



Nourish Dreams, Defeat Hunger

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Women Entrepreneurs Need Support



Modnath Dhakal

The institutions working in the areas of women's rights should also collaborate with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Supplies and the Ministry of Finance to create and implement more impactful programmes that could economically empower women.

Of the 6.66 million households, 31 per cent headed by women members of the family, and more than 51 per cent of the population are women, but only 23.8 per cent of them own a piece of land or a house. However, this achievement is the result of the impact of foreign employment and the split in the family, primarily in the districts affected by the 2015 Gorkha earthquake, where families were broken apart to claim the housing grant of Rs. 300,000 offered by the government for reconstruction of the house damaged in the tremors. Likewise, 31 women per 100 cannot read and write, while the number of males who are illiterate is 16 per 100, according to the National Census 2021.

Similarly, the Economic Census 2018 showed that about 29.8 per cent of the total 923,356 business firms run in the country were owned or managed by women. But women-run businesses earn slightly above a quarter of the business firms managed by men; female-led businesses earn an average annual profit of Rs. 343,000, which is quite modest compared to the average profit of Rs. 1.2 million of the male-led enterprises.

Since informality incidence is high among women-run firms, they are deprived of various offers, benefits, and discounts announced by the government and Nepal Rastra Bank. For example, many informal businesses couldn't obtain facilities like discounts and wave-offs on bank interest rates, refinancing, and other subsidies, as such facilities were available only to formal businesses. Many cottage and small entrepreneurs neither know about the funds and support mechanisms created by the government nor have access to them. During the recent economic slowdown, a substantial number of micro-cottages and small enterprises managed by women had to shut down temporarily or permanently, as estimated by the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI). The impact of this economic hit is not only affecting men but also women in their attempts to venture into entrepreneurship.

This reality underscores the need to promote the participation of women in business and industries, not only to economically empower women but also to create an equitable and just society.

Since women have been traditionally discriminated against on social, economic, and political fronts, positive discrimination is needed to create a more egalitarian society in terms of gender development. Since the government has adopted the policy of poverty alleviation through entrepreneurship promotion and job creation, the inclusion of women in this drive can help expedite the results and achieve the national goal. The World Trade Organisation has maintained that trade policies can affect men and women differently, with women facing higher obstacles to taking part in the global economy and trade.



Poor execution of policies

Bureaucratic hassles and dillydallying disappointed women entrepreneurs while obtaining incentives on exports from the government, as the process needs multiple days with multiple rounds of banks, customs offices, and business chambers of the Department of Industry. Owing to it, many women entrepreneurs have distanced themselves from the process of obtaining incentives.

Since many women operate small and medium enterprises, they don't directly export their products but instead do it through an exporter, which has benefited the traders as the incentives on the exports are given to the exporters, not the producers. But the government agencies have shown apathy to the issue and continue to defend themselves with incentives and policies that are not gender-exclusive but are for all. Some high officials said that there is no gender in trade, while many East Asian and African countries have devised gender-friendly trade policies for domestic and regional trade.

Government-announced funds and facilities like the Industry and Investment Promotion Fund and e-haat bazar have not come into operation even after a couple of years since their announcement. The

government, through its budget, had also announced a plan to establish a women's craft village at the Bhrikuti Exhibition Centre in Kathmandu, which couldn't materialise, while the financial support for women entrepreneurs to participate in international trade fairs has also been diminishing.

Initiatives for future

Nepal's Women, Business, and Law score of 80.6, as per the World Bank's 2023 report, suggests a relatively favourable environment. The government is developing the Micro, Cottage, and Small Industries Promotion Policy, 2080, to boost access for women, minorities, Dalits, and differently abled individuals in MCSEs. The policy includes provisions for concessional loans, capacity-building, competitiveness enhancement, and support for handicraft industries, which are likely to support women in business as well. However, this document doesn't have exclusive policies or provisions for women in business.

Meanwhile, the National Startup Enterprise Policy's progress is halted at the Ministry of Finance, affecting overall startup promotion. Ensuring legal political representation is one side, but for

promoting women's entrepreneurship, there need to be developers in finance, technical background operations, and marketing. Collaboration is key to increasing the effectiveness of women in all areas, including economic, social, and political aspects. But the idea has not been adopted by policymakers and political leaders in Nepal.

The Women Ministry and Women Commission of Nepal are more focused on violence against women and other social maladies but have poor engagement in economic activities. However, right-based institutions and mechanisms help in the protection, self-respect, and empowerment of women, which ultimately boost their confidence to start or participate in a business. The institutions working in the areas of women's rights should also collaborate with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Supplies and the Ministry of Finance to create and implement more impactful programmes that could economically empower women. Economic empowerment can enhance decision-making capability, social and political resilience, and the strength to fight for other rights.

(Dhakal is a journalist at The Rising Nepal)

Constitutional Rollercoaster Ride



Rameshwar Baral

The street had briefly hosted a lively, humorous scene. Some playful kids chased a cyclist who passionately chanted, 'Ram! Ram!' In jest, they teased his deity by chanting, 'Krishna! Krishna!' They would shout, 'Your bicycle has Krishna!' The rider promptly dumped the bike on the street and chanted 'Ram! Ram!' to lift back his ride with penance, as if his deity alone were superior. This amusing cycle of teasing and penance continued. Onlookers found it entertaining until he finally rode off.

Some individuals might find themselves in a dilemma, the constitution of the Sanatan Dharma being the reason. In fact, Ram or Krishna is the same deity, no less than the other in the unwritten constitution. Chanting any name is equally supreme. The devotee was bold and confident, as were the kids in jest. This incident is comparable to Nepal's constitutional journey as a rollercoaster ride. Nepal has cycled through a series of six constitutions over the past six decades. The land is the same, and the people are the same, but the constitution is much like a bicycle, once dumped and then picked up. Now, the constitution has its seventh version. The former six were impeached and overturned, as none had ground reality. During the change, a couple of them had seismic turbulence on the Richter scale. In a democracy, people's anger and protests often overturn the law of the land. The demise of a constitution is a hypothesis about a nation's progress.

Thus, Nepal now picks up the seventh law, known as the Constitution of Nepal. Evidently, it promises smooth and good governance for the Republican nation. Hence, the previous six were dumped like lesser deities. This one has come into effect like old shoe pairs replaced successively.

The constitution is democratic, following the practice of general elections. Representatives

come to the parliament through the processes. Voters view them as committed to working tirelessly for the nation's development and welfare. The masses feel that the leaders have experience, ideals, and vision.

