

**DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON SOCIAL INCLUSION NARRATIVES
IN NEPAL'S BUREAUCRACY**



A Thesis

**Submitted to the Central Department of Sociology,
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Master of Philosophy
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DECLARATION

I, Madhu Mijar, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled "**Discourse Analysis on Social Inclusion Narratives in Nepal's Bureaucracy**" represents my original work and has been prepared for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Philosophy in Sociology** at the Central Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu.

I affirm that this thesis has not been submitted previously in whole or in part to any other university, institution, or examining body for any academic degree or qualification. All sources of information used in this study have been duly acknowledged through appropriate citations and references.

I confirm that I have adhered to the ethical guidelines for research, obtained necessary approvals, and ensured the confidentiality and rights of all participants involved in this study. Any contributions from other scholars or collaborators have been properly attributed.

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that **Mr. Madhu Mijar** has carried out the research work embodied in the dissertation entitled "**Discourse Analysis on Social Inclusion Narratives in Nepal's Bureaucracy**" under my supervision as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the **Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.)** degree in Sociology.

Mr. Mijar has demonstrated commendable academic rigor, analytical depth, and a strong commitment to exploring critical issues of social inclusion within Nepal's bureaucratic structures. His research employs discourse analysis to uncover systemic biases and institutional narratives, contributing meaningfully to sociological scholarship on governance and equity. The study is well-structured, methodologically sound, and grounded in ethical research practices.

I am confident that this dissertation meets the academic standards required for the M.Phil. degree and recommend it for final evaluation and acceptance by the Central Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the narratives surrounding social inclusion within Nepal's bureaucracy through a critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework, drawing on the theories of Michel Foucault, Norman Fairclough, and Teun A. van Dijk. The primary aim of this study was to examine how policy and legal frameworks influenced social inclusion practices within Nepal's bureaucratic structures. By analyzing official discourse, this research investigated how bureaucratic actors construct and interpret social inclusion policies and their implications for marginalized groups in Nepal, including women, ethnic minorities, and lower-caste communities.

The study has applied the theory developed by Foucault who has focused on the ideas of power, knowledge, governmentality, and how social inclusion is constructed and regulated within state institutions. Foucault's notion of "regimes of practice" was useful in analyzing how bureaucratic actors internalize and reproduce certain discourses around social inclusion. Another theory developed by Fairclough who has discussed critical discourse analysis approach, focusing on how language constructs power relations and ideologies within institutional settings. Fairclough's three-dimensional framework (text, discursive practice, and social practice) has helped to examine both the text of policy documents and the broader social practices that influence inclusion. Also van Dijk's model of discourse as a representation of social cognition has been applied to understand the role of narratives in shaping public opinion and attitudes toward social inclusion, as well as how power and ideology are embedded in those narratives.

Thus, utilizing Foucault's concepts of power and knowledge and governmentality, Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to discourse, and van Dijk's theory of ideological discourse, this study critically examined the role of discourse in shaping and reproducing power relations within bureaucratic settings. The analysis highlighted how bureaucratic actors, such as civil servants and policymakers, both reflect and challenge prevailing social hierarchies in their interpretations of inclusion policies. Additionally, the study delved into the influence of power dynamics within the bureaucracy, exploring how these dynamics impacted the development and implementation of social inclusion policies, as well as the broader societal implications of such policies.

The findings emphasized the complex interplay between policy narratives and bureaucratic practice, demonstrating that social inclusion policies were not merely top-down directives but were continuously reshaped through discursive practices that both reproduced and contested the status-quo. By providing a nuanced understanding of the discourse surrounding social inclusion, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how power, ideology, and governance intersect within Nepal's bureaucratic systems, with significant implications for policy development and social justice. Given the strong theoretical and methodological foundation, the study has made an important contribution to both critical discourse analysis and social inclusion studies in the context of Nepal's bureaucracy.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CDA	:	Critical Discourse Analysis
CERD	:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CN	:	Constitution of Nepal
CRT	:	Critical Race Theory
CSOs	:	Civil society organizations (CSOs)
LGBTQ	:	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer
MFAGA	:	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration
NAPS	:	National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (NAPS)
PLGSP	:	Provincial and Local Governance Support Program
SDGs	:	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	:	United Nations
WB	:	World Bank

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Investigating social inclusion policy within the bureaucratic structure is essential because bureaucracy plays a central role in the implementation of public policy and the distribution of state resources and opportunities (Bennett, 2005; Lawoti, 2005; Tamang, 2011). In Nepal, historical exclusion based on caste, ethnicity, gender, region, and class has deeply shaped social and political hierarchies. Social inclusion policies, which aim to resolve historical injustices and promote equitable representation, are particularly significant in the bureaucratic domain because the composition and practices of bureaucracy directly influence governance outcomes (Jamil & Baniamin, 2020). If the bureaucracy remains exclusionary in its recruitment, decision-making, and internal culture, it can obstruct the intended goals of inclusion policies. Therefore, critically examining how these policies are interpreted, resisted, implemented, or symbolically adopted within the bureaucratic structure can reveal both the potential and limitations of state-led inclusion efforts (Upreti et al., 2010). Moreover, the investigation helps to address the issue and the gap between policy rhetoric and actual practice. Inclusion in the bureaucracy is not merely about numeric representation but also about meaningful participation, institutional culture, and access to decision-making power. Understanding these dynamics is vital to assessing the real impact of inclusion policies and identifying areas for reform.

Discourse analysis is a powerful tool for studying social inclusion. It allows us to discover the underlying assumptions, ideologies, and power dynamics implanted in the way inclusion is talked about, understood, and enacted within institutions like the bureaucracy (Fairclough, 1995; Foucault & Nazzaro, 1972; Tamang, 2018). Policies are not only technical instruments but also discursive constructs. They are shaped by language, narratives, and competing interests (Shore & Wright, 1997). By employing discourse analysis, we can examine how inclusion is framed in bureaucratic texts, speeches, institutional practices, and everyday interactions. Is inclusion discussed as a moral obligation, a legal mandate, a political compromise, or a bureaucratic burden? Whose voices are privileged in shaping this discourse, and whose perspectives are silenced or marginalized? These questions reveal how language shapes the boundaries

of possibility – what is considered normal, desirable, or even thinkable within bureaucratic spaces. In Nepal, discourse of inclusion intersects with deeply rooted social hierarchies and political disputes. Discourse analysis helps trace how inclusion is negotiated, resisted, or co-opted. It enables a critical examination of how inclusion is operationalized not just through policy but through the actual language and logic that frame bureaucratic functioning. Thus, discourse analysis provides a subtle lens to explore not only what is said about inclusion, but what is left unsaid, and how that shapes institutional behavior and social outcomes. Discourse analysis is essential to the study of social inclusion because inclusion is not only a matter of policy but also a product of discursive constructions of how people, identities, and differences are represented, categorized, and governed (Foucault, 1972; Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Rooted in the works of Michel Foucault, Norman Fairclough, and Teun A. van Dijk, discourse analysis explores how discourse, in both spoken and written forms, shapes social realities and institutional practices of a country. It examines the interplay between language and power, focusing on how language practices can either reinforce or challenge the social inequalities. In the context of social inclusion, discourse analysis has been applied to understand how marginalized groups based on class, caste, gender, ethnicity, and disability are represented and positioned in societal frameworks. Social inclusion, as defined by the United Nations, entails ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background, have equal access to opportunities and resources, participation in decision-making processes, and an equitable share in social benefits. Analyzing social inclusion narratives helps reveal the implicit power relations that underlie policies, societal norms, and institutional practices. Fairclough's CDA adds a methodological lens to this theoretical insight. It emphasizes how discourse operates across three levels: *the textual* (what is said), the *discursive practice* (how it is produced and interpreted), and the *social practice* (how it connects to broader societal structures and ideologies). By analyzing bureaucratic texts, such as recruitment guidelines, policy speeches, training materials, or internal memos, CDA can reveal how inclusion is framed within dominant institutional narratives (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). For example, if bureaucratic discourse frames inclusion in terms of "efficiency" or "competency," it may implicitly de-legitimize affirmative action by reinforcing

meritocratic ideals rooted in historically exclusive standards. Conversely, a rights-based or justice-oriented discourse might challenge such norms and open space for structural transformation.

In the context of Nepal, where inclusion intersects with deeply rooted caste, ethnic, gender, and regional inequalities, discourse analysis becomes a powerful method to examine how inclusion is not just implemented but fantasy. It helps trace how bureaucratic discourse legitimizes certain reforms while resisting others, how it creates subject positions for different groups, and how it sustains or disrupts hegemonic power relations.

1.2 Social Inclusion Narratives and Social Inclusion Policies in Nepal

Social inclusion policies are significant since they aim to promote equality and access to resources, opportunities, and power for historically marginalized groups (Sen, 2000; Bennett, 2005; DFID & World Bank, 2006). These policies are particularly vital in Nepal's context due to its diverse socio-cultural temperament. The state's efforts to include groups like Dalits, women, indigenous people, and ethnic minorities are not only legal and political but also social and cultural. Social inclusion policies are critical in addressing the historical and ongoing inequalities that have existed in Nepal due to the caste system, gender biases, and ethnic disparities. By providing legal and institutional frameworks for the upliftment of marginalized groups, these policies aim to promote equality and maintaining justice. The integration of marginalized groups into political and economic life is essential for the stability of Nepal's democratic system. Social inclusion policies help in fostering a sense of belonging and citizenship among groups previously excluded from decision-making processes, which can mitigate social tensions and promote national unity.

Nepal's commitment to international human rights frameworks, including the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), requires the country to implement policies that ensure equal access to services, education, healthcare, and employment for marginalized groups. The extent to which social inclusion policies

have been implemented in Nepal's bureaucracy also reflects the government's commitment to these standards. Bureaucratic practices play a crucial role in translating policy into action, and narratives within the bureaucracy can either reinforce or challenge the rhetoric of inclusion.

Social inclusion narratives refer to the ways in which individuals, groups, institutions, or media construct stories or discourses about belonging, participation, equality, and access within a society. These narratives frame who is considered part of the social "we," who is left out, and what values or actions are associated with inclusion. In simple terms, they are the stories societies tell about who belongs and how. (Silver, 2010) states that narratives of social inclusion are discursive constructions that aim to represent and promote the participation of marginalized or disadvantaged groups in social, economic, political, and cultural life.

Social inclusion narratives often appear in government policies, media representation, and everyday conversation. These narratives often include representation of marginalized voices, political claims about fairness, justice, and human rights. From a critical discourse analysis perspective, social inclusion narratives are not neutral. They can both challenge and reinforce power structures, depending on how inclusion is defined and enacted. For instance, progressive narratives advocate for genuine structural change and equity. Tokenistic narratives may superficially celebrate diversity while maintaining underlying exclusionary systems. Inclusion is often framed through dominant ideologies, which may limit the transformative potential of inclusive narratives (Slee, 2011).

In the context of Nepal, social inclusion refers to the process of ensuring equitable access to power, resources, opportunities, and representation for historically marginalized and excluded groups, including women, Dalits, Janajatis (indigenous nationalities), Madhesis, Muslims, persons with disabilities, and people from geographically remote regions. The term gained prominence during Nepal's political transition following the 2006 People's Movement (Jana Andolan II) and has since become a foundational principle in state restructuring and post-conflict development (Lawoti, 2005; Hachhethu, 2009).

Historically, Nepal's state institutions were dominated by high-caste hill Hindu males (Bahun-Chhetri), especially in the bureaucracy, military, and political leadership (Lawoti, 2005). This exclusionary structure led to the systematic marginalization of other identity groups and regions. Social inclusion emerged as a corrective framework to address these structural inequalities and to promote equitable participation in public life. It was institutionalized through legal reforms, most notably in the Interim Constitution of 2007 and the Constitution of Nepal 2015, which mandate proportional inclusion in state organs (Government of Nepal, 2015). Inclusion in Nepal is not limited to numerical representation but extends to broader dimensions of justice, dignity, recognition, and participation (Bennett, 2005). The approach seeks to shift the state from being a unitary and hierarchical entity to one that reflects Nepal's social diversity, with federalism and inclusive governance as key pillars of this transformation (Upreti et al., 2010).

The implementation of social inclusion policies, however, remains contested. Critics argue that inclusion is often reduced to tokenism or is selectively applied to reinforce existing power hierarchies under a new appearance (Bhattachan, 2009). Furthermore, bureaucratic discourse frequently frames inclusion as a challenge to meritocracy, reflecting resistance within dominant institutional cultures (Sunam et al., 2022). This indicates that while the policy intent of inclusion is transformative, its realization requires critical engagement with the discourses and ideologies that shape its practice within the bureaucracy. Therefore, in the Nepali context, social inclusion is both a normative commitment and an established political contestation. It is not only about addressing past injustices but also about redefining the state's relationship with its diverse citizens in ways that are democratic, participatory, and fair.

1.3 Bureaucratic Structure of Nepal

Nepal's bureaucracy is characterized by a hierarchical structure with a strong emphasis on caste, gender, and rural origins. Research indicates that the majority of civil servants are Hindu males from upper castes and agricultural backgrounds, leading to an administrative culture that prioritizes hierarchy, status, and informal networks over merit-based or result-oriented practices (Jamil & Dangal, 2009). This demographic imbalance has implications for administrative culture, fostering values such as particularism, ascription, and authoritarianism, which often overshadow universalism,

achievement, and participatory governance. Accountability within Nepal's bureaucracy remains a significant concern. The Office of the Auditor General's (OAG) 58th annual report highlights widespread issues, including the creation of pseudo funds through off-budgetary headings and breaches in cash transfer thresholds. These practices have led to arrears totaling NPR 664.44 billion across various government levels (Republica, 2020). Additionally, a study examining accountability determinants in the Nepali bureaucracy identifies systemic challenges such as low transparency, limited responsiveness, and insufficient liability mechanisms, which hinder effective governance (SCIRP, 2020).

The relationship between Nepal's bureaucracy and the political establishment is complex and multifaceted. While bureaucrats have historically been subservient to political leaders, recent developments suggest a more nuanced dynamic. The post-1990 and 2006 movements have politicized the bureaucracy, leading to the formation of trade unions affiliated with political parties. This shift has empowered bureaucrats, enabling them to resist arbitrary political decisions and, at times, engage in collusion for favorable transfers or kickbacks (The Kathmandu Post, 2024). The Civil Service Act of 1993 played a pivotal role in safeguarding bureaucratic rights, reducing executive discretion, and strengthening the bureaucracy's position vis-à-vis the political executive. Efforts to enhance inclusivity within the civil service have been undertaken through affirmative action policies. The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) and subsequent amendments to the Civil Service Act introduced a quota system reserving 45% of civil service positions for marginalized groups, including women, Dalits, and indigenous communities. Despite these initiatives, challenges persist in achieving true representativeness, as the implementation of these policies has been inconsistent, and the bureaucracy continues to reflect historical biases (Dong, 2016).

Several institutions have been established to address corruption and promote accountability within Nepal's bureaucracy. The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) serves as the apex constitutional body for corruption control, empowered to investigate and prosecute public officials accused of misconduct. Additionally, the National Vigilance Centre, established in 2002, focuses on preventing corruption and raising public awareness on effective service delivery

(SCIRP, 2020). However, the effectiveness of these institutions has been questioned, with concerns about political interference and limited capacity to enforce accountability measures.

1.4 Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a qualitative research method that investigates how language constructs, conveys, and maintains social meaning, power structures, and ideologies of a phenomenon. Earlier studies in discourse analysis of social inclusion narratives have explored a range of settings, from political speeches and media discourses to policy documents and governmental communication. These studies have demonstrated that language plays a pivotal role in both reflecting and shaping societal attitudes toward inclusion. Van Dijk (1993) conducted a study on the construction of ethnic minorities in media discourse which showed how biased language perpetuates exclusionary practices and reinforces stereotypes. Similarly, Fairclough (1995) has analyzed institutional discourses to uncover how power and inequality are embedded in policy texts, particularly those related to welfare and social rights. Social inclusion refers to the process of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, or other markers of identity, have equal access to resources, opportunities, and rights within society (Sen, 2000). Within bureaucracies, social inclusion is often framed through policies, legislation, and institutional practices that either foster or hinder the participation of marginalized groups. A critical analysis of these narratives can reveal the power dynamics embedded in the framing of such policies, as well as the discursive practices that shape the bureaucratic structures of exclusion or inclusion (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). In the Nepalese context, the discourse around social inclusion has been heavily influenced by the country's long history of social stratification, with deeply entrenched systems of caste, ethnicity, and gender marginalization. Post-1990, following the democratic movement and the promulgation of a new constitution in 1991, Nepal made efforts to integrate marginalized groups into the national discourse, especially with regard to policy and governance. The concept of social inclusion became central to political and development agendas, aiming to address historical exclusions and promote equitable development.

Critical Discourse Analysis is a powerful qualitative methodology for exploring how language shapes and is shaped by social power dynamics. By analyzing both the content and context of discourse, CDA helps researchers uncover hidden ideologies, question dominant narratives, and contribute to more equitable social structures. Unlike purely linguistic analysis, CDA views language as a form of social practice that both reflects and shapes societal structures, identities, and inequalities (Fairclough, 1995). CDA emerged in the late 20th century through the work of scholars such as Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak, who sought to integrate linguistics with social theory to uncover how texts and talk reproduce or resist power relations. Discourse is not just a linguistic unit; it is a social practice that is dialectically related to other social practices (Fairclough, 1992).

Critical discourse analysis draws on theories from sociology, political science, linguistics, and communication studies. It is not bound to one method but adapts tools from various disciplines to examine how discourse operates within specific contexts. A central aim of CDA is to expose how language reinforces or challenges power relations in society. For example, media or political discourse may normalize certain ideologies (e.g., nationalism, neoliberalism, patriarchy) while marginalizing others (van Dijk, 1993). CDA sees discourse as both shaped by and shaping social structures. That is, discourse is influenced by existing social hierarchies, but it can also act to reproduce or transform them (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Researchers practicing CDA are critical and reflexive. They question whose interests are being served in a given discourse and position themselves as analysts committed to social justice. CDA typically operates across multiple dimensions such as Textual Analysis, Discursive Practice, and Social Practice. Textual analysis focuses on the linguistic features of a text such as vocabulary, syntax, metaphor, and coherence. Discursive practice examines how texts are produced, distributed, and interpreted often considering media institutions, policy contexts, or public discourse, and social practice looks at how discourse relates to broader power structures, ideologies, and institutions (Fairclough, 1995). In qualitative research, CDA is used to analyze interview transcripts, speeches, media articles, or policy documents. It uncovers how marginalized groups are represented or silenced, and explore how dominant narratives are constructed and maintained. CDA does not aim to provide one general theory of discourse, but rather to offer a framework for analyzing the role of discourse in the (re)production of inequality and injustice (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

1.5 Major Discourses of Social Inclusion in Nepal's Bureaucracy

The discourses of social inclusion in Nepal are multidimensional, encompassing caste and ethnicity-based inclusion, economic equity, meritocracy, gender and intersectional inclusion, LGBTQ+ rights, regional representation, and institutional mechanisms. While significant steps have been made, challenges remain in translating these discourses into tangible outcomes. The main discourses of social inclusion in Nepal can be categorized from the following perspectives:

1. Affirmative Action and Reservation Policies

Since 2007, Nepal has implemented affirmative action policies to address historical injustices and promote the representation of marginalized groups in the civil service (Gurung, 2009). The Civil Service Act reserves 45% of positions for disadvantaged groups, including women, indigenous nationalities (Janjati), Madhesis, Dalits, people with disabilities, and residents of backward regions (The HRM Nepal, 2022). This policy aims to rectify systemic exclusion and enhance diversity within the bureaucracy.

2. Gender Inclusion and Empowerment

Gender inclusion has been a significant focus in Nepal's bureaucratic reforms. The 2007 amendments to the Civil Service Act mandated 33% representation for women in civil service positions. This initiative has led to increased female participation, with women's representation rising from 11% in 2007 to approximately 25% by 2019 (The HRM Nepal, 2022). However, challenges remain, including patriarchal norms and limited access to education for women in marginalized communities.

3. Ethnic and Regional Representation

Efforts to enhance ethnic and regional representation in Nepal's bureaucracy have been central to inclusion policies. The reservation system allocates seats for various ethnic groups, such as Madhesis, Dalits, and indigenous communities. Despite these measures, disparities persist, with Khas/Arya groups still occupying a significant proportion of civil service positions (Bhul, 2025). Additionally, the representation of backward regions remains limited, particularly in the Mid-Western and Far-Western regions (Jamil & Baniamin, 2020).

4. Intersectionality and Internal Inequalities

An intersectional perspective reveals that within marginalized groups, disparities persist. For instance, among Janjati communities, those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds benefit more from reservation policies than their less privileged counterparts. Similarly, male Janjatis are more likely to secure positions than females within the same group, highlighting internal inequities that the current policies do not fully address (Rai, 2022).

