छ । सेवा व्यापारमा भने अवस्था केही राम्रो छ र यो अनुपात लगभग (१:१.५) को हाराहारीमा छ । यो संरचनात्मक अन्तरलाई विदेशी रेमिट्यान्सले संक्षिप्त रूपमा ढाक्छ, जसले अत्यधिक कमजोर उपभोग—आधारित अर्थव्यवस्था सिर्जना गर्दछ (भन्सार विभाग, २०८३) ।

भन्सार विभागको पछिल्लो तथ्याङ्क अनुसार आयातमा भएको उच्च वृद्धिका कारण मुलुकको व्यापार घाटा १४.९२ प्रतिशतले बढेर १४ खर्ब ४३ अर्ब ६७ करोड रुपैयाँ पुगेको छ । गत आर्थिक वर्षको १० महिनामा यस्तो घाटा १२ खर्ब ५६ अर्ब २७ करोड रुपैयाँ थियो । तथ्याङ्कअनुसार नेपालको कुल वैदेशिक व्यापारमा आयातको हिस्सा ८७.१८ प्रतिशत पुगेको छ भने निर्यातको हिस्सा घटेर १२.८२ प्रतिशतमा सीमित भएको छ । गत वर्ष निर्यातको हिस्सा १२.८८ प्रतिशत थियो । यस अवधिमा आयात—निर्यात अनुपात ६.८० पुगेको छ । यसको अर्थ नेपालले १ रुपैयाँ बराबरको वस्तु निर्यात गर्दा ६ रुपैयाँ ८० पैसा बराबरको वस्तु आयात गर्ने गरेको देखिन्छ । अघिल्लो वर्ष यस्तो अनुपात ६.७७ रहेको थियो ।

३.२.३ ऊर्जा सङ्कट

नेपालको ऊर्जा सङ्कटको प्रकृति लोड—सेडिडबाट मौसमी बेमेल र पूर्ण जीवाश्म इन्धन निर्भरताको संकटमा परिणत भएको छ । ग्रीष्मकालीन मनसुनमा नेपालले अतिरिक्त बिजुली उत्पादन गर्दा, यसका रन—अफ—द—रिभर (आरओआर) जलविद्युत संयन्त्रहरूले सुख्खा जाडो महिनाहरूमा उत्पादनमा भारी गिरावट बेहोर्छ । जाडोको चरम माग पूरा गर्न, नेपालले भारतबाट बिजुली आयात गर्नुपर्छ । साथै, नेपालले आन्तरिक रूपमा शून्य पेट्रोलियम वा जीवाश्म इन्धन उत्पादन गर्छ । यसको सबैभन्दा ठुलो आयात बिल पूर्ण रूपमा परिष्कृत तेल उत्पादनहरू (पेट्रोल, डिजेल, र एलपिजी) द्वारा सञ्चालित छ जसले अर्थतन्त्रलाई विश्वव्यापी तेल आघात र भूराजनीतिक आपूर्ति शृङ्खलाका अवरोधहरूको सामना गर्न बाध्य पारेको छ । नेपालले इन्धन (पेट्रोलियम पदार्थ) र बिजुली खरिद गर्नका लागि भारतमा प्रतिवर्ष करिब ३ खर्बदेखि ३ खर्ब ५० अर्ब रुपैयाँ खर्च गर्ने गरेको छ (भन्सार विभाग, २०८३) ।

नेपाल जल विद्युत उत्पादनको हिसावले प्रचुर संभावना भएको मुलुक भए पनि यस क्षेत्रमा जति हुनु पर्ने हो त्यती काम हुन नसकेको हो । यसका लागि राजनीतिक नेतृत्वको इच्छा शक्तिको कमी, उपयुक्त

नीतिगत प्रावधानको कमी, दीर्घकालीन रणनीतिको कमी कमजोरी र फितलो कार्यन्वयन पक्ष भएको देखिन्छ ।

३.३ अर्थतन्त्र सङ्कटका ऐतिहासिक कारणहरू

यी सङ्कटहरूका मूल कारणहरू ऐतिहासिक रूपमा राज्यले उत्पादक क्षमताहरू विकास नगरी कसरी स्रोतहरू निकाल्छ भन्ने कुरामा आधारित छन्:

३.३.१ सामन्ती भूमि अधिग्रहण प्रणाली

क्रमिक ऐतिहासिक शासनहरू (राणा शासन र शाह वंश) अन्तर्गत बिर्ता र जागीर जस्ता प्रणालीहरू मार्फत भूमिको स्वामित्व केन्द्रीकृत गरिएको थियो । वास्तविक खेती गर्नेहरूलाई नभई पुरस्कारका रूपमा राजनीतिक सम्भ्रान्त वर्गलाई जग्गा प्रदान गरिएको थियो । यसले उत्पादक प्रोत्साहनबाट भूमिको स्वामित्वलाई अलग गर्यो, निर्वाहमूखी कृषिलाई संस्थागत बनायो र संरचनात्मक नवप्रवर्तनलाई दबाएको छ ।

३.३.२ रेमिट्यान्स द्रयाप

राज्यले ऐतिहासिक रूपमा घरेलु उत्पादनलाई आर्थिक सहयोग गर्नुको सट्टा व्यापार शुल्कबाट राजस्व निकाल्नमा भर परेको थियो । आधुनिक समयमा, यो मानव पूँजी निर्यातमा निर्भरताको रूपमा प्रकट भयो राज्य श्रम आप्रवासनमा धेरै निर्भर छ (रेमिट्यान्स जीडीपीको २६% भन्दा बढी हो) । स्थानीय कृषि र औद्योगिक क्षेत्रहरू निर्माण गर्ने प्रोत्साहनलाई व्यवस्थित रूपमा नष्ट गर्दै राज्यको भन्सार राजस्वलाई बढावा दिँदै पैसाको यो आगमनले उपभोक्ता वस्तुहरूको आयातलाई वित्त पोषण गर्दछ ।

खाद्य संकट ऐतिहासिक रूपमा कृषि प्रधान रहेको नेपाल बिस्तारै खाद्यान्नमा परनिर्भर बन्दै जानुको पछाडि कृषि क्षेत्रमा व्यावसायिकीकरणको अभाव, निर्वाहमूखी परम्परागत खेती प्रणाली, मल, गुणस्तरीय बीउको अपर्याप्तता, कमजोर कृषि प्रसार प्रणाली र कृषक प्रधान कृषि अनुसन्धानमा कम ध्यान दिनाले गर्दा उत्पादन बढ्न सकेन । ग्रामीण क्षेत्रबाट युवा जनशक्ति विदेशिने क्रम बढ्दा लाखौं हेक्टर खेतीयोग्य जमिन बाँझो भएको छ, जसले गर्दा उत्पादन घट्न पुग्यो । सिँचाइको अभावमा मनसुनमा निर्भर हुनुपर्ने बाध्यता र तीव्र सहरीकरणका कारण उर्बर कृषि भूमि घट्दै गएको छ ।

३.३.३ दीर्घकालीन रूपमा विभाजित भू-राजनीति

नेपालको भू-परिवेष्टित भूगोलले यसलाई भारतको आर्थिक प्रभाव क्षेत्रभित्र राख्छ । सन् २०१५ को सीमा नाकाबंदी जस्ता ऐतिहासिक घटनाहरूले संरचनात्मक कमजोरतालाई उजागर गर्दछः भारतीय पारवहन मार्गहरू र खुला सीमा सम्झौताहरूमा अर्थतन्त्रको निर्भरताको अर्थ व्यापार नीतिहरू प्रायः आन्तरिक बजार आवश्यकताहरू भन्दा क्षेत्रीय राजनीतिक परिवर्तनहरूद्वारा निर्देशित हुन्छन् ।

व्यापार घाटा नेपालको अर्थतन्त्रमा निर्यातभन्दा आयात अत्यधिक हुनुका ऐतिहासिक कारणहरू छन् । नेपालमा तुलनात्मक लाभ भएका वस्तुहरूको उत्पादन घट्नु र आयात प्रतिस्थापन गर्ने उद्योगहरू बन्द हुँदै जानु । सन् १९८० र १९९० को दशकमा लिइएको खुला अर्थतन्त्र र उदारीकरण नीतिपछि भन्सार दरहरू घटाइए, जसले विदेशी सस्तो र ब्रान्डेड वस्तुहरूको बाढी ल्यायो र आन्तरिक उत्पादन ध्वस्त भयो । सन् २००४ मा विश्व व्यापार संगठनको सदस्य बनेपछि अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय प्रतिस्पर्धा गर्न नसक्दा निर्यात घट्यो र आयात हात्तै बढ्यो । भूपरिवेष्टित मुलुक हुनु र पारवहन लागत (ट्रान्जिट कस्ट) महँगो पर्ने भएकाले नेपाली उत्पादन अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय बजारमा प्रतिस्पर्धी बन्न सकेन ।

ऊर्जा संकट नेपालमा जलविद्युतको अपार सम्भावना भएर पनि लामो समयसम्म ऊर्जा संकट रहनुका ऐतिहासिक कारणहरू हुन् । दशकौंसम्म ठूला जलविद्युत आयोजनाहरू निर्माण नहुनु र राजनीतिक अस्थिरता, लगानीको अभाव तथा कमजोर व्यवस्थापनले परियोजनाहरू समयमै सम्पन्न हुन सकेनन् । उद्योग र अन्य क्षेत्रमा पेट्रोलियम पदार्थको माग अत्यधिक बढे पनि आफ्नै उत्पादन नहुँदा सम्पूर्ण इन्धन विदेशबाट आयात गर्नुपर्ने बाध्यता रह्यो । ग्यास र पेट्रोलियम गाडीहरूमा समाज अभ्यस्त हुँदा राष्ट्रिय आयको ठूलो हिस्सा ऊर्जा आयातमा नै खर्च हुने संरचनात्मक अवस्था बन्न पुग्यो ।

३.४ नेपालको तिनवटा संरचनात्मक आर्थिक सङ्कट पार गर्ने उपाय

नेपालको संरचनात्मक आर्थिक सङ्कटलाई पार गर्न कृषि उत्पादकता, निर्यात सञ्चालित औद्योगिकीकरण र नवीकरणीय ऊर्जाको विविधीकरणमा लक्षित सुधार आवश्यक छ । यी रणनीतिक र स्थानीयकृत हस्तक्षेपहरूले स्थिरीकरणको मार्ग प्रदान गर्दछः

३.४.१ खाद्य सुरक्षा

ठुलो मात्रामा कृषि—औद्योगीकरण कार्यान्वयन र कृषिलाई आधुनिकीकरण गर्ने । निर्वाहमूखी खेतीबाट उच्च उत्पादन दिने व्यावसायिक कृषिमा सदैँ, नेपालले खाद्यान्न आयातमा भारी निर्भरता कम गर्न सक्छ अनुदानित मल, बिउ र सूक्ष्म सिँचाइमा पहुँच सुनिश्चित गर्नु महत्वपूर्ण छ ।

३.४.२ व्यापार सन्तुलन

आयातित उपभोक्ता र पूँजीगत वस्तुहरूको विकल्पका रूपमा घरेलु उत्पादनलाई बढावा दिनु पर्ने हुन्छ । नेपालले महँगो पेट्रोलियम आयातलाई तीव्र रूपमा कम गर्दै सार्वजनिक यातायात र भारी उद्योगहरूको विद्युतीकरण गर्न आफ्नो प्रचुर मात्रामा जलविद्युतको उपयोग गर्न सक्छ । सेवाहरू (आइटी र पर्यटन जस्ता) मा निर्यात प्रतिस्पर्धालाई सुदृढ पार्दा विदेशी मुद्रा भण्डार पनि स्थिर हुनेछ ।

३.४.३ मौसमी ऊर्जा सङ्कट

नेपाल धेरै मात्रामा नदीको जलविद्युतमा निर्भर छ, जसले सुख्खा जाडो महिनाहरूमा बिजुलीको अभाव निम्त्याउँछ । यसलाई पार गर्न राष्ट्रिय ग्रिडमा सौर्य ऊर्जालाई एकीकृत गर्न आवश्यक छ । जलविद्युत र व्याट्री भण्डारणसँग सौर्य ऊर्जा (जुन सुख्खा मौसममा शिखरमा पुग्छ) संयोजन गरेर, नेपालले लचिलो, वर्षेभरि घरेलु ऊर्जा आपूर्ति निर्माण गर्न सक्छ ।

