An Indigenous Approach of Educational Leadership in Magar Community

Rudra Prasad Danai
Laxmi Prasad Bhandari
Shiva Prasad Aryal
Dhana Bahadur Reshmi

Abstract

This article is based on ethnographic study of the indigenous approach to educational leadership in formal and informal schooling in the Magar Community of Palpa.The study led ahead through a qualitative ethnographic study design that follows an interpretive approach. The population for this research was selected on the basis of judgmental sampling design. The tools we used for data collection was an interview, observation, and review of secondary source of data. We interviewed the three leaders of three Bhejas known also as Dhukuryas to understand how they provide educational leadership to their people in the modern context. The study found that the Magar community of people living in these parts of the country since a thousand years ago have their distinct, popular way of socio-cultural education leadership. This also concluded that the unique cultural leadership of these people is democratic, participative, honorary, based on system and values, and united. Chiefly, this study reports that the Magar community, as the indigenous people of Nepal have been practicing educational leadership culture that supports a new generation of people learning the culture, religion, language, society, and formal education management.
Keywords:Educational leadership, Bheja, Dhukurya, and indigenous culture

Introduction

This is research on educational leadership in the Magar community of Palpa District which chooses its leader for different *Bheja*, understood as a particular village within a certain territory. The particular village known as *Bheja* is categorized as *Khanichhap Bheja*, *Mahachhap Bheja*, and *Bhalebas Bheja*. The leader they choose every year is entitled 'Dhukurya' which refers to the headman or manager of a certain cluster of the Magar community who is addressed with various names as '*Mukhiya*', or *Dhupaurya*, or Guru.The *Dhukurya* is a traditionally well-accepted local governor and his decisions are in the context of marketing local products, resource management, cultural customs and rituals, worship deities, local dispute management, local people mobilization, public developmental activities, local rules, educational leadership, etc.

Rudra Prasad Danai
Laxmi Prasad Bhandari
Shiva Prasad Aryal
Dhana Bahadur Reshmi

The rules are strictly followed by the villagers. In another word, *Dhukurya* is a kind of village leader and local cluster manager.

Similarly, '*Bheja*' refers to different meanings among different groups of people across different parts of Nepal in different communities. For instance, an archery contest in *Thakkhola* (Kawakita, 1974), offering meat, local beer, and liquor to *Subba* (the headman) in the Athpahariya Rai community in the *Khoichama* tradition (Kandangwa 1993). But in the Magar community, the term represents a system of livestock meat distributions being offered to local deities and distributed to every household of the same village cluster only. This also resembles the sign of households belonging to a particular village. In a broad sense, *Bheja* refers to a group of households belonging to a particular village or a settlement cluster. In Magar society, one village means one *Bheja*, for example, *Bhalebas Bheja*, *Khanichhap Bheja* etc. It is thus being used to define a territory comprising a certain number of households, which is known as a single village and whose inhabitants feel like a single unit of that particular society. In other words, *Bheja* is the traditional land of a certain tribe and does not act as an ancestral social institution to adapt to living in an isolated locality for only a group of people, but also a sustainable way of living in the Magar society in isolated settlements, adjusting themselves to their physical and cultural environments (Chidi, 2010). Thus, *Bheja* can be defined as an organization of households of a settlement cluster with a self-governing system of Magars. As each member of the household belongs to a particular *Bheja* and therefore is a part of the inhabitants' identity, they are supposed to follow the social norms and values of the society according to the rules and regulations of that *Bheja*. The social policy and norms that are formed by the community members and implicated in the leadership of *Dhukurya* are supposed to be the *Bheja* System. The *Bheja* coordinates various rituals of the Magar community of western Nepal, helps to establish and maintain the community with a certain system of production, enables interaction harmoniously with nature (Dhakal, 1996), and educational management inside the *Bheja* territory. To coordinate the rituals and their leadership to the community, the *Bheja* decides the day for initiating new grains (*Nwagi*), no use of plough when there are first hailstones with the rain of the new Year, etc.

Due to the absence of the written document, except for lists of current households, the origin of the *Bheja* system is unknown. The Magars have been following the practice of *Bheja* as their ancestors did for a long. The system is so tied to their daily activities, they even could not think of their existence without the *Bheja* and *Dhukurya* systems. If any household member does not follow the rules and regulations and the social norms and values, all members of that household will be excluded from the *Bheja*. This is the highest penalty, which is known as '*Bheja Bahik*'. This means no household of the *Bheja* is allowed to support of any kind the excluded household even in case of death, sickness, and calamities and likewise, no help from members of the excluded household is allowed. So, this is a question of adjustment, identity, and prestige of each household member.

The findings of the study will be useful information to enrich the decolonized curriculum design for educationists, experts, teachers, researchers, and policymakers to improve the existing educational system. The sociologist and researcher study

related to this topic will be as empirical literature for their study. Furthermore, the cultural practice of the Magar community will be a written document for future generations.

