

Executive Summary

Background and Introduction:

This paper presents a review on relevant literatures and policies related with disability issues and research in Nepal. In addition, the paper also tracks the progress that has already been made in the area of disability issues, and it also finds gaps that need to be acknowledged and covered in future research so that both appropriate recommendations and a way forward can be formulated for subsequent disability studies and policy formulations.

Moreover, policy and priority changes have also resulted in various research activities concerning disability issues that has continued to sustain new landscape for disability study in Nepal. With this a background, this study provides an assessment on relevant research articles, surveys and field reports that has discussed, analyzed and explored disability related issues to elaborate and explain the contemporary landscape of disability studies in Nepal.

More importantly, this study has focused on identifying important trends within disability research to explore and review key issues, factors, policies, concerns, expectations and challenges that continues to impact the lived-world experiences of persons with disabilities in Nepal. In addition, this study has evaluated research finding and discussions of relevant literatures, with typical focus on different disability related issues such as health, exclusion, violence, abuse, training and employment opportunities, inclusive education, data consolidation and policy evaluations as thematic structure for this study.

Major Findings and Discussions:

- Disability statistics collected and consolidated by various Governmental and Non-Governmental agencies to interpret the conditions of persons with disabilities and to track the trends in disability research are both confusing and complicated due frequent changes in definitions of disability and don't adequately reflect all types of persons with disabilities in Nepal
- Regarding socio-economic characteristics of persons with disabilities, based on review of different relevant literatures this study indicates that a family with a children with disability is likely to be poorer compared to other families. Similarly, financial burden for

a household having a person with disability is likely to be higher as compared to other households. Moreover, women with disabilities have to endure both gender and disability based discriminations in the society. Likewise, persons with disabilities are less likely to be employed than persons without disabilities, thereby increasing the dependency for the family. This study also finds that the average salary level for persons with disabilities is substantially lower.

- In regards to disability and education, persons with disabilities are more illiterate than others and they also perform worse in all other levels of education as well. More specifically, the children with disabilities lag behind in all three measures of educational outcomes (access, participation and learning). Dropout rate among children with disabilities is highest and even inclusive schools have not maintained the portfolios of the students, hence the reliable data on the learning status of children with disabilities is unavailable either for monitoring or for intervention review. This study also indicates a lack of awareness about services provided by the government regarding educational services among parents.
- Regarding the issue of disability and health, as the evidences suggest there is a higher prevalence of chronic illness among persons with disabilities. More specifically, on the issue of health and children with disabilities, the presence of disability from birth underscores the urgency for more careful and comprehensive early childhood screening for disability. Besides, social unawareness and superstition prevalent in Nepalese society regarding disability continues to keep such children away from several curable disability related diseases and disorders. Hence, there is a need for extensive and regular nationwide programme that encourages disability screening of children in Nepal on a regular basis.
- Similarly on the issue of health conditions of Women with Disability, this study indicates that females with disabilities experience larger disparities when it comes to their access to health-care services as compared to male- persons with disabilities. More specifically, social stigma of physical shame and stigma of disability impacts their access to health care.
- This study finds that data regarding the status of persons with disabilities employment in Nepal is insufficient. There are also other issues related with environmental and social barriers along with the lack of information and technology to facilitate employment for

persons with disabilities. Besides, in country like Nepal a large part of the employment is still in the informal sectors, hence it is very difficult to know about the present situation of persons with disabilities involved in this sector.

- Women and children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable and marginalized individuals in Nepal. Domestic violence, rape, accusations of witchcraft, dowry related violence, beating and scolding are quite common experience of abuse among persons with disabilities. In addition, women with disabilities are twice as likely to suffer from severity of violence as compared with women without disabilities. Based on the review of relevant literature this study also finds that traditional beliefs, prevalent patriarchy, poverty, lack of education and weak institutions are some of the critical factors behind continuation of violence, abuse and discrimination concerning persons with disabilities in Nepal.
- This study also explores that the role played by the Community Rehabilitation Programme (CBR) has been outstanding. The organization has served as a “ray of hope”, critical guide, strong supporter, rescuer and the first contact during natural disasters and violence for persons with disabilities
- More specifically, the study finds inadequate disability measures and statistics suitable for disability research for Nepalese Context. Besides, adequate and relevant disability statistical tools are still lacking. Importantly, this study recommends that there is a need for more research on disability issues to broaden the parameters of disability research and policy formulations that allows a more inclusive understanding of disability, persons of disability and their lived world experiences and their access to different services provided by different Governmental and non-governmental agencies.
- To conclude, acknowledging sufficient progress in the area of inclusive education, community based rehabilitation program, advocacy and legislative initiatives, this paper as a way forward, discerns key areas for further research such as functional approach to disability statistics, violence against children, women and elderly, role of mother of persons with disabilities, and emerging advancements in technology and innovation and its impact on the functionalities of persons with disabilities. Finally, this paper recommends a need for thorough review on existing international literature for conducting disability research in Nepalese context with new approaches, models and dimensions.