

## Role of Informal Education, and Human-Agent on Insurance Industry

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### Abstract

*This article discusses how the insured persons learn to be responsible for managing the risk via insurance and the role of agents in this process. So that, a dozen of purposively selected persons were interviewed with unstructured and open-ended questions. Interpretation of so generated qualitative information suggests that people rarely appreciate insurance, and agents are as dominant as the product in buying decisions. Employing informal education to make citizens responsible for their risk management is almost ineffective. The role of agents in enabling customers as prudent risk managers by raising their awareness about different insurance products is observed as a conflict of interests between the state and the agent. In a liberal society, persuading people by a profit-making company is dominant than the state-delivered awareness program. These findings not only question the role of the insurance agent, a human resource for facilitating people to learn about insurance, as commission-based workers instead of professional but also problematize the legitimacy of transferring the state's responsibility of educating citizens to the private companies.*

**Keywords: Human-Agent, Informal Education, Insurance Industry, Life-skill Learning, Risk-Management Education**

### 1. Introduction

In Nepalese insurance market, more than 100 types of life insurance products are available through 19 different life insurance companies. These companies are owned by state, domestic private sector, foreign investor, and jointly owned by domestic and foreign investors, and regulated by Insurance Board (henceforth, IB). Insurance companies, on the one hand, prepare human agents by providing short-term training and IB grants license, and, aware and encourage citizens to get insured, on the other. Generally, the insurance product is sold but not bought to safeguard the company from adverse selection and information asymmetry.

Insurers produce a large number of sale agents to render their services to potential customers providing training and needful information. Agents work as a mediator between insured and insurance companies and act as a "Field Underwriter". Thus, the agents have identified potential policy buyers, and aware them of the importance of insurance, and convince them to buy policies. On the one hand, the agents seem the key person of the insurance business, and on the other hand, they are found under pressure because of a monopolistic competition among the companies, as well as, intra-company and inter-company competitions of agents.

In liberal economy, the state's responsibility of risk management has not only been transferred to the profit-making companies but also state social insurance, welfare, and security provisions have been substantially reduced in the favor of private-sector alternatives (Ericson, Doyle & Barry, 2003, p. 29). For example, the government has handed the authority to financial institutions such as banks and insurance to decide to whom to accept as risks. Thus, companies have segmented the population into risk pools, and have decided to whom to sell or not to sell the insurance policies for the benefits of companies.

The subject, in liberal risk regimes, requires knowledge of risk to be an active consumer. This knowledge is increasingly available in the risk-centered stories in mass media with a more specialized publication. Both one-way education through media and two-way interactive education via a human agent is equally pertinent convincing to the potential customers of an insurance policy.

In Nepal, commercial general insurance service was started in 1947 with the establishment of Nepal Insurance Company, and commercial life insurance was commenced in 1973 by Rashtriya Beema Sansthan. Nepal government-initiated social health insurance since 2015 which is still not obligatory but commercial third-party motor liability insurance and term life insurance for foreign migrant workers is mandatory. There is an ideological, political, legal, socio-cultural, and economic debate about making insurance voluntary or mandatory. ILO Social Security Convention 1952 has recommended a minimum of, nine different types of social insurance but the coverage is not satisfactory. The coverage of commercial life insurance is almost 25% (Insurance Board, 2020) whereas the coverage of social insurance (universal health coverage) is far below the coverage of commercial insurance.

For both modes of insurance policies, the citizens must be educated: either to convince the rationale of mandatory insurance or to make them aware and able for choosing, and at the same time, taking responsibility of choice, making a decision in voluntary insurance. Insurance policy is a matter of selling rather than buying. An insurance company, via its agents, selects the customer, and unless recommended by an agent one cannot buy an insurance policy directly from the office of the company.

The aforementioned conditions for voluntary insurance; and status of insured numbers, together imposed two assumptions: (a) people are not sufficiently aware to buy voluntary products of insurance, and (b) people are aware but they have no economic capacity to buy

these products. It is a matter of curiosity how these two factors are acting on making ready a person buying an insurance policy. Among the aforementioned assumptions, the first is related to the process of persuading that composed of constructing belief and developing a positive attitude toward insurance. However, considering the logistic and academic limitations, on the one hand, and interest of researcher and prioritizing of the issue, on the other, a study was conducted to explore the experience of people regarding their perception toward insurance policy, and the role of agents in buying an insurance product.

