



A Bibliometric Analysis of Knowledge Production in Nepal: Trends, Gaps, and Pathways to Inclusive Scholarship in the *International Research Journal of MMC*

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Abstract

Background: Multidisciplinary academic journals are an important element in Nepal in shaping the scholarly discourse and informing national development priorities. As the national agenda develops a roadmap with focus on an inclusive and resilient society, the need arises for an examination of whether the country's own knowledge production gives expression to this commitment towards equity and diversity.

Objectives: The bibliometric study was carried out to map the research trends, thematic focus, collaboration patterns, and gaps of IJRMMC for assessing its contributions to inclusive and resilient scholarship in Nepal.

Methods: Bibliometric analysis was done using metadata of all the publications from IJRMMC indexed in Lens.org. Data were analyzed using VOSviewer for co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence network visualization, and Wordsift.org for lexical analysis of titles and abstracts.

Findings: Empirical foci on education, public health, and community-based studies suggest a high level of interest, though COVID-19 related research further gains prominence. However, large gaps remain: the so-called issues of lowest priority include caste, ethnicity, Madhesi issues, disability, and climate justice. Geographical clustering of research in urban centres and author collaboration networks are marked by limited cross-cluster or inter-discipline linkages.

Conclusion: This leads to the clear conclusion that, even though the journal's output is robust in some sectors, it is by no means totally in line with today's broader sociological imperative for inclusive knowledge production. The gaps noted indicate a trend towards homogenized



scholarship that may serve to unconsciously reinforce well-entrenched social and spatial inequalities.

Implementation: To fill these gaps, the journal and other similar platforms could introduce special issues targeting this, revise submission guidelines to include encouragement for such intersectional analyses, and offer incentives toward collaborative and geographically diverse research. Policies at the academic institutional level should be directed at supporting the production of decentralized knowledge and encouraging collaboration that bridges disciplines and regions.

Keywords: bibliometric analysis, Nepal, knowledge production, inclusive scholarship, research gaps

1. Introduction

Academic journals are critical sites that curate and make national priorities, methodological trends, and intellectual commitments visible (Karki et al., 2024; Healey et al., 2023). They do not merely mirror existing research; they shape the scholarly discourse regarding what questions are important, whose voices should be heard, and what kinds of knowledge are validated. In a country as socially diverse and rapidly transforming as Nepal, understanding the output of its leading multidisciplinary journals becomes a sociological exercise in understanding the landscape of knowledge production itself (Kumar et al., 2024; Neupane & Lourdasamy, 2025). This can provide insight into whether academic discourse is keeping pace with, or even guiding, the nation's aspirations for equity, justice, and resilience. The call for an inclusive, resilient Nepal requires an inclusive, resilient knowledge ecosystem. Research by scholars plays a foundational role in diagnosing social inequalities, informing public policy, and envisioning pathways toward a more cohesive society. As long as this research does not take into account the experiences of historically marginalised groups, does not take heed of the pressing intersectional crises, or remains confined to siloed academic circles, it risks reinforcing the very gaps it purports to address. An approach to the question of what is studied, how it is studied, and who is involved in the study offers crucial insight into both the strengths and blind spots of the leading role Nepal's academia plays in national development.

This paper examines one focused case study of domestic knowledge production: the bibliometric analysis of the *International Research Journal of MMC*, a prominent multidisciplinary Nepali journal. Extracting data from Lens.org and analyzing it through the visualization tools VOSviewer and Wordsift.org, we systematize the mapping of the journal's publication trends, thematic focus, collaboration networks, and conceptual language over time. Our analysis goes beyond the mere inventory of articles in order to interrogate sociological dimensions of scholarship contained within.

