

**Voices of Janakpurdham: Student Perspectives on Higher Education**

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**Abstract**

Higher education institutions play a crucial role in shaping the socio-economic and cultural landscape of a region. In the context of Janakpurdham, a historically significant city in Nepal, the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of higher education are vital for the city's progress. This research paper investigates the multifaceted issues and challenges faced by higher education institutions in Janakpurdham and propose strategies for addressing them. Through a comprehensive analysis of data, and literature review, this paper aims to contribute valuable insights to inform policy decisions and enhance the overall higher education landscape in Janakpurdham. This study follows a descriptive and survey research design. The data has been collected by questionnaire method from 160 students of various higher education institutes of different universities. A purposive sampling technique has been used to select respondents. The research findings highlighted the existing disparities in access to higher education, with financial constraints acting as a major barrier. The study revealed diverse perceptions regarding the quality of education and curriculum relevance. The positive feedback regarding alignment with industry demands is encouraging, but efforts must continue to ensure that curriculum evolves to meet changing industry trends and technological advancements. The positive

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perception of faculty quality and accessibility indicates a solid foundation. The findings of the study can guide policymakers, educators, administrators, and other stakeholders in devising effective strategies to overcome these challenges and enhance the higher education landscape in Janakpurdham.

*Keywords:* accessibility, challenges, higher education, issues, Janakpurdham, quality of education

## Introduction

### Background of the Study

Higher education institutions are fundamental pillars of knowledge dissemination, skill development, and societal progress. They play a crucial role in shaping the intellectual and economic landscape of a region by producing a skilled workforce, fostering innovation, and contributing to the growth of various sectors. Higher education is the sign of economic and social development in the country. It helps in preserving and developing the historical and cultural heritage of the nation. It helps in producing competent manpower in the global context (Upadhyay, 2018). According to Shrivastava (2017), education should shape the perspectives of the younger generation, teaching them the significance of ethical principles for the development of strong character. This, in turn, would elevate the stature of today's youth, guiding them to become exemplary citizens. Bhardwaj (2016) asserts that education infused with moral values transforms an individual into not only a good human but also a divine being, assisting them in attaining life's ultimate objective. In the context of Janakpurdham, a historically and culturally significant city in Nepal, the landscape of higher education is both dynamic and complex, influenced by a myriad of socio-economic factors. Janakpurdham, named after the mythical King Janak and closely associated with the Hindu epic Ramayana, holds immense cultural and spiritual significance. It serves as a hub for pilgrims and tourists alike, attracting visitors from various parts of Nepal and beyond. The city's vibrant heritage and cultural heritage have contributed to its prominence, and its strategic location in the southern plains of Nepal further adds to its economic potential. However, amid its cultural riches and geographical significance, Janakpurdham faces its share of contemporary challenges. As the city experiences urbanization, population growth, and increasing demand for education, higher education institutions are confronted with a range of issues that impact their effectiveness, quality, and accessibility. Several factors contribute to the urgency of addressing the issues and challenges in higher education in Janakpurdham:

### *Rapid Urbanization*

The urbanization trend in Janakpurdham has brought about changes in the city's demographics, leading to increased demand for higher education services. The influx of people seeking education has strained the existing educational infrastructure.

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### ***Changing Educational Landscape***

The higher education landscape is evolving rapidly, driven by technological advancements, changing employment trends, and evolving industry requirements. Janakpurdham's higher education institutions must adapt to these changes to remain relevant.

### ***Equity and Inclusivity***

While education is a fundamental right, ensuring equitable access to higher education remains a challenge. Socio-economic disparities and geographical barriers often hinder marginalized populations' access to quality education.

### ***Global Competitiveness***

In an increasingly globalized world, the quality of education provided by higher education institutions directly impacts a region's competitiveness. Preparing graduates with skills aligned with global demands is crucial.

### ***Sustainable Development***

Higher education institutions play a role in fostering sustainable development by producing graduates who can contribute to economic growth while addressing social and environmental challenges.

