

# Real-Life Experiences of Students with Disability in Tribhuvan University: Hermeneutic Phenomenological Method

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## Abstract

*The number of students with disabilities has been increasing nowadays for higher education. Students with disabilities in universities are excluded from the research fields in Nepal although there are some researches done on school children with disabilities and people with disabilities in the family and society: college students with disabilities need to be studied. This study focuses on the lived experiences of students with disabilities while pursuing their studies at Tribhuvan University, Nepal. A hermeneutic phenomenological research method within qualitative approach was applied. A purposive sampling technique was used to select five students with disabilities in this study. The major findings are that the disabled students encountered mainly infrastructure/physical structure barriers, university policy and practice barriers, the university executives' (un)conscious/ (un)intentional ignorance and attitude barriers while pursuing studies. The students with vision impairment and motor impairment underwent the difficulty with disable-unfriendly physical structures, university policy and practices. The hearing impaired students expressed that the usual class was not for them, and nobody was in the campus for interaction with them. The findings mean the university environments were unfriendly, hostile and adverse to the disabled students. This study may motivate the executives to modify the policy, practices and attitudes toward the disabled.*

**Keywords:** disability studies, disabled students, campus environments, executives' attitude, (un)conscious bias

## Background

Students with disabilities in universities are excluded from the research fields in Nepal although there are some research done on school children with disabilities and people with disabilities in the family and society. For true implementation of inclusive education and social justice, adult students with disabilities need to be studied in the universities; they assist to improve the education system and deconstruct stereotypes, stigma and negative representations of disability. The research on the lived experiences of students with disabilities reflected the importance of understanding the disability in the University. The number of the students with disabilities in universities is increasing nowadays. Although the universities ignore their actual lived experience, the human conditions and values of the students with disabilities in higher education institutions of Nepal need to be thoroughly exposed.

The study, therefore, aims to explore what the students with disabilities have experienced in Tribhuvan University and how they have interpreted the University's practices and behaviours to their needs. It also investigates the barriers for the disabled students' access to higher education. The study focuses on the things that the students with disabilities have experienced themselves inside the University. This study provides the university executives a knowledge or understanding that they have heard a little about such experience, but do not have. The study presents true lived experiences of the disabled students from the University gained through direct face-to-face interaction and involvement in everyday events inside the university.

The primary audience of this research will be universities' executives, teachers, students, students' affairs practitioners and disability resource providers to people with disability, and the scholars and researchers related to disability studies and social justice approach. This research may be useful to the government bodies, NGOs/INGOs and other social service sectors that work for persons with disability. The main concern of this study was to create an intellectual sense of the lived world of the students with disabilities in Tribhuvan University. This study has discussed the experiential conditions of students with disabilities only inside the campuses in Tribhuvan University.

### **Research Objective**

The objective of the study explores the lived experiences of students with disability at Tribhuvan University.

### **Literature Review and Research Gap**

Disability carries the social behaviour or attitude for restriction to the impaired people who are excluded from social activity. Hall mentions, "Disability is created through a social process: through the relationship between an individual with impairment and the society in which they live. [...] They are disabled by the lack of provision of ramps and appropriate access facilities" (21). The concept of disability is socially constructed; people with impairment are excluded by the society from different activities. Siebers says, "Disability is not a physical and mental defect but a cultural and minority identity" (4). No one can perform all things, and people with disability can service at least a work in life. "The [disability] field ... arose from rights-based, social-justice-influenced knowledge building and disseminating initiatives. Such fields theorized as well as actualized greater inclusion and equality in the academy" (Garland-Thomson 916). The social model of disability defines disability as a social attitude and treatment of concerning inclusion and exclusion in social activities.

