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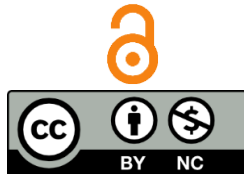
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## **Editorial**

# **Continuing the Journey of Education, Training and Research**

**Mina Bhatta\*, Shiba Bagale**

Training Institute for Technical Instruction (TITI)

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The Journal of Training and Development, Volume 7 has been published with the objective of sharing knowledge and recent research findings in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). This publication has a collection of valuable articles from TVET experts, scholars and educationists. The articles in this journal are valuable resources for the scholars, educationists, TVET experts and stakeholders.

This issue consists of seven articles on different aspects of training and development.

The article **“Enhancing Rural Women's Technical and Vocational Capability through Homestay Initiatives in Nepal: An Ethnographic Exploration”** written by Chet Nath Kanel, Dr. Prakash Chandra Bhattarai, Dr. Laxman Gnawali explores the enhancement of rural women’s technical skills and confidence through homestay. Homestay tourism contributes significantly transferring technical knowledge and vocational skills, boosting women’s confidence and motivation to engage in entrepreneurship. However, challenges arise due to low literacy level, limited education and minimal exposure to modern practices. The study emphasizes the need for accessible training programs in local languages or simple Nepali language, supplemented with regarding materials, continuous facilitation and support to enhance the learning and capacity development.

The article penned by Nirmala Mailani, **“Challenges and Opportunities for Industry-School Partnerships in Implementing Apprenticeships: A Case Study of Lumbini Province, Nepal”** is about the assessment of status of apprenticeship programs. The writer highlights the importance of collaboration between Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and industries, which helps to promote employability of the graduates. She further focuses on the partnership for enhancement of TVET system and addressing the labour market demand. The challenges include limited industry participation, inadequate supportive legislation and need for cultural shifts in how company view their roles for workforce development.

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The article “**Panchakosha: Foundations for Holistic Child Development**” written by Er. Purushottam Chapagain highlights on the Panchakosha Theory which provides a holistic framework for understanding human development. This theory bridges Eastern and Western educational philosophies applying diverse teaching methods. The writer emphasizes the significance of nurturing the physical, emotional and intellectual dimensions by incorporating yoga, nidra, meditation, yoga philosophy and mindful nutrition practices. The writer highlights the practical strategies, including yoga practices and storytelling to align the pedagogy with holistic child development principles.

Sambedan Koirala focuses on the gap between demand and supply of the workforce in his article “**TVET in Nepal: Scope and the Associated Challenges**”. The writer highlights the establishment of CTEVT for the institutionalized formal training programs aiming to produce skilled human resources to support economic development. He further summarizes the challenges faced by TVET, mismatch between workforce supply and demand, limited enrollment in technical programs compared to capacity and issues with instructor quality. He concludes that strengthening TVET is crucial for fostering self-reliance, entrepreneurship and reducing unemployment in Nepal.

The article “**Impact of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in ABCD Approach in Nepal**” by Raj Bahadur Giri focuses on social cohesion, economic resilience and economic empowerment for holistic development of TVET. His emphasis on the ABCD approach helps to utilize local assets and capacities for sustainable, community rooted solutions. The study highlights the role of TVET in equipping individuals with employable skills, driving transformative changes, fostering entrepreneurship and expanding livelihood opportunities contributing to inclusive development, economic growth and poverty reduction.

Dev Krishna KC and Bikash Ghaju jointly penned the article “**Technical Education in Community Schools (TECS) Instructors’ Experience in Their Retention: A Narrative Study**”, which explores the reasons behind the instructor’s retention. The findings of the study suggest that the retention is influenced by both personal and professional considerations. He further adds that low pay and lack of job security lead to dissatisfaction among instructors. Providing flexible working environment, minimizing bureaucratic bottlenecks, updating curricula with appropriate tools and equipment and offering professional development opportunities are the writer’s recommendations for improving the retention of instructors.

The article “**Prospects and Challenges for Executing Work-Based Learning Approach in Nepal**” authored by Dr. Anoj Bhattarai, examines the prospects and challenges of implementing a work-based learning (WBL) approach in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nepal. Dr. Bhattarai advocates for a supportive legal framework that mandates employers to provide WBL opportunities to TVET students within their industries. He also emphasizes the need for an increase in the volume of industries and creating a favorable environment for private sector and foreign investment. Additionally, he highlights the importance of raising awareness among guardians about the value of WBL, encouraging them to support their children’s participation, and preparing students for learning in work-based settings.

Finally, the editorial team expresses its heartfelt gratitude to the authors, reviewers and TITI management, for their invaluable support and collaboration. We also extend our thanks to the Tribhuvan University Central Library (TUCL) for their professional assistance in checking the articles for plagiarism. We look forward to continued cooperation from them in the future. Additionally, the editorial team welcomes feedback on this publication, as we believe it will help further enhance its quality.





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# **Enhancing Rural Women's Technical and Vocational Capability through Homestay Initiatives in Nepal: An Ethnographic Exploration**

Chet Nath Kanel\*, Prakash Chandra Bhattarai, Laxman Gnawali

Kathmandu University

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## **Abstract**

*'Homestay tourism' occupies significant space in Nepal's tourism sector, and these homestays are mostly operated by women, who are often informally educated and have less access to modern skills and knowledge-gaining opportunities. However, limited information is available on rural women's experiences in such endeavors. This paper elaborates the experiences of rural women who received various types of technical and vocational training in the process of developing and managing community homestays in rural areas of Nepal. The study was carried out using qualitative approach (ethnography) in the Mahabharat Hills of Bagmati Province administering various qualitative tools, such as participant observations, 'bhalakusari' (intimate informal talks/'kurakani'), focus group discussions (FGDs), and study of local artifacts. A total of seven homestay operators (women) were engaged in the close observations and 'bhalakusari'. Additional reflections were also gathered from other stakeholders: the family members, tourists, local leaders, as well as the community facilitators. The findings suggest that homestay tourism in the area has been playing significant role in the process of transferring technical knowledge and vocational skills to these rural women, so that they are inspired and motivated to engage in the homestay enterprising with better confidence. The study also concludes that homestay operators' limited educational and literacy skills, and less exposures have put difficulties in the learning and capacity development processes. Suitable training courses with local and/or simple Nepali language, along with adequate reading/supporting materials and continued facilitation and backstopping are some of the practical implications suggested by the study.*

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**Keywords:** community homestay, enterprise, rural women, technical and technological education, vocational

## **Introduction**

Nepal's tourism greatly contributes to earning foreign currencies; and towards improving local socio-cultural and infrastructural conditions (Ministry of Culture, Tourism and

Civil Aviation [MoCTCA], 2020). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (now called UN Tourism) (UNWTO, 2022) also claims that tourism has been one of the most thriving economic activities of the 21st century, with increasing roles of the private sector

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(MoCTCA, 2016; Nepal Tourism Board [NTB], 2019). Equally, it helps enhancing local capacities and empowerment processes (Sharma, 2019). In such cases, local men and women's active participation is crucial in order to increase community engagement in tourism destinations (Lama & Job, 2014). Nepal's several conservation and tourism/ecotourism projects and destinations, such as Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Project (TRPAP), Eco-Himal Tourism Initiative, the Great Himalaya Trail Project (GHT), etc. have proved that participatory and community-based tourism activities can greatly support in the overall capability enhancement of the local communities, particularly in the rural areas (Choegy, 2011; United Nations Development Program [UNDP]/TRPAP, 2007). Through tourism and social mobilization, the capacity development activities are mainly focused on creating a teaching-learning environment in the target areas. Homestay tourism has been considered as one of the promising economic and social activities in the rural parts of Nepal, where community homestays are in growing trends (Sedai, 2018; Sharma, 2018; Taragaon Development Board [TGDB], 2016; TGDB, 2024). Homestay enterprising in Nepal mostly involves women (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013); since they are more familiar with traditional hospitality, food items and also experienced in household chores (Kandel, 2016; Pasa, 2021). According to Choi and Cai (2022), community-based tourism (CBT) endeavors also primarily put emphasis on developing locally-owned food and beverage services, so that they can have their own 'destination image'.

Similarly, according to the MoCTCA (2010), community homestays, as a key approach to CBT in Nepal, have been playing important roles in promoting women's motivation as 'main players' of the system. Equally, CBT approaches employ various ways and strategies in order to develop homestay operators' skills, knowledge and attitudes through a number of events including basic orientation on tourism/sustainable tourism, exposure visits, technical and vocational training courses, waste management and environmental sanitation campaigns, and so on (TGDB, 2016). Due to

some good examples from different villages of Nepal such as Sirubari, Ghalegaun, Ghandruk, ACAP region (various villages), Shree Antu, etc. community homestay initiatives are gradually being adopted and spread out in other parts of the country where CBT development activities are in operations (Kanel, 2020). Homestay related training and exposure visits have helped local communities' overall capacity development and their empowerment processes as well (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013). Most often these homestay operators are adults, with less formal education but with lots of experiences (Kanel, Bhattarai & Gnawali, 2023). However, little is known about what and how these rural women (or the homestay tourism's main 'drivers') actually learn and what types of difficulties do they face in grasping and retaining the learned knowledge and skills in their day-to-day vocational life. Also, limited empirical knowledge is available on the contribution of homestay-related training in overall technical and vocational capacity development (TVCD) and related enterprising. Now-a-days Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has got priority in Nepal's secondary schools; and, TVCD is focused more on the involvement of adults in various professions/work-forces. Despite this, less research has been done in these fields.

Thus, this descriptive study is designed to explore mainly focusing on three pertinent areas of inquiry: i) How the homestay-related training and learning programs are helping homestay operators in the rural areas to develop their vocational capacities; ii) What (contents) are they actually learning?; and, iii) What types of challenges do they face in the learning practices and processes?

## **Literature Review**

### ***Concept of Homestay and Homestay Enterprising***

Globally, homestay has emerged as a new phenomenon in diversifying both accommodation facilities and tourism products/services with sustainable and resilient concepts (UNWTO, 2022). The homestay accommodation system enhances tourist-related services and satisfaction with an enhanced enterprising capacity in the tourism

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development process (NTB, 2011; Pradhanang, 2002). Homestay enterprising is also considered as an indigenous and traditional skills-oriented business which is believed to spur cultural interaction and revival, bolster employment, alleviate poverty, curb rural migration, and empower local communities if managed properly, responsibly, and sustainably. Additionally, such initiatives could encourage the locals and concerned stakeholders to diversify tourism products and explore new tourism sites/activities. Thus, in brief, homestays not only provide food and shelter to visitors but also enrich the value of cultural and heritage tourism in the locality. It is also advocated that rural area-based homestay tourism activities provide with several seen and unseen opportunities for the local communities/villagers - both directly and/or indirectly engaged (Kanel, 2020; Kunwar, 2002). Homestay enterprising has several connections with other enterprises too (TGDB, 24), since tourism is considered as an integrated and complex industry, or also called the 'industry of other industries'. Since homestays are intended to develop multiple capitals and capacities, including social, economic, human, physical, etc., homestay enterprises are run by family members, mostly women (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013; Government of Nepal [GoN], 2019; NRB, 2015). They are also involved in micro-finance activities with the objective of empowering them (KC, 2013; Lamichhane, 2020). Homestay hospitality activity starts with the welcoming of the guests (Kunwar, 2002). The homestay hosts are always ready to welcome the guests anytime they arrive (Lama, 2014). Homestay is also a part of 'sustainable tourism initiative' (Bhatt, 2015; Kandel, 2016; Lama, 2013; UNWTO, 2022).

As key catalysts, homestay operators' capacity development and empowerment issues encompass various concerns, such as the nature and extent of the empowerment-related activities, the empowerment process, and the local stakeholders' experiences in those capability enhancement and empowerment efforts (Kanel, Bhattarai, & Gnawali, 2024). The homestay training packages include, among others, homestay management, food

preparations, health and hygiene, waste management, tour package development, proposal development and budgeting, menu (*tariff*) development, code of conduct development, etc. TRPAP's experiences showed that "little effort could make big changes in disadvantaged and marginalized households" (UNDP/TRPAP, 2007, p. 33). Local-level institutional development, minor infrastructures, different types of training, and capacity development initiatives were instrumental in uplifting the status and dignity of these grassroots people. It is, therefore, that the actors urgently realize sustainable supporting mechanisms and local capacity development efforts. As advocated by Blanchard et al. (2012), applying cost-effective methods in such training and workshops becomes vital, ensuring sustainability and ownership of the locals. This equally relates to homestay learning and enterprising as well.

### ***Vocational Capability Enhancement through Homestay Training***

Being an integrated industry, rural tourism and homestay enterprising has the potential and role of enhancing local human resources and capacities along with making them more accountable and responsible. Sen (2009) believes that such enhanced capacities contribute to a person for more choices of freedom and secured 'social justice', who sees 'freedom' as significant aspect- "making people more accountable" (p. 19). Local capacities and leadership can bring many positive changes at local levels to a greater extent. Nyaupane and Chhetri (2009), and Nyaupane et al. (2020) also suggest that local adaptive skills are crucial for developing management skills and resilient capacities. These are possible through different supportive interventions. Despite the fact, Sedai (2018) blames that there has been little effort to deliver systematically developed training and capacity development packages with the above objectives. Community homestays' contributions to local-level learning, capacity building, and related issues are well acknowledged.

In rural area-based tourism, the community learning processes mainly focus on the contents like tourism and environment awareness

program (TEAP), learning green development through conservations and plantations, cultural heritage preservation and effective performance, waste management, hospitality management, house-keeping, cooking, baking, local guiding, local resources management, community museum establishment, and development, etc. According to Lama (2014) and UNDP/TRPAP (2007), various organizations and projects in Nepal gradually developed and adopted such contents and curriculum in formal, informal and non-formal homestay-focused technical and vocational capacity development training and education programs and activities. Although limited, local knowledge and practices are also reflected in the contents and courses. Such traditional and local knowledge and skills are further improved with new knowledge and skills in order to increase efficiency and profitability. Homestay learning is also a part of the overall capacity building of the local stakeholders in tourism development and related endeavors. Such overall capacities mainly include technical and vocational capacity, motivational and empowerment capacity, and business leadership capacity. It is said that learning is an active process "that needs to be stimulated and guided toward desirable outcomes" (Crow & Crow, 2008, p. 225); and learning helps to know and to do better; nevertheless, all the learning may not be applied in actual work/field although sustainable development efforts are greatly expected (Bagale, 2015). Thus, the homestay development and capacity enhancement processes start simultaneously and go continuously.

Likewise, such homestay interventions often play an integral role in enhancing not only the operators' technical and vocational capacities, but also a wider spectrum of personal development, household management, and integrated community development activities; for instance: health and sanitation, waste management, drinking water, irrigation, trail improvement, infrastructure development, institutional and social cohesiveness development, educational development, etc. (Kanel et al., 2024). In this context, KC (2013) and Lama (2013) also claim that women's leadership and confidence development

through tourism is much appreciated and apprehended. Along with their capacities, they gradually learn how tourists can be attracted to their villages or communities (Pandey, 2011; Pyakurel, 2013) so that "mutual benefits" would be possible (Sen, 2009; Sen, 2010). Despite this, there are lacks in training and promotional efforts in some new homestay/CBT/rural tourism destinations (Kanel, 2020; Sedai, 2018). Likewise, there are several research gaps, particularly on the homestay training needs, suitable training packages, effective and practical delivery mechanisms, utilization of training programs, equity issues in capacity development and benefit sharing, and so forth.

### **Methodology of Exploration: *Bhalakusari*, a Dominant Tool**

In this research, we adopted qualitative inquiry approach. Within the qualitative approach, ethnographic method of exploration was employed.

We followed the ideas of Bogdan and Biklen (2011), Bryman (2008), Dawson (2013), Denzin and Lincoln (2018), Gobo (2011), and Hammersley and Atkinson (2019) in designing and implementing the research approach and tools. We have adopted interpretive paradigm with a reflective approach, which enabled us to seek the meaning of the social world of homestay operators in the study area. According to Campbell and Lassiter (2015), Creswell (2012), Kahn (2011) and Saldana (2015), the ethnographers observe, participate, interact, analyze, reflect, write, rethink, and describe cultures, their members, and their involvement with them. For the study, we chose one of the homestay sites ('Mahabharat Hills'-MH; name changed) in the Bagmati Province. The Province is the epicenter of Chepangs' inhabitation in Nepal (CBS, 2011; Gautam & Thapa-Magar, 1994). The study site (MH) is also dominantly resided by ethnic people Chepangs. Other castes are Giri-Puri (also called 'Dasnami'), Magar, and Brahman-Chhetri. Here homestay tourism development efforts—although in limited scale—are going on for almost two decades. All initiatives here have been geared towards developing hill tourism, like 'hill-station tourism' based on community homestay initiations. This area is

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one of the famous rural tourist destinations in Nepal. Out of 12, three homestays have been run by Chepangs in this site. Chepangs have their own language (but no separate script), rituals, foods, and costumes. Irrespective of difficult life conditions, Chepangs' unique lifestyle, traditional cultures, and geographical landscapes ("although there are hardships": Gurung, 2016; Khanal, 2014) are great assets/resources for CBT development/promotion in the MH. Other homestays are run by Magars, Dashnami and Brahman/Chhetri.

Considering the nature of the inquiry, we designed the research to adopt a purposive sampling technique. Thus, in this study, the research participants were the female homestay operators of the site. Families having homestay experience and able to provide such services at present were the main basis for selecting as 'research participants'. Out of those 12 homestays in the area, seven homestays (ethnic representation as: 3 Chepangs, 2 Magars, 1 Dashnami, and 1 Brahmin-Chhetri) were in primary focus of the study. In this study, for anonymity or ethical reason, their changed names (re-naming) have been used in this way: Aaita Kumari, Som Maya, Mangala Devi, Buddhi Maya, Bihi Devi, Shukrikala, and Shanishchara.

In the study process, in addition to those seven homestays, other homestays were also briefly observed; and other members of the selected homestay families were also consulted for further enriching the information. Likewise, a local tourist guide (as an initial 'gatekeeper') was also mobilized (details can be found in a journal paper by Kanel, Bhattarai, and Gnawali, 2023). In the study, homestay operators' day-to-day life/activities, particularly focusing on homestay operational works and other cultural activities were observed and experienced by the first author. The field research was accomplished from 2019 to 2021, spending some twelve weeks (intermittently) by the first author. During the study processes, different ethnographic techniques and tools were applied for qualitative data collection, including staying in homestays, regular observations, *bhalakusari*/ '*kurakani*' (Dhakal, 2021), and focus group discussions (FGDs). In the FGDs (in total 3 events), there were minimum eight

and maximum fourteen participants in each discussion session. Each FGD lasted for about 1.5 to 2 hours.

The scratch notes ('rough notes'), field notes (elaborative notes from those rough notes), conversational interview/*bhalakusari* records (audio) and transcripts, photographs (with their prior approval), local artifacts, and key participants' diaries/copies, as well as the homestay management records, were the main sources of research data. *Bhalakusari* ways of local conversations played dominant roles in the research process. Based on the observations and formal/informal conversations, initial notes were prepared in Nepali language, and while preparing the detailed transcripts in computer, they were directly translated into English by the lead author. Transcript notes were highlighted with different colors for seeking key patterns, major themes and issues/challenges. The data were further synthesized and analyzed manually and appropriate themes/sub-themes; and key issues/insights were re-developed and derived to illustrate the field reflections and insights.

Research participants' prior consent, anonymity, multiple sources of information (triangulation), summarizing the collected information at each event/step with the key research participants, etc. (Campbell & Lassiter, 2015; Dawson, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019) were some of the key strategies adopted during the research process for maintaining ethical standards and enhancing the credibility of the information/research insights.