In short, *Bheja* is a system that binds households together in a single group. Unlike previous studies of the *Bheja* of Magar that focused on ecological and political perspectives, the present study is concerned with the educational leadership of the *Bheja* system as an ancestral practice of the Magars. The paper also argues about the relevance of the *Dukurya* leadership of *Bheja* within the legal educational provision, its significance in the present context, and the necessity to maintain or revive it.

This research was led ahead to explore indigenous peoples' leadership practice in the community being practised by the Magar community people in Palpa District. This research aimed at exploring the nature of indigenous peoples' educational leadership, their ways of choosing a leader named *Dhukurya*, the type of leadership they practice, and the relevance of such leadership. The main pursuit of this research was to distinguish the Magar community's educational leadership in the formal education system and transfer their cultural knowledge to the new generation through ritual or cultural practices in an informal way of educational practices of *Dhukurya* leadership in the *Bheja* System.

Review of Literature

Ethnic or Indigenous leaders are found in history, across the country. Such leaders possessed qualities, worked within frameworks and created strategies to successfully lead their people of groups and nations (McCall, 2020). One of the questions that can be raised is, what makes leadership, "Indigenous leadership"? In this context, Gorringe (2008) states that Indigenous leaders have extensive wisdom of cultural knowledge, language, and practices. They may not have the desire to participate in modern leadership and work under the National government systems (cited in Mccall, 2020, p. 5). According to Haar, Roche & Brougham (2019), argue that indigenous leaders have a strong collectivist ethos that uses Indigenous knowledge to assert them, and that their communities and such leaders ignore their cultural perspectives. However, they are often characterized as argumentative or disruptive to modern leadership practices. However, they often succeed when pursuing main stream goals. They tend to believe that people need to change their cultural ways to fit in with main stream ideologies, and that they differ from other types of leadership styles. There are lessons to be learned through stories and connections to land and indigenous identities.

The cultural capital theory has been reviewed with respecting the problem being studied to justify the study as a meaningful and authentic attempt (Creswell, 2007; Best & Kahn, 2014). I believed that these theories are always concerned with approaching learning to all and contribute to planning for effective school management from the ethno-methodological perspective to particular groups of people like the Magar community of Palpa.

The concept of cultural capital was first introduced by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, in 1984 and he has given rise to three particularly important theoretical concepts: cultural capital, cultural field, and habitus (Huang, 2019). Cultural Capital, for Bourdieu, refers to the collection of symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, posture,

Rudra Prasad Danai
Laxmi Prasad Bhandari
Shiva Prasad Aryal
Dhana Bahadur Reshmi

clothing, behaviours, material belongings, authorizations, etc. that one acquires through being part of a particular social class (Huang, 2019). It creates a sense of collective identity and group position, "people like in the indigenous community of Palpa. But Bourdieu also points out that cultural capital is a major source of social inequality. Certain forms of cultural capital are valued over others and can help or hinder one's social mobility just as much as income or wealth.According to Bourdieu, cultural capital comes in three forms—personified, objectified or symbolized, and institutionalized (Kotinsky, 2016), one's Idiom or vernacular is an example of embodied or personified cultural capital, while a record collection is an example of cultural capital in its symbolized state. In its institutionalized form, cultural capital refers to identifications and qualifications such as titles that symbolize cultural competence and authority.

Cultural habitus can be understood as a series of dispositions, which influences a person's expectations of social life (Huang, 2019). Bourdieu's concept of habitus also relates to the resource of knowledge (Bourdieu 1990). Knowledge is gained from a specific culture that an individual lives in (cited in Huang, 2019). For example, a religious or working-class person will have a particular religious or class-based understanding, in this way, there will be a difference in the worldview of people from other religions or the middle class. From the above fact of Bourdieu's cultural habitus, all are reflected in the person's behaviour, such as how they talk, use vocabulary, and show attitudes and values toward the other groups or working-classpeople attitude and values. It often leads to justifying social inequality, because it is believed that some people are naturally willing to the better-quality things in life while others are not (Kotinsky, 2016).

Bourdieu uses the term cultural field 'to explain the dynamics of cultural capital (Huang, 2019). It means that the social world as being divided up into a variety of distinct arenas or fields (location, cast, culture, ethnicity, language) of practice like art, education, religion, law, etc.,with their own unique set of rules, knowledge, and forms of cultural capital.Bourdieu sees each field as being relatively autonomous from the others. Each field has its own set of positions and practices, as well as its struggles for the position as people mobilize their capital to stake claims within a particular social domain (Saraceno, 2014).