३.५ बागमती प्रदेशका आर्थिक रूपान्तरणका क्षेत्रहरू

बागमती प्रदेश नेपालको आर्थिक केन्द्र हो, जसले राष्ट्रिय कुल गार्हस्थ्य उत्पादनमा (३६.७%) योगदान पुर्याउँछ । यस प्रदेशको आर्थिक रूपान्तरण मुख्यतया सहरी सेवा क्षेत्रहरूद्वारा सञ्चालित छ, जसमा थोक र खुद्रा व्यापार, वित्त र बिमा, घर जग्गा र आवास, र काठमाडौँ उपत्यकामा केन्द्रित प्रशासनिक सेवाहरू समावेश छन् ।

३.५.१ अवसरहरू

सूचना प्रविधि (आइटी): यो प्रदेश डिजिटल निर्यात बढाउन र डिजिटल अर्थतन्त्रलाई बढावा दिन सम्भावनाहरू खोल्दै क्षेत्रीय प्रविधि र आउटसोर्सिङ हबको रूपमा उदाउँदै छ ।

जलविद्युत र ऊर्जा: पहाडी क्षेत्रहरूमा प्रचुर मात्रामा जलस्रोतहरूले विद्युत उत्पादन विस्तार गर्न र निर्यात उन्मुख उद्योगहरूलाई सहयोग गर्ने विशाल सम्भावना प्रस्तुत गर्दछ ।

पर्यटन र संस्कृति: काठमाडौं उपत्यका र वरपरका क्षेत्रमा युनेस्को विश्व सम्पदा स्थलहरूको उपस्थितिले इको—टुरिजम र सांस्कृतिक सम्पदा पर्यटनका लागि अपार सम्भावना प्रदान गर्दछ ।

कृषि प्रशोधन: अन्नबाली, तरकारी, पशुपन्छि पालन, औषधीय जडीबुटी र उच्च उत्पादन दिने उत्पादनहरूका लागि मूल्य अभिवृद्धि शृङ्खलामा आधारित कृषि उद्योगहरूको विकासले ग्रामीण उत्पादनलाई सहरी उपभोक्ता बजारसँग जोड्छ ।

३.५.२ चुनौतिहरू

पूर्वाधार र भीडभाड: द्रुत सहरीकरणले काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा सहरी फैलावट, ट्राफिक जाम र गम्भीर प्रदूषण निम्त्याएको छ । ग्रामीण कनेक्टिभिटी र फोहोर प्रबन्धनमा पनि ठूलो पूर्वाधारको खाडल छ ।

बेरोजगारी वृद्धि: अर्थतन्त्र उत्पादक, श्रम—सघन उत्पादनको सट्टा सेवा र अचल सम्पत्तिमा धेरै निर्भर गर्दछ, जसले युवाहरूलाई कम रोजगारी दिन्छ ।

क्षेत्रीय असमानता: प्रदेशका दुर्गम, पहाडी जिल्लाहरूलाई कम विकसित छोडेर आर्थिक अवसरहरू काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा अत्यधिक केन्द्रित छन् ।

प्राकृतिक प्रकोप: प्रदेशले बाढी, भूस्खलन र माटोको क्षरण जस्ता जलवायु—प्रेरित प्रकोपहरूको महत्वपूर्ण जोखिमको सामना गरिरहेको छ ।

वर्षा छायाक्षेत्र: बागमती प्रदेशको सुनकाशी र तामाकोशी नदी किनारका काभ्रेपलाञ्चोक, सिन्धुली, रामेछापका केही भागहरू वर्षा छाया क्षेत्रहरू हुन् । यस क्षेत्रमा कम वर्षा हुन्छ । यस अवस्थाले यस क्षेत्रको आर्थिक विकासमा चुनौती खडा गरेको छ ।

४. सिकिएका पाठ

बागमती प्रदेशले नेपालको कूल गार्हस्थ उत्पादनमा झन्डै ३६.७% (आ.व.२०८२÷८३ आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण) योगदान दिएको छ । यो प्रगतिको अनुभवबाट दिगो आर्थिक रूपान्तरणका लागि सन्तुलित पूर्वाधार विस्तार, विकेन्द्रीकरण, युवा उद्यमशीलताको प्रवर्द्धन र स्रोत साधनको अधिकतम सदुपयोग गर्नुपर्ने मुख्य पाठहरू सिकिएको छ ।

बागमती प्रदेशको आर्थिक रूपान्तरणको मार्गचित्रबाट सिकिएका प्रमुख सिकाइहरू यस प्रकार छन्:

४.१ सन्तुलित क्षेत्रीय विकास र विकेन्द्रीकरण

काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा मात्र आर्थिक गतिविधि केन्द्रित हुँदा अन्य जिल्लामा विकास पछि परेको देखिन्छ त्यसैले, सबै जिल्लाहरूमा समान पहुँच र आर्थिक अवसर सिर्जना गर्नुपर्ने पाठ सिकिएको छ ।

४.२ कृषि र पर्यटनमा आत्मनिर्भरता

सहरी क्षेत्रको माग धान्न र विदेश पलायन रोक्न गाउँ फर्कने युवाहरूलाई कृषि, वन पैदावार, र ग्रामीण पर्यटनमा प्रोत्साहन गर्नुपर्ने देखिएको छ ।

४.३ सेवा क्षेत्रको आधुनिकीकरण

कुल गार्हस्थ उत्पादनमा सेवा क्षेत्र (पर्यटन, होटल, वित्त) को हिस्सा सबैभन्दा बढी (७७%) छ, यसलाई अझ व्यवस्थित र डिजिटलमैत्री बनाउनु आवश्यक छ ।

४.४ सहकारीको नियमन र परिचालन

सहकारी संस्थाहरूले गरिवी न्यूनीकरणमा ठूलो भूमिका खेले पनि आर्थिक संकट रोक्न तिनीहरूलाई उत्पादनशील क्षेत्रसँग जोड्नुपर्ने र नियमन कडा पार्नुपर्ने पाठ सिकिएको छ ।

४.५ स्थिर नीति र सुशासन

उद्योगी तथा व्यवसायीलाई प्रोत्साहन गर्न सरकारी नीतिमा स्थिरता र एकद्वार प्रणालीको आवश्यकता महसुस गरिएको छ ।

४.६ वर्षा छाया क्षेत्र लक्षित कार्यक्रम

सुनकोसी नदी किनारका वर्षा छायाक्षेत्रका भूभागहरू केन्द्रित गरी विशेष परियोजना नै तयार गरी आर्थिक रुपान्तरणका कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन गर्नु पर्ने महसुस गरिएको छ ।

४.७ शहरी सुकुमवासी र अति विपन्न वर्ग

बागमती प्रदेशका ठूलाशहरहरूमा बसोवास गर्ने सुकुमवासी, अति विपन्न वर्ग, र दलित समुदाय शहरी अर्थतन्त्रका अभिन्न अङ्ग हुन् । उनीहरूको उचित बसोवासको व्यवस्थापन गर्नु तीनै तहका सरकारको जिम्मेवारी हो ।

५. निष्कर्ष र सुझाव

नेपालमा संरचनात्मक सङ्कटहरू—खाद्य सुरक्षा, व्यापार असंतुलन, र मौसमी ऊर्जा घाटा—समयपूर्व डि—औद्योगिकीकरण, आयातित वस्तुहरू र जीवाश्म ईन्धनहरूमा भारी निर्भरता, र घरेलु उत्पादन पूर्वाधारमा दीर्घकालीन न्यून लगानीद्वारा सञ्चालित सम्भाव्यताको विचमा गरिबीको विरोधाभासमा परिणत हुन्छ । प्रत्येक आपसमा जोडिएको क्षेत्रको निष्कर्षले गहिरो जरा भएका कमजोरीहरूलाई उजागर गर्दछ । नेपाल शुद्ध कृषि निर्यातकर्ताबाट खाद्य आयातमा खतरनाक निर्भरतामा सरेको छ । देशले सामान्यतया व्यापक खाद्य तथा पोषण संकटबाट गुज्रनु पर्ने अवस्था छ । यस्ता कारक तत्वले दीर्घकालीन कुपोषण र भौगोलिक असुरक्षा निम्त्याउन सक्छ । यो सङ्कट कृषियोग्य भूमिको पूर्ण अभावको सट्टा वितरण, भूमि विभाजन र आपूर्ति शृङ्खलाको अस्थिरताको कारण हो । कम उत्पादकत्व, अपर्याप्त सिँचाई, र युवाहरूको बहिर्गमनको अर्थ कृषि क्षेत्रले मौसमी जलवायु कमजोरीहरू बिना ग्रामीण जीविकोपार्जनलाई योगदान पुऱ्याउन सक्दैन । यी तीनवटै आर्थिक संकटलाई दिगो रूपमा समाधान गर्न जलविद्युत उत्पादन र खपत बढाउने तथा कृषि क्षेत्रलाई व्यवसायिकीकरण र आत्मनिर्भर बनाउने नीतिहरू प्रभावकारी हुन सक्छन् । कृषि क्षेत्र सधैं उपेक्षित हुदै आएको छ । कुनै पनि नीति निर्माता, निर्णयकर्ता, राष्ट्र बैंक र कमरसियल बैंकहरूले पनि कृषि क्षेत्रमा लगानी गर्ने कुरा प्राथमिकतामा पारेको देखिदैन । यो क्षेत्र उत्पादनमूलक, रोजगारी सिर्जना, खाद्य तथा पोषण सुरक्षा र गरिबी निवारण गर्ने इन्जिनको रूपमा रहेको छ ।

बागमती प्रदेश नेपालको आर्थिक मेरुदण्ड हो । दिगो आर्थिक रूपान्तरणका लागि पर्यटन, ऊर्जा र सूचना प्रविधि जस्ता सम्भावनाहरूको पूर्ण उपयोग गर्नुपर्ने देखिन्छ । यद्यपि, द्रुत शहरीकरणले निम्त्याएको अव्यवस्थित बसोबास, क्षेत्रीय असमानता, र उत्पादनमूलक उद्योगहरूको संकुचन जस्ता चुनौतीहरूलाई सम्बोधन गर्न एकीकृत योजना र प्रभावकारी नीति कार्यान्वयन आवश्यक छ । बागमती प्रदेशको सुनकोसी र तामाकोशी नदीको आसपासका सुखा क्षेत्रमा आर्थिक रूपान्तरणका लागि ध्यान जानु पर्ने देखिन्छ । यस क्षेत्रमा हाल सडकको सुविधा राम्रो भएकाले व्यवसायिक कृषि तथा पशुपालनमार्फत किसानको आय आर्जन बढाउन सक्ने यथेष्ट संभावना छ । यसको लागि तीन तहकै सरकारले योजनाबद्ध ढङ्गले परियोजना नै सञ्चालन गर्नु पर्ने देखिन्छ । बागमती प्रदेश सरकारको दोस्रो आवधिक योजनामा वर्षा छाया परेको यस क्षेत्र प्राथमिकता प्राप्त योजनाहरूमा परेको भए पनि काम भने हुन सकेको देखिदैन । यसको कार्यान्वयनका लागि सम्बन्धित क्षेत्रका सचेत जनता, राजनीतिक नेताहरू, प्रदेश सभा सदस्यहरू र प्रदेश सरकारले सक्रियता देखाउनु पर्ने खाँचो छ । साथै शहरी सुकुमवासी, मजदूर, सडक छेउमा वस्तु बेच्ने साना व्यापारीहरू, कृषक, अति विपन्न वर्ग, पछि पारिएका समुदाय, महिला, बालबालिका, दलित,

