

An Analysis of Role of Civic Education in Promoting Social Mobility and Democratization in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, civic education has proven to be a significant tool in the process of building democratic governance, fostering political participation, and ensuring social mobility in developing countries. With the shift from the monarchical political structure to a federal democratic republic in Nepal, civic education has become increasingly important for fostering educated, responsible, and politically engaged citizens. The present paper is intended to investigate the significance of civic education in relation to social mobility and democratization in Nepal by reviewing relevant policies, curriculum approaches, democratic processes, and theoretical studies on the issue. Through qualitative document analysis, the investigation will discuss the development of civic education, its place in the Nepalese school curricula, as well as the contribution made to democracy and social change by civic education. As the research findings suggest, civic education can promote democratic consciousness, political participation, constitutional education, civic responsibility, and social inclusion. Moreover, civic education fosters educational, occupational, and political mobility among others. Although there have been various policy commitments in this regard, there are difficulties in its actual implementation in terms of poor teacher training, conventional teaching methods, lack of participation and participation-based learning, and the contextualization of curriculum contents. The study maintains that developing civic education through the use of democratic pedagogy and inclusive education can substantially enhance democratic consolidation and social mobility within Nepal. Civic education is described as an agent for transformative change to bring about democratization, social justice, and sustainable development of the country.

Keywords: *Civic education, democratization, social mobility, democratic citizenship, political participation, Nepal*

Introduction

Not only constitution making or political processes sustain democracy but also the engagement of informed and responsible citizens does. For democracy to prevail, there must be people who are educated about civic matters and democracy in particular. There must be people with democratic values, political awareness, understanding of politics, and dedication towards community wellbeing. Civic education plays a crucial role in producing informed and responsible citizens since civic education endows people with competencies to comprehend political processes. The world has recognized civic education as a very vital aspect of learning institutions in building democracies in the world and ensuring active citizenship in any country. It is well known from democratic theory that democracy would not be sustainable without citizens having a sound understanding of democratic principles and having the ability to participate in politics (Almond & Verba, 1963; Dahl, 1998).

There have been several studies conducted on the correlation between democracy and education. According to Dewey (1916), education acts as a medium of propagating the spirit of democracy and preparing people to be part of society. Education in Freire's (1970) perspective can be seen as a means of liberation where the poor gain a sense of awareness and act as agents of social transformation. Hence, civic education is not only about transferring knowledge to individuals; it is more about fostering democratic dispositions and encouraging individuals to initiate social change. Civic education takes on a greater meaning in developing nations, especially in circumstances where there are difficulties with democratic institutions in terms of political instability, poor governance, social disparity, and lack of citizen participation.

Civic education helps in strengthening the democratic process by ensuring citizens become politically effective and socially cohesive. This form of education opens doors to social advancement by giving people knowledge and skills that enable them to participate actively in society. Nepal provides an exemplary setting for analysing the nexus between civic education, democratization, and social mobility. Since the 1950s, Nepal has been

witnessing various changes in its political structure. After the demise of the Rana regime in 1951, there have been several changes in the political structure of Nepal, which include constitutional monarchy, Panchayat era, democracy reinstated in 1990, insurgency initiated by the Maoists in 1996, Comprehensive Peace Accord signed in 2006, and finally, the formation of Federal Democratic Republic as mentioned in the Constitution of Nepal 2015. All these transformations in the political arena have brought major changes in the education system of Nepal, providing scope for integrating values of democracy in the education system. Civic education and democratic education started to become an integral part of the education reforms in Nepal. According to Dhungana & Dhungel (2015), civic and democratic education received a lot of importance after restoring the multiparty democratic system in 1990, and consequently democratic values, human rights, and constitutional awareness were integrated into the school curriculum.

These aspects have been explicitly mentioned in the National Curriculum Framework (2005), which aims at producing educated individuals who are aware, responsible, ethical, democratic, and able to contribute towards national development (MoE, 2005). Civic education has thus become a means by which educational institutions aim to make learners ready for democracy and social life. In addition to its democratic aspects, civic education has another function related to social mobility. Social mobility can be defined as upward movement of people along the social hierarchy through better education, occupation, income levels, social and political power, and social status. Education has long been considered one of the greatest sources of social mobility since it broadens possibilities, develops human capabilities, and removes structural inequalities. Civic education contributes to social mobility in the following ways:

The significance of civic education cannot be underestimated for historically oppressed peoples in Nepal, such as women, Dalits, Indigenous nationalities, Madhesi, and poor people. By encouraging democratic values and teaching human rights, civic education has the potential to help reduce social inequalities and provide more opportunities for public engagement. Nevertheless, despite the efforts made by Nepalese authorities and civil society

representatives, there are still several problems that prevent civic education from fulfilling its potential completely. These obstacles include lack of teachers' qualifications, curriculum adaptation to local context, insufficient resources, poor pedagogical skills, and limited institutional support. Examination-oriented teaching strategies restrict students' opportunities to engage in participatory learning and democratic activities at school.