As said by Bordieu, many indigenous people are living in Nepal and practising their way of leadership in the community. The Magar community people living in the Palpa district are ethnic people following their unique culture and adjusting modern education with their indigenous knowledge. Baral (1992) argues in 'Magar cultures in Palpa, Tanahu, and Syanja' that the *Bheja* is the group of the territory of the Magar community for the agricultural works by *Parima* (reciprocal exchange of labour), and sometimes by a temporarily formed labour group known as *Bhaijeri* (or Hora in certain areas). Thus, formed labour groups are regulated by *Bheja* and are not offered any wages except two meals and drinks. *Bheja* fixes the date for work in the field and all households get an opportunity to do their work properly on time and according to their need. *Bheja*, of course, was not started for such farm work. It can now fix and even revise the wage for labour. The Magars, therefore, do not face labour crises during the peak farming seasons. At the time of marriage and other social ceremonies,

Rudra Prasad Danai
Laxmi Prasad Bhandari
Shiva Prasad Aryal
Dhana Bahadur Reshmi

for instance, it helps in the performance of specific tasks and ceremonial functions. Someone from a member household dies, others extend their helping hand to the giving family, and join in the funeral procession and death rituals. No evidence of a written document, but according to its working nature it was a local governance system for the public mobilization in Magar village by headman *'Dhukurya'*. There will be the active involvement of *Bheja* and *Dhukurya* in any kind of developmental activities; such as educational, economic, infrastructural, social, and political, in the *Bheja* territory. The recent political system has brought somewhat changes in the legal provision of the role of *Dhukurya* but almost social leadership activities are conducted under the influence of *Bheja* and *Dhukurya*.

Dhakal (1996) argues that the Magar community is a self-perpetuating saturated community that regards themselves as Hindus and Buddhists, but their religious traditions and practices indicate they are animists. They certainly do not worship idols of gods or goddesses such as *Vishnu, Krishna, Ram, Laxmi,* or *Kali* as other Hindus do. Directly related to the history of their forefathers, they worship their ancestors, *Baje-Bajai Pooja, Parange Pooja, Beskang Bajai Pooja, Manduli Baje-Bajai Pooja, PanchKanya, Ban Jhankri Pooja,* etc., believing that they will be protected any kind of natural calamities and miseries. Such poojas do not require temples and specific shrines for deities. The hilltop nearby, or middle of the forest where cutting timber and livestock grazing is banned, the ceremony is fixed by the *Bheja* itself under the leadership of *Dhukurya*. To worship such deities and regularly conduction of Pooja, management responsibility is by *Dhukurya*. Another significant cultural practice of the community is *'Barana'* (a day when people do not work outside the house). The day differs from place to place and from group to group since it is fixed by *Dhukurya* of *Bheja*. Similarly, any kind of community-related, activities, issues, and problems are discussed first in the *Bheja* assembly in the presence of *Dhukurya*. The agenda may be educational, social, cultural, economic, political, developmental, and so on. The literature concludes that *Dhukurya* has the social power to lead the community-related issues and agenda.

Similarly, Chidi (2013) argues that the Magar culture in Nepal, since the unknown long history, Magar Community is continuing its cultural traditions by being allied with the *Bheja* territory. It is a self-governing system for collective benefits, concerning the long term, the sustainable method is not only for a single kinship society, it is an adaptation system for all who have settled in a cluster of settlements. Under long tradition, and integrated manner of different social, and cultural systems tied with local resources and production, the *Bheja* system is the best option to be considered as the local organization for various development efforts. All the public activities in the *Bheja* territory are led by the *Dhukurya*. Previously, schools in the community for children were established and managed under the leadership of *Dhukurya*. At present, except for daily administration, other cultural and managerial activities of the school are conducted under the direct direction and instruction of *Dhukurya*. This means the *Dhukurya* is leading the educational institute of *Bheja* territory and he is considered an educational leader in his community.

Rudra Prasad Danai
Laxmi Prasad Bhandari
Shiva Prasad Aryal
Dhana Bahadur Reshmi

Unlike previous studies of the *Bheja* of Magar that focused on ecological, cultural, social, and self-governance perspectives, the present study is concerned with the educational leadership of *Dhukurya* within the *Bheja* territory as an ancestral practice of the Magars. The paper also argues about the relevancy of the *Dhukurya* leadership in the modernization world, its significance in the present-day context, and the necessity to maintain or revive it.

Occupationally, the Magar community in all these *Bhejas* are chiefly farmers and the youths prefer joining British or Indian Gurkhas. Those who are engaged in farming have a deeper respect for the earth and celebrate, an occasion by offering incense to the earth and letting all not dig or plough the day. Most of the agricultural works are done by mutual help known locally as *Parima*, a way of exchanging help in farming, and sometimes by a temporarily formed labour group by Bheja known as *Bhaijeri* (a special task force created for agricultural work) but they don't get any wages. Bheja fixes the date for work in the field and all households get an opportunity to do their work properly on time and according to their need. They also rear animals like goats, pigs, buffalos, cows, and fowl.

