

Exploring Teachers' Perspectives and Strategies for Enhancing Workplace Wellbeing

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Abstract

Wellbeing is perceived as a contested, relational, interdependent, and multifaceted concept. The study explored teachers' perceptions on wellbeing and their efforts and organizational efforts and commitment to maintain holistic teacher wellbeing. Underpinned by the interpretive paradigm, the study employed the PERMA model, a theory of wellbeing and resilience. The model represents positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishments to cultivate wellbeing. Another theory employed is appreciative inquiry as a transformative approach to maintaining teacher wellbeing. Teachers need to cultivate a sense of hope, nurturing their agency and resilience, as deficit views appear to be hurdles for maintain and flourishing wellbeing. A sense of optimism in teachers appears to be a compass to navigate challenges and foster teacher wellbeing. Teacher wellbeing is a collective concern. Teachers' awareness of cross-cutting issues of pedagogical innovations and professional sensibilities and commitments play a crucial role in maintaining their wellbeing. Efforts and strategies adopted by teachers align with the intent of appreciative inquiry and positive psychology. The study calls for taking teacher wellbeing as a collective commitment and an indispensable aspect to enhance team culture, thereby contributing to quality education. It requires emotional commitment and holistic understanding of the stakeholders to reduce the stress and burnout of teachers so that they can remain engaged wholeheartedly in their profession to make a difference.

Keywords: *Wellbeing, resilience, relational, appreciative inquiry, positive psychology*

Research Motivation

“The real voyage of discovery consists, not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”

- Marcel Proust

The study begins with an anecdote shared by one of the scholars at a University, which often makes me emotional and poses some questions: why has teacher wellbeing been neglected at school? Isn't it a collective concern? Who cares for teachers voices and choices? Aren't teachers' actors in the classroom?

The incident happened some two months ago in a Master's Level class in the Spring Semester. During the viva of the end-semester assessment, Roshani, who is also a long-serving teacher at a school, said, *"Sir, I have tried my best to finalize the term paper. It has been quite difficult for me to manage my time. I requested the principal for a four-day leave for my written examination at the university. But sadly, the school administration did not approve my leave request. Needless to say, I took my classes the whole day at school and managed time to appear for exams in the evening as per the university schedule. I have been working at that school for twenty years. But my contribution has not been well-acknowledged. The school leadership does not care about my career-related endeavor. I am disheartened and frustrated. Sometimes I feel like quitting the job"*. I and other scholars were utterly dumbfounded to hear her painful remarks. The school administration did not seem to take any concern of a long-serving teacher seriously. Should the principal not show any empathetic attitude toward a teacher's problem? How does school leadership perceive wellbeing and professional development of teachers? How can teachers continue working under stress and emotional turmoil?

Some five months before, I was interacting with teachers of a school on nonviolent communication. I highlighted the

transformative power of compassionate communication in resolving any conflict and misunderstanding to create a peaceful and flourishing ambience at school. During the break time, one of the teachers said, *"My daughter was ill. I requested our principal to leave school an hour early for some days as my wife is also having some health issues. But without showing any concern for my problem, our principal said it was my family issue and I had to manage extra time myself to support my daughter. If the principal treats me that way, how can I devote extra time to school or engage wholeheartedly for the betterment of the school? Actually, even being a human, he does not have any sense of humanity."* His grievances and the dehumanizing attitude of the principal made me think of the roles of school leaders to maintain teachers' wellbeing. A school leader's apathetic or dehumanizing attitude seems to mar the teachers' wellbeing. It appears quite crucial to humanize leadership to foster teacher wellbeing.

Two months before, I received a call from the Education Training Centre, Dhulikhel, Nepal, to facilitate a training session on 'Teacher Wellbeing' for the Lower Secondary Level English teachers. I heartily accepted the request as it is a topic close to my heart and it was also an opportunity to interact and network with the English language teachers in different districts across the Bagmati Province. During the training session, I showed two pictures, one was of a burning Diyo and the next of a burning candle and asked them to relate them to their wellbeing. I also asked them what they would like to be. Most of them said that they preferred to be a Diyo but situations compel them to burn like a candle and get burnt out. This is our bitter reality, another teacher remarked. During the tea break, a teacher came to me and said

