

**SCHOOLING OF TERAJ DALIT GIRLS OF DHANUSHA
DISTRICT IN NEPAL**

Gyanee Yadav

**A Dissertation for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education**

**Submitted to
Dean's Office, Faculty of Education
Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur, Kathmandu**

April 2021

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Supervisor

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K. Tomasevski

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved late parents and family.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree.

I understand that my dissertation will become a part of the permanent collection of Tribhuvan University, Central Library. My signature below authorizes release of dissertation to any reader upon request.

Gyanee Yadav

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Recommendation

The undersigned certify that I have read and recommend to the Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University for acceptance, a dissertation entitled **Schooling of Terai Dalit Girls of Dhanusha District in Nepal** submitted by Gyanee Yadav in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION.

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Approval

The undersigned certify that we have read, approved and recommended to the Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, for acceptance, a dissertation entitled **“Schooling of Terai Dalit Girls of Dhanusha District in Nepal”** by Gyanee Yadav in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION.

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The present study focuses on schooling practices of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal, who, for centuries, have been treated as *paninachalne tatha chhunanhune Jat (An untouchable caste)*.

The main objective of the study was to explore Dalit girls' access to basic education by assessing their schooling practices. The research has therefore analyzed issues and challenges related to schooling of Dalit girls to derive implications to improve their schooling practices.

The study has used both quantitative and qualitative research design to collect primary information from the research participants and schools. Primary information was collected from four head teachers, eight teachers, 48 students and their parents (48) using a number of instruments: interview guidelines, focus group discussion guidelines and school profile form. The collected data were presented in the forms of tables, figures, charts and graphs to facilitate the process of analysis and interpretation. The data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The researcher collected primary data from four out of 22 community schools of Janakpurdam submetropolitan area of Dhanusha district that recorded dominant presence of Dalit girls who were more than 100 in each of the sample schools.

Parents' poor economic status, teachers' behavior, poor participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, inadequate tutorial support at school and home, and small presence of Dalit female teachers, all contributed to have their poor access to basic education. Besides, engagement in domestic chores and agricultural work, age-old inappropriate social and religious practices, and parental illiteracy were

the other challenges to their schooling. Additionally, social pressure on early marriage, dowry system, and lack of vision for further study were the other challenges.

Changes in schooling of Dalit girls resulted in the development of self-confidence and positive images of self with their effort to bring their learning knowledge into practice in their day to day life.

Support services like tutorial support by parents at home, providing sufficient time to children's learning, helping them to do their homework, or managing special time for difficult parts of their study were little done by parents.

Schools, communities and families were expected to address challenges of Dalit girl students but their awareness level, which is increasing due to their schooling, is to be raised at a faster speed to enable them to fight against the neglect of their rights.

Number of female teachers should be increased, particularly female Dalit teachers are to be encouraged to join teaching profession in order to inspire other Dalit girls for ensuring their equitable access to education.

Improvement of schooling practices of Dalit girls calls for several efforts at multiple fronts: social protection programs, guarantee of minimum level of employment, skill development training programs to improve their employability skills, and setting of equity-based targets to narrow down the disparities.

Programs and policies to address gender discrimination and gender-based challenges, teachers' awareness about their roles and responsibilities, remedial instruction to ensure that all the Dalit girls learn not just the foundational skills but also the transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, advocacy and conflict resolution, could be the other supportive measures to improve the schooling practices of Terai Dalit girls.

Gyanee Yadav

PhD Research Scholar

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Abbreviations

APEID	Asia and Pacific Program of Educational Innovation for Development
APPEAL	Asia-Pacific Program of Education for All
ARNEC	All Round National Education Committee
BPEP I	Basic and Primary Education Program (Phase first)
BPEP II	Basic and Primary Education Program(Phase second)
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CCA	Co-Curricular Activities
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CERID	Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CEHRD	Centre for Education and Human Resource Development
COPE	Community Owned Primary Education
COVID-19	Corona Virus Diseases-19
CPE	Compulsory Primary Education
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSSP	Community School Support Program
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DDC	District Development Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DME	Deprivation and Marginalization in Education
DoE	Department of Education
ECA	Extra Curricula Activities
EFA	Education for All
EFA-NPA	Education for All National Plan of Action
EGS	Educational Guarantee Scheme
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
GCRC	Geneva Convention on the Rights of the Child
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GoN	Government of Nepal
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HSEB	Higher Secondary Education Board

IFCD	Innovative Forum for Community Development
INGOs	International Non-Government Organizations
ISRC	Intensive Study and Research Centre
LSGA	Local Self-Governance Act
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MINEDAV	Fifth Regional Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning in Asia and the Pacific
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science & Technology
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoLD	Ministry of Local Development
NCED	National Centre for Educational Development
NDC	National Dalit Commission
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NESP	National Education System Plan
NFEC	Non-formal Education Centre
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NHDR	Nepal Human Development Report
NLSS	Nepal Living Standard Survey
NMIS	Nepal Management Information System
NNDSWO	Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRB	Nepal Rastra Bank
OCE	Office of the Controller of Examinations
OSC	Out of School Children
OSP	Out of School Program
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
SAP-Nepal	South Asia Partnership-Nepal
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SESP	Secondary Education Support Program
SGOG	School Grants Operational Guidelines
SHEP	Second Higher Education Project
SLC	School Leaving Certificate

SMC	School Management Committee
SSRP	School Sector Reform Program
TEP	Teacher Education Program
TEVT	Technical Education and Vocational Training
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
VCDP	Vulnerable Community Development Plan
VDC	Village Development Committee

CHAPTER I

Introduction

This introductory chapter deals with the background of the study highlighting the objectives followed by research questions. It further justifies the reasons behind taking this theme as the focal point of the study along with the delimitations. The operational definition of the key terms marks the closure of this chapter.

Background of the Study

The study has a reference to the initiation taken by the world body of education to address educational backwardness of people who are excluded from the mainstream of development: Dalits, especially the girls who are also socially excluded. To address the causes of poverty, and for this matter, the causes of poor schooling of the disadvantaged, the global society has been taking initiative to improve their schooling practice.

A brief review of the South Asian Regional Conferences devoted to the advancement of girls' education shows how girls' education has been conceived and received in the past forty years. The regional meeting of the representatives of Asian member states on primary and compulsory education in 1959, produced the Karachi Plan in the Needs of Asia in primary education report, which claimed that every country of this region should provide a system of universal, compulsory and free primary education of seven years or more within a period of not more than twenty (1960-1980) years (The Needs of Asia in Primary Education, 1959 as cited in Maslak, 2010).

In 1960, the World Conference of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy (Teheran, 1965), for instance, addressed education as an essential

component in the development process by integrating it with economic and social initiatives supported by the local governments. This conference was followed by the fifth regional conference of Ministers of education and those responsible for economic planning in Asia and the Pacific (MINEDAP V, 1985) which sought to decrease the educational disparities within and between countries, increase universal primary education, promote out-of-school programs, and link formal education with non-formal education.

Based on the recommendations of the MINEDAP V, the general conference proposed the establishment of regional programs for the universal provision and renewal of primary education and the eradication of illiteracy in Asia and the Pacific (Maslak, 2010). Thus, the global initiative to work for the cause of the excluded took place in the early 60s in the form of educational intervention.

This global initiative, led especially by UNESCO, building upon the work of the twenty-third general conference in Sofia in 1985, reaffirmed the commitment to literacy and the universalization of formal education, and consequently, the Asia and the Pacific program of educational innovation for development's regional review meeting began to focus on the universalization of primary education (UPE) for girls. Participants from ten South Asian and Southeast Asian countries attended the 1985 meeting to discuss the status of girls' education. They deliberated on the access to and participation in literacy programs and the formulation of regional cooperative and operational schemes for increased enrollment and participation of girls in member countries' primary educational systems. As a result, by February 1987, UNESCO established and launched the Asia-Pacific Program of Education for All (APPEAL).

APPEAL's major contribution is the recognition of the need to consider the socio-economic factors that determine and influence the opportunity for primary

education for all children in the region. The educational objective, however, did little to address the ways in which economic and social conditions influence girls' education, as demonstrated in the three objectives. First, it called for the development of meaningful and realistic objectives of education in each country, including improved access to, retention during, and graduation from primary school. Second, it proposed for new educational structures of sufficient dimension and quality for the entire kids' population. Third, it developed a curriculum, which focused on both personal and national development. None of these objectives clearly addressed either social or economic causes of low enrollment. Having endorsed and adopted the structure of Article 9 from the fifth regional conference of Ministers of education and those responsible for economic planning in the Asia and the Pacific, representatives from South Asian countries participated in the world conference on education for all in Jomtien, Thailand (1990). APPEAL's educational plan provided for new educational structures of sufficient dimension and quality for the entire juvenile population without discrimination against the less privileged.

Similarly, the world conferences, the most recent one held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, formulated a comprehensive set of goals to address the problem of illiteracy and education. With the promotion of UPE for all children, there was the launching of the education for all (EFA) campaign, established as the framework for "realistic and functional" international plans of action. Currently, South Asian countries do acknowledge their own difficulties and support the EFA document. In short, the EFA model has forged a consensus among South Asian countries and has served as the basis for developing and implementing national educational plans specific to each country. The hope was that the goals set and the strategies devised, including the development of programs designed for out-of-school youth (in the form of non-formal

education) and the opportunity to re-enroll in the formal educational system, would notably increase educational opportunities for girls (EFA, 2000).

For more than three decades, Ministers of education and country representatives of South Asia, together with international agency specialists from UNESCO and the World Bank, have developed educational policies aiming to address the problem of girls' low participation in school. The World conference on education for all held in Jomtien, Thailand (1990) attended by national and international representatives, formulated goals to promote education for all children by the year 2000. The document outlined several areas of concern: (1) early children's care and education; (2) universal and basic education; (3) basic learning and skills programs; (4) learning achievement; (5) education of women and girls and the elimination of gender disparities; (6) literacy and continuing education; (7) life skills and values; and (8) education for peace and global understanding.

Although a greater percentage of the world's school-age children are enrolled in school today than ever before, an alarming gender disparity exists. In the six to eleven years' age group, eligible for what is usually considered primary or first-level education, the World education report 1995 states that nearly a quarter (24.5%) of the world's girls are estimated to be out of school (85 million), compared to around one-sixth (16.4%) of the world's boys (60 million).

Nepal's own policies and programs have specifically targeted children's primary education since 1951. With the advent of democracy in 1951, the government assumed greater responsibility for education in Nepal. During the period 1951 to 1960, the government formed the first education commission for the improvement of the education system. The Commission recommended several measures as free and compulsory primary education, no tuition fees for the students and no exclusion of

students from education on the basis of sex, caste, religion & occupation, provision of additional ten rupees per teacher per month for the stationery and other operating costs of the school by society, fixing of number of not more than 40 and less than 20 students per teacher and collection of voluntary donation (*chanda*), charities and gifts except tuition fees for the support of the school (Education in Nepal, 1956).

Ministry of education (MoE) came into existence with a responsibility of overall management of education sector in Nepal and it was during this decade that an attempt was made to make primary education free and compulsory with a major focus on right based approach to education. At the end of the period 1961-1970, two districts: Jhapa and Chitwan were piloted for the introduction of compulsory and free primary education (ARNEC, 1961). It was during the same period that the All Round National Education Committee was formed which recommended various things for the development of the national education system by giving continuity to the 1956 commission's recommendations. The Committee also recommended for the provision of free and compulsory primary education all over the country.

The long range target of the government for primary education is free, compulsory and universal education and for this, the Karachi Plan of 1959 and the conference of the Ministry of Asian countries held in April, 1962 in Tokyo worked as the main sources of inspiration. However, the government of Nepal expressed the aim of achieving this long range objective only by 1990 instead of 1980 as suggested by the UNESCO conference (Aryal, 1970 as cited in Sinha, 2007).