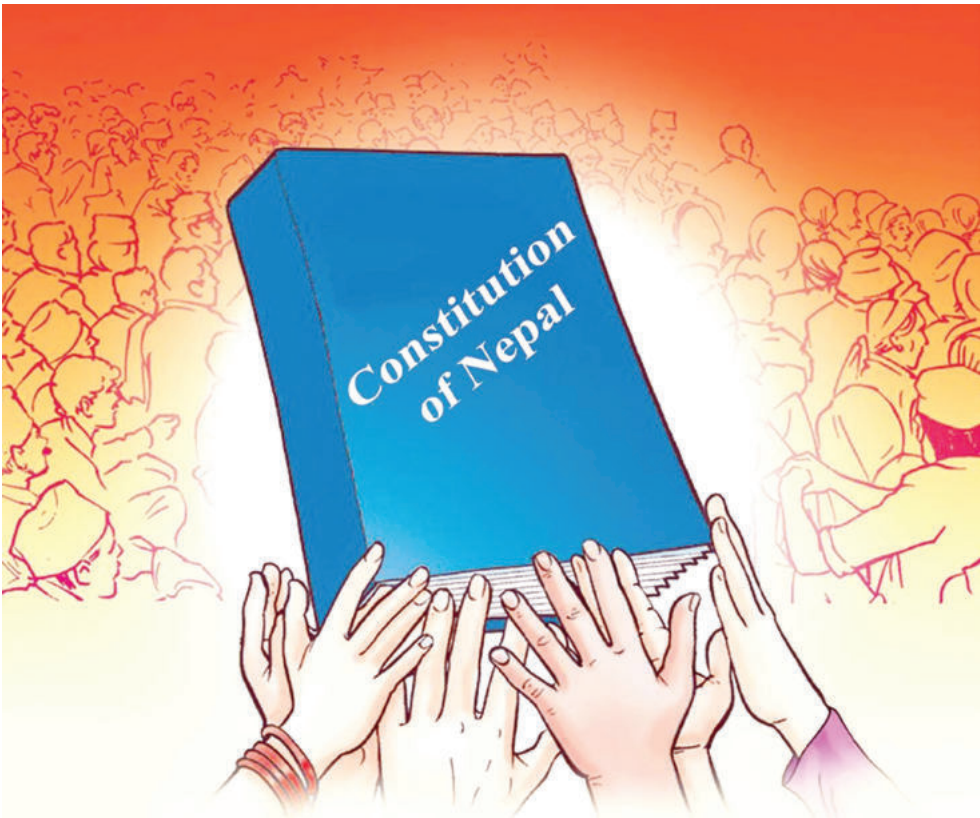
Leaders worked under earlier provisions too. They were all lesser gods, though leaders were not dumped. The current constitution now holds the leaders directly accountable.

While leaders take pride in being its architects, they are grappling with complex processes. Critics and the media spark a debate, arguing, 'The nation, landscape, and transition remain unchanged when the constitution changes successively. The same irony echoes until today, seventy years after the Ranas.' The ground reality of leaders and the constitution both prompt an open question: 'Are leaders ineffective?'

Previous constitutions, too, had the same ego. All claimed that they were not lesser but a supreme god for the nation's overall transformation. Miserably, all were disgraced with no pass score. In that sense, they faced impeachment when the current one had the claim of the least unworkable provisions and was ensured to be positive and effective. Under this practice, leaders are staggering against heavy electioneering expenses.

Nonetheless, the question remains: where is the nation, and where are the trends? An overall review of economic, social, or political contexts is just negative. A likely escape from this situation that leaders claim is, "The nations are in the phase of transition!" The catchword of transition is not new because people know a nation was in transition under all the previous constitutions. It means the transition phase continues until today!

This is a scene comparable to dumping the bike and lifting it again. If the bike is the written constitution, the unwritten part proclaims lesser deities. The unwritten world is one of virtual ethics, commitment, and vision with ground reality. Ethics is an individual leader's inner quality pointer to being on the ground with the people. In contrast, leaders have set up a different ground. So, two contrasting narratives now come into view. One is Facebook, and the other is BankBook. Facebook symbolises public comments on the present corrupt scenario. The bankbook symbolises record-breaking, disgraced corruption. Such examples are numerous, say nepotism, Bhutan refugees, gold smuggling, Ncell, etc. Now a bigger terror is devouring the nation; her frontiers have turned volatile



and vulnerable. Observers ask: How long shall expatriates and remittance workers sustain the nation's economy?

Leaders as well as the masses have the same biting echo: "The nation is off track." Viewers critically observe that the constitution and leaders have no coordination. Clearly, then, who bears the lapses and who should be impeached? Is it the bike to be dumped or its riders? When the deity the leaders are chanting is supreme, they also have to prove they should not or need not dump the bike.

Keep riding the bike, affirming that the deity they worship is supreme. In this case, the riders (who are leaders) stand questionable. Moral virtues like being clean against corruption, having a vision for the nation, and being committed are just a few examples of an unwritten constitution. If it is said that both the constitution and leaders are immune, then leaders are still its guinea pig.



Again, if the leaders say, "We're clean," they are not subject to being impeached. In that case, the constitution calls for impeachment. But leaders claim, 'we are the father of the constitution.' This conflict is unending.

In the viewers' claim, a nation's

Leaders fail, but never again does the constitution. Never hypothesise that a nation fails, as it is not like partisan gods.

transformations so far are time-given, not leader-made. In truth, no bike or its rider could have obstructed them. Transformations as such are like a burst of population, a rise in literacy, education, and awareness, and the absence of jobs. This hypothesis is against those leaders who have turned into Your Majesty against the only monarch on the throne. Therefore, two books are open against them. One is Facebook, and the other is BankBook. But they still shrink back from past ground realities.

By now, they have forgotten about themselves, like who they were before. To know who they were, they could post their photo on the wall before they were into politics. That is their vital statistic today, which displays an ultra-convenient living standard. No other photo of the unprivileged masses is required. The burst of street public is like a volcano erupting in an unwritten constitution.

Assume for a short while that the masses are not against the constitution. Is then a leader subject to being dumped? Besides this, if leaders fail to defend themselves or convince the masses, the constitution itself is the guinea pig. Neither the ruling nor opposition benches have a resolution, although both are found battling with words against each other. The media is there to update this all for the unprivileged masses.

In the party system, leaders are leaders with experience in governance, such as making the constitution, driving party workers, making sacrifices for the nation's common cause, and having the capacity to unite national forces. Desperately, no final say emerges, and all are conflict-ridden among themselves.

It's like Anton Chekhov said about a learned prisoner in his story: first catching at one spar and then at another, amidst the wreckage of the ship in the deep sea (The Bet). Leaders fail, but never again does the constitution. Never hypothesise that a nation fails, as it is not like partisan gods. The show continues, though not logically.

(The writer is a retired lecturer of English.)

