

# Beyond the School Boundaries and Formal Curriculum

## *Parental Involvement in Children's Learning in the Perspectives of Teachers*

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**Abstract:** Children's learning extends beyond the boundaries of the school. They spend a significant portion of their time at home with their families and parents, acquiring knowledge, attitude and skills - both formally and informally - through parental interactions. Parental involvement is widely recognized as an important aspect in fostering children's success. A number of studies have indicated that such involvement enhances children's academic performance, supports their emotional growth, and positively influences their overall learning process. Nearly 70 years ago, the Nepal National Education Planning Commission had already recommended the necessity of parental involvement in children's learning. However, it appears that this recommendation has not been effectively implemented to date. Given this, parental involvement in children's learning is essential. Despite its importance, there appears to be a lack of sufficient studies on this topic. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to explore how basic school teachers in Nepal, perceive parental involvement in children's learning. This study is grounded in a general qualitative method. It was conducted in three community basic schools located in the Sindhupalchok district, Bagmati province, Nepal. Nine basic school teachers from these schools were selected as participants through a convenient sampling procedure. Essential information for the study were generated through in-depth interviews. The findings of this study suggest that parents have not been able to engage actively in their children's learning. Several underlying factors contribute to the inconsistent and limited involvement of parents in their children's learning. A significant finding of this study is the critical role of sociocultural factors in shaping parental involvement in their children's learning. The traditions, cultural norms, values, and practices prevalent in a society profoundly influence parents' attitudes toward education. Moreover, these sociocultural dimensions also shape parents' perceptions of their children's learning processes. The study highlights the complex interplay of these influences and their potential implications for enhancing parental engagement in educational settings. Thus, alongside other influencing factors, the economic and sociocultural characteristics of a society are pivotal in determining parental perspectives on their children's education and learning engagement.

## CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

In Nepal, it is widely acknowledged that parents have played an important role in their children's learning since ancient times. Historically, education systems such as Gurukul, Devkul, Rishikul, and Pitrikul were common. Among these, the Pitrikul system involved fathers or ancestors teaching their descendants about their family professions, and this was referred to as Pitrikul education (Shah, 2024). Even today, it is frequently seen that children follow the professions of their ancestors. In such cases, parents take on the responsibility of providing their children with the knowledge and skills necessary for these professions (Shah, 2024). In this type of education, the role of parents in teaching is more prominent than that of formal schools.

There is no doubt that parents play a significant role in the teaching and learning of children. Moreover, the home is often regarded as the first school, and the mother as the first teacher. Parents inherently show an active interest in their children's education (Shah, 2013). To ensure that education receives the attention it deserves, parents and basic school teachers must collaborate effectively (NNEPC, 1956, p. 265). Basic school teachers can provide valuable support to parents in addressing specific challenges faced by their children. Therefore, a coordinated partnership between parents and basic school teachers is essential for achieving the best outcomes in a child's education (NNEPC, 1956, p.266). Approximately 70 years ago, the Nepal National Education Planning Commission of 1956 emphasized the significant role of parents in children's learning, stating:

"Once or twice a year, a Parents' Day should be organized where all parents can visit the classroom to observe their children learning. Regular classes continue, giving parents an opportunity to see how teaching is conducted. (Yes, parents are welcome at other times as well, but these are special days.) On such occasions, children can present activities showcasing their talents to parents and the community. These activities help parents better understand the school's environment and foster strong collaboration between parents and the school". (NNEPC, 1956, p. 266).