These international educational conferences, especially those since the 1970s, have significantly informed and shaped Nepal's educational policies and programs. An educational plan, popularly known as the national education system plan (NESP, 1971-75), was one of the first efforts to address and meet the educational needs of all

children in the country. The developers of this plan document sought to promote equal educational access for all children, link education with production by providing vocational training, and improve education by supplying trained teachers and instructional materials (MoE, 1971).

The NESP recommendations: primary education to be made tuition free including free textbooks to all students in grade 1-3, free textbooks to girls in grade 4 and 5 and eventually, to all students studying in primary grades (1-5) and some percent of girl students to receive scholarship or uniform throughout the country worked as very good incentive to bring the out of school children including the disadvantaged to school. This affirmative action was intended to promote educational participation of children in remote areas throughout the country (Thapa, 1993).

The World conference on education for all (1990) intended to promote universal primary education for children by the year 2000 and Nepal's Ministry of education (MoE) set goals and designed programs in both the formal and non-formal educational sectors to achieve the world conference objectives. An assessment indicated that 72 million children of primary school age of the Asia-Pacific region were out of school, either because they have never entered the education system or because they have dropped out (UNESCO, 2010).

In Nepal, near about eleven percent of average school-going age (5-12 years) children have never been to school. Twenty and thirty percent of the schooled children dropout before completing the primary school cycle (1-5) and basic school cycle (1-8) respectively (DOE, 2016). Thirty-four percent of grade ten graduates cannot pass the school leaving certificate (SLC) examinations and about sixty-six percent of students who pass the SLC examinations cannot join higher education (OCE, 2010).

Despite these problems, there are schools in every village development committee (VDC) with an average of 123 students in each primary school (grade 1-5), 176 in each basic school (grade 1-8), and 150 in each secondary school (grade 9-12)(compared to 126, 179 and 145 respectively in the last school year). This widespread extension of schooling into the lives of the people of Nepal has occurred rapidly; for example, the country has gone from just over 321 primary schools in 1951 to over 10,000 in 1981 and more than 34,837 in 2015-16 (DoE, 2016).

The trends of total enrollment at basic level over the period 2013-17, Dalit enrollment share in total enrollment, survival rate to grade five and eight by gender and promotion, repetition and dropout rate have been mentioned in detail in chapter IV.

This rapid increase in enrollment of school going age children has however not been matched with the expected increase in enrollment of children from the disadvantaged sections including the girls from the Dalit communities.

The key findings of NASA report for grade 8 on the achievement level of students has shown a decrease in 2013 compared to the achievement level 2011. Mathematics achievement in 2013 is found 8 percent lower than previous assessment 2011. The report also revealed that in Social study, a similar but not entirely identical pattern emerged. Likewise, comparative situation of the achievement in 3 subject areas (Mathematics, Nepali, and Social studies/Science) indicates that the average score was found to be quite higher in Mathematics and Social study, whereas in Nepali it was below the international average. But the reasons behind this situation were not mentioned in the report and were left for further discussion within and outside the system (MoEST, 2018).

Regarding the achievements, in reading and writing the study report reveals that the achievement level in writing skill is lower than that in reading skill, while the curriculum has emphasized writing skill by allocating more periods. Specially, the achievement level of students with non-Nepali mother language is comparatively lower in reading and writing skills. Another finding with regard to achievement by rural and urban based-schools show the achievement level of school from urban area as 52 percent and that of rural areas 45 percent, which indicates the performance of rural schools being poorer. Similarly, same type of variation has been observed between the types of schools such as “Institutional and Community schools” achievement level. It shows the average achievement of institutional school is 63 percent whereas that of the community schools it is 44 percent. Here, one of the contexts in the better performance of institutional school is the better socio-economic status of the students.

Similarly, the second round of the NASA 2013 study reports reveal that compared with the assessment of the student’s achievement in the same subjects in 2011, the achievement has not been improved over these years. For instance, in 2011 it was 49 percent for Nepali, whereas it was only 48 percent in 2013. In Mathematics, it is more worsening as the achievement score has gone down further by 8 percent from 2011 to 2013 (i.e. from 43% in 2011 to 35% in 2013), which indicates that Mathematics result is comparatively low in all the content areas.

Furthermore, the report depicts that except in Nepali subject, there are gender differences in the achievement of various caste groups in NASA 2013 in Mathematics. For example, the difference in achievements between boys and girls is highest in Terai communities, that is 10 percent. Similarly, the Brahmins, Kshetris, and ‘other’ group also have similar status. Overall, the second round of the NASA

report 2013 for grade 8 presented some very important findings that need to be taken into account for further policy, planning, programme and implementation of school education (Consolidated report, 2018).

The NASA (2013) report presents that students' average achievement score in institutional schools is higher than that in the community schools (i.e. in Mathematics the average achievement score is 57% in institutional schools whereas it is 26% in community schools). There are wide differences in student achievement in terms of mother tongue, difference in caste/ethnicity (i.e. achievement level of the Dalit students is lower in all subjects comparing the students from other communities). Similarly, the achievement of Madhesi students is also lower than the total national average. The other important variances in the student achievement are the rural/urban and the status of timely availability of the textbooks. It reveals there is a strong association regarding the timely availability of textbook and students' achievement (i.e. the students reporting to have received textbook at the beginning of the academic session have scored 36% in Mathematics, 49% in Nepali and 42% in Science whereas those who did not receive textbooks even at the end of academic year have scored 24%, 35% and 34% respectively in the same subjects).

Likewise, the NASA unit in ERO has completed both the first and second round of studies on "NASA 2013 and 2015 for both grades 3 and 5". The key findings of the study report of the NASA 2013 and 2015 for grade 3 and 5 are almost similar in nature. There is an educational inequality between the languages groups; students with very low socioeconomic status obtain remarkably lower than average achievement, and also timely availability of textbooks and other materials demonstrated the significant differences in both reports' findings. In grade 5, compared to the student achievement in 2013, there is a significant decrease in all

subjects (Mathematics, Nepali, and English) in 2015. The findings show that the student achievements of Mathematics and English subjects are in favour of boys by 1.6 percent and 0.4 percent points, however Nepali subject is in favour of girls by 2.5 percent points in 2015. Similarly, in grade 3 compared to the student achievement in 2013, there is a significant decrease in all subjects (Mathematics and Nepali) in 2015. The findings show that there are no differences between boys and girls in Mathematics in both assessments, whereas in Nepali subject there are gaps between boys and girls in both assessments. The gaps have been wide in 2015 than in 2013, that is in favour of girls (Consolidated report, 2018).

As a whole, both the studies suggest that the socioeconomic status plays a strong role in the educational processes. In this regard, the studies revealed that the educational level of the parents, parent's occupations, involvement of children in house hold chores (more than 4 hours) and the delay of textbooks have negative effects on student achievement.

The results are far better in urban areas than in the rural areas, and the difference is remarkable. The students in the institutional schools have performed better in comparison to community schools. There are wide differences in achievement among the language and ethnic groups, for example, students from Newari speaking performed better in Mathematics. On the other hand, students with the mother tongues from Rai, Sherpa, Tharu, Limbu and Magar speaking scored lower in Mathematics.

The analysis of the NASA reports shows that more efforts and resources should be put to the lowest- performing students in the very early grades of schooling. The efforts in the lowest level students at the early grades would most probably raise later their standards in the higher grades too. For this, the MOEST should prepare a

strategic plan how this would happen and support the districts of absolutely low achievement level such as Achham, Bardiya, Jumla, Khotang, Mahottari, Rolpa, Saptari and Udaypur as well as the schools in western and mid-western development regions.

Nepal is known as a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural country with diverse geography and rich biodiversity. There are 125 castes/ethnic groups and 123 languages spoken as mother tongue as reported in census 2011(CBS, 2011). According to the census 2011, Chhetri is the largest caste/ethnic group having 16.6 percent (4,398,053) of the total population followed by Brahmin-hill (12.2%; 3,226,903), Magar (7.10%; 1,887,733), Tharu (6.6%; 1,737,470), Tamang (5.8%; 1,539,830), Newar (5.0%; 1,321,933), Kami (4.8%; 1,258,554), Musalman (4.4%; 1,164,255), Yadav (4.0%; 1,054,458), Rai (2.3%; 620,004) and other castes/ethnic groups (31.2%; 8,266,285) (CBS, 2011).

Similarly, out of 123 languages spoken as mother tongue, Nepali is spoken as mother tongue by 44.6 percent (11,826,953) of the total population followed by Maithili (11.7%; 3,092,530), Bhojpuri (6.0%; 1,584,958), Tharu (5.8%; 1,529,875), Tamang (5.1%; 1,353,311), Newari (3.2%; 846,557), Bajjika (3.0%; 793,418), Magar (3.0%; 788,530), Doteli (3.0%; 787,827), Urdu (2.6%; 691,546) and other languages (12.0%; 3,179,341).

Regarding religion, there are 10 types of religions as categorized in the census, 2011. Hinduism is followed by 81.3 percent (21,551,492) of the total population followed by Buddhism (9.0%; 2,396,099), Islam (4.4%; 1,162,370), Kirat (3.1%; 807,169), Christianity (1.4%; 375,699), Prakriti (0.5%; 121,982), Bon (13,006), Jainism (3,214), Bahai (1,283) and Sikhism (609) (CBS, 2011).

Dalits are broadly categorised into three groups: Hill Dalit, Kathmandu valley (Newar Dalit) and Terai Dalit. According to the 2011 census, Dalit population by caste is as follows:

- i) Hill Dalit: Kami (1,258,554), Damai (472,862), Sarki (374,816), Gaine (6,791) and Badi (38,603).
- ii) Kathmandu valley (Newar Dalit): Kasai (n.p), Kusule (n.p), Kulu (n.p), Pore (n.p) and Chyame (n.p) (Hoffer, 2012).
- iii) Terai Dalit: Chamar (335,893), Musahar (234,490), Dusadh (208,910), Lohar (101,421), Tatma (104,865), Khatwe (100,921), Dhobi (109,079), Halkhor (4,003), Kisan (1,739), Pattharkatta (3,182), Kalar (1,077), Natuwa (3,062), Dhandi (1,982), Dhankar (2,681), Kori (12,276), Sarbaria (4,906), Chidimar (1,254), Kushwadiya, Bantar (55,104) and Dalit others (155,354).

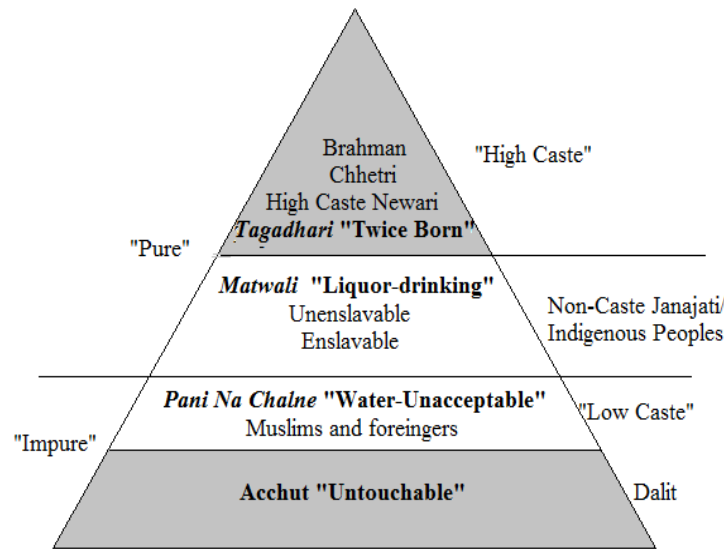
All together, the total population of Dalits in Nepal is 3,593,825 including unidentified groups, which is 13.56 percent of the total national population (26,494,504) (CBS,2011).