### **Technical and Vocational Capacity Building through Homestay Initiatives**

The field reflections suggest that the homestay initiatives have brought different opportunities for the locals to be a vocational person or an 'entrepreneur'. The homestay operators of the MH have been able to learn in many ways and through different strategies, as we found from the observations, *bhalakusari*/ interactions, and other sources of information. In the words of Kolb (1984), the homestay operators' own strategies and facilitated ways of teaching-learning come under their life-long learning initiatives too. The following sections elaborate

how technical and vocational matters are learnt by the locals, what types of contents are in use in such endeavors; and, what challenges and difficulties are being faced by the homestay operators, mainly by the women of MH.

### ***Homestay Initiatives and Learning Opportunities***

Life-long learning is a well-established perspective in education and training (Kolb, 1984). Such learning continues in formal, informal, and non-formal ways. Here also, locals have learnt different matters associated with homestay development and management. Different packages developed by various organizations like Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management (NATHM), Nepal Tourism Board ([NTB], 2011; 2022), Taragaon Development Board (TGDB) are delivered by various resource persons being mobilized by UN Project, INGOs, NGOs, and GOs (NATHM, 2022). At the same time, locals also share their experiences and learning with the trainers/educators. They have learnt various knowledge and skills through training and workshop programs, exposure visits (of best sites), family (intergenerational) and friends/peer, community of practice, exhibitions and fairs, from tourists/ 'guests', through digital ways, and sometimes from their kids (such as, new internet-based technology or 'ICT', English language, etc.).

For example, 'hospitality' (more importantly welcoming and giving farewell to the guests) aspects were learnt from an exposure visit to (Sirubari and other places). As a result, in the observations and *bhalakusaris*, it was found that a single or solo guest or group guests coming without prior information are greeted with just 'greetings' (*abhivaadan*, *namaste*, etc.). Whereas, guests coming with prior information are welcomed/greeted with flower-bunches/garlands/*tika* and also a 'welcome drink.' In this context, research participant Bihi Devi shared:

*After we learned from the Sirubari visit, when there is no big group of tourists, it is difficult for us to manage a welcome program by the local homestay management committee. Individual or small groups of tourists are welcomed by*

*the concerned homestay operators only in a simple way. In that case, instead of finding flowers and garlands, the welcoming of the tourist is managed simply by exchanging 'Namaste' and available drinks like water, tea, or sometimes 'raksi' (local alcohol). Welcoming guests was not new thing for us, but welcoming in group with special flowers and tika was a new practice for us, which we learned from Sirubari.*

According to them (FGD, where Shukrikala and Bihi Devi's husband were also there), the technical and vocational training and exposures were helpful in improving existing knowledge, skills and also developing positive attitudes towards homestay enterprising for better earning and better learning. Likewise, the FGD participants shared that they learned so many things about homestay management, including theoretical (knowledge) and practical (action-oriented) subject matters. It was notable that exposure visits and training programs complemented the overall learning process. The participants also claimed that the exposure visit was more important to get motivated and develop confidence by 'seeing and believing'; while classroom based teaching and learning opportunities provided more confidence in speaking and expressing, including knowing and practicing some English words. In an observation, one of the participants showed a note-book (artifact) maintained during the training event, in which all the English words and other useful information could be seen. Studying their wall-matters and other artifacts (e.g. diary, visitor register, etc.) as well some senses could be made that they are continuously thriving for learning new English words, even standard Nepali words.

The homestay (rural tourism) program not only provided trainings related to hospitality and gardening; but also provided some handicraft-based skills, which were boon to improve their economic and social status in the village. And, a handicraft (bamboo-based) entrepreneur (male) shared that the homestay enterprising and handicraft-making initiatives are directly linked; thus, training received from various organizations have been useful. According to them, the training opportunities were

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instrumental to refine or improve their traditional skills of making bamboo-based crafts, e.g., *mudhaa* (stool) and also some decorative items (such as newspaper-stand, letter-box, mirror-frame, photo-frame, pen-stand, *churi*/bangles-holder, etc.). Those items are purchased by the visitors as '*koseli*' or '*samjhanaako chino*' (local souvenirs) from the village. Scholarships on homestay tourism (Kandel, 2016; Pasa, 2021; Sedai, 2018) also highlight such benefits, concerns and perspectives.

According to the participants, many subject-matters were covered during the training/workshop programs and exposure visits, and further reinforced by occasional exhibition-oriented programs and festivals/fairs held locally in the district/province headquarters or/and the capital city of Kathmandu. Many types of handicrafts and several types of food items were displayed/on sale. According to participants Mangala Devi and Shanishchara, they enjoyed it and learned so many things from that exhibition. This experience also illustrates that exhibitions and fairs could also be good tools for local capacity enhancement and technical and vocational confidence-building.

The study has found eight key ways and sources being adopted in the field for teaching-learning new techniques and technologies, including:

- i) Learning through traditional ways or 'intergenerational knowledge' transfer and self-experiences;
- ii) Learning through self-experience ('learning by doing');
- iii) Learning through training and workshops (formal classes/ sessions);
- iv) Learning through observational (exposure) visits, exhibitions;
- v) Learning through peers/ groups/ networks ('community of practice') (Wenger, 2004);
- vi) Learning through host-guest interactions and guests' feedback;
- vii) Learning through different digital modes/ICTs and media (mass, social); and,

- viii) Learning through kids.

Among those ways, "learning through training and workshop events" occupies significant space in the overall learning and capacity development process. All formal and informal training/ learning activities are based on certain curricula and/or manuals developed by various institutions. As the next key finding, the following section depicts the major contents being used or delivered for the purpose.

### ***Key Technical and Vocational Contents of the Homestay Training-Workshop Events***

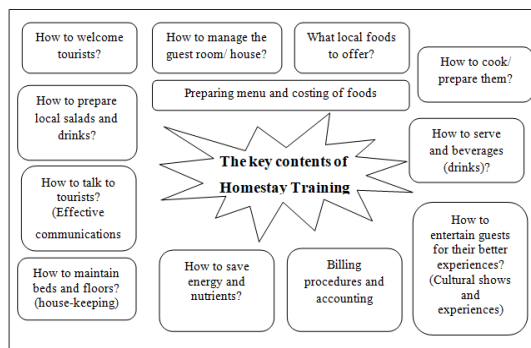
The study found a wide range of technical and vocational contents being delivered during various training and workshop events in the homestay destination. According to the participants, even the exposure visits or field trips to famous homestay sites helped cover those contents formally or informally. For example, in an interaction, a research participant Som Maya was trying to remember the key contents of those exposure visits to Sirubari as follows: tourist-welcoming styles, food items, cultural shows and entertainment, guest distributions, local pricing system, management of tourism attractions, guiding, communications with guests, billing and payment procedures, equitable benefit sharing, guests' farewell, etc.

To be particular, during the study period, we also reviewed a homestay training course curricula/manual being used by various organizations/ individual consultants while running homestay management training which was developed in the initiation of the Nepal Tourism Board in 2011 on the occasion of 'Visit Nepal Year- 2011' (Bhandari, 2010; 2013). The curricula-based training programs were mostly run for a week as 'basic training', and the course duration depends upon the resources available with the training organizer(s). As per the tourism trainers met in Kathmandu, in such cases, theoretical parts of homestay management are shortened, and the 'cooking' (food and beverage preparations) part is given more emphasis. In the inquiry, it was also found that a minimum of 3-day homestay training and a maximum of 10-day training events supported by various organizations are common in the homestay field. And in some cases, 2 to 3 days'

refresher or follow-up training have also been organized by the concerned facilitating organizations. As described above, those training packages have been mainly developed by NATHM, NTB, and TGDB (NTB, 2011). Based on those models, other NGOs/INGOs have also made some tailor-made courses to suit local contexts in their working (target) areas. The training manual by NTB is the latest one in the homestay arena. These basic and modular courses are further refined/tailor-made by various local private companies and CBOs involved in the homestay and 'small hotel and lodge management' (In the MH context, as we prefer to say 'hometel': 'होमटेल') training. The key organizers of such training courses include local governments, colleges, private companies, including the Federation of Nepali Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)'s branches, and individual consultants/ professional trainers.

The seven-day modular training manual developed by the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB, 2011) to provide homestay training to the homestay operators of various parts of Nepal, included subject matters like i) Introduction to tourism, tourism in Nepal, homestay tourism, ii) Importance of tourism, benefits, types, positive and negative impacts, iii) Homestay operation and management techniques; iv) Reception; v) Housekeeping; vi) Food and beverage production and quality control; vii) Food and beverage service and hygiene and sanitation management; viii) First aid and general treatments/precautions; ix) Ethical/moral issues (codes of conduct) in homestay tourism; and x) Packaging, promotion, and marketing of homestay and local tourism products/services.

Initial development of the training curricula was made by TGDB and NATHM, and later it was further promoted by NTB and other organizations. Figure 1, depicts the key contents of the homestay training and workshops run for capacitating community homestay operators in Nepal.



**Figure 1: Key Contents of Homestay Training**

(Source: NTB, 2011; and field notes of the lead author, 2019-2021)

According to the FGD participants (primarily expressed in the second event of the three FGDs), the trainers/instructors mostly dealt with the theoretical parts and often spent less time on practical aspects. In addition, contextualizing the practicalities of the contents, a freelance homestay trainer in Kathmandu, who has been conducting such courses for the last two decades, shared:

*If homestay training is delivered with full emphasis on practical parts, it is very costly and time-consuming. Our training events have covered many things as 'tips,' but not in full or wider detail. Sometimes, training courses are completed with some 'demonstrational' sessions only rather than giving a chance to everyone to 'practice' in the classroom. If we do so, we need lots of materials and time, which is generally out of our expectations and budgets. Perhaps due to this, they usually do not care about how much the participants have learned or will learn, but they are more concerned about the total number of participants; because more participants will justify the 'rationale' of the training conduction and the cost-matters. This is a ground reality. What can we do?*

Overall, content-wise, the homestay operators have gone through different topics and contexts - formal training sessions or observational tours organized by various facilitating organizations (UNDP/TRPAP, 2007). In addition to these directly-related topics, participants are also



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taught/self-learn about enterprising, local environment conservation, waste management, cleaning campaigning, health and hygiene maintenance, and so on. It depends on the institution's purpose, intent, resources, and other factors involved in local capacity building so as to enhance 'enterprising' skills or business capacities of the homestay operators. In the process of multiple enterprise development in the homestay site, in addition to homestay training and exposure, some of the participants have got opportunity to take part in various skills-oriented training programs such as *mudhaa* (bamboo-stool)-making, wood-based souvenir items-making, bee-keeping, green vegetable production, and so on. In this case, UNDP/TRPAP (2007) also reported that at least thirty types of training were given to local beneficiaries in the target areas. Among them, literacy, leadership, and entrepreneurship development training were also there. Those all training helped develop local technical and vocational/enterprising capacities of the homestay operators too.

### ***Utilization of Technical and Vocational Learning and the Challenges Experienced***

In this study, we were particularly interested in observing the cases of different enterprises within the homestay families and their neighbors. We tried to get their actual field 'experiences' (Kolb, 1984); thus, in addition to observations of their day-to-day 'business' life, we held *bhalakusari* with those homestay operators regarding their learning and initiations (utilization). In the same connection, in a *bhalakusari*, a research participant Shukrikala shared:

*After I learned the skills from a five-day mudhaa-making training, I have continuously produced bamboo mudhaa, which are sold locally. Sometimes, domestic tourists also buy these mudhaas. Annually, I earn about five thousand rupees from mudhaa-making vocation only. It is good money for me. I mostly make such mudhaas in my leisure time and sometimes at night.*

Here, Shukrikala shared her business experiences very interestingly. Her representative voices helped us understand the local situation and reality. One day, in her yard,

we also met some domestic tourists buying those handicrafts. One of the female tourists (from Hetauda, Nepal) also told us that the handicrafts need to be refined and diversified to satisfy different types of tourists. At the same time, they were happy to share that women's involvement in different types of enterprises could be a model work for other villages too. She said, "*Sometimes we buy such things just to encourage women entrepreneurs*". And, from such voices too, it was easy to draw a lesson that vocational learning and capacity-building issues are directly associated with the overall performance of the homestay enterprising to increase additional income sources.

In a separate *bhalakusari*, the same research participant, Shanishchara, remembered:

*Due to homestay and rural tourism development program, we got chances to take part in several training courses, and many organizations were coming to conduct different types of training courses for us. Many organizations provided training, training, and only training; and obviously, women got more opportunities than men.*

Aaita Kumari, in the same context, lamented that she also attended more than six training courses in the last 3-4 years, which provided her with good skills and knowledge for running the homestay business, along with some additional modern farming-skills, like seasonal and off-seasonal vegetable farming, bee-keeping, poultry-keeping, smokeless stove, organic farming system, etc. In our observations too, we observed some bee-hives, green vegetable production, poultry farming, etc. They were trying their best to utilize the essences of those training and learning. Supporting this fact, in the FGD, one of the then VDC officials (male leader) also remarked that many organizations and projects had poured their inputs into developing technical, vocational and empowerment-related capacities of locals, and those training courses - to some extent - helped the participants handle different types of businesses and enterprises in better ways; however, most of the training courses provided were of very short duration, and some were just 'in the name of training'.

At this point, relating and contextualizing his concern, we were trying to gather more information regarding various difficulties and challenges experienced by the homestay operators in the learning and adoption processes. They have faced some challenges that are associated with both the 'learning parts' and 'utilization (execution) parts'. In this context, for example, in a joint *bhalakusari*, research participants Buddhi Maya and Mangala Devi together shared that sometimes travel times were longer than the total duration of the training courses, which gave extra burden to the participants.

These indications give a sense that the training venue and the duration are crucial things to be considered while organizing capacity development courses in the areas like MH. Local experiences have also shown that too much information is given in a single training; and, they are mostly in 'English-mixed' (locally called '*Nenglish*' or '*Nepangreji*') sessions, which were difficult to understand for the locals, who are mostly less educated or 'illiterate'. In a FGD meeting, one Dashnami female member of the local homestay committee and also the member of the local cooperative said that the trainers coming from Kathmandu or from other city areas cannot speak simple (understandable) Nepali language, which also causes problems in properly understanding, which is a common phenomena in 'adult education' (Kempher, 2009). And, she was further commenting that the trainers pay little attention towards providing reading or supporting/resource materials, even to the participants who are able to read and write. Likewise, a male member (Magar) of the homestay committee was saying that the training organizers provide inadequate materials for practical courses, which creates impediment in learning practical (vocational) matters. Previous researchers, like KC (2013), Pasa (2021), and Sharma (2017), indicate that low level of literacy is a common phenomenon of Nepali rural settlements; however, alternative methods could be used in such training courses so that more internalization of learned matters would be possible. In this context, in a *bhalakusari*, a research participant Aaita Kumari frankly shared her feelings and

experiences:

*Sometimes we feel difficulty in listening (and grasping) in the classrooms or training programs as most of the trainers/instructors use too difficult words for us. And, sometimes, they even don't write such difficult words in the white-boards or chart-papers. And, sometimes we don't get any allowance from the training, which is also a difficult part for us as we must earn some money every day for our daily living. These types of things need to be considered by the training organizers.*

In the same context, another research participant Som Maya added: "*As compared to male members, female members get less chance in training and exposure programs, but these male members use lesser amount of learned skills and knowledge.*" This was another issue of equality and equity associated with community homestay development, which is generally considered to be pro-women and equitable business. It is well acknowledged that homestay tourism can make gender-balanced economic, social, cultural, environmental, and other multitudinous contributions to the community even in families of low income, low educational attainment, and low levels of governmental support.

Likewise, in the FGDs, some participants were expressing that limited material support from the supporting organizations during learning times and also during practicing (post-learning) times, actual implementation hasn't happened at anticipated level. Poor micro-finance facility, low number of tourists in the area, unequal distribution of tourists in the homestays (and primarily due to 'hometel' development in the area); inadequate promotion and marketing, limited support from local and other governments; and, so many other factors like earthquake of 2015; COVID-19, and others were also reported by the locals as challenges in the process of using learned skills and knowledge in order to actively engage in the homestay enterprising. Despite these, the homestay operators of MH are still trying to cope with various challenges and hurdles in order to develop the place as a homestay

destination. According to the local social mobilisers, the homestay entrepreneurs are actively seeking support from provincial and federal governments, especially to cope with post-COVID situations. They are also seeking refresher courses to refresh themselves from technical and technological points of view.

### **Discussion**

In this research, the researchers were guided by the philosophy that each person and each community has different experiences, methods, opportunities, abilities, perceptions, and 'capabilities' (Sen, 2000). Different homestay operators have different experiences and feelings too. The theory of 'Capability Approach' (Sen, 2000) suggests that capability, freedom, and poverty are directly associated, and, for a greater level of freedom, "all types of deprivations are to be removed including political liberty and basic civil rights" (Sen, 2000, p. 15), which are ensured through various types of training and capacity-building initiatives. In such a case, an integrated and fostered understanding, and respective roles of different actors plays vital roles in developing human capacities (Sen, 2009, 2010). Likewise, as Kolb (1984) advocates, the 'Experiential Learning Theory' fits better in the context of homestay as well since homestay always gives emphasis on existing experiences, skills and knowledge for an enhanced capability. Experiences lead to further development and actions, which also become vital for developing human resources and capacities combining with traditional and indigenous knowledge and skills; because, in the experiential learning process, according to Kolb (1984), almost every individual uses all learning modes to some extent. However, despite that fact, each person has a preferred learning style and has different levels of knowledge, skills, and experience. It is said that a good instructor/ teacher/ educator/trainer can have different approaches and processes in the overall teaching-learning processes including listening, observing, reading, group work, pair work, discussion work, active learning, teacher-centered activities, participant-centered activities, question and answer session, hot-seating, role play and through playing different games. These all methods are intended to facilitate

effective learning processes. However, as our field reflections revealed, use of these processes and methods primarily depends on the interests and capacities of the trainers/teachers as well as of the learners.

There is no doubt that capacities are developed through continuous learning and experience (Kolb, 1984). In CBT initiatives, participatory actions and group learning processes, including the 'community of practice' (CoP) (Wenger, 2004), exposure visits, class-room based teaching, regular practice, and also different events/exhibitions can play vital roles. NTB, MOCTCA, TGDB, NATHM also gave emphasis on such matters while developing the homestay development training manual/packages. Overall, homestay operators of MH have learnt several skills and knowledge and got motivated towards developing and managing homestay business as a technical and vocational profession mainly for an additional income source and other multitudes of cultural and social benefits (Kandel, 2016; Pasa, 2021; TGDB, 2016, 2024), and to some extent, environmental benefits as well (Bhatt, 2015; Lama, 2013). Understanding gender roles is also very important in such capacity development and empowerment-focused endeavors since there are a number of issues connected to gender roles, responsibilities and strategic needs in the process of learning, capacity enhancement, and overall homestay management processes (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013; Adeyeye, 2021; Bhasin, 2003; Rai & Joshi, 2020; Volker & Doneys, 2021). In the study area, women have played more roles than the men in the day-to-day management of homestay, and guest management as well. Women's self-initiative to learn new things and capacitate themselves is more visible in the area. As the 'Experiential Learning Theory', and the 'Capability Approach' emphasize on the step-by-step learning, experimentation, re-learning and gradual development of capabilities, the homestay operators in the MH have also been taking multiple initiations for advancing knowledge, skills and attitudes towards self-empowerment and economic progress through better homestay management, despite several challenges as discussed above.

