

Teachers' Experiences in Inclusive Education Practice in Community Schools in Nepal

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Abstract

Inclusive education is a way of teaching in which no group is excluded from the learning process. For learning, an inclusive school welcomes students of all races and backgrounds. This study aims to explore the lived experiences in inclusive practices and challenges to implementing inclusive policy in community school Nepal. For this purpose, we have applied hermeneutic phenomenology which studies the lived experiences of participants. Purposively five community school teachers were selected as participants from Palungtar Municipality Gorkha district. The in-depth interviews were conducted for the data collection. The study found the inclusive education approach was not practiced well at the school level. However, teachers and students preferred this approach due to the diverse nature of the community such as social, cultural, economic, and religious, etc. It is the best approach to address the diversified nature of the participants that address the capabilities of the diversified nature of the participants. This study contributes to addressing the concerns of minorities and underserved groups in education by using primary streams. Similarly, it promotes a sense of belonging and respect. It also allows you to learn about and accept individual variances.

Keywords: Inclusion, flexible learning, traditional teaching, and inclusion practices

Introduction:

We have taught at schools and universities for over 10 years and have experienced a diverse range of students in terms of cast, culture, religion, languages, physical and intellectual abilities. To include in mainstream education is a great challenge and problematic for teachers. In this context, we feel curious to study in detail

how the school teachers experience in addressing the issues of diversified nature of students. Are they addressing the issues of inclusive education? What are the obstacles they have in day-to-day teaching? Such questions shocked us for the study. This study has explored the lived experiences towards the inclusive teaching environment thus it is significant professional development for teachers and it possesses the challenges and problems faced by the teachers that will be insight for the policymaker.

Inclusion in schools entails more than just giving extra assistance to pupils with specific educational needs. It is about establishing a learning environment that works for all learners, whether they have disabled, speak their mother tongue as an extra language, are a member of a minority population, come from a low-income home, or for any other reason find it difficult to study and accomplish. This is a challenge for teachers: how do you ensure inclusion for all of these students, each with their own set of requirements and hurdles to learning? While unique plans are frequently required to suit the individual needs of the children in the class, there are certain things that all instructors can do to establish a safe, pleasant, focused, and inclusive atmosphere. We have included in this written paper those broad, all-pervasive instances of inclusion in the classroom. Supporting and celebrating diversity and inclusion in schools works because it provides all students the opportunity to succeed and fosters an atmosphere in which individuals with special needs are not isolated and viewed as others they are part of the same community of learners. Inclusion tackles harmful cultural attitudes and prejudices regarding individuals with disabilities or members of minority groups. The inclusion strategies that can be implemented in our

inclusive learning environments are behavior on the part, continuously, sensibly, the opportunity to listen, scaffold to learn, the specific need of the child, support for benefit, create a conducive learning environment, display time table, inform planning, demonstration setting, and do not compare with another child.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to explore the inclusion practices and challenges to apply in the classroom at the school.

Conceptualizing Inclusive Education

Inclusive practice is a teaching style that ensures equal access for all students' active participation in their learning process. It is recognized that no two learners are the same and that their learning courses and activities are tailored to this reality. The inclusive approach allows for a better understanding of quality education for all students and is essential in altering prejudiced attitudes. Schools serve as the foundation for a child's initial encounter with the learning environment of pupils outside of their homes, allowing for the expansion of social interaction and relationships.

Inclusive education is an educational method in which no component or group is excluded from the learning process. A school with pupils of various races and ethnicities is an example of inclusiveness since it includes everything within its scope and sequence. Both physical and attitudinal; mindset is frequently considered as one of the most significant barriers and supports inclusion. Choice, the fact that sport is not one-size-fits-all, partnerships, the fact that inclusion seldom occurs in isolation, communication, policy, and possibilities. There is a substantial corpus of literature on how to support inclusive education. As a result, the literature is explicitly exploratory and argues for specific classroom methods and procedures (Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2005).

Inclusive education entails placing all children, regardless of ability, in age-appropriate general education courses to get a high-quality education, engagement, and support from nearby schools, allowing them to achieve. Fundamental Courses (Bui, Quirk, Almazan, & Valenti, 2010) Schools and classrooms operate

on the assumption that children with disabilities are just as capable as students without impairments. As a result, all children may become active members of their classroom and school community. Many movements are based on the principle that pupils should be educated in a basic protective setting. This implies they are as close to their classmates as possible without a handicap, and they are the first choice clearance for all kids with general education (Alquraini and Gut, 2012).