Revolving around the axis of this objective, a dozen of neighbors and teaching faculties were purposively selected and their experiences about buying insurance products were dug out through 'qualitative interview' as used by Knapik (2006). So generated verbal formation was interpreted, and extracted three themes: (a) people rarely appreciate insurance; therefore, it looks like buying an insurance policy is for the agents rather than themselves; (b) insures rely almost upon the agent instead of the comparison of different companies and products and choosing the best; and (c) the role of the insurance agent is mostly requesting, creating emotional pressure rather than educating for mutual appreciation. Therefore, this finding problematizes the channel of informal education that state-employed to make people aware of risk management and insurance. It also questions the conflicting roles of agents- i.e., an agent of a private company to expand the business, at the same time, an agent of the state to enhancing social welfare through educating people; and their positions and capacities of deliberating the roles.

## **2. Review of Literature**

This article ventures cross-cutting issue- the implication of educational principles of public awareness into the promotion of insurance business. Therefore, a brief discussion has been made to conceptualize 'risk management and insurance', educating people to make responsible for insurance decisions, and the role of insurance agents in educating people and linking these concepts.

### **2.1 Public Awareness in Liberal Society**

A nation invests in educating its citizen because the educated people are relatively better at making the right decisions in their daily lives, as well as, they can easily be mobilized as per the policies of the state (Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000). Nations' efforts to educate people are categorized into three complementary modes: formal, non-formal, and informal. The formal modes are delivered through schools and colleges; non-formal is through skill development and vocational training centers; and informal is through mass media, seminars, interactions, workshops, and informal conversations, etc.

State-delivered public awareness is one form of informal education that is targeted for a huge mass of diverse backgrounds, and it is loosely designed, delivered, and evaluated. Learning in informal education is guided and designed by the learner rather than teacher and

institutions, therefore it is tantamount to life-long and life skill learning. Pozgaj (2008) opined that informal education is "acquired through everyday activities when a person freely chooses what knowledge and skills they want to master and how they want to accomplish it. A person has control over the learning process and its results (p. 1)".

In a liberal society, states transfer their role in private organizations and people should be self-aware to take advantage of a competitive market. In liberal society it is claimed that services are personalized by putting users at the heart of services, enabling them to become participants in the design and delivery, services will be more effective by mobilizing millions of people as co-producers of the public goods they value (Leadbetter, 2004, p. 19) and thus, people make decisions about their lives in a different way. This is bottom-up, mass social innovation, enabled by the state (Leadbetter, 2004, p. 16). But the capitalist can develop the culture of consumerism, and shape the choices people make their profit for what Migone (2007) describes as 'Hedonistic consumerism'. Nevertheless, people are forced to take sole responsibility for their actions. . . . "That means people have to shoulder more responsibility for assessing and managing the risks of their behaviour (Leadbetter and Lownsborough, 2005, p. 27)". Therefore, in a liberal society, citizens as consumers should be updated to the policies and programs of the state, as well as develop their skills to have access.

## **2.2 Informal Education in Risk Management**

In a liberal society, risk management is the business of individuals instead of the state. Therefore, risk-management education is essential for citizens so that they can know, choose, and take responsibility for their choice. The state should provide them opportunities and facilitators so that they can learn about managing their risk with different methods, where one is buying an insurance product. Risk management education to the citizens covers sufficient knowledge about the sources of risk, and ways of managing it, on the one hand, and skill in a comparative analysis of insurance products available in the market, on the other (Hall, Knight, Coble, Baquet & Patrick, 2003). From the perspective of consumer right, Ericson, Doyle, and Barry (2003) opine-

"The insurance industry is instructive for advancing the sociology of consumption. Insurance is a product that most buyers with little appreciation. They spend large sums of money to purchase something they have little knowledge about and therefore cannot adequately assess concerning price and feature. The only material thing they obtain at the outset is a piece of paper: a legal contract that they rarely read and even more rarely understand. They do understand that embedded in the contract is a promise to pay if something goes wrong (p. 5)".

The aforementioned excerpt suggests that policy buyers need sufficient knowledge so that they can analyze the value-price ratio of any insurance product. In a liberal economy, as suggested by Ericson, Doyle, and Barry (2003), there are six principles regarding individuals' self-responsibility in risk-taking that the state actively promotes-

" (a) people are presumed to have enough self-restraints, willingness to share, and capacity for self-governance; (b) a free-market is supposed to provide security and propensity by encouraging fragmented individuals; (c) people must become educated, knowledgeable, reflexive risk-taker; (d) each individual is to be her political economy, and informed, self-sufficient consumer or labor markets, personal security markets; (e) within a range of responsible risk-taking all differences, and the inequalities that result from them, are a matter of choice; and (f) the state is a necessary but uneasy partner, a problem subject to vigilant monitoring and active reform (p. 36)".

