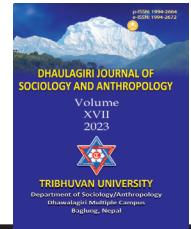


Gold Open AccessFull contents are available in NepJOL(<http://www.nepjol.info/index.php/DSAJ>)[DOAJ \(https://doaj.org/toc/1994-2672\)](https://doaj.org/toc/1994-2672)**Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology**

Exploring the Causes of Squatting in the Balkhu Corridor of Kathmandu

- *Bala Ram Acharya***Article Info**

Received: September 5, 2023

Revised received: April 17, 2024

Accepted: May 16, 2024

Available online: June 30, 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/dsaj.v18i01.67516>

Ratnarajya Laxmi Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Abstract

Squatting persists primarily in urban areas due to fulfil housing needs and lack of viable livelihood options for marginalized people. In Nepal, it is generally seen as a combination of economic and political factors. The study aims to assess the poverty levels among the squatters in the Balkhu Corridor of Kathmandu and to investigate the causes of squatting as a manifestation of urban poverty. The research utilizes a qualitative approach. The results indicate that squatters in the Balkhu Corridor lack options, resources, support, and government aid meant for the homeless. The research shows that landlessness is not the main reason for squatting among migrant families in urban areas. Instead, the financial strain of meeting housing, education, healthcare, and other essential needs exacerbates the difficulties faced by these families, ultimately pushing them towards squatting. Nepal's ruling and opposition parties utilize squatter communities for political gain. The flow of squatting in urban regions of Nepal can be linked to notable historical occurrences such as the People's Movement in the 1990s and the internal armed conflict spanning from 1996 to 2006.

Keywords: informal settlement, migration, political squatting, poverty, squatter

Introduction

Squatting remains a significant issue worldwide, especially in urban regions, due to the expensive land prices, high rental expenses, and more attractive income opportunities available in the informal sector for those living in poverty in cities (Martinez, 2019). Despite a decrease in the proportion of squatting in overall urban populations, it still persists considerably. For instance, in 2000, nearly 39.6% of urban residents globally resided in slums, a figure that decreased to 35.5% in 2005 and was projected to have further decreased to 29.2% in 2018 (World Bank, 2020). Davis (1965) has grouped formal and informal housing under the same category. However, it is essential to differentiate between "slums" and "informal housing," as these terms can be misleading and

occasionally used interchangeably. Squatter settlements in Kathmandu have grown significantly, from 17 in 1985 to 40 in 2010, primarily along river banks on marginal government-owned land, with nearly 7% of Nepal's urban population residing there. (UN-Habitat, 2003). Nepal's history, including the People's Movement and the internal Maoist armed conflict, has indeed played a role in exacerbating squatting in major cities. Political upheavals can result in displacement and migration to urban areas, leading to an influx of marginalized populations seeking refuge in informal settlements. Squatting, a sort of slum particularly noticeable in Nepal's riverbanks, is the process by which poor groups infringe on public and private open land, owing mostly to the high costs of urban life (Shrestha, 2013). An individual or a large group may illegally squat openly or secretly. Squatter communities



This work is licensed under the <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> © Bala Ram Acharya
Email: balaram_72@yahoo.com

differ significantly from slum to slum because they lack fundamental land rights (Little, 2012). Rural poverty, landlessness, and wage differentials drive migration to Nepal, fueled by the Maoist insurgency and increased informal settlements (World Bank, 2007). Prices for land, housing, and rent have rapidly increased in the Kathmandu Valley as people from all around have moved there in search of jobs, healthcare, education, and other amenities. Nepal, particularly Kathmandu Valley, witnessed a surge in the real estate sector in the past few decades, notably from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s. The Nepal Land and Housing Association reported that land prices in Kathmandu Valley have increased by 300% since 2003 (Ishtiaque et al., 2017). According to Haack and Rafter (2006), the urban expansion in Kathmandu Valley persisted as a rapid and predominantly unregulated phenomenon, with a staggering 450% increase between 1978 and 2000. The surge in urban migration and the continuous rise in land value have compelled impoverished individuals to seek shelter in informal settlements. Underprivileged and unskilled migrants are compelled to squat in public land, mostly in environmentally fragile locations such as riverbanks, steep hillsides, and empty land, due to the government's failure to provide sufficient land and affordable housing for them. Their meager incomes, unemployment, and food insecurity exacerbate these challenges even more.

Urbanization and squatting in Kathmandu have intensified due to political changes since the 1990s, significantly impacting urban poverty and the ability of the poor to adapt to city life. The Maoist insurgency that started in the 1990s and spread widely in rural areas of the nation brought a remarkable influx of people to Kathmandu for safety. This reshaped the urban setting significantly. There has also been a flow in the number of fictitious squatters seeking compensation money (Tanaka, 2009) in Kathmandu. In the last few decades, it has seen significant and often unplanned urbanization, increasing the city's population and leading to informal communities. Squatting has been a common occurrence and a way of life for many urban poor people in Kathmandu. Without authorization or legal standing, squatters occupy property owned by the government or individuals. The absence of reasonably priced housing has led to the emergence of slums or informal communities throughout the city, which has driven many individuals to turn into squatters as a final option for surviving in the cities.