This paper argues that these thematic and network patterns are not neutral; they reflect the structural contours of Nepal's academic landscape—its institutional hierarchies, methodological preferences, and perhaps unconscious biases—that can homogenize scholarly discourse inadvertently. By making explicit these patterns, our analysis seeks to inform a sociological debate on how knowledge production can become more inclusive, intersectional, and integrated. Concluding, we suggest ways in which journals like IJRMCM might productively foster a research agenda that genuinely reflects the diverse realities and resilient aspirations of all Nepali people and aligns the practice of scholarship more effectively with the urgent goals of social equity and national cohesion.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Foundations and Importance of Bibliometric Studies in Nepal

Bibliometric analyses have emerged as essential tools for examining the intellectual topography of academic journals/research disciplines in the context of Nepal. These analyses quantitatively examine the publication patterns, collaboration patterns, and themes developed in the context of academic publications to yield an evidence-based historical perspective of the evolution of academic scholarship (Mahat et al., 2023). More recently, the application of the method has proved versatile in the context of examining particular academic journals like the NPRC Journal of Multidisciplinary Research for the most productive authors as well as the most frequently emerging themes expressed in terms of keywords like “sustainable development,” among others. This work joins the rising trend of scholarly exercises in the emerging sub-domain of bibliography in the context of examining yet another important multidisciplinary journal of Nepal – the *International Research Journal of MMC* (IRJMMC) in the context of its contribution to the Nepalese body of knowledge.

1.1.2 Knowledge Production and National Development Agendas

Content within the scholarly output of Nepal is also analyzed in a critical manner with a view to its alignment with and adaptation to the most pertinent and urgent developments in the nation. Research work in its various domains is recognized in a broadened perspective not as a mere academic pursuit but as a necessary contribution towards analyzing sociological disparities and influencing public policymaking with a view to promoting a cohesive society (Shrestha et al., 2024; Karki & Khadka, 2019). In fact, as brought out in detail in this manuscript, research journals are also perceived and function as proactive knowledge moderators with a view to promoting national concerns and scholarly commitments. All this has also been explored in other research works in terms of the contribution made by alumnae and research scholars in making vital interventions in vital domains such as equality in gender and social inclusivity and empowerment of marginalized social groups through publications.

1.1.3 Representation Gaps and the Demand for Inclusion

One of the issues that recur in studies of Nepali scholarship is that of under-representation of some themes and some communities. The pattern of results on the presence of large gaps in studies on caste, ethnicity, Madhesi matters, and disability reflects what has been found in other studies (Gartoulla, 2017). For example, a bibliometric study of studies on Nepal’s literature found that there exist glaring gaps in the study of gender, or in studies on regional issues, while studies on harmful cultural practices aim to give voice to issues that remain on the periphery. Also well-known is that of geographical disparities, in that studies tend to focus around large cities and particular institutions, though this phenomenon this study has found to exist in the context of IRJMMC. In this manner, this study identifies these particular themes and geographical issues in connection to a possible ‘homogenization’ of scholarly endeavors, in that these issues may contribute to the further hardening of the very same social and geographical inequalities that studies aim to address.

1.1.4 Methodological Aspects and Future Directions

The bibliometric analysis in a Nepalese environment has certain research methodologies that this research mitigates. For instance, problems like resolving ambiguities in authors’ names to facilitate accurate search and extraction, keyword normalization to account for variations in keyword representation in different indices and databases, and overlap of non-indexed publications. For instance, this research methodology of Lens.org data extraction and subsequent cleaning and analysis with VOSviewer is in line with best practices. The implications of these research results about a fractured form of co-authorship graph structures of the IRJMMC journal in terms of graph insularity could indicate a larger problem in Nepal's academies. Additionally, these research results about thematic gaps form a basis for

the research recommendations. For instance, recommendations like initiating specific special issues and encouraging research that is geographically more distributed could bring a complete change in IRJMMC from a reflective journal of current academies to a force that triggers a balanced and linked knowledge society.

2. Methodology

This research utilized a quantitative bibliometric analysis to systematically map and evaluate the research output of the *International Research Journal of MMC* (IJRMMC). The approach was tailored to convert raw publication data into insights that are visual and statistical, thus facilitating an objective analysis of trends, thematic focus, collaboration patterns, and potential gaps in knowledge production. The process had three salient phases: collection and extraction, data processing and cleaning, and analytical visualization and interpretation.

