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EMPOWERING MARGINALIZED REGIONS: NASO'S INITIATIVE IN DEMOCRATIZING SPACE
EDUCATION AND ADDRESSING LOCAL CHALLENGES IN NEPAL

Abstract

Nepal started its space journey recently and still, across the nation, the accessibility to space science is majorly determined by its topographic factor. With varying topography, ranging from Urban and suburban to remote areas, the exposure, opportunity, and access to space resources vary exponentially. Nepal Astronomical Society (NASO) has chosen the region bordering Sunsari and Udayapur districts of Nepal including Sri Lanka Tappu, a flood-prone infrastructurally isolated island in the Saptakoshi River of eastern Nepal and home to underprivileged communities of different ethnic groups, where discussions of Space Science remain largely an unheard topic across generations.

This paper will discuss the inception of the NASO in those communities with its outreach and educational programs with a motive to cultivate space literacy, raise public awareness, and sensitize young school students on the topic of space science while utilizing and mobilizing locally available resources for the process. It will also highlight the impact of educational and outreach activities like Build a Rosetta Mission Workshops, Water Rocket Workshops, Stargazing sessions, Space-quiz, and Lunar and Solar eclipse observations for the primary and secondary level students of Sri Lanka Tappu and Belaka Municipality. This paper, within its limited scope, encapsulates NASO's commitment to democratizing space education underscoring its relevance to local contexts, emphasizing empowerment and knowledge dissemination in underprivileged regions. Ultimately, this work contributes to the ongoing dialogue on inclusive science education and the potential of space science to uplift communities facing socio-economic and environmental challenges.

Key Words: Marginalized Community, Space education, Srilanka Tappu,