Along with the region's population expansion, squatter communities have proliferated throughout the Kathmandu Valley. According to the UN-Habitat report (2003), Nepal was listed in the fourth position, just below Ethiopia, Chad, and Afghanistan, among the countries with the world's highest percentage of slum dwellers. Over the decade between 1990 and 2000, the number of urban squatter settlements almost tripled in Nepal with a majority located on public lands along rivers (Hada, 2001). The Kathmandu Valley has seen a 25 percent annual increase in squatter settlements from 17 in the 1970s to 64 now,

accommodating 2600 families (Pradhan, 2003). Troffin observed that 65 of the valley's 75 squatter settlements were in the Kathmandu district (Troffin, 2010). Squatter settlements are located on marginal lands like slopes, gullies, and riverbanks. Popular sites for squatters include abandoned roads, construction sites, major intersections, bridges, and the riverbanks, particularly around the Vishnumati River (Gallagher, 1992). Squatter communities in Kathmandu Valley predominantly reside at river edges of Bagmati, Vishnumati, and Manohara rivers, with 863, 304, and 589 households, compared to 542 in non-river areas. (Lumanti/GTZ/Government of Nepal 2008; Lumanti, 2001). In 1985, Kathmandu had 2,000 squatters, rising to 3,700 by 1992, and by 1992, the number was estimated to be between 8,000 and 10,000. (Gallagher, 1992). The number increased to 12,000 in 1997, with 3,000 residing in abandoned government structures and 9,000 in informal settlements (Tanaka, 1999). Nonetheless, there is a relationship between urbanization and development, and the marginalization of the urban poor due to the high cost of living in cities eventually pushes them into living in informal settlements. Since Nepal's Maoist conflict that began in 1996, many displaced people have moved to Kathmandu, with squatter communities growing from 17 in 1985 to 61 in 2000, with settlements more than doubled and population tripled (Sengupta & Sharma, 2006). Urban squatting is becoming more prevalent in Nepal. According to estimates from the Nepal Landless Democratic Union Party, 29,000 squatters were living in 73 locations in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal in 2019 (Ojha, 2019, July 15). These facts have proved that squatting in Nepal has increased with the events of different political movements. The Kathmandu Valley, famous for its numerous opportunities and services, draws individuals from various regions seeking relocation. However, urban poverty has notably increased, particularly affecting lower-class individuals, despite the urbanization growth. Balkhu stands out as a sizable community within the valley, covering around 1650 residents in 360 households (Kivelä, 2014, September 18). Exploring squatters through a sociological lens is essential for grasping the origins of squatter settlements within a broader political-economic framework. The study sheds light on the resilience of marginalized groups, and offers valuable perspectives on squatting, urban poverty, and informal urban practices. Furthermore, it contributes to the continuous academic discourse surrounding these matters, offering valuable insights and perspectives.

Literature Review Squatting

In Nepal, squatting refers to occupying property when the supposed owner lacks a legitimate land ownership certificate (known as a Laalpurja) or occupying property without one (Gallagher, 1992). Biderman and Smolka (2012) have claimed that informal settlements have no agreed definition.

Different terms are frequently used synonymously, including squatter, slum, and shanty town. Whatever the term, it is obvious that the phenomenon is becoming more and more significant since more than a quarter of the world's population currently lives in informal settlements (Avis, 2016). According to Little (2012), there are important distinctions between slums and squatter communities in the Kathmandu Valley. Although residents of both kinds of communities have several disadvantages, squatters' living conditions are far less secure due to a fundamental absence of land rights. Squatters are unauthorized residents without owner's consent, while slum dwellers are lawful, low-income residents living on land, often paying rent (Abrams, 1964). The most acceptable definition rests on the legality of the occupation of land, house, or both. Slums usually refer to the old deteriorating tenements in the city center while possessing legal occupancy rights (Gallagher, 1992). Squatting is often defined as the illegal occupation of public or private land (Shrestha, 1990). A sukumbasi or squatter refers to an individual, or a household, who does not have a regular source of income to support themselves and may have exploited the legality of the grey area for their residence (Kaplan, & Shrestha, 1982). Within the Nepali context, squatting can be defined as uncontrolled settlements where the poor occupy non-claimed, marginal public land (Gallagher, 1991). Squatter settlements in Nepal are groups of individuals without official rights, often residing on land for decades without legal title. These illegal, temporary structures are often populated by socially disadvantaged individuals with legal ownership documents for their homes and land, contributing to poverty in urban and rural sectors (Lumanti, 2001). 'Squatter' and 'slum' seem more or less the same from socio-economic perspectives. However, their legal status is completely different due to this very reason of the slum's ownership and a somewhat long history. However, on both public and private unoccupied property, squatter colonies appear to have appeared suddenly. Slum and squatter conditions are more of a social and political issue than an economic one (Acharya, 2011). However, up until the 1980s, impoverished migrants from rural areas moved to Kathmandu's capital, living in public spaces like temples. Then, starting in the late 1980s, informal communities started to emerge (Tanaka, 1999).

Numerous factors contribute to squatting. Poverty is one of the main elements influencing derivational difficulties. The main causes of the problem include large land packages, expensive rental prices, a shortage of housing options, and poor land management techniques (Akirso, 2021). However, there are political problems involved as well, with those active in the squatting movement being politically motivated to possess the right to reside in a city. To explain it another way, squatting is the act of inhabiting a vacant or abandoned building or plot of land typically a house without the legal authority's permission to do so. It frequently happens when a community of the poor and homeless squat on vacant land or structures. Migration

from rural to urban areas creates informal settlements in African nations like Nigeria. Reasons for squatting include the lack of low-cost housing, unemployment, and the inability to access loans. (Ebekoziem et al., 2019). In Latin American and Caribbean countries, informal settlements result from internal migration to urban areas, a lack of affordable housing, and ineffective governance (Carrion et al., 2021). Across the Asia-Pacific region, the employment rate in the informal sector stands at an average of 68.2 percent. However, this data varies significantly across different countries. For instance, Japan has a rate below 20 percent, while the Republic of Korea has a rate of around 30 percent. On the other hand, countries like Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, and Nepal have rates of 90 percent and above (OECD/ILO, 2019). Although it is against the law to squat, many of them serve as community hubs. The left-wing activities in Italy in 1968 marked the beginning of the first occupation of vacant houses (Wright, 2002). Neoliberalism has led to innovative governance models that combine state and corporate interests, prioritizing the upper class and corporate capital in urban development (Harvey, 2003). However, Pruitt, (2011) has classified squatters into five distinct classifications: deprivation-based squatting, political-based squatting, conservation-based squatting, entrepreneurial-based squatting, and alternative housing strategy-based squatting. Squatters are aware of their growing political power as a voting bloc in Nepal (Gallagher, 2016). Gallagher has further pointed out that the sukumbasi legal issue in Nepal legitimizes squatters, marginalizing the landless and homeless. Sociopolitical squatting is also a current phenomenon.