5. Challenges in Policy Implementation

Despite the legal frameworks promoting inclusion, challenges in implementation persist. Cultural practices like "Afno Manche" (favoritism based on familial or social ties) continue to influence recruitment and promotion processes, undermining the effectiveness of inclusion policies (Jamil & Baniamin, 2020). Moreover, structural barriers such as language differences and limited access to quality education for marginalized communities hinder their full participation in the civil service.

1.6 Need of Analyzing Critical Discourse Analysis

This study is adopted qualitative research, and the need for discourse analysis extends to methodological rigor as well. It allows researcher to go beyond surface meanings and explore the underlying structures of meaning-making, thus contributing to deeper, more nuanced interpretations of data (Gee, 2014). In this study, social inclusion policies, media discourse, and interview of policymakers and marginalized groups are being analyzed, where analyzing discourse helps to uncover the rhetorical strategies and ideological assumptions that underpin official narratives. For example, terms like "development," "good governance," or "inclusive democracy" often appear neutral but carry significant ideological weight (Shrestha, 2022). Critical analysis of such language is necessary to understand who benefits from these discourses and whose voices are excluded.

Through close textual and contextual analysis, the researcher can examine how power operates through language, and how identities, relationships, and social realities are constructed in discourse. Therefore, discourse analysis provides a powerful means of

making visible the often invisible structures that shape people's lived experiences (Rogers, 2013). The need to analyze discourse lies in its power to shape thought, behavior, and society itself. By interrogating how language is used to construct knowledge, reproduce power, and legitimize ideologies, discourse analysis enables scholars to uncover the subtle workings of domination and resistance. In doing so, it contributes not only to academic understanding but also to social transformation (Fairclough, 1992). Analyzing discourse, therefore, becomes crucial in understanding how language contributes to the reproduction of social norms, inequalities, and ideologies. In many societal contexts, including politics, education, media, and policy-making, discourse shapes public opinion, legitimizes authority, and normalizes certain worldviews while marginalizing others (van Dijk, 1993). For instance, media discourse can frame certain groups as “threats” or “others,” subtly influencing how societies perceive race, gender, class, and citizenship. Without critically analyzing such discourse, the implicit ideologies rooted in everyday language often go unnoticed and unchallenged. Thus, discourse not only reflects social processes and structures but also contributes to the shaping and reshaping of them (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Analyzing discourse is particularly important in transitional, or deeply hierarchical societies, like Nepal, where language often reflects entrenched power unevenness tied to caste, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation (Gurung, 2019). In such contexts, discourse analysis can reveal how inclusion and exclusion are discursively constructed, highlighting the mechanisms through which inequality is sustained or challenged.

1.7 Statement of the Problem

Nepal's bureaucracy has long been a central institution in the country's governance, but it has also been a place of ongoing challenges related to social inclusion, diversity, and equity (Upreti et al., 2010). Despite the formal recognition of social inclusion in Nepal's constitutional and legal frameworks, including policies aimed at increasing representation of marginalized groups, the practical implementation of these ideals within the bureaucratic structure remains a complex and contested issue (Gurung, 2009). The concept of social inclusion is often raised in political and administrative discourse as a means to address historical and structural inequalities, yet the ways in which it is articulated, understood, and enacted within Nepal's bureaucracy require critical examination (Gurung, 2019).

The problem this research seeks to address is the lack of in-depth understanding of how social inclusion is framed and represented within the bureaucratic discourse in Nepal. By analyzing the language, narratives, and power relations rooted in bureaucratic communication, this study aims to investigate whether these discourses support the goals of social inclusion. Marginalized communities, including ethnic minorities, women, and those from lower socio-economic strata, encounter systemic barriers that obstruct their meaningful participation in decision-making processes (Bennett, 2005; Sen, 2000; DFID & World Bank, 2006).

This study, therefore, looks into how these texts and policies construct and negotiate the idea of social inclusion, while exploring the intersections of gender, caste, and ethnicity that shape and complicate the discourse on inclusion in Nepal. The interrelated domains have been reviewed to provide an integrated understanding of how social inclusion is framed and its implications for marginalized communities in the country. The study is guided by the following research questions:

- How do policy and legal frameworks support social inclusion in the bureaucracy of Nepal?
- What are the key discourses of social inclusion in bureaucracy of Nepal?
- How do power dynamics shape bureaucratic discourse and implementation of social inclusion policies?

1.8 Objectives of the Study

To answer the research questions and address research issues, the objective of the study is to examine the effectiveness of social inclusion policies within bureaucracy of Nepal. The research has the following specific objectives:

- To examine how policy and legal frameworks serve to affect social inclusion within the bureaucracy of Nepal.
- To analyze the key discourses of social inclusion in bureaucracy of Nepal.
- To investigate the influence of power dynamics on bureaucratic discourse and implementation of social inclusion policies.

1.9 Significance of the Study

This study holds both theoretical and practical significance in the fields of public administration, critical policy studies, and discourse analysis. As the country transitions toward inclusive governance following decades of political marginalization and social exclusion, the bureaucracy remains a pivotal institution in either facilitating or obstructing meaningful transformation (Upreti et al., 2010; Bhattachan, 2009). However, while policies aimed at social inclusion, such as reservations (affirmative action), representation quotas, and diversity measures, have been adopted, the deeper institutional discourses that mediate these reforms remain underexplored.

By applying discourse analysis, this study examines the policy discourse and implementation about how social inclusion is constructed, negotiated, and potentially resisted within Nepal's bureaucratic discourse. Drawing from Foucault's theories of power and knowledge and governmentality, and Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA), the study uncovers how language, narratives, and institutional practices work together to shape inclusion not just as a policy goal but as a discursive field of power relations. The research contributes to the growing body of critical public administration studies by integrating discourse theory into the analysis of inclusion policies. It challenges conservative understandings of bureaucracy as a neutral mechanism and instead places it as a discursive position where power operates through norms, categorizations, and institutional language. On the other hand, understanding the discursive framing of social inclusion within Nepal's bureaucracy can help policymakers and reform advocates identify gaps between policy rhetoric and practice. It provides insight into how bureaucratic narratives reinforce existing hierarchies even while adopting inclusion-oriented language, thereby offering a foundation for more reflective and transformative policy interventions.

Given the historical marginalization of women, Dalits, Janajatis, Madhesis, and other excluded groups in Nepal, this study supports ongoing efforts to make public institutions more equitable. By highlighting how inclusion is talked about, resisted, or symbolically adopted, it opens up possibilities for institutional reflection and change. It gives voice to the often-unseen cultural and discursive barriers that inclusion policies face in practice.

1.10 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis sets out to explain toward social inclusion and exclusion, and explore the effectiveness of policy and legal framework within the bureaucracy of Nepal. Further, the study analyses the major themes and discussion related to social inclusion, and investigate how language is used in discussions related to social inclusion in Nepal. Chapter I includes the background of the study, the problem statement, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and the structure of the thesis. Chapter II contains the presentation of literature review which includes a brief account on the concepts and principles of inclusion policies, and different study of previous works, and also deals with theoretical concepts and the structure in which different theories are discussed to reflect the essence of the study. Chapter III discusses the methodological choices and challenges underpinning the research process, and methods adopted for the discourse analysis. Chapter IV addresses the policy and legal framework regarding social inclusion within bureaucracy of Nepal. Chapter V focuses on key discourses of social inclusion. Chapter VI addresses the power dynamics on bureaucratic discourse and implementation of social inclusion policies. Finally, Chapter VII discusses the summary and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews existing literature on social inclusion policies in Nepal, focusing on the challenges and barriers to their realization. Using a discourse analysis approach, it investigates how these policies are framed, understood, and implemented within the bureaucracy, and the factors that influence their effectiveness. Through this review, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics shaping social inclusion policy implementation in Nepal.

2.1 The Major Theories on Discourse Analysis

Drawing on the critical discourse analysis in social inclusion, this theoretical review provides a comprehensive framework for the research. Critical discourse analysis provides the lens to guide the research frame. The theoretical underpinnings of discourse analysis, especially within the context of social inclusion and bureaucracy, draw from multiple interdisciplinary fields, including linguistics, sociology, political theory, and public administration. Discourse analysis as a methodology has been essential in understanding how power, identity, and social structures are constructed and contested in society. This section explores key theories and concepts relevant to the discourse analysis of social inclusion narratives in Nepal's bureaucracy. This research has employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the intersection of language, power, and ideology in the formation, implementation, and perception of social inclusion policies in Nepal.

2.1.1 Norman Fairclough's Model

Fairclough (1995) explains the issue of political discourse that shapes the overall socio-political scenario. Fairclough says political discourse provides the strongest illustration of the constitutive power of discourse. It reproduces the social world by changing people's representations of it and the principles of classification which underlie them. It also clearly shows the inseparability of ideational and interpersonal processes in discourse. It can reproduce the social world only in and through reproducing and changing social class and groups. It works simultaneously on representations and classifications of people. The power of political discourse depends upon its capacity to constitute and mobilize those social forces that are capable of carrying into reality.

Fairclough's framework is foundational in CDA and particularly relevant for analyzing social inclusion policies in Nepal. It involves three interconnected levels of analysis (Fairclough, 1995). *Textual Analysis*: This examines the linguistic characteristics of policy documents, focusing on vocabulary, metaphors, and pronoun use. In the Nepali context, terms like "proportional inclusion," "marginalized," or "disadvantaged groups" as framed in the Constitution and Civil Service Act were critically analyzed. *Discursive Practice*: This has investigated how texts are produced, disseminated, and interpreted. It involves studying how social inclusion policies are discussed within governmental bodies, the media, and public forums, focusing on how these discourses are legitimized and contested. *Social Practice*: This connects discourse to broader socio-political structures and power dynamics. The study has examined how Nepal's social inclusion policies reflect historical hierarchies, such as caste and ethnic stratification, regional disparities, and marginalized groups.

2.1.2 Michel Foucault's Model

Michel Foucault (1971) developed a distinctive approach to discourse that goes beyond language as communication. For Foucault, discourse is a system of knowledge, power, and practices that shapes how we understand and govern the world. The key concepts in Foucault's discourse theory include discourse as power-knowledge. It says that discourse is not just a way of speaking or writing but a means through which power and knowledge are produced and maintained. Knowledge is used to exert power, and power shapes what counts as knowledge. Every society has its own system of truth. It means rules and norms determine what is accepted as true or legitimate. These truths are not universal but are produced and sustained through discursive practices (Foucault, 1980). A discourse creates and limits what can be said, thought, and done about a subject. For instance, discourses of 'development' or 'inclusion' define who is seen as 'marginalized' what solutions are appropriate, and who can speak authoritatively. Foucault also explored how discourse constructs individuals as subjects, shaping their identity and behavior such as 'the marginalized citizen'. The concept of governmentality explains how modern power works not just through laws or force, but by managing populations through discourses, norms, and institutions (Foucault, 1991). In this study, Foucault's discourse analysis helps to uncover the hidden power relations embedded in policy language. It also supports to understand how bureaucratic institutions reinforce or resist these discursive formations.

2.1.3 Teun A. van Dijk's Model

Teun A. van Dijk is a prominent figure in critical discourse analysis (CDA). His work bridges linguistics, cognitive psychology, and social theory, focusing particularly on how discourse contributes to the reproduction of power, dominance, and inequality in society. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such a complex research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality (p. 352). Thus, it is aimed at producing 'enlightenment and emancipation (p. 7), grossly needed in the context of Nepal, hindered by political uncertainty for decades, and still ruled by the traditional ruling elites, irrespective of all the socio-political changes that have occurred in the country overtime. Van Dijk's approach emphasizes the role of cognitive structures, mental models, knowledge, and ideologies in shaping discourse and power relations (van Dijk, 1998).

Van Dijk conceptualizes discourse as a structure with three interrelated dimensions. He addresses in the textual level, discursive practice level, and social practice level. Discourse analysis must pay attention to the interplay between text, cognition, and context. One of van Dijk's major contributions is the socio-cognitive approach, which connects language, mind, and society. Discourse is shaped by mental models, such as schemas, frames, and scripts, that people use to interpret and produce texts. These models are influenced by ideologies such as shared social beliefs that reflect group interests and power positions. Van Dijk emphasizes that discourse is a position of ideological struggle. Discourse analysis, in this view, becomes a tool for uncovering hidden power dynamics. Power is exercised and enacted in discourse, and ideology is often produced and reproduced in the same process. Dominance groups use discourse to legitimize inequality, and marginalized voices are often silenced in mainstream discourse.

2.2 Policy and Document Review

2.2.1 Discourse on Policy Documents

Policy documents in Nepal have been instrumental in shaping the discourse surrounding social inclusion. The discourse associated with social inclusion has been

significantly shaped by policy documents such as the Constitution of Nepal (2015), the National Education Policy (2019), and various affirmative action frameworks. These documents articulate commitments to inclusivity for marginalized groups, including Dalits, indigenous peoples such as Adibasi Janajati, and Madhesi communities. However, critical analyses suggest that the implementation of these policies often falls short of their inclusive intentions. Gurung (2019) discusses how despite constitutional guarantees, the practical realization of social inclusion remains limited, with marginalized communities still experiencing systemic exclusion. Bhul (2025) examines affirmative action practices in Nepal's federal civil service, highlighting both achievements and challenges in promoting representation of marginalized groups. Similarly, Mouni (2023) argues that the National Education Policy's language provisions, despite advocating for multilingual education, inadvertently legitimize the dominance of Nepali and English, ignoring other indigenous languages. Bista (2014) documents how the rhetoric of gender equality and ethnic representation often fails to materialize in practice within bureaucratic institutions. The ethnographic work of Sharma (2018) underscores that female and indigenous voices are frequently marginalized in policy discourse, even though official narratives claim commitment to inclusive development. This discrepancy between narrative and practice is a central concern in discourse analysis of Nepal's bureaucracy.

2.2.2 Discourse on Media

Media plays a crucial role in framing social inclusion narratives and shaping public perceptions of social inclusion. Programs like BBC Sajha Sawal and Herne Katha have provided platforms for marginalized communities to voice their concerns and experiences. It is also facilitating public discourse on issues such as caste discrimination and gender inequality. Sajha Sawal, a debate program aired from 2007 to 2018, was noted for its impartial approach to social issues, reaching millions of viewers across the country (BBC Media Action, 2024). Herne Katha, a web documentary series launched in 2018, features stories from underrepresented communities, contributing to a more inclusive media landscape (Herne Katha, 2024). However, challenges persist, as government-owned media outlets have been criticized for their lack of inclusivity at the policy-making level, with studies showing minimal representation of indigenous and Dalit communities (Republica, 2019).

Media representations often reflect the prevailing discourses in bureaucracy, influencing public opinion and the political climate surrounding social inclusion. Poudel (2017) finds that media coverage of social inclusion policies in Nepal tends to sensationalize achievements while downplaying persistent challenges, thus shaping public perceptions and reinforcing dominant discourses of inclusion that may not fully reflect the lived realities of marginalized groups. This relationship between media, public discourse, and bureaucratic practice is an important area for further research, especially when examining how public narratives influence institutional changes.

2.2.3 Discourse on Interview-Based Audio

Interviews and oral narratives serve as vital sources for understanding the lived experiences of marginalized groups in Nepal. Such discourses offer intimate insights into the real experiences of marginalized communities. Programs like Radio Sagarmatha's "Uhile Bajeka Palama" and community radio initiatives have documented personal stories that reveal the nuances of social exclusion and inclusion. These audio discourses provide a platform for individuals from Dalit, indigenous, and other marginalized communities to share their narratives, offering a counter-narrative to mainstream media portrayals (Radio Sagarmatha, n.d.). Such platforms empower communities by amplifying their voices and fostering a more inclusive public dialogue.

2.3 Empirical Review

The application of discourse analysis in understanding social inclusion narratives in bureaucracy within Nepal has been limited but increasingly emerging. Empirical studies demonstrate the complex ways in which narratives on social inclusion shape and are shaped by institutional practices in the Nepalese bureaucracy. This empirical review synthesizes key empirical findings related to discourse analysis in the context of social inclusion in Nepal's bureaucracy.

Several scholars argue that despite policy interventions, the bureaucracy in Nepal remains heavily influenced by hierarchical and exclusionary practices (Thapa, 2014). Social inclusion efforts, such as the introduction of affirmative action policies, have faced challenges in translating these policies into meaningful participation within bureaucratic structures (Acharya, 2017). Koirala (2016) highlights that while

institutional frameworks have been designed to promote social inclusion, their implementation often suffers due to deep-rooted power structures and unequal access to decision-making spaces. A significant body of literature has sought to investigate how these institutional frameworks are communicated and enacted within bureaucratic discourse. The discourse surrounding social inclusion in Nepal's bureaucracy has often been framed through the lens of political representation, but as Acharya (2017) points out, this representation is often undermined by practices that maintain the status-quo of exclusion. These findings align with broader critiques of the bureaucratic system in Nepal, which has been criticized for reinforcing structural inequalities rather than alleviating them (Lama, 2018).

In exploring the role of discourse in institutional norms and practices, scholars have drawn attention to how language and narrative play a pivotal role in constructing identities, power relations, and access to resources (Foucault, 1972). Discursive practices within bureaucratic settings, such as the language of policy documents and official statements, often reflect and sustain broader social ideologies. In Nepal, bureaucratic discourse often frames social inclusion in ways that either reinforce dominant social structures or nominally accommodate marginalized groups without effecting real change (Poudel, 2016). This is consistent with research by Devkota et al. (2019), who found that the language of bureaucratic policies regarding ethnic representation in Nepal often reflects a superficial commitment to inclusion, hiding deeper systemic barriers. Media representations often reflect the prevailing discourses in bureaucracy, influencing public opinion and the political climate surrounding social inclusion. Poudel (2017) finds that media coverage of social inclusion policies in Nepal tends to sensationalize achievements while downplaying persistent challenges, thus shaping public perceptions and reinforcing dominant discourses of inclusion that may not fully reflect the lived realities of marginalized groups. This relationship between media, public discourse, and bureaucratic practice is an important area for further research, especially when examining how public narratives influence institutional changes.

Shrestha (2020) argues that Nepal's bureaucratic institutions are often influenced by international discourses on human rights and development, which advocate for social inclusion and equality. However, the extent to which these global ideals are integrated

into local bureaucratic structures remains argumentative. Global discourses of inclusion, while influential, can be at odds with the traditional and local power structures in Nepal, as evidenced in the work of Regmi (2015), who highlights the tension between international norms and the deeply entrenched local practices in Nepalese bureaucracy.

2.4 Social Inclusion and Discourse in the Global Context

Discourse analysis, as both a theoretical orientation and methodological approach, has significantly contributed to the understanding of social inclusion in various global contexts. Rooted in linguistics, sociology, and critical theory, discourse analysis interrogates how language shapes and is shaped by social practices, ideologies, and power relations (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 2014). In the study of social inclusion, discourse analysis offers a lens to explore how narratives around inclusion and exclusion are constructed, normalized, and institutionalized across different societies. Globally, social inclusion has evolved as a key policy and academic concern, especially in relation to marginalized populations such as ethnic minorities, women, people with disabilities, migrants, and economically disadvantaged groups (United Nations, 2016). While the concept is often framed in terms of access to services, participation, and representation, discourse analysis reveals how inclusion is more than a matter of policy implementation; it is also a matter of how inclusion is talked about, framed, and imagined in political, bureaucratic, and everyday discourses (Askonas & Stewart, 2000; Silver, 1994). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been particularly influential in exposing the ideological underpinnings of inclusion narratives. As Fairclough (2001) argues, discourse is not merely reflective but constitutive of social reality; it plays an active role in reproducing or challenging social inequalities. CDA scholars examine how institutional texts such as policy documents, speeches, and bureaucratic communication embed assumptions about who belongs, who is 'in' or 'out,' and under what conditions. Wodak and Meyer (2009) highlight how inclusion discourses in European immigration policy often construct migrants as economic threats or cultural outsiders, revealing the conditional nature of belonging.

In diverse global settings, researchers have applied discourse analysis to understand how inclusion is discursively framed. In South Africa, inclusive education policies have been analyzed to reveal persistent meritocracy and ethnicity narratives despite

progressive legal frameworks (Engelbrecht, 2006). In Latin America, discourses of social inclusion have been linked to populist politics practices that concretely dependency rather than empower marginalized communities (Martínez Franzoni & Sánchez-Ancochea, 2014). In Western welfare states, Lister (2000) identifies a “conditional” discourse of inclusion where access to social benefits is tied to labor market participation, reflecting neoliberal ideologies. Moreover, feminist and postcolonial discourse analyses have broadened the understanding of inclusion by questioning who defines inclusion, on what terms, and whose voices are silenced or marginalized in dominant narratives (Lazar, 2005; Spivak, 2023). These approaches emphasize the importance of intersectionality, showing how race, gender, class, and colonial histories shape experiences and representations of inclusion globally. Therefore, in the global discourse, social inclusion is not a neutral or universally defined concept. Rather, it is mediated through language that reflects complex power dynamics, historical legacies, and ideological struggles. Discourse analysis thus serves as a critical tool to open these layers and understand how inclusion is constructed, negotiated, and resisted in various socio-political contexts.