Methods and Procedures

This research on the educational leadership in *Bheja*, a Magar community in Palpa District at exploring how the Magar community is providing community education leadership and promoting their educational status there through sociocultural practices. Hence, the historical practices to celebrate their culture, perform agricultural tasks,maintain the social harmony and transfer them to their new generation and how they lead the formal school with harmony of the social member is the ontology of this research. Likely theintuitive and empirical knowledge that the community possesses and how they nurture educational leadership through cultural and occupational practices is the epistemological feature of this research.

This is ethnographic research that studies the particular community people through an interpretive approach. Since the target of the research was to explore the particular communities' educational leadership, we chose a purposive judgmental sampling design. Hence, the three *Dhukuryas* leading the three *Bhejas*, i.e. *Khanichhap Bheja*, *Bhalebas Bheja*, and *Mahachhap Bheja* in Bagnaskali Rural Municipality, ward no. 4, are chosen as the research respondent for this research.As tools to collect data, in-depth interview of the three *Dhukuryas* of that different *Bhejas* was conducted.Likewise, the participatory observation of the cultural performances celebrated and educational leadership performed by the locals in different *Bhejas* was performed by visiting the research sites.

Result and Discussion

According to the interview and observations of the different three *Bhejas*, the educational leadership practiced by thecultural leaders by *Dhukuryas* in Magar Community, Palpa are interpreted as below;

Bheja and Life Structure

The most important factor within each *Bheja* is educational leadership. For this purpose, the *Dhukurya* and *Mukhiya* are crucial role players. They lead education in formal and non-formal situations equally. In informal situations, they lead cultural

Rudra Prasad Danai
Laxmi Prasad Bhandari
Shiva Prasad Aryal
Dhana Bahadur Reshmi

knowledge, and practice in the society and transfer it to the new generation so that every new member of the *Bheja* is well aware of their culture. The rituals, how to celebrate them, the occupations and how to lead them from planting to harvesting, their languages, custom, and respect for social hierarchy are the things they practice and teach to the new generations. On the other hand, the *Dhukurya* provides good leadership of formal education within his *Bheja*. He calls for help from villagers for the building of schools and maintenance. Similarly, collecting resources for schools, adding teachers to the private quota, settling good livelihood for the teachers, and managing the environment for sending all children to school is the duty of *Dhukurya* in support of his *Bheja* members. They ensure well-management of schools for good education for their children. The *Dhukurya* is chosen as the chairman of the village school who directly and formally responds to all these jobs.

The Selection Process for an Educational Leader

Nepalese society is made up of different cultural, ethnic, racial, language, and religious groups. The census of Nepal (2011) has postulated that there are 125 caste\ ethnic groups, 123 languages spoken as a mother tongue, and ten types of religious groups have been categorized as people of the Nepalese society. The Magar community is one of the racial, ethnic, or cultural groups of Nepalese society. According to Wijeyesinghe (2001), race and racial groups refer to socially constructed concepts that divide the human population into subgroups based on real or perceived differences in such things as physical appearance or place of ancestral origin (as cited in Jaenee& Brooks, 2016).While Adams (2001) explains that "race in the United States has been associated with cultural, material, physical, and linguistic differences" (Cited in Jaenee& Brooks, 2016). Similarly, ILO Convention no. 169, clearly states in article 27(1) that all of the indigenous and tribal educational services and programs would be developed and implemented to address their needs with their participation and support. It will cover their history, knowledge and technology, and their social-economic, and cultural values and aspirations. In this line, *Bheja* is the social and cultural practices and customs prevalent in the Magar community which have been existing since ancient times. It is a kind of cultural institution, the major function of which is to make a social code of conduct and its implementation as well as attempt to provide educational opportunities to the people of the Magar community. The educational opportunities as seen in our interview and observation were that the *Bheja* leaders known as *Dhukurya* were leading several socio-cultural leaderships which were transferred to the next generation as their identification and their leadership of formal schooling too played a crucial role in developing basic literacy to their children. In this context, a participant-1 shared his experiences with the system and process of Bheja and its leadership:

> *There will be a regular assembly of Bheja on the day of Chandi Purnima (Buddha Jayanti) and discussion about the regular agendas, and incidental assembly will be in occasional cases. He was the son of a previous Dhukurya and after his father's death, the assembly had selected him as a Dhukurya of that KhanichhapBheja. His father was the son-in-law of Dhukurya of that period, and his family relationship with Dhukurya and somewhat knowledge and experiences opened the opportunity for him to be selected as a Dhukurya.*

Leadership is commonly understood as the use of influence to encourage participation in achieving set goals (Yukl, 2006) Ethnic or Indigenous leaders are found in the history across the country, such leaders possessed qualities, worked within frameworks, and created strategies to successfully lead their people of groups and nations (McCall, 2020). Similarly, Dhukurya is one of the socially constructed leaders, particularly in the Magar community, specifically, one participant talked about the selection process of Dhukurya as educational leadership:

> *Dhukurya is a leader of the 'Bheja organization' which is related to especially Magar community which is located within a certain geographical boundary where 1oo to 300 households are involved as a member of such cultural organization. To be a leader as Dhukurya or to be appointed as a Nike (Dhukurya) of the Bheja organization of the Magar community, the member of the Bheja will be supported.*

The cultural capital theory of Bourdieu assumed that the collection of symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, posture, clothing, behaviours, material belongings, authorizations, etc. that one acquires through being part of a particular social class (Huang, 2019). Similarly, Adler and Kwon (2002) said that social capital is the goodwill available to individuals or groups. Itssource lies in the structure and content of the actor's social relations (McCallum & O'Connell, 2008), such relations also will be determined the capacity to make solidarity among the member. Thus, the effective leader always attempts to exist in the active connection among the people. This theory also suggested that social capital exists in connections, it resides both within and beyond organizational boundaries. According to the theory of social capital, to be an effective leader, the person should be competent in social awareness, self-management, and commitment to their particular groups, ability to coordinate and network, give feedback and establish trust, goodwill, and reciprocity (Mc Callum & O'Connell, 2008). In this regard, the participant-2 shared his experiences about the prerequisites qualities to be selected as a leader in the Bheja system in the Magar community:

> *To be selected as the leader (Dhukurya) of the Bhejagroup, he is to be a source of knowledge of the indigenouslanguage, culture, and customs of the Magar community as well as he is to be a respected person of the community. He also describes that the novice Dhukurya tends to be the master of cultural knowledge later in the future. Therefore, suchcultural practices can be analyzed as the mini-university of the original culture and Dhukurya as its principal.*

According to Haar, Roche & Brougham (2019) add more, these Indigenous leaders hold a strong collectivist mentality that use Indigenous knowledge to keep themselves, and their communities, grounded, and such leader is often characterized as argumentative or disruptive, however, they often succeed when pursuing mainstream goals. Similarly, the assumption of cultural habitus under the theory of cultural capital also suggested that Cultural behaviour can be understood as a series of dispositions called cultural habitus, which influences a person's expectations of social life (Huang, 2019). Bourdieu's concept of habitus also relates to the resource of knowledge (Bourdieu 1990). Knowledge is gained from a specific culture that an individual lives

in (cited in Huang, 2019). Thus, the selection process of the leader (Dhukurya) as instruction leader in the *Bhaja* system seems culturally relevant and remains valid.

From the analysis of the selection process of leaders in *Bheja*, "*Dhukurya*" is based onprior inheritance but if prior inheritance doesn't meet the required virtues for *Dhukurya*, the pubic pooling for the likely candidate. We have found that there is a rule of discussion in the *Bheja* assembly about the continuity or discontinuity of *Dhukurya*. Generally, no one shows interest in being the *Dhukurya* of *Bheja*, because it's not an economically beneficial post but socially responsible. Therefore, the duty of*Dhukurya* in some *Bheja* can continue till his death and after his death, by force to a successor or any other relatives have to be the *Dhukurya* of *Bheja* just to continue the Magar culture. On the other hand, *Dhukurya* must be aware of Magar culture and cultural leadership norms. A person who plays the nearest supportive role to *Dhukurya* in operating the cultural and educational activities can be a possible candidate for future *Dhukurya*. It means every future *Dhukurya* has to learn the leadership and cultural aspects of being involved in the activities of *Bheja*. Therefore, leadership is developed by the process of learning by doing. The person who learns greater about *Bheja* culture and activities connected to that culture will be selected as *Dhukurya*. So, there is the role of informal education in leadership selection.

Educational Roles and Responsibilities of Leader in the *Bheja* System

Bheja is the traditional land of a certain community and does not act as an ancestral social institution to adapt to living in an isolated locality for only a group of people, but also a sustainable way of living in the Magar society in isolated settlements, adjusting themselves to their physical and cultural environments (Chidi 2010). Thus, *Bheja* can be defined as an organization of households concerning the particular cast groups likely with a self-governing system of Magars. The first written history of the Magar people dates as back as 1100 CE (Vansittart, 1993, p.21). The Magars are one of the oldest known tribes in Nepal. Magwar Bisaya was the ancient name of Margaret, Magar area. Mongar, are the third-largest ethnolinguistic group in Nepal representing 7.1% of Nepal's total population (CBS, 2011). In this vein, the convention of ILO, No. 169 clearly state in article no. (27.2), the capable authority shall ensure the training of members of these peoples and their involvement in the formulation and implementation of education programs.... (ILO, 2003). In addition, article (27.3) also advocates that the government shall recognize the right of these people to establish their educational institutions and facilities, provided that such institutions meet minimum standards established by the competent authority in consultation with these people (ILO, 2003). In this context, participant-3 shared his experiences as, *Khanichhap Bheja has run one school up to class eight, which is known as a basic school in the mainstream education system.*