“Sir, I put every effort to engage my students in the classroom. I prepare lesson plans and develop required materials. My class is mostly interactive. I do some interesting warm-up activities to motivate the students. I feel glad to see the students meaningfully engaged in the different activities I have designed. However, I am hardly appreciated and supported by the school administration. Sometimes, I get completely frustrated. What should I do? As a human, I always desire to be appreciated for my efforts. I do not need any reward, but just acknowledgement of efforts.” The teacher’s remarks made me quite emotional and thoughtful. How can teachers work under pressure in a depreciative environment? How can they maintain and build wellbeing so that they do not get burnt out and muster the courage to pursue their career with new enthusiasm and commitment? Why don’t school leaders pay heed to the teachers’ wellbeing? These anecdotes and the emergent questions as mentioned above, inspired me to explore how teachers perceive and maintain workplace wellbeing despite the challenges and plethora of obstacles they face every day. Sometimes, teachers need to devote their extra time and energy beyond the call of duty for the wellbeing of pupils (Holmes, 2005). But who cares when it comes to the well-being of teachers? The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers perceive and maintain their workplace wellbeing. Aligning with the purpose of the study, the study seeks answers to the following questions: how do teachers perceive wellbeing? and how do teachers narrate their efforts and their organization’s strategies to foster teacher wellbeing?

Methodology

Qualitative inquiry with an interpretive paradigm underpins this study “to look at

the bigger picture of the nature of knowing in my inquiry” (Luitel, 2009, p. 24). I love to interact and negotiate the interest, hopes and challenges of my participants to embrace living values and beliefs as well as promote living collaboration (Dhungana, 2020). The paradigm of interpretivism helps me to generate context-based subjective meanings (Bryman, 2012, as cited in Qutoshi, 2016) by taking an emic perspective. “Interpretivism argues that we cannot understand why people do what they do without grasping how these involved interpret and make sense of their world” (McLaughlin, 2012, p. 20). In other words, it is pertinent to understand the values, beliefs, assumptions and attitudes of people to make sense of why people do what they do. Further, Taylor (2015) mentions that interpretivism deals with constructivist epistemology incorporating emergent analysis via grounded theorizing and thick description. It enables me to construct insightful understandings of the meaning- perspectives underpinning the participants’ perspectives and strategies to maintain wellbeing. Interpretivism helps for contextual meaning-making of the events or situations under inquiry.

I purposively selected four English language teachers from three districts of the Bagmati Province. Out of them, Manila and Sapana teach at Basic levels. They have seven years of experience, whereas Anjali and Sanam teach at the secondary level with ten years of experience. All the teachers hold Master’s degrees in English Language Teaching. They are involved in teacher professional development seminars and workshops. I asked them to share their perspectives and strategies for maintaining workplace wellbeing email. Before sending the email, I talked with them over the phone and took their consent to be involved in this inquiry. They readily

accepted my request as we belong to the same community of practice. I have analyzed and made sense of their remarks and generated themes based on their sharing. I have used pseudonyms to maintain anonymity. The study is confined to exploring how teachers perceive and maintain wellbeing despite several challenges at the workplace.

Theoretical Lens

The study employed the PERMA model as a theory of wellbeing and resilience connected to positive psychology to explore how teachers cope with the realities of personal as well as professional life and maintain their wellbeing. The model represents positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishments. Positive psychology is concerned with understanding and enhancing happiness, joy and wellbeing (Seligman, 2002). In connection to making life worth living and preventing life from being barren and meaningless, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2014) argue that the domain of positive psychology at the subjective level embraces embodied subjective experiences in the past for the future and finds the present. It appears that well-being is at the heart of positive psychology. Highlighting the role of personal strength and a positive social system, Carr (2013) mentions that “positive emotions facilitate creative, tolerant thinking and productivity” (p.6). It might be quite hard to sustain and thrive in the teaching profession without positivity. Maintaining a positive mindset sows a seed of well-being, while negative emotions are quite damaging and disempowering. The teachers are keen to look at their efforts to enhance their happiness, joy and well-being while promoting the well-being of their students and colleagues. They firmly believe that to maintain “the balance

between individual and collective well-being” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014, p. 293), they have to create positive vibes and confront every hurdle with optimism as hope sustains life. The insights of positive psychology help to build optimism and resilience and realize signature strengths to pursue the professional journey of teaching with commitment and dedication. The PERMA model emphasizes a harmonious balance of positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning and achievements to enhance wellbeing and stay resilient to trailblaze through chaos and challenges. The teachers need to overcome their deficit views and cultivate a positive learning mindset to promote their wellbeing. The participating teachers also mention that they try their best to develop positive thinking to create a collegial and collaborative space at school.

