

**IMPACT OF CHILD CLUBS PARTICIPATION IN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
A Study of Dhading District**

A Thesis Submitted to
Central Department of Rural Development
Tribhuvan University,
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of the Master of Arts (MA)
in
Rural Development

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled **Impact of Child Clubs Participation in Community Development: A Study of Dhading District** submitted to the Central Department of Rural Development, Tribhuvan University, is entirely my original work prepared under the guidance and supervision of my supervisor Prajwol Man Pradhan. I have made due acknowledgements to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of preparing this thesis. The results of this thesis have not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree or for any other purposes. I assure that no part of the content of this thesis has been published in any form before.



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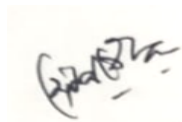
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RECOMMENDATION LETTER

This is to certify that **Mr. Naba Raj Joshi** has completed this thesis work entitled **Impact of Child Clubs Participation in Community Development: A Study of Dhading District** under my guidance and supervision. I recommend this thesis for final approval and acceptance.



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Date: 30 November, 2016

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APPROVAL LETTER

This Thesis entitled **Impact of Child Club's Participation in Community Development: A Case Study of Pida VDC of Dhading District** submitted by **Mr. Naba Raj Joshi** has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Rural Development.

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Mr. Naba Raj Joshi

ABSTRACT

This study, titled "Impact of Child Club in Community Development: A Case Study of Pida VDC of Dhading District," explores the role of child clubs as defenders and promoters of children's rights and their broader implications in Nepalese society. Focusing on eight child clubs newly merged from seven different groups within an ethnically mixed community in Pida VDC, Dhading District, the research examines how children's participation in these clubs has influenced community development and social awareness.

The study reveals that children, through these clubs, have emerged as competent social actors capable of making informed decisions on issues affecting their lives. Despite existing challenges such as low awareness and traditional societal practices that often limit child participation, the child clubs have cultivated a sense of collective agency among children. This increased participation has not only empowered children in decision-making but also highlighted their issues within the community.

The clubs have had a positive impact, as evidenced by the personal growth and advocacy shown by participating children. While the main focus of the clubs has been personality development to help children navigate daily challenges, they have simultaneously played a significant role in promoting children's rights. Overall, the research underscores the transformative potential of child clubs in fostering child agency, raising rights awareness, and contributing to community development in Nepal.

Key words: Child, Club, Community, Development, Dhading, Nepal

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBS.....Central Bureau of Statistics in Nepal

CCRGs.....Community Child Rights Groups

COWCP..... Consortium of Organization Working for Child Participation

CPGB.....Child Participation Guide Book

CRC.....Convention on the Rights of the Child

CWIN.....Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Center

DCRC.....Delhi Children’s Rights Club in Indian

DVC.....Village Development Committee

I/NGO.....International/National non-Governmental Organization

NGOs.....Non-governmental Organizations

NOSEB.....Norsk Senter for Barneforskning (Norwegian Centre for Child Research

NPCANational Plan of Action for Children

SCN..... ..Save the Children Norway

SCUK..... Save the Children United Kingdom

SCUS..... Save the Children United States

SOWC.....State of World Children

SSRP.....School Sector Reform Plan

UNCRC.....United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child

UNICEF.....United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

VDC.....Village Development Committee

NPAC.....National Plan of Action for Children

VDC.....Village Development Committee

CRPChild Rights Programming

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Club work aims to find undiscovered leaders and to give them opportunity for congenial work and for development through their interest in the children, their work with them and their partnership with State and National leaders of large experience. Thus, the country's own resources have been utilized for the benefit of the country. Club work is the performance of a definite farm, garden, or farm-home interest enterprise, and is based on the best economic practice of the farm and home. It aims to teach better methods of agriculture and home economics. When co-ordinate with school work, it serves greatly to increase interest in all of the school studies and other activities. Children from ten to eighteen years old¹ are organized into local clubs, and these clubs are federated into a county, State, and National organization. Recently children's rights and issues have been the matters of wider discussions and debates around the globe. Additionally, children's right to participate has got an unprecedented focus in the democratically growing world (Benson, 2005).

In order to promote children's rights, mainly the rights to participate, child clubs have come into being in the global South in particular. There are about fourteen thousand child clubs only in Nepal working for children's rights and their issues. The clubs are getting more and more popular in Nepalese society since the last decade. They have been very successful in promoting children's right to participation in social activities in particular and have raised the issues that are of direct concern to them. However, children's organizations are not new in Nepal. There have long been children's organizations. Most notably, children have involved in the clubs and scouts in many important ways since 1952. It seems that children have been included; not actively involved in the adult-led organizations. The child clubs came into existence in the initiation of the international

and national organizations working with children and their issues in the beginning (Bourdillon, 2006).

The 'child-to-child training program' conducted by SCN appears to have incited children to form a group to continue their work and some of the clubs were formed to this end. Some of the clubs were supported by Save the Children US and UK as well. The rest of them came into being freely because of the dissemination of the concept to the nearby villages. Some child clubs were established in response to a fictional child club that children heard in many of the stories told to them on child-to-child radio programs. While child-to-child groups were created around school settings, the child clubs were structured around a forum for meetings and activities (Bjerke, 2009).

The child clubs are both for boys and girls. They provide a rare opportunity for children to mix with those who are outside of their social group, and to learn to respect a difference. They have been an important medium for children to air their voices for their rights enshrined in the UNCRC. The clubs have promoted children as active citizens and been important 'democratic training grounds (Ebbing, 2010) which result in the advancement of democracy and children's rights (Rajbhandary et al., *ibid.*). In addition, my research revealed that the clubs have succeeded in collecting children's voices from all corners of society and bringing them to the policy makers. Children have got a platform to act as competent social agents in their own organizations for their own development (Ebbing, 2010).

There are two kinds of child clubs in Nepal. They are (1) school-based child clubs and (2) community-based child clubs. The community-based child clubs are the focus of my research as well. These two are the most common types of child clubs in terms of the regions of locations (Child Participation Guide book, 2007). Likewise, as the Guide Book further states, child clubs can be categorized in terms of a number of factors. In terms of the activities that children get involved, two kinds of child clubs exist; general child clubs, which have been established in order to promote child participation, do not limit to

a particular subject of discussion and cover a number of subjects, and the community based child clubs situated in the rural areas are of this kind in nature; and subject focused child clubs, on the other hand, have been formed in order to discuss on a limited number of subjects of interests to children. There are some child clubs who focused only one of these themes like child labor, cleanliness, library development, etc (Kellet,2010).

1.2 Statement of Problem

Child clubs have emerged as important platforms for children's participation, learning, and community engagement in Nepal. In Pida VDC of Dhading District, these clubs offer children opportunities to gather, share experiences, and develop skills through a range of activities such as singing, dancing, theatre, environmental work, and awareness campaigns. Club meetings often serve as a structured space where children learn decision-making, democratic interaction, and organizational management. However, despite these positive developments, several issues remain that warrant deeper investigation.

Firstly, while clubs provide a valuable platform for children's personal growth, the actual degree of children's agency and involvement in designing and leading projects appears limited. Many club initiatives are influenced or directed by adults, which can restrict genuine child-led participation and undermine the intended goal of empowering children as change agents.

Secondly, participation in these clubs is not equal among all children. Gender disparities are evident, particularly with older girls often being unable to engage in recreational or playful activities due to household responsibilities and social norms. Additionally, although children recognize the clubs as spaces for self-expression and learning, their potential as enjoyable, inclusive environments remain underutilized.

Thirdly, while children report improvements in confidence, public speaking, and environmental awareness, community members, particularly adults, tend to overlook the broader social contributions of the clubs. Projects initiated by the children are often not

fully recognized as child-led efforts, and the impact of clubs on community development is undervalued.

Finally, the awareness-raising aspect of the clubs, especially regarding children's rights, is both promising and problematic. While children are beginning to take initiative on rights-related issues, there is a risk that their actions may be manipulated by adults to serve agendas not fully understood or designed by the children themselves.

This research seeks to address the following key questions:

- i) What is the current status of child clubs in Pida VDC?
- ii) What factors influence children's participation in these clubs?
- iii) What impacts do these clubs have on the lives of participating children?

By exploring these questions, this study aims to assess the effectiveness, inclusiveness, and developmental impact of child clubs within the local community context.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this research is to examine the role of child clubs as defenders and promoters of children's rights and to understand their impact on Nepalese society. It also seeks to highlight the social conditions of children and their participation in community life through child clubs. Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

- 1. To assess the current status of child clubs in Pida VDC.**

This includes examining their structure, membership, activities, and operational effectiveness.

- 2. To identify the factors that influence children's participation in child clubs.**

This involves exploring social, cultural, economic, and gender-related barriers or enablers that affect children's involvement.

3. To evaluate the impacts of child clubs on the lives of children.

This focuses on understanding changes in children's confidence, awareness, leadership, education, and social engagement resulting from their participation in the clubs.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Despite the growing number of child clubs across Nepal, there has been limited research focusing specifically on community-based child clubs and their roles in promoting children's rights. This study is significant for several reasons:

1. Filling the Research Gap:

While a few studies have explored child clubs in general, this research uniquely focuses on community-based child clubs, an area that remains largely unexplored. It provides new insights into their formation, purpose, and role in community development.