This study explores the contribution of civic education to democratization and social mobility in Nepal. It is based on the assumption that civic education can become an effective tool for empowering underprivileged people and consolidating democracy in Nepal. In order to analyse civic education in Nepal and its effects on democratization, this study is going to address the following research questions:

What is the history of civic education in Nepal's educational system?

In what way can civic education advance democratization in Nepal?

In what ways does civic education contribute to the social mobility of Nepalese citizens?

Literature Review

Conceptualization of Civic Education

Much has been witnessed in the conceptualization of civic education. The classical understanding of civic education revolved around the transmission of knowledge concerning the structure of governments, constitutionalism, and citizenship. In contrast, the modern approach embraces wider aspects of civic education, such as democracy and civic engagement. According to Quigley (1999), civic education is the acquisition by citizens of requisite knowledge and skills required for effective participation in democratic society. Likewise, UNESCO (2015) conceptualizes civic education as a way of nurturing informed, responsible, and active citizens who contribute towards the creation of peaceful, inclusive, and democratic societies. According to Dahal (2002), there are three essential features of civic education including socialization, participation and humanization. Socialization refers to

the process of acquiring democratic values and social norms while participation pertains to the issue of being engaged in public affairs. Lastly, humanization involves human dignity, social justice and civic responsibility.

Civic Education and Democratic Citizenship

Democratic citizenship entails the ability of citizens to engage in the democratic process without violating others' rights. Citizenship involves both the rights and duties of citizens and requires active citizen involvement in politics and society. Marshall (1950) explained that citizenship involves civil rights, political rights, and social rights. Regarding democratic citizenship, the role of civic education is to enable individuals to understand their rights, duties, and democratic institutions and practices. Almond and Verba (1963) found that democratic stability is possible if the citizens possess relevant political attitudes, political trust, and orientations towards participation. From this research, it is clear how crucial the role of civic education is for the promotion of citizenship and the realization of democratic values. Putnam (1993) argued that a stable democracy also depends on adequate social capital, civic participation, and trust among other elements. For Nepal, the significance of democratic citizenship has increased because of new democratic rights and participation opportunities resulting from political transformations. Therefore, educational policy has been focused on citizenship education in order to consolidate democracy.

Democratisation and Civic Education

The process of establishing and solidifying democratic institutions, values, and practices inside society is known as "democratisation." Democratisation, according to Huntington (1991), entails the shift from authoritarian authority to democratic governance marked by civic engagement, responsibility, and respect. The importance of education in promoting democratisation has been repeatedly noted by academics. According to Lipset (1959), having a higher level of education increases political knowledge, tolerance, and engagement, all of which support democratic stability. Education and democratic sentiments are positively correlated, according to more recent research (Glaeser et al., 2007).

A complicated process including political movements, constitutional amendments, peace building projects, and institutional restructuring has led to Nepal's democratisation. Alongside these changes, educational reforms have promoted civic consciousness among students and integrated democratic ideas into curricula. According to Dhungana and Dhungel (2015), post-1990 educational reforms greatly broadened the scope of civic and democratic education in Nepal. Curriculum objectives now emphasize human rights, democracy, social justice, constitutional literacy, and civic involvement. These modifications are a part of broader efforts to align education with democratic principles and national objectives. In particular, the National Curriculum Framework (2005) seeks to produce people who respect human rights, embrace diversity, participate in democratic processes, and promote national growth. These objectives demonstrate the significance of civic education to Nepal's democratization plan.

Civic Education and Social Mobility

Social mobility is the term used to describe changes in an individual's or group's social status over time. Education is frequently seen as one of the most important elements fostering social mobility since it enhances opportunities, knowledge, and skills. Education increases people's potential for productivity and improves economic outcomes, according to the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993). Civic education extends these benefits by cultivating leadership traits, political awareness, communication abilities, and social competencies that facilitate participation in civic and political life. Research indicates that educational attainment has a favourable impact on political participation, community involvement, and leadership development (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Civic education aids in achieving these objectives by fostering political efficacy and civic competency. Social mobility in Nepal is still hampered by disparities related to caste, ethnicity, gender, geography, and economic status. Civic education can help alleviate these inequities by promoting social inclusion, strengthening democratic engagement, and increasing awareness of rights. The importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in educational policies is growing. The National Curriculum Framework highlights the importance of using education to help disadvantaged groups become part of the country's mainstream

national life. These initiatives imply that civic education can be a tool for advancing socioeconomic mobility and democratisation.

