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# Contextualizing Socio-cultural Resources in Secondary Level Classroom Instruction in Lumbini Cultural Municipality, Rupandehi Nepal

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**Abstract**

**This study investigates the contextualization of locally available socio-cultural resources in secondary-level classroom instruction, with a focus on evaluating task-based approaches, methods, and techniques for promoting skill-oriented education within the designated research settings. Utilizing a qualitative research design, data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The analysis was guided by an interpretive paradigm, allowing for an in-depth understanding of how indigenous knowledge systems and community practices can be pedagogically mobilized. The findings reveal a substantial presence of local knowledge and underscore its potential to be systematically integrated into instructional practices, thereby fostering experiential and task-based learning. The study concludes that embedding such culturally rooted resources into the secondary curriculum in Nepal can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of education by aligning it with the learners' socio-cultural context. It further offers strategic recommendations for the pedagogical incorporation of socio-cultural resources to support practical, functional learning through task-based instructional frameworks.**

**Keywords: Indigenous knowledge, socio-cultural resources, task-based instruction, skill-oriented education, contextual learning**

## Introduction

The interrelationship between knowledge, experience, and skill development is fundamental to the educational process. These elements are not isolated; rather, they operate synergistically to support holistic learning. Dewey (1916) conceptualized education as a dynamic, continuous process through which individuals acquire knowledge and experiences that are subsequently reorganized to develop practical competencies by adapting to their environment. He emphasized that education facilitates the transformation of innate potential into actionable skills, thus underscoring its functional role in individual development (p. 61). Similarly, Agrawal (1992) highlighted the productive dimension of education, asserting that the application of acquired skills empowers individuals to navigate and resolve real-world challenges (p. 33). Collectively, these perspectives reflect the philosophical foundation of progressive education, which prioritizes functionality, productivity, and the cultivation of practical skills through experiential learning.

Reinforcing this orientation, Dewey (1997) posited that the central purpose of education is to prepare learners for the demands and responsibilities of adult life. This preparation entails the systematic acquisition of knowledge and the development of standardized competencies that constitute the core of instructional content (p. 18). In alignment with this view, Crow and Crow (2008) characterized education as a transformative force that influences the physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and ethical dimensions of individual development. According to them, such multidimensional growth contributes to the internalization of societal values, behavior patterns, and practical skills essential for responsible citizenship and lifelong learning (p. 53).

From a more critical perspective, Smith (2006) argued that education can simultaneously serve as both a solution and a problem. He underscored the necessity of evaluating educational policies and practices at all levels to ensure they are responsive to cultural diversity and capable of fostering inclusive and equitable social development (p. 29). Smith's position highlights the role of diversity as a catalyst for innovation in education. The varied knowledge systems, experiences, and skills present in diverse communities provide opportunities for enriched learning, although they also present challenges in the formulation of inclusive educational frameworks. This underscores the importance of embracing diversity as a pedagogical resource.

To bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, it is imperative that educational practices actively engage learners with the resources embedded within their socio-cultural context. Such contexts encompass both individual and collective identities, including localized knowledge, skills, experiences, and traditions. UNESCO (2011) defines socio-cultural contexts as inclusive of variables such as race, ethnicity, class, ability, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, and varied learning conditions and styles, all of which influence educational engagement and outcomes (p. 2). Supporting this, Nwabueze and Isilebo (2022) assert that modern educational approaches increasingly favor event-driven and task-oriented pedagogies rooted in the theory of social learning. This approach encourages learners to engage with indigenous knowledge systems and local resources, thereby fostering relevant and meaningful learning experiences (p. 545).

**Conceptualizing Resources**

Nature is frequently conceptualized as a life-sustaining force that becomes a resource when it is assigned value for human utilization or benefit. Within this framework, resources are inherently anthropogenic constructs, reflecting the appropriation and transformation of natural elements to fulfill human needs (Hope, 2002, p. 2). This anthropocentric view positions resources not as static entities, but as dynamic elements defined by human perceptions, interactions, and utility.

The World Bank offers a foundational definition of natural resources as materials naturally occurring in the environment that are essential or beneficial to human life. These include elements such as water, air, land, forests, fisheries, wildlife, topsoil, and minerals (Collier, 2003, p. 38). Expanding on this perspective, the World Trade Report (2010) characterizes natural resources as finite stocks of naturally occurring materials that are economically valuable, whether in their raw state or following minimal processing (p. 46). This interpretation emphasizes both scarcity and economic relevance, highlighting the pivotal role of natural resources in global development and trade systems.

From a broader philosophical standpoint, Worthington (1964) defined resources as "everything that is derivable for the use or benefit of humans from any part of the universe" (p. 2). This inclusive definition encapsulates the vast potential of natural and non-natural elements to serve human ends. In a similar vein, Sadhukhan (1986) underscored that resources are not simply physical materials but are socially constructed outcomes of interactive processes between human beings and nature. According to this view, resources arise from intentional human efforts to satisfy personal desires and achieve collective social goals (p. 94). Hussen (2000) further supports this notion by defining a resource as anything capable of directly or indirectly fulfilling human wants (p. 3). These interpretations illuminate the socio-cultural and utilitarian dimensions of resources, asserting that their value is contextually determined rather than intrinsically fixed.

