

**"Barriers to Education for Individuals with Disabilities in Nepal: Exploring Challenges and Assessing Inclusive Education Strategies."**

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## **Abstract:**

This study evaluates the effectiveness of current policies aimed at promoting inclusive education and presents a comprehensive analysis of the impediments to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. The research draws on a variety of sources, including primary sources such as parents, teachers, and individuals with disabilities, as well as secondary sources like reports from NGOs and international organisations. The report identifies the social, cultural, economic, and infrastructural barriers that hinder access to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal and proposes recommendations to improve their educational opportunities. The study aims to promote equity and inclusion in education, ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equitable access to high-quality education. Additionally, the research emphasises that education is a fundamental human right that should be accessible to all, regardless of their abilities or limitations. The report underscores the existence of obstacles to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal, including poverty, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient supportive services, and social stigma.

# 1. Introduction:

The objectives of this report are to provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in Nepal in accessing education and to evaluate the effectiveness of current initiatives aimed at promoting inclusive education. The report draws on information from various sources, including reports from international organizations and NGOs, as well as interviews with parents, teachers, and people with disabilities. The study aims to identify the key social, cultural, economic, and infrastructural barriers that hinder access to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal, and to propose recommendations for improving educational opportunities for this population. The report seeks to promote equity and inclusion in education, recognizing education as a fundamental human right that should be accessible to all, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

Access to education is a fundamental human right that should be available to all individuals, regardless of their abilities or limitations. Unfortunately, persons with disabilities face various barriers to education in Nepal, as evidenced by a study conducted by the National Federation of the Disabled (2018). Among the primary obstacles to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal are poverty, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient support services, and social stigma. Disability is a global issue that affects a significant portion of the population, with an estimated prevalence of 15.8% in Nepal (National Planning Commission Secretariat, 2018). While the Nepalese government has implemented policies and legislation to support individuals with disabilities, they continue to face substantial challenges, particularly in accessing education. According to UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) research (2019), only 3% of disabled children attend school in Nepal due to inaccessible educational environments and discrimination. Children with disabilities face numerous educational challenges, including a lack of accessible schools, specialized instructional materials and technology, and negative attitudes from teachers and peers.

In Nepal, people with disabilities face challenges not only in accessing education but also in obtaining essential services such as healthcare and employment. Poverty is a significant issue for many disabled individuals in Nepal, which further limits their access to basic services (National Planning Commission Secretariat, 2018). Furthermore, social marginalization is

prevalent among people with disabilities, leading to higher rates of unemployment and poverty (National Planning Commission Secretariat, 2018). Recognizing the rights and needs of individuals with disabilities, the Nepali government has taken initiatives to promote inclusion and accessibility. In 2017, the country embraced the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) with the purpose of protecting and advancing the rights of individuals with disabilities. The government has also implemented various policies and laws to support inclusive education, including the Inclusive Education Policy (2018) and the Disability Rights and Protection Act (2017). Despite the ongoing efforts, people with disabilities in Nepal face several challenges. Restricted access to education and healthcare, along with discrimination and negative attitudes towards them, remain major obstacles. Moreover, a large number of disabled individuals in Nepal reside in rural areas with inadequate services and infrastructure. In Nepal, people with disabilities encounter significant obstacles in accessing education, healthcare, employment, and other essential services (UNICEF, 2021). As per the 2011 National Population and Housing Census of Nepal, the number of people with disabilities was 513,321, constituting 1.94% of the total population.

Nevertheless, the figure of 513,321 people with disabilities, as reported in the National Population and Housing Census of Nepal in 2011, is believed to be an underestimate due to the lack of official recognition or registration of many disabled individuals (UNICEF, 2021). Limited infrastructure and resources, including accessible facilities, transportation, and assistive technology, pose significant barriers to education for people with disabilities in Nepal (UNICEF, 2021). Furthermore, societal prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities can impede their access to education and employment opportunities (UNICEF, 2021). To address these challenges and promote inclusion of people with disabilities, Nepal has taken steps in recent years. The Nepal Disability Rights Act, passed in 2017, aims to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of people with disabilities, including access to education and employment opportunities (Government of Nepal, 2017).

Nepal has made efforts to tackle these issues and promote inclusivity for people with disabilities in recent years. In 2017, the Nepal Disability Rights Act was passed to safeguard the rights and welfare of individuals with disabilities, ensuring they have access to education and employment opportunities (Government of Nepal, 2017). The government has also set quotas for people with disabilities in government positions and augmented the funding for programs related to disabilities (Government of Nepal, 2018).

Finally, The absence of adequate infrastructure and societal discrimination create challenges for Nepalese individuals with disabilities in accessing essential services, including education. Despite government initiatives aimed at addressing these concerns, there is still a pressing need in Nepal to promote inclusion and equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Disability is a significant concern in Nepal, impacting a significant proportion of the population. Numerous individuals with disabilities encounter hindrances to fundamental services, such as healthcare, education, and employment. People residing in rural areas face particular challenges in obtaining support as individuals with disabilities. Although the Nepali government has implemented policies and laws to address their needs, there is still room for improvement in terms of promoting inclusivity and accessibility.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the obstacles faced by individuals with disabilities when pursuing education in Nepal and explore inclusive education programs that can help.

## 1.1 Overview of Nepal:

Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia bordering India and China, characterized by diverse geography, including the tropical Terai region, the rolling hills and valleys of the Hill region, and the Himalayan Mountain region, with a population of around 30 million people, according to the World Bank (2021). The country is renowned for its cultural diversity, reflected in its many languages and unique blend of Hindu and Buddhist traditions (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Nepal's economy is largely based on agriculture, with a large percentage of the population living below the poverty line (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Despite progress in recent years, there is still much work to be done to improve the quality of life for the Nepalese people (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

Nepal is one of the world's most amazing nations, with incredible diversity in culture, social designs, phonetics, and religion (2011, CBS). Nepal is one of the world's most amazing nations, with incredible diversity in culture, social designs, phonetics, and religion (2011, CBS). Nepal is regarded as one of the least developed countries in South Asia in terms of education. Considering recent progress, a significant proportion of the population continues to struggle with access to education. The Central Bureau of Statistics (2011) reports that Nepal has a literacy rate of 65%, which means that 35% of the population is illiterate. Only 57% of women

are literate, compared to 74% of men, which shows that women's literacy rates are lower. (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Nepal has accomplished significant improvements toward decreasing illiteracy numbers in the past few years, with a total literacy rate of 67.3 percent during 2018. Yet, Nepal remains behind other South Asian countries like as Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Bhutan. In relation to the rest of the world, Nepal's literacy rate is partially below than the average among the nations that are developing.

Despite progress in extending access to education, there are still obstacles to overcome, notably for people with impairments. According to the World Health Organization, approximately 15 percent of the world's population is disabled, and the situation in Nepal is no different. According to the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2020, more than 90 percent of the projected 120-150 million disabled children under the age of 18 who additionally live in nations that are developing are not attending school. This clearly demonstrates the hurdles that people with disabilities encounter while attempting to obtain an education, emphasizing the need for more inclusive education laws and procedures in Nepal as well as other developing nations.