## Conclusion and Implications

While exploring the role of homestay-related technical and vocational training in the overall capacity development of the homestay operators in the MHs, we came across different formal, informal, and non-formal means and sources of teaching-learning. And, such learning activities have taken place with number of ways and practical strategies. In the overall technical and vocational capacity development of the women homestay operators, proper use of available training curricula and manuals as well as the mobilization of appropriate trainers (with local knowledge and familiarity) has always been a matter of concern among the local beneficiaries. It can also be revealed that the homestay training package itself was a well-defined and satisfactory package from the view-point of contents; however, those contents/subjects' practical and theoretical aspects are not balanced. Local resources- and knowledge-based contents are hardly developed. Likewise, practical aspects of the training have also been inadequately addressed in the study area.

Despite some limitations, such TVET-related and managerial skills-oriented teaching-learning tools and techniques have helped the homestay operators to be able to share knowledge, passion, concern, and ideas among the team-members and with tourists. Facilitated technical and vocational courses have also helped the locals to develop their overall capability and readiness to start-up and scale-up their homestay businesses in the area. In the same manner, as we presented eight different categories of learning sources and ways, these have prudently helped the homestay operators to capacitate themselves in running the homestay and associated ancillary enterprises. Viewing the importance of homestay as a key tool to develop local capacities with multitude of benefits, more facilitation and backstopping support could produce better results not only in the technical and vocational capability development of homestay operators, but also the whole community through the proper use of 'community of practice'. To implicate more practically, technical and vocational contents derived from local perspectives, conducting training and workshop in understandable

languages, emphasizing on traditional and experience-based learning approaches, providing more reading/supporting materials, integrating more exposures in the overall capacity development programs would further facilitate the learning and capacity development practices of the community homestay operators of the study area. The practice could have wider implications with the similar phenomena of community homestay development processes in Nepal and elsewhere.

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# Challenges and Opportunities for Industry-School Partnerships in Implementing Apprenticeships: A Case Study of Lumbini Province, Nepal

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ENSSURE Project

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## Abstract

*Apprenticeship programs serve as an effective approach to integrating technical education and industry needs, offering tangible benefits for students, employers, and educational institutions. This study explores the challenges and opportunities for industry-school partnerships in establishing and implementing apprenticeship programs in Nepal, focusing on Lumbini Province. The study employs a qualitative, exploratory case study approach, with interviews and focus group discussions involving 30 stakeholders. It assesses challenges, such as limited industry participation, inadequate legislative frameworks, reliance on foreign labor, and weak collaboration between government and industry. Key findings underscore the necessity of raising industry awareness, fostering government-industry partnerships, and establishing clear policies to institutionalize apprenticeship systems. The article identifies opportunities for strengthening partnerships through improved communication, collaboration in curriculum development, and a focus on addressing industry needs along with some existing challenges.*

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*Keywords:* TVET, apprenticeship, industry-school partnership

## Introduction

Apprenticeship is a very useful model which creates a dynamic educational experience for all stakeholders by benefiting students through enhanced practical understanding, employability, and career clarity. Employers benefit through cost-effective labor, skilled recruits, and a culture of learning that reduces recruitment costs. Similarly, educational institutions through aligned programs, and

continuous feedback, heighten student motivation, improve reputation, and support to channel additional resources through industry partnerships. The Swiss-South African Cooperation Initiative, 2013. The realization of these benefits leads to an apprenticeship model of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to integrate theoretical and practical learning. The implementation modality may have varied approaches offering

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pros and cons. Informal apprenticeship and dual apprenticeship, as seen in Benin, Bankolé and Nouatin (2020) offer flexibility and accessibility, allowing for a broad range of skills to be learned in real-world settings. However, it may lack standardized quality control and certification processes. According to Lerman (2012) extensive use of the market and public-private collaborations, coupled with a limited government role can drive innovation and responsiveness to industry. Coaching as an apprenticeship approach, (Salavert, 2015) provides personalized mentorship and targeted skill development, fostering strong professional relationships. It can be resource-intensive and dependent on the availability and quality of coaches. Work-school alteration (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training [Cedefop], 2010) allows students to alternate between academic study and practical work experience, facilitating the integration of theory and practice. Nevertheless, it can be logistically challenging to coordinate and may create discontinuity in learning. Oviawe et al (2017) emphasize close partnerships between educational institutions and employers, ensuring curriculum relevance and a smooth transition to employment. So, the experiences with the success of the TVET programs under these various approaches are not uniform across the world which needs to consider the context of the implementation.

TVET indicates its contribution to country's economic development by enhancing productivity and reducing poverty, particularly in Asia and the Pacific (Pavlova, 2014). There is a strong correlation between the proportion of TVET students at the post-secondary level and per capita income, prompting many countries to bolster policy guidance and regulatory frameworks for TVET and to foster partnerships with the private sector (Pavlova, 2014).

Though apprenticeship programs are recognized for their benefits, which include integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience, promoting problem-solving and workplace skills, obtaining nationally recognized qualifications, enhancing employability and educational experience; there is debate in the academic world about its

drawbacks, which include its diverse nature, potential employer exploitation, and difficult integration between school and work (Ryan, 1998). Despite these critical voices, it is generally recognized that a strong partnership between vocational education and training (VET) schools and companies is essential for the development of an employment-oriented VET system (Bagale, 2018). This collaboration enables the creation of market-oriented VET programs, ensures that students gain valuable work-based learning experiences and improve their employability skills by equipping them with the skills demanded by the industry (Cedefop, 2021).

### **Apprenticeship in Nepal**

Technical and vocational education and training is crucial for strengthening human resources and promoting socio-economic development in Nepal. In this regard, it is essential to develop partnerships between TVET institutions and industry. To effectively address the rapidly changing labor market demands, it is crucial to establish a common framework for educational institutions to collaborate and work together, ensuring a mutually beneficial link with the market.

Learning that takes place in the real work environment and with a VET provider is commonly referred to as "apprenticeship" and represents an innovative approach to skills development. It combines theoretical knowledge taught in the classroom with practical experience gained through active learning in the company (Paudel & Eberhardt, 2023). Approximately 75% of learning takes place in industry, allowing trainees to participate in real production processes under the guidance and supervision of experienced in-company trainers. According to Bhandari (2011), apprenticeship as a system of experiential learning is critical to meeting the skills needs of industry by bridging the gap between theoretical and practical experience. The partnership between industry and VET providers can manifest in three major areas; pooling of resources, joint ventures, and improvements to training models, often through formal agreements (Callan & Ashworth, 2004) highlighting the importance of promoting

resource pooling, flexibility and programme alignment, successful collaborations that lead to financial sustainability, improved capacity, and the elimination of skills gaps, over and above immediate profitability, and the challenges of partnership such as procedural complexity, organizational structures and accountability mechanisms. While industry-TVET institute partnership is underscored for developing successful apprenticeship program for market-based skill development.

A study conducted by Hussain et al. (2021) reveals that Malaysian government's strategy of quadrupling tax reduction incentives for industries contributing to TVET programs since 2016 and introducing pay subsidies in 2020 resulted in internships, upskilling, new-skilling programs, and job-retention programs, significantly contributing to human resource development in Malaysia. The Malaysian government's corporatist model, inspired by the German Dual-Apprenticeship System, promotes collaboration between the TVET system and local industries, offering incentives, tax reductions, training, and wage subsidies to strengthen the relationship which led to successful implementation of policies focusing on collaboration and active industry participation in vocational training programs overseen by the Department of Skills Development; however, Malaysia area of improvement could be further collaboration by introducing specific legal frameworks that encourage industries to contribute to human-capital development (Hussain et al., 2021). This approach of Malaysian government could be a good example in the context of Nepal where industry-TVET provider partnership is its initial stage.

Although apprenticeships have been informally embedded in Nepali culture and society since the *Rishimuni* era – mostly the informal and family-based apprenticeship- formal education has failed to become long-term practice-oriented and co-located with practical learning sites (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2022). This is illustrated by the fact that when the Norwegian engineer Odd Huftun was building the hospital in 1963, he was confronted with a shortage of skilled labor and he introduced four-year

apprenticeship training courses through the Butwal Technical Institute (BTI) to fill the skills gap (Grierson, 1989). This initiative was beneficial for both youth and industries. Despite the program's benefits, its reach remained limited, and it was not integrated into the mainstream education system. Due to this limited outreach and failure to be addressed by subsequent policies, the initiative was not expanded nationwide. However, following on from these successful initiatives, attempts have been made in Nepal to re-establish dual TVET. The article illustrates how an attempt was made to establish dual training in the Lumbini Province. It illustrates initial experiences and assessments and, based on this, formulates further research questions.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative, exploratory case study approach to examine the early stages of implementing industry-school partnerships for apprenticeship programs in Lumbini Province, Nepal. The case study design allows for an in-depth exploration of a specific context, focusing on a rich understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the Lumbini Province. An extensive literature review laid the groundwork for the research by providing a fundamental understanding of vocational training programs and apprenticeships in Nepal and globally. This review identified key themes such as challenges, opportunities, and theoretical underpinnings of apprenticeship programs. The respective qualitative study, conducted in July 2023, relied heavily on interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (including trainees, industry representatives, and government officials, a total of 30 interviewees). The study utilized a purposive sampling strategy to recruit participants with knowledge and experience in apprenticeship programs. I interviewed industry representatives, TVET instructors, apprentices, and government officials. Industry representatives represented sectors like tourism, manufacturing, and agriculture, TVET instructors provided insights from the educational perspective, and apprentices were recruited through collaboration with TVET schools. Government officials were also interviewed to gain insights into policy

frameworks and government involvement in apprenticeship programs. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes and patterns within the collected interview transcripts and focus group discussion notes. Information was hand-coded, categorizing segments of text based on emerging themes and refined to develop a thematic framework representing the core findings. The study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Lumbini's apprenticeship programs and their impact on the industry.

### **Apprenticeship in the Lumbini Province**

The apprenticeship program connects two major learning avenues, i.e. technical schools and industries, and it supports in the transition process from education to employment. This module could be an innovative approach to address the issue of skill gaps. To increase the access dual-VET apprenticeship program, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), a major actor with long history of working in the sector of skill development, launched the project 'Enhanced Skill for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment (ENSSURE)' to implement the dual vocational education and training system in Nepal.

### **The ENSSURE Project**

ENSSURE was launched in 2016 (SDC, 2023) as a bilateral initiative between the governments of Nepal and Switzerland. The ENSSURE project is designed to promote dual learning. It is planned that the trainees will spend 3.5 months learning intensively at the technical colleges. Here, qualified instructors impart both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in controlled laboratory situations. During this time, the apprentices are familiarized with basic concepts and prepared for the real-life applications of their chosen professions (Apprenticeship Program Implementation Guidebook, 2022). Following the foundational training, the apprentices will transition to a 19.5-month industry-based learning phase. Within this phase, they will have the opportunity to work alongside qualified and experienced in-company trainers. Guided by these experienced mentors, apprentices will delve deep into their respective

fields, gaining insights into the nuances of their chosen trades (Apprenticeship Program Implementation Guidebook, 2022). As the program advances, apprentices will undergo a 1-month block release period. During this time, they will temporarily step away from their industry placements and return to the technical schools. This block release phase serves as a time for reflection, consolidation of learning, and preparation for the final examination. The culminating point of the program arrives with the completion of the cycle, marked by the final examination. This assessment evaluates the comprehensive knowledge and skills that apprentices have amassed over the course of their journey (Apprenticeship Program Implementation Guidebook, 2022).

To implement such a program, essential framework conditions must be established. Finally, it is important to involve the main stakeholders of apprenticeships (schools and industry) and to find young people who are interested in this new form of training. The following steps have been taken to onboard industries and technical schools for apprenticeship:

- **Mapping and Orientation to Potential Industries and Technical Schools:**

The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) initially undertook the task of mapping potential industries and technical schools in support with Project Support Unit (PSU); a list of such institutions was subsequently compiled. The MoSD subsequently coordinated apprenticeship program orientation workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to provide technical schools and industries with an understanding of the apprenticeship program, including its implementation process and the significant advantages it provides to both young people and industries.

- **Call published for the implementation of Apprenticeship:**

The MoSD issued a call through prominent newspapers in Lumbini

province, inviting technical schools to submit letters of interest for the implementation of the Apprenticeship Program, with backstopping support from PSU. Several technical schools expressed interest in participating by submitting proposals. After careful consideration, 11 technical schools were chosen to participate in the apprenticeship program in 2022 and 15 Technical schools in 2023.

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Technical Schools and MoSD:**

A total of 11 and 15 selected schools entered into partnership with the MoSD through MoU in 2022 and 2023 respectively. The MoU formalized this partnership, outlining the responsibilities and expectations of both technical schools and the MoSD. The technical schools assumed various roles in the process, including disseminating information about enrollment notices, conducting interviews for applicants, managing the admission process, executing classes, and overseeing the instructors and lab facilities. On the other hand, the MoSD was primarily engaged in activities related to raising awareness about the apprenticeship program. The MoSD also had the responsibility of monitoring and providing feedback on the interview process, ongoing classes, and releasing funds to the technical schools.

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Chamber of Industries:**

The objective of the MoU was to establish and bolster public-private partnerships, particularly since industries play a pivotal role in the success of apprenticeship programs, the project-initiated MoU signings with the Chamber of Industries. As part of this initiative, the establishment of the Skill Development Unit (SDU) within the Chamber of Industries was pivotal. The SDU played a crucial role

in engaging with industries, creating awareness about the apprenticeship program, and highlighting its benefits for industries. The unit was expected to actively motivate industries to participate in the apprenticeship program, encouraging them to hire apprentices and providing information about the advantages of such engagement. Additionally, the SDU was supposed to play a key role in gathering the demand volume for apprenticeships from industries, contributing directly to the process of setting targets by the MoSD.

- **Enrollment Notice Published:**

As per the terms mentioned in the bilateral agreement, the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) and the MoSD exchanged the list of chosen schools, along with designated professions and desired enrollment figures. After that, a call for enrollment was released in national newspapers, with the objective of admitting 460 young people in 2023 and 420 young people in 2022. To distribute information via multiple channels, PSU, MoSD technical schools, and the Skill Development Unit (SDU) worked together. This involved using social media, interacting with various networks, and running campaigns to raise awareness. Visits to communities were also undertaken as part of these initiatives. Consequently, 412 youths were admitted in 2022, and 450 youths in 2023.

- **Tripartite Agreement made between Technical School, Industry and Apprentice:**

To ensure industry-based learning, 11 technical schools, in coordination with the MoSD, SDU and PSU signed a tripartite agreement between technical schools, industry and apprentices. This agreement delineated the roles and responsibilities of the

participating technical schools, apprentices, and the industries involved. The agreement was expected to maintain clarity and alignment among all stakeholders and provide a structured framework for the apprenticeship program's smooth operation. With this MoU, 112 industries were onboarded to secure the industry-based learning of apprentices.

### **Impressions From the field: First Assessments on Apprenticeship**

Meanwhile the MoSD was managing a 24-month apprenticeship program, multiple technical schools were offering this program, which covered seven vocational fields: Automobile Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Early Child Development Facilitator, Information Technology, Mechanical Engineering, and Hotel Management. The 2022 batch had completed institute-based learning and was in industry-based learning. Meanwhile, the 2023 class would begin the institute-based learning by December. To substantiate the above discussion and to dig further into the different aspects of dual-VET apprenticeship context, several interviews were conducted focusing on the initiatives taking place in the Lumbini Province. The interviews helped to dig out the understanding of the actors/stakeholders involved.

### **Case 1: A Manufacturer of Metal Components**

Since 2019, a leading manufacturer of vital metal components for hydropower has actively involved apprentices, with a particular emphasis on mechanical engineering. The owner, a BTI apprenticeship program graduate, demonstrated a deep understanding of the value of apprenticeships. What distinguished it from others industry was its immediate compensation for apprentices during their industry-based learning. The industry actively promoted diversity by welcoming and encouraging female apprentices, breaking away from traditional norms. The owner praised female apprentices' dedication and generosity, challenging stereotypes prevalent in some

industries which were hesitant to hire them. The industry had also a track record of hiring apprentices as employees who had completed their apprenticeship program. Notably, he addressed a broader labor force issue, stating that due to a shortage of skilled workers in the local market, Indian workers made up more than half of the workforce in the Nepalese industries. He saw apprenticeship programs as a potential solution for developing a skilled workforce that is tailored to the needs of the industry. The owner was pleased with the approach's success, emphasizing its benefits not only for the apprentices but also for the company. This strategy ensured a long-term dedicated and supportive workforce, significantly contributing to the production process. The successful assessments of the apprenticeship program were flanked by the statements of the in-company trainer who described the demands that the implementation of apprenticeship placed on the qualifications of the staff:

*Industry-based learning stands out as an excellent platform for acquiring market-relevant skills, and I am honored to be a part of the apprentices' learning journey. I strive to effectively transfer my knowledge and expertise to apprentices, thanks to a solid educational background and training in instructional skills. Recognizing the importance of continuous improvement, we can still improve our pedagogical approaches. Given their remarkable enthusiasm for skill acquisition, strengthening this aspect would allow us to guide apprentices more effectively. (Interview with in-company trainer, conducted on 12 July 2023)*

In broadening the scope, the owner shed light on the challenges of Nepal's federalized structure, where the role of provinces remains unclear. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the government for only promoting youth for foreign employment while ignoring the status and needs of the local labor market. He highlighted the limited initiatives of provincial industry ministries, emphasizing the need for clearer roles and proactive support for

industries. In this regard, he advocated for clear roles and favorable policies from provincial ministries, as well as better coordination between industries and these agencies. Furthermore, the owner emphasized the importance of publicizing apprenticeship programs, urging local and provincial governments to actively promote and advocate for such initiatives. That, he believed, would not only improve individual career development but also promote overall industry growth and productivity. Obviously, apprenticeship not only benefits the economy, but also the learners. One of the trainees described the benefits of apprenticeship for the individual as follows:

*So far, the learning environment has been commendable, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of a real workplace. I am truly happy to be a part of the apprenticeship program, gaining practical experience in addition to theoretical knowledge. The program has not only broadened my understanding of a real-world work environment, but it has also fueled my desire to learn new skills.* (Female apprentice, interview conducted on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023)

## **Case 2: A Renowned Resort**

A renowned resort in Ghorahi Sub-metropolitan city was actively engaged in the apprenticeship program, specifically targeting students pursuing hotel management courses. The resort used to welcome apprentices by providing a solid platform for industry-based learning as well as extending remuneration and additional benefits to help them grow. The owner acknowledged the abundance of job opportunities in the hospitality industry, but emphasized the social stigma that surrounds it, making it difficult to find skilled labor. Furthermore, the problem was exacerbated by skilled workers migrating to countries such as Dubai and Qatar in search of better pay. Considering these challenges, the owner emphasized the potential of apprenticeship programs to address the local labor shortage.

