



Analysing Deuda Folk Culture of Western Nepal from the Perspective of Informal Education and Social Learning

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Abstract

This study analyses the Deuda folk culture prevalent in Sudurpaschim and Karnali regions of western Nepal from the perspective of informal education, social learning, and cultural transmission. Deuda is not only a medium of folk songs and dances but also an important cultural practice for building social relationships, collective participation, cultural continuity, and imparting life-useful knowledge. Although modern education system prioritises formal education, community-based cultural practices play an important role in building an individual's knowledge, skills, values, and perspectives. This study attempts to highlight the educational importance of Deuda and its potential importance as an indigenous pedagogy. A qualitative research design employing an interpretive approach has been adopted in the study. Semi-structured interviews, group discussions, participant observation and related document study were used for data collection. Deuda artists, elders, youth, and teachers were involved through purposive sampling. The collected data have been analysed using the thematic analysis method. The findings show that Deuda is an effective medium for intergenerational transmission of language, history, cultural values, moral education, social behaviour, and practical knowledge. It encourages observation, imitation, participation, collaboration, social inclusion, and collective identity building. However, modernisation, migration, digital entertainment, and declining participation of the younger generation have been found to create challenges to its continuity. Therefore, the findings imply that by accepting Deuda as an educational resource based on local knowledge systems, its interactive and rhythmic practice can be integrated with local curricula, child-centred and inclusive teaching methods, adult education, and community-based learning to strengthen the relationship between schools and communities.

Keywords: Deuda culture, oral knowledge, indigenous pedagogy, cultural transmission



Introduction

Nepal is a country with multilingual, multicultural and multi-ethnic characteristics. Each region or province of Nepal has its own unique culture, tradition and social practices that have been continuously maintained. Deuda folk culture, especially prevalent in Sudurpaschim and Karnali regions of western Nepal, is an important cultural heritage that is deeply connected to social life, cultural identity and community relations. Deuda is not only a medium of song and dance but has also been established as a vibrant cultural practice that promotes social interaction, collective consciousness, entertainment, cultural transmission and social relations within the community. Traditionally, Deuda is a social activity practised in village fairs, festivals, Gaura, weddings and group gatherings. In this process, participants get the opportunity to learn knowledge related to social relationship building, social values, experience exchange, cultural values, ethical conduct, agricultural life, gender relations, cooperation and community responsibility through songs, dialogues, question-answers, group presentations and behaviors.

Individuals learn behaviors and values through observation, participation and social interaction (Bandura, 1977). Deuda is an effective medium for informal education and social learning, especially as children and young people learn language, social behavior, moral values, and cultural knowledge by observing and imitating the activities of their elders. Since such learning develops through experience, participation, and social practice outside the formal school structure, it can be considered an effective medium for informal education (Smith, 2002).

Although the modern education system primarily prioritises formal schooling, cultural practices, experiential learning, and social interactions within the community also have a significant impact on the formation of an individual's knowledge, behavior, and attitudes. Freire (1970) argues that education is not limited to schools and that consciousness is developed through community, dialogue, and cultural practices. UNESCO (2003) notes that intangible cultural heritage plays an important role in transferring knowledge, skills, and cultural continuity within a community. Learning through Deuda appears to be working to preserve local knowledge systems, collectivism, collaboration, social values, and cultural identity.

Folk culture is the basis for the construction of social knowledge and learning should be considered as a result of social and cultural processes (Vygotsky, 1978). In Western Nepal, Deuda seems to be a means of intergenerational knowledge transmission, strengthening social relations, and preserving cultural identity. However, due to modernisation, migration, digital entertainment, and changing lifestyles, various changes and challenges are emerging in Deuda culture. The declining participation of the younger generation and the weakening of traditional cultural practices have made it necessary to study the social and educational role of Deuda. Therefore, this study has attempted to analyse Deuda from the perspectives of informal education, social learning, and indigenous pedagogy.

