

Intrinsic Motivational Factors and Enrollment of Adult Women at School Leveldoi: <https://doi.org/10.3126/skmj.v4i1.90297>**Babita Maharjan**¹**Abstract**

Education is the process of the facilitation, learning or the gaining of knowledge, skill values beliefs and habits. Education plays a vital role in the shaping individual, societies, and nations. So, Adult education is important those who dropout the education in different levels. Different motivational factors motive them to rejoin the school in different levels. This research explores the challenges faced by the adult students in re-entering formal education and to analyze the key motivational factors motivating adult students to pursue further education. This study is based on qualitative method. In-depth interview was conducted with 8 participants who are studying in different grades. Interpretative research paradigm and exploratory research design are used to collect the information. This study highlights the intrinsic motivational factors like Desire for personal growth and development, Self-fulfillment and achievement, Family encouragement, and Self-Efficacy and Confidence to enroll in the school in various levels.

Keywords: *Rejoin, school education, challenges, Motivations, values***Introduction**

Education is the process of facilitation, learning or the gaining of knowledge, skill, values, beliefs and habits. Education enhances the personal and professional development and prepare individual to participate effectively in society. Education plays a crucial role in shaping individual, societies and nations. Its importance cannot be overstated as it has a significant impact on personal development, economic growth, social progress, empowerment global development and overall wellbeing. It is a fundamental human right, enshrined in international frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals. In its 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the United Nations stresses how important education is for fostering the full growth of the human person and protecting human rights and freedoms (Sahani, 2024).

Education helps in overall development of the people. It helps to change their individual, social and nations. Although, many of people are compulsion to dropout the education in different

¹ Maharjan is a faculty of Sahid Smarak College, Kirtipur, Kathmandu Nepal, email: babitamaharjan42@gmail.com

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levels. Especially girls have many social, financial, and academic challenges which makes them to dropout (Maharjan, 2024).

The trend was that, many people enrolled in school level and half of them were dropout the school due to above challenges. In Nepal, I noticed that, many adult women struggled to rejoin their studies. This lack of motivation is often influenced by factors such as previous educational experiences, societal perceptions, family support, and individual psychological barriers. Understanding these motivational factors is serious to providing adequate support and creating environments that can short-term successful educational outcomes for this demographic. Intrinsic motivational factors that motivate adult women to rejoin school arise from their internal desires, values, and personal goals. These factors are powerful because they come from within and are linked to self-growth, dignity, and life improvement. Many adult women return to school to improve themselves, gain knowledge, and become more confident and independent. Completing unfinished education gives a strong feeling of pride and accomplishment, especially after overcoming social or personal barriers. Education helps adult women feel capable, respected, and valued, motivating them to continue learning. Education provides a sense of control over life decisions, finances, and future goals, motivating women to rejoin school. Some women return to school because they enjoy learning new skills, reading, writing, or understanding the society better. Adult women are intrinsically motivated to set a positive example for their children, family members, and community. Education gives meaning to life by helping women fulfill personal dreams that were previously interrupted. The joy of learning, participating in class, and achieving goals motivates women beyond external rewards. Intrinsic motivational factors motivate adult women to rejoin school because education fulfills their inner needs for growth, confidence, empowerment, and self-worth. These internal drives often sustain long-term commitment to learning despite challenges.

Without addressing the motivational barriers, adult learners may not fully engage with educational opportunities, potentially leading to high dropout rates and limited career development. The trend was that, many people enrolled in school level and half of them were dropout the school due to different reasons. So, to motivate to the adult students to rejoin the schools and colleges, there are Tribhuvan University, community colleges, private colleges, secondary schools and several public and private schools are here in Kirtipur. Even though, there are several +2 level and community colleges in Kirtipur