2.1 Data Source and Extraction

For this analysis, we depend on data from the scholarly database Lens.org because of its comprehensive coverage and robust export functionalities. A targeted search in October 2025 was done using the query: Source.Title:"*International Research Journal of MMC*". No date restrictions were set to capture the full publication history of the journal. The search results were exported in the standard CSV (Comma-Separated Values) format inclusive of metadata for all articles, reviews, and editorials indexed in the Lens.org catalog. The dataset includes key fields such as article title, authors, including their affiliations, abstract, keywords, publication year, DOI, and number of cited references.

2.2 Data Preprocessing/Cleaning

Extensive cleaning and standardization of the exported CSV file were performed to make the data analytically accurate. The following operations were performed:

- Author Name Disambiguation: Manual inspection and standardization of author names to group possible variants of the same author, such as "Sharma, L. R." and "Sharma, Lok Raj", into a unique canonical form.
- Harmonization of the keywords: singulars and plurals of the keywords, such as "student" and "students", respectively, were combined, and minor syntactic variations were assimilated into a standard form.
- Institutional Affiliation Normalization: Various abbreviations for the same institution, for example, were unified such as "MMC" or "Madan Bhandari Memorial College".
- Abstract and Title Text Preparation: Collected all article titles and abstracts to create one unified plain-text corpus for the succeeding lexical analysis. Filter out common stop words such as "the," "and," "of" since the aim is to focus on substantive terms.

This cleaned dataset was the basis for all further analyses.

2.3 Analytical Framework and Tools

Results were derived using a multi-tool approach, each selected based on its specific strong analytical point in bibliometric research.

Descriptive Bibliometric Analysis (Lens.org & MS Excel): Initial descriptive statistics were generated using built-in analytics in Lens.org for preliminary descriptive statistics, such as annual volume of publication, top contributing authors and institutions, and broad subject area distribution, and the output was refined using pivot tables in MS Excel. This provided a base overview of the journal's output.

Keyword and Thematic Analysis (Wordsift.org): The corpus of cleaned article titles and abstracts was analyzed using Wordsift.org, a text visualization online tool, to identify the

The keyword cloud places "Nepal" at its center, visually and in frequency, which is an indicator that the research being published in this journal is heavily embedded in national contexts. Following close behind in prominence are the terms "students," "education," "performance," "study," "analysis," and "community." The trend revealed herein is that quite a good level of scholarship published in the journal emanates from educational settings, with special emphasis on student learning, academic performance, achievement, and challenges. It seems to support that the journal is used as an outlet where the most promoted type of research is educational, indicating a broader national academic interest in the education sector for development.

Multidisciplinary Spread, Strong Social Science-Orientation

The cloud shows a broad multidisciplinary range with such recurring terms as "health," "economic," "social," "technology," "environment," and "financial." That generally speaks to the journal's positioning as a multidisciplinary outlet. On the other hand, social-science-related terms dominating the picture-for instance, "community," "gender," "women," "role," "behavior," "perception," "impact," and "challenges"-suggest that sociological and socio-educational topics dominate more than natural or technical sciences. In those cases when technology shows up as a keyword, it is related to learning, development, and online education, rather than to any innovation within the area of STEM studies. This means research in the journal basically tends to explore human-centered developmental issues side by side with the most urgent social transformations of Nepal.

Emerging Themes: Health, Risk, and Pandemic-driven Issues

Terms like "health," "COVID," "risk," "prevalence," and "factors" are indicative of the rise of public-health-oriented research, probably influenced by the pandemic years. Such keywords indicate that recent issues have covered community health, risk behavior, disease prevalence, and wellbeing, which became a major talking point globally and in Nepal. Health is often identified along with socioeconomic and educational variables, drawing into focus how researchers frame health not solely as a medical issue but rather as a social and community developmental concern.