The people with disability do not have access in educational infrastructure such as buildings, classroom, learning materials (books, library, labs, and audio-visuals) and

curriculum in majority of educational institutions (CBS 2010/11). Banskota et al. report that people with disability have no easy access to the higher education institutions including Universities (cited in Ojha 11). There is “the need for inclusive education rather than special education” (27). People with disability experience discriminatory behaviours every day. National Joint Committee on Learning Disability (NJCLD) reported that there should be friendly environments (institutional goals, policy, curriculum, awareness, accommodation, collaboration, and infrastructure, etc.) to students with learning/intellectual disabilities in educational institutions; academic efforts to students with intellectual disabilities of higher education advance the state of universities and societies. Corby, Taggart and Cousins explored the experiences of people with intellectual disabilities who once completed their studies in post-secondary and higher education, and analyzed how the education transforms their views to their own lives.

Evans et al. discussed about faculty and staff with disabilities in higher education. Universities’ bodies rarely concern about the issues of employees with disabilities. They further analyzed the employees with disabilities from social justice, human resource, legal and economic perspectives; “disabled faculty and staff face attitudinal, policy, and procedural barriers as employees in higher education institutions ... within the context of social justice” (204). Universities can make friendly environments for faculty and staff with disability by creating an inclusive climate; there may be direct support and other strategies (training for the campus community, change in policy and programmes, infrastructures, facilities and physical access, workplace accommodations, organizational structures, provisions of childcare, etc.) to support the disabled employees.

Brabazon discusses that universities matter in inclusive environments for people with disabilities, and “the barriers that block the movement through online and offline spaces” and “universities have failed to create structural change to ensure that proportion of staff and students in the institution match the population more generally” (55, 58). There is a lack of desire for change and avoidance of even unintentional discrimination to staff and students with disabilities. From the viewpoint of social model, non-disabled people restrict social and material participation in public places, and fix them in private places. Oakley discusses the discursive psychology and loneliness of persons with disabilities; “the loneliness constitutes a person’s perception of social isolation” (3). Non-disabled and disabled individuals should collaborate with each other to make sense of their experiences in real lives.

Dhungana presents the experiences of women with disability in Nepal; she concludes, “[...] disabled women are positioned at the lowest social level. They are cast down,

stigmatized, rejected, excluded from family, community and from the government authority” (144). Aryal and Aryal investigated stigma and discrimination regarding with disability in the family and society in Pokhara, Nepal; they studied disability outside the educational institutions. Rohwerder focused on the situational analysis of the disabled school children’s access to education, health care, jobs and stigma and discrimination in Nepal. Grimes, et al. reported a country profile of Nepal that included only school children with disabilities connecting with inclusive disability education, but ignored the school teachers with disabilities and the students and teachers with disabilities of the universities. Neupane and Giri investigated the experiences of the non-disabled teachers of integrated schools of Kathmandu and Kavre where the students with disabilities and other students study together in the same classes.

In the social justice model of disability, “concepts such as social justice, liberation, and oppression are used to analyze, evaluate, and transform systems of social behavior, discriminatory institutional structures, and cultural practices” (Adams, et al., cited in Evans et al. 71). Non-disabled persons in the institutions consciously or unconsciously create hostile environments to persons with disability who need social justice in the institutions. “The policies, practices, and norms established in institutions [...] create barriers for people with disability. Individual attitudes [...] expressed toward disabled individuals contribute to feelings of discomfort and distrust that people with disabilities experience in an ableist society” (Friffin et al., cited in Evans et al.72). Non-disabled persons have the privilege and power to manage environments within institutions that are not friendly to persons with disability.

The constitution of Nepal 2015 specifies that citizens with disabilities including vision, hearing and motor impaired citizens shall have the right to free school education with Braille script and sign language. The Inclusive Education Policy for Persons with Disabilities, the School Sector Development Plan 2016-2023 and Education Act focus on free education and scholarships, developing special rules, disability-friendly infrastructures, educational materials and curriculum, and trained teaches for disabled children in education. There are the provisions of disability-inclusive recruitment policy in government funded sectors including Public Service Commission, Tribhuvan University. The 2017 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act has ensured non-discrimination on work and employment. UGC provides some scholarships for the students with disabilities pursuing higher education, and prioritizes the teachers with disabilities for research works.

There were some theoretical reviews of disability studies and some empirical researches. Most of the empirical researches concern with women and school students with disabilities. Although the literature review presents disability in different contexts, this

study focuses on the lived experiences of students with disabilities inside campuses of the universities. The University needs to address the students with disability; for that, it requires some empirical literature, i.e. the real experience of the students with disabilities in the university. The research gap is to explore the lived experiences of students with disabilities at Tribhuvan University.

