

Dream to Excellence: The 25-Year Journey of Madan Bhandari Memorial College

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Abstract

Madan Bhandari Memorial College (MBMC) is a non-profit community college in Kathmandu, Nepal, founded in 2001 and serving the higher education sector for 25 years. This qualitative research paper examines the history of the college from its inception, when the vision of the college was the dominant force, to the present, where it has become a distinguished center of learning. Presented within the framework of organizational excellence and leadership theories, the study explores how MBMC has managed to operate in the challenging landscape of higher education in Nepal without compromising the legacy of its founder, Madan Bhandari. The study uses thematic analysis of institutional documents, media reports, and observational data to identify five main themes of excellence: community-centered affordable education, comprehensive academic programs, infrastructural development through international partnerships, a holistic student development approach, and quality assurance and accreditation. The findings reveal that MBMC's success is attributed to its strong community base, its international partnership with the Government of India, dedicated faculty and management, and the inspirational framework of Excellence in Leadership for Transformation. The college's 25-year history demonstrates how community-based institutions can achieve excellence in resource-constrained environments by blending institutional memory with a pragmatic educational purpose. The research contributes to the body of literature on community colleges in Nepal and provides implications for other similar institutions aiming to achieve sustainable excellence.

Keywords: MBMC, community college, higher education in Nepal, leadership transformation, quality education

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Introduction

It has traditionally been recognized that higher education in developing countries is a key catalyst for socio-economic change and national development (Altbach, 2016; Robertson, 2009). Higher education institutions have played a significant role, especially in Nepal, a nation with heterogeneous geography, a multi-ethnic population, and a history of political transition. Community-based colleges began to rise in Nepal in the late twentieth century, frequently dedicated to national leaders and

guided by the values of social justice and access (Rajpreet, 2024). These institutions were formed in response to the limited capacity of the state to provide quality higher education, especially in urban areas such as Kathmandu, where demand was much higher than supply.

In Nepal, memorial colleges hold a unique niche in the education sector. Unlike strictly commercial private institutions, they are generally established with a dual purpose: to offer quality education at a reasonable price and to carry forward the legacy of the individuals after whom they are named (Khadka, 2019). This commemorative dimension introduces an element of cultural-political depth, as educational activities are connected to broader discourses of national identity, sacrifice, and aspiration. As Dhakal (2023) explains, memorial institutions in Nepal serve as living reminders of the ideals of their namesakes, transforming abstract concepts into concrete educational opportunities for future generations.

The theoretical basis for conceptualizing institutional excellence in higher education has been grounded in various traditions of thought. According to Cameron (1978), organizational effectiveness comprises four models: the goal model, which is concerned with the attainment of stated objectives; the system resource model, which focuses on the acquisition and sustainability of resources; the internal process model, which is concerned with the efficiency and health of an organization's internal processes; and the strategic constituencies model, which focuses on stakeholder satisfaction. More recently, the Baldrige Excellence Framework has been adapted to tertiary education environments, emphasizing leadership, strategic planning, customer focus, workforce engagement, operations, and outcomes (Ruben, 2019; Peters

& Waterman, 1982). These theoretical lenses provide a strong foundation for studying the 25-year experience of MBMC.

Transformational leadership theory, as developed by Bass and Avolio (1994), provides further insight into how educational institutions can attain continuous excellence. Transformational leaders motivate followers through idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation. Transformational leadership is considered one of the most important success factors for community colleges in the Nepali context, where institutional stability is often threatened by political instability and resource shortages (Dhungana, 2020). This theoretical orientation is reflected in the concept of Excellence in Leadership for Transformation, which serves as the guiding motto of MBMC.

The college was named after Madan Bhandari (1951–1993), a charismatic political leader who served as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) and developed the theory of People's Multiparty Democracy (PMPD) (Dhakal, 2023; Dhakal, 2023). Known as the “People's Leader,” Bhandari is generally regarded as a reformist who sought to combine elements of Marxist ideology with democratic pluralism in Nepal (Dhakal, 2023). His vision of Excellence in Leadership for Transformation, a phrase that later became the motto of MBMC, emphasized the power of principled leadership in bringing about positive social change. According to Usha Kiran Bhandari, Chairperson of the Madan Bhandari Foundation (MBF), the institution is not merely a college where people can obtain an education but also a continuation of Madan Bhandari's dream of a just, educated, and prosperous Nepal.