2. Clarifying the Concept of Child Clubs:

The study helps clarify the various meanings and interpretations of child clubs and child participation within the Nepalese context. It examines how these clubs' function and what they mean to the children and communities involved.

3. Understanding Children's Participation:

The research uncovers the different types of activities that child club members engage in to strengthen their participation rights and decision-making abilities. It highlights how these clubs create spaces where children learn to express themselves, make collective decisions, and take social action.

4. Raising Awareness on Children's Rights:

By exploring how conscious children and adults are about children's rights, the study reveals which rights are most recognized and prioritized in the community. It also addresses how children's rights are being promoted or challenged within the existing social structures.

5. **Highlighting the Socioeconomic Context:**

The research provides a deeper understanding of children's positions in Nepalese society and how they respond to socioeconomic challenges. It also examines how traditional norms and power structures are being questioned and challenged by children through their collective actions in child clubs.

6. **Policy and Program Development:**

The findings offer valuable information for government agencies, NGOs, and child rights organizations. The study provides practical direction for designing child-friendly policies and programs that support children's rights in line with national and international legal frameworks.

7. **Promoting a Child-Friendly Society:**

Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader goal of creating a more secure, inclusive, and just society for both children and adults by recognizing children as active agents in their own development and in community life.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

In qualitative research, the presence and behavior of the researcher can significantly influence the way participants share information. Acknowledging this, I carefully adopted different roles throughout the research process to create an environment where participants—especially children—felt comfortable, respected, and free to express their thoughts.

Recognizing that children join child clubs voluntarily and highly value their freedom in participating in various activities, I intentionally took on a **non-authoritarian** role during interactions. This approach was essential to uphold the children's autonomy and ensure that their participation in the research was open, voluntary, and honest. By showing respect for their freedom and encouraging their input without pressure or control, I was able to gather more authentic and meaningful data.

Limitations of the Study

While this study offers valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge the following limitations:

1. **Geographical Scope:**

The study is limited to **Pida VDC of Dhading District**, and findings may not be generalizable to other regions.

2. **Focus Area:**

The research focused only on **eight child clubs**, potentially limiting the diversity of experiences and perspectives represented.

3. **Data Sources:**

The study utilized both **primary and secondary data**, but the scope of available secondary sources may have constrained the depth of contextual analysis.

4. **Sample Size:**

The research was conducted with a total of **50 child club members**, which may not fully capture the range of experiences and opinions of all children involved in clubs across the region.

CHAPTER -TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review consists of reviewing both the theoretical and previous related studies to shape to the present study.

2.1 Theoretical Review

Nepalese society has been dominated by the ideals of Hindu religion to a large extent along with Buddhism and other religions. The ideals of other religions such as Buddhism in particular have significant impact on Nepalese society too. Nepalese society is patriarchal in nature positioning women and children in minority in terms of participating in social activities and decision making. Women and children in particular are still in no position of decision making. By nature, Nepalese society does not promote child participation. In addition, children's rights have been mostly neglected in comparison with women's rights. Discrimination in terms of gender and age group is still prevalent. Nevertheless, the male-dominated society is changing to an egalitarian society in snail's pace by the influence of education and mass media. The child clubs are also playing significant role in challenging the conventional practices that hinder child participation (Abebe, 2009).

Different States have different approaches to comply with their obligations to implement children's rights in their countries. Some have promulgated new constitutions or amended the existing ones in order to incorporate provisions of the UNCRC, while others have translated the UNCRC into their domestic law. Nepal has translated basic principles of the UNCRC into its domestic law and established Children's Act 1992 as well. Till date six constitutions have been promulgated in Nepal. In the four constitutions announced before 1990, children's rights were not addressed. Children's rights were included in

more general human rights. Children's issues were not of great concern and importance to Nepalese government till 1980s. Children as a development concern was only included for the first time in the seventh Plan (1985-90), but for the first time, the 1990 constitution (Article 20b) of the country officially states that the State shall make necessary arrangements to safeguard the rights and interests of children, ensure that they are not exploited and make gradual arrangements for free education (Benson, 2005).

I concisely review child clubs in different parts of the world, particularly in the global South in order to draw comparative views on the ways child clubs are working for promoting children's overall well-being through the clubs. A child club is understood as an organization led and managed by children for themselves to deal with their issues in the community. It is a common platform and an effective medium for children to make their voices reach to the policy making level. Child clubs can be taken as local implementation of global initiatives. The UNCRC is the global initiative to fight for the rights of the children.

Child clubs in Sierra Leone, as Cox (2009) contends, were formed by Save the Children as a means of protecting children and teaching them and their community about their rights. In the introduction of the booklet, she further notes that child clubs have been "a crucial means of bringing children together in a safe forum so that they can protect themselves and other children and to express themselves freely" (p.4). They help the children build up their confidence, acquire knowledge of their rights, and empower children to become role models for their own generation and those to come. In Sierra Leone, a child club is understood as "a group of children who meet regularly together in their community to mix with each other, talk about their problems and their lives and to form friendships" (Cox, 2009, p. 4).

The child clubs in Nepal, as in other countries, have been a forum for children's participation in social activities through which they can show that they are able to do a lot for themselves and for the people in their societies if they get a chance and support from

adults. Furthermore, the international child rights and welfare organizations, like SCN, SCUS, UK, UNICEF, Plan International, etc. have played the key role in the establishment of these clubs. I have further looked into the organizational structures and activities of those clubs as well.

In Sri Lanka, as Seneviratne (2008) describes, the orthodox adult structures are being imposed on children's groups such as child clubs and children are not provided with alternative structures that are more egalitarian, less hierarchical and are more empowering to all children within the clubs. There is still the domination of conventional adult model of organizational structure in the clubs. Nevertheless, the change is emerging in the organizational structure of the child clubs ranging from a structure of a single leadership, a hierarchical structure, a structure that reinforces collective leadership, and clusters of collective leadership. Children mostly preferred clusters of collective leadership, or collective leadership, which are different from traditional adult organizational structures and is more conducive to right-based child participation. Democratic leadership is of utmost emphasis in the clubs.

The article 15 (1) ensures children's right to form association and work for their own well beings. It makes clear that "States Parties recognize the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly". Making use of this right, it seems that children, along with the support of adults, have initiated their organization, the child club, in order to work for their rights. Child participation is the main focus of the child clubs as participation in social activities is a crucial right of every citizen in democratic society. Participation is a fundamental human right to be guaranteed and protected. Children's right to participate in the issues that affect them and influence the decision-making process has been enshrined in the UNCRC. The UNCRC has recognized children as active social actors in the process of shaping their lives. "They have their own views on their best interests, a growing capacity to make decisions, the right to speak and the right to be heard" (Wood head, 2010).

2.1.1 Information about child clubs

SN	Child club name	School Name of Dhading	Total no of Members		
			Girl	Boy	Total
1	Bhanubhakta Child Club	Bhanubhakta Secondary School-	7	10	17
2	Navajyoti child Club	Mahadev Primary School	7	8	15
3	Bageshowori child club	Tallo Ramche	9	9	18
4	Prgatisil child Club	Dolvanjyang Higher Sec School	14	15	29
5	Indrayeni Child Club	Indrayeni Lower Sec School	7	8	15
6	Gyan Jyoti Child Club	Gajuri Pida Secondary School	13	15	28
7	Saraswoti Child Club	Saraswoti Primary School	9	8	17
8	Prayatnaship Child club	Manevanjyang Primary School	6	5	11
9	Pindeshori Child Club	Pindeswhori Lower Sec School	20	16	36
11	Jaldevi Child club	Jaldevi Primary School	6	5	11
16	Jalkanya Child Club	Jalkanya Primary School	6	6	12
17	Janachetana Child Club	Janachetana School	8	10	18
18	Sunder devi Child club	Baghasunder Primary school	7	11	18
19	Shantaneshwor Child club	Shantaneshwor Primary school	6	6	12
20	Oile Child Club	Oile Primary School	8	8	16
21	Kalika Child Club	Kalika Primery School	5	9	14
22	Lakurai Child Club	Ghariang Primary School	8	11	19
23	Bhumisthan Child Club	Bhumesthan Primary School	6	7	13
24	Srijansil Child Club	Pipalvanjyang Secondary School	9	20	29
25	Simthali Child Club	Praja Primary School	4	7	11
26	Pragatisil Child Club	Gaurisankar Primary school	4	6	10
27	Pragatisil Child Club	Mahadevsthan Primary School	6	9	15
28	Gyanjyoti Child Club	Rahuldada Lower Sec School	6	11	17
29	Makhamali Child club	Chandi Devi Primary School	11	10	21

SN	Child club name	School Name of Dhading	Total no of Members		
			Girl	Boy	Total
30	Simtar Child Club	Simtar Primary School	5	6	11
31	Jarung Child Club	Jarung Simtar Priamry School	0	0	0
32	Saipatri Child Club	Baskharka Primary school	9	18	27
33	Laligurash Child club	Lawang Primary School	8	5	13
39	Daurali Child club	Daurali Primary school	5	10	15
40	Sahayogi Child club	Community base	6	10	16
		Total	225	279	504

2.2 Empirical Review

UNICEF (2011) has studied on ‘National Protection Policy for Children’ and ‘National Framework for Child Participation’. These soon-to-come measures has significantly contributed to translating the principles of the UNCRC, the right to participation in particular and decision making. Recently Government of Nepal has announced ‘National Child Policy’ in 2012 and unfortunately it is more paternalistic in ideals which undermines children’s competences and agency. Under the aegis of the UNICEF the ‘State of World Children (SOWC)’ 2011 was launched by adolescents 10th March in Mangalsen, the district headquarters of a far-western district, Achham, Nepal. The issues that the SOWC has address include social and gender 15 discrimination, child marriage, lack of purchasing power, sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, and the inability to talk about their issues openly. The SOWC is primarily concerned with the issues of adolescents in society.

