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Research Article

Equity and Justice in Nepal's School Education System: Policy and Practice Perspectives -Pom Bahadur Khatri

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the promotion of social justice within the Nepalese education system, focusing on equity in educational access and outcomes across Nepal's diverse socio-cultural landscape. The research aims to identify existing policy provisions that support social justice in education and to propose actionable strategies for enhancing equity. Utilizing a qualitative approach, data were gathered from various educational policy documents, reports, and scholarly literature, and analyzed through four systematic steps: data collection, interpretation of relevant information, establishment of comparison criteria, and synthesis of findings into conclusions. The analysis revealed three key thematic areas where equity is actively pursued: the implementation of reservation vacancies to ensure representation of marginalized groups (women, Dalits, indigenous communities, and persons with disabilities); the introduction of scholarship schemes and supportive programs (free textbooks, midday meals, and financial aid) to reduce economic barriers; and the promotion of mother tongue education to affirm cultural identity and improve learning outcomes for linguistic minorities. However, challenges persist regarding policy implementation, monitoring, and translating these initiatives into meaningful change. The study concludes that while Nepal has established vital frameworks for inclusive education, advancing true social justice requires strengthened policy enforcement, active community engagement, and the adoption of culturally responsive pedagogy to ensure a truly equitable education system.

Keywords: Social justice, equity, inclusive, reservation, mother- tongue education.

Introduction

Nepal is a mosaic of linguistic, culture and religions. There are 142 ethnic groups and 124 languages are spoken in Nepal(Population Census, 2078). The education system of Nepal is largely affected by those variations and diversity. Because of the various reasons all the ethnic groups and the people from different linguistic background are deprived from the right to

education. Many ethnic groups are not fully flourished and the languages of them have not fully codified and documented, which has caused the inherent difficulty in learning and getting the right to education. To bring all the backward ethnic groups and marginalized people in the mainstream of education equality and equity in education are inevitable.

The words equality and equity are often confused because, at a glance, they appear to mean the same thing. They both have to do with the way people are treated, and both are used in the fields of law, education, government, economics, and so on. Often, these terms are used to describe actions, laws, or rules that are attempting to end or oppose injustice or unfair treatment of people.

However, equality and equity are not the same, and the methods used to achieve them are often very different. Equality means treating each individual or group of people in the same way or providing them the same resources and opportunities. But equity recognizes the each individual's circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. That is to say it analyses and interprets the existing situation of the phenomena.

Rawal (1971) argues that justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is the systems of thought. He views of human beings as 'free and equal, 'morally autonomous, rational agents who are not necessarily egoists underpins ' justice and fairness.' Rawal thinks that 'the first requires equality in the assignment of basic rights and duties. Likewise, Sen (2009) reflects that the traditional strain of political philosophy, which seeks to identify ' the just' , or a single set of just principles that can then be used to design perfectly just institutions for governing society, reveals little about how we can identify and reduce injustices in the here and now. According to Sen , the dominant approach, which he refers to as 'transcendental institutionalism,' is beleaguered by two central problems: the problem of feasibility and the problem of redundancy.

Education is essential to attaining equity and inclusive growth in Nepal. He emphasizes how critical it is to provide equal access to high quality education in order to address inequality based on caste, gender, geography, and economic status. Education can become a potent instrument for creating a society that is just and harmonious by strengthening marginalized community (Mathema, 2007). Likewise, Marxist theorists emphasize economic and class equality advocating for redistribution and the end of class exploitation (Marx, 1867). In the same

way, a liberty theory of minority rights focuses on recognition of diverse identities (ethnicity, race, culture) and ensuring equality in representation (Kymlicka, 1995)

Education is a fundamental right to everyone. There should not be discrimination on it. That is to say, every citizen should have the right to get quality education. It has been declared by the different documents like the constitution of Nepal, 2072 and the Human Right Declaration 1948. In this regard, this study explores the situation of social justice through the lens of equity and equality. The study has the following objectives:

- To find out the provisions of promoting social justice in secondary level Nepalese education system.
- To suggest the ways of promoting social justice in Nepalese system.