People from various socio-economic, ethnic, cultural, religious, and political backgrounds live in the Balkhu Corridor of Kathmandu. Significant numbers of people fleeing natural disasters and the Maoist insurgency (Troffin, 2010) are one of the main reasons for moving into squatter camps in this area. In addition, individuals from different parts of the nation moved to the Kathmandu valley in pursuit of employment and better education for their children. The study's primary aim was to evaluate the living conditions of individuals residing in squatter settlements and analyze the political framework surrounding such areas. The study placed special emphasis on socio-economic aspects, including safety, housing, sanitation, water supply, health, and environment, as well as educational and employment opportunities. In particular, the research investigates the poverty level experienced by squatters in the Balkhu Corridor and examines the political and economic dimensions of squatting.

Theories on Squatters and Poverty

According to Davis (1965), "overpopulation" in "underdeveloped" nations led to the creation of dilapidated shantytowns, changing the course of urbanization from historical industrialized West urbanization. The urban political economy approach emerged from the contributions

of Harvey and Castells in the early 1970s. Harvey noted that Baltimore's serious urban issues and social inequality were directly and predictably caused by the way capitalist land and real estate markets operated. (Harvey, 1973 cited in [Palen, \(1997\)](#)). Similarly, Castells has suggested the Marxist approach to studying cities and urban life squatting ([Castells, 1977](#)). In contrast to the Marxist theory, the world system theory of Wallerstein views cities as a complex phenomenon of human behavior and activities, and it has focused on political-economic relations with capitalism and development. World system theory suggests the creation of hierarchies in the long historical processes of the development of capitalism due to the unequal relations between the countries. The foundation of the theory is that uneven development or asymmetry between the core and periphery over time happens with unintended implications. ([Wallerstein, 2074](#)). Walton emphasizes the need to comprehend urban processes such as ecological patterns, community organization, economic activity, class politics, and local governance, which draws attention to the uneven economic development in developing countries. (Walton 1981, cited from [Walton, 1993](#)). Political economic theory, developed after the 1960s, analyzes how economic ideas impact socio-economic systems, focusing on structural relations and inequalities among urban residents in less developed countries, particularly in slums and squatter settlements.

Squatters in capitalist cities understand socio-spatial and political environments conducive to squatting and relationships between squatters, government, and property owners to prevent extreme urban democracy ([Martinez, 2019](#)). Capitalism must find viable areas for surplus generation and labor discipline in urban areas experiencing booms and slums, using immigration, export, or capitalism ([Harvey, 2003](#)). Urban poverty and inequality have resulted from global capitalist development; these trends are driven by social, political, and economic factors, as outlined by David Harvey's spatial social justice theory ([Polanska & Weldon, \(2020\)](#)).

Squatting as a Political Construct

In Nepal, disasters that cause crop failure and destroy property and agricultural land, difficulties for small farmers to compete in international, globalized markets, and years of political instability and conflict, such as the Maoist insurgency, also push people from rural communities to urban spaces ([Dahal, 2011](#)). It is crucial to understand that Kathmandu's squatter settlements are diverse in terms of their socioeconomic and political relationships, as well as the ethnicity or caste of their residents, age, and population within the settlements and surrounding amenities ([Sengupta & Gallagher, 2016](#); [Moffat & Finnis, 2005](#)). Physical circumstances, public service accessibility, economic opportunities, land market, population growth, political situation, plans and policies, and land market all impact the growth pattern. ([Thapa & Murayama, 2010](#)).

Similarly, [Roy \(2009\)](#) observed squatters in Calcutta being caught between conventional city politics and other more radical forms of protest. He compared this with other traditional forms of urban populism where “tenuous access to shelter and services are exchanged for electoral loyalties”, thereby reinforcing the “voter-bank” concept. Settlements constantly threatened by evictions and demolitions, muster up a stronger form of organizational solidarity as a “micro-politics of improvisation” and lead an urban social movement with grassroots objectives through resistive political tactics ([Vasudevan, 2015](#)). [Neuwirth \(2004\)](#) states that slum dwellers being repeatedly excluded from their acknowledgment in the city, “find their place themselves” and in the process challenge society’s denial of their place by creating “their world” in the slums. In 2016, the Ugandan presidential elections saw candidates politicizing squatter settlements and promoting legalized land access and territorial rights for unregulated slum dwellers and ethnic minorities. President Museveni's regime often uses land usage debates to mobilize votes ([Meinert & Kjær, 2018](#)). The Islamic Welfare Party won the 1995 Turkey general elections by collaborating with urban squatter neighborhoods, focusing on their urban land usage. These squatters, known as "Gecekondu" or "makeshift shack dwellers," are a significant vote bank, with 65% of Istanbul's buildings being these types of houses in unregulated settlements ([Özler, 2000](#)). In "The Makeshift City," [Vasudevan \(2014\)](#) distinguishes between the politics of squatter occupation in northern cities and those in the south of the world. He further states that squatter settlement zones experience prolonged phases of ‘extreme biopolitical abandonment’. He adds that these people are ‘economically exploited, politically repressed, culturally excluded and socially stigmatized’. As [Holston \(2008\)](#) observed in Sao Paulo, this form of alternative urbanization causes the emergence of new “insurgent forms” of acceptance, citizenship, and identity.

Politicians recognize the importance of these communities and may engage with them to secure electoral support. In exchange for votes, promises of improved living conditions, basic amenities, and tenure security might be offered. Nepal has been struggling with squatter issues for years, with 22 commissions established since 1953. Fourteen focus on squatter issues, three on land reform, and five on land registration and management ("Act beyond political", 2024). Dissolving the current land commission and establishing a new one driven by hidden political motives amidst the evolving political scenario poses a significant challenge to solving the squatting problem effectively.

Methodology

The Balkhu corridor is a dwelling place of a large number of low-income, urban squatters, some even multi-generational and comprising of varying places of origin,

socio-economic reach, political affiliations, and age. This acted as a perfect sample to study the causes and perceptions of urban poverty. This particular demographic, largely made up of the urban poor, presented an opportunity to investigate the research on urban poverty and explore potential research issues of great significance.