Moreover, the insurance market is not free from fraud, and "prosecution and punishment of insurance fraud through the legal system is extremely rare (ibid, p. 19)". It indicates that in a liberal society, citizens are let free to swim in a lake of the profit-making market where an informed, clever, and prudent can get more benefits and unaware, straightforward, and average people do not. Private (or profit-making) insurance companies have implemented the policy to minimize welfare 'social transfer' and maximize liberal 'risk transfer' to the level of organization and individuals. Through insurance contracts, "the state actively promotes individual responsibility for risk. This promotion involves an attack on welfare, including the moral risks posed by state insurance systems and the mangling and dependency that result at the level of welfare recipients. Reconfiguring itself and but one player in the inter institutional field of insurance, the state limits its role to turning people into responsible risk-takers and managers who purchase private insurance, offering at best a temporary safety net when things go wrong (ibid, p. 14)"

In such a market system, knowing about insurance policies, products, choices, etc., is one part of doing risk management. Risk management is not only one aspect of life skill, but also a part of lifelong learning as discussed by Singh (2015, p.19). Therefore, public awareness about insurance is a kind of informal education where "the attainment of learning follows practices that depend on the interactive, dialogic and experiential subject matter (Hewitt, 2018, preface)".

### **2.3 Human-Agent in Alternative Education**

The non-formal and informal education is collectively called alternative education, the counterpart of mainstream formal education. An empirical study conducted by Ghimire (2018) suggests that human agents through alternative education can bring changes in the health and nutrition habit of socially backward people. The Government of Nepal (MoES, 2007) has adopted an 'oral literacy campaign', as a form of an awareness campaign (Policy 1). The strategy of implementing such a campaign is discussion sessions and mobilization of various communication media. To make learning effective, the government has established 'Community Learning Centers', where a social mobilizer, a human agent, is appointed to conduct a literacy campaign by mobilizing both the individuals and the community where various development activities for the welfare of the community can be conducted (MoES, 2007).

Self-learning, for layperson, about insurance policy is almost impossible, it requires facilitators to explain and interpret the clauses and provisions of the contract. One way of public awareness through media is not sufficient. Raising public awareness is not the same as telling the public their responsibility (UN Women, 2010). Like a social mobilizer, an insurance agent can interact with potential policy buyer, explain the importance of insurance products, suggests for the best product, and assist in the official process of the contract.

People get information through different electronics and printed media as well as social interactions. But, education, of risk management and insurance, is more than awareness, because, education requires, beyond receiving the information, responding and valuing- i.e., developing understanding and attitudes according to the message of the information delivered. Just information, though, the rational-empirical method is not sufficient to change the value of a person, that requires normative-reeducative strategy (Nickols, 2010). Selling insurance products, and collecting premium periodically resembles educating to educating.

Insurance policy, as proactively selling products, demands human agent who approaches to the buyers, explains, presents the evidence or cases of benefits of insurance, follow up or supervise the people in work, etc. By this process, an agent plays role in developing a belief that buying an insurance product is the best way of risk management. "Traditionally beliefs have been linked with information about an object, attitudes to the evaluation of that object conceptualized beliefs as more than just cognition, capable of arousing effect around the object of the belief and thus having a motivational function (Seel, 2012, p. 448)". Clusters of beliefs form attitudes that are functionally and cognitively connected to the value system. Therefore, an agent can play a crucial role in developing the value of insurance for people, but the danger is that s/he implicitly influences for the benefits of her/him and the affiliated company rather than the customer. regarding the selling of in(security) Ericson, Doyle & Barry (2003) opine-

Insurance products are less consumer-driven, many of them are sold proactively and aggressively by providing lucrative incentives to sales staff. Marketing (in)security is substantially different from marketing of material goods, in which brands identities and cultivates 'coolness' through positive lifestyle images and a sense of immediacy (p. 5).