One of the most important questions that can be raised is what makes leadership an'indigenous leader. In this context, Gorringe (2008) states that Indigenous leaders grow with extensive wisdom of cultural knowledge, language, and practices. They may not have the desire to participate in modern leadership and work under the National government systems (cited in Mccall, 2020, p.5). Haar et al. (2019) add more, that these Indigenous leaders hold a strong collectivist mentality that use indigenous

Rudra Prasad Danai
Laxmi Prasad Bhandari
Shiva Prasad Aryal
Dhana Bahadur Reshmi

knowledge to keep themselves, and their communities, grounded, and such leader is often characterized as argumentative or disruptive, however, they often succeed when pursuing mainstream goals. Likewise, participant-1 reveals:

> *In our community, local deities and PrakritiPooja are always occurring in every Shravan, Bhadra, and Aswin month on a full moon day known as BhejaPooja. The Chandi Purnima (Baishakhe Purnima) is another great festival in the Magar community, where pig, goat, and hen are sacrificed in devotion to several deities. Such cultural ceremonial activities are performed under the management of Dhukurya. On these occasions, the Dhukurya have to fix the date of Pooja and provide the resources and materials for cultural ceremonies and even distribute the responsibility among the member to accomplish the cultural ceremonies regarding the Magar community.*

Indigenous leaders are different from other types of leadership styles. For instance, indigenous leaders are traditional imagery, and lessons are taught through stories and also have a connection with the land and Indigenous identity (Haar, Roche & Brougham, 2019).The assumption of the habitus of Bourdieu's cultural theory is that the socio-cultural conditions of society directly influence on person's expectations of social life (Huang, 2019). Bourdieu's concept of habitus also relates to the resource of knowledge (Bourdieu 1990). Knowledge is gained from a specific culture that an individual life (cited in Huang, 2019). For example, a religious or working-class person will have a particular religious or class-based understanding, in this way, there will be a difference in the worldview of people from other religions or the middle class. As per his experience, participant-2 shares:

> *The Dhukurya is a social leader, particularly in the Magar community, as a Dhukurya, he became a chairperson of a school management committee. As a chairperson, on one hand, he will do the external activities like the development of school infrastructure, managing the required resources, and mobilization of community people for school, On the other hand, he will focus on school monitoring and supervision of school activities with respecting use of language, local cultural festival, and follow the cultural rule and regulation.*

A report of Convention on indigenous and tribal people's no. 169 has given more priority to the preservation of indigenous people's cultural rights. Article 22 (b) of this report clearly states that the social and cultural identity of the particular group of people with full recognition of their social, economic, and cultural rights by respecting their customs, traditions, and institutions must be promoted. (ILO, 2065). Moreover, the preamble of the constitution of Nepal (2015) has clearly stated that protecting and promoting social and cultural solidarity, and unity in diversity by recognizing the multiethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, and multi-cultural through the use of the inclusive principle in making the government policy (Government of Nepal, 2015). Mapp (2012) is a prominent family engagement export and he emphasizes the involvement of the community in school for sustained investment in strengthening home-school partnerships. In this vein, a report of EFA, 2004-2009 has shifted the school management strategy from centralized to community-controlled in collaboration with different partners including religious institutions as well as Community Based

organizations (MOES, 2003) like the *Bheja* system of the Magar community. With support to these ideas, a report of SSRP (2008-2015) clearly states the role school management committee mainly will be responsible for the development and maintaining the learning environment of a school. For most of the responsibilities of community people towards the school, it is expected that both monetary and non-monitor support. For instance, land, funds, volunteer teachers, labourers, construction materials, etc. From the point of expansion of education, it is an appropriate way to achieve a reasonable level of progress with the direct participation of the community. A report of Convention on indigenous and tribal people's no. 169 has given more priority to the preservation of indigenous people's cultural rights. Article 22 (b) of this report clearly states that the social and cultural identity of the particular group of people with full recognition of their social, economic, and cultural rights by respecting their customs, traditions, and institutions must be promoted. (ILO, 2065). Participant 1 of this research shares his experiences in an interview:

> The leader of Bheja of the Magar community called Dhukurya has regularly conducted the cultural programs of Magar in a school, each last Friday of every month. Such classes are focused on what to do or what not to do in a community (about Barana \restricted days) to teach about the values of the Bheja system and Magar festivals.