Appreciative Inquiry

This study also focused on exploring and enhancing wellbeing through the lens of Appreciative Inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) generates a collective transformative new vision in an organization (Chapagain, 2012). It is a “strengths-based” approach that provides an innovative lens to nurture creativity and helps to minimize the deficit view that saps energy, motivation and goodwill (Cooperrider, 1986). As appreciation goes miles, AI is grounded in positive affirmation and appreciation as it is a way of being. The transformative and generative power of AI influences the process of nurturing and enhancing wellbeing. Appreciative inquiry also includes nonviolent communication, which fosters deep and active listening, empathy and meaningful connection to repair and nurture relationships with the stakeholders (Rosenberg, 2005). “Appreciative inquiry is a positive system

of thinking induced by generative and constructive forces” (Chapagain, 2012, p. 89). It operates through the cycle of discovery, dream, design and destiny. Appreciative inquiry offers a new hope or ray to navigate challenges and set a path to destiny.

Nonviolent communication, as an inseparable component of appreciative inquiry, is a way of communicating that emphasizes empathy, compassion, and mutual respect to create connections and resolve conflicts in a peaceful, compassionate and nonviolent way to enhance wellbeing. The teachers need to identify their signature strengths and nurture them to bring out the best of their abilities, which helps to maintain their wellbeing. The participating teachers mention that they collaborate with colleagues and appreciate each other’s efforts.

Efforts and strategies adopted by teachers align with the intent and transformative as well as generative power of appreciative inquiry and positive psychology. Both of these theories explore the strengths of human beings to navigate their possibilities by challenging the deficit views. Teachers’ wellbeing can be built and maintained by nurturing the agency of teachers and discovering their strengths by creating a conducive and collegial working space at school so they can meaningfully and wholeheartedly engage in teaching-learning activities while maintaining their wellbeing.

Navigating Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a contested and multifaceted concept that requires a multidisciplinary sensibility to define it. “Wellbeing is a growing area of research, yet the question of how it should be defined remains unanswered” (Dodge et al., 2012, p. 222). Wellbeing refers to happiness, satisfaction and meaning,

which emerges from the dynamic interplay of personal traits and socio-contextual factors (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020). They also talk about the ways of managing emotions in order to nurture and sustain wellbeing. I perceive wellbeing as a harmonious balance of connection, cultivation and contribution. It is a journey of roots to fruits to live a flourishing life. “Well-being requires harmony between mind, body and soul. It implies a sense of balance and ease with the myriad dimensions of life” (Holmes, 2005, p. 5). It includes physical, mental, financial, emotional, social and spiritual well-being. Physical well-being is the foundation of entire well-being. In a similar vein, Holmes (2005) mentions that “physical wellbeing is our ultimate challenge” (p.6). Food, air, water, exercise, and our lifestyles determine our physical wellbeing. Our mental health and wellbeing are another crucial aspect to lead a balanced life. Without financial wellbeing, it is hard to manage our basic needs which ultimately derails our overall wellbeing. Goleman (2005) considers emotions as our superpower and self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills as the key components of emotional intelligence. Holmes (2005) highlights the essence of spirituality as a means to lead a soulful and deeply enriching life with meaning and purpose. Spiritual wellbeing promotes inner peace and harmony by inculcating courage, compassion, and connection. Spiritual sensibility ignites an attitude of gratitude.

Hedonic pleasure includes immediate sensory pleasure, happiness, and enjoyment. It also depicts a pleasure-seeking attitude, whereas eudaimonic pleasure incorporates growth, authenticity, meaning and excellence. It represents virtue-oriented living (Deci & Ryan, 1987). “Emotion regulation is regarded

as a crucial factor in well-being” (Nyklocek, et al., 2011, p. 2). Positive emotions play a significant role in maintaining social and psychological wellbeing. “Workplace wellbeing significantly influences employee health and productivity, impacting organizational success” (Putra et al. 2024). Wellbeing embraces optimism, a thriving, flourishing and meaningful life (Dodge et al., 2012).

Findings and Discussion

In an attempt to seek answers to the research questions, the following themes have been generated based on the participants’ sharings.