Various studies, books and research have been published globally on the relationship between folk culture and informal education (Izu, & Somlata, 2025; Saud, 2022). In particular, social learning, community-based knowledge transfer and learning processes through cultural practices have been interpreted by various scholars as important educational foundations. The ideas of Bandura (1977), Freire (1970), Vygotsky (1978), and UNESCO (2003) have made significant contributions to this. However, these studies mostly focus on a global or general cultural context and have not directly linked the Deuda folk culture prevalent in the western region of Nepal to informal education and social learning.

Some research has also been done on the Deuda culture prevalent in the western region of Nepal. Shah's (2023) study on Deuda transformation has studied the transformation of Deuda from folk culture to popular culture. Similarly, Air's (2023, 2025) study on Deuda as folk poetic tradition and Deudā: A Verbal Art of the Subaltern has analyzed Deuda as an oral tradition, cultural identity and expression of a neglected community. In addition, GC and Joshi's (2024) study has highlighted the environmental consciousness in Deuda. Similarly, Bajgain's (2080 BS), Study on Deuda Folk Songs, Upadhyay's (2017) study on Deuda: A Carnival Poetry of Performance, Joshi's (2074 BS) study on Doteli, Gaura Parva's Mythological Context and Song Study, and many other studies have studied Deuda. Thus, although the Deuda folk culture of western Nepal has been practised for a long time as a medium of social relations, cultural transmission and collective participation, there has not been sufficient study on its educational and social learning aspects. Most studies focus on the musical, literary or cultural aspects of Deuda, but there seems to be little in-depth analysis of its impact on informal education, social behavior, moral values and social learning within the community. Thus, there is a clear research gap regarding the educational role of Deuda culture and its impact on the social learning process.

In particular, the issue of how children and youth are learning language, social values, cultural behavior, and collectivism through Deuda is still unclear. Similarly, the question of what changes are being brought about by the impact of modernity, urbanization, migration and communication technology in the practice, participation and intergenerational learning process of Deuda culture is also at the centre of this study.

On the contrary, due to the limited use of local culture and indigenous knowledge systems in school education, community-based learning practices are not given sufficient importance. The issue of how cultural practices such as Deuda can be used as indigenous pedagogy and community-based pedagogy has also become an essential area of research. Therefore, this study attempts to address issues such as the role played by Deuda folk culture in informal education and social learning processes, social values, cultural identity and transmission of local knowledge, the impact of modern social changes on the practice and educational role of Deuda culture, and the potential for its development as an indigenous pedagogy and community-based teaching method.

The purpose of this study is to analyse Deuda folk culture in the context of Western Nepal from the perspective of informal education, social learning and cultural transmission. The specific objectives include:

1. To identify the practices of informal education in the community through Deuda folk culture
2. To analyse the role played by Deuda culture in the social learning process
3. To explore the impact of modern social changes on the educational and social role of Deuda folk culture

Methods and Procedures

This study is based on a general qualitative research design (Marriam & Tisdell, 2016). An interpretive approach has been used to understand the meanings of social and cultural practices in depth. The Deuda communities of Sudurpaschim and Karnali provinces have been selected as the study area. Participants have been selected through the purposive sampling method including Deuda singers, local experts, scholars, teachers and youth as respondents. For data collection, additional information has been collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation of Deuda play and secondary sources, such as Deuda songs, cultural performances and related documents and YouTube. The collected data has been analysed through the thematic analysis method, and the findings have been discussed on the theoretical basis. Triangulation, field notes and participant validation have been adopted to ensure the reliability of the study.

An attempt was made to understand the multidimensional aspect of social learning and informal education by including people of different ages, genders and roles who have a direct relationship with Deuda culture. The participants include three Deuda Artist (DA) (DA1, DA2, DA3); three Senior Citizen (SC) (SC1, SC2, SC3); three Youth (Y) (Y1, Y2, Y3), three teacher and educators (TE) (TE1, TE2, TE3) and five FGDs. The data were analysed through a thematic approach.