So, to motivate to the adult students to rejoin the schools and colleges, there are Tribhuvan University, community colleges, private colleges, secondary schools and several public and private schools are there in Kirtipur. Kirtipur is known as good destination for education too because many community schools and colleges are established where people get quality

education. Contextually, some of the Community Educational Institutions provide education, only for the female adult like *Mahila Vidhyalaya* (women school) where female adult can join for formal education in any school level and *Khulla Bidhyalaya* (open school) and Sahid Smarak College (established on the name of four martyrs of Kirtipur) where any adult student can join the formal classes. *Mahila Vidhyalaya* is only for adult women which are opened in the day time and teach only three hours. Kirtipur is a hub for tourism development. Because, there are any famous temples like Umamaheshwar Temple which is located in the highest place of Kirtipur, Baghabhairab Temple where the main idol of the god is in the form of angry tiger have a unique story of origine, Bishnu Devi Temple, Indrayani temple, Saraswoti temple, Lowndegal temple, Jalbinayak, Manjushree, Boudha Stupa, Boudha Bihar Longest bridge (*Jhulenge Pul*), can see the view of many mountains and so on (Maharjan, 2024).

Even though, there are several +2 level and community colleges in Kirtipur. An all-around development would result from the tough search of adult education. In order to fulfill the nation's ever-increasing demands and help it reach the Millennium Development and Education for All goals, adult education should be repositioned (Hussain, 2013). These processes help people who are considered adults by their society develop their skills, expand their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, and change their attitudes or behaviors in the dual perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic, and cultural development (Onyenemezu, 2012). If the majority of the women in the society have benefited from this degree of knowledge, the changes are typically rather noticeable. A woman with some primary education is less fertile than an uneducated woman, but her children are healthier. Unfortunately, female literacy does not surpass 30% in any of Nepal's five development regions (Mathema, 2007).

Nepal has one of the newest advanced educational systems in the world. When Nepal became a "new nation" in 1951 with the collapse of the Rana monarchy, there were only 9,000 primary school students and 1,700 secondary school students. Schools and a little more than a hundred undergraduate institutions. The university didn't exist and just 5% of adults received any kind of schooling (Mathema, 2007). However, special adult students those with physical cognitive or socio emotional challenges often face unique barriers in accessing and pursuing further education.

The concept of transformative learning theory of Mezirow's (1970) that focuses on the adult education and young adult learning which have been applied as guidelines of the study. With the application of these theories, my point here is, to show the ideas that learners can adjust their thinking based on new information. So, my study looks upon the concept of this theory.

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Learning is a continuous, lifelong process. Maintaining a high level of motivation is essential. The energy that drives pupils to overcome all difficult and challenging situations is known as motivation. There is a lot of room to accommodate motivation itself. Therefore, a number of motivational theories that are relevant to the learning domain are highlighted in this study (Gopal, et. al, 2017). Intrinsic motivation occurs when a learner wants to accomplish something because she truly wants it, finds satisfaction in it, or recognizes its value (Mahat, 2022). One of the main reasons women attended higher education was their love of learning. The ambition to contribute to society is another reason why women pursue higher education (Karki, 2013).

The girls thought they were on equality with boys in terms of their ability to make money. However, the head of the home had the final say in all decisions, regardless of their wishes (Sharma, 2022). Maslow's hierarchy of needs places self-actualization needs at the top and includes peak experience, self-fulfillment, personal growth, and realizing one's potential. According to psychologist Maslow (1943, 1954), human motivation stems from people's desire for change and fulfillment via personal development. People who are fulfilled and achieving everything they can are said to be self-actualized (McLeod, 2007). The special adult students, the desire for the education may be linked to needs gaining confidence through education or self-actualization.

The socially excluded, marginalized, and unreachable populations are among the abandonment (Devkota & Bagale, 2015). In this respect, the government of Nepal, along with various NGOs and educational institutions are working together to provide scholarship and financial support to deserving students. Additionally, initiatives are being taken to improve career counseling services, enhance educational infrastructure and promote practical learning approaches to make educational more engaging and relevant.