Krappmann (2010) has conducted that the children should be given opportunity to express their views in all matter affecting them and those views should be given due weight according to the age and maturity of the children. This seems to be conditional

since children are able to express their views if only the adults give them a chance to do so, otherwise not. What happens if the adults deny doing so and turn a deaf ear to children's views? How can children get chance to practice this right in such a situation? This article contradicts with adult authority and demands adults' responsibility and sensitivity to children's views. The power imbalance still persists and remains dominant in policy documents. There is not any way out to resolve the power imbalance persistent in the UNCRC. In such an asymmetrical situation, how can we "integrate parents and other responsible persons, who are responsible for wellbeing and development of children, into the dynamics of growing influence of children on matters of concern to them.

Valentine (2011) argues that the available literature on agency only gives accounts of the privileged children and not of the marginalized and disadvantaged children. She proposes a critical social perspective model of agency in order to incorporate marginalized and disadvantaged children, and account the differences between children, and between children and adults too. My research also reflects on whether the child clubs have been able to include both privileged and marginalized children or not. In addition, how the clubs have been able to develop the children's agency and what factors create a challenge to developing and promoting their agency.

Singh (2012) has examined the children are seen as competent social actors in new social studies of childhood and proponents of which seek for children's participation in all matters that are of interest to children, and simultaneously and thereafter influence the decision-making process that affect them in both explicit and implicit terms. Additionally, the UNCRC in articles 12 and 13 legally provisions for the participation of children to have a say on the issues of their concerns and their views should be taken into consideration. The community-based child clubs seem to have emerged to meet this end. My thesis aimed at exploring the lived experiences of children involved in the community-based child clubs in order to gain knowledge on how the clubs have been good defenders of children's rights, particularly their right to participate and agency and

what implications the clubs have in Nepalese society. Qualitative questionnaires as a gateway to enter the issue, and (semi) interviews, focus groups discussions and ranking as primary qualitative methods were used to collect data. Nine children, five girls and four boys, and six adults were the informants, but children were the focus of the research. The empirical data were further analyzed and interpreted. This research shows that the community based child clubs have been a good forum for children to get information on children's rights and other issues, and develop their personal and social skills. Children's participation in the social activities that are of direct interest to children has been the main focus of the clubs. Children lead, manage and implement the clubs' activities and program themselves and hence children's agency has been recognized and promoted.

These clubs have brought positive changes to children themselves, their families and societies. Furthermore, the clubs have got a strong space in the society and challenged the traditional beliefs and practices that discourage child participation. Thus, it is reasonable to say that the child clubs have turned into a real crusader for informing, promoting and protecting children's right to participate and hence develop their agency.

CHAPTER - THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to describe and explain the process of my research. Keeping in mind that there is no single proven path to collect the qualitative data, The researcher has triangulated several methods to tap the lived experiences of the children on their involvement and activities in the child clubs, and link them to the notions of childhood. The context in which This research has been carried out my research determined the selection of multiple related methods and techniques. In this chapter I was described about the research design, rationale of site selection, nature and sources of data, sample and sampling strategy and data collection techniques and tools etc.

3.1 Research Design

This study has been carried out on the basis of analytical as well as descriptive research design because the study was focused on to investigate the effectiveness of Child Club for rural development taking the advantage activities, their participation and benefit from the club. The researcher has been collected the information on what we see, hear, understand and found at their community.

The in-depth account of participants is generated by talking to them, watching their behaviors and analyzing their artifacts (such as diaries, meeting minutes, photographs, drawings), taking into accounts different contexts in which they are based Interactive relationship between the researcher and participants through collaborative process for the construction of meaning in a particular context is the core of qualitative research which tried to maintain while collecting the data.

3.2 Rationale of Site Selection

The field sites for this research are community-based child clubs located in Pida VDC of Dhading District, where eight newly merged child clubs were selected using judgmental

sampling. These clubs are situated in ethnically diverse communities, offering a rich context for studying children's participation and rights.

The rationale behind selecting this particular site includes:

- High prevalence of child clubs in the area, making it a suitable location to study various aspects of child participation and club functioning.
- Diverse backgrounds of child members, which allows for a broader understanding of the social, cultural, and economic factors influencing child participation.
- The researcher's close relationship with the community, which facilitated trust, access, and deeper engagement with participants—ensuring more accurate and natural data collection.
- Availability of regular meetings of the Pida VDC child network, providing opportunities to gather insights from children with different lived experiences across the region.

The eight selected child clubs are:

1. Bhanubhakta Child Club
2. Pragatisheel Child Club
3. Indrayani Child Club
4. Gyangoti Child Club
5. Pindeshori Child Club
6. Sagarmatha Child Club
7. Bageshori Child Club
8. Prayatnashi Child Club

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

This study is based on both qualitative and quantitative data, with a primary emphasis on qualitative insights gathered from the field.

- **Primary Data:**
Collected through structured questionnaires, field observations, and interactions/interviews with children and adult respondents involved in the clubs.
- **Secondary Data:**
Sourced from published and unpublished materials, including:
 - Books, journals, articles, dissertations
 - Reports from NGOs and government agencies
 - Economic surveys and demographic profiles
 - District and VDC profiles

3.3 Universe, Sample, and Sampling Procedure

- **Universe:** There are a total of 22 child clubs in Pida VDC. Out of these, 8 clubs were purposively selected for this research.
- **Target Group:** The primary focus is on children aged between 12 to 20 years who are active members of community-based child clubs. These children are regarded as competent social actors with meaningful perspectives on issues affecting them.
- **Sampling Method:**
 - **Simple random sampling** was used to select **50 children** (both boys and girls) from the eight clubs.
 - In addition to child participants, **six adults** were also selected:
 - Four directly working with the clubs
 - One teacher trainer providing critical insights
 - One community member from the club area
- **Research Approach:**
This study adopts a child-centered research approach, viewing children not just as subjects or objects, but as active participants and co-constructors of knowledge. The methodology aimed to empower children as key informants by encouraging their active involvement in the meaning-making process.

- **Interviews:**

- All child participants were interviewed individually in person, often in small groups to ensure comfort and openness.
- Adult participants were also interviewed individually to gather critical and contextual perspectives on the clubs and their activities.

- **Data Collection Focus:**

The study primarily relied on the views, perceptions, motivations, and experiences of both children and adults. To support and contextualize these findings, a review of relevant literature and previous research on child clubs was also conducted.

3.5 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

Methods are systematic techniques for gathering data about the research participants through their participation in the collaborative process of meaning making with researchers. Child-friendly participatory methods or techniques are needed to get insights of children's experiences and opinions. The researcher has been used several tools of data collections like observation, key informant interview, and oral tradition for collecting primary data. Similarly, the necessary secondary data has been collected from different government offices and non-government organizations, published journals, media, and internet.

3.5.1 Household Survey

The researcher has been used tool in order to collect ideas and experiences of children involved in the child clubs. The questionnaires is open-ended so that the participants could express their views on the child clubs and reflected upon key issues freely. One of the main purposes of using this technique is to collect ideas for generating issues on the phenomenon which came to be a better base for interviewing the participants later. **To get the primary data and relevant information the researcher has been applied the observation method. Despite the fact achieved from respondents' reply, the researcher herself has observe the impact of child club in that community.** The structured questionnaire has been

developed, and the questionnaire has been filled up by the researcher visiting all selected respondents or households.

3.5.2 Key Information Interview

The key informant interview is a standard method that is widely used in socio cultural development inquiry. This is one method used in rapid assessment for gathering information from the affected community. The term “key informant” refers to anyone who can provide detailed information and opinion based on his or her knowledge of a particular issue. Key informant Interviews seek qualitative information that can be narrated and cross-checked. This technique has also useful to provide essential information about the activities of respondents. VDC Secretary, social workers were taken as key informants for this study. These key informants are interviewed to get more information as per necessary. Key Informants for this study have those who has been able to express thoughts, feeling, opinions regarding different aspects of child club in this VDC.

3.5.3 Observation

The researcher has visited the study area and has observed the children's situation with the help of some well reputed, active and literate person of study area.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

The collected raw data and information has been first categorized on the basis of its nature then it has been processed for analysis. For the analysis process we have employ the responses to formulate the data. Perception, attitude, beliefs, ethos, behavior, and feelings concern with live hood has been descriptively analyzed. They have been displayed in social map and chart from raw data

CHAPTER - FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter deals with the analysis and presentation of data, obtained from primary sources. In this chapter includes the social structure, caste, ethnicity composition of respondents, food habit, religion, education, economic structure, occupational structure, family size, age and gender composition. and interpreted descriptively using simple statistical tools like percentage, mean etc. with Para-orthographic presentation as tables and charts.