Lamki Chuha Municipality of Kailali district was selected to directly observe the Deuda play and culture. The main reason for selecting this area is the significant presence of communities who have migrated from various hilly districts of Sudurpaschim and Karnali Province forming the mixed community. In addition, since Deuda is played regularly for five days a week in different places, this area is considered important as a living and representative practice site of Deuda culture.

The researcher, myself, is directly involved in Deuda folk music culture and is an insider in its practices, which has helped to analyse the study in depth. However, reflexivity has been adopted to control potential bias, and the perspectives of the participants have been prioritized.

Results

The findings from the data have been presented thematically quoting some relevant Deuda songs.

Historical and Cultural Background of Deuda

Deuda songs, dances and poems were born when trying to express the experiences of folk life in various regions of the Sudurpaschim and Karnali Province in musical rhythm. Deuda songs not only provide entertainment but also convey social and educational messages.

The origin of the word Deuda is mainly linked to its unique singing style and footwork. When playing Deuda, the players in a circle move one and a half steps forward and half steps back and adjust their footwork. In this, the genre may have been established under the name 'Deuda' through derivation from the one-and-a-half-foot gait and one-and-a-half frequency of voice-waves (Pant, 1975). According to scholars of Nepali language and grammar, words have been modified with the development of Khas language. Some local opinions associate it with the praise of the gods. Bajgain (2080BS) has mentioned that the word "Deuda" is derived from "Devbadai", which refers to a song sung during festivals while worshipping the deity. It occupies an important place as a cultural and historical heritage. The development of Deuda songs has played an important role in strengthening the cultural identity of this region as well as in social relations and practical learning. However, academic research seems to have paid more attention to it as a practical expression of folk life and a medium of social communication.

According to scholars, the initial form of Deuda began during the period of Prakrit and Apabhramsa languages. However, it is estimated that its beginnings were from the then Khas kingdom (Sinja). It is also believed that the songs sung on Bhirpakha, Sukha, Sukha, the victories of the ruler and social events may have been later modified and developed into the Deuda play.

Deuda has survived only in oral tradition for a long time. The work of collecting and documenting it became possible only in modern times. In BS 2015, Doti folk artist Dhan Bahadur Malla recorded the Deuda song for the first time on Radio Nepal and took it from the hill village fairs to the national level. He took it to the stage. Similarly, after BS 2040, Deuda became professional and widespread.

In the current changing environment, Deuda has always had historical significance. Deuda songs are not only a means of expressing the cultural identity of Sudurpaschim, but also a musical campaign for national recognition and inclusive nation building (Stirr, 2012). Pant (1975) has considered Deuda as a folk cultural expression representing the life, culture and collective consciousness of Sudurpaschim, in which song, dance, dialogue and community participation are included together. The folk culture of any society is born from the life of the people and remains alive in

the life of the people (Joshi, 2071 BS). In this context, Deuda is also a cultural heritage that expresses the life, feelings and social relations of the local society.

With migration and globalization, the recent migration from Sudurpaschim and Karnali to the Terai (Kailali, Kanchanpur, Bardiya) and the Kathmandu Valley has changed the geography of Deuda. With migration, culture also transfers, a direct example of which is the Gaura celebrated in Tundikhel in Kathmandu and the Deuda played. Currently, the young generation has started presenting it on global platforms by fusing it with modern instruments.

Human learning and development are built through social interaction, language, culture and collective experience (Vygotsky, 1978). From this perspective, Deuda is not just entertainment or folk songs but a living cultural medium carrying collective knowledge, social practices and cultural identity of Western Nepal. Especially in rural communities of the Sudurpashchim and Karnali regions, Deuda has long been found to express social relations, labor culture, religious beliefs and collective feelings.

Culture is the basis of learning. Since individuals learn knowledge through language, symbols, traditions, and practices prevalent in society, the songs, rhythms, dances, and dialogues of Deuda are important cultural tools of social learning (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, the local language, proverbs, cultural references, and ironic expressions used in Deuda serve to transmit the social experience of the community to the new generation. This confirms Vygotsky's concept that the construction of social knowledge is a collective process, not an individual one.