Teachers’ Perceptions on Wellbeing

“Wellbeing of teachers in our school is intimately connected to pupil performance” (Holmes, 2005, p. 40). Teachers are questioned if students underperform. In this sense, teacher wellbeing is connected to students’ achievement. This might be one aspect, but there is a need to explore other dimensions of well-being. As wellbeing is a multifaceted notion, different teachers perceive it differently. Manila said *“Wellbeing means the state of being happy mentally, physically, socially and emotionally. As far as I know, the term wellbeing means just feeling well and doing activities that are in favour of our benefits, which help us to keep satisfied and free from any kinds of stress. It also helps us to give the identity of an ideal, exemplary and civilized person in the society whose who try to keep balance in their day to day life”*. Similarly, Anjali said *“To me, wellbeing means to do justice and goodness for others and own self with positive activities. In short, wellbeing means to be physically, mentally and emotionally well.”* Likewise, Sanam said *“Wellbeing means being happy, healthy, comfortable and having*

satisfaction in a related sector; I think”. Sapana said, *“Teacher wellbeing, for me, is a condition of professional satisfaction”*. The enriching remarks of the teachers unfold their understanding of wellbeing. They try to see it from multiple facets, such as a harmonious balance of physical, mental, emotional, social, equity and justice, as well as professional satisfaction with a sense of purpose and meaning in life being free from stress and anxiety. They focus on wellbeing as a holistic approach. “Emotional wellbeing is the ability to produce positive emotions, moods, thoughts, and feelings, and adapt when confronted with adversity and stressful situations” (Melkonian, 2021). The teachers talk about a holistic perspective of wellbeing relating to happiness, joy and satisfaction. Remarkably, they associate wellbeing with her identity construction. Neupane (2024) mentions that teachers face a crisis of identity in new learning and working contexts; they negotiate their identities by taking part in learning and professional development endeavors. Norton (2020) argues that identity is dynamic, multiple, adaptable, multiple, and fluid, and dynamic and identities are constantly constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed. It is clear that identity construction is a journey and it is always in the making. The teachers think if they are able to portray their ideal image as an engaged teacher at school and in society, it gives them the utmost satisfaction and it becomes their source of wellbeing.

Ways of Maintaining Wellbeing

There is not a single way to maintain wellbeing as it embraces multiple dimensions of personal and professional life. As thinking beings, teachers constantly negotiate their positionalities to foster wellbeing. They are keen to find ways to maintain and sustain their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual

well-being. In this connection, Manila said *“As a human being, there might be many obstacles in our life, but despite them, I try to cope with these problems by navigating real struggles and real-life experiences. So, I am also facing many problems in my life, but I am trying to keep a balance of all these things. I never want to draw anyone’s attention and sympathy by expressing grievances. I always try to be satisfied with what I have. I do the things that make me happy, like exercises and give priority to diet to be fit and fine. I never give stress to my mind. I spend my spare time in physical recreation to feel good and shake off stress. In this way, I maintain physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.”* Similarly, Anjali said *“For physical wellbeing, I avoid eating junk food items. I have the habit of eating an evening meal before 7 pm. I sleep for 7/8 hours without any compromise. I do simple yoga and a brief meditation of ten minutes daily. After that, I take a glass of water. I always take an apple in the morning, which aligns with a saying that an apple a day keeps the doctor away. I always Eat only healthy and nutritious food items. For mental and emotional wellbeing, I keep myself busy with creative work and cultivate positive emotions. I never compare myself to others. I only try to be the best version of me. I try to keep away from Facebook and TikTok. When I spend time on my mobile, I mostly watch YouTube and watch the content that is good for my career and gives positive vibes to me. I always give quality time to my family. I will never be close to the people from whom I feel dominated and get only negative vibes.”* In the same vein, Sanam said *“I maintain physical wellbeing by doing exercises, jogging in the morning, drinking enough water. Sometimes, I take a ride, go for therapy, dance, etc. I maintain mental and emotional wellbeing by talking to my mother, meditating, watching*

movies, listening to music, drawing and listening to positive motivational speeches. To maintain wellbeing at school, I communicate with everyone in a proper way. I always try to be punctual. I always complete the task in a given time. I do my duty regularly. I believe that duty is beauty. I sometimes crack healthy jokes with staff and students. Every day in the first period, I let my students meditate for 5 minutes. Every Friday, I focus on ECA like handwriting, singing, drawing and so on, and I sing with my students”. Similarly, Sapana said *“I maintain physical wellbeing by doing exercise, yoga and walk. Mental wellbeing by meditation is a well-planned and focused work. Emotional wellbeing is possible by maintaining a balanced and cordial relationship with staff, students and parents.”*