The Bagmati River Corridor in Kathmandu, known as the Balkhu Corridor, was the focus of the study, targeting an estimated 360 rural migrant households (Kivelä, 2014). Qualitative methods were predominantly utilized to investigate into the complexities of squatting processes among a limited number of respondents. The nature of this study primarily deals with the non-quantifiable aspects of respondent's personal lives, their aspirations, life stories, and interactions with the broader socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts shaping squatter settlements.

Purposive sampling was employed, selecting fifty-six respondents based on judgmental criteria encompassing various age groups and gender identities, to achieve information saturation. Data collection took place from December 2022 to January 2023, and required participants to have resided in Balkhu Settlement for at least a year. In the process of inquiry fifty-six individuals from different residents were chosen, who expressed that answering both formal and informal way was somewhat tedious and time-consuming. However, the gender distribution of respondents was uneven, with 22 males and 34 females participating due to the mobility of male respondents for work during the interview period. Before the interview, participants were informed about the goals of the study and assured that any sensitive information recorded would be treated confidentially. The study utilized intensive interviews and ethnographic studies to gather comprehensive information and employed observation to gain insights into individuals' experiences within the context of their daily routines. During the interviews, participants appeared hesitant to share details about their work, income, sources of income, available basic amenities, and political involvement. Their inputs were transcribed and thematically analyzed, along with the respondent's permission. Lastly, the data was coded and visualized as a theoretical framework to better synthesize meaningful insights.

Findings

Physical Structures and Faced Insecurities

The vulnerability of squatter communities in urban areas presents major problems that stakeholders in emerging regions need to understand (Momade & Hainin, 2018). The Balkhu Corridor residents do not have a legal claim to the land on which they have erected a shelter. Houses, however, are clustered and small. In the event of disasters like earthquakes, floods, and fire, these homes become unstable. In this discussion, "insecurity" means the emotional, social, and physical safety of Balkhu Corridor residents, while "poor housing" refers to the

infrastructure and living conditions that are in a vulnerable condition. Their health issues become worse because of the contaminated Bagmati River. Even though electricity is used in every home, not everyone has easy access to it. There were many houses without direct access to power supply and had to rely on their neighbor's supply lines.

Residents in the Balkhu Corridor are far from having access to clean piped drinking water in their homes. There are just four public taps, and none of them provide clean, consistent water. They largely use water from tube wells, and the polluted river nearby doesn't help either. According to a female respondent, poverty and substandard housing impacted the children's schooling and health conditions.

Causes of Squatting

Squatting is a complex issue in Nepal, knotted to urban migration and driven by factors like limited opportunities and the state's development pattern. The Balkhu corridor experiences squatting due to natural disasters, insecurity, and unproductive land in its original place. Socio-psychological factors also contribute to individuals leaving their original homes. As urban land values increase, impoverished residents are pushed into these informal settlements.

Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, several interrelated factors emerged as driving forces behind the prevalence of squatting in Kathmandu. Economic considerations, particularly the search for employment opportunities and a better life, were prominently mentioned in the narratives of most respondents that I interviewed. As one participant remarked, "There were simply no jobs back home, and we struggled to make ends meet. Kathmandu offered the promise of work and a chance to improve our lives."

Similarly, social networks also played a significant role, with some individuals choosing to squat because friends or relatives had already established themselves in informal settlements. This highlights the importance of community ties and support systems in dealing with the challenges of urban living. As one respondent explained, "My cousin had been living in this settlement for years. He helped me find a place and get settled when I first arrived in the capital city."

Historical contexts, such as Nepal's routine earthquakes and natural disasters (floods and landslides) and the Maoist insurgency, further contributed to the displacement of people from their places of origin, compelling them to seek refuge and rebuild their lives in the relative safety of the cities. A participant recounted, "Our village was devastated by the 2072 earthquake. We lost everything. Coming to Kathmandu was our only hope for survival."

Interestingly, Table 1 in the appendix shows the complex and unpredictable relationship between squatting and ancestral property ownership. While some respondents possessed land or housing in their hometowns, they purposefully chose to squat in Kathmandu due to factors

like limited economic opportunities or the appeal of the 'urban life'. Conversely, others without inherent ancestral property regarded squatting as an 'only option' for securing shelter and establishing a foothold in Kathmandu, once the city of their dreams.

Bimala (name changed) possesses more than one ropani (508.72 sq. meters) of land in her native community in the Sidhupalchowk District and is from the Tamang ethnicity. The land is arid and insufficient to sustain their life. She lacks any means of support in her life. She wants to provide her three daughters with a higher education. All five family members had moved to Kathmandu and lived there in a rental house for two years. Husband and wife worked together in construction. Unfortunately, her husband suffered from a mysterious illness, and experienced severe symptoms. Then they moved into the Balkhu Corridor six months after her husband's illness and have remained there for eight years.

Occupational Structure and Livelihood Practices

Various occupations are the source of income for households living in informal settlements; skilled workers have access to well-paying positions, while unskilled workers do not, emphasizing the value of human capital.

The squatter settlements of Kathmandu are home to a diverse range of employment opportunities and socio-economic realities. For many residents, the harshness of poverty and limited prospects was displayed in the form of low-wage menial work, often characterized by physical labor, informal sectors, and precarious working conditions. Individuals engaged in wage labor, machinery assistance, sanitary work (such as garbage collection), street vending, and housekeeping formed a significant portion of the community. Their narratives were interwoven with tales of struggle, resilience, and the relentless pursuit of survival for themselves and their families. One resident shared, "Every day, I wake up not knowing if I'll find work or how much I'll earn. But I have no choice but to keep trying for the sake of my children."

While a smaller segment found moderate employment opportunities and solidified their slightly improved socio-economic standing, their stories highlighted the persistent challenges of upward mobility and financial stability. Occupations such as driving, tailoring, cottage industry labor, welding, cooking, and painting (trade skills) provided a modest income, yet the constant pursuit of better prospects was always in their minds.

A few, however, managed to secure comparatively higher-paying jobs that not only provided a decent salary but also conferred a sense of social status and respect within the community. These individuals, through education, hard-work or even fortunate circumstances, found their foothold in professions that offered financial security and social recognition.