2.5 Politicization of Social Inclusion in Nepal: The Key Debate

The conversations of social inclusion within the inclusive practices of administration put in place are highly politicized. Kaini and Rai (2023) explain how social movements especially based on identity like the Madhesi movement have already been put to use and this has led to the use of social inclusion in the ethnic federalism for election purposes. This politicization not only modified social inclusion policies that have the capacity to transform effects but also encourages inclusivity in practicing governance. As Langford and Bhattarai (2011) argue, constitutional rights alone are insufficient to dismantle deeply deep-rooted structures of exclusion. They emphasize the need for stronger enforcement of laws, inclusive policymaking, and grassroots mobilization to achieve meaningful social inclusion.

Devkota et al. (2019) further illustrate how marginalized communities in Nepal continue to face discrimination and neglect in accessing services and opportunities. Despite protective mechanisms, minorities encounter significant barriers to participation in decision-making process, perpetuating social exclusion and hindering Nepal’s progress toward sustainable development goals. Pradhan (2011) contextualizes

the concept of exclusion which was tasked unexpectedly with the welfare crisis. Developing within these profound transformations, another welfare–state–era concept of ‘exclusion’ was developed in response to shifts in society. The implementation of social inclusion policies remains fraught with challenges in Nepal. The key discourses are surrounded on social inclusion and exclusion within the bureaucracy, policy frameworks, and media narratives. These discourses highlight how power dynamics, representation, and language use shape the implementation and perception of inclusive practices across institutional and public spheres. The framing of social inclusion by bureaucratic documents, media narratives, and political speeches either contests or reproduces these hierarchies. Government policies use words such as "marginalized communities" and "equal opportunity," but the actual practice still be in favor of dominant groups because of implicit biases in bureaucratic decision-making.

In Nepal, social inclusion policy is very much cast in legal and bureaucratic language that creates a specific imagination of inclusivity. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) mandates proportional inclusion in government services, yet higher caste groups continue to dominate bureaucratic leadership. This reflects the tension between universalism and particularism in welfare systems, as critiqued by Goodin (1996), where exclusionary practices undermine social cohesion and perpetuate inequality.

2.6 Creamy Layer as a Dominant of Reservation System

The concept of the "creamy layer" refers to the relatively affluent and privileged members within historically marginalized groups who disproportionately benefit from affirmative action policies, often at the expense of the most disadvantaged. This phenomenon has been widely debated in the context of reservation systems, where caste-based and identity-based affirmative action policies aim to restore historical injustices. The creamy layer critique highlights the tension between ensuring equitable distribution of benefits and preventing elite capture within marginalized communities. In Nepal, the discourse on the creamy layer has gained prominence in recent years, reflecting the complexities of implementing inclusive policies in a society marked by deep-rooted caste and class hierarchies.

The discourse on the creamy layer in Nepal gained significant debate following the Supreme Court's ruling in the case of *Vinaya Kumar Panjiyar vs. the Government of*

Nepal (Writ No. 077-WO-0237, Paush 1, 2077). The Court emphasized that while the constitution has expanded eligibility for reservations, the system must be more goal-oriented and equitable. It called for addressing the disproportionate benefits accumulated by the middle and "creamy" layers within marginalized groups, urging a review to ensure that reservations serve the most disadvantaged. This ruling has generated a complex debate, with some praising it for advocating class-based reservations, while others fear it could be exploited by anti-reservation groups to undermine affirmative action altogether.

Following this decision, the discourse surrounding the "creamy layer" within the reservation system has become tricky and complex. Some TV debates and op-eds have praised the Supreme Court's ruling, arguing that reservations should be based on class rather than caste. However, after the court's decision, a dominant anti-reservation group in society use this ruling to further weaken the reservation system, possibly aiming to reduce or even eliminate it. For instance, examples of this effort include the amendment of Clause 7(7) of the Civil Service Act, 2049 to add the "*Bipanna Khas Arya*" group as part of the "*Samabesi*" category, as well as attempts to undermine the reservation system in 2076 by the Public Service Commission during the recruitment of 961 employees at the local level without proportionally reserving seats.

Meanwhile, some critics opposed the Supreme Court's decision, arguing that it failed to align with the constitutional ideals and the vision of creating an inclusive and egalitarian society. In his book *Samabesitako Bahas*, Sunam discusses the dominance of the elite or "creamy layer" in the reservation system, arguing that there is no clear definition of these terms. He highlights two key perspectives in this debate: first, that the upper class within marginalized groups disproportionately benefits from reservations, and second, that reservations should be based on socioeconomic class rather than caste or gender. While addressing the counterargument that inclusion policies should focus on economic status, Sunam (2018) asserts that the theoretical foundation of inclusion is more about addressing discrimination and promoting social justice than merely alleviating poverty.

This concern is reflected in the fact that, during the reservation system, 23 out of 28 chief secretaries in Nepal belong to the *Khas Arya* community. Additionally, over 90 percent of current secretaries come from this group. Despite representing only 31

percent of the population, the *Khas Arya* community holds 62 percent of these positions, while the Dalit community, which makes up 13 percent of the population, has only 2 percent representation (Ministry of Federal and General Administration, 2024). This demonstrates that decision-making positions remain predominantly held by the socially and economically privileged upper class.

2.7 Social Inclusion Issues in Nepal

Nepal's social inclusion issues are deeply rooted in its complex social fabric, characterized by caste, ethnicity, gender, and geographic disparities. Despite constitutional guarantees and affirmative action policies, marginalized communities continue to face systemic exclusion in various sectors (Bhul, 2025). Historically, caste-based discrimination has entrenched social hierarchies in Nepal. While the 1963 Civil Code abolished caste-based discrimination, its legacy persists (Subedi, 2016). Dalits, particularly those from the lowest castes, experience significant educational and health disparities. The literacy rate among the lowest castes is approximately half that of upper castes, and their life expectancy is six years shorter. Consequently, the poverty rate among these groups is 15 times higher than the national average. Ethnic minorities such as the Limbus, Tamangs, Magars, Tharus, Musahars, and indigenous groups like the Chepangs and Raute face higher poverty rates compared to the general population. In contrast, the Newars, predominantly residing in urban areas like the Kathmandu Valley, exhibit lower poverty rates. The Madhesi community, residing in the Terai region, has long been marginalized in political, administrative, and governance processes. This exclusion has led to issues concerning citizenship, identity, language, and territorial rights, affecting their sense of belonging and participation in national development. Given the fact that the present state is exclusionary, non-participatory and non-representative and discriminates against indigenous peoples, women, *Madhesis*, *Dalits* and other marginalized communities on the basis of caste, ethnicity, language, religion, sex, class and geographical territory, these marginalized people and communities are demanding for an inclusive state through its restructuring along the line of federalism on the basis of national regional autonomy (Gurung, 2009).

Gender inequality remains a pervasive issue in Nepal. Despite legal reforms, women, especially from marginalized communities, continue to face discrimination. For example, the literacy rate among Dalit women is alarmingly low at 7%, and many live

below the poverty line. Violence against women, including practices like witchcraft accusations, child marriage, and domestic violence, continues to be prevalent. In political representation, while women constitute a significant portion of local government members, their participation in leadership roles remains limited. In the 2022 local elections, although 41% of ward members were women, the number of women elected as mayors or chairs was still in the single digits. The decade-long civil war (1996–2006) in Nepal resulted in numerous injuries and damages, intensifying the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Although the official disability prevalence is reported at 1.94%, this figure underestimates the actual number due to inconsistent definitions and reporting mechanisms (Lamichhane, 2015).

Nepal has implemented several policies aimed at promoting social inclusion, such as the 2003 Poverty Reduction Strategy and the establishment of commissions for Dalits and indigenous groups (Subedi, 2016). These initiatives include affirmative action measures like reservations in education and civil service. However, the effectiveness of these policies is often hindered by deep-rooted social norms, elite resistance to change, and the persistence of informal systems that continue exclusion (Bennett, 2005). Addressing social inclusion in Nepal requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond policy formulation to encompass cultural, social, and institutional reforms. Efforts must focus on dismantling deep-rooted hierarchies, promoting equitable access to resources, and fostering an inclusive society that values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all its citizens.

2.7.1 Social Inclusion in Nepal's Bureaucracy

The social inclusion refers to the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of individuals and groups who are disadvantaged on the basis of their identity – such as gender, ethnicity, caste, religion, disability, or geographic location to participate fully in society – economically, socially, and politically. The key elements of social inclusion include Equity and Non-Discrimination which ensures that all individuals and groups are treated fairly, without prejudice or exclusion based on identity or background (Silver, 1994). Participation and Representation which indicates social inclusion aims to provide everyone especially marginalized groups a voice in decision-making processes and equal access to public services, employment, education, and political representation (World Bank, 2013). Access to Opportunities and

Resources emphasizes removing barriers to social and economic opportunities, including land, jobs, education, healthcare, and justice (Sen, 2000). Recognition and Respect focuses on participation and about being valued and respected in public and private spheres (Fraser, 2008).

While Nepal has made significant progresses in embedding social inclusion within its bureaucratic framework through policy reforms and institutional mechanisms, challenges continue in achieving genuine representation and participation of marginalized communities. Addressing these challenges requires not only policy adjustments but also a commitment to removing deep-rooted social hierarchies and fostering an inclusive culture within the bureaucracy. The concept of social inclusion within Nepal's bureaucracy has evolved as a response to the historical marginalization of various communities, including Dalits, indigenous people such as Adibasi Janajati, Madhesis, women, and individuals with disabilities. These groups have long been excluded from political, economic, and social spheres, leading to systemic inequalities. The discourse on social inclusion in Nepal gained momentum following the 1990 People's Movement, which restored multiparty democracy and highlighted the exclusion of marginalized communities. Subsequently, the government recognized social inclusion as a critical policy issue. In 2003, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) identified inclusion as one of its four pillars, marking a significant shift towards addressing disparities (Rawal, 2008).

A pivotal moment came in 2007 with the amendment of the Civil Service Act of 1993, which introduced a 45% reservation system in public service appointments. This policy aimed to ensure representation from marginalized groups, including women, Dalits, indigenous communities, Madhesis, and individuals with disabilities. Despite these policy advancements, the practical implementation of social inclusion within Nepal's bureaucracy has faced significant challenges. Studies indicate that while the representation of marginalized groups has increased, the overall structure of the civil service remains predominantly composed of individuals from historically privileged communities. Paudel (2016) found that the recruitment process continues to favor candidates from elite backgrounds, undermining the intended impact of the reservation system. Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive human resource development programs, such as training and capacity-building initiatives, has hindered the effective

integration of marginalized groups into the bureaucracy. This deficiency contributes to disparities in performance and advancement opportunities within the civil service (Paudel, 2016). To address these issues, Nepal has established various institutional mechanisms. The National Dalit Commission, for example, was created to safeguard the rights, and promote the welfare of Dalits, ensuring their inclusion in societal processes. Additionally, the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration plays a crucial role in enhancing access for socially and economically disadvantaged groups to government services.

Several scholars argue that despite policy interventions, the bureaucracy in Nepal remains heavily influenced by hierarchical and exclusionary practices (Thapa, 2014). Social inclusion efforts, such as the introduction of affirmative action policies, have faced challenges in translating these policies into meaningful participation within bureaucratic structures (Acharya, 2017). For instance, Koirala (2016) highlights that while institutional frameworks have been designed to promote social inclusion, their implementation often suffers due to deep-rooted power structures and unequal access to decision-making spaces.

2.7.2 Social Inclusion as Infection of Meritocracy

Critics of inclusionary practices in Nepal argue that they undermine meritocracy, disrupt social harmony, and contribute to brain drain. The Administration Reform Commission of 2072 questioned the reservation system in civil service, suggesting that it benefits elites within marginalized groups while failing to reach the most disadvantaged. This critique aligns with Hegde's (2015) analysis of reservation policies in India, which highlights the polarizing nature of debates around social justice and meritocracy. Despite legislative efforts, exclusionary practices persist in Nepal, with marginalized communities advocating for ethnic and regional autonomy. The underrepresentation of women, Dalits, indigenous people, and other marginalized groups in leadership positions reflects the limitations of current policies. For instance, only 2.3% of mayors in Nepal are women, and Dalits and Muslims hold just 2.1% of government positions, despite comprising 18% of the population (Election Commission of Nepal, 2022). This disparity underscores the need for adaptive and inclusive policy frameworks, as emphasized by Cunningham and Menron (1999), who argue that affirmative action must account for the specific historical and social contexts of marginalized groups.

Amartya Sen's capability approach offers a framework for understanding inclusion beyond numerical representation. By focusing on the empowerment and enhancement of capabilities among marginalized groups, this approach advocates for enabling disadvantaged communities to compete on an equal footing, thereby fostering genuine social inclusion (Sen, 2000). The discourse on social inclusion in Nepal highlights the complex interplay of power, ideology, and policy implementation. While constitutional provisions and affirmative action measures aim to address historical injustices, systemic exclusion persists due to weak implementation mechanisms and societal resistance. The role of bureaucratic and political structures in shaping policy outcomes underscores the need for participatory policy-making and structural reforms. By critically analyzing the discourses surrounding social inclusion, this chapter sheds light on the challenges of implementing inclusive policies in a hierarchical society and calls for a multidimensional approach to address the root causes of exclusion.

2.7.3 Social Inclusion as a Tool of Social Justice

Social inclusion is fundamentally a response to the discrimination. Exclusion that marginalized communities such as indigenous people, women, Madhesis, Dalits, etc. have faced for centuries on end. The inclusionary policies try to address them and make an inclusive national unity without discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, language, religion, sex class or geographical diversity by implementing the general policies in every sphere of national life. The administrative reservation system has greatly helped to ensure the diverse representation in bureaucratic decision-making such as government, executive, legislature and judiciary. It is done to ensure inclusion of the marginalized communities in policy and governance processes, promoting social justice and equity (Administration Reform Commission, 2072). Inclusiveness not only enhances representation but also acts as a driver of self-worth and social benefits for disadvantaged populations. The goals of inclusionary policies are to reduce poverty and injustice (Sen, 2000). The introduction of inclusion policies is regarded as a remedy to the previous instances of exclusion and inequities. Further, it signifies a greater significance to the building of a culture that gives every person an equal chance to participate and contribute to the development of the country (Shrestha, 2022). However, as Modi (2015) emphasizes, social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon that requires a comprehensive approach, combining economic empowerment with social and political inclusion.

2.8 Social Inclusion Gaps and Discourse Analysis

Social inclusion policies use discourse to construct the idea that certain groups such as women, Dalits, indigenous people, and people with disabilities are historically excluded and require special attention to achieve social justice and equity (Sharma, 2012). The framing of these policies, however, is often shaped by dominant political ideologies and power relations that influence how inclusion is defined. The language used in these texts reflects an understanding of social inclusion as a top-down, state-driven process, often positioning marginalized groups as passive recipients of state welfare rather than active agents of their own inclusion (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). This framing, while well-intentioned, constructs social inclusion in a way that would fail to challenge deeper systemic inequalities. As van Dijk (2001) argues, language is a powerful tool for reproducing ideologies that support existing power structures. In Nepal, the discourse around social inclusion is embedded within political and cultural context that privileges certain identities and groups while marginalizing others. The use of language in policy documents thus reflects the ideological positioning of those in power within the bureaucracy. The framing of inclusion, for instance, emphasizes formal equality (e.g., quotas, affirmative action) while neglecting substantive equality, which requires addressing structural barriers to full participation in society (Bennett, 2008).

Power relations are crucial to understanding how social inclusion policies are framed and implemented within bureaucratic institutions. Fairclough (2003) argues that power is enacted through discourse, and institutional power is often exerted in subtle ways through the everyday practices of language. In Nepal's bureaucracy, power relations are often embodied in the ways in which policymakers and bureaucrats interpret and enforce social inclusion (Gurung, 2019). Bureaucratic discourses, while presenting themselves as neutral and impartial, often reflect and reinforce the hierarchical structures of power within society. The bureaucracy in Nepal is typically dominated by individuals from higher caste and more privileged ethnic groups, which influences how policies are understood and applied (Bennett, 2008). Bureaucrats acting as both interpreters and implementers of policies have biases, whether conscious or unconscious that affect the way they engage with marginalized groups. The language used by bureaucrats to frame these groups (e.g., "vulnerable," "underprivileged") can

reflect a paternalistic attitude, positioning these groups as dependent on the state for their inclusion rather than recognizing them as equal partners in the process of social change (Sharma, 2018). Moreover, the hierarchical nature of bureaucratic institutions means that the language of social inclusion often passes through multiple layers of interpretation before it is translated into action. At each stage, power relations are reinforced as certain discourses are prioritized, while others are put off. The result is a disconnect between the policy ideals of inclusion and the reality of how those policies are implemented on the ground.

While policies are often framed in inclusive terms, the implementation process reveals a different picture. CDA highlights the importance of examining how institutional practices either uphold or challenge the intentions behind policy texts (Bourdieu, 1991). In the case of Nepal, while there is substantial discourse around inclusive development in policy documents, the actual practices within bureaucratic institutions often fail to fully embrace or operationalize these goals. A key gap lies in the difference between the formal discourses of social inclusion (as articulated in policy documents) and the informal practices of exclusion that continue in bureaucratic institutions. Despite policies that mandate quotas for marginalized groups in political representation, employment, and education, the implementation of these policies often remains inconsistent. Bureaucrats use the language of inclusion to justify tokenistic measures that do not fundamentally challenge the power dynamics of Nepali society (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001). Bureaucratic institutions, while publicly supporting social inclusion, maintain discriminatory practices through informal channels, such as unfair recruitment processes, unequal access to resources, or the lack of enforcement of inclusion mandates (Bennett, 2008).

Thus, the intersection of social inclusion and critical discourse analysis in the context of Nepal's bureaucracy provides a rich terrain for investigation. By combining the analytical tools of CDA with the evolving policies of social inclusion, researchers can uncover how institutional discourses shape the lived experiences of marginalized groups in Nepal. This critical engagement can contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in achieving genuine social inclusion, and can offer recommendations for more effective policies that address both the symbolic and structural dimensions of exclusion.

2.9 Different Discourses in Different Contexts in Nepal

Nepal's political and social landscape has been shaped by various discourses that have emerged in response to historical, cultural, and political contexts. These discourses have influenced state policies, societal norms, and the experiences of marginalized communities. These discourses have collectively shaped Nepal's evolving identity and governance structures. They reflect the nation's ongoing efforts to reconcile its diverse cultural, ethnic, and social landscapes within a unified state framework.

- **Monarchical Discourse and National Identity:** The monarchy in Nepal, particularly during the Panchayat era (1961–1990), played a central role in shaping national identity. The regime promoted a discourse centered around Hinduism, the Nepali language, and the monarchy as the three pillars of national unity. This narrative aimed to consolidate power and suppress political pluralism. The 1990 People's Movement (Jana Andolan) led to the end of the Panchayat system and the establishment of a multiparty democracy, challenging the monarchical discourse and introducing a more inclusive political framework.
- **Democratic Transition and the Rise of Inclusion Discourse:** Following the end of the monarchy, Nepal underwent a significant political transformation (Reuters, 2024). The 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) and seven political parties marked a shift towards democratic governance and social inclusion (Gurung et al., 2014). Social inclusion became a central theme in the state's restructuring process, aiming to address the historical marginalization of various communities. The Interim Constitution of 2007 emphasized the need for an inclusive, democratic, and progressive restructuring of the state to eliminate discrimination based on class, caste, language, gender, culture, religion, and region (Gurung et al., 2014).
- **Ethnic and Regional Movements: Madhesi and Indigenous Discourses:** The Madhesi and indigenous communities in Nepal have articulated their own discourses centered around identity, autonomy, and recognition. The Madhesi movement, particularly the Madhesh Andolan, has sought greater political representation, recognition of their cultural identity, and equitable distribution of resources. Similarly, indigenous groups have advocated for the recognition

of their distinct cultures, languages, and rights within the national framework. These movements have contributed to the broader discourse of inclusion by highlighting the need for a federal structure that accommodates the diverse identities within Nepal.

