# Possibilities for Better Educating Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Nepal: A Constructivist Outlook

## Sharan Hari Shrestha[1], Basu Dev Kafle[2], Namraj Neupane[3], Kyounggun Han[4], Sirjana Thapa[5]

[1]Principal, Assistant Professor in Central Department of Education, -Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur Nepal
[2]Emeritus Professor, Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Nepal
[3]Assistant Professor, Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Nepal
[4]Professor &amp; Dean, Dept. of Special Education, Dankook University, South Korea
[5]Associate Professor, Department of Global Addiction Rehabilitation Counseling, Namseoul University, South Korea

**ABSTRACT:** The study is primarily concerned with finding possibilities for providing better education to students with intellectual disabilities studying in the special schools of Nepal. This is qualitative research carried out in an interpretive paradigm followed by a descriptive research design. Three special schools for students with intellectual disabilities from three separate districts of Kathmandu Valley were taken as samples by purposive sampling method. Three head teachers from these schools were automatically selected and six teachers from purposive sampling. Two experts were selected by using the convenience sampling method. Thus, 11 respondents took part in the study. Interview questions were prepared, validated by the experts' review, and administered to the respondents to gather data. A Document study was also carried out to collate information. Thus, obtained data from these sources were triangulated to ensure the reliability of the study. Study results depicted that there are immense possibilities to provide better education catering to the prevailing challenges of teaching students with intellectual disabilities. Possibilities are high when guiding documents are prepared, qualified teachers are recruited, there are several special education experts, critical masses take their roles in the society, home-school collaboration is adequately practiced, providing inclusive education or introducing inclusive special education settings in the schools.

**KEY WORDS:** Intellectual disabilities, Possibilities, Teaching adaptive skills, Constructivism

## INTRODUCTION

In the education history of Nepal, the National Education System Plan (NESP) realized the importance of education for people with disabilities (Ministry of Education, 1971). Hence, the plan was committed to tackling irrelevant and disorganized varieties of education that existed in the country during that time. Since then, there have been different efforts from government, non-government, and private entities to provide education for people with disabilities in Nepal. Special Education Policy 1996 came into effect to provide special needs education by creating an environment to provide special education, increasing social awareness, and making independent people (Nepal Law Commission, 1996) with different types of disabilities in Nepal.

Students with intellectual disabilities are generally defined as having sub-average intellectual functioning resulting in limited abilities to conduct normal activities of daily living (Harris, 2010). Intellectual disability of the children can be the result of a disorder that is manifested into abnormal brain development. Similarly, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) defines intellectual/developmental disabilities as having significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, deficits in adaptive behavior, and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects the educational performance of the child. Because of their unique aspects of intellectual and physical manifestation, they need different levels of support for diverse features. Therefore, different groups of students with intellectual disability need different levels of support (Harris, 2010; Tylor, Richards, & Brady, 2005), for example; students with mild intellectual disabilities need intermittent support, moderate intellectual disabilities need limited support, severe intellectual disabilities need extensive supports and profound intellectual disabilities need pervasive supports.

# Possibilities for Better Educating Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Nepal: A Constructivist Outlook

Many children with mental and physical disabilities study in separate schools or classrooms and still do not receive adequate educational support services, instructional materials, and care for quality education. Schools in Nepal suffer from the dearth of physical accessibility, trained teachers, availability of educational materials, and other indispensable supports (Jung & Niure, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2011). In the year 2017, Nepal adopted the Disability Rights Act and the Inclusive Education Policy for people with disabilities. These policies urge to provide education for children with disabilities free of cost and without any discrimination in their communities (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Despite this policy and provisions for people with disabilities, there is only a small number of special schools for children with intellectual disabilities in the country. Furthermore, Human Rights Watch (2018) indicated that a large number of children with intellectual disabilities are served in community-based rehabilitation centers conducted by non-government organizations (NGOs) and also a large segment of such children have been devoid of any educational and other supports.

Many children with intellectual disabilities adjust well and comfortably in society while many children with severe intellectual disability have several impairments that require lifelong care and support. According to Heward (2013), and Kirk, Gallagher, & Coleman (2015), students with intellectual disabilities need help with adaptive skills in living, work, play, and communication, especially in expressive language skills. However, they can benefit from supportive and effective vocational training and thus adapt to their community lives (Tylor, Richards, & Brady, 2005; Friend, 2006). Moreover, they are often capable of undertaking unskilled or semi-skilled work when they are well-supported guided, and directed.