Mainly they are involved in public sector employment, business, and foreign employment. The classification

of a job or occupation is done by how the worker or employee perceives their job or occupation. The largest populations are employed in physically demanding jobs like construction. Some of them work as weavers and drivers. While some residents of the neighborhood work, others work as street vendors. Fewer people are leaving the settlement for an overseas job in overseas. Most of them worked in the construction industry, transporting bricks, sand, mud, cement, stones, and other building supplies as they built homes, bridges, and maybe other structures.

They are paid daily due to the sporadic nature of their employment, and their aggregate monthly wages in between fifteen to twenty thousand rupees. Jitendra (name changed), a native of the Dhading District who has lived in the Balkhu Corridor area for 18 years and has worked in various jobs, is involved in tailoring with his wife and has four adult children. Both of his daughters are married. One of his sons has left for foreign labor in Malaysia and another works in the hotel sector. He currently lives with his wife and a son. In Dhading, his birthplace, he was able to invest in real estate and homes. He experienced worse health problems as a result of the shanty town and dusty surroundings, and under pressure from his kids, he made plans to go back to their original place. He has been subjected to stigma during the children's marriages. Following an elderly respondent, the focus should be on economic empowerment to reduce poverty, marginalization, negative stereotypes, and the shame attached to living in impoverished areas, which they usually face.

Literacy and Gender

The presence of a considerable number of illiterate individuals within a community can greatly influence that settlement's identity, social status, and economic standing.

The prevalent issue of illiteracy among the household heads in the squatter settlements of the Balkhu corridor highlighted the limited access to educational opportunities within this community. Qualitative insights from respondents disclosed the complicated layers of barriers they faced, including poverty, cultural norms, and a lack of resources.

Significantly, as demonstrated in [Table 2 in the appendix](#), the results indicate a striking imbalance in educational achievement based on gender. It is evident that a significant number of female household heads are illiterate. This highlighted the compounding effects of gender, socio-economic status, and cultural factors that spread inequalities in access to education for women in these settlements.

As one female participant shared, "In our community, female education was never prioritized. We were expected to help with household chores and get married at a young age. Attending school was a privilege reserved for our brothers."

Socio-economic factors, such as poverty and the

need for children to contribute to the family's livelihood, further worsened the challenges in obtaining education. A male participant recounted, "We were a large family with limited resources. I had to start working at a young age to support my parents. Going to school was a luxury that we couldn't afford."

The contextualization of these findings within the broader socio-political and economic landscape of Kathmandu and Nepal as a whole highlighted the deep-rooted structural inequalities and 'historical legacies' that have contributed to the spread of squatter settlements as an effect of uneven distribution of educational opportunities in their native villages.

Based on the group discussion, despite the proximity to medical facilities like public, semi-public, and private hospitals, there was an inability to afford the medical bills, isolating them from getting good treatment. One female respondent, Uma (name changed), aged 46, originally from Terai, said there were a lot of incidents of untimely deaths. Recently, her 49-year-old spouse died due to a kidney disorder. She was unable to defend his life because of their financial limitations. She currently has 120,000 rupees of debt taken from relatives. Six interviewees admitted that their kids decided not to attend school because of their families' poor financial resources. Squatter settlements are plagued by economic hardships, which in turn give rise to numerous challenges in the realms of education, health, insurance, and overall livelihood. These difficulties directly impact on hindering their access to basic education, adequate healthcare, reliable insurance coverage, and sustainable livelihood practices.

Political Squatting

Squatters who engage in political activities and are "building up a counter-power to the state" are called political squatting (Pruijt, 2013; Gallagher, 2016). The residents of the Balkhu Corridor settlement have two main demands: the land on which their home is built and the land rights. Mahesh (name changed), a 24-year-old man, has argued for his right to live in the city. He has been reported to own a little piece of land close to where his parents were born. He doesn't care about his parents' property or his birthplace. In addition, he has lived in different squatters in Kathmandu Valley with his parents for the past eighteen years. Likewise, he frequently interacts with political figures and organizes various party-related activities, especially close to elections. He joined a communist-affiliated political party to fight for their right to live there. He claims that the political parties he belongs to have always backed his right to choose acceptable alternatives or to stay in that squatter settlement. His affiliated political party has successfully persuaded him to stand up for his rights. Four respondents, however, have stated that they moved to the city due to the Maoist insurgency. Respondents who are politically knowledgeable and hostile to state initiatives make up one-third of the sample. Eighteen respondents expressed

their arguments, which they considered to be revolutionary in anti-systemic politics. Political ideology served as the driving force in this case.

Raman (name changed), a resident of Kathmandu by his origin too, stated, "Squatting is our human right; there is no way to go elsewhere," and "There are no alternative options for livelihood." He also stated, "We are the state victims: urban poor, homeless, and local." He wasn't expressly affiliated with any political party. Furthermore, he does, however, have political aspirations for resolving the issues facing residents. According to the information given by local leaders of squatters, respondents, and inhabitants of the Balkhu Corridor, the squatting movement, advocates against the marginalization of the market and promotes enlarged solidarity-based beliefs between urban poor whether they live in squatter or out of informal settlements, aims to politicize the working class for their rights and social justice.

Since the political upheaval of the 1990s, squatter politics has developed in Nepal. Even while there were a few squatter colonies in Kathmandu over fifty years ago, they were not as numerous as they are now. Squatter settlements grew, rising from 17 in 1985 to 45 by 2008. (Tanaka 2009). Illegal settlements are a serious and long-standing issue in Nepal where informal settlement issues have been politicized, despite 15 commissions and thousands of agricultural plots distributed. Government-initiated development programs, identification of landless families, and alternative options of livelihood are needed in rural and urban areas. Rima (Changed real name) aged 19, a student in class 12 has lived in this community since her birth and is not optimistic that party politics and government would provide a better outcome for her community. She has reported, "Political parties' positions and deeds in these issues is inconsistent". Squatter politics in Nepal, fueled by party politics, has emerged since the 1990s, linked to poverty and limited livelihood opportunities rather than just landlessness.