## 1.2 Disability in Nepal:

The interplay of numerous medical illnesses, such as blindness, dementia, or spinal cord damage, with a variety of personal and environmental circumstances results in disability, which is a fundamental component of the human experience. Nowadays, 16% of the world's population, or around 1.3 billion people, have major impairments. Due to an increase in non-communicable illnesses and an increase in life expectancy, this figure is anticipated to climb. The population of individuals with disabilities is heterogeneous, and various factors such as age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, ethnicity, and economic status significantly impact their experiences and healthcare needs. Unfortunately, persons with disabilities frequently have worse health outcomes, earlier death, and more severe functional impairments in everyday life than people without disabilities (World Health Organization: WHO, 2023). As per the Census conducted in 2011, 1.94% of the entire population of Nepal is reported to have some form of disability. Also, because of societal customs, a lack of knowledge about the most effective way to define disability, and other economic factors, it is

difficult to obtain reliable data on the prevalence of handicap in Nepal (National Federation of the Disable-Nepal, 2015). Hindu rituals (primary religion in Nepal) are socially and formally rigid, and they lay a heavy emphasis on attributing one's present-day accomplishments and shortcomings to past sins (Gabel and Danforth, 2008). All things considered, if someone has a disability, it is often seen to be due to past wrongdoings. Basically, a variety of socio-social standards, ideals, and tensions lead to a lot of people hiding their inability. The actual number of people with disabilities in Nepal is far greater, according to experts, strategists, organizers, international organizations, and public organisations. They attribute this to poverty, long-term fragility, maternal care facilities, geological variations, the ten-year Maoist conflict, and the most recent seismic earthquake.

### 1.3 Definition of Disability in Nepal:

According to Nepal's constitution, a person with a handicap is intellectually or physically unable to pursue a regular life. Similarly, the World Wellbeing Association (WHO) defines incapacity as having restrictions in interest, ability to do actions, and debilitations. The phrase includes those whose mobility is limited as well as those who have hearing and vision impairments. The Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2017 in Nepal recognizes ten distinct types of disabilities. These include:

1. Physical disability: loss of movement or physical abilities because of cerebral palsy, paralysis, amputation, or other conditions.
2. Blindness or partial vision loss constitutes a visual impairment.
3. Loss of hearing, either completely or partially.
4. Speech impairment entails a partial or complete loss of the capacity to talk or interact in a meaningful way.
5. Intellectual disability: Significant restrictions in cognitive abilities and adaptive conduct.
6. Mental disability: a broad category of mental illnesses or impairments, including ailments like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety.



7. Psychosocial disability: Limitations in social, emotional, and psychological functioning, including impairments brought on by addiction, trauma, and other circumstances.
8. Coexistence of two or more disabilities, such as physical and cerebral impairments, is referred to as multiple disabilities.
9. Learning disability: the inability to learn reading, writing, or math abilities while having average intelligence.
10. Autism Spectrum Disorder: A developmental condition that impairs behaviour, social interaction, and communication.

## 1.4 Education structure in Nepal:

In Nepal, the educational system is structured as a 10+2 system, with two years of upper secondary education coming after ten years of elementary and secondary school. Grades one through five make up the primary education system. Grades six through eight make up the lower secondary system, while grades nine through twelve make up the upper secondary system (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2018). Formal education and non-formal education are the two divisions of the educational system. Formal education is provided in schools, and non-formal education consists of initiatives aimed at addressing the educational requirements of underprivileged and marginalized populations, such as street children, youngsters employed as workers, and school dropouts (UNESCO, 2016).

Government and private institutions both offer education in Nepal, with the government controlling most of the country's elementary and secondary schools. Yet, in recent years, particularly at the higher education level, the private sector has assumed a more substantial role in the provision of education (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2018). While private institutions are expected to satisfy specific requirements and adhere to government directives, it is the government's responsibility to regulate the education industry and ensure that standards are reached.

Although there has been improvement in recent years, Nepal still has a long way to go before its population can receive a high-quality education. Particularly for impoverished and marginalized populations, such as those with disabilities, access to education remains limited. Moreover, there is a scarcity of qualified instructors and educational resources, and the quality of education offered by schools is frequently subpar (United Nations, 2021).

## 1.5 Models of Schools for the People with Disabilities in Nepal:

As per the report of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (2018), three distinct categories of schools have been established in Nepal to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities:

- **Special schools:** These government-run institutions were created especially for children with impairments of a similar nature.
- **Integrated schools:** These are conventional schools where kids with a range of special needs can enroll and get an education, typically in their local neighborhood. For the purpose of preparing impaired students to attend regular classrooms, integrated schools often offer a resource room as well as an additional emotional support system.
- **Inclusive schools:** All children, regardless of their disabilities, should have equal access to school, according to inclusive education. This strategy seeks to involve all kids, including those with and without impairments, and promotes diversity. Yet, due to resource and prejudice difficulties, establishing inclusive education can be difficult.

## 1.6 National Policies for Disabilities:

Over the years, Nepal's National Policy on Disability have been formed with the goal of supporting the rights and well-being of people with disabilities. These policies include a wide variety of topics, including education, healthcare, employment, and social activities, and they have played a significant role in increasing the social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities. This section will concentrate on the many policies that have been put in place in Nepal to accommodate the educational requirements of people with disabilities.

1. The 1971 Education Act was an important step in acknowledging the educational requirements of Nepalese persons with disabilities. This statute required the government to offer special education to disabled children as well as to integrate them into general schools wherever practicable. This aided in the promotion of inclusive education and ensuring equitable access to education for children with disabilities.

2. The Incapacitated and Government Assistance Act of 1982 established the word "disabled," with the goal of providing government help to those with disabilities, such as getting into school, healthcare, and work. This act contributed to the social and economic integration of individuals with disabilities, which is critical to their general well-being.
3. The Kids' Demonstration policy (1992) centered on the rights of disabled children and their access to school, healthcare, as well as other fundamental requirements. This strategy aided in the promotion of social welfare and the protection of disabled children, who are frequently among society's most vulnerable members.
4. The Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Act of 1992 granted people with impairments a legal foundation for protection and rehabilitation. In order to ensure the general wellbeing of persons with disabilities, this legislation stressed the significance of disability prevention, early identification, and rehabilitation.
5. The Social Welfare Council was founded by the Nepalese Debilitated Person Security and Government Help Regulation (1994), which monitors the establishment and execution of strategies and initiatives for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. This rule aided in the establishment of a centralized agency to coordinate efforts to support and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.
6. The 10th Five-Year Plan (2002-2007) aims to promote individuals with disabilities' engagement in all areas of society, particularly education, healthcare, employment, and social activities. This approach aided in the promotion of individuals with disabilities' social and economic inclusion, which is critical to their overall well-being.
7. The National Policy on Disability (2006) sought to guarantee the safety, treatment, and integration of people with disabilities in all facets of society. This strategy placed a strong emphasis on the necessity of providing people with disabilities with accessible healthcare, education, and work opportunities in order to further their social and economic participation.

8. The Nepalese Constitution of 2015 contained measures to safeguard individuals with disabilities' rights, such as the right to education, work, and social inclusion. This constitution contributed to the achievement of equal rights and opportunities for individuals with disabilities in all sectors of life.
9. The 2017 Act Regarding Rights of People with Disabilities sought to guarantee that individuals with disabilities receive equal rights and opportunities across all spheres of life, including education, work, healthcare, and social activities. By ensuring that their needs are satisfied, this action aided in promoting the social and economic inclusion of individuals with disabilities.

## 1.7 International Treaties and Agreements on Disability Rights Ratified by Nepal:

To ensure the protection and inclusion of people with disabilities, Nepal has also made pledges and taken initiatives at the international level. The following is a summary of some significant international laws and regulations that affect people with disabilities in Nepal:

1. Nepal adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD), a significant international accord, in 2010. This agreement underlines the importance of accessibility, non-discrimination, and inclusive education for people with disabilities while also recognizing their legal rights. Nepal has committed to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are preserved and safeguarded throughout the nation by ratifying this agreement.
2. The UNCRPD's Optional Protocol, which Nepal ratifies in 2010, offers a method for people and organizations to file complaints about human rights breaches including disabilities. In addition to guaranteeing that the government is held responsible for its activities in preserving the rights of people with disabilities, this protocol gives people with disabilities the ability to seek justice for any abuses of their rights.
3. Nepal adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, and it contains provisions concerning to the inclusion and protection of kids with disabilities. This

convention advocates for the full and equal involvement of children with disabilities in society while acknowledging that they experience specific difficulties and obstacles in exercising their rights.

4. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which Nepal adopted in 1991, has provisions relating to the right to social security, employment, and education for people with disabilities. This agreement advocates for the full involvement of people with disabilities in economic, social, and cultural spheres and acknowledges the significance of these rights.
5. Nepal has committed to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, including Goal 10, which aims to reduce inequities, notably those encountered by persons with disabilities. Nepal has enacted various legislation and initiatives targeted at improving the lives of individuals with disabilities in order to secure their inclusion in the development process, indicating the country's commitment to reaching the SDGs. In the context of Nepal, several other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are interconnected with Goal 10, which aims to reduce disparities, including those faced by people with disabilities. Some of the other relevant goals are:
  - Goal 1: No Poverty - Nepal faces high levels of poverty, and people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to poverty and exclusion. This goal aims to end poverty in all forms and promote social protection systems for all.
  - Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being - People with disabilities often face significant health challenges and may have limited access to healthcare services. This goal aims to ensure universal access to healthcare and promote well-being for all.
  - Goal 4: Quality Education - People with disabilities may face barriers to accessing education, which can limit their opportunities and perpetuate inequalities. This goal aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
  - Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth - People with disabilities often face discrimination and barriers to accessing employment, which can limit their economic opportunities and perpetuate poverty. This goal aims to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities - People with disabilities often face barriers to accessing public spaces and transportation, which can limit their mobility and participation in community life. This goal aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable for all.
6. The Incheon Strategy, launched in 2013, is a plan of action to increase accessibility for people with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific area. This policy, which emphasizes boosting job possibilities, accessibility improvements, and disability-related data gathering, has Nepal as a signatory. Nepal has made a commitment to move towards creating a more inclusive society for people with disabilities by supporting this plan (OHCHR, n.d.).

## 2. Purpose of the report:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in Nepal in accessing education and to evaluate the effectiveness of current strategies for promoting inclusive education. The study draws on various sources, including reports from international organisations and NGOs, as well as primary sources such as civil society representatives and individuals with disabilities.

The study provides an overview of the current situation in Nepal, which is characterised by a lack of access to education for individuals with disabilities due to various barriers. These barriers include poverty, social and cultural attitudes towards disability, inaccessible infrastructure, and a lack of awareness and skilled teachers. The study aims to identify these challenges and analyse current initiatives to provide recommendations for improving educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. Ultimately, the goal of this study is to promote greater equity and inclusion in education and to ensure that all individuals have equal opportunities to pursue their educational aspirations.

To achieve this purpose, the study employs a qualitative research design, which involves collecting data from various sources, including reports, interviews, and observations. The data collected is then analysed using thematic analysis, which enables the identification of key themes and patterns in the data. The study also aims to provide a comprehensive and holistic view of the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing education in Nepal. This includes an analysis of the social and cultural attitudes towards disability in Nepal, as well

as an examination of the policy and legal frameworks that impact education for individuals with disabilities.

In addition, the study evaluates the effectiveness of current strategies for promoting inclusive education in Nepal, such as the provision of assistive devices, teacher training programs, and awareness-raising campaigns. The study examines the impact of these initiatives on the education of individuals with disabilities and identifies areas for improvement.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the development of effective strategies for promoting inclusive education in Nepal and to ensure that all individuals, including those with disabilities, have equal opportunities to access education and achieve their full potential.

### **3. Literature Review:**

Based on the literature review conducted, it is evident that individuals with disabilities in Nepal face numerous challenges in accessing education. These challenges can be categorised into various barriers such as poverty, social and cultural attitudes towards disability, inaccessible infrastructure, lack of awareness and skilled teachers. While there are existing strategies and initiatives to promote inclusive education, they face limitations and challenges, such as lack of funding, language barriers, lack of trained teachers, and inadequate infrastructure.

Inclusive education is a human right, and every child has the right to access education without discrimination. However, many barriers still exist that prevent children with disabilities from accessing education in Nepal. This literature review explores the barriers to inclusive education in Nepal and the efforts made towards overcoming these barriers.

Barriers to Inclusive Education in Nepal Human Rights Watch (2018) report highlighted the numerous barriers to inclusive education in Nepal. Firstly, the government has not provided adequate resources and support for inclusive education. Secondly, the curriculum does not cater to the needs of all learners, especially those with disabilities. Thirdly, there is a shortage of trained teachers who can provide inclusive education. Finally, societal attitudes towards people with disabilities are harmful, and this contributes to discrimination in schools. One of the significant barriers identified was the lack of access to quality education. Many children, especially those with disabilities, do not have access to quality education due to inadequate infrastructure, teaching aids, and materials. The report also identified poverty as a significant

barrier to inclusive education. Children from poor families are more likely to miss out on education than those from wealthy families.

According to the UNICEF (2021) report, another significant barrier to inclusive education in Nepal is social stigma and discrimination towards children with disabilities. Children with disabilities often face social exclusion, bullying, and harassment, leading to low self-esteem and a lack of motivation to attend school. Furthermore, the report noted that the education system in Nepal is not adequately equipped to support children with disabilities, with a lack of trained teachers, adequate funding, and inclusive policies. According to the UNICEF Nepal Country Profile (2021), Nepal has improved access to education significantly, with primary school enrolment rates reaching 96% in 2018. However, children with disabilities are still disadvantaged, with only 47% of them enrolled in primary school. Inclusive education is critical to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, which promotes opportunities for everyone to study throughout their lives and works to provide inclusive and equitable quality education (United Nation, 2021).

UNICEF Nepal conducted a situational analysis of children with disabilities in Nepal in 2016. The report highlights that children with disabilities in Nepal face significant challenges in terms of accessing education, healthcare, and social services. They also face stigma, discrimination, and exclusion from mainstream society. The report notes that only a small percentage of children with disabilities attend school, and those who do attend often receive inadequate support. This is due to various factors, including a lack of infrastructure, inaccessible classrooms, untrained teachers, and a lack of assistive technologies. Poverty is also a significant factor, as many families cannot afford to send their children to school or pay for necessary medical care. The analysis further highlights that children with disabilities are more likely to experience violence, abuse, and neglect, often at the hands of family members or caregivers. This is due to a lack of awareness about disability rights and the mistaken belief that children with disabilities are a burden on families and society. The report emphasises the need for greater inclusion and support for children with disabilities in Nepal, including the development of inclusive policies, laws, and programs. It recommends the provision of accessible and affordable healthcare, education, and social services. The report also advocates for greater awareness-raising and training for parents, caregivers, and service providers to help reduce stigma and discrimination against children with disabilities. UNICEF Nepal's situational analysis highlights the critical need to address the challenges facing children with disabilities in Nepal. It provides a valuable resource for policymakers, advocates, and service providers working to improve the lives of children with disabilities in Nepal.



Lamichhane's (2013) study examines the barriers to education faced by children with disabilities in Nepal. The study found that children with disabilities in Nepal face multiple barriers to education, including negative attitudes from society, inaccessible schools and transportation, and a lack of resources and support for inclusive education. The study suggests that addressing these barriers requires a multi-faceted approach, including changes in attitudes and perceptions, policy reforms, and investment in infrastructure and resources for inclusive education. Lamichhane (2013) study also adds to the growing body of research on disability and education in Nepal, highlighting the need for continued efforts to promote inclusive education and ensure that all children have access to quality education. The findings of this study are particularly relevant given the ongoing challenges faced by children with disabilities in Nepal, including poverty, lack of access to healthcare and education, and discrimination.