### **Research Methods**

**Research Designs:** This research study has utilized the hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative method to meet the objective. Here, qualitative method was exploited to explore the in-depth experience of informants and how meanings were formed and transformed; it provided a humanistic bent, and assisted to improve disability condition and social justice in the campuses.

**Sources:** Primary sources for data collection were the students with disability within the university. Secondary sources were journals, bulletins and books having disability studies.

**Population and Sample Population:** The population of this study included all students with disabilities of constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University. The sample population from purposive sampling were five students with distinct disabilities from the TU constituent campuses of various locations where they are likely to be available to present their lived experiences for the diversity of experiences and information.

**Research Tools:** The research tool was a semi-structured interview with the students with disabilities to expose the lived experiences and conditions at TU. Note-taking technique was used to record the required information from interviews and the selected texts. The interviews were conducted in individual setting of the participants' conveniences to make them comfortable sharing their experiences and information. The researcher took notes and identified themes in the interviews with the sampled students. Research ethics and safety were assured to the participants during and after the interviews.

**Data Analysis:** The information and lived experiences of the students with disabilities collected from the campuses have been presented and interpreted in terms of their disability characteristics associating with infrastructures of the institutions and academic-social integration inside the university. The study has synthesized campus structures and textual descriptions to make sense of the lived experiences of students with disability at the university connecting with the national priority in education. The study explored why the structural phenomena were as they were, why they were disabled-unfriendly in the colleges and how the campus phenomena were understood by the students with disabilities in the contexts of teaching learning in the University.

## Results and Discussion

The number of students with disabilities is increasing in the Tribhuvan University, and the university needs to manage their needs. In order to achieve the objective – to investigate the lived experience of students with disabilities in Tribhuvan University - five individual interviews were organized at the constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University. Three main types of students with disability were met: students with visual impairment, hearing impairment and motor impairment (wheelchair users). The first type of disability, persons with visual impairment, interviewed were three students; one was a Master level student in Education and second was a student of bachelor level in Humanities and Social Sciences in Kathmandu and third person was a student from bachelor level in education from outside Kathmandu valley. The second type of disability was students with hearing impairment, and one individual interview was taken from a constituent campus outside Kathmandu Valley. Regarding the third type of disability, one student with motor impairment who was a student of bachelor level in Faculty of Management was interviewed in Kathmandu valley. All the responses expressed by each participant with disability were analysed in the contexts of what infrastructures were and how they understood the campus phenomena.

Students with disability need a special environment for enhancing their knowledge and skills, and interacting with other students and teachers with/without disabilities in the university because the students with disability have physical limitations that prevent their academic activities in the university. The students with impairments undergo physical inability for their performances as normal persons do. Normal students and teachers (un)intentionally discriminate them in social, academic and educational activities; it has been a social discrimination and social injustice. Students with disability are part of educational institutions, and society of the university should respect their disability rights. This study explores what they experienced in the university regarding with studies.

Students with disability agreed that academic and social barriers have negative impact on the completion of their study in campuses. Students with visual impairments expressed that they did not find alternate print sources and have poor access to computer-based materials for study; they were unable to participate in extracurricular activities and lacked independence in learning because of their visual impairments. Student 1 with visual impairment stated

The lack of independence leads to poor knowledge and acquiring skills in the campus, and he has to become too dependent on his friends. Teachers and administrations treat them the same as did to the sighted students. We unsighted students cannot see what

the teachers write on the boards in the classroom, where the extracurricular activities are going on, we know they are not appropriate to the unsighted students. (Interview, December 2021).

