

Systematic Review of Social Inequality and Educational Access in Nepali Context

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Abstract

Education is a constitutional right. There is much research about social inequality as well as educational access but the synthesis that defines the locus in which both these parameters come together is not much discovered. The purpose of this study endure is to investigate scholarly articles published after 2014 so that factors influencing contemporary Nepal for social inequality and educational access are identified. The method this study employs is PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis) framework, the study has systematically retrieved, screened, rescreened, and developed eligibility criteria for the document found in Google Scholar and ultimately downsized to seven scholarly stronger peer reviewed journal articles that aligns with research method and questions. This review systematically answered what indicators are used to measure social inequality and education access? The result of the study finds thirteen major indicators as Socio-economic class, caste/ethnicity, gender, parental education, geographic location, digital access and technological skills, language proficiency, student support system, domestic responsibilities, religion, child nutrition, political capital, and disability and its implications on education access. This study concludes that these indicators are correlated, interrelated and collectively produce results for education access and these are embedded in structures of society and lived human experiences. This study brings insights about disparities to help empirical foundations for policy makers and urges to move further with stronger commitment and implementation for transformative changes of lived experiences of Nepalese students.

Keywords: *Inequality, Education, Equity, Access*

Introduction

Education is widely appraised and recognized as key instruments for social mobility and equitable development. The opportunities, however, are unevenly distributed by making different layers in the society; these layers may comprise of caste, ethnicity, gender, geographical location, and socio-economic status. Even though there are consensus from constitutional commitments, UN charters and proclamations for inclusive, equitable education, social structures influence access, participation, continuation and completion in schooling. There are many studies carried out to examine these inequalities using various indicators in different contexts and time periods. However, there is skewed ideation across studies making it difficult to bring consensus and common consciousness on how inequality is assessed.

Many researches in contemporary Nepal, mainly focus on specific groups and layers of caste, gender, class etc. so indicators of social inequality and educational access vary across studies. This fragmentation of meaning-making creates difficulties in comparing findings and developing cumulative knowledge. If the systematic synthesis is not done, ontology of these indicators and understanding patterns of inequality in the Nepalese education system remains limited. On the other hand, there are good research that talks about educational inequalities and educational access but limited synthesis indicators that integrated both social inequality and educational access have been crafted; creating gaps in the literature. Hence this systematic review unfolds the insights on that perimeter.

The foundational purpose of this study is to identify relationality of indicators of social

inequality and education access in Nepal. This study synthesizes conceptualization and operationalization of indicators in different researches. This study develops the coherent categories and clearer analytical framework to broaden the sociological understanding of social inequality and access in education. Being based on the Socio-educational foundation this study compiles and organizes indicators of social inequality and educational access in Nepal. This study conceptualizes robust variables that may help future studies in these areas. It also provides insights to policy makers and education planners for their professional and academic endeavors. The Delimitation of the study focuses on literature that addresses indicators of social inequality and educational access within the context of Nepal. The scholarly material used are limited to their availability in google scholar which are peer reviewed journals, theses and academic reports. This study does not use and address economic outcome, migration or labor markets without a clear connection to educational access and social inequality.

The right to education is a fundamental right of every human being which does not need any references as it is mentioned in every legal document of concern as constitution, act, policy and international proclamation. Article 26 of the universal declaration of human rights states that everyone has the right to education and primary/general education should be free. Primary education should be compulsory. Technical and vocational education should be available to the public. Everyone should have equal access to higher education according to their talents (UN, 1948). Education, no doubt, serves as a powerful instrument for social transformation and fosters equity, inclusion and sustainable development across societies (UNESCO, 2015). However, in the context of Nepal as a developing country, deep-rooted socio-economic and cultural hierarchies that produce various forms of social inequality deeply obstructs equitable access to education (UNDP, 2020).

