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Factors Influencing the Student Enrolment Rate at Higher Education in Nepal

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Abstract

This study is carried out to explore the factors influencing students' enrolment rates in higher education at Tribhuvan University (TU). It is a mixed-method study that employs a convergent mixed-method design. Data were collected from 384 students and 6 teachers with the educational authorities of TU by using surveys and in-depth interviews. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis in convergent form. Findings revealed strong socio-economic and personal influences, with over 60% of students reporting monthly family incomes below NPR 15,000, and financial obstacles to enrolment. A large majority (67.4%) were aged 25 to 29, reflecting delayed entry, as many worked first to save for enrolment. Females comprised 59.6% of respondents, indicating higher female participation partly due to male labor migration abroad. Motivation for enrolment centered on future job security (50.8%) and social prestige, with families and teachers providing critical encouragement. Nearly 70% were first-generation university students. Academic and institutional factors also shaped access. 64.1% of students participated from master's program, while the Humanities faculty had a good representation (42.4%) in this study. Still, institutional and systemic barriers persisted, only 21.6% believed scholarships were easily available, fewer than 40% were satisfied with the enrolment process, and limited information, housing, and transport created big challenges. Overall, the study highlights the need for enhanced financial support, clearer communication, and inclusive support policies to improve equitable enrolment at TU.

Keywords: *Factors, Influencing, Higher Education, Enrolment Rate*

Introduction

Higher education is the third level of education. It is taken after completing school education in colleges and universities (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2019). It usually includes undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Therefore, higher education allows us to study a subject of interest and helps us increase our career prospects and earning potential. Nepal has a multi-university system that includes 12 central universities, 4 provincial universities, 7 health/medical academics, and one proposed university (UGC, 2024). They are Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Purbanchal University, Nepal Sanskrit University, Pokhara University, Lumbini Bauddha University, Agriculture and Forestry University, Far Western University, Mid-western University, Nepal Open University, Rajarshi Janak University, Madan Bhandari Science and Technology University, and Lumbini Prabidhik University. Medical academy includes National Academy of Medical Science, Karnali Academy for Health Sciences, Patan Academy for Health Sciences, Pokhara Academy for Health Sciences, B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences etc. Some provincial governments have also started academic programs and established new universities. Preparations are underway at the federal level to establish new universities such as Bidushi Yogmaya University (Paudyal, 2016).

Based on educational data for (2019), an infographic shows that the number of undergraduate students enrolled was almost evenly distributed between genders, with 211,451 female students and 183,438 male students. However, at the master's level, male students were 8% higher than female students, with 17,884 female and 25,728 male students. At the MPhil level, only 16% of the students were female (167) compared to 84% male (908). Similarly, at the Ph.D. level, only 17% of the students were female (340) compared to 83% male (1,679). The difference at the PGD level (119 Females and 105 Males) is only 5%. According to the current data, each college or university in Nepal has an average of 302.37 undergraduate students, while there are slightly fewer than half as many postgraduate students. The current ratio between these two groups is 144.90. There are 14 Ph.D. and 6 MPhil institutions, with a campus-to-student ratio of 179.17 and 144.21, respectively. Additionally, there are 224 students registered in the degree program and seven institutions that facilitate PGD studies, which means that each institution has an average of 32 students.

In total, 441,789 students are enrolled in the health academies and universities. This number makes up over 75% of the student population at Tribhuvan University. Pokhara University has the most students enrolled, with 30,542 students, followed by TU. Purbanchal University has the most enrolled students, with 27,527 students, followed by Kathmandu University with 18,356 students. Far Western University has 10,113 students, Mid-Western University has 7,343 students, Agriculture and Forestry University has 3,871 students, Nepal Sanskrit University has 3,749 students, Nepal Open University has 955 students, Lumbini Buddhist University has 675 students, and Rajarshi Janak University has 153 students. The list is arranged in descending order based on the enrolled students. The B. P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences has the highest number of students enrolled among the five autonomous health academies, with 1,528 students. Patan Academy of Health Sciences and the National Academy of

Health Sciences have 931 and 447 students enrolled, respectively. Karnali Academy of Health Sciences has 56 students enrolled overall, while Rapti Academy of Health Sciences has not yet received any enrolments.

Tribhuvan University has large number of students' enrolment than other universities. In total 491,299 students cover the 77.61 percent of the higher education of Nepal (UGC, 2024). It indicates that the students' enrolment rate in higher education increased in the year (2024) than data given in the year (2019) of UGC report. Compared to other developing nations like India, Malaysia, and Vietnam, Nepal has a lower gross enrolment rate in higher education (Joshi, 2018). Only 14.42% With 552 higher education institutions (HEIs) having fewer than 100 students appearing for the final exam and 277 HEIs having between 100 and 200 students, the sustainability of academic programs and resource mobilization remains challenging due to the lack of uniform norms and mapping of HEIs during the establishment and affiliation of new HEIs.