Human capability is the function of several factors such as intellectual ability, adaptive skills, opportunities to participate in school and social contexts, health status, and environments of nurturing and upbringing of the child (American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2012). The overarching term to represent what a physical human body can perform worldly activities encompassing a certain extent of knowledge, skills, and dispositions as a whole is 'human functioning'. Sometimes, the skills associated with human functioning are also referred to as 'functional skills' 'life skills' or 'independent living skills' (Heward, 2013). The appropriate educational setting can enhance the learning of such skills in the children. Teaching students with intellectual disabilities is a challenging job but there are ample possibilities to improve instruction for those students. Possibilities should be found in the structure of education, curriculum, people's perspective, educational setting, and redefining the role of parents and school family.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Increasing access and opportunities for education for all children, especially for those with a disability, socially and economically vulnerable is a matter of growing concern across the world. Generally, special education is provided for such children to address their unique needs. Special education is a distinctive provision with specially designed instruction that includes education for pupils with disabilities and disorders (Farrell, 2012; Heward, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2011). Therefore, special education is important also for students with intellectual disabilities because education is considered a subject of basic human rights in almost every country in the world. Furthermore, the Constitution of Nepal (2015) also declared that every citizen shall have access to basic education which is free and compulsory. Also, the citizens shall have free education up to a higher level. The Constitution of Nepal has also encompassed that people with disabilities shall receive free education up to a higher level as provided for by law (Nepal Law Commission, 2015). Hence, the Constitution of Nepal envisaged a just and equitable society ensuring social justice in education.

Several Community-Based Rehabilitation Programs (CBRs) have been conducted by government and non-government organizations as leading models of intervention in Nepal. Furthermore, many students with intellectual disabilities have been integrated into mainstream schools; many of them are placed in Community-Based Rehabilitations (CBRs) (Crishna & Prajapati, 2008). Key issues are to build awareness and understanding of ID, development of care and rehabilitation programs, and a system to provide livelihood, employment, and social security for adult people with intellectual disabilities. The lack of educational resources and their mismanagement are the most talked about subjects challenging for internal efficiency of the education system of Nepal.

In this scenario, providing education for children with intellectual disabilities is more challenging (Harris, 2010). Challenges in terms of preparing and effectively implementing curriculum, identifying specific instructional methods for specific skills, preparation of educational resources, managing physical infrastructures, etc. are prevailing in the education system of Nepal. According to Shrestha, Han, and Neupane (2020), there are several challenges such as improvement of special education curriculum, recruiting qualified teachers, strengthening home-school collaboration, preparation of actual IEP, development of positive thinking in parents, enhancing support service networks, strengthening school management, and creating disable-friendly environments in school for effective teaching to students with intellectual disabilities in special schools of Nepal.

**Possibilities for Better Educating Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Nepal: A Constructivist Outlook**

In practice, there is no proper focus of the government on the education of such children where their families are living in despair and agony. Many students with intellectual disabilities are attending special schools where education for them is limited to learning very basic skills related to personal care and daily living. According to Jung & Niure (2017), despite having many policies and programs on special needs/inclusive education in the country, there are many barriers to receiving quality education for children with all types of disabilities. Every challenge comes up with the solutions where ample possibilities to cope with exist. In this context, this study is an attempt to find out the ways to overcome the challenges and provide quality instruction to students with intellectual disabilities in Nepal.

**Objective and Research Question**

Every problem has a solution and this article also posits some working possibilities for challenges prevailing in teaching students with intellectual disabilities. Coping strategies for the challenges of teaching to students with intellectual disabilities help to find possibilities for better learning outcomes. In this context, the objective of this study was to find out possibilities or ways forward to overcome the instructional challenges for students with intellectual disabilities. Therefore, the study posits questions like, what possibilities exist in meeting the educational needs of students by overcoming prevailing challenges?

**METHODS**

A qualitative paradigm (Danzin & Lincoln, 2011) was used in this study and followed a descriptive research design (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). 14 special schools are operating for students with intellectual disabilities out of 32 special schools in Nepal (Ministry of Education, 2017). Three special schools of Kathmandu Valley (one school from each Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur District) were selected by using a purposive sampling method (Wiersma and Jurs, 2009). All the head teachers, teachers of special schools in Nepal, and experts of special education working in the country were taken as the population of the study.