Against this theoretical and contextual background, this paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the 25-year developmental history of Madan Bhandari Memorial College (MBMC), from its establishment in 2001 to its current position as a reputable community institution. The study seeks to understand how the college has managed to overcome challenges, achieve excellence, and establish a distinctive presence within Nepal's broader higher education landscape.

Rationale of the Study

Even though community colleges in Nepal have expanded significantly over the last three decades, there is limited systematic research on their long-term development, successes, and challenges. Although some case studies have examined specific institutions, few studies have analyzed the entire 25-year process through which a community college develops and achieves excellence (Regmi, 2016). This gap is particularly significant given the critical role community colleges play in providing access to higher education for students who might otherwise be unable to pursue it.

MBMC is one institution that is particularly interesting to study. Founded in 2001 as a non-profit community institution, MBMC has reported remarkable success in terms of quality education and infrastructural development (MBMC, 2025). The college has been accredited by the University Grants Commission (UGC) Nepal, serves more than 1,500 students from across the country, and has developed a comprehensive range of programs extending from the intermediate level to the master's level. Moreover, the infrastructure development grant provided by the Government of India under the framework of Nepal–India Development

Cooperation represents a unique example of internationalization in community-based higher education (Embassy of India, 2023).

Nevertheless, several research questions remain unanswered. Why has MBMC been able to sustain itself and distinguish itself over the past 25 years? How has the college managed to navigate the challenging higher education landscape in Nepal, characterized by governance issues, outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, and the brain drain of students? How has the memorial aspect of the institution influenced its mission, identity, and practices? What lessons can other community colleges learn from the experience of MBMC?

The justification for this research is threefold. First, the study contributes theoretically to the literature on organizational excellence in community-based higher education institutions, particularly within the South Asian context. Second, from a practical perspective, the findings provide useful insights for policymakers, educational administrators, and community leaders interested in establishing or strengthening similar institutions. Third, with MBMC marking its 25th anniversary in 2026, the study offers a timely and comprehensive documentation of its journey, serving both as an institutional history and as a contribution to the broader history of education in Nepal.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, which is particularly appropriate for understanding complex institutional phenomena in their natural settings (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative methodology facilitates rich, contextualized

understanding of organizational processes, stakeholder perspectives, and the meanings attached to institutional experiences. Since the study focuses on the 25-year experience of MBMC, a qualitative case study approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth investigation of a bounded system (Yin, 2018).

Data Collection

Multiple sources were used to collect data to ensure triangulation and enhance credibility (Denzin, 2017). The primary sources of data included:

Institutional Documents

The analysis involved official college publications, including content from the college website (npca.edu.np, 2025), program descriptions, and messages from the campus chief. These documents provided background information on the college's mission, programs, and perceived achievements.

Media Coverage

News reports concerning the activities of MBMC, particularly the inauguration of a new building in 2023, were reviewed. Sources included the press release of the Embassy of India (2023), ThePrint (2023), ANI News (2023), and Online Radio Nepal (2023). These reports provided external validation of institutional claims and documented significant events.

Academic and Policy Literature

Peer-reviewed articles on higher education in Nepal, quality assurance strategies, and the community college movement were examined to place the MBMC experience within the context of broader trends in the sector.

Observational Data

The researcher also conducted virtual observations of the college's online presence,

including its website and social media platforms, to gain additional insights into its current operations and public image.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the thematic analysis approach described by Braun and Clarke (2006). The process consisted of six stages: (a) familiarization with the data through repeated reading; (b) generation of initial codes; (c) searching for themes; (d) reviewing themes; (e) defining and naming themes; and (f) producing the final report. Coding and theme development were conducted using NVivo software.