Synthesizing these perspectives, Hussen (2000) articulates a comprehensive conceptualization of natural resources as encompassing the original components of Earth's life-support systems. These include atmospheric elements, hydrospheric bodies, lithospheric materials, and solar radiation each essential for sustaining ecological and human systems (p. xxv). Thus, the concept of resources transcends mere physicality, embedding itself in human-environment interactions that are shaped by cultural, economic, and technological factors.

**Multi-dimensions of Resources**

Natural resources occupy a central position in the global production and consumption system. The World Trade Report (2010) categorizes all goods as either containing natural resources or being dependent upon them for their production. For example, automobiles require iron ore, and agricultural products rely on fundamental inputs such as land and water. From this perspective, virtually all goods are derivations of natural resources, either directly or indirectly (p. 46). Furthermore, essential energy resources like oil and gas are indispensable for powering nearly every sector, while ecological assets such as forests, fisheries, and aquifers represent irreplaceable environmental reserves vital for long-term sustainability (World Trade Report, 2010, p. 40).

Despite this recognition, the World Bank (2009) presents a more utilitarian view, emphasizing the importance of natural resources for human survival while giving limited attention to deeper philosophical dimensions such as the metaphysical relationship between humans and nature. This raises fundamental questions regarding whether nature exists solely to serve humanity or whether a cosmological, perhaps spiritual, linkage binds human beings to their environment. Nonetheless, the World Trade Report reaffirms the instrumental value of nature, highlighting its contributions to human development through indicators such as health, education, and life expectancy (World Trade Report, 2014).

Supporting this utilitarian yet essential perspective, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2004), as cited in the World Bank (2009), emphasizes the multifaceted contributions of natural resources, including the provision of food, fuel, medicines, freshwater, fisheries, and environmental regulation. These resources are particularly critical for the survival and well-being of rural populations in developing regions, where livelihoods and food security are closely tied to natural capital (p. 423).

Expanding beyond ecological and economic considerations, the notion of social resources illustrates that resource value is not inherent but socially constructed. Burch (1971) argues that resources do not originate

solely from the Earth but are conceptualized and assigned value through societal systems, including myths, ideologies, and institutional traditions (p. 9). Donenfeld (1914) similarly identifies the formation of social resources within human institutions and collective attitudes, such as those expressed by social agencies, associations, and institutional frameworks (p. 560). These interpretations position resource utilization and mobilization as fundamentally social phenomena, rooted in cultural norms, institutional settings, and patterns of human behavior.

Human interaction with natural environments imbues them with symbolic and practical meaning. Donenfeld (1914) posits that social resources include all conditions that involve human engagement with their surroundings (p. 560). These interactions are shaped by diverse social factors. Tornblom and Kazemi (2012) note that both material (e.g., possessions, wealth) and immaterial (e.g., knowledge, power, emotional support) resources are exchanged and distributed within social contexts, forming the core of social capital (p. 1). Earlier scholars such as Galbraith (1967) and Bell (1973), as cited in Tornblom and Kazemi (2012), emphasized that expert knowledge, communication skills, and organizational capabilities are pivotal in shaping social development and institutional effectiveness (p. 1).

Drawing upon Weber's theory of social stratification, Tornblom and Kazemi (2012) identify three primary dimensions through which social resources operate: class, status, and party affiliation. These dimensions respectively determine individuals' access to economic assets, their social esteem and recognition, and their participation in power structures. These stratifications are critical in mediating access to both natural and social resources and underscore the interaction between individual agency and systemic inequalities (p. 1).

Furthermore, Tornblom and Kazemi (2012) assert that overall well-being and quality of life are contingent on the balanced production and equitable distribution of both material and non-material resources. This holistic view of human development demands careful consideration of how resources are shared and accessed across social groups (Introduction section, para. 3). Hugo and Clanahan (2009) expand on this argument by asserting that overcoming the "resource curse" in resource-rich nations requires transformative social change rather than narrow economic policy reforms (pp. 165–166). They advocate for a deeper understanding of the social and cultural contexts that enable sustainable development in resource-abundant countries (p. 178).

Berger (1992) echoes this sentiment by calling for a broader development discourse that incorporates social dynamics and power relations alongside economic concerns (p. 146). Berger and Luckmann (1967) further contend that the meanings ascribed to landscapes and natural environments are socially constructed, reflecting human interpretation rather than objective reality (p. 69). In this context, Greider and Garkovich (1994) argue that natural environments are shaped through collective negotiation and socio-cultural discourse, resulting in landscapes that are both ecological and symbolic (p. 2). These views suggest that the natural world acquires meaning primarily through human cultural frameworks.

Greider and Garkovich (1994) further emphasize that understanding how landscapes are interpreted can reveal the institutional mechanisms through which natural resources are managed (p. 2). Whorf (1956) supports this claim by suggesting that human perception of nature is mediated through culturally constructed language systems that organize sensory input into coherent experiences (p. 213). Similarly,

Blumer (1969) argues that human beings live in a world of symbolically meaningful objects, where meaning is continuously produced and reproduced through social interaction (pp. 238–239). These insights highlight that the interpretation, valuation, and governance of resources are deeply embedded in cultural, linguistic, and social structures.