There 3 head teachers (head teachers from each school) were automatically selected as respondents and 6 teachers (2 from each school) and 2 experts were selected by purposive sampling method (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Altogether 11 respondents were selected for the study where all the respondents have been engaged in activities related to special education; especially in teaching students with intellectual disabilities. In that sample, schools are established for teaching students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. Although there were no divisions for distinct grades for the students, rather the students were categorized as first, second, and third level according to their ages as indicated by the special education curriculum. The following table depicts the demographic information of the respondents:

**Table 1: Demographics of the study**

| Item | Sex | | Age | | Training received on special education | | | Teaching experiences (Yrs) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | F | 20-40 (yrs.) | 40-60 (yrs.) | Less than 10 days | 10 days to 1 month | 1 to 5 months | Less than 2 yrs | More than 2 yrs |
| Head teachers | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Teachers | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Experts | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 0 | 2 |

Separate interview guidelines (Creswell & Poth, 2018) were developed and administered to the head teachers, experts, and teachers respectively. Interview questions were prepared regarding a book related to a special school for students with intellectual disabilities in South Korea. The validity and reliability of the research tools were ensured by consultation and revision with peers and experts in special education. Document study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) was another prominent method used for enriching data. The document study was done to support the data collected from the interview process. The information obtained from the document study helped triangulate the data to increase the reliability of the study.

An ethical issue in qualitative research is addressed by respondents' consent (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007) which was received from the respondents in advance. Most of the interviews were conducted during leisure periods of the head teachers and teachers. Some of the interviews were also taken through telephone calls. However, the time allocated for each participant was similar. Documents study were focused on finding the existing situation of special education in Nepal and providing insights for the future improvements. The interview process was conducted for 20 minutes for each respondent and took almost two days to complete collecting data. Documents were reviewed after the data collection process was completely over. Hence, all the data were triangulated (Kaul, 2009; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. The data were sorted out

and categorized to form different sub-themes. Similar sub-themes were grouped under one major theme. Thus, the study incorporates data obtained from multiple sources (Creswell, 2012), and major themes were generated. Finally, rigorous interpretation and analysis of the data were carried out to find meaningful results.

**RESULTS**

Possibilities are always open to solve problems because of changes that have occurred as a result of human efforts or environmental demands or the demands of the time. Education these days has become the subject of human rights almost in all the nations of the world. Systematic efforts of the government are further boosted by the international and national whim of the human rights concept and also the demands of contemporary societies. This is because education has been conceptualized from the sense of humanity, quality of life, and the development of the human personality. Furthermore, it is taken as an instrument to achieve the objectives of the social, economic, and political development of a nation. Therefore, human civilization is always tending to seek better education to make their future secure and more prosperous. In this course, possibilities are explored, potentials are tapped out, and future directions are determined.

**Detailed Guidelines for Special Schools**

Special education is a system of education where every intervention and instructional procedure is carried out by following due process. Education and support services provided to an individual student are guided by standard operating procedures. The guiding documents are commonly related to screening, diagnosis, eligibility determination, and special education planning for their future transition. In the case of Nepal, except for an Inclusive Education Policy and Special Education Operation Guidelines 2014, no other such standard regulations are formulated. There are many weaknesses and dilemmas between existing policies and practices. A head teacher said; "*We are confused about how the new inclusive education policy is going to address the problems of schools like ours' running in special education setting?*" [Head Teacher of School A]. The concern of the head teacher is quite relevant in the case of Nepal. Regarding the recently enacted inclusive education policy, some people thought the policy was a great achievement in the field of special education on one hand, and on the other hand, it has created confusion about the survival of special schools. However, the present policy provides an opportunity to bring special education to a new height. An expert viewed this scenario as,

> *The special education sector in Nepal still needs more policies on providing support services, teacher qualification and certification, home-school collaboration, networking of services, parental responsibilities, screening, diagnosis, eligibility determination, intervention, etc. to make this area more secure, organized, and well managed* [Expert 1].

Here are many aspects left and yet to be addressed by the policies. The educational rights of the students ensured by the constitution of Nepal and other related laws could not be provided in practice due to insufficient rules and regulations.