Given these dynamics, there is a pressing need to comprehensively assess the issues and challenges faced by higher education institutions in Janakpurdham. This research aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the obstacles hindering the optimal functioning of higher education in the city. By identifying these challenges and their underlying causes, the research seeks to provide recommendations and insights that can inform policy decisions, institutional strategies, and collaborative efforts to enhance the quality, accessibility, and relevance of higher education in Janakpurdham.

### **Focus of the Study**

The research aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of the issues and challenges faced by higher education institutions in Janakpurdham, Nepal. The focus of the study encompasses various dimensions that contribute to the complexities of higher education in the region. The primary objectives are to identify, analyze, and understand the multifaceted obstacles that hinder the effective functioning and growth of higher education in Janakpurdham.

### ***Access and Equity***

Investigate the barriers that hinder equitable access to higher education, including economic, geographical, social, and gender-related factors. Examine how these barriers disproportionately affect certain groups, such as marginalized communities and women.

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### ***Quality of Education***

Evaluate the quality of education offered by higher education institutions in Janakpurdham. Analyze factors such as curriculum relevance, pedagogical methods, faculty qualifications, research output, and the alignment of education with industry demands.

### ***Curriculum Relevance and Industry Alignment***

Investigate the alignment of curricula with the changing demands of the job market and society. Analyze whether the courses offered are relevant, up-to-date, and capable of producing graduates with the skills needed for various professions.

### ***Faculty and Teaching Quality***

Explore challenges related to faculty recruitment, professional development, and retention. Assess how these challenges influence teaching quality, research output, and student engagement.

### ***Governance and Administration***

Examine the administrative structures of higher education institutions in Janakpurdham. Investigate issues related to transparency, accountability, decision-making processes, and collaboration among different stakeholders.

### ***Community Engagement and Industry Linkages***

Examine the level of engagement between higher education institutions and the local community as well as industries. Analyze the potential benefits of collaboration in terms of research, internships, job placements, and community development

By addressing these key aspects, the research seeks to offer insights into the multifaceted challenges faced by higher education institutions in Janakpurdham and provide recommendations for improving the quality, accessibility, and relevance of higher education in the region. The findings of the study can guide policymakers, educators, administrators, and other stakeholders in devising effective strategies to overcome these challenges and enhance the higher education landscape in Janakpurdham.

### **Statement of Problems**

Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual, social, and economic landscape of a region. In the context of Janakpurdham, a prominent city in Nepal, the issues and challenges faced by higher education institutions have far-reaching implications for the development of both individuals and the community as a whole. This research aims to investigate and analyze the various issues and challenges that are impacting the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of higher education in Janakpurdham. Despite the city's historical significance and cultural richness, higher education in Janakpurdham is confronted

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with a range of multifaceted problems. The rapid growth of the city, coupled with the changing educational needs of its population, has led to a complex interplay of factors that hinder the seamless functioning of higher education institutions. The research seeks to answer the following research questions:

- How do socio-economic factors impact the accessibility of higher education in Janakpurdham, particularly for marginalized and economically disadvantaged populations?
- What are the key issues and challenges faced by higher education institutions in Janakpurdham in terms of access and equity, quality of education, curriculum relevance and industry alignment, faculty and teaching quality, governance and administrative efficiency and community engagement?
- What is the students' overall perceptions of higher education in Janakpurdham and how well it prepares students for future careers?

These research questions aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted issues and challenges surrounding higher education in Janakpurdham. Through addressing these questions, the research seeks to uncover insights that can guide meaningful improvements in the higher education landscape of the city.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The primary objective of this research is to identify and comprehensively understand of the key issues and challenges faced by higher education institutions in Janakpurdham, encompassing aspects of quality, accessibility, and effectiveness. The specific objectives of the research are as follows:

- To examine how socio-economic factors, such as income disparities and geographical accessibility, influence the accessibility of higher education for various segments of the population in Janakpurdham.
- To explore the key issues and challenges faced by higher education institutions in Janakpurdham in terms of access and equity, quality of education, curriculum relevance and industry alignment, faculty and teaching quality, governance and administrative efficiency and community engagement?
- To analyze the students' overall perceptions of higher education in Janakpurdham and how well it prepares students for future careers.