A study done with “Bankariya” community recognized as smallest and most helpless community that has been facing unadorned inequality “on impact of land ownership and socio-economic status on indigenous communities” shows that lack of land ownership has been limiting them from basic human rights including education. For many “Bankariya” education is out of reach and drop out is by grade 6 and 7 (UNDP, 2024). Education Review Office (ERO),(2024)

identifies huge gap between learning achievement across the provinces, types of school, gender, caste and teaching medium. Use of mother tongue has enhanced learning achievements; Regularity of teachers and teacher education and availability of teaching resources has brought positive impact on students leaning achievements. Use of social media and spending leisure hour has also improved students learning (Education Review Office (ERO), 2024). Gandharba and Gaire (2022) discuss the paradoxes inherent in Nepal’s educational policies, which, despite aiming for equity, often fail to address the lived realities of marginalized communities furthermore they underscore the disconnect between policy intentions and implementation, particularly in areas such as free and compulsory education, equity in education and inclusion and the localization of education policies (Gandharba & Gaire, 2022). Dahal (2020) examines the impact of neoliberal policies on access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs in Nepal and argues that neoliberal policies have reinforced educational inequalities by limiting access to TVET programs for students from lower economic backgrounds, thereby perpetuating social stratification. Devkota and Upadhyaya (2015) analyze income-based inequalities in Nepal and on the basis of their findings that urbanization and income disparities contribute to educational inequalities. Chalaune (2023) provides critical analysis of class theories in the context of Nepal’s education system, arguing unequal distribution of wealth and power, along with cultural hegemony and emphasizes the need of structural changes in national policies and classroom teaching to address educational inequalities.

Nepal’s education policy, its implementation and facilities enjoyed by students are in critical positioning. Attainment of education as legal rights as various layers that Nepali students have to break before enjoying it. The main goal of this study is to fill a critical knowledge gap in understanding indicators of social inequality and education access. This study aims to inform policy makers, support practitioners and civil society. This study finds the answers to the research questions: QN1, what indicators are used to measure social inequality and education access in Nepal?

Methodology

Dempster, (2011) defines systematic review as comprehensive and conducted in methodological (or systematic) manner with pre-defined, specific

protocols to minimize biases, with aim of synthesizing the repossessed information. The fundamental aspect of systematic review is “a method of critically appraising, summarizing and attempting to reconcile the evidence” (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Similarly, systematic review is a rigorous, protocol driven methodology designed to answer a precise question by identifying, appraising and synthesizing all relevant high-quality evidence (Crowther et.al, 2010). This methodology is recognised as the most rigorous review type because it is distinguishing from traditional narrative reviews as it is transparent, reproducible scientific process with minimal author bias (Aromataris & Pearson, 2014). This study applies PRISMA as a Method.

PRISMA

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) helps authors identify inclusion and exclusion criteria, create research question which facilitates systematic review process and helps to navigate significant number of researches (Shaffril, Samah, & Samsudhin, 2021). PRISMA provides a minimum set of evidence-based recommendations designed to encourage transparent, complete, and accurate reporting of systematic review methods (Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021). The original PRISMA statement was published in 2009 and later on updated by PRISMA statement 2020 which comprise of 27-item checklist and expanded checklist that details reporting recommendation for each item (Tugwell & Tovey, 2021) This Study use PRISMA 2020 statement because it enhances

transparency, Completeness, improves reporting quality, promotes reproducibility and reduces research waste (Page et al, 2021).

PRISMA is not methodological guideline, it is not intended to guide the design and conduct systematic review, it solely focuses on reporting, for example it recommend reporting complete search strategies but not design or conduct literature searches (Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2012a)

Systematic Searching Strategy: The three systematic process a) identification, b) screening and c) eligibility, are implemented to retrieve relevant journals from google scholar. Identification is done with a search string to capture all relevant journals. Eligibility criteria are developed based on the relevance of research questions. In the screening phase abstract and full text are reviewed and filtered through inclusion criteria.