All the participating teachers appear proactive, resilient and dynamic. They dare to face any obstacles, taking challenges of life as opportunities to flourish, finding the courage to tackle adverse situations with a powerful vision and perspective towards life. The teachers’ remarks align with the notions of learned optimism (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014) to move ahead in life, nurturing agency and resilience. Most of the teachers mention that even if they do not get adequate support from the schools to maintain their wellbeing, they find some ways and strategies to do so. They have developed a positive mindset and learning attitude, which have empowered them to cope with the challenges posed by difficult circumstances. They remain connected to their community of practice to share innovative ideas and update themselves with emerging pedagogical approaches akin to the idea of sharpening the saw or self-renewal (Covey, 2020). They find things that interest them, like hobbies. They spare some quality time to be with family

and friends. It is a wonderful way to foster relational space. Staying away from harmful or toxic people is another way to maintain their wellbeing. But in reality, it is hard to get away from toxic people all the time. It is essential to learn the art of dealing with difficult and toxic people. They find making comparisons with others to be a damaging act. Meaningful professional engagement is another factor for teachers to enhance their wellbeing as they mention that they feel glad when they find their students keenly involved in classroom tasks and activities. In essence, the teachers firmly believe in maintaining equilibrium in life as they believe that fostering wellbeing is a balancing act.

Adaptation and Adjustment

As the saying goes, while in Rome, do as the Romans do, it is essential to act being mindful of the contexts. In this regard, Teacher Manila shared *“I always try to adapt and adjust to the environment of school. If I do not understand the ground realities of my school, it becomes quite hard for me to make adjustments there.”* Her remarks reveal that a teacher must be mindful of the circumstances and ambience of school. A well-adapted or well-adjusted person promotes subjective wellbeing (Luhmann et al., 2012). *“Adaptation involves the successful search for meaning and purpose in life”* (Larsen, 2018, p. 2). Similarly, Teacher Anjali said, *“I always try to appear as a good teacher among my students and colleagues”*. Teacher Seema said, *“I try to be punctual and dutiful as well as adjust as per the circumstances at school”*. She focuses more on teacher integrity and being a role model at school. Integrity requires a genuine commitment and sincere attitude of teachers to make a difference in the students’ lives (Nillsen, 2005). Ball and Wilson (1996) argue that teaching is the fusion

of moral and intellectual endeavors. A teacher is anticipated to “think, to perform, and to act with integrity” (Brooks & Mutton, p. 3, 2023).

Communication as Key

Communication is considered the heart of our personal as well as professional life. Communication and interaction help to build a culture of trust and collaboration by creating a collegial and collaborative learning space in an organization (Panta, 2022). Compassionate communication is a powerful strategy to repair and nurture relationships so that workplace wellbeing can be enhanced. Regarding the role of communication in maintaining wellbeing, Manila shared *“I think communication is the key to maintaining cordial relationships and wellbeing”*. Similarly, Sapana said, *“To maintain wellbeing at school, I properly communicate with all”*. Likewise, Sanam said, *“Effective communication is a source of wellbeing. I try my best not to hurt others with my words. I always try to develop a meaningful relationship. I do not mind being humble”*. The remarks of the teachers reveal their efforts to maintain their wellbeing and stay connected with others through their communication skills. Teachers can navigate numerous challenges of personal and professional life through the power of words. Communication and wellbeing appear complementary to each other. Positive and compassionate communication helps to resolve conflict and reach a mutually agreeable solution. It helps to create a community and inspire positive change by maintaining a positive relationship (Mirivel & Lyon, 2023). *“Good communication and leadership are all about connecting”* (Maxwell, 2010, p. 2). In this sense, effective communication is the glue that connects everyone in the organization.

Involvement in Recreational Activities

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Teachers must find ways to break monotony and rejuvenate to get ready for the next day. The participating teachers find time to engage in different recreational activities to rejuvenate and feel good. In this connection, Manila said *“We have to get out of the box in life. I find time to go for outings with my family members, friends and colleagues”*. Sapana said *“Sometimes, I crack jokes with staff and students as well. Every day in the first period, I let my students meditate for five minutes. Every Friday, I focus on ECA like handwriting, singing, drawing and so on, and I sing with my students”*. Anjali said, *“I manage time for moving around and being with family and friends to reduce the stress level and burnout”*. The remarks of the teachers reveal their involvement in recreational activities such as outings, sports, yoga and meditation. They also engage their students in some recreational activities. Akram (2024) mentions that physical recreation fosters positive emotions linked to personal fulfillment and wellbeing. Engaging in different physical activities serves as a wonderful way to maintain wellbeing. Physical recreation is an antidote to stress and anxiety.