### **Rationale of the Study**

Higher education institutions serve as crucial pillars of societal progress, knowledge dissemination, and human capital development. In the context of Janakpurdham, a city of historical significance in Nepal, the state of higher education has significant implications for the region's economic growth, social development, and cultural preservation. It is imperative to

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address the various issues and challenges faced by higher education institutions in Janakpurdham to ensure that they can effectively fulfill their role in shaping the city's future. Higher education institutions contribute to the development of an educated and skilled workforce, fostering innovation, and addressing societal challenges. By understanding and addressing the challenges faced by these institutions, the city can cultivate a knowledge-based society that positively impacts the lives of its residents. A skilled workforce is essential for economic growth and attracting investment. Addressing skill mismatches, improving employability, and ensuring industry-relevant education will contribute to Janakpurdham's economic development and competitiveness.

. Addressing issues of accessibility and inclusivity within higher education can contribute to more equitable development. Providing opportunities for education to marginalized populations fosters social mobility and reduces disparities. Policymakers need comprehensive insights into the challenges faced by higher education institutions to formulate effective policies. This research can serve as a basis for evidence-based policy recommendations that can drive positive change in the city's education landscape. To remain competitive on the global stage, Janakpurdham needs graduates who are equipped with contemporary skills and knowledge. By addressing the issues and challenges of higher education, the city can better prepare its workforce for the challenges of the global economy. Effective solutions to the challenges of higher education can have a lasting impact on Janakpurdham's future. Graduates will contribute to the city's development, making it more resilient, competitive, and inclusive.

In conclusion, the rationale for this study lies in the recognition that addressing the issues and challenges of higher education in Janakpurdham is essential for the city's holistic development. By improving the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of higher education, Janakpurdham can position itself as a hub of knowledge, culture, and economic opportunity, benefiting its residents, industries, and future generations.

### **Literature Review**

Higher education plays a crucial role in shaping the intellectual, economic, and social landscape of a region. The challenges and issues faced by higher education institutions are of paramount importance in ensuring the development and progress of a city. In the case of Janakpurdham, a historically significant city in Nepal, the higher education landscape presents a complex set of challenges that need to be addressed for the city's holistic growth. Access to higher education has been a concern worldwide, impacting social mobility and economic development. In Nepal, the issue of access is particularly pronounced due to geographical disparities and socio-economic inequalities (Government of Nepal, 2017). The lacks of affordable higher education options and limited opportunities for underrepresented groups have

hindered equitable participation (Pradhan & Adhikari, 2021). To enable all human resources to use their full potential, higher education requires to address inequalities and ease opportunities for all so that the government of Nepal promotes its position to a middle-income country by 2030 (Ministry of Education, 2016). The quality of higher education is a fundamental concern. Global trends show that the mismatch between education outcomes and industry demands is a significant challenge (World Bank, 2018). Chowdhary & Miah (2019) revealed that skill gaps, lack of quality education system, quality teachers, industry-university collaboration, backdated course curriculum, and corruption are important challenges for graduate employability in Bangladesh. The major challenges of higher education in Nepal are to establish and develop good governance, ensure quality and relevance of higher education, expansion of technical higher education, and increase the access of marginalized groups in higher education (Baral, 2013). In the context of Nepal, outdated curricula, lack of practical training, and inadequate faculty development programs contribute to a gap between graduates' skills and the needs of the job market.

Industry-academic partnerships and collaborations occur across several settings, providing benefits for researchers, the scientific community, private businesses, and society in general (King & Persily, 2020). The alignment of higher education with industry demands is essential for producing job-ready graduates. Studies highlight the importance of collaboration between educational institutions and industries to ensure curricula reflect the skills required in the workforce (Dhull & Rohatash, 2017). This linkage can enhance graduates' employability and contribute to economic growth. The quality of higher education depends heavily on faculty expertise and dedication. Research indicates that faculty development programs are often inadequate in developing countries (Gyawali et al., 2020). The lack of opportunities for continuous professional growth can impact teaching quality and hinder effective learning outcomes. Effective governance and administration are vital for the smooth functioning of higher education institutions. However, challenges related to bureaucratic processes, lack of transparency, and insufficient resources can hinder efficient decision-making and lead to operational inefficiencies (Neupane & Sharma, 2018). Higher education institutions play a role in engaging with their communities and addressing societal challenges. University–community engagement is often understood as knowledge transfer and collaboration with large corporations—a result of the growing influence of neoliberalism on higher education institutions (Olssen & Peters, 2005). However, studies suggest that community engagement initiatives are often limited and lack sustained impact (Sapkota et al., 2020). Building strong links between institutions and communities can enhance the relevance of education.