Nourish Dreams, Defeat Hunger



Saroj Acharya

When the lunch bell rings, you can hear the blissful cries of children with big smiles on their faces, eagerly waiting in line to receive their piping hot meals. Tummies filled with locally palatable food, their personalities shine with beautiful smiles, and their joyous chit chat will soothe your soul.

The dedicated kitchen team members behind ISKCON Nepal work tirelessly each day to prepare food for the 26 community schools in Budhanilkantha and Tokha Municipalities. Their skill and commitment make it possible to provide nourishing meals for the students in these areas. For the past nine years since its genesis, Food for Life Nepal has worked for the welfare of children. Since the construction of a centralised modular kitchen with state-of-the-art technology by the Embassy of Japan in 2019, the 'School Lunch Preparation Centre' has operated as a centralised kitchen. If, by chance, you happen to walk by the area at 6 a.m. in the morning, you can hear heavy utensils clanking. These sounds are resonating far and wide, signifying warm meals being cooked for the little students.

Proper nutrition is important for children's intellectual and physical growth. The organisation



realises that schoolchildren perform better academically with a nutritious meal filling their stomachs; this philosophy is why Food for Life Nepal existed in the first place. It serves humanity by providing nutritious meals to the community, especially to needy children. The organisation started by serving meals to a relatively small number of 18 children in 2014. Today, the organisation serves over 10,000 meals every school day to government schoolchildren.

There are approximately 3,500,000 students in public schools all over Nepal. The majority of the students who are enrolled in government schools are from financially challenged backgrounds. The

government schools have been facing challenges in providing meals to students, with budget being the primary concern. To address this issue, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology started the programme 'Diva Khaja' under the national budget in 2017, where each student would be allocated Rs. 15 per child, which was a huge step towards eliminating classroom hunger. Though this was a commendable move due to inflation and rising costs, the fund was not sufficient for a proper, nutritious meal.

The organisation contacts the school administrators and implements their mid-day meal plan for schools in need of the 'Diva Khaja' programme.

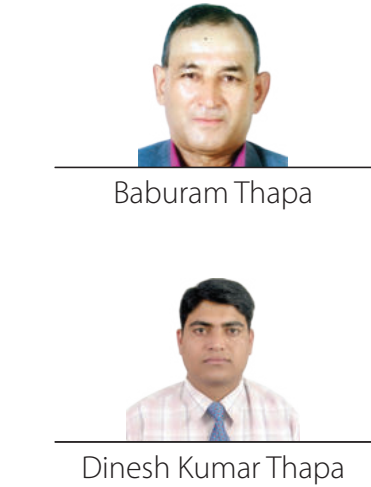
This programme features six meals for six days (except for government holidays), ensuring that students in the school get to fill their stomachs without having to compromise their health by relying on junk food. The programme's positive impact was evident in enhanced academic performance as proper nutrition improved the health status of the children. This, in turn, fostered regular attendance at school, ensuring a consistent and uninterrupted learning experience for the students.

The organisation is not only limited to deprived schoolchildren; they have also expanded their operations by featuring packages like the meals for the frontline pack. This provision ensured that the frontline health workers got the nutrition they deserved during the peak of COVID-19. Around 20,000 frontline workers got proper meals during such a precarious period. Soon after the registration of the organisation in 2015, an earthquake hit Nepal with strong blows. Our team sprang into action to set up relief kitchens that served more than 3,00,000 earthquake victims over the course of a month, situated at different locations such as Nuwakot, Panauti, Bhaktapur, Tudhikhel, Sakhu, Budhanilkantha, etc. Not only that, they had also set up 44 shelters for earthquake victims. The organisation had also announced the giveaway of Happiness Kits in 2020, which helped the schoolchildren keep up with stationary requirements and encouraged them to attend classes after more than a year and a half of social distancing. It has hosted other significant activities, such as awareness campaigns, clothes drives, and dental hygiene awareness programmes, for the overall holistic development of children and community schools.

Aiming to eradicate hunger as a barrier to education, the organisation aspires to expand its reach and ensure no child in Nepal faces educational deprivation due to hunger. With a strong commitment to serving the hungry, it has gained support from prominent international organisations, including Dr. Jacob's Medical, and local bodies. Kumari Bank Limited had also sponsored meals for the children of Jana Jagriti Secondary School in 2022. By relieving children of concerns about their stomachs, the organisation enables them to concentrate on their aspirations for success. The goal is to support the dreams of 25,000 children daily within the next decade.

(The author is an Executive Manager at Food for Life Nepal.)

Shanghai's Education Success: Lessons For Nepal



Baburam Thapa



Dinesh Kumar Thapa

In recent times, statistics and narratives on educational success are often cited from Shanghai, China, for having a highly successful education system, as evidenced by its students' strong performance in international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that concerns students' performance in reading, mathematics, and sciences, as well as in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) regarding teachers' professional practices, job satisfaction, collaboration with colleagues, professional development opportunities, and other factors that contribute to the overall teaching and learning environment. The scribe duos participated in the "Integrated Training of Teachers Before and After Service" organised by the UNESCO Teacher Education Centre and Shanghai Normal University with support from Shanghai Municipal Council from November 9-20, 2023. This article attempts to highlight the key features backing up the successful educational landscape of Shanghai, China, and the implications Nepalese educational policymakers, educators, and teachers can draw from Shanghai's education system.

Involvement and observations

The 'Belt and Road Shanghai Exchange Project on Integrated Training of Teachers Before and After Service' project was organised with the aim of exploring system design and performance mechanisms of pre-service training and life-long development of teachers through the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and experiences among education administrators, university educators, researchers, principals, and teachers from the Belt and Road countries. The programme was comprised of two modules: the first was dedicated to discussing the process and outcomes for excellence in teacher education through seminars and lectures, and the other was directed to experiencing the implementation of educational programmes at school and classroom levels for quality students' learning.

Research sharing and presentations during the project highlighted how Shanghai attracts the best talents in teacher education programmes, prepares able teachers, and provides continuous teacher development opportunities while teachers are in service. The seminars gave us the idea that quality education is never an



accident, but it is always the result of intelligent effort. We understood that a strong and systemic collaboration between the Normal University, which prepares teachers, teacher educators, and educational researchers, and schools, which implement the educational programmes, is the precursor to quality teacher preparation. There are about 100 normal universities in China, which intensively collaborate with governments and schools across the country in preparing the required strength of educational human resources to realise the goal of 'developing students morally, educationally, and physically to make them both "red" (loyal to the party) and "expert" (well-educated and trained for the job)'.