The literature review indicates an ambivalent condition of public awareness in a liberal society. The first logic is that private insurance companies via their agents approach the potential policyholders with the intention of the state in managing the risk of subjects. The second logic is that private insurance companies, on the one hand, educate the potential customers via their agents who work on a commission basis, so that they work for the self-benefits among affiliated companies, and the state, on the other hand, via its regulatory authority, educates citizens enabling them to make the best choice among many products. Thus, interests of state and private companies encounter and conflict while making decisions

in insurance policy buying. It is crystal clear that this incommensurability exists during the interaction between agents and insures to arrive at a contract. Leaving behind observing this issue in the field, this review encourages exploring- how the insurance companies and their agents are perceived by the customers in the course of learning and deciding about insurance products.

### **3. Methodology**

As the study aimed to explore individuals' experiences regarding perception toward insurance policy, and the role of agents in buying (or offering) insurance products, it employed phenomenological design. Therefore, it rejects the belief that objects in the external world exist independently and information about objects is reliable but accepts that how things as insurance appeared in or "presented to the consciousness of the study subjects" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 43). The paradigm of the study was constructionism- i.e., participating with the people, and co-constructing the knowledge with and about the customers of insurance products.

As the term phenomenology equates to 'modes of appearing', or 'a thing experienced by individuals', the best avenue of inquiry of individuals' "subjective understanding" is interviewing (Seidman, 2006, p. 12). Therefore, a dozen of close friends including teaching faculties and neighbors, who were ready to share their experiences of how they decided to buy insurance policy were consulted. To increase the credibility of this study prolonged engagement had been employed. The information was inductively analyzed by generating themes and the themes were further analyzed to solving the research problem.

### **4. Citizens' Experiences about Insurance**

In phenomenological interviews, one studies another subject, which means that two autonomous subjects, capable of producing accounts of themselves and their worlds, interact together in an ever-developing conversation (Høffding & Martiny, 2015, p. 2). The researcher, in this study, seeks a second-person perspective. In the process of the interview, the interviewer (researcher) got not only first-hand knowledge of the interviewee, with a lot of discursive knowledge but also a lot of tacit knowledge. This knowledge has influenced while analyzing the information.

Analyzing the information implicitly begins with the conversation, and then a selection from the plethora of transcript because "phenomenology is not interested in quail in the sense of purely individual data that are incorrigible, ineffable, and incomparable (Gallagher & Zahavi 2008, p. 28)". Rather, it seeks to explore its essential structures and conditions of possibility and aims to disclose structures that are inter-subjectively accessible, and its analyses are consequently open for corrections and control. Therefore, analysis followed the axial coding- i.e., segregating and selecting the themes around of axis of a research question, by considering "the types of phenomena, contexts, causal and intervening conditions, and consequences (Kelle, 2005, p.?)" deciding insurance policy buying.

#### **4.1. Some Excerpts and Meaning**

From the conversations to a dozen, excerpts of experiences of the five purposively selected subjects (by changing their names) are presented here to share with the readers as first-hand information. The meaning of each excerpt paragraphs has been extracted in the succeeding paragraph. The subjects present diverse backgrounds as well as experiences, but their excerpts and meaning indicate certain common patterns.

##### **(a) Suvash Kumal**

Suvash Kumal is a 39-year-old school graduate. He has been running fancy clothes shops for 10 years. An agent of an insurance company, whose shop is next to his, had tried to sell him a life insurance policy many times. Besides him, the other three agents also had requested him to buy. Three years ago, when his daughter went to Japan to work, the agent again came to convince him, saying that- "you are a businessman, you can get a loan from the same company after the 3 years of policy start; if you get an accident: the company will bear the cost of treatments; after that, if you get disable, the company will provide the disability benefits, or if you get demise company will pay the sum assured". He was recommended by other two insured persons: the shop-room owner, and adjacent homeowner, to buy the policy. They also had bought the same product from the same agent. They told him that the company is the best among all, and an agent is also trustworthy person their suggestions made him buy the insurance product by realizing that if his daughter and son won't care for him at old age, or in case of accidental disability, the insurance will be his sole supporter.

The agent not only frequently requested but also created pressure by recommendation of two influencing policyholders. The buyer has supposed that the agent is urging him for his benefits, though; he has realized that the agent won't cheat him. Suvash is hopeful to the contract paper as explained by the agent; he will be helped, if something will go wrong. Nevertheless, he has hesitantly and suspiciously bought the policy in the recommendation and urging.