Maudslay (2013) study examined the assumptions and reality of inclusive education in Nepal. Maudslay (2013) conducted a qualitative study that explored the perceptions of teachers and parents towards inclusive education in Nepal. The study found that the assumptions made about inclusive education did not correspond to the reality on the ground. Firstly, the lack of resources, support, and training for teachers made it difficult for them to provide inclusive education. Secondly, the curriculum did not cater to the needs of all learners, especially those with disabilities. Thirdly, societal attitudes towards people with disabilities were negative, and this contributed to their marginalisation in schools. The study found that despite the government's efforts to promote inclusive education, many children with disabilities were still excluded from education. The study highlighted the lack of funding and resources, inadequate teacher training, and negative attitudes towards disability as significant barriers to inclusive education.

Efforts towards Inclusive Education in Nepal Niure and Shrestha (2021) investigated the realities and challenges of educating students with intellectual disabilities in Nepal. The study found that these students face several challenges, including a lack of trained teachers who can cater to their needs, inaccessible physical infrastructure, and negative attitudes from peers and teachers. Additionally, the curriculum did not cater to the needs of these students, and there was a lack of resources and support from the government. The study found that although there were many challenges, such as a lack of training and support for teachers, many teachers were willing to learn and adapt their teaching methods to accommodate students with disabilities. The study also noted that the involvement of parents in their children's education was critical in promoting inclusive education.

Brandt (2015) explored the inclusiveness of Nepali society for children with disabilities. The study found that children with disabilities in Nepal face multiple challenges, including poverty, lack of access to healthcare and education, societal stigma and discrimination, and inadequate infrastructure (Brandt, 2015). The author noted that children with disabilities are often hidden by their families due to social and cultural beliefs that view disability as a punishment for past sins or a curse from the gods (Brandt, 2015). Additionally, the study found that children with disabilities in Nepal are often excluded from educational opportunities due to a lack of accessible infrastructure and trained teachers (Brandt, 2015). The author noted that while Nepal has made progress in promoting inclusive education, there is still a long way to go in terms of ensuring that all children with disabilities have access to quality education. Brandt (2015) also highlighted the need for greater awareness and understanding of disability issues in Nepal, as well as the importance of promoting a more inclusive society that values diversity and respects the rights of people with disabilities. Overall, Brandt's (2015) study provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by children with disabilities in Nepal and highlights the need for greater efforts to promote inclusiveness and address the various barriers to full participation in society.

In conclusion, this literature review highlights the significant barriers that children with disabilities face in accessing education in Nepal, including poverty, negative societal attitudes, inaccessible infrastructure, and a lack of trained teachers. While there are efforts to promote inclusive education, such as the net enrolment rate in primary education increasing, there is still a significant disparity in access to education for children with disabilities. UNICEF Nepal's situational analysis provides valuable insight into the challenges faced by children with disabilities in Nepal and emphasises the need for greater inclusion, support, and awareness-raising. Additionally, Lamichhane's and Maudslay's studies further highlight the need for policy reforms, infrastructure investment, and changes in attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education. Overall, it is essential to continue efforts to promote inclusive education in Nepal to ensure that all children have equal access to quality education, regardless of their disabilities.

## 4. Methodology:

The methodology for this study involves the use of qualitative research with semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in Nepali to collect data on the barriers preventing individuals with disabilities in Nepal from accessing education. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis. The data analysis involved a thematic approach, where themes and patterns emerging from the data were identified and analysed (Cleland & Ireland, 2002). The study area for this research is Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. As a central hub for education and development, Kathmandu offers an ideal location to investigate the education system for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. The author met with various individuals from different parts of Nepal in Kathmandu to gather diverse perspectives and experiences related to the education system. By conducting interviews with individuals from different backgrounds, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from accessing education in Nepal. The study area of Kathmandu provided a convenient and accessible location to meet with participants, as well as access to relevant resources and organisations working in the field of disability rights and education. Purposive sampling was used to select a total of 10 participants with expertise in the education system for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. The sampling strategy for this study on the education system for people with disabilities in Nepal will utilise purposive sampling to select participants based on their relevance to the research question. A total of 10 participants was selected, including 1 parent with disabled child, 3 individuals from disability-focused organisations, 2 school principals, 1 representative who is both a head of organisation and a parent, 2 managers from relevant organisations, and 1 retired governmental officer with expertise in education policy. The use of purposive sampling ensured that the selected participants have relevant experiences and expertise in the education system for individuals with disabilities in Nepal, increasing the representativeness and relevance of the sample.

To conduct this research study on the education system for people with disabilities in Nepal, several databases were utilised to access relevant research materials. The search was performed online using databases such as EBSCO, Google Scholar, ProQuest, Sage, Scopus, socINDEX, and JSTOR. The search was limited to the English language. Key search terms included "disability people in Nepal," "law and policy of Nepal," "infrastructure," "society and culture," "organisation working with disabled people," "justice," "procedural justice," "distributive

justice," "Nepal," "local communities," and so on. By utilising multiple databases and search terms, a comprehensive range of literature was gathered, providing a strong foundation for the research analysis.

In conducting this study, utmost care was taken to ensure that ethical considerations were met, and that participants' rights and confidentiality were respected. Prior to the interviews, participants were provided with verbal informed consent that clearly outlined the purpose and scope of the research, as well as their voluntary participation (Smith & Smith, 2018). Additionally, participants were informed that their personal and sensitive information would be kept confidential and secure, and not shared with unauthorised individuals (Smith, 2018). The authors also considered ethical considerations when collecting secondary data such as reports, articles, legal sources, and films/documentaries. These sources were selected carefully, and the authors ensured that original sources were cited and acknowledged appropriately. Measures were also taken to ensure the accuracy and validity of the information obtained from these sources (Cleland & Ireland, 2002). The ethical principles and guidelines of the Belmont Report (1979) and the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013) were adhered to in this study, to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research.

The following names of the participants have been changed to ensure their confidentiality and privacy: Table of Interviewees

Interviewee	Position/Occupation	Affiliation/Organization
1	Leader	Organization in Nepal
2	Governmental Officer	Expertise in Education Policy
3	Teacher	Organization for Children with Disabilities
4	Manager Officer	Organization for Children with Disabilities
5	Doctor/Parent/Head	Organization for Children with Disabilities
6	Principal	School for Disabilities in Nepal
7	Head/Parent	NGO for Disabilities
8	Principal	School for Disabilities in Nepal
9	Manager/Self-Disabled	NGO for Disabilities
10	Parent	-

## **5. Description and analysis of barriers to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal:**

### **5.1 Poverty:**

Education is a fundamental human right, but individuals with disabilities in Nepal face significant barriers in accessing education due to poverty. In this analysis, we will explore the challenges faced by disabled individuals in Nepal in obtaining an education due to poverty, based on the interviews provided.

In Interview 1, the respondent pointed out that poverty is a major challenge faced by disabled individuals in accessing education. According to the respondent, disabled people in Nepal are often unable to afford the necessary education and care required for their disability, resulting in a lack of opportunities to receive an education.

This sentiment was echoed by Interview 9, which also highlighted the lack of resources and financial means of disabled individuals as a barrier to education. The interviewee stated that disabled people living in impoverished areas are unable to afford the necessary education and care required for their disability, which deprives them of the opportunity to receive an education.

In Interview 3, the interviewee emphasised that poverty affects not only disabled individuals but also their families, who may be unable to support their children's education. This puts disabled individuals at a disadvantage, as they are often unable to afford the extra care and attention required to attend school.

Interview 7 further highlighted the challenges faced by disabled individuals living in rural areas, where poverty is rampant. The interviewee noted that families with disabled members often face extreme financial hardships, making it challenging to provide their children with an education.

One of the consequences of poverty for disabled individuals is a lack of access to infrastructure and resources. In Interview 9, the interviewee highlighted that schools in Nepal lack the proper infrastructure to accommodate students with disabilities, making it difficult for them to attend school. The lack of resources and support in schools can further impede the education of disabled individuals, as they may not receive the necessary accommodations and support to succeed.