Bourdieu understood the social world as being divided up into a variety of distinct arenas or "fields" of practice like art, education, religion, law, etc., each with its own unique set of rules, knowledge, and forms of capital. While fields can certainly overlap—education and religion (Saraceno, 2014). Every public school in Nepal has formed its own school management committee under the national education act and their role and duties are limited by the Education act. The school management committee encompasses managing and operating the school relatively within the specific location and communities. In this context, *Dhukurya* is one of the socially constructed organizations, particularly in the Magar community. He plays the dominant role in managing the school education in the Magar community because he is a unique person among the other people of the Magar community in terms of competencies in language, experiences with cultural knowledge, and the skill of communication and social relations, for which\ what Bourdieu called cultural habitus, it is reflected in the person's behaviour, such as how do they talk, use the vocabulary, and shows attitudes and values towards the other group's person's attitude and values. (Kotinsky, 2016). Ornstein & Levine (2002) said about the power and responsibility of the school management committee are to make general policy, and human resources management, to improve the relationship between employees, to collect and manage local resources, and to help the development of community relations and student support programs.

From the aforementioned fact, *Dhukurya* is a leader of particularly the people who live in and behave with people as the basis of common values and beliefs of the *Bheja* system of the Magar community. On the other side, he is the chairperson of the management committee of the school legally. As a researcher, I am one of the members of this community. There are now three *Bheja*: *Khanichhap*, *Bhalebas*, and *Mahachhap*, and one school for each *Bheja* territory. Such leaders actively work in

managing the school to their community as described by EFA, 2004; SSRP, 2064 and ILO, 2065. Schools should foster a culture that takes all cultures into account with their formal and informal curricula and policies. This type of school atmosphere provides an environment in which students feel safe enough to be themselves and in which their anxiety is lowered to the point that they can concentrate on learning in a culturally safe environment (Jaenee & Brooks, 2016).

In nutshell, *Bheja* is a type of indigenous cultural organization. It plays important role in formal, and informal education. *Dhukurya* takes the responsibility of leading *Bheja* and leads the school management committee (SMC) of public schools in the *Bheja* area, guiding the next generation to cultural, and social knowledge, skill and attitude through informalpractice as an informal education contributor. Likely, the *Dhukuryas* also lead the formal educational attempts like school management committees, environment development and sending children to school. The *Dhukuryas* also rule the children to study in the schools within their *Bheja* and interrupt them to migrate to schools of the next *Bheja* in the same or lower classes.

Conclusions

The *Dhukurya* leadership in the *Bheja* community of Palpa district in Nepal is a unique lifestyle of the Magar community in Nepal. This study concludes that there is multifarious leadership practice inherited from the past in each of the ethnic groups of people living in Nepal and the Magar community of people in the Palpa district are one.

The Magar community people of Palpa district have a tradition of defining the Magar community as *Mahachhap* or *Bheja* community and they choose a leader known as *Dhukurya* to renovate every year in the prior inheritance ordemocratic process. The leadership-choice process is more distinct from the absolute democratic and traditional process and they choose their leader on the very day of *Chandi Purnima* by the discussion at their assembly and is based on the prior hereditary process too.

The leader chosen by the community is responsible to maintain harmony, forming commercial policy, following traditions and keeping up, ensuring peace, prosperity, exchanges, and leading physical development in the *Bheja* community, providing education leadership in formal and informal stakes. The educational leadership provided by the *Dhukurya* too divides into two sectors leadership of formal schooling like chairing the local school, collecting donations and physical help to build schools, helping in the admission process, sheltering the teacher, etc., and informally transferring their cultural knowledge to their successor by keeping up and performing rituals.

The study concludes that the *Dhukurya* leadership is at risk of being collapsed due to the influence of modernism and globalization. This is found that the change in their concept and attitude over lifestyle, occupation, and matters of dignity, food, etc. has also put the Magar culture at risk.

In conclusion, the Magar culture of the Palpa district is a unique culture of the Magar community as indigenous culture and leadership that need preservation which is connected to the creative identity of the Magar community and the country too.

The conclusion of this study will contribute to the understanding of *Dhukurya* leadership known as the *Bheja* system - which is being practised under the formal

school in the Magar community, Palpa. This study also will help to empower the people of the Magar community about their cultural knowledge system and will inspire the educational policymakers to make policies to promote socio-cultural assets. For instance, the policy proposed through the EFA and SSRP for effective school leadership, where would share the power with the local people for collaboration with different partners i.e.,religious groups or community based-organization, here *Bheja* also is acommunity organization of the Magar community.This study will also contribute to the preservation of socio-cultural norms, traditions and practices by increasing awareness in indigenous communities.

References

Baral, K. J. (1992). Palpa, Tanahura Syangjaka Magarhruko Saskriti. Kathmandu: Nepal Rastriya Pragya Pratisthan.

Best, J. W., & Kahn, V. J. (2014). *Research in education.* Delhi: Phi Learning Private (LTD)

Chidi, C. L. (2013). The indigenous governance system of Magar ethnic, Nepal. In P. K. *Pradhan, Geography of Governance: Dynamics for Local Development (pp. pp. 47-56).* International Geographical Union Commission on Geography of Governance.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* California: Sage Publication.