**Socio-cultural Dimension of Resources**

Socio-cultural resources originate from shared social realities and are perpetuated through cultural practices, traditions, and collective memory embedded within a community. Rogers (1981) posits that these shared realities are constructed through commonsense knowledge and routine social interactions that organize daily life (p. 134). This perspective is further supported by Goffman (1974), Denzin (1977), Corsaro (1985), and Fine (1991), who collectively argue that cultural groups actively reconstruct their realities by interpreting and reinterpreting symbols and meanings through ongoing social engagement (as cited in Greider & Garkovich, 1994, p. 6). In alignment with this view, Busch (1989) emphasizes that natural environments are not merely physical entities but are socially organized to reflect the belief systems and structural patterns of the communities that inhabit them (p. 4).

Within this socio-cultural framework, landscapes both natural and human-modified can be understood as cultural constructs shaped by human interactions with their environment. Pradhan and Pradhan (2011) define these cultural landscapes as manifestations of human activity on nature, informed by cultural, social, and economic objectives (p. 51). Functional landscapes typically emerge from economic practices, while others are shaped by symbolic, aesthetic, or historical considerations. These variations indicate that the mobilization and interpretation of natural resources are deeply embedded in cultural systems and value structures.

The influence of traditional knowledge systems on resource governance is particularly significant. Fabricius and Koch (2004) highlight that indigenous cultural knowledge plays a pivotal role in shaping resource management through informal institutions, customary laws, and belief systems that regulate access and usage (p. 24). Similarly, Torrington and Hall (1991) assert that socio-cultural environments vary across nations and have a direct impact on institutional norms, legal frameworks, values, and demographic behaviors (p. 11). These factors, taken together, demonstrate that resource management is not merely technical or economic it is also a socio-cultural endeavor.

Cultural values fundamentally shape the ways in which individuals and communities interact with natural environments and determine the manner in which resources are perceived, valued, and utilized. Adhikari (2009) contends that cultural norms significantly influence organizational behavior, especially within systems of human resource management, and that failure to recognize or address socio-cultural variables can obstruct institutional reforms (p. 82). Culture and nature, therefore, should not be viewed as separate domains but as interdependent dimensions of human-environment interaction. Cultural landscapes reflect both the technological capacities and the socio-economic aspirations of local populations (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2011, p. 51), while cultural resources include not only physical artifacts but also natural features that have been shaped, interpreted, or repurposed through human engagement (Ngozi & Chinonso, 2016).

Analyzing environmental change and resource use requires an understanding of cultural frameworks. Greider and Garkovich (1994) argue that cultural interpretations of landscapes are central to understanding

how communities perceive, respond to, and are affected by environmental transformations (p. 2). In support of this, Bennett (1976) asserts that human communities continually reinterpret natural phenomena through the lens of culture (p. 4). Likewise, Greider and Garkovich (1994) observe that cultural symbols play a defining role in shaping how groups conceptualize and interact with their environment (p. 8). These culturally rooted interpretations contribute to the development of diverse knowledge systems, practices, and skills, all of which are essential to the sustainable use and management of resources.

Consequently, the significance of indigenous knowledge and local cultural systems in resource management requires continued scholarly inquiry. The socio-cultural diversity inherent in human populations offers a multiplicity of strategies for resource mobilization, rooted in context-specific experiences and cultural interpretations. Recognizing and incorporating these localized knowledge systems into broader resource governance frameworks may enhance both ecological sustainability and cultural resilience.

**Local Communities and Socio-cultural Resources**

Indigenous and local communities constitute distinct socio-cultural groups defined by ancestral ties to the landscapes and natural resources they inhabit, utilize, or steward. These relationships transcend geographical or utilitarian functions, encompassing deeply rooted cultural identities, languages, traditional livelihoods, and both the physical and spiritual well-being of community members. Through generations of sustained interaction with their surrounding ecosystems, these communities have developed robust, place-based knowledge systems and resource management practices. Particularly notable is the capacity of local populations to mobilize natural resources for collective benefit by drawing upon context-specific knowledge, traditional skill sets, and adaptive utilization strategies.

Supporting this understanding, Getz et al. (1999) emphasize the intrinsic ability of local communities to manage natural resources effectively, observing that “it starts from the premise that local people have the collective capacity to manage natural resources through their knowledge and experiences; in community-based conservation and development programs, local communities are responsible for managing their natural resources for the development of practical skills” (pp. 3783–3789). Weddell (2002) further illustrates this point by documenting the pivotal role indigenous communities play in developing innovative and ecologically sound conservation initiatives across diverse biogeographical regions—from arctic zones to tropical ecosystems. These locally driven initiatives have contributed not only to ecological sustainability but also to the enhancement of technical competencies, indigenous innovation, and the creation of context-relevant technologies.

The growing recognition of indigenous knowledge in the scientific literature underscores the importance of integrating these systems into educational frameworks and resource development strategies. Timsina and Ojha (2008) assert that “scientists themselves have admitted that knowledge that comes from the school and university education is all based on the indigenous knowledge system which has existed with the community and farmers for generations” (p. 27). This perspective challenges dominant hierarchies in knowledge production by acknowledging the foundational role of indigenous epistemologies in shaping formal scientific and educational discourses.