The apprenticeship program in that company lasted approximately 20 months and the

company provided participants with the necessary skills for success in the hotel industry. One of the trainees interviewed described his experiences as follows:

*This apprenticeship has given me the invaluable opportunity to learn about and contribute to the hotel's four major departments. I've noticed a significant increase in my confidence, particularly when dealing with foreign guests, which used to make me nervous. Company's learning environment has aided my personal and professional development. Furthermore, the provision of a stipend, duty meals, and other associated benefits adds to the overall positive experience, allowing me to be truly satisfied with my apprenticeship"* (Female apprentice, interview conducted on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023)

The owner expressed satisfaction and pride in contributing to the development of skilled human resources, viewing the program not only as a benefit to individual apprentices but also as a way for the hospitality industry to actively contribute to the cultivation of expertise in the local labor market. The initiative not only improved the skills of the apprentices, but it also helped to alleviate the shortage of skilled professionals in the hospitality industry. In this regard, one of the in-company trainers put his observations emphasizing the internal learning processes:

*Engaging and guiding apprentices daily is not only enjoyable for me, but also a continuous learning experience. This process gives me a lot of satisfaction, especially because the apprenticeship concept emphasizes industry-based learning, which I really appreciate and find extremely beneficial. Recognizing the significance of a consistent connection between educational institutions and industry, I see opportunities for further improvement through increased coordination and course content discussions. Similarly, I see that only a few hotels are aware of this*

*program; collaboration should be expanded” (In-company trainer, interview conducted on 19th July 2023)*

### **Findings: Current Challenges of Apprenticeship Implementation in Nepal**

This article describes the status of co-operation between vocational schools and industry to create an employment-oriented vocational training system in Nepal and sheds light on the challenges that lie ahead for further implementation. It highlights the disparity between labor approvals and highly skilled workers, highlighting the need for a dual VET model that integrates theoretical classroom knowledge with hands-on industrial experience. The starting point here was to look at the global landscape of TVET and apprenticeships and to highlight the different approaches derived from some countries such as Germany, Switzerland, and Malaysia.

While the level of awareness among the industry representatives about the importance of apprenticeship seemed sufficient in the above mentioned two cases, their limited participation might indicate that industry-at-large were yet to be reached out with effective information by the agencies working to promote apprenticeship. This is further substantiated by the survey done by ENSSURE project which shows that only 7% out of 210 industries are aware of any kind of apprenticeship programs including ENSSURE (Skill Needs Assessment Report, 2023). This hinders the effectiveness of these programs in addressing skill gaps and reducing unemployment. However, the finding of the study calls for stronger partnerships between TVET schools and industries to develop market-based skills and to ensure that industries are sufficiently equipped with locally available skilled human resources. With rigorous effort of ENSSURE project, the project experienced gradual improvement in industry involvement for apprenticeship among partnered industries. However, the focus group discussion conducted in July 2023 with industry people revealed that the participation and role of industry in apprenticeship programs was limited. One of the representatives of the industry in FGD

expressed:

*Apprenticeship selection procedure restricts the industry's role by allowing participation as a representative only within the selection committee on the other hand, I support industry leadership in the hiring process. (Industry representative in FGD, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023)*

However, first findings indicate that industry participation is not yet having the desired and meaningful result to address the existing skill gaps. There is no separate law or policy that institutionalizes or defines the role of employers for apprenticeship. This lack of formalization has resulted in disregard for the private sector as a key actor.

It was found that awareness of apprenticeship programs among employers was limited. They had limited knowledge and access to the prerequisites of apprenticeship programs like curriculum development and enrolment of apprentices. Employers showed reluctance to pay the apprentices in the initial time of apprenticeship program. These and others are the reason why apprenticeship is still very limited. Furthermore, there are some more challenges of apprenticeship implementation in Nepali context.

First, Nepal shares common hurdles with other developing nations in establishing a connection between industries and educational institutions through apprenticeship programs (Obwoye et al., 2013). While persistent efforts have led to a gradual improvement in industry participation, there remains a critical gap in the form of legislative frameworks and regulatory guidance aimed at sustaining this connection. Notably, the Industrial Enterprises Act specifically sections 51 pertaining to the Industry and Investment Promotion Fund and section 54 concerning Corporate Social Responsibility, fails to address the issue of apprenticeships (The Industrial Enterprise Act of Nepal 2076, 2020). Moreover, industries have played a limited role in adhering to the defined apprenticeship guidelines set forth by CTEVT.

Second is the reluctance of industries in the process of developing skilled work force. In the

process of nurturing a skilled work force, companies or employers are expected to take on a dual role as both producers and consumers (Caves & Renold, 2016). Nevertheless, in Nepal, companies tend to primarily fulfill the role of consumers, rather than actively engaging in the production or development of skilled labor.

Third, there is dominance of skilled work force from India in the Nepali industries. The significant remittance outflow from Nepal to India, amounting to 1596.07 million US dollars in the year 2022 (Statista, 2022), serves as a clear evidence of the prevailing dominance of the Indian skilled labor force in the Nepali job market. The open border facilitates an easy inflow of skilled labor from India, thereby reducing the motivation for companies to invest in training and development initiatives.

Finally, a challenge exists in the effective coordination between the government and the private sector. During focus group discussions with industries and the government, it was experienced that both sectors sometimes engaged in a blame game, with each side attributing the responsibility for skilled labor development in the country to the other.

## **Conclusion**

This article highlights the urgent need for transformational actions within Nepal's TVET system, specifically in the Lumbini Province. The apprenticeship program, which is recognized as a viable model of dual VET, presents itself as a possible solution for addressing this disparity by combining technical knowledge with practical industry experience. This research examines the global environment and highlights the diverse outcomes of apprenticeship programs implemented in some countries. The article highlights several challenges that hinder the effectiveness of apprenticeship programs in Nepal, particularly in Lumbini Province. These include limited industry participation, legislative and policy gaps, and a focus on companies as consumers rather than producers. Some of the employers had limited knowledge about program details, hesitant to pay apprentices, and limited roles in selection processes. The collaboration between the

government and private sector is also hindered by a "blame game" mentality, preventing effective skills development. These challenges call for further discussion and potential solutions to improve apprenticeship programs in Nepal such as raising industry awareness through comprehensive information campaigns and workshops to educate employers about the benefits of apprenticeship programs and their role within them.

Similarly, strengthening industry-school partnerships in curriculum development, internship placements, and mentorship to ensure programs address industry needs and provide valuable practical experience. For that, advocacy for clear legislation that defines employer roles in apprenticeships, while also allowing flexibility for adaptation across different industries.

This study opened a window into the challenges hindering the implementation of apprenticeship programs in the Lumbini Province, Nepal, particularly the limited role of industries and the lack of formal frameworks. Further research can be conducted about the apprenticeship programs such as longitudinal studies to assess their long-term impact on graduates' employability, career advancement, and industry productivity. Cost-benefit analysis can be conducted to consider both initial investment and long-term economic benefits. Industry-specific studies can identify unique needs and challenges in specific sectors. Comparative studies with successful developing countries can provide insights into best practices. Government and private sector collaboration can be explored to bridge the gap between the two sectors, potentially through incentive programs or public-private partnerships to encourage investment in apprenticeship programs.

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# ***Panchakosha: Foundations for Holistic Child Development***

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## **Abstract**

*The Panchakosha theory, a cornerstone of ancient wisdom, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of human beings emphasizing the nurturing of all five layers of being. This theory's application in education can revolutionize the way we approach child development, integrating the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions. By incorporating elements such as Yoga Nidra, meditation, yoga philosophy, and mindful nutrition, educators can foster holistic growth in children and instill valuable social and personal disciplines promoting better concentration, calmness, and improved learning and memory. Educational philosophies from both Eastern and Western traditions, including contributions from notable thinkers, shape diverse and effective teaching methods. This article delves into the practical ways in which the Panchakosha Theory can be applied to education, offering insights into yogic practices, storytelling, and pedagogical strategies that align with both Eastern and Western educational philosophies.*

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**Keywords:** Yoga Nidra, Yamas, Niyamas, Yoga

## **Introduction**

Panchakosha is a concept rooted in ancient Hindu philosophy and Ayurveda that describes the five layers or sheaths of the human being. When it comes to holistic child development, understanding and nurturing each of these layers is essential for the overall well-being and growth of a child. By addressing the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of a child through education, nutrition, emotional support, and opportunities for creative expression, we can help children develop into well-rounded individuals. Holistic child development focuses on nurturing a child's

physical health, emotional intelligence, cognitive abilities, social skills, and spiritual growth to support their overall development and well-being.

## **Exploring the Five Layers of Being in Panchakosha Theory**

The Panchakosha theory presents a comprehensive model of the human being, delineating five distinct layers (oneyogathailand, n.d.) or 'sheaths' that encompass our existence. The journey through these koshas moves from the gross to the subtle, starting with the physical body and extending to

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the realm of bliss.

- **Annamaya Kosha (अन्नमय कोष):** This is the physical layer, made up of the food we consume and representing our tangible body. It means 'matter' (earth, water, fire, air, and space). We perceive shabda (शब्द), sparsha (स्पर्श), roopa (रूप) ras (रस) and gandha (गन्ध).
- **Pranamaya Kosha (प्राणमय कोष):** The energetic layer, governed by the life force or prana, which regulates vital physiological functions. It balances health and addresses diseases.
- **Manomaya Kosha (मनोमय कोष):** The mental body, where thoughts and emotions reside, influencing our psychological state, "conglomeration of thoughts and moments of feelings".
- **Vigyanamaya Kosha (विज्ञानमय कोष):** The wisdom body, associated with intellect and discernment, allowing us to make conscious decisions. It is the inner voice guiding us to do or not to do, right or wrong, useful or not useful.
- **Anandamaya Kosha (आनन्दमय कोष):** The bliss body, a state of joy and spiritual fulfillment, representing our innermost essence. A state of total silence, a complete harmony and perfect health.

(Vikaspedia.in/health/ayush/yoga-1/pancha-kosha)

Each layer is not isolated; they interpenetrate and influence one another, creating a holistic system that is dynamic and interconnected. (Mishra, 2024). The understanding of these koshas is crucial for nurturing all dimensions of a child's development in educational settings.

By integrating the Panchakosha model into educational practices, we can address the multifaceted nature of child development, ensuring that each layer is acknowledged and nurtured. Swami Sharvananda (1921) has paraphrased the verse in *Taittiriya Upanishad* as all beings are born of food as *Anna*, 'food body' concerned with our physical existence: birth, growth, change, death and decay qualities. Similarly, *prana*, manifested in the form of the breath (Feuerstein, 2001) to raise consciousness from the body to a higher level of the life force. *Man* concerned with "everyday creativity" (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007; Richards, 2007), which tends to be linear and logical. *Vigyan* orients life towards either unreflective bodily experience or enhanced awareness and spiritual realization (Feuerstein, Kak, & Frawely, 1995). Meanwhile *anand* that dissolves the veil of the mind leading to ecstasy, bliss and what Maslow calls "integrated-creativity" from which "comes the great work of art, or philosophy or science" (Maslow, 1968, p. 142). Hence it is concluded that this approach fosters a balanced growth, preparing children not just academically, but also physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.

**The Kosha and their Characteristics (Satpathy, 2018)**

Kosha	Annamaya Kosha	Pranamaya Kosha	Manomaya Kosha	Vigyanamaya Kosha	Anandamaya Kosha
Characteristics	Inertia	Movement	Passive Knowledge	Acquisition of Knowledge, Decision Making	Intuition, Idea generation
Quality	Passivity	Activity	Knowledge	Intellect, Ego	Happiness
Shakti (शक्ति)	Avarana Shakti (आवरण)	Kriya (क्रिया) Shakti	Iccha (इच्छा) Shakti	Gyana (ज्ञान) Shakti	Bhoga (भोग) Shakti
Power, Energy	Unconsciousness	Activity	Will power	Wisdom	Joy, Pleasure, Blissful

## **Integrating Panchakosha in Educational Settings**

The integration of Panchakosha theory into educational settings is a transformative approach that aligns with the holistic development of children. It recognizes the value of nurturing not just the intellectual, but also the emotional, physical, energetic, and spiritual layers of a child's being.

To effectively incorporate Panchakosha, schools can adopt a multi-dimensional strategy:

- **Curriculum Design:** Embedding Panchakosha principles into the curriculum to foster a well-rounded education.
- **Teacher Training:** Equipping educators with the knowledge and skills to apply Panchakosha in their teaching methods.
- **Environment:** Creating a learning environment that supports all five koshas, from the physical space to the emotional climate.

By embracing Panchakosha, educational institutions can create a nurturing space that promotes the growth of each child in a comprehensive manner, addressing their needs at every level of their being.

This approach not only benefits the individual child but also cultivates a more empathetic and connected classroom community. As children learn to recognize and respect the different layers within themselves and others, they develop a deeper sense of self-awareness and compassion which allows an individual to reflect on their hidden features of self-thoughts, feelings, and beliefs (DaSilveira et al., 2015)

## **Yogic Practices for the Young Mind: Yoga Nidra and Meditation**

### **Designing Age-Appropriate Yoga Nidra Sessions for Children**

Yoga Nidra, developed by Swami Satyananda Saraswati in 1976 is an ancient practice of deep relaxation, also known as "yogic sleep" or 'effortless relaxation', holds significant benefits for children, offering a way to cultivate

mindfulness and a deep connection with their inner selves. Designing age-appropriate *Yoga Nidra* sessions requires an understanding of children's anatomy and physiology to address their functional developmental differences. Here, our body finds its natural equilibrium and we fall into an innate state of deep, blissful awareness (Reeves, 2019).

Many children have difficulty "sitting still". But in Yoga Nidra is done while you are lying down, so it is very comfortable promoting relaxation and also enhancing memory, concentration, and emotional management (littlefloweryoga, n.d.)

Understanding the unique needs of each age group is crucial. For instance, younger children may respond well to shorter sessions with playful storytelling, while older children might appreciate a more structured approach that includes breathing exercises and body awareness techniques (kidsyogafun, n.d.). The goal is to create a nurturing environment that supports holistic development and well-being.

### **The Role of Guided Meditation in Enhancing Concentration and Calmness**

Guided meditation is a powerful tool in the educational sphere, fostering a sense of calm and improving students' ability to concentrate. (Notion4Teachers, n.d.). This practice follows a structured approach, often beginning with relaxation techniques that pave the way for deeper mental focus.

Through guided meditation, children learn to navigate their thoughts and emotions, leading to a more harmonious classroom environment.

The Relax-Resolve-Reform method first propounded by Dr. Herbert Benson, a cardiologist, and editor of the Harvard Medical School Special Health Report, is a prime example of how guided meditation can be systematically introduced to students. It emphasizes the importance of relaxation as the first step towards personal change and better focus.

- **Relaxation:** Initiating the state of calm
- **Resolve:** Setting intentions for personal growth

- Reform: Implementing changes for improved well-being

Incorporating these practices into the curriculum obviously may help to reduce stress, build emotional resilience, and enhance overall focus among students.

### Evaluating the Impact of Yogic Sleep on Learning and Memory

The practice of Yoga Nidra, often referred to as yogic sleep, has been increasingly recognized for its potential to enhance learning and memory in children. Studies (Kumari & Tripathi, 2018) suggest that the deep relaxation state induced by Yoga Nidra can improve concentration and information retention.

Recent educational programs have begun to integrate Yoga Nidra sessions into their curriculum, observing notable improvements in students' academic performance. The following table summarizes key findings from an experimental study on effectiveness of Yoga Nidra (YN) on school children of age group 14-16 (10<sup>th</sup> grade students) for consecutive 21 days conducted in Mangalore, Karnataka, India (D'souza et al., 2021).

#### Effectiveness of Yoga Nidra (YN)

Stress level	Performing YN	Not performing YN
Low Stress level	98.15%	58.06%
Moderate stress level	3.85%	41.93 %

The relaxation and mindfulness based cognitive therapy (Kuyken et al., 2010) cultivated through Yoga Nidra not only support cognitive functions, but also contribute to the overall well-being of children, fostering a conducive environment for learning.

Educators and parents alike are encouraged to consider the inclusion of yogic practices such as Yoga Nidra in the educational journey of children, recognizing its role in developing a balanced and focused mind.

### Incorporating Yoga Philosophy and Stories in Child Education

#### Teaching Yamas and Niyamas: Fostering Social and Personal Discipline

Incorporating the Yamas and Niyamas the yoga's ethical guidelines propounded by Patanjali may have lived between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, into educational curricula is essential for nurturing a child's ethical and moral development. These foundational principles (Hocheiser, 2024) of yoga philosophy offer a framework for children to understand and practice social and personal discipline. Educators can creatively introduce these concepts through interactive activities, ensuring that the lessons are both engaging and impactful.

- **Yamas** - Ethical standards that include non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-covetousness.
- **Niyamas** - Personal observances comprising purity, contentment, self-discipline, self-study, and surrender to a higher power.

By integrating the Yamas and Niyamas, into daily learning, children can develop a sense of responsibility and respect for themselves and others. This approach fosters a supportive and compassionate classroom environment.

The practical application of these principles can be seen in various classroom activities. For instance, storytelling and role-playing can be used to illustrate the importance of honesty and non-violence. Additionally, incorporating mindfulness and reflection exercises helps children internalize the values of self-discipline and contentment.

#### Yoga Stories as Educational Tools: Lessons in Values and Virtues

Yoga stories are a treasure trove of values and virtues, serving as a powerful medium to impart ethical and moral principles to children. Through captivating narratives, these stories introduce concepts of truth, discipline, and compassion (patanjaleeyoga, 2024). They are not just tales but life lessons wrapped in the

guise of adventures and quests, making the learning process engaging and memorable.

Incorporating yoga stories into education can be done effectively by:

- Selecting stories that align with the age and understanding of the children
- Encouraging interactive discussions to reflect on the morals of the story
- Using role-play to bring the characters and their virtues to life
- Providing creative activities related to the story, such as drawing or writing

By weaving yoga stories into the fabric of education, we nurture a child's ability to discern right from wrong and cultivate a sense of empathy and responsibility towards others (Harper, 2013).

Yoga stories are not only about the physical postures or asanas; they are about the journey of the soul towards enlightenment. They teach children to see beyond the surface, to understand the depth of their actions and their consequences (Basavaraddi, 2023).

### **Creative Approaches to Introducing Yoga Philosophy to Children**

Introducing yoga philosophy (Wile, 2015) to children can be a transformative experience, fostering not only physical well-being but also instilling values and virtues. Innovative methods such as storytelling, music, and dance (Harper, 2013) make the teachings accessible and engaging for young minds.

To effectively convey the essence of yoga philosophy, educators can utilize a variety of creative tools:

- **Storytelling** that incorporates yoga principles
- **Music and songs** that reflect yogic themes
- **Dance and movement** to express the Yamas and Niyamas
- **Games and activities** that reinforce the lessons learned

These methods not only make learning enjoyable but also cater to the diverse learning styles of children. By integrating these approaches, educators can create a rich and multi-sensory learning environment.

The art of teaching yoga to children lies in making the practice relatable and fun. It is about connecting with the child's innate curiosity and guiding them towards self-awareness and discipline through interactive and imaginative experiences (Harper, 2013)

### **Nutrition and Well-being: Engaging Children with Healthy Snacks**

#### **Kid-Friendly Recipes that Promote Balanced Eating**

Introducing children to the joy of cooking can be a delightful way to encourage healthy eating habits. Kid-friendly recipes not only provide a fun activity but also teach valuable nutritional lessons. Energy balls (Flaherty, 2024), for example, are a simple no-bake option that can be packed with nutrients to bust those low-energy moments. They are delicious, easy to make, and perfect for storing for later consumption.

Involving children in the kitchen can lead to a greater interest in the food they eat and a better understanding of balanced diets. Here's a quick list of ingredients for a basic energy ball recipe:

- Oats
- Honey or maple syrup
- Peanut butter or any nut butter
- Flax seeds
- Chocolate chips or dried fruit

By experimenting with these ingredients, children can learn about the importance of each component in their diet. For instance, oats provide fiber, nut butter offer healthy fats, and flax seeds are a source of omega-3 fatty acids (Hjalmarsdottir, 2024).

Encouraging children to be hands-on with their food choices fosters a sense of autonomy and decision-making about their health. It is a step towards holistic education that aligns with the principles of Panchakosha, nurturing the

physical layer of being through conscious eating.