4.1 Description of the Study Area

Dhading district is a part of Province No 3, is one of the seventy-five districts of Nepal. The district with DadhingBesi as a district headquarters, covers area 1,926 square kilometers (744 sq. mi), had a a population of 338658 in 2001 and 336067 in 2011. Dhading district was selected for the case study, where different people live with different ethnicity and cast, among them most of the residents are empowered through savings and credit cooperative. Pida VDC has been selected for my study. The main reason behind the selection of this place is of course due to the familiarity of the researcher too. Total 22 child club has been established in Pida among them 8 clubs were selected.

4.3 Present Status of Child Club in Pida VDC

This heading particularly aims to make the critical analysis of the data and their interpretations with direct reference to my first research objective and question. I have explored children's experiences and reflections on various connotations of child clubs and inclusiveness of clubs in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, class and disabilities. My main purpose of presenting and analyzing these categories is to get insights of the backgrounds of the child clubs which can help thoroughly contextualize my research. I

have made use of both empirical data; the data that obtained through my research methods and the secondary data; the books, reports and articles on child clubs in the context. As the nature of my research, I have given much emphasis on children's views in particular on different categories along with the views of adult son the same topics for the sake of comparison and critical analyses.

In addition, I have also reflected the rights (or issues) of prominent concerns to children in the context in this chapter. I have made use of the important views that children and adults made in interviews to understand the individual perspectives and the views children concluded in focus group discussions for a more generalized view of children on different variables. Furthermore, I have related the analysis and interpretation of the data to theories and theoretical underpinnings.

4.2.1 Information about Child Clubs

It seems that the clubs were primarily established as a place for children to meet, share and discuss their issues. However, as children started taking part in different social activities and programs, many terms and understandings have emerged to refer to a child club. 'An organization', 'a forum', 'a place', and 'a group' are the common terms existing in the context.

Mahesh, a person working for coordinating child clubs in Bhanubhakta child club, calls it "*a group of children gathering, enjoying and discussing the issues of their concern*". Hari, a local resident calls it "*an organization of children for learning and discussions*". These statements show that people have different understandings of the child clubs. Children have also used the same terms that are commonly found in documents and adults' discourses related to child and child clubs. According to the focus group discussion, the common understandings children had about the clubs are;

Hari Krishna: The organization where children gather to discuss the rights of children is called a child club (17-year-old boy)

Mina: Child club is a place where small children get organized in order to obtain information on child rights and other issues of children and entertain when they are free (15-year-old girl).

Sila: A child club is forum for children to get organized, discuss children's rights and the issues like child health, HIV/AIDS, child marriage, share experiences with each other and enjoy free times with friends by playing games, writing poems, organizing quiz contests, and so on (a 16-year-old girl).

Some children regarded the clubs as a place where they can meet, share and enjoy when they are free while other regarded it a forum which seriously deals with children's right issues and other social problems that directly influence children. Whatever terms are being used to refer to a child club, all children that participated in my research took the club as a means of change in their lives and a means of learning through group discussions and participation in various activities and programs. In addition, in children's opinions, the clubs have been a good place for meeting with new friends, sharing experiences, having fun and enjoyment through a number of games, learning a number of social issues related to children, and enriching their potentialities. As mentioned by children, the child clubs are best known as a means of child participation in social activities and programs. Furthermore, the community-based child clubs are particularly intended to work children's rights and issues, and learning as well.

The clubs seem to represent child community and children's voices on the issues that are of their concerns. According to children, the clubs have emerged as some sort of networked organization to fight for children's rights in society through a number of activities and awareness campaigns. They have dealt with adolescent health hazards, child marriage, child labor and community cleanliness. Furthermore, children's direct involvement in communal activities through child clubs has drawn adults' attention.

“Whenever, there is the meeting and gathering of the community and village development committee, the adults ask for the participation of child club members in their community” (Sila, a 16-year-old girl).

The researcher has met the children of the clubs whom interviewed later gathering at a meeting of the Village Council. In my opinion, this shows that children have been understood as important members of the community who can contribute to the development through their perspectives on the issues. Children have been able to establish the clubs as a dynamic crusader for their rights and other issues that affect in the realizations of them. Through the child club's children have proved that they are social actors, who participate in the process of sharing decisions which affect their lives and lives of people in around them. It seems to me that both children and adults have similar understandings of a community-based child club. I have briefly presented the common connotations that exist in adults' discourses and documents.

4.2.2 Children's Experiences on Inclusiveness of Child Clubs

More than 39,446 children from different class, caste, and ethnicity are actively taking part in the clubs to get information on child rights and learn life skills. I have reflected here children's experiences on inclusiveness of the child clubs based on own empirical data and previous researches in order to have a bird's eye point of views on everyday lives of children.

4.2.2.1 Gender

Gender dichotomy is the most contentious and criticized in societies. Conventionally every society is gendered society in that the roles of both boys and girls differ and accordingly they are taught both at home and in society in order to fit them in existing social templates. The boys are supposed to handle the out of home affairs while the girls the affairs inside the home. This traditional notion of gender is still more dominant in the South than it is the North. The socio-cultural values and norms that play a crucial role in

the constructions of gender adversely affect the roles of both boys and girls in the societies. In the child clubs I found the changing trend of involvement of club members in terms of gender. The 50 children that I interviewed shared that “In the beginning there were more boys and fewer girls in my clubs, but now more girls and fewer boys”. However, the gender variation is changing now and more and more girls are getting involved in social activities outside home.

Table No.4.1 Gender

Gender	No.	Percent
Girls	28	56
Boys	22	44
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

There can be several reasons behind greater number of girl participants in the clubs. One, in my opinion, can be the result of more and more women’s participation in social activities for the last decade. There is an increased awareness and advocacy campaign to include women in all sectors of social activities and state apparatuses throughout the country. Similarly, the traditional belief that women should be limited within domestic periphery is changing.

“Now people have started believing that their daughters can excel their sons if they got a chance” (a 15-year-old girl).

Furthermore, there can be a change in traditional view parents maintain that girls are more vulnerable to abuse and attack in public space. The girls can believe that they can

resist the abuse and attack likely to be meted out on them out of home. These kinds of things can have inspired girls to join the clubs. However, regarding the less participation of boys, there can be many reasons. One is those who join the community-based child clubs are mainly 12 to 18 years of children and when they reach at the age of 16 they are no longer children and they are more adults in Nepalese context. They might be busy in performing the adult related activities.

Likewise, there is slightly more participation of boys than girls in club meeting and activities. In the leading positions of the clubs, fewer than 2% of the total numbers of girls served as chairpersons, while the percentage for boys is 5%. Girls are proportionally represented in the post of treasurer only. This is also the impact of gendered culture. “Boys stress the position and hierarchy, whereas girls emphasize intimacy and connection” (Thorne, 1993, as cited in James et al., 1998, p. 85). Children say girls are more trustworthy than boys with money (Rajbhandary et al., *ibid.*). Although this figure has slightly changed now, the number of boys in leading position is still higher than girls. This was also received through interviews, e.g., as one girl, Mina (a 15 old girl) stated *“Girls are still reluctant and shy in coming forward to have their say while boys not to large extent”*. In addition, the conventional practices still do not allow the free movement of girl children out of home. Sima (a girl child) made it clear.

“Being a girl, we have a lot of problems... we cannot go out whenever we want like boys do”

Furthermore, in my opinion, the conventional ideas that boys are better than girls might have influenced the leading enterprise of the clubs. Women should play ‘silent’ supportive role to their male counterparts at home, not the leading one. In a majority of social gathering, the number of males still outnumber the women.

The socio-cultural assignment of gender roles can be acting as a discouraging factor for girls in taking leadership positions. However, the more and more girls are taking leaderships in the clubs, but the structure of the clubs is the same as the traditional adult

type in which only the extrovert and smart people get chances in the leading positions than those who are not so. This does not promote equal participation of all children in leading position and only the children who are smart and outspoken are taking the leading positions. It makes it clear that the existing conventional structure of the clubs seems to be changed in order to give equal opportunities to all participants in leading position. The structure that the child clubs in Serra Leone have can help to this end.

4.3.2. Age

Age is a social construction and every society has a defined age for its groups of people. It disappears as an individual grows up but childhood remains a permanent social category since one has to pass through it once in life from development perspectives of children are competent social actors in their own terms and rights and age does not limit one's potentiality to show up if provided an opportunity and congenial environment. However, the adult's view and interest-laden notion of competence accorded to children acts as a hindrance to practice their competences in their own terms and condition, which results in lesser participation of younger children in social activities than the older ones as it is assumed that the former are less competent and matured. Age has been a determining factor for children's involvement in the clubs.