Identification: Identification of relevant journals is done by developing search strings. The search result showed 70 publications in 0.05 seconds. The search string used for the systematic review process was as follows;

Database: Google Scholar

Search string: ("social inequality" OR "educational inequality" OR "education disparity" OR "education gap") AND "Nepal" AND ("measuring indicators" OR indicators OR metrics OR determinants) AND ("educational excess" OR over education OR "education surplus") AND ("systematic review" OR "literature review")

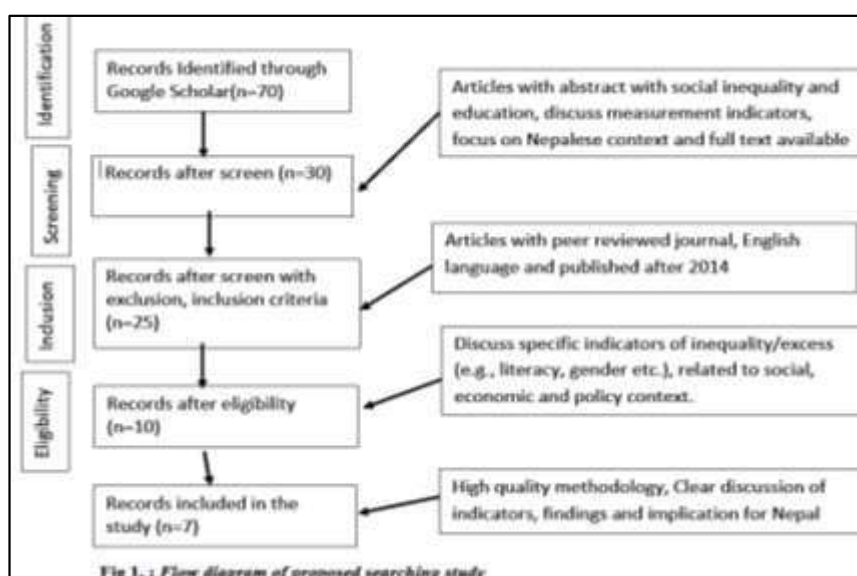


Fig 1.1 Flow diagram of proposed searching study

Screening

The aim of the screening process is to ensure obtained materials are potentially relevant and appropriate for research study. Content related criteria as words associated as “role, skills, competence and similar synonyms “with head teachers and “school development”, “school

effectiveness” and research only done in geographical location of Nepal were if seen in title were downloaded on first come on search bar basis. Those journals if not available on open sources were excluded. The 30 relevant articles are identified. In the second screening stage 25 articles are finalized based on inclusion, exclusion criteria which is shown in the table.

Table 1:

The exclusion and inclusion criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Timeline	Between 2015-2024	2014 and earlier
Literature Type	Journal (Research Article)	Journal (Systematic review), Book series, Book chapter, Proceedings
Publication Stage	Published	In Press

Eligibility

The third step is prepared with 25 articles, those articles that lacked analytical depth, evidence and critical examinations of indicators were excluded. The articles with specificity, correlated with

indicators and evidence, presented either empirical evidence or thick descriptions/authentic narratives were included. Finally, this number of articles was reduced to 10 and finally with methodological rigor the number was reduced to 7.

Table 2:

Final list of Eligible Journal Articles

Reference of Selected journal articles
Devkota, S. P., & Bagale, S. (2015). Social Inequality in Nepal and Right of Education. <i>Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development</i> , 8.
Neupane, P. (2017). Barriers to Education and School Attainment-Evidence from Secondary Scholls in Rural Nepal. <i>International Education Studies</i> , 10. doi:10.5539/ies.v10n2p68
Pyakurel, U. P. (2019). Education-A source of continued inequality in Nepal. <i>Journal of Communication and Development Studies</i> , 45-58.
Devkota, K. R. (2021). Inequalities reinforced through online and distance education in the age of COVID-19: The case of higher Education in Nepal. <i>International Review of Education</i> , 145-165. doi:10.1007/s11159-021-09886-x
Dhakal, S. (2021). EMI policy in Education in Nepal and Social Inequalities: A Case Study of Problems and Possibilities. <i>Devekota Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies</i> , 24-31.
Ghandari, Y. (2021). Equity in higher education of Nepal. <i>International Journal of Educational Administrative and Policy Studies</i> , 40-47. doi:10.5897/IJEAPS2021.0694
Acharya, K., Rahman, M. S., Islam, M. R., Gilmour, S., Dhungel, B., Parajuli, P. R., . . . Tsuchiya, K. J. (2023). Socioeconomic and education-based inequality in suspected developmental delays among Nepalese children: a subnational level assessment. <i>Scientific Reports</i> . doi:10.1038/s41598-023-31629-1

General background of the selected studies

Acharya, et al., (2023) is an academic paper published online on 23rd march 2023. The authors are from Nepal and Japan. This study focuses on SDD (suspected developmental delays) among Nepali children of age 3-4 years. This paper examines socio-economic and education based inequality. Devkota K. R., (2021) examines how

the transition to online and distance teaching learning in higher education in Nepal during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted inequalities. Dhakal, (2021) suggests that current EMI policies might lead to socio-class variations and epistemic inequalities. Ghandari, (2021) focusses on social inequality in Nepal, particularly caste-based discrimination against dalits in academic institutions and higher education. Pyakurel, (2019)

dives into the historical development of education in Nepal tracing its origins among high-caste groups, the influence of Sanskrit and policies under the Rana regime that restricts access to education in general public. Devkota & Bagale, (2015) discusses the relationship between social inequality and the right to education in Nepal. Finally, Neupane, (2017) examines inequality in secondary school attainment and its determinants across gender, caste and ethnic groups in rural Nepal.

Results and Discussion

The objective of this study is to methodologically evaluate the indicators of social inequality and education access. Compared to past inequalities have been decreasing but with rigorous analysis of journals as simplified above; thirteen main themes of social inequality has emerged as Socio-economic class/family income, caste/ethnicity (discrimination/hierarchy), parents education status (mothers/fathers education), gender, geographical marginalization (rural vs Urban/ remote), technological Skills and access to required infrastructures (digital devices, internet etc) proficiency in English language, availability of student support system, household chores (done by students), religion, child's nutritional status (stunting), political resources and disability.

Socio-economic class/Family income

Socio-economic class reflected through family income through literature can be viewed as a fundamental indicator that shapes educational access. Devkota and Bagale (2015) argues that a student's socio-economic class is identified as a primary cause of children being out of school and are more likely to receive schooling of lower quality and have poor educational results. This indicated the capability of families to purchase direct and indirect costs of education during enrollment, learning material, transportation and supplementary support. Children from lower social class origins are less able to take advantage of "equal accessibility" provisions compared to those from higher social class backgrounds and their family income levels contribute significantly to these differences (Devkota & Bagale, 2015). Acharya, et.al (2023) suggests that socio-economic status is a significant risk factor for suspected developmental delay (SDD) among children from poor economic backgrounds. Disadvantaged households' economic conditions are associated with unfavorable households' conditions like inadequate home stimulating environments and lack of learning materials (Acharya, et al., 2023).

The families with sound economic status tend to have children who perform better academically. Thus, socio-economic class is a structural determinant that opens doors of enrollment, attendance, and progression through adequacy of material condition through which students can sustain participation, continuation, and progression of education.