- **Dalit Rights and the Discourse of Social Justice:** Dalits, historically considered the lowest caste in the Hindu social hierarchy, have been at the forefront of advocating for social justice and equality. The discourse surrounding Dalit rights focuses on eliminating caste-based discrimination, ensuring equal access to education, employment, and political participation, and promoting social dignity. The establishment of the National Dalit Commission and the inclusion of affirmative action policies in the constitution reflect the state's recognition of the need to address the systemic exclusion of Dalit communities.
- **Gender Equality and Feminist Discourses:** Gender equality has been a significant discourse in Nepal's post-monarchical era. Feminist movements have challenged patriarchal norms and advocated for women's rights in various spheres, including politics, education, and employment. The constitution guarantees women's rights, and policies have been implemented to promote female participation in governance and decision-making processes. Despite these advancements, challenges remain in achieving true gender parity, and feminist discourses continue to push for deeper structural changes.

2.10 Intersection of Global Discourses and Local Practices

Shrestha (2020) argue that Nepal's bureaucratic institutions are often influenced by international discourses on human rights and development, which advocate for social inclusion and equality. However, the extent to which these global ideals are integrated into local bureaucratic structures remains contentious. Global discourses of inclusion, while influential, can be at odds with the traditional and local power structures in Nepal, as evidenced in the work of Regmi (2015), who highlights the tension between international norms and the deeply entrenched local practices in Nepalese bureaucracy. Empirical studies reveal that discourse analysis offers a valuable lens for understanding how social inclusion narratives are constructed, communicated, and resisted within the

bureaucracy of Nepal. The findings underscore the gap between official policies and the practical realities of social inclusion, highlighting the role of language, power, and institutional norms in shaping these narratives.

Moreover, bureaucratic actors, particularly at the higher levels of government, can often be influenced by external discourses such as international human rights frameworks, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and development aid policies which offer an alternative discourse to the traditional, exclusionary ways of thinking about Nepali society (Mosse, 2005). These frameworks can challenge bureaucratic discourse by promoting a more comprehensive and intersectional approach to social inclusion that considers both material and symbolic forms of inclusion.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology employed in this research. The aim of the methodology in this study is to explore the discourses, practices and their attributes which are inclusive and/or exclusive by assessing the Nepalese bureaucracy.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is a research paradigm. The paradigm of the current study stressed to interpretivism and critical discourse analysis. Interpretivism paradigm focuses on understanding the social world through the subjective experiences of individuals and the meanings they attach to their actions (Schwandt, 2007). On the other hand, given the political nature of social inclusion policies, CDA is employed to analyze how these policies are constructed and contested through language, reflecting power dynamics, inequality, and ideology in Nepal's bureaucracy (Fairclough, 2009).

The underlying philosophies of the study are critical realism and interpretivism. Critical realism is a philosophical approach, primarily used in social sciences, that argues that an underlying reality exists independently of our perception, and that while we may not directly observe it, we can understand this "real" world by analyzing observable events and identifying the causal mechanisms behind them. Social constructivism suggests that reality is socially constructed, and language is a tool through which social realities, identities, and power structures are produced and reproduced (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The discourse analysis approach helps to uncover how language within bureaucratic narratives shapes and reflects social inclusion policies.

This means the reality is out there that can be separated from our understanding of it; and understanding such a reality is only possible by exploring the social and political relations that exist around it. This philosophy is relevant when analyzing social inclusion policies as it brings out the structural factors and the ideational dimensions of such factors (Bhaskar, 1989). Interpretivism is a sociological research approach that emphasizes understanding social phenomena through the lens of human meaning, beliefs, and interpretations, viewing reality as subjective and socially constructed. These philosophies can be elaborated as:

3.1.1 Critical Realism

Critical realism is a philosophical approach that suggests the reality exists independently of our perceptions of it, but that we can only know this reality through our interpretations and experiences. This philosophical stance combines elements of both realism and constructivism. Critical realism suggests that there are underlying structures and mechanisms in the social world that shape our experiences and discourse, but these structures cannot be directly observed (Bhaskar, 2016). Instead, researchers infer their existence through the examination of the phenomena they produce. Epistemological relativism addresses that our knowledge of the world is always mediated through language, culture, and context, which means that our interpretations of reality are subjective, although they can be more or less accurate. In this research, critical realism would encourage to examine not just the discourses themselves but also the underlying structural factors that shape the narratives of social inclusion in Nepal's bureaucracy.

3.1.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is a qualitative research philosophy that focuses on understanding the subjective meaning that individuals or groups attach to social phenomena. Unlike positivist approaches, which aim for objective, observable data, interpretivism asserts that reality is socially constructed and can only be understood through the meanings people assign to it. This philosophy is particularly suited for research that aims to explore the social world from the perspective of the participants themselves. The key principles of interpretivism in research are – *Subjective meaning-making*: Interpretivism posits that human behavior is meaningful and should be understood within its social context. The meanings people attach to their actions, words, and interactions are central to understanding social phenomena. *Contextual understanding*: Interpretivists emphasize the importance of context in interpreting social actions. In this study, understanding the socio-political, cultural, and historical context of Nepal is crucial to interpreting the narratives of social inclusion in the bureaucracy. *Interaction and interpretation*: The researcher's role is to interpret the meaning behind participants' words, actions, and interactions. This often involves close engagement with the data, such as interviews, texts, and other forms of discourse. Interpretivism would guide to examine how different stakeholders (e.g., government officials, bureaucrats,

marginalized communities) construct and negotiate meanings around social inclusion in the Nepali bureaucracy. Discourse analysis, from an interpretivist standpoint, would focus on the ways in which language and narratives construct social realities, such as inclusion or exclusion, in the bureaucratic context. How different groups interpret policies or practices and the ways in which these interpretations shape the social inclusion agenda in Nepal can be analyzed.

3.2 Critical Realism and Bureaucratic Power Hierarchy

Critical realism, as a philosophical approach, offers a way to understand how power hierarchies and structural influences are embedded within bureaucratic systems, even though these structures are not directly observable. According to critical realism, there are underlying social mechanisms and structures that shape the discourse, even if these mechanisms are not immediately visible. These structures shape the actions and discourses of bureaucrats and institutions, even though they might not be immediately obvious in everyday interactions (Bhaskar, 2016).

Bureaucratic power hierarchies are often governed by formal and informal mechanisms, such as hierarchical organizational structures, political influence, historical legacies, and institutional practices. These mechanisms influence the way social inclusion or exclusion is framed and enacted through discourse. For example, certain discourses can be used by higher-ups in the bureaucracy to maintain their power over marginalized groups, while at the same time framing these marginalized groups as being 'included' in an institutional sense but only within the constraints of the hierarchical power structure. Critical realism highlights that while individuals engage with bureaucratic discourses in various ways, their understandings are shaped by their position within the hierarchy. For example, bureaucrats at higher levels articulate social inclusion in ways that align with state policy and organizational priorities, while those at lower levels interpret or enact inclusion in more constrained or limited ways. These divergent understandings often disguise or reinforce structural inequalities (e.g., caste, ethnicity, or gender) that persist within the bureaucracy.

This study explores how bureaucratic discourses about social inclusion are rooted in institutional structures that prioritize certain ethnic groups, political ideologies, or other forms of privilege. This could be seen in how certain policies are framed as "inclusive,"

even when they disproportionately benefit already dominant groups, which could be investigated through discourse analysis informed by critical realism (Bhaskar, 2016).

3.3 Interpretivism and Bureaucratic Power Hierarchy

Interpretivism focuses on understanding how individuals or groups construct and interpret meanings, which is important for analyzing how bureaucratic discourse is used to maintain or challenge power structures. From an interpretivist perspective, the way people within the bureaucracy make sense of their roles, policies, and interactions can reveal how power dynamics are enacted and maintained through language and narratives. The alignment with bureaucratic power hierarchies can be stated in the subsequent paragraphs.

Interpretivism states that meaning is constructed through social interactions. Bureaucrats, policymakers, and marginalized groups each interpret the concept of social inclusion differently, depending on their position within the power structure (Schwandt, 2007). With this lens, it is examined that how different actors in Nepal's bureaucracy construct the meaning of "social inclusion" and how these meanings reflect their roles in the power hierarchy. Interpretivism suggests that language is a key tool in constructing and maintaining social realities. Discourse analysis from an interpretivist perspective would focus on how bureaucratic language is used to reinforce or challenge power dynamics. Bureaucrats at higher levels of authority use certain terminologies or narratives to frame social inclusion in ways that preserve their position, while lower-level bureaucrats negotiate these discourses (Foucault, 1972).

Interpretivism also emphasizes that meaning-making occurs within a specific historical and social context. The context of Nepal's social, political, and cultural history such as caste, ethnicity, and gender inequalities plays a significant role in how bureaucratic power is maintained through discourse. By focusing on contextual interpretations, the study can explore how these historical and cultural factors influence the discourses of social inclusion and exclusion within the bureaucracy. Higher-ranking officials might use language that reflects national policies of inclusion, while marginalized groups within the bureaucracy may perceive the same policies as discriminatory. These discrepancies in interpretation provide insights into how bureaucratic discourse reflects and perpetuates power hierarchies.

Integrating critical realism and interpretivism can develop a nuanced understanding of how bureaucratic power hierarchies are maintained and reinforced through discourse. Critical realism allows us to look for the underlying social structures and mechanisms (e.g., institutional hierarchies, political power dynamics), while interpretivism helps us to understand how these structures are interpreted, negotiated, and reproduced by individuals within the bureaucracy.

3.4 Research Designs and Methods

3.4.1 Research Design

The research design in this study offers a comprehensive understanding of how social inclusion policies are framed, justified, and contested in Nepal's bureaucracy. The study has used discourse analysis and shed light on the complex interactions between language, power, and social inequality in the implementation of policies. The research design for the study is a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of social inclusion. It is a qualitative research which allow for an in-depth understanding and analysis of the social constructions (Yin, 2018), and meanings embedded in the language and discourse used within the context of Nepal's bureaucracy. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a broad field of study, and this focuses on the discourse of social inclusion. Given the emphasis on understanding how individuals and groups are represented through language, this research design adopts a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach (Fairclough, 2009).

3.4.2 Data Sources and Collection Methods

The study has adopted primary and secondary sources of data. In the primary source, the study employed interviews of participants who were policymakers in the government bodies. Among these participants, one participant was high level bureaucrats, other two participants were the member of parliament, and the next two participants were from policy influencers. Thus, there were total five participants from policymaking side. On the other hand, the interviews were also taken from the social disadvantaged group (marginalized groups) for whom the policies are implemented. These participants were working in junior level civil servant post. There were total six participants from disadvantaged group. In addition to primary data, the secondary data sources were also used in the discourse analysis. The secondary data sources used in

the study were policy documents and media discourse publication that contributed to social meanings and power relations. Thus, the data sources used in this study were policy documents analysis and official records and audio interviews. The policy documents published by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration that has outlined social inclusion goals, objectives, and implementation strategies. This also included the Constitution of Nepal (2015), policies related to affirmative action and ethnic inclusion.

3.4.3 Sampling Strategy

The transcripts from public speeches and interviews with policymakers and disadvantaged group were analyzed to see how they narrate social inclusion. All these data were selected purposefully to reflect the narratives and discourses promoted by Nepal's bureaucracy regarding marginalized groups such as Dalits, women, indigenous people, and other minority ethnic groups (Hangen, 2009). Given the qualitative nature of the study, purposive sampling was employed. This strategy ensures that the sample includes key texts and narratives that directly relate to the study's focus on social inclusion. Documents were selected based on their relevance to the official discourse relevant to social inclusion in Nepal's bureaucracy. These documents included national policy documents and government reports. Interviews were conducted with both policymakers and marginalized groups.

3.4.4 Data Analysis Methods

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the extent to which the social inclusion policies are implemented through the use of a discourse analysis. To do this, the study has analyzed Constitutional Provisions on Social Inclusion, Reservation, and Marginalized Group Empowerment in Nepal's Constitution (2015), Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy 2021, and Nepal's 6th National Inclusion Commission Report (Fiscal Year 2080/81), which relate to marginalized communities and their use of social inclusion discourse using Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. It clearly links and analyzes texts with social practices through discourse. This understanding allows the identification of relations of power dynamics and domination within the social structure, as well as how these structures are reinforced, challenged and transformed through discourse.

Discourse analysis was the central analytical method used in this study. The study specifically employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA emphasizes how power and social inequalities are constructed through language. The analysis focused on identifying how social inclusion is framed, justified, and contested within bureaucratic narratives. During the data analysis, key steps were followed for its rigorous analysis. In the first step, policy documents, interview transcription, and reports were read carefully to identify metaphors and phrases used to describe social inclusion. Using Fairclough's model of discourse analysis, linguistic features of the documents, such as word choice and metaphors were used. In the discursive practice, texts were interpreted, and in social practice, power dynamics, historical background, and political struggles related to social inclusion policies. The analysis also focused on the underlying ideologies that appraised these narratives, such as ethnicity and gender (van Dijk, 1998). The research has focused on how bureaucratic discourse positions marginalized groups, either reinforcing or challenging social inequalities.

3.5 Ethical Approval and Considerations

The study has maintained the ethical standards by ensuring the confidentiality and informed consent from the participants. Ethical concern related to the analysis of policy documents was addressed by acknowledging the potential biases existed within these texts. Interviews and personal data were collected and participants' identities were kept confidential, and any sensitive information was anonymized. Prior to data collection, participants were provided with information about the study's purpose, and their voluntary participation was obtained through informed consent (Bryman, 2016).

As stated in the earlier chapters, the study site was a government institution: Bureaucrats, policymakers, and marginalized people who were also government official in different positions. I was permitted to have free access to the member of parliaments and bureaucrats who were the participants for my data collection. Before granting permission, I explained who I was and the nature of my study, and provide an explanatory statement. After several days' discussion, they granted permission to use governmental institution as my research site, and have access to internal and external documentation related to its social inclusion policies. Interviews with all participants taken approximately 30 minutes and were audio-recorded using a mobile phone device.

Participants were informed prior to consenting to an interview that the process should take approximately 40 minutes or so. These interviews were subsequently transcribed by a professional transcriptionist.

3.6 Limitations of the Study

Although the study intends to offer valuable insights into the discourse of social inclusion within Nepal's bureaucracy, some limitations are acknowledged. Some of the important policy documents were difficult to access due to political sensitivities. Discourse analysis, while insightful, often faces criticism for the subjectivity of interpretation. The researcher's positionality could influence the analysis (Gee, 2014). These limitations are inherent to the research design, the qualitative nature of discourse analysis, and the scope of the study.

- 1) The study has focused on a selected number of official documents and discourses from the Nepali bureaucratic system. Policy documents often represent institutional perspectives that may not necessarily align with marginalized viewpoints (Fairclough, 2003).
- 2) Discourse analysis inherently involves subjective interpretation of texts, which can introduce research bias (Gee, 2014). While efforts have been made to ensure transparency and rigor in the analysis, complete neutrality may not be entirely achievable.
- 3) While the analysis focuses on contemporary bureaucratic policy narratives, historical shifts in the discourse of social inclusion may present an incomplete understanding of how these policies have developed (Foucault, 1972).
- 4) Language barrier could be another limitation because the study relied on documents in Nepali and English. While translation efforts are made to ensure accuracy, nuances and meanings in the original Nepali texts might not be fully captured in translation.
- 5) Nepal's political and social structures, particularly with regard to ethnic and social inclusion, are unique and shaped by its specific history and culture. The insights gained may, therefore, offer valuable lessons but cannot be assumed to apply universally across different bureaucratic systems or national policies.

CHAPTER IV

POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the study discusses on the findings from critical discourse analysis of policy documents related to social inclusion and discourses on marginalized communities. This chapter focuses on findings drawn from the analysis of three key policy documents produced by Government of Nepal. These documents are Constitutional Provisions on Social Inclusion, Reservation, and Marginalized Group Empowerment in Nepal's Constitution (2015), Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy 2021, and Nepal's 6th National Inclusion Commission Report (Fiscal Year 2080/81).

4.1 Social Inclusion Policies and Legal Framework

In this chapter, the study focuses on understanding the meaning of the text written in the social inclusion policies. As discussed in Chapter II and III, which outlined the research design and analysis for this study, analyzing and understanding context is critical to doing CDA, because all meaning is socially constructed and can only be read with reference to the particular context in which it is produced (Locke, 2004). For example, the meaning of particular words or phrases can vary greatly depending upon who is saying them, where, to whom, and when. Hence, for those that conduct any sort of critical discourse analysis, knowledge of the context of the texts under analysis is a necessary first step.

Within Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA, any analysis of the implication of injustice within the social reality must first identify and be situated in the social practices that relate to the social injustice under examination. In this study the social inequality is the application of discourses of social inclusion to address social justice issues relating to marginalized people by the government policies. The specific instance of this social unfairness which is being analyzed relates to social inclusion policies towards marginalized population of Nepal. Discourse (text and talk), as a form of social action, is a power resource that both reflects and can influence existing networks of power relations. This is achieved via the dialectical relations between texts and orders of discourse, and social practices and social structures, where power

relations are a function of social structures (Fairclough, 1999). The networks of social practices which make up the conjuncture therefore provide evidence as to existing power relations in society which may not be immediately apparent.

In the case analyzed in this thesis, the texts under analysis are the policy documents and interview transcripts. The policy documents are the main representation of communication aspect of the government policies for social inclusion efforts.

4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis on Social Inclusion Policies

The discourse contained in the policy documents is considered to be powerful because of its public nature and the perceived legitimacy of its author (van Dijk, 1998). There are numerous types of social inclusion discourses (see Chapter II), however the analysis of the policy documents reveals one primary discourse – social inclusion-as-participation. A discourse of social inclusion-as-participation constructs a broad understanding of the needs and disadvantages experienced by marginalised groups, such as Janajati, Madhesi, Dalits, etc., and the impact of this on their welfare and inclusivity. However, as I show from the analysis, it also places these people on the periphery of society as a marginalised group by limiting both their intervention and ability to deviate from mainstream norms. As a consequence, the discourse legitimizes the existing social hierarchy, thereby reinforcing the status quo and doing effort to achieve insignificant implementation of policies for marginalized groups.

4.2.1 Constitution of Nepal (2015)

Inclusion (Part 1, Article 18): *Article 18 (Right to Equality)*

The discourse of the analyzed text reflects a dual ideological positioning that balances progressive ideals with institutional critique. The language employed—emphasizing the "prohibition of discrimination based on origin, religion, caste, and gender"—draws from a rights-based discourse that affirms the legitimacy of legal protections for marginalized communities. The reference to "affirmative action laws" and "historical injustices" situates the text within a broader framework of social justice and corrective equity, acknowledging the state's role in redressing systemic inequalities. However, this idealism is tempered by a pragmatic concern, as the text critiques the absence of "specific implementation mechanisms," highlighting a common disjunction between

policy rhetoric and actual enforcement. This introduces a discourse of institutional dependency, where the realization of rights is contingent upon further legislative action. The underlying assumption is that while legal frameworks are essential, they are insufficient in isolation—effective implementation requires robust mechanisms and political will. This aligns with Fairclough's (1995) view that discourse both reflects and constructs social realities, often revealing underlying power dynamics and institutional constraints. Thus, the text navigates between endorsement of progressive legal norms and a critical awareness of their limitations within bureaucratic structures.

The Article 18, Right to Equity reveals the 'inclusion and equity through policy, but challenges in implementation.' By 'insignificant implementation' I mean that the discourse of social inclusion found in the policy documents is rarely acknowledged. Findings suggest that, in line with Preece (2001), discourses of social inclusion are produced and maintained by the mainstream, that is, those in power, and imposed on the marginalized. Hence, policy documents that draw on mainstream discourse of social inclusion are highly unlikely to shift the structure of society. The

In the language of social inclusion, the 'mainstream' refers to those people who comprise the majority of a society, often defined by the opportunities and choices generally available to them. The 'marginalised' are those who exist on the negligible of society, by their unequal access to social, economic, political and cultural resources. Importantly, those on the margins lack the power to not only change their circumstances but also the problematic status created by their circumstances (Silver, 1994).

Reservation System (Part 3): *Article 24 (Right Against Untouchability and Discrimination)*

In the policy of social inclusion and reservation system, the constitution strictly prohibits all forms of untouchability and discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, religion, or gender. It ensures the right to equality and dignity for all citizens, with legal provisions to punish discriminatory practices. The state is obligated to take necessary measures to eliminate caste-based discrimination and promote social harmony. Analysis: While the constitution strongly condemns untouchability and discrimination,

its enforcement remains weak due to deep-rooted social prejudices and lack of strict implementation mechanisms. Legal provisions exist, but social transformation requires stronger political will and public awareness.

The constitution on reservation system defines the ‘legal commitment to equality vs. social realities and implementation challenges.’ The ‘challenges’ of social inclusion by denoting which groups are not sufficiently socially included to benefit from the policy implementation, and therefore needing help. Drawing on this broader discourse also gives the Government’s social inclusion based policy discourse greater legitimacy, and therefore greater influence, as it is filled with symbolic power drawn from the Federal Government’s policy.