Dhakal, S. (1996). Bheja as a strategic cultural convention: community resource management in the Barha Margaret. In Bhattachan, *Occasional Paper inSociology and Anthropology (5) (pp. 39-51.).*

Haar, J., Roche, M., & Brougham, D. (2019). Indigenous insights into ethical leadership: A study of māori leaders. *Journal of Business Ethics*

Huang, X. (2019). Understanding Bourdieu's cultural capital and habitus. *Review of European Studies,* Vol. 11(3), p: 1-5).

I L O (2003). *Convention on indigenous and tribal peoples,1989 (no. 169):* A manual. Geneva: International Labor Office.

ILO (2065). *Convention on indigenous and tribal peoples no,169 (Nepali version).* Kathmandu: International Labor Office.

Jaenee, N., & Brooks, J. S. (2016). Toward a theory of culturally relevant leadership for school-community culture. *International Journal of Multicultural Education, 17 (*1), pp:1-16.

Julien, M., Wright, B., & Zinni, D. M. (2010). Stories from the circle: Leadership lessons from aboriginal leaders. *The Leadership Quarterly, 21,* 114–126.

Kotinsky, R. (2016). *Pierre Bourdieu on education: Habitus, capital, and field. Reproduction in the practice of education.* Retrieved from https://infed.org/mobi/pierre-bourdieu-habitus-capital-and-field-exploring-reproduction-in-the-practice-of-education/

Kawakita, J. (1974). The hill Magars and their Neighbours: Hill peoples and Surrounding the Ganga plain. Tokyo: Tokyo University Press.

McCall, K (2020). *Leadership through an indigenous lens.* Retrieved from: sites.wustl.edu/dist/a/1072/files/2020/10/Leadership-through-an-Indigenous-Lens.pdf

Rudra Prasad Danai
Laxmi Prasad Bhandari
Shiva Prasad Aryal
Dhana Bahadur Reshmi

McCallum, S. & O'Connell, D. (2008). *Social capital and leadership development:Building stronger leadership through enhanced relational skills.* Retrieved from: DOI, 10.1108/01437730910935756.

MOES (2003). Education for All 2004-2009: Core Document. Keshar Mahal: The Ministry of Education and Sports.

MOES (2064BS). *School sectors reforms programs: A core policy and strategies.* Government of Nepal: Author

NITPC (2061). *International Labor Organization, Convention No, 169: An Easy booklet on public advocacy.* Kathmandu:Nepal Indigenous and Tribal People Convention

OECD (2017). *Supporting success for the indigenous student.* doi: *10.1007/ s10551-018-3869-3*

Rabbitskin, N., & Depadua, A. (N.D.). *Working with indigenous leadership and indigenous environments.* Retrieved from https://leadershipand influencingchangeinnursing.pressbooks.com/chapter/chapter-3-working-with-indigenous-leadership-and-indigenous-environments/

Saraceno, C. (2014). Do we need capital accounts for culture? Retrieved from: https://www.oecd.org/statistics/measuring-economic-social-progress/ Saraceno.pd

Vansittart, E. (1993, P.21). *The Gurkhas (reprint)*.New Delhi: Anmol Publications.

Author

Mr. Rudra Prasad Danai is a lecturer at Adarsha Multiple Campus, Gajuri, Dhading. He has 25 year long teaching experience in different schools and colleges of Dhading district. He has completed MA in English literature and M. Ed. in English language teaching from Tribhuvan University. He is currently his Ph. D. in education leadership. He is keen on research in teacher education, education leadership, indigenous leadership and pedagogy.

Mr. Laxmi Prasad Bhandari is a Lecturer at Panchthar Multiple Campus Panchthar, Nepal. He has completed Master's Degree in Educational Planning and Management (M. Ed.) and Economics (M. A.) from Tribhuvan University. He is currently an MPhil scholar in Education Studies at Tribhuvan University. He is interested in teacher's motivation, inclusive education, educational leadership, and family roles in education.

Mr. Shiva Aryal is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Foundation of education, under the Faculty of education, T.U., Kirtipur. He received a Master's Degree in Education, Planning and Management. Shiva is doing his Ph.D. from the Tribhuvan University in Education Studies. He has 13 years long teaching experience in Sanothimi Campus, Bhaktapur. His current research on 'Practicing of Critical Pedagogy' in School Education at Marginalized Community.

Mr. Dhan Bahadur Reshmi Magar, received Master's Degree in Education in Chemistry Education from T.U. and started his teaching career as a full faculty member of education department since 2006 in Butwal Multiple Campus. He has published text books on 'Environmental Science for Class twelve and 'Environmental Science respectively.