This body of literature highlights the necessity of systematically valuing and incorporating the experiential knowledge held by local populations into formal education systems. In countries such as Nepal, where cultural diversity and localized practices remain vibrant, such integration holds particular promise. Timsina and Ojha (2008) exemplify this through the model of participatory variety selection, which fosters collaboration between scientific and indigenous knowledge systems. Although they recognize that socio-cultural knowledge is often undervalued during the development and dissemination of new technologies, they advocate for a more inclusive approach that fully acknowledges and legitimizes indigenous perspectives (p. 27).

The imperative to institutionalize and support community knowledge systems through policy interventions is also evident. Strengthening local institutions and community networks can enable the formal recognition and integration of socio-cultural resources into national educational and development frameworks. According to Timsina and Ojha (2008), local communities possess unique capacities to identify resource varieties and management strategies that are both ecologically appropriate and culturally aligned. These capabilities make indigenous knowledge holders indispensable collaborators in the co-creation of contextually relevant educational and technological innovations.

In summary, the reviewed scholarship affirms that local communities represent essential repositories of socio-cultural knowledge, practical expertise, and intergenerational wisdom. These attributes position them as key actors in the development of sustainable technologies, inclusive education models, and locally grounded solutions for resource management. Their accumulated experiences and specialized knowledge, derived from sustained environmental engagement, make them critical partners in the co-production of knowledge and the promotion of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Many communities in the context of Nepal possess deeply embedded knowledge systems that offer valuable insights into sustainable resource use, ecological stewardship, and participatory learning. However, such systems are frequently marginalized within the formal education sector, which often privileges standardized curricula and externally derived knowledge frameworks.

Accordingly, this study seeks to address this gap by identifying the socio-cultural resources available in local communities, analyzing their potential integration into classroom instruction, and proposing strategic approaches for incorporating these resources into the broader educational landscape. In doing so, the research aligns with contemporary discourses on educational reform, sustainability, and the empowerment of marginalized communities. It aims not only to contribute to theoretical and scholarly discourse but also to provide actionable pathways for implementing culturally grounded pedagogical practices that resonate with the lived experiences of learners and their communities.

**Rationale of the Study**

In Nepal, particularly in culturally diverse regions, secondary-level education often overlooks the rich socio-cultural resources embedded within local communities. The existing curriculum tends to rely heavily on externally standardized content, which may not fully resonate with students' lived experiences or

cultural contexts. This disconnect can hinder meaningful learning, reduce student engagement, and limit the development of practical skills. Recognizing this gap, the present study seeks to explore the potential of contextualizing locally available socio-cultural resources in classroom instruction. Drawing upon the indigenous knowledge systems, practices, and artifacts that communities have cultivated over generations, the research aims to identify these resources, assess their applicability in teaching, and recommend strategic integration approaches. By aligning educational practices with local realities, the study aspires to promote culturally responsive pedagogy, enhance learning relevance, and contribute to educational reforms that are inclusive and sustainable. Such an approach can empower learners and educators alike while strengthening the connection between schools and communities.

**Objectives of the study**

1) To identify the locally available socio-cultural resources in the study areas.
2) To analyze the contextualization possibilities of identified socio-cultural resources in secondary level classroom instruction.
3) To recommend the strategies for the contextualization of identified socio-cultural resources in classroom instruction.

**Research questions**

1) What types of socio-cultural resources are locally available in the selected study areas?
2) How are these local socio-cultural resources currently being used, if at all, in secondary-level classroom instruction?
3) What are teachers' perceptions regarding the relevance and usefulness of local socio-cultural resources in teaching-learning processes?
4) What challenges and opportunities exist in integrating local socio-cultural resources into secondary-level classroom instruction?
5) What pedagogical approaches can enhance the integration of socio-cultural resources into classroom instruction?
6) What strategies can be recommended for the effective contextualization of socio-cultural resources in secondary-level education?

**Research Methodology**

This study adopted a qualitative research design grounded in hermeneutic phenomenology to thoroughly explore and interpret the lived experiences of individuals within the socio-cultural context of the study area. Hermeneutic phenomenology was selected because it enables researchers to access the deeper meanings and essences embedded in human experiences, allowing for rich, contextualized understanding (Langdridge, 2007, p. 4). According to Van Manen (2014), this approach involves interpreting human experiences as they are lived, thus facilitating insight into the subjective realities of participants (p. 28). The primary aim of the phenomenological inquiry was to uncover the implicit meanings associated with participants' practical knowledge, skills, and interactions with socio-cultural resources in their educational environments.

The research was framed within the interpretive paradigm, which recognizes knowledge as socially constructed and seeks to understand the complexities and contextual nuances of human behavior and social phenomena (Higgs, 2001, pp. 48-49). This paradigm aligns with the study's focus on how individuals derive meaning through social interaction, reflection, and lived experience. Interpretive phenomenology provided a robust framework for investigating the rich, context-dependent educational experiences of participants and the ways in which socio-cultural resources are integrated into their daily lives.

Data collection involved a combination of unstructured and semi-structured interviews, which were guided by phenomenological questions designed to elicit detailed, reflective responses from participants (Beck, 2021). These interviews allowed participants to articulate their experiences and perspectives in their own words, providing depth and nuance to the data. In addition to interviews, field observations were conducted to capture participants' behaviors and interactions in natural settings, offering contextual insights that complemented the interview data. Supplementary data collection methods included detailed field notes, photographic evidence, and audio recordings, all of which enhanced the richness and triangulation of the dataset.