Karki (2016) 'Educating 'A Girl Is like Repairing Someone Else's Wall': Assessing Women's Motivation for Attending Secondary School in Kathmandu, Nepal' examine by talking about the state of women's education around the world. Researcher go into further detail about the gender gap in education, the causes of women dropping out, the reasons why women go back to school, and the reasons why women in poor countries enroll in adult literacy programs. The top powerful reasons for adult learners in higher education, based on research of 203 university students. These include curriculum quality, instructional quality, relevance and pragmatism, self-directedness, a supportive learning environment, progressive assessment and prompt feedback, engaging classrooms and efficient management techniques, and good academic advising procedures. According to these elements are essential for improving or generating students' willpower to succeed in higher education (Sogunro, 2015).

This study tried to explore the motivational factors that motivate to adult learners who dropout the school and rejoin after long gap.

Methods

In this research qualitative research design was used and eight participants were used for in-depth interview through the interview guidelines. The data was collected by primary source. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with participants to explore phenomenon with adult special students. They responded their interview guidelines. The participants were only adult women learners who are getting formal education after long gap. They are studying in grade one to twelve. The sample was selected by convenient sampling method. This study was conducted only in the schools and colleges of kirtipur Nagaar Palika which helped to examine the influence of intrinsic motivational factors on the enrollment of adult women in school education and to analyze the mediating role of self-efficacy, educational aspiration, and perceived value of education in the relationship between motivational factors and school education enrollment.

Results

Intrinsic Motivational Factors on the Enrollment of Adult Women

Self-belief, empowerment, and personal fulfillment are examples of intrinsic motivation that are crucial in motivating adult women to pursue higher education. Even in the face of external obstacles, these internal elements frequently maintain perseverance.

Desire for personal growth and development

Strong desire for personal growth and development motivates every people to enroll the school. If people continue their education, it will allow them to strengthen in their academic skills, expand their knowledge, and better prepare for future opportunities. So,

The participant P1 who has got full support from her family and said:

It makes me feel more confident. Gaining knowledge gives a sense of control and capability. Self-improvement increases self-confidence and personal value. It helps me reach my goals. It's a lifelong process. It keeps me mentally sharp. Especially common among older adults; intellectual engagement is seen as a way to prevent cognitive decline. (Interview, 2025)

In this sense, the psychological, personal, and lifelong importance of gaining knowledge and engaging in self-improvement. Learning is represented as a powerful source of self-confidence. When individuals acquire new knowledge or skills, they develop a stronger belief in their own abilities. This confidence stems from a sense of control and capability, as

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understanding the world better reduces uncertainty and increases one's ability to make informed decisions. Self-improvement is also closely linked to personal value and identity. By continuously developing oneself, a person reinforces their sense of worth and purpose. Knowledge becomes not just a tool for practical success, but a marker of personal growth, helping individuals move closer to their goals.

Learning is a lifelong process, not limited to formal education or early life stages. Continuous intellectual engagement keeps the mind active and adaptable, contributing to mental sharpness. This is especially significant among older adults, for whom learning and intellectual stimulation are often viewed as protective factors against cognitive decline. Engaging the brain through reading, problem-solving, or acquiring new skills supports mental health and promotes a sense of independence and relevance later in life.

So that, gaining knowledge supports confidence, personal growth, goal achievement, and cognitive well-being across the lifespan. Learning is presented as a vital, ongoing investment in both the mind and the self.

If someone wants to shift careers or enter a new field, additional education can provide the foundation needed to make that move effectively. For the family, society, and nation to have a bright future, women's empowerment is crucial. Encouraging women to be self-sufficient, financially independent, self-assured, capable of handling any challenging circumstance, and actively involved in a variety of social-political development initiatives would constitute empowerment of women (Baskey & et. all).