The graduation rate in Nepal's higher education system is extremely low, with only 26.1% of students graduating with a bachelor's degree from Tribhuvan University, despite 69% of students being enrolled (Goyal, 2018). There is a 73% wastage rate, making it difficult to improve the quality of higher education and make it relevant to the market. Although, there are investments in higher education, a considerable number of students continue to go out of Nepal in search of quality education, especially in technical and vocational courses. Consequently, the country is losing a lot of money. As per the research, the rate of student enrolment in higher educational institutions in Nepal has been growing at an upsetting rate since the year 1994 (Steyn & De Villiers, 2006). Higher education and training include certifications, diplomas, postgraduate and undergraduate degrees, and doctoral degrees.

In the international context, the South African higher education institutions consist of 11 traditional, five technological, and six comprehensive institutions (Cloete, 2014). The Northern Cape and Mpumalanga provinces have recently opened two new universities that did not have any higher learning institutions. The establishment of the two institutions in such provinces will also raise the enrolment rates, as a majority of the students are natives of their home provinces. Enrolment rate in higher education is an important sign in the development and preparation of employees in a country in terms of education. In Nepal, as in most other developing nations, higher education development and quality is a very critical element in determining the future of the country. Educational institutions and policymakers need to be aware of what drives students to attend higher education in order to provide equal access, higher retention rates, and the overall effectiveness of the higher education system.

Although we had many years of teaching experience in Tribhuvan University, the decreasing enrolment of students in the campuses has been noticed as well as the rise in the number of institutions and students who are going to study abroad. It has been reported that more than one lakh students acquire NOCs each year to pursue education abroad and many of the higher education institutions have less than 100

students implying gradual decrease in higher education enrolment. This tendency causes the issue of whether there is a real decline in the enrolment rates and what factors impact the enrolment choice of students in higher education. Prince et al. (2017) propose that socio-economic background, out of date curriculum, migration, institutional structure and poor job market fit are the main factors that influence the rate of enrolment particularly by region and demography in Nepal. Consequently, it is necessary to study the factors that can drive students to join institutions of higher learning to enhance policy, access, and equity and efficacy of higher education in Nepal. This study offers the following objectives and research questions:

Research Objectives

i. To explore the factors affecting students' enrolment rate in higher education at Tribhuvan University
ii. To investigate the perception of teachers towards students' enrolment rate in higher education at Tribhuvan University
iii. To assess the university policies and initiatives aimed at increasing enrolment rates in higher education at Tribhuvan University

Research Questions

i. What are the key socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors affecting students' enrolment rate in higher education at Tribhuvan University?
ii. How do teachers at Tribhuvan University perceive the trends and challenges related to student enrolment rate in higher education?
iii. What university-level policies and initiatives have been implemented to improve enrolment rates at Tribhuvan University?
iv. How effective are the current policies and initiatives of Tribhuvan University in addressing the barriers to the student enrolment rate in higher education?

Literature Review and Gap

According to the review, theoretical and empirical sources have integrated divergent points of knowledge and have presented gaps in research. Tribhuvan University (TU) is the biggest and oldest University in Nepal. According to the Human Capital Theory, individuals pursue higher education in order to get a better income in the future and high social status, but in the Nepali socio-economic context, the theory cannot always be applied because graduates are constantly unemployed (Goyal, 2018). Equally, the Access and Equity Framework is aimed at bringing everyone to education. The prevalence of the gender and regional variations within the enrolment data of TU implies that it still has barriers to access (Infographic Report, 2019). The research about cross-cultural studies, including that by Samuel et al. (2019), Minh et al. (2023) on university choice in Nigeria and Vietnam, respectively, has not been introduced into the framework of the Nepalese higher education system. Another study has also shown that reputation of the university, the social media attention, and the parental controls are some other factors that affect student choices (Ljepava et al., 2022; Mathabo et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the enrolment of TU has not been researched. Nepal has focused more on the descriptive statistics as opposed to the underlying decision-making process of students and

families through the Rational Choice Theory that focuses on the cost-benefit analysis of students and families (Steyn & De Villiers, 2006). There is very little empirical evidence on how the financial constraints, perceived payoffs on education and the quality of institutions interact to affect enrolment decisions in TU. Further, there is a sociocultural capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986) indicates that family and parental education affect university attendance but none of the studies in Nepal have addressed the impact of these two forms of capital in enrolling students to the higher learning institution. Although Goyal (2018) confirms that the enrolment rate at TU is low, the aspects that influence the initial enrolment have not been comprehensively examined, especially when they are associated with socio-economic status and gender. Nepal does not have a logical structure of incorporating sociocultural, economic, and institutional factors as in other nations and Taiwan (Kuang et al., 2019). The literature available also does not consider the role played by the perception that the students possess on their work opportunities, relevance of the curriculum and the quality of teaching in determining the enrolment behavior in the Nepal government campuses. Moreover, even though in Nepal TU makes up the majority (over 75) of enrolled in total higher education (Infographic Report, 2019), the literature interested in motivational, structural, and policy-related factors influencing student enrolment is limited. The majority of the past studies are based on quantitative and institution-wide research, leaving a gap in the investigation of mixed approaches that would record a lived experience of students and situational barriers. This gap in the knowledge prevents the easy formulation of the specific interventions to expand enrolment equity and retention by policy makers and administrators. In this way, this paper will address this gap by examining the relationship between the economic, social, and cultural variables that influence enrolment decisions at TU on a theoretically substantiated and case-specific platform.