Successful inclusive education takes place primarily through the acceptance, consideration, and participation of students' diversity, which can include physical, cognitive, educational, social, and emotional. This does not mean that students should never spend time outside of regular education classes, as they sometimes do for very specific purposes, speech or occupational treatment. But the goal should be this exception. The driving principle is to make all students feel welcome, appropriately challenged, and supported in their endeavors. It is also critically important that adults are supported. This includes regular education teachers and special education teachers, as well as all other staff and faculty who are the main participants, and also parents. To implement inclusive education in the classroom, teachers must be supported. Many teachers had a restrictive or unfavorable perspective on inclusive education (De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). This is because they lack confidence in their ability to give a more educated, competent, or inclusive education. Similarly, more experienced teachers, such as parents, and more training, including inclusive education for teachers, were extremely supportive of this. The research supports the notion that to be effective, teachers must adhere to best practices in teaching as well as principles for inclusive learning. However, having a good attitude toward inclusion is the most critical part of creating an inclusive classroom that works (Savage & Erten, 2015). School education is significant for the overall development of the country. As a result, the education system is based on societal and national needs. The goal of education is to focus on producing excellent productive citizens for the nation. As a result, the government is

considered obligated to offer education for all citizens, rich or poor. However, in our society, it has become harder to incorporate disabled and minority groups into the mainstream of education (OECD, 2012).

Diversity and Inclusive Education in Nepal

Geographically, Nepal is separated into three primary regions: the mountains, the hills, and the Terai. However, ethnographically, it is a region of diverse ethnic and linguistic groupings, with a substantial number of these people living in the inner Terai area. A significant group will go unrecognized if the ethnicity of Nepal is solely examined via three geographic zones. According to the CBS (2011) study, there is 125 caste where 69 castes are included in indigenous and nationalities group. The former is a hierarchical/caste-based structure, whereas the latter is an ethnic/tribal pattern evident in our environment. The majority of caste groups are dispersed throughout the country, however, the majority of ethnic/tribal groups have unique zones of residence in certain geographic locations. Even in the twenty-first century, Nepalese ethnic, minority, and disadvantaged groups are suppressed, neglected, and forced to live in poverty as a result of lack of education, poverty, and social prejudice. As a result, one of the key issues for the government has been determining how to get them to school and provide them with further education. Nonetheless, the government has begun a variety of initiatives and policies for minorities to give underprivileged individuals access to education. The majority of them are illiterate. Education is the most significant vehicle for advancing all elements of growth. In this aim, the government has developed several scholarships and incentive schemes to encourage their study. However, given the circumstances, the researchers chose this place for the study.

Inclusion is a term that is bandied about a lot in education, particularly in international practices, where the national Curriculum mandates that schools and instructors guarantee that all students, regardless of their specific needs, are involved in successful learning. But, in the context of schools and education, what

does inclusion entail? In what ways does inclusiveness manifest itself in the classroom? And, perhaps most importantly, how can instructors establish an inclusive classroom that serves all children, regardless of their specific needs? In its most basic form, inclusion in education involves ensuring that every kid, regardless of their specific needs or challenges to learning, gets equal access to learning and equal opportunity to succeed.

Inclusive education is a process that addresses and responds to the diversity of needs of all learners in the classroom, school, and society, thereby reducing exclusion within and from education, regardless of the causes of exclusion (as cited in Tiwari 2009, p. 90). However, the exclusion is reducing, although people continue to be denied access to government services. As a result, their educational standing is quite poor." Education is regarded as one method of reducing poverty by providing people with the information and skills they need to express their concerns and secure their rights to live a decent life. As a result of the government's recent shift in priorities toward the socially disadvantaged community and its intensive work for a more inclusive environment, the country's existing socio-cultural equation has changed drastically, resulting in increased demands and expectations from all walks of life, particularly from traditionally disadvantaged and underserved groups (DOE, 2008, p.1). As a result, an inclusive strategy is essential to ameliorate the position of disadvantaged populations. The setting for the study, as well as the overall analysis technique applied by (Wiersma 1995). According to our research and relevant literature, the Nepalese government has prioritized inclusion practices in elementary education. Similarly, some studies highlight inclusion policy but not additional research that is based on inclusion practice in school education. Although it is the twenty-first century, Nepalese people are still deprived of schooling. They are oppressed, ignored, and forced to live impoverished lives as a result of a lack of education, poverty, and societal prejudice. As a result, they have very limited access to education. So, bringing them into the mainstream of education is a big task for the government in producing capable, industrious,

disciplined, and socially responsible people. In school education, and inclusive education strategy is critical.