अपाङ्ग, अल्पसंख्यक जनजाती र महाभारत पर्वत श्रृङ्खलामा बसोबास गर्ने बहुसंख्यक घर परिवारहरूको जनजीविकाको प्रत्याभूति गर्न र आर्थिक तथा सामाजिक रुपान्तरणका लागि प्रदेश सरकारले विशेष प्राथमिकता दिनु पर्ने देखिन्छ । राज्यको दायित्व भनेकै विपन्न वर्गको आर्थिक तथा सामाजिक शशक्तिकरण गर्दै उनीहरूको जीवनमा आमूल सकारात्मक परिवर्तन गरी मुहारमा मुस्कान छाउनु हो ।

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व्यवसायिक शासन र नेपालमा यसको अवस्था

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शासन प्रणाली

सरकार संचालन गर्दा अवलम्बन गर्ने पद्धति तथा तौर तरिकालाई शासन प्रणाली भनिन्छ भने कुनै पनि संस्था संचालन गर्ने क्रममा संस्थाका संचालक लगायत सरोकारवाला पक्षले गर्ने निर्णय, त्यसको कार्यन्वयन र अन्तर सम्बन्धित पक्षसंगको सम्बन्धलाई व्यवसायिक शासन भनिन्छ । शासन प्रणालीलाई पारदर्शी, जवाफदेही, सहभागितामूलक र कानूनमा आधारित बनाउनुलाई सुशासन भनिन्छ । सरकारले प्रभावकारी एवं नतिजामुखी हिसावले कार्य सम्पादन गर्न सकेमा मात्र शासन प्रणाली पनि समग्रमा प्रभावकारी हुन सक्छ । १९९० को दशकमा दाता सर्तको रूपमा शासन प्रणाली पारदर्शी, जवाफदेही, सहभागितामूलक, कानूनको शासन, प्रभावकारी सहभागिता र समाजदारीता परिणाम केन्द्रित हुनु पर्ने विषय उठान भएको थियो । सुरुमा सरकारको शासन प्रणालीमा यी विषय हुनु पर्ने मान्यता रहेकोमा पछिल्लो समयमा निजीक्षेत्रको वृद्धो भूमिका एवं जिम्मेवारीका कारण व्यवसायिक शासन प्रणालीमा समेत यी गुणहरू अपरिहार्य मानिएको छ ।

व्यवसायिक शासन

व्यवसायिक शासन भनेको कुनै पनि व्यवसायिक संस्था वा कम्पनीलाई निर्देशित, नियन्त्रित र संचालन गर्ने नियम, अभ्यास र प्रकृयाहरूको समग्र प्रणाली हो । यसले निजी क्षेत्रका व्यवसायिक फर्म, कम्पनी तथा संस्थामा निर्णय कसरी गरिन्छ र त्यसको कार्यन्वयन कसरी हुन्छ भन्ने विषयलाई जनाउँछ । व्यवसायिक शासनले शासनको पारदर्शिता, जवाफदेहीता र संस्थागत आन्तरिक सुशासनलाई वृद्धाउँछ । व्यवसायिक संस्था संचालनका लागि बनाइएको निश्चित कानून, मापदण्ड, कार्यविधि तथा पद्धतिमा आधारित भइ व्यवसायिक शासन संचालन गरिन्छ । कम्पनीलाई व्यवस्थापनले संचालन र नियन्त्रण गर्ने तरिका विधि र पद्धतीको आधारमा कम्पनीमा सुशासनको अवस्था जानकारी हुन्छ । यो कम्पनी संचालनको समग्र प्रणाली हो जसले कम्पनीको साधारणसभा, संचालक समिति, व्यवस्थापन, र शेयरधनी अर्थात लगानीकर्ता लगायतका सरोकारवालाहरू बीचको अन्तर सम्बन्ध र कार्य विभाजनलाई वृद्धाउँछ । व्यवसायिक शासन देखिने भन्दा व्यवहारबाट अनुभूती गर्न सकिने कुरा हो । व्यवसायिक शासनको कुरा गर्दा कम्पनीको नीति निर्माणको दृष्टिकोणले सबैभन्दा सार्वभौम अंग साधारणसभा हुन्छ भने नीति तथा प्रचलित कानूनको परिपालना

र कार्यान्वयनको सवालमा कम्पनीको कार्यकारिणी अंगको रूपमा संचालक समिति रहेको हुन्छ । यसैगरी कम्पनीको व्यवस्थापनले कम्पनीको दैनिक प्रशासन संचालन गर्दछ जसमा सीईयो सहितका विभागीय प्रमुख हुन्छन् । यसर्थ कम्पनीको संचालन, व्यवस्थापन र सेयरधनीका लगायत समग्र सरोकारवालासंग गरिने व्यवहारलाई संस्थागत सुशासन अन्तर्गत हेर्नु पर्ने हुन्छ । कर्पोरेट शासनको मुख्य सरोकारवाला सेयरधनी र संचालक समिति रहन्छन् भने अन्य साझेदारमा संस्था वा कम्पनीसंग सम्बन्धित प्रचलित कानून, कर्मचारी, आपूर्तिकर्ता, व्यवसायिक वातावरण र सेवा लिने वर्ग समेत पर्दछन् ।

व्यवसायिक शासन त्यो प्रणाली हो जसको माध्यमबाट व्यवसायिक संस्थाहरूलाई निर्देशन, नियन्त्रण र समन्वय गरिन्छ । कम्पनीले आफ्नो नाफा नोक्सानका साथै सेवा लिने वर्गलाई समेत केन्द्रमा राखेको हुन्छ । व्यवसायिक सुशासन कायम हुन सकेमा मात्र संस्था दीर्घजीवि रहनुको साथै संस्थाको शाख वृद्धि हुन गई सदैव संस्था आर्थिक रूपमा सफल र प्रतिस्पर्धि हुन सक्दछ । व्यवसायिक शासन कम्पनीलाई व्यवसायीक, नैतिक र जिम्मेवार बनाउने औजार समेत हो । जसले कम्पनीलाई आर्थिक रूपमा सफल बनाउन, जनविश्वास वृद्धि गर्न र प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक रूपमा दीर्घकाल सम्म जीवन्त तुल्याउन मद्दत गर्छ । व्यवसायीक शासन साधारणसभा, संचालक समिति, उच्च व्यवस्थापन सेयरधनी सदस्यहरू र सरोकारवाला लगायतको व्यवसायिक संरचना, सम्बन्ध र कार्य प्रकृयालाई बुझाउने हुंदा यो कुनै पनि कम्पनी वा संस्थाको संचालन, निर्देशन र नियन्त्रण गर्ने तौर तरिका हो । व्यवसायिक शासनलाई देहाएको चक्रबाट समेत बुझ्न सकिन्छ ।



अतः व्यवसायिक शासनले कुनै पनि व्यवसायीक कम्पनीमा नीति एवं नियमनकारी कार्य ढाँचा, तहगत जिम्मेवारीको वाडफाड, आन्तरिक नियन्त्रण, पारदर्शिता एवं जवाफदेहीताको व्यवस्था, सदाचारयुक्त व्यवहार, सरोकारवालाको वृहत्तर हितसंग सम्बन्धित संस्कृति, सबल व्यवसायीक रणनीति, विवाद व्यवस्थापन जस्ता विषयहरूलाई समेटेको हुन्छ ।

व्यवसायिक शासनका विशेषताहरू

व्यवसायिक शासनमा स्वायत्तता र स्वतन्त्रता, सामुहिक निर्णय प्रणाली, नाफालाई प्राथमिकता, नाफाका लागि जोखिम उठाउने प्रवृत्ति, नव पर्वद्धनमा जोड, शेयरहोल्डरको र सरोकारवालाको वृहत्तर हितलाई बढी ध्यान, प्रत्यक्ष उत्तरदायित्व वहन र नतिजा केन्द्रित सोच जस्ता विशेषताहरू रहेका हुन्छन् ।

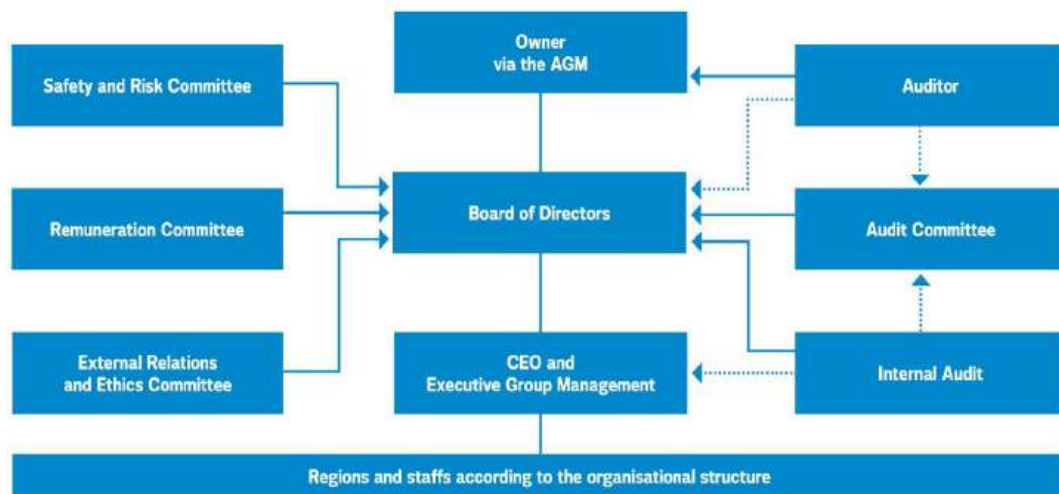
व्यवसायिक शासनका तत्वहरू

व्यवसायिक शासनमा साधारणसभा, संचालक समिति, सेयरधनीको अधिकार र दायित्व, सेयरधनीलाई समान व्यवहार, व्यवसायिक शासनमा सरोकारवालाको भुमिका, लेखापरिक्षण र सुचनाको पारदर्शिता, कार्यकारी भुमिका स्पष्ट नभएका संचालक समितिका सदस्यहरू, कार्यकारी व्यवस्थापन, क्षतिपूर्ति र कार्यसम्पादन, इमान्दारीता, सदाचारीता, नैतिकता र खुलापन, कार्यसम्पादन जिम्मेवारी र उत्तरदायित्व, सरोकारवालाहरूको चासो लगायता संरचना र तत्वहरू हुन्छन् ।

व्यवसायिक शासनका उद्देश्यहरू

व्यवसायिक शासनका प्रमुख उद्देश्यहरूमा व्यवसायीको हक हितको संरक्षण गरी लगानीको प्रतिफल प्राप्त गर्नु, व्यवसायको पारदर्शिता तथा जवाफदेहीता वहन गर्नु, सरोकारवालाको वृहत्तर हितमा काम गर्नु, प्रतिस्पर्धालाई पर्वद्धन गरि संस्थालाई दिगो समय टिकाउनु, मुल्य र मान्यतामा आधारित व्यवसायीक कृयाकलापको संचालन गर्नु, संस्थागत उद्देश्य परिपुर्तिको लागि सामाजिक जिम्मेवारीको वहन गर्नु, सरोकारवालाको विश्वास वृद्धि र संस्थाको विश्वासनीयता बढाउनु, व्यवसायमा रहेको जोखिम न्यूनीकरण गर्नु, संस्थाभित्र हुने स्वार्थको द्वन्द कम गर्नु, स्पष्ट जिम्मेवारी सहित पारदर्शी र मितव्ययी प्रणाली संचालन गर्नु, लगानीकर्ताहरूको लगानीको संरक्षण गर्नु, संस्थाको विश्वसनीयता एवं प्रभावकारीता अभिवृद्धि गर्नु आदि पर्दछन् ।

व्यवसायिक शासनको संरचनागत व्यवस्था



व्यवसायिक संस्थाको नीति तथा कानून तर्जुमा गर्न शेयरधनीहरूको साधारणसभाको व्यवस्था हुन्छ । साधारण शभाले संचालक समितिको छनौट गर्ने अधिकार हुन्छ । संस्थालाई मार्गदर्शन गर्ने यो सवैभन्दा सर्वोच्च अंगबाट नै शेयरधनीहरूले आफ्नो मताधिकारको प्रयोग गरी संचालक समिति गठन गर्छन । प्रचलित कम्पनी ऐन, संस्थाको आफ्नै प्रवन्धपत्र तथा नियमावली र साधारणसभाको मार्ग निर्देशन बमोजिम संचालक समितिले संस्थाको व्यवस्थापन, संचालन र नियमन सम्बन्धि काम गर्ने गर्दछ । संस्थाको दिर्घकालीन रणनीति तय गर्नुको साथै संस्थालाई जीवन्त बनाउन समेत संचालन समितिको महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहन्छ । संचालक समितिको आकार छरितो हुनु पर्ने मान्यता रहेको र कानूनले तोकेको परिधिभित्र रहेर सामान्यतः सात देखि एघार जना सम्मको संचालक समिति गठन गर्ने अभ्यास रहेको छ ।