The statement highlights the recognition of parents' vital role in education by various commissions established in Nepal over the years. These commissions have acknowledged that parents significantly contribute to their children's learning and overall educational development (Shah, 2019a). Specifically, the All-round National Education Committee (ARNEC) of 1961 emphasized this point as well. It appears that this committee not only acknowledged the importance of parents in teaching and learning but also made specific recommendations or statements reinforcing their active involvement (Shah, 2020b). By doing so,

ARNEC-1961 underscored the partnership between formal education systems and the familial support system in nurturing holistic learning experiences for children. If the continuation of the statement is available, it likely includes further insights or recommendations regarding how parental roles should be integrated or supported within the educational framework (Shah, 2019b). The All-round National Education Committee of 1961 also appears to place great emphasis on the role of parents in teaching and learning. This committee (ARNEC-1961) has further stated:

"Educational theorists assert that education commences not merely after birth but also prior to it. This assertion is grounded in the understanding that the behaviors, thoughts, emotions, and actions of parents, as well as those with whom they engage, exert a profound and undeniable influence on the child during the prenatal stage". (ARNEC, 1961, p. 13)

The collaboration between parents and basic school teachers is crucial for the overall development of children. The role of basic school teachers in fostering children's growth is most effective when there is mutual cooperation between parents and basic school teachers. In the absence of such collaboration, or when the values of home and school conflict, education can become not only ineffective but potentially harmful. The committee clearly states the significant role of parents in children's learning under the heading "Conference of Parents and Basic school teachers ". ARNEC, (1961) writes:

"Therefore, it is recommended that parents and basic school teachers engage in discussions about the child's progress at least once a month. Additionally, parents are occasionally encouraged to participate in the school's educational programs and activities". (p. 13)

In Nepal, school basic school teachers often view parental involvement as a critical factor in enhancing children's academic performance and holistic development. Many basic school teachers believe that active parental participation, such as attending parent-teacher meetings, assisting with homework, and encouraging regular attendance, directly impacts a child's success. However, they also note challenges, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas, where parents may lack time, education, or awareness to actively engage in their child's education (Shah, 2013; Maharjan, 2016). This disconnect often leads to students struggling academically and emotionally, highlighting the need for schools to raise awareness and facilitate programs that encourage parents to play an active role.

Despite their acknowledgment of its importance, Nepali basic school teachers sometimes encounter excessive parental interference stemming from cultural practices, which can undermine their professional autonomy. Basic school teachers emphasize the need for balanced collaboration, where parents support their child's education without undermining the teacher's authority or expertise. Effective communication between basic school teachers and parents is crucial to bridge these gaps (Shah, 2019b). Encouraging parents to understand their supportive role, while respecting the professional boundaries of educators, can create a nurturing environment for students' learning and

growth. However, the socioeconomic status of rural Nepal is a major influencing factor; families struggle to support their children with enough time and resources (Shah, 2019a). Basic school teachers play an essential function in encouraging or discouraging parental involvement. It may fail as a result of basic school teachers' competence and disgusting attitudes.

Previous studies have shown that collaboration between parents and teachers best serves children's educational interests (Adams et al., 2018). Their combined efforts benefit both the home and the school in numerous ways. For instance, effective collaboration enhances families' self-esteem, fosters trust, improves the school's credibility, and ultimately contributes to children's academic success (Epstein, 2018). However, in Nepal, the concept of parental involvement is not widely acknowledged due to parents' financial limitations and schools' lack of motivation. Many developing countries, including Nepal, lack policies that promote parental involvement in children's education (Pobbii, 2020). As a result, basic school teachers are often perceived as weak and passive in addressing children's learning challenges and encouraging parental involvement (Shah, 2019c).