Table 4.2: Age Group

S.N.	Age Group	Age group	Percentage
1	below 12 years	11	22
2	13-15 years	32	64
3	Above 15	7	14
	Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The children I interviewed were of 13 to 18 years old. According to the State of Children of Nepal (2011), the greater number of children involved in the clubs is of 13 to 15 years

of age and fewer of 15 to 18 years of age. The recommended age range, as Rajbhandary et al. (1999) describe, for club membership is from eight to sixteen in the SCN supported clubs, but in some clubs the maximum age for memberships is up to 18 years of age based on the spirit of the UNCRC.

However, there is a great deal of age variations between school based and community-based child club memberships. *“Even primary school children are the members of the clubs in the school-based children clubs but they are too young to join the community-based child clubs”*.

5.3.3. Caste and class

Although these are two different categories, they are related in terms of children’s participation in social activities in Nepalese context. Even though people from so-called upper castes are privileged to involving in social gathering and activities while people from so-called lower castes are marginalized and restricted from taking part in such activities, reports show that children from upper castes and rich class do not seem to be actively involved in the clubs. However, the socio-cultural values and norms in the context do not encourage the upper castes and rich class people let their children move freely wherever they want to go. And the reverse is true in case of people from lower castes, working and middle classes.

Table -4.3 Caste

Cast	No.	Percent
Bhramin	18	36
Chettri	16	32
Tamang	9	18
Others	8	16
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey 2016

There is a great deal of variation in terms of ethnicity or caste in club memberships. However, this variation seems to be caused by location, not by social practices in the clubs

5.4. Priorities of Children's Rights

I used ranking technique in order to know the rights in priority to children involved in the clubs. According to the analysis of the data obtained through this technique, children's right to basics is still the most prominent right of children in Nepal since half of its population is living under poverty line and about 2.6 million children (Census, 2001) are working as laborers throughout the country. The children of the clubs also put this right at the top of their priority. Similarly, children stressed the right to participate and have their voice after their right to basics in second priority. The right the children put in third in priority is the right to education and health services without discrimination in terms of gender, ethnicity and geography. However, the rights that children put in priority after these rights vary. Some emphasized children right to be protected against abuse and attack and some right to play and entertainment.

The most prominent rights that children thought were essential to them have been summarized below according their degree of priority.

1. Right to basics (provisional rights)
2. Right to participation (participation)
3. Right to education and health services without discrimination
4. Right to be protected against abuse and exploitation (protection)
5. Right to play and entertainment

This ordering of children's rights from more prominent to less prominent suggests that children are still striving to meet the basics of life in the context. The prevailing poverty

has tangible effects on the lives of children as well even if the article 27 (1) of the UNCRC states the role of States Parties in ensuring “the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development”. Furthermore, this gives me a solid ground to claim that the majority of children in the clubs, as stated in many documents, are from working class in the community-based child clubs who have given much emphasis on learning life skills in the clubs in order to cope with their everyday lives of work. By participating in the club's activities, as mentioned by children, they gained knowledge, skills and confidence which helped many of their friends to grab a better job opportunity after they leave the clubs.

4.3 Factors Affecting Children’s Participation

This chapter aims at making analysis of how the child clubs have been able to promote the crucial rights of the children, the right to participate and hence to enhance children’s agency. I have made the analyses and interpretations of empirical data with direct reference to my second research objective and research questions which seeks for the explanations of how the child clubs promote child participation and what kinds of situations they have faced in terms of their participation and decision-making power on those matters that are of direct interest to them.

Furthermore, I have interpreted data with reference to the sociology of childhood which views children as competent and active social actors who have valid perspectives about their worlds. Children are no longer passive and incompetent becoming and they are the social actors who determine their lives and the lives of people living around them (James and Prout, 1990) with constant interactions and negotiations with the adult structures. I have also explored the nature of children’s participation and its role in conceptualizing and materializing children’s capacities to manage their lives and lives of people in their surroundings, which is called children’s agency here. I have categorized my empirical data in into several sub-categories in order to be specific in seeing children participation

from various angles. I have further analyzed and explained child participation and agency as inextricably interrelated and complementary to each other in my research.

4.3.1 Children's Aims of Joining the Clubs

Some of the aims of both schools based and community-based child clubs seem similar. They both aim at teaching children some learning cum social skills. Nevertheless, it seems that the school-based clubs are more academic in nature and the community-based child clubs are much more empowerment oriented. The community-based child clubs go beyond the academic enterprise of children and emphasize greater autonomy of children's everyday lives. They have been able to significantly influence both child community and adult community. Therefore, it is important to study what the children state that the club goes, as both child and adult participants stressed, started being outspoken, much more social and improved a lot in school and college performance as well. The changes children have shown in their everyday lives after joining the clubs have prompted rise of the clubs in quantity across the country, as Sima (13-year-old girl) commented,

“I joined a club with an aim to improve my personality since I saw my senior child club member improve a lot in his study and other social skills as well”.

The aims of children that I have derived from my empirical data for joining the child clubs are mentioned here.

- To develop our personality
- To develop positive thinking
- To gain new skills and trainings
- To obtain information on child rights and child clubs
- To promote child rights in our localities

- To learn social and mental development skills
- To show that we are also important members for society
- To meet new friends and share with the issues of children
- To enjoy in groups
- *To do something remarkable for children and youths*
- *To go forward for the development of society*

To keep updated to social happenings, particularly related to children and their issues

The above listing of the aims of children for joining the community-based child clubs seems that they have a number of various aims and expectations. Almost all my child participants mentioned that they came to the clubs in order to know about children's rights and develop their personality skills. But some just came because of the influence of their friends. As Anil (16-year-old boy) mentioned,

"In the beginning I did not know but later, I got information on child rights and I thought that I should do something for children rights" (Anil, a 16-year-old boy).

It seems vivid that some children came to the clubs with aims to learn and develop their personality and some just came without any specific aim in mind but they later determined their aims. More or less the children I interviewed have the same sorts of aims of joining the clubs. Nonetheless, some of the aims of children are quite ambitious in the sense that they seem eager to do what the adults are supposed to do. They aim at 'doing something remarkable for the children and youth in their community and promoting children's rights'. In addition, the child clubs have been a media as well since children keep abreast of social events and other happenings related to children through the child clubs as Satya (a 16-year-old boy) mentioned,

“I have come to the club to know what other social happenings affect us and how we can deal with them effectively in collaboration with adult authority”.

Children have been able to get updated to social happenings like child marriage, child drug addiction, adolescent health hazards, etc., through the child clubs. These aims of children obviously suggest that regard themselves competent and active social agents who are attempting to show up their competencies through child clubs. Along with changes in social situations, children’s issues and problems are also getting more complex and difficult. As per the situation of majority of children in the community where the child clubs are situated, the aims of children also vary. Some communities have the problems of child marriage and the members of the clubs of those communities aim at dealing with such a problem. In regard with clubs’ changing aims, Sila, (a 16-year-old girl) opined that

“Now our aim has been to fight with these issues by launching awareness programs in community in order to discourage child marriage, drug addiction and adult health hazards, but we lack sponsors”.

Because of financial crunch, children have not able to fulfill their aims. This results in decreased memberships in the clubs since they have not been able to implement their programs. In the beginning there were many children in the community-based child clubs but later only few members are at the clubs.

We had a lot programs like sport competition, quiz context, wall magazine writing but later we could not do them since World Vision stopped supporting us. Now even president and secretary of the clubs do not come. We are only few children here (Sima, 13-year-old girl).

It seems that children have many aims of coming to join the community-based child clubs. They aim at understanding children’s rights and issues, and learning and developing life skills in order to cope with their everyday life situations. However, all

children I interviewed stressed that they have particularly focused on learning life skills and personality development. I have made a discussion on this issue in chapter seven.

4.3.3 Children's Activities in the Clubs

It is, needless to say, the activities that children go through play a crucial role in their meaningful participation and empowerment. Since the clubs are actively child initiated, lead and managed, children design the activities themselves and they do not practice the activities that have already been created by someone else. As the aims of children, they engage in a number of activities in order to develop their physical, mental, social, and educational skills and practice their right to participation in the activities that are of direct concern to them. Furthermore, some children engage in social activities like making a trail, community cleanliness and so on. Rajbandary et al. (1999) list different types of activities that children of the clubs do. They are community awareness promotion, learning skill development, club management and networking, competitions, recreational activities, development work, national rallies and artistic or cultural activities.