##### **(b) Ram Bhandari**

Ram Bhandari is a 53-year-old associate professor of TU. He runs a private school as well. Twelve years ago, he had bought life insurance policy at the request of his own of the relatives who was an agent. For seven years he paid an annual premium regularly. Then he went to India for Ph.D., he discontinued paying a premium. With the burden of study, he forgot or did not take it seriously. A few months ago, the agent met by chance reminded him to continue by paying all the dues. His wife urges him either to continue or terminate by refunding how much he can. Even though, he has no time to think over it and execute what he thinks to decide (this sentence demands another supportive sentence). He hesitantly



expressed- "what can I do, the company won't refund, nor I like to store more money there unproductively, instead of investing in the productive sector?"

For him, the insurance product is not appreciative; he bought it only because he could not deny the request of the agent. He has bought some obligatory and medical insurance for *Karmachari Sanchaya Kosh*. Even in his accidental death, his wife gets pensions, and he has sufficient property to survive. For him, paying the premium, documenting, claiming in saturation is just bothering of time and money.

**(c) Mahendra Khatiwada**

Mahendra Khatiwada is a 30-year-old college dropout. He has been running a hardware shop with an annual turnover of above 200 million for seven years. He had bought a policy of premium of 10 thousand per annum, 15 years ago, but terminated after seven years. In my question "why are you not interested in insurance" he replied as- "for businessmen, every amount of money is worth to multiply our profit, then how can we turn such active money into inactive by spending in the name of premium?" In my curiosity- "but, there are many businessmen who buy the policies of millions" he explained- "yes, I understood what you mean, only those businessmen who have a link and setting to earn much money via insurance fraud (compensation of loss claim) buy insurance policies". He presented three cases of familiar and renowned businessmen of Chitwan district who had become rich overnight by insurance fraud. Finally, he says- as businessmen we must think that the insurance company which is doing business with others' (i.e.- insured) money (premium), of insurance, how can we think to put our worthy cash ideal in a bank?

As a young energetic businessman, he has understood insurance is beneficial only for those who can fraud, otherwise, it is just a waste of productive money.

**(d) Rashika Gurau**

Rashika Gurau is a 30-year-old high school dropout, spinster. She has been running a tailoring shop for ten years with her three sisters. One of her relatives requested her to buy a life insurance policy to which she could not deny. It was just an amount of three thousand and five hundred rupees per annum, and it is collected as saving, therefore she accepted. As told that she could not terminate it before, but after 15 years, she will get more than twice the collected amount and bonus, etc. she supposed that the scheme was not bad.

She bought insurance because she could not deny the request of the agent. Meanwhile, realized that paying a premium, on the one hand, turns into saving for the future, and on the other hand, support, if something will go wrong with her. She took the help of the 'insurance' (contract) as explained and promised by the agent, because she has no other more helpful hopes- family members, property, job, etc., in the day when she becomes unable to earn.

**(e) Naresh Shrestha**

Naresh Shrestha is a 47-years-old, lecturer of TU by profession. He had bought an insurance policy 15 years ago, and became an agent of the same company, and mediated for all the members of his family. He has mediated for more than 20 people, in the early years. Now, almost all persons who may accept his urge and request are insured, and he is unable to convince the persons of the outer sphere. He says- "insurance is important, but most of the layperson be ready to buy a policy in the urge of agents, as honoring their request. There are many of my agent friends who earn more than two million per annum from the commission of the insured premium. An agent who rides a car befriends with rich- business, party, club, etc., can have to buy policies of millions, and get commission accordingly, but, for those (like us) who ride motorcycles, and whose friends and relatives are not willing to buy policies, agentship is just self-humiliation".

His decision of buying insurance policies was influenced by the motivation of the commission of the agent. However, his knowledge of insurance as an agent and then context, suggest that he realized insurance as risk management. But, for him, insurance is the forced selling business, and the agent who works in commission-basis must have, at first, access to the rich persons, and then, so deep friendship that they won't deny his request.

#### **4.2. Interpretation and Findings**

Interpretation is the heart of qualitative research. Willing (2017) opines that "the language of 'analysis' is associated with science whereas the language of 'interpretation' with arts and humanities (p. 256)" and for Bryan (2002), "the purpose of the analysis is seen to be the establishing of cause whereas interpretation is considered to be about the elucidation of meaning (p. 2)". Thus, the axial themes are interpreted to make meanings, and thus produced meanings are presented as the findings of the study.