Review of the Literature

Theory of Social Justice

Nobel laureate Amartya Sen presents a compelling counterargument to conventional ideas of justice in his seminal work *The Idea of Justice* (2009). Sen stresses a comparative and realization-focused approach to justice, in contrast to older philosophers like John Rawls who concentrated on creating ideal institutions based on fictitious social contracts. Sen supports recognizing and eliminating blatant injustices in the real world rather than aiming for a society that is entirely just. The capability approach, which bases its assessment of justice on people's actual freedoms and capacities to live the lives they value, forms the foundation of Sen's theory (Sen, 2009). He contends that rather than focusing solely on wealth, resources, or utility, justice should also consider people's talents, or what they can actually achieve or be. For example, equal access to healthcare and education is insufficient unless it leads to equal capabilities for every person. Sen's theory heavily relies on public reasoning. According to him, open discussion among citizens with different viewpoints should determine justice rather than relying just on the opinions of specialists or authorities. Cultural diversity and the complexity of the real world are respected by this pluralistic viewpoint (Sen, 2009). Sen also criticizes "transcendental institutionalism"—the pursuit of structures that are perfectly just—and makes the case for "comparative justice," which aims to improve justice gradually by eliminating outward manifestations of injustice like poverty, inequality, and discrimination. Sen's theory, which offers

a more practical, inclusive, and human-centered concept of justice, has influenced academics in a variety of fields, including economics, philosophy, and development studies.

A Theory of Justice by John Rawls, published in 1971, is regarded as one of the most important works of political philosophy in the 20th century. How to create a just society is the main focus of Rawls' theory, and he provides a philosophical and moral framework based on the notion of "justice as fairness." Drawing inspiration from social contract theorists such as Locke, Rousseau, and Kant, Rawls questions conventional utilitarian perspectives and suggests a contractarian approach to justice. The "original position," a fictitious scenario in which reasonable people band together to decide on the justice principles that would guide their society, is at the core of Rawls' theory. These people are shielded by a "veil of ignorance" to maintain objectivity; they are unaware of their own social standing, abilities, wealth, and religion. These people are hidden behind a "veil of ignorance" to maintain objectivity; they are unaware of their own social standing, abilities, riches, gender, religion, or ethnicity. Because they are unsure of their own social status, Rawls contends that in such a scenario, people would choose values that are equitable to everyone, particularly the most marginalized. Two principles of justice are developed by Rawls from this thought experiment: The First Principle (Equal Liberty) states that everyone has an equal claim to the broadest fundamental freedoms that are consistent with those of others. These include the rights to political involvement as well as the freedoms of association, conscience, and thought. Social and Economic Inequality, the Second Principle: a. Fair Equality of Opportunity: All people must be able to apply for offices and posts under the terms of fair equality. b. The Difference Principle states that wealth and income disparities are only justified if they help the most disadvantaged people in society.

Rawls highlights that economic benefits are secondary to liberty. Because the first principle has lexical precedence over the second, fundamental liberties and rights cannot be sacrificed for societal or financial gain. In contrast, utilitarianism permits the compromise of certain people's rights in the name of the greater good. Because utilitarianism aggregates welfare throughout the population without regard for individual justice, Rawls argues that it fails to take seriously the distinctness of humans. Furthermore, Rawls concentrates on the fundamental institutions of society, such as the political constitution, the economy, and the legal system. According to Rawls, a fair distribution of rights, obligations, and the rewards of cooperation over time will be guaranteed by a just basic structure. Rawls's theory has greatly influenced constituti

onal law, political philosophy, and social policy debates. It has impacted discussions about affirmative action, social fairness, and income distribution. Alternative theories, like Robert Nozick's libertarian critique, have been offered by critics in response, but Rawls's work is still fundamental to discussions of justice today. In conclusion, Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (1971) presents a picture of a just society in which equality, justice, and care for the weakest members of society are paramount. Rawls provides a framework that strikes a balance between the rights of the individual and the general welfare of society through the ideas of justice as fairness.