### **Connection between Nutrition and Cognitive Development**

The intricate relationship between dietary habits and cognitive performance in children is increasingly evident. Proper nutrition is crucial for the healthy development of a child's brain. Nutritional deficiencies, particularly in the early years, can lead to cognitive impairments, while a balanced diet supports mental acuity and learning capabilities.

- Macronutrients such as carbohydrates, proteins, and fats provide the energy necessary for brain function and development.
- Micronutrients, including vitamins and minerals, play key roles in neural processes.
- Antioxidants protect brain tissue from oxidative stress, supporting cognitive health.

Ensuring that children receive a diet rich in essential nutrients is fundamental to fostering their cognitive growth and educational success (Nelson & Luciana, 2008).

The evidence suggests that malnutrition can impair cognitive development, whereas practices like breastfeeding are beneficial for cognition. It is imperative to understand the nutritional needs at various stages of a child's growth to optimize their cognitive potential (Nyaradi et.al., 2013).

### **Culinary Activities as a Medium for Holistic Education**

Engaging children in culinary activities serves as a powerful tool for holistic education, fostering not only an appreciation for healthy eating but also imparting valuable life skills. Through hands-on experiences such as menu planning, cooking, and tasting, children learn about nutrition, teamwork, and the cultural significance of food.

Incorporating culinary activities into the curriculum can be both fun and educational. Here's a simple framework for educators to

follow:

1. Introduction to basic nutrition and food groups
2. Hands-on cooking sessions with simple, healthy recipes
3. Exploring cultural dishes and their history
4. Understanding the farm-to-table process
5. Reflecting on the experience and sharing with peers

By integrating these activities, children not only learn how to prepare food but also develop a sense of responsibility and self-sufficiency. They connect with the process of creating a meal from start to finish, which can have a lasting impact on their relationship with food and eating habits.

Educators can draw inspiration from various sources, including Ayurvedic cooking workshops, visits to temple kitchens, or even yoga for digestion, to create a diverse and enriching culinary curriculum. The goal is to create a joyful learning environment where the act of cooking becomes a gateway to a deeper understanding of health, community, and the environment.

### **Educational Philosophies and their Influence on Teaching Methods**

#### **Comparative Analysis of Eastern and Western Educational Ideals**

The educational landscapes of the East and West are often viewed through the lens of their philosophical underpinnings (Spizzica, 1997). Eastern educational ideals are deeply rooted in philosophies such as Sankhya Yoga, Vedanta, Buddhism, and Jainism, which emphasize holistic development and the pursuit of wisdom. In contrast, Western education has been shaped by schools of thought like idealism, realism, naturalism, pragmatism, and existentialism, focusing on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of critical thinking skills.

The interplay between these diverse educational philosophies reveals a rich tapestry



of approaches to learning, each with its unique contributions and limitations.

Eastern traditions value the integration of spiritual and moral dimensions within education, while Western models often prioritize empirical inquiry and the scientific method. This dichotomy presents opportunities for a more enriched educational paradigm when elements from both systems are thoughtfully integrated.

- **Eastern Approaches:**
  - Emphasis on spiritual growth
  - Moral and ethical education
  - Teacher as a guide and mentor
- **Western Approaches:**
  - Focus on empirical evidence
  - Development of analytical skills
  - Teacher as a facilitator of knowledge

Understanding these differences is crucial for educators aiming to foster environments that nurture both the intellectual and personal growth of students.

**Sociological Approaches to Education: Theories and Applications**

The sociological approach to education delves into how societal structures and cultural norms shape the educational landscape. Through the study of sociology of education, (Satapathy, 2021) teachers are exposed to micro and macro theories that explain factors affecting academic performance. These theories include symbolic interactionism, structural functionalism, and conflict theory, each offering a unique lens through which to view the classroom and its dynamics.

The interplay between educational institutions and social institutions such as family and society are crucial. It highlights the role of socialization in shaping both educational outcomes and cultural transmission.

Understanding these sociological concepts is essential for educators to create learning environments that are both inclusive and

effective.

**Sociological approach, focus and implications**

Approach	Focus	Educational Implications
Symbolic Interactionism	Micro-level interactions	Personalized learning experiences
Structural Functionalism	Social stability and cohesion	Emphasis on social norms in curriculum
Conflict Theory	Inequality and power dynamics	Critical thinking and social justice education

**Pedagogical Strategies for Reflective and Autonomous Learning**

In the realm of education, fostering reflective and autonomous learning is paramount. Moon (1999, p. 63) defined the reflective practice as “a set of abilities and skills, to indicate the taking of a critical stance, an orientation to problem-solving or state of mind”. So, educators need to cultivate a deeper level of understanding and self-awareness in their students. These strategies encourage learners to think critically about their own learning processes and outcomes.

The dynamic model of learner autonomy, as proposed by Knowles (1975), emphasizes the importance of self-directed learning. This approach to pedagogy aligns with the theory of andragogy, which is particularly relevant for adolescent and adult learners. It underscores the significance of tailoring educational experiences to the unique characteristics and needs of learners.

Assessment plays a critical role in reflective and autonomous learning (Hay & Mathers, 2012). It is not just about measuring outcomes, but also about providing feedback that can guide further learning. Effective assessment

practices encompass a range of types, including formative, summative, and diagnostic assessments.

To implement these pedagogical strategies effectively, educators must consider various factors such as the learner's characteristics, the learning environment, and the available instructional facilities. The table below outlines the levels of teaching and their corresponding requirements (Bloom et al., 1994).

**Bloom’s Taxonomy**

Level of Teaching	Characteristics	Basic Requirements
Memory Level	Repetition and recall	Structured environment , clear instructions
Understanding Level	Comprehension and application	Interactive sessions, problem-solving tasks
Reflective Level	Critical thinking and self-assessment	Opportunities for reflection, feedback mechanisms

**Conclusion**

The exploration of Panchakosha theory within the context of education reveals a profound connection between ancient wisdom and modern pedagogical practices. By integrating the holistic approach of Panchakosha, which encompasses the physical, energetic, mental, intellectual, and blissful layers of being, educators can foster a more comprehensive development in children. This article has highlighted the significance of incorporating elements such as kid-friendly yoga philosophy, Yog Nidra, and guided meditation into educational curricula to support the well-being and growth of young minds. Moreover, the insights from various schools of philosophy, both Eastern and Western, underscore the

importance of a well-rounded educational experience that balances academic rigor with the cultivation of moral and spiritual values. As we strive to prepare children for the complexities of the modern world, the Panchakosha theory serves as a reminder of the timeless principles that can guide their journey towards becoming balanced, and enlightened individuals.

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## **TVET in Nepal: Scope and the Associated Challenges**

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### **Abstract**

*Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) equips individuals with specific skills required for the job market. It also provides a workforce that is needed for employment generation, entrepreneurship, and industrial growth. During the pre-agricultural stage of society, human beings used to practice the on-the-job phenomenon to learn the basic and necessary skills required for survival and cultural continuity. As society changed, vocational education also evolved in the form of formal and informal apprenticeships, oral tradition, and experiential learning. In Nepal, the establishment of the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) officially ensured that long and short courses offered by technical schools produce skillful human resources that are needed for the economic growth of the country.*

*Despite the growth in technical schools across the years, this article shows that TVET has not been able to bridge the gap between demand and supply of the workforce. This article has used secondary data to examine the status of population demographics and employment rate and also has explored the enrolment capacity versus actual enrollment in technical schools. In addition, this study has also explored the status of instructors in technical schools. Based on the secondary data, this study concludes that there is a need for a nationwide debate along with a plan of action to improve all aspects of TVET programs if Nepal aims to cultivate self-reliant and self-employed individuals as a way of reducing unemployment in the country.*

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**Keywords:** TVET, technical schools, pragmatism, progressivism

### **Introduction**

The root of vocational education can be traced back to the pre-agricultural stage where learning was an on-the-job phenomenon. Knowledge and life skills were orally transmitted from one generation to the next. The elders imparted survival skills, knowledge of tool-making, and techniques of shelter-building to the family and the clan members. This early educational approach also showcased the effective example of work segmentation and

specialization where elders transmitted skills, beliefs, practices, and adaptations essential for survival and cultural continuity. In the words of American anthropologist Margaret Mead, learning during this stage was more focused on observing the tribal communities and imitating the learning-by-doing approach of work to ensure that empathy, identification, and imitation became the core of learning (Schwartz, 1975).

The horticultural stage of society gradually saw

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the emergence of family, religion, law, economy, caste, and class along with political organizations. Vocational education also evolved during this stage in the form of informal apprenticeship, oral tradition, and experiential learning. An example of vocational education during the Vedic period used Vedas, Upanishads along with Dharmashastras, and Aranyakas to spread the concept of *Vidya* and *Avidya* (Saunaka Samhita, 1990-1997). Gurus encouraged students to pursue self-realization and its connection with the cosmic self through *Vidya* while *Avidya* provided knowledge on agriculture, livelihood, land management, and seasonal practices. This education system used spiritual and religious teachings along with vocational skills in ethics, mathematics, martial arts, yoga, medicine, and astronomy to ensure that cultural identity, knowledge, and social cohesion are transferred across generations. Additionally, the transfer of vocational knowledge during this stage encompassed a wide range of skills necessary for successful agriculture, animal husbandry, and trade.

The industrial era brought a massive change in society, as technology became an integral part of everyday life. Such change also led to the establishment of specialized technical schools/institutes aiming to create human resources with technical and vocational skills. Many nations also promoted vocational education through funding and the establishment of national standards and certifications. Institutes like *École des Ponts et Chaussées*, established in France in 1747, started to provide formal training in engineering and technical subjects, primarily for civil infrastructure projects. The first officially registered technical school, the Royal Polytechnic Institution (now the University of Westminster) established in 1838, and the establishment of technical education thereafter drove the need for skilled labor thus increasing the scope of technical and vocational education across the world.

The shift in vocational education came in the 19th century when vocational learning also focused on off-the-job delivery ultimately leading to the rise of formal vocational education and training (Hager, 2007). This

encouraged workers to become better persons by acquiring the scientific disciplinary knowledge connected to their occupation, rather than learning skills that would directly enable them to do their job better. All these laid the groundwork for modern vocational and technical education systems including the establishment of the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) in Nepal, which has worked as a national autonomous apex body of TVET to ensure that technical and skillful human resources are produced through long- and short-term courses. Starting in 2013, the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD, erstwhile Department of Education), another line agency of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) also started the technical stream of education in community schools as a four-year program from grade 9 to 12 to ensure that students are equipped with necessary skills and techniques to compete in national and international job market. In terms of courses, schools that are supported by CTEVT provide pre-diploma and diploma courses that are operated in different models and that include: i) Technical Education in Community Schools (TECS), ii) private schools, iii) partnership schools, and iv) constituent schools.

### **Theoretical Discussions**

Technical and vocational education in Nepal uses a pragmatic approach to education by providing knowledge and hands-on training, apprenticeships, and internships that directly prepare individuals for specific courses. The TVET curriculum used on-the-job training (OJT) models as an integral part of education so that students can demonstrate their practical skills and knowledge. However, it has been found that all pre-diploma curricula and the short courses offered by CTEVT had OJT provisions, while it was not specifically categorized in the case of diploma-level courses (Centre for Public Policy Dialogue, 2022). In the case of CEHRD-led technical stream, there is a provision for one-year OJT following 4 years of school-level education. The implementation status of OJT is subject to debate, but it clearly emphasizes the pragmatist method of experiential learning and problem-

solving approach to promote personal growth and social progress as essential outcomes of education (Sikandar, 2016).

Progressivism in education is a student-centered philosophy of education (Webb et al., 2007), that advocates the needs and interests of both students and society. Technical and vocational education in Nepal follows a progressivist philosophy of education aiming to prepare human resources that meet the demands of the labor market thus contributing to social and economic development. The selection of TVET courses including engineering (civil, computer, and electrical), health, agriculture (plant science, and animal science), hospitality, forestry, tourism, and others (entrepreneurship development, computer application, social work, and music) is intended to generate skilled human resources that meet the market demands. However, the study revealed that "the enrollment capacity of TVET programs is more influenced by the supply of students rather than the demand of the market" (Neupane, 2020, p. 25). This was evidenced by the decreased percentage of students from community schools completing pre-diploma courses from 66 percent in 2014 to 61 percent in 2023. While there was an improvement in the case of diploma courses from 29 percent in 2019 to 69 percent in 2023 (Ministry of Finance, 2023), it is clear that the outcome of Nepal's progressivist approach to TVET does not align with the intentions and therefore needs further discussion.

One of the aims of TVET in Nepal is to address, as critical theorists Max Horkheimer refers to, the issue of inequality in education and to critically analyze and question social norms and structures (Noddings, 2016). In the context of Nepal, where society is divided into class and caste, access to TVET schools was given priority to enhance the skills of students ultimately challenging existing norms and society. During the initial year of CTEVT establishment, when there were only six technical schools (National Planning Commission, 1991), by the end of 2021, 1591 schools were providing technical courses across the country. However, these schools have not been able to attract many students these days. Such a trend is evident in all types of technical

schools signaling the possible gap of skilled human resources in the country. Despite CTEVT's provision, with up to 10 percent reserved for students from less privileged communities, 74.9 percent of diploma and 27.5 percent pre-diploma level scholarships remained unused in 2022 (Centre for Public Policy Dialogue, 2022). While TVET aims to address inequality, the expansion of TVET schools has not been able to attract more students to the classrooms. Similarly, the inability to distribute scholarships to needy students has not been able to reduce the issue of inequality.

All the above-mentioned philosophical stances along with the constructivist idea of contextual learning are the foundations of TVET programs. They encourage students/learners to become practical, learner-centered, and socially responsive. As Nepal aims to become a middle-income country by 2087 BS, efforts have been made to strengthen technical and vocational education that prepares a competent workforce relevant to domestic and global needs. Yet, Nepal is the third lowest among nine South Asian countries including China, placing it above Sri Lanka and Pakistan, with a 4.4 percent annual growth rate (Ministry of Finance, 2023). This growth rate is 0.9 percent less than the annual growth rate from emerging and developing Asia and 1.4 percent less than the annual growth rate of Nepal for 2022, signifying a possible loss of employment. In this context, TVET has been hoped to be a viable tool for driving individuals to become self-reliant and self-employed; however, evidence shows that TVET has not been able to generate much interest among parents, students, and other stakeholders thus suggesting the need for nationwide debate in improving all aspects of TVET programs.

### **Methodology**

This is a review-based article based on the secondary data that are available in CTEVT and the CEHRD. Many variables could have been analyzed; however, this study focused exclusively on quantitative data related to population demographics and employment rate; the number of technical schools across the country along with the enrollment capacity and

the actual capacity of those schools; and the availability of instructors in those schools. The objective is to assist policymakers in predicting the scope of TVET in Nepal and also to understand the demand side situation of human resources needed to enhance employment and economic outcomes.

The analysis of the number of technical schools and the enrollment capacity versus the actual capacity was conducted to understand the supply of skilled labor needed for the market. This data was also studied to show the level of interest of students and parents in TVET programs. Less difference between enrollment capacity and actual capacity signifies a high level of interest in TVET programs while a big difference would signify the opposite. This dataset, it was hoped would be pivotal to understanding the degree and magnitude of access and relevancy of TVET programs in Nepal.

The responsibilities of teachers in technical schools go beyond traditional teaching, and therefore the adequacy of such teachers has also been explored in this study. Teachers in technical schools have multifaceted responsibilities to address and some of those responsibilities include instruction, industry collaboration, curriculum development, and technology integration. While schools can make alternative provisions or can use technology as a means of teaching and learning practices to address the shortage of teachers, this dataset was necessary to inform stakeholders of possible gaps regarding teacher recruitment.

In the end, the data needed for this study has been extracted from journal articles, research reports, TVET plan preparation reports, informative publications from CTEVT and CEHRD along with the literature that is available online regarding various aspects of TVET in Nepal.

### Data Presentation

The data obtained from secondary sources for this study has been organized and presented in three categories. The first set of data shows the probable mismatch between demand and the supply of human resources. The second set

shows the supply side aspect of human resources by presenting information on enrolment capacity versus the actual enrolment. Finally, the management of instructors is the third set of datasets presented in this study.

### Dataset 1: Probable mismatch between demand and the supply of human resources

Reflecting upon the population age group of 10 years and above along with their involvement in any economic activity in the last 12 months preceding the 2021 census shows that 62.5 percent were engaged in some form of economic activity while 37.5 percent population were not engaged in any activity. As expected, and as given in Table 1, the percentage employed in the case of males is higher than that of females.

Table 1: Population (above 10 years) and the number of employed

Gender	Population	Employed	Percentage Employed
Female	12439247	7106988	57.1
Male	11519621	7876322	68.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23958868</b>	<b>14983310</b>	<b>62.5</b>

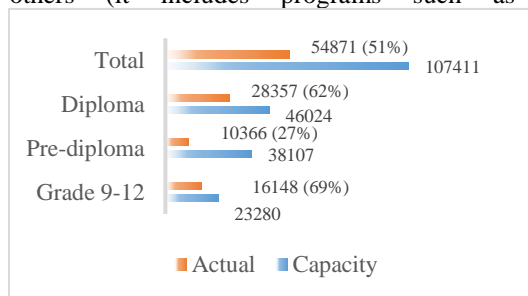
Source: (National Statistics Office, 2021)

The question arises: which aspect of education, technical and vocational or the traditional academic institutions is responsible for generating employment in Nepal? The answer is not clear, however, it is believed that employment assurance is a shared responsibility involving multiple stakeholders including TVET and traditional academic institutions. In the case of Nepal and as Table 1 depicts, a collaborative approach is needed involving educational institutions, government, industries, and individuals to create a robust employment landscape because even with the increase in technical schools from 853 to 1591 schools in 2021 (Centre for Public Policy Dialogue, 2022), the number of unemployed populations is more than 35 percent. In another dataset, research conducted in 2016 showed that out of 2009 TVET graduates that were tracked,

only 42 percent of them were employed, 5 percent were working as volunteers while the remaining 46 percent had no employment (Accountability Initiative Private Limited, 2016). The same kind of study that was done in Sudan in 2016 had a 59 percent employment rate for the TVET graduates, which is 17 percent higher than that of Nepal (International Labour Organization, 2016). The study conducted in 2018 showed that out of 4727 graduates, only two-fifths (43.8 percent) were provided support about employment opportunities, meaning the majority were not supported at all (DEVTEC Nepal Private Limited, 2018). In this respect, the need for nationwide debate is necessary to assess whether the gap between the eligible population and the employed population is because of economic reasons, or whether it is related to curriculum or human resources not getting connected to the industries. Answers for such responses need to be explored through policy and program-level intervention; failing to do so would mean more brain drain resulting in Nepal falling into the remittance trap.

**Dataset 2: Enrollment capacity versus actual enrollment**

TVET opportunities in Nepal are available mainly in 6 sub/sectors; agriculture, engineering, health, forestry, hospitality, and others (it includes programs such as



**Figure 1: Enrollment capacity versus actual enrollment**

entrepreneurship development, computer application, social work, and music). Out of 1591 schools in 2021, the CTEVT led 1106 schools to implement various courses through technical education in community schools (TECS), affiliated private schools, constituent schools, and partnership schools offering pre-

diploma and diploma courses. The remaining 485 schools are operated through community schools led by CEHRD. Grade 8 graduation is the only criterion for students to be enrolled in the CEHRD-led technical stream while the entry criterion for the CTEVT-led pre-diploma and diploma course is the SEE completion certificate. To ensure that the TVET program provides the best result, each program has an approved enrollment capacity which is/can be different for CEHRD and CTEVT-led TVET programs. Figure 1 shows that CEHRD and CTEVT-led programs have only been able to attract 51% of students out of the total TVET capacity (Centre for Public Policy Dialogue, 2022). While the classes are relatively empty as shown in Figure 1, a recent tracer study conducted by Pokhara Technical School showed that out of 27 diploma graduates in hotel management, 44 percent of the students are still without employment (Pokhara Technical School, 2080 BS). Similarly, the report submitted by the Centre for Public Policy Dialogue (2022) showed a mismatch between the SEE results publication time and the CTEVT entrance examination events resulting in subsequent delay of enrollment leading to potential students getting enrolled in traditional academic courses. Scenarios like these need to be discussed at all levels so that the compatibility between education and the economy along with the timing between the examination and the entrance period is solved. Failing to do so would mean skilled TVET graduates will also go abroad for better economic opportunities, leaving Nepal with semi-skilled and unskilled human resources.