In particular, the historical development of Deuda seems to be linked to agricultural life, festivals, fairs, and collective labor culture. The performance of Deuda, especially at Gaura, Bhailo, weddings, and other cultural occasions, has become a means of strengthening community relations. Thus, Deuda is a folk tradition deeply related to social structure and cultural continuity.

Social Relations, Collectivism and Inclusion in Deuda Folk Culture

Based on the responses of the respondents selected as a sample, Deuda folk culture is seen as an important means of strengthening social relations. DA1 has stated that since people play together in a Deuda group without discrimination, it strengthens social unity and relations. Since women-women, men-men and boys-girls participate collectively in Deuda, community cooperation and social closeness are seen to develop. DA2 states that there is no caste discrimination in Deuda and people from all communities play together on an inclusive basis. For example,

Sai rahichhau Chhetri ko chhora ma Dalit ma Bhoola

Dekhinchha pairanu chhain chattan mathiko phoola

The girl says in this song that you are the son of a Kshetri and I am a Dalit. Our love is like a flower on a rock. It can be seen but cannot be used. We can play Deuda

together. There can be good love between us, but we cannot spend our lives together. Because there are limits to the beliefs of the caste society. In this way, Deuda is used to convey a message about the values and social boundaries of the caste system in society through songs. The relationship between Dalits and Chhetris has also been expressed through songs. On the one hand, this shows that Deuda acts as a means of practising social inclusion; on the other hand, it shows the social norms of the caste system. According to SC1, in the past, Deuda was played collectively at weddings, religious and cultural functions, creating an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation in the village society. Y1 said that participating in Deuda gained social relationships and a sense of group identity. TE1 said that Deuda teaches cooperative behavior and social harmony. Direct observation also found that people of different castes, ages and communities participated in the same place. This confirms that Deuda is not just entertainment but a practice of social integration.

In the group discussion, participants expressed their experience that Deuda strengthens social relationships, increases harmony in the village, and reduces loneliness. One respondent said: “When playing Deuda, everyone has fun together, mutual relations in the village are strengthened, and mental stress is also reduced.” This statement makes it clear that Deuda plays a role in building social interaction and emotional relationships. While playing Deuda, youth get the opportunity to learn cooperation, dialogue, respect, and collective behavior. For example, Deuda that reflects social harmony was found to be as follows:

Gau ra samaja milau hatemalo gardai (“Let’s unite the village and society, joining hands)

Sanskritiko vikas garau yuwa aghi sardai (Let’s develop culture, youth moving forward.)

This type of Deuda teaches social harmony, cooperation and collective behavior. Especially in rural areas, Deuda still seems to be alive as a means of community unity.

From the perspective of Social Learning Theory by Bandura, people are learning collective behavior, cooperation and social values through group follow-up and interaction. Similarly, according to Sociocultural Theory, since social interaction is the basis of learning, Deuda is seen as a cultural practice that builds social relationships.

Oral Knowledge, Cultural Transmission and Informal Education in Deuda Folk Culture

According to the responses of the respondents, Deuda is an effective medium of oral knowledge and cultural transmission. According to SC1, ‘Duda was played in groups during religious and cultural functions, weddings and other social functions and there was a large audience, so it strengthened social relations. In our time, Deuda was the only means of cultural transmission and entertainment. Love, happiness and sorrow

were exchanged through Deuda and other information was shared.’ For example,

Aadhi khet banjo rahayo, rukhka chhayale

Achham dekhi Dailekh aanya mitra ka mayale

In this song, the boy says that half the field is barren due to the shade of the trees and that I came from one district to another because of your love.