Like in other provinces, Shanghai too has placed aspiring candidates through open competition in the bachelor and master level programmes in education. The normal universities offer rigorous courses on core and specialisation subjects differently for elementary and secondary levels of education. One remarkable feature of the university courses is the provision of intense and rigorous internships, which the students need to complete by working in schools. The interns are well tended to by mentor teachers and are monitored and supported regularly in their teaching activities. Graduates, thus, would develop the philosophy, knowledge, and skills required for implementing the ambitious curricula and standards and educating the children of

Shanghai, who perform excellently in academics, ethics, and life skills.

Our exposure to schools and classrooms gave us the realisation that, with adequate educational infrastructure and the dedication of the teachers and students, it is possible to harness the extreme talents in children. We found the school curricula were well balanced with their focus on literacy, numeracy, physical education, moral education, and service education. Service education started right in the third grade, which would connect the students to topics related to domestic and industrial production. Topics related to history, geography, culture, the Chinese Communist Party, national pride, heritage, tradition, and modernity were incorporated into moral education. We also learned that there was an equal focus on the skills of arts, calligraphy, dramatics, music, and athletics in the elementary level of education, which would provide the foundation of expression, virtuosity, and all-round development in the children. We were spellbound by the excellent performances of elementary school children at Shannan Elementary School, Anhui, a partner school of Huainan Normal University. The school was highly spacious and well equipped for individual and group learning and performances. Investment in buildings, classrooms, tools, playgrounds, and equipment was praiseworthy. When the children reached the secondary level, the focus seemed

to shift to physics, mathematics, and modern languages, while maintaining studies in moral education and service education continuously. We could sense a visible linkage between mental, moral, and physical development as well as production and industry at the secondary level of school education. At Pudong Secondary School, Shanghai, we found a harmonious blend of culture and science, tradition and modernity, and arts and morality in the students and teachers. In addition to laboratory work, experiments, sports, and the arts, we found that Pudong School, which was one of the partner schools of Shanghai Normal University, had well-managed counselling sessions, therapy, extended study time, coaching on specific areas, etc. for the students. Teachers' performance was also standardised, with a heavy emphasis on the planning of materials and lesson activities before classroom delivery. Besides the conventional academic subjects, students also learned national pride, production, self-management, and volunteer spirit.

Learning for Nepal: smart education policy

The project led us to contemplate and reflect on how an education system can yield excellent results. The inspiring words of Professor Dr. Minxuan Zhang, Head of the Teacher Education Centre, UNESCO, resonate that a successful education system could only be built on the sound

foundation of the soil of the nation and shaped by the needs and priorities of the nation. China at present is a reality of miracles in infrastructure, manufacturing, massive production, and efficient management. 'From 'P' [pin] to 'P' [plane] is the slogan of the Chinese, and Shanghai, being an industrial and commercial hub in east-central China, has no less aspirations to realise among its students. Shanghai, a city of about 23 million people, has now achieved complete primary and junior high school enrollment, and it is the first city in China to achieve almost universal secondary school attendance. At present, 80 per cent of children are studying in the public education system, and the rest are in international schools. Backing up these successes, Professor Bo Ning, the coordinator of the project, shared the immense role of Shanghai Normal University and the Teacher Education Centre, UNESCO, which work in collaboration with the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission to carry out research in teacher education, organise exchange programmes, and promote reforms in education through innovative teaching methods to improve teachers' capability. At this juncture, we conclude that it is only through collaboration and commitment that education policies result in excellent learning.

Our involvement in the Shanghai Project gave us some insights that might be key strategies for possible reforms in education in Nepal. We conclude that an efficient education system and transformation can be achieved only with a comprehensive reform, including reforms in policies, financing, teacher development, and having proper standards of curricula, assessments, work processes, and mechanisms of check and balance in place. Likewise, we reflect that educational policies and programmes recognise the role of the teacher workforce, regard teaching as an attractive and respected profession, and have clear career advancement mechanisms in place wherein teachers are supported and evaluated systematically to improve performance.

Our reflection further led us to the conclusion that teachers need to be highly qualified and well-trained through rigorous pre-service training and well-supported in-service professional development so that they can improve their instructional activities to evaluate and modify their own pedagogy in relation to student outcomes. Our learning also suggests that the curriculum should be carefully designed to cover key academic concepts and skills with a balance of subject-specific knowledge and skills, vocational and career skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. We also contend that the education system recognises and involves parents at a high level, tapping their enormous cultural values, time, resources, and support for students' learning.

Finally, we deeply hold that schools should become a fulfilling space for the students wherein their mental, physical, vocational, and moral spheres are developed through their regular and extended involvement in academics, sports, athletics, arts, drama, production, and welfare-related activities.

(Babu Ram is the Chief Advisor of the Confederation of Nepalese Teachers, and Dinesh Kumar is a PhD Fellow at the School of Education, Kathmandu University.)

Insights Of A Civil Servant On Corruption



Madan Kumar Bhattarai

The new book has incorporated commentaries by popular figures spread over a wider compass, like actively practicing politician Gagan Kumar Thapa, senior economist Dr. Swarnim Wagle, who caught international limelight after his resounding success in the Tanahun by-election, then Chief Secretary Dr. Somlal Subedi, and a senior journalist writing on corruption, Hari Bahadur Thapa.

Corruption is possibly one area in Nepal that everybody, from politician to administrator, lawyer to judge, and even civil society to the ordinary person, professes to focus on and reduce, if not totally eradicate. It is also accepted that the phenomenon of corruption exists in some form or manifestation, from family to public life. This may range from outright bribery to policy-level corruption and even aspects of social life not taken that seriously in the ordinary sense of the term.

Ram Kumar Acharya, a retired special class officer of the Nepal Judicial Service with a Master of Laws from Bond University, Australia, has made a solid effort to highlight different aspects and manifestations of corruption in the global context in general and its special impact on Nepal with deadly consequences in particular. The book with an impressive cover, entitled NEPALMAA BHRASTA-ACHAAR: KAARAN RA NIBAARAN, can roughly be translated as Corruption in Nepal: Causes and Prevention.

Seen as a logical output of serious research, study, and interest in the area, the voluminous book is divided into eight major chapters along with appendices, a picture gallery, and quite a comprehensive 36-page bibliography, mostly in English. One basic attribute of the book is the telltale details of the corrupt behaviours of various people. Those who read the book thoroughly can't remain unimpressed with the last two pages dealing with what is called a resume of corruption, tracing its tentative birth dating back to almost 300 BC.

Chapter one categorises five types, forms, and levels of corruption, including policy-level corruption normally practiced as a protective shield to save people from indulging in such acts, along with normative criteria and definitions. The second chapter deals with the corruption index vis-à-vis Nepal's status. Chapter three deals at length with the theoretical and practical aspects of corruption as a social, economic, and political malaise.