The students with unsighted have encountered many problems in the classrooms: they must take help from other sighted students to note down what teachers write on the boards, and where the classes are going on and where the extracurricular activities are happening. The students 1, 2, and 3 with visual impairment told that they used to ask their teachers to read aloud what they wrote on the boards in the classrooms. Many teachers read aloud while writing on the boards, but few teachers ignored their problem that hurts them. The students with visual impairment expected to read aloud what the teachers wrote on the boards to enhance the learning in the campus (Interviews, December 21 and 27; January 5)

Students 1, 2 and 3 with visual impairment stated that they have taken notes of lectures and listening materials at home in braille lipi what they remembered. They added that the campuses have never provided the audio educational materials and the reading materials in braille scripts. They took notes of reading materials with the help of friends or family members at home. It shows that they have confronted some hostile and difficult situations in the learning processes. The students 3 with blindness bewailed that she has depended on either lectures of the teachers or friends; her family members stayed in the village. She has been staying with her village friend who was junior in school education, but she waited her friend for just having a companion in the campus. She revealed what she has learned was the result of only listening lectures and friends' reading. She could not read the normal reading books and journals; she whined that there were no audio materials of course books in the campus. The unsighted student who studied Nepali had difficulty accessing web audio content, and the unsighted student who studied English had received a few web audio materials.

The students 1, 2 and 3 complained that there were large classes and the normal students often murmur in the classrooms, so that it becomes difficult to listen to the lecturers well, and as a result, that noisy environments hinder to gear up the study. According to their experiences, many students did corrections in their murmuring habits in the classrooms, some students were stubborn. The unsighted student 1 stated that some stubborn students muttered about our disabled conditions, too- because of these andha (the unsighted students), they did not get chance to talk with their friends in the classrooms and the teachers also scolded them. It means that it has tormented the students with visual impairment. The students 1, 2 and 3 agreed that most of the teachers and the students assisted them to study well in the classrooms.

The students 1-3 with visual impairment mentioned that they had to discuss the topics with their intimate friends to learn more after the classes: they sometimes queried with some teachers even after the classes. Their main sources of gaining knowledge were either the teachers, friends or family members. The students 2 and 3 with visual impairment bellyached that there was no use of the campus libraries for their study because college course books and reference books for their bachelor and master study were not available in braille scripts and audio texts. The students 1 and 3 affirmed that they have passed the examinations although the study materials were limited for them. The students with vision impairment groused that the campus administrations and other students' union disregarded them and indirectly restricted them from participating in the programmes; they stated that they never knew what the campus administration and the students' union were going to, and they were never consulted about the extracurricular activities in the campus. The students with eyesight problem could not see the notice on notice boards and websites; they needed help from others. The student 1 stated that even if he had rarely participated in the extracurricular activities like poem recitation programme, public speaking competition, other physically normal students and some teachers felt strange and perplexedly complimented to the students with eyesight problem. These activities and behaviours of the campus administrations and the students' unions showed their indirect discriminations to the students with disability.

All the students 1-3 with visual impairment fulminated that the university tormented them by the changing rule of recommendation for scholarship for blind students. The student 1 complained that blindness was itself a proof for the campus administration and the campus itself can forward the document to the concerned bodies of the university, and why the campus administration asked him to go to the central office of Tribhuvan University for recommendation of disability. The student 2 exasperated that for students with disability it was difficult to go different offices of the University for getting scholarships, and the university system indirectly persecuted the disabled students and discouraged in the university. They considered it as an unintentional discrimination to the disabled students in the University. The students 1, 2 and 3 demanded that the concerned campuses should forward the necessary documents to the concerned bodies of the University to provide the scholarships for students with disability.

The students agreed that most of the teachers and students succoured and supported them in their study, but few teachers overlooked the problems of unsighted students in the classrooms, and a few students passed over the complications of the disabled students. The student 1 shared that one student added the problem by showing the office of the Campus Chief to the wrong direction and the next one directed him for



toilet to the wrong way on the first day at the campus. Although there were a few unfriendly behaviours happened to them, they found somehow supporting attitudes of the teachers and students at the campus. Student-1 and 2 with visual impairment complained about the building structures.