Nepalese social structure is based on the Hindu culture and caste system was written in a legendary constitution of Hinduism, '*Manusmriti*', from 220 to 200 BC. The caste system of Nepal was conceived and nurtured by religious and cultural values and in most cases, a class system is blended with the caste hierarchy. It categorized Nepalese society as upper caste and lower caste. Traditionally, at that time, the responsibility of acquiring education/knowledge had been assigned to the Brahmins only by the social system, which was a complete injustice in the Nepalis society.

Caste system in Nepal. Caste hierarchy and discrimination are the primary reasons for inequality and disparity among the Nepalis people (Bishwakarma, 2019). A caste is a form of social stratification based on the cultural notation of purity and pollution (Marglin, 1977: 255). Caste systems maintain social hierarchies in Hindu societies that enforce untouchability behavior against Dalit (Dumont, 1970; Ahuti, 2010). The genesis or origin or foundation of caste was developed in the Varna system. Varnas primarily originated in the Indian sub-continent as a form of so-called 'Colour' distinction among different groups of people (Prashrit, 2015). As legend has it, about 6,000 years ago, the people of Dravid and Atrik used to live in the Indian sub-continent and were said to be 'Black', 'Red' and 'Yellow' in skin colour (Ahuti, 2010: 8). Later, a group of people of Aryan origin said to be 'White' encroached and defeated the local inheritance. The extent of colour discrimination later turned into the labour-based division of the four fold Varna system refers to four castes: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Shudra were the slaves who were captured in war and the children of slaves, sold to provide services to other categories of Varna (Cameron, 1998 as cited in Bishwakarma, 2019).

Historically, it is believed that the origin of caste that the Brahmin King Manu imposed untouchability against the Shudra in around 200 B.C. However, the description of Chandal in Buddhist religious manuscript indicates that the untouchability practice was there as far back as almost 2,600-3,000 years ago (Ahuti, 2010; Prashrit, 2015). In Nepal, the Varna system was developed under the Lichhavi rulers in the 6th century (Prashrit, 2015). However, Jayasthiti Malla formalized the caste system around 12th century. It became law under late king Ram Shah of Gorakha in the 15th century. Later, King Prithivi Narayan Shah imposed the Varna system over the indigenous ethnic people in the 17th century. Under the Civil Code of 1854,

introduced by Jung Bahadur Rana, all caste and ethnic groups were incorporated within the four fold Varna- caste- structure and the law. The Legal Code 1854 was discriminatory with lower caste. The following figure 1.1 illustrates the caste hierarchical order of Nepali society established by the 1854 Code, where Dalits fall at the bottom of the social structure (Bishwakarma, 2019).



The area showing the different groups in the triangle does not represent population size. Dark shows the Hindu caste groups.

Figure 1.1. Caste Hierarchy in Nepal (1854 Civil Code-Muluki Ain).

Source: World Bank/ DFID (2006).

The caste system distribution in the major regions of Nepal is as follows:

The Kathmandu valley. King Jayasthiti Malla, in 14th century, tried to purify religious practice in the Kathmandu valley by introducing caste principles and conduct according to the manuscript Code of the Hindus (Lamsal, 1966, cited in Bista, 2008). The people of Nepal valley came to known as the ‘Newar’ during 15th century in the rule of King Pratap Malla (Acharya, 1972). In the 19th century the first of the Ranas, Jung Bahadur secures Rana control over the land. In 19th century, the Khas Bhahuns, decided to put all Newari speaking people into a single caste category at the lower level (Vaishya caste), known as Matawali, meaning liquor drinkers. Later, there are

char-thare Shresthas- the Malla, Pradhan, Amatya, etc., and the Panch- thare shresthas- Chettri, Bajracharya like Bahun (Bista, 2008). The majority of the Kathmandu valley people-reagents, farmers' vegetable growers etc. are collectively called the Jyapus. The Jyapu were turned into a low caste category during the Malla period and called Shudra (Khanal, Gelpke and Pyakurel, 2012). The Late King Mahendra, for the first time, prohibited the caste discrimination and untouchability in public places by Civil Code, 1963 (Muluki Ain, 2020 B.S.).

The Gandaki Region. The Gandaki region remained relatively free of the caste system impact until recently. Late King Ram Shah developed the first comprehensive Legal Code anywhere outside of the valley (Joshi & Rose, 1966). King Prithivi Narayan Shah continued this tradition and treated Bahuns also as any other people. He said that he had soldiers from four different people, namely Bahun, Magar, Thakuri and Khas (Stiller, 1968). The famous saying of that time- 'For knowledge go to Banaras (Kashi) and to Gorkha for justice' became wide spread (Kirkpatrick, 1964).

The Khasaan region. The Nepali language is the Khas language. According to manuscript law, Khas and Kirant are mentioned together as lower status. But recently, Chhetri Khas believed that they were Hindu caste with Rajput background. The Khas people who settled in Kathmandu valley did not realize that their ancestors were in the western hills. Every ruling Prince, took the title Thakuri around this time (Sharma, 1982). Thakuri and Chhetri began to call themselves as Matawali Thakuri and Matawaki Chhetri, while the bulk of the Khas became simply Matawali. The term 'Khas' meant fallen according to pundits (Bista, 2008).

Northern Himalayan Region. The people, who did not adopt Hindu high caste status are located in the high Himalayan region. The ruling family of Mustang

only does not have the family name Thakuri without the ritual thread. The northern Himalayan region was always inhabited by people of Tibetan origin who were the followers of the Tibetan form of Buddhism- Lamaism. Most of these people practice the oldest form of Lamaism, as they have always been remote from Lhasa, the capital of Tibet (Bista, 2008).

The Terai Region. Terai is the origin of human civilization. Nepal borders India along a strip of the plain called the Terai, and as the people living along the northern border with Tibet are of Tibetan origin and under the influence of Tibetan religion and social custom and speak Tibetan dialects, some of the Terai people of Indian origin, speak in languages akin to those spoken to the south and practicing Indian religious and social customs. But in the Terai, diversity is as great, in compassing several very different languages: Bengali, Maithili and Bhojpuri in the east, and Hindi and Urdu in the west in addition to a group of indigenous languages such as Tharu, Danwar, Dhangar and Satar. Social customs, religion, Hindu and Islam, marriage practices and even economy to some extent vary according to ethnic group (Bista, 1976). Hindu caste system made great effects in this plane land of Nepal. During Tirhut regime, the caste system was intensified with the recruitment of new Panjekar (the person to keep the record of genealogy). In the Varna classification, the concept of Kshatriya is not clear in Terai, skilled/ occupational people and businessmen were classified as Vaishya and untouchable servant caste/ ethnics were kept under the class of Shudra (Chaudhary, 2011). Today there are three distinct cultures practicing with three different religions in the Terai plains in Nepal. There are the Hindus, who are mostly found in eastern Terai districts from Chitwan to Jhapa which were full of indigenous people until recently. The entire western was dominated by second groups of indigenous people like the Tharu until recently. The

third groups of people, who have moved into parts of the Terai, are the Islamic Musalmans, who have been there from the middle of the 9th century (Bista, 2008). The Muslims, the Telis, the Sudhis and the Kalwars were put under the 4th category of the untouchables that did not need the sprinkle of water for the religious purposes. The present Dalits were kept under the 5th category. The Civil Code 1854 has incorporated only Brahmin, Rajput, Muslim, Teli and Tharu in the classification of Varna of Terai. There is nothing mentioned about the rest of the caste existing in the Terai region (Chaudhary, 2011). Brahmans fall into two groups: Maithili and Patra. Maithili sub-castes are rich land owners, money lenders and zemindars- the village land registrars and revenue collectors. Patra Brahmans can act as priests only during the funeral ceremony and accept gifts in the name of the dead. Bhumihars are also land owners, money lenders, traders and zemindars. Rajputs are Khstriyas, the traditional warrior of Hindu society. Kayastha are also land owners and money lenders, although professionally they are better known as clerks and accountants to the zamindars and therefore are addressed by the polite terms “Diwanji” or “Munimji”. Gwalas keep cattle and sell milk, ghee and curd. Gwalas belong to either Ahir or Yadav subcaste (Bista, 1976).

The Eastern Hills. The people with Mongolian complexion are the oldest ones in the hilly region. This group specially comprises of the Sherpa and the Kiraty groups Limbu, Rai and Sunuwar of the eastern region. Most of the Janajati have Mongolian complexion. These ethnic groups have their own language and culture and do not fall in the four fold Hindu Varna. But in the practical life, except some Sherpas and Tamangs, others follow Hindu rituals. They have intimate relationship with nature. In Nepal, Mongolian people are also called Kirant or Kiranthy. The Kiranthy

were ruling in Nepal over 600 years before 500 A.D. (Chaudhary, 2011). The word 'Kirant' is the corrupt form of Kiriat, Kiriya of Kirjath which means a fort or town.

The time over that kind of social system created a lot of discrimination in Nepalis society socially, economically, educationally and culturally. Due to such social system, more than 50 percent people fell under disadvantaged groups. These groups are Dalits, Adibasi, Janjatis, minorities, Madhesis, deprived groups and other lower castes (Gurung, 2007). Among the lower castes, some are Dalits and untouchable. The GoN has identified 23 Castes as Dalits: Kami, Damai, Sarki, Lohar (hills), Sunar, Badi, Gaine, Kasai, Kusle, Kulu, Chyame, Pore, Chamar, Dhobi, Dushadha (Paswan), Tatma, Khatwe, Bantar, Dom, Mushahar, Santhal, Satar and Halkhor (DoE, 2004). Dalits, who live in Terai region, are Dom (Marik), Dushad (Paswan), Pasi, Mushahar, Chamar (Ram, Mochi, Rabidas), Tatma (Das), Khatwe (Mandal, Khang), Dhobi (Rajak), Halkhor (Mestar). Kalar, Kakaihiya, Kori, Khatik, Chidimar, Bantar, Sarbhang (Sarbariya), Dharikar (Dhankar), Dhandi and Natuwa (CBS, 2011). They are lagging far behind the hill Dalits in education, health and several other sectors. Among the Terai Dalits, the socio-economic conditions of the women and girls are even worse. Virtually, they are Dalits of the Dalits (Jha, 1999).

In Nepal, poverty pressure is high among the Dalits (46% of them live below the poverty line). By the end of the fifteenth plan (2019/20-2023/24) the population below the absolute poverty line will have come down from 18.7 percent to 9.5 percent (2023/24) and to 4.9 percent by 2030, and the population living in multidimensional poverty will have decreased from 28.6 percent (2014) to 11.5 percent (2023/24) and 6 percent by 2030 (NPC, 2020). In comparison with the national average of 18.7 percent, the figures of Dalits are formidably high (NPC, 2020). It is estimated that about 7 million people (especially Dalits) are still living below the poverty line in the

country. So, poverty is still a major problem in Nepal. At the national level, various policies and institutional efforts have been made for poverty reduction, although poverty gap between towns and villages has not been reduced yet. The poverty in towns is 8.7 percent and in villages it is 22 percent. At the regional level, the poverty is highest in mid-western region (37.4 %), in central region it is 22.3 percent and in Kathmandu valley 11.5 percent. This shows that Dalit community has limited access to productive resources and development investment as well as outcomes (CBS, 2012). It is estimated that over 167 million children will have lived in extreme poverty by 2030 if the world does not take measures to reform health and education sectors (Maharjan, 2021).