Discussion

After the restoration of democracy in the 1990s, the issue of squatters in Nepal has become an issue of debate. The attraction of urban center development has drawn people to the cities in search of a better life. At the same time, the Maoist insurgency that started in the mid-1990s and continued for a decade has led to a significant rise in the number of internally displaced individuals in the valley. Unfortunately, the urban poor face numerous challenges as they struggle to find accessible livelihood opportunities. The expenses associated with housing for the underprivileged in urban areas are far from meeting their hopes and expectations. The current circumstances have helped to force the poor move into the informal settlements. Based on the current study's findings, squatting in Nepal has an unbreakable connection to migration, party politics

poverty, and backwardness. Compared to Pruijt's (2011) and (Troffin, 2010) comprehensive interpretation, the formation and ongoing existence of squatter settlements is influenced by multiple factors, resulting in a wide range of contexts being created in Nepal. Wright (2002) clarified that the Italian squatters are closely associated with left-wing movements. In Nepal, the Nepali Congress and several communist parties are advocating for the rights of squatters and turning the issue into a political matter. However, it is important to understand that addressing the problems faced by squatters requires a comprehensive approach and collective efforts, rather than it's over-politicized.

The Constitution of Nepal, specifically Article 37, clearly guarantees equal rights to land and secure residence for all citizens. Nevertheless, it has become a common practice for political parties to exploit the Sukumvasi (Squatter) community as a means to secure votes. This hypocritical behavior of political leaders, who vocally advocate for the Sukumvasi community when in? but remain silent when?, has exacerbated the situation. The political parties are keen on perpetuating this issue and utilizing it as a tool to advance their political agendas. Issues of squatters or informal settlements are widespread, and comprehensive, and have political ramifications requiring a political consensus in Nepal. Moreover, it is strongly associated with the overall advancement of the country, welfare, and meaningful development that enables individuals to escape poverty.

Squatters in the Balkhu Corridor have, at various points in time, encountered a great deal of unmet expectations from the major parties. In today's neoliberal state, neither the left wing nor the right seems capable of giving justice to the urban poor. Saraswati Subba, president of the National Land Rights Forum said: "Dozers cannot be used on squatters. It is not a solution for the problem". Squatter communities, with their large population, can significantly influence political dynamics, leading politicians to engage with them for electoral support only. The findings of this study on the livelihood practices of the residents in Balkhu Corridor are disheartening. The community lacks access to essential amenities including educational opportunities, better livelihood options, and adequate healthcare. The research reveals a lack of significant disparities among the participants in terms of their livelihoods.

Conclusion

Multiple factors contribute to individuals engaging in squatting. The current research does not uncover any evidence of a direct correlation between urban migration, squatting, and land landlessness. Current research indicates that poverty remains a persistent issue that is closely connected to squatting. The government must decrease the number of underprivileged individuals moving to urban areas in search of economic opportunities to effectively address this issue. The prevalence of chronic poverty within cities has further exacerbated the problem

of squatting. Squatting is attributed to the escalating urban expenses and limited livelihood options available for the urban poor, which have inadvertently contributed to the proliferation of informal settlements. Conversely, urban squatting arises from lower-class families' lack of opportunities in both rural and urban areas, which finally leads them into low-living places due to the unpredictable nature of metropolitan spending. Even an agro-based rural lifestyle is insufficient for their sustenance, safety, and the future of their children, which encourages migration from rural to urban areas. The current study looks into the problem of squatter settlements, which are extremely challenging for the urban poor who are excluded from mainstreaming development. Deprived people of urban areas are compelled to live in informal settlements of Balkhu Corridor due to high urban expenses and rising formal land prices in urban areas. Balkhu Corridor squatting is primarily based on deprivation as explained by Pruijt (2011) and political squatting (Gallagher, 2016). There is not one particular event, context, or circumstance that can be attributed to the causes of the Balkhu corridor squatting. The multifaceted phenomenon of squatting seems to have been common. As per the theory of political economy, the liberal priorities of development fail to promote inclusive development and fair governance for the poor and excluded people. In Nepal, the number of squatter settlements has increased noticeably since the late 1990s. It's interesting to note that Nepal's growing squatter population coincided with the country's transition to liberal democracy and development. The inhabitants of Balkhu Corridor face precarious living conditions, which expose them to the terrible consequences of extreme poverty. This predicament arises from a combination of urban poverty, natural calamities, the Maoist insurgency, high unemployment rates, and a lack of access to essential health and educational facilities in their place of origin. The wide range of issues of poverty, migration, and politics embedded in the formation of squatting is significant in Nepal.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent:

I conducted this study independently as part of my teaching and research activities. Prior to conducting interviews, I obtained consent from all participants.

Consent for Publication:

Not applicable.

Availability of Data and Materials:

Data can be shared, if any person interested.

Competing Interests:

There are no competing interests in this study.

Funding:

No funding.

Acknowledgments:

I am delighted to express my gratitude to the Editor-in-Chief of this journal, Dr. Man Bahadur Khattri, who serves as an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Central Department of Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, for his encouragement to contribute this paper. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the two anonymous reviewers at the Dhawalagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, whose valuable feedback played a crucial role in enhancing the initial draft.