**Recruiting Qualified Teachers**

Quality education is possible only when the teachers are qualified, trained, and committed to their professional development. The scarcity of qualified teachers in schools is a major problem in the education system in most developing countries including Nepal (Human Rights Watch, 2011). In Nepal, there are challenges to classroom diversity and only one-third of the teachers are knowledgeable about diversity management (Regmi, 2017). Regarding this, one expert said; "*There are problems with under-qualification, untrained, and inexperienced teachers in the schools including special schools of Nepal*" [Expert 2]. Before a couple of years, there was an extreme shortage of teachers majoring in special education in the country. But these days, many students have graduated with bachelor's and master's degrees from Tribhuvan University of Nepal majoring in special education; and now are available in the market. A head teacher opined; "*If the government initiated to hire these graduates and recruit in the special schools, it will take no time to change the stories of the special schools*" [Head Teacher of School C]. The above statement is true so far because these graduates are equipped with updated education, educational policies, knowledge, and skills regarding special and inclusive education.

**Producing Special Education Experts**

Special education is the services to be provided, and not the place (Heward, 2013), and it is a team game. Therefore, there are many stakeholders associated with the school to provide education and services effectively. Expertise is required for every organization to collaborate, negotiate, build networks, communicate with other organizations, etc. Experts provide specialized services to students with special educational needs and also transfer skills to teachers and other paraprofessionals. Unfortunately, there are very few experts in the field of special education in the country. In this regard, one of the teachers said;

**Possibilities for Better Educating Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Nepal: A Constructivist Outlook**

*In Nepal, there were only a handful number of special education experts to provide expertise and guidance to the special schools. There was a very limited number of people who could make discourse on the issues of disability, special education, inclusive education, and educational rights of the students* [Teacher 2 of School A].

These days, the scenario has been changed. Many people completing doctoral degrees in special education from different universities (5 people graduated last year and 1 this year from CWNU, for example) around the world have been actively doing work in this field. Many special education graduates who can influence policy formulation are working in different positions in the civil service of Nepal. Regarding this, one of the teachers said,

*It is our pleasure to have many experts in special education graduate from South Korea this year. Now, I am very hopeful for the rapid development of special education in Nepal because they are providing us with fruitful guidance in conducting the special education process* [Teacher 1 of School C].

As told by the teacher, there seems a great possibility to develop special education by providing training and expert services for the teachers who are teaching students with intellectual disabilities in Nepal.

**Better Home-School and Interagency Collaboration**

Collaboration is a process or association of people who work together to address problems and deliver outcomes that cannot be achieved effectively when working alone. It yields greater benefits by the combination of various efforts and expertise by bringing harmony and increased efficiency. Collaborative practice involves community agencies working together to achieve shared goals. Collaboration and interagency collaboration helps in bridging the expertise, resources, and values of the organizations. It has been a matter of great concern in Nepal how collaboration with parents and other agencies can be enhanced to provide better support services to students with disabilities, especially to students with intellectual disabilities. A teacher and a head teacher had similar opinions;

*We cannot clap with a single hand. Just like this, collaboration needs at least two parties. Our school has been collaborating with parents and other agencies like teaching hospitals and volunteering organizations which provide their services on some occasions. The school has been making its utmost efforts, but there are problems with parents' participation and other agencies that rarely have time to collaborate with our school* [Teacher 1 of School B; Head Teacher of School C].

Teachers of the schools were claiming that their schools are doing their best to collaborate with the parents and other agencies to get support for better delivery of services to the students. It is true to some extent that awareness of the relationship between disability and society has been raised among parents and philanthropic organizations. Therefore, the organizations are extending their services among different walks of people in the society.

**Emergence of Critical Mass for Responsible Society**

The role of community in school improvement is a long-discussed issue in the field of education. Education cultivates values in people through curriculum and methods of teaching. There exist relationships between individuals, interest groups, and society. Society is dynamic, and its dynamics depend upon the type of people living in the society. Nepalese societies are continuously changing because of the growing number of such critical masses of people. Such masses are intervening in the broad areas of societies to make these entities right-based, accessible, inclusive, and more efficient. Regarding the role of critical mass in improving school an expert and a head teacher had overlapping ideas;

*These days, people in society are more concerned about the activities of our school and other social problems as well. Sometimes people themselves initiate dialogue with government organizations on behalf of the school, try to mediate between the school and other agencies, generate funds to support the school, come to volunteer, help our students, and make school staff aware of our duties* [Expert 1; Head Teacher of School A].

The above statement of the head teacher is very important in the sense of how enthusiastic they are to make a better future for their children. Except for some parents of students with intellectual disabilities, many others are critical and concerned about improving the adaptability of their children at any cost they have to bear. The rise of critical mass in the society informs about some positive change in the society. As stated above by the head teacher, there have been ongoing debates on increasing education quality in public schools in Nepal. Special schools are no more exception to this debate.