Situation of Dalit Education. Dalit have been historically disadvantaged in the educational sector. The pattern of exclusion has its roots in the Varna system as described by Manusmriti, in which Dalits were considered as the labourers, denied from the rights of education, and the Brahmin was the only rightful holder of education (Ahuti, 2010). In fact, not only Dalit but also other caste groups were excluded from school education, but the penalty for violating the rules was harsher for Dalit than the other caste group. Jung Bahadur Rana established some schools during the Rana regime, but they were only for the Rana family and not open to the public. As a result, 98 percent people were illiterate in Nepal until 1950 and only 100 Dalits were found to be literate in this period (Bhattachan, et al., 2008). Dalit are enrolled, but continuation in school is a problem. In 2004, the school completion rate of Dalit was considerably lower than 15 percent of the total Dalit population (Bishwakarma, 2019). The survey of the Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO, 2005) in six districts, shows that more than 50 percent children,

especially Dalit, are not going to school, the reason for dropping out being the adverse economic situations (NNDSWO, 2006).

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita income at USD 703, more than 35 percent people are illiterate, and 25 percent of people live under the extreme poverty line. Poverty is higher in rural areas (27%) than urban areas (15%), and in the mid- and far west, there is a higher incidence of poverty. Dalit have a much higher incidence of poverty at 46 percent compared to the advance ethnic group Newar at 14 percent (CBS, 2011b). Due to various reasons, Dalit face exclusion from education, SMC, PTA, and others related field of the schools (Bishwakarma, 2019).

The situation of Dalit girl's education presents a relatively sad picture. Though the enrollment rate of girls in school has gone slightly up, disparity in the male-female enrollment rates goes on increasing in each successive grade, and therefore the situation is not satisfactory. In Dalit society, girls are more sufferer than boys. A Dalit girls' education suffers due to several inter-related factors, such as distance of school, school related expenditure, irrelevance of the curriculum, ill health, heavy work burden and poverty. Illiteracy, awareness and prejudices as well as the parents are also responsible for girls' education. School education for Dalit girls is also neglected by illiterate mothers due to caring of siblings and grazing goats in the field. Those Dalit parents who are sending children to school favour the boy child rather than girl child. The two main reasons assigned for this preference are -the girl child is meant for her future husband's household and the future role of a girl child is confined to home only (Majpuria, 2007).

As the present study focuses on educational status of Terai Dalit girls in Nepal who for centuries have been treated as *paninachalne tatha chhunanhune Jat* (an

'untouchable caste' people who cannot be touched and food cannot be taken from them) and the term 'Dalits' is used to denote their socio-cultural status in a derogatory way. This dehumanizing word 'Dalits' is derived from Sanskrit nomenclature/root 'Dal' which means 'to break' or 'broken' and therefore, downtrodden. The cultural epithets include outcastes, exterior-castes, depressed classes, untouchables, ex-untouchables, Harijans and Dalits. The Dalits, in literal terms, are socially weak, economically needy and politically powerless, despite protective policies followed by the government under the provisions of the constitution (Samel, 2006).

Untouchability is the extreme and vicious aspect of the caste system, prescribing severe social sanctions against those placed at the bottom of the caste structure and involving terrible punishments, fatal attacks, and atrocities. The major dimensions of the prevailing practices of untouchability are exclusion, humiliation-subordination and exploitation (Bishwakarma, 2019). The concept of caste based discrimination is not new (NDC, 2003). Dalits suffering from caste based discrimination and untouchability have been entrenched in an age-old caste system that has reinforced hierarchy between 'upper' and 'lower' castes (Khanal et.al.2012). Bishwokarma (2002) writes "...caste based discrimination and practice of the untouchability was firstly introduced in Nepal in 2nd century. King Jayasthi Malla (1360-95) of the Kathmandu valley and King Ram Shah (1605-36) of Gorkha state constituted the caste system and organized the Nepalese society on the basis of caste hierarchy in the name of establishing social system. The Civil Code(1854) legalized the Nepalese society into two main caste group - 'the touchable' and 'the untouchable, the later headed sprinkling of water for purification'. The historical mistake of untouchability was corrected with the legal provision when the practice of untouchability was outlawed with the promulgation of the Country Code of 1963.

Though the practice of untouchability is illegal, the deep-rooted practice in the society has not been eroded completely. The outlawing of untouchability was further elevated as the constitution of kingdom of Nepal 1990 contained the provision of illegality of such practice- article 11(2) of the constitution: “no discrimination shall be made against any citizen in the application of general laws on the grounds of religion, race, sex, caste and ideological conviction”. This constitutional recognition of illegality of practice of untouchability shows not only the elevated legal provision but also the practice that continued despite the statutory provision of outlawing it (Hoffer, 2012).

There are two principal obstacles to the untouchables of Nepalese society: the one is the so-called anti-communalism (shampradayikta) and the second obstacle is the lack of any decisive legislation. Unlike India’s constitution and the untouchability offence act of 1955, Nepal has denied any ‘positive discrimination’ to the untouchables (Hoffer, 2012). In the Nagarik Adhikar of 1955, discrimination (bhedbhaw) on the basis of religion, race, sex, caste and tribe (dharma, warna, linga, jat, jati) is prohibited. Untouchability is a key form of caste discrimination, which refers to the humiliations imposed, from generation to generation, on a particular but sizeable section of the population that relates to impurity and pollution (Sooryamoorthy, 2008). They – the untouchables – are excluded from much of social life, including everyday activities like sharing sources of drinking water and participating in religious worship festivals. The prohibition into temples and cultural functions is also another form of caste discrimination (Bishwakarma, 2019).

The term ‘Dalit’ itself arrived in Nepal from India around 1961, when Nepali untouchable delegation visited India. Earlier, ‘Untouchables’ acchuts were used even in the Dalit organization (Nepal Dalit Act, 2001). The very term ‘Dalit’ was first used by Jyotirao Phule (1827-90) for untouchables as oppressed and depressed by the Hindu

caste system. It was taken up by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and really popularized by the Dalit panthers in Maharashtra in the 1970's (Gellner and Karki, 2007).

Since 1963 the traditional concepts of touchability and untouchability have been legally prescribed. However, social practices of exclusion and inferiorization continued in many places. There was an infamous incident when Hira Lal Bishwakarma, an Assistant Minister of State during Panchayat period, was refused entry to a tea shop in Chainpur, east Nepal, on caste grounds. No legal action was taken against teashop owner, but the Minister recommended that the headquarters of the district be moved to Khadbari (Bishwakarma, 2002). Traditionally, in general, Dalit used to be divided into the three sections: The hill Dalits, the Newar Dalits and Terai Dalits, since the concept of touchability and untouchability as the Hindu notion came in Nepal. The 1990 Constitution reiterated that "No person shall, on the basis of caste, be discriminated against as untouchables, be denied access to any public place, or be deprived of the use of public utilities. Any contravention of this provision shall be punishable by law".

The number of Dalits according to the population census (2011) is 3,593,825, which is 13.56 percent of the national population. Among them 1,702,835 were male and 1,890,990 females indicating the female dominance in the composition of Dalit population. In 2011, central development region was the most Dalit populated development region (916,655) followed by the western development region (755,957). Similarly, Saptari (211015) Siraha (140499) and Dhanusha (120902) were the three most Dalit populated districts against Manang (336), Rasuwa (1345) and Mustang (1811) as the three least Dalit populated districts (Census, 2011).

Selection of the research topic.What made you select this research topic?

There were several occasions and circumstances that led me to select this topic: “Schooling of Terai Dalit Girls of Dhanusha District in Nepal”. The researcher himself had gained lots of experiences in his life that they made up his mind to study on the topic related to Dalit girls.

The researcher had been District education officer in many different districts. Whenever he was supervising non-formal education program as a DEO, he found some of the girls doing well in every activity although they were out of school. They had left their formal education. At that moment, he found most of them were from Dalit community and he thought, they might have faced lots of challenges to achieve formal education. That’s why, the researcher was curious to do a research on Dalit girls’ schooling to find out what were their challenges for not getting formal education and how they could benefit from good formal learning opportunities.

At other times, when the researcher was in field visit, he was sorry for many school age-old children just playing among themselves, working in their fields, grazing cattle and doing household works in Dalit community without going to school. When they were asked, ‘Why they are not going to school?’ ‘Are they willing to go to school?’. They replied, they were interested to go to schools but they had some challenges so they were not going to schools. This scenario forced the researcher to think seriously of the situation and made up his mind to workout strategies to help the dropout children to stay in schools. This experience of the researcher motivated him to do research on the very topic.

Another experience was related to the team visit from ministry of education for studying Dalit girls’ educational opportunity. The study team visited the

researcher's village including the researcher himself. In course of the visit, the team visited Dalit community where they saw a girl of near about 11-12 age, doing her household work. The work was a manual one, hard to do due to her tender age. The age was of school age but she was engaged in such hard household work. The whole team was surprised and asked about her parent and education. She replied that she herself along with her family was not aware about the benefit of education. That situation inspired the researcher to do research on the girls' schooling situation so that he could contribute to uplift their lifestyle by helping them to have opportunity for proper education.

Dhanusha district, the study district, is situated in the southern part of the then Janakpur zone, now province no 2, in the Terai region. This district with Janakpur as its headquarters covers an area of 1180 square kilometer with 7, 54, 777 populations (male 3, 78,538 & female 3, 76,239) (CBS, 2011). Dhanusha, the second largest home of Dalits in the then central development region (now province no 3) of Nepal, had 101 village development committees (VDCs) with one municipality named Janakpurdham. Majority of the people in the district are Madhesis of the Terai community whose common language is Maithili (89.69%) (ISRC, 2008).

It is known that Nepal has made significant progress in education during 1952-2011 (CBS, 2003). Level of literacy of population 6 years and above increased from 13.9 percent in 1971 to 65.9 percent in 2011. Development of literacy rate from 1952 to 2011 of 6 years and above has been synoptically presented in table 1.1.

Table 1.1. *Literacy Status of Six Years and Above Population(In percentage)*

Year	Male	Female	Total	Gap between male and female
1952	9.5	0.7	5.3	8.8
1961	16.3	1.8	8.9	14.5
1972	23.6	3.9	14.0	19.7
1981	34.0	12.0	23.3	22.0
1991	54.5	25.0	39.6	29.5
2001	65.1	42.4	53.7	22.7
2011	75.1	57.4	65.9	17.7

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2011).

The above data indicates that along the increment in literacy rate also comes the gap between male and female literacy rate, which is also on the increase. What is also encouraging in the last two decades is this that the literacy rate of male is increasing by 10 percent along with the increasing literacy rate of females. The reason behind this increase in literacy rate could be assigned to the affirmative action taken by the government in terms of female literacy program, the millennium development goals, education for all program, school sector reform program, international commitment, Nepal's literate Nepal mission and many other forms of government interventions.

However, the trend of Terai Dalit's literacy shows that literacy percent is less than 20 (NHDR, 2009) in comparison to hill Dalit literacy rate (43%). The share of Dalits in the total population of Nepal is around 13.56 percent, where as their share in school enrollment is 19.7 percent at primary level, 14.4 percent at lower secondary, 11.0 percent at secondary and 6.6 percent at higher secondary level, which are almost similar to the pervious school year (DOE, 2016). Enrollment at different levels still shows a severe gap in terms of access to education. Similarly, the share of Dalit teachers to total teachers' population is very negligible. The proportions of Dalit

teachers at primary, lower secondary and basic levels are 5.3 percent, 4.2 percent and 5 percent (Compared to the share of Dalit teachers 5.1 percent, 4.0 percent and 4.9 percent in the previous school year) respectively (DoE, 2016). Table 1.2 shows the participation of Dalits in basic education (Grade 1 to 8). The female teachers' participation is less (42.3%) in comparison to their male counterparts (57.7%). The data, given below, shows Dalits' weak participation in school education system when considered from the perspective of equity, equality and inclusion.