Spatial and Institutional Orientation toward Urban Centers

Place-based keywords - "Kathmandu", "Makawanpur", "Hetauda", "Chitwan", and "municipality" - indicate that studies are geographically anchored. The salience of Kathmandu-related terms echoes urban concentration in Nepal's academic research, as access to institutions, data, and researchers is dense therein. Meanwhile, the presence of Makawanpur and Hetauda is indicative of the journal's institutional roots and its preference for publishing research grounded within its immediate provincial context. For example, the lack of remote or underserved regions such as Karnali and Sudurpaschim alludes to possible geographic imbalances in knowledge production-a surmise pertinent to debates about academic inclusivity.

Obvious Omissions: Marginalised Identities and Intersectional Issues

Equally important is what the cloud conceals. Terms related to Dalit, Janajati, Madhesi, disability, migration, LGBTQ+, and other marginalizing identities are either missing or very small. This indicates a thematic gap in intersectional and inclusion-focused research-a fact that is an important insight for sociological debates. Whereas gender and women figure often, deeper intersectional dimensions remain underexplored. Similarly, themes touching on climate justice, conflict transformation, or political representation are relatively weak. These gaps in priorities underline the necessity for the journal-and Nepal's academic community-to expand their research agenda toward greater reflection of Nepal's diverse social realities and the aspirations of an inclusive, resilient Nepal.

many studies connect micro-level behaviors (e.g., individual performance, household factors) with macro-level systems (e.g., government programs, economic conditions). The use of words such as "woman," "child," and "cultural" suggests some engagement with social equity themes, although the visual prominence of such terms is slight compared to broader developmental terminology.

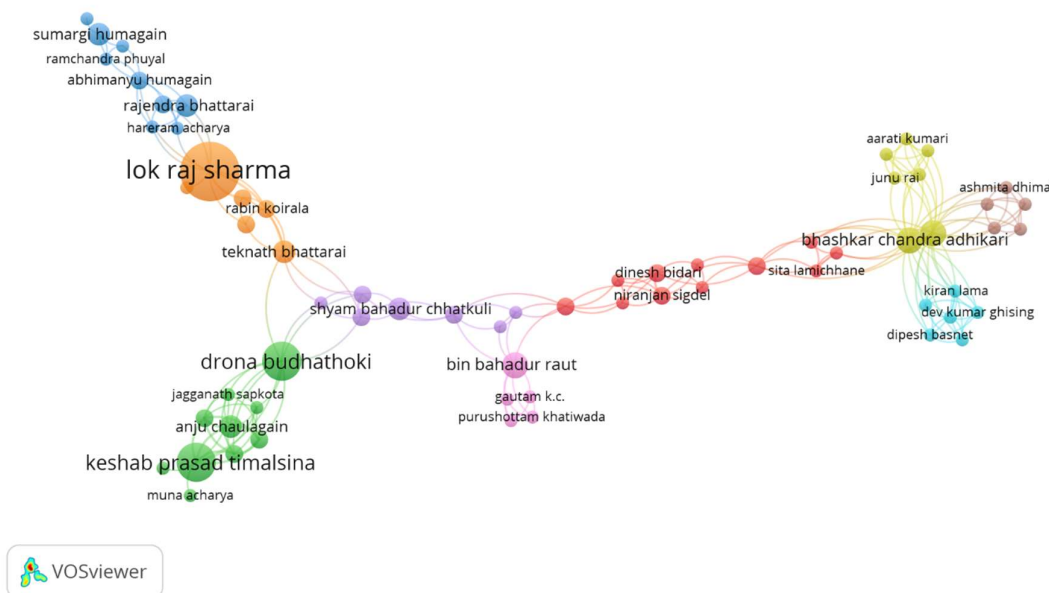
Strong Methodological Orientation Toward Surveys and Descriptive Designs

Words like "survey," "design," "method," "qualitative," "collected," "sample," "variable," and "model" underline methodological emphasis on survey-based studies, descriptive research designs, and basic statistical analyses. Qualitative approaches are mentioned, but their relatively smaller prominence suggests that they are less commonly employed or receive less emphasis in abstracts. The methodological vocabulary suggests that research published in the journal tends to be accessible and practitioner-friendly, often resting on structured data collection and established analytical tools rather than advanced modeling or experimental designs.

