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Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

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Abstract

This study is about grandparental involvement in their children's learning. Its main objective was to find out how the grandparents are involved in their children's learning. It is a qualitative research based on the narrative design. One grandfather, one grandmother, and two grandchildren were purposively selected for in-depth interviews. I used the general inductive approach for coding, categorising and theme generation. The human resource capital approach and the social demand approach were used for analysing the data and drawing conclusion. The grandparents were found involved in motivating their grandchildren, providing proper guidance to them and counselling them in different conditions. They provided emotional and financial support for transforming the grandchildren to human resource capital. They provided different care and practical help to develop behavioural skills on their grandchildren which can contribute for fulfillment of social demand. The grandchildren, their family, the society and the whole country have to recognise the contribution of grandparents properly and pay proper respect to them.

Keywords: Human resource capital approach, social demand approach, motivation, counselling, emotional support, financial support

Introduction

The involvement and contribution of different people can be important for children's learning. Grandparents are parents of the parents and their involvement for children's learning is the remarkable issue for the societies having many joint families in existence, which must be a matter of research. Learning is a change in original behaviour through experience, training, practice, imitation, identification, self-attempt and insight (Bhattarai & Bhattarai, 2017). It is something new or different behaviour rather than any behaviour that happens automatically. Education is a wider, continuous and lifelong process. Learning a

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Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

new knowledge, skill, attitude or thing is education. A person learns new things throughout his/her life (Bhattarai & Nepal, 2015).

There are three types of education namely formal, non-formal and informal. Formal education is planned, systematic and organised. It is provided in predetermined places like School, College, Universities and other Institutions. On the other hand, non-formal education is an alternative form of education, which is designed to overcome the problems of formal education. It tries to provide the knowledge to outsiders of formal education with need-based skills and knowledge. Though non-formal education is based on the predetermined objectives, contents and activities, it is flexible in time, place, and prequalification of participants, certificate and so on. Non-formal education is organised according to the need of those people who are outside or deprived of formal education. It is need-based education and alternative approach to education. Likewise, informal education is non-systematic, non-planned and non-organised. People learn new things or acquire new behaviour in different occasions during their life span. Both incidental and spontaneous education are included in informal education. Informal education supports the view of lifelong education (Eaton, 2010).

Education is the root of awareness. Personality development of an individual, progress of community and prosperity of nation are dependent on education. Education develops life skill on individual. It promotes internal capacity of individual and makes him/her able and competent. It develops the predicting power of problems and hindrances coming in near future and increases the awareness and sensitivity for their solution. In this way, education is the important base for successful individual life.

The transformation of society depends upon access and opportunity of education. The society gets aware, efficient and competent citizens through education. In addition to this, education produces productive manpower of national and international level. Therefore, education is the backbone of social and economic development. The modern society uses education as a multidimensional means for socialising future generation, developing civil qualification, respecting human values and traditions, increasing economic capacity of citizens, preserving natural resources, social tradition and culture, developing patriotic feeling and using innovative knowledge, skills and technology (Kafle et al., 2068).

I have seen different types of family in my community. Some of the families among them are joint families where three or more generations are using the same kitchen. The children, their parents and grandparents are staying under the same roof being a family. I have seen the grandfathers going to their grand children's school carrying the school bag of their grandchildren and catching their hand at around 9:30 am. I have also seen the grandmothers with the tiffin box going to their grandchildren's school at around 1:00 pm. I have also seen some of the fathers and mothers coaching their children for different works, some of the grandfathers and grandmothers playing football or badminton with their children, some are planting flowers in the garden with their children, some are singing and dancing with their children. When I went in one of the houses in my community, one of the grandfathers was

Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

walking by two hands and two legs. His small grandson was riding on his back and the grandfather was walking like a horse.

After observing these different activities, I had a keen interest to study how grandparents are involved in their children's learning; what kinds of feelings and perceptions the grandparents have about their grandchildren's learning; what type of feelings the grandchildren have about their grandparent's involvement towards their learning. Under this context, I felt that it was necessary to study about the involvement of grandparents for their grandchildren's learning. Therefore, the study explored the answer of the research question: How do the grandparents involve in their grandchildren's learning?