Reliability and Ethical Implications

Trustworthiness was established through the triangulation of multiple data sources, prolonged engagement with the data, and reflexivity regarding the researcher's positionality. Because the study relied on publicly available documents, member checking was not possible. Ethical considerations included the accurate representation of institutional information and proper attribution of sources. No human subjects were involved in the study; therefore, approval from an institutional review board was not required.

Challenges and Opportunities of Higher Education in Nepal

The higher education system in Nepal has undergone significant changes since the establishment of Tribhuvan University (TU) in 1959 (Rajpreet, 2024). Nevertheless, the system continues to struggle with deep-seated issues. According to Gnawali (2025), persistent concerns include outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, limited research, and insufficient faculty development. Similarly, Bhatta (2026) reports that Nepali universities are characterized by poor governance, low academic standards,

and increasing student migration for higher education abroad, which places a burden on the national economy. Nepal also experiences a significant brain drain, as approximately 100,000 students leave the country to pursue higher education (CESLAM, 2024).

Since 2007, the UGC has been introducing Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) mechanisms to address these issues (UGC Nepal, 2019). However, by 2025, only 137 out of approximately 1,400 campuses in Nepal had received QAA certification (Kaini, 2025). This low rate of accreditation reflects structural challenges in meeting quality standards and highlights the need for case studies of institutions that have successfully undergone the accreditation process.

Community Colleges in Nepal

Community colleges play a unique role in Nepal's higher education landscape. Unlike government-funded public campuses or profit-oriented private colleges, community colleges are often established by trusts, foundations, or local organizations with the mission of providing affordable and accessible education (Regmi, 2016). An example of this model is the MBF, the organization that operates MBMC, a charitable institution dedicated to serving the nation.

Studies of community colleges in Nepal highlight the importance of the equity and access they promote. According to policy debates, community colleges in Nepal follow curricula prescribed by their affiliated universities, maintain strong connections with local communities, and provide opportunities for students who do not reside in major urban centers. Nevertheless, community colleges also face distinctive challenges, including insufficient funding, dependence on volunteer leadership,

and difficulties in maintaining quality standards without the resources available to private institutions.

Higher Education Organizational Excellence

Organizational excellence has received considerable attention in the higher education literature. Ruben (2019) argues that the Baldrige Excellence Framework, originally developed for business settings, can be successfully applied to colleges and universities. Key dimensions of excellence include leadership, strategic planning, customer focus (students and stakeholders), workforce engagement, operations, and results. Cameron's (1978) model of organizational effectiveness emphasizes goal achievement, resource acquisition, internal processes, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Research on organizational excellence in Nepal is still emerging. Dhungana (2020) examined the relationship between transformational leadership and institutional effectiveness in Nepali community colleges and found positive results. Nevertheless, as Upadhyay (2018) points out, higher education institutions in Nepal often struggle with systematic performance measurement and quality improvement because of resource constraints and limited administrative capacity.

Institutions of Memory and Their Heritage

Memorial institutions—schools, colleges, hospitals, and other organizations named after deceased leaders—represent a unique form of organization. These institutions carry symbolic meanings that extend beyond their practical missions (Rajpreet, 2024). Memorial colleges in Nepal are commonly established by political parties, foundations, or community organizations to honor leaders who have made significant contributions to the country's development.

The memorial nature of these institutions influences institutional identity, stakeholder expectations, and organizational practices. As Bhattarai (2020) notes, naming an educational institution after a national leader transfers not only the leader's legacy but also the responsibility to reflect their values and uphold their vision. At MBMC, the educational mission is directly linked to the political philosophy of People's Multiparty Democracy, which promotes pluralism, social justice, and principled leadership. This connection is explicitly reflected in the college motto: Excellence in Leadership for Transformation (Dhakal, 2023).