**Provision of Inclusive Education for Students with ID**

In the study, most of the participants agreed that providing inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities is the most concerned issue in Nepal. Two teachers and an expert had the same opinion "*It is essential to act according to the intent of inclusive education policy and change all special education provision into inclusive education. In an inclusive environment, students with ID can better learn social skills*" [Teacher 2 of School C; Teacher 1 of School B; & Expert 2]. From the perspective of students' right to participation and socialization, inclusive classrooms are better at developing communication and social skills in students with ID.

**Possibilities for Better Educating Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Nepal: A Constructivist Outlook**

Because they get a chance to interact with their normal counterparts. Regarding the possibilities of providing inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities, a head teacher said,

> There are ample opportunities and possibilities to provide inclusive education in Nepal because we already have an inclusive education policy, concerned government organizations already replaced the word 'special' with 'inclusive' in their names, and activists are orienting and training the people more with inclusive education. I think the time has come to start practices for inclusive education because the goal of "Education for All" (EFA) is to make our education system inclusive [Head Teacher of School B].

It is true that if we see the possibilities from a policy perspective, there are a lot of possibilities to provide inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities. Adaptive skills can be taught better in inclusive environments than in special education settings. Inclusive education is more cost-effective than special education in the long run. It is said that inclusive education provision is costly but exclusion costs more. This means inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities is one of the best options in the education system.

**Introducing Inclusive Special Education Practice**

In Nepal, three types viz. general, special, and integrated educational settings are in practice. The inclusive education policy is in action these days and inclusive education for students with disabilities is also the goal of the present education system. Achieving full inclusion in the education system is not easy for developing countries like Nepal. In this context, some of the participants suggested that it would be better especially for students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities, if there was an education model that is a blend of special and inclusive education systems carrying characteristics of both special and inclusive education systems. While suggesting bringing possible change in special education, a head teacher and a teacher opined a similar view;

> It would be the best solution if all the special education schools and other infrastructures for special education could be changed into inclusive education. Otherwise, we can practice special education; especially for students with moderate and severe intellectual disability, within inclusive settings where characteristics of both special and inclusive education are incorporated. In this provision, students with ID get the opportunity to interact with normal students, learn social skills easily, and feel themselves as part of society [Head Teacher of School C; Teacher 2 of School C].

In a similar vein, one of the teachers and an expert expressed a similar view;

> I don't believe that there is a possibility of full inclusion for all types of children in general education settings. How can such moderate and severe children study together with normal peers? Full inclusion is good to hear, but difficult to practice in a developing country like Nepal. Rather, we should search new system of education where special and inclusive education could be practiced simultaneously [Teacher 1 of School C; Expert 1].

The participants' opinions were similar to the notion of Hornby (2014) who proposed a model of inclusive special education that incorporated good practices of special education in Finland and characteristics of inclusive education. Taking the suggestions of the participants into consideration, the researcher searched for a similar model that could be fitted into the Nepalese education system. Hornby's model of inclusive special education model could be a possible solution where students with intellectual disabilities could receive specialized services in an inclusive setting. Thus, learning knowledge as well as adaptive skills of the students with ID would be better in such a system.

**DISCUSSION**

Children with intellectual disabilities naturally have limited intellectual capacity and therefore, they have little chance to do intellectual work. However, they can perform skill-based tasks when they are instructed by special education experts, therapists, and well-trained teachers. Therefore, the efforts must be focused on teaching them adaptive behavior, and functional skills. Having many challenges to provide them with quality education, there are several possibilities too to instruct quality education for learning several life skills to students with intellectual disabilities.

As mentioned earlier, guiding documents like IEP, appropriate curriculum, teacher's guide book, books with picture vocabularies, etc. are essential to teaching adaptive behavior to students with intellectual disabilities. IEPs are usually developed for students with special needs by a team of professionals and family members (Armstrong, 2009). According to Shrestha, Jung, Niure, and Ha (2019), IEPs uniquely focus on a child's strengths and weaknesses, suitable pedagogy and instructional activities, resource persons to be involved, include measurable goals, and also child's learning environment, etc. but schools of Nepal lack actual IEPs. Friend (2006) stated that guiding documents may be instructional or policy-related; and they provide modes and methods of interaction, networking of services, collaboration, and many more among teachers, students, and parents. In the sample schools, IEPs are prepared but these IEPs did not contain essential elements for effectively guiding the teaching learning of intellectually disabled

students. The guiding documents should provide an idea of how learning becomes a process of constructing knowledge, acquiring skills, and changing behavior. Constructivist argues that knowledge construction is possible through personal experiences, and the experiences come from the systematic implementation of well-written guiding documents (Prichard & Woollard, 2010). There are a lot of possibilities to provide effective adaptive skills or related life skills to students with intellectual disabilities if there are an adequate number of effective guiding documents that can provide clear guidelines to the schools and teachers.