The lyrics of this song provide information about the influence of the shade of trees on social relations, love, geography and agriculture. It is also found that religious knowledge, social values, love, happiness and sorrow and practical knowledge are passed on to the new generation through Deuda. DA3 stated that Deuda imparts knowledge of history, genealogy, language, culture and kinship to the younger generation. TE1 stated that education is not limited to literacy but also through oral and practical practice. This presents Deuda as a medium of informal education. Y2 stated that Deuda imparts information and experience about various aspects of society. Observation also showed that songs are sung in a question-answer style, rhythms are adjusted, and participants learn by watching each other. This presents a form of experiential learning. SC2 sang the Deuda song like this-

Indra le kutniti khele apsara lai nachai

Devi le saitan marin mahila shakti dekhai

This Deuda song conveys a religious and moral message as well as information about the place of women in ancient times. This makes it clear that Deuda is a storehouse of practical life knowledge.

Similarly, during the focus group discussion, some youths interpreted Deuda as a means of preserving cultural identity. One participant said: “Deuda is our identity, it has preserved old customs and village culture.” This statement shows that Deuda is a means of cultural transmission and social identity formation. Through Deuda, youths learn local language, customs and social values.

This analysis is related to the concept of Informal Education. The process of people learning knowledge through daily social practice outside formal schools is clearly visible in Deuda. According to Sociocultural Theory, since language and culture are the main means of learning, Deuda seems to have become a means of transferring cultural knowledge.

Observation, Imitation and Participatory Learning in Deuda Folk Culture

The learning process in Deuda folk culture seems to be based on direct participation, observation and imitation. DA3 responded that Deuda is learned through observation, imitation and participation. From the observation, it was found that the participants were learning to move their feet, hold hands, sing songs and match rhythms by watching each other. It was seen that the girls and boys sang songs in a question-

answer style. This shows that the interactive learning process has developed. Y3 said that participating in Deuda provides mental concentration, physical exercise and collective experience. TE2 responded that pedagogy based on observation, imitation and participation can also be developed in school education. These ideas were also supported by the FGD. This shows that the learning method of Deuda is also related to modern teaching methods.

From the direct observation, it was observed that during the Deuda play, boys and girls ask and answer questions. The audience was calmly listening to the play and to Deuda's questions. For example, there is social interaction in it.

a) *Sanai chhai bhai thulo hollai umer chadhallai*

Deuda kheli ke garallai school padhallai

b) *Atto khet ma chatto mato radda ta raddai chhu*

Deuda kheli sandesh dinchhu padha ta padhai chhu

In the above Deuda dialogue, the girl gives a message to the young boy to go to school, while the boy also gives an educational message to the audience through Deuda songs and replies that he is also going to school. This shows that there is also awareness-based learning in Deuda. The process of the audience listening to the questions and answers calmly and learning from it was also observed in the observation. This has established Deuda as a participatory learning process.

This situation can be explained by Social Learning Theory. According to Bandura, since people learn by observing the behavior of others, the practice of observation and imitation in Deuda is a direct example of social learning. Similarly, according to sociocultural theory, group dialogue and participation create knowledge, which is clearly seen in Deuda.

Changing Contexts and Challenges of Deuda Culture

Based on the responses and direct observations of the respondents, the traditional form of Deuda culture seems to be changing in the present day. SC1 stated that Deuda was the main medium of social relations, religious beliefs, moral values, and oral knowledge transmission in the past. However, in the present day, due to modern lifestyle, technological development, and migration, its practice and form have changed. According to SC2, Deuda was previously the main medium of entertainment and group interaction in the village society, but now the younger generation is more attracted to modern songs and music. Y1 stated that although the youth in rural areas are more familiar with Deuda, the youth living in urban areas are attracted to modern musical culture. This shows that urbanization and modernization have affected Deuda culture. DA1 stated that various group efforts, cultural programs, and social media are being promoted to preserve the originality of Deuda culture. This shows the positive side of digitalization expanding the reach of Deuda. However, according to DA2,

despite the promotion through digital media, there has been some distortion in the originality and traditional style. Modern presentation, commercialisation, and media-oriented performances are likely to weaken the traditional community form of Deuda. SC3 expressed concern that despite the increasing commercialisation of Deuda, its original cultural aspect is weakening. This shows that there is a conflict between cultural preservation and commercial use.