संचालक समितिले आफुहरू मध्येबाट समितिको निर्णय अनुसार निश्चित सर्तको अधिनमा रहि नियमित वा दैनिक काम कारवाही तथा प्रशासन संचालनको लागि प्रवन्धक वा कार्यकारी प्रमुखको रूपमा कार्य गर्न सक्ने वा कानूनले तोकेको योग्यता पुगेको कुनै व्यक्तिलाई कम्पनी सचिव नियुक्ति गर्न सक्ने, निजको काम, कर्तव्य र अधिकार प्रचलित कानून र संचालक समितिले तोके बमोजिम हुने व्यवस्था गरिएको हुन्छ । संचालक समितिले व्यवसायीक शासनलाई प्रभावकारी बनाउन निश्चित कार्य जिम्मेवारी सहित लेखापरिक्षण समिति, आन्तरिक नियन्त्रण समिति, जोखिम व्यवस्थापन समिति, क्षतिपुर्ति समिति, आन्तरिक

तथा बाह्य सम्बन्ध व्यवस्थापन समिति र सदाचार समिति लगायतका आवश्यकतानुसार विभिन्न समिति गठन गरि संस्थाको कार्य सम्पादन गर्न गराउन सक्छन् ।

व्यवसायिक शासनका सिद्धान्तहरू

पारदर्शिता, जिम्मेवारीपना, जवाफदेहीता, निष्पक्षता, जोखिम व्यवस्थापन आदि व्यवसायिक शासनका प्रमुख सिद्धान्तहरू हुन् ।

नेपालमा व्यवसायिक शासन

नेपालमा १९९३ मा पहिलो कम्पनी ऐन लागु भए संगै व्यवसायीक शासनले विराटनगर जुटमिल तथा नेपाल बैंकको स्थापना पश्चात निश्चित आकार लिन सुरु गरेको हो । पञ्चायती शासनकालमा नियन्त्रीत व्यवस्था रहेकोले सार्वजनिक संस्थानको संचालन र निजी उद्योगको हकमा व्यवसायीक शासनको अभ्यास सीमीत मात्रमा थियो ।

सन् १९९० को दशक पश्चात खुला उदार र वजारमुखी अर्थव्यवस्थाको सुरुवातमा स्थापना भएका ठूला उद्योग र बहुराष्ट्रिय कम्पनीहरूको स्थापना पश्चात व्यवसायीक शासनको अभ्यासले मूर्तरूप प्राप्त गर्न सुरु गरेको हो । मूलतः २०४९ सालमा कम्पनी रजिष्ट्रारको कार्यालय स्थापना भए पश्चात व्यवसायीक शासन प्रणालीलाई थप बल पुगेको देखिन्छ । सार्वजनिक संस्थानको महाप्रबन्धक र संचालक सरकारबाट नियुक्ति हुने व्यवस्था रहेको । कम्पनी ऐन, २०६३ र बैंक तथा वित्तिय संस्था ऐन, २०७३ आए पश्चात व्यवसायीक शासनको अभ्यास बैंक तथा वित्तिय क्षेत्र, पब्लिक लिमिटेड कम्पनी र धितोपत्र बोर्डमा सुचिकृत कम्पनिको हकमा राम्रो देखिएतापनी समग्र कम्पनीको अवस्था प्रभावकारी छैन । मौजुदा कानुमा संसोधन गरि हालै व्यवस्था गरिएको स्टार्टअपको हकमा एक व्यक्तिले समेत पब्लिक कम्पनी बनाउन पाउने, विधुतीय प्रणालीबाट समेत साधरण शभा र संचालक समितिमा भागलिन पाउने, लैंगिक समावेशी बोर्ड, स्वतन्त्र संचालकको व्यवस्था, सामाजिक जवाफदेहीता र सुचिकृत कम्पनीले आफ्नो नाफा घाटाको प्रतिवेदन तीन तीन महिनामा सार्वजनिक गर्नु पर्ने प्रावधानले नेपालको व्यवसायिक शासनमा इट्टा थप्ने काम गरेको भएपनि यो मात्र व्यवस्था प्रयाप्त छैन ।

नेपालमा व्यवसायीक शासनका समस्याहरू

नेपालमा व्यवसायिक शासनमा निम्न समस्याहरू देखिएका छन्:-

- प्रचलित कम्पनी ऐन, कम्पनी निर्देशिका र सम्बन्धित कम्पनीका आफ्नै प्रबन्धपत्र, नियमावलीका व्यवस्थाको परिपालना नहुनु ।

- विश्वमा आएका नविनतम मान्यता अनुसार कम्पनी संचालन गर्ने गरि कम्पनी ऐनमा समयानुकूल संशोधन/ परिमार्जन हुन नसक्नु ।
- व्यवसायिक संस्था वा कम्पनीलाई नियमन गर्ने गरी अर्धन्यायिक निकाय समेतको स्पष्ट अधिकार कम्पनी रजिष्ट्रारको कार्यालयलाई नदिइदा कम्पनी प्रशासनको काममा मात्र सिमित हुने अवस्था ।
- प्रचलित कम्पनी ऐन, २०६३ मा कम्पनी संचालन, शेयर खरिद विक्री, मृत्यु पछिको नामसारी, वेपत्ता भएका, कम्पनीको सम्पर्कमा नआएका, विदेशमा रहेका, र मृतक विदेशी शेयरधनीहरूको हकमा कम्पनी खारेजी लगायतका विषयमा स्पष्टता नहुदा कम्पनी प्रशासन तथा अभिलेखिकरणमा समस्या ।
- व्यवसायिक संस्था वा कम्पनीले सम्पादन गर्नुपर्ने कार्यको समयावधि र कार्यालयमा पेश गर्नुपर्ने विवरण सम्बन्धमा कम्पनी ऐनमा भएको दुविधा एवं अस्पष्टताका कारण राजश्व र जरिवाना एकिकन गर्ने समेतका कार्य सम्पादनमा एकरूपता नहुनु ।
- विदेशी लगानीका हकमा विदेशमा रहेको मुख्य कम्पनीले नेपालमा सोझै लगानी गर्नुपर्ने हो वा आफ्नो कुनै सहायक कम्पनीको नाममा नेपालमा लगानी गर्न पाउने भन्ने स्पष्ट छैन यसले गर्दा नेपाल सरकारलाई जानकारी नदिई विदेशमा रहेको कुनै मुख्य कम्पनीले विदेश स्थित कुनै अर्को कम्पनीलाई नेपालमा रहेको आफ्नो सहायक कम्पनी विक्री गर्न सक्ने अवस्था बनेको छ । (जस्तै मुख्य मलेशियन कम्पनी आजियाटा (विक्रीकर्ता)-- सहायक कम्पनी नेपालमा Ncell को ८० प्रतिशत शेयरवाला नेरोल्डस- खरिदकर्ता स्पेक्टलाईट यू.के.)
- व्यवसायिक संस्था वा कम्पनी प्रशासनको कार्य तथा अभिलेख व्यवस्थापन आधुनिक प्रविधि मैत्री बनाउन नसक्नु ।
- आन्तरिक नियन्त्रण प्रकृत्यालाई प्रभावकारी बनाउने हिसावले अनुगमन, मूल्याङ्कन र व्यवस्थापन परिक्षण गरि पृष्ठपोषणको अभाव हुनु ।
- प्रचलित कम्पनी ऐनमा गैर नाफामुलक (नाफा वितरण नगर्ने) कम्पनी दर्ता र संचालनमा कानूनी स्पष्टताको कारण गैसस मोडलका कम्पनीमा निरन्तर वृद्धि भइ कम्पनी प्रशासनमा जटिलता सिर्जना हुनु ।
- संचालन हुन नसकेका व्यवसायिक संस्था एवं कम्पनीको खारेजी प्रक्रियालाई प्रभावकारी हुन नसकेका कारण कम्पनी प्रशासन भद्दा र जटिल थपिदै जानु (हाल सम्म करिव ३२०,००० कम्पनी दर्ता भएकामा दुई तिहाई कम्पनी निष्कृय रहेका)
- व्यवसायिक संस्था एवं कम्पनी दर्ता र बहिर्गमन प्रक्रियालाई सरल बनाउन नसक्नु ।

- संघिय प्रणालीमा प्रदेश तथा स्थानीय तहबाट सरकारी कम्पनी दर्ता, सेयर लगानी एवं संचालन गर्न पाउने नपाउने सम्बन्धमा स्पष्ट कानूनी व्यवस्था नहुदा प्रशासनिक जटिलता सिर्जना हुनु ।
- संस्था वा कम्पनीमा हुने निजी लगानीको श्रोतको शुद्धता परीक्षण, नियमन निकायको रूपमा क्षमता विकाश र हिताधिकारीको पहिचान गर्ने मापदण्ड विधि र पद्धतीको अभाव हुनु ।
- कर्मचारीको तलब भत्ता सुविधा र उत्प्रेरणाको अवस्था कमजोर रहनु ।
- कम्पनीको वार्षिक साधारणसभा नाम मात्रको हुनु ।
- कम्पनीको लेखापरीक्षण प्रभावकारी नहुदा लेखापरीक्षण प्रतिवेदनको समेत विश्वसनीयता घट्दै जानु ।
- लेखापरीक्षण प्रतिवेदन र कर प्रणाली विच आवद्धता नहुनु ।
- सरकारी संस्थानको हकमा व्यवस्थापन तहमा राजनैतिक हस्तक्षेप हुनु ।
- कम्पनी सचिव नियुक्तिको कानूनी व्यवस्था व्यवहारमा पूर्णतया पालना नहुनु ।
- कम्पनी संचालक समितिबाट हुने काम कारवाहीको पारदर्शिता र जवाफदेहिताको अभाव हुनु ।
- कम्पनीका व्यवस्थापक र संचालक बीच जिम्मेवारीमा दोहोरोपन हुनु ।
- सिमित सेयरहोल्डर, व्यवस्थापक र सरोकारवालावालाको नाममा कम्पनीबाट नाजायज लाभ लिनु ।
- संचालकहरूको स्वार्थ वाझिने निर्णयहरू हुनका साथै संचालकहरूले स्वार्थ अनकूल हुने गरी कम्पनी संचालन गर्ने प्रवृत्ति हुनु ।
- संस्था, कम्पनीका संचालक, शेयरधनीहरू विचको विवाद समयमा निरोपण नहुदा कार्य सम्पादनमा विलम्ब हुनु
- अल्पमत शेयरधनीहरूको संरक्षण सम्बन्धी पर्याप्त कानूनी व्यवस्था अभावमा अल्पमत शेयरधनीहरूको हित एवं सरोकार संवोधन गर्न नसक्नु ।
- संस्था, कम्पनीका संचालक, शेयरधनीहरूमा कम्पनी संचालन सम्बन्धी सचेतनाको अभाव हुनु ।
- व्यवसायिक मूल्य मान्यता, नैतिकता र नाफाबीच तालमेल मिलाएर सेवाग्राहीको वृहत्तर हितमा दिगो व्यवस्थापनका साथ कम्पनी संचालन नहुनु ।

सुधारका क्षेत्रहरू

- नयाँ कम्पनी ऐनको तर्जुमा गर्ने क्रममा प्रचलित कम्पनी ऐन तथा अन्य सम्बद्ध वाझिएका कानूनहरूमा समसामयिक संशोधन एवं परिमार्जन गर्ने ।
- कम्पनी रजिष्ट्रारको कार्यालयलाई अर्धन्यायिक निकायको रूपमा स्पष्ट अधिकार प्रदान गरी नियमनकारी निकायको रूपमा थप बलियो बनाउने ।