**Dataset 3: Management of instructors**

The CEHRD-based technical stream has approved a quota of 7 instructors. A study (Centre for Public Policy Dialogue, 2022) shows that the 485 such schools have an average of 3.9 instructors, and 2 assistant instructors, thus giving a total of 5.9 instructors per school. It also implies that an average of 1.1 instructors are missing from each school. To manage the classes, the schools are compelled to use teachers from general education or hire teachers through their private sources to complement the teacher deficit issue. In addition, only 20.1 percent of instructors and



9.6 percent of assistant instructors have had teacher professional development training so far. Only 7.4 percent of instructors have received industry-based training while this percentage is 7.8 in the case of assistant instructors.

The study shows that CTEVT-led pre-diploma courses have an average of 2.88 total instructors with a shortfall of 0.12 percent of average human resources. In the case of diploma, the study shows that there is an average of 6.13 instructors in each school thus indicating that human resources are a major issue in the technical stream. Annual turnover of 22.4 percent diploma level instructors and 6.8 percent pre-diploma level instructors further add complexity in assuring required human resources in the technical stream. While the actual enrollment is only 51 percent of the total capacity, some students who are in classrooms are also likely to underperform because of insufficient instructors. Such a scenario therefore needs to be discussed or else students, even when they graduate, will not be able to compete in the job market.

### Conclusion

The scope of TVET is vast as it equips individuals with practical skills that are needed to compete in the world of work. It also addresses youth unemployment, fosters economic development, and promotes social inclusion. Despite such opportunities, this article shows that there is a mismatch between the demand and supply of human resources as 50 percent of the TVET graduates have remained unemployed. This contradicts the progressivist foundation that positions TVET programs to address the needs and interests of both students and society and therefore advocates for discussions at all government levels regarding the effectiveness of the program.

The dataset presented in this article shows that classes are relatively empty. There could be many reasons, however, this article based on data and figures given above concludes that such reasons could be a) TVET courses are not connected to industry b) the lack of sufficient instructors in schools resulting in incompetent TVET graduates in the job market, or c) the

economy does not have sufficient industries to cope up with the supply of human resources. The empty classrooms again contradict the progressivist, critical theorist, and pragmatist approach of delivering practical skills and knowledge to students, addressing inequality in education through the expansion of TVET schools and distribution of scholarships, and addressing the curriculum that meets the needs of society, and therefore remedial measures need to be undertaken to enroll more students in TVET schools.

This article also shows that schools have a shortage of instructors. The majority of the available instructors are also not trained. Many conclusions can be drawn from this shortage and the training status, however, this article based on the available data and figures concludes that such shortage to some extent, might have been reflected in students not being able to compete in the job market. The tracer study reports also showed that TVET graduates have not been able to compete in the job market thus arguing for a more pragmatist approach to teaching and learning practices in TVET schools.

To conclude, this article suggests the need for a nationwide debate along with a plan of action to improve all aspects of TVET programs. This would ensure that TVET programs are connected to the job market and these programs generate workforces that are practical, progressive, and adept at solving problems. It is essential to adhere to this process if Nepal aims to cultivate self-reliant and self-employed individuals as a way of reducing unemployment in the country.

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# Impact of Technical and Vocational Education and Training on ABCD Approach in Nepal

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## Abstract

*Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) aims to equip individuals with skills that are in demand and likely to remain relevant in the long term, promoting economic sustainability. Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) seeks to build on local assets and capacities, creating solutions that are sustainable because they are rooted in the community itself. TEVT and ABCD both support holistic development connecting effective framework, paying particular attention to social cohesion, economic resilience, and community empowerment. The findings underscore the pivotal role of TVET courses in equipping individuals with employable skills and talents, enabling them to actively drive transformative changes within their communities. By fostering entrepreneurship, expanding livelihood opportunities, and strengthening social networks, TVET programs significantly contribute to inclusive development outcomes, spur economic growth, and facilitate poverty reduction. However, the integration of TVET into the ABCD framework faces substantial challenges, including limited funding, socioeconomic disparities, and legal restrictions, which hinder its effective implementation. Despite these obstacles, there remains significant potential for innovation, collaboration, and legislative enhancement to address these issues and optimize the benefits of TVET for community development. In essence, this article examines into the intricate ways in which Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is woven into Nepal's Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) paradigm. This includes integration of TVET within the ABCD paradigm holding the considerable promise for fostering community.*

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**Keywords:** empowerment, vocational education, community development, social cohesion, paradigm

## Introduction

In Nepal, both technical and vocational education and training (TEVT) and the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach have been important efforts to promote sustainable development and alleviate

poverty. Nepal has recognized the importance of TEVT in addressing unemployment and underemployment issues, particularly among its youth population. The country has implemented various TEVT programs aimed at providing practical skills and training to equip individuals for employment opportunities both

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domestically and abroad. The Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) oversees the development and implementation of TEVT programs in Nepal.

The ABCD approach has gained attraction in Nepal as a community-driven strategy for development. In a country with diverse ethnicities, cultures, and geographical challenges, ABCD emphasizes the strengths and assets within communities to address local issues such as poverty, access to education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. Organizations and NGOs working in Nepal have increasingly adopted the ABCD approach to engage communities in identifying and mobilizing their resources for sustainable development initiatives.

### **Integration and Collaboration**

Recognizing the complementary nature of TEVT and ABCD, there have been efforts to integrate these approaches in development projects and programs in Nepal. For example, TEVT programs may incorporate elements of community engagement and participatory development to ensure that skills training aligns with local needs and priorities. Similarly, ABCD initiatives may collaborate with TEVT providers to offer skills training that empowers community members to take active roles in their own development.

### **Government Support and Policy Framework**

The Government of Nepal has also recognized the importance of both TEVT and community-driven approaches in its development agenda. Policies and programs have been put in place to support TEVT institutions and promote community-led development initiatives across the country. Additionally, there have been efforts to strengthen coordination between government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders to maximize the impact of TEVT and ABCD interventions. TEVT and the ABCD approach might seem disparate at first, but they can be connected through their shared focus on empowerment, community development, and sustainable solutions. Both TEVT and ABCD focus on empowering individuals and communities. TEVT provides people with

practical skills and knowledge to pursue meaningful employment and contribute to economic development. ABCD empowers communities by identifying and mobilizing existing assets and strengths to address local challenges. TEVT programs can be designed with input from local communities to ensure that the skills being taught are relevant to the needs of the area. ABCD also emphasizes community participation and ownership in development initiatives, fostering a sense of collective responsibility and cooperation. TEVT aims to equip individuals with skills that are in demand and likely to remain relevant in the long-term, thereby promoting economic sustainability. ABCD seeks to build on local assets and capacities, creating solutions that are sustainable because they are rooted in the community itself. TEVT and ABCD both support holistic development. TEVT programs often include not only technical skills but also elements of personal development and entrepreneurship. Similarly, ABCD takes a holistic view of development, recognizing that solutions to complex challenges often require addressing multiple interconnected factors within a community.

### **Complementary Approaches**

TEVT and ABCD can complement each other in community development efforts. TEVT can provide the technical skills needed to implement projects identified through the ABCD approach, while ABCD can provide the community engagement and context needed to ensure that TEVT programs are effective and sustainable. Every country's socioeconomic environment is shaped in large part by the TVET. A workable solution for advancing sustainable development and community empowerment in Nepal is to include TVET in the framework of ABCD.

Nepal, a mountainous nation, has a number of socioeconomic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and poor infrastructure. In this case, the ABCD method offers a thorough framework with an emphasis on using local resources and capacities to assist community-led development initiatives. The TVET's emphasis on skill development, practical learning, and industry applicability is in line

with the ABCD approach. It is predicated on the ideas of sustainability, collaboration, and empowerment. The four pillars of the ABCD approach - assets, connections, capabilities, and dreams - are supported by TVET programmes that are especially created to cater to the needs and strengths of Nepalese communities. This is the main area of attention for this study. TVET courses provide individuals the tools they need to actively participate in their communities as change agents by leveraging locally available resources and traditional knowledge. Marginalised populations can raise their standard of life via skill and competency development, which encourages inclusive growth and reduces socioeconomic disparity.

Beyond individual empowerment, the synergistic relationship between TVET and the ABCD approach also includes sustainable development and community resilience. Through encouraging entrepreneurship and local talent, TVET activities increase community ability to deal with significant concerns like environmental degradation and natural disasters. Moreover, TVET fosters social cohesiveness and cross-sectorial collaboration to help build vibrant, self-sufficient communities that can accomplish their common objectives. TVET's significance within the ABCD approach is crucial to take into account given the Fourth Industrial Revolution's needs and Nepal's changing socioeconomic environment. In light of the nation's efforts to achieve the development goals outlined in the National TVET Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this paper attempts to shed light on the transformative potential of integrating TVET into community-driven development paradigms. By examining best practices, possibilities, and issues, it seeks to provide insights that direct the creation of policies, programmes, and grassroots activities. Ultimately, this will open the door for a stronger and more prosperous Nepal.

In recent times, Nepal has witnessed a notable upsurge in the adoption of community-led development initiatives, owing to the growing recognition of local resources and capacities as pivotal agents of sustainable transformation. This paradigm shift is led by the adoption of

ABCD principles, which emphasise strengths-based solutions for resilience and community empowerment. Every community has intrinsic resources and capacities that may be exploited to achieve its own needs and goals, according to the ABCD theory (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Despite the ABCD strategy's foundation in the ideas of empowerment, cooperation, and sustainability, its application in Nepal is complicated by the country's unique sociocultural context and developmental limitations. The main objective of the article is to examine the use of ABCD in Nepal, examining how local groups, NGOs, and grassroots movements have embraced its principles to promote positive community transformation. We want to shed light on the inner workings of ABCD practice in Nepal and its implications for community development by integrating case studies, empirical data, and academic literature.

The incorporation of TVET into the ABCD paradigm has significant promise for promoting sustainable development, fostering inclusive growth, and empowering communities in Nepal. Through an extensive desk analysis of recent literature, empirical data, and case studies, this study explores the findings and discussions surrounding the transformative potential of TVET within the ABCD framework in Nepal. TVET's inclusion in the ABCD plan signals a shift in development paradigms towards community-led approaches that prioritise local resources and capacities. Through efforts that focus capacity building, community participation, and participatory methodologies, TVET is being integrated into the ABCD framework. These methods align with the ABCD principles of sustainability.

### **Integrating Digital Transformation in TVET**

Recent developments highlight the importance of digital transformation in TVET to bridge the skills gap and expand access in Nepal. Emerging initiatives emphasize digital platforms for delivering vocational education and fostering employability in rural communities. For instance, UNESCO's 2023 report underscores the role of e-learning platforms and mobile applications in enhancing access to TVET, particularly for women and

marginalized groups. These tools not only provide remote learning opportunities but also facilitate real-time monitoring and assessment of skills development programs. Integrating digital literacy modules into TVET curricula and partnering with the private sector for technological support can address the digital divide, enabling communities to leverage technology for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2023).

### **Climate-Responsive TVET Programs**

Another recent focus area is the alignment of TVET programs with climate-responsive practices, as highlighted in a 2023 study by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The study advocates for integrating green skills training into TVET to prepare communities for employment in environmentally sustainable sectors. In Nepal, pilot programs such as the "Green Vocational Training Initiative" have successfully incorporated renewable energy, waste management, and sustainable agriculture modules. These efforts align with the ABCD principles by utilizing local knowledge and resources to address climate challenges while promoting sustainable livelihoods. Expanding such initiatives could position TVET as a pivotal tool for building climate resilience and fostering economic diversification in rural communities (ILO, 2023).

### **ABCD Practice in Nepal**

Nepal, with its diverse geography and rich socio-cultural fabric, offers a unique context for applying ABCD practices. Numerous initiatives and case studies demonstrate how communities in Nepal have leveraged local resources for development. The principles of ABCD have been effectively applied in areas such as rural development, health, education, and disaster resilience. For example, the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) initiative, supported by local governments and non-governmental organizations, promotes sustainable sanitation practices at the grassroots level (UNICEF, 2019). CLTS exemplifies the ABCD approach by empowering communities to identify and address their sanitation challenges collectively, emphasizing community ownership and self-reliance.

ABCD principles have also been incorporated into microfinance programs designed to support female entrepreneurs in rural areas. Organizations like the Rural Microfinance Development Centre (RMDC) utilize participatory approaches to build upon women's existing networks, aspirations, and skills (Dixit, 2017). These programs provide peer support, financial literacy training, and capacity-building opportunities, enabling women to realize their entrepreneurial potential and positively impact the local economy.

Another successful example of ABCD in Nepal is the Community Forestry Program (CFP), initiated in the mid-1990s. This policy transferred forest management responsibilities to local communities and has since been recognized as a model of ABCD (Kanel & Dahal, 2008). The Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal (FECOFUN), represents over 19,000 community forest user groups that sustainably manage forest resources. These groups generate income through eco-tourism, non-timber forest products, and timber sales, utilizing local knowledge and leadership to improve forest conservation and rural livelihoods (Ojha et al., 2009).

While ABCD practices empower communities and build resilience in Nepal, they also face significant challenges. Limited institutional capacity, resource constraints, and top-down development policies often hinder the effective implementation of ABCD principles (Manandhar & Ojha, 2019). Grassroots initiatives also encounter obstacles such as entrenched power structures, political instability, and natural disasters. However, these challenges provide opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and strengthening partnerships. Decentralization of government institutions, growth in social entrepreneurship, and increased influence of civil society groups offer potential to enhance ABCD's impact (Manandhar & Ojha, 2019).

ABCD practices in Nepal extend beyond sector-specific interventions to broader community mobilization efforts that address issues like caste-based discrimination, social exclusion, and gender inequality. Programs such as the Social Mobilization and Local

Development Program (SMLDP) use participatory methodologies to empower marginalized communities, promote inclusive development, and encourage equitable decision-making processes (Shrestha et al., 2018). By embracing diverse perspectives and identities, ABCD practices in Nepal aim to foster harmonious and equitable societies, addressing complex development challenges through comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

### **TVET Issues and Challenges within the Framework of the ABCD Approach in Nepal**

The implementation of TVET in Nepal through the ABCD strategy faces several challenges. Key factors influencing this approach include:

#### ***Challenges in TVET Implementation within ABCD Framework***

**Limited Infrastructure and Resources:** Rural Nepal struggles with inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of qualified instructors, insufficient training facilities, and a lack of essential tools and materials. Without adequate funding, delivering quality vocational education aligned with ABCD principles becomes difficult.

**Socioeconomic Inequalities:** Nepal's significant socioeconomic disparities, including caste-based discrimination, gender inequality, and geographic isolation, hinder equitable access to TVET opportunities. These challenges disproportionately affect marginalized groups, complicating the implementation of ABCD-aligned programs.

**Mismatch between Skills and Market Demand:** Often, the skills taught in TVET programs do not align with the local labour market's needs. This disconnect reduces the employability of graduates and hampers the development of businesses that address community demands. Effective collaboration between TVET providers, businesses, and communities is essential to ensure training is market-relevant and demand-driven.

**Lack of Community Ownership and Engagement:** The ABCD approach emphasizes community ownership and participation. However, in Nepal, TVET programs often suffer from insufficient community

involvement in their design, management, and evaluation. Building trust, fostering open decision-making, and valuing local expertise are vital to ensuring sustainable development.

**Institutional and Policy Limitations:** Weak institutional frameworks, inconsistent funding, fragmented governance, and bureaucratic hurdles pose challenges to integrating TVET into community development programs. Overcoming these issues requires supportive policies, streamlined processes, and enhanced institutional capacity.

**Quality Assurance and Monitoring:** The effectiveness and sustainability of TVET programs depend on robust quality control measures, accreditation systems, and monitoring frameworks. However, weaknesses in these areas can undermine accountability and transparency, necessitating stakeholder collaboration and regular program evaluations.

**Technology and Innovation:** Integrating technology can improve TVET delivery, especially in underserved areas. However, cultural barriers, limited digital infrastructure, and low digital literacy hinder the adoption of innovative methods. Bridging the digital divide and fostering partnerships with tech stakeholders is crucial to unlocking technology's potential in TVET programs.

### ***The Impact of TVET in Nepal's ABCD Framework***

#### **1. Integration of TVET in ABCD Approach**

TVET's incorporation into the ABCD framework marks a shift toward community-led development models that leverage local assets and talents. These programs emphasize community participation, capacity building, and sustainable development, aligning with ABCD principles of empowerment and collaboration (Shrestha & Thapa, 2019).

#### **2. Community Empowerment**

TVET equips individuals with market-relevant skills, enabling them to participate in local decision-making and development processes. This approach enhances self-reliance and resilience, empowering individuals to improve their socioeconomic status through career

education, entrepreneurship, and hands-on training (Sharma & Shrestha, 2017).

### **3. Enhancing Livelihoods and Economic Resilience**

TVET interventions help diversify income streams, reduce dependency on traditional livelihoods, and foster entrepreneurship. These initiatives support regional economic growth and enhance communities' capacity to adapt to changing socioeconomic conditions (Manandhar & Shrestha, 2018).

### **4. Promoting Social Cohesion and Inclusion**

TVET programs foster collaboration, social participation, and peer learning, reducing disparities and promoting inclusivity. By addressing caste, gender, and ethnic inequalities, these programs enhance social cohesion and build stronger, more inclusive communities (Koirala & Khatiwada, 2019).

#### **Opportunities for Improvement**

While TVET has shown promising outcomes, challenges persist, including limited budgets, regulatory constraints, and disparities in access to quality training (ADB, 2018). Addressing these barriers requires innovative approaches, legal reforms, and strengthened partnerships among TVET providers, communities, and government agencies (Government of Nepal, 2020). By enhancing collaboration and fostering inclusivity, Nepal can maximize TVET's potential to empower communities and contribute to broader sustainable development goals.

#### **Conclusion**

The findings demonstrate the significance of TVET programmes for Nepalese community empowerment. Through the provision of market-relevant skills and competencies, TVET initiatives enable community members to take an active role as change agents by enabling them to engage in local development processes and decision-making. Additionally, by encouraging a sense of ownership and self-reliance, TVET boosts the resilience, autonomy, and confidence of community members. TVET activities within the ABCD framework are critical to enhancing livelihood

opportunities and bolstering community economic resilience in Nepal. TVET graduates are more prepared to start small businesses, get employment, and promote regional economic development. TVET courses equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to assist communities in diversifying their revenue streams, reducing their reliance on customary ways of sustenance, and adapting. Therefore, when TVET is linked with the ABCD plan, there is a certainty for inclusive growth, sustainable development, and community empowerment in Nepal. By overcoming challenges and taking advantage of opportunities, stakeholders will be able to fully employ TVET to promote social inclusion, economic resilience, and community well-being. Nepal's more ambitious development ambitions would be aided by this. Coordination will be needed in the future to strengthen coalitions, enhance resource mobilisation, and push legislative adjustments that will allow TVET incorporation into the ABCD framework.