I have found the community-based child clubs are much more personality development skills oriented rather than right oriented; however, they have been initiated with an aim to fulfill the call and spirit of the CRC while the school-based child clubs are much more learning skills and academic improvement strategies oriented. But the community-based child clubs are the focus of my research and I have only described the activities that children practice in them. Here are some pieces of interview I had with Mina, a 15 years old girl on the kind of activities the children of the clubs do.

children's competence that they are able to deal with the issues that concern them. Competence grows out of what is performed by the children and their maturation as well. Children's full control over planning, designing, and implementing the club's activities is also an instance of their increased agency. Children have been able to manage the distribution and resources at their disposal for promoting their participation. Management of the available resources for their own benefits and benefits of the society is an exercise

of agency (Kabeer, 1999). The common types of activities that children practice in the clubs are listed below;

- Wall magazine writing
- Poems writing
- Quiz contests
- Dramas
- Street plays
- Sports competitions
- Taking part in local rallies
- Orientation classes on children's rights
- Discussing and debating children's issues like child marriage, child workers, etc.
- Cultural programs like dance competition
- Painting and drawing
- *Inviting the adults of their community in their meeting in order to aware them about*

Although the specific activities vary from clubs to clubs, according to the children and adults that I interviewed the above-mentioned activities are the common activities that children practice in the child clubs. The children I interviewed had the experiences of all the above activities as they were from different locations. These activities suggest that children can take part in any activities of their interest in order to develop their potentialities and competences. The clubs seem to have taken in account that every

individual is different and accordingly the activity one engages also obviously differs. In my opinion, focusing on diverse activities help promote their genuine participation, which the UNCRC also emphasizes, that creates a real situation to express children's views in accordance with growing competences, and their socio-cultural and economic situations. Furthermore, children have at their disposal a diverse means of communication of their problems and issues which is very crucial as all children do not /cannot communicate well through the same means.

4.3.4 Child Participation through Child Clubs

More than three hundred thousand children are participating in more than fourteen thousand the clubs. All child clubs were initiated primarily with aim to promote children's right to participation in all matters that are of direct interest to them. In part 2 of the CPGGB published by Central Child Welfare Board in 2007, child participation has been defined as "the democratic access and practice of children in decision making and implementation of those issues that are. Concerned with children" (p.19). However, there is not uniformity of understandings of it in the child clubs. The coordinator further states the ambivalences of child participations as;

There is no uniformity in child participation in child clubs...the organizations not directly linked to children have made child participation a project and accordingly mobilized children. In the name of child participation, they have opened Saving Cooperative groups. In some districts, district level child networks have been formulated which gives much more focus on network management and coordination rather than child participation. The child clubs have made and conducted the non-governmental organization like projects in some cases too (pp. 5-6).

It's clear that child clubs are not working within any defined framework of child participation. They have engaged freely in different activities ranging for personality development to social development. The increased participation of children in social

activities through child clubs means the adults respect children's right to participation and their capacities to influence decisions, and recognize them as partners. This can be a strong reason for rapid increase of child clubs across the country. The following statements that children made show the various understandings of child participation in the context.

Furthermore, children seem to be very aware of their duties as well and they know very well that they can enjoy their rights if they fulfill their duties. The main aim of child clubs seems to promote children's participation in social activities that affect them either directly or indirectly. It is, as Lansdown (2004) contends, "through participation that children are empowered to take greater the exercise of their own rights as they get confidence and competence to make informed choices" (p.3) and child clubs have been able to promote children's participation to this end. Children seem to be very conscious about their rights and duties too. The most important change in children is that they think they should participate in all social gatherings and programs since they are affected in both tangible and intangible terms as Sila stated,

"Whatever happens in our locality affect us in many ways and therefore we should have access and get chance to have our voices all activities and programs that take place".

In addition, children's awareness towards their rights has increased. They are not only taking part in the activities or programs they are supposed to do, they are also engaged in adult like activities too. In this regard, an adult participant said,

"Children are not doing the activities are supposed to do, they are making trails, doing community cleanliness, plantation; however, these things affect them too".

Additionally, the freedom that children have in participating social activities ensures their self-determination rights in the choices of what they think are important in their context.

This forms a strong base for children's agency, the capacities to manage their lives and lives of people living around them.

Roger Hart has developed a ladder of participation for children with eight different forms of it. The first three forms of participation; manipulation, decoration and tokenism are said to be the forms of non-participation since children they don't know why they are participating and they are only taking part because someone has made them to do. These are a kind of pretense. Children I have interviewed go beyond these forms of participation and they also know that these are not the actual forms of participation, but just some sort of control on children as child participants concluded;

“We want to participate freely without any force from adults, we know what things affect us and accordingly we want to present ourselves in social activities”

The real form of participation includes the “assigned and informed” stage in which children are given specific roles, and the “consultation and informed” stage in which children give advice and suggestions on adult-run programs with a clear understanding on how their voices affect the outcome. The most advanced stages are “adult initiated participation” in which adults share a decision-making process with children, and “child initiated and directed participation” in which children share a decision-making process with children and adult appear only in supportive and advisory roles. Although majority of the clubs have been initiated and lead by children. Themselves, there are adults “invisibly” guiding children in many cases on the ground that they want to show children independent social actors, while they are not in reality.

Child participation begins from guided participation to independent participation. Community based child clubs are to large extent autonomous in the sense that children are themselves designing programs and implementing them with the support and advice of adults. However, they are subject to adults has because it's very difficult to the children to run their programs and activities if the adults stop supporting them. This is what is happening right now. The clubs were established in the internationally increased

whim of promoting child participation and many I /NGOs supported children to do so as well but now many of them have stopped their both financial and logistics supports. So, it is equally important to adults as well to be conscious and sensitive to child participation; “it is essential not only to enable children to include their voices and get involved in decision-making, but also to work with key duty bearers to act on children’s agenda”

4.4 Factors Affecting Children’s Participation

Majority of the children I interviewed were from Newar community, the dominant local community of the city. The children referred to the traditional social values and norms that their families and communities profess and practice as the obstacles to their participation and exercise of decision making. Nepalese society has not transformed completely in viewing a child a human being. It has still different views and practices according to gender, age, caste and class.

The males from upper classes and castes are dominant in all spheres of social lives in general than others. Children are in third rank in terms of participation and decision-making process and are in close surveillance of their parents and other people in loco parentis. Children always remain as becoming, not beings even if they pass over the period of childhood in the context to the caretakers. The main problems to children’s participation in social activities, as pinpointed in interviews and sorted out in focus group discussion with children are;

- Lack of awareness about children’s rights in community
- Cultural values, norms and practices
- Financial burden on children

4.4.1. Lack of Awareness about Children's Rights in Community

In children's opinion, a great majority of adults and children in their community do not have any idea of child rights. Those who have got some information on child rights are through schools and child clubs. In schools, as children opined, they learn children's rights mainly for passing the exams rather than practicing them in their everyday lives. Commenting on it further, Anil (16-year-old boy) said,

“Even teachers who teach us about the rights are not aware about children's rights and their issues, how come other people?”

It shows that many people are not informed about children's rights. Without the help of other people children alone cannot promote and protect their rights and their caretakers are also the main people to do so and help children realize their rights. Little knowledge and low consciousness of adults about children's rights pose a challenge and threat to children's right to participation in the affairs that matter them. Both children and adults' participants of my research realized an urgent need of awareness programs among people in order to inform them about children's rights. Children also opined that they would take initiations through the clubs in the near future to spread awareness programs among people about children rights. Article 42 of the UNCRC states the prime responsibility of the State Parties “to make the principles and provisions of the convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike”

There can be more reasons behind the lack of awareness about children in communities. First, in my opinion, there are a few organizations that work only for children's rights and issues in Nepalese society. Children's rights are still not their major focus of concern. There are also few media programs that inform and make people aware about children's rights. And in school and college text books, there is little information about children's rights.

4.4.2. Cultural Values, Norms and Practices

As mentioned by children, culture is a main obstacle to practicing their rights. In almost all cases, the best interests of adults determine best interest of children. The conventional social values and customs do not promote children's participation and hence overlook children's views. Childhood is seen a period of apprenticeship to adulthood and children are the becoming waiting-to-be matured and competent adult beings. These kinds of perspectives resist children's right to participate. However, as Sila claimed,

“much change has happened now and we are getting attention and respect from adults and our participation and views are getting focus of adults”.

People have started respecting children's views which results in children's increased participation in social activities through child clubs. The clubs are playing a significant role in shaping this view of children. Both adult and children give credit to child clubs about this change. The clubs have been very successful at least in imparting information in community that children have the rights as adults have and in creating awareness that children's rights should be respected and children have a respectable position in society. O'Kane (2003) also sees the changing attitudes of adults from lack of awareness and resistance to child participation to acceptance, recognition of children as competent social agents and partners in south Asian contexts.

Children, as Punch (2002), and Kjørholt and Abebe (2009) argue, children hold interdependent rather than independent social relations and Nepalese children experience virtually interdependent social relations. They are mostly dependent on their care takers in terms of their participation and choices. But the child clubs have challenged this trend and brought changes both in their lives and in the lives of others. They have turned out to be effective agents of behavior changes in peers, families and communities and can therefore become social entrepreneurs who can foster positive influences for the good of

their society (Gov. of Nepal, 2006); however their participation in domestic and social affairs is still limited and subject to adult has and permission as well in Nepalese context. Their participation is simply rejected on the ground that they are not matured and competent.

Adults mostly see children as passive, vulnerable and helpless. Rather than understanding that children have the right to holistic development and duty bearer are accountable for upholding those rights, adult tend to have a charitable or welfare approach towards children. Moreover, adults view childhood as a period of transition to adulthood. Childhood as a stage of development is often not recognized. Adults also assume that they know 'best' for a child.