Table 1.2. *Status of Dalits' Participation in Basic Education (In percentage)*

Description	Primary (1 - 5)			Lower secondary(6-8)			Basic level (1-8)		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
Net Enrollment rate	96.3	96.9	96.6	78.9	76.5	77.7	89.6	89.2	89.4
Dalit Enrollments	-	-	19.7	-	-	14.4	-	-	18.1
Janjati Enrollments	-	-	34.4	-	-	38.6	-	-	35.7
Disabled Enrollments	-	-	1.1	-	-	0.89	-	-	1.03
Women Teachers	42.3	57.7	-	27.9	72.1	-	39.1	60.9	-
Janjati Teachers	27.8	32.4	30.5	19.8	20.2	20.1	26.6	29.2	28.2
Dalit teachers	3.7	6.4	4.3	3.3	4.6	4.2	3.7	5.9	5.0

Source: Department of Education (DoE, 2016).

We can make an easy guess from the above table about the poor situation of the Terai Dalit girls so far their schooling is concerned. A Dalit girl has more than two and half times the risk of not going to school in comparison to a boy. This risk increases with age. Household chores and registration fees during the time of enrollment accounted for 45 percentage of the responses in the Nepal Living Standards Survey, NLSS (1996) to explain why girls were not sent to school. The major reasons for not sending daughters to school include lack of household resources; lack of sense of importance since girls will marry; girls' workload at home; indirect school fees; lack of female teachers and inadequate facilities. The Nepal

multiple indicator surveillance reported help required on farms and parental wishes as the main reasons for not sending girls to school. As the level of education increases, the girls' enrollment rate declines progressively. Household income and the level of concern with the purity of the female body, which leads to early marriage, are important effect in deciding whether to send girls to school or not.

As long as there is no financial resource constraint for the family, the primary school age girls may be able to go to school but, as soon as it arises, the first casualty is the female child's education. Girls in lower income groups get little opportunity to go to school at all levels. Those who go to school can hardly complete the secondary school education. Another compelling factor hindering women's education in general is the fact that girls are transferred to their groom's households after marriage, with the result that parents have no claim on their work. In summary, poverty, workload and cultural perceptions are the major factors hindering female education (NRB, 1984). Social factors aside, lack of physical facilities and female teachers are considered to be major constraints in increasing girls' enrollment in secondary education. Locally, less relevant curricula, lack of competent teachers, lack of guidance and counseling services seem to be the strong hindering factors in schooling of Dalit girls. There is an absence of positive mention of Dalit's traditional professions in the curriculum, although this type of inclusion could help students to revalue their importance rather than emphasizing the negative descriptions. In general, the curriculum has not considered the Dalit and marginalized groups as essential component of the nation (Bishwakarma, 2019). As almost all study materials are available in the Nepali language in school, teacher used the same language rather than local language for instructions. These things are the obstacles to Dalit students.

It is in this context that this study has made an attempt to analyze the status of Dalit girls' participation in education, especially from the Terai region in Nepal. Government of Nepal has some specific policies to increase Dalit girls' participation in education. The government is committed to providing free and quality primary education to all children, especially the girls (Dalit), ethnic/marginalized and minority children by 2015 (CERID, 2009). The government is also arranging scholarship, mid-day meal and edible oil for children of backward communities, especially Dalit children (NPC, 2008). This spectrum of schooling, seen from the perspective of Dalit girls from the Terai region, has therefore formed the crux of the theme of the present research work.

Statement of the Problem

The government of Nepal has been committed to achieve the EFA goals by 2015, and it has focused on the universal participation of children in the education sector, especially in basic education. A large number of children (especially Dalits) are still out of school and they are deprived from the light of education. The data show that participation, retention and success of Dalit students in education (especially girls) and economically weak people are still very low (MoE, 2003; CERID, 1997; Poudel, 2002, 2003; NPC, 2002; CBS, 2011). The enrollment rate of Dalit children is 19.7 percent in primary level, 14.48 in lower secondary level, and 11.08 in secondary level and 6.6 percent at higher secondary level, which is almost similar to the previous school year (DoE, 2016). There are still 6.6 percent primary school aged (6-10) children who are not able to join the school, and 7.3 percent of 10-14 year aged population and 29.7 percent of 15-19 year's age group are out of educational access (CBS, 2011). School enrollment, retention and school dropout

pose big threat to Dalit communities of Nepal as nearly 43 percent in hilly and 76 percent in Terai school age Dalit children are out of school.

Education plays an important role in creating awareness and bringing positive change in overall aspect of human life, and education in particular to women is more important. The popular saying “Educate a man, you will educate him only; educate a woman you will educate the whole family” reveals the importance of education to women, which is subsequently beneficial to the whole family. Attainment of higher level of education has positive role in creating employment opportunity and improving women’s social status as educational attainment influences person’s income level as well (Tamang, 2014). German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) research (2010) reports education playing important role in making decision on fertility and reproductive rights; it leads to longer spacing between births and, as a result, less children. Swarna (1997) comes with the opinion that “Education is widely used as an indicator of the status of women and is seen in more recent literature as an agent to empower women by widening their knowledge and skills” (p. 411). Education, thus, is an important agent in bringing positive change in women’s lives, opening the door of opportunity and leading them to economic security.

But women’s access to education and economic activities is very low in the context of Nepalese society. They are involved more in household chores and less in economic activities. Lundberg (2005) views women’s confinement to household and marginal access to resources resulting in relatively poor alternatives outside their current partnership as well as in distribution of resources. In terms of access and control over resources, Parajuli (2010) observes Dalit women as victim of gender discrimination (even from their male counterparts) as well as with very less access to and control over economic resources. Their denial of access to economic resources is

also, thus, caused by gender discrimination to a large extent. And Dalit women's access to it is further marginalized due to both gender and caste discrimination.

Living standard of most of the Dalits is unacceptably poor. CBS (2011) shows the average poverty rate in the country as 25.16 percent; the poorest group is Dalit (41%) followed by hill Janajatis (28.25%). Dalit are still the poorest group in the country and suffering from multiple problems and becoming worst affected victim of unemployment and poverty, it is hard for women to hold employment position and good income. Different income-generating programs can play a positive role in enhancing women's confidence and decision making role. Women's economic empowerment enhances their control over reproductive health, self-mobility, and decision making (Steele et al. 1998).

Everyone knows that Nepal is one of the world's poorest countries. The existing socio-economic structure of the country is a major causes of poverty. A large number of people live below the poverty line. Most of them do not have land. Among them, the condition of Dalit is very bad. According to Bhattachan, 78 percent Dalits live below the poverty line and near about 90 percent are landless (*Sukumbasi*) with 38 percent of their children becoming the victims of child labor. Alarmingly, 75 percent Dalit children become the victims even after the enrollment before grade five (Bhattachan & Bhattachan, 2008). Dalit girl suffers heavy educational loss due to several interrelated factors such as less relevant curricula, lack of female teachers, ill health, heavy domestic work load, lack of parental support, early marriage and poverty (Majapuria, 2007).

Likewise, some additional problems identified through research, low enrollment, high dropout rates and caste prejudice in schools, combined with a discriminatory behavior are some dimensions of the problems Dalits are facing in the

education sector (Bishwakarma, 2019). A low level of teacher diversity is also a major challenge in Nepal. The majority of teachers still come from the higher caste groups- Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Only 5.1 percent of teachers at basic level, 5.4 percent of teachers at secondary level and 3.7 percent at higher secondary level are Dalit which is the lowest among all caste groups (GoN, Flash II, 2017). Caste discrimination has been also a key obstacle to Dalit development. This is also confirmed by the fact that only 10 percent of the Dalits own land, meaning that 90 percent are landless and without capital and can only earn a living through wages (Ahuti, 2010). According to the 2014 Human Development Indicators, Terai Dalit occupies the worst position in terms of socio-economic status and they are landless. A landless Dalit does not have a citizenship certificate, which restricts them from accessing allowances provided to senior citizen. Thus, landlessness has a multi dimensional effect such as poverty, limited access to state resources and opportunities among Dalits in Nepal.

The enforcement of caste-based untouchability generates lower social status and disrespect for Dalit. According to Dorling (2015), institutionalized social norms undermine and exclude marginalized (specially Dalit) people from what would for those in advantageous positions constitute normal social activity, and this creates further segregation and disdain for the marginalized (specially Dalit) groups in the society (Dorling, 2015). A big majority of Dalit people in developmental arena remain excluded from the process of decision-making to the implementation level. The participation of Dalits and weaker sections of the society in critical areas of decision-making is yet to be ensured. National laws, social rules and regulations are supporting the rigid hierarchical social structure, social injustice and control Dalits to bring to the decision-making body as well (Nepali, 2007).

Other problems, probably trickier, are the lack of Dalit sensitive policy, lack of incentives for the implementation of the program, lack of available resources and support system, lack of sensitization, advocacy and networking for promoting Dalit participation, inadequate attention to make commitment and efforts from government and non-government sectors and Dalit movement. Also underlying causes of exclusion are inadequate understanding of the Dalit rights. Likewise, denial of Dalits participation in policy formation, planning, implementation and resource sharing is, nonetheless, yet another crucial problem. Hence, there is a serious lack of responsive policies and programs in both government and non-government sector to tackle with the issue of Terai Dalit girls (Nepali, 2007).

If we view Terai Dalit girls' literacy status against that of the country (65.9%, census, 2011), only less than 20 percent Terai Dalit population is found to be literate. It sadly tells us the story of the Dalit girls from the Terai region with concentration of the Dalit population. Comparatively speaking, male literacy rate is 75.1 percent against female literacy rate of 57.4 percent on national scale (CBS, 2011). The literacy rate is high from the high caste strata and it gradually decreases with the lower caste structure. The Terai Dalits that fall at the bottom of the hierarchy of these caste strata naturally have a lower literacy status. The Terai Dalits like Musahar, Dom, Khatwe, and Chamar have therefore the lowest literacy status. Among the Terai Dalits, Musahar is the most educationally deprived Dalit. They are only 7.28 percent literate in 2001 census but according to the CBS census 2011, out of 15-caste group of Terai Dalits, the literacy rate of Dom caste is lowest. Table 1.3 shows the literacy rate of Terai Dalits in Nepal:

Table 1.3. *Literacy Rate of Terai Dalits in Nepal(In percentage)*

Caste/ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Dom	26.37	14.16	20.31
Musahar	26.90	16.66	21.82
Natua	40.53	23.09	32.03
Kori	43.45	23.90	34.15
Dushad/Paswan/Pasi	43.92	26.53	35.37
Khatwe	46.55	25.39	35.72
Chamar/Harijan/Ram	46.17	27.74	37.03
Halkhor	45.58	29.28	37.67
Tatma/Tatwa	49.83	28.40	49.11
Dhankar/Dharika	49.07	32.58	40.91
Dhobi	54.19	31.46	43.09
Bantar/Sardar	53.71	34.90	44.12
Sarbariya	57.34	34.72	46.18
Dhandi	60.18	35.12	47.85
Kalar	59.25	44.31	51.41
Nepal	75.13	57.38	65.94

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2011).

The most deprived groups in terms of education are Terai Dalits or untouchables. The literacy rate (20.31%) of Dom in 2011 census is lowest, followed by Musahar, Natuwa, Kori, Dushad and Khatwe respectively. The Dom community, one of the most excluded of the Terai Dalit, are not allowed to enter local hotels and should they be permitted any service, they are required to bring utensils (glasses and plates) if they want to buy tea or foods. The dom caste has no land, even for a small shade for pigs, and pig farming is the only sources of income for this community (Bishwakarma, 2019). Occupying the lowest status within the caste hierarchy has multidimensional effects on the socio-economic, educational and political situation of Dalit. Unequal status underpins unequal distribution of power and other resources

(Olsen, 2011). As identified by the UNDP human development report 2014, Dom is the least developed Dalit group in its category of the human development index. Dom falls at the lowest rank in the different dimensions of development such as income, literacy and gender empowerment (UNDP, 2014). Table 1.4 below shows the literacy situation of different caste/ethnicity according to their age-groups (15- 49).