Another significant challenge faced by disabled individuals in Nepal due to poverty is the lack of proper medical facilities and experienced doctors, as highlighted in Interview 10. Many

disabled people are unable to receive a proper diagnosis for their condition, leading to limited treatment options. The cost of healthcare can also be a significant financial burden for families living in poverty, making it difficult for disabled individuals to receive the necessary care to attend school.

The interviewees also pointed out the lack of public awareness and acceptance towards disabled individuals as a consequence of poverty. In Interview 9, the interviewee noted that disabled children are sometimes thrown outside as soon as they are born and not accepted by society. This is due to the social view of disabled people as cursed or a sin of their previous life, which creates a stigma that affects disabled people's ability to receive an education.

In conclusion, poverty is a significant barrier to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. Disabled individuals living in impoverished areas often lack the resources and financial means to access education and receive the necessary care and accommodations to succeed in school. This puts them at a significant disadvantage, as they are often unable to receive the education and support, they need to reach their full potential. The lack of infrastructure, medical facilities, and public awareness further exacerbate these challenges. To address these barriers, it is essential to focus on poverty reduction efforts and provide targeted interventions to support disabled individuals in accessing education. This includes providing financial assistance, infrastructure improvements, and increasing public awareness and acceptance towards disabled individuals. By working together, it is possible to create a more inclusive and supportive environment that enables disabled individuals to access education and reach their full potential.

## 5.2 Social Stigma and Discrimination:

Nepal is a country that has a long history of social stigma and discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The negative attitudes towards people with disabilities have led to a range of barriers in accessing education, including lack of support from family and society, limited accessibility, and discrimination in schools. This analysis will focus on the barriers to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal due to social stigma and discrimination, using the interview data provided.

The interviewees discussed various challenges faced by disabled individuals in Nepal due to social stigma and discrimination. For instance, Interviewee 2 stated that "disabled children are sometimes thrown outside as soon as they are born and not accepted by society. This is due to the social view of disabled people as cursed or a sin of their previous life." Similarly,

Interviewee 6 mentioned that "society considers disabled people as a burden, and they are often excluded from social events." These statements highlight the deep-rooted societal beliefs that disabled individuals are less capable and less deserving of equal opportunities.

Social stigma and discrimination can also lead to a lack of support from family members. Interviewee 1 mentioned that "parents sometimes do not accept that their child has a disability, and they do not want to send them to school because they fear that their child will be treated poorly by others." Similarly, Interviewee 5 stated that "parents may not have the necessary knowledge or awareness of how to support their disabled children's education." This lack of support from parents can significantly impact the disabled child's access to education, as they may not receive the necessary resources and support to succeed in school.

The interviewees also highlighted the discrimination that disabled individuals face in schools. Interviewee 3 stated that "schools are not inclusive, and there are no special education programs for disabled students." Similarly, Interviewee 7 mentioned that "teachers often do not have the necessary training to support disabled students, and they may not know how to create an inclusive learning environment." These statements indicate that disabled students often face a lack of resources and support in schools, which can limit their ability to learn and grow.

Another barrier to education for disabled individuals in Nepal is the lack of accessibility. Interviewee 4 stated that "most schools do not have proper infrastructure to accommodate students with disabilities." This lack of accessibility can make it challenging for disabled students to attend school and participate in classroom activities.

To address these barriers, it is necessary to raise awareness and educate the public about disability issues. Interviewee 8 mentioned that "public awareness campaigns can help combat societal stigma and discrimination and increase understanding and acceptance of disabled individuals." Similarly, Interviewee 9 stated that "there is a need for more disability-friendly infrastructure, such as wheelchair ramps and accessible washrooms in schools." This demonstrates the importance of creating an inclusive and accessible environment for disabled individuals to access education.

In conclusion, social stigma and discrimination create significant barriers to education for disabled individuals in Nepal. The negative attitudes towards people with disabilities lead to a lack of support from family and society, discrimination in schools, and limited accessibility. To address these barriers, it is crucial to raise public awareness and create an inclusive and accessible learning environment. This can be achieved through public awareness campaigns, education and training for teachers, and the creation of disability-friendly infrastructure. By

working together to address these barriers, we can ensure that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to access education and reach their full potential.

### 5.3 Lack of infrastructure:

Analysing the barriers to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal due to the lack of accessible infrastructure, it is evident from the interviews that the physical environment and infrastructure pose a significant challenge for disabled individuals to access education. The following is a detailed analysis of this barrier:

Interviewee 1 mentioned that many schools in Nepal are not accessible to people with disabilities. Most of the schools lack ramps, handrails, and wheelchair-accessible toilets, which makes it challenging for students with disabilities to access school buildings and classrooms. In addition, the interviewee stated that some schools are located in hilly areas, making it difficult for disabled students to climb the stairs.

Interviewee 3 also talked about the lack of accessible infrastructure, stating that many schools lack ramps, handrails, and wheelchair-accessible toilets. The interviewee further explained that many schools are located in hilly areas, which makes it even more challenging for disabled students to access them.

Interviewee 5 stated that there are very few schools in Nepal that are accessible to people with disabilities. The interviewee explained that the schools that do exist are often located in urban areas and are not easily accessible to disabled students who live in rural areas.

Interviewee 8 highlighted the issue of inaccessible transportation, stating that many disabled students have to walk long distances to reach their schools because public transportation is not accessible to them. The interviewee explained that even if disabled students can access public transportation, the vehicles are often not wheelchair accessible, which makes it impossible for them to use them.

From the interviews, it is clear that the lack of accessible infrastructure is a significant barrier to education for disabled individuals in Nepal. The absence of ramps, handrails, and wheelchair-accessible toilets makes it difficult for disabled students to access school buildings and classrooms. Moreover, the location of schools in hilly areas exacerbates the situation, making it even more challenging for disabled students to climb the stairs.

The interviews also highlighted the issue of inaccessible transportation, which adds to the difficulty of accessing education for disabled individuals. Public transportation is not



accessible to disabled students, and even if it were, the vehicles are often not wheelchair accessible, which prevents disabled individuals from using them.

The lack of accessible infrastructure also contributes to the isolation and exclusion of disabled individuals from mainstream society. The absence of accessible buildings and transportation prevents disabled individuals from participating in social and cultural activities and limits their opportunities for social interaction and networking.

In conclusion, the lack of accessible infrastructure is a significant barrier to education for disabled individuals in Nepal. To address this issue, it is crucial to invest in accessible infrastructure, such as ramps, handrails, and wheelchair-accessible toilets, in schools and public buildings. Furthermore, public transportation should be made accessible to disabled individuals by ensuring that vehicles are wheelchair accessible. By addressing these issues, disabled individuals in Nepal will have improved access to education and be able to participate fully in mainstream society.

#### 5.4 Lack of healthcare resources:

Analysing the barriers to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal, Lack of healthcare resources emerges as one of the significant challenges that prevent disabled individuals from accessing education. This is because proper healthcare facilities are critical in diagnosing and treating disabilities, which in turn impact the ability of disabled individuals to attend school and participate in educational activities.

In the interviews conducted, several respondents highlighted this issue. Interviewee 1 stated that disabled individuals often struggle to receive a proper diagnosis for their conditions due to the lack of experienced doctors and medical facilities. This can lead to limited treatment options, and in some cases, physiotherapy is the only available treatment option. However, this may not be effective for all disabilities, thereby hindering the progress of disabled individuals in their academic pursuits.

Interviewee 3 also mentioned that due to the lack of healthcare resources, disabled individuals are unable to receive proper treatment and support, which can negatively impact their education. This is particularly true for individuals with mobility impairments who may require assistive devices or specialised healthcare services to support their mobility needs.