It is adults who think know the best of the best of children. Children need care and attention of parents rather. Adults hold caretaker's thesis (Archard, 1993) in viewing children which states that "children should not see as self-determining agents (p.50)" while the reverse view is emphasized by child liberationists. What rules the adult mindset, as UNICEF and Save the Children cite (2006), is 'trickle-down theory' which suggests that children automatically benefit

4.4. 5 Financial Burden on Children

About half of the population of the country is living below poverty line in Nepal. The children of poor families are bearing the brunt of this situation since they should get involved in economic worlds as early as they can. These families view

"Childhood as a phase of life in which the work should be contributed to household. Children are expected to help their parents both in work and in earning money and children intern get better food and clothing. Children are giving up their childhood and deprived of play mind even study as well. Children's lives are characterized by their "attempts to balance study and work"

Furthermore, schooling is a waste of time pass to these families since it does not feed them a two square meal. So they are having an economic burden which is against the right of the children. In order to educate and empower the children from working class, there are also many child clubs in Nepal. These children through their participation in the clubs are bringing positive changes for themselves, their family, their community and their nation, they have become responsible citizens demonstrating that they are able to decide what is important to them in the situation.

4.4.6. Children's Agency in the Context of Child Clubs

Children's agency has been the focus of many scholars recently. They view children as competent social actors (James and Prout, 1997) and children's social relation is conceptualized in terms of the notion of agency. "Certain abilities and competencies are attributed to children in such a way that they are recognized as influential participants within a variety of social contexts". Participation is not only a means by which children can affect change but also provides an opportunity for developing a sense of autonomy, independence, heightened social competence and resilience. Thus, participation is a key to empowering children. Here are some of the important statements that children concluded in the focus group discussions regarding their capacity to manage their lives and decision-making power.

6.7. Factors Affecting Children's Agency

As social participants children produce and reproduce culture in everyday lives on par with adults and they are constructors of their childhoods through the establishing relationships with adults. This is only possible when children have a capacity to deal with their everyday life circumstances on their own, which refers to their agency. Agency involves children capacity to understand and upon their world, thus demonstrating competence from birth. However, children's competence in society has almost been ignored. It has not been recognized fully yet in majority of the worlds. There is a

tendency to ignore children's experiences and understanding of world in both everyday life and academic research and children's potentiality has been suppressed.

In Nepalese society, as mentioned, there is also a strong trend to see children, dependent, incompetent and vulnerable rather than to see them independent, competent and strong social agent. This long held-idea regarding children's capacity creates challenges to children's agency and put them in vulnerable situations. Children are a competent and independent right holder is not the concept that Nepalese society holds, it is an imported concept through I/NGO from western world concept and has been imposed upon. This creates conceptual and ideological conflicts with what people believe what a child and childhood is in their everyday life situations.

Furthermore, only limited number of people has the concept that "children are competent social agents and independent right holders". They have not been able to strongly advocate this idea either. Neither have they been able to create their own ideas in accordance with their socioeconomic and political ideas.

They are completely ambivalent; as Anil straight forwardly told "*Cultures and adults' unhas ingness to accept children capacity*" is a main challenge to children. and their agency. Traditional values and norms see children completely vulnerable who need step to step guidance and care for making them mature adults. Children are very innocent who need to be introduced with their surroundings by their care takers and rather than letting themselves explore their surroundings. Seeing children dependable, incompetent and vulnerable is to disregard their competence. However, children's competence, and dependability and vulnerability are interdependent and fluid, not opposite and irreconcilable since viewing children as competent is to accept their resilience and resistance to dependability and vulnerability, and vice versa. Because of socio-economic situations children's activities and achievements are noted and accounted only in terms of their academic improvements and economic benefits, rather than children's social

networking. Because of this kind of focus from caretakers, children are compelled to either improve academically or involving making money.

“No one sends children here if we only focus on children’s right...that’s why we have opened a tuition center in our club” (Sushila, an adult child club facilitator).

Furthermore, as argues, agency is “often exercised in unequal relationships where dominant members use their privileged access to authoritative or allocate resources, or resort to outright coercion, or override dissent or resistance”. Children in Nepalese society haven subordinate position which also means the people who have super-ordinate positions have. Control over the lives of those in subordinate. The existing super and subordination of relationships has hindered children in their practice of agency in their everyday lives.

4.5. Impacts of the Child Clubs

This chapter aims to explore the various implications of the community-based child clubs in Nepalese societies, primarily on the basis of the analyses of my empirical data and the other documents related to the child clubs in general. Here implications refer to the results or consequences such as benefits, discourses that child clubs have in children’s everyday lives and in their society. This chapter is also directly related to uncover the meanings of my third research objective and question. The child clubs around the country are mushrooming and children are taking initiations to establish the child club in close coordination with the adults.

4.5.1. Benefits of Getting Involved in the Clubs

The child clubs are increasingly becoming popular, not only in Nepal, but also other countries in the South. Children and young people with raised awareness on their rights can work to challenge injustices and transforming society. The children gave all the credits to the clubs for the positive changes they have in themselves, their family and community. They have got both individual and social benefits after they joined the clubs.

In the individual level, they have learned about children's rights and issues, built up self-confidence, and improved their school and college performance. In the social level, people have started recognizing, respecting, promoting and protecting children's rights. Furthermore, child clubs have got a wider recognition and stronger social places. Whenever the social programs and activities take place people strongly demand the participation of children from the clubs to have their say, not only on the matter of their direct concern, but also on the matter that are of wider social concern.

Nationally, they have been able to influence the policy making bodies with reference to children's rights. Because of the active participation in wider discussion on child rights and children's issues, interaction and negotiation with adult authority, children have been able to influence the policy making processes. The child clubs are also being "active from central to community level especially in awareness raising, raising voices on violence against sexual.

Moreover, children have been able to express their views candidly in their family. Their parents and in-laws have started hearing their voices as well. They have been able to make decision on their own. Some of the children's experiences a minimum level of interferences from the adult caretakers with their decision-making process. In this regard, Satya, (a 17-year boy) shared his view as;

My parents always pay attention to my views and they have not interfered with my decision on the issue that is of my direct interest. I have chosen the college myself. And I always share my decision with my parents and other family in-laws. Such changes have come to my family members after I joined the clubs.

As my empirical data communicate it is reasonable to argue that much change have happened to him after he joined the club. Children's agency has been enhanced since the club goers have been able to manage their lives by themselves to a larger extent effectively. They have been able to make their decision on many issues that are of their concerns. They gather at the clubs, discuss the issues, if needed invite the adult facilitator

for helping them analyze the issues and make a decision. They themselves go to the VDC themselves to submit their decisions.

However, children stressed that the adults have not given due attention to their views. Their views often get unheard. With much displeasure Raju, a 15-year-old boy commented on this issue.

“After we make a decision, we give it either the adult facilitator to take it to the authority or we ourselves go to submit it for implementing, but unfortunately, we don’t know whether our decision has been heard.”

It is also derived from the data that despite children’s control over their activities and decision-making process; their decisions have not been given much attention by the adult authority. To children, their issues are the least cared and focused by the adult bodies yet in the adult decision-making level even if their resistance to accept the decision made by their family members on their issues of interests. Adults’ interests always overshadow children’s interests and issues.

Majority of people think that children cannot do a lot and their duty is to read and write being an obedient child. This ‘adult chauvinism’ (Alanen, 2004) has made children’s view invisible in policy documents and the National Child Policy (2012) is an example of it since it sees children as incompetent and immature becoming and beings in the future only. However, children have continued their efforts to make their voices visible and competences known in the policy making level, where adults only get involved, is still strong. Through discussion and debates with adult children are realizing changes in their society.

The above statement that a girl participant made further communicates that there is still discrimination prevalent throughout the country between boy and girl child. Conventionally, boys are enjoying far much freedom than girls. But recently there are many girls now in the clubs than the boys. The main reason behind it can be the impact of

national awareness and advocacy campaigns for making more and more women participate in social activities through social institutions. Furthermore, the clubs have stood stronger against gender discrimination. Both national and international child welfare organizations are also backing children in the clubs to campaign against it.

Because of their involvement in the clubs, children have been bold and confident enough in expressing their views and opinions both at home and in community as Sila stated,

“I have built up self-confidence and been able to speak up my mind without any fear, and my family members have started paying attention to my views”.

They have been able to talk to their parents and other in-laws in regard to their issues and familial decision-making processes. After the children joined the clubs, they saw huge differences on the way their family members as well as the people of their community used to look at them. The working children have got a chance to study and play in the clubs and have learned life skills to cope with their everyday circumstances

As Ebbing (ibid.) further contends, children have been empowered in social, psychological, and political terms. Psychological empowerment results in broadening the possibilities of other types of empowerments. “The solidarity, faith in each other, sense of identity and belonging” that children develop in the clubs are “important social capabilities that lead to social empowerment” (Ebbing, ibid., p.108), which help them cope with challenging situations. Furthermore, children learn important social skills through interactions and debates with their fellow members and adults while designing and implementing the clubs' programs. They also update to the appropriate information through this process. The interaction and debate that children engage both with children and adults in the clubs is a very crucial process in becoming ‘responsible citizens. Most importantly, children practice democratic principles in running and managing the clubs. They present their views; argue for and against the views and come to a conclusion. This is a process of children’s political empowerment as well. Most remarkable benefit that children shared is they are being recognized as human beings who can contribute from their level in social development and democratic process, and their participation is often sought for in social activities that take place in their localities.