Table 1.4. *Literacy Situation by Caste/Ethnicity (15-49)(In percentage)*

Caste/Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total	HDI (2007)
Brahmins/Chhetri	92.8	68.6	80.7	0.552
Madhesis	72.0	24.2	48.1	0.450
All Dalits	59.9	34.8	42.3	0.424
All Janjatis	79.6	56.9	68.3	0.490
Newar	93.5	74.5	84.0	0.616
Muslim	61.8	51.5	56.6	0.401
All mountain	86.9	63.4	75.2	0.523
Terai Madhesi	69.9	35.9	52.9	0.455
Others	97.4	52.3	79.8	0.559
Nepal	81.0	54.5	67.8	0.509

Source: UNDP, Human Development Report, 2009

The above table indicates a huge gap in literacy rate between all mountain Himali groups of women (63.4%) against all Terai Madhesi women(35.9%).Hence, the literacy gap between Hill and Madhesi women is 27.5 percent.

Table 1.5 below shows the relation between the poverty level and literacy status of caste and ethnicity has implication by per capita income. The per capita income of Hill/Mountain groups of people like Newar, whose literacy rate is high (84%), have higher earning (Rs. 68060), whereas the per capita income of Terai/Madhesi Dalit, whose literacy rate is low (42%), have less earning (Rs. 27562).

Table 1.5. *Per Capita Income by Caste and Ethnicity(2011)*

Caste and ethnic groups	Per capita income (rupees)
All Brahman/ Chettri	49,878
Hill Brahman	55,763
Hill Chhetri	45,420
Madhesi Brahman/Chhetri	41,889
Madhesi other caste	32,737
All Dalit	33,786
Hill Dalit	36,021
Madhesi Dalit	27,562
Newar	68,060
All Janajati excluding Newar	37,726
Hill Janajati	46,986
Tarai Janajati	36,765
Muslim	31,096
All Hill/Mountain groups	47,208
All Terai/Madhesi groups	33,288
Others	103,579

Source: Nepal Living Standards Survey, 2011

According to the UNESCO report (2010), illiteracy, poverty, cultural, social, religious, psychological, legal biasness (discrimination) are some of major obstacles and challenges for schooling of Dalit girls, especially, in the Terai region. So Dalit girls are ill-treated and are educationally backward. It is, however, observed that government of Nepal is committed to the international declarations and treaties like the world summit for children, the UN convention on the rights of children and others.

The Constitution of Nepal (2015) has made several provisions to have the right to get free education. Similarly, the world conference on education for all (EFA, 1990) goals, national plan of action (2001-2015) for EFA, the millennium

development goals (MDG, 2000-2015) and the sustainable development goals (SDG, 2016-2030) have targeted universal primary education.

An inclusive provision in the annual strategic implementation plan (ASIP, 2006) has taken various measures. Although there have been many efforts and initiatives to address the serious levels of educational inequality that exist in Nepal. These have not been as effective as they might have been, even taking into account the very challenging governance context. There are certain national and international law against discrimination and initiative to reduce gap, which is indeed not working well (Bishwakarma, 2019). Despite all these efforts, Dalit girls' access to education is still not satisfactory. Considering the status of the Terai Dalits, only 24 percent of them are represented in the basic education level (Pyakurel, 2012).

This study on 'Schooling of Terai Dalit Girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal', therefore, focuses on schooling issues of the Dalit girls in order to find out their participation in schooling process. The focus of the study, thus, is to explore the status of their access to education by identifying issues and challenges related to their schooling.

Justification of the Study

The world education forum on education for all (EFA), held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, listed six major EFA goals in the form of Dakar framework for action to be achieved by 2015. Among those six goals, one crucial goal is about access to education highlighting the importance of reaching the unreached including girls and women for basic education. The goal laid stress on achieving access to and completion of primary education by all, particularly the disadvantaged, with a focus on ensuring Dalit girls' full access to and achievement in quality basic education

(CERID, 2006). Nepal, given its existing socio-economic situation, is facing the problems of how to ensure an equitable access to quality basic education and increased retention and reduce dropout rate of disadvantaged groups, mainly Dalit girls. The present research makes an attempt to provide answers to these questions with an expectation of improving access and retention to basic education for the disadvantaged, the girls and moreover, the Dalit girls. The output of this research would thus make a valuable contribution to educational policy makers, planners and administrators in the country in order to attain the goal of improving access and increasing retention and reducing dropout rate of basic education schooling with a focus on the disadvantaged Dalit girls.

The need for a comprehensive study like this is there that can answer questions that have remained unanswered so far. The focus of this study i.e. Terai Dalit girls, signifies its importance simply because such study was barely done from national perspective with broader implications for the planners, policy makers and educationists who are directly or indirectly involved in Dalit movement. Very few studies have been made about Terai Dalit girls in Nepal and therefore, the study is justified.

It has been seen in the Nepalese context that only free basic education could not attract the disadvantaged groups of children, particularly Dalits or low income group children, because of reasons like inability to meet the school related and student related cost and reluctance to miss the opportunity cost. The schools at the same time could not tap resources from the elite groups (higher income) who are capable to pay even more for their children's quality education. The presence of Dalit teachers can provide role models to both Dalit parents and children to make them realise the importance of education. Despite the ninth plan (1997-2002) that required that there

be one Dalit teacher per school, the policy was not implemented effectively. Poverty compels Dalit to wage labour and most children work with their parents. The informal social values and norms also discourage Dalit children from continuing their schooling. Beyond the promulgation of formal laws to address discriminatory behavior, particularly after 1990, governments have taken some initiative to use the law as an instrument to change the socio-economic, education and the political situation of Dalit. Among them are affirmative action policies in the public service, army and police administration, and the abolition of bonded labour (Haliya). In the education sector, the latest amendment to the education act, 1971, is another initiative that enshrines the rights of free school education for Dalit students (Bishwakarma, 2019).

This study is expected to shed light on many such important issues that had remained hitherto unknown to many including the planners of the education system. The study is, further expected to be significant in mainly drawing conclusions and suggestive measures as important steps to be taken by the government under important programs like school sector development program (SSDP) and the EFA campaign towards ensuring equitable access to quality education for all including the disadvantaged groups such as the Terai Dalit girls. In addition, the study has the potential to contribute to the development of a framework to guide the government to workout strategies for the cause of the disadvantaged groups, mainly Dalits, for their sustainable development through the education sector. The Nepal government has formulated some targeted policies for Dalit's education and has adopted some international conventions. However, the implementation of these policies is not effective, and as a result the progress is slow. For example: Nepal did not significantly progress achieving free and compulsory primary education as set out by the

millennium development goals (UNICEF, 2006). Among the several legal provisions the education act, 1971(8th amendment, 2004), is one of the important laws in safeguarding free education for Dalit children. This act envisioned free primary education for all children, including free education for poor Dalit, ethnic groups and women. Education by laws (2002) has directed community schools to manage free education for Dalit, ethnic groups and girls. According to the constitution of Nepal (2015), provision of free education with scholarship, from primary to higher education, shall be made by law for the Dalit students. Special provision shall be made by the law for the Dalit in technical and vocational education.

Dalits have great expectations and aspirations that should not be taken lightly. The issue of social exclusion is coming up as one of the major problems in the country. It is slowly shaping into a greater size immensely affecting lives of Dalit, which is a grave matter of concern for all. Dalit people not only go through the adjustment problem in a totally new surrounding but they are also exposed to several other vulnerabilities and scarcities. The practice of caste-based discrimination has excluded Dalit especially women from the society, limiting their social relationship and their opportunities. Sen (2000) defines social exclusion as capability deprivation as being excluded from social relations that can lead to other deprivation as well, there by further limiting their living opportunities. Due to the impact of long-run caste system, Dalits have become one of the most deprived, marginalized groups in the society. Dalits lack much behind in many spheres of life of the society. In a society like ours where Dalits have been suffering from caste-based discrimination and poor socio-economic conditions, female Dalits' condition is no better than their male counter parts. Dalit women suffer from gender discrimination along with caste-based

discrimination. Dalit women's condition is much vulnerable compared to higher caste women (Bishwakarma, 2004, as cited in Tamang, 2014).

Patriarchy-based societal norms do not provide equal status between male and female even when having meals together in a family. Dalit women face additional discrimination in terms of equitable access to available food. The study by Right and Democracy (2007) reveals that "within many communities" women are commonly "the last one to eat and the first to go without foods in times of shortage".

Problems like less participation of Dalit girls in school, lack of the female teachers in remote areas (especially Dalit female teacher), lack of appropriate physical facilities for girls (CERID, 2006) are still persisting as they have been affecting girls' schooling and performance (CERID, 2004). The study is expected to dig into the situation related to these problems and bring out realities that are to be internalized by all, especially by the decision-makers and planners in order to devise ways and strategic measures to respond to the appalling situation related specifically to the schooling situation of the Dalit girls from the Terai region. It is worth conducting a study of this magnitude in order to find out ways of empowering Dalit girls for ensuring their equitable access to schooling and improving their schooling experiences. The findings of this study will contribute and support the government's initiative in formulating Dalit girls' friendly policies for their better schooling practices in Nepal.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to explore the schooling status of Terai Dalit girls as seen in the form of their access to basic education. More specifically, the study intends to accomplish the following objectives:

- i. To explore Dalit girls' access to basic education by caste and age-group.
- ii. To assess Dalit girls' schooling practices.
- iii. To identify challenges related to Dalit girls' schooling.
- iv. To explore ways to mitigate the challenges of schooling with implications.

Research Questions

The study mainly intended to explore the status of Dalit girls' access to basic education. It also made an attempt to find out challenges related to their schooling practices. While analyzing the status of Dalit girls related to their schooling, the study focused on the following questions:

Who among the Dalits are not participating in education?

What is the existing educational status of Dalit girls?

What are the reasons of Dalit girls for not attending the school?

What are the major challenges faced by Dalit girls in school? `

How can Dalit girls' participation be increased in education?

What can be done to overcome different types of challenges faced by Dalit girls in school?

What policy options are to be developed in order to ensure their access to basic education?

What changes do Dalit girls aspire from their education in future?

The study has sought answers to the above questions in order to explore the status of Terai Dalit girls in the district of Dhanusha.

Delimitations of the Study

The study on "Schooling of Terai Dalit Girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal" is a broad area covering multifaceted dimensions and aspects. The delimitation of this

study is related to specific choices for the inclusion of areas for the intended research.

This study is, therefore delimited to a number of specific variables:

The first delimitation of the study was related to the coverage of Dhanusha as a district. It has covered Dalit girls of basic schools age group (5-12) of that district. It was delimited to four basic schools (1-8) of the then Janakpur municipality. It was delimited to the study of Dalit girls (48), parents (48), teachers (8) and head teachers (4) for data collection purpose.

The second delimitation of the study was related to the coverage of the levels of education: only formal basic education was covered excluding secondary level of education.

The third delimitation of the study was related to a single Dalit community of a single district in the Terai region of Nepal; therefore, widespread generalizations should not be made from it but it can be expected that there will be re-occurrence of similar responses in similar context to this research and with a researcher with a background similar to mine.

The fourth delimitation was related to the generalization of the application of the findings to similar situation regarding Dalit girls' access to basic education.