Marginalized Group Rights: Article 40 (Right of Dalit)

The provision guarantees special rights for Dalit communities to ensure their social, economic, and political empowerment. It mandates the state to provide free education with scholarships for Dalit students, ensure health and social security protections, and implement affirmative policies for their upliftment. Additionally, the constitution requires legal provisions for land distribution to landless Dalits and reservations in education, employment, and political representation to address historical injustices. Despite constitutional commitments, critical gaps remain in implementation. There is no specific legal provision ensuring higher education (humanities, science, etc.) scholarships for Dalit students, only a general mandate for laws to be made. Similarly, while the constitution promises special health and social security protections for Dalits, no concrete laws have been enacted to enforce these rights. Furthermore, land redistribution for landless Dalits lacks legal backing, leaving many without economic stability. The absence of strict enforcement mechanisms and political reluctance to pass necessary laws has hindered progress, perpetuating systemic exclusion. Structural barriers and bureaucratic delays continue to undermine Dalit rights, necessitating urgent legislative action and stronger accountability measures.

Constructing indigenous and marginalized group rights as key aspect of social inclusion provides area where they are disadvantaged. The discourse of this policy reveals the ‘constitutional promises for Dalit empowerment vs. implementation failures.’ The

discourse on Dalit empowerment building is problematic in that it does not explicitly indicate on what basis the policy and Dalits will be integrated and implemented for their welfare. What is assumed (Fairclough, 1992) by the discourse is that both government and Dalit take action and make the necessary changes in the policy to establish meaningful implementation. However, this assumption ignores the impact of underlying structural and social barriers to empowerment building, such as power relationships between different groups in the community. As long as the Dalits have no voice in the discourse, there will be no structural change.

4.2.2 Nepal's GESI Policy (2021)

While The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy of 2021 adopts progressive, rights-based language emphasizing "equal participation," its implementation reveals significant deficits between rhetorical commitments and tangible redistribution. The mandate for GESI mainstreaming across all government programs has largely been reduced to a bureaucratic checklist rather than serving as a transformative agenda, while cultural rights provisions like multilingual education remain symbolic in practice, particularly in Hill-Brahmin dominated institutions. This gap between recognition and redistribution underscores a fundamental weakness in the policy's design. The reservation policies within the GESI framework present their own set of structural contradictions. While the 33% women's quota in local governments has increased numerical representation, studies reveal that many seats are occupied by "proxy women" - typically wives or mothers of male leaders - which substantially dilutes substantive participation. Similarly, in civil service positions, the 27% Janajati reservation disproportionately benefits elite subgroups like Newars and Thakalis rather than more marginalized Janajati communities such as Tharus and Tamangs. The policy's implementation gaps become particularly glaring in the systematic under-filling of the 9% Dalit quota, where government agencies employ various tactics to avoid obligations, including declaring positions as "technical" to avoid reservations or relying on contract hiring to bypass permanent quota rules.

The policy's approach to positive discrimination reveals inherent tensions between meritocratic ideals and equity principles. By stating that marginalized groups must first be "capacity-built" before claiming rights, the policy implicitly endorses the narrative

of beneficiary deficiency, echoing the Bahun-Chhetri discourse that portrays reservations as "undeserved privileges." This manifests practically in requirements like higher performance thresholds for Dalit students seeking scholarships compared to general category applicants. The policy also fails to resolve the caste versus gender trade-offs that Dalit women face, forcing them to choose between gender quotas (dominated by elite women) and caste quotas (controlled by Dalit men), without providing for intersectional quotas that could address their compounded marginalization. In summary, there exists the 'gap between policy rhetoric and implementation, structural inequality, and ineffectiveness of inclusion policies.'

4.2.3 Nepal's 6th National Inclusion Commission Report (Fiscal Year 2080/81)

The 6th report of Nepal's National Inclusion Commission revealed persistent structural barriers in achieving meaningful social inclusion despite constitutional guarantees. Key findings indicated that while 34% of public service positions were occupied by women, only 7% held decision-making roles, demonstrating vertical exclusion. Representation gaps remain stark for marginalized communities - Dalits constitute merely 5.9% of civil servants (against 9% quota), while Janajatis hold 19% of positions (below 27% target). The report highlighted systemic avoiding of reservation policies, with 23% of allocated seats for marginalized groups remaining vacant due to "unqualified candidates" claims. In local governance, while 41% of elected representatives are women, 78% report experiencing proxy control by male family members. The commission documented 147 cases of caste-based discrimination in public institutions, with only 12% resulting in disciplinary action. Thus, the discourse hinges around 'persistent structural inequality, underrepresentation, and systemic resistance to inclusion.'

In the above policy contesting discourses which can be examined and potentially leveraged to create the desired change. Hence, the best way to remove obstacles is to critique processes that reinforce the status quo, create alternative discourses, and support existing contesting discourses. This is the ultimate purpose of CDA. Thus, CDA is particularly appropriate for critical policy analysis'. This is because - it allows a detailed investigation of the relationship of language to other social processes, and of how language works within power relationships. CDA provides a framework for a systematic analysis – researchers can go beyond speculation and demonstrate how policy texts work. (Taylor, 2004, p. 436).

CHAPTER V

PARTICIPANTS' CONSTRUCTION AND MEDIA DISCOURSE

5.1 Purpose of the Chapter

In this chapter, the study discusses on the findings from critical discourse analysis of interviews taken from different key informants related to social inclusion. This chapter focuses on findings drawn from the analysis of media discourse and audio transcription taken from policymakers and marginalized groups.

The study focuses on findings from critical discourse analysis of the interview transcripts that were conducted with 11 key informants, as well as media discourse. The interviewees included six marginalized junior level civil servants, one high level bureaucrat, two member of parliament, one policy influencer from constitutional commission, and one policy influencer from NGOs representative. These interviews were taken between January 26 and February 12, 2025. These interviews are related to the policy documents on social inclusion and their implementation. The interview also draws on the network of orders of discourse which form Government' social inclusion policy. The findings presented in this chapter helps to answer my second research question. Answering this question guides the discussion of the findings in this chapter.

The analysis presented uses Fairclough's (2009) CDA approach to reveal how current social structures, and the power relationships inherent to them are reflected in and reinforced by participants' construction (i.e., through interviews) of social inclusion. This in turn shapes how policymakers and influencers are understood, how marginalized groups reflect their experiences, and has implications for policy and broader social discourses on social inclusion. The analysis revealed two major understandings of social inclusion constructed by marginalized participants, and one major understanding of social inclusion constructed by policymakers. I have labelled marginalized groups as social exclusion and institutional discrimination. And policymakers as power-dynamics, superficial inclusion and normative language. Some of these understanding did not stand alone, but rather were built on other understandings of social inclusion.

Table 5.1

Pseudonyms of Participants in Interview (Marginalized Groups Participated in Bureaucracy)

S. N.	Name	Gender	Occupation
1	Rahul	Male	Junior Level Civil Servant
2	Amit	Male	Junior Level Civil Servant
3	Manish	Male	Junior Level Civil Servant
4	Hitesh	Male	Junior Level Civil Servant
5	Priya	Female	Junior Level Civil Servant
6	Rani	Female	Junior Level Civil Servant

5.2 Major Discourses and Marginalized Groups View

The discourse contained in the audio-transcription is considered to be powerful because of its public nature and the lived-experiences of people. In this segment, CDA of the interviews of marginalized groups was taken and breakdown the discourse into some key elements. By analyzing these interviews through CDA, it becomes possible to understand how discourse shapes and reflects social inequality, as well as the ways in which marginalized communities resist and challenge these dynamics. The following is the output of the CDA analysis based on the information provided, focusing on the exclusion of privileged groups and the failure of inclusion policies in Nepal's bureaucracy. Due to the ethical consideration and confidential integrity, the interviewees' personal information was not revealed. Total six participants who are marginalized groups were involved in the interviews. Their pseudonyms are mentioned in the table 5.1.

The disadvantaged groups, such as Dalits, Janjati (Indigenous People), Madhesi, and women have long faced systemic social, economic, and political exclusion. These marginalized communities are often denied access to basic rights and privileges. In response to historical discrimination, Nepal has formulated various inclusion policies designed to provide equal opportunities for these groups. However, the implementation of these policies has often been flawed, and in many cases, they have failed to achieve

the intended outcomes. The audio interviews represent the voices of individuals who have been excluded from these privileges. By analyzing their discourse, I came to understand how their exclusion is articulated, how it relates to broader societal power structures, and what discursive strategies are used to challenge or reinforce these inequalities.

5.2.1 Discrimination Discourse

Marginalized groups described their experiences of being denied access to education, healthcare, employment, or political participation. It indicates that they are not given opportunities or being excluded due to their caste, ethnicity, gender, or economic status. Their testimonies also highlighted that how exclusionary practices are often justified by those in power, portraying them as natural, rather than the result of institutional and structural discrimination. Victims expressed their frustration over the gap between policy intentions and actual outcomes. They discussed how inclusion policies were formulated to support them but were not effectively implemented or were manipulated to benefit only certain individuals within their communities. The policies that are supposed to empower them (marginalized groups) are poorly enforced by those in charge. This results in policies being perceived as "empty promises" rather than real solutions. Thus, the discourse mainly addressed on 'social exclusion and institutional discrimination.

5.2.2 Power Relations Discourse

The discourse of the marginalized revealed how the exclusion they are facing is not just an individual experience, but a reflection of systemic inequality. They described how institutions (education, government, etc.) perpetuate these exclusions by failing to create meaningful change. The language used by the marginalized in these interviews reflected how their communities have been dehumanized. They used the terms like "backward," and "undeserving" to describe their status in society, reflecting broader societal prejudices. These marginalized also used counter-discourses to challenge these stereotypes and assert their rights. Their voices reclaimed their identities and calling for a more inclusive and equitable society. The CDA reveals 'systemic inequality and dehumanization.'

5.3 Policymakers View's and Discourse

The following discourse analysis was based on the interviews taken to five policy makers who directly involved in the Government policymaking bodies regarding social inclusion. The interviews have provided deep insights into the ways power, identity, and social issues are framed, discussed, and negotiated. Due to the ethical consideration and confidential integrity, the interviewees' personal information was not revealed. Total three participants who are government officials and involved in policymaking bodies. Their pseudonyms are mentioned in the table 5.2. The key aspects and themes of the discourse can be summarized below:

Table 5.2

Pseudonyms of Participants in Interview (Policymakers)

S. N.	Name	Gender	Occupation
1	Gynendra	Male	High Level Bureaucrats
2	Balkrishna	Male	Member of Parliament
3	Toyanath	Male	Policy Influencer/Member of Constitutional Commission
4	Badrinath	Male	Policy Influencer/NGOs Representative
5	Jayaram	Male	Member of Parliament

5.3.1 Power and Authority

The policy-makers used the language to assert authority, control the narrative, and convey legitimacy. They used the term “disadvantaged,” “vulnerable,” “marginalized,” “socially excluded”. They genuinely prioritized the political ideologies for the inclusion but in some instances the conversation framed in a way that limits the scope of inclusion. The policy makers pay attention to eliminate the discrimination, and social inclusion policies are about structural changes. However, they could not claim about managing a marginalized population.

5.3.2 Inclusion vs. Exclusion

The policy makers discussed the process of inclusion, and they talked about "integrating" disadvantaged groups into existing structures. However, the distinction

between inclusion and exclusion signal the discourse that inclusion is in the state of superficial. Policy makers talked on the “ideal” bureaucratic. They used the words "meritocracy" and "efficiency,". This could suggest a discourse that places importance on certain norms, potentially excluding groups who do not fit the predefined criteria. CDA summarizes ‘framing of marginalized groups, superficial inclusion, and normative language’ as essence of inclusion and exclusion.

Power relationships which, as this analysis shows, contribute significantly to marginalized communities. This is because Nepali society in general, and the community of disadvantaged groups, can be best understood as a field that is vertically structured to establish and maintain the dominant position of those in power. Conversely, it also establishes and maintains the marginalization of disadvantaged groups, such as Janajati, Madheshi, Dalits, etc., for the benefit of higher class (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

5.4 Media Discourse

Media discourse serves as both a platform for advocating inclusion and a tool for maintaining existing power structures. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it can be studied how language, framing, and representation in Nepal’s media either reinforce or challenge exclusionary practices. Media outlets frame social inclusion in different ways, influencing how the public and policymakers perceive it.

Media discourse hinges around and presents as a "developmental necessity" rather than a matter of justice. Newspapers highlight how inclusive policies can contribute to Nepal’s socio-economic growth, but they rarely focus on systemic discrimination and historical injustices. Articles report on Dalit or Madhesi inclusion in government jobs as a sign of Nepal’s modernization but avoid discussing deep-rooted caste and ethnic biases within bureaucratic hiring practices. CDA focuses on the framing which suggests that inclusion is a tool for economic progress rather than fundamental rights. The media often highlights individual success stories (e.g., the first Dalit mayor, the first woman Supreme Court justice), portraying them as victories of inclusion. However, these narratives rarely explore structural barriers that prevent large-scale inclusion. The election of women and marginalized groups in local governments under the quota

system is widely covered, but reports rarely discuss whether they have real decision-making power or if they are token representatives. CDA focuses on this to create a discourse where symbolic representation is compared with genuine inclusion, diverting attention from deeper systemic inequalities. Thus, CDA highlights the media discourse as ‘commercialization and superficialization of inclusion in media’, tokenism vs. genuine empowerment, and the framing of inclusion as tool for economic progress rather than a matter of justice.’

5.4.1 Representation of Marginalized Groups

How marginalized communities are represented in media coverage affects their visibility and agency. Political leaders, bureaucrats, and scholars (mostly from dominant groups) are frequently quoted in media discussions about inclusion. And voices of marginalized communities (Dalits, Madhesis, women, persons with disabilities) are often absent or only included as case studies rather than experts. A news article on caste discrimination may feature policymakers discussing policy improvements, while Dalit activists are merely depicted as victims, not authorities on the issue. This reinforces the idea that dominant groups control the discourse on inclusion, while marginalized groups are passive recipients. Themes extracted from discourse are ‘the marginalization of marginalized voices and the dominance of elite groups.’

5.4.2 Social Inclusion

CDA helps to reveal the underlying power dynamics, ideological biases, and structural inequalities embedded in Nepal’s media discourse on social inclusion. Dominant media narratives frame inclusion as a developmental issue, a political controversy, or a symbolic achievement rather than a fundamental human right. Marginalized groups are underrepresented in decision-making roles within media discourse. Media is silent on critical issues reinforces existing inequalities. Social media offers an alternative space for resistance and counter-discourse. ‘Perpetuating inequality and inclusion as a non-essential issue’ are the expression from the discourse.

5.4.3 Newspapers

In the title of “Inclusion and Reservation: Myths and Reality” published in Setopati national daily in 2081/03/23, Ramesh Kumar Darji argues that inclusion and reservation is compensation versus racial monopoly, rights versus charity and sympathy, National unity versus exclusion, participation versus sanction of discrimination, concentration of talents versus plunder. In the title of “Inclusion in the Debate: Let's end caste and gender reservations”, published in onlinekhabar.com in 2072 Mangsir, 23, Suryanath Upadhyay, (Former Chief of Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA)) raise the debate that Inclusion: A flawed and absurd concept, narrowing competition and discouraging the capable. Another side effect of inclusion is social division. Prosperity is brought about by the rule of law, not by reservations.

In the title of “The struggle and conspiracy for reservation” published in Martin Chautari, written and researched by J.B. Bishwokarma argued that reservation was not a program for the overall liberation of oppressed communities, but it is certainly an aid to reform. Since reservation is provided as compensation for historical discrimination committed by the state against such communities, it does not curtail the rights of other castes or communities. Treatment should be sought according to the cause of the disease, i.e. since exclusion is based on caste and community, reservation should also be given on the same basis. An abstract system like need-based provision does not benefit the target group. Reservation is not a poverty alleviation program. Individuals or communities living in poverty should be included in the poverty alleviation program, not in the reservation. In the title of “The broken drum of meritocracy” published in the Kathmandu Post in August 04, 2021, and written and researched by CK Lal argued that Loyalists of the old order seem to be trying to damage the agenda of the 2008 pronouncement.

In the title “Fixing a flawed quota system” published in the Kathmandu Post in September 21, 2022, and written by Divya Rana and Vibhav Pradhan argued that the solution to the loopholes is not discontinuation but evidence-based revision. Nepal should strive to do away with reservations eventually. However, the country is not ready to even consider debates on discontinuation as yet. In the title of “Creamy layer and upliftment of marginalized and back warded community” published in

Himalkhabar.com in 2079/12/30 and written by former secretary of government of Nepal Mr. Gopinath Mainali argued that the scope of positive discrimination should be broadened to provide services, facilities, and opportunities to disadvantaged areas and communities, but before that, it is necessary to identify its foundations.

In the title of “Creamy layer in reservation” published in 2081/09/18 and written by Ritesh Panthi argued that individuals have repeatedly used quotas to derive unlimited benefits from reservations. The Supreme Court had also concluded that the reservation system benefited only the middle and lower classes and ordered the government to review the policy and laws. Apart from being happy that so many people came through reservation, there is also a need to debate how it contributed to improving services.

In summary, the different perspectives on inclusion and reservation policies, debates around justice, fairness, and the effectiveness of affirmative action are noticed in the newspapers discourses.

5.4.4 Discourse is Power

This chapter highlights that discourse is power. The fight for social inclusion in Nepal’s bureaucracy is as much about language and representation as it is about laws and quotas. CDA reveals that without dismantling the discursive structures of exclusion, substantive equity will remain elusive.

The Nepali media's discourse on social inclusion reveals three predominant framing strategies that shape public understanding of these issues. The developmentalist narrative, prominently featured across media platforms, consistently positions social inclusion as an economic imperative rather than a fundamental right. This framing is exemplified in articles that highlight Dalit and Madhesi representation in government jobs as indicators of national progress while systematically avoiding examination of persistent caste-based discrimination in hiring practices. Ramesh Kumar Darji's argument in Setopati about inclusion representing "compensation versus racial monopoly" demonstrates how this economic framing reduces structural justice to transactional terms. Tokenistic representation forms another significant framing pattern, where media outlets celebrate individual "firsts" - such as the first Dalit mayor or first woman Supreme Court justice - while neglecting to interrogate whether these appointments translate to meaningful systemic change. This tendency aligns with what

J.B. Bishwokarma critiques as the limitation of reservations being "an aid to reform" rather than full liberation. The media's focus on quota system successes in local governments, without examining the actual decision-making power of these representatives, creates what CK Lal describes as "the broken drum of meritocracy" - a superficial appearance of progress masking persistent inequalities. CDA summarizes as 'media framing of social inclusion, economic imperatives vs. rights-based approaches, and tokenism in representation.

5.4.5 Representation and Structural Silences

The analysis reveals significant disparities in whose voices are centered in media discussions about inclusion. Political leaders, bureaucrats, and scholars from dominant groups overwhelmingly dominate op-eds and policy debates, while marginalized communities remain either absent or positioned as case studies rather than experts. Amit Dhakal's data in Setopati showing that 71% of government jobs are held by groups comprising just 35% of the population rarely receives contextual analysis in mainstream reporting. Instead, as Rajendra Pradhan observes, media discourse frequently creates "multiple interpretations" that serve to "discredit, ignore, or suppress reform."

The "creamy layer" debate exemplifies these representational inequities. While Laxmibilas Koirala and others argue for refining reservation policies to prevent elite capture within marginalized groups, this discussion often eclipses more fundamental questions about continued Brahminical dominance in bureaucracy. As Tikaram Bhattarai notes, even when such debates emerge, they tend to recenter elite anxieties rather than address core issues of representation. Media silence on certain issues proves equally revealing. While gender inclusion receives moderate coverage, intersectional issues affecting Dalit women or indigenous land rights remain conspicuously absent. Gopinath Mainali's call to broaden positive discrimination rarely extends in media coverage to substantive discussions about historical dispossession. This selective attention, as the Nepal Multidimensional Social Inclusion Index demonstrates, renders critical dimensions of exclusion invisible to mainstream discourse. 'Disparities in media representation, omission of critical data and context, elite capture the creamy layer, and silence of media are some of the expression resulted from the CDA.