Caste/Ethnicity (Discrimination/Hierarchy)

The patterns of social inequality through caste/ethnicity, rooted every structure of society dates back to the history as Ghandari (2021) digs deep and states national code of conduct of Nepal in 1854 legitimized caste-based social division and hierarchy, providing a legal foundation for discriminatory rules and banning Marginalised (so called *Dalits*) from pursuing formal education, leading to their marginalization. This is a legal foundation that still persists in different layers of society though it is illegal to practice in the contemporary condition of Nepal. In the less positive connotation, Neupane (2017) adds Nepal is a society where different castes and ethnic groups live together with significant disparities in educational access and attainment. Caste-based discrimination and untouchability are substantiated in society and in academic institutions, peers, teachers and administrators which is encouraging dropouts (Ghandari, 2021). Marginalized (so called janajati and dalits) students' school attainment and results are considerably lower than those of Brahman and Chhetri students and Minority groups need special policy treatment to uplift their educational level (Neupane, 2017). The study finds dialectical tension, policy dimensions emphasize on equality, equity and inclusions but researches argue existence of discrimination, exclusion affecting access to education. So, this study finds Caste /Ethnicity as the basis of discrimination/hierarchy which is strongly embedded within social structures as one of the indicators that hinders education access in Nepal.

Gender

Gender is not just a demographic variable but social construction that shapes roles, expectations and hopes. Girls' School attainment is significantly lower than boys' and lesser in the context; belonging to marginalized groups such as "*Dalits*" or "*Janajatis*" that is even devastating with two tier deprivation of their right to education due to their gender and caste (Neupane, 2017a). The study finds gender as a powerful determinant of exclusion in education in Nepal. Interactions

between caste/ethnic discrimination, gender inequality and social exclusion are reflected in wide disparities in educational attainment in various researches. Devkota (2021) suggests through history, women and girls were denied educational opportunities, the socio-historically informed “patriarchal construction of gender roles” has persistently prevented women from accessing quality modern education. Female students have poorer results compared to male students and disparities remain between genders in access to education. Though participation is advancing yet it remains embedded in society enforcing inequality in education while gender-based education access is challenged and reproduced at the same time. This duality requires greater intervention from social principles and praxis to break free from gender-based inequality.

Parents Education Status (Mothers/Fathers Education)

These indicators do not exist in solitary rather they intermingle with other indicators discussed in this study for their relativism as well as relational meaning making. Parents education status influences family income, their understanding about gender roles, help and sustenance in educational service procurement etc. Literature suggests that parents' education level is a significant determinant affecting students' schools' attainment. The prevalence of SDD (Suspected developmental delays) is significantly higher among children whose mother had no formal education compared to the children of higher education mothers (Acharya, et al., 2023b). Educated parents often understand the importance of higher education and tend to have a stronger financial basis and social network to support their children's access. Parents with higher education are more likely to create a learning environment for their children and low educational attainment among many Dalit parents means they are less likely to encourage their children to attain higher education (Ghandari, 2021b). Parental education status is identified as a key indicator that shapes education access in Nepal. Educated parents have greater awareness, engagement and support for their children whereas lesser education do not show such affinity that constrains education access in Nepal. These attitudes are reproduced through generations. Educated parents influence not only educational attitudes of their children but navigation in the process of being educated, continuation and completion.

Geographical marginalization (rural vs Urban/ Remote)

The educational provisions and national policy for inclusivity and participation as widen so as to resolve geographical marginalization but significant inequality and access to education persists. Children from rural areas have a relatively higher prevalence of suspected developmental delays (SDD). Online and distance education programs tend to be concentrated in urban centers, leading to inequalities for students in rural areas who lack infrastructures and connectivity (Devkota K. R., 2021a). Students from rural and remote areas have higher dropouts and repetition rates than those in urban areas. Rural students generally have poorer academic results than urban students. Early Childhood centers are under-resourced and lack-trained teachers, particularly in rural settings. Geographical marginalization is a key factor creating barriers for Dalits to access higher education. Location is structurally embedded; not merely spatial that conditions educational access and spatial inequalities. that enforces unequal participation in Nepal

Proficiency in English Language

Low proficiency in English Language is the factor contributing to inequality in access to and participation in online and distance education (Devkota K. R., 2021). Dhakal (2021) argues that policy of English medium of instruction (EMI) has become a challenging fashion, particularly for the students from poor economic background and Dalits with minimum exposure to English outside school, making classes not comprehensive and widening the educational gap and Insufficiency of English proficiency among teachers and students has created a “comprehension crisis” and epistemic inequalities for minoritized students (Dhakal, 2021). Thus, English language comes as basic parameters of opportunity and exclusion. English is taken as a marker of proficiency rather than medium of instruction or an individuality of skill set. The proficiency in English posits as getaways for academic advancement and quality education creating hindrances for students without such skillset. Proficiency in English language is negotiated for enrollment, participation and continuity within the education system in Nepal.