The biggest chapter of the book is the fourth, which seeks to specifically portray the causes and reasons of corruption, even citing major cases of sheer anomalies involved. Linked to this are chapters seven and eight that depict endeavours against the evil and suggestions and recommendations to control visibly rampant corruption in the country, respectively. Chapter five seeks to deal with what can be called the ill-effects of corruption. The remaining chapter six essentially seeks to highlight global efforts to control corruption.

One disturbing aspect of corruption in Nepal is the visibly perceived impression by people both inside and outside the country that the menace has constantly mushroomed with a tinge of impunity after the political change supposed to foster democratic culture and promote socio-economic transformation through efficient and judicious utilisation of internal and external resources.



NEPALMAA
BHRASTAACHAAR: KAARAN
RA NIBAARAN
Ram Kumar Acharya
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Pages 494,
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As a reflection of his 32-year-long experience in legal service and close observations of the working modality of organisations and bodies expressly dedicated to controlling corruption, including the judiciary and the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority, Nepal's Ombudsman type of constitutional organ, Acharya finds a state of dilemma and even a double standard pervading Nepali society as everyone talks of controlling the vice but takes little interest in going through its cause and effect, not to mention the quite distant issue of controlling it.

The well-researched book is possibly the second such attempt by a senior bureaucrat after former Secretary Sharad Chandra Paudel's similar but still bigger work entitled BHRASTAACHAAR: KAARAN, PARINAAM RA NIYANTRANKAA UPAAAYA (Corruption: Causes, Effects, and Measures towards its Eradication) that hit bookshelves more than two years ago.

Acharya has used a methodology to deal with the vexed issue of corruption with both historical insight and the real-time status of corruption in Nepal, with some leading examples, with a view to presenting a cogent approach as far as the theoretical and practical aspects of corruption in our context are concerned.

Besides, the new book has incorporated commentaries by popular figures spread over a wider compass, like actively practicing politician Gagan Kumar Thapa, senior economist Dr. Swarnim Wagle, who caught

international limelight after his resounding success in the Tanahun by-election, then Chief Secretary Dr. Somlal Subedi, and a senior journalist writing on corruption, Hari Bahadur Thapa.

Acharya has also tried to convey his message to readers in the form of various dos and don'ts and taken care to cover a wide range of stakeholders and the erosion that has taken place in our social value system and normative behaviour over several decades. His field, which can be called the command area, is wider to include all aspects of corruption, including historical legacy, the preponderance of corruption-friendly legal rules and regulations, and the politicisation of constitutional and judicial councils supposed to become vanguards of anti-corruption activities.

Acharya tries to depict and expose varied areas and tools of corruption that have now been discussed in public with satirical derision. These include an advance payment system for contractors, a loss of quality in bureaucracy, overpoliticization, a corrupt and costly election system, political parties and their leadership, proportional representation, weak norms for good conduct and behaviour, corrupt leadership, an unequal and discriminatory educational system in practice, etc.

One discerningly notable aspect is that Acharya has used a comprehensive quantum of references and source materials in his quite detailed presentation, with emphasis on a vast range of foreign publications and topical reports, to highlight his concerns about the rather thriving phenomenon of corruption in Nepal. He has also made use of a number of our own sources, including articles available in both print and web media.

However, it is quite difficult to understand why he has not thought it prudent to make reference to a large volume on the same subject written by Secretary Sharad Chandra Paudel, as already mentioned above.

Another lacuna of the otherwise comprehensive book is the plethora of proofreading mistakes. Likewise, there are some instances relating to the Nepali context that seem to have been directly culled from newspapers. The sheer volume of the work might have prevented the author from processing and refining it properly.

Despite such seemingly unavoidable and minor pitfalls, I congratulate Acharya on his wonderful contributions, despite lingering apathy on the part of readers on the very subject of corruption. This is in the context of a lack of seriousness among stakeholders to squarely deal with the subject that has significantly eroded our credibility in the community of nations, including among our development partners and international organisations that have shown interest in assisting us in improving the quality of life.

(Dr. Bhattarai is a former Foreign Secretary, ambassador, and author; kutniti@gmail.com.)

FUTURE WATCH

(Based on birth names)

January 12th to 18th 2024

- D. N. Lohani



ARIES

Success without struggle is unlikely. Income will be lower than expected, but you will handle the situation. Students will have to work harder. Philanthropic sentiment will prevail. The family will provide good support towards the end.



TAURUS

Fear and confusion can reside within oneself. Circumstances will improve starting Sunday. Prevailing fear and confusion can reside within oneself. Relatives will provide good support. Trade and profession will both turn profitable.



GEMINI

The first half is ordinary. Worthless travel can occur. Expenditure will rise. Circumstances will improve starting Tuesday afternoon. Study will take a progressive course. Business can slow down.



CANCER

Travel will turn profitable. Study will take a progressive course. You will be eager to learn new subjects. Marital development will face obstacles. Study will take a progressive course.



LEO

Major days are favorable. A high level of enthusiasm will guide you ahead. Income and expenditure will maintain balance. Love and life will prosper. Decisive ability will guide you ahead.



VIRGO

Initially expenditure levels will rise. Circumstances will improve after Sunday afternoon. Students will have to work harder. Indecisiveness can create some problems. With some effort, employees will observe productive periods. The business will turn profitable.



LIBRA

The period until Monday will contain challenges. A health disorder is predicted. The expenditure level will rise. Circumstances will improve from Tuesday. Major tasks will be completed successfully. Social prestige won't rise. You will win on legal issues. The business will turn profitable.



SCORPIO

A high level of determination will guide you ahead. Health disorders are predicted during the mid-portion. Trade and profession will both turn profitable. Students will have to work harder.



SAGITTARIUS

Handle valuable goods during the first two days. Major tasks will be completed successfully on Sunday evening. You will be attracted to a new subject. Income and expenditure will maintain balance.



CAPRICORN

An entertaining week is in the store. You will meet interesting people during the initial period. Expenditure will go beyond your expectations. Foreign trade will yield a return. Some of you may have to travel abroad.



AQUARIUS

The expenditure level will rise. Trade and profession will both turn profitable. Travel and recreational events will occur. You will be keen to learn new trades or travel. Friends and family will cooperate.