Notable Absences Indicate Gaps of Inclusion, Diversity, and Critical Inquiry

Equally telling is what the cloud does not show in any prominence. Terms related to caste, ethnicity, migration, disability, climate justice, gender minorities, conflict, or political representation are minimal or absent. This points towards a very limited engagement with intersectional, marginalized, or critically oriented sociopolitical issues-areas that are central to the debates around inclusive development in Nepal. While there is some focus on “woman” and “community,” deeper dimensions of structural inequality remain unaddressed. This gap represents an opportunity for the journal to expand its research horizons toward more diverse, equity-focused, and analytically critical contributions that reflect better Nepal’s diversity.

4.3 Co-authorship Networks



Clustered Collaboration Patterns with Distinct Research Circles

The coauthor map shows a number of clear-cut, color-coded clusters. Each cluster represents a small group of people collaborating internally within small research circles with limited interaction outside their closest circle. Coming across some of the names, like Lok Raj Sharma, Drona Budhathoki, Keshab Prasad Timalisina, and Bhashkar Chandra Adhikari, it is evident that such a central node usually signifies an influential role in respective clusters, either as the senior researcher or as a recurring author or coordinator of the collaborative project. Clustering in this suggests that research collaborations within the journal seem to be set by institutional proximity, departmental networks, and preexisting professional relationships rather than broad, cross-disciplinary partnerships.

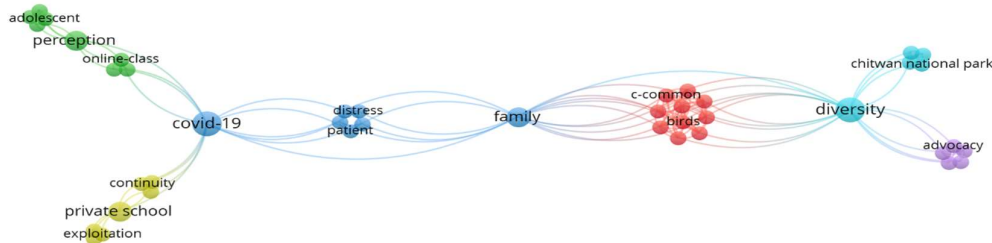
Limited Inter-Cluster Connectivity and a Linear Structure

It is a network that forms a loosely connected linear chain; that is, only a few authors act as bridges between clusters. This linear, “chain-like” structure suggests that, although across research groups, the network remains fragmented and some contact exists. Most clusters function in relative isolation, with little co-authorship across different thematic or institutional research communities. This reflects the broader pattern of Nepali academia, where collaborations often remain localized and fail to coalesce into large, integrated research networks. The restricted number of bridging authors points to an opportunity: the strengthening of cross-cluster collaboration could dramatically enhance interdisciplinary research capacity.

Emerging but Uneven Research Communities

On the right-hand side, the cluster around Bhashkar Chandra Adhikari is thick and diversified, showing a relatively robust and active group with a considerable number of recurring collaborators, such as Aarati Kumari, Junu Rai, Ashmita Dhimal. In contrast, the leftmost and some mid-line clusters exhibit fewer connections and smaller team sizes, which are either rising researchers or isolated authors who work independently. This unevenness suggests that while certain research communities are thriving, others still operate at a small scale. For the journal’s greater academic ecosystem, this trend underlines the need to encourage multi-author, cross-institutional, and multi-disciplinary collaborations to foster a more integrated and robust research environment.

4.4 Co-occurrence Networks



Overall Structure and Thematic Clusters

The co-occurrence network visualizes a multidisciplinary landscape in the *International Research Journal of MMC*, in which various thematic clusters, through varying degree conceptual overlap, are interlinked. The visualization consists of various colored groups that represent different research domains. Yet, despite topics ranging from education and health to biodiversity and conservation, these clusters still hold meaningful linkages, signifying a journal that publishes work that is often informed across multiple fields. The structures are spread out to branch from the center nodes as a reflection of the wide academic engagement a journal embarks on, open toward cross-cutting research themes.