The buildings and paths within the campus are not friendly for disabled students. The ladders/staircases are with steps but not sliding ones; we unsighted students were hurt many times in the ladders. Some of the buildings have no bars, and we are terrified while walking. Therefore, we must be more dependent on other sighted students. (Interviews, December 2021 & 27)

The student 2 with visual impairment stated that campus administration has allotted different classroom for each subjects, and this has made them problem to move from one classroom to the next classroom, one floor to next floor, sometimes one building to the next (Interview, December 2021). This saying shows that the campus administration do for their own convenience but it has created problems for disabled students to move from one place to another; this discrimination comes under unintentional and/or negligent discrimination for students with disability. Students-1 and 2 with visual impairment expected that the classrooms for the study should be allotted in the same floor of a building if there is not possible in a room for all subjects. It can be if the campus administrations consider about the disabled students before determining the classrooms.

The researcher found by observations that even recently constructed buildings were unfriendly for disabled students in the campus. One constituent campus in the Kathmandu valley has constructed a classroom building having four floors and three stairs in 2075 BS, but there was not a single stair for the persons with disability; the campus administration and planner turned a blind eye to the needs of the students and teachers with disabilities. Such derelictions of duty pose the problems for the unsighted students in the University, and discourage the students to attend the class in the campus. This is the (un)intentional discriminatory behaviours of the campus administrations to the students with seeing problem.

While observing the toilets in the campuses, there was no water in the students' toilet, and they have to carry from other places. This awkward condition created a problem for the students with disability. The students 2 and 3 stated that they had to manage themselves and they felt horrible when they had diarrhoea in the campus time. The students 1 and 3 with vision impairment complained that the campus grounds were not plane that made difficulty for the unsighted students; they had to walk through the narrow passages. The student 2 expressed that he moved every step with fear at

the campus because of building structures and ground conditions. The students with blindness had the problems of accessing the classrooms, toilet, written and practical examinations, research works, and no extra vocal description from the teachers.

Hearing-impaired has been another great problem in human health. Some children may lack little hearing power and some may be totally deaf either since births or after particular accidents. The study included a bachelor level student with hearing impairment who has been deaf since birth. He is pre-lingually deaf, that means a person who has been deaf since before he started to talk. Deaf people by birth use sign language as their mother language. In Nepal, children with hearing-impairment often do not get school education; few deaf children receive schooling because there are few schools for deaf children. There is not a single higher institution for the hearing-impaired students in Nepal. The deaf children who passed school education have to study in normal educational institutes. The researcher did not meet the hearing-impaired students in the classrooms of the campuses, but met him at a deaf school where he has been teaching deaf children. During the interview, the researcher took a help with a teacher of the school who knew both sign language and verbal language.

The student 4 with hearing impairment stated that he has been deaf since birth, and he received school education at a deaf school because of being a son of a teacher. He said that there were many children who did not get education, but he obtained school education up to twelve class at the deaf school where he has been working. The deaf student has joined a bachelor level in a constituent campus of Tribhuvan University. He exposed that he rarely took classes in the campus because he was unable to hearing the teachers' sound; the teachers seldom used the boards, and even if they wrote on the boards they wrote a topic and few words that were meaningless for him because he could not make senses from those few jumbled words. He affirmed that the formal classes therefore were not useful for deaf students in Tribhuvan University. He stated that he visited the campus only in the exam, and his friends helped him to admit and fill the exam forms as well as to borrow the books from the campus library.

During the interview, the hearing-impaired student showed his feeling of shock that Tribhuvan University has not even a single teacher in the campuses for deaf students. He complained that he could not converse with the other students and teachers in the campus because he was unable to hear and speak with them and they could not understand sign language; in emergency he used to write in papers for communication. He expected some teachers who can communicate in sign language in the campus. He displayed his deep distress the teachers disregarded him in the campus because they did not know sign language. The other physically normal students also ignored him, and sometimes ridiculed him. The campus environments were unfriendly to the

deaf students, and that discouraged him and other students with hearing impairment. He affirmed that because of such reasons many hearing-impaired students have been out of the higher education. He expressed that this has been a social discrimination because the physically normal teachers and administrators determined and behaved as their socially-constructed visions.