Finally, the fifth delimitation of this study was that the researcher did not establish extended relationships with the participants. The researcher interviewed each school's Dalit parents and their daughters separately. Multiple interviews would have been ideal. However, the researcher felt that the initial data and analysis of them provided a strong foundation for more depth knowledge about the schooling of Dalit girls.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Access. The ability, right or permission to approach, enter, speak with

- The term access typically refers to the ways in which educational institutions and policies ensure or at least strive to ensure - that students have equal and equitable opportunities to take full advantage of their education.
- Universal access to education to the ability of all people to have equal opportunities in education, regardless of their social class, gender, ethnicity background or physical and mental abilities.

Basic education. According to the international standard classification of education, basic education comprises primary education (first stage of basic) and lower secondary education (second stage).

Dalits. Dalits refer to the groups of castes from whom water is not accepted and whose touch requires sprinkling of holy water. In other words, they are “*untouchable caste*” in Nepal. In the overall Nepali ethnic/caste framework of today, Dalits still represent the lowest strata in the Nepalese society, whether this social structure model is that of Hindu, the typical Newar or the ethnic/tribal groups.

Equity. The term describes fairness in the distribution of opportunities for education. Enhanced equity implies a reduction in disparities based on gender, poverty, residence, ethnicity, language or other characteristics and circumstances that should not influence education outcomes.

Madhesh. Low land and plain area is called Madhesh. Historical name of Madhesh is Terai and inner Terai region of Nepal (Chaudhary, 2011).

Madhesi (Terai) Dalits. Dahal (2005) has categorized the Madhesi Dalits into three categories:

- Inhabitants of the Terai region of Nepal showing a geographical identity of people as a whole.
- A term used by the hill people to address the Terai people or the plain people (Madhesiya) to mark their physical and cultural identity.
- A term historically meaning the people of Madhya Desha, showing the closeness and connection with people living in northern India, particularly Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Schooling. Schooling is a simple concept in common language.

- For this study, the operational definition of schooling refers to the formal school system from primary through secondary level.

Terai. It has come from Persian (Farsi) language which is made of ‘Ter’ and ‘Terai’ meaning ‘wet’ and ‘wetland’ e.i. the land with soft-wetsoil. The word Terai refers to the plain land from the southern Ganga of India to northern plain land of Nepal. The plainland of Nepal is also called Teriyani in some places. The relation of Terai and Teriyani can be the subject of investigation. ‘Low region is called Teriyani or Terai or Keloni (Hamilton, 2007)’.

Untouchability. Practice of discrimination based on higher and lower–caste hierarchy.

Varna. A form of colour and occupational division of people.

Organization of Dissertation Report

The dissertation (study) report has been organized into eight different chapters. The first chapter deals with introduction of the study as made familiar by background of the study, statement of the problem, justification of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, delimitations and operational definitions of key terms.

The review of related literature and theoretical framework have been discussed in the second chapter, including status of disadvantaged children, access of Dalit girls to education, theoretical considerations, empirical reviews and conceptual framework of the study.

Similarly, the third chapter deals with a brief introduction of the study areas and the research methodology used for the study.

The fourth chapter consists of analysis of one of the key themes related to access to basic education by throwing light on the Dalit girl students' enrollment by caste, age-group and gender along with determinants of their school's initiative, school environment, teachers' behaviour, parental socio-economic status as well as school curriculum including promotion, repetition and dropout of Dalit students.

The fifth chapter of the study is concentrated on schooling practices, concept of schooling, parental expectation, support and schooling practices, participation in CCA and ECA activities, tutorial support at school and home, presence of female teachers and impact of schooling.

The sixth chapter of the study is concentrated on challenges of Dalit girls' schooling and ways of mitigating them are discussed with background; factors related to poor schooling, underage marriage/early marriage, parental attitude, poverty situation, mid-day meal and engagement in domestic chores.

The seventh chapter deals with findings and discussion, and summary of findings, results and their importance.

The last eighth chapter deals with conclusions and implications for improving schooling practices which are stated as implications for policy, practices and for further research.

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature and Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature related to the theme of the research. Literature related to the researches on the status of the disadvantaged children, especially, Dalit girls from the Terai region, and theoretical considerations are reviewed to identify research gaps as well as practices related to the schooling situation of such girls. In the same way, the relevant documents, reports, and other publications have also been reviewed to draw meanings to the theme of the study.

Status of Disadvantaged Children

A brief note on the status of the disadvantaged children is presented in the following paragraphs, both nationally and internationally, from the perspective of education.

Nepal has realized that it must emphasize girls' education, especially Dalit girls' participation, with their equitable access to education. This part, therefore, includes the legal arrangement, policy decisions, issuance of directives and efforts made by the government of Nepal in education sector especially for Dalit girls. Nepal is trying to fulfill the commitment regarding this concern made in the international conferences. It is observed that government of Nepal (GoN) is committed to the international declarations and treaties like the world summit for children, the United Nations (1989) convention on the rights of the child, UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities(UNCRPD, 2006) and many others related to the rights of people living below the poverty line. The government is committed to providing equitable access to quality primary education to all children especially girls (Dalit)

and the children from ethnic/marginalized and minority sections of population by 2015 (CERID, 2009).

The Ministry of education (MoE) has been implementing various educational programs to improve the status of education sector and to achieve the national and international commitments (such as world conference of education for all by 2015, Dakar framework for action, and millennium development goals-MDGs) emphasizing equitable access to education for all. The ultimate aim of all programs is to ensure the opportunity of school education as the fundamental rights of the children with focus on marginalized sections of the population e. g. women, Dalits, children with disabilities, and ethnic and linguistic minorities. Basic and primary education program I (BPEPI, 1991-1996), basic and primary education program II (BPEPII, 1997-2004), education for all (EFA) 2004-2009 were the major programs completed in education sector. Similarly, secondary education support program (SESP, 2003-2008), teacher education program (TEP, 2002-2007) and, the community school support program (CSSP, 2006-2011) were other important programs implemented in the country (DoE, 2013) to this effect.

To incorporate successful experiences of all earlier educational programs, the school sector reform plan (SSRP, 2009-15) was designed and department of education (DoE) had already implemented the program throughout the country. Similarly, second higher education program (SHEP, 2007-2014) was also implemented with a view to improve higher education. United nations children's fund (UNICEF) and united nations educational, scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO) are assisting/supporting DoE with various field level activities. The DoE is coordinating with the central level educational agencies- national center for educational development (NCED), curriculum development centre (CDC), office of the controller

of examinations (OCE) and non-formal education centre (NFEC), higher secondary education board (HSEB) and council for technical education and vocational training (CTEVT) for preparing, implementing, monitoring, supervising and reporting these programs. In addition, DoE collaborates with various organizations and research institutions such as the research centre for educational innovation and development on various research activities. The government has been working with I/NGOs (such as world food program, world education and others), and UN agencies collaboratively for achieving the EFA targets and MDGs in education sector (DoE, 2013).

Nepal started periodic planning from 1955 and now has become a global partnership for education. It has successfully conducted Seti project, primary education project (PEP), basic and primary education program (BPEP) I & II phase, teacher education program (TEP), school sector reform program (SSRP), higher secondary education program (HSEP), second higher secondary education project (SHSEP), community school capacity building (TEVT), education for all (EFA), shishu bikas karyakarm (ECED) and food for education project are ongoing programs and projects in Nepal. Nepal has accepted and internalized the world declaration of education for all conference held in Karachi, Jomtien and Dakar. SSRP (2009-15) is a strategic plan of government of Nepal and it is a continuation of the EFA and SESP program (DoE, 2014).

Universal primary education is one of the major millennium development goals (MDGs, 2000-2015) to which all member countries of the United Nations including Nepal were committed. The world education forum in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000 embraced a holistic concept of educational development, and subsequently, declared education for all (EFA) program to be achieved by participating countries by 2015. As EFA is a national priority program, the

government of Nepal prepared an education for all national plan of action (EFA-NPA, 2001-2015) with a focus on six overall EFA goals: Expanding and improving early childhood and care, ensuring access to all, meeting the learning needs of all children including indigenous people and linguistic minorities, reducing adult illiteracy, eliminating gender disparity, and improving all aspects of quality education (UNESCO, 2010). Nepal added the goal of providing basic education through mother tongue as the seventh goal because of her unique multilingual situation.

Nepal was also working simultaneously for fulfilling the millennium development goals (MDGs). The MDGs outline major development priorities including education to be achieved by 2015. One of the millennium development goals gives emphasis on achieving universal primary education. One of these goals has targeted promoting gender equality and empowering women (NPC, 2005). The interim constitution of Nepal (2007) had made several provisions to guarantee equal opportunity for both women and men in all state matters. Such provisions included these points: Education as a fundamental right of every citizen, provision of primary education in mother tongue, and free education from the state up to secondary level.

The eighth plan (1992-97) had mentioned that the feasibility of introducing compulsory primary education would be studied. In the event of free and compulsory primary education, local bodies (VDC/ Municipality) would be provided with necessary authority to implement the free and compulsory education plan. This plan has stated that compulsory primary education schemes may be launched on pilot basis by the local bodies with their own initiative and, on the basis of their own demand (NPC, 1992). The ninth plan (1997-2002) had two objectives related to free and compulsory education: (a) to make primary education easily accessible to people and conduct program for making primary education gradually compulsory, and (b) to

provide educational opportunities to the disabled, backward ethnic tribes and deprived sections of people living in remote areas and bring them into the national mainstream. The plan has stated that in the process of making the existing free primary education program compulsory, scholarship would be provided to the children of backward ethnic tribes and oppressed classes (NPC, 1997). The tenth plan (2002-2007) has outlined the policies and action plan to provide education for all by 2015 in accordance with the international commitment. The government of Nepal would gradually implement the program of compulsory education and improve the institutional, managerial and physical infrastructure accordingly. To achieve this goal, the government would encourage teaching in the children's mother tongue to increase the participation of linguistic groups of different ethnic communities in education and take steps to gradually make free primary education compulsory. The government would arrange scholarship for the children of backward communities (lower castes or Dalits, indigenous groups, women, person with disability and children from economically backward population) with priority while doing so (NPC, 2002).

In the three-year interim plan (2007/8-2009/10), the following provisions were mentioned: Inclusive and equitable education for all, ensuring the educational rights of all females, males and children at local level, and income generating and life-skill based non-formal education as a campaign focused on the disadvantaged groups such as women, Dalits and Madhesi.

To ensure basic education for all, the school sector reform plan had suggested legislative mechanism with the provision of compensation to the deprived students for denied access and penalty for those who inhibit their access. Provision of free and compulsory basic education has been made in the SSRP to ensure access to all. Free basic education includes free tuition, free textbooks, and examination fees. Support

programs for the promotion of compulsory education are in place to encourage local governments to adopt this policy. The plan had also placed emphasis on access of the out of school population with guaranteed provision for all children to learn by raising efficiency and enhancing effectiveness in the delivery of services in education sector (SSRP, 2007).

The local self-governance act (LSGA, 1999) has empowered VDC/ Municipality to supervise and manage the schools within their respective areas, assist them in providing primary level education through mother tongue, arrange for providing scholarships to the students oppressed from ethnic point of view (MoLD, 1999).

Research center for educational innovation and development (CERID) conducted a study on free and compulsory primary education in the context of education for all (2004). It aimed to document the compulsory primary education (CPE) experiences from the past, to analyze how the initiatives were conceived, planned, implemented and monitored, and to assess the impact of these initiatives in order to draw lessons for the future EFA plan. This was a comparative case study carried out in Banepa municipality of Kavre district and Ratna Nagar municipality of Chitwan district. The findings of the study in Kavre indicated that the program of Banepa was highly successful while Ratna Nagar program could not achieve success that much, though both of them had received equal support from the government. The study had concluded that the program was successful in Banepa because it got necessary program prerequisites such as eradication of illiteracy with the help of the community learning centers (CLCs), and ran advocacy campaigns in partnership with the local level stakeholders. The other causes that helped Banepa were strong

commitment at the local level to program implementation and good attention to program monitoring (CERID, 2004).