Observations of Deuda plays showed that the participation of the elderly and adults in Deuda play was more, while the participation of the younger generation was comparatively less. This indicates a challenge in generational transmission. DA3 stated that the interest of the younger generation in Deuda is decreasing. This situation seems to pose a problem in cultural continuity in the future. However, some young people had a positive view, linking Deuda with social relationships, mental balance, entertainment and cultural identity. This shows that Deuda's social importance remains even amidst change.

Similarly, some negative aspects and challenges of Deuda were also raised in the group discussion. Due to the impact of modernity, urbanization, and modern technology, the direct participation of youth was seen to be decreasing. Out of the five youth who participated in the discussion, three said that they were not interested in playing Deuda or did not play it regularly. One youth said, "We listen to Deuda but are not that interested in playing it. Nowadays, new songs and modern entertainment seem more attractive."

This response indicates a growing distance from traditional cultural practices among the modern generation. There was also a tendency among educated and urban youth to view Deuda as an 'old' or 'rural' culture. This has created a challenge in the actual practice and transmission of Deuda.

However, the fact that social media and digital technology have played a positive role in the promotion of Deuda was also clear from the group discussion. Youth said that they watch and listen to Deuda through YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok. One participant said, "Earlier, it was limited to the village, but now you can watch Deuda even on your mobile phone, so the new generation has started to learn about Deuda."

This seems to have created an opportunity to bring Deuda to a new generation through digital media. However, there is also a risk of changing the original rhythm, language and style during digital presentation. Some participants responded that Deuda's originality is starting to be lost when modern music is mixed in.

Similarly, concerns were also expressed in the group discussion about some distortions. In some places, it was mentioned that the tendency to use obscene and slang words in the name of Deuda, excessive competition or weakening cultural dignity is increasing. This seems to have an impact on the cultural value and educational role of Deuda.

Overall, based on the focus group discussion, Deuda culture seems to have played an important role in developing social harmony, love, collaboration, cooperation, cultural preservation, entertainment and emotional balance in the social learning process. However, modernity, the impact of technology, the decreasing direct participation of youth and the challenges related to preserving originality have raised questions about its continuity. Therefore, it seems necessary to transfer Deuda to the new generation by coordinating it with modern technology and preserving its originality.

TE1 stated that local culture and Deuda should be included in the local curriculum of schools. TE2 stated that a participatory teaching method can be developed based on Deuda. Y3 also expressed the view that local curricula and degree-based courses should be conducted to preserve folk culture. This shows that institutional initiatives are needed to preserve Deuda culture. DA3 stated that there is a need for institutional preservation of Deuda. On this basis, collaboration between the community, school, government and cultural institutions seems necessary. The focus group discussion concluded that Deuda should be institutionally preserved and developed as a part of formal education.

When analysing this situation according to Sociocultural Theory, culture is a social process that changes with time, society and interaction. When the social environment changes, cultural practices and learning processes also change. The modern influence, migration, digital media and changes in the interests of the youth seen in Deuda are the result of this sociocultural transformation. Similarly, according to Social Learning Theory, the attraction towards modern music seems to have increased as the new generation learns new behaviors and musical practices from the social environment.

The facts obtained from artists, elders, youth, teachers, participatory observation and FGD have presented similar conclusions. Artists have called for preservation, elders have expressed concern about the loss of originality, youth have accepted modern influences, teachers have suggested curricular inclusion, and observations have shown an imbalance in intergenerational participation. All these facts lead to the conclusion that Deuda culture is in a state of flux and that a coordinated effort is needed for its preservation, transmission, and revitalisation.

Discussion

When the findings of this study are analysed in an integrated manner, it is seen that Deuda folk culture is deeply related to the social life, cultural practices, collectivism, oral knowledge transmission and social learning of Western Nepal. Triangulating the facts obtained from artists, elders, youth, teachers, FGD and direct observations, it is confirmed that Deuda is not just an entertaining cultural practice but a living process of social interaction, informal education and cultural identity building. The findings of this study are particularly directly related to Sociocultural Theory, Social Learning Theory and Informal Education.