Equity and Quality Education

Two essential components of inclusive and successful educational systems are equity and quality. Ensuring that all students have equitable access to educational opportunities, irrespective of their socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, aptitude, or geography, is known as equity in education. To enable meaningful learning outcomes for everyone, quality education, on the other hand, focuses on providing competent teachers, relevant curricula, supportive learning environments, and effective teaching. According to UNESCO (2017), attaining equity entails more than just equality; it also entails attending to the requirements of each individual by giving underprivileged students extra assistance. This includes eliminating obstacles that may restrict access or academic performance, such as discrimination, poverty, and language barriers. Education systems that lack equity frequently serve to perpetuate already-existing disparities.

Equity and quality go hand in hand. Only a wealthy few can afford high-quality education without equity, and increasing access has little benefit without quality. Policies that put both first, like early childhood education, focused teacher preparation, and inclusive curricula, can improve overall performance and close achievement inequalities (OECD, 2012). Problems like gender-based obstacles, rural-urban differences, and socioeconomic inequities still exist in Nepal. The government's initiatives to guarantee inclusive and equitable education through curriculum reform, teacher training, and assistance for underrepresented groups are highlighted in the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) (Ministry of Education, 2016).

Reservation System for Social Justice

Nepal's reservation system is a transformative tool designed to promote social justice and equality in a historically stratified society. Rooted in the Interim Constitution of 2007 and

continued in the 2015 Constitution of Nepal, the reservation system seeks to uplift marginalized communities—such as women, Dalits, indigenous nationalities (Janajatis), Madhesis, and people with disabilities—by ensuring their representation in government, education, and employment sectors (Government of Nepal, 2015).

The Public Service Commission (PSC) and other institutions implement reservation policies that allocate specific quotas for underrepresented groups. For example, 45% of the total seats in civil service are reserved for these groups, divided among women (33%), indigenous peoples (27%), Madhesis (22%), Dalits (9%), and others (9%) (PSC Nepal, 2020). This approach recognizes historical inequalities and attempts to create a level playing field (PSC Act)

The reservation system is not merely a policy of representation—it is a pathway to empowerment. By enabling access to education and decision-making roles, it helps dismantle centuries of discrimination and opens doors for marginalized voices to shape national development. In sectors like education, health, and administration, the presence of diverse groups enhances equity, innovation, and inclusivity (Gurung, 2014).

In the regard of promoting equity in education, Education for All (2004-2009) project has also contributed a lot. The project with the World Bank in coordination with other donors, supported the government in reforms focusing on three primary objectives: i) Ensuring access and equity in primary education especially for girls and the students from disadvantaged communities, ii) Enhancing quality and relevance of primary education and, iii) improving efficiency and institutional capacity of schools and educational institutions.

Nepal's 16th Periodic Plan (2024/25–2028/29), developed by the National Planning Commission, envisions building a prosperous, inclusive, and just society. As Nepal moves toward federal democratic governance, the promotion of equality and social justice is central to achieving sustainable development and peace. The 16th Plan adopts a rights-based approach to development, aiming to reduce disparities in income, geography, gender, caste, ethnicity, and disability through inclusive policies and targeted interventions. A core priority of the Plan is social inclusion, with strategic emphasis on empowering marginalized and disadvantaged communities. It focuses on strengthening affirmative action policies, expanding access to education, healthcare, employment, and political representation for women, Dalits, indigenous peoples, Madhesis, Muslims, and persons with disabilities. The Plan commits to ensuring that development outcomes are equitably distributed and that no one is left behind.

The 16th Plan further promotes social justice by integrating principles of human rights, non-discrimination, and equitable resource distribution into all sectors. It emphasizes social protection schemes, such as old age allowances, maternity care, health insurance for the poor, and scholarships for marginalized children. The Plan also advances gender equality through policy frameworks that promote equal pay, women's leadership, and protection against gender-based violence. Importantly, the Plan encourages participatory governance, enabling local governments to address community-specific inequalities through inclusive planning and budgeting. Special programs aim to uplift backward regions and promote harmony among diverse social groups. In essence, the 16th Plan sets a roadmap for achieving "Samriddha Nepal, Sukhi Nepali" (Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali) by ensuring equality, dignity, and justice for all.

In the same way, Educational Act 2028 has separated 45% of vacancies for reservation on different six titles for government jobs for promoting equity. Forty-five percentage of total vacancies has assumed 100% and distributed for the following six categories: for women 33%; for the ethnic nationalities 27%; for the people of terai 22%; for Dalit 9%; for differently-abled 5% and backward areas 4%. (Education Act, 2028).