- कम्पनी कानून तथा कम्पनी संचालनका आधारभुत मूल्य मान्याताको परिपालना गरि व्यवसायिक शासन संचालन गर्ने गराउने ।
- आधुनिक सूचना प्रविधिको प्रयोग कम्पनी प्रशासनलाई छिटो, छरितो र सरल बनाउने ।
- अभिलेख व्यवस्थापन छरितो, सुरक्षित एवं सूचना तथा प्रविधि मैत्री बनाउने ।
- सार्वजनिक संस्थानका महाप्रबन्धक तथा संचालकको नियुक्ति प्रतिस्पर्धाको आधारमा गर्ने र कार्यसम्पादन मुल्याङ्कन गर्ने व्यवस्था गर्ने ।
- कम्पनीका संचालक तथा शेयरधनीहरू विचको विवादका विषयहरू समयमै किनारा गरी अर्धन्यायिक प्रकृतिको कार्य व्यवस्थित एवं छिटो छरितो रूपमा किनारा गर्ने ।
- कम्पनी प्रशासनको सेवाको विस्तार र विकेन्द्रीकरण गर्ने ।
- अनुगमन तथा निरीक्षणलाई प्रभावकारी बनाउने ।
- व्यवसायी, संचालक, शेयरधनीहरू, कर्मचारीलाई सचेतना एवं क्षमता अभिवृद्धी कार्यक्रम संचालन गर्ने ।
- संस्था, कम्पनी, नियमनकारी निकाय र अन्य सम्बद्ध निकायहरू विच अन्तरक्रिया एवं समन्वय गरी दृष्टिकोणमा एकरूपता ल्याउने प्रयास गर्ने ।
- कम्पनीको विज्ञ संचालक नियुक्ति गर्दा अनुभव र दक्षतामा ध्यान दिने ।
- कम्पनीमा आन्तरिक नियन्त्रण प्रणालीलाई प्रभावकारी बनाउन लेखा समिति, जोखिम व्यवस्थापन समिति, कर्मचारी व्यवस्थापन समिति र सम्पति सुद्विकरण निवारण समिति बनाइ संस्थागत सुशासनमा जोड दिने ।
- कम्पनीको वृहत्तर हितलाई ध्यानमा राखी सरोकारवालाको विश्वास आर्जन गर्ने गरी सेवा प्रवाहमा ध्यान दिने ।
- पारदर्शिता, जिम्मेवारी र जवाफदेहीतालाई मूलमन्त्रको रूपमा अवलम्बन गरी कम्पनी संचालन सम्बन्धी काम कारवाही गर्ने गराउने
- कम्पनीको संचालक समिति र व्यवस्थापनको स्पष्ट जिम्मेवारी किटान गर्ने ।
- लेखापरीक्षणमा सुधार, लेखापरीक्षण प्रतिवेदन र कर प्रणालीसंगको आवद्धता बलियो बनाउने ।
- कम्पनी सचिव नियुक्तिको व्यवस्थालाई समसामयिक बनाई निजलाई जिम्मेवार बनाउने प्रणालीको विकास गर्ने
- कम्पनीको वार्षिक प्रगति प्रतिवेदन र काम कारवाहीको पारदर्शितामा ध्यान दिने ।
- कम्पनी पदाधिकारीको आचारसंहिताको तर्जुमा र कार्यन्वयन गर्ने ।
- कम्पनी संचालनको लागि स्थापना भएका विभिन्न समितिहरूको जिम्मेवारी स्पष्ट गरि क्रियाशिल बनाउने ।

- सरोकारवालाको वृहत्तर हीतलाई ध्यानमा राखी दीर्घकालीन सोचका साथ कम्पनी संचालन गर्ने

निष्कर्ष

अर्थतन्त्रको महत्वपूर्ण खम्बाको रूपमा रहेको निजी क्षेत्रले गर्ने निर्णय र त्यसको कार्यन्वयन गर्दा अवलम्बन गर्ने समग्र प्रकृत्यामा पारदर्शीता, जवाफदेहिता, सहभागिता, न्यायोचितता र कानून सम्मत प्रकृत्याको अवलम्बन हुन सकेमा मात्र देशमा आर्थिक सुशासन कायम हुन सक्दछ । जनताका दैनिक जीवनलाई प्रत्यक्ष प्रभावित गर्ने निजीक्षेत्रले गर्ने व्यवसायिक अभ्यासको क्रममा कानूनको पालना, आन्तरिक नियन्त्रणका उपायको प्रयोग, व्यवसायिक सामाजिक जिम्मेवारी जस्ता उपाय मार्फत जनताको विश्वास आर्जन गर्न सकेमा संस्था दीर्घजीवी हुन सक्ने भएकोले निजी क्षेत्रले संस्थागत सुशासनलाई संस्था संचालनको मुल मन्त्रको रूपमा लिनु पर्दछ ।

सन्दर्भ सामाग्रीहरू

कम्पनि ऐन २०६३

वैक तथा वितीय संस्था सम्बन्धी ऐन २०७३

व्यवसायिक शासन सम्बन्धमा गुगल तथा ईन्टरनेटमा प्राप्त लेख रचना

शुशासन (व्यवस्थापन तथा संचालन) ऐन २०६४

सार्वजनिक प्रशासन सम्बन्धी विभिन्न लेख रचना

Right to Development: Nepal's Federal Experience

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Abstract

This study presents the Right to Development as a fundamental human right and a framework for inclusive and sustainable progress, with particular reference to Nepal's legal, political, and administrative context. It analyzes the conceptual foundations, multidimensional nature, and contemporary relevance of this right, while identifying key challenges and pathways for its realization within a federal system. The research adopts a qualitative, doctrinal, and normative approach based on desk-based analysis of UN instruments, international treaties, national laws, policy documents, and academic literature. Using thematic and interpretive analysis, it evaluates core principles, state obligations, and operational dimensions of the Right to Development. The study finds that although Nepal's Constitution and policy frameworks provide a strong normative basis, implementation is constrained by legal gaps, political instability, administrative limitations, and socio-economic inequalities. Effective realization requires harmonized legislation, stronger institutional coordination, and inclusive, participatory governance. Targeted measures for marginalized groups and transparent monitoring systems are essential to ensure equitable outcomes. The study concludes that the Right to Development is both a legal imperative and a practical guide for policy. Its realization depends on coordinated action across all levels of government, supported by community engagement and international cooperation, alongside rights-based planning and evidence driven policymaking.

Key words: Right to Development; Human Centred Development; Equity and Inclusion; Legal and Policy Frameworks; Federal Governance and Implementation

Introduction

Development has evolved beyond the narrow notion of economic growth into a holistic process focused on improving human well being and expanding substantive freedoms. In contemporary international discourse, it is understood as a people centered, rights based, and equity-oriented process that enables individuals and communities to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political progress.¹ Within this framework, the Right to Development holds a distinctive place in international human rights law and global development diplomacy. Formally articulated in the 1986 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development, this right affirms that development is an inalienable human right. It entitles every individual and all peoples to participate in and enjoy development in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully realized. This marked a paradigm shift, redefining development as a legal and moral entitlement grounded in human dignity, equality, and justice. Conceptually, development extends beyond material accumulation to include the expansion of human capabilities, institutional accountability, and social justice. It encompasses poverty alleviation, access to education and health, gender equality, environmental sustainability, democratic participation, and respect for human rights. The Right to Development integrates civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, emphasizing their indivisibility and interdependence. The Right to Development operates across multiple dimensions: individual and collective, national and international, procedural, and distributive. While states bear primary responsibility, its realization also depends on global cooperation, equitable economic relations, and shared responsibility. In the context of globalization, climate change, and persistent inequalities, it serves as a guiding principle for inclusive and sustainable development. Despite ongoing debates over its legal status and

¹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Human Development Report 1990: Concept and Measurement of Human Development 1–3 (Oxford Univ. Press 1990).

implementation, the Right to Development remains a vital normative framework for addressing global disparities and advancing a more just international order.²

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, doctrinal, and normative approach, drawing on desk based analysis of legal and policy texts to examine the Right to Development. It relies on secondary sources, including United Nations documents, international treaties, national laws, academic literature, policy reports, and recorded expert discussions. The research employs thematic and interpretive analysis to identify key principles, state obligations, and the multidimensional nature of the Right to Development. Guided by a human rights-based framework, it emphasizes universality, participation, accountability, and international cooperation. Ethical standards are ensured through the exclusive use of credible, publicly available sources, maintaining reliability and academic rigor.

The Right to Development: Evolution and Origin

The Right to Development did not emerge abruptly within international law; rather, it evolved through decades of intellectual debate, political struggle, and normative transformation. Its origins lie at the intersection of human rights discourse, post colonial aspirations, and demands for a more equitable international economic order. Understanding this evolution requires situating it within the broader historical and legal shifts of the twentieth century.

Early Foundations: From Economic Growth to Human Centred Development

In the immediate post-Second World War era, development was primarily conceived in economic terms, emphasizing industrialization, capital accumulation, and gross domestic product growth. Early models promoted by international financial institutions focused on modernization and economic expansion. However, by the 1950s and 1960s, it became

² Stephen P. Marks, The Human Right to Development: Between Rhetoric and Reality, in *Realizing the Right to Development: Essays in Commemoration of 25 Years of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development 17–20* (United Nations ed., 2013).

evident that economic growth alone did not ensure social justice, improved living conditions, or human dignity.³

Simultaneously, the emergence of the modern human rights framework particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)—laid the foundation for a broader understanding of development. Although it did not explicitly recognize a right to development, it affirmed a wide range of rights requiring enabling social and economic conditions. Development thus began to be viewed as intrinsically linked to human well being and human rights rather than merely a policy objective.⁴

Decolonization and the Collective Dimension of Development

The articulation of the Right to Development is closely tied to the decolonization movement of the mid twentieth century. Newly independent states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America faced structural inequalities rooted in colonial legacies, including economic dependency and unequal trade relations. For these states, development became a matter of sovereignty, self determination, and collective dignity.

The principle of self determination, enshrined in the 1966 International Covenants, played a central role in shaping the collective dimension of this right. Development was increasingly framed as a right of peoples as well as individuals, emphasizing national ownership and equitable participation in the global economic system. During this period, initiatives such as the New International Economic Order (NIEO), advanced by the Non Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, called for fairer trade, technology transfer, and restructuring of global economic governance. Although politically contested, these efforts significantly shaped the normative evolution of the Right to Development.⁵

³ W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* 4–16 (Cambridge Univ. Press 1960).

⁴ Mary Robinson, Human Rights and Development, in *Realizing the Right to Development: Essays in Commemoration of 25 Years of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development* 23–26 (United Nations ed., 2013).

⁵ Salomon, Margot E., *Global Responsibility for Human Rights: World Poverty and the Development of International Law* 68–75 (Oxford Univ. Press 2007).

Intellectual Contributions and Normative Consolidation

The conceptual foundations of the Right to Development were further strengthened by influential development theories that challenged purely economic approaches. Ideas such as basic needs, human development, and capabilities emphasized expanding human freedoms, choices, and opportunities. These perspectives underscored that development must encompass education, health, equality, participation, and social justice.

Within the United Nations system, these ideas were reflected in resolutions, policy debates, and expert studies, gradually establishing a normative convergence between development and human rights. This convergence created the conditions necessary for the formal recognition of the Right to Development as a distinct human right.

The 1986 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development

The adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development in 1986 marked a historic milestone. It affirmed development as an inalienable human right, entitling every person and all peoples to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy development in which all human rights can be fully realized.

The Declaration introduced transformative principles, including recognition of both individual and collective rights, the primary responsibility of states for development, and the essential role of international cooperation. It also emphasized participation, equality, non discrimination, and the equitable distribution of development benefits, while reaffirming the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights. Despite being adopted by majority vote, it has gained substantial normative authority and continues to guide international human rights and development discourse.⁶

Post Declaration Developments and Contemporary Relevance

Since the adoption of the 1986 United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development, the concept has continued to evolve through United Nations resolutions, expert

⁶ Arjun Sengupta, On the Theory and Practice of the Right to Development, 24 Hum. Rts. Q. 837, 840–45 (2002).

mechanisms, and scholarly engagement. Institutional developments, including the establishment of the Working Group on the Right to Development and the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, have played a significant role in clarifying its content, identifying implementation challenges, and strengthening its normative coherence.