Methodology

The research was conducted in the Kathmandu Valley, and the study was centered on Tribhuvan University and its constituent campuses based at Kathmandu valley in Kirtipur, Tahachal and Bhaktapur. These locations were chosen to have a sample that is representative of a wide population of students, teachers, and educational authorities. The research philosophy considered in the work was pragmatic, which made it possible to combine both quantitative and qualitative methods and gain an insight into the factors that impact higher education enrolment. The combination of statistical evidence and contextual insights during the process of finding a compromise had been made possible by pragmatism to improve the reliability and validity of the findings. Convergent mixed-methods research design was used where both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered at the same time. The design helped to do a detailed analysis of the enrolment patterns and individual experiences that were involved in higher education decisions. Students and institutions of higher learning based in the Tribhuvan University were the target population. Participants were selected using a mix of purposive sampling and random sampling. The used quantitative sample consisted of 384 students with the help of two

constituent campuses and four central departments. To represent the qualitative element, two educational authorities and four heads of departments were selected purposely. This was a sampling strategy that guaranteed representation whereas the selection bias was minimal. Some of the data collection methods were structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The quantitative instrument was a 5-point Likert questionnaire about the level of awareness, financial situation, perceived benefits, and access to scholarships. Semi-structured interviews on cultural, social and motivational determinants of enrolment were used to gather qualitative information. SPSS was used to analyze quantitative data through descriptive and comparative statistical techniques. Thematic and narrative analysis of qualitative data were used to determine the major patterns and meanings. The validity of the study was boosted by the triangulation of the survey data, findings of the interviews, and secondary sources. To have proper data management, data were coded, transcribed, anonymized, and stored safely. Ethical concerns were addressed by informed consent, confidentiality and voluntary involvement. Research instruments were pilot tested to provide clarity and reliability which enhanced the overall credibility of the study.

Results and Discussions

The result and discussion are presented in the following theme:

Analysis of Demographic Patterns: Age, Gender, Study Level, and Faculty

The analysis of demographic patterns examines how age, gender, study level, and faculty affiliation influence the composition of the study participants. It highlights the distribution of students across different age groups, showing where the majority of learners fall in their academic journey. Gender representation provides insight into the balance or disparity between male and female students within the sample. The study level reveals whether most participants are undergraduates, graduates, or postgraduates, reflecting their academic progression. Finally, examining the faculty categories illustrates which disciplines or fields of study attract the highest number of respondents, offering a clearer picture of the overall demographic trends. Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 present the demographic pattern of this study. This study employs a convergent mixed-methods design. Therefore, quantitative and qualitative analysis is carried out simultaneously.

Table 1: *Analysis of enrolment factors regarding age*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Below 20	2	.5
22-24	42	10.9
25-29	259	67.4
30-34	76	19.8
Above 35	5	1.3
Total	384	100.0

Table 1 shows that most students (67.4%) are between 25 and 29 years old, indicating that higher education is common among all students. Only 0.5% are below 20, meaning few join universities immediately after school. About 20% are aged 30–

34, suggesting continuing education is appreciated. A small 1.3% are above 35, reflecting limited late-career enrolment. Overall, higher education in this sample mainly attracts young adults rather than teenagers.

Table 2: *Analysis of enrolment factors regarding sex*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Male	149	38.8
Female	229	59.6
Other	1	.3
Not mentioned	5	1.3
Total	384	100.0

Table 2 shows the analysis of enrolment factors regarding sex. The females make up 59.6% of the students, showing stronger participation of women. Males account for 38.8%, indicating a gender gap favoring females. Only 0.3% identify as the other gender, and 1.3% did not mention gender. This suggests that women are increasingly seeking higher education. The trend highlights progress in gender inclusion.

Table 3: *Analysis of enrolment factors regarding study level*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor	108	28.1
Masters	246	64.1
Mphil	27	7.0
PhD	3	.8
Total	384	100.0

Table 3 indicates that a majority (64.1%) are master's students, making postgraduate study the most common. Bachelor's students are 28.1%, reflecting a smaller undergraduate share. The MPhil (7%) and PhD (0.8%) numbers are low, indicating limited enrolment in advanced research. This pattern signals a strong interest in master's qualifications for career growth. Doctoral-level study remains rare.

Table 4: *Analysis of students' responses regarding faculty*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Humanity	163	42.4
Education	126	32.8
Management	57	14.8
Science and Technology	38	9.9
Total	384	100.0

Table 4 shows that analysis of student responses regarding faculties. Humanities lead with 42.4% of students, showing a wide interest in social and cultural studies. Education follows at 32.8%, reflecting demand for teaching careers. Management has 14.8%, while science and technology trail at 9.9%. The figures point to fewer respondents participate in technical fields. This may affect Nepal's future human resources balance.