From the literature review in the study, it was revealed that the scarcity of quality teachers in schools has been creating challenges for the effective delivery of instruction to students with special needs. Teachers teaching such students must be well equipped with knowledge, skills, and good disposition. Unfortunately, in many cases, such qualities as training and qualification are lacking in the teachers (Jung & Shrestha, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2011). In a study in South Korea, Park (2014) stated that special education teachers have been criticized for their low implementation level, which is often considered to result from teacher negligence or fault. A study by Jung and Neupane (2017) stated that underqualified teachers cannot provide the results expected by the goals of education, and this is also the case in the Nepalese context. As mentioned by constructivists, More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) (Prichard & Woollard, 2011) can provide better help to students with intellectual disabilities for learning. Effective participation, and cooperation among the teachers, school administrators, parents, and government agencies can help in creating a better atmosphere for better learning. Most importantly, recruiting qualified teachers is the 'must do' job by school administration.

In addition to qualified teachers, other professionals such as psychologists, doctors, nurses, social workers, parents, etc. who work closely with school administration to educate students with intellectual disabilities should be well aware of nature, nurture, needs, and expectations of the students. A very small number of experts in this field are working these days in Nepal. Social constructivists assume that learner's cognitive skills are boosted by applying the apprenticeship method (Prichard & Woollard, 2011), i.e. through presentation, interactions, description, explanations, and demonstration of acceptable behavior in the case of students with intellectual disabilities. Without expertise, dealing with students with intellectual disabilities is not effective because the constructivist approach seeks to create a social situation where services are interlinked to provide the best solution to instructional problems.

Constructivists agree that students with intellectual disabilities need direct instruction by teachers but a teacher's sole job is not only teaching to the students but also to collaborate with the service-providing agencies and parents of the students (Heward, 2013). The study result revealed that because of the limited authority of the school administration, there was a problem in directly dealing with supportive organizations for better collaboration. In a study by Jung and Neupane (2018), it is enunciated that the lack of effective home-school collaboration in Nepalese schools, the issue of quality education has been challenged. Therefore, to make the school supportive and classroom constructive for learning, home-school, and interagency collaboration is necessary. Home-school collaboration is very important in the case of teaching students with intellectual disabilities. Suryani (2013) stated that through social learning, children can learn to develop social concern and sensitivity. In addition to this, they can develop their autonomy of learning and learning through experience. Home-school collaboration makes parents more responsible for laying the foundation of children's learning, basic values, moral education, and basic social learning. Constructivist emphasizes active learning and active learning comes in a social context (Algahtani, 2017); therefore, the parent's role is very important in creating a social environment for effective learning. Similarly, interagency collaboration strengthens the schools in terms of expertise, resources, and other necessities for a constructive learning environment.

In Nepal, the majority of people do not keep appropriate information about the importance and rights to education for students with intellectual disabilities. Because of the traditional way of thinking, they still do not believe that the majority of children with ID can learn, earn, and contribute to their societies. The only thing they need is quality education through constructivist pedagogy. The constructivist way of learning fosters criticality in learning (Prichard & Woollard, 2011), and such learning is promoted by a mass of people with critical thinking. A small critical mass of people is advocating and working voluntarily for the education of people with disability in the study area. Such critical mass is a small group of thoughtful and committed teachers, parents, and other stakeholders working to change schools and societies. Teachers of ID students need to be a part of such a mass of people that they can get support for their efforts at establishing critical inquiry. Critical mass starts with a core of students that the teacher brings on the side and empowers as the catalyst for change (McCaskill, Nd.). Therefore, critical mass is a change agent in the society which acts as a watchdog to activities of the social institutions like schools. The gradual rise in critical mass providing thrust to change schools in Nepalese societies are evident for immense possibilities in providing education for the students with intellectual disabilities.