First of all, the study has shown that Deuda culture strengthens social relations, collectivism and social inclusion. Artists have stated that people of different castes, communities and genders participate in Deuda without discrimination. Elders have stated that Deuda was played collectively in the past during marriages, religious and cultural functions and that it developed unity and cooperation in the village society. Youth have stated that Deuda provides social relations and a sense of community. Similar conclusions were also obtained from the FGD. Direct observation also found that people of different castes, ages, and communities participated in the same place. When triangulating these facts, Deuda is a means of social integration.

This finding seems to be directly related to Sociocultural Theory. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is constructed within social interaction and cultural context. Group singing, question-answering, rhythmic matching, and intergenerational participation in Deuda show that learning is being constructed within a social environment. Local language, group participation, and cultural practices seem to socialise knowledge construction. Therefore, Deuda is confirmed to be a socially mediated learning process, not just a cultural performance.

Similarly, the study has presented Deuda as a medium of oral knowledge, cultural values, and informal education. Elders have said that religious knowledge, moral values, love, happiness-sadness, and practical life experiences are passed on to the new generation through Deuda. Artists have said that Deuda teaches history, genealogy, language, culture, and social values. Teachers and educationists have said that education is not limited to literacy alone but also verbal and practical. Youth have said that Deuda provides social experience, entertainment and mental balance. Observations showed question-and-answer style, rhythmic presentation and participatory learning. All these facts confirm that Deuda is a means of transferring useful knowledge.

This finding seems to be related to Informal Education. According to Informal Education Theory, people learn through daily social life, cultural practices and experiences outside of school. Even though there is no formal textbook or teacher in Deuda, participants are learning language, rhythm, social behavior, moral values, cultural identity and collectivity (Smith, 2002). This presents a form of experiential learning and community-based learning. Teachers or respondents have said that local culture and Deuda can be linked to local curricula and adult education. This shows the possibility of integrating informal learning with formal education.

Another important finding of the study is the process of observation, imitation, and participatory learning in Deuda culture. Artists have said that Deuda is learned through observation, imitation, and participation. Observations showed that participants were learning to move their feet, sing songs, match rhythms, and ask and answer questions by watching each other. Youth reported that they gained mental concentration, physical exercise, and social experience while participating in Deuda.

Teachers reported that participatory pedagogy can be developed based on Deuda. The expression “I am giving a message to people through Deuda, and I have also been studying in school,” presented by a boy who sings a song, shows that educational awareness is being transmitted through cultural practice. Similar facts obtained from artists, youth, teachers, and direct observations can confirm that observational learning is being practised.

This finding is directly related to Social Learning Theory. According to Bandura (1977), people learn by observing the behavior of others, imitating them, and through social participation. In Deuda, the new generation is learning songs, rhythms, social behavior, and cultural values by watching their elders. Here, elders, artists, and experienced people are seen as role models. This presents a practical form of observational learning and modelling.

The study also showed challenges in Deuda culture due to the changing social environment. The elders have said that modern music, migration and changing lifestyles have affected the originality of Deuda. The youth have said that digitalization has distorted the originality even though it has promoted Deuda. The artists have pointed out the need for conservation and institutional development. Teachers and educationists have expressed the view that it should be included in the local curriculum. The participants in the group discussion have expressed the view that Deuda should be institutionally developed, conserved, promoted, included in the school curriculum and made a part of the teaching method. The participation of the elderly and adults in the observation was higher than that of the youth.

Conclusion

This study shows that it is an effective medium for social learning, cultural transmission and informal education. Deuda is seen as a living cultural practice that builds social relationships, develops collectivity, promotes social inclusion and transfers intergenerational knowledge. It was found that language, history, genealogy, religious consciousness, moral values, practical knowledge, social values, and emotional experiences are being transferred to the new generation through Deuda.