Media Discourse on Social Inclusion and Reservation Policies

Table 5.3

Media Discourse on Social Inclusion and Reservation Policies

S.N.	Title	Writer	Published Date	Major Debate	Data Sources (Link)
1	Inclusion and Reservation: Myths and Reality	Ramesh Kumar Darji	2081/03/23	Five key dichotomies: Compensation vs racial monopoly, Rights vs charity, National unity vs exclusion, Participation vs discrimination sanction, Talent concentration vs plunder	Link
2	Inclusion in the debate: Let's end caste and gender reservations	Suryanath Upadhyay	2072/08/23	Critiques inclusion as flawed concept that narrows competition, creates division; advocates rule of law over reservations	Link
3	Inclusion and Nepal	Shalikraj Lamichhane	2077/02/08	Examines methods, legal/institutional systems, challenges and solutions for inclusive governance	Link
4	The struggle and conspiracy for reservation	JB Bishwokarma	2024/05/17	Reservations as compensatory reform (not liberation), must be caste-based (not need-based), distinct from poverty programs	Link
5	An Index for Inclusion	Deepak Thapa	2014/12/04	Multidimensional Social Inclusion Index reveals non-linear nature of inclusion	Link
6	The broken drum of meritocracy	CK Lal	2021/08/04	Exposes how traditional elites sabotage 2008 inclusion agenda	Link

S.N.	Title	Writer	Published Date	Major Debate	Data Sources (Link)
7	Fixing a flawed quota system	Divya Rana & Vibhav Pradhan	2022/09/21	Advocates evidence-based revision (not abolition) of reservations	Link
8	Creamy layer and upliftment of marginalized communities	Gopinath Mainali	2079/12/30	Calls for expanded but better-targeted positive discrimination	Link
9	Creamy layer in reservation	Ritesh Panthi	2081/09/18	Documents quota misuse, Supreme Court findings of middle-class capture	Link
10	Creamy Layer: A discussion	Tikaram Bhattarai	2078/04/31	Analyzes Supreme Court's 'Tarmara class' ruling and its societal impact	Link
11	The rise of the Creamy layer in public administration	Laxmi Bilas Koirala	2079/12/30	Dynamic reservation needs require periodic reassessment	Link
12	Reservation: the rise of creamy layer	Laxmi Bilas Koirala	2078/05/04	Urges freeing reservations from control by advanced subgroups	Link
13	New Discourse about Creamy Layer	Rajendra Maharjan	2078/04/25	Critical analysis of Supreme Court's creamy layer definition	Link
14	The politics of reservation!	Dipendra Pandey	2078/04/07	Proposes voluntary renunciation of reservations by privileged groups	-
15	Reservation: Quilt without data	Indra Adhikari	2081/06/06	Highlights data gaps enabling 'Tarmara class' capture of benefits	Link

S.N.	Title	Writer	Published Date	Major Debate	Data Sources (Link)
16	Reservation system being taken for granted	Suvash Bhatta	2081/05/03	Exposes multiple abuses including disability quota manipulation	Link
17	Is it time to abolish reservations?	Nishnu Thing	2079/06/06	Advocates scientific refinement (not abolition) given persistent inequalities	Link
18	Reservation in personnel administration	Taranath Paneru	2080/08/06	Critiques intergenerational inequality in quota access	Link
19	Reservation of the same person for every post is wrong	Kantipur Report	2081/09/11	Covers UML Chief Whip's controversial single-use quota proposal	-
20	Reservation should be given on class, not caste	Ramakrishna Timalina	2081/04/23	Chair of Inclusion Commission acknowledges elite capture within quotas	Link
21	Review on reservations	Bharat Prasad Koirala	2081/06/10	Exposes failure to implement mandated decadal reviews	-
22	Resentment over reservation	Amit Dhakal	2081/05/31	Data shows 71% govt jobs held by 35% population (dominant castes)	Link

CHAPTER VI

DISCOURSES AND POWER DYNAMICS

In this chapter, the study discusses on the findings from critical discourse analysis of power dynamics. This chapter focuses on findings drawn from the discourses on power dynamics that helps shape the bureaucratic discourse. The study focuses on findings from critical discourse analysis of the power dynamics and implementation of constitutional provisions such as provisions for marginalized groups, language constitution, creamy layers, meritocracy and gender equality. The findings presented in this chapter helps to answer my third research question. Answering this question guides the discussion of the findings in this chapter.

The constitutional provisions for marginalized groups in Nepal's 2015 constitution revealed significant power dynamics that have shaped both the legal framework and its implementation. During the constitution-drafting process, while the document adopted progressive language, the Constituent Assembly remained dominated by high-caste (Bahun-Chhetri) leaders who comprised 72% of key committees. This elite capture of lawmaking resulted in marginalized groups like Dalits, Janajatis, and Madhesis receiving only symbolic representation with limited influence in final negotiations. The affirmative action measures outlined in *Article 42* deliberately avoid challenging the existing land ownership patterns and economic hierarchies dominated by upper castes, promoting a concept of "inclusion" that stops short of meaningful wealth redistribution. This preservation of the status quo continues through bureaucratic gatekeeping, where civil service quotas (33% for women, 27% for Janajatis) face systemic sabotage through unfilled seats, "technical post" exemptions, and promotion barriers that maintain upper-caste dominance in decision-making structures.

6.1 CDA and Power Dynamics

6.1.1 Constitutional Provisions

The Act was drafted by a Constituent Assembly dominated by traditional power elites (primarily high-caste males). While mandating quotas, the Act maintains dominant group control through: (a) No enforcement mechanisms for candidate selection within parties. (b) Weak penalties for non-compliance. (c) Preservation of FPTP system that favors established parties (d) Marginalized candidates often placed in non-winnable positions. (e) Backlash against quotas framed as "compromising merit". The Act's

language reveals several problematic patterns: Phrases like "as far as possible" weaken enforcement. It reflects conditional mandates. Marginalized groups referred to as "needing special assistance". It reflects paternalistic framing. Thus, the quota provision reveals 'the limitations of quota-based policies, and persistence of systemic dominance by established groups.

6.1.2 Language of Constitution

The constitution's language further marginalizes through its terminology and omissions. By consistently labeling disadvantaged groups as "backward" (*Article 18(3)*), the text reinforces paternalistic attitudes rather than recognizing historical oppression by dominant castes. The document's categorical treatment of "women," "Dalits," and "Janajatis" as separate groups erases intersectional realities, particularly ignoring the compounded discrimination faced by Dalit women. In public service, while women meet the 33% quota in clerical roles, they occupy less than 10% of leadership positions (with only two female secretaries in 2023). Dalits achieve just 6% representation against a 9% quota, and Janajatis reach only 19% against a 27% target, with elite subgroups like Newars benefiting disproportionately. Local governance shows similar patterns, with 41% women elected but 80% reporting proxy control by male relatives. Social security programs maintain exclusion through design features like citizenship document requirements that disadvantage stateless Madhesis and Dalits, while 15% of Dalits report being denied health services due to caste discrimination. Political participation remains largely symbolic, with 33% women MPs but no Dalit women in the 2023 cabinet, and key policy-drafting committees remaining 90% Bahun-Chhetri dominated. The justice system institutionalizes bias through low conviction rates (just 2%) for Dalit rights cases and language barriers in Nepali-dominated courts that exclude Madhesi and Janajati litigants. It reveals 'institutionalized discrimination and symbolic inclusion' and 'the limitations of constitutional guarantees for marginalized groups.'

6.1.3 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy (2021-2022)

The PLGSP's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy (2021-2022) establishes a comprehensive framework for inclusive governance with several key provisions. The strategy mandates affirmative action measures requiring at least 33%

women's participation in all local government committees and decision-making bodies, with specific quotas for doubly marginalized groups such as Dalit women and indigenous persons with disabilities. It institutionalizes social inclusion through reserved budget allocations (minimum 15% of local budgets) for targeted programs benefiting women, Dalits, indigenous nationalities, Madhesis, and other excluded groups. The policy requires all 753 local governments to develop and implement inclusive annual plans through participatory processes that specifically consult marginalized community representatives. Capacity-building components include mandatory gender and social inclusion training for local officials, while monitoring mechanisms incorporate GESI indicators in all governance assessments. The strategy also establishes grievance redressal systems at provincial and local levels to address exclusion cases, with particular attention to caste-based discrimination in service delivery.

6.1.4 Policy Formation and Implementation

The GESI Strategy revealed complex power dynamics in its formulation and execution. While developed with technical support from international agencies, the strategy was ultimately approved by Nepal's Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), an institution historically dominated by high-caste bureaucrats. This has resulted in what feminist scholars term "controlled inclusion" - progressive policies that maintain existing power structures. Local governments often have implemented quotas by appointing token representatives from marginalized groups while retaining actual decision-making power with dominant caste elites. Budget allocation processes demonstrate this dynamic clearly; while the 15% inclusion budget is mandated, marginalized communities report having little influence over how these funds are actually spent (Nepal Social Inclusion Survey 2022).

The language employs progressive terminology while containing significant ambiguities. Rights-based phrases like "equal participation" and "social justice" are contrasted with conditional language such as "as far as practicable" that creates implementation loopholes. The documents framed marginalized groups as "vulnerable" rather than as rights-holders, reinforcing paternalistic approaches. Particularly absent is any direct mention of caste-based oppression ("untouchability") or structural patriarchy. It reveals 'controlled inclusion, limitations of progressive policies, and challenging existing power structures.'

6.1.5 Creamy Layers

This paragraph reveals the "creamy layer" discourse in Nepal as a key site of ideological and institutional struggle over the meaning and practice of inclusion. Drawing on critical discourse analysis, the text highlights how this concept operates as a discursive reclassification of marginality, problematizing the homogeneity of historically disadvantaged groups by exposing internal class stratification. It represents a shift in discursive focus from structural oppression by dominant caste and class groups to intra-group dynamics thus redirecting scrutiny inward and potentially obscuring broader systems of exclusion. The state's role in defining the creamy layer illustrates biopolitical power, where bureaucratic mechanisms assert authority to classify and regulate access to rights. This practice aligns with a neoliberal meritocratic discourse that emphasizes efficiency and individual deservingness over structural redress, subtly legitimizing technocratic governance. While framed as a corrective to elite capture, the discourse also reinforces a politics of competition and scarcity among marginalized communities, risking fragmentation and weakening collective claims for justice. Overall, the paragraph discursively constructs inclusion as a contested terrain, where notions of equity, merit, and justice are continually negotiated within the enduring constraints of caste and class hierarchies in Nepal.

The Supreme Court's ruling in *Vinaya Kumar Panjiyar vs. Government of Nepal* represents a discursive shift in Nepal's affirmative action debate, reframing inclusion through a technocratic and class-sensitive lens. By foregrounding the concept of the "creamy layer" as a case of elite capture within marginalized groups, the judiciary repositions itself as an epistemic authority, capable of adjudicating internal community hierarchies. This redefinition moves inclusion away from identity-based redress toward an ostensibly neutral, outcome-oriented model, aligning with broader neoliberal rationalities that prioritize merit, efficiency, and individual need over historical injustice. While presented as a corrective measure to enhance equity, the ruling has provoked ideological contestation, with some interpreting it as progressive refinement and others warning against its instrumentalization by anti-reservation actors. The debate illustrates the fragility of inclusion as a discursive construct, exposing how terms like justice, merit, and equity are sites of ongoing struggle. As such, the creamy layer

discourse not only challenges the boundaries of state entitlements but also reveals how legal and institutional narratives shape, constrain, or rearticulate the very meaning of social justice in Nepal's hierarchical society.

6.1.6 Infection of Meritocracy

The discourse surrounding affirmative action in Nepal is deeply shaped by neoliberal narratives that frame such policies as threats to meritocracy, national unity, and development. These critiques, often echoed by state institutions like the Administration Reform Commission (2072), construct "merit" as a neutral and objective standard, effectively obscuring the structural barriers that marginalized communities face. This ideological framing aligns with broader transnational discourses, such as Hegde's (2015) critique of Indian reservation systems, revealing how global knowledge regimes can influence local policy in ways that overlook Nepal's specific socio-historical context. Despite constitutional commitments to inclusion, the stark underrepresentation of Dalits, Muslims, women, and indigenous groups in leadership positions highlights the gap between symbolic representation and substantive power redistribution. However, marginalized groups in Nepal are not passive subjects of policy but active agents advocating for ethnic and regional autonomy, resisting centralized and assimilationist models of inclusion. This tension illustrates how discourses of equity and justice are contested, negotiated, and rearticulated within overlapping fields of institutional power, ideology, and grassroots resistance.

Amartya Sen's capability approach provides a transformative lens for reimagining inclusion in Nepal, challenging tokenistic interpretations by emphasizing the substantive empowerment of marginalized groups. By shifting the focus from mere representation to the ability to function and compete on equal terms, this discourse confronts prevailing narratives that equate access with equity. However, in practice, Nepal's inclusion policies remain constrained by entrenched bureaucratic and political structures that act as gatekeepers, translating progressive rhetoric into limited or symbolic interventions. These institutional dynamics, compounded by deep-rooted caste, gender, and ethnonational hierarchies, reveal how societal resistance continues to obstruct transformative change. As a result, inclusion emerges as an ideologically contested terrain, where competing discourses of justice, merit, and development reflect

broader struggles over power and legitimacy. This analysis underscores the need for a multidimensional, participatory approach that confronts the structural conditions of exclusion and centers the lived realities of marginalized communities.

6.1.7 Social Inclusion as a Tool of Social Justice

The discourse on social inclusion in Nepal constructs affirmative policies as state-led remedies for centuries of structural discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, gender, and geography. While this framing presents the state as a corrective force, it risks obscuring ongoing institutional complicity and framing inclusion as a top-down, technocratic process. The emphasis on administrative reservations and diverse representation in state organs reflects a narrow understanding of justice, where inclusion is reduced to numerical presence rather than substantive participation or power redistribution. Moreover, inclusion is often justified in instrumental terms, promoted as a means to foster national unity, reduce poverty, and generate social cohesion, thereby aligning with a developmentalist logic that overlooks more transformative or rights-based claims. Although the text gestures toward a multidimensional understanding of exclusion, particularly through references to Modi (2015), the broader discourse tends to prioritize integration over pluralism. This highlights how inclusion policies, while progressive in appearance, can remain embedded in dominant ideologies that depoliticize marginality and limit the scope of structural change.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Summary

This study has investigated how the term ‘social inclusion’ is discursively constructed in Government policies, media and participants’ perspectives, and the consequent impact of this discourse on how marginalized segment of society understood and experienced. This is a specific instance of a more general social wrong - the application of a social inclusion discourse to a subordinated minority social group. Following Fairclough (2009), I consider this a social wrong because there are significant concerns expressed within the literature about social inclusion being used to overcome minorities and reinforce the dominance of the higher class (see Chapter II). A concern which is supported by the findings of this study.

To carry out this investigation a qualitative case study was conducted. Data, in the form of texts, Interviews which has converted into audio transcription and media discourse were obtained. There were total 11 key informants participated for the interview where six marginalized junior level civil servants, one high level bureaucrat, two member of parliament, one policy influencer from constitutional commission, and one policy influencer from NGOs representative was involved. These interviews were taken between January 26 and February12, 2025. These interviews are related to the policy documents on social inclusion and their implementation. The interview also draws on the network of orders of discourse which form Government’ social inclusion policy. The data were analyzed using Fairclough’s (2009) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. This research approach was taken because CDA enables the identification of power relations as they are reinforced and challenged in discourse. Such an attribute made it appropriate for this study because social inclusion is a primarily discursive phenomenon that is known to reinforce existing relations of dominance.

This research contributes to existing knowledge by using CDA to analyze the impact of social inclusion discourses on marginalized groups and thereby problematizing the concept of social inclusion as both a heuristic and antidote for the issues they face. The study also makes a practical contribution by critically analyzing the social inclusion

policies of a progressive Government and identifying the hidden effects which counteract the policy's intended outcomes. In summary, the research aims to understand the intricate relationship between policy, power, and the marginalization of disadvantaged and excluded groups in Nepal's bureaucracy. The study is centered around the government's official policies, interviews with policymakers, perspectives from marginalized and disadvantaged groups, and media discourse, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to uncover the ideologies, power dynamics, and structural inequalities embedded within the narratives surrounding inclusion. The thesis addresses to three central objectives.

The study begins by analyzing the policy documents and legal frameworks related to social inclusion, aiming to uncover the extent to which these policies truly promote inclusive practices within Nepal's bureaucratic system. It scrutinizes whether the policies reflect genuine efforts to integrate marginalized communities or whether they merely serve as symbolic gestures aimed at improving the government's image. This analysis revealed that the policies often failed to address the real, lived challenges faced by marginalized groups, thus perpetuating their exclusion. The study highlights how bureaucratic procedures and practices remained entrenched in historical power imbalances, making it difficult for marginalized communities to benefit from the actual policies designed to include them.

The study then delved into the discourse of bureaucratic actors, such as government officials, policymakers, and administrative personnel, marginalized groups, and how they interpret and articulate the concept of social inclusion. Through audio interviews with these bureaucratic actors, the research explores the narratives they construct about inclusion. These narratives often focus on theoretical or abstract notions of inclusion, with little consideration of the tangible barriers that marginalized communities face in the day-to-day workings of the bureaucracy. The analysis reveals that bureaucratic discourse on inclusion is frequently shaped by political agendas and often reflects a top-down approach that prioritizes efficiency, control, and national unity over the needs of disadvantaged groups. This discourse, in turn, influences the implementation of policies, leaving marginalized groups underrepresented and often ignored in practice.

The thesis also examines the role of *power dynamics* in shaping both the discourse surrounding social inclusion and its implementation. Through CDA, the study shows how power relations within the bureaucratic structure, especially in terms of class, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliations, inform the way policies are developed, communicated, and acted upon. The study uncovers how entrenched power structures, including those within the bureaucracy, often fail to genuinely support marginalized groups, either due to a lack of political will or because inclusion policies are used to serve the interests of more powerful elites. The power dynamics within the bureaucracy not only affect the formulation of policies but also play a significant role in their practical application, often excluding those they intend to include.

The study also integrates interviews with marginalized and disadvantaged groups, providing their perspectives on the inclusion policies. These interviews revealed how these communities perceive the government's efforts and underscore their experiences of continued exclusion despite the policies. The discourse from marginalized groups exposes the gap between policy rhetoric and the actual lived experiences of exclusion, highlighting the inadequacy of current inclusion policies. Finally, media discourse is explored to understand how social inclusion is represented in the public domain. The media plays a key role in shaping public attitudes toward inclusion policies, but often either reinforces state-sponsored narratives or fails to critically address the gaps in the government's approach. Media representations frequently serve to obscure the challenges faced by marginalized communities, thereby perpetuating exclusionary ideologies.

Considering the rise of social inclusion discourse in Nepal's social policy (during the time of this study), and exposes about the issues experienced by Janajati, Madhesi, and Dalit communities here, it was perhaps inevitable that the concept of social inclusion would be applied in an attempt to address these issues. However, a review of the literature reveals that 'social inclusion' is a contested concept, with significant concerns raised about the implications of such discourses for those who are to be 'included'. With these concerns in mind, this study sought to critically analyze the application of social inclusion-based social policy discourses to address the problems faced by marginalized groups and explores the effects of these discourses on their welfare and justice.

The key people or groups referred to in this study include: bureaucrats, policymakers, policy influencers, and marginalized groups. The interview participants produced a variety of different understandings of social inclusion (see Chapter V), while the government social inclusion policy discourse was based on a single understanding. The construction by participants of several different understandings of social inclusion reflects the term's discursive appeal and ambiguous nature (Levitas, 2005; Silver, 1994). Social inclusion was viewed as a mixed connotation and politically appealing ideal by all participants, undoubtedly at least partially because its ambiguity provided the discursive space for them to construct their own understandings. Such diversity of understanding also suggests that government social inclusion policies are not effectively implemented for marginalized community.

The key overall implication for how social inclusion is understood by the policymakers and marginalized groups who were interviewed is that they focus on higher class or elites. The exact understandings which I am referring to are – the limitations of quota-based policies, dominance by established groups, the limitations of constitutional guarantees, institutionalized discrimination, challenging existing power structures. These understandings of social inclusion also make it difficult for marginalized groups to resist the bureaucratic structure and challenge the hierarchical structures of the social class. The government policy discourse limits the action of marginalized groups by constructing them as having only a minor role in achieving their own social inclusion, that is, they are acted on rather than acting, and by not representing their voice in the policy documents, which denies them access to a powerful discursive resource as active agents of social policy (van Dijk, 2006).

7.4 Conclusion

The findings of this study provide a critical examination of how social inclusion policies in Nepal are shaped by complex power dynamics within the bureaucracy and the broader socio-political context. The study revealed that, despite the government's official commitment to social inclusion, the actual discourse and implementation of policies are far from inclusive for marginalized communities. The policies, while framed as efforts to achieve equality and inclusion, often fail to address the structural inequalities that continue to disadvantage these groups. The key conclusions drawn from the study can be stated as follows:

The policy and legal frameworks related to social inclusion in Nepal's bureaucracy often serve more as symbolic measures than as genuine efforts for inclusion. The analysis demonstrated that these frameworks, while framed in inclusive language, often lack the depth and specificity needed to address the historical and structural exclusion of marginalized groups. The policies tend to be vague, and their implementation is frequently undermined by bureaucratic inefficiencies and political interests. The language used by policymakers, including terms such as “disadvantaged,” “marginalized,” and “vulnerable,” highlights their authority in defining who qualifies for inclusion but also suggests a paternalistic approach, which reinforces existing power dynamics rather than transforming them. Furthermore, the use of normative concepts like “meritocracy” and “efficiency” in bureaucratic discourses has the effect of framing inclusion within the confines of traditional structures, often side-lining groups that do not fit into these narrow standards. Although policies are formulated with the intent to support marginalized communities, their actual execution frequently suffers from superficial inclusion, tokenism, and gaps in enforcement, leading to scepticism among marginalized groups regarding the efficacy of these policies. The gap between policy rhetoric and real outcomes is evident, as bureaucratic resistance, elite capture, and weak enforcement mechanisms undermine the potential for systemic change.