Research Deficit

Curriculum development, citizenship education, democratic principles, and educational reforms have been the main topics of previous research on civic education in Nepal. Few studies have looked at the connections between civic education, democratisation, and social mobility, despite the fact that these studies offer significant insights into the development and use of civic education. Additionally, a large portion of the material now in publication either concentrates on educational policy or democratic citizenship without sufficiently examining the ways in which civic education concurrently advances social progress and democratic consolidation. Comprehensive analysis that incorporates these factors in the context of Nepal's continuing democratic transition is still required. By investigating civic education as a democratising force and a driver for social mobility, this study aims to close this gap and offer a more comprehensive understanding of its function in modern Nepal.

Conceptual Model

Democratic Citizenship Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Social Capital Theory are the three complimentary theoretical stances that form the foundation of this investigation. When combined, these ideas offer a thorough framework for comprehending how civic education advances socioeconomic mobility and democratisation in Nepal.

Theory of Democratic Citizenship

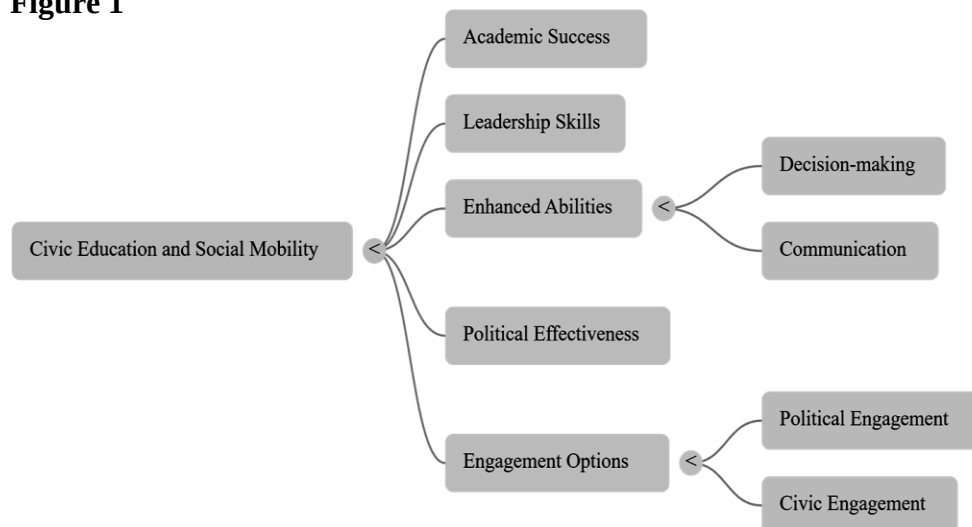
According to Democratic Citizenship Theory, citizens must have the information, values, attitudes, and abilities needed to participate effectively in public affairs. Democratic citizenship emphasises active participation in political, social, and civic life and goes beyond only being a state citizen. Democracy, according to Dewey (1916), is essentially an associated way of life that relies on educated citizens who can take part in group decision-making. As a result, schools function as democratic establishments where

pupils acquire civic duty, cooperation, critical thinking, and discourse. In a similar vein, Almond and Verba (1963) contend that a civic culture marked by political consciousness, trust, involvement, and support for democratic institutions is necessary for democratic stability. By fostering democratic principles and promoting engaged citizenship, civic education supports this civic culture. Democratic Citizenship Theory explains how civic education in Nepal fosters social inclusion, political engagement, democratic participation, and constitutional awareness. Students gain knowledge about democracy, human rights, government, citizenship, and civic duties through civic education, which enhances democratic culture.

Theory of Human Capital

According to Human Capital Theory, education is an investment that improves people's productivity, knowledge, abilities, and skills (Becker, 1993). Education advances social standing, work prospects, and earning potential while advancing country development. Human Capital Theory offers significant insights into civic education even if it has historically been linked to economic outcomes. Human capital that allows people to effectively engage in society includes civic knowledge, leadership skills, communication ability, problem-solving talents, and political literacy.

Figure 1



Civic education can enable marginalised groups to participate more actively in social, economic, and political activities in Nepal, where education is still a crucial route for upward mobility.