Parental involvement is a crucial factor in enhancing children's educational outcomes and fostering academic success. Basic school teachers frequently observe that when parents actively engage in their children's learning process, it positively impacts students' motivation, behavior, and overall performance (Epstein, 2011). Effective collaboration between educators and parents creates a supportive environment that enables students to thrive both academically and socially (Shah, 2019d). Parental involvement significantly shapes teachers' perceptions of student success. Strong parent-teacher partnerships improve classroom outcomes and contribute to holistic development (Epstein, 2001). Teachers view parental involvement as essential for student success, recognizing it as a factor that enhances academic performance, encourages positive behavior, and strengthens home-school collaboration. Engaged parents are seen as key collaborators in supporting student development both at home and in school (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Some parents perceive themselves as their children's primary educators and may feel unable to step into this role once their children enter school (Kalayci & Ergül, 2020). The academic success and progress of students cannot be achieved solely through the efforts of elementary school teachers. Parental involvement plays a vital role in supporting students' academic success, as it can enhance their learning experiences and improve their school performance (Beard, 2017). However, teachers and parents may hold differing views on parental involvement. According to Gokturk and Dinçkal (2017), parental involvement is characterized by parents helping with homework or projects at home and expressing a desire to be engaged in decisions about their children's education. This difference in perspectives between teachers and parents can hinder the effectiveness of their collaboration (Gokturk & Dinçkal, 2017). Pakter and Chen's (2013) study further emphasizes the importance of raising teachers' awareness of the value of parental involvement. Their research

suggests that teachers who recognize the significance of parental engagement employ various strategies, such as phone calls, emails, newsletters, and creating websites to allow parents to track their children's progress.

Research indicates that children's learning can significantly benefit from parental cooperation and involvement, as well as communication between families and schools. Such partnerships benefit children, families, and schools by enhancing children's learning, allowing parents to monitor their children's education, and supporting teachers in the classroom (Shah, 2019d; Young, Young, & Hamilton, 2013; Olender et al., 2015). Studies suggest that teachers' views are crucial for understanding various parental involvement practices (Kalayci & Ergul, 2020; Gulevska, 2018). Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of research, which is primarily drawn from developed countries, by investigating basic school teachers' perspectives on parental involvement in the context of rural schools in Nepal.

Basic school teachers' perspectives on home-school collaboration vary according to the cultural context in which they operate (Haem & Griswold, 2017). These perspectives are crucial when it comes to encouraging or discouraging parental involvement in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey, 2002). For example, teachers are more likely to encourage parental involvement when they hold parents in high regard (Yulianti, 2020). Active parental engagement can even mitigate some of the negative effects associated with living in underprivileged communities and having lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Ali et al., 2022). However, when basic school teachers exhibit inappropriate or insensitive behavior, it demotivates parents, leading to a breakdown in communication and a mutual allocation of responsibility, especially when students appear to be learning passively (Ozmen et al., 2016). Teachers' views on parental involvement are closely linked to their professionalism. Professionally competent teachers are more likely to adopt welcoming gestures and foster positive relationships with parents (Shah, 2020b; Teder & Mikser, 2019). Conversely, those who are inadequately prepared to interact with parents fail to establish strong connections, which negatively impacts the relationship between home and school.

Research on parental involvement indicates that the degree of involvement varies, with these differences primarily influenced by the social and cultural backgrounds of the parents (Bower & Griffin, 2011). Furthermore, Giraldo-Garcia and Roy (2018) referenced a study demonstrating that cultural differences significantly impact parental involvement, particularly in terms of enhancing social and emotional development. Similarly, Tan, Lyu, and Pen (2020) highlighted that parental involvement has a considerable influence on students' achievements, with socioeconomic background playing a key role. In Nepal, factors such as poverty and parents' low educational levels hinder parental involvement, which negatively affects their children's learning progress (Shah, 2019a). In rural areas, parents who lack financial resources and education often perceive themselves as neglectful and are less inclined to engage in their children's education (Basnyat, 2023). Additionally, the learning

environment in rural basic schools - including infrastructure, teaching quality, and overall motivation - combined with the challenging living conditions of parents, often discourages them from guiding their children's learning.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The major objective of the present study is:

- To explore basic school teachers' perceptions of parental involvement in children's learning.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The major research questions are given below:

- How do basic school teachers perceive parental involvement in their children's learning process? and
- What are the challenges experienced by basic school teacher in fostering meaningful parental involvement in the learning processes of their students?

## METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The present study employed a qualitative research design to explore the perspectives of basic school teachers on parental involvement. Qualitative approaches are particularly well-suited for examining individuals' experiences and viewpoints (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). A thematic interview method was utilized to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' perspectives on parental involvement strategies within the context of rural Sindhupalchok, Nepal. The research specifically focused on capturing the experiences and viewpoints of teachers from three different basic schools, providing a comprehensive exploration of the topic.

Present study was conducted in three basic schools within the Tripura Sundari Rural Municipality of Sindhupalchok District, Bagmati Province, Nepal. The rural municipality was chosen for its representation of both remote and accessible areas. Additionally, it is home to a diverse population of parents, ranging from those with high levels of education to those with limited access to education, as well as parents from various ethnic backgrounds. Given its multifaceted characteristics and perspectives, the selection of this rural municipality was deemed appropriate for the study. Nine basic school teachers from three community-based schools were selected for the present study. Specifically, three teachers were purposively selected from each school, resulting in a total of nine participants. A convenience sampling procedure was employed to ensure both feasibility and accessibility in the selection process. In-depth interview was used in this study. Each participant took part in

interviews lasting approximately 50 minutes, with discussions centered on the role of parental involvement in their children's learning.

Information collection was carried out through thematic interviews with basic school teachers. A total of nine teachers, five male and four female, were selected from three basic schools situated in rural Sindhupalchok, Nepal. To ensure diverse representation, both male and female participants were included in the study. The interviews were conducted on school premises during the teachers' free time. The schools were purposefully chosen from disadvantaged rural areas to align with the study's objectives. Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from the headteachers of the respective schools. Cultural sensitivity was carefully considered in designing the interview process and setting, ensuring respect for local customs and practices. Each interview lasted approximately 50 minutes and was audio-recorded for transcription and analysis. Informed consent was obtained from all participants beforehand to maintain ethical standards, respect their autonomy, and ensure voluntary participation. A consent form, along with detailed information about the study, was provided to the participants, who were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The study adhered to the technical and ethical guidelines governing research involving human participants, with ethical considerations rigorously followed throughout the process. The interview guidelines were designed to explore teachers' perceptions of parental involvement, focusing on participation in school meetings, assisting children with homework, and identifying barriers to parental engagement. In addition to audio recordings, demographic data and field notes were collected to supplement the interviews.

The information was analyzed using an information - driven thematic analysis approach, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involved transcription, translation, coding, decoding, and the development of themes and categories, adhering to the methodological guidelines provided by Clarke and Braun (2017). These analytical techniques enabled a rigorous examination of the qualitative data, ensuring the identification of significant findings and recurring patterns. All interview audio recordings were transcribed, and the transcripts were meticulously reviewed and cross-checked to ensure accuracy. The first author conducted the transcription personally, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the data. Initial codes were generated after an in-depth familiarization with the dataset, and these codes were systematically organized and categorized to identify subthemes and overarching themes. The findings emerged from translations of the original Nepali data into English. This analytical process resulted in the identification of four major themes and twelve distinct subthemes.

## FINDINGS

This study explored how basic school teachers perceived and experienced parental involvement in rural areas of Nepal. The responding teachers

acknowledged that parental involvement plays a crucial role in enhancing children's learning. For example, Teacher (T5) stated, "Parents are crucial to children's education, in my opinion. Children are not able to develop their learning successfully without involvement from parents." However, the majority of teachers' reports revealed that several factors influence parental involvement in children's education, including limited parental education, unstable financial situations, local customs, and teachers' tendency to blame parents. Furthermore, female educators demonstrated a heightened awareness of the unequal roles and parental interference in their daughters' education. Through the information analysis, four themes were established regarding basic school teachers' perceptions on parental involvement: (i) The blame game between basic school teachers and parents (ii) The influence of poverty and parental education on children's learning, (iii) The role of local practices in shaping parental interference, (iv) Basic school teachers' biased perceptions toward parents.