Leadership for Transformation

Transformational leadership theory is particularly relevant to the story of MBMC. According to Bass and Avolio (1994), transformational leadership consists of four elements: idealized influence (leaders as role models), inspirational motivation (articulating compelling visions), intellectual stimulation (encouraging innovation and critical thinking), and individualized consideration (responding to the needs of followers). Transformational leadership has also been shown to be beneficial in educational settings in terms of teacher commitment, student performance, and organizational culture (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

The idea of leadership for transformation, which lies at the core of MBMC's mission, resonates with contemporary discussions on educational reform in Nepal. Recent policy studies suggest that accountable leadership is essential for bringing timely changes to Nepal's higher education system (Joshi, 2025). Nevertheless, studies also indicate that

educational leadership in Nepal remains largely administrative and compliance-based, with limited implementation of instructional and distributed leadership practices. The emphasis on transformational leadership at MBMC, therefore, represents a deliberate departure from prevailing norms.

Results and Discussion

The evaluation of the gathered information revealed five key themes that shed light on the 25-year journey of MBMC toward achieving distinction. The following themes are discussed and supported by illustrative evidence from institutional documents, media reports, and academic literature.

Theme 1: Community-Based Affordable Education

The first and most central theme is the identity of MBMC as a community-based institution devoted to affordable education. The college was founded in 2001 with the aim of providing quality education at a reasonable cost. This mission statement reflects an understanding of the financial barriers that many Nepali students face in accessing higher education. Unlike private colleges that charge premium fees, MBMC is a non-profit community institution managed by a dedicated team of educationists, academics, and social workers.

This community foundation extends to its governance structure. The college is operated by the MBF, a charitable organization dedicated to serving the nation. Usha Kiran Bhandari, the Chairperson of the Foundation, has emphasized the college's role in promoting justice and access to education (ThePrint, 2023). This focus on equity and access aligns with Madan Bhandari's vision of a society in which every citizen is given an opportunity to progress.

The college's national reach is evident in its enrollment figures. The college serves more than 1,500 students from various districts across the country (Embassy of India, 2023). Such geographical diversity indicates that MBMC serves not only residents of Kathmandu but also students from rural and remote areas who come to the capital to pursue higher education. The college also provides a large number of scholarships to deserving and needy students, further demonstrating its commitment to accessibility.

Theme 2: Extensive Educational Programs, Academic Development, and Research Culture

The second theme is associated with the development of a broad and diversified academic portfolio at MBMC. The college offers programs ranging from the class 11 to the master's level. At the NEB level, MBMC offers programs in the Science, Management, and Humanities streams. At the bachelor's level, the college offers Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Business Studies (BBS), Bachelor of Business Management (BBM), Bachelor of Computer Application (BCA), and Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Information Technology (BSc CSIT). At the master's level, MBMC offers programs in Sociology, Journalism and Mass Communication, and English. These academic data show that MBMC currently provides a multi-level academic structure, including at least three higher secondary streams, five bachelor's-level programs, and three master's-level programs. Such program diversity indicates that MBMC has gradually expanded from general education to professional, technical, managerial, social science, and humanities-based higher education.

All higher education programs at MBMC are affiliated with TU, the oldest and largest

university in Nepal. TU affiliation provides the college with standardized curricula, examination systems, and nationally recognized degrees. However, this affiliation also places MBMC within the broader governance system of TU, where administrative delays and bureaucratic procedures have often been identified as challenges in higher education management. Despite these limitations, MBMC has continued to expand its academic programs and institutional capacity over the last twenty-five years. The college is also accredited by the UGC. According to UGC Nepal, MBMC was accredited on January 2, 2025, with accreditation valid until January 1, 2030 (University Grants Commission Nepal, 2026). This QAA accreditation is an important institutional milestone because it reflects MBMC's commitment to quality assurance, academic accountability, governance improvement, student support, documentation, and institutional development.

The academic growth of MBMC is further strengthened by its emerging research culture. The college website presents research-related publications such as faculty research articles, conference papers, annual reports, audit reports, tracer study reports, survey reports, EMIS reports, newsletters, and bulletins (Madan Bhandari Memorial College, 2026). These documents show that MBMC is not limited to classroom teaching but is also developing a culture of academic documentation, institutional reporting, evidence-based planning, and knowledge production. The presence of the Research Management Cell (RMC) also supports the institutionalization of research activities within the college.