Data analysis followed a systematic six-stage phenomenological process: immersion in the data, understanding the content, abstraction of key elements, synthesis of thematic insights, illumination and illustration of phenomena, and finally, integration and critical reflection on the findings. This iterative process allowed for the transformation of raw experiential narratives into coherent thematic categories that reveal the structures of meaning underpinning participants' lived experiences (Stolz, 2023, p. 825). Each stage involved reflective interpretation and writing, thereby ensuring methodological rigor and depth in the analysis.

The study site was purposively chosen to reflect a diverse socio-cultural and demographic profile, consistent with guidance from Rowland and Leu (2011). The research was conducted in a suburban area of Lumbini Cultural Municipality, Rupandehi district, Lumbini Province, Nepal, selected for its social heterogeneity encompassing both indigenous inhabitants and migrant populations. This diversity provided a rich context for examining the interaction between socio-cultural resources and educational practices.

Participants were purposively sampled to represent a broad spectrum of stakeholders within the community. The sample consisted of ten local residents, five teachers, five students, five parents, two social workers, one member of the School Management Committee (SMC), and one local government representative. Efforts were made to ensure diversity in gender, age, occupation, and socio-economic status to capture varied perspectives relevant to the research questions. Ethical considerations were rigorously maintained throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was protected through the use of pseudonyms and secure data management protocols.

**Result and Discussion**

This section presents a detailed analysis of the socio-cultural resources identified through field observations and semi-structured interviews conducted within the selected study area. Utilizing a phenomenological approach, the study aimed to capture the lived experiences, cultural practices, and contextual knowledge embedded within the local community. Data were gathered from a diverse group of stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, social workers, and local representatives, thereby

providing a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the locally available knowledge systems and cultural assets pertinent to educational settings.

The identification and analysis of socio-cultural resources were systematically guided by thematic coding and interpretive analysis, ensuring that the emergent findings authentically represent both the practical relevance and the pedagogical potential of each resource. Attention was specifically focused on resources that demonstrate tangible contributions to classroom instruction, facilitate contextualized learning experiences, and support the meaningful integration of socio-cultural knowledge into formal secondary education. This analytical process enabled the distillation of key themes related to the forms, functions, and educational utility of the identified resources.

The findings reveal a rich tapestry of socio-cultural elements, encompassing indigenous knowledge, traditional practices, local arts and crafts, communal rituals, linguistic heritage, and context-specific skills that collectively enrich the educational landscape. These resources not only reflect the community's historical continuity and cultural identity but also offer dynamic opportunities for experiential and skills-based learning. The participants emphasized that integrating such resources into the curriculum could enhance student engagement, contextual relevance, and the development of practical competencies.

Table 1 below, synthesizes these identified socio-cultural resources, categorizing them according to their intrinsic characteristics and outlining possible pedagogical applications within secondary-level classroom instruction. This synthesis underscores the multidimensional nature of socio-cultural resources and their capacity to bridge formal education with community-based knowledge and practices. The discussion further explores how these resources can be strategically mobilized to foster task-based, experiential learning approaches that resonate with learners' cultural backgrounds and lived realities.

Table 1. The Identified Socio-cultural Resources in Study Site

| | |
|---|---|
| **1. Natural Resource Heritage** | parks, conservation areas, ponds, creaks, streams, fields, grassland, gardens, historical place |
| **2. Socio-cultural Resources: Organizations/Associations** | -Youth Club -Typical Song Group<br>-Dairy Association -Financial Cooperatives<br>-Agricultural Cooperatives -Women's Association<br>-Rickshaw Association -Hotel Association<br>-Vegetable Plantation Association -Jewelers' Association<br>-Barbers' Association |
| **Industries** | -Diary production -Rice/flour/oil mill<br>-Handicraft production -Furniture |
| **Primary Occupation** | Agriculture |
| **Secondary Occupation** | Jobs in office, shop keeping, making statues, crafts, making houses, tour guide, working for wages, laborers, barbers |
| **Institutions** | -Madhuvani Sec. School<br>-Metta Gurukul School<br>-Karuna Girls'Sec. School |

