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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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