A major indicator of MBMC's research culture is the publication of the *Journal of*

Productive Discourse (ProD). The journal is published by MBMC and is described as an international, not-for-profit, blind peer-reviewed journal of critical readings across disciplines. It provides an open-access academic platform for teachers, students, and scholars to publish research articles, reviews, and critical perspectives on interdisciplinary issues. The availability of ProD through both the college website and NepJOL further increases the visibility of MBMC's research output. The call for papers for the fourth volume of ProD also demonstrates the continuity of the journal and the college's commitment to sustaining regular academic publication.

Thus, MBMC's second major achievement is not only the expansion of educational programs but also the development of an academic ecosystem supported by program diversity, QAA accreditation, research publication, faculty engagement, institutional documentation, and student-centered academic services. The combination of extensive academic programs and a growing research culture has helped MBMC evolve from a teaching-focused community college into a quality-oriented and research-aware higher education institution.

Theme 3: Infrastructural Development Through National and International Partnerships

The third theme concerns the infrastructural development of MBMC, particularly the construction of a new college building with the support of the Government of India. The project was implemented as a High Impact Community Development Project under Nepal–India

Development Cooperation (Embassy of India, 2023). The building, designed in 2066 B.S. (2009/10 A.D.), comprises 30 rooms, including 29 classrooms, a library, and conference facilities (Online Radio Nepal, 2023; ThePrint, 2023).

The building was officially handed over to the College Management Committee (CMC) on February 27, 2023, in the presence of Indian Ambassador HE Naveen Srivastava, former Nepali Foreign Minister Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, and Usha Kiran Bhandari (Embassy of India, 2023; ANI News, 2023). This symbolic event marked not only the completion of the infrastructure project but also the enduring friendship between Nepal and India. According to Ambassador Srivastava, the Government of India supported the construction of the building as part of its developmental partnership with Nepal (ThePrint, 2023). In addition, the college has a 250-seat-capacity auditorium hall in Block A, further strengthening its physical infrastructure by providing a well-equipped venue for academic, institutional, cultural, and public programs.

In addition to the main building, MBMC has constructed a new facility with substantial financial support from the Kathmandu Metropolitan City under a bilateral agreement between KMC and the Madan Bhandari Foundation. In this new building, the college has established well-furnished and technologically advanced classrooms, workshops, research laboratories, a resource-rich e-library, regular publication units, research-based teaching and learning pedagogies, its own frequency-modulated (FM) radio station, and a well-equipped audiovisual studio.

The college radio station is another unique feature that is uncommon among community colleges and provides students with firsthand experience in media production and broadcasting.

Theme 4: Comprehensive Student Development Model

The fourth theme focuses on how MBMC has ensured the holistic growth of students beyond mainstream academics. The college promotes proactive student engagement through leadership and personality development programs, co-curricular activities, extracurricular activities, non-credit courses, on-the-job training, field visits, and community service programs. These activities help students develop critical thinking, decision-making, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills that are essential for both academic and professional life.

Student life at MBMC is further enriched through various institutional platforms such as the Student Council, student clubs, alumni networks, and different co-curricular and extracurricular programs. The Student Council provides students with opportunities to participate in leadership, representation, coordination, and institutional activities. Similarly, student clubs encourage creativity, teamwork, social responsibility, and active participation in academic, cultural, literary, sports, research, and community-based initiatives. The Alumni Association also plays an important role in connecting former students with the college, supporting networking, mentorship, institutional development, and career guidance for current students.

The student development approach of the college is clearly connected to its vision, “Excellence in Leadership for Transformation.” This vision reflects the college’s commitment

to producing responsible, confident, and transformative graduates. The message from the Campus Chief also highlights MBMC as a glorious, inspiring, and thought-provoking center of learning that promotes quality education through leadership-oriented academic practices. This focus on leadership reflects the personal legacy of Madan Bhandari as a transformative leader and indicates that MBMC aims to develop similar qualities among its students.

Collaborative learning is also an important part of MBMC’s student development process. The college uses academic information system software and online social media platforms to support knowledge sharing, communication, and collaborative learning. This digital orientation has helped students become more creative, dynamic, research-oriented, and connected with peers and teachers. Through ECAs, CCAs, student clubs, alumni engagement, Student Council activities, and digital learning practices, MBMC has created a student-centered environment that supports holistic development beyond the classroom.