Grandparental involvement affects the achievement of their grandchildren. This study shows the reality of different aspects of contribution made by grandparents in children's learning, which can be important for the production of human resource in the nation building process. The identification of the trend of involvement by grandparents in children's learning will help in finding out the truth of their contribution. So, this can suggest different ways in strengthening their role for making the involvement more fruitful. This can justify the rationale of this study.

Literature Review

For establishing validity and objectivity of the study, some related literatures are reviewed. Stevan (2006) said that life events in which children most often participate and which are also potential sources of stress can be personal, familial, interpersonal and academic. Out of numerous stresses, stress created by the transition from one level education to another such as from primary school to secondary and from secondary school to university, peer rejection and problems concerning financing school education are major stressors. Anxiety, depression and anger were analyzed as the most frequent consequences of unfavorable life events. Social support, problem solving orientation, reduction and avoidance of tension as well as sport and recreation can be the strategies for overcoming stress. Parents and grandparents can play a vital role in these strategies.

I have the reflection on Stevan's concept that the grandparents make different contribution for the management of their grandchildren's stress and for making them able in the upcoming future. This can be very much important for the children's learning. Kenner et al. (2007) stated that young children and grandparents jointly participate in different events ranging from storytelling to computer activities; the exchange of knowledge enhances learning for both generations. In different cases, learning with grandparents at home develops concepts and skills relevant to children's formal education, and this significant contribution needs to be recognised by schools. This has proved that the contribution of grandparents in learning of grandchildren is important.

Saxena and Brotherson (2013) argued that grandparents are very important and influential people to grandchildren of all ages. The grandparents take as an exciting opportunity to guide their grandchild towards becoming the responsible adult they envision and they involve

Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

themselves in the children's learning as much as possible. This shows that the grandparents perceive their involvement in children's learning as a good opportunity, not as a burden. Biljana (2014) emphasises that alone mothers have faced financial problems, unemployment, housing difficulty, child care problems, loneliness, etc. Most of alone mothers in solving problems and rising children rely on their grandparental role. So it has become important. My realisation on Biljana's indication is towards more important role of grandparents in specific cases where there are alone mothers.

Romerosa (2018) has classified the stakeholders as authorised policy actors (school administrators) and non-authorised policy actors (teachers, parents and students) and focused on the role of both actors in appropriating policy within the operational framework of public private partnership. Thus, the realisation of Romerosa is towards importance of equal role of authorised and unauthorised policy actors. I think the parents and grandparents are the remarkable stakeholders under unauthorised policy actors and that is the indication of grandparental involvement.

Rokicka and Sztanderska (2014) conducting a study in Poland have cleared that although the majority of educational services in Poland are delivered within a public education system, various educational costs are born by parents and grandparents including the fees, private tutoring and courses, educational goods and materials, the Internet, etc. Their indication is towards the involvement of parents and grandparents in financial investment for their children's learning.

Manning (2015) stated that raising a second generation brings many rewards, like giving grandkids a sense of security, developing a deeper relationship, and keeping the family together. Simpson (2018) has argued that the close relationship of grandparent and grandchild benefits the health and well-being of both grandparent and grandchild. For the grandchildren, the largest gift of the important grandparent-grandchild bond is the endless supply of love, acceptance, patience, and unwavering support of grandparents. So, the grandparental involvement is the source of love, acceptance, security, and patience for the children.

Lamsal et al. (2011) stated that mass movement of 1990 ended the Panchayat system and established democracy in Nepal. The constitution formulated after that movement, managed the provision of secured human rights and social justice. For correcting the past shortcomings and fixation of national aims of education according to new context, National Education Commission was formulated on 1991 on the chairmanship of education minister. The report also highlighted the promotion of guardian's role for children's learning. I think the indication of the report to guardian's role had intention towards parental and grandparental role both.