Furthermore, TVET courses integrated into the ABCD framework offer opportunities for peer learning, collaborative activities, and skill enhancement, fostering social inclusion and cohesion. TVET initiatives leverage social networks, community enterprises, and cooperative efforts to diminish socioeconomic disparities and enhance social cohesion within communities. Despite these positive impacts, challenges persist, including insufficient high-quality training facilities, inadequate financial resources, socioeconomic disparities, gender inequality, and institutional and regulatory constraints. Nonetheless, there are opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and policy reform to maximize TVET's benefits for community development.

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# **Technical Education in Community Schools (TECS) Instructors' Experience in their Retention: A Narrative Study**

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## **Abstract**

*This empirical paper aims to explore the Technical Education in Community Schools (TECS) instructors' experiences in their retention. Three TECS instructors from the Kathmandu valley were purposively interviewed to extract their in-depth information. A narrative inquiry method was used to explore the research participants' lived experiences about their teaching profession along with the various aspects of their retention. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene factor theory was adopted to overview the instructors' retention at TECS. The study revealed that retention of the instructors is a matter of personal and professional concern. Due to low pay and no provision for job security, those instructors who were only involved in teaching were not satisfied. On the other hand, instructors were happy with their teaching professions as they were applying theoretical knowledge to their practical fields. A flexible working environment, a bureaucratic hurdles-free system, an updated curriculum with appropriate tools and equipment, and professional development opportunities are to be considered for the instructors' retention at TECS. In a nutshell, TECS instructors' retention is contextual and depends on working conditions, financial benefits, job security, and professional development opportunities.*

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**Keywords:** job security, professional development, retention, TECS instructors, working environment

## **Introduction**

Technical and vocational education is an essential field of education which is directly linked to employability. Teachers are those who materialize the curriculum into practice in the classroom and workshop as well as inspiring students to attain learning objectives. That's why it can be said that teachers are the center of teaching-learning activities regardless of school setting. In technical and vocational institutions,

instructors are expected to be academically and professionally sound. Comparatively, finding technical instructors is challenging than general subject teachers. Only qualified and committed teachers or instructors can produce good students who can contribute as good human resources for the country. Thus, retaining qualified and talented teachers in school is crucial (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015). Role of teachers or instructors is vital in an educational

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institution, and they can impact the development of a country by preparing skillful human resources with competitive skills and civic values.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) instructors are to be retained and motivated in TVET institutions as there is a high challenge to recruit them. TVET instructors are expected to be qualified academically and occupationally. The poor performance of such instructors can lead to various problems in TVET schools such as students' dissatisfaction, dropout of students, and delay in learning delivery (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015). When an instructor performs poorly, it can leave a bad impact on students' learning and the whole teaching-learning activities. Therefore, qualified, talented, and experienced instructors are needed in TVET institutions. The major problems in retaining instructors in institutions are lack of standard pay scale and financial benefits, opportunities for professional development, poor work life, and heavy workload (Sultangaliyeva, 2019). It is a personal preference that some instructors emphasize financial aspects whereas some thrive for learning and growth opportunities. Likewise, some instructors view their profession through family and social aspects. Instructors' work efficiency is executed when they are satisfied.

In the context of Nepal, TECS instructors are not getting equal salary and benefits in comparison to teachers from the general schools (Ghaju, 2021). When there is discrimination, TECS instructors may not be satisfied and perform well. Likewise, they may not be retained for a long time, and their focus will be on seeking other opportunities rather than on their teaching profession. It affects the whole teaching learning activities of the TECS and it directly hampers students' learning outcome and their own professional growth. TECS instructors cannot be updated and cannot perform their jobs as per the market trend in the absence of professional development opportunities, hence it is also a major reason behind their retention issue. And frequent turnover of the instructors creates burden in human resource management; questionable in institutional trust; and disturbance in teaching

learning activities.

Technical Education in Community School (TECS), a type of TVET schools, is merged with general community schools as a cost-effective skill development scheme to utilize the locally available resources and facilitate the access of people, especially from rural areas, in TVET. To provide access to TVET in all over the country at minimum cost, TECS is a good option as affiliated private institutes charge high fee and CTEVT's constituent and partnership schools cannot address the demand of the Nepali youths from all the nooks and corners. TECS is embedded in the general secondary schools, and is designed to utilize the available human resources, administration, lab, library, and infrastructure. The purpose of this paper is to explore the TVET instructors' experience in their teaching profession and different aspects of their retention in Technical Education in Community Schools (TECS). To attain the purpose of the paper, a research question - how the instructors narrate the various aspects of their retention in TECS - was formulated. The study is needed in this regard because technical and vocational education demands high investment due to physical infrastructure, tools and equipment, and instructors with technical and instructional abilities.

### **Instructors of Technical Education in Community Schools (TECS)**

Technical Education in Community Schools (TECS) is a category of public schools having both streams: general and technical. In the context of Nepal, TECS is a viable scheme as it addresses the economically poor and geographically underprivileged youth (Shrestha, 2013). Since public schools are affordable and available in most of the local municipalities, there is a high likelihood of access to technical education for all. TECS is conceptualized as a modality to implement technical education in general schools for the maximum utilization of physical infrastructure, resources, teaching and non-teaching staff, school management, and the social recognition of the public school (CTEVT, 2020, as cited in Ghaju & Bhattarai, 2021). Therefore, TECS is a viable program for developing countries like

Nepal to uplift the deprived community through technical education.

In a study of Zimbabwe, Ncube and Tshabalala (2014) find that teachers in rural secondary schools have positive attitude toward the TVET program, however, due to lack of practical skills, they face challenges to link students with industries. Inadequate financial resources, tools and equipment create challenges in teaching learning activities. It is also highlighted in the study by Kopsen (2014) that vocational teachers are to be equipped with own vocational experiences and competencies. As a result, Chauhan (2017) concludes that, if the faculty members and teachers are not satisfied with their institutions and their jobs, there is a high chance of leaving their job or irregularity or overstressed. Ultimately, it leads to a poor institutional result and minimal learning outcomes.

There are two types of teachers in technical schools of Nepal, general and technical, both teachers may have experienced their jobs differently. As per the study done by Ghaju (2021), even technical instructors of TECS experiences are different from one another even if they are in the same premises of the general school. His study found that TECS instructors were more satisfied with separate infrastructure because general subject students used to make noise during outdoor practical work, inferior perspectives of school administration to technical education, and discrimination in salary, benefits and professional development opportunities. It shows school administration's biasness towards technical education despite the fact that both streams are running under the same premises. Being TECS a viable program, retention of the instructors is quite challenging.

### **Retaining Instructors is Challenging**

There are various reasons for failure to retain qualified instructors in TVET institutions, it is an individual matter and contextual. Most of the instructors choose the teaching profession themselves, however, many of them cannot cope with the issues like a heavy workload, students' disciplinary problems, and stakeholders' ambiguous expectations in the TVET system. Instructors are to be understood and motivated to retain them in their chosen

profession and make them optimistic about their teaching profession and career (Omar et al., 2018). Since instructors themselves choose the teaching profession in many cases, they are to be satisfied and retained in TVET institutions for the growth of schools, students and instructors as well.

In general, financial benefits are the main elements that satisfy instructors. Pay satisfaction includes salary add-ons and incentives which play a vital role in the retention of the instructors (Pfeffer, 1998, as cited in Sultangaliyeva, 2019). Likewise, due to heavy workload, the instructors cannot balance their personal and professional life which is another hindrance in the retention of instructors. Similarly, when instructors get opportunities to enhance personal and professional development, they are likely to remain in the institution (Horwitz et al., 2003, as cited in Sultangaliyeva, 2019). In the context of Nepal, retention of the instructors mostly depends on financial benefits followed by personal and professional development and work-life balance.

### **Motivation-Hygiene Theoretical Perspective**

Instructors' retention is interconnected with their personal and professional motivation. Thus, Frederic Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory has been adopted as a lens for this study. As per Herzberg (1968), human satisfaction is affected by two factors - the motivator and hygiene. Where motivators are regarded as the intrinsic factors like their achievement, recognition, personal development, and promotion; on the other hand, hygiene factors are denoted as extrinsic factors such as institutional policy, management, supervision, salary and benefits, job security, and work environment. Motivators are known as the primary factor for satisfaction; however, their absence may not cause dissatisfaction, whereas hygiene factors play a key role to avoid dissatisfaction. Taking a reference from Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, Lalwani and Lalwani (2017) state that motivators and hygiene factors affect staff's job satisfaction as well as their retention in the organization. Personal development and achievement as motivators lead to job

satisfaction, whereas the work environment and financial benefits as hygiene factors prevent staff from job dissatisfaction. In this study, technical instructors' retention depends on both motivators or intrinsic factors and hygiene or extrinsic factors. Motivators help instructors to be satisfied whereas hygiene factors prevent them from dissatisfaction that consequently retain the instructors in TVET institutions. Thus, Herzberg's two-factor or motivation-hygiene theory is suitable for this study.

### Methodology

This study adopted a narrative study method to explore the instructors' experience in their retention in TECS. We purposively selected three instructors from three TECS in the Kathmandu valley as our research participants. The first participant is Mr. Ram Narayan (Pseudonym) who is a civil engineer and teaches Surveying, Soil Mechanics and Water Supply Engineering subjects in ABC Secondary School (Pseudonym) in Kathmandu. He has been teaching for more than seven years in the TECS. The second participant is Mr. Hari Shankar (Pseudonym) who is a master's degree holder in Physics and teaches Engineering Physics subject for Diploma in Civil Engineering in MNO Secondary School, Bhaktapur. He has been teaching for more than five years in the TECS. Likewise, the third instructor is Ms. Sita Maiya (Pseudonym) who teaches Highway Engineering and Water Supply Engineering subjects at XYZ Memorial Secondary School, Lalitpur. She has been teaching for about two years. We have maintained the anonymity of the research participants and the schools' names.

A narrative study was employed to elicit in-depth information from the experiences of the participants. In a narrative study, a researcher coordinates with the research participants to understand their stories thoroughly (Clandinin, 2022). We took in-depth interviews, then transcribed the information into the English language. Similarly, we coded the data based on the main ideas in the narratives of the participants. Then we interpreted the main ideas and elicited main themes through blending with literature and theory.

### Findings and Discussion

The technical instructors at TECS are mostly civil engineers. They have dual roles of instructors and professionals; thus, it seems quite challenging to retain them in teaching profession for a long time. We have portrayed our research participants' narratives regarding different aspects about their teaching profession and retention in the TECS. In this section, the empirical findings from our research participants' narrations are discussed with the relevant literature and theory explicitly.

#### Teaching Profession at TECS

The teaching profession at TECS is found interesting and helpful for our research participants' professional growth. Theoretical knowledge that they deliver in schools strengthens their professional skills and practical experience makes them confident. Stating the notion about the teaching profession at TECS, the first participant Mr. Ram Shankar said, *"I am very happy with the teaching profession at this TECS. Since I am an engineer, the theoretical knowledge of school supports my engineering field. Likewise, my engineering experience has been a good resource for my students."* The teaching profession keeps updated to the instructors and it is more helpful when the instructor is a professional in a technical field. On the same note, Ghaju and Bhattarai (2021) also found their TECS instructors satisfied with their teaching profession as it made them studious and updated with the theoretical knowledge for their engineering field.

Regarding the teaching profession, a participant, Hari Shankar, experienced it as a challenging job to teach students of different levels theoretically and practically. In contrast, another participant, Sita Maiya, narrated a bitter experience in the teaching profession due to insufficient support for her professional development. According to the two-factor or motivation-hygiene theory by Herzberg (1968), motivation factors such as instructors' personal and professional capacity, experience, and skill can make them happy and satisfied. Whereas the work culture and institutional policy of TECS can be viewed as hygiene factors which

can prevent the instructors from dissatisfaction. Thus, the teaching profession at TECS is found interesting, challenging, and fruitful for the professional field when there is a good work culture and cooperative institutional policy for their professional development which is an essential element to retain instructors in TECS.

### **Instructors' Retention at TECS**

Different elements affect technical instructors' retention at TECS schools. Our research participants have quite similar experiences regarding the affecting elements of their retention in their teaching jobs. In a question related to his job retention, a participant Mr. Ram Narayan narrated with joy, *"Actually, my self-satisfaction is determined by my students' achievements. Their achievement and their happiness always encourage me to stay in the teaching profession. I am satisfied with their achievement, and I reflect myself how I teach."* Mr. Ram Narayan has noble thought that the reason behind his retention is his students' happiness and their achievements. Similarly, another participant Mr. Hari Shankar also highlighted the elements which affected his retention at TECS, *"Being an instructor, I feel very valued as a professional in this community. As an instructor in this public school in a technical wing, despite some challenges from community members, I feel satisfied with the students' regularity, interaction, and happiness. The students are wonderful and hardworking and they are interested in attending my class. In many cases, I feel most of the family members and school administration are supportive, so, I enjoy teaching in this TECS."*

As per our participant, an instructor can be an example for the community, he is quite satisfied with his teaching profession due to the supportive environment and social recognition as motivators stated by Lalwani and Lalwani (2017). For Mr. Hari, working environment, students' attitudes, and recognition from the community were the major factors responsible for his retention at TECS.

Unlike Mr. Ram and Mr. Hari, Ms. Sita Maiya did not seem satisfied with her teaching profession at XYZ Memorial Secondary School because of the poor working environment.

While asking about her retention at the school, she desperately uttered, *"Retention, for me, is not just about spending a long time in the same school without satisfaction. There should be a harmonious relationship with students and administration, and they should be supportive."* On the same note, Sultangaliyeva (2019) also states that poor administrative support and lack of acknowledgements cause instructors frustrated and that leads to their dropout. Overall, the management of ABC Secondary School and MNO Secondary School had better working environments, and better rapport among students, instructors, and administration than that of XYZ Memorial Secondary School. Our research participants Mr. Ram Narayan and Mr. Hari Shankar had other jobs than teaching, thus, they did not have any issues with the salary. Whereas Ms. Sita Maiya was only an instructor in the school and as for her, there was no government scale and other financial allowances for the TECS instructors like general school teachers, so, she had another reason for dissatisfaction.

Regarding the financial facilities, Khanal and Phyak (2021) also state that salary, provident fund, bonus, gratuity, and pensions are the prime motivational factors for instructors' retention in the institution. Stating on the same notion in TECS, Ojha (2016) concludes that the major cause of instructors' turnover in TECS is to lack of salary, bonus, and allowances. From the narratives of the participants, we came to know that there is not equal pay for general school teachers and TECS instructors despite being under the same school management and premises. Technical instructors require experience in the relevant occupations as well. In this regard, they are to be encouraged through additional allowances to retain in TECS.

### **Overlooked Areas for Instructors' Retention**

Regarding the teaching profession and various aspects of instructors' retention at TECS, those instructors are more satisfied who are engaged in other occupations including teaching than the instructors who are only involved in teaching in the TECS. While talking about the weaknesses of their teaching profession which can hamper the retention of the TECS instructors, our

research participant Mr. Ram Narayan replied, *“Though teaching is helping in my engineering practice, the curriculum of Diploma in Civil Engineering is been updated for a long. The labour market is changing rapidly, but our curriculum is not at that pace.”*

He expressed dissatisfaction with the curriculum and its implications. From the narratives of the participants, Ghaju (2021) also highlights that the curriculum of the Diploma in Civil Engineering is outdated and has no more content which is demanded in the national and international labor market. When curriculum is mismatched with the labor market that is seen in employability, thus, instructors can be dissatisfied. Regarding any dissatisfying matters, another research participant Mr. Hari Shankar narrated,

*Teaching is a challenging job and quite different than our engineering works. You need to be updated and should have different levels of pedagogical knowledge and skill to motivate various levels of students. So, we expect training and professional development courses, but I got only a short training on classroom management. Due to the lack of professional development opportunities, teaching job has been monotonous. When you don't find your graduates in the labor market, you will be frustrated. So, technical instructors are to be provided professional development opportunities like training, conferences, workshops, teacher exchange programs, and incentives for article writing and further studies.*

Every occupation needs updates as per time and market demand. Teaching job even needs to be more updated to align their course with the national and international labor market. There is a chance of switching jobs when one cannot get professional development opportunities for a long time. Highlighting the importance of professional development Kraft and Papay (2014) argue that providing more training opportunities to the staff leads to a higher level of retention. For instructors' retention at technical schools, their pedagogical skills are to be enhanced and updated through training and

different professional development activities.

In the matter of the weak parts of the teaching profession which can be a hindrance for instructors' retention at TECS, another research participant, Ms. Sita Maiya loudly uttered, *“Administrative workload and bureaucratic hurdles make me frustrated. There are limited resources and practical works. Due to outdated tools, equipment, and technology, I cannot provide my best instruction, so, I don't think I may remain for a long time.”* When there is a high workload, difficulty in administrative work due to bureaucratic hurdles, and outdated tools and equipment in workshops and classrooms, the instructors cannot deliver reinforcing instruction. From one of the findings of Tehseen and Hadi (2015), instructors' poor instructions lead to students' dissatisfaction, dropouts, delays in learning delivery, and hiring costs for a new instructor.

Insufficient professional development opportunities, outdated curriculum, lack of modern tools and equipment, bureaucratic hurdles, low pay scale, and unhealthy working environments were found in this study which could hamper instructors' retention at TECSs. Thus, these elements should not be overlooked while considering qualified and experienced technical instructors' satisfaction and retention.

## Conclusion

Technical Education in Community Schools (TECS) is conceptualized to cater the technical education in all parts of the country at a minimal cost through cost-sharing mechanism in public general schools. Due to two models of education, general and technical, management of TECS is quite challenging. Technical instructors are supposed to be sound academically and occupationally for effective instruction. Qualified and experienced instructors with professional backgrounds can benefit from the theoretical knowledge from the teaching profession in their professional field. TECS instructors do not get equal salaries and other financial benefits like general subject teachers. Job security of the technical instructors, professional development opportunities, a good working environment through updated curriculum, relevant tools and



equipment, and recognition play a key role in retention of the instructors in technical institutions. TECS instructors are to be motivated to retain in the schools for effective and efficient teaching. Instructors seek recognition of their profession, personal development, achievement, and promotion. These intrinsic factors or motivators are known as the primary factors for their satisfaction. Likewise, instructors are also likely to expect extrinsic or hygiene factors such as good institutional policy, job security, good salary and benefits, and comfortable work environment. These hygiene factors play a key role in avoiding dissatisfaction and retaining instructors in the TECS.

The findings of this study can be a reference for the policymakers to formulate policies related to curriculum, practical works, and professional development packages for the technical instructors' retention. TVET institutions can also reflect upon their overlooked areas through this study. Likely, future researchers can conduct further research on various topics related to instructors' retention including quantitative methods, mixed methods, and case study methods. This study is expected to contribute to technical instructors' retention for effective teaching-learning activities in TVET institutions.