Theme 5: Quality Assurance, Governance, Association, Media, and Technology

The fifth theme focuses on MBMC’s continuous pursuit of quality assurance and institutional accreditation. The college has been accredited by the UGC, and the official UGC list records MBMC as a QAA-accredited community college affiliated with TU, with accreditation dated January 2, 2025, and valid until January 1, 2030 (University Grants Commission [UGC], 2026). In Nepal, the QAA system is implemented through the Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council under the UGC, and it assesses higher education institutions in major areas such as institutional

policy, curriculum, teaching, learning and evaluation, research, infrastructure and learning resources, student support, information systems, and public information. Therefore, MBMC's QAA accreditation reflects not only academic achievement but also institutional commitment to governance, infrastructure, student services, transparency, and continuous quality improvement.

The fact that MBMC has achieved accreditation is significant because QAA requires a collective institutional effort. According to information about the college available through the Nepal Public Campus Association, MBMC is a non-profit community institution established to provide quality education at an affordable cost and has developed academic programs, infrastructure, techno-friendly classrooms, workshops, research laboratories, e-library facilities, and its own radio transmission system. Statements from the campus leadership also highlight that this achievement is the result of the sincere efforts of the management committee, founders, faculty members, supporting staff, students, and stakeholders over many years. This shows that MBMC's quality journey is based on collective ownership rather than individual institutional action alone.

MBMC's governance identity is also connected to its association with the Nepal Public Campus Association. NPCA functions as an umbrella organization for non-profit, community-based public campuses in Nepal and works to promote access, affordability, quality, research-oriented education, and coordination among community campuses. The association states that community campuses have played a significant role in expanding higher education to different social groups, including students

from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, women, and marginalized communities. MBMC's membership in NPCA strengthens its identity as a public/community-oriented higher education institution guided by service, accountability, access, and social responsibility.

This association also provides MBMC with a broader institutional network. Through NPCA, community campuses become connected through shared concerns such as QAA activities, training, research initiatives, scholarship support, workshops, seminars, and policy advocacy. In this sense, MBMC's quality assurance is not limited to internal administration. It is also linked to broader public campus governance, peer learning, and collective improvement within Nepal's higher education sector. The NPCA framework supports the idea that community campuses must remain transparent, accountable, inclusive, and responsive to national educational needs.

Another important dimension of MBMC's quality culture is its use of media and technology as living laboratories for students. Radio Shweta Shardul 93.6 MHz is one of the strongest examples. The station is an educational radio service operated by MBMC and broadcasts from Kathmandu. It has its own production studio, control room, and learning center for interns, and it is used to disseminate news, views, and educational programs. MBMC's annual report further states that the college owns Radio Shweta Shardul 93.6 MHz and has used UGC-supported radio equipment to strengthen Journalism and Mass Communication students' practical learning through broadcast consoles, computers, microphones, studio headphones, and field recorders. Thus, Radio Shweta Shardul functions as a practical classroom where students can move from theory to real-world media production.

Similarly, MBMC IdeaX, idea-pitching activities, ESP, and hackathon-based programs demonstrate how the college connects technology, entrepreneurship, innovation, and problem-solving. MBMC IdeaX is described by the college as its flagship technology event, and the 2024 edition focused on indigenous languages and communities through a hackathon model. The 2025 MBMC IdeaX Hackathon encouraged students to move beyond theoretical learning and develop functional prototypes with the potential to grow into sustainable startups. The competition focused on sectors such as tourism, technology, health services and accessibility, fintech, cultural identity, and open innovation categories. The event also incorporated online presentation and finalist-selection rounds, helping students develop skills in idea pitching, teamwork, prototype development, and public presentation.