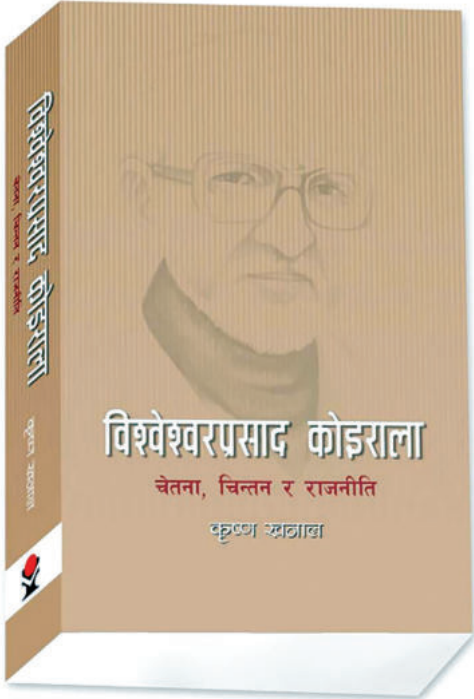


PISCES

An advantageous week is in the store. A ray of hope will emerge. Regular gain will provide a return. Expenditure will surpass income. Studying will keep you busy. Family problems will disappear. Business will advance.

BOOK REVIEW

A Revive On BP's Thoughts



Gandhi Raj Kafle

Bishweshwor Prasad Koirala:
Chetana, Chintan Ra Rajneeti
(Bishweshwor Prasad Koirala:
Conscience, Vision, and Politics),
by Krishna Khanal, published by
Oriental Publication House,
price: 1150.00,
ISBN: 978-9937-9608 – 0 – 9.

words on the cover page, there are also three other smaller font words: Chetana, Chintan, and Rajniti, which highlight all the themes on the topic "Bishweshworprasad". Outwardly, these three words may seem to readers that they are used by the author only to describe B. P. Koirala's personality, but the intrinsic sense of the use is not so. They are more relevant to present and future times also because no one can imagine making or developing visionary leadership if politics is delinked from Chetana and Chintan (conscience and vision).

The author has divided this study into eleven chapters. Chapter one is "Chetana Ra Chintan" (Conscience and Vision), and the last one is "Lokatantra, Sambaidhanik Abhyas Ra Rajneeti" (Inclusive Democracy, Constitutional Practice, and Politics). Between these two themes, there are many events: the process of political awakenings, the revolution of 1951 AD, and the movements of restoration of democracy to the journey of the nation to institutionalise republican set up through the successful practice of the Constituent Assembly.

So, this book is wide, even from the point of view of time. B. P. Koirala emerged as a prime leader during the time of the revolution in 1951 AD, and it has already been more than four decades since his demise. He struggled for democracy throughout his life and remained uncompromised for democratic values, even with kings. Beyond doubt, these things are inspiring.

But these things were not the prime motive for author Krishna Khanal to produce this insightful book. His real surprise for him to write this voluminous 591-page book is the question of why B.P. Koirala, who floated the idea of national reconciliation to bring monarchy into the constitutional framework, has been continuously referred to and remembered even in post-republican governance in the country.

Professor Khanal's findings in this book, however, are optimistic. He emphasises that BP. Koirala has been remembered in a symbolic sense, too. This means the country is still in need of a visionary leader.

But is it possible for leaders to act with this

vision and become leaders like this? The first three chapters of this book are very important in the search for this kind of leadership.

B.P. Koirala faced significant challenges in his family background, reflecting the struggles endured by his father, Krishna Prasad Koirala. Despite these hardships, he had the opportunity to receive a liberal education and actively participated in the Indian independence movement. Engaging with prominent Indian leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Jayaprakash Narayan, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad during the fight against British rule further shaped his life.

But the main point, as mentioned by Khanal in this book, should not be seen only in this background. The author is convinced to say that all such values are mere themes of background. The real secret is that BP Koirala himself was the creator of his personality.

The inspiring point, therefore, is that the road to walk ahead in this vision and rise above the petty interests of societies or groups to enhance national glory in a new republican setup in Nepal is open to all leaders.

According to Professor Khanal BP Koirala's intact remembrance even after more than four decades of his demise, this is a testimony to the trust of the people of Nepal in visionary leadership to act and deliver good governance in the country. Will someone come up this way? The book offers insights in detail.

(Kafle is a former Deputy Executive Editor of this daily)

AI’s Revolution In Film Editing



Bharat Regmi

Storytelling and human experience are at the core of what editors do, and nowhere are these elements more present than in the field of film editing. At their heart, films are stories about people, their struggles, and their outer transformation. Crafting a compelling narrative on a timeline requires a deep understanding of story structure, pacing, and the filmmaking process. Editing is the backbone of filmmaking and some percent of directing because the editor is recreating and rewriting the post. A well-edited film can elevate the story, pacing, mood, performance, and themes.

In the early days of film, editing was a manual process involving physical film reels. After the decade of 2000, editing underwent a digital transformation. The digital transformation in Nepal started in 2007 with the Kagbeni movie. Released in 2008, Kagbeni is Nepal's first digital film, which was shot by a camera that was not fully functional. It became a great opportunity for creative professionals, including directors, actors, cinematographers, and editors, to experiment with digital transformation. Digital cameras revolutionised the film industry by making hard drive storage and digital editing possible for feature films. Software such as Adobe Premiere, Final Cut, and Avid allows editors to easily rearrange scenes for nonlinear editing. Software has come a long way to help with editing such as cuts, transitions, and colour correction.

Now, after 2020, another digital revolution is taking place, which is rapidly increasing as it can do the entire work of filmmaking itself. Some critics have started saying that there will be no need to shoot movies within a few years. All created by artificial intelligence. Art, scenery,

characters, editing, colour grading, everything—even the film itself—is made by AI. Film director Pranab Joshi is working on AI and experiencing its innovations in every dimension. He says, "The introduction of AI in the film industry marks a significant shift, showcasing glimpses of it's potential through tools. Innovations such as video editing tools' new updates and the emergence of tools that can translate videos into any language hint at a transformative future where entire movies can be created from the comfort of a room without the need for traditional cameras."

The AI industry, already valued at 136.6 billion dollars, is reshaping the filmmaking experience across different stages, from pre-production to post-production. AI's capacity to analyse vast datasets can provide valuable insights and generate stunning graphics, transporting audiences to imaginative realms. Moreover, AI assists in creative processes, offering ideas, character development, dialogue improvement, and content refinement. So, it has already begun to impact filmmaking and editing. There are three huge benefits to editing. One is reducing the amount of time spent on editing. Another one is the ability to make micro-adjustments that might be difficult for a human. And another one is that AI can act as an assistant editor, allowing editors to focus on more creative tasks. Among the editing tools in Premiere, the Auto Reframe tool automatically identifies focal points within a frame and adjusts aspect ratios to suit different platforms, making it especially useful for filmmakers who want to produce trailers for social media. Similarly, Speech to Text offers AI transcription services, converting spoken dialogue into text subtitles. However, the Colour Match tool matches colour grades between different shots, helping to maintain consistent looks throughout their project. In addition, AI removes unwanted objects from clips, analyses audio tracks, and balances the mix. AI allows you to create complete videos from text descriptions. As we describe a scene, this tool will create a video of it on the spot. Filmmaker Joshi says, "The efficiency gains are further extended to film editing, with AI tools streamlining processes and enhancing footage quality. As the industry witnesses the continuous influx of new AI tools, the trajectory suggests that AI will become



ubiquitous, revolutionising various aspects of filmmaking. While these advancements bring forth exciting possibilities, they also raise concerns about potential job displacement and the impact on traditional filmmaking practices."