The Theory of Social Capital

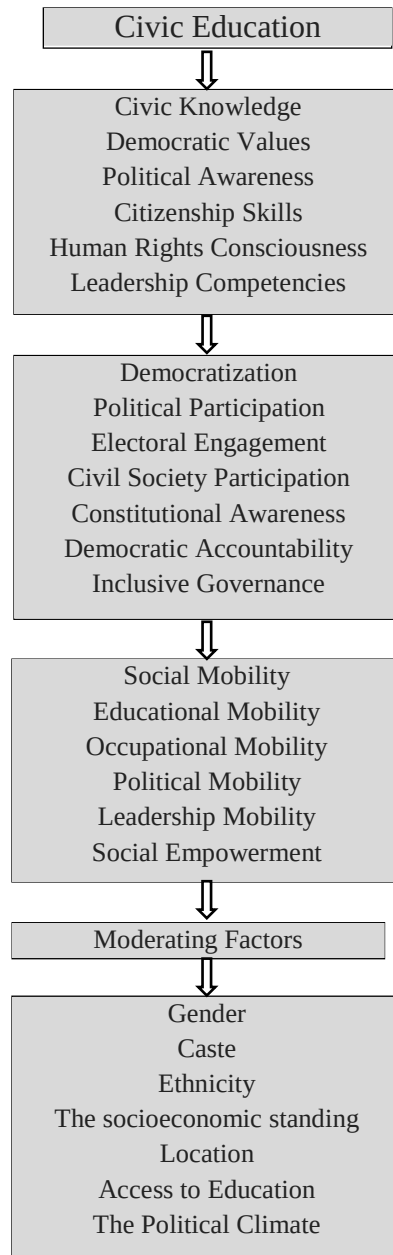
According to Putnam (1993), social capital theory highlights the significance of social networks, trust, collaboration, and civic involvement in fostering collective well-being. Social capital makes it easier for people to work together and supports democratic institutions. By promoting volunteerism, active community involvement, group problem-solving. Interpersonal trust, and democratic discourse among citizens, civic education greatly aids in the creation of social capital (Dhungana, 2014). Through civic education, people gain the knowledge, values, and abilities needed to participate successfully in civic and public activities, work with others to address social concerns, and engage constructively in community affairs. It encourages people to actively contribute to social welfare and community development by fostering a sense of civic duty and group commitment. Additionally, civic education fosters tolerance, respect, and understanding among various groups-all of which are fundamental pillars of democratic societies-which enhances social trust and collaboration (Dahal, D. R., 2002).

Civic education strengthens social networks and civic institutions by promoting democratic discourse and civic engagement through open discussion, deliberation, and idea sharing. As a result, civic education is essential for creating social capital, which promotes social cohesiveness, democratic governance, and long-term community development (Putnam, 1993; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; UNESCO, 2015). Schools are vital places for the formation of social capital because they provide opportunities for civic engagement, communication, and teamwork. Students who participate in civic activities develop stronger social networks and have more faith in democratic systems. In Nepal, a country characterized by social variety and past injustices, civic education can help build bridging social capital across caste, ethnic, linguistic, and regional groupings.

Conceptual Structure

The study claims that civic education is an independent variable that influences democratization and social mobility via a number of mediating mechanizes.

Figure 2



The paradigm holds that civic education has an impact on democratic participation and socioeconomic advancement, but the extent of these impacts varies depending on larger societal factors.

Methods of Research

Design of Research

This study employs a qualitative research approach, with document analysis serving as the primary technique of inquiry. Qualitative approaches are highly useful when examining curriculum frameworks, educational policies, and scholarly publications related to civic education and democratization. Researchers can identify patterns, themes, and linkages relevant to their objectives by using document analysis to examine academic articles, educational materials, and policy documents.

Information Sources

The study used secondary sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the role civic education plays in promoting socioeconomic mobility and democratization in Nepal. The key sources included the National Curriculum Framework (2005), Nepalese educational policy documents, civic education curriculum guidelines, and Dhungana, and Dhungel's article Democracy and Civic Education in Nepali School Curricula (2015). These sources provided hard evidence of the objectives, content, and implementation of civic and democratic education in Nepal.

Secondary materials included academic publications, peer-reviewed journal articles, reports from UNESCO and other international agencies, and studies on democratization, civic education, socioeconomic mobility, and democratic involvement. These resources helped to situate the Nepalese experience within broader scholarly discussions about civic education and democratic development. They included theoretical perspectives, empirical data, and comparative analysis. The collected data was subjected to thematic analysis in order to identify recurring patterns and significant subjects related to civic knowledge, democratic values, political involvement, social inclusion, leadership development, social mobility, and democratic consolidation. The

study investigated how civic education supports the growth of democratic culture, possibilities for social improvement, and active citizenship in Nepal through a methodical analysis and interpretation of the materials. The literature's emergent themes were categorised into more general groups and analysed in light of Nepal's democratic transition.