The Entrepreneurship Support Program (ESP) further strengthens this culture of practical learning. MBMC's annual report states that the college launched ESP with UGC support as a non-credit course, oriented more than 50 students, and aimed to develop entrepreneurs through the program. The academic calendar also includes an MBMC Internal Hackathon, indicating that innovation and technological experimentation are gradually becoming regular components of the college's academic and co-curricular system. These activities make MBMC more than a traditional teaching institution. They transform the college into a living laboratory where students learn communication, creativity, coding, entrepreneurship, leadership, teamwork, and real-world problem-solving.

The college has also gained notable international recognition attesting to its

institutional excellence. MBMC received the Outstanding Digital Transformation Organization Award 2025 at the ASSOCIO Digital Summit in Taipei, Taiwan, China, and the SAARC Education Award 2025 presented by Britannica Education. These accolades affirm the college's standing in innovative pedagogy and digital transformation, and its commitment to developing capable human resources for a rapidly evolving world.

Beyond external recognition, MBMC has cultivated robust networks spanning industry and academia. The college has signed Memoranda of Understanding with approximately 25 institutions, facilitating mutual benefit, knowledge exchange, research collaboration, skill development, and enriched practical learning opportunities for students.

MBMC has also played an active role in strengthening the collective voice of community colleges in Nepal. Through its membership in the Nepal Public Campus Association, the college has engaged in advocacy efforts aimed at advancing the rights and interests of community campuses within the national higher education landscape (Adhikari, 2025; Adhikari, 2026; & Gautam et al., 2025).

Thus, the theme of quality assurance at MBMC is deeply intertwined with governance, associational membership, media practice, and technological innovation. UGC accreditation provides formal recognition of institutional quality; affiliation with the NPCA situates MBMC within Nepal's broader public campus movement; Radio Shweta Shardul enables hands-on media training; and MBMC IdeaX, the ESP, and hackathon programs cultivate innovation and entrepreneurial thinking. Together, these elements demonstrate that MBMC's quality

journey encompasses far more than accreditation — it reflects an enduring commitment to building a dynamic, accountable, practice-oriented, and future-ready higher education institution.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the 25-year history of MBMC from its inception in 2001 to the present day, when it is recognized as a distinguished community institution. Through thematic analysis of institutional documents, media coverage, and scholarly literature, five major themes of excellence were identified: community-based affordable education, comprehensive academic programs, infrastructural development through international collaboration, a holistic approach to student development, and quality assurance and accreditation.

The results show that the success of MBMC is based on several interrelated factors. First, its establishment as a non-profit community organization has enabled it to maintain its focus on its educational mission rather than on profit maximization. Second, the memorial character of the college, named after Madan Bhandari, and its guiding motto, Excellence in Leadership for Transformation, provide a sense of unity that informs institutional practices and stakeholder engagement. Third, the Government of India has served as a strategic international partner, enabling infrastructural development that would otherwise not have been possible. Fourth, the continuity and direction provided by the MBF, the CMC, and the campus administration have been supported by committed leadership that has guided the institution for more than twenty-five years.

These findings have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the research demonstrates that organizational excellence in

community colleges can be achieved through the integration of multiple success factors, including community orientation, memorial legacy, international partnership, holistic development, and quality assurance. The case of MBMC contributes to the body of research on memorial institutions by demonstrating how a memorial identity can be translated into an educational context. Practically, the study provides lessons for other community colleges in Nepal and elsewhere, including the importance of maintaining a clear mission, strengthening community governance, pursuing accreditation, investing in infrastructure, and fostering international partnerships.

The limitations of this research include its reliance on publicly available documents rather than primary research involving interviews with faculty members, students, and administrators. Future research could be expanded through qualitative interviews to obtain more direct stakeholder perspectives. Additionally, quantitative research on student outcomes, graduate employment rates, and institutional performance indicators would complement the qualitative findings presented here.

After 25 years of service, MBMC's journey from vision to distinction is both inspiring and instructive. The college stands as a beacon of what can be achieved in Nepal's challenging higher education landscape through community commitment, institutional leadership, and sustained effort. As the Campus Chief states, "It is my strong belief that our past and present students experience a unique teaching-learning environment and can feel the difference". Indeed, MBMC has made a difference over the past 25 years, and its legacy continues to grow.

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