The deaf student stated that the students with hearing impairment have limited vocabularies because of sign language development condition; the sign language has not developed many letters and words/phrases well. He accepted that because of the limited vocabulary, they felt difficulty to read and write effectively. He laboured more not only to study the textbooks and reference books but also enrich vocabularies of a language. He asked his friends for class notes to study at home; he has depended on his friends to study more about the course books. He generally accessed web content at home to study more. He stated that some students and teachers supposed the hearing impaired students joined the campus just for time-pass, and that irritated him.

The deaf student stated that building structures, classroom structure and grounds were the same for the other normal students. But he complained that the host never thought making inclusive in extracurricular activities in the campus; he was never informed about the extracurricular programmes. He concluded that it was an (un)intentional discrimination to the students with hearing impairment.

In the meantime, he disclosed that he failed in all subjects in the first year examination, and later he did more hard work and performed better. He suggested that Tribhuvan University taking help of the government can introduce at least a programme for deaf students. He said that the students with hearing impairment who completed SLC/SEE and twelve class from deaf schools have been unemployed, and if few adults with hearing loss have got jobs, they are low-paid compared with the general employees. He stated that he got support from his friends for study and determined to hard work to succeed.

The third type of disability discussed in this study was motor impairment. Among many students with totally/partially motor impairment, the researcher chose a total leg-impaired student who was using a wheelchair. The study included a student who lost total functions of legs, and needed wheelchair to move. The student 5 with motor impairment who studied BBS at a constituent campus of Tribhuvan University was a student of Master's Degree.

The student 5 with paraplegia (paralysis of the legs) stated that it was difficult to move into the classrooms, sometimes the campus administrations allotted the classroom

on the second and third storeys, and there were no stairs for wheelchair. She asked the campus administration to change the classrooms for the students with motor impairment. She said that the administration was, at first, unwilling to change the classrooms to the ground floor, and the programme coordinator stated that they would not admit her if they knew her disability. After she reminded him the disability-inclusive education policy and disability rights, he managed the class on the ground floor and the ways into the rooms. There were not enough space to move and adjust her wheelchair in the classrooms; she including her friends manage their wheelchairs in the aisle between the rows of seats. She asked many times to make free space in front of the class for wheelchairs by avoiding a set of bench and desk but neglected her voice. It would be difficult for the administration to adjust all the classes on the ground floor if there were many students with paraplegia in all academic years. She suggested that the solution of this problem was to construct the disable-friendly stairs. The researcher observed that there were three stairs in a building in a campus in Kathmandu Valley, but none of them were useful for the students with disability; at least on stair could be built disable-friendly. Such thought diminished human value of the students with motor impairment.

The student 5 with motor impairment stated that the office of the Campus Chief, library room and other rooms of the administration were not also easily accessible to the leg-impaired students; there were steps like stairs; there were not plane smooth passages on the ground for students with disability. She exposed that such structures discouraged her and other students with motor impairment to attend classes regularly in the campus. All structures and institutions are for human beings, but the university disregarded the necessity of the students with disability.

She complained that the process of getting scholarship for the students with disability provided by the university was annoying: the administration asked her to submit the consent letter from the central office of Tribhuvan University, Student Welfare and Sports Directorate, Kritipur which was also disability-unfriendly. She protested against the process of providing scholarship to the students with disability, and asked to revise it. From the viewpoint of social justice, the disable students should not be maltreated in the name of processes.

The student 5 with leg-impairment said that almost all teachers and students assisted her for study in the campus when she requested, but only few students obliquely made fun of her as an animal. Many teachers and students showed their unwillingness to talk with her and attempted to escape from her: such behaviours hurt her. She groused that the campus administration and the students' unions neglected the students with disability to incorporate in the extracurricular activities. She shared her experience

that they put notices on the notice boards which was not accessible for wheelchair user students, and she herself could not read and asked other friends for information. They conducted the programmes like poem recitation, gurupurnima in the hall of the fourth floor; such behaviours of the abled ones impaired her. She never used toilets of the campus because they were unfriendly for her; toilets were made for the abled ones. She had to leave the classes due to the toilet problem.