However, editing is not just about cutting clips together; it's a deep art of the story's timing, mood, and emotion understanding. Editor's choices are at the foundation of craft. Turning raw footage into a narrative of the editor's decisions, each of which has the potential to impact the pace, sequence, and tone of the story. Film editing is as much about storytelling as it is about technical skills. Editors understand the feelings between characters through precise timing. This requires a level of understanding of human behaviour that AI has yet to reach. Many professionals say that AI-generated results are a good starting point, but additional editor input is usually needed for the final touches. The role of AI in editing is that it acts as an advanced tool that

can handle the more monotonous aspects of the job, freeing editors to focus on creative decisions. This could be useful for dialogue editing or temporary voice-over work before final recording.

The BFI London Film Festival in London had an 'I AM NOT A ROBOT' session about generative AI in the screen industries, organised in collaboration with Screen International. In the session, Tim Weber, CEO of UK-based animation and visual effects company Framestore, says, "Generative AI is not as effective as first thought. It's neither as revelatory and amazing as we all thought it might be in the early days, nor is it as scary as we all thought it might be in the early days. We're crossing somewhere in the middle."

Also on the panel was Sami Arpa, CEO of Swiss-based AI company Largo, who unveiled a new AI storyboarding tool that allows for more 'style consistent' creations. "While traditional storyboarding often relies on generic images and is a time-consuming process, the new AI tool uses

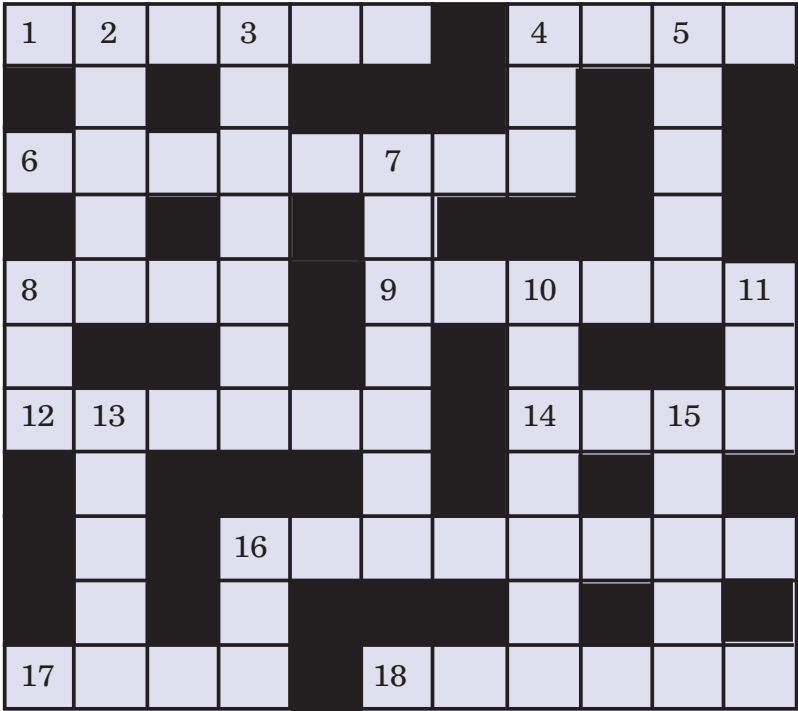
highly specialised production to create specific styles. Production companies can now benefit from the power of AI-assisted storyboarding, making the creative process more efficient and accessible," Arpa says.

In my opinion, AI may devalue the art of storyboarding and editing in film, although it seems unlikely that AI will overtake creative and intelligent humans. Technology has not reached the point where it can replicate the artistry and creative intuition that humans bring. But now the debate is going on about whether the film will be made by AI. Artists will do it all with AI. If so, what about human emotions? What about human expression? Could it represent humans' inner feelings, ethical reflections, and cultural nuances? Could it make a moral impression? These questions help us think more deeply about the role and value of human creativity in an increasingly automated world. Theatre artist, film director, and writer Kedar Shrestha says, "I don't believe that AI will make movies and create emotions and thoughts." The Oscar-winning visual effects supervisor Tim Weber at the BFI's industry panel says, 'Using generative AI for video is much more difficult than for images. The big issue is temporal stability. Getting and controlling the style you want is one of the hardest things. They're not very directed. They're not very controlled.' He added, "Actors are not hired for their faces. We are recruiting actors based on their performance, their personalities, and what they bring in terms of character. We create a lot of characters, but bringing that character to life and getting someone to carry the film is a completely different challenge."

Aside from these challenges, AI might introduce unemployment and dwindling opportunities for emerging professionals in the creative journey. Art captures the inner feelings, ethical reflections, cultural nuances, and other subtleties of the creator, but automation might streamline the process of filmmaking and reduce costs as well as the emotional richness of the outcome. Technology and art never stand still. What is AI capable of doing today, and what can it do tomorrow? None of us can say.

(The author is a film editor.)

TRN CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO. 1773



Name
Address
Signature

Last date of entry:
January 17, 2024

Win a prize of Rs. 600. In case there are more than one correct entry the prize will be split into three sums of Rs. 200 each. The winner will be selected by a lucky draw. Only cuttings (not photo copy) that include the Crossword Puzzle no. will be accepted.