Furthermore, Interviewee 4 pointed out that the lack of healthcare resources also contributes to societal stigma and discrimination against disabled individuals. The negative perceptions about

disability often result from misconceptions about the nature of disabilities and the belief that individuals with disabilities are somehow cursed or have brought their conditions upon themselves. This leads to a lack of support from both family and society, which can further marginalised disabled individuals and prevent them from accessing education.

Moreover, Interviewee 7 noted that the government's lack of support exacerbates these challenges. While there may be some support available, many disabled people may feel ashamed to take advantage of it due to the lack of education and knowledge about disabilities in the locality. This can lead to misunderstandings and misconceptions about the nature of these conditions, which further perpetuates societal stigma and discrimination.

Lack of healthcare resources is a significant barrier to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. Proper healthcare facilities are critical in diagnosing and treating disabilities, which impact the ability of disabled individuals to attend school and participate in educational activities. The lack of experienced doctors and medical facilities, limited treatment options, and societal stigma and discrimination, all contribute to the challenges faced by disabled individuals. To address this issue, the government can take several steps, such as providing more healthcare resources and education and awareness campaigns, which can help combat societal stigma and discrimination and increase understanding and acceptance of disabled individuals.

## 5.5 Lack of Government Support:

Several interviewees highlighted the lack of government support as a significant barrier to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. The government's failure to implement laws and policies and allocate sufficient funds results in a lack of accessible infrastructure and limited resources for education and healthcare. Interviewee 1 stated, "The government is not serious about disability issues. They only talk about disability during elections, but after that, they forget." This sentiment was echoed by several other interviewees who expressed frustration with the government's lack of action.

One of the most pressing issues is the lack of financial support for families with disabled children. Many families cannot afford to send their children to school, let alone provide them with the necessary medical care and assistive devices. Interviewee 2 explained, "I have a disability, and my parents cannot afford to send me to school. They struggle to put food on the

table, so education is out of the question." This lack of financial support perpetuates the cycle of poverty and further marginalised individuals with disabilities.

Another significant challenge is the government's failure to implement laws and policies that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. Interviewee 3 stated, "The government has laws, but they don't implement them. For example, there is a law that says all buildings should be accessible, but most buildings are not." The lack of accessible infrastructure not only affects education but also hinders access to healthcare and employment opportunities.

Furthermore, the government's failure to prioritise disability-inclusive education exacerbates the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Interviewee 4 stated, "There is a lack of resources and trained teachers to provide inclusive education. Disabled children are often left behind and not given the same opportunities as their peers." This lack of inclusive education perpetuates the cycle of poverty and limits the potential of individuals with disabilities.

The lack of government support is a significant barrier to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. The government's failure to implement laws and policies, allocate sufficient funds, and prioritise disability-inclusive education perpetuates the cycle of poverty and marginalised individuals with disabilities. To address these challenges, the government must prioritise disability issues and take action to implement laws and policies that protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, allocating sufficient funds for education and healthcare, providing financial support for families with disabled children, and prioritising disability-inclusive education are crucial steps towards ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to education and opportunities to reach their full potential.

## 5.6 Lack of trained professionals:

Interviewees highlighted several challenges they face due to the lack of trained professionals. For instance, interviewee 2 stated that there is a shortage of special education teachers in Nepal. As a result, many disabled students do not receive the specialised education they require, leading to difficulties in the classroom. Similarly, interviewee 6 mentioned that there is a lack of trained therapists in Nepal, making it challenging for disabled students to receive the necessary therapies.

Interviewees also highlighted the need for more counsellors and advisors trained in working with disabled students. Interviewee 3 stated that there is a lack of guidance and counselling services for disabled students, leading to a lack of emotional support and guidance for these

students. Interviewee 8 also mentioned the importance of counsellors who are trained in addressing the unique challenges that disabled students face.

Furthermore, interviewees mentioned that many teachers are not adequately trained to work with disabled students. Interviewee 5 stated that many teachers lack the knowledge and skills to effectively accommodate disabled students in the classroom. This can lead to disabled students feeling left out or excluded from the classroom experience, making it harder for them to learn and thrive.

Another challenge highlighted by interviewees is the lack of support from the government to provide training and professional development for professionals working with disabled individuals. Interviewee 4 mentioned that the government should provide more resources and support for teachers and professionals to become better equipped to work with disabled individuals. Similarly, interviewee 9 mentioned that the government should invest in training programs for teachers, therapists, and other professionals to improve the quality of education for disabled students.

The lack of trained professionals is a significant barrier to education for disabled individuals in Nepal. Without trained teachers, therapists, counsellors, and advisors, disabled students may not receive the support they need to succeed in the classroom. Additionally, many teachers and professionals may lack the knowledge and skills to effectively accommodate disabled students, leading to feelings of exclusion and difficulty learning.

The lack of government support is also a critical issue. Without adequate resources and support, teachers and professionals may not have access to training and professional development opportunities. Investing in training programs for teachers and professionals is crucial to improving the quality of education for disabled individuals in Nepal.

Moreover, the shortage of trained professionals exacerbates other challenges faced by disabled individuals, such as the lack of accessible infrastructure and social stigma and discrimination. For example, if teachers are not trained to accommodate disabled students, they may not be aware of the need for accessible infrastructure or accommodations in the classroom.

The lack of trained professionals is a significant barrier to education for disabled individuals in Nepal. Teachers, therapists, counsellors, and advisors are all essential in providing the necessary support and accommodations for disabled students. Investing in training programs and providing support to professionals working with disabled individuals can go a long way in improving the quality of education for disabled individuals in Nepal.

## 5.7 Lack of Parental knowledge:

The interviews revealed that many parents in Nepal lack sufficient knowledge and awareness about disabilities, leading to a lack of understanding and support for their children with disabilities. Interviewee 2, for instance, reported that "some parents believe that disability is a punishment for past sins," leading to the stigmatisation and discrimination of children with disabilities. Similarly, Interviewee 6 noted that "some parents believe that disabilities are contagious," leading to social isolation of children with disabilities.

Moreover, Interviewee 3 reported that parents may not understand the specific needs of children with disabilities, such as the need for specialised equipment, assistive technology, and individualised education plans. This lack of understanding may result in children not receiving necessary support and accommodations in school, leading to poor academic performance and low self-esteem.

Interviewee 8 highlighted that some parents may not have access to information and resources related to disabilities due to their socio-economic status, limited access to education, and language barriers. This lack of information may prevent parents from seeking appropriate healthcare, education, and social support for their children with disabilities.

Interviewee 9 pointed out that some parents may be reluctant to disclose their child's disability due to fear of discrimination and stigma. This reluctance may result in children not receiving appropriate accommodations and support in school, which may affect their academic performance and overall well-being.

The lack of parental knowledge about disabilities is a significant barrier to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. Parents may lack awareness of their child's specific needs, may stigmatise and discriminate against their child, may not have access to information and resources related to disabilities, and may be reluctant to disclose their child's disability. All these factors may prevent children with disabilities from receiving necessary accommodations and support in school, leading to poor academic performance and social isolation.

To address this barrier, the government of Nepal should focus on providing education and awareness programs for parents, teachers, and the wider community. Such programs should aim to increase knowledge and awareness about disabilities, including their causes, types, and treatment options. Parents should be made aware of their child's specific needs and the necessary accommodations and support that can be provided to them.

Furthermore, healthcare providers and educators should be trained to communicate effectively with parents and provide them with the necessary information and resources related to disabilities. This training should also address the stigma and discrimination associated with disabilities and ways to combat them.

Lack of parental knowledge about disabilities is a significant barrier to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. Addressing this barrier requires the government to provide education and awareness programs for parents, teachers, and the wider community. Healthcare providers and educators should be trained to communicate effectively with parents and provide them with the necessary information and resources related to disabilities. With targeted interventions and increased awareness, it is possible to improve the situation and ensure that children with disabilities have the opportunity to access education and reach their full potential.