In conclusion, the literature review underscores the global and local significance of challenges within higher education. The issues of access, quality, industry relevance, faculty development, governance, and community engagement are interrelated and impact the overall Multi-disciplinary Peer-reviewed Research Journal; Dharan, M. M. Campus, TU.

effectiveness of higher education institutions. Addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring the development of a skilled workforce, promoting economic growth, and fostering societal progress in Janakpurdham.

### **Research Materials and Methods**

The research design and methodology employed in this study are crucial for comprehensively addressing the issues and challenges of higher education in Janakpurdham. This section outlines the materials used, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques utilized in the research process.

#### **Research Design**

The study adopts a survey method of research design. The study is of descriptive and quantitative in nature. This approach allows for a holistic exploration of the multifaceted challenges faced by higher education institutions in Janakpurdham by collecting data from students of different higher education institutions through survey.

#### **Sample Selection**

The sample consists of students from different higher education institutions of Tribhuvan University, Purbanchal University and Rajarshi Janak University in Janakpurdham. A total of 160 students are taken sample for study. A purposive sampling technique has been used to select respondents. The students studying in different higher education institutes of Janakpurdham have been approached for participation in the study.

#### **Data Collection**

Structured surveys were distributed among students from various higher education institutions in Janakpurdham. Stratified random sampling was used to distribute surveys among students across different higher education institutions in Janakpurdham. Stratification was based on institution type (public and private) to ensure a representative sample. The surveys focused on collecting quantitative data on demographics, access to education, perceptions of education quality, faculty support, industry relevance, and community engagement. A Likert scale was used to gauge participants' agreement or disagreement with specific statements.

#### **Data Analysis**

Tables were created, analyzed, and interpreted using excel sheets on a computer, based on the data collected from questionnaires. Conclusions were drawn from the findings derived from the tabulated information and observations made during data collection. Quantitative data



from surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations.

### Results and Discussion

The results of the study provide valuable insights into the perceptions of students regarding the issues and challenges of higher education in Janakpurdham. The data collected through surveys on various aspects of access, quality, industry alignment, faculty, governance, and community engagement. This section presents a summary of the results followed by a discussion of their implications.

#### Demographic Information

Demographic characteristics of students i.e. gender, age, and types of institutions are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics of Students*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	88	55
Female	72	45
Total	160	100
Age:		
18 - 21 years	52	32.5
22 - 25 years	72	45
26 - 30 years	24	15
Above 30 years	12	7.5
Total	160	100
Institutions:		
Public	88	55
Private	72	45
Total	160	100

*Notes.* Field Survey, 2023.

Table 1 provides the demographic characteristics of the 160 sample students. 55% of the students were male and 45% were female. A slight majority of the students in the study were male. The largest group was between 22 to 25 years old, making up 45 % of the students. 32.5% were between 18 to 21 years old. Students aged 26 to 30 made up 15% and those above 30 years were only 7.5%. 60% of the students were from public institutions and 40 % of the students were from private institutions. The demographic diversity ensures a representative sample for analysis.

#### Access and Equity

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Responses of students regarding access and equity of higher education in Janakpurdham are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Response of Students Regarding Access and Equity*

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Higher education opportunities are accessible to all segments of the population in Janakpurdham.		
Strongly agree	8	5
Agree	26	16.25
Neutral	44	27.5
Disagree	66	41.25
Strongly disagree	16	10
Total score	160	100
Financial constraints are a major barrier to accessing higher education in Janakpurdham.		
Strongly agree	24	15
Agree	72	45
Neutral	34	21.25
Disagree	24	15
Strongly disagree	6	3.75
Total score	160	100

*Notes.* Field survey, 2023.