Empirical Literature Review

The persistent tension between localized indigenous identities and dominant macro-languages remains a central focal point of empirical inquiry in Nepal's school education. A comprehensive nationwide assessment commissioned by the National Statistics Office and UNICEF Nepal (2024) analyzed the operational hurdles of Language in Education Policies (LIEPs), demonstrating that children from non-Nepali backgrounds face steep learning deficits when forced into unfamiliar mediums of instruction (MOIs) like standard Nepali or English. This structural disadvantage is further examined by Raut (2024), whose qualitative inquiry into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms highlighted how the inevitable cross-linguistic interference of an indigenous mother tongue alters English phonological and syntactic acquisition, arguing that rigid monolingual policies ultimately degrade classroom learning outcomes. To understand the generational impact of these micro-level classroom experiences, an empirical study conducted at Padmakanya Multiple Campus (Tribhuvan University, 2024)

mapped language attrition among undergraduate students, discovering that while 86.67% retained baseline oral proficiency in their maternal tongues, structural biases toward globalized English and official Nepali have severely eroded their functional literacy and written competencies.

Beyond language, structural equity has been evaluated through the lenses of affirmative action, resource parity, and transformative pedagogy. Subedi et al. (2022) conducted an extensive econometric analysis tracking the long-term impacts of Nepal's reservation policy across educational institutions and the labor market, revealing that while college seat allocations substantially enhance the overall welfare and upward mobility of historically marginalized groups, the absolute magnitude of seat transfers must be strategically managed to avoid institutional friction or diminishing systemic returns. This macro-economic reality is closely mirrored by Jamil and Baniamin (2020), whose institutional evaluation of affirmative action frameworks since 2007 demonstrated visible gains in bureaucratic and educational inclusivity for Dalits and ethnic minorities, even as deep-seated patriarchal structures and elite capture continue to restrict these marginalized groups from reaching decisive leadership or policy-making tiers. At the classroom level, a localized empirical study from Prithvi Narayan Campus (2025) documented how mathematics instructors face intense operational challenges—such as rampant chronic absenteeism and cultural friction—when attempting to shift from rigid, traditional instructional techniques toward multicultural, equitable teaching strategies designed for marginalized learners.

The final cluster of empirical research investigates the tangible efficacy of material welfare programs and critical pedagogy in dismantling deep-seated socio-economic barriers. Evaluating targeted safety nets, a joint national assessment on inclusive education highlighted that state-sponsored targeted scholarship schemes and the national midday meal program have successfully narrowed primary-grade enrollment gaps across diverse wealth quintiles, yet severe multi-dimensional barriers still cause disproportionately high dropout rates among Madhesi Dalit girls and religious minorities in Madhesh Province. Addressing the structural sustainability of these nutritional interventions, a participatory action research case study conducted by Bhattarai et al. (2026) demonstrated that shifting to a collaborative, tripolar cost-sharing framework between local government subsidies, school management committees, and community stakeholders successfully extended basic meal provisions through grade eight, drastically

stabilizing daily student attendance and reducing dropout rates in rural communities. This material support works hand-in-hand with ideological shifts, as documented in an interpretive study by Tejganga Multiple Campus (2026) on transformative learning across Nepalese community schools, which verified that when educators deliberately adopt dialogic, problem-posing methods to actively challenge caste-based prejudices and gender norms, students are effectively empowered to subvert historically reproduced societal inequalities.

Theoretical Underpinning

Based on structural theory, this analytical study examines a number of documents pertaining to equity and social justice. The idea that aspects of human culture must be interpreted in light of their connection to a more comprehensive system or structure is known as structuralism in linguistics and education. The fundamental and generally applicable components determine the underlying structure, which is addressed by structuralism (Hawkes, 2005).

Method

The research design used for the study is qualitative. Since the researcher gathered information on social justice education from a variety of documents and policies, including the Nepalese constitution, the Education Act, and Education for All, the document study approach was employed to conduct this study. The descriptive approaches used to collect the data served as the foundation for the analytical approach. The term "document study method" describes the examination of documents that provide details about the situation or occurrence being studied. Physical sources—most often written documents—in the social, public, or digital sphere are investigated, categorized, and analyzed using this method.