She said that she could not enter the library and search books herself, but she asked her friends for the books by giving the names of books: the library was also disability-unfriendly in the campus. She complained that because of exam centre policy of the university in the Kathmandu, she had to spend almost six thousand rupees to attend the exams. The administrators' attitudes and many exam centres were disability-unfriendly: these behaviours were unintentional discriminations to the disabled ones. She got a little discount in admissions fees, but she had to pay hostel charges equally to the abled ones. She said that the executives' attitudes, practices and campus phenomena made them more impaired rather than their physical conditions.

From the interviews with the informant students with disabilities, it can be concluded that the university/campus phenomena are disability-unfriendly and hostile. "Academics with disabilities were being put at a severe disadvantage compared to able-bodied academics" (Barton and Hayhoe 21). The disabled students expected human support for enrolment procedures, library study, note-taking, interpretation of lectures, movement in the campuses, technical support like laptops, audio educational materials, etc., and extra exam time with an assistant for writing in the examinations. Brown and Leigh say, "Academics with chronic illness, disabilities or neurodiversity are practically unseen and starkly under-represented in comparison to students with disabilities or disabled people in the general public (5). They also need specific ways of teaching learning processes and performance evaluation (assessment and examination system- only oral and/or written), accommodation, social security, easy access to different buildings of the University. They also asked for specific and accessible courses and books for specific disabilities. They recounted that they received a lot of supports from friends and teachers in the campuses: the main barriers that they found in the University were lack of disabled-friendly infrastructures for movement inside the campuses, lack of disabled-friendly information, the negative attitude of some general students, teachers and administrators, the research and practical activities particularly for the students with visual and hearing impairment, lack of counselling and guidance inside the campuses, lack of hearing-impaired student's interactions with classmates and teachers, the same types of practical and theoretical assessment and examinations for general and disabled students, etc. Students with disabilities have limitations due to their bodies in the campuses. "Disabled students and faculty face multiple challenges

in campus; they also have the ability to provide counternarratives about the place of people with disabilities in the world” (Evans et al 199). The disability friendly campus environments and executives’ practices and attitude minimize the dependency of the disabled students on others. The students with disabilities stated that they joined and continued their higher education study due to the support of family members, friends, the self determination to overcome the disability conditions and to succeed in life, and little support from the University.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study explored the experiences of students with disabilities at Tribhuvan University; how they perceived the campus phenomena. The study has deduced that the students with disability have perceived negative experiences and understanding inside the colleges. They underwent through various obstructing factors like inaccessible infrastructures, unfriendly teaching learning environment, educational materials and pedagogy, limited institutional support, limited cooperative friends, performance assessment system, etc. while pursuing their studies at the university. There were mainly infrastructure barriers, university policy and practice barriers and attitude barriers for their academic performance in higher education. Those disabled-unfriendly infrastructures impeded to speed up their intellectual abilities and social and academic integration in the university. They affirmed that the university policy and practices such as bothersome admission process, getting scholarship process, performance assessment, maintaining traditional library, unfriendly resources for the disabled students, unsuitable professional development as their characteristics of disability, etc. were influenced by the executives’ (un)conscious/ (un)intentional disability bias and ignorance/negligence to the disabled students in the colleges. The physically disabled students exposed that they endured more negative attitude barriers from some physically abled students, teachers and administrators inside the colleges; those adverse viewpoints sometimes frustrated and obstructed their intellectual, academic and social integration inside higher education. The traditional frames of mind and prejudices of physically normal students, teachers and administrators were uncooperative behaviours to the students with disabilities.

They asked the university executives why the infrastructures and practices were as they were, why even the recently constructed structures and practices have been disabled-unfriendly in the university: the major cause was the conscious negligence and ignorance of the executives. Some modifications on the university environments, practices and executive’s thoughts can improve the performances of the students with disabilities as well as the university itself. It can improve the performance of the university, and address the national goal (disability education and justice) and society. For further research, the study may be on a comparative analysis of the lived

experiences of the students and teachers with disability across public and private colleges/universities, an analysis of the lived experiences of the disabled students from the socially excluded, marginalized and disadvantaged groups while pursuing their higher studies, and the lived experiences of the disabled students and teachers outside the college phenomena/ in the family and society during their studies or after completing their studies.

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