Recently, a paradigm in special education has been shifted to inclusive education in Nepal from the perspective of the new Inclusive Education Policy for the People with Disability 2017. The policy has been in action for two years but the students with intellectual disabilities are studying in special schools in special classroom settings. The new policy has opened the way to serve students with

intellectual disabilities in inclusive educational settings (Neupane, 2020). And also, integrated schools are now open to practice inclusive education. However, providing inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities is not free of challenges. Wehmeyer and Shogren (2017) emphasized on continuous efforts of school personnel and incorporated evidence-based practices in general schools to provide inclusive education. Similarly, DJK and Balakrishnan (2012) mentioned some challenges like improving curriculum, assessment-based placement, and placing students in inclusive classrooms based on experiences and maturity, etc. are some ways to provide inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities. Inclusive classrooms are more interactive, lively, and full of learning opportunities. Thus, education for students with intellectual disabilities can be provided truly in an inclusive classroom as recommended by constructivists.

Often there is a dilemma about providing inclusive education to students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. There used to be a question mark while thinking about inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities. Questions often used to emerge such as; whether students with intellectual disabilities can study together with normal students in general classrooms. In Nepal, students with disabilities are studying in special, integrated, or general schools. Most of the moderate and severe intellectually disabled students are enrolled in special schools which are regulated by Inclusive Education Policy 2017. To overcome such a dilemma in such an educational setting, a reference from Hornby's (2014) "Inclusive Special Education Model" which incorporates positive aspects of special and inclusive educational perspectives. In this setting, students with intellectual disabilities get services through collaboration between mainstream and special schools. They can have their study both in inclusive classrooms as well as self-contained classrooms. This provides them ample opportunities to study in a social context as well as in a resourceful classroom. This also allows the teachers to practice constructivist perspectives in learning.

**CONCLUSION**

Several challenges exist in providing quality education to students with intellectual disabilities in Nepal. Students with intellectual disabilities need education that can develop their cognitive abilities and adaptive behavioral skills aiming to make them able for their independent living. Despite several challenges, there are abundant possibilities to cope with the challenges and provide better education to students with intellectual disabilities. It is a well-known fact that the special schools of Nepal are going through many impediments to attaining the goal of education for students with ID. Therefore, the preparation of necessary guiding documents, recruitment of qualified teachers, increasing number of special education experts, the role of critical mass in society, the practice of better home-school collaboration, practicing inclusive education, etc. are essential for obtaining better results in providing education to the students with intellectual disabilities in Nepal.

**Implications of the Study**

The study primarily seeks to find solutions for the existing challenges in educating students with intellectual disabilities. Providing education to students with intellectual disabilities means enhancing their intellectual and adaptive capabilities to a level where they can lead independent lives. Teaching students with intellectual disabilities is quite technical, and one should think beyond the box of teaching methods that are generally applied to normal students. Therefore, the study provides insight to the concerned researcher, organizations working in related fields, government agencies, and other interested people. Teachers and students engaged in this field also can take advantage of this study work.

**REFERENCES**

1) AAIDD (2012). *User's guide on intellectual disability: Definitions, classifications, and systems of supports* (11th ed.). USA: Authors

2) Algahtani, F. (2017). *Teaching students with intellectual disabilities: constructivism or behaviorism?* Educational Research and Reviews, 12(21), 1031-1035.

3) Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (2007*). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to the theory and methods*. Pearson Education, Inc.

4) Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (5th ed.). London.

5) Creswell J. W. & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative research inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th edition). USA: Sage Publication.

6) Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson Education Inc.

7) Crishna, B. a& Prajapati, S. B. (2008). Comparative policy brief: Status of intellectual disabilities in Nepal. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities, 5*(2), Wiley Online Library

8) Denzin, N. K. & Loncoln, Y. S. (2011). *The sage handbook of qualitative research*. (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

9) DJK, C. & Balakrishnan, J. (2012). *Inclusive education for students with intellectual disability*. Disability, CBR, & Inclusive Development, 23(2), 81-93. Doi 10.5463/DCID.v23i2.111.

10) Farrell, M. (2009). *Foundations of special education: An introduction*. New York and London: Wiley and Sons.

11) Friend, M. (2006). *Special education: Contemporary perspectives for school professionals*. USA: Pearson Education Inc.

12) Harris, J. C. (2010). *Intellectual disability: A guide for families and professionals*. USA: Oxford University Press.

13) Heward, L. W. (2013). *Exceptional children: An introduction to special education*. New York: Pearson Education Inc.