Technological Skills and Access to Required Infrastructures (digital devices, internet etc.)

ICT integration in education has been promoted to a larger extent both by policy and praxis in Nepal however competency frameworks and nature of equal distribution is yet to be formulated. The

unequal access to technological instruments, internet access and connectivity, and digital literacy in educator and learner still persist in education system that brings differentiation in learners. A lack of technological Skills or info-techno literacies among Students reinforces social inequalities in higher education, especially with shift to online and distance learning. Students lacking these skills are often left behind and disengaged from online tutoring. Nepal belongs to least-income country which lacks in creation of resources and infrastructures necessary for accessing higher education. Joshi et, al. (2024) highlights disparities in device ownership, connectivity and effective use that perpetuate unequal educational opportunities in Nepali context. The absence or limitation of necessary physical infrastructure, such as digital devices, internet access, computers and mobile phones, is a key mechanism reinforcing social inequalities in online and distance education. Thus, disparities in access to technology and skills bring differentiated educational experiences that keep technology in the dialectical position of enabler of learning as well as emerging inequality within the education system of Nepal.

Availability of student support system.

The student support system is a critical factor to determine education continuity. Gautam et al (2025) pin points that well-structured support mechanisms enhance students' engagement and satisfaction bridging the gap of institutional resources and learners' needs. Similarly, Devkota et al (2025) argues that strong efficacy in access to mentoring, counselling, and scholarships positively influence enrollment, retention, participation and commitment to the education system, even more boon for students from marginalized classes in Nepal. A lack of strong pedagogy support or a strong student support system for students from disadvantaged and marginalized spaces reinforces inequalities particularly in online and distance teaching and learning. The absence of such support in colleges located in rural settings contributes to disconnect and disengagement from higher education. The student support system remains within the framework of institutional capacity, socio-economic awareness and institutional policy structures. Thus, the effectiveness of the support system remains contingent on both policy and structural provisions. Therefore, the student support system emerges as an essential indicator that shapes enrollment, participation and student well-being in the educational system of Nepal.

Household Chores (Done by students)

Household chores underrecognized yet significant indicator that has been shaping education access in Nepal. Though household chore is taken as part of normal family contribution, it consumes students much time and energy that would have contributed better participation in the education process. Shrestha & Gurung, (2025) has found household workloads can lead to stress and reduced academic focus, absenteeism and diminished educational performance. The amount of time a student spends on household chores affecting their school attainment. Attaining more household chores means less time for school attainment, which can subsequently lead to less exam scores, which was found to be a significant factor in studies to examine secondary school attainment in rural Nepal. This indicator points to how domestic responsibilities, which may disproportionately fall on certain children based on gender or household socioeconomic status, can directly impede their academic performance and contribute to educational inequality.

Religion

Religion has a unique influence or effect on school attainment; which operates dialectically on both parameters of inclusion and exclusion. Some religious institutions through faith -backed schooling have been expanding opportunities to excess to education; simultaneously they also restrict inclusion to mainstream (Zhao, 2025). Social exclusions in the name of religion contribute to inequalities in Nepal. While the majority population in Nepal is Hindu, the country has various religious beliefs, the sources specifically identify Muslim community as an educationally disadvantaged population, this indicates the religious affiliation can intersect with other social strata to limit educational opportunities for certain groups. Gautam, (2025) interprets religious norms can structure educational pathways in two layers a) particularly for marginal groups, b) faith based expectations and gender roles. At the same time the impact of religion on access to education intersects with other socio-economic, cultural, and family prioritization (Khanal, 2024) in conclusion, the concept that inequalities result from social exclusion in the name of religion suggest that discriminatory practices or systemic disadvantages may exist based on religious identity. Religion operates both as an enabler as well as hindering factor in developing differentiated access within Nepali education system.