Reliability

The study relied on reputable national and international references, used a variety of scholarly sources, triangulated findings across policy documents and academic literature, and applied systematic thematic analysis procedures to guarantee consistency, depth, and rigour in data interpretation in order to ensure credibility and reliability.

Results and Discussion

Nepal's Civic Education's Historical Development

The evolution of civic education in Nepal is a reflection of the nation's larger political changes. Alongside changes in democratic goals and political institutions, educational strategies have also changed.

Prior to 1990, civic education

Early educational reforms implemented following the overthrow of the Rana government can be linked to formal civic education. Recognising that education is the cornerstone of democracy, the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (1956) suggested educational methods in line with democratic ideals.

The Commission highlighted

Democratic administration in schools.

The general education system. Decentralisation.

Awareness among citizens.

The growth of the country.

Subsequent Panchayat-based educational reforms, however, took a more state-centered approach. Rather than emphasising political involvement, civic education mostly focused on obedience, loyalty, morality, and national unity.

Subjects like "Panchayat and Civic Life" were included in the National Education System Plan (1971), which reflected the political goals of the time. The political system itself limited political freedoms, so even though there was civic content, democratic participation remained low. As a result, prior to 1990, civic education mostly served as a tool for political socialisation rather than democratic empowerment.

After 1990: Civic Education.

Civic education changed significantly when Nepal's multiparty democracy was restored in 1990, mirroring the nation's larger political, social, and constitutional shifts. In addition to ending the party-less Panchayat system, the democratic movement started the process of redefining education as a tool for fostering democratic values, civic engagement, and respect for fundamental rights. As a result, educational programs began to promote pluralism, involvement, tolerance, and accountability rather than a single national ideology. In order to help pupils, comprehend their rights and obligations as citizens, civic education progressively integrated ideas like constitutionalism, the rule of law, democratic governance, gender equality, social inclusion, and peaceful dispute resolution. Curriculum changes that aimed to respect Nepal's multicultural, multilingual, and multi-ethnic society while preparing students for engagement in democratic institutions served to further solidify this change. The educational discourse has come to acknowledge that citizens with civic knowledge, democratic attitudes, and participatory abilities are just as important to sustaining democracy as political institutions (Ministry of Education, 2005; UNESCO, 2015).

An important step toward institutionalizing civic education in Nepal's formal education system was the release of the National Curriculum Framework in 2005. In order to align Nepal's educational priorities with international principles of education for democratic citizenship, the framework skillfully identified democracy, diversity, human rights, social justice, civic responsibility, national unity, peace, and respect for cultural differences as core educational objectives. Civic education embraced a comprehensive approach that prioritized critical thinking, ethical decision-making, social responsibility, environmental

awareness, and community engagement rather than being limited to teaching governmental systems. Subsequent constitutional reforms, especially the 2015 adoption of the Nepalese Constitution, which established a federal democratic republican system based on equality, inclusiveness, and the defence of fundamental rights, further reinforced this attitude. As a result, schools have grown in significance as places to foster democratic culture, inspiring students to take part in decision-making, value variety, oppose discrimination, and support the peaceful development of their country. Therefore, the development of civic education since 1990 is a reflection of Nepal's continuous shift to democratic governance, where education is a vital tool for producing responsible, informed, and socially engaged citizens who can uphold constitutional democracy (Ministry of Education, 2005). Government of Nepal, UNESCO 2015. (2015) Students are expected to gain proficiency in the following domains:

According to Nepal's modern civic education framework, students will acquire a wide range of skills that will allow them to actively and responsibly engage in a democratic society. These competencies include an appreciation of the rule of law as the cornerstone for responsible governance, peaceful conflict resolution, and the defense of citizens' rights; a thorough understanding of human rights and fundamental freedoms that fosters respect for dignity, equality, and justice; and active participation in democratic processes through informed participation, discourse, voting, and community service. Effective leadership abilities, which include moral decision-making, teamwork, accountability, problem-solving, and the capacity to motivate constructive social change in their communities, are also expected of students. Additionally, civic education promotes social inclusion by urging students to reject discrimination on the basis of caste, gender, race, religion, handicap, or socioeconomic status and to appreciate Nepal's multicultural, multilingual, multi-ethnic, and multireligious variety. The development of constitutional literacy, which enables students to comprehend the institutions, rights, obligations, values, and federal structure outlined in the Nepalese Constitution, is equally crucial in educating them to be knowledgeable, accountable, and engaged citizens. These competencies collectively reflect Nepal's commitment to education for democratic citizenship, social justice, peace, and sustainable national development. Aligning national educational goals with international frameworks that emphasize civic

participation, human rights, and lifelong democratic learning (Ministry of Education, 2005; UNESCO, 2015; Government of Nepal, 2015).