#### **The blame game between basic school teachers and parents**

This theme examines the dynamics of accountability in education, emphasizing how educators frequently place the blame for a child's issues or activities on the parents. It explores how this particular form of blame influences parent-teacher relationships and how it influences a child's development. Basic school teachers who were interviewed preferred to blame parents for their children's lack of interaction with the school, incomplete homework, and absenteeism. Basic school teachers expressed dissatisfaction about the unwillingness of parents to fulfill their responsibilities with regard to their children's education. They emphasized that children's education gets hampered by parents' insufficient involvement. The majority of basic school teachers, for example, noted that many children attending school from home but spend all of their time outside of it. Basic school teachers sent notices to the parents of those children in response, but they rarely responded back. Basic school teachers thought that parents' lack of interest and indifferent behavior indicated that they weren't enthusiastic about their children's education but rather considered it simply as an alternative. The following interview quotation explains the basic school teachers' (T1) concerns:

"Although we have been working to keep schools disciplined for many years, many kids arrive late. Parents of children don't work with us. I believe that parents are the ones who are fostering such types of behaviors in their children".

Basic school teachers believe that while parental support at home can motivate children to learn, involvement in homework is a critical area where parental engagement is essential. However, teachers expressed concern that many students face academic challenges because their parents are unable to visit the school or assist them with homework. Despite ongoing efforts to maintain school discipline, many students continue to be tardy. Teachers pointed out, "We don't work with parents of children. In my opinion, parents are the ones encouraging these kinds of behaviors in the children they have.



After sending their children to school, parents consider their responsibilities fulfilled." Teacher (T3) described the low level of parental participation as follows:

"Some parents have no idea what their specified homework is. When we call the parents, they first fail to respond, and if they do, they report that the child remains at home studying books. You are responsible if he fails to learn the lesson".

Basic school teachers also expressed their disappointment with parents who merely send their children to school. According to these teachers, most rural parents believe that enrolling their children in school fulfills their responsibility to educate them, leaving the rest to the teachers. The interviewees emphasized that both parents and teachers share responsibility for educating children. However, they identified parents' failure to attend parent-teacher meetings as a significant barrier, making it difficult to discuss students' behavior and academic progress. Teachers voiced their frustration that parents often claim to be too busy with household duties when invited to visit the school. Yet, when children underperform, parents tend to blame the teachers, asserting that the failure lies with the teachers for not properly educating their children. The following quote from Teacher (T2) illustrates this issue:

"A significant number of parents don't even make time for their children. In addition to not helping their children with their studies at home, parents do not attend their schools. Their parents' children are their future, yet they are not as worried about them as they ought to be".

From the above views, we come to the point that basic school teachers often feel unfairly blamed for students' challenges, citing lack of parental involvement as a key issue. They stress the importance of shared responsibility, advocating for open communication and collaboration with parents to ensure a child's holistic development and success.

#### **The influence of poverty and parental education on children's learning**

The second theme explores how parents in rural areas face difficulties in engaging with their children's education due to low academic performance and financial constraints. Basic school teachers argue that providing food and clothing for children is a fundamental parental responsibility in rural Nepal. According to these teachers, many children do not receive adequate nutrition at home and are often sent to school without breakfast. This lack of proper nourishment affects their ability to focus and engage in class. Teacher (T4) highlighted how financial scarcity negatively impacts children's health and learning, explaining:

"In class, I frequently observed a large number of students who were physically there but mentally absent from class. When I usually looked into why they weren't paying attention in class, I realized that the majority of kids didn't have proper breakfast. Although we have a provision of day food for children".

Basic school teachers clarified that education at basic schools is free. However, they noted that hidden costs associated with schooling, such as notebooks, writing instruments, school uniforms, and transportation, create

additional financial burdens for parents with limited resources, making it more difficult for them to send their children to school. According to the teachers, many parents pressure their children to work at home after school, which negatively affects the children's focus and attention in their studies.