Thus, the social role of Deuda appears to be multifaceted. First, it develops social unity and collectivity. Since Deuda is played collectively in villages during fairs, festivals, weddings, or special occasions, cooperation, intimacy and social harmony increase among people. Since collective participation is given more importance in Deuda than caste, class, or economic status, it also seems to encourage social inclusion.

Second, Deuda culture is also a medium of social education. Deuda songs are found to express moral education, social messages, gender relations, the importance of labour, love, satire, and criticism of social evils. For example, some Deuda songs poignantly present foreign employment, poverty, social discrimination, or women’s suffering. In this way, Deuda also plays an informal educational role in spreading

awareness in society. Third, Deuda is a symbol of cultural identity and originality. Even amidst the effects of globalization and modernity, Sudurpaschim community is using Deuda as a cultural practice to preserve its identity. Deuda is gaining importance, especially as a means of connecting the younger generation with their language, costumes, rhythms and traditions. UNESCO has also considered the preservation of local intangible cultural heritage as an important basis for preserving cultural diversity, to which Deuda culture is directly related. In addition, Deuda also plays the role of emotional balance and entertainment. Deuda has been used as a useful medium to relieve fatigue after hard work, provide group entertainment and reduce social tension. Deuda has been an integral part of social life since the days when radio, television or modern entertainment media were limited in rural societies.

The study clearly shows that there is an observation, imitation and participatory learning process in Deuda. The participants have developed a process of learning through singing songs, rhythmic rhythms, question-answering and social interaction in groups. This has established Deuda as a medium for experiential learning based on the social and cultural environment. The findings of the study are directly related to Sociocultural Theory, Social Learning Theory and Informal Education.

However, modernity, digitalisation, urbanization, migration and the attraction of youth towards modern music seem to have created challenges in the originality and transmission of Deuda culture. However, digital media has also helped in its dissemination. Therefore, a coordinated effort of communities, schools, local governments and cultural institutions is necessary for the preservation, revival and transmission of Deuda culture. This also presents the conclusion that it is possible to connect Deuda with local curricula, adult education, cultural education and community-based learning processes and create a new pedagogy based on Deuda values, increasing the activeness of students in learning.

This study presents important educational implications for the education sector. First, it seems necessary to connect local culture and community-based teaching with school education. Historical beliefs, skills, language, rhythm, social interaction, moral education, and cultural values in Deuda culture can be included in the local curriculum. This helps to develop a culturally responsive pedagogy by linking education to the local context.

Second, since Deuda's learning process is based on observational learning and participatory learning, it can be used as a teaching method. Teachers can use question-answer style, group presentation, role play, rhythmic teaching, interactive learning and collaborative activities in the classroom. This strengthens learner-centred pedagogy. Deuda-based activities can be useful especially in language teaching, social studies, moral education and art education.

Third, the study has shown that experiential learning and community-based learning can be encouraged based on local folk culture. Students can be involved

in community-based project work, folk culture observation, cultural interaction and learning activities with local artists. This can strengthen the relationship between the school and the community.

Fourth, the collectivism, cooperative behavior, and social inclusion inherent in Deuda culture can be linked to inclusive pedagogy. The practice of involving students of different castes, communities, and genders in collaborative learning activities can help develop social harmony and tolerance.

Fifth, the study has shown that Deuda can also be linked to adult education and functional literacy. Awareness-raising and practical education programs can be conducted in the community using local languages, folk songs, and cultural performances. This can strengthen informal education and lifelong learning.

Sixth, although digitalization creates challenges for Deuda culture, it can be used as an educational opportunity. Schools and local bodies can develop Deuda songs, history, and cultural practices in the form of digital archives, audio-visual materials, and e-learning materials. This can help develop attraction and identity towards local culture in the new generation.

Overall, the study shows that Deuda folk culture needs to be reinterpreted not only as a cultural heritage but also as a pedagogical resource based on social learning, informal education, and local knowledge systems. Therefore, Deuda culture can make a significant contribution to the development of local culture-based pedagogy, participatory learning, experiential learning, and culturally responsive teaching.

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