14) Hornby, G. (2014*). Inclusive special education: Evidence-based practices for children with special needs and disabilities*. New York: Springer.

15) Human Rights Watch (2019). *World Report 2019*. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org /sites/default/files/world_report_download/hrw_world_report_2019.pdf.

16) Human Rights Watch, (2011). *Futures Stolen: Barriers to education for children with disabilities in Nepal*. New York, USA.

17) Human Rights Watch, (2018). *Nepal: Barriers to inclusive education, segregation, lack of accessibility for children with disabilities*. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/ news/2018/09 /13/nepal-barriers-inclusive-education.

18) IDEA (2004). *IDEA parent guide: A comprehensive guide to your rights and responsibilities under the IDEA (2004)*. New York: National Center for Learning Disabilities.

19) Jung, D. Y. & Neupane, N. R. (2018). Teacher-related impeding factors for implementing inclusive education policy in Nepal. *The Journal of Inclusive Education*, 13(1), 159-178.

20) Jung, D. Y. & Neupane, N. R. (2019). Unveiling the challenges of home-school collaboration in special schools of Nepal. *The Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14(1), 57-79.

21) Jung, D. Y. & Niure D. P. (2017). Barriers to inclusive education. *The Korean Journal of Special Education*. Retrieved from https://www.happycampus.com/paper-doc/22428823/.

22) Kaul, L. (2009). *Methodology of educational research* (4ᵗʰ ed.). New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.

23) Kirk, S., Gallagher, J., & Coleman, M. R. (2015). *Educating Exceptional Children* (14ᵗʰ edition). USA: Cengage Learning.

24) Kirk, S., Gallagher, J., Coleman, M. R., & Anastasiow, N. (2012). *Educating Exceptional Children* (13ᵗʰ ed.). Wadsworth.

25) McCaskill, W. (nd). *Critical mass: A strategy for the classroom from hell*. Retrieved from https://playistheway.com.au/img/ cms/Critical%20Mass-A%20Strategy%20For%20 The%20Class room%20From% 20Hell.pdf.

26) Merriam, S., & Tisdell, E. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. USA: John Wiley and Sons Inc.

27) Ministry of Education (1971). *The National Educational System Plan 1971-76*. Government of Nepal: Author.

28) Ministry of Education (2015). Reference material for intellectual disability. CDC, Bhaktapur: Author.

29) Ministry of Education (2017*). Inclusive education policy for people with disability*. Retrieved from file:///E:/Education%20policies%20of%20Nepal/Inclusive%20Education%20 Policy%20for%20PWD, %202017.pdf.

30) National Centre for Educational Development (2015). *Disability and education for children with disabilities: Teachers' self-study material for basic training on disabilities*. Bhaktapur: Author.

31) Nepal Law Commission (2017). *The act on the rights of people with disabilities 2017*. Retrieved from file:///E:/Education%20policies%20of%20Nepal/Act%20on%20the%20 people% 20with%20disabIlity, %202017.pdf.

32) Neupane, N. R. (2020). *Exploring realities, challenges, and possibilities for instructing adaptive skills to the students with intellectual disabilities in Nepal. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation*. Changwon National University, South Korea.

33) Park, Y. (2014). *Analyzing dilemmas encountered by Korean special school teachers for students with intellectual disabilities in implementing transition services: A qualitative analysis based on the dilemma's framework*. South Korea: University of Iowa.

34) Pritchard, A. & Woollard, J. (2010). *Psychology for the classroom: Constructivism and social learning*. New York: Routledge.

35) Regmi, N. R. (2017). *Inclusive education in Nepal: From theory to practice*. Germany: Ludwig-Maximilians University.

36) Shrestha S. H., Jung, D. Y., Niure, D. P., & Ha (2019). The ways forward for improving services to educating children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in Nepal. *Journal of Emotional & Behavioral disorders, 35*(3). 97-114.

37) Shrestha, S. H., Neupane, N. R., & Han, K. (2020). Challenges of Effective instructions to the students with intellectual disabilities in special schools of Nepal. *The Journal of Special Education: Theory and Practice, 21*(2). 167-189.

38) Suryani, A. (2013). Home-school interaction: Remodeling a framework of parents-teachers relationship for supporting students' learning. *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora, 6*(1), 1-19.

39) Wehmeyer, M. L., & Shogren, K. A. (2017). *Handbook of research-based practices for educating students with intellectual disability*. New York: Routledge.