Across

1. An evil practice had to control
4. Register your vote
6. The money possessed by a company
8. Unexpected drawback
9. Make it possible for
12. Time of intense difficulty
14. Keep annoying
16. You get free information from them
17. A thrust with knife
18. An official treaty

Down

2. You are one
3. Allegations
4. Because
5. Reveal confidential information to someone
7. Chalk landing place
8. A very short time
10. Good, kind and beautiful
11. A person's death
13. A machine controlled by computer
15. Dayahang Rai is one
16. Hit a ball in a high arc

Solutions to TRN Crossword Puzzle No. 1772

ACROSS: 1. UPDATE 4. JOLT 6. BACKSTAB 8. DATA 9. WEALTH 12. EVADER
14. ALSO 16. PEDIGREE 17. EDIT 18. REMARK
DOWN: 2. PLAZA 3. AWKWARD 4. JAB 5. LEAST 7. TOWERED 8. DIE
10. AMALGAM 11. HBO 13. VALID 15. STER 16. PIT



LUCKY
WINNER

Radheshyam Shrestha
Damodar Lohani
Surya Shakya

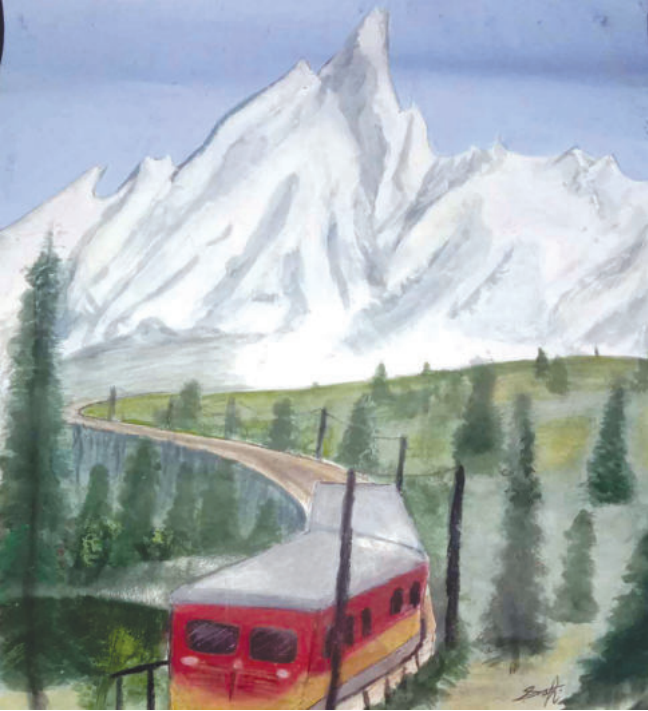
ALL CORRECT ANSWER

Bal Krishna Shrestha, Krishna Chandra Gautam, Sunil Sharma Bhattarai,
Archana Devi Shrestha

CREATIVE CORNER



Brisha Wagle, Grade: II, The Chandbagh School



Saanvi Karkee, Grade VII, Campain School, Lagenkhel, Lalitpur

TRN PUZZLE NUMBER-405

All you have to do is to fill up in the seven boxes below with the numbers in such a way that the sum will be 462 whether you go diagonally, horizontally or vertically. The numbers should be 42 to 90 between. The number should not be used twice.

71	80	89		51	60	69
79	88	48		59	68	70
46	55	57	66	75	77	86
		65			85	
		73			44	
63	72	81	90	43	52	61

84	93	102	55	64	73	82
92	101	61	63	72	81	83
100	60	62	71	80	89	91
59	68	70	79	88	90	99
67	69	78	87	96	98	58
75	77	86	95	97	57	66
76	85	94	103	56	65	74

TRN PUZZLE SOLUTION-404

Prepared by: Bishwo Nath Kharel

Gandhi's Influential Journey



Kashyap Gautam

On October 2nd, 1969, Karamchand Gandhi had a son from his fourth wife, Putlibai. His name was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, or he was later known by the world as Mahatma Gandhi. Mohandas was the youngest child, having one elder sister and two elder brothers. Born into a simple family, he looked like the simplest of boys and was about to influence the whole world with his rebellious virtues and tactics. While the whole world chose violence, Mahatma Gandhi chose words.

The early days were nothing special, as it was like any other school life story—mocking teachers and calling them names. But he was otherwise a very shy introvert, and he used to avoid fame and the spotlight as much as he could. He instead chose books as his mates.

Even from his childhood days, he always embraced the truth, always speaking the truth despite the consequences he would have to face later. He was a simple young lad with the qualities of respecting the elders, loving the youngsters, and bonding with the people of his age. He always acknowledged his teachers, relatives, friends, and companions.

But two plays made him set two new rules throughout his life. In the play of Shrivana, he carries a sling on his shoulder, carrying his blind parents. This gave him a motive to take care of his parents until his last breath. Another is about Harishchandra, where he always speaks the truth despite the pain and consequences he might face later.

Mahatma Gandhi married at the age of 13, which he thinks was a disturbing and incorrect happening in his life. He did not hate Kasturba (Gandhi's wife), but disliked child marriage in general. Actually, he thought of her as a simple and preservative woman.

Gandhi's family was a pure vegetarian, and so was he. But Gandhi's friend Mahtab manipulated and dragged Mohandas to eat meat, as Mahtab deceived him into believing that meat was the only way to become strong. He used to consume goat meat. He had done this, breaking his father's faith in him. Then he thought and came to the conclusion that it was wrong and should not be continued. However, it was not the end of deceiving others. He used to smoke the cigarettes thrown away by his relatives clandestinely.

Gandhi's marriage life was not easy. When he was sixteen, his father died. However, the death happened at the most rare and unusual time possible. As Gandhi notes, it happened when Kasturba and Gandhiji were having sex. This incident left him in trauma until his last moments and brought hatred towards sex into his mind.

Now, with his father dead, he was the main man of the house and decided to go to England with three virtues: never touching another woman, wine, and meat. Gandhi went to London to study law. Nevertheless, the adaptation wasn't easy; he wore a hat, learned their dance, and learned to play the violin. He also visited the Eiffel Tower. He returned in 1891 to work in the high court of Bombay. He found out that his mother had died while he was in London. Later, he left Bombay for Rajkot and set up his office there, where his brother lived. In 1893, he got a contract from South Africa for a court case. He accepted it and went on a new adventure in a new country. South Africa, where he experienced various forms of racial discrimination. The three most famous incidents are: first, he was thrown from his first-class train seat only because he was an Indian. Second, he was forced to take off his 'pagdi' while fighting the court case in South Africa. Third, in his hotel, he was commanded to eat his dinner in his room because only white people deserved the dinner tables, despite both races paying the prices equally.

After these oppressive experiences that he faced, he started some protests with some other Indians as well. He went back to India after some months to take his wife and sons with him. He continued protesting and influencing people with his lifestyle. Later, he was invited to India again, and thus he went back.

Gandhi's speeches were powerful and convinced many to adopt a non-violent protest called Satyagraha. This approach later influenced Nelson Mandela too. Satyagraha was nothing but a movement where you are not supposed to claim or win something using your physical strength but rather by tolerating and using your words.

He also used another movement while fighting for India's independence. In this movement, Indians were requested to only use products that were Indian-made and to boycott British products, which came with a heavy amount of tax. Gandhi led a famous event called the Salt March, where Indians collected their own salt instead of buying it from the English, showing opposition to British control.

After World War II, England was slowly getting weaker and losing land and men. That is why, on August 15th, 1947, India gained its independence and became an independent country. Gandhi was a phenomenon. From a normal boy to the greatest Indian personality, let us use his teachings in our lives as well.