Child's Nutritional Status (Stunting)

This indicator came structurally embedded to shape education access in Nepal, this is mainly focused on biological conditions that either induces or regresses educational participation. The aspiration of schooling is cognitive readiness of a child, while a stunted child has lesser capacity in effective learning engagement. The research argues that stunted children come from lower wealth quintiles, rural areas, lesser parental education, unfolding deep linkage in the context of socio-economic inequality (Manandhar, et al., 2025). Hence students face limitations in cognitive development so have to face delayed school enrollment, and are likely to underperform. Nutritional status of a child is associated with childhood development; Stunted children have 1.78 times higher odds of having suspected developmental delays (SDD) compared to those who are not stunted. Health and nutritional disparities contribute to developmental inequalities, which have long impacts on schooling and social functioning. Hence educational inequality is also embodied in students' physical development through early life-deprivation of nutrition may translate into unequal ability in enrolment, participation and success in the education system in Nepal.

Political Resources

Political resources as an indicator shows dialects of policy intent and implementation realities. Political factors and resources significantly influence access to higher education and contribute to social inequalities. The sources point out that ambiguous educational policies and inconsistent nationwide implementation result in social inequalities. Khanal (2024) argues that despite recent political changes, there is a lack of effective implementation of policies that has brought inequality in access to education. On the other hand, research shows political influences significantly affect allocation of educational resources. Another perspective is that, communities make the negotiated meaning through political resources about educational access to education as local-level political dynamics and governance practices sometimes facilitates, sometimes constrains, including marginalized areas (Devkota, 2024). Thus, political agenda is not only institutional provisions but also the socially embedded mechanism that shapes social inequality and access to education with the consequences of differentiated educational outcomes.

Disability

Individuals with disability face unique challenges and discrimination that acts as barrier to accessing higher education, in Nepal disable people face overlapping as well as independent system of discrimination contributing to multitude of barriers they encounter. Though there are policy obligations in favor of differently able people ,various studies shows they still face difficulties for example The University Grants Commission (UGC) formulated strategies to promote access to higher education for “ citizen with disabilities” (UGC , 2024), The National Planning Commission (NPC), in its 15th five-year developmental plan (2019-2024), aims to improve and expand the open and distance education system to provide higher education access to those in remote settings and those in need of alternative pathways, including “citizens with disabilities” (NPC , 2020). The constitution of Nepal, specifically article 31 (right to education), ensures equitable educational opportunities for people with disabilities and economically indigent individual. Multi layered exclusion and vulnerability including education, especially when combined with other marginalized identities such as being Dalits, female, poor economic background etc. exists in Nepal if a student has disability (Reinders et al., 2020)

Conclusion

This systematic review has critically and interpretatively examined a varied range of complex indicators prevailing in Nepal's context to understand inequality and education access. From the deep insight of seven rigorously selected journal articles; the study finds; despite policy commitment, Nepali students still suffer from the thirteen core indicators this study finds: Socio-economic class, caste/ethnicity, gender, parental education, geographic location, digital access and technological skills, language proficiency, student support system, domestic responsibilities, religion, child nutrition, political capital, and disability. These indicators are correlated, interrelated and collectively produce results for education access and these are embedded in structures of society and lived human experiences. This study shows marginalized groups like Dalits, *Janajatis*, girls, children, poor and disabled face the multilayers of inequalities and disadvantages. This study brings insights about disparities to help empirical foundations for policy makers and urges to move further with stronger commitment and implementation for transformative changes of lived experiences of Nepalese students.

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