Reference

- Abrams, C. (1964). *Man's struggle for shelter in an urbanizing world*. The M.I.T. Press.
- Acharya, B. R. (2011). Urban poverty: A sociological study of Shankhamul squatter. *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 9, 179-192 <https://doi.org/10.3126/dsaj.v4i0.4519>
- Act beyond political interest to resolve the problem of squatters. (2024, February 8). *Republica*. <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/act-beyond-political-interest-to-resolve-the-problem-of-squatters/>
- Akirso, N.A. (2021). Exploring causes and consequences of squatter settlement in Jimma Town, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia, *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 13(2):58-63. <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJSA2019.0831>
- Arup, M. (1994). *Urbanization, slums, informal sector employment, and poverty*. B.R. Publishing Corporation.
- Avis, W. R. (2016). *Urban governance (Topic Guide)*. GSDRC & University of Birmingham.
- Biderman, C., & Smolka, M. O. (2012). *Housing informality: An economist's perspective on urban planning*. Oxford University Press.
- Bose, A. (1995). *Urbanization and slum*. Har-Anand Publication.
- Carrion, D., Vasconez, J. & Bermudez N. (2021). The case of Quito, Ecuador. *Understanding Slums: Case Studies for the Global Report on Human Settlements 2003*. Retrieved 2021-02-28.
- Castells, M. (1977). *The urban question: Marxist approach*. M.I.T. Press.
- Charles, A. (1964). *Man's struggle for shelter in an urbanizing world*. M.I.T. Press.
- Dahal, K. 2011. *Poor Communities and Livelihood in Urban Context: A Case Study of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Nepal*." PhD diss., University of Delhi. India <http://182.93.84.134:9991/nml/handle/123456789/348>
- Davis, K. (1965). The urbanization of the human population. *Scientific American*. 213: 40-53.
- Davis, M. (2005). *Planet of Slums*. London; New York: Verso.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Sage Publications.
- Ebekozien, A, Abdul-Aziz, AR, & Jaafar, M (2019). Low-cost housing policies and squatters struggles in Nigeria: the Nigerian perspective on possible solutions. *International Journal of Construction Management*. 21 (11): 1088–1098.
- Gallagher, K. M. (2016). The discourse of power and the politics of squatting Nepal. *Crossing the Border: International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. 4 (1): 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.3126/ctbijis.v4i1.18425>
- Gallagher, K. M. (1991). *An exploration into the cause of squatting in the Kathmandu Valley* (Unpublished master's thesis). Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology.
- Gallagher, K. M. (1992). Squatting in the Kathmandu Valley: a historical perspective. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*. 19 (2): 249–259. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822394525-002>
- Gugler, J., & William, F. (1977). On the political economy of urbanization in the third world: The case of West Africa. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 1(2). <https://doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.1977.tb00712.x>
- Haack, B.N., Rafter, A. (2006). Urban growth analysis and modeling in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. *Habitat International*. 1056–1065
- Hada, J. (2001). Housing and squatter settlements. In *City diagnostic report for city development strategy*. Kathmandu Metropolitan City/World Bank.
- Harpham, T., Lusty, T., & Vaughan, P. (Eds.). (1988). *In the shadow of the city: Community health and the urban poor*. Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2003). *The New Imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Holston, J. (2007). *Insurgent citizenship: Disjunctions of democracy and modernity in Brazil*. Princeton University Press.
- IngeNesvag, S. (2000). Street trading from Apartheid to Post-Apartheid: more birds in the cornfield? *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 20(3/4), 34–63. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01443330010789115>
- Ishtiaque, A., Shrestha, M., & Chhetri, N. (2017). Rapid Urban Growth in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal: Monitoring Land Use Land Cover Dynamics of a Himalayan City with Landsat Imageries. *Environments*, 4(4), 72. <https://doi:10.3390/environments4040072>
- Kansakar, V. B. S. (1988). *Housing conditions of the urban poor in Kathmandu and Pokhara: A study of squatter settlements*. CEDA.
- Kaplan, P. F., & Shrestha, N. R. (1982). The Sukumbasi movement in Nepal: The fire from below. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 12(1), 75–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472338285390061>

- Kivelä, S. (2014, September 18). *Faiths and community in a riverside slum in Nepal*. [Paper presentation] Diaconal under Pressure Conference (International Society for the Research and Study of Diaconal and Christian Social Practice), Stockholm, Sweden.
- Little, A. (2012). *Field assessment concerning multiple deprivation in squatter settlements and slum communities in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal*. Mercy Corps.
- Liu, Y., & He, S. (2010). Chinese Urban Villages as Marginalized Neighborhoods under Rapid Urbanization. *Marginalization in Urban China: Comparative Perspectives*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. 177–200. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230299122_10
- Lumanti. (2001). *A situational analysis of urban poor communities in Kathmandu and Lalitpur*. Lumanti Support Group for Shelter.
- Lumanti/GTZ/Government of Nepal. (2008). *Status of squatter communities along Bagmati River and its tributaries in Kathmandu Valley*. Lumanti.
- Martinez, M. A. (2019). *Squatters in the Capitalist City Housing, Justice, and Urban Politics*. Routledge.
- Meinert, L., & Kjær, A. M. (2018). “Land belongs to the people of Uganda”: politicians’ use of land issues in the 2016 election campaigns. In *Elections in Museveni's Uganda*, 207-226. Routledge.
- Moffat, T. and Finnis, E. 2005. Considering social and material resources: the political ecology of a peri-urban squatter community in Nepal. *Habitat International* 29: 453-468
- Momade, M. H., & Hainin, M. R. (2018). Problems affecting squatter settlements in Nampula, Mozambique. *International Journal of Engineering and Technology*, 7(4), 5022-5025. <https://doi.org/10.14419/ijet.v7i4.26560>, 21. University of Oslo.
- Neuwirth, R. (2004), *Shadow Cities: A Billion Squatters. A New Urban World*. Routledge.
- OECD/ILO. (2019), *Portraits of informality*. OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ee0642f5-en>.
- Ojha, A. (2019, July 15). Riverside squatters in Thapathali spend sleepless nights. *Kathmandu Post*. <https://kathmandupost.com/valley/2019/07/15/riverside-squatters-in-thapathali-spend-sleepless-nights>
- Oudho, R. A., & Mhlanga, C. (Eds.). (1988). *Slum and squatter settlements in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Praeger Publishers.
- Özler, Ş. İ. (2000). Politics of the Gecekondu in Turkey: The political choices of urban squatters in national elections. *Turkish Studies*, 1(2), 39-58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683840008721233>
- Palen, J. J. (1997). *The urban world*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Phuyal, R. K., Maharjan, R., Maharjan, R., & Devkota, N. (2019). Assessments of drinking water supply quality at squatter and indigenous settlements of Bagmati River Corridors in Kathmandu. *Scientific Research and Essays*, 14(8), 53-67. <https://doi.org/10.5897/SRE2016.6474>
- Polanska, D. V., & Weldon, T. (2020). In search of Urban commons through squatting: The role of knowledge sharing in the creation and organization of everyday utopian spaces in Sweden. *Participation and Conflict*. 13, 1355–1372. <https://doi.org/10.1285/i20356609v13i3p1355>
- Portes, A. (1981). Unequal exchange and the urban informal sector. In A. Portes & J. Walton (Eds.), *Labor; class and the international system* (pp. 161-175). Academic Press.
- Pradhan, P. (2003). *Housing the urban poor*. Lumanti Support Group for Shelter.
- Pruitt, H. (2011). The logic of urban squatting. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1285/i20356609v13i3p1355>[doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01116.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01116.x)
- Ramana, K. V., & Krishna, K. S. (1995). The informal sector in Visakhapatnam City. *Informal sector in India* (pp. 114-121). Khama Publishers.
- Roy, A. (2009). Why India cannot plan its cities: Informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization. *Planning Theory*, 8(1), 76-87.
- Sengupta, U. (2013). *The divided city? Squatters' struggle for urban space in Kathmandu*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203085332>.
- Sengupta, U. and Sharma, S. (2006). The challenge of squatter settlements in Kathmandu. *International Development Planning Review* 28(1):105-126 <https://doi.org/10.1285/i20356609v13i3>
- Sethuram, S. V. (1983). The informal sector in developing countries: Some policy implications. In A. de Soiza (Ed.), *The Indian city*. (48-60). ILO.
- Shrestha (1990) *Landlessness and migration in Nepal*. Rautledge.
- Shrestha, B. K. (2013). Squatter settlements in the Kathmandu Valley: Looking through the prism of land rights and tenure security. *Urban Forum* 24(1): 119-135 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12132-013-9189-x>
- Tanaka, M. (1999). Which female-headed household is vulnerable? Field notes on female-headed households of squatter settlements in Kathmandu, Nepal. *Journal of Asian Women's Studies*, 6 (7): 22-48. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0956247809103011>
- Tanaka, M. (2009). From confrontation to collaboration: a decade in the work of the squatters’ movement in Nepal. *Environment & Urbanization*. 21(1): 143–159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247809103011>
- Tanaka, M. (1997). *Conditions of Low-Income Settlements in Kathmandu: Action Research in Squatter Settlements*. Research report submitted to the International House, Osaka, Japan.
- Thapa, R.B., & Murayama, Y. (2010). ‘Drivers of urban growth in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal: Examining