| | |
|---|---|
| **3. Cultural Heritages** | -Janaki Temple -Durga Temple<br>-Shiva Temple -Buddha Bihar Gumba<br>-Mahilwar Masjid -Samay Mai Than |
| **4. Events and Festivals:**<br>**Festivals** | Dashain, Tihar, Teej, Ramnawami, Nagpanchami, Rakshyabandhan, Maghi, Faghu Purnima, Buddha Purnima, Eid, Bakar Eid |
| **Seasonal Celebrations** | -Gawa(beginning of Ropai)<br>-Harihari(conclusion of Ropai)<br>-Winter Fair (Buddhist)<br>-Chaitra Fair (Hindu)<br>-Baisakh Fair (Buddha Purnima) |
| **Worships** | -Shivaji Pooja (in Shravan)<br>-Samay Mai Pooja<br>-Shivaratri Pooja<br>-Buddha Pooja (in Baisakh) |
| **Rituals** | -Fasting -Mundan<br>-Chhati ($6^{th}$ day of birth)<br>-Nwaran($9^{th}$ day of birth) |
| **Public Events** | -Karahi Pooja (before monsoon, all the villagers get together in one place, cook for all, worship, spell and move around the entire village) |
| **Public Tours** | -Pilgrimage (Hindu/Muslim/Buddhist)<br>-Occasional excursions organized by financial/occupational cooperative associations |
| **5. Indigenous People/ Ethno Groups** | Yadav, Kewat/Mallah, Brahmin, Teli, Chhetri, Gupta, Kurmi, Harijan, Loth, Pandey, Jollah (Muslim), Chamar, Tharu, Gaderiya, Badhai, Dhobi, Pashi, Lohar, Sonar, Dhandi, Pathak ,Tiwari, Mishra, Shukla |
| **6. Indigenous Knowledge: (physical/technical/social) Based on (Mukherjee, 1995, p. 11.)**<br>**Physical Knowledge** | -Topographic knowledge -Land structure<br>-Soil type -Land condition<br>-Land tenure -Quantifying<br>-Thatching<br>-Weather prediction |
| **Technical Knowledge** | -Transplanting –Weeding -Ploughing<br>-Field leveling -Drawing water<br>-Mapping –Diagramming -Listing<br>-Comparing/contrasting -Identifying<br>-Estimating -Ranking<br>-Visual sharing/mental- maps -Cross checking<br>-Correcting –Modifying -Sequencing |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Social Knowledge** | -Observing -Listening to others<br>-Criticizing -Discussing<br>-Interacting -Seeking problems<br>-Seeking solutions -Answering<br>-Telling local history -Presenting the<br>-information of map -Sharing |
| **7. Indigenous Technologies** | -Planting potato/paddy/wheat<br>-Making ploughing equipments set(by Badhai people)<br>-Chakiya (for making pulse)<br>-Making walls made of straw and mud<br>-Making boats (by Badhai people)<br>-Making Khasi (blocking reproduction of male goat)-Muslim<br>-Processing the skin of dead cattle (Harijan/Chamar)<br>-Making Khapada(roofing materials)<br>-Making puffed rice<br>-Pottering(by Kumal)<br>-Jato (flour making device) |
| **8. Local Skills** | -Speaking English (illiterate local people)<br>-Planting/irrigating<br>-Making statues of elephant, God etc.<br>-Making Dehari/Bhakari (granary)<br>-Pigeon house (made of mud) -Swimming<br>-Crossing the flooded river (Mallah)<br>-Fishing (Kewat/Mallah)<br>-Making straw made seat and mat<br>-Milking and making dairy products<br>-Bamboo ladder -Stitching clothes -Making Dhakiya<br>-Making hand fan and Nanglo with bamboo straps<br>-Making fishing equipments -Paintings on wall (sun, snakes etc.) -First aid of snake bite<br>-Treatment of mud infection on feet and hands<br>-Making fishing net -Khadgodawa Dance (by Harijan)<br>-Biraha songs and dance (by Yadav)<br>-Singing religious songs (Bhajan/Kirtan)<br>-Working as Dhami/Jhakri (witch remover)<br>-Breeding cattle -Making hand fan of clothes<br>-Making special cap of clothes -Using herbs on cut wounds/cold -Making broom of typical plant |

The comprehensive data gathered from the study area reveal a multifaceted and deeply embedded socio-cultural resource system that holds significant educational and practical value. The identified resources

span natural, social, cultural, indigenous, and technological domains, each contributing uniquely to the community's knowledge base and livelihood strategies.

Natural resources and heritage such as parks, conservation areas, water bodies, and historical sites demonstrate the community's rich environmental endowments and cultural landmarks. These elements serve not only ecological and recreational functions but also provide tangible contexts for place-based learning and environmental education. Their integration into classroom instruction could facilitate experiential learning by linking theoretical knowledge with locally relevant natural phenomena.

Socio-cultural organizations and occupational groups reflect a vibrant communal structure that supports collective action and economic activities. The presence of diverse associations—ranging from youth and women's groups to cooperatives and occupational guilds—highlights the social capital that underpins community cohesion and resource mobilization. Industries such as dairy production, handicrafts, and milling illustrate the community's economic diversification and skill specialization. Primary and secondary occupations, including agriculture, craftsmanship, and service-related jobs, indicate a spectrum of livelihood practices that offer practical content for vocational education and skills development.

Cultural heritage sites and religious landmarks, including temples, mosques, and monasteries, represent focal points of communal identity and spiritual life. These sites and associated rituals and festivals such as Dashain, Tihar, Shivaratri, and Buddha Purnima embody the intangible cultural heritage that shapes community values and social interactions. Their educational potential lies in fostering cultural awareness, ethical values, and communal participation, which are vital for holistic education.

Indigenous peoples and ethno-linguistic groups exhibit the community's cultural diversity, encompassing a range of castes, ethnicities, and religious affiliations. This plurality enriches the socio-cultural fabric and offers varied knowledge systems and traditions, which can be harnessed to create inclusive and culturally responsive curricula.

Indigenous knowledge systems, divided into physical, technical, and social knowledge, reveal sophisticated understandings of local ecology, agricultural practices, and social dynamics. For example, topographic knowledge and weather prediction exemplify community-based environmental intelligence, while technical skills such as transplanting, ploughing, and mapping demonstrate applied competencies essential for sustainable resource management. Social knowledge involving listening, discussing, and problem-solving underscores the communal transmission of information and collaborative learning processes.