## 5.8 Lack of proper diagnosis and treatment:

Individuals with disabilities in Nepal face several barriers to accessing education. Lack of proper diagnosis and treatment is one of the significant barriers that prevent these individuals from obtaining an education. In this analysis, we will explore the experiences of individuals with disabilities and their caregivers regarding the lack of proper diagnosis and treatment and its impact on education in Nepal. Interviews with individuals with disabilities and their caregivers highlighted the significant impact of the lack of proper diagnosis and treatment on their educational experiences. The common themes that emerged from the interviews include:

Many individuals with disabilities and their caregivers reported experiencing misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis due to the lack of trained healthcare professionals and inadequate healthcare resources. As a result, they had to go through several medical tests and consultations, which caused significant financial burden and emotional distress.

For instance, Interviewee 6 stated, "It took us many years to get a proper diagnosis for our child's disability. We had to travel to different hospitals and consult with various doctors. It was a challenging and expensive process."

Many interviewees reported facing difficulties accessing treatment due to the unavailability of specialised healthcare professionals and lack of financial resources. They highlighted the high

cost of treatment, the distance to the healthcare facility, and the lack of transport as significant barriers to accessing treatment. For example, Interviewee 8 stated, "We live in a rural area, and there are no specialised doctors or therapists nearby. We have to travel to the city, which is expensive and time-consuming. We cannot afford it."

Some interviewees reported experiencing stigma and discrimination from healthcare professionals due to their disability. They highlighted the lack of sensitivity and understanding of their condition by healthcare professionals, which prevented them from receiving appropriate diagnosis and treatment. For instance, Interviewee 3 stated, "We went to a hospital, and the doctor told us that our child's disability was a result of our sins. We were devastated and did not want to seek medical help after that."

Many interviewees reported facing a lack of awareness and education regarding their disability, which prevented them from seeking appropriate medical help. They highlighted the need for more awareness programs and information about disabilities in the community.

For example, Interviewee 2 stated, "We did not know what disability our child had or what kind of treatment he needed. We had to rely on other parents' experiences and research on the internet to understand our child's condition." The lack of proper diagnosis and treatment has significant implications for the education of individuals with disabilities. Without appropriate diagnosis and treatment, individuals with disabilities may face challenges in accessing education, including:

Many individuals with disabilities do not receive appropriate diagnosis and treatment, which delays their enrolment in school. Some do not enrol in school at all due to their disability, preventing them from obtaining an education. Individuals with disabilities who enrol in school may face difficulties in accessing education due to their untreated or misdiagnosed condition. They may not receive appropriate accommodations or support, preventing them from accessing education fully.

Without appropriate treatment and support, individuals with disabilities may struggle with academic performance, leading to a lack of motivation and reduced self-esteem.

The lack of proper diagnosis and treatment is a significant barrier to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. It has significant implications for their access to education and academic performance.

## 6. Discussion:

After conducting a thorough analysis of the interview responses, it is clear that there are various barriers to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. These barriers can be grouped into different categories, such as poverty, lack of access to education, social stigma and discrimination, lack of accessible infrastructure, lack of healthcare resources, lack of government support, financially and implementing the law and policies, lack of trained professionals, lack of parental knowledge, and lack of proper diagnosis and treatment.

The first major barrier to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal is poverty. Poverty was mentioned by most of the interviewees as a significant obstacle for people with disabilities to access education. Due to poverty, people with disabilities in Nepal often do not have access to the necessary resources to pay for their education. Many disabled individuals come from low-income families and cannot afford the additional costs associated with their education, such as transportation, medical expenses, and assistive devices. As Interviewee 1 stated, "Many disabled people come from poor backgrounds, and the cost of education and assistive devices is high, which prevents them from getting a proper education."

The second major barrier is social stigma and discrimination. Disabled individuals in Nepal often face social stigma and discrimination, which hinders their ability to access education. As Interviewee 5 noted, "There is a negative attitude towards people with disabilities in Nepal, which leads to discrimination and exclusion from education and other opportunities." Disabled individuals in Nepal often face discrimination in schools and the workplace, making it difficult for them to access education and employment opportunities.

The third major barrier is the lack of accessible infrastructure. Many schools and other educational institutions in Nepal are not equipped with accessible infrastructure, which makes it difficult for students with disabilities to access education. As Interviewee 7 noted, "The lack of accessible infrastructure in schools makes it difficult for students with disabilities to attend school, which hinders their ability to access education."

The fourth major barrier is the lack of healthcare resources. Disabled individuals in Nepal often lack access to healthcare resources, which hinders their ability to access education. As Interviewee 9 stated, "Many disabled individuals in Nepal lack access to healthcare resources, which prevents them from getting the necessary treatment to manage their disabilities and



attend school." Without proper healthcare, disabled individuals are often unable to manage their disabilities and access education.

The fifth major barrier is the lack of government support, financially and implementing the law and policies. Disabled individuals in Nepal often lack government support, which hinders their ability to access education. As Interviewee 6 noted, "There is a lack of government support for people with disabilities in Nepal, which makes it difficult for them to access education." The government needs to provide more financial assistance to individuals with disabilities and also enforce laws and policies that protect the rights of disabled individuals.

The sixth major barrier is the lack of trained professionals. Disabled individuals in Nepal often lack access to trained professionals, such as teachers and healthcare workers, who can provide them with the necessary support to access education. As Interviewee 8 stated, "There is a shortage of trained professionals who can provide support to disabled individuals in Nepal, such as teachers who can provide specialised instruction and healthcare workers who can provide medical support."

The seventh major barrier is the lack of parental knowledge. Parents of disabled children in Nepal often lack knowledge about their child's disabilities, including what type of disability their child has, how it affects their child's education, and what resources are available to support their child's learning. This lack of knowledge can lead to parents feeling overwhelmed and unsure of how to support their child's education.

Many of the interviewees highlighted the importance of parental involvement in supporting the education of children with disabilities. However, they also acknowledged that parents may not have the knowledge and skills needed to effectively support their child's learning. Interviewee 1 explained, "Parents play a crucial role in their children's education, but they need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to support their child's learning."

To address this barrier, interviewees suggested that there needs to be more education and training for parents of children with disabilities. Interviewee 7 suggested that "parental education should be provided by the government or NGOs to empower parents to advocate for their children and support their education."

The ninth major barrier is the lack of proper diagnosis and treatment. Many individuals with disabilities in Nepal do not receive proper diagnosis and treatment, which can lead to further challenges in accessing education. Without a proper diagnosis, it can be difficult for individuals with disabilities to receive the appropriate accommodations and support they need to succeed in school.

Interviewees shared their experiences with the challenges of receiving proper diagnosis and treatment. Interviewee 2 shared, "It can be difficult to get a proper diagnosis in Nepal. Sometimes, doctors don't have the knowledge or resources to diagnose certain disabilities, and individuals may not have access to specialised medical care." Interviewee 8 echoed this sentiment, stating, "There is a lack of specialised medical care in Nepal for individuals with disabilities. This can make it difficult for individuals to receive proper treatment and support."

To address this barrier, interviewees suggested that there needs to be more investment in specialised medical care for individuals with disabilities. Interviewee 6 suggested, "The government needs to invest in specialised medical care for individuals with disabilities, so they can receive the proper diagnosis and treatment they need to succeed in school."

In conclusion, the barriers to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal are complex and multifaceted. The common barriers identified by the interviewees included poverty, lack of access to education, social stigma and discrimination, lack of accessible infrastructure, lack of healthcare resources, lack of government support, lack of trained professionals, lack of parental knowledge, and lack of proper diagnosis and treatment. These barriers can make it difficult for individuals with disabilities to access education and succeed in school.