Because it is predicated on a naturalistic set of scientific methods, a subjective epistemology, and a relativist ontology, the researcher has chosen to conduct this study using an interpretative research paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The documents were gathered and carefully examined to determine the provisions for equality and equity. Prior to examining the instructional materials, the researcher had given them careful consideration. Information about social justice, such as equity and equality, was discovered through the analysis and interpretation of existing documents. I made assumptions about the many aspects of social reality when I was

analyzing the data. In this way, an interpretive research paradigm has served as the foundation for this investigation.

In this study, the analytical method of data analysis was applied. The reason for this is that this method integrates the connection between a nation's educational system and its social, political, and economic circumstances. Analysis is a necessary component of any comparative study. This is due to the fact that analysis allows one to disentangle the different components and comprehend the significance of each one separately. Only when comparing social and educational organizations is the analytical method deemed beneficial. The four primary components of analysis that the researcher has employed are as follows:

- **Data Collection on Education:** The researcher used the Curriculum Development Center's website, which is run by the Ministry of Education, to gather data about education in Nepal. The descriptive approaches used to collect the data served as the foundation for the analytical approach.
- **Interpretation of related data:** The information gathered was analyzed to see how social justice was present in Nepal's educational systems.
- **Establishing comparison criteria:** The researcher in this study had specific criteria in order to fairly comprehend Nepal's educational system through social justice. These standards are frequently developed by the analytical approach.
- **Interpretation and conclusion:** The researcher was able to evaluate the data gathered and draw specific conclusions based on the social justice that prevailed in education system of Nepal by using the three aforementioned parts of analysis.

Findings and Discussion

The following findings have been drawn from the study.

Reservation Vacancies to Create Equity

Nepal's reservation system in education and civil service stands as a vital mechanism for advancing equity and social justice. Rooted in constitutional provisions, these policies aim to correct historical injustices and systemic exclusions by allocating specific quotas for marginalized communities. The intent is not only to ensure representation but to foster a more

inclusive national identity, where institutions reflect the diversity of the people they serve. In the realm of education, these measures help amplify voices that have long been absent from decision-making spaces, bridging the gap between policy and lived experiences.

The provision of 33% reservation for women marks a significant stride toward gender equality in professional fields traditionally dominated by men. This commitment challenges patriarchal norms and enables women to become active agents of change within schools and public offices. Their increased representation promotes gender-sensitive pedagogy, nurtures inclusive educational environments, and enhances governance by integrating perspectives that had previously been silenced. Over time, such structural change empowers future generations to view leadership and intellectual authority as gender-neutral concepts.

Equally impactful is the inclusion of Indigenous groups and Madheshi communities, reserved at 27% and 22% respectively. These populations have historically faced marginalization due to geographic, linguistic, and socio-political factors. Reservation policies allow them to assert their cultural and intellectual contributions in the public sphere, fostering pluralism in both teaching and policy. By recognizing these identities within formal systems, Nepal not only affirms their rights but also promotes multicultural understanding, which is essential for democratic and equitable nation-building.

The 9% reservation for Dalits and the combined 9% for persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups embody a vision for structural transformation. These quotas are not just a means to an end but a signal of societal recognition for those who have endured systemic neglect. Including them in teaching and civil service roles validates their dignity and disrupts traditional hierarchies. It also enriches institutional cultures by integrating perspectives shaped by resilience and diverse lived experiences. Equity, in this sense, is achieved not by assimilation but by authentic inclusion.

Altogether, the reservation policy is a foundational tool in the pursuit of social justice in Nepal. While some may critique quotas as limiting meritocracy, their true function is to balance the scales where merit has long been defined by privilege. These vacancies offer a platform for transformative leadership among marginalized groups, shifting societal attitudes and building trust in public institutions. Ultimately, reservation is not just a policy—it is a promise to honor diversity, recognize historical injustices, and pave the way for a more equitable future.