P8 is a housewife and has two children. They both are in an abroad. In reference to the importance for the continuation of her further studies in her personal life, she said:

I am 56 years old woman. I have a son and a daughter. Both my children are in aboard, Australia. They have been staying there for many years. They call me there to visit. So, before going there, I thought, if I learn at least some words of English then it makes me easy to go there. Even after I go there, I can communicate in English easily with the foreigners and adjust accordingly. (Interview, 2025)

The statement reflects how learning, particularly language learning, is closely connected to personal motivation, family relationships, and adaptability in later adulthood. As a 56-year-old woman with children living abroad, the desire to learn English emerges from both emotional and practical needs. Wanting to communicate more effectively while visiting Australia shows a strong sense of responsibility, independence, and willingness to step outside one's comfort zone.

The motivation to learn English is deeply rooted in the wish to maintain close relationships with her son and daughter. Being able to understand and speak the language of the country

where they live reduces feelings of dependence and isolation. It empowers her to navigate daily situations confidently, whether interacting with foreigners, managing travel, or adjusting to a new cultural environment. This situation also highlights the importance of lifelong learning, especially in later stages of life. Despite age-related challenges that may come with learning a new language, the willingness to acquire even Basic English words demonstrates resilience and adaptability. Learning becomes a tool for self-confidence, helping her feel more prepared, secure, and capable in an unfamiliar setting.

So, learning is not only about gaining knowledge but also about social integration, emotional connection, and personal empowerment. It shows that education and self-improvement have no age limit and that motivation driven by family and real-life needs can make learning meaningful and effective. Completing further education can enhance self-confidence and professional credibility, which are critical for leadership or specialized roles.

Self-fulfillment and achievement

Self-fulfillment and achievement serve as significant motivational factors influencing individuals to rejoin the school. Many learners rejoin to education after dropout, to fulfill their desire, achieve personal goals, and attain a sense of purpose. Rejoining school provides an opportunity to complete unfinished educational goals, overcome past limitations, and achieve personal satisfaction. This motivation is often linked to increased self-esteem, and the fulfillment that comes from achieving meaningful academic milestones.

According to participant P5 who is working in the Newari restaurant share her thought:

"I always wanted to be more than just an employee. In my workplace, I want to lead, manage, and make decisions according to necessity. As per my observation, education is the key to that door. I'm going back to school so I can stop depending on others. I want to earn my own income and build a career that makes me proud. I've worked hard all my life, but without a degree, I've been overlooked. Now, I'm giving myself the qualification to match my skills" (Interview, 2025).

The statement reflects a strong desire for professional growth, independence, and self-recognition. The speaker expresses dissatisfaction with being limited to the role of "just an employee" and aspires to move into positions of leadership, management, and decision-making. This ambition indicates a clear awareness of personal potential and a readiness to take responsibility beyond routine tasks. Education is identified as a crucial gateway to opportunity and authority in the workplace. Through observation and experience, the speaker has recognized that skills alone are often not enough; formal qualifications are frequently required to gain trust, promotions, and leadership roles. Returning to school symbolizes a deliberate effort to bridge the gap between

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existing abilities and institutional expectations. The desire to stop depending on others” highlights the importance of economic and professional independence. Earning one’s own income and building a career that inspires pride reflects a deep need for self-respect and long-term security. It also suggests a shift from survival-based work toward purpose-driven employment. (Interview, 2025)

It is extremely true that returning to school is to gain the education and qualifications which is needed to being an employee. It is directly connected with being independent with financial issues and taking leadership in the career. After years of hard work, even if it may have often been overlooked, it actually helps to determine to earn own income, build a career. This will make the learners feel proud in any point of their lifetime

Internal sense of empowerment

An internal sense of empowerment refers to a person’s belief in their own ability to make choices, take control of their life, and influence outcomes. It is a deeply personal source of strength that comes from within rather than from external validation or circumstances. This inner empowerment plays a crucial role in personal, professional, and emotional well-being. When individuals trust their own abilities and judgment, they are more willing to take initiative, face challenges, and step outside their comfort zone. This confidence allows them to pursue goals without excessive fear of failure or dependence on others’ approval. Internal empowerment strengthens flexibility. A strong inner sense of empowerment helps people view difficulties as opportunities for learning rather than as personal failures. It encourages persistence, adaptability, and problem-solving. An internal sense of empowerment is fundamental because it shapes how individuals see themselves and engage with the world. It is the foundation for confidence, resilience, independence, and meaningful achievement.