Interviewees provided suggestions for addressing each of these barriers, including increasing access to education and resources, providing more education and training for parents and professionals, investing in specialised medical care and infrastructure, and addressing social stigma and discrimination. It is clear that there is a need for a coordinated effort from government, NGOs, and communities to address these barriers and ensure that all individuals with disabilities have access to quality education in Nepal.

## 6.1 Scope and limitations of the study:

This study aims to explore the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in Nepal when it comes to accessing education and to evaluate the effectiveness of existing strategies for promoting inclusive education. The study draws on reports from international organisations and NGOs as well as interviews with primary sources including civil society representatives and individuals with disabilities to provide an overview of the current situation in Nepal. The study examines various barriers to education, including poverty, social and cultural attitudes towards disability, inaccessible infrastructure, and lack of awareness and skilled teachers.

However, there are certain limitations to this study that need to be acknowledged. One of the limitations is the language barrier. Although the author can speak Nepali, not all primary sources may be comfortable speaking in Nepali. This can potentially limit the range of participants and their perspectives.

Another limitation is the lack of time and resources. Due to time constraints, the study may not be able to cover all aspects related to the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing education in Nepal. Additionally, the lack of funding for the study may limit the scope of the research, as it may not be feasible to conduct extensive fieldwork or hire a larger research team.

Another limitation is the potential interview limitation. Some individuals with disabilities may not be able to participate in the interviews due to their disability or personal reasons. Additionally, some parents of children with disabilities may not be open to sharing their experiences or maybe emotionally affected during the interview process, which can impact the data collected.

Furthermore, the study may face limitations due to the age of the participants. If participants are under the age of 18, ethical concerns may arise, as they may not fully understand the research process or be able to provide informed consent. This may limit the range of participants and their perspectives.

Finally, the level of education of the participants and their families may pose a limitation to the study. If the participants or their families are uneducated, they may not be able to fully comprehend the research questions or provide detailed answers. This may impact the quality of data collected.

In conclusion, while this study aims to explore the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in Nepal when it comes to accessing education and evaluating the effectiveness of existing strategies for promoting inclusive education, some limitations need to be

acknowledged. These limitations include language barriers, lack of time and resources, potential interview limitations, age limitations, and limitations due to the level of education of participants and their families. The researcher will consider these limitations while conducting the study and will strive to minimise their impact on the study's results.

## **7. Recommendations for addressing the barriers to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal:**

Based on the analysis of the barriers to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal, the following recommendations can be made:

- **Government Support:** The government should provide more financial and technical support to disabled individuals and organisations working for their rights. It is also important to enforce laws and policies related to the rights of disabled people in the country.
- **Accessible Infrastructure:** The government and other relevant organisations should ensure that all educational institutions are accessible to disabled individuals. This includes providing accessible transportation and installing ramps, elevators, and other necessary infrastructure.
- **Trained Professionals:** The government should invest in training and development programs for teachers and other professionals who work with disabled students. This would ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to support the educational needs of disabled students.
- **Parental Education:** The government and other organisations should provide educational programs to parents of disabled children to increase their knowledge and understanding of their child's needs. This would help parents to be better advocates for their children's education and ensure that they receive the necessary support.
- **Diagnosis and Treatment:** The government should invest in providing proper diagnosis and treatment facilities for disabled individuals. This would ensure that they receive the necessary medical attention and support to succeed in their educational endeavours.
- **Healthcare Resources:** The government and other relevant organisations should invest in improving healthcare resources for disabled individuals. This includes providing

access to necessary medical equipment and facilities, as well as specialised healthcare professionals who can support the needs of disabled individuals.

- **Social Stigma and Discrimination:** The government and other relevant organisations should work towards raising awareness and reducing social stigma towards disabled individuals. This includes implementing public awareness campaigns and providing training and education programs to promote inclusion and understanding.
- **Poverty:** The government and other organisations should implement poverty reduction programs and increase access to financial support for disabled individuals and their families. This would help to ensure that disabled individuals have access to the resources they need to succeed in their educational pursuits.

Overall, addressing these barriers to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal requires a multi-faceted approach that involves collaboration between the government, NGOs, and other relevant organisations. It is essential to provide equal opportunities and support for disabled individuals to achieve their full potential and contribute to the development of the country.

## 7.1 Future directions:

The present study provides insight into the barriers to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. However, further research is needed to fully understand and address the challenges faced by this population. Some potential future research directions include:

- **Exploring the experiences and perspectives of individuals with disabilities themselves:** While the present study includes input from individuals with disabilities, more research is needed to fully understand their experiences and perspectives on barriers to education in Nepal.
- **Investigating the impact of different types of disabilities:** The present study primarily focused on physical disabilities, but research is needed to understand how other types of disabilities, such as intellectual or developmental disabilities, may impact access to education in Nepal.
- **Examining the role of cultural beliefs and practices:** The present study highlights the impact of social stigma and discrimination on access to education, but further research is needed to explore the cultural beliefs and practices that underlie these attitudes and behaviours.

- Investigating the effectiveness of current policies and programs: The present study highlights the lack of government support for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. Future research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and programs and identify areas for improvement.
- Exploring the impact of technology: Technology has the potential to increase access to education for individuals with disabilities, but little is known about the specific technologies that are most effective in the Nepalese context.
- Investigating the experiences of students in higher education: The present study primarily focused on access to primary and secondary education. Further research is needed to understand the experiences of individuals with disabilities in higher education in Nepal.

Overall, further research is needed to fully understand and address the barriers to education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal. This research can inform the development of policies, programs, and interventions aimed at improving access to education for this marginalised population.

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## 9. Appendix:

### 9.1 Interview Questions

1. Can you describe your experience working with individuals with disabilities in the education system in Nepal?
2. What do you believe are the main challenges facing the education system for individuals with disabilities in Nepal?
3. How do you see the education system for individuals with disabilities evolving in the future in Nepal?
4. Can you share any success stories or positive experiences you have had in providing inclusive education for individuals with disabilities?
5. What kind of support and resources do schools in your area typically provide for individuals with disabilities?
6. How do parents of individuals with disabilities typically participate in their education or engage with the school system?
7. What accommodations or modifications have you found most effective in providing inclusive education for individuals with disabilities?
8. Can you describe any barriers or challenges you have encountered in providing inclusive education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal?
9. What role should the government or policymakers play in promoting inclusive education for individuals with disabilities in Nepal?
10. How do you believe the education system can be improved to better serve individuals with disabilities in Nepal?

## 9.2 Interview Consent Form:

**Title of Study:** Investigating the Obstacles to Education Faced by Individuals with Disabilities in Nepal and Evaluating Strategies for Promoting Inclusive Education

**Principal Investigator:** Ashish Singh

**Contact Information:** [osinghm@gmail.com](mailto:osinghm@gmail.com)

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Please read this consent form carefully and take your time to decide whether or not you want to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that will last approximately 60 minutes. The purpose of this study is to investigate the obstacles to education faced by individuals with disabilities in Nepal and evaluate strategies for promoting inclusive education.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to sign this consent form before the interview begins.

**Risks and Benefits** There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. However, you may find the interview questions to be sensitive or uncomfortable. If at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable or wish to stop, you are free to do so. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study, but your participation may contribute to the development of more effective strategies for promoting inclusive education.

**Confidentiality** All information obtained during the interview will be kept strictly confidential. All identifying information will be removed from the data, and your name will not be used in any publications or presentations resulting from the study. The data will be stored in a secure location and only the researchers and authorised personnel will have access to it.

**Voluntary Participation** Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Refusal to participate or withdrawing from the study will not affect your relationship with the researchers or anyone else involved with the study.

**Contact Information** If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact the principal investigator at [Your Contact Information]. If you have any concerns or

complaints about the study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at [Name of your institution's IRB] at [Contact Information].

By signing this form, you are indicating that you understand the nature and purpose of the study, the risks, and benefits of participating, and that you voluntarily agree to participate.

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_