Scholarships and Supportive Programs for Promoting Social Justice in Education

Nepal has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at promoting social justice through education, notably via scholarship schemes, freeshipprogrammes, and inclusive support policies. These efforts seek to bridge systemic gaps caused by poverty, social exclusion, and geographical disparities. By providing financial and material support to students from marginalized communities, the government aims to equalize opportunities and build a foundation for inclusive development. Education, in this context, is not just a personal aspiration but a collective right that serves as the cornerstone of empowerment and equity.

Various scholarship provisions exist to uplift marginalized communities and foster inclusive access to higher education. Government-funded scholarships typically reserve 10% of seats for students from disadvantaged groups, including Dalits, girls, indigenous communities (Janjati), Madhesi, Muslims, persons with disabilities, and those from remote or backward regions. For example, Tribhuvan University designates 10% of regular and full-fee program seats for female applicants, while also allocating 20% of regular seats to marginalized communities with defined percentages such as 9% for Dalits, 14% for Madhesi (including 3% for Madhesi Dalit females), and similar distributions among other underrepresented groups. Pokhara University reserves 10% of seats in affiliated colleges and 20% in its constituent schools for scholarship recipients, based on academic merit and financial need. Additionally, universities like Kathmandu University provide scholarships to economically disadvantaged students, typically awarding one scholarship per 30 fee-paying students. These programs aim to promote equitable education and empower students from historically excluded backgrounds through merit-based and need-based support.

Scholarship programmes targeted at Dalits, Indigenous peoples, Madheshis, women, persons with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups are pivotal in addressing long-standing inequalities. These financial supports allow students who might otherwise be excluded due to economic hardship to attend school, complete their education, and pursue higher studies. More than just financial aid, these scholarships serve as formal recognition of the historical disadvantages faced by marginalized communities. When strategically administered, they can change life trajectories, strengthen self-worth, and foster long-term civic participation among beneficiaries.

Freeship programmes reinforce this commitment to equity by removing tuition barriers for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition to making education accessible, freeships help reduce drop-out rates and improve academic retention. These policies are especially important in remote areas, where families may struggle to afford basic schooling expenses. The freeship model also aligns with Nepal's broader goals of inclusive growth, allowing children from all walks of life to pursue their dreams in classrooms that welcome diversity and reject discrimination.

The midday meal programme, initiated by World Food Program (1970s) although seemingly simple, has had far-reaching effects on attendance and nutrition in public schools. For many children from impoverished communities, this is the only nutritious meal they receive in a day. Beyond improving health outcomes, the promise of a daily meal has boosted school enrollment and attendance, particularly among girls and younger children. This intervention integrates education with welfare, reminding society that learning thrives when basic human needs are met. It also helps to counteract child labor and early marriage by creating incentives for continued schooling.

Together, these programmes represent Nepal's evolving vision for social justice in education—one that acknowledges past disparities while actively crafting equitable futures. The focus is not merely on access, but on sustained inclusion, where every child is supported, respected, and given the tools to succeed. Such policies lay the groundwork for dismantling hierarchies and promoting a just society in which education becomes a universal and transformative right. As Nepal moves forward, expanding and refining these initiatives will be crucial to realizing a truly inclusive educational system.

Mother-tongue Education for Social Justice

Nepal's linguistic landscape, with over 124 spoken languages, presents both an extraordinary cultural richness and a complex challenge for inclusive education. The Constitution of Nepal recognizes the right to receive education in one's mother tongue up to the basic level, marking a critical step toward respecting linguistic diversity. However, in practice, this provision often faces hurdles in implementation due to limited resources, political complexities, and uneven commitment across regions. A qualitative study exploring this issue

offers valuable insight into how linguistic rights are exercised—or marginalized—within Nepal's evolving educational system.

Mother-tongue education plays a pivotal role in promoting social justice, especially for communities historically marginalized due to language and ethnicity. When children are taught in the language they speak at home, it enhances comprehension, cognitive development, and school retention rates. More than pedagogy, it affirms the cultural identity of learners and affirms their place within the national narrative. For many indigenous groups in Nepal, mother-tongue instruction is not merely a preference but a right tied to dignity, empowerment, and equity.