COVID-19 and Family Themes Centrality

The most apparent central node seems to be "covid-19," with strong links toward keywords such as perception, adolescent, online-class, private school, and distress. This would indicate that the majority of the journal's recent output has dealt with issues related to the pandemic, particularly in regard to its influence on education, mental health, and institutional functioning. Another such keyword connector is "family," which seems to bridge health-related research—COVID-19, distress, patient—and topics dealing with biodiversity/conservation. This would suggest that the journal has interest in studies looking at the social fabric and how broader global issues are affecting family relationships and community well-being.

Biodiversity and Environmental Research Cluster

On the right-hand side of the network, a large and dense red cluster is focussed around "birds" and "c-common," hence a rather massive body of literature dedicated to avian biodiversity, species distribution, and ecological monitoring. The means through which the environmental cluster connects to the keyword "diversity" is as the thematic anchor that will link ecological studies to wider discussions on conservation. Thus, the connection of "diversity" to Chitwan National Park shows, at least, a geographical concern with Nepal's protected areas by suggesting that this journal rather frequently publishes studies on the conservation of wildlife and habitat diversity as well as the advocacy for the protection of the environment.

Interdisciplinary Integration and Journal Scope

The network as a whole clearly indicates that the *International Research Journal of MMC* maintains a very interdisciplinary research platform. Connections between social issues—education, perception, and private school—and those related to health, such as COVID-19, distress, and patient, and also environmental issues, including diversity, birds, and national parks, demonstrate how the journal tends to encourage integrative scholarship. Bridging nodes like "family" and "diversity" show how social science and environmental studies come together in the publications within this journal. This infrastructure is indicative of the journal's mission—to support variant academic discourses while encouraging holistic approaches that address the challenges of society, education, and ecology.

5. Discussion and Analysis: A Sociological Reading of Bibliometric Patterns

These bibliometric findings represent a double-edged storyline of loud productivity and deafening silences. This discussion interprets these data points through the core conference themes and contends that the structure of academic knowledge in this journal mirrors and potentially reinforces broader social dynamics in Nepal.

5.1 The Dominant Discourse: Education, Empiricism, and Urban Anchorage

The overwhelmingly high focus on education, students, and empirical "analysis" attests to a scholarly prioritization of human capital development and measurable outcomes. This is

aligned with national development paradigms within which education is seen as the key engine of mobility and progress. The methodological emphasis on surveys and quantitative data represents a quest for legitimacy through positivist frames that tend to be privileged in policy circles, at the cost of silencing qualitative, ethnographic, and critical theoretical work that is vital for making meaning from lived experiences of inequality. Similarly, the spatial concentration of studies in Kathmandu, Hetauda, and Chitwan reveals an "academic cartography" that reinforces Nepal's spatial inequalities. Research tracks institutional and resource pathways, with the socioeconomic and ecological conditions of the Far-West, Karnali, and otherwise remote areas being much less well-documented in the scholarly record and thus difficult to build knowledge resilience for the whole nation.

5.2. Critical Silences: The Missing Voices of Marginality

The most salient finding for a conference on inclusivity is the thematic absence of the very key marginalized groups. The near-invisibility of keywords such as Dalit, Janajati, Madhesi, disability, and LGBTQ+ is not an innocent omission. It reflects a structural gap in scholarly attention to the very groups that face the most acute discrimination and exclusion. When "gender" appears, its links to intersectional analyses of caste or ethnicity are often severed. This silence in academic production can perpetuate silence in policy and public discourse, as research legitimizes issues for public debate. Secondly, while "biodiversity" is a strong cluster, any links connecting it to "environmental justice" and the disparate impact of climate change on marginalized communities are not visible. These gaps reveal a disconnect between Nepal's vibrant sociological debates on identity and justice and the formal knowledge being curated in a leading multidisciplinary journal.