Most of the students (67.4 %) are 25–29 years old, indicating delayed or work-gap entry into higher education. Women outnumber men (59.6 % vs. 38.8 %),

and master's enrolment (64.1 %) dominates. Similarly, 42.4 percent of the respondents in this study were from the humanities and social sciences. Interviews with participants confirm that many students first seek jobs or save money before enrolling. Faculty noted that *"students may choose not to enroll or may leave if they find good employment opportunities"* (BSA, MD). Several participants also observed that young men often migrate abroad for work, while women remain and continue their education (MKS, SCB). Similarly, Studies of Nepali higher education (Khaniya, 2021; Thapa, 2023) report rising female participation and delayed enrolment due to labor migration and economic constraints. South Asian analyses show that master's degrees are viewed as career accelerators, explaining the large postgraduate share (Altbach & de Wit, 2018).

Analysis of Socio-Economic Background and Financial Barriers

The analysis of socio-economic background and financial barriers examines the students' family income, parental occupation, and living conditions influence their access to education. It reveals patterns of economic diversity, highlighting differences between students from high, middle, and low-income households. The study identifies common financial obstacles, such as tuition costs, limited scholarships, and the need for part-time work, that can hinder academic progress. It also considers the economic challenges that affect students' choices of study programs and enrolment in higher education institutions. Overall, the findings show the critical link between financial capacity and educational opportunities, emphasizing the need for stronger support systems. Tables 5, 6, and 7 represent the analysis of socio-economic background and financial barriers.

Table 5: *Analysis of factors influencing enrolment rate regarding monthly income*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
below 15000	234	60.9
15001- 30000	100	26.0
30001- 50000	44	11.5
50001- 75000	6	1.6
Total	384	100.0

Table 5 shows the analysis of factors influencing enrolment rate regarding monthly income. Most families (60.9%) earn below NPR 15,000. 26% earn 15,001–30,000, while very few exceed 50,000. It clearly shows that low income limits study options. A financial plan is crucial. It clearly shows that economic gaps have an effect on the enrolment rate.

Table 6: *Analysis of factors influencing enrolment regarding students' family Economic status*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	31	8.1
Agree	109	28.4
Neutral	168	43.8
Disagree	67	17.4
Strongly disagree	9	2.3
Total	384	100.0

Table 6 presents the analysis of student family economic status. About 43.8% of students are neutral on their family's economic effect on their studies. 28.4% agree and 8.1% strongly agree that family economy influences enrolment. Still, 19.7% disagree or strongly disagree, showing mixed opinions. Economic pressure is felt but not overwhelming for everyone. This reflects diverse financial backgrounds.

Table 7: *Analysis of enrolment factors regarding time and loan taking for reading*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Yes	128	33.3
No	256	66.7
Total	384	100

Table 7 shows the analysis of enrolment regarding time and loan taking from reading. Two-thirds (66.7%) do not work part-time or take loans. One-third (33.3%) rely on such support. This shows that most students manage without extra jobs or responsibilities. Those who are involved in work face added stress balancing study and income. It indicated that financial independence varies widely.

Tables 5, 6, and 7 reveal that most families earn below NPR 15,000 per month. Only one-third of students take loans or part-time jobs. Around 36 %–44 % say family economy directly influences their study. Similarly, in this line, all interviewers stressed financial strain: *"Parental income is a critical factor… financial constraints often lead to studies being interrupted"* (HBK, CDE). Limited part-time job options and small scholarships make Kathmandu living costs difficult to manage (UKM, CDG; DP, GD science). The literature review supports that the economic status is a major determinant of Nepali higher-education access (World Bank, 2022). First-generation learners (69.8 % here) face particular challenges that match global findings on the need for targeted financial and mentoring support (Tinto, 2017).

Analysis of Motivation, Social & Cultural Influences

The analysis of motivation, social, and cultural influences explores how personal drive and community factors shape students' learning experiences. It examines intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, such as career goals, personal interest, and family expectations. Social influences, including peer support and role models, are assessed for their impact on academic commitment and performance. Cultural traditions and values are also considered, showing the customs, language, and beliefs that affect educational aspirations. Overall, the findings highlight the powerful interaction of personal motivation with social and cultural contexts in guiding students' educational choices and success. Tables 8 to 16 represent the factors influencing enrolment in higher education regarding motivation, social and cultural influences.

Table 8: *Analysis of factors regarding future opportunities*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	46	12.0
Agree	149	38.8
Neutral	87	22.7
Disagree	99	25.8
Strongly disagree	3	.8

Total	384	100.0

Table 8 represents the analysis of factors regarding future opportunity. Half the students (50.8%) agree or strongly agree that they study for future opportunities. About 22.7% are neutral, and 26.6% disagree. This means career and personal growth motivate many, but not all. Some students may study for reasons other than job prospects. It indicated that future opportunity remains an essential factor of enrolment.