Indigenous technologies and local skills further illustrate the community's capacity for innovation and adaptation. Craftsmanship in making ploughing equipment, mud walls, boats, and traditional household items indicates a wealth of context-specific technical knowledge. Skills such as fishing, pottery, dairy processing, traditional healing, and cultural performances (e.g., Biraha songs and Khadgodawa dance) provide rich content for integrating arts, cultural heritage, and livelihood education.

Collectively, these findings underscore the critical importance of recognizing and contextualizing local socio-cultural resources within formal educational frameworks. The diversity and depth of these resources

offer opportunities to enrich curriculum content, promote task-based and experiential learning, and strengthen the relevance of education to learners' socio-cultural realities. Harnessing this indigenous and local knowledge can foster practical skill development, cultural identity affirmation, and community empowerment, aligning education more closely with sustainable development goals and culturally responsive pedagogy.

A substantial abundance of socio-cultural resources was identified within the selected study area, demonstrating that these elements are far from incidental aspects of daily life. Rather, they are deeply embedded within the community's social structures, behavioral norms, and cultural practices. These resources simultaneously represent both challenges and solutions for local populations, reflecting a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between traditional knowledge systems and lived experience. Such resources, inherently adaptive and community-centered, constitute an essential framework through which individuals interpret their environment and navigate everyday life.

These socio-cultural resources encompass a broad spectrum of culturally situated knowledge, including language, classification systems, resource utilization practices, ritualistic behaviors, spiritual beliefs, and overarching worldviews. As noted by Boven and Morohashi (2002), such cultural complexes form the epistemological and pragmatic basis for local-level decision-making processes related to survival, environmental stewardship, and socio-cultural transformation. The participants' narratives and lived experiences underscored that these knowledge systems are richly contextualized and function as vital frameworks for community resilience, adaptation, and continuity.

Acknowledging the significant educational potential of these resources, this study critically examined their applicability and integration within secondary classroom instruction. The identified socio-cultural elements provide meaningful pedagogical opportunities to foster experiential learning, enhance critical thinking, promote cultural literacy, and facilitate context-sensitive problem-solving among students. When thoughtfully incorporated into school curricula, these resources can support the development of diverse cognitive and practical competencies. Accordingly, the study identified possible pedagogical applications of socio-cultural resources that span multiple instructional techniques and objectives aimed at skill development. These applications are summarized in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2. Possible Pedagogic Contextualization of Socio-cultural Resources

| **Available Socio-cultural Resources** | **Techniques for Contextualizing the Socio-cultural Resources** |
|---|---|
| Organizations/associations | Field visit, simulation, drama, project work, report writing, |
| Indigenous/ethno groups | Demonstration, resource person, interaction, group discussion |
| Industries | Project work, report writing, observation, demonstration |
| Occupations | Role play, simulation, drama, interaction, project work |
| Cultural heritages | Project work, report writing, observation, demonstration, field visit |
| Events and festivals | Role play, simulation, drama, interaction, project work |

| | |
|---|---|
| Seasonal celebrations | Role play, simulation, drama, interaction, project work |
| Public gatherings | Dramatization, interaction, discussion, group work |
| Tours | Excursion, project work, questioning, answering |
| Physical knowledge | Demonstrating, facilitating, group work, discussion, project work, observation, interaction, presentation |
| Technical knowledge | Field visit, demonstrating, facilitating, group work, discussion, project work, observation, presentation, interaction, problem solving |
| Social knowledge | Interaction discussion facilitation, group work, project work, observation, interaction, problem solving, question-answer, presentation |
| Local technologies | Demonstration, presentation, observation, field visit, participation, field work, modeling, realia, |
| Local skills | Demonstration, presentation, observation, field visit, participation, field work, modeling, realia, role play, dramatization, project work, problem- solving |

The findings summarized above reveal a significant potential for the contextualization of socio-cultural resources in classroom instruction through diverse and interactive pedagogical techniques. The identified instructional strategies ranging from field visits and demonstrations to simulations, dramatizations, and project-based learning reflect a constructivist and experiential learning philosophy that emphasizes student engagement, contextual relevance, and the development of practical skills.

The integration of local organizations and associations, such as youth clubs, women's groups, and occupational cooperatives, into the learning process through techniques like field visits, simulations, and report writing, offers students an authentic understanding of community structures and functions. These engagements enable learners to critically analyze real-world social institutions, develop communication skills, and reflect on community-based problem-solving processes. Similarly, using indigenous or ethno-cultural groups as educational resources through interactions, group discussions, and inviting resource persons promotes intercultural awareness, social inclusion, and respect for diversity. These practices help foster a culturally responsive learning environment aligned with the local demographic context.

Industries and occupations within the community such as handicrafts, agriculture, barbers, and artisans can be explored through observation, role play, project work, and demonstrations. These approaches allow learners to understand the economic foundations of their community while gaining insight into technical and vocational competencies. Incorporating such content into curriculum delivery connects education with livelihood realities, addressing the growing demand for skill-based education in Nepal's rural and semi-urban regions.