"One of my highly talented students suddenly left the class. After a few days, I asked her friends why she wasn't attending class, but nobody had an answer. Then, I asked her best friend. She said, "Ma'am, she lives a long way from school and her father has not paid the vehicle's charge and stationery for the past two months" (teacher 8).

Furthermore, basic school teachers assert that the majority of parents in rural areas have lower levels of education. Children who face parental neglect often lack adequate supervision and guidance, resulting in unsatisfactory academic performance. Teachers believe that even parents with literacy or knowledge may adopt a neglectful attitude, which allows competent students to take advantage of the situation, leading to a decline in their enthusiasm for learning. The following passage illustrates parents' lack of engagement in their children's education:

"When the father arrived at school, he requested a few days of leave for his son. I questioned him about his son's grade. The grade in which his son was enrolled was unfamiliar to his father. Imagine how we would expect his father to support him in learning at home" (teacher 5).

Basic school teachers frequently observe that poverty and limited parental education impede children's learning by restricting access to necessary resources and support at home. They advocate for educational equity, stressing the importance of schools offering additional support, such as counseling, tutoring, and nutritious meals, to address these gaps and enhance students' learning opportunities.

#### **The role of local practices in shaping parental interference**

The third point of discussion focuses on local customs, which may occasionally hinder children's learning. This theme examines how deeply rooted local traditions and practices influence parental involvement in children's education. It explores the interaction between cultural norms and current teaching methods, highlighting the challenges basic school teachers face in balancing respect for tradition with fostering active learning environments. In rural areas, parents often adhere to local customs that can interfere with children's education. For instance, basic school teachers in rural areas reported that many parents lack education and do not recognize the value of educating their daughters. This mindset is largely shaped by prevailing local customs that favor boys over girls. As a result, many parents prioritize sending their boys to private schools, while sending their girls to government schools. Moreover, teachers noted that parents often pressure girls into early marriages. These young, uneducated mothers are unable to raise their children in ways that basic school teachers deem ideal, perpetuating a cycle of illiteracy that extends to future generations. Basic school teachers (T9) shared their personal experiences, further illustrating this issue.

"I had a student her mother wanted her to get married after 8th grade. She wanted me to talk to her mother to wait until she completed her 12th grade. I called her mother and asked her, but her mother said we have got a better proposal this time, and after all, they could not bear the burden anymore".

Basic school teachers also discussed parents' concerns about the safety of their children. They explained that many parents refrain from sending their daughters to school due to the distance between the school and their homes. Teachers noted that a girl typically requires accompaniment by a male family member, who may need to forgo a day's earnings if she must walk to school. According to the participants, parents generally send their daughters to basic schools, but as girls reach the high school level, parents often reconsider. Subsequently, they rarely send their daughters to school due to prevailing social beliefs and concerns about harassment. Teacher (T3) commented:

"Family honor might occasionally act as a barrier to females' education. Parents discourage their daughters from obtaining higher education in rural areas. Many parents believe that their family's honor will be affected if someone follows their daughter or if she suffers abuse".

In addition, basic school teachers clarified that children's absenteeism from school during community social festivals or occasions has both instant and long-term adverse effects on their education. They explained that convincing rural parents to ensure their children's school attendance was complex during social events and festivals. Children stay absent without permission of school, especially during memorial observations and marriages, which ultimately distracts their attention from studies. Interviewee (T5) explained that children were being absent without permission. Consequently, many parents take away their children from school.

"One of the major concerns is the attendance of the children. Children are sometimes missing for a few days without notice. They frequently respond, "We went to attend the ceremony with our parents," when questioned why they were absent".

Basic school teachers recognize that local practices often shape parental intervention, as cultural norms and traditions influence how parents engage with their child's education. While some involvement promotes growth, excessive interference can interrupt learning. Basic school teachers advocate for balanced partnerships, encouraging parents to support school policies while respecting professional boundaries to ensure effective education for students.