Table 9: *Analysis of students' enrolment regarding Family Motivation*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	22	5.7
Agree	159	41.4
Neutral	92	24.0
Disagree	100	26.0
Strongly disagree	11	2.9
Total	384	100.0

Table 9 present the analysis of student's enrolment regarding family motivation. About nearly half (47.1%) feel motivated by family. 24% are neutral, and 28.9% disagree or strongly disagree. Family encouragement is important, but not universal. Some students may self-motivate or lack support. Family backing clearly helps enrolment decisions.

Table 10: *Analysis of students' enrolment regarding Sociocultural aspiration*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	49	12.8
Agree	159	41.4
Neutral	124	32.3
Disagree	50	13.0
Strongly disagree	2	.5
Total	384	100.0

Table 10 indicates the analysis of students' enrolment regarding sociocultural aspiration. More than half (54.2%) agree that cultural goals drive their study. About 32.3% remain neutral. Only 13.5% disagree. Culture and social expectations thus encourage higher education. Tradition can be a positive force.

Table 11: *Analysis of Social support in higher Education enrolment*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	36	9.4
Agree	154	40.1
Neutral	105	27.3
Disagree	87	22.7
Strongly disagree	2	.5
Total	384	100.0

Table 11 shows the analysis of social support in higher education enrolment. Nearly half (49.5%) feel supported socially in higher education. 27.3% are neutral and

23.2% disagree. Community backing matters for persistence. Students with less support may face more challenges. It shows that social networks remain influential for higher education enrolment rate.

Table 12: *Analysis of Information on higher education at the school level*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	25	6.5
Agree	158	41.1
Neutral	116	30.2
Disagree	81	21.1
Strongly disagree	4	1.0
Total	384	100.0

Table 12 shows that analysis of information of higher education in school level. Around 47.6% respondents say schools provide higher education information. 30.2% are neutral, and 22.1% disagree. This indicates school guidance is moderate but not universal. Better counseling could raise enrolment. It concluded that early awareness shapes decisions of enrolment.

Table 13: *Analysis of enrolment factors regarding residence and transportation*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	37	9.6
Agree	180	46.9
Neutral	105	27.3
Disagree	58	15.1
Strongly disagree	4	1.1
Total	384	100.0

Table 13 presents the analysis of enrolment factors regarding residence and transportation. Over half (56.5%) agree that housing and transport are problems. 27.3% are neutral, and 16.2% disagree. Residency and transportation clearly affect the enrolment. Improving infrastructure would help in enrolment rate of higher education. Location of higher education remains a barrier for enrolment.

Table 14: *Analysis of Student-centered enrolment process*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	34	8.9
Agree	116	30.2
Neutral	131	34.1
Disagree	92	24.0
Strongly disagree	11	2.8
Total	384	100.0

Table 14 presents the analysis of student-centered enrolment process. it shows that only 39.1% find the process student-friendly. 34.1% are neutral, while 26.8% disagree. This shows mixed satisfaction. Many students want more user-focused enrolment. It indicated that enrolment process design needs attention for the higher education enrolment rate.

Table 15: *Analysis of the Effect of Scholarship on students' enrolment*

Valid	Frequency	Percent

Strongly agree	32	8.3
Agree	141	36.7
Neutral	110	28.6
Disagree	96	25.0
Strongly disagree	5	1.3
Total	384	100.0

Table 15 represents the analysis of the effect of scholarship on student enrolment in higher education. About 45% agree that scholarships encourage enrolment. 28.6% stay neutral. 26.3% disagree, suggesting limited reach. Scholarships are important but insufficient. It indicated that better funding could attract more students' enrolment in higher education.

Table 16: *Analysis of teachers' motivation for HE Enrolment*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	45	11.7
Agree	160	41.7
Neutral	163	42.4
Disagree	15	3.9
Strongly disagree	1	.3
Total	384	100.0

Table 16 shows an analysis of teachers' motivations for higher education enrolment. A majority (53.4%) feel teachers motivate them. 42.4% are neutral and only 4.2% disagree. Teacher encouragement strongly supports enrolment. Positive teacher influence is clear. It indicated that teachers' motivation is a key factor of students' enrolment rate in higher education.

Tables 8 to 16 represent the factors influencing students' enrolment rate in higher education regarding motivation, social and cultural influences. It reveals that half of the students are enrolled in future opportunities. The 54 % cite sociocultural aspirations; Family and teacher motivation each influence about half of the students' enrolment in higher education. Similarly, qualitative information highlighted changing gender norms: *"More daughters are enrolling in education, indicating a substantial reduction in discrimination"* (BSA, CDM). Others noted persistent regional restrictions on girls' mobility (HBK, HED). Social prestige and peer migration abroad also shape choices (MKS, SCB). Literature review also supports research in Nepal, which shows that family encouragement and community expectations strongly predict women's higher education participation (UNESCO, 2021). Social capital networks and role models help first-generation students persist (Coleman, 1990).