In recent decades, the Right to Development has been increasingly integrated into global development agendas, particularly the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These frameworks reflect its core principles, including poverty eradication, equality, participation, sustainability, and international cooperation. Emerging global challenges such as climate change, public health crises, digital inequalities, and widening economic disparities have further reinforced its relevance as a guiding principle for global solidarity and shared responsibility.⁷

Evolution as a Living Norm

The evolution of the Right to Development demonstrates that it is not a static or abstract concept, but a dynamic and living normative framework shaped by historical experiences, global power relations, and changing development priorities. While debates persist regarding its legal status and enforceability, there is growing recognition of its value as an ethical and legal foundation for reimagining development as a human centered, rights based, and justice oriented process. In this sense, it represents both the culmination of decades of normative evolution and an ongoing project aimed at transforming development practice in line with principles of human dignity, equality, and cooperation.

Contemporary Features of the Right to Development

In the current international legal and policy landscape, the Right to Development has developed into a comprehensive framework capable of addressing complex global challenges such as inequality, environmental degradation, and technological transformation. Several key features define its contemporary character.

⁷ G.A. Res. 70/1, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 1–5 (Sept. 25, 2015).

First, the Right to Development is fundamentally human centered and people oriented. Development is no longer confined to economic growth or infrastructure expansion; rather, it is understood as a process that enhances human well being, dignity, and freedoms. Individuals and communities are recognized as both the primary subjects and beneficiaries of development.

Second, it adopts a holistic and integrative approach by combining civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights within a single normative vision. It rejects hierarchical distinctions among rights and emphasizes their indivisibility and interdependence. Development is thus considered incomplete if it undermines political freedoms, social inclusion, cultural identity, or environmental sustainability.

Third, the Right to Development maintains both individual and collective dimensions. Every individual is entitled to participate in and benefit from development, while peoples and communities are recognized as collective right holders, particularly in matters of self determination, natural resource governance, and national development priorities.

Fourth, participation, inclusion, and democratic governance are central to its realization. Development processes must be transparent, inclusive, and participatory, ensuring meaningful engagement of all stakeholders, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups. Accountability, access to information, and democratic institutions are essential enabling conditions.

Fifth, equality and non discrimination are integral to the contemporary understanding of the Right to Development. It requires equitable distribution of opportunities and outcomes, as well as targeted measures to address structural inequalities, poverty, gender disparities, and social exclusion.

Sixth, the Right to Development reflects a dual structure of obligations. While States bear the primary responsibility for creating enabling national conditions through appropriate policies and institutions, international cooperation remains indispensable. Fair trade,

development assistance, technology transfer, and reform of global economic governance are critical components of this shared responsibility.

Seventh, the Right to Development emphasizes a process oriented and accountability-based approach. It focuses not only on development outcomes but also on the fairness and transparency of decision-making processes. Rule of law, accountability mechanisms, and access to remedies are therefore essential elements.

Eighth, distributive justice remains a central concern. The benefits of development must be shared equitably both within and among States, addressing income inequality, regional imbalances, and global disparities.

Finally, sustainability and intergenerational equity have become defining features. Development must meet present needs without compromising the rights of future generations, integrating environmental protection, climate justice, and responsible resource management. Its alignment with the SDGs further enhances its practical relevance as a guiding framework for inclusive and sustainable development worldwide.

Constitutional Recognition of the Right to Development in Nepal

The Constitution of Nepal provides a strong normative foundation for the realization of the Right to Development. Although it does not explicitly recognize the “Right to Development” as a standalone provision, its substantive elements are deeply embedded within the Constitution’s spirit, objectives, and enforceable fundamental rights. The Preamble commits the State to ending discrimination, ensuring social justice, and building an egalitarian society based on inclusion and participation. Article 16 guarantees the right to live with dignity, forming a foundational basis for development, while Article 18 ensures equality and non discrimination, linking development with equitable access to opportunities.⁸

Furthermore, Articles 31 to 43 enshrine a broad range of economic, social, and cultural rights, including rights to education, health, employment, food, housing, social security,

⁸ Nepal Const. 2015 pmbl.; id. arts. 16, 18.

and a clean environment. Collectively, these provisions reflect a constitutional vision of development as a comprehensive process aimed at enhancing human well being and expanding freedoms. In addition, Article 51, which outlines the Directive Principles, Policies, and Obligations of the State, mandates inclusive, sustainable, and balanced development, poverty reduction, and social justice. Although these principles are not directly justiciable, they guide state policy and reinforce development-oriented obligations.

Policy and Planning Frameworks

Nepal's policy and planning instruments further operationalize the Right to Development. Periodic development plans and long-term national visions emphasize inclusive growth, human development, good governance, and social protection. These frameworks prioritize marginalized groups, including women, Dalits, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and geographically disadvantaged communities.

Sectoral policies in education, health, employment, agriculture, and social security demonstrate a shift from welfare-based approaches to rights-based development planning. The focus on universal access to basic services, social protection schemes, and participatory approaches aligns with principles of equality, participation, and distributive justice. Moreover, the introduction of federalism under the 2015 Constitution represents a significant structural reform aimed at deepening development through decentralization. By devolving authority to provincial and local governments, it enhances participation, accountability, and responsiveness in development decision making.

Legal and Institutional Mechanisms

Nepal has adopted various legal and institutional measures to support development related rights. Laws governing education, public health, social security, labor, environmental protection, and local governance provide a legal framework for advancing development objectives. Transparency and accountability are further strengthened by instruments such as the Right to Information Act and good governance legislation.

Institutionally, the National Human Rights Commission plays a key role in monitoring human rights, including those related to development. Sectoral ministries, planning bodies, and local governments are central to implementation, while the Supreme Court has contributed through progressive interpretation of socio-economic rights. Despite these advancements, challenges persist, including limited institutional capacity, coordination gaps, resource constraints, and regional disparities in development outcomes.

International Obligations and Global Commitments

Nepal's commitment to the Right to Development is reinforced by its international obligations. As a party to major human rights treaties, including the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Nepal is bound to promote conditions for inclusive development. Its engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals further reflects alignment with global development priorities, emphasizing poverty reduction, equality, environmental sustainability, and international cooperation. As a least developed country, Nepal also relies on development partnerships, highlighting the importance of global cooperation in realizing the Right to Development.⁹

Current Status, Ongoing Challenges, and a Multi Level Framework for Realizing the Right to Development in Nepal

Nepal has made measurable progress in poverty reduction, access to education and health services, and expansion of social protection. However, persistent structural inequalities, regional disparities, climate vulnerability, and economic constraints continue to limit equitable outcomes. The gap between constitutional commitments and lived realities underscores the need for stronger implementation, accountability, and participatory governance. Realizing the Right to Development (RtD) in Nepal therefore

⁹ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights art. 2, Dec. 16, 1966, 993 U.N.T.S. 3.

remains a progressive, ongoing process requiring coordinated action across all levels of government.¹⁰

The RtD, as articulated in the 1986 United Nations Declaration, affirms that every individual and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy development that enables the full realization of human rights. It emphasizes equality, non discrimination, participation, accountability, and international cooperation. Under Nepal's federal system, the responsibility for implementing this right is shared across federal, provincial, and local governments.

Federal Level: Enabling National Framework

At the federal level, the Government of Nepal must strengthen the legal and institutional foundation for RtD implementation. This includes harmonizing national laws with RtD principles to ensure equality of opportunity and equitable access to essential services such as education, health, housing, and employment. Development planning should adopt a rights-based approach, integrating human rights outcomes into budgeting and policy formulation. Periodic plans must prioritize reducing inequality and regional disparities while embedding transparency, accountability, and social justice.¹¹

Effective intergovernmental coordination is also essential. The federal government should establish mechanisms that align policies across ministries and ensure coherence with provincial and local frameworks, thereby promoting equitable distribution of development benefits nationwide.

Provincial Level: Contextualized Implementation and Equity

Provincial governments play a crucial role in translating national commitments into context specific policies. By tailoring development strategies to regional needs, cultural contexts, and socio-economic conditions, provinces can enhance inclusion and participation. Provincial plans should be developed through broad stakeholder

¹⁰ U.N. Dev. Programme, *Human Development Report 2021/2022* (2022).

¹¹ U.N. Dev. Programme, *Human Development Report 2020: The Next Frontier—Human Development and the Anthropocene 23–25* (2020).

consultation, particularly involving marginalized groups, and incorporate human rights impact assessments to prevent exclusion.

Targeted interventions such as improving rural infrastructure, expanding quality healthcare, and strengthening education in underserved areas are essential for reducing disparities. Provinces should also establish monitoring and reporting systems using disaggregated data to track progress, ensure accountability, and support evidence-based policymaking.

Local Level: Grassroots Realization and Participation

Local governments are central to operationalizing the RtD at the community level. Participatory planning processes should be institutionalized to ensure that citizens actively shape development priorities. This enhances ownership, responsiveness, and alignment with local needs. Equitable service delivery must remain a priority, with a focus on universal access to basic services, including clean water, healthcare, education, sanitation, and livelihood opportunities.

Local authorities should adopt inclusive approaches that address risks of discrimination and exclusion, ensuring that no group is left behind. Transparency and accountability mechanisms such as public hearings, accessible information systems, and citizen feedback platforms are vital for strengthening governance. These tools foster trust, reduce corruption, and enable communities to hold authorities accountable for development outcomes.¹²

The major challenges to the Right to Development in Nepal¹³

Legal Challenges:

Nepal's constitutional recognition of development lacks detailed legal instruments to implement the Right to Development. Absence of clear statutory provisions, harmonized

¹² World Bank, *World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People* 49–52 (2004).

¹³ B. S. Chimni, *International Law and World Order: A Critique of Contemporary Approaches* 241–45 (2d ed. 2017).

laws, and enforceable rights-based safeguards undermines legal certainty. This gap weakens accountability mechanisms, impedes judicial enforcement, and limits alignment with international human rights standards for inclusive and equitable development.¹⁴

Political Challenges:

Political instability, frequent policy shifts, and fragmented commitment to socioeconomic rights hinder consistent implementation of the Right to Development in Nepal. Short term political agendas often overshadow long term rights-based development planning. This reduces policy continuity, undermines public trust, and weakens institutional dedication to principles of participation, equality, and broad-based developmental justice.

Administrative Challenges:

Nepal's decentralized governance struggles with capacity constraints and coordination gaps among federal, provincial, and local authorities. Limited administrative resources, weak monitoring systems, and insufficient transparency mechanisms impede participatory planning and equitable resource distribution. These systemic weaknesses restrict efficient public service delivery and hinder fulfillment of inclusive development obligations.

Practical Challenges:

Persistent socio-economic disparities, poverty, and exclusion of women, indigenous peoples, and marginalized groups limit access to basic services and development opportunities. Geographic isolation and resource scarcity further restrict meaningful participation. Without targeted interventions, these structural inequalities prevent the Right to Development from becoming a lived reality for all segments of Nepali society.

¹⁴ Philip Alston & Ryan Goodman, *International Human Rights* 339–42 (Oxford Univ. Press 2013).

Addressing Challenges to the Right to Development in Nepal¹⁵

- To overcome legal challenges, Nepal should enact clear, harmonized legislation that operationalizes the Right to Development across all governance levels. Strengthening judicial mechanisms to enforce rights-based development and integrating international human rights norms into domestic law will enhance legal certainty and accountability. Capacity building programs for judges and legal practitioners can support effective implementation.
- Political stability and commitment are essential. Nepal must prioritize long term, rights-based development strategies above short-term political agendas. Institutionalizing inclusive policymaking, securing bipartisan support for development frameworks, and strengthening parliamentary oversight will ensure consistent implementation and foster public trust in equitable and participatory development initiatives.
- To address administrative challenges, Nepal should enhance coordination and capacity among federal, provincial, and local governments. This includes establishing robust monitoring and evaluation systems, increasing administrative resources, and promoting transparency mechanisms. Training public officials in participatory planning and rights-based governance will improve service delivery and equitable resource distribution.
- Practical challenges require targeted, inclusive interventions. Expanding access to basic services in rural and marginalized communities, empowering women and indigenous peoples, and addressing geographic and resource inequalities are key. Community engagement, participatory decision making, and monitoring

¹⁵ United Nations, *Realizing the Right to Development: Essays in Commemoration of 25 Years of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development* 112–18 (2013).

mechanisms ensure that development benefits are effectively distributed, making the Right to Development a tangible reality.