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# Prospects and Challenges of Executing the Work-Based Learning Approach in Nepal

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## Abstract

*This study was carried out to scrutinize the prospects and challenges of instigating the work-based learning (WBL) approach in TVET in Nepal. A qualitative methodology was adopted for the study. Face-to-face and virtual in-depth interviews were conducted with purposively identified TVET experts, teachers and employers from Nepal. Altogether, there were 15 participants. Primarily, the study addressed two research questions: (i) What are the prospects and challenges for instigating a work-based learning approach in TVET in Nepal, and (ii) How the challenges are tackled? The findings revealed that stakeholders' readiness and the industry's volume to meet learners' needs are key challenges in instigating work-based learning approaches in Nepal. The findings also revealed that the prevailing legal frameworks and practices do not have significant provisions. This urges for a conducive legal framework that makes employers mandatory for providing work-based learning opportunities to TVET students in their industries. The industry volume needs to be increased and strengthened by creating a conducive environment for private sector and foreign investment. Additionally, awareness needs to be made among the stakeholders, especially the guardians and the students, so that the guardians understand the importance of WBL and encourage their children to join and the students to be ready for learning in work-based settings.*

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**Keywords:** technical and vocational education and training, workplace-based learning, world of work

## Context and Rationale

According to Brewer and Comyn (2015), skills required for success in today's world of work are (i) foundation skills that are a prerequisite for continuing learning such as literacy and numeracy skills, (ii) vocational or technical skills that are specialized competencies needed to perform occupation specific duties or tasks, (iii) professional/personal skills that are

individual attributes relevant to work, such as honesty, integrity and work ethic, and (iv) core work skills that are the abilities to learn and adapt; to read, write and compute competently, to listen and communicate effectively, to think creatively, to solve problems independently, to work in teams or groups; to handle basic technology and to lead effectively. Now the question arises, whether the presently prevalent

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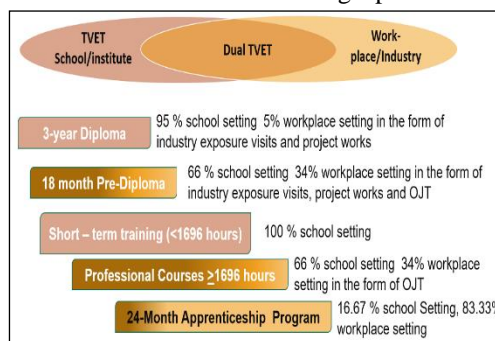
school-based TVET implementation approach of Nepal, which claims to produce competent graduates for the *world of work* addresses the aforementioned requirements. Nepali employers claim that TVET graduates who graduated from Nepali TVET schools are somehow fine in technical competencies but lack professional/personal skills and core work skills (Sharma & Bhattarai, 2022). This might be because of the TVET implementation approach. It has been found that most of the TVET courses are conducted only in school settings in Nepal. In a school setting, a teacher teaches students using a prescribed curriculum normally in a classroom or workshop setting (Komaariah, 2015) where the students rarely get workplace exposure. On the contrast, according to the Australian National Training Authority (2004), skills for the world of work are best learned and assessed in the workplace. This claim matches with Bandura’s social cognition theory. Bandura (1986) claims that people learn best by observing, associating and copying through the people they associated with. Unlike school-based learning, the work-based learning (WBL), which is an experiential learning approach, learning takes place in a real work environment and is based on industry standards under the guidance of subject matter experts (Komaariah, 2015). WBL provides learners to get acquainted with the employers, who value relevant work experience, and learners who have already spent time in a professional setting can demonstrate their practical skills and commitment to their chosen field.

Then another question arises: what factors are limiting Nepal from shifting the paradigm from a school-based learning (SBL) approach to a WBL approach? This study, therefore, primarily focuses on exploring the prospects and challenges of implementing a WBL approach in TVET of Nepal and the ways to tackle these challenges, by understanding the stakeholders’ viewpoints.

### Presently Prevalent TVET Programs and Learning Approaches in Nepal

The Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) is taking a lead role and holds a significant share in developing

the technical and vocational workforce in Nepal. CTEVT caters to the TVET sector with twelfth-class equivalent diploma/certificate level and 10<sup>th</sup>-class equivalent pre-diploma and apprenticeship programs through 1169 TVET schools that include 66 constituents, 57 partnership institutes, 639 community schools, and 407 private technical schools. The programs are primarily in the agriculture, engineering, health, and hospitality sectors. In addition, there are 1618 affiliated TVET providers across the country for conducting short-term market-responsive vocational and professional training (CTEVT, 2024). Additionally, many other TVET actors organize various skill development activities formally and non-formally in Nepal. Nevertheless, most of the programs are conducted in the school setting and a negligible number of programs such as training with on-the-job (OJT) programs and 24-month Dual Vocational Education and Training (VET) apprenticeship programs are organized in the workplace setting. As a result, most of the graduates rarely get workplace exposure. Additionally, the practice is that almost all programs are led and managed by TVET schools. Employer participation except during the need assessment and design phase of the



**Figure 1:** Presently Prevalent TVET Curricula and Learning Approach in Nepal

training cycle is not at all satisfactory. Furthermore, quality is ensured by the government and other TVET agencies rather than employers (Bhattarai, 2019).

Figure 1 depicts the presently prevalent TVET curricula and learning approach in Nepal. While analyzing the content and teaching

methods prescribed in the curricula designed by CTEVT, it is found that on average 95 per cent contents of the 3-year diploma which is equivalent to the 12th grade is taught in schools and only 5 per cent in workplace settings in the form of project work and sometimes as field visits. Similarly, 100 per cent of the short-term non-academic courses of less than 1696 hours are only taught in a school or training institute setting. However, 34 per cent of the pre-diploma level curricula and professional courses are taught in workplace settings through OJT and industry exposure visits. Likewise, in 24-month apprenticeship programs, 83.33 per cent of the contents are learned at workplace setting.

### **Governing Provisions for Work-Based Learning (WBL) Approach in Nepal**

Following are some of the key governing provisions conducive to implementing work-based learning approach in Nepal.

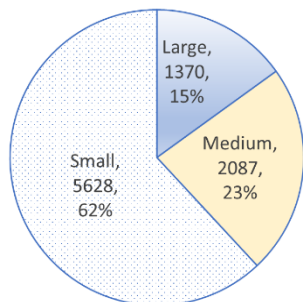
- i. CTEVT Regulations, 1994 (Chapter 4, Rule 13-16): The regulation has made structural and legal arrangements under the chair of the Vice Chairperson of CTEVT to prepare the necessary curricula for basic and skill enhancement training programs conducted by government and non-government industrial establishments, to standardize such training programs and maintain coordination.
- ii. Apprenticeship Training Working Procedure, 2018 (CTEVT): This working procedure mandates the functions, duties and powers of the Industrial Apprentice Training Committee constituted under Section 13 of the CTEVT Act, 1988. Under this, conducting research studies on workforce demand and recommending for making necessary policies for producing such workforce; conducting industrial training in cooperation with industries and their associations and recommending government concessions and facilities for the industries conducting industrial training are the main ones.
- iii. Workplace-based (Apprenticeship) Training Working Procedure, 2019 (Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security): To develop a skilled workforce, according to the needs of the domestic industry, there is a provision to conduct employment-oriented training programs for trainee workers in the production and service industry in collaboration with the private sector employers. The provision to employ for a period of at least two years in the same industry/workplace is also stated in the working procedure.
- iv. National Education Policy, 2019: Partnership with private sector employers for the internship, OJT and apprenticeship programs (10.12.5)
- v. School Sector Development Plan 2016/17-2022/23 Partnership with the private sector for OJT and apprenticeship opportunities.
- vi. 15th Five Year Development Plan (2019/20-23/24): The plan emphasized for apprenticeship programs in collaboration with public, cooperative, industries and private sector (Work plan 4.4.6.1)
- vii. The Labour Act, 2017 (Sections 16 and 17): Provisions to enter and learn at the workplace as an intern, apprentice or trainee. The apprentice learns as per the prescribed curricula. However, a person must be 16 years of age to become an apprentice.
- viii. The TVET Sector Strategic Plan (2023-32): To improve the quality and relevance of TVET programs in Nepal, the TSSP intends to increase collaborative programs and activities with schools and industry and their associations for internship, on-the-job training, apprenticeship and Dual TVET system model bring into practice (2.4.5.) and introducing and implementing a dual TVET system with the active, meaningful and collaborative actions of BIAS by the

development of guidelines & policy provisions.

Analyzing these provisions, it can be said that Nepal has made adequate legal and policy arrangements to keep trainee workers for workplace-based learning who have reached the age of 16.

### Industry Volume of Nepal

One of the major employers of Nepal is the private sector industries, where the learner as an intern, apprentice or trainee can be placed. However, on the flip side, the present industry volume is not enough to cater for all TVET learners. Only 9085 private sector industries are registered in Nepal till FY 2022/23 by scale and the enrollment capacity in Diploma and Pre-diploma programs for the FY 2022/23 are 57,070 and 29,743 respectively (Annual Report of CTEVT, 2024). Out of 9,085 industries, private sector employers are categorized as small, medium and large industries based on fixed capital as stated in Industrial Enterprise Act, 2020 (Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, 2020). Figure 2 depicts industries in



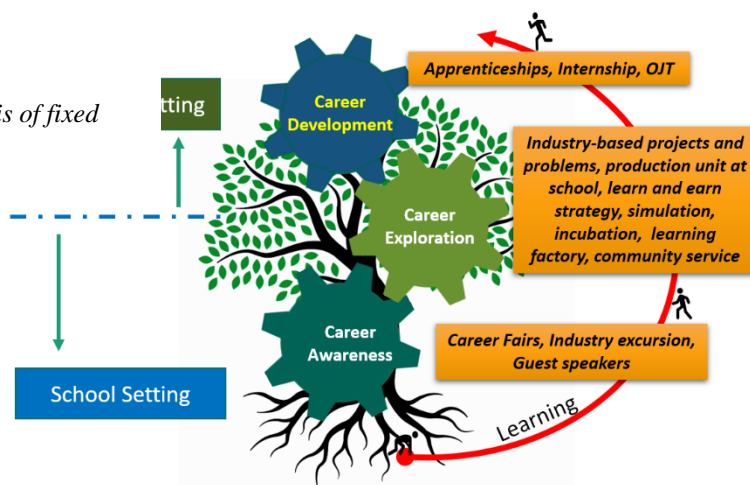
**Figure 2:** Industries in Nepal on the basis of fixed capital

Nepal by scale based on fixed capital. These industries contribute to generating 680,327 employment opportunities, (Department of Industry, 2023). So far, the government has not made a rule to keep a certain percentage of interns in the industry. Even if the government applies at least

ten per cent (assumption) mandatory provision, each industry will not and cannot cater to more than seven TVET graduates.

### Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) Approach: Concept and General Perspective

The WBL approach places students in the workplace or similar situations as depicted in Figure 3. In the school setting, career awareness can be created among the students by providing opportunities like career fairs, industry excursions, guest speakers, etc. Likewise, students can be placed to explore career by applying various career exploration strategies such as by providing them with industry-based projects and problems, by establishing and by applying “*learn and earn*” strategy, by establishing a production unit or the learning factory at school and by placing students in the incubation center. These kinds of work-based learning activities at school settings inspire the students to learn about the future work environment. Komarias (2015) claims that the WBL provides real-life, practical work experiences; as a result, students learn professional/personal skills and core work skills in addition to technical competencies that effectively prepare them for the challenging world of work. Likewise, Comyn and Brewer (2018) also claim that the work-based learning facilitates transitions to decent work. In the workplace setting, some of the widely practiced learning approaches are (i) on-the-job training



**Figure 3:** Work-based learning possibilities

(OJT) or internship, and (ii) apprenticeship. Students are sent to the actual workplace for a fixed period as prescribed in the curriculum so that they can get the real work experience required for the world of work. This approach is called internship or OJT or sometimes placement. The internship is usually of a shorter duration than an apprenticeship. In the apprenticeship approach, apprentices or students spend most of their time in the workplace with other employees to acquire technical as well as employability skills. Typically, the apprenticeship program lasts two to four years (European Training Foundation, 2014).

### Global Scenario of WBL

WBL practices of Germany and Switzerland are considered as successful WBL systems (European Training Foundation, 2014). Employers are playing a lead role in most of the countries. Three kinds of WBL approaches are practiced in the United States: (i) Time-based: in this kind, an apprentice's program is measured by the number of hours spent in on-the-job training, (ii) Competency-based: in which the apprentice's program is measured by his/her demonstration ability to apply the necessary competencies, and (iii) Hybrid: a combination of (i) and (ii) (International Labour Organization, 2020). There are three modes of WBL according to the leading role in the United States. These are (i) Union apprenticeships, in which the labour unions offer WBL programs, (ii) Employers sponsored WBL programs and (iii) intermediaries, in which a third party works with both employers and apprentices to provide WBL (Darche, Nayar, & Bracco, 2009). Likewise, employers play a leading role in Germany and Switzerland. Dual VET and apprenticeship programs are kinds of WBL practiced in Germany and Switzerland where off-the-job learning occurs in school and on-the-job learning occurs in the industry. For the quality assurance and assessment, chambers take care in Germany and the State Government takes care of it in Switzerland (International Labour Organization, 2020).

Likewise, South Korea is practicing both employer-led and school-led WBL programs

(Ryu, 2017). In employer-led programs, they independently develop the programs and provide both on-the-job and off-the-job learning opportunities to the apprentices. For quality assurance and assessment, both the State Government and private sector employers are responsible (ILO, 2020).

Various empirical studies have also been conducted on prospects and challenges for executing a work-based learning approach. Denso and Osei (2021) conducted a descriptive survey with 1200 respondents titled *The Factors Contributing to the Challenges with Apprenticeship in Ghana: Trainees' Perspective* and found that the major factors contributing to the challenges with an apprenticeship are (i) Aid-related factors, (ii) Recognition related factors, (iii) Funding related factors, (iv) Training structure-related factors, (v) Contemporary technological-related factors, and (vi) Perception related factors.

Zureada et al. (2019) conducted qualitative research titled *Key Challenges of Work-Based Learning Application in Teaching and Learning Strategies for Accounting Programs* and identified challenges related to acceptance by academics and industries, operationalization and talent.

Likewise, a report prepared by Bolli et al. (2019) found two major challenges to implementing dual VET apprenticeship programs in Nepal. According to their report, the two challenges were (i) encouraging private sector employers to accommodate apprentices and support for the dual VET apprenticeship program and (ii) motivating students to enroll in such programmes.

### Methodology

This study was carried out using one of the techniques of qualitative research i.e., in-depth interviews with TVET experts, teachers who are teaching in TVET schools and private sector employers who are catering to TVET students during apprenticeship or OJT, to elicit insightful information regarding the prospects and challenges for instigating WBL approach in Nepal. The participants were selected purposely following Creswell (2011) who says

that in qualitative research, the researcher selects or identifies the sites and the participants purposely, which helps a researcher to understand the research problem in the best way. The researcher selected five respondents from each group.

For in-depth understanding, the researcher framed the following questions: (i) What are the prospects and challenges of instigating a workplace-based learning approach in TVET in Nepal? and, (ii) How can these challenges be tackled? These questions were sent in advance to the participants.

The researcher facilitated the in-depth interview with each respondent separately and took notes simultaneously. The interview began with rapport building with the participant followed by an explanation of the purpose of the study. After ensuring that the participants had a good understanding of the concept, the aforementioned questions along with some clarifying and exploratory unstructured questions were asked by the researcher. The discussion ranged in duration from 20 minutes to half an hour. The in-depth interview helped the researchers to get a deeper understanding of the phenomena.

### **Findings and Discussion**

Analysis was done concurrently while collecting information. The first question asked to the respondents was “What are the prospects and challenges of instigating a workplace-based learning approach in TVET in Nepal?” and the second question asked to the respondents was “How can these challenges be tackled?” After scrutinizing the respondents' understanding, the following points were extracted.

#### **Prospects of Implementing Work-Based Learning Approach in Nepal**

Private sector employers were initially reluctant and skeptical to accommodate apprentices. Likewise, initially, students were also reluctant to enroll as apprentices in WBL programs. The ground realities of the Nepali context expressed by the respondents are consistent with the findings of studies conducted by Zureada et al. (2019) and Bolli et al. (2019).

According to the respondents, the employers are

now expressing their willingness to be actively engaged in TVET. Likewise, now the students also have started realizing that the WBL provides them the opportunity to experience the day-to-day challenges of a real job and gain practical skills and insights that can enhance their career prospects and prepares themselves for the world of work. Additionally, the policy makers and other stakeholders of TVET in Nepal now started realizing that the work-based learning approach effectively helps to make the curricula relevant to industry needs and thus learners acquire the relevant competencies including hands-on experience and employability skills required for the world of work. As a result, Nepal has started resuming, planning and prioritizing expansion of WBL programs.

#### **Challenges of Implementing Work-Based Learning Approach in Nepal**

One of the major challenges is the social stigma or the perception (Denso & Osei, 2021) towards TVET. Joining TVET and more specifically WBL is seen as a second option. However, TVET stakeholders, including students and employers, have started to participate in WBL after realizing its benefits.

The effort and commitment for building strong ties with industries for WBL have not reached enough level. Likewise, there is no adequate workplace infrastructure, resources and industry's volume required for effective WBL, as a result, consistent quality assurance across diverse workplaces is questionable.

Another major challenge of WBL is the high dropout rate. This is due to the uncertainty of career progression prospects, learner's economic condition, apathy demonstrated by policy makers, schools and industries, trade union obstruction during the placement of apprentices and the possibility of finding job before the completion of the study. Additionally, tight schedule of the learner is another challenge.

Apprentices of the dual VET program currently underway are practicing the “one day back at school” strategy. Due to the geographical condition of the country and the distance between the school and the industry/workplace, it is difficult for the apprentices to come back to school for one day in a week and return to the



workplace next day. This and similar unpractical procedural decisions have become additional challenges for the effective implementation of WBL. Additionally, the existing legal provisions are not enough and even those that exist are not conducive to effective implementation of WBL in Nepal. This is another challenge according to the respondents.

### Ways to Cope with the Challenges

One of the major challenges is the social stigma towards TVET. Awareness programs are needed to remove this social stigma so that society starts respecting dignity of labor and TVET, more specifically the WBL.

To cope with the challenges of inconsistent learning outcomes, inadequate workplace infrastructure and resources and the concern of employers for productivity and profit; the government and the policy makers need to provide a conducive environment to employers so that they can provide structured training and mentorship. It urges for establishing regulatory provisions, clear guidelines and standards with subsidy.

Due to the compulsion to come to school one day a week, the effort and time of the students is wasted. To solve this problem, instead of implementing a “*One day back at school*” strategy, implement a “*School at industry/workplace*” strategy. The instructor visits the apprentices as a roaming instructor.

Another challenge is the tight schedule of the learner. To address this challenge, the curriculum needs to be designed in such a way that it balances learning time with work responsibilities and provides flexible and self-paced learning opportunity with credit transfer and multiple entry and exit provisions.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, as per the understanding of the TVET experts, teachers and private sector employers, the TVET stakeholders especially the policymakers, curriculum developers, implementers and employers of Nepal acknowledge the inevitability of WBL. These stakeholders understand that the WBL is the only way to effectively equip the youth with the competencies required to acquire, sustain and

succeed in the world of work. Despite, having the aforementioned understanding among the stakeholders, the readiness of two key stakeholders, i.e., students and employers, and the volume of the industry to cater to the needs of all TVET students/trainees as per the prescribed curricula, are the two major challenges in implementing work-based learning approach in Nepal. Likewise, it is also found that there is a need for a conducive legal framework that makes employers mandatorily provide work-based learning opportunities to TVET students in their industries. Furthermore, the industry volume needs to be increased and strengthened. Extensive expansion of industry is necessary for which the government needs to create a conducive environment for private sector investment and even for foreign investment. Moreover, awareness needs to be created among the stakeholders, especially the guardians and the students, so that the guardians understand the importance of WBL and send their wards, and the students to be ready for learning in work-based settings. This way, by transforming the practice of TVET from a traditional school-based learning approach to a work-based learning approach, it can be believed that Nepal can effectively equip its workforce with the competencies needed to cope with the challenges of the 21st century.

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