##### **(a) People rarely appreciate insurance**

Among the subjects of the study who participated in the interview, regardless of their academic qualification, and profession, certain phenomena appear. Ram and Mahendra did not appreciate insurance. They were not worried about risk and relied on transferring the liability of risk by buying an insurance policy. Moreover, for Mahendra, 'insurance' is tantamount to fraud, and an approach of moneymaking for both company and insured. It is a system of exploiting the honest and layperson and supplying to the depraved and clever.

##### **(b) Agents are dominants instead of product**

Suvash and Rashika bought the policy, but they were imposed by agents. Nevertheless, the insurance contract has made them a little hopeful to their worrying future. Suvash was, though, informed many years before, he took a decade to decide to buy. Rather than understanding by comparison among the different, he chooses the company and product in the recommendation of the other two insured, and the agent to whom he got friendship. It suggests that a familiar and trustworthy agent is the key source of convincing. The principle

of awareness about insurance assumes that people learn about the companies and their products, and identify the best for them, and the people, in this process, will study the documents and interact with agents. But the experiences of the subjects suggest the contrary to the assumption.

As Naresh reported, an agent convinces potential customers to buy a policy by making them so close friends that they would not deny the request for buying insurance products. It suggests that agentship looks like the art of friendship rather than professionalism. This finding threatens the general assumption regarding agentship, and professional development of insurance agents.

## 5. Conclusion

There are three types of insurance products. The first type is offering- 'Employees Provident Fund' offers health insurance to its members; second is the obligatory- 'third-party vehicle insurance' is one of the examples; and third is voluntary insurance- as the aforementioned subjects had bought. While imposing citizens the obligatory types, or letting them voluntarily buying, clients' awareness, acceptance, and self-responsibility to choose are must as a hallmark of a democratic society, and the state's responsibility in liberalism towards citizens as claimed by Hung, Yoong, and Brown (2012)-"a combination of awareness, knowledge, skill, attitude, and behavior necessary to make sound financial decisions and ultimately achieve individual financial wellbeing (p.8)." The OECD (2007) has highly appreciated the consumer education- "households should be encouraged and provided with the possibilities to enhance their awareness and their responsibility relative to the coverage of their overall risk-exposure as well as their understanding and knowledge of insurance products and markets (p. 4)." The findings contradict the claim of liberal society. But, lacking knowledge about insurance in public suggests that the government has not valued insurance as much as it must. Citizens rarely approach the awareness programs and pamphlets about risk management and insurance. People perceive insurance as a crook way of businessmen for moneymaking rather than an honest way of risk-sharing. Moreover, there is lacking informal learning about insurance and life skill about risk management.

Instead of a separate and reliable channel of a guardian, the state has applied the channel of profit-makers. People almost rely on agents even to decide whereas obligatory for buying, even though, they perceive agent as fraud setter. "Insurance sector faces many more unethical practices, such as untrue advertisements, half-truths, and nondisclosure of material information, (p. 10)". Similarly, Cooper and Frank (1991) have identified six types of unethical behavior committed by insurance agents in Malaysia, where, sales and company policy would be the driving force for unethical intention, as agents need to constantly match the expectations and targets set by the company (Haron, Ismail & Razak, 2011). Insurance market based on intra-company and inter-company competition, unit and target-based payment always possess the risk of unethical work, nonetheless, the state has transferred the

role of educating into the agents of private companies. In this situation, how can the state's policy of public awareness through agents be a true-teaching?

Persuading people by a profit-making company is dominant than the state-delivered awareness program. People decide to buy a product because of the relationship with the agent, the role of an agent is crucial for both to make citizens responsible and capable of risk management; and the selling of companies. Contrary to this icon, an agent is sometimes perceived as a fraud-setter between a company and customers, and the fraud-setter also can be a successful agent. To overcome this ambivalence, the agent who takes insurance products to potential customers must be an expert and moral educator. So that, an agent as a teacher of informal education, like a school or college teacher, must be developed as a professional. How can the insurance agents be supposed as agents of the state to educate citizens without any 'performance-based reward' as insurance companies provide a commission?

An agent carries out two incommensurate, if not conflicting, roles that are- educating people risk and insurance, and meanwhile, selling them insurance products for the benefits of a company. It creates a pertinent doubt of whether the interest of the state- i.e., wakening citizens to take full responsibility of risk management; and the interest of the profit-making company and commission-driven agents- i.e., persuading one to buy their products, completely commensurate? This controversy and ambivalence suggest a study on how the agents can be developed as professionals who can define their roles in the destiny of the 'socialism-oriented just society' as envisaged by the constitution of Nepal.

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