Conclusion:

The Right to Development in Nepal embodies a human centered, rights-based framework for equitable and sustainable progress. While constitutional provisions and policy frameworks provide a strong normative foundation, its realization is constrained by legal gaps, weak institutional coordination, political instability, and socio-economic inequalities. Marginalization and geographic disparities further limit inclusive participation. Advancing this right requires harmonized laws, stronger governance, enhanced administrative capacity, and inclusive, participatory development strategies. Ultimately, its effective implementation depends on coordinated efforts across all levels of government, supported by accountability, community engagement, and international cooperation.

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Human Capital Beyond Schools and Hospitals: Rethinking Development through Homes, Neighbourhoods and Workplaces

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Abstract

Human capital has become a central concept in development planning, yet it is often operationalized through fragmented sectoral interventions in education, health, and employment. This paper draws on the World Bank's framework *Building Human Capital Where It Matters: Homes, Neighborhoods, and Workplaces* (Holla et al., 2026) and extends it by explicitly integrating formal institutions, - schools and hospitals - into a unified systems approach.

Using a qualitative policy review of Nepal's *Sixteenth Plan* and the *Second Periodic Plan of Bagmati Province*, the paper examines how human capital is currently addressed in development planning. The findings suggest that although human capital is widely recognized as a policy priority, planning remains largely sector-based, limiting integration across key domains of human development.

To address this gap, the paper proposes a *Human Capital Planning Framework (HCPF)* that conceptualizes human capital formation as an interconnected system of five domains: schools, hospitals, homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces. These domains jointly shape cognitive development, health outcomes, social opportunities, and labour productivity across the life course.

The proposed HCPF provides a practical planning tool that can strengthen policy integration across sectors and levels of government, making human capital investment more effective and development more inclusive.

Keywords: Human capital, integrated planning, schools, hospitals, homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, and development policy

1. Introduction

Human capital is a central concept in development policy and planning. Countries that achieve sustained economic growth tend to invest not only in physical infrastructure but also in the knowledge, skills, health, and productive capacity of their people. Recent development thinking has expanded beyond the traditional view that human capital is formed mainly through formal institutions such as schools and hospitals.

The World Bank's publication *Building Human Capital Where It Matters: Homes, Neighborhoods, and Workplaces* (Holla et al., 2026) emphasizes that human capital is continuously shaped by the environments in which people live and work. This paper builds on this idea and extends it by integrating formal institutions, - schools and hospitals- together with homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces into a unified framework.

Nepal's *Sixteenth Plan (2024/25-2028/29)* and Bagmati Province's *Second Periodic Plan (2024/25-2028/29)* recognize human capital as a key development priority. However, interventions remain largely sectoral, with education, health, employment, and infrastructure treated as separate policy domains. This limits the potential for integrated human capital development.

Against this background, this paper examines how Nepal's planning system can be strengthened using an integrated Human Capital Planning Framework (HCPF). The paper adopts a qualitative policy review approach based on key planning documents and relevant literature. It proposes that human capital is formed through five interdependent domains: schools, hospitals, homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces; and argues that integrating these domains can significantly improve the effectiveness of human capital development planning in Nepal.

2. Conceptual Framework

The concept of human capital has evolved significantly over the past several decades. Although early economic thought recognized the importance of human skills and knowledge for productivity, modern development thinking has progressively expanded the understanding of how human capital is formed, sustained, and utilized. This evolution has moved from a narrow focus on formal education to a broader life-cycle and systems-based perspective.

The modern foundation of human capital theory is commonly associated with the works of Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker. Schultz (1961) conceptualized human capital as an

investment in education, health, and skills that enhances productivity and economic growth. Becker (1964) further formalized this idea by demonstrating that investments in education and training yield higher earnings and improved economic outcomes. These early contributions firmly established human capital as a central concept in development economics.

However, later scholarship expanded the concept beyond formal education systems. Amartya Sen (1999) reframed development as the expansion of human capabilities rather than simply income or productivity. From this perspective, education and health are valuable not only as economic inputs but also as means of expanding individual freedoms and well-being. Similarly, Martha Nussbaum (2011) emphasized the importance of enabling social and institutional environments that allow individuals to develop their full capabilities.

A major empirical advancement was introduced by James Heckman (2006), who demonstrated that early childhood development has long-lasting effects on cognitive and non-cognitive skills. His work highlighted that human capital formation begins long before formal schooling and is strongly influenced by family environment, nutrition, and early learning experiences.

More recently, the World Bank Human Capital Project (World Bank, 2019) introduced a global framework linking education and health outcomes to future productivity. However, much of this framework still relies on formal institutional indicators.

The World Bank's publication *Building Human Capital Where It Matters* (Holla et al., 2026) advances this discussion by emphasizing that human capital is shaped across multiple environments, particularly homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces. This paper builds on that insight but further extends it by explicitly integrating schools and hospitals as foundational formal institutions alongside these environments.

Table 1: Focuses of Human Capital

Scholar/Institution	Main Contribution	Limitation	Contribution to this Paper
Schultz (1961)	Investment in education and health	Mainly economic perspective	Foundation of human capital
Becker (1964)	Human capital and productivity	Focus on individual returns	Economic rationale

Scholar/Institution	Main Contribution	Limitation	Contribution to this Paper
Sen (1999)	Capability approach	Less operational for planning	Human-centred development
Heckman (2006)	Early childhood investment	Focus on early life stage	Importance of homes
World Bank (2019)	Human Capital Index	Mainly education and health indicators	Measurement perspective
Holla et al. (2026)	Homes, Neighborhoods, Workplaces	Needs an operational planning framework	Basis for provincial planning

Source: Author's self-construction

Based on this synthesis, this paper adopts a five-domain systems perspective. Human capital is understood as being formed and strengthened through the interaction of:

- Homes (early development and caregiving environment)
- Schools (formal education and cognitive skill formation)
- Hospitals (health, nutrition, and physical/mental well-being)
- Neighborhoods (infrastructure, services, and social environment)
- Workplaces (productivity, skills upgrading, and lifelong learning)

These five domains operate as an interconnected system rather than isolated sectors. Human capital outcomes depend on the quality and interaction of all five domains across the life cycle.

For example, early childhood nutrition and parental care at home influence school readiness; school learning outcomes depend on health conditions supported by hospitals; neighborhood infrastructure affects access to both schools and health services; and workplace environments determine whether skills acquired earlier are effectively utilized and further developed.

This integrated systems perspective forms the conceptual foundation of the Human Capital Planning Framework (HCPF) proposed in this paper. It enables a shift from

fragmented sectoral planning toward a coordinated approach that reflects the real-world dynamics of human capital formation and utilization.

3. Human Capital in Nepal's Sixteenth Plan

Nepal's *Sixteenth Plan (2024/25-2028/29)* identifies human capital as a central driver of national development and long-term economic transformation. It emphasizes investments in education, health, employment, and social inclusion as key pillars to improve productivity and reduce inequality. The plan reflects a strong policy recognition that human development is essential for achieving sustained growth in a federal system.

However, despite this recognition, the planning structure remains largely sectoral. Policies and programs are designed and implemented through separate institutional channels, with education, health, infrastructure, labour, and social protection operating as distinct policy domains. While coordination is acknowledged in principle, the actual integration of these sectors in shaping human capital outcomes remains limited.

This section does not introduce a new analytical framework at this stage. Instead, it examines how human capital is currently addressed in the Sixteenth Plan and highlights the extent to which its components are treated in a fragmented manner.

3.1. Education: Expansion with Uneven Learning Outcomes

The *Sixteenth Plan* places strong emphasis on expanding access to education across all levels. Key priorities include improving school infrastructure, strengthening teacher management systems, revising curricula, and increasing enrolment and retention rates.

Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain in learning outcomes. National and regional disparities persist, and improvements in enrolment have not always translated into equivalent improvements in learning achievement. This suggests that education outcomes are influenced not only by school-level inputs but also by external factors such as household conditions, nutrition, early childhood development, and health status.

The plan, however, continues to treat education primarily as a sectoral intervention, with limited integration into broader social and economic policy areas.

3.2. Health: Strong Policy Priority with Institutional Separation

Health is a major priority in the *Sixteenth Plan*, particularly maternal and child health, immunization programs, nutrition, and expansion of basic healthcare services. The plan

correctly recognizes that health outcomes are directly linked to productivity, educational attainment, and overall human development.

However, health policy is still largely implemented as an independent sector. Its connections with education, household welfare, early childhood development, and labour productivity are acknowledged but not systematically integrated into a unified policy framework. As a result, health interventions tend to operate in parallel rather than in coordination with other human capital-related sectors.

3.3. Household Environment: Implicit but Under-Recognized Role

The role of households in human capital formation is addressed indirectly through poverty reduction strategies, social protection programs, and targeted welfare interventions. However, the household is not explicitly framed as a central site of human capital development within the planning structure.

This is a critical gap, given the strong empirical evidence that early childhood experiences within households such as nutrition, parental care, emotional stability, and income security have long-term effects on cognitive and non-cognitive skill formation (Heckman, 2006). These early investments shape school readiness, learning capacity, and future productivity.

Despite this evidence, household-level determinants remain underemphasized in the *Sixteenth Plan's* conceptual framing.

3.4. Infrastructure and Neighborhood Development

The *Sixteenth Plan* places strong emphasis on infrastructure development, including roads, electricity, urban expansion, and basic service delivery. These investments are primarily framed as drivers of economic growth and physical connectivity.

However, infrastructure also has significant indirect effects on human capital formation. Improved roads enhance access to schools and hospitals, reliable electricity supports digital learning, and urban infrastructure influences access to employment opportunities. Despite these linkages, infrastructure planning is not explicitly integrated with education, health, or labour market outcomes in a systematic way.

This indicates that infrastructure is treated primarily as a physical development agenda rather than as an enabler of human capital formation.

3.5. *Employment and Labour Market: Skills without Full System Linkages*

Employment generation and skill development are key priorities of the *Sixteenth Plan*. The plan emphasizes vocational training, entrepreneurship development, and expansion of labour market opportunities.

However, the linkage between education systems, skills development, and labour market outcomes remains relatively weak. There is limited coordination between what is taught in schools and what is demanded in the labour market. Similarly, workplace learning and continuous skill development are not fully integrated into the broader human capital strategy.

As a result, labour market interventions often focus on job creation rather than productivity enhancement or lifelong learning systems.

3.6. *Overall Assessment: Fragmentation of Human Capital Policy*

Overall, the *Sixteenth Plan* demonstrates a strong and consistent commitment to human capital development. Education, health, infrastructure, and employment are all recognized as key development priorities.

However, the policy structure remains predominantly sector-based. Each domain operates within its own institutional boundary, and the interconnections among them are not fully integrated into a unified framework. Human capital is therefore addressed in a fragmented manner rather than as a system of interconnected investments across society.

This fragmentation limits the overall effectiveness of public investment and reduces the potential for synergistic impacts across sectors. It also suggests the need for a more integrated approach to human capital formation, which is developed in the subsequent sections of this paper.

4. *Human Capital in the Second Periodic Plan of Bagmati Province*

The *Second Periodic Plan of Bagmati Province (2024/25-2028/29)* recognizes human capital as a key driver of provincial development and economic transformation. The plan prioritizes education, health, employment generation, infrastructure development, and social inclusion as central components of its development strategy. This reflects a strong policy commitment to improving human well-being and enhancing productivity in the province.

However, similar to the national planning framework, the structure of the Bagmati Province plan remains largely sectoral. Policy interventions are organized through separate ministries and departments, with limited integration across key development domains. While coordination is acknowledged as an objective, human capital is not yet treated as a unified system of interconnected investments.