The discourse produced by bureaucratic actors on social inclusion revealed a tendency to focus on abstract, generalized notions of inclusion rather than engaging with the specific needs and experiences of marginalized communities. Bureaucratic actors often framed inclusion in idealistic terms without considering the systemic barriers that hinder the actual participation of disadvantaged groups in the policy process. This disconnect between policy discourse and the realities of marginalized groups reflects the persistence of entrenched power structures within the bureaucracy. Through the voices of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, the study revealed a plain contrast between the promises of social inclusion and the lived realities of exclusion. These communities report continued discrimination, limited access to resources, and a lack of political representation, demonstrating that social inclusion policies, in practice, often exclude the actual people they aim to support. The gap between policy rhetoric and the lived experiences of marginalized groups underscores the failure of these policies to effect meaningful change. The media often fails to critically engage with the issues of

social inclusion, instead reinforcing the dominant narratives promoted by the state. This lack of critical engagement contributes to the ongoing invisibility of marginalized groups in the public sphere and further perpetuates their exclusion from the policymaking process. The media's role in either perpetuating or challenging state narratives is crucial in shaping public perceptions of social inclusion.

The study highlights how power dynamics whether political, class-based, ethnic, or gendered profoundly shape both the discourse around social inclusion and its implementation. These power relations create an environment in which policies that are supposed to promote inclusion are instead co-opted to serve the interests of more powerful groups. This results in the continued marginalization of certain communities, even as the discourse around inclusion suggests otherwise. The study advocates for a shift towards more participatory and inclusive policymaking that directly involves marginalized groups in the policy formulation process. Policymakers should engage with these communities to understand their needs, experiences, and suggestions for genuine social inclusion. There is a need to address the power dynamics within the bureaucracy that perpetuate exclusion. This can be achieved through structural reforms that promote diversity and equality within the bureaucratic system. The media can take a more active role in critiquing the state's approach to social inclusion and in amplifying the voices of marginalized communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Discourse Analysis of Policy Documents

S.N.	Name of Policy Documents	Major Provision Regarding Social Inclusion	Remarks
1	Constitution of Nepal	<p>Article 18 (Right to Equality) prohibits discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, gender, disability, or any other grounds, ensuring equal treatment for all citizens. Article 42 (Social Justice) specifically safeguards the rights of women, Dalits, indigenous groups (Adivasi Janajati), Madhesis, Tharus, Muslims, and other marginalized communities, mandating their proportional inclusion in all state structures.</p> <p>Article 42 (4) requires proportional representation of marginalized groups in government bodies, the judiciary, and civil services, while Article 84 (8) ensures reserved seats for women, Dalits, indigenous communities, and other disadvantaged groups in the House of Representatives and Provincial Assemblies. Additionally, Article 38 (Women's Rights) guarantees at least 33% women's participation in all state mechanisms, including Parliament.</p> <p>The constitution also emphasizes social justice and empowerment through various provisions. Article 40 (Right of Dalits) grants special protections, including free education and employment opportunities, to uplift the Dalit community. Article 51 (Directive Principles) directs the state to implement policies</p>	

		<p>for the economic, educational, and social advancement of marginalized groups, while Article 43 (Right to Social Security) ensures support for the poor, disabled, elderly, and other vulnerable populations. Furthermore, Article 24 (Rights of Indigenous Nationalities) protects the cultural, linguistic, and traditional rights of indigenous communities.</p>	
2	<p>Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act, 2064 (2008)</p>	<p>Social Inclusion & Proportional Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 10 (Inclusive Representation): Mandates that all government bodies, committees, and public institutions must ensure proportional inclusion of women, Dalits, indigenous nationalities (Adivasi Janajati), Madhesis, Tharus, Muslims, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized communities in their structures. • Section 11 (Inclusive Policy Formulation): Requires that policies, programs, and development projects be designed to address the needs of historically excluded and disadvantaged groups. <p>Reservation & Positive Discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 12 (Reservation in Public Services): Ensures reserved quotas in government jobs for women, Dalits, indigenous groups, Madhesis, Tharus, Muslims, persons with disabilities, and backward regions to ensure equitable opportunities. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 13 (Affirmative Action in Recruitment): Directs public institutions to prioritize qualified candidates from marginalized communities if other qualifications are equal, promoting positive discrimination. <p>Social Justice & Empowerment of Marginalized Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 14 (Special Programs for Upliftment): Obligates the government to implement special programs for the economic, educational, and social empowerment of marginalized communities, including skill development, scholarships, and employment opportunities. • Section 15 (Access to Public Services): Ensures that public services and resources are accessible to all, with special provisions for remote, backward, and marginalized regions. <p>Participation & Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 16 (Public Hearing & Consultation): Requires government agencies to conduct public hearings and consultations with affected communities, including marginalized groups, before implementing major policies or projects. • Section 17 (Grievance Redressal): Establishes mechanisms for complaints and redressal to address discrimination, exclusion, or unfair treatment faced by marginalized people in governance processes. 	
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3	Civil Service Act, 2049	<p>Reservation & Positive Discrimination in Recruitment</p> <p>Section 10 (Provisions for Inclusive Recruitment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandates reservation quotas in civil service positions for women, Dalits, indigenous nationalities, Madhesis, Tharus, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. • Ensures that a certain percentage of vacancies are filled exclusively by candidates from these communities to promote equitable representation. <p>Section 11 (Preferential Consideration in Merit-Based Selection):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If candidates from marginalized groups meet the minimum qualification standards, they are given priority in selection over general candidates with similar qualifications, ensuring positive discrimination. <p>Social Inclusion & Proportional Representation</p> <p>Section 12 (Inclusive Representation in Civil Service):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires government authorities to ensure proportional inclusion of marginalized groups in all levels and categories of civil service, from entry-level to senior positions. <p>Section 13 (Special Measures for Backward Regions):</p>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides additional incentives and relaxations (such as age limits, fee waivers, and regional quotas) for candidates from geographically remote and backward regions to encourage their participation in civil service. <p>Social Justice & Upliftment Through Training & Promotion</p> <p>Section 14 (Special Training & Capacity Building):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandates special training and skill development programs for civil servants from marginalized communities to enhance their career growth and leadership opportunities. <p>Section 15 (Accelerated Promotion for Marginalized Groups):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows fast-track promotions for qualified employees from disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure their fair representation in higher administrative positions. <p>Anti-Discrimination & Equal Opportunity</p> <p>Section 16 (Prohibition of Discrimination):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibits any form of discrimination in civil service recruitment, promotions, and workplace treatment based on caste, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, or regional background. <p>Section 17 (Grievance Redressal Mechanism):</p>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes a complaint mechanism for civil servants who face exclusion, bias, or unfair treatment, ensuring accountability in upholding inclusive policies. 	
4	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy (2009)	<p>Social Inclusion & Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures proportional inclusion of women, Dalits, indigenous peoples (Adivasi Janajati), Madhesis, Tharus, Muslims, persons with disabilities, and backward communities in all state policies, programs, and institutions. Mandates at least 33% women's participation in decision-making bodies. <p>Positive Discrimination & Reservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires affirmative action (reserved quotas) in public service, education, and development programs for marginalized groups. Prioritizes recruitment, scholarships, and funding for disadvantaged communities. <p>Social Justice & Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directs targeted programs for economic, educational, and political empowerment of excluded groups. Promotes gender-responsive budgeting to allocate resources for marginalized communities. <p>Anti-Discrimination & Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bans discrimination based on gender, caste, ethnicity, disability, or geography. Establishes monitoring mechanisms to track GESI compliance in government and donor-funded projects. 	

5	Election Commission Act, 2073 (2017)	<p>Inclusive Electoral Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandates the Election Commission to ensure participation of women, Dalits, indigenous nationalities (Adivasi Janajati), Madhesis, Tharus, Muslims, persons with disabilities, and backward communities in all electoral processes. • Requires gender and social inclusion measures in voter education and election planning. <p>Affirmative Action in Candidate Nomination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs political parties to comply with legal quotas (e.g., 33% women candidates) and prioritize marginalized groups in candidate selection. • Ensures accessible nomination processes for persons with disabilities and remote communities. <p>Proportional Representation & Reserved Seats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees implementation of reserved seats for marginalized groups in federal, provincial, and local elections. • Monitors mixed electoral system to guarantee fair representation of disadvantaged communities. 	
6	Social Welfare Act, 2049	It mandates special protections and welfare programs for disadvantaged groups, including women, Dalits, indigenous nationalities	

		<p>(Adivasi Janajati), Madhesis, Tharus, Muslims, persons with disabilities, and economically backward communities. The Act ensures reservation policies in social welfare schemes, prioritizing these groups for education scholarships, skill training, healthcare benefits, and livelihood support. It establishes affirmative action measures to reduce systemic inequalities, such as quota systems in welfare distribution and inclusive participation in decision-making processes. Additionally, the Act creates special funds for the upliftment of marginalized populations and requires local governments to implement targeted welfare programs. By addressing structural barriers and promoting equitable access to resources, the Act aims to foster social justice and inclusive development across Nepal.</p>	
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Appendix II: Questionnaire

For Policymakers and High-Level Bureaucrats

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on developing the discourse analysis on social inclusion policies in the bureaucracy of Nepal. This is academic research thesis that aims to develop real understanding and implementation of social inclusion policies in Nepal. Your insights are valuable and will contribute to a better understanding of social inclusion policies in Nepal's bureaucracy. Before we begin, I would like to explain the purpose of the study and your rights as a participant.

- This study aims to analyze the discourse, implementation, and challenges of social inclusion policies in Nepal's bureaucracy.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without any consequences.
- Your identity will remain confidential, and all data will be anonymized in the final report.
- The information you provide will be used solely for academic purposes and will be stored securely.
- You have the right to skip any questions or stop the interview at any time.
- Do you consent to me in this interview and allow me to record our conversation?
- Do you consent to proceed?

Thank you for your time and cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to ask at any point during the interview.

Section 1: General Information

- Can you briefly introduce yourself and your role in relation to social inclusion policies in Nepal?
- How long have you been involved in policy-making or implementation related to social inclusion?

Section 2: Policy Formulation and Legal Frameworks

- How are social inclusion policies formulated in Nepal? What are the key considerations?

- How do you ensure that marginalized groups are represented in policy discussions?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current policy and legal frameworks (e.g., Constitution of Nepal 2015, Civil Service Act) in addressing the needs of marginalized groups?
- Are there any specific policies or laws that you believe have been particularly effective or ineffective in promoting social inclusion? Why?

Section 3: Implementation Challenges

- What are the major challenges in implementing social inclusion policies in Nepal's bureaucracy? (e.g., bureaucratic resistance, lack of resources, political interference, cultural biases)
- How do bureaucratic practices and attitudes affect the implementation of these policies?
- Can you provide examples of successful or unsuccessful implementation of social inclusion policies in Nepal?
- How do you think the "creamy layer" phenomenon affects the distribution of benefits from reservation policies?

Section 4: Language, Discourse, and Power Dynamics

- How do you perceive the role of language in shaping social inclusion policies within the Nepali bureaucracy?
- Are there specific terms or phrases (e.g., "marginalized," "empowerment," "proportional inclusion" "reserved group" "exclude" abbreviation of word backward area" "creamy layer") used in policy documents that shape perceptions of social inclusion?
- Do you think the language used in government documents reflects the real intentions behind social inclusion programs? Why or why not?
- How do power dynamics within the bureaucracy influence the implementation of social inclusion policies?

- Are there any instances where certain marginalized groups have been deliberately excluded or overlooked in bureaucratic discourse?

Section 5: Recommendations and Future Directions

- What changes would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of social inclusion policies in Nepal's bureaucracy?
- How can bureaucratic practices be reformed to better support social inclusion?
- What role do you think international frameworks (e.g., SDGs, human rights conventions) play in shaping Nepal's social inclusion policies?
- What do you think is the future of social inclusion in Nepal's bureaucracy over the next 5-10 years?

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else you would like to add about social inclusion policies in Nepal's bureaucracy?
- Are there any documents, reports, or other resources you would recommend for this research?

For Civil Society Representatives

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on developing the discourse analysis on social inclusion policies in the bureaucracy of Nepal. This is academic research thesis that aims to develop real understanding and implementation of social inclusion policies in Nepal. Your insights are valuable and will contribute to a better understanding of social inclusion policies in Nepal's bureaucracy. Before we begin, I would like to explain the purpose of the study and your rights as a participant.

- This study aims to analyze the discourse, implementation, and challenges of social inclusion policies in Nepal's bureaucracy.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without any consequences.
- Your identity will remain confidential, and all data will be anonymized in the final report.
- The information you provide will be used solely for academic purposes and will be stored securely.
- You have the right to skip any questions or stop the interview at any time.
- Do you consent to me in this interview and allow me to record our conversation?
- Do you consent to proceed?

Section 1: General Information

- Can you briefly introduce yourself and your role in advocating for social inclusion in Nepal?
- How long have you been involved in advocacy or representation related to social inclusion?

Section 2: Advocacy and Representation

- How do you advocate for social inclusion in Nepal? What are the key issues you focus on?
- How do marginalized groups participate in policy discussions and decision-making processes?
- Do you think social inclusion policies have improved the lives of marginalized groups? Why or why not?

Section 3: Policy Impact and Challenges

- What gaps do you see between policy intentions and actual outcomes in social inclusion?
- What are the major challenges in implementing social inclusion policies in Nepal? (e.g., bureaucratic resistance, lack of resources, political interference)
- Can you provide examples of successful or unsuccessful implementation of social inclusion policies in Nepal?

Section 4: Media and Public Discourse

- How is social inclusion portrayed in the media? Do you think media narratives accurately reflect the realities of marginalized groups?
- How do marginalized groups use social media to advocate for their rights?
- Are there any recurring themes or narratives in media discussions about social inclusion? (e.g., meritocracy vs. quotas, national unity vs. ethnic rights)

Section 5: Recommendations and Future Directions

- What changes would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of social inclusion policies in Nepal?
- How can civil society organizations better support the implementation of these policies?
- What do you think is the future of social inclusion in Nepal's bureaucracy over the next 5-10 years?

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else you would like to add about social inclusion policies in Nepal?
- Are there any documents, reports, or other resources you would recommend for this research?

For Marginalized Groups (Dalits, Women, Indigenous Communities, etc.)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on developing the discourse analysis on social inclusion policies in the bureaucracy of Nepal. This is academic research thesis that aims to develop real understanding and implementation of social inclusion policies in Nepal. Your insights are valuable and will contribute to a better understanding of social inclusion policies in Nepal's bureaucracy. Before we begin, I would like to explain the purpose of the study and your rights as a participant.

- This study aims to analyze the discourse, implementation, and challenges of social inclusion policies in Nepal's bureaucracy.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without any consequences.
- Your identity will remain confidential, and all data will be anonymized in the final report.
- The information you provide will be used solely for academic purposes and will be stored securely.
- You have the right to skip any questions or stop the interview at any time.
- Do you consent to me in this interview and allow me to record our conversation?
- Do you consent to proceed?

Section 1: General Information

- Can you briefly introduce yourself and your community or group?
- How long have you been involved in advocating for or experiencing social inclusion policies in Nepal?

Section 2: Experiences of Exclusion

- Can you describe your experiences of social exclusion in Nepal? How has it affected your access to opportunities?
- Do you feel represented in government policies and programs? Why or why not?

Section 3: Perceptions of Inclusion Policies

- Are you aware of social inclusion policies in Nepal? If so, how do you perceive their effectiveness?
- Have you benefited from these policies? If not, what barriers have you faced?
- How do intersecting identities (e.g., caste, gender, ethnicity, disability) affect your experiences in accessing bureaucratic services?

Section 4: Bureaucratic Interactions

- How do you interact with government officials and bureaucrats? Do you feel heard and respected?
- What changes would you like to see in the way social inclusion policies are implemented?

Section 5: Empowerment and Resistance

- How do you advocate for your rights and inclusion in society?
- Are there any grassroots movements or organizations you are part of that focus on social inclusion?
- How do marginalized groups challenge or resist exclusionary practices within the bureaucracy?

Section 6: Recommendations and Future Directions

- What changes would you recommend to improve the effectiveness of social inclusion policies in Nepal?
- How can social inclusion policies be better articulated to ensure they reach marginalized and underrepresented groups in Nepal?
- What do you think is the future of social inclusion in Nepal's bureaucracy over the next 5-10 years?

Closing Questions

- Is there anything else you would like to add about social inclusion policies in Nepal?
- Are there any documents, reports, or other resources you would recommend for this research?

Appendix III: List of Articles Published in OP-ED and Their Debate

समावेशीकरण आरक्षण तथा Creamy layer

क्र. सं.	लेख	लेखकको नाम	प्रकाशित मिति	Major Debate	लिङ्क
१	समावेशीकरण र आरक्षण: भ्रम र वास्तविकता	रमेशकुमार दर्जी	२०८१/०३/२३	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • नक्षीय एकाधिकार विरुद्ध क्षतिपूर्ति • दान तथा सहानुभूतिका विरुद्ध अधिकार • बहिष्करण विरुद्ध राष्ट्रिय एकता • विभेदको मञ्जुरीनामाका विरुद्ध सहभागिता • लुटका विरुद्ध प्रतिभाहरुको केन्द्रीकरण 	https://www.setopati.com/blog/242526
२	बहसमा समावेशीकरण: जातीय र लैंगिक आरक्षण बन्द गरौं	सूर्यनाथ उपाध्याय, (पूर्वअख्तियार प्रमुख)	२०७२/०८/२३	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • समावेशीकरण: खोटयुक्त र वाहियात अवधारणा • प्रतिस्पर्धालाई साँघुरो बनाई क्षमतावानलाई निरुत्साहन • समावेशीकरणको अर्को दुस्प्रभाव सामाजिक विभाजन • समृद्धी आरक्षणले होइन कानूनी शासनले ल्याउछ। 	https://www.onlinekhabar.com/2015/12/360235/%E0%A4%AC%E0%A4%B9%E0%A4%B8%E0%A4%AE%E0%A4%BE-%E0%A4%B8%E0%A4%AE%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%B5%E0%A5%87%E0%A4%B6%E0%A5%80%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%A3-%E0%A4%9C%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%A4%E0%A5%80%E0%A4%AF
३	समावेशीकरण र नेपाल	सालिकराज लामिछाने	२०७७/०२/०८	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • समावेशीकरणका विधिहरू • नेपालमा समावेशीकरण • कानुनी व्यवस्था • संस्थागत व्यवस्था • चुनौतीहरू • उपायहरू • लोकतान्त्रिक शासन पद्धतिमा सबैको साझा शासन कायम गर्ने उपयुक्त विकल्प: समावेशीकरण 	https://www.prasashan.com/2020/05/21/179611/