Educated women contribute to more stable, fair, and democratic societies. Education empowers women to engage in political life because it raises awareness and confidence. Education strengthens women’s ability to influence political decisions and become leaders. Educated women contribute to more stable, fair, and democratic societies.

Another quote of the participant P4 who is 48 years old said:

I missed my chance. But this is my time for study. I’m not starting over. I’m continuing my story. Going back to school is my way of changing my life. I’m not just doing this only for me. I’m doing it for every woman who thought it was too late. (Interview, 2025).

The statement expresses a powerful sense of renewal, resilience, and purpose. Rather than viewing past missed opportunities as failure, the speaker reframes education as a continuation of her life journey, emphasizing growth rather than starting over. Returning to study

symbolizes personal transformation and the reclaiming of agency. The message also carries a strong collective and inspirational dimension. By pursuing education not only for herself but for other women who feel it is “too late,” the speaker challenges age-related and gender-based limitations. Overall, the statement highlights education as an act of empowerment, hope, and social example, proving that self-improvement and change are possible at any stage of life.

Women's education is crucial to the progress of society. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "If you educate a woman, you educate a whole family, but if you educate a man, you educate an individual." Mother India is empowered when women are empowered (Jaysawal & Saha, 2023).

When focusing on professional motivations, the voices of women rejoining school reflect ambition, unfulfilled potential, and a drive to claim their rightful place in the workforce. These voices are confident, forward-looking, and purpose-driven. Here's how their voices might sound when centered on professional growth.

Self-Efficiency and Confidence

We should try harder and don't give up quickly. It will increase self-efficiency. If we see mistakes as part of learning, it will not prove that we are “bad” at a subject. It will develop our confident level. So, self-efficiency and confident is the motivational factor for the participant.

One of the participants (P2), who is getting higher secondary education, elaborate on her experience and future planning:

I already know the basic skills on how to read and write properly but if I acquire higher studies, I can keep my own business records. Actually, I want to open a small shop and operate my own business, and education will help me understand finance and banking. In future, after I get married, I don't want to ask my husband for every small expense. If I earn, I can buy what I need for myself and my family. (Interview, 2025)

The statement highlights education as a tool for economic independence and self-reliance. While the speaker already possesses basic literacy skills, higher education is seen as essential for managing business records and understanding finance and banking. This shows a practical, goal-oriented approach to learning.

The desire to run a small business and contribute financially reflects a strong sense of empowerment and responsibility. By wanting to avoid dependence on a future husband for everyday expenses, the speaker emphasizes dignity, autonomy, and equality within family life. Overall, the statement interprets education as a pathway to confidence, financial security, and independent decision-making.

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Basic education helps women better manage money, understand profit/loss, and gain confidence in handling finances for small enterprises. Financial independence is a major motivator. Many adult women see education as a stepping stone to becoming less financially dependent on their spouse or family. Women's control over resources, agency, and accomplishments can be used to assess their economic potential. Women's financial independence is also influenced by their access to microfinance services. Additionally, it could aid in increasing their purchasing power. In the past, women's education has been viewed as extremely hazardous and threatening (Jaysawal & Saha, 2023).

Continuing education can reduce future unemployment risks, minimizing long-term financial instability. Some employers offer tuition assistance or pay for continuing education, making it financially smart to return to school while employed. Education can prepare individuals with skills to start or grow a business, increasing financial independence.