This section examines the provincial plan from a diagnostic perspective, focusing on how different dimensions of human capital are addressed and where fragmentation limits policy effectiveness.

4.1. Education: Expansion and Technical Orientation

The Bagmati Province Plan places significant emphasis on education development, including expansion of school infrastructure, improvement of teaching quality, and promotion of technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The plan recognizes the importance of aligning education with labour market needs and improving human resource quality.

However, education policies remain largely institution-centred. There is limited integration between school education and other determinants of learning outcomes, such as household environment, nutrition, early childhood development, and health conditions. As a result, improvements in educational infrastructure do not always translate into proportional gains in learning outcomes.

4.2. Health: Service Expansion with Systemic Limitations

Health sector development is another major priority in the provincial plan. The focus includes expansion of hospitals and health posts, improvement of maternal and child health services, and strengthening of public health systems.

While these interventions contribute significantly to improving health indicators, they are still implemented as a separate sectoral agenda. Linkages between health outcomes and education performance, household welfare, and productivity outcomes are not systematically addressed. This limits the ability to fully realize the broader economic and social benefits of health investments.

4.3. Household and Social Protection Systems

The provincial plan includes various social protection measures aimed at reducing poverty and supporting vulnerable populations. These include targeted welfare programs, income support initiatives, and community-based interventions.

However, these programs are not explicitly framed as part of a broader human capital formation strategy. The household is not clearly recognized as a primary site where early human development takes place. This results in a gap between social protection policies and long-term human capital investment strategies, particularly in early childhood development and intergenerational welfare improvement.

4.4. Infrastructure and Urban-Rural Development

Infrastructure development is a major focus area in the Bagmati Province Plan, particularly given its rapid urbanization and economic importance. Investments are directed toward roads, urban infrastructure, housing, energy, and basic service delivery.

These investments are essential for economic growth and spatial connectivity. However, they are primarily framed in terms of physical development rather than human capital enhancement. Their indirect but significant effects on education access, healthcare delivery, and labour mobility are not systematically integrated into planning logic.

As a result, infrastructure is treated mainly as an economic input rather than as an enabler of human capability development.

4.5. Employment, Skills, and Productivity

The Bagmati Province Plan places strong emphasis on employment generation, entrepreneurship development, and skill enhancement programs. Technical education and vocational training initiatives are promoted to improve labour market outcomes.

However, the linkage between education systems, skill development institutions, and workplace productivity remains weak. Labour market programs are often designed independently of formal education and health systems, limiting their effectiveness in ensuring smooth school-to-work transitions and continuous skill upgrading.

This creates a disconnect between human capital formation and its productive utilization in the economy.

4.6. Overall Assessment: Sectoral Strength, Systemic Fragmentation

Overall, the Second Periodic Plan of Bagmati Province demonstrates strong commitment to human capital development. Significant investments are being made across education, health, infrastructure, and employment sectors.

However, similar to the national level, the planning approach remains predominantly sector-based. Each sector operates within its own institutional boundaries, and the interdependencies among them are not fully integrated into a unified development strategy.

Human capital is therefore addressed in a fragmented manner, where education, health, infrastructure, social protection, and employment are treated as parallel rather than interconnected systems. This limits the potential for maximizing the overall impact of public investment.

The analysis suggests that while Bagmati Province has strong policy foundations and institutional capacity, it would benefit from a more integrated approach to human capital formation that connects these sectors in a systematic way. This sets the analytical basis for the integrated framework proposed in the following section.

5. Towards a Human Capital Planning Framework (HCPF)

The analysis of Nepal's *Sixteenth Plan (2024/25-2028/29)* and the *Second Periodic Plan (2024/25-2028/29)* of Bagmati Province shows that human capital is widely recognized as a central objective of development policy. However, planning and implementation remain largely fragmented across different sectors. Education, health, housing, infrastructure, employment, and social protection are typically designed and implemented separately, even though they jointly shape human capital outcomes. This fragmentation limits the effectiveness of public investment and reduces the potential impact of development programs.

To address this challenge, this paper proposes an integrated Human Capital Planning Framework (HCPF). Unlike traditional sector-based approaches, the HCPF organizes development planning around five interconnected domains: Schools, Hospitals, Homes, Neighborhoods, and Workplaces. These five domains collectively represent the full ecosystem through which human capital is formed, maintained, and utilized across the life course.

The framework builds on the World Bank's conceptual insight that human capital is created not only in formal institutions but also in everyday environments where people live and work (Holla et al., 2026). However, it extends this perspective by explicitly reintegrating schools and hospitals as core institutional pillars alongside homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces. In this way, the framework avoids the limitations of both narrow sectoral thinking and overly informal interpretations of human capital formation.

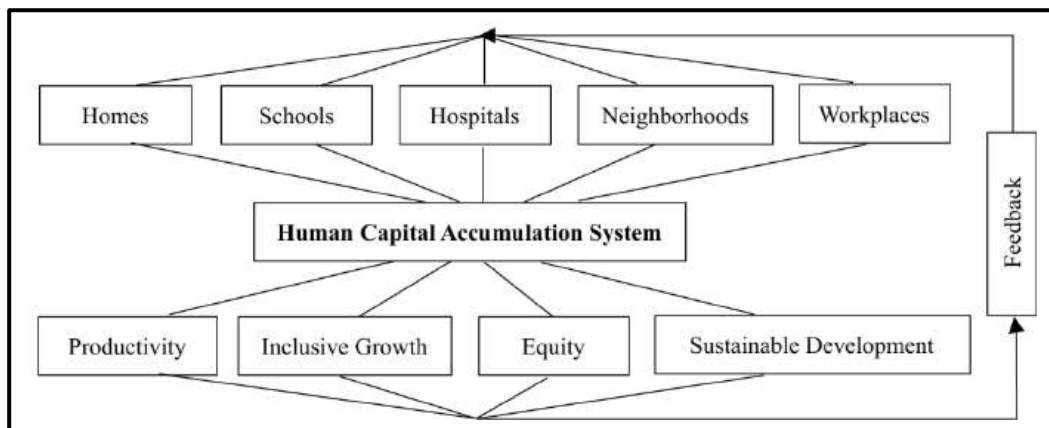
5.1 Core Structure of the HCPF

The HCPF conceptualizes human capital formation as a dynamic system:

Homes + Schools + Hospitals + Neighborhoods + Workplaces → Human Capital Outcomes → Productivity and Inclusive Development

Each domain plays a distinct but interdependent role. Homes provide the earliest foundation of human development. Schools deliver structured learning and cognitive skill formation. Hospitals ensure physical and mental health, which is essential for learning and productivity. Neighborhoods shape access to services, safety, infrastructure, and social cohesion. Workplaces transform skills into economic productivity while enabling lifelong learning.

Figure 1. Human Capital Planning Framework (HCPF): An Integrated Systems Approach



Source: Author's construction based on Holla et al. (2026) and extended human capital theory

Together, these five domains form an integrated ecosystem of human capital development rather than isolated policy sectors.

5.2 Homes: The Foundation of Human Capital

Homes are the first and most influential environment in human capital formation. Early childhood nutrition, parental care, emotional stability, and household income conditions significantly affect cognitive and non-cognitive skill development. Evidence consistently shows that investments made during early childhood have long-term impacts on education, health, and productivity (Heckman, 2006).

Under the HCPF, household-level interventions include nutrition programs, maternal and child health support, social protection schemes, early childhood development services, and gender-sensitive policies. These interventions are not treated as standalone welfare measures but as foundational investments in human capital formation.

5.3 Schools: The Structured Learning Systems

Schools are the core institutional mechanism for formal human capital formation. They provide structured learning environments where individuals acquire literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and social skills. Schools also play a key role in reducing inequality by providing access to standardized education across different socio-economic groups.

Within the HCPF, schools are not viewed in isolation but as part of a continuum of learning that begins at home and continues into workplaces. The effectiveness of schooling depends on household conditions, health status, and neighborhood environment. Therefore, education policy must be coordinated with health, nutrition, and social protection policies to improve learning outcomes.

5.4 Hospitals: Health as Human Capital Foundation

Health is a fundamental component of human capital. Hospitals and health systems ensure survival, physical well-being, and mental health, all of which directly influence productivity and learning capacity. Poor health limits school attendance, reduces cognitive development, and lowers labour productivity.

In the HCPF, hospitals and health services are integrated into the broader human capital system rather than treated as isolated service delivery units. Preventive care, maternal health, child health, nutrition, and mental health services are all considered essential inputs into human capital formation.

5.5 Neighborhoods: The Enabling Environment

Neighborhoods represent the spatial and social environment in which individuals access services and opportunities. Infrastructure, transportation, housing, sanitation, digital connectivity, and public safety all influence human capital outcomes.

Under the HCPF, neighborhood development is directly linked to human capital formation. For example, improved roads enhance access to schools, clean water reduces the incidence of water-borne disease, and digital infrastructure expands learning and employment opportunities. Neighborhoods therefore function as enabling systems that connect households, schools, hospitals, and workplaces.

5.6 Workplaces: The Productivity and Lifelong Learning

Workplaces are the final stage of human capital utilization and continuous development. They are not only sites of employment but also environments for skill upgrading, innovation, and lifelong learning. Modern economies increasingly depend on continuous learning within firms and organizations.

The HCPF emphasizes that workplace policies should go beyond job creation. They should focus on productivity enhancement, skills upgrading, vocational training, and technological adaptation. Strong linkages between education systems and labour markets are essential for ensuring smooth school-to-work transitions.

5.7 Integration Logic of the HCPF

The central strength of the HCPF lies in its integration logic. Instead of treating sectors independently, it views human capital as an outcome of a system shaped by interactions among five domains. For example, early childhood development (homes) influences school readiness; schooling outcomes (schools) depend on health status (hospitals); learning achievement is affected by neighborhood conditions; and workforce productivity depends on both education and health.

This systems perspective allows policymakers to design coordinated interventions rather than fragmented programs. It also supports more efficient allocation of public resources by identifying complementarities across sectors.

5.8 Policy Significance

The HCPF provides a practical framework for national, provincial, and local governments in Nepal. It aligns with federal governance by allowing each level of government to focus on different but interconnected domains. The federal government can focus on policy standards and financing, provincial governments on coordination, and local governments on household and neighborhood-level implementation.

By adopting this integrated framework, Nepal can move from fragmented sectoral planning to a unified human capital strategy that enhances productivity, reduces inequality, and promotes inclusive development.

6. Conclusion

This paper examined the evolving concept of human capital and its implications for development planning in Nepal. It argued that human capital is not formed only through formal institutions such as schools, hospitals, and training centres. Instead, it is continuously formed through a broader system of interacting environments, including homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces, across the life course.

The analysis of Nepal's *Sixteenth Plan* and the *Second Periodic Plan* of Bagmati Province shows that human capital is widely recognized as a development priority. However, policy interventions remain largely organized in sectoral silos, with education, health, employment, infrastructure, and social protection treated as separate domains. This limits the ability of development planning to fully capture the interconnections that shape human capital outcomes.

To address this gap, the paper proposes an integrated Human Capital Planning Framework (HCPF). The framework identifies five interdependent domains: homes, schools, hospitals, neighborhoods, and workplaces as the core environments through which human capital is formed, sustained, and utilized. It argues that development outcomes depend not on any single sector, but on the interaction among all five domains.

The HCPF provides a systems-based approach to development planning that strengthens coordination across sectors and levels of government. It is particularly relevant in Nepal's federal context, where responsibilities are distributed across federal, provincial, and local governments. By aligning policies across the five domains, governments can improve policy coherence, enhance the efficiency of public investment, and strengthen long-term development outcomes.

The paper concludes that Nepal's next phase of development requires a shift from fragmented sectoral planning to integrated human capital planning. Such a shift is essential not only for improving productivity and reducing inequality but also for ensuring that investments in people translate into sustainable and inclusive development outcomes.

Ultimately, human capital is not built in isolated institutions alone, but through a connected system of schools, hospitals, homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces that together shape the capabilities and opportunities of individuals throughout their lives.

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बागमती प्रदेश सरकार

प्रदेश नीति तथा योजना आयोग

हेटौंडा, नेपाल

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