According to Economics of Education, education is an economic good. Such types of goods are called economic goods, for which the mankind have to bear the cost and pay price. Education demands investment. The free goods available in nature are not economic goods. The scarcity of different goods creates the price in such goods. If scarce goods are

Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

being used to fulfill human needs, these goods are economic goods. Education is scarce and it helps to fulfill human needs. So, it is economic good. The investment in education affects positively to the family, society, nation and the whole world. Teachers, education workers, doctors, engineers, lawyers, technical manpower are the products of education. Supply side of investment consists of salary and allowances to teachers, construction of school building, stationery expenditure which are generally in the responsibility of government. Demand side consists of all costs which are according to the demands of people of community. The community has to bear direct and indirect cost under demand side. Direct cost includes books and other materials, different fees and educational materials and indirect cost includes opportunity cost of lost income due to the time used in education process. Our present education system is mostly based on supply side financing. But for making the system qualified and assessable, we have to join it to demand side also (Acharya & Khanal, 2063).

As Acharya and Khanal (2063) have stated that education is an economic good and it positively affects the family, society, nation and the whole world. Education is always for learning. I have the reflection towards them that the grandparents always give importance to their grandchildren and they try their best to make their grandchildren able for every works. They involve themselves in children's learning as contributor of supply side. So, the grandparents actively involve themselves in their grandchildren's learning.

Patrinos (2002) has stated about demand-side financing. He takes it as the principle of channeling education resources through students and their parents or basing school funding on enrolments or attendance. Supply-side financing usually refers to funding inputs such as human and material resources based on formal sector planning by technical planners and managers. However, ensuring the supply side is, in many cases, not enough. Thus, there may be good equity and access reasons to consider demand-side financing. My reflection to the view of Patrinos in favour of demand side financing is that it has indirectly accepted the importance of guardians or parents and grandparents for children's learning.

In most of the countries, educational investment has followed cost sharing approach. Under cost sharing approach, the family, community and the government have to bear the cost of education jointly. If the guardian or community bear the whole cost, that is full cost recovery. But if the community is not bearing any cost that is zero cost recovery. In most of the countries, the government hasn't taken full responsibility. In this context, partnership in investment is appropriate and useful (Diarra, 1997).

Generally the school level students are of low age. Especially in Nepal, the primary age group of children is six to ten years (National Education Commission, 2049). According to National Curriculum Framework of school education 2076, the education from grade one to three is basic education level one and from grade four to five is basic education level two. The corresponding age groups of level one and level two are five to seven years and eight to nine years (Curriculum Development Centre, 2076). Various types of support and care are necessary to them at this age. The basic level curriculum (Grade 1-3) is being implemented in Nepal from the year 2077 (Curriculum Development Centre, 2076). That has also recognised the role of guardians in children's learning.

Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

Studies have stated about the parents and teacher's role in children's learning but the involvement of grandparents for children's learning is not yet clearly studied and that is in shadow. In the societies having large number of joint families, the parents involve themselves in outdoor activities and children pass most of the time with their grandparents. There is gap in literature and the grandparental involvement in children's learning is the important issue to be researched. This study is focused on this issue.

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on human resource capital approach and social demand approach. Investment in education means the investment in human capital or human resource. Human capital investment means the investment for increasing quality of labour force by proper management of education, training and collection of experiences. Investing budget, time and effort for human resource development is the theme of human resource capital approach (Mincer, 1974; Becker, 1964 as cited in Cohn & Addison, 1998). Capital can be formed by the investment of financial resource in production activities. By investing in education, we can produce effective manpower and increase earning of mankind. So, investment in education is a type of capital formation.

On the other hand, the study is based on social demand approach. According to this approach, the state invests financial resources in education to produce active, competent and ideal citizens, who can make remarkable contribution to solve various social problems like problems created by superstitious beliefs, high growth of population, environmental pollution, social discriminations, etc. (Lamsal et al., 2011). The guardians also invest their financial resources in education to transform their children to ideal citizens. For social development, social conservation, educational and cultural development, financial investment in education is important.

Not only the state but also the parents and grandparents think about the future returns from the present investment in education and make decision about their involvement in learning of their children. Therefore, both of these theories are related anyway to the grandparental role in children's learning and they are used as theoretical framework.

Methods and Procedures

I have used the narrative inquiry design of qualitative research. I have selected research site and participants by applying the purposive sampling method to investigate fully on subject of inquiry and to get information for indepth study. By using this sampling, I have selected one grandfather aged 68, one grandmother aged 63, one grandson aged 14 studying at grade nine and one granddaughter aged 10 studying at grade five as sample. The occupation of the grandparent's family was trade. All were residing in Phidim, Panchthar and I have conducted indepth interviews for collecting data from grandparents and grandchildren. I have searched the grandparent's approaches when they were involved in their grandchildren's learning and also the grandchild's feelings about that involvement.

Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

By taking permission from participants, I have recorded these interviews on mobile phone. I have transcribed them accordingly. From that transcription, I completed coding. From those codes, I formed categories and from those categories, themes were generated. I used the "General Inductive Approach" (Thomas, 2006) for coding, categorising and theme generation. I explained the themes by connecting them to verbatim of participants, related literature and the theoretical framework.

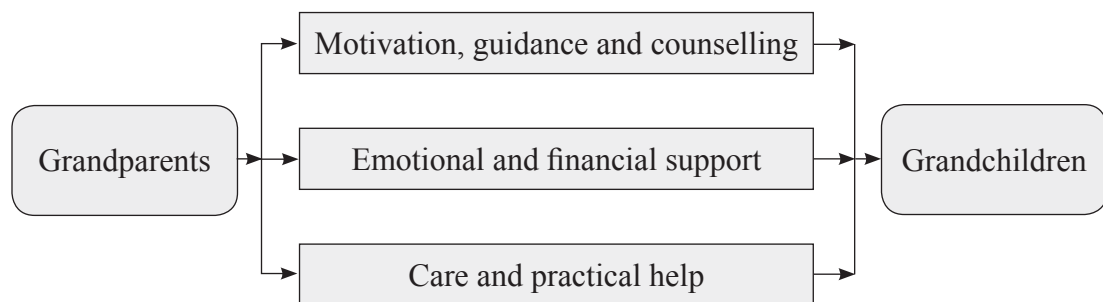
I maintained ethics by following researcher's professional code of conduct. Sound research is a moral and ethical endeavour (Halai, 2006). Therefore, first and foremost, I had an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desire of the participants. I had maintained secrecy of the sensitive personal information which was revealed during data collection through different research tools. I had given too much importance to rapport building to the participants. By this, I made trustworthy environment. I had taken pre-consent of participants for data collection from them. I maintained no chance of unnecessary data manipulation during collection and analysis. Neutrality has been maintained during collection and analysis of data by controlling the possibility of each and every kinds of biasness. In my research, ethics has been an important consideration and it is taken seriously, but that is extrinsic to the inquiry process itself. As Denzin and Lincoln (2011) have said the ethical behaviours are maintained by following researcher's professional code of conduct during the study.

Results and Discussion

For the study about grandparental involvement in children's learning, the interviews were conducted with the participants. Those interviews were recorded in mobile phones and transcribed accordingly. Different codes were developed from the insights received from those transcripts. The categories were formed from those codes. Three themes were generated from these categories which are presented and interpreted here (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Themes of the Results



Motivation, Guidance and Counselling

The important involvement of grandparents in children's learning according to the views received from my participants is motivation, guidance and counselling for the children. The grandparents motivate their children for study regularly. These issues are discussed below:

Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

Motivation

Providing motivation is the important role of grandparents in children's learning. The act of stimulating someone to take the desired course of action is motivation. Here, the desired course of action means learning of different things. The grandparents stimulate their grandchildren for learning. In this regard the grandfather said:

I have so many remembrances of the beginning of their school days. I have motivated them at that time by telling them that they have to study well and I have guided them to the school on foot by catching their hands for motivation. I motivate them to sit for study in the evening after they come from school.

The grandmother's view in this regard was also same to the grandfather. Remembering the beginning school days of her grandchildren, she said "During those days, I have motivated them to go to school by promising them to buy toy and doll for them if they went to school." I asked the grandson about this matter and he said, "My grandmother had purchased a small ball for me and a doll for my sister to convince us to go to school during our beginning school days."

These statements showed clearly that grandparents are the great motivators to their grandchildren for learning. The grandparents motivate their grandchildren for well study. They motivate their grandchildren for learning different behavioral activities.

Manning (2019) has argued that there are millions of grandparents raising grandchildren in U.S. These families are often called grand families. The grandparents motivate their grandchildren most in these families. Manning's view justifies that motivation is the important role of grandparents for children's learning.