#### **Basic school teachers' biased perceptions toward parents**

This theme explores how basic school teachers' prejudices and expectations about parents - shaped by factors such as socioeconomic status, educational attainment, cultural background, and parent-teacher relationships - influence collaboration, trust, and students' overall educational experiences. Teachers often view rural parents critically, perceiving them as inferior to other societal groups due to characteristics such as poverty, illiteracy, and low social standing. These biases lead teachers to believe that rural parents fail to appreciate the role of educators and the contributions they make to their

children's education. The following discussion provides a detailed analysis of this issue (T1).

"This is a remote site, and people here are not skilled. Parents do less value education and ignorance about education is children's right. They send their children to school but they thought that teacher would bear all the responsibility of children's learning".

Basic school teachers expressed concern over bearing sole responsibility for students' education, emphasizing that parents fail to fulfill their roles in supporting their children's learning. Teachers reported that without parental involvement, addressing challenges in children's education becomes significantly more difficult. Moreover, the relationship between home and school further deteriorates when parents, who show little interest in their children's education, criticize teachers for perceived shortcomings. As Teacher (T4) explained, only a small number of parents view education as a shared responsibility between home and school.

"In rural places, parents are not aware of the importance of education. The only duty they believe they have is to send a child to school. A child has little interest in what they have studied in school. Parents, in my opinion, are completely unaware of their commitment".

Basic school teachers also emphasized that it is difficult to understand the value of education in a society where a significant number of educated individuals are unemployed. According to their argument, many of parents believe that education won't make a significant effect on their children's life. The basic school teachers suggest that parents desire their son to continue in their footsteps and work as a laborer. As a result, parents frequently give up on expecting their children to reward them when they completed their educational endeavors. This method avoids parents from being involved in children's education. The following lines explain this concern (T2).

"Sometimes, we unintentionally form biases about parents based on their background or behavior. It's crucial to self-reflect and communicate openly, ensuring assumptions don't cloud our judgment. There are many of intelligent and well-educated people without jobs in our society, I must accept. Additionally, it is one of the reasons why parents lose motivation and disregard the children's education".

Basic school teachers recognize that prejudiced perceptions often stem from cultural, socioeconomic, or communication barriers, which can undermine collaboration and trust. They emphasize that fostering mutual respect is essential for cultivating a supportive environment for students and their families. Teachers highlight the importance of self-reflection, empathy, and open communication to challenge assumptions and build constructive relationships. They assert that understanding parents' perspectives enhances partnerships and effectively supports students' academic success and personal growth.

## DISCUSSION

The current study highlights basic school teachers' dissatisfaction and frustration with parental involvement, particularly regarding the barriers hindering parent-teacher collaboration in children's education. Teachers expressed the belief that many parents appeared disinterested or unmotivated in their children's education. They also emphasized that the vulnerable socioeconomic conditions of rural parents negatively impact parental engagement. Furthermore, teachers demonstrated reluctance to view parents as equal partners in education, often holding indifferent attitudes toward low-income families. This disconnect was exacerbated by teachers' passivity and lack of responsiveness in engaging with parents, widening the gap between home and school (Luna & Del Valle, 2023). The findings revealed that teachers lacked confidence in parents, perceiving them as failing to fulfill their essential role, which adversely affected home-school collaboration and diminished children's educational outcomes. As Lawson (2003) argues, the willingness of either parents or teachers to engage cannot alone explain parental involvement. Parental involvement is inherently subjective and influenced by contextual factors, including poverty, illiteracy, and teachers' professional competence. These elements shape a community's priorities and are deeply rooted in the socioeconomic structure of society.