This change is a reflection of Nepal's wider democratic transition and the understanding of the importance of education in maintaining democratic institutions.

Democratisation and Civic Education

Growth in Democratic Awareness

The development of democratic awareness is one of civic education's most important contributions.

Students gain knowledge of

The Principles of the Constitution: The principles of the Constitution refer to the fundamental values and ideals upon which a nation is governed. In Nepal, these include **democracy**, republicanism, federalism, secularism, inclusion, social justice, the protection of fundamental rights, the separation of powers, and the rule of law. These principles guide the functioning of the state and safeguard the rights and responsibilities of citizens (Government of Nepal, 2015).

Democratic Rule: Democratic rule is a system of governance in which political authority is derived from the people through free, fair, and periodic elections. It emphasizes citizen participation, majority rule with respect for minority rights, transparency, accountability, political pluralism, and the protection of human rights. Democracy enables citizens to influence public decision-making through elected representatives and active civic engagement (United Nations, 1948).

Systems of Elections: Election systems are the methods used to elect representatives to public office. Nepal has a hybrid electoral system that combines proportional representation (PR) and first-past-the-post (FPTP). This strategy aims to guarantee inclusive participation of women, marginalized communities, and various social groups in legislative bodies in addition to direct representation of constituencies (Government of Nepal, 2015).

Rights of Citizenship: Those who are acknowledged as citizens of a nation are entitled to certain legal, political, civil, and social rights. In Nepal, these rights include equality before the law, freedom of expression, education, employment, property and participation in governance, voting, and access to justice. Alongside these rights, citizens are expected to fulfil responsibilities such as obeying laws, respecting others' rights, and contributing to national development (Government of Nepal, 2015).

The Rule of Law: The rule of law is the principle that everyone, including government **officials**, institutions, and citizens, is subject to and accountable under the law. It ensures equality before the law, independent judicial processes, fair administration of justice, and the protection of fundamental rights. The rule of law prevents the arbitrary exercise of power and promotes justice, stability, and good governance (United Nations, 2004).

Accountability Systems: Accountability systems are mechanisms through which public officials, institutions, and government bodies are held responsible for their actions and decisions. These systems include parliamentary oversight, independent **constitutional** bodies, judicial review, auditing institutions, anti-corruption agencies, free media, civil society organizations, and public participation. Effective accountability promotes transparency, reduces corruption, strengthens public trust, and ensures that government actions serve the public interest (Transparency International, 2021).

The capacity of citizens to assess political procedures and actively engage in government is strengthened by political literacy. Politically aware citizens are more inclined to support democratic institutions and participate in democratic activities, according to numerous studies (Dahl, 1998).

Encouragement of Democratic Principles

Democracy needs democratic values in addition to structures. In order to create responsible citizens who, appreciate inclusivity and actively contribute to a peaceful and equitable society, the Nepalese curriculum promotes fundamental democratic and human principles such tolerance, equality, respect for variety, social justice, human dignity, and cooperation. These principles are

especially crucial in Nepal's multicultural society, where inclusion and respect for one another are essential to social cohesiveness (Dhungana, R., & Dhungel, D., 2015). Civic education promotes long-term democratic stability by instilling democratic values in youth.

Engagement in Politics

The ability and willingness of citizens to engage in public affairs is increased through civic education. Students gain knowledge of important democratic institutions and procedures, such as elections, political parties, local government systems, the creation of public policy, and citizen duties. This fundamental understanding aids students in understanding how governance. Structures operate and how choices are made at various governmental levels. Active civic engagement, such as voting, joining community organisations, participating in civil society events, and contributing to public discourse, is encouraged under this view. Students eventually gain the knowledge and skills necessary to participate responsibly in democratic society through these experiences. It is commonly acknowledged that political engagement is essential to democratic governance. Participating citizens are better equipped to hold leaders responsible and have an impact on policy decisions.

Democratic Responsibility

By educating citizens about transparency, supervision, and constitutional rights, civic education enhances accountability. Understanding governance structures increases the likelihood that citizens will keep an eye on public servants, demand accountability, oppose corruption, and promote good governance, all of which boost institutional efficacy and contribute to democratic consolidation.

Social Mobility and Civic Education

Mobility in Education

One of the main ways that people increase their chances in life is through education. Through the development of critical thinking, communication,

leadership, and problem-solving skills-all of which support academic performance and lifelong learning-civic education improves educational mobility. Throughout their educational journey, students who develop these civic qualities frequently exhibit more self-assurance, active involvement, and enhanced academic accomplishment.