According to human resource capital approach, the efficient and qualified human resource can be too much productive for the development of the family, society, and the whole country. The aim of grandparents when motivating their grandchildren and involving themselves in their grandchildren's learning was to transform their grandchildren into human resource capital. So, the grandparental involvement is connected to human resource capital approach anyway.

Guidance

Providing guidance is also the important role of grandparents in children's learning. Assisting the individual to prepare for his future life to fit him in society is called guidance. The grandparents provide guidance to their grandchildren for learning as per efficiency and requirement. In this regard the grandfather said:

I am literate only. I can write simple Nepali words and numbers but I don't have knowledge of English language. Then, how can I guide them in reading? The grandchildren are in boarding school. My daughter-in-law has very good English. She does that job. Oh, Yes... Yes. I had taught Nepali alphabets 'Ka to Gyna' to my grandson and granddaughter (showing happiness in his face).

Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

This shows that if the grandparents have the idea of subject matters, they guide the children in doing homework also. The grandparents guide the children for performing simple household works.

In one of my questions, my participant (the grandfather) said:

I always look at whether they have gone to school or not. At what time did they return from school? What kind of works have they done at school? What kind of homework have they brought from subject teachers? I regularly make surveillance about all these facts from the time of my sons.

In this regard, the grandmother said, "I am providing support in the time management of children. I remind them their homework in the evening and early in the morning." I asked the granddaughter about the guidance made by their grandparents to her. She said:

My grandfather had taught me the alphabets during my beginning school days. He plays Ludowith me. My grandmother has guided me about cooking tea, managing the bedsheet, and washing my clothes. Every day, she reminds me to finish my homework of school before going to play.

Both of the grandparents said that they provide guidance to their grandchildren according to the requirement of the guidance. Kenner et al. (2007) have argued that "learning with grandparents at home develops concepts and skills relevant to children's formal education, and this significant contribution needs to be recognized by schools" (p.241). So, the important involvement of grandparents in children's learning according to the views received from my participants correlates with them.

The grandparents wanted to make their grandchildren the ideal citizen for society and the country. So that they were guiding them in various aspects. Thus, this concept relates with social demand approach.

Counselling

Providing counselling is also the important role of grandparents in children's learning. Counselling is a person to person relationship in which one individual with problems and needs turns to another person for assistance. The grandparents provide counselling to their grandchildren for learning.

In this regard the grandfather said:

I am providing regular time to them for counseling. I tell them that education and health are the greatest assets in our life. They have to be educated. I look after them and ask whether they are reading or not. So, they start reading if I come to their room.

The grandparents counsel their grandchildren to focus on education and health. By reminding the home assignment of the children given by teachers as per necessity, the grandparents persuade the children for playing after finishing the homework only. They counsel the children for awaking early in the morning.

Saxena and Brotherson (2013) have argued that grandparents are very important and influential people to grandchildren of all ages. They provide counselling to their

Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

grandchildren in different moments. So, the important involvement of grandparents in children's learning according to the views received from my participants correlates with them.

In Nepal, there is a proverb in practice "Sawako bhandabyajakomaya." This means the love for interest will be more than the love for capital. In other words, grandparents love their grandchildren more than their own children. So they involve themselves in motivating, guiding and counseling their grandchildren.

The grandparental involvement on children's learning through motivation, guidance and counselling correlates with human resource capital approach and social demand approach. The grandparents want to make their grandchildren qualified and able with respect to each and every aspects of life. That means they want to transform their grandchildren to human resource capital.

On the other hand, they want to make their grandchildren active, competent and ideal citizens, who can make remarkable contribution to solve various social problems like problems created by superstitious beliefs, high growth of population, environmental pollution and social discriminations. For this overall purpose they involve themselves in support of children's learning.

Emotional and Financial Support

Another important involvement of grandparents in children's learning according to the views received from my participants is emotional and financial support. The grandparents are very close to their grandchildren emotionally and they always try to make their grandchildren happy. They persuade them when they are angry. Sometimes, they go to children's school with children and sometimes they go there to bring them to home. They participate themselves in children's birthday, sing and play with children just for their happiness. The grandfather provides school fees and the grandmother provides money for breakfast separately. In this regard the grandmother said:

They demand money to me at the time of preparation of going to school every day. They ask me about what to take as breakfast regularly. They demand additional expenses with me. But they take school fees and other amounts payable to school from below (Below means from shop demanding to grandfather or father).