Confidence in academic abilities

Confidence in academic abilities is essential for effective learning and long-term success. When individuals believe in their capacity to understand, learn, and perform academically, they are more likely to engage actively in their studies and persist through challenges. Academic confidence increases motivation and participation. Students who trust their abilities are more willing to ask questions, share ideas, and take on difficult tasks. This active involvement leads to deeper understanding and better learning outcomes. Confidence in academic abilities reduces fear and anxiety. When students feel capable, they experience less stress during exams, presentations, and assessments, allowing them to perform closer to their true potential as well as academic confidence fosters independence and self-directed learning. Confident learners are more likely to manage their time effectively, seek resources, and take responsibility for their progress.

The participants feel that getting education develop more confident to treat with family and society. As well as academic qualities help in carrier success and improve in employment opportunities. According to the participant P1 who is studying in grade 12 has said:

I am adult woman. I dropout the school after SLC. I was eager to continue my studies. But I could not because of my poor financial condition. I got married at the age of 21 Years. Then, I got children. I spent my all the time for caring my children and family. Now, my children are grown up. I had more leisure time. So, I want to utilize this leisure time. I thought, I could gain self-confidence & respect in family and society, even I would get knowledge. I rejoined the school. (Interview, 2025)

The statement reflects a journey of delayed aspirations and renewed self-empowerment. Early life circumstances—financial hardship, marriage, and family

responsibilities prevented the speaker from continuing her education, highlighting common social and economic barriers for women. Now, with grown children and more leisure time, she chooses to pursue learning as a means of personal growth, self-confidence, and social respect. Returning to school is not just about gaining knowledge, but also reclaiming her identity and independence. It illustrates that education can be a lifelong opportunity and a source of empowerment, regardless of age or past obstacles. This study can be implemented in Local Government of education division, to advocate for educational access, flexible timing for classes, can be cited by future students and researchers as same as add to the academic body of knowledge on adult learning and gender education in Nepal.

Discussion

The main finding of this study highlights that, the intrinsic motivational factors like Desire for personal growth and development, Self-fulfillment and achievement, Family encouragement, and Self-Efficacy and Confidence to enroll in the school in various levels. Adult learners can gain new qualifications or update old ones to meet modern job requirements. It aids them change careers or start small businesses with more knowledge and confidence. It supports in reading, writing, speaking, and problem-solving skills. Learners become more confident in expressing their opinions and making decisions in personal and professional life. It helps in community development and support others' in their learning and empowers the women. It builds friendships. The school supportive environment reduces stress, loneliness, and isolation, especially for women who may have spent years at home.

The findings will help educators and policymakers develop more inclusive and effective programs, ultimately improving adult learners' educational experiences and outcomes. Through this research we hope to bridge existing gaps and foster a more accessible and supportive learning environment for adults pursuing education at various stages of life.

Conclusion

Education plays a crucial role in the development of individual, social, and economic development. It impacts on awareness, employment, and national progress. In our society, many of the people especially, girls dropout the school in different levels due to various reasons. Adult students face many challenges to enroll in school. They do not get support from their family, society but they show their interest in the study. Therefore, this study explored various factors which motivate to adult women to enroll in the various levels of the school. Desire for personal growth and development, self-fulfillment and achievement, internal sense of empowerment motives to enrollment in the school. Intrinsic motivational factors are the internal drives that encourage a person to engage in an activity for their own satisfaction or personal reward, rather than for external rewards like money, praise, or grades. In other words, the motivation comes from within the individual, not from outside influences. Motivation

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comes from wanting to improve yourself, gain skills, or achieve mastery. Activities are pursued because they are interesting or meaningful, not because someone else demands it. So, intrinsic motivation is about doing something because it is inherently rewarding, not because of external pressures or rewards.

So, this research can have several significances in the context of adult learners who dropout the school and those who are interested to rejoin after long gap. This study can help to identify the challenging and motivational factors to continue the education level of adult women and to promote education level of the adult women and raising community empowerment. As well as it can address the educational challenges faced by the adult women.

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