Workplace Mobility

In addition to technical expertise, soft skills are becoming more and more valuable in today's employment markets. In addition to improving students' employability and supporting their career advancement in a variety of professional disciplines, civic education fosters critical qualities like teamwork, communication, ethical decision-making, leadership, and conflict resolution. Civic skills are becoming more and more important types of human capital as Nepal moves toward a knowledge-based economy.

Mobility in politics

Increased involvement and representation in political institutions is referred to as political mobility. By increasing political awareness, fostering civic engagement, cultivating leadership abilities, and boosting self-assurance for active participation in public life, civic education promotes political mobility and empowers people to assume more significant roles in local and political decision-making processes. Student organisations, community organisations, and civic engagement are common places for political leaders to start their careers.

Development of Leadership

One of the most significant results of civic education is the development of leadership skills. In order to make just decisions, serve the public interest, and collaborate effectively with a variety of groups in governance and community development, leaders in democratic societies must possess ethical judgement, civic responsibility, effective communication skills, and strong collaborative abilities. Through student councils, debates, community service,

and participatory learning activities, schools give students the chance to acquire these qualities. Both personal growth and democratic development are aided by these encounters.

Social Inclusion and Civic Education

Significant disparities based on caste, ethnicity, gender, geography, and socioeconomic class have defined Nepal's history. While educational policies specifically highlight the integration of marginalised groups into mainstream national life, thereby fostering a more inclusive and just society, civic education promotes equality, human rights, gender justice, cultural diversity, and social equity. Civic education can give women, Dalits, Indigenous communities, Madhesis, and other historically marginalised groups the information and self-assurance they need to become more involved in public life. Therefore, civic education advances not only democratic goals but also more general ones of social justice and transformation.

Civic Education Challenges of Nepal

Even though Nepal's educational policies and curricula have made great strides toward integrating civic and democratic education, a number of implementation and structural issues still limit its efficacy. These obstacles limit civic education's ability to effectively support socioeconomic mobility and democratisation.

Practice-Policy Disparity

One of the primary problems is the disparity between policy goals and classroom realities. Social justice, inclusivity, human rights, democracy, and participation are all highly valued in curriculum frameworks and educational policy. Nevertheless, real teaching-learning methods frequently fall short of these standards. Even though democratic citizenship is listed as a significant educational goal in the National Curriculum Framework (2005), classroom activities are still mostly examination-focused and teacher-cantered. Because of this, students frequently learn civic principles by heart without acquiring the actual skills required to engage in democracy.

Conventional Pedagogy's Dominance

Textbook-cantered learning, rote memorisation, and lecture-based education are still widely used in many schools. The goals of civic education, which call for discussion, active engagement, critical thinking, and group learning, are incompatible with such methods. Passive learning is insufficient to properly cultivate democratic citizenship. Students must be given the chance to participate in discussions, role-playing, problem-solving exercises, community projects, and collaborative decision-making.

Poor Teacher Readiness

Teachers are essential in fostering civic skills and democratic principles. Nonetheless, a lot of educators have little expertise in participatory teaching techniques, democratic pedagogy, human rights education, and civic education. Teachers may find it difficult to lead conversations on democracy, inclusion, diversity, citizenship, and social justice without sufficient professional development. As a result, civic education may continue to be limited to textbook material rather than evolving into an experiential learning environment.

Schools' Limited Democratic Culture

If schools are to produce democratic citizens, they must operate as democratic institutions. Nonetheless, a lot of schools still use hierarchical administrative structures with little student involvement in decision-making. According to research, democratic learning settings greatly improve civic learning results (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Students are more likely to acquire democratic attitudes and participatory skills when they are exposed to democratic practices in the classroom.

Structural and Social Inequalities

Nepal's educational prospects are nevertheless impacted by persistent disparities based on caste, ethnicity, gender, language, disability, geography, and financial background. Even though civic education encourages equality and inclusivity, the degree to which marginalised groups can profit from educational opportunities may be constrained by larger systemic injustices.

These disparities continue to be major obstacles to social mobility and democratisation.

Limitations on Resources

Civic education materials, reference books, digital resources, library facilities, and qualified staff are all lacking in many schools, which limits the quality of instruction and students' access to all-encompassing learning opportunities. In rural and isolated places, where educational infrastructure is still relatively inadequate, resource constraints are especially severe.

New Democratic Difficulties

Political polarisation, misinformation and disinformation, digital manipulation, dwindling public trust in institutions, identity-based conflicts, and growing intolerance are just a few of the new issues that civic education must address in the modern democratic environment. All of these issues call for increased civic awareness and critical engagement to uphold democratic values. Students may not be sufficiently prepared to handle these new democratic issues by traditional civic education programs.