Sharing is Caring

Sharing woes and success stories with colleagues helps teachers feel good and manage their stress level out of the hustle and bustle of their daily schedule. Regarding her habit of sharing, Sanam said *“Though there might be some bitter experiences while working in the same workplace, we should try to shut them out. I never keep these things personally, but I share bitter experiences with*

colleagues and clear misunderstandings if they emerge.” Likewise, Anjali said *“I always try to be cooperative with teachers. Sometimes, I go to the primary classes and share my ideas and knowledge, especially with those teachers who are not well trained and are serving from private sources of school. I find positive responses from them. This makes me proud of my role.”*

The teachers highlight that despite the diversity of thoughts and opinions, it is always good to have a shared attitude. It is said that a problem shared is half-solved. Embracing a sense of care and connection helps to maintain wellbeing (Panta, 2022). Noddings (2013) argues that as human beings, we all have a desire to care and to be cared for. So, it seems essential to create a collaborative culture of care and connection at school.

Building Positive Mindset

In this connection, Manila said, *“I think twice before taking any actions and always develop positive thoughts, self-restraint, benevolence and humility.”* Similarly, Anjali said *“I always try my best to be good and cooperative among the students and teachers.”* In a similar vein, Sanam said, *“If the school atmosphere is supportive, we get opportunities to grow professionally in a collaborative manner”*. Cultivating a positive or growth mindset and finding signature strengths could be wonderful strategies to foster wellbeing. Highlighting the generative power of positive thinking, Peale (2020) mentions that *“a sense of inferiority and inadequacy interferes with the attainment of your hopes, but self-confidence leads to self-realization and successful achievement”* (p. 11). Dweck (2007) talks about a growth mindset to foster wellbeing and success in life. She also highlights the transformative

power of a growth mindset to take a journey of success, overcoming numerous setbacks.

Teacher Wellbeing: A Neglected Phenomenon

It is crucial to consider effective strategies “to promote a sustainable sense of wellbeing of teachers” (Holmes, 2005, p.2). The remarks of teachers reveal their grievances and school leaders’ apathy to enhance their wellbeing. In this connection, Anjali said, *“I think teacher wellbeing has been neglected due to many reasons. They include a lack of political commitment biased treatment of the bureaucracy system in Nepal. The bureaucracy of Nepal never thinks of providing equal facilities to teachers at a similar level as that of civil servants. Teachers are not united in raising the voices of teachers’ rights. Last but not least, teachers are also responsible for tarnishing their image. Teachers are not updated enough, well-trained, and innovative in their profession. They are not sincere in their duties as well”*. Similarly, Manila said *“I think teacher wellbeing has been neglected because teachers have a lot of workloads. As faculty members, they often have to sacrifice their own time and energy for the betterment of their students. There is a saying by educationists, “A teacher is like a candle which burns themselves to give light to others,” It reflects the expectations of selflessness in the teaching profession. Community, parents, and society often share this view, expecting teachers to provide selfless services without considering the impact on their mental and physical health and wellbeing. Consequently, there is little concern for improving teacher wellbeing. Moreover, there are no significant programs organized for the welfare of teachers. In Nepal, for example, the Government discriminates between teachers and other*

civil servants by neglecting teachers’ needs.” Similarly, Sapana said *“I think it is supposed that a teacher’s intellectual profile is low. This is because, from 2052 BS to 2070 BS, teachers were recruited haphazardly. When teachers work near their homes, they gradually become stagnant. Hence, the teaching profession is regarded as of low value and as a result, it has been neglected.”* Overall, teachers mention that the apathy of stakeholders, biased bureaucracy and lack of professional support and mentoring hinder their wellbeing. It is important to support teachers before stress and burnout take hold (Holmes, 2005). The insights of Appreciative Inquiry help to combat teachers’ burnout (Chapagain, 2012). The remarks of teachers also highlight the lack of professional integrity and commitment which have hindered their wellbeing by tarnishing their social image. The teachers need to be conscious of preserving and maintaining their social image as role models in society. Teacher autonomy also appears to be crucial to maintaining teachers’ wellbeing (Panta, 2019). Only a resilient education system can build teacher wellbeing.