Research Methods

We used a hermeneutic phenomenology (Manen, 1997) research design in this study. This design helps in the study of the teacher's lived experience with inclusive classroom practices. Five community school teachers from Gorkha district, Palungtar Municipality wards 6 and 7, were purposely designed as participants. Participants who had taught at a community school for ten years at different levels. Their teaching experiences were uncovered through in-depth interviews (Given, 2012). To solve the ethical quandary, the subjects were asked to provide informed permission. To acquire the detailed information, in-depth interviews data were examined using the themes of cooperation and observation of a resource teacher's activity. The audio recorder was used to record the interviews with the participants. Responses from recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and code was produced. Several themes were generated by organizing similar scripts (Sherpa, 2020). The study's comparable elements were arranged into a major theme. Themes were shown using ground data and compared and contrasted using data to data and data to literature.

Result and Discussion

The information collected from the interview was presented and discussed thematically in this section, which is presented as follows:

Flexible Learning Environment in Classroom
This mentioned research title is inclusive education practice in schools of Nepal: Historical Perspectives. In reality, students, teachers, educators, and the whole society have to practice inclusion. In the learning process activities started from the classroom so that directly or indirectly classroom is very important for teachers and students. Therefore, classroom activities needed to conduct according to inclusion way for improving this approach in the classroom. In this regard participant's teacher (T1) stated as: The teacher can practice inclusion in the classroom by treating them equally in the classroom. The teacher should make the class more flexible and

should not forget the equality, access, and quality of all kinds of students. He must think about multiple, intelligence too (Interview recorded: July 2021).

The above lines are very relevant to teachers and students because it was based on real themes of an inclusive educational approach. Whereas learners have equal opportunity to learn and equal treatment to all. Additionally, he suggests to paying attention to multiple intelligences means students have different qualities so, the teacher needed to identify to enhance achievement in learning. Similarly in this subject, another participant (T2) asserted as:

Even though there is no more practice of inclusion approach in getting enrolled in our school, there are appreciable practices in the classroom. Our teachers pay attention not only to comparable bright students but also to all the students. All the students in the classroom are equally asked questions whether of front side's student or back side's (Interview recorded: July 2021).

Above mentioned student quotation indicates that teachers paid attention to the classroom for practicing such an approach. It is shown that all students were happy with the classroom approach.

Traditional Teaching Approaches

Traditional methods of teaching, in which instructors are the controllers of the classes in which they teach and accept total responsibility for the learning environment, are a thing of the past (Flores & Day, 2006). All obligations and powers are vested in the teacher, and as the lecturer in the class, they serve as an instructor for the students as well as the decision-maker for deciding what to teach and how to educate. In the same issue participant teacher (T3) asserted as:

Fully prepared teachers are using the recent techniques to deliver the lesson. There is no specialized effort to include any group or individual and a regular and biased free environment is created to develop all the students of their own (Informal talk: July 2021).

It is found that teachers are well prepared to deliver content for students by the way of an

inclusive educational approach in schools' classrooms practices in our context. In this reference participant teachers (T4) stated as:

I do not see any such pieces of evidence of teacher inclusion practice. However, it can be seen in the case of experts that they work together under different programs. No, practice is regulated in classroom teaching (Interview recorded: July 2021).

Here, teacher views also indicate that contrast between two, one is claimed that well-prepared teacher for inclusion practice. Similarly, another teacher claimed that there is no sign and systems to practice this approach. But teachers accept that an inclusive approach is essential.

Teachers Experience in Inclusion Practices People's attitudes are incredibly significant, and they impact every aspect of a person's or society's activities. As a result, our open-minded attitude to inclusion is essential. However, not everyone is enthusiastic about it. As a result, this sort of attitudinal idea is the most difficult thing to overcome to promote an inclusive approach in school classrooms. In this context participant (T5) asserted as:

Still, there is a lacking of attitudinal change in inclusion. The traditional way of thinking and practicing seems a major challenge. Some modes and media will be more useful in including all the students in the teaching-learning stream which is always lacking are also a big challenge for inclusion. Similarly, our classroom is not disabled-friendly (Interview recorded: July 2021).

A teacher was found that his satires to our traditional thinking, attitude and our classroom infrastructure are not disabling friendly. Schools administrations have not paid attention to making disable friendly classrooms. Which hinders/challenges the inclusion practice in schools? The teacher showed that all groups are not satisfied with this approach. Similarly, economic and other problems created challenges toward this practice in schools. In this reference, another teacher said that qualities of education cannot be mentioned fairly before the knowledge of students may be different. Thus, almost all respondents are not satisfied with schools' implementation of inclusion approach or school has enough challenges to conducting smoothly this

approach. A similarly subject (T5) asserted as: The main challenge is to make a positive attitude toward the disadvantaged group. Then political, economic, social, and educational challenges are playing a vital role to prevent the inclusive education approach (Informal talk: august, 2021).