Analysis of Institutional Process and Support

The analysis of the institutional process and support examines the educational policies, administrative practices, and campus services that affect students' learning experiences. It highlights the efficiency of admission procedures, course management, and academic advising in shaping a smooth academic journey. The study also evaluates the availability of resources such as libraries, laboratories, and digital tools that enhance learning outcomes. Student support services, including counseling, mentoring, and financial aid, are assessed for their role in fostering academic and

personal growth. Overall, the findings reveal how well-structured institutional processes and strong support systems contribute to student satisfaction and success. Tables 17 to 31 represent the analysis of institutional process and support.

Table 17: *Analysis of teachers' understanding of enrolment challenges*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	55	14.3
Agree	101	26.3
Neutral	135	35.2
Disagree	90	23.4
Strongly disagree	3	.8
Total	384	100.0

Table 17 shows that the analysis of enrolment challenges is understood by teachers. Around 40.6% think teachers understand enrolment challenges. 35.2% are neutral, 24.2% agree. Teacher awareness is moderate. Training could improve guidance and support varies across faculty enrolment rate in higher education.

Table 18: *Analysis of the help of teachers with students' problems in enrolment*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	59	15.4
Agree	136	35.4
Neutral	108	28.1
Disagree	71	18.5
Strongly disagree	10	2.6
Total	384	100.0

Table 18 shows the analysis of the help of teachers with students' problems in enrolment. Over half (50.8%) agree that teachers help with problems. 28.1% are neutral, and 21.1% disagree. Assistance from staff is valuable. Consistent help boosts enrolment. Teacher-student relations matter.

Table 19: *Analysis of teachers helps in enrolment*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	73	19.0
Agree	122	31.8
Neutral	118	30.7
Disagree	66	17.2
Strongly disagree	5	1.3
Total	384	100.0

Table 19 presents the analysis of how teachers help in enrolment. Half (50.8%) find it easy to seek help. 30.7% remain neutral and 18.5% disagree. Approachable teachers aid enrolment. Friendly culture benefits learning. Access should be maintained.

Table 20: *Analysis of the importance of HE talk with teacher*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	46	12.0
Agree	134	34.9
Neutral	144	37.5
Disagree	53	13.8
Strongly disagree	7	1.8
Total	384	100.0

Table 20 indicates the analysis of the importance of higher education talks with teachers. About 47% agree that teachers discuss the importance of higher education. 37.5% are neutral, and 15.6% disagree. Classroom guidance supports choices. Awareness-building talks are useful. This aids informed decisions. Table 21: *Analysis of availability of scholarships at TU*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	17	4.4
Agree	66	17.2
Neutral	149	38.8
Disagree	102	26.6
Strongly Disagree	50	13.0
Total	384	100.0

Table 21 indicates the analysis of the availability of scholarships at TU. Only 21.6% see scholarships as widely available. 38.8% are neutral, and 39.6% disagree. Perceived scarcity is high. Limited scholarships may deter students. Expansion is needed.

Table 22: *Analysis of useful information about the enrolment program*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	21	5.5
Agree	84	21.9
Neutral	111	28.9
Disagree	146	38.0
Strongly disagree	22	5.7
Total	384	100.0

Table 22 shows the useful information about enrolment program. Just 27.4% agree they receive useful enrolment info. 28.9% are neutral, and 43.7% disagree. Information gaps remain a major issue. Better communication is essential. Clarity can raise enrolment.

Table 23: *Analysis of enrolment factors regarding TU supports the marginalized group*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	43	11.2
Agree	118	30.7
Neutral	72	18.8
Disagree	113	29.4
Strongly disagree	38	9.9
Total	384	100.0

Table 23 reveals that TU supports the marginalized group students in enrolment. About 42% agree that TU supports marginalized groups. 18.8% are neutral, and 39.3% disagree. Opinions are divided. Policies need strengthening. It shows that inclusivity requires in action.

Table 24: *Analysis of students' awareness of TU enrolment policy*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	34	8.9
Agree	107	27.9
Neutral	84	21.9

Disagree	128	33.3
Strongly disagree	31	8.1
Total	384	100.0

Table 24 indicates the awareness of students with the TU enrolment policy. Only 36.8% are aware of TU enrolment policy. 21.9% are neutral, and 41.4% disagree. Low awareness hinders access. Better outreach is required. Policy knowledge is critical.

Table 25: *Analysis of the statement as TU enrolment process is fair and transparent*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	42	10.9
Agree	126	32.8
Neutral	66	17.2
Disagree	126	32.8
Strongly disagree	24	6.3
Total	384	100.0

Table 25 reveals that the statement TU enrolment process is fair and transparent. About 43.7% feel the process is fair. 17.2% are neutral, and 39.1% disagree. Trust in fairness is moderate. It indicated that transparency must improve, and confidence encourages enrolment.

Table 26: *Analysis of enrolment factors regarding counselling and orientation in enrolment*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	39	10.2
Agree	117	30.5
Neutral	85	22.1
Disagree	126	32.8
Strongly disagree	17	4.4
Total	384	100.0

Table 26 shows the analysis of enrolment factors regarding counseling and orientation in enrolments. Around 40.7% agree that counseling is available. 22.1% are neutral, and 37.2% disagree. Guidance services are uneven. Stronger counseling could help students' enrolment rate in higher education. It indicated that orientation is key factors of enhancing enrolment.