Policy Consequences and Suggestions

The study's conclusions offer a number of policy recommendations for improving civic education in Nepal.

Developing Democratic Pedagogy

Democratic pedagogy should take precedence over content transmission in educational changes. Discussion-based learning, debates and deliberation, problem-solving exercises, experiential learning, service-learning projects, and collaborative learning should all be promoted in schools because these pedagogical strategies encourage students' active participation, critical thinking, and practical understanding. These methods encourage democratic engagement and critical thinking.

Improving the Professional Development of Teachers

In order to ensure that instructors are prepared to handle a variety of classroom demands, comprehensive teacher training programs should be

created to enhance their proficiency in civic education, human rights education, democratic teaching techniques, conflict resolution, peace education, and inclusive pedagogy. In this sense, educators ought to be acknowledged as important agents of democratic change who are vital in producing citizens who are knowledgeable, accountable, and inclusive.

Tailoring Civic Education

It is important to contextualise civic education to take into account community experiences and local realities. Local governance structures, indigenous knowledge systems, community participation practices, and local democratic experiences should all be incorporated into curricula by curriculum developers. This kind of localisation can improve student engagement and increase relevance by tying learning to students' actual social and political contexts.

Encouraging Democratic School Administration

Since children learn democracy best when they encounter it first hand in their learning environment, schools should set an example of democratic ideals through student councils, inclusive governance structures, participatory decision-making, and transparent administrative procedures.

Including Education on Digital Citizenship

Civic education should incorporate media literacy, information verification, digital ethics, online civic engagement, and responsible social media use due to the increasing impact of digital technologies. In the twenty-first century, digital citizenship has become a crucial part of participating democracy.

Enhancing Civic Engagement Initiatives

Opportunities for community service, volunteerism, civic projects, youth leadership programs, and community-based research should be increased in schools and colleges since these activities improve students' civic competency and sense of social responsibility.

Promoting Civic Education That Is Inclusive

Women, Dalits, indigenous nationalities, Madhesi communities, people with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged populations are among the

historically marginalised groups that should receive particular attention because inclusive civic education can greatly advance social justice and equitable social mobility by guaranteeing equal access to educational opportunities and civic engagement.

Consequences for Social Mobility and Democratisation

The study's conclusions have significant ramifications for comprehending Nepal's democratic evolution.

First, civic education promotes democratization by producing knowledgeable individuals with the abilities and information required to engage in democracy. People learn about constitutional rights, accountability systems, and governmental procedures through civic education. Second, by improving civic competencies, leadership qualities, communication skills, and political consciousness, civic education promotes social mobility. People can more successfully engage in political, social, economic, and educational institutions thanks to these abilities.

Third, by encouraging tolerance, diversity, inclusion, and respect for one another, civic education fosters social cohesion. In Nepal's multicultural and multi-ethnic, society, these discoveries are crucial. Fourth, civic education facilitates communication between citizens and democratic institutions. When people are aware of and actively participate in public institutions, democratic regimes work best. Lastly, civic education encourages responsible governance and gives citizens the ability to take part in the solution of societal problems, both of which support sustainable development.

Conclusion

This study looked at civic education's role in Nepal's democratization and socioeconomic mobility. The study shows that civic education is an essential tool for promoting democratic citizenship, political engagement, social inclusion, and social development by drawing on educational policies, curriculum frameworks, and academic literature. Civic education's historical development in Nepal is a reflection of the nation's larger political changes. Although citizenship and national identification were the main focus of early educational projects, post-1990 changes greatly broadened the scope of civic

education to encompass democracy, human rights, social justice, diversity, constitutional literacy, and active citizenship.

The results show that civic education promotes democratic consciousness, civic duty, political engagement, constitutional comprehension, and accountability all of which are beneficial to democratization. By improving educational possibilities, civic competencies, leadership development, and political empowerment, civic education also promotes social mobility. But there are still a lot of obstacles to overcome, such as gaps in implementation, outdated teaching methods, poor teacher preparation, a lack of democratic school cultures, and enduring social injustices. Comprehensive educational changes that put inclusive participation, curriculum localization, teacher development, and democratic pedagogy first are needed to address these issues.

Civic education will continue to be an essential tool for creating knowledgeable individuals who can uphold democratic institutions and advance social justice as Nepal continues its democratic journey. The ability of educational institutions to produce capable, accountable, and engaged citizens is just as important to Nepal's democracy's survival as political leadership and constitutional requirements. In this sense, civic education ought to be seen as a revolutionary process that concurrently fosters democratization, social mobility, and national development rather than just a subject for the curriculum.

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