The present study advances the understanding of parental involvement in children's education within the specific sociocultural and economic context of rural Sindhupalchok. Basic school teachers identified certain practices that, in their view, fall outside conventional definitions of parental involvement as outlined by Epstein (2018). Teachers emphasized that providing basic necessities, such as clothing and food, ensuring children attend school, and relieving them of household duties, should be regarded as fundamental parental responsibilities. They further explained that the need for parents to prioritize their children's basic livelihood often arises due to the region's unstable economic structure and low levels of parental education, which constitute significant barriers to parental involvement. While parental involvement, as defined by scholars like Wilder (2014) and Teder and Mikser (2019), entails collaborating with teachers and actively participating in children's education at home and school, the study revealed that such involvement can sometimes devolve into interference, disrupting children's schooling. Interviewees also highlighted the prevalence of gender disparity in rural Sindhupalchok, which disproportionately hinders girls' education. This finding reflects broader patterns of gender inequality that persist in many developing countries, including Nepal.

Basic school teachers observed that even when parents send their daughters to school, they often fail to provide adequate guidance, and the girls' education is prematurely discontinued as they are married off during their teenage years. Within this context, allowing girls to continue schooling, particularly beyond primary education, is perceived as a progressive parental decision (UNICEF, 2018). Teachers also expressed concern and hesitation about

effectively coordinating with parents, acknowledging their own limitations in fully meeting their responsibilities to ensure student learning. They frequently attribute the shortcomings in children's education to parents, accusing them of failing to adequately support their schooling. Despite recognizing that most parents possess limited resources and are often illiterate, many teachers still expect parents to share equal responsibility for their children's education. However, parents struggling with financial hardships and low literacy levels face significant challenges in prioritizing their children's academic needs. These constraints, compounded by substantial economic burdens, leave parents with limited time and capacity to engage actively in their children's education.

As a result, motivated children with great aspirations are often unable to continue their education due to their parents' vulnerable socioeconomic circumstances (UNICEF, 2018). In other words, parental involvement is intricately linked to the role of basic school teachers, as parents can effectively engage in their children's education when teachers collaborate with families (Beack, 2015; Yulianti, 2020). Therefore, basic school teachers should address barriers related to parental involvement and household responsibilities, treating the children as their own (Abdu-Raheem, 2015). Such collaboration by teachers can inspire parents and contribute to fostering creative learning outcomes for students.

## CONCLUSION

This study highlights the challenges in fostering effective collaboration between home and school regarding children's education in rural areas of Nepal. It suggests the need for stronger regulations and increased funding to enhance the quality of basic school teachers, improve parents' understanding of their responsibilities, and provide significant support for the education of children from low-income households in order to improve conditions and educational outcomes. In rural areas, basic school teachers often criticized low-income parents, perceiving them as less valuable than other sectors of the community. To address these issues, it is essential to provide high-quality pre-service and in-service training that equips basic school teachers with the skills to collaborate and communicate effectively with parents. Additionally, teachers must be educated on their ethical and moral responsibilities toward parents, recognizing them as equal partners in their children's education. Administrative support should also be provided to ensure parents have a platform to express their concerns (Ozmen et al., 2016). Furthermore, the government should offer critical financial assistance to low-income families to ensure children have access to necessary educational resources, such as books, notebooks, writing materials, and appropriate clothing. In conclusion, both basic school teachers and parents must be made aware of their shared responsibility in supporting children's learning and held accountable for the resulting educational outcomes.

This study primarily focused on basic school teachers' perceptions of parents in a rural context. Expanding the research to include the perceptions of teachers working with children from middle-class and upper-class families is necessary to gain a broader understanding of this issue. Additionally, other research suggests that educators hold both parents and children accountable for the lack of parental interest and involvement in education. Consequently, the central objective of this study was to explore how basic school teachers perceive the involvement of parents from disadvantaged backgrounds in the classroom. The study also revealed that parental interference often creates challenges for teachers and impedes children's education, particularly for girls and children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Therefore, further research is needed to explore how rural households perceive and respond to established behaviors, which could help address these challenges. Moreover, additional studies should examine how parents view their role in their children's education and how they respond to teachers' requests for participation.

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