Table 27: *Analysis of enrolment factors regarding the help of the digital platform in enrolment*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	60	15.6
Agree	123	32.0
Neutral	87	22.7
Disagree	99	25.8
Strongly disagree	15	3.9
Total	384	100.0

Table 27 shows the analysis of enrolment factors regarding the help of the digital platform in enrolment. Nearly half (47.6%) say digital platforms help. 22.7% are neutral, and 29.7% disagree. Technology aids enrolment. Expanding digital access is beneficial. It indicated that online tools can simplify the enrolment processes.

Table 28: *Analysis of statement, first generation of university students*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Yes	268	69.8
No	116	30.2
Total	384	100.0

Table 28 reveals the analysis of the statement, the first generation of university students. About 69.8% are first-generation university students. 30.2% have family university experience. Higher education is still new for most families. First-generation learners need extra support. This indicates the educational change in the enrolment process in higher education.

Table 29: *Analysis of TU faculties flexible for job-holding students*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	42	10.9
Agree	116	30.2
Neutral	118	30.7
Disagree	103	26.8
Strongly disagree	5	1.3
Total	384	100.0

Table 29 shows the analysis of TU faculties that are flexible for job-holding students. About 41.1% agree that TU is flexible for working students. 30.7% are neutral, and 28.1% disagree. Flexibility helps balance work and study. Some still struggle with schedules. It indicated that more support could attract the students' enrolment in higher education.

Table 30: *Analysis of TU support for all backgrounds of students*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	31	8.1
Agree	62	16.1
Neutral	104	27.1
Disagree	173	45.1
Strongly disagree	14	3.6
Total	384	100.0

Table 30 indicates the analysis of TU support for all backgrounds of students. Only 24.2% feel TU helps all backgrounds. 27.1% are neutral, and 48.7% disagree. Support for diversity is weak. Better inclusion is needed. it clearly shows that equity should be improved.

Table 31: *Analysis of factors regarding the increase in enrolment rate*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	50	13.0
Agree	164	42.7
Neutral	80	20.8
Disagree	75	19.5
Strongly Disagree	15	3.9
Total	384	100.0

Table 31 reveals the analysis of factors regarding the increase in enrolment rate. over half (55.7%) believe enrolment is rising. 20.8% are neutral, and 23.4% disagree. Students notice some growth. Positive change is visible.

From the analysis of institutional process and support, it reveals that only 27 % receive useful enrolment information; the awareness of policy is low (36.8 %); scholarship access is perceived as rare (21.6 % see wide availability); physical and digital infrastructure challenges; and over half cite housing/transport problems, just 39 % find the student-friendly enrolment processes. similarly, the qualitative information reveals that the faculty describe aging infrastructure, multi-shift scheduling, and weak counseling services (BSA, CDM; MKS, SCB). Timely examinations and result publication are often delayed (GPD, MRC). However, digital platforms are emerging as a partial solution. These findings support the literature, such as TU's infrastructure and administrative delays, which have been widely reported (MOE Nepal, 2022). The need for better information, counseling, and e-governance aligns with global recommendations for inclusive enrolment management (OECD, 2020).

Analysis of Challenges and Suggested Improvements

The analysis of challenges and suggested improvements identifies key obstacles that hinder students' academic and personal enrolment in the TU higher education system. It examines issues such as limited resources, aspiration of curriculum, and inadequate support services that affect learning quality and enrolment. The study also highlights difficulties like financial constraints, heavy workloads, and a lack of practical training faced by many learners. Based on these findings, it presents targeted recommendations, including better resource allocation, curriculum updates, and enhanced student support programs. Overall, the analysis emphasizes the need for continuous improvement to create a more effective and inclusive educational enrolment environment. Tables 32 to 34 represent the analysis of challenges and suggestions for improvements for higher education enrolment in TU.

Table 32: *Analysis of key challenges of TU in students' enrolments*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Economic	207	53.9
Lack of information	66	17.2
Cultural aspiration	44	11.5
Complex process	63	16.4
Others problems	4	1.0
Total	384	100

Table 32 indicates the analysis of key challenges of TU in students' enrolments. Economic problems top the list at 53.9%. Lack of information (17.2%) and complex processes (16.4%) follow. Cultural issues are 11.5%. It clearly shows that financial and communication barriers dominate in the enrolment process of TU. Addressing these factors can enhance the enrolment of TU.

Table 33: *Analysis of factors regarding improvement in enrolment rate*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Extra scholarship	80	20.8
Well counselling	113	29.4
Easy process	125	32.6
Community information	66	17.2
Total	384	100.0

Table 33 reveals the analysis of factors regarding improvement in enrolment rate. Easy process (32.6%) is the most recommended step. Better counseling (29.4%) and extra scholarships (20.8%) follow. Community information (17.2%) also matters. Students want simpler, better-supported systems. These actions can raise participation

Table 34: *Analysis of students' satisfaction to the enrolment process of TU*

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	48	12.5
Agree	169	44.0
Neutral	129	33.6
Disagree	32	8.3
Strongly disagree	6	1.6
Total	384	100.0

Table 34 shows the analysis of students' satisfaction with the enrolment process of TU. More than half (56.5%) are satisfied. 33.6% are neutral and 9.9% dissatisfied. Overall, students feel fairly positive. Still, there is room for improvement. Satisfaction supports the retention of students in higher education.