Table 2 shows the responses from students regarding access and equity of higher education in Janakpurdham. For the first statement "Higher education opportunities are accessible to all segments of the population in Janakpurdham", 51.25% of students either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Only around 21% agreed or strongly agreed. For the second statement "Financial constraints are a major barrier to accessing higher education in Janakpurdham", while the majority of students, around 60%, either agreed or strongly disagreed around 19% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A significant proportion of respondents indicated that higher education opportunities are not equally accessible to all segments of the population. Financial constraints were identified as a major barrier to accessing higher education, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to promote equitable access.

### **Quality of Education**

Responses of students regarding quality of education at higher education institutions in Janakpurdham are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Response of Students Regarding Quality of Education*

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
The quality of education provided by higher education institutions in Janakpurdham meets industry standards.		

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Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	10	6.25
Agree	30	18.75
Neutral	92	57.50
Disagree	20	12.50
Strongly disagree	8	5
Total score	160	100
Practical training and real-world applications are adequately integrated into the curriculum.		
Strongly agree	10	6.25
Agree	22	13.75
Neutral	80	50
Disagree	32	20
Strongly disagree	16	10
Total score	160	100

*Notes.* Field survey, 2023.

Table 3 shows the results of the response of students regarding the quality of education at higher education institutions in Janakpurdham. For the first statement "The quality of education provided meets industry standards", 6.25% of students strongly agreed, 18.75% agreed, 57.5% were neutral, 12.5% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed. For the second statement "Practical training and real-world applications are adequately integrated into the curriculum", 6.25% strongly agreed, 13.75% agreed, 50% were neutral, 20% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed.

While a small portion of students felt the education meets industry standards and practical training is adequate, the majorities were neutral or disagreed with those statements. Respondents expressed mixed opinions about the quality of education provided by higher education institutions. While some agreed that education meets industry standards, others expressed concerns about the practical training and real-world applications embedded in the curriculum.

#### **Curriculum Relevance and Industry Alignment**

Responses of students regarding the relevance of higher education curriculum and its alignment with industry demands in Janakpurdham are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Response of Students Regarding Curriculum Relevance and Industry Alignment*

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
The curriculum offered by higher education institutions aligns with the demands of the job market.		
Strongly agree	24	15
Agree	52	32.50
Neutral	64	40

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	14	8.75
Strongly disagree	6	3.75
Total score	160	100
Industry representatives are actively involved in shaping the curriculum of higher education programs.		
Strongly agree	8	5
Agree	12	7.50
Neutral	52	32.50
Disagree	64	40
Strongly disagree	24	15
Total score	160	100

*Notes.* Field survey, 2023.

Table 4 shows the response of students regarding the relevance of higher education curriculum and its alignment with industry demands. According to the survey results, around 48% of the students either agreed or strongly agreed that the curriculum offered by higher education institutions aligns with the demands of the job market. However, only around 12.5% of the students felt that industry representatives are actively involved in shaping the education programs' curriculum. The majority of around 55% of the students either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement regarding industry involvement in curriculum development. Overall, while students felt that the curriculum somewhat aligns with job demands, there is still a need for more active industry involvement in shaping higher education programs to improve their relevance and alignment with industry needs.

### **Faculty and Teaching Quality**

Responses of students regarding the experience of faculty and their teaching quality at higher education institutes in Janakpurdham are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Response of Students Regarding Faculty and Teaching Quality*

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Faculty members are adequately qualified and experienced in their respective fields.		
Strongly agree	30	18.75
Agree	54	33.75
Neutral	60	37.50
Disagree	12	7.50
Strongly disagree	4	2.50
Total score	160	100
Faculty members are accessible and supportive in addressing students' academic concerns.		
Strongly agree	28	17.50
Agree	58	36.25

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Neutral	47	29.38
Disagree	18	11.25
Strongly disagree	9	5.62
Total score	160	100

*Notes.* Field survey, 2023.