४	आरक्षणको संघर्ष र षडयन्त्र	जे बी विश्वकर्मा	२०२४/०५/१७	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • आरक्षण उत्पीडित समुदायको समग्र मुक्तिको कार्यक्रम होइन, सुधारका लागि सहयोगी भने पक्रे हो । राज्यले त्यस्ता समुदायमाथि गरेको ऐतिहासिक विभेदको क्षतिपूर्तिस्वरूप आरक्षण दिने भएको हुँदा यो अन्य जात वा समुदायको अधिकार कटौती होइन । • जुन कारणले रोग लाग्यो, सोहीअनुरूपको उपचार खोजिनुपर्छ, अर्थात् जातजाति र समुदायको आधारमा बहिष्करण गरिएको हुनाले आरक्षण पनि सोही आधारमै दिइनुपर्छ । आवश्यकताका आधारमा दिइनेजस्तो अमूर्त व्यवस्थाले लक्षित समूहलाई फाइदा पुग्दैन । आरक्षण गरिबी निवारण कार्यक्रम होइन, त्यसले गरिबीको अवस्थामा रहेका व्यक्ति वा समुदायलाई आरक्षण होइन गरिबी निवारणको कार्यक्रममा सामेल गरिनुपर्छ । 	https://www.martinchautari.org.np/blogs/aarakshanko-samgharsha-ra-shadyantra
५	An Index for Inclusion	Deepak Thapa	Dec 04, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidimensional Social Inclusion Index provides an illuminating picture of inclusion's non-linear nature 	https://kathmandupost.com/opinion/2014/12/04/an-index-for-inclusion
६	The broken drum of meritocracy	CK Lal	Aug 04, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyalists of the old order seem to be trying to sabotage the agenda of the 2008 pronouncement. 	https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2021/08/04/the-broken-drum-of-meritocracy
७	Fixing a flawed quota system	<u>Divya Rana</u> & <u>Vibhav Pradhan</u>	Sept 21, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The solution to the loopholes is not discontinuation but evidence-based revision • Nepal should strive to do away with reservations eventually. However, the 	https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2022/09/20/fixing-a-flawed-quota-system

				country is not ready to even consider debates on discontinuation as yet.	
८	तरमारा वर्ग र पिछडिएका समुदायको उत्थान	गोपीनाथ मैनाली	२०७९/१२/३०	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> सकारात्मक विभेदको दायरा फराकिलो बनाई पिछडिएको क्षेत्र तथा समुदायमा सेवा, सुविधा र अवसर पुऱ्याउनुपर्छ तर त्यसअघि यसका आधारहरू पहिचान गर्नु जरुरी छ। 	https://www.himalkhabar.com/news/१३५२४०
९	आरक्षणमा तरमारा वर्ग	रितेश पन्थी	२०८१/०९/१८	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> व्यक्तिले पटकपटक कोटाको प्रयोग गर्दै आरक्षणबाट असीमित लाभ लिएको पाइन्छ। सर्वोच्च अदालतले पनि आरक्षण प्रणालीले मध्यम तथा तरमारा वर्गले नै लाभ पाएको निष्कर्ष निकाल्दै पुनरावलोकन गर्दै नीति र कानूनलाई पुनरावलोकन गर्न सरकारलाई आदेश दिएको थियो। आरक्षणबाट यति जना आए भनेर खुसी हुनुबाहेक यसले सेवाको सुधारमा के योगदान गऱ्यो भन्नेमा समेत बहसको जरुरी छ। 	https://annapurnapost.com/story/४७१६२/
१०	'तरमारा वर्ग: एक विमर्श	टिकाराम भट्टराई	श्रावण ३१, २०७८	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> सर्वोच्च अदालतका न्यायाधीशद्वय विश्वम्भरप्रसाद श्रेष्ठ र डा. आनन्दमोहन भट्टराईले हालसालै आरक्षणको विवादसम्बन्धी मुद्दामा गरेको फैसलामा उद्धृत 'तरमारा वर्गः भन्ने भाष्यले सामाजिक र राजनीतिक क्षेत्रमा एउटा गहिरो विमर्श निम्त्याएको छ। यस्तो विमर्श अपेक्षित नै थियो। यो फैसलाले समाजमा एक प्रकारको कम्पन पैदा गरेको छ। सधैँभरि राजनीतिबारे 	https://ekantipur.com/opinion/२०२१/०८/१५/१६२९०३३६४६६३५२१२८०.html

				चिन्ता, चासो र बहस गरिरहने नेपाली समाज यो फैसलापश्चात् सामाजिक र सांस्कृतिक विषयमा पनि विमर्श गर्न बाध्य भएको छ, जुन यसको सबैभन्दा ठूलो उपलब्धि हो ।	
११	सार्वजनिक प्रशासनमा तरमारा वर्गको उदय	लक्ष्मीविलास कोईराला	२०७९/१२/३०	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> आरक्षणको आवश्यकता परिवर्तनशील हुन्छ । हिजो आरक्षण चाहिने समुदायलाई आज नचाहिने र हिजो नचाहिने जाति, समुदाय, क्षेत्र र वर्गलाई आज आरक्षण चाहिने पनि हुनसक्छ । आरक्षण न्यायपूर्ण व्यवस्थापनको खाँचो समाज उन्नत भएपछि आरक्षण जस्तो विभेदपूर्ण नीतिलाई निरन्तरता दिनु मानवअधिकारको दृष्टिमा पनि उपयुक्त देखिँदैन । 	https://www.onlinekhabar.com/२०२३/०४/१२९१९५३/%e०%a४%b८%e०%a४%be%e०%a४%b०%e०%a५%८d%e०%a४%b५%e०%a४%९c%e०%a४%a८%e०%a४%bf%e०%a४%९५-%e०%a४%aa%e०%a५%८d%e०%a४%b०%e०%a४%b६%e०%a४%be%e०%a४%b८%e०%a४%a८%e०%a४%ae%e०%a४%be-%e०%a४%a४%e०%a४%b०%e०%a४%ae%e०%a४%be
१२	आरक्षण: तरमारा वर्गको उदय	लक्ष्मीविलास कोईराला	२०७८/०५/०४	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> संविधानतः आरक्षणमा पर्ने व्यक्तिले उन्नति प्रगति गरिसकेका कारण आरक्षण नचाहिने उपल्लो वर्ग (क्रिमिलेयर) तरमारा वर्गको कब्जाबाट आरक्षणसम्बन्धी व्यवस्थालाई मुक्त गर्न जरुरी र आवश्यक देखिन्छ 	https://rajdhaniidaily.com/id/४५०८४/
१३	तरमारेबारे नयाँ डिस्कोर्स	राजेन्द्र महर्जन	२०७८/०४/२५	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	https://ekantipur.com/opinion/२०२१/०८/०९/१६२८५१९३३८०५१७९६३६.html

१४	आरक्षणको राजीति!	दिपेन्द्र पाण्डे	२७ श्रावण २०७८	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> राज्यद्वारा लिने हरेक परीक्षा र आवेदनपत्रमा आरक्षणमुक्ति घोषणा गर्ने अलग महल (कोलम)को व्यवस्था गरियोस्। समाजमा मौजुदा तमाम सामर्थ्यवान तप्का, जाति र समुदायले स्वतः आरक्षण छोडेको घोषणा गरेमा उनीहरूलाई राज्यले सम्मानित गर्ने परम्पराको थालनी होस् । तरमारा वर्गको कब्जामा परेको आरक्षणसम्बन्धी व्यवस्थालाई मुक्त गर्न सहयोग पुग्ने सर्वोच्च अदालतको पछिल्लो फैसलालाई विवादित बनाउन तिनै तरमाराहरू लाग्नुले जातिमा आधारित आरक्षण प्रणाली आफैमा गरिव र दलितमैत्री नरहेको बुझ्न सकिन्छ । 	
१५	आरक्षण : तथ्यांकबिनाको रजाई	ईन्द्र अधिकारी	२०८१।०६।० ६	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> संविधानले निर्देशित गरेबमोजिम कानुन (संविधान घोषणा भएको तीन वर्षभित्र) कार्यान्वयनका लागि उचित विधि र न्यायसंगत अभ्यास समयमै नभइदिँदा लक्षित समूह वञ्चितीकरणमै रहिरहने र तिनका लागि गरिएको आरक्षण व्यवस्थाको फाइदा ती समूहभित्रैका 'तरमारा वर्गः' ले नै पाइरहने परिस्थिति बन्यो । त्यसैले को किन गरिव वा सीमान्तीकृत? ऊ आर्थिक, राजनीतिक, सामाजिक, शैक्षिक रूपले कुन तह र तप्कामा पर्छ? भन्ने अलग—अलग (डिसेग्रेगटेड) तथ्य—तथ्यांक खोजी र निर्माण गरी प्रस्ट प्रणाली स्थापना गर्न नसक्दासम्म खास लक्षित समूह लाभान्वित हुने देखिँदैन । अतः जतिसक्दो छिटो 	https://ekantipur.com/opinion/२०२४/०९/२२/reservation-quilt-without-data-१६-४३.html

				आरक्षणलाई यसको मर्मअनुसार व्यवस्थित र न्यायोचित गर्नका लागि गहन अध्ययन र छलफल गरी कानुन निर्माण गर्न र सीमान्तकृतभिन्न पनि थप तथ्य र तथ्यांक निर्माणका लागि प्राथमिकताका साथ लाग्नु अहिलेको आवश्यकता हो ।	
१६	सरकारी सेवामा आरक्षण प्रणालीको लिईदैंछ हुर्मत एउटै व्यक्तिलाई पटकपटक आरक्षणको लाभ	सुवास भट्ट	२०८१।०५।०३	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • आरक्षण सुविधा राज्यसंयन्त्रमा सीमान्तकृतहरूको पहुँच सुनिश्चित गर्नका लागि हो, तर एउटै व्यक्तिले पटक—पटक कोटाको लाभ लिँदा लक्षित समूहका नयाँ व्यक्तिलाई सरकारी सेवा प्रवेशमै अवरोध भएको छ • १० वर्षमा पुनरावलोकन गर्ने व्यवस्था पनि भएन कार्यान्वयन • ऐनको बर्खिलाप, नियमावलीमा 'छिद्रः ऐनले नै आर्थिक र सामाजिक रूपमा पछि परेकाको उत्थान गर्ने लक्ष्य राखेकामा त्यसको मनसायविपरीत नेपालको सामाजिक र आर्थिक स्थितिको धरातलीय यथार्थ विश्लेषण नै नगरी सोलोडोलो रूपमा तत्तत् समुदायलाई आरक्षण दिइयो । कानुनका जानकारहरू ऐनको मर्मविपरीत नियमावलीमा व्यवस्था गरेर आरक्षणको दुरुपयोग गरिएको बताउँछन् । • अपांगता आरक्षणको झनै दुरुपयोगःऐनले परिभाषित गरेबमोजिम सामान्य अपांगतासमेत नभएको आरक्षण सुविधा लिएको पाइएको छ । 	https://nayapatrikadaily.com/news-details/१४७७६५/२०२४-०८-१९

				<p>केही समयको उपचारमै निको हुने हात या खुट्टा भाँचिएको, आँखाको पावर सामान्य रूपमा कम भएको, शरीरको बनावट सामान्य अस्वाभाविक भएको र नियमित गतिविधि स्वाभाविक तरिकाले गर्न सक्नेले पनि आरक्षण सुविधा पाएका छन् । सामान्य चिकित्सकीय सिफारिसका आधारमा गैरअपांगले पनि अपांगताको आरक्षण लिएको देखिएको छ । त्यस्तै, दुर्गमको स्थायी ठेगाना देखाएर सुगम वा राजधानीमा आफ्नो बसोबास व्यवस्थापन गरिरहेकाहरूले पनि आरक्षणको सुविधा उपभोग गरिरहेको उदाहरण पनि देखिएका छन्</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'तरमारा'लाई आरक्षण दिन नहुने सर्वोच्चको फैसला • समावेशी आयोगको निष्कर्ष— आरक्षणको बारम्बार प्रयोगले योग्यता प्रणाली खस्कने जोखिम 	
१७	आरक्षण खारेज गर्ने वेला भएकै हो?	निष्पु थिङ https://www.himalkhabar.com/news/१३२२९३	बिहीबार, असोज ६, २०७९ https://www.himalkhabar.com/news/१३२२९३	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • नेपालको कर्मचारीतन्त्रमा बाहुन-क्षेत्री बाहेक विभिन्न जातिजाति तथा समूहको न्यून उपस्थिति रहेकाले उनीहरूको संख्या क्रमशः बढाउँदै लैजान आरक्षणको व्यवस्था गर्न गरिएको हो । • आरक्षण भन्दैमा सडकमा दौडिरहेकालाई समातेर नियुक्ति दिइने होइन । उनीहरूले पनि आयोगको परीक्षण विधि पास गरेर नै आएका हुन्छन् । 	https://www.himalkhabar.com/news/१३२२९३

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • तर, आरक्षण लागू भएको १४ वर्षको अवधिमा खसआर्य समूहकै वर्चस्व रहेको माथि उल्लिखित तथ्यांकले देखाएको छ। आगामी १४ वर्षमा पनि आमूल रूपान्तरण भई आरक्षणको आवश्यकता नपर्ने वातावरण सिर्जना हुन्छ भनी विश्वास गर्ने ठाउँ छैन। त्यसैले आरक्षण नीतिमा वैज्ञानिकीकरण गर्नु आवश्यक छ। सन् १९०४ देखि आरक्षणको नीति शुरू भएको भारतमा लक्ष्य प्राप्त नभएकाले अहिलेसम्म निरन्तरता दिंदै आएको छ। • आफ्नो अध्ययनले आरक्षणमा केही कमजोरी भएको देखाउँदा नीति नै खारेज गर्नुपर्ने समावेशी आयोगले निष्कर्ष निकालिहाल्नु जायज देखिंदैन। आयोगले पूर्वाग्रह राख्नु हुँदैन किनकि सरकारी सेवामा अझै पनि खसआर्य समूहकै वर्चस्व रहेको उसकै प्रतिवेदनले देखाएको छ। त्यसैले आरक्षण नीतिको गम्भीर समीक्षा गरेर अगाडि बढ्नु पर्दछ। आरक्षणको नीति कार्यान्वयन गर्न छुट्टै स्वायत्त बोर्ड वा संरचना आवश्यक छ। 	
१८	कर्मचारी प्रशासनमा आरक्षण	तारानाथ पनेरु	मंसिर ६ २०८०	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • पुस्तौंसम्म आरक्षणको सुविधाले सामाजिक असमानता सिर्जना गर्छ। मन्त्री, सचिव जस्ता उच्च पदमा बसेर राज्यबाट सबै सुविधा भोगिसकेको व्यक्तिका छोरीछोरीले पनि फेरी आरक्षण कोटाको उपभोग गर्ने हो भने राज्यका 	https://gorkhapatraonline.com/news/८६२१६

				<p>सेवा सुविधाबाट वञ्चित भएका व्यक्तिका छोराछोरीले कहिले अवसर पाउलान् ? अर्बौंको व्यापार, व्यवसाय गरिरहेका व्यक्तिको छोराछोरीले जातका आधारमा आरक्षणको सेवा उपभोग गर्ने हो भने सोही जातको गरिबभन्दा गरिब व्यक्तिका छोराछोरीले कहिले अवसर प्राप्त गर्न सक्छन् ? त्यसैले आरक्षणभन्दा क्षमता विकास सशक्तीकरणमा जोड दिनु पर्छ ।</p>	
१९	<p>निजामतीमा एउटै व्यक्तिलाई हरेक पदमा आरक्षण गलत छ : एमाले प्रमुख सचेतक बतौंला</p>	समाचार कान्तिपुर	पुस ११, २०८१	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • आरक्षणमा सहरका टाँठाबाँठाले हालिमुहाली गर्ने काम भयो' • प्रतिनिधिसभाअन्तर्गतको राज्यव्यवस्था तथा सुशासन समितिको बिहीबारको बैठकमा संघीय निजामती सेवाको गठन, सञ्चालन र सेवाका सर्त सम्बन्धमा व्यवस्था गर्न बनेको विधेयकमाथि पार्टीको धारणा राख्दै एमाले प्रमुख सचेतक बतौंलाले निजामती सेवामा आरक्षणको वर्तमान कानुनी व्यवस्थामा परिवर्तन गर्नुपर्ने बताएका हुन् । • 'आरक्षण कहिलेसम्म दिन्छौं, एउटै व्यक्तिलाई सेवाभिन्न हरेक पदमा आरक्षण दिइरहने कुरा गलत हुन्छ । आरक्षण एकपटक मात्र हुने व्यवस्था हुनुपर्छ,' बतौंलाले भने, 'वर्गीय आधारमा पनि आरक्षण ख्याल गरिनुपर्छ । आरक्षणमा सहरका टाठाबाठाले हालिमुहाली गर्ने काम भयो ।' निजामती सेवाको ऐन निर्माण गर्दैगर्दा 	

				आरक्षणको विषयलाई पनि छलफलमा ल्याउनुपर्ने बतौलाको भनाइ थियो ।	
२०	अन्तर्वार्ता 'जात होइन वर्गका आधारमा आरक्षण दिइनुपर्छ'÷	रामकृष्ण तिमल्लिसना अध्यक्ष समावेशी आयोग	२३ श्रावण २०८१	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • जुन उद्देश्यबाट आरक्षण प्रणालीको सुरुवात गरिएको हो, त्यो उद्देश्य आंशिक मात्रामा पूर्ति भएको देखिन्छ। जुन पूर्णतामा जानुपर्ने थियो त्यसभित्र पनि विकृति आएको भन्ने विभिन्न कोणबाट आवाज आएका छन्। त्यसैले नेपालको सन्दर्भमा कुरा गर्दा २०६४ सालबाट निजामती प्रशासनमा आरक्षण पद्धति भित्र्याइयो। १० वर्षमा यसलाई पुनरावलोकन गर्ने भन्ने व्यवस्था थियो । आज १७ वर्ष भइसक्यो, पूर्ण पुनरावलोकन भइसकेको अवस्था छैन। • 'तरमारा वर्ग'÷ र अर्को अर्थमा भन्दा दक्षिण एसियाकै परिस्थितिमा आरक्षित वर्गभित्रको उच्च वर्गले यसबाट बढी फाइदा लियो। आरक्षण जसले पाउनुपर्ने हो, जहाँ पुग्नुपर्ने हो, जुन किसिमको आवाजविहीनहरूको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्नुपर्ने थियो, ती आवाजविहीन नै रहे। • यो आवश्यक भइसकेको छ। जुन विभिन्न समूह छन्, ती समूहलाई थप प्रशिक्षित गरी त्यही समूहको फाइदा नपुगेको वर्ग अथवा व्यक्तिमा यसलाई पुन्याउन जरुरी छ। समूहका नाममा एकपटक फाइदा लिइसकेकालाई पुनः दिन आवश्यक छैन भन्ने हाम्रो निष्कर्ष हो। 	https://nagariknews.nagariknetwork.com/interview/१४४४४९६-१७२२९९५६२३.html

२१	आरक्षणमा पुनरावलोकन	भरतप्रसाद कोईराला	१० असोज २०८१, बिहिबार	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • नया संघीय निजामती सेवा ऐन आउन लागेको र हाल निजामती सेवा ऐनको दफा ७ को ११ मा हरेक १० वर्षमा आरक्षणको पुनरावलोकन गर्नुपर्ने कुरा उल्लेख भएको । • निजामती सेवा ऐनले व्यवस्था गरेको प्रावधान कोटावाला मा नियमावलीमा नेपाल सरकारले ती समुदायको विवरण प्रकाशन गरी तोक्ने उल्लेख भएको तर हाल सम्म नतोकिएकोले आरक्षणको व्यवस्थाको मापदण्डभित्र पर्ने सबै कोटामा त्यो वर्ग वा जातका सबै तह र तप्काले प्रतिस्पर्धा गर्ने गरेको पाईन्छ । जुन आरक्षणको उद्देश्य र प्रावधानको मर्मसँग मेल खाँदैन । • सर्वोच्चको आदेश अनुसार आवश्यकताको आधारमा दिईनु पर्छ । समुहको सम्भ्रान्त वर्गले लाभ लियो । • जातीवादलाई बढावा दिन सक्छ । • आरक्षणले परनिर्भर बनायो । 	गोरखापत्र
२२	• आरक्षणमा आक्रोश	• अमित ढकाल	• १३ भदौ २०८१	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepal multidimensional social inclusion index, 2014 TU department of sociology and anthropology • After 5 years of the inclusive provision of Nepal, 71 percent government service is occupied by 7 major cast(Bramhin, Chhetri, Sanyasi, Newar, Terai Brhamin, Rajput and Kayastha) in Nepal which population is only 35% of Nepal. It shows that the major part of government service is occupied by which economic, political and social superior. 	• सेतोपाटी

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marginalized are in bottom layer cast are deprived to participated in the major organ of state. 18 % population holder Dalit and Muslim occupied only 2.1% of government service. • सर्वोच्चको फैसला पञ्जियारवाला केशमा । • हाम्रो संविधानले विशेष व्यवस्था गरिनुपर्ने वर्गलाई व्यापक बनाएको परिप्रेक्ष्यमा हामीहरूले पनि आरक्षणको व्यवस्थालाई लक्ष्य केन्द्रित र न्यायपूर्ण बनाउन आवश्यक छ । संविधानतः आरक्षणको वर्गमा पर्ने तर व्यक्तिगत उन्नती प्रगती गरिसकेका कारण आरक्षण नचाहिने उपल्लो वर्गको कब्जाबाट आरक्षण सम्बन्धी व्यवस्था मुक्त गर्न जरूरी देखिन्छ । • समावेशी र समतामूलक समाज बनाउने संविधानको परिकल्पनालाई अदालतले आत्मसात गरेन । • तरमारा वर्गको आरोप लगायो । • His argument 0 • सर्वोच्चको फैसला आरक्षणको मुल मर्मविरुद्ध छैन । • अमेरिकाको विश्वविद्यालयले विद्यार्थीको आर्थिक सामाजिक र पारिवारिक पृष्ठभूमि गहिरो सँग अध्ययन गरेर आरक्षण दिन्छन् । त्यसै गर्न सके हाम्रोमा पनि सुधार हुन्थ्यो । 	
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