The saying of grandmother proves that the children are emotionally more attached to her and they tell their internal matters to her. The demanding of additional expenses from grandmother is the proof of more emotional attachment to her.

The grandfather's view in this regard is:

Generally, I study the mood of my grandchildren and if they are angered, I coax them. If they are angered to their father and mother, I and my wife have to coax them. I participate in the birthday program of the grandchildren.

The grandparents are more attached to their grandchildren emotionally. They have to persuade the children if they are angered to their parents. The granddaughter has also said

Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

during the in-depth interview that her grandmother persuades her maximum when she is angered. The children feel that their grandparents are the guardians of their parents also and they tell the complaint about their parents to grandparents. At that time the grandparents provide them emotional support. They provide them financial support also. The grandfather pays school fees and the grandmother provides money for breakfast.

Simpson (2018) had argued that a close relationship of grandparent and grandchildren benefits the health and well-being of both grandparent and grandchild. For grandchildren, the biggest gift from grandparents is the endless supply of love, acceptance, patience and unwavering support. This study has also the theme like Simpson's view.

The grandparental involvement on children's learning through emotional and financial support also relates with human resource capital approach and social demand approach. The motive of emotional and financial support directly corresponds to produce qualified and able manpower or human resource capital. On the other hand they want to fulfill the social demand by providing emotional and financial support to their grandchildren and making them able to make contribution for solving various social problems.

Care and Practical Help

One of the important involvement of grandparents in children's learning according to the views of my participants is care and practical help. First of all, the grandparents take care about school selection for children. The grandparents care too much about the health of their grandchildren. They care about sanitation and nutrition management of their grandchildren. They care about clothing management of grandchildren. They guide them practically for doing household works, teach them social values and moral norms. In this regard the grandfather said:

Nowadays also I allure them to make happy and go with them to their school sometime if they do not have satisfactory health condition because they have to carry too many books and materials. I have done this kind of work for my children and grandchildren both.

Caring of children is the important role of grandparents. In most of the Nepalese societies, the parents comparatively engage themselves in out of home and income generating activities. The grandparents who are not generally engaged in out of home activities or who are retired from the major productive works provide care and practical help to children. The views of grandparents have proven the matter.

Lasota (2015) has argued that parents and grandparents teach children to satisfy basic needs, specific skills, values and moral norms. My finding of this study has the same type of idea. So, my study correlates with Lasota.

The grandparental involvement on children's learning through care and practical help is also related with human resource capital approach and social demand approach. The grandparents want to develop behavioral and practical skills on their grandchildren through this work. These skills support them to be qualified and able with respect to each and every

Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

aspects of life or to transform their grandchildren to human resource capital. On the other hand, by developing practical and behavioral skills, they want to make their grandchildren active, competent and ideal citizens, who can make remarkable contribution to solve various social problems like problems created by superstitious beliefs, high growth of population, environmental pollution and social discriminations. For this overall purpose they involve themselves in support of children's learning.

Conclusion

Learning is a change in original behavior through experience, training, practice, imitation, identification, self-attempt and insight. There is the great role of guardians in children's learning. The grandparents are the true source of inspiration for their grandchildren in life. There is the important involvement of grandparents in children's learning. The grandparents are found involved in motivating their grandchildren, providing proper guidance to them and counselling them in different conditions. It helps in human resource development process. They provide emotional and financial support for transforming the grandchildren to human resource capital. They do different care and practical help to develop behavioral skills on their grandchildren which can contribute for fulfillment of social demand. The grandchildren, their family, the society and the whole country have to recognize the contribution of grandparents properly and pay proper respect to them.

This research has found the reality about grandparental involvement in children's learning and has suggested indirectly the policy makers to make policies for providing encouragement to grandparents for investing more time, effort and money in learning of their grandchildren. This research has showed the actual condition of involvement of grandparents and has helped to increase the awareness about their responsibility. Not only that, it has also helped the grandchildren to make realization about great contribution of their grandparents' for them and has inspired them to give great respect for them.

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Grandparental Involvement in Children's Learning in Phidim Municipality of Nepal

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