Table 5 shows the response of students regarding faculty and teaching quality. According to the survey results, most students were generally satisfied with the faculty and teaching quality at the university. For the first statement regarding faculty members being adequately qualified and experienced, around 50% of the students either strongly agreed or agreed. Only around 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed. For the second statement about faculty members being accessible and supportive in addressing students' concerns, around 54% of students either strongly agreed or agreed. Around 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed. While the majority of students seem satisfied with the faculty and their teaching, there is still room for improvement as around 17% students felt that faculties were not accessible or supportive enough.

#### **Governance and Administrative Efficiency**

Responses of students regarding governance and administrative efficiency in higher education institutions in Janakpurdham are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Response of Students Regarding Governance and Administrative Efficiency*

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Administrative processes within higher education institutions are transparent and efficient.		
Strongly agree	16	10
Agree	46	28.75
Neutral	58	36.25
Disagree	32	20
Strongly disagree	8	5
Total score	160	100
Decision-making processes within higher education institutions are inclusive and responsive to student needs.		
Strongly agree	20	12.50
Agree	52	32.5
Neutral	56	35
Disagree	24	15
Strongly disagree	8	5
Total score	160	100

*Notes.* Field survey, 2023.

Table 6 provides data regarding students' responses on governance and administrative efficiency in higher education institutions. According to the results, around 39% of students either agreed or strongly agreed that administrative processes within higher education institutions are transparent and efficient, while 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Around 36% remained neutral. When asked about decision-making processes being inclusive and responsive to student needs, around 45% of students either agreed or strongly agreed. However, 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 35% remained neutral. In summary, while a majority of students felt that administrative processes were transparent to some extent, there appears to be room for improvement in making decision-making processes more inclusive and responsive to student needs based on the number of students who disagreed or remained neutral.

**Community Engagement**

Responses of students regarding community engagement at higher education institutions in Janakpurdham are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Response of Students Regarding Community Engagement*

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Higher education institutions actively engage with local communities to address societal challenges.		
Strongly agree	20	12.50
Agree	50	31.25
Neutral	56	35
Disagree	28	17.50
Strongly disagree	6	3.75
Total score	160	100
Collaborative initiatives between institutions and industries are effective in enhancing the relevance of education.		
Strongly agree	18	11.25
Agree	60	37.50
Neutral	54	33.75
Disagree	22	13.75
Strongly disagree	6	3.75
Total score	160	100

*Notes.* Field survey, 2023.

Table 7 contains survey results regarding students' perceptions of community engagement. According to the results, around 43.75% of students either agreed or strongly agreed that higher education institutions actively engage with local communities to address societal challenges, while around 21.25% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. For the statement that collaborative initiatives between institutions and industries are effective in

enhancing the relevance of education, around 49% of students agreed or strongly agreed while around 17.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

### Overall Perceptions

Responses of students regarding their overall perceptions of higher education in Janakpurdham and how well it prepares students for future careers are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8**

*Response of Students Regarding Overall Perceptions*

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Overall, I believe that higher education in Janakpurdham effectively prepares students for future careers.		
Strongly agree	24	15
Agree	56	35
Neutral	44	27.5
Disagree	24	15
Strongly disagree	12	7.5
Total score	160	100

*Notes.* Field survey, 2023.

Table 8 shows the response of students regarding their overall perceptions of higher education in Janakpurdham and how well it prepares students for future careers. 15% of the students strongly agreed that higher education in Janakpurdham effectively prepares students for future careers. An additional 35% of students agreed with that statement. Meanwhile, 27.5% of students were neutral in their response and did not strongly agree or disagree. 15% of students disagreed that higher education in Janakpurdham effectively prepares students, and 7.5% strongly disagreed. Respondents generally agreed that higher education in Janakpurdham effectively prepares students for future careers, indicating a degree of optimism about the impact of education on employability.

### Major Findings

The major findings of the research are as follows:

- The study highlighted that higher education opportunities are not equally accessible to all segments of the population in Janakpurdham. Financial constraints emerged as a significant barrier, preventing a substantial portion of the population from pursuing higher education.
- Respondents expressed varied opinions on the quality of education provided by higher education institutions. While some felt that education meets industry standards, others expressed concerns about the practical relevance of the curriculum and the integration of real-world applications.
- The majority of respondents believed that the curriculum offered by higher education institutions aligns with the demands of the job market. However, the level of involvement

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of industry representatives in curriculum design and review was perceived as needing improvement.