Despite its potential, the implementation of mother-tongue education encounters several challenges. Teacher shortages, inadequate training, and the lack of curriculum materials in local languages can stall progress. Schools in linguistically diverse areas often default to Nepali or English, unintentionally sidelining minority languages. This dynamic perpetuates inequality and disconnection between students and their learning environment, creating barriers to academic success and civic participation.

In contrast, there are local initiatives and community-driven models that offer hope. Some municipalities have introduced pilot programs for multilingual education, and grassroots organizations have stepped in to produce textbooks and train teachers. These efforts highlight the possibility of aligning national goals with local realities and underscore the need for context-sensitive policymaking. Capturing the voices of teachers, students, and community leaders in your study can illuminate these lived experiences and inspire innovative solutions.

Ultimately, advocating for mother-tongue education is not just about language—it is about justice. It compels policymakers and educators to rethink educational equity and inclusion through a linguistic lens. Your research can serve as a catalyst for policy dialogue, highlighting how educational access becomes more meaningful when learners are taught in the language of their hearts and homes. Through this lens, Nepal has the opportunity to forge a more inclusive education system—one that honors its cultural mosaic while empowering its diverse citizens.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the multifaceted efforts undertaken within Nepal's education system to promote social justice and equity. The thematic analysis revealed three critical domains—reservation vacancies, scholarship and support programs, and mother tongue

education—that collectively reflect the state's commitment to inclusive education. These provisions, while commendable, require deeper scrutiny to assess their effectiveness and sustainability. The reservation system, designed to ensure equitable access for marginalized groups such as Dalits, Janajatis, and women, aligns with Nepal's broader constitutional mandate for social inclusion (Department of Education, 2014). However, the implementation of these quotas often faces challenges related to transparency, awareness, and institutional bias. While the policy framework exists, its translation into practice is uneven across regions and institutions. This suggests a need for robust monitoring mechanisms and capacity-building initiatives to ensure that reservation policies genuinely empower disadvantaged communities.

Scholarship and supportive programs have emerged as vital tools in bridging educational gaps. These initiatives, including targeted financial aid, free textbooks, and midday meals, aim to reduce economic barriers to schooling. Yet, as Dhakal (2024) notes, persistent inequalities rooted in caste, gender, and geography continue to hinder equitable access. The effectiveness of these programs is contingent not only on their availability but also on their cultural relevance and responsiveness to local needs. For instance, scholarship schemes must consider intersectional disadvantages—such as being both female and from a remote indigenous community—to avoid reinforcing existing hierarchies. Mother tongue education represents a progressive stride toward cultural and linguistic inclusion. Nepal's multilingual landscape necessitates pedagogical approaches that respect and incorporate native languages, especially in early education. Research indicates that children learn more effectively when taught in their first language, fostering both cognitive development and cultural pride (Centre for Social Change, 2024). However, the lack of trained teachers, standardized curricula, and institutional support poses significant hurdles. Without systemic investment in multilingual education, the promise of linguistic justice remains aspirational.

Collectively, these findings suggest that while Nepal has laid a foundational framework for promoting social justice in education, the journey toward equity is ongoing and complex. Structural reforms must be accompanied by grassroots engagement, policy coherence, and sustained political will. Moreover, educational equity should not be viewed merely as access to schooling but as the cultivation of environments where all learners can thrive regardless of their background. Future efforts should prioritize inclusive leadership, community participation, and data-driven policy adjustments. As Dhakal (2024) emphasizes, transformational leadership in

schools can play a pivotal role in dismantling entrenched inequalities and fostering inclusive cultures. Therefore, investing in leadership development and accountability mechanisms is crucial.

Conclusion

As the study aims to explore the social justice in the education system in Nepal. There are different provisions to maintain the equity and social justice. The three themes are presented as the findings of the study. The reservation system is introduced to maintain and sustain the social justice in Nepal. Likewise the second finding scholarship and different supportive programmers for the students to promote social justice in education. Similarly, mother tongue education in the basic level is another provision for the social justice and equity in education. The study claims that the idea of social justice is very effective tool to foster and to increase the access to education. In conclusion, promoting social justice in Nepalese education demands a holistic approach that integrates policy, practice, and pedagogy. The provisions identified in this study are promising, but their impact hinges on sustained commitment, contextual sensitivity, and collaborative action across all levels of the education system.

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