Key Insights of the Study

The study explored the ground realities about teacher wellbeing and strategies embraced individually as well as collectively to foster teacher wellbeing by minimizing teachers’ level of stress, burnout and demotivation towards the teaching profession by creating a collegial working space at school. It was explored that teacher wellbeing is connected to student achievement. The teachers wanted to be role models for their students, which would provide them with professional satisfaction and joy at the workplace. The teachers appeared to be quite resilient and dedicated to their profession and several other

issues that impeded their wellbeing such as the apathy of the school administration towards their problems, the declining social image of teachers, workload and stress and so on. The teachers tried to maintain their positive attitude amid challenges and got engaged in different recreational activities to find solace in their souls. They, being humble, tried to adapt and adjust to the school environment with a commitment to making a difference at school.

They considered themselves as a gardener who had a prime responsibility to take care of the students and let them bloom to their full potential. They communicated well with school administration, parents and students about their plans and activities to create a meaningful learning space at school (Panta, 2022). They cling to the ethos of sharing is caring. They collaborated with colleagues and shared their narratives of pleasures and pains. They also shared knowledge, skills and innovative pedagogical approaches and perspectives to nurture a sense of hope to become better teachers and serve better to the school and society. They aligned with the intent of a growth mindset (Dweck, 2007), as learning is a collaborative journey and making a difference together. By cultivating positive thinking and mindset, they tried to create a harmonious collaborative space at school.

Conclusion

It appears that wellbeing is a relational, interdependent and multifaceted concept. Integrity helps to maintain wellbeing of the teachers. The participants cultivate a positive mindset and maintain meaningful relationships with colleagues as the foundations of wellbeing. School leaders need to consider wellbeing of teachers and students openly

and thoughtfully, demonstrating emotional intelligence and empathy (Carter Andrews et al. 2016; Goleman, 2005). So, in order to enhance learners' outcomes, strategies to foster teacher wellbeing need to be included in the strategic plan of a school. Teachers need to cultivate a sense of hope, nurturing their agency and resilience. A sense of optimism appears to be the foundation of wellbeing. Teachers are found engaged in recreational activities and creative tasks, which have helped them to maintain their well-being, fostering a transformative new vision and perspective of life. They also want to stay away from toxic people to ensure their wellbeing. Meaningful connection is key to wellbeing (Brown, 2021). Teachers' unfolding awareness, coping strategies, and endeavors of meaningful and creative engagements play a profound role in flourishing their wellbeing.

Teacher wellbeing is a collective concern. It needs to be the priority of concerned stakeholders as it has a direct connection to the learning outcomes of the students. Teachers' awareness of cross-cutting issues of pedagogical innovations and professional sensibilities and commitments also contribute to their wellbeing. At the same time, it appears quite pertinent to empower teachers' agency to maintain their wellbeing as the reciprocity of influence and growth (Neupane, 2024). Teachers find ways of managing and sustaining their wellbeing such as adaptation and adjustment, involvement in recreational activities, developing a collaborative culture, building a positive, thriving and learning mindset. The school leadership and concerned stakeholders need to pay heed to the humanistic dimension to foster teacher wellbeing, which aligns with the intent of appreciative inquiry and positive psychology. It is always good to focus on strength rather than deficiency

to create a thriving and flourishing school, thereby ensuring teacher wellbeing.

Implications of the Study

As there is an ongoing discourse on enhancing the quality of education, it is essential to encourage and empower teachers as they are the change makers at school. They are anticipated to create a meaningful learning space in the classroom with greater learner involvement. Cultivating a culture of appreciation appears to be crucial to promoting amicable relationships, which are also key aspects of wellbeing. Teacher wellbeing requires a collective commitment. Strategic planning of school and policy provisions needs to prioritize teacher wellbeing, considering its long-term impact on the education system. Teacher wellbeing contributes to creating a better school. So it is crucial to create a thriving environment at school, where teachers feel at home, become more resilient and perform their responsibilities wholeheartedly and joyfully.

The Author

Chet Nath Panta completed his PhD in Educational Leadership and MPhil in English Language Education from the School of Education, Kathmandu University (KU). He has been working as a visiting faculty there since 2018. He is avidly engaged in teacher professional development and leadership capacity-building workshops, seminars, and publications. His areas of research interest include critical pedagogy, learner autonomy, transformative learning, educational/ school leadership, critical spirituality, well-being and school counseling.

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