5.3 Network Fragmentation: The Resilience of Collaboration

The co-authorship network visualizes a kind of scholarly community that is insular and clustered. Tight, discrete circles of collaboration suggest research is very often conducted within institutional, departmental, or personal silos. The limited bridging ties between clusters weaken the potential for cross-pollination of ideas necessary in addressing complex, wicked problems such as inclusive development or climate adaptation, both of which inherently span disciplinary boundaries. It is this fragmented network structure that makes the collective resilience of Nepal's research community even weaker. In order to establish a more integrated and inclusive knowledge ecosystem, it will be important to create collaborative infrastructure through funding mechanisms, workshops, and editorial policies that provide incentives for partnerships across institutions, disciplines, and geographic regions.

5.4 The Pandemic Pivot and the Homogenizing Pull

The central node of "COVID-19" reflects academia's ability to respond quickly and relevantly to a world crisis, but especially in linking health with education and family distress. This is a positive adaptive tendency, but it also underlines a reactive homogenization, where a global event powerfully reconfigures the national research agenda perhaps at the expense of locally specific, longer structural issues like caste or chronic poverty. Here, one clearly sees the "homogenizing role" of globalized academic trends, crowding out critical indigenous and marginal voices that do not fall within the ambit of international funding or publication trends.

5.5. Towards an Inclusive Sociological Imagination within the Academy

Ultimately, this suggests that the IJRMCM—as a microcosm of Nepali academia—is at a crossroads. It has strengths: national relevance, empirical grounding, and multidisciplinary scope, which form a real foundation. However, if it wants to reach its full potential in "building inclusive and resilient Nepal," then it has to extend its sociological imagination. The need is to

go beyond merely studying about the marginalized communities to stimulate research by and with them, placing their epistemologies and priorities at the forefront. It calls for a critical, interpretive, and advocacy appreciation along with the empirical methodologies. The journal itself is not a passive prop; its editorial policy, calls for papers, and reviewer guidance construct actively the boundaries of legitimate knowledge. By addressing the identified gaps, it can be transformed from being a mirror of existing inequalities into an agent of change for a more equal and resilient knowledge society.

6. Conclusion & Recommendations

This bibliometric review underlines the fact that inclusiveness in Nepal must begin with inclusiveness in knowledge production. The patterns at the *International Research Journal of MMC* indicate a capable yet uneven landscape of academia that actively engages with the national issues of education and health but systematically bypasses the profound questions of caste, ethnicity, and spatial justice that define the social fabric of Nepal. For scholarship to be a pillar of resilience, it must reflect the full spectrum of societal experiences and vulnerabilities.

Recommendations:

A. For Journals (IJRMMC and Peers)

- Launch Thematic Special Issues: Proactively commission special issues on "Caste, Ethnicity, and Knowledge Production," "Climate Justice in the Himalayas," or "Gender, Migration, and Livelihoods," with guest editors from marginalized communities and diverse disciplines.
- Revised submission guidelines encourage authors to include an explicit discussion about the inter-sectional dimensions, that is caste, ethnicity, gender, or location, of their studies and encourage justifications for the geographic focus, even in studies focused on education or health.
- Encourage Fair Collaboration: Introduce a "Collaboration in Focus" section, which will highlight research emanating from collaborations between university-based academics and community-based institutions, especially those in underrepresented locations.

B. To Researchers and Academic Institutions

- Create Conscious Research Agendas: Researchers, particularly senior scholars and PhD supervisors, should mentor students in pursuing topics to address the identified gaps. Funding proposals must be scrutinized for their inclusion of intersectional analysis and community engagement.
- Institutional Strategic Bridges: Creation of incentives-seed grants, recognition-for interdisciplinary and inter-institutional research teams to address the complex themes of inclusion and resilience described in this conference.
- Decentralizing Knowledge Production: Other universities not located in Kathmandu Valley must be assisted toward the goal of acting as knowledge hotspots in research into their regional socio-ecological setting, frustrating urban-centric biases in academics' data collection. By implementing these recommendations, the academic community can ensure that Nepal's knowledge production becomes as diverse, interconnected, and resilient as the society it aims to understand and serve. This is not merely an academic exercise but a basic building block for creating a genuinely inclusive national discourse.

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