The contextual use of cultural heritages, events, and festivals through project work, dramatization, and role play enhances students' cultural literacy, creative expression, and emotional intelligence. These culturally embedded learning experiences serve as valuable tools for teaching values, ethics, history, and

religious diversity. Furthermore, the inclusion of seasonal celebrations and public gatherings in educational activities reinforces the connection between formal education and local life rhythms. Such contextual learning strategies promote a sense of belonging, community pride, and civic participation among learners.

Educational tours and excursions, including religious pilgrimages and community-organized trips, offer opportunities for reflective inquiry and experiential learning. Techniques such as questioning and reporting foster students' analytical abilities and their capacity to connect abstract knowledge with tangible experiences.

A particularly significant aspect of the study is the emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems categorized into physical, technical, and social knowledge which can be effectively utilized in classrooms through collaborative strategies like group work, discussions, interaction, and problem-solving. For instance, physical knowledge related to land, weather, and topography can be taught using real-world observation and guided inquiry, while technical knowledge such as farming practices, irrigation, and sequencing can be incorporated into science, social studies, and life skills curricula through hands-on experimentation and modeling. Social knowledge focused on interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and storytelling offers valuable input for language development, civic education, and ethical reasoning.

Similarly, local technologies and traditional skills such as pottery, weaving, medicinal plant use, and building techniques can be introduced into classroom settings through fieldwork, realia (use of real objects), modeling, and direct participation. These instructional methods not only validate community knowledge but also equip students with tangible skills and appreciation for local innovation and craftsmanship. When combined with dramatization, role play, and problem-solving tasks, these practices can cultivate creativity, critical thinking, and cooperative learning.

Overall, the findings underscore that socio-cultural resources, when appropriately contextualized and pedagogically integrated, provide fertile ground for enhancing classroom instruction. They allow for a departure from rigid textbook-based teaching towards a more participatory, inclusive, and skills-oriented pedagogy. This approach aligns with global discourses on culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) and locally grounded curriculum reform, as advocated by UNESCO and national educational policies in Nepal. Moreover, it reinforces the view that education must not only transmit knowledge but also transform learners by engaging them with the lived realities of their communities.

Integrating locally relevant socio-cultural resources into the secondary-level curriculum offers substantial potential to enhance contextualized and meaningful learning. These resources comprising community-based knowledge, cultural practices, social norms, and indigenous problem-solving strategies can significantly enrich both content and pedagogy. Aligned with the Curriculum Development Center's (CDC, 2010) vision to "Think Globally, Act Locally," this approach promotes the grounding of curriculum in local realities, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students.

However, a clear gap persists between policy intent and classroom practice. Despite theoretical support, socio-cultural resources remain largely absent from formal curricula and teaching methods. A key reason

for this disconnect is the lack of academic research documenting relevant local knowledge suitable for curricular integration. This absence has hindered the development of evidence-based strategies for educators and curriculum developers.

Moreover, teachers show limited motivation to adopt such practices, partly due to an assessment system that overlooks context-based instruction. Without formal recognition or evaluation, these pedagogical approaches are undervalued. Bridging this gap calls for targeted research, policy reform, and teacher training that emphasize the educational value of socio-cultural knowledge and support its practical application in classrooms.

**Conclusion**

The contextualization of locally available socio-cultural resources within secondary-level classroom instruction offers a transformative pathway for promoting relevant, inclusive, and skill-oriented education. These resources rooted in community knowledge systems, traditional practices, cultural institutions, and lived experiences serve as powerful pedagogical tools for bridging the gap between formal academic content and students' socio-cultural realities. Recognizing, interpreting, and mobilizing these resources not only validates indigenous knowledge but also fosters a deeper engagement with learning through authenticity, relevance, and participation.

The effective integration of socio-cultural resources can enhance students' cognitive, emotional, and practical competencies when supported by context-sensitive pedagogical approaches such as project-based learning, fieldwork, role play, observation, and experiential inquiry. These strategies encourage learners to engage critically with their environment, build local knowledge, and develop transferable problem-solving and life skills. For instance, subjects like Social Studies, Agriculture, Technical Education, and Business Studies in grades 8 to 10 offer natural entry points for embedding local content, skills, and practices into formal curriculum delivery.

Moreover, involving local practitioners, artisans, elders, and community members as resource persons allows students to access diverse knowledge systems and learn through real-world applications. Such practices not only promote inclusive education but also foster intergenerational knowledge exchange and appreciation for cultural heritage. Community excursions, observation of seasonal practices, and the analysis of indigenous technologies further support interdisciplinary, hands-on learning aligned with constructivist and experiential models.

Despite its pedagogical promise, the systematic integration of socio-cultural resources remains limited due to insufficient academic documentation, policy gaps, and lack of assessment mechanisms that recognize context-based learning. Addressing these barriers requires concerted efforts in research, curriculum reform, and teacher professional development to build frameworks that value and institutionalize local knowledge.

In conclusion, contextualizing socio-cultural resources in classroom instruction enriches the educational experience by making it more locally grounded, socially relevant, and practically meaningful. Aligned with the Curriculum Development Center's (CDC, 2010) vision to "Think Globally, Act Locally," this approach holds potential to cultivate socially conscious, technically skilled, and critically informed

citizens. As such, integrating socio-cultural resources is not simply an educational enhancement it is a pedagogical imperative for fostering equity, sustainability, and community empowerment within Nepal's evolving education system.

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