Tables 32 to 34 reveal that the top barriers are: economic problems (53.9 %), lack of information (17.2 %), and complex processes (16.4 %). Students call for a simpler process (32.6 %), better counseling (29.4 %), and more scholarships (20.8 %). These findings relate with qualitative information, such as interviewees resonated with these priorities: *"University scholarships are nominal… making it challenging for students from economically weaker backgrounds"* (DP, DG science). They proposed closer government–university coordination and stronger student employment services (GPD, MRC). Similarly, literature supports the findings, such as international evidence showing that financial aid, transparent admissions, and early academic/career counseling significantly boost access and retention of enrolment (Perna & Thomas, 2008).

Results and Discussion

The results and discussion are reported in thematic manner to elaborate important variables that determine higher education enrolment in Tribhuvan University. The demographic characters indicate that majority of students (67.4) were between 25-29 years of age meaning that they entered higher education late in life because of employment and financial preparation. The female students better the male students which demonstrates that gender equity and male migration to work abroad are on the rise. The enrolment on the masters' level is predominant implying that postgraduate education is taken as a career ladder. The greatest percentage of students are participated in humanities and social sciences, which is consistent with the national enrolment patterns. Interviews validate that lots of students delay their registration to acquire work knowledge and income. Such patterns coincide with the Rational Choice Theory, according to which students will compute the cost-benefit analysis before admission. The socio-economic studies have indicated that the majority of students belong to families earning less than NPR 15,000 per month. Economy is a big factor in the choice of enrolment, especially among first-generation

learners. Kathmandu has limited scholarship opportunities and part-time employment, which increases the economic burden of studying there. Qualitative data underscore the fact that economic strain usually results in a lack of continuity and delay of studies. In terms of an Access and Equity approach, these positions cause systemic disadvantages to the marginalized groups. Socio cultural Capital Theory describes that the less family experience in higher education hinders future guidance and motivation. Motivational factors indicate that family support, teacher support and future career goals have a strong impact on the enrolment. The shift of gender norms and social prestige encourages more female involvement despite the regional and cultural limitations. The institutional results are poor information dissemination, insufficient counseling services, poor infrastructure and complex administrative procedures. Such institutional restrictions make higher education to be more expensive and demoralizing to prospective students. The simplified procedures, improved counseling, and scholarships are the main improvements proposed by students. All in all, the results indicate that economic, social, and institutional forces collectively influence enrolment choices, which implies that Nepal should have inclusionary and well-formulated policies of higher education.

Conclusion

Economic limitations are important in determining the enrolment into education, especially for first-generation college students. Most people are confronted with low-family incomes and a lack of chances to engage in part-time employment that may contribute to late admission in higher learning institutions. Also, the social transformation has also helped to institute a visible gender gap that favors women in universities. The rise in the number of female students' involvement, as well as the changing gender norms, has encouraged more women to engage in higher education. Nonetheless, institutional deficiencies remain a problem for potential students. The infrastructures and lack of information flow facilitate proper communication regarding existing resources and opportunities. Additionally, the insufficiency of scholarships to fund education also discourages the enrolment process, and some students will not be able to afford college. Although TU has a good image, these systemic problems can exceed its good qualities. As such, the students can be discouraged by the financial and logistical setbacks they face in order to enroll. The mentioned problems are critical to address them in order to enhance educational access and a diverse student body.

The demographic patterns of the Nepali students analyzed show that a considerable majority of them, i.e. 67.4% fall in 25-29 age support, and tend to enroll in higher education later in life, when they have work-related obligations. There is gender imbalance as well; women form 59.6% of the student body, and 64.1% are pursuing master' degree courses. These trends are serious by economic issues because the majority of families make less than NPR 15,000 each month making only one out of three students seek part-time employment loans, and financial limits tend to disturb the educational process. The desire to get enrolled is often driven by the sociocultural hopes and family and teacher persuasion are significant factors, and most still

encounter regional limitations to girls' education. The support provided by institutions is minimal with the report of 27 percent of all students receiving helpful enrolment information and a significant number citing barriers like outdated infrastructure and lack of sufficient scholarships. The qualitative data points out various issues such as requiring better counseling services and more efficient enrolment processes with the students pushing to have an easier application process and more scholarships. Among the greatest huddles that are encountered by students are economic disadvantages and a lack of transparency in the admissions. These findings can be justified by literature, which notes that first-generation learners should be provided with specific assistance, especially, financial and mentoring. It is also pointed out that there is the need to increase the presence of a better government-university coordination and increase employment services to students to promote increased access and retention to higher education. All in all, it is important to respond to these challenges of the economy and institutions to enhance educational outcomes in Nepal among students.

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