CHAPTER -FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter primarily aims at highlighting and discussing further some main points and arguments presented in the analysis. I have related the discussions to research objectives and questions in order to establish the links between objectives, theoretical perspectives and analyses in order to discuss the discourses on child participation in the clubs, implications of child clubs in Nepalese society and their meanings in relation to the global discourse children and childhood. In addition, I have drawn some conclusions, made some recommendations and showed up some directions for further researches related to child clubs in this chapter

5.1 Summary

It is derived from my empirical data that community-based child clubs have been an excellent place and means for children to assemble together, sort out the issues that are directly affecting them, design the strategies to deal with them, and implement them with their own initiations, efforts and resources at their disposal. The meetings of the children vary according to the types of the clubs. In community-based child club's children normally meet at every weekend in order to share their views and discuss the issues they think are important and matter of concern to them. As per their rule they at least meet every month. However, children assemble in the clubs whenever they find the free time since the clubs are located within the peripheries of children's own localities. Sometimes children call the adult child club facilitators if they need further discussions and debates in the issues of their concern.

Furthermore, many clubs have established their own libraries after they got grants from VDC and support from their communities in order to build a small club building. They have collected books related to children, child rights and their course of studies as well.

Whenever, they are free they indulge in reading as well which is the most wanted and appreciated by their parents and people in loco parentis. Sports and games are the stuff of much attraction for children's participation in the clubs. Children from the clubs always take part in local sports competitions such as football, volleyball basketball, etc. They do also not miss quiz, poems, story, and essay contests. Children themselves organize both intra clubs and inter club sports and quiz competitions. Furthermore, the club secretaries and presidents prepare the reports of their programs and submit to the organizations that have supported them logistically and financially if needed. In order to bring out their potentialities, children of the clubs publish wall magazines in the clubs covering a number of ideas of opinions of their fellow members on different topics. These kinds of activities, as Thakuri (2010) contends, have promoted physical, social, and intellectual developments. The children involved in the clubs in the past have now become reporters, club program coordinators in the adult organization.

5.2 Conclusions

All the activities that children do in the clubs have tremendously enhanced child participation and children's abilities to work on their own on those issues that are of their direct interests. It is child participation that gives voice to children and getting chance to have voice is an expression of agency. Through the everyday activities of the club's children seem to be practicing uninterrupted and free participation in their own rights. The adults have only advisory roles in children's activities, not the domineering one as the children have started and lead the clubs, designed the programs and implemented them by themselves.

However, the existing social structure does not empower and free children from adult hegemony despite our best efforts to recognize them competent social actors. First of all, the senior and junior hierarchy always put the juniors, either children or adults in lower positions who are believed to be less competent, less matured and less experienced than the seniors. Second one, people still believe that children are innocent and need intensive

guidance and care and they have been only able to have an adult kind of role only after they cross their teenage and have good education. However, the notion of competence varies among social classes and the further discussion on it has been in the next topic here in this chapter. And third one is the cultural values and norms see children as vulnerable and dependent rather than competent and independent which stress on keeping children in close surveillance of their parents and other care takers. Children need to be obedient to their seniors in both family and community.

The previous chapters, community-based child clubs have enormously promoted child participation and enriched children's capacity to make decision on their own on the matters that affect them. Child clubs are fighting for the children's rights, particularly the right to participation. However, child participation is always sandwiched in "the challenging children's traditional roles in society" and "transforming the relationships of power between adults and children". Child clubs have been an excellent means to transform the traditional roles of children and seek a compromise between asymmetrical power relations between children and adults through child initiated and lead campaign and advocacy for promoting and safeguarding their rights.

They have influenced substantially both child community and adult community through their active participation in social activities like rallies, sports competitions, wall magazine publications, and so on. Since community-based child clubs are exclusively child initiated and child lead with supports from adults, children are directly involved in decision making process on the matters that are of direct concern to them and children who get involved in decision making and are informed about their rights feel privileged to take on the responsibility of imparting information about their rights in their community.

Nepalese society is culturally very diverse. There are more than hundred ethnic groups who speak more than hundred different languages across the country. These ethnic groups have their own cultural norms and values with reference to child rearing and

development and “the meaning of childhood and processes of children’s development are understood and constructed differently by different groups” (Arnold et al., 2000, p. 31). The early years, generally up to five or six, are seen as a special time, deserving particular care and indulgence, and relatively free of familial responsibility. By the time they reach six or seven, children, as in many societies are considered to have developed new capacities, and expectations change as per the situations of the family in which children are brought up. Children become more aware of both familial and communal values and norms and understand them and are able to take responsibilities to contribute to their families in dependable ways. After children become older than six or seven years, they are no longer children and are neither considered adults yet.

However, there is a great deal of variations both within and between communities. There are also variations between classes as well. “Children are more likely to be expected to take responsibility, if they are oldest, or if the family is especially hard pressed” and most often the working-class children are expected to take responsibility as early as they can. But in middle class and rich class families and communities, children are expected to eat healthy foods, study and play unless the familial situations demand their responsibilities in family affairs.

Children see themselves competent social actors who have the real perspectives of their issues and make an informed decision on the issues that of their direct concerns, low awareness and consciousness about children’s rights, and societal practices often undermine children participation and deny their agencies. However, children have developed a sort of collective agency to promote and protect their rights and issues as their participation in the activities that take place in their community is always sought for by the adults. The increased participation of children has enriched their decision-making power, which in turn has enhanced their agency.

In addition, the clubs have positive impression in Nepalese society as the children involved in the clubs showed positive changes in themselves and brought their own rights

and issues into limelight. Personality development has been the main focus of the community-based child clubs for children in order to cope with their everyday life situations rather than children's rights.

5.3. Recommendations

Although child clubs have done an excellent work for promoting and protecting child participation in particular and child rights in general, the child members in community-based child clubs are decreasing and children, to some extent, are losing their interests in club participation and activities because of the lack of new activities and fund to implement their programs. Furthermore, the international organizations have stopped supporting them both financially and logistically which has made children stop create activities and programs. These things have discouraged the children in taking part the club activities. As the adults working for child clubs stated, they left the child clubs to the community hoping that they could get support from there without taking into account the socio-cultural values and practices, and people's level of consciousness towards child rights.

- i. Thus, in order to motivate more and more children in the clubs and let them have their say on the issues that affect them, children should be provided with a continued support. Children should be informed about their rights in detail since they said they did not get much information on child rights.
- ii. In addition, there is no any clear policy on how child clubs should be run and what activities children should get involved in it. So, a national policy related to child clubs seems to be needed in order to structure the child clubs and child participation. Children cannot enjoy their rights without the support of adults. Majority of the adults have not been informed and hence are not conscious about children's rights. So, the adults need to be informed and aware about child rights and children's issues as well.

- iii. Child clubs should do this activity as children know the best of their community's level of awareness and consciousness towards children and child rights.
- iv. Researcher particularly focused on children's experiences and how child clubs have promoted children's participation and agency. Researcher have just provided information on other interesting themes and topics related to child rights in the context of child clubs.
- v. Researcher have got very limited information on class variation in child club's memberships. Majority of children are from working class and a few of them are only middle and rich classes. This is very interesting and worth researching further on class variation on child club's memberships. Why are there a few children from middle and rich classes? Do they think the clubs only for the working classes? Why the discourses on children and children's rights initiated by the international child rights organizations have not influenced those classes?

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APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRES

A) Present Status of Child Club

1. What is a child club?

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2. What are the normal activities you get involved in?

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3. Why do you take part in those activities?

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4. What benefits have you got by practicing those activities?

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5. Are they sufficient to you?

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6. What do mean by child participation?

7. How do you make decision on the important issue that concerns you a lot?

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8. Do you think your voices have been heard and given due weight by the concerned authority in terms of decision making on the issues that are of utmost concern to you?

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9. Do you think you are independent enough to make decision on your own?

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10. What have you learnt after you joined the club?

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11. What kinds of issues of children do the clubs deal with?

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12. What do expect from the clubs?

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B. Children's Participation

1. Child clubs and their roles in promoting children's rights.

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2. Children's participation

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3. Kind of children's participation

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4. Reason for children's participation

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5. Children's involvement in decision making

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6. Concerned authority's role in enabling children's decision making power

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7. Children's agency (are children independent enough to make decision on their own?)

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8. Why children's voices are neglected?

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9. Problems of child clubs

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10. Obstacles to child rights

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11. Children's expectation from child clubs

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12. Familial and communal responses to child clubs and children's activities.

B) Impact of Child Club

1. What have got after you joined the child clubs?

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2. Do you think you have learned something that is very important to you?

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3. What is the focus of the child clubs?

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4. How did you get information on child rights?

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5. Who gave you such information?

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6. Do you know about the UNCRC?

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7. Why are child clubs focusing on personality development skills?

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8. What do you expect from the clubs?

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9. What do our parents expect from you after you join the clubs?

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10. How do you deal with adults who are powerful in terms of implementing your decisions?

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11. Why do you think people sometimes do not pay attention to your voices?

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12. Why are child clubs getting popular in our society?

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13. What have you done to make the clubs popular?

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