- Respondents generally viewed faculty members as qualified and experienced in their respective fields. The perception of faculty accessibility and their supportive attitude in addressing students' academic concerns was positive.
- Administrative processes within higher education institutions received mixed feedback. While some respondents perceived these processes as transparent and efficient, others indicated room for improvement, particularly in streamlining bureaucratic procedures.
- Higher education institutions were recognized for their engagement with local communities to address societal challenges. Collaborative initiatives between institutions and industries were seen as effective avenues for enhancing the relevance of education.
- Most respondents believed that decision-making processes within higher education institutions are inclusive and responsive to student needs. This suggests a positive institutional environment where students' voices are considered.
- Respondents generally held positive perceptions about the ability of higher education in Janakpurdham to prepare students for future careers. This suggests a degree of confidence in the value of education in enhancing employability.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

While this research endeavor aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues and challenges of higher education in Janakpurdham, there are certain limitations that should be acknowledged to ensure a balanced interpretation of the findings:

- The study utilized purposive and stratified random sampling techniques for surveys. However, the sample may not fully represent the diversity of perspectives within the higher education landscape in Janakpurdham.
- The findings of this study are specific to the context of Janakpurdham and may not be directly applicable to other regions or cities.
- In surveys, participants might provide socially desirable responses or omit sensitive information due to concerns about confidentiality. This could lead to a skewed representation of their experiences and perceptions.
- Certain perspectives and issues may not have been fully explored due to time constraints and the scope of the research.
- While surveys collected student perspectives, the study did not extensively explore the perspectives of faculty members, administrators, and other stakeholders who play vital roles in higher education institutions.



- The challenges and issues identified may be unique to the specific context of Janakpurdham and might not be directly transferable to other cities or regions with different characteristics.

### **Conclusion**

The research on "Voices of Janakpurdham: Student Perspectives on Higher Education" has illuminated critical insights into the higher education landscape of the city. Through a comprehensive investigation involving surveys, this study has uncovered a multifaceted array of challenges that higher education institutions face. The findings underscore the need for targeted efforts and collaborative initiatives to address these challenges and enhance the overall quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of higher education in Janakpurdham. The research findings highlighted the existing disparities in access to higher education, with financial constraints acting as a major barrier. To promote equitable access, it is imperative for institutions and policymakers to explore strategies such as scholarship programs, flexible payment options, and outreach initiatives. The study revealed diverse perceptions regarding the quality of education and curriculum relevance. The positive feedback regarding alignment with industry demands is encouraging, but efforts must continue to ensure that curriculum evolves to meet changing industry trends and technological advancements. The positive perception of faculty quality and accessibility indicates a solid foundation. However, addressing administrative inefficiencies and enhancing transparency are essential to optimize institutional effectiveness. Engaging faculty and students in decision-making processes can contribute to a more inclusive and responsive higher education environment. The recognition of collaborative efforts between institutions and industries underscores the importance of partnerships in enhancing the practicality and industry relevance of education. Strengthening ties with local communities can further align education with societal needs. The positive outlook on future employability indicates a belief in the value of higher education. However, continuous efforts to bridge the gap between education outcomes and industry expectations are necessary to ensure graduates are well-prepared for the job market.

In conclusion, the research has laid bare the multifaceted challenges that higher education institutions in Janakpurdham confront. These challenges, while daunting, present opportunities for improvement and transformation. The findings advocate for a collaborative approach involving educational institutions, government bodies, industries, and civil society to collectively address the identified issues. By implementing strategic interventions based on these insights, Janakpurdham can position itself as a hub of quality education, innovative research, and a skilled workforce that drives economic growth, societal development, and cultural preservation. This research serves as a starting point for a broader discourse on higher education reform in Janakpurdham. As the city navigates the challenges, it can leverage its

unique strengths and partnerships to pave the way for a higher education landscape that not only meets the needs of today but also prepares for the demands of the future.

### **Declarations**

#### ***Competing interest***

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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#### ***Author contributions***

All authors listed have significantly contributed to the development and the writing of this article.

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