- the efficacy of the analytic hierarchy process, *Applied Geography* 30: 70-83
- Troffin, G. (2010). Urban fringes: Squatter and slum settlements in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 37(2), 43-66.
- Turner, J. (1968). Uncontrolled Urban Settlement: Problems and Policies. In G. Breese (Ed.), *The City in Newly Developing Countries: Readings on Urbanism and Urbanization*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- UN-Habitat. (2003). *The challenge of slums: Global report on human settlements*. United Nations Human Settlements Programme. <https://unhabitat.org/the-challenge-of-slums-global-report-on-human-settlements-2003>
- UN-Habitat. (2010). *Nepal urban housing sector profile*. United Nations Human Settlements Programme. <https://unhabitat.org/nepal-urban-housing-sector-profile>
- UNICEF. (2009). *Self-made Cities*. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, ECE/HBP/155. United Nations Publications. https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/SelfMadeCities_E.pdf
- United Nations. (2009). *Self-made cities: In search of sustainable solutions for informal settlements in the United Nations*. United Nations. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/655478?ln=ru&v=pdf>
- United Nations. (2013). *A country analysis with a human face*. United Nations Country Team in Nepal. https://un.org.np/sites/default/files/doc_publication/Nepal_CountryAanalysis_2011_Feb2013.pdf
- Vasudevan, A. (2015). The makeshift city: Towards a global geography of squatting. *Progress in Human Geography*, 39(3), 338–359. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132514531471>
- Wallerstein, I. (2074). The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 16(4), 387-415. Cambridge University Press.
- Walton, J. (1993). Urban sociology: The contribution and limits of political economy. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 19. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2083390>
- Wright, S. (2002). *Storming heaven: Class composition and struggle in Italian autonomous Marxism*. Pluto.
- World Bank (2020). *Databank: World development indicators*. World Bank. <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>

About Author

Bala Ram Acharya,  <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0125-6663>, an Associate Professor in Sociology at Ratnarajya Laxmi Campus and Center Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur Nepal. He is also the coordinator of a research cell at the Department of Sociology at Ratnarajya Laxmi Campus. His research focuses on urban poverty, squatter settlements, child labor, family and divorce, disability, aging, and senior citizens.
Email: balaram_72@yahoo.com

Appendices

Table 1
Causes of Squatting and Inherent Property in the Origin Place

| Causes | No of respon- dents | Percentage | Inherent property available in the birthplace | |
|--|------------------------|------------|--|----|
| | | | Yes | No |
| Disaster | 4 | 7.12 | 0 | 4 |
| The presence of friends and kinship were in an informal settlement | 6 | 10.71 | 3 | 3 |
| Jobless/search for a better life | 16 | 28.57 | 10 | 6 |
| Treatment | 4 | 7.12 | 3 | 1 |
| Job availability in Kath- mandu | 12 | 21.42 | 8 | 4 |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|----|-------|--------------|------------|
| Poverty | 4 | 7.12 | 2 | 2 |
| Maoist insurgency | 4 | 7.12 | 4 | 0 |
| Unable to afford housing | 6 | 10.71 | 4 | 2 |
| in other places | | | | |
| Total | 56 | 100 | 34 (60.71) | 22 (39.28) |

Sources: Field study, 2022

Table 2
Education Level of Household Head

| Education level | No of re- spondents | Percentage | Male HH head/Per- centage | Female HH head/Percentage |
|------------------|------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Illiterate | 40 | 71.42 | 10 (25) | 30 (75) |
| Literate | 16 | 28.56 | 12 (75) | 4 (25) |
| Primary level | 10 | 62.5 | 6 (60) | 4 (40) |
| Higher Secondary | 4 | 25 | 3 (75) | 1 (25) |
| level | | | | |
| College | 2 | 12.5 | 2 (100) | 0 |
| Total | 56 | 100 | | |

Source: Field study, 2022