The above-given statement showed that almost all people have no positive attitude toward disadvantaged and marginalized groups to bring them into the educational mainstream.

Difficulties in Inclusion Practices

Inclusive education seeks to provide schools, programs, classrooms, and activities in which all students may learn and participate. It entails identifying many teaching strategies that actively involve students in creating mutual respect, partnerships, and friendships among themselves as well as between instructors and students in a classroom setting (Ferguson, 2008). This inclusive education approach would be very favorable for their good schooling. In this context, another student expressed his views:

There are so many difficulties practicing inclusive education that have been mentioned below but the prime causes are the ill-defined policy of institutions about this, and so-called unions or taking students in the name of politics as well (Interview recorded: august, 2021).

The above-given lines found that inclusion policy is also defined personally or institutionally which is not favorable for the students. In the context of classroom activities are very important for the teaching-learning process. Most of the learning activities occurred in classroom teaching for the student's betterment, they can ask the question to the teacher that's why it is very essential to practice an inclusive approach to all students who are from diverse backgrounds. In this relation (T3) is expressed as:

Most of the teachers understand the inclusive approach as the traditional/special approach 'which is a wrong way of perceiving inclusion. Right pedagogy and preparation of practicing in the classroom other physical arrangements are also lacking which is challenging an effective delivery in an inclusive approach (Interview recorded: august, 2021).

It is seen from the above expression that teachers perceive this approach traditionally and they practice it difficult way. There is a lack of some factors like right pedagogy, teacher preparation, and physical arrangement also hinder to deliver inclusive approach.

Provision of Qualified Teacher for Inclusive Teaching

The teacher's duty includes not only teaching the topic but also providing other training such as mobility training, self-care training, preparing instructional materials based on the requirements of disabled children, training in the use and maintenance of aids, and so on (Stainback & Stainback,1984). In this reference, another participant (T2) explains as:

The inclusive groups have less competition capacity in comparison to others. They seem a bit more negligent, Regularity of students cannot maintain, all teachers are not experts to inclusion (Interview recorded: august, 2021). The above-given points are challenging factors for implementing the inclusion approach. These are much related to schools, teachers, and students. They pointed to the student's regularity and smoothly conduct the class in schools. Similarly, almost all teachers are out of inclusion practice these are bitter challenging factors for practicing inclusion approach. Our perception of inclusion is different and difficult means there is no clear vision on inclusion so it is hard to implement in schools. Anyway, inclusion is necessary to practice.

Conclusion

The researcher underlines the importance of reducing exclusive behavior throughout the learning process. It is also critical to recognize that an inclusive approach to learning is extremely beneficial to everyone in our setting. Furthermore, we just talk about inclusion practice, but every step we take is outside of this work. As a result, we must prefer or commit to applying the inclusion strategy in our teaching methods. This rationality derives from the fact that the inclusive educational approach depends on our practice in schools education. Almost all students prefer the inclusive education method in the classroom since they come from varied

backgrounds, and it is critical to expanding the inclusive educational approach in the future.

This strategy is very applicable in Nepalese classrooms and is critical to the teaching-learning process. Students and teachers have expressed their dissatisfaction with our current inclusion practices in schools, arguing that they are woefully inadequate. In our schools, inclusive practice is not being implemented successfully. As a result, they do not benefit from the inclusive approach, and many handicapped and underprivileged groups do not have excellent access to education even in schools. In terms of impaired students, practically all school infrastructure is inaccessible.

To build a thorough strategy for a feasible inclusion approach for classroom activities, inclusive practices are necessary. Similarly, a clear inclusive plan and vision are required for implementing an inclusive approach in the classroom. The inclusive educational approach at the school level of education in our situation. It is needed to change our traditional mind which was out of inclusion practice and the barrier of such types of practices. It is required to implement an inclusive education approach from the lower level to the higher level of education. Nepal has a diverse background in language, caste, and geography, but not a single research enough to address this matter through inclusion practice. The diversity in cast, culture, ethnicity and geographical region make difficulties in inclusion practices. Due to the lack of clear policy, it is being difficult to implement inclusion practice at the schools level due to the diverse learners present in our situation. Therefore, it is inevitable to further research on the inclusion approach is the relevant problem for the research.

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