Another study that appears relevant was a study of rights based education and structural reforms in basic and primary education conducted by CERID in 2007. This study had found that in spite of various efforts such as scholarship, textbooks and opening of the early childhood centre, the existing situation did not appear satisfactory for providing rights based education to children as per their needs and demands. The overall findings of the study indicated that the policies and programs were neither sufficient nor efficient for providing rights based education. There was a need to classify the responsibilities of the stakeholders. The government has to manage regular sources of income to run schools so that rights based education could make impact on the children representing each section of the Nepalese society (CERID, 2007).

Besides women, other traditionally disadvantaged people are awakening to the cause of utilizing the freedom provided by the democratic system and the spread of education. In every nation, some regions or areas may regard themselves as economically cheated by the central authorities. In Nepal, Kathmandu valley consumes a greater share of facilities compared to the other parts of the country. Apart from economic inequality, there are several minority linguistic and ethnic groups who feel suppressed by the majorities and the elite of the society. In addition to the traditional conflict between the majority and the minority, the regional, ethnic and linguistic groups demand the right to come to the main stream and want to have a different identity at the same time. Poverty and illiteracy are the breeding ground for social unrest in society.

During the drafting of the constitution of Nepal in 1990, religious, linguistic and ethnic groups of Nepal such as Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Gurung, Tharu, Bhojpuri, Maithali and Newars and religious groups such as Buddhist, Muslims, Christians raised their voices to give their language and religion proper representation in the constitution. But, rather than attempting to accommodate their grievances, the constitution drafting committee and the interim government perceived them as a threat to national unity and virtually dismissed them out of hand. Actually, a healthy democratic system should tolerate the widest possible diversity and there is nothing frightening about the existence of such groups so long as the political system remains in equilibrium (CERID, 1998).

Raja Roy Singh of UNESCO in 1991 stated "One billion humans are living below the poverty line. More specifically, 20 percent of the 'haves' today own or use for themselves 80 percent of the earth's assets and income". With respect to the poverty in the third world, he further mentioned, "In the third world countries which represent the majority of humanity, unbalanced development is a general phenomenon. It is as if there are two countries in one-the modern elite and the rural and urban poor" (p. 21). It was during the decade of the 80s in the United Nations family of 165 sovereign countries that 75 percent were classified as poor (CERID, 1998).

One of the world's main priorities is to eradicate poverty and hunger. This is the first of the eight MDGs, for which the target for 2015 was to halve the proportion of people living on less than US\$1.25 a day relative to 1990. This goal was achieved three years before the target date primarily because of the success of some of the most populous countries: Brazil (from 17.2% to 6.1%), China (from 60.2% to 13.1%) and India (from 49.4% to 32.7%). Between 1990 and 2008, China alone lifted a

remarkable 510 million people out of poverty. Poverty has multiple dimensions with deficits in health and education, for example. Moreover, an estimated 10 percent of the global population is afflicted by some form of disability, potentially limiting their standard of living regardless of low income. In the early and middle 20th century, European countries reduced poverty not only by increasing incomes but also by providing public goods such as health care and education (UNDP, 2013). Human poverty is much more than income poverty. People are poor not only because of low income, but also because of their low access to opportunities or their participation in them (UNDP, 2009). From human development perspective, poverty is regarded as a state in which the opportunities and choices most basic to human development are denied (UNDP, 1997 as cited in UNDP, 2009). If the human development index (HDI) reflects the expansion of opportunities and choices, the human poverty index (HPI) captures the denial as a result of income and capability deprivation. High levels of human poverty in the mid-western and far-western regions of Nepal reflect deprivations in health, education and sanitation. In these two regions, the most deprived districts in terms of health are Dolpa, Bajura, Kalikot and Bajhang. The most deprived districts in terms of education are Rautahat, Mahottari, Humla, Sarlahi, Mugu, and Siraha, where adult illiteracy rates are over 60 percent. Dailekh, Dang, Achham, Jajarkot and Salyan, mainly in the mid- western region, are the most deprived in terms of access to safe drinking water (UNDP, 2014).

The world conference on education for all, the UN convention on the rights of the child, the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, the international year for eradication of poverty and the proclamation of 1997-2006 as the United Nations decade for the eradication of poverty are some of the important international efforts to address the basic needs of the disadvantaged

mankind. Although poverty alleviation has been one of the major agendas of many developing countries including Nepal for many years, achievement of this goal seems to be still far away. It is therefore important to find out the answers to why inequality and poverty remain high in many countries in spite of their economic growth. For this, it is also necessary to study the reasons behind the perpetuating circle of poverty (CERID, 1998). Among the developing countries, the poor ones share some common characteristics. Ordonez (1998) specified the characteristics of the poor as being illiteracy, malnutrition, poor health, low life expectancy, sub-standard housing, chronic unemployment or seasonal/under employment, landlessness, land shortage, low agricultural productivity, indebtedness and low wages. They tend to live in rural and remote areas and in urban slums where basic services are scarce. There could be multiple causes for being poor or the poor becoming poorer.

Explaining the situation of the poor in Asia and Pacific region, Ordonez (1998) writes; "Half of the world's poor live in South Asia alone and the vast majority of world's illiterate population (two-thirds of which are accounted for by the countries of the Asia and Pacific region) and unschooled primary school age children live in poor, under-served disadvantaged rural and remote habitations. Poverty can be measured more comprehensively using the multidimensional poverty index (MPI), which looks at overlapping deprivations in health, education and standard of living. In the 104 countries covered by the MPI, about 1.56 billion people-or more than 30percent of their population-are estimated to live in multidimensional poverty. This exceeds the estimated 1.14 billion people in the world who live with less than US\$1.25 a day, although it is below the proportion that live on less than \$2 a day (World Bank, 2012b). The countries with the highest poverty percentages based on the MPI are in Africa: Ethiopia (87%), Liberia (84%), Mozambique (79%), and Sierra

Leone (77%). In South Asia, the highest MPI value is in Bangladesh (0.292 with data for 2007), followed by Pakistan (0.264 with data for 2007) and Nepal (0.217 with data for 2011). The proportion of the population living in multidimensional poverty is 58 percent in Bangladesh, 49 percent in Pakistan and 44 percent in Nepal, and the intensity of deprivation is 50 percent in Bangladesh, 53 percent in Pakistan and 49 percent in Nepal (UNDP, 2013).

Ordonez (1998) further specifically listed the following characteristics of the poor in Asia and Pacific region, which are also relevant to the context of Nepal. The poor section of population is highly concentrated in rural areas. They live in relatively remote areas or in isolation, far from roads and have restricted access to information, public services and markets. They migrate from rural to urban areas in search of better livelihood. The poor have limited access to basic public services. They have a high population growth rate but a low health and nutrition status. The poor are exposed to many risks and hazards in terms of their living conditions as well as the occupation they are compelled to be engaged in. The poor are generally landless. They lack capital, both in terms of the cash to invest and skill to get higher wages. Whatever little they earn, most of it is spent on food. The poor do not have access to skill development facilities and thus they remain unskilled during their lifetime, and poverty in ethnic minority population is high due to various social and legal discrimination against them. Women and girls in particular are the victims of poverty. Children from the poor families suffer both physically and psychologically. The poor are always victims of exploitation, prone to cultural exploitation due to poverty, deep-rooted conventions, social taboos, etc. The poor have a low status in society and not allowed in the decision- making process due to illiteracy. Keeping in view the depth of the problem, many countries have developed national plans and policies to fight

against poverty. The characteristics mentioned above reveal that a single measure could not be a magic drug for alleviating poverty. Many strategies and approaches are being adapted to this effect. For instance, one of the strategic moves for fighting against poverty adopted in many developing countries including Nepal is the program for early childhood development (CERID, 1998).

The case of Terai Dalit girls does not differ very much from this situation. Marginalization in education matters at many levels. Having the opportunity for a meaningful education is a basic human right. It is also a condition for advancing social justice. People, lacking in education face the prospect of diminished life chances in many other areas, including employment, health and participation in the political processes that affect their lives. Moreover, restricted opportunity in education is one of the most powerful mechanisms for transmitting poverty across generation (GMR, 2010).

The drive for universal primary education (UPE) has gained momentum during the last decades. Various initiatives and declarations (for example the Dakar declaration and the millennium development goals) have stressed the importance of achieving universal primary education. The millennium development goals declared in 2000 have set 2015 as the year in which universal education and gender equality, in this respect, are to be achieved (MoE, 2003).

Universal declaration of human rights (UNDHR, 1948) and subsequent treaties have established the right to education. They act as the force of law for governments that ratify them. The convention on the rights of the child (CRC), the most widely ratified human rights treaty, reaffirms the right to free and compulsory primary education and emphasizes the children's well-being and development. As education is included in human rights and child rights, it has been the responsibility of

nation to educate all the children without discrimination of any kind. Everyone has right for education. Similarly, half a century ago, government around the world made a clear statement of intent on convention against discrimination in education (1960). This imposed a comprehensive justice on discrimination by legal intent, but on the processes that have the effect of causing discrimination (UNESCO, 1960).

Going forward, in 1990, from around the world including Nepal, 164 governments together with partner organizations, made a collective commitment to dramatically expand educational opportunities for children, youth and adults by 2000 for providing basic education to all the children without discrimination of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Nepal also made commitment to EFA and prepared a national plan of action for EFA. Thus, it has been the obligation of the nations to educate all the children (MoE, 2003).

Education for all (EFA) plan of Nepal made the provision to ensure that all children in the country have quality basic and primary education in a caring and joyful environment (MoE, 2003). It has made the provision that all children have the experience of caring and joyful childhood development. They will have primary education in their mother tongue without any kind of cultural, ethnic or caste discrimination. In the same way, according to the plan, almost all adults will be literate and engaged in continuous learning through community learning centers (CLCs). Moreover, the plan has assured that provisions of varieties of appropriate learning and life skill education that are contextual and directly beneficial for the youths and adults will be available through different modes including CLCs (MoE, 2003). This is the educational opportunity defined by EFA core document prepared by Nepal.

Global net enrollment rate (NER) is 87 percent whereas Nepal has 96.2 percent. To put it another way, globally about 13 percent children are out-of-school, where as the number is 3.8 percent in case of Nepal (DoE, 2015). The promotion, repetition and dropout rate in grade one is 72.5, 19.9 and 7.7 percent respectively. The promotion rates in the upper grades are better as compared to grade one. The overall survival rate to grade five is 84.1 percent with 83.0 percent for boys and 85.0 percent for girls. The overall survival rate to grade eight is 69.4 percent with 68.7 percent for boys and 71.1 percent for girls. The overall co-efficient of internal efficiency at primary and basic levels is 76.6 percent and 68.3 percent (DoE, 2012).

The 2011 census shows that Nepal's literacy rate is 65.9 percent which further indicates that a large number of school age children are out of school and they are the hard core group to be served by the nation. Keeping this fact in the centre, Nepal has identified girls/female, children with disabilities, Dalit children, Janajatis, street children, children in conflict, sexually abused children, poor children, children in prison, orphan children and the children victimized from HIV/AIDs and language minorities as the disadvantaged from the point of view of educational facilities. They should be treated as hard core group for providing educational opportunities in Nepal (MoE, 2003).

The facts mentioned above indicate that Nepal's school education system is facing two challenges: inadequacy of access and quality. These two challenges are similar to the ones faced by other developing countries (UN millennium project, 2005). If so, Nepal has to significantly accelerate the enrollment of children and improve their ability to keep children in school. Increasing access and improving the quality are mutually reinforcing. The first concern in access should be the primary

focus in Nepal because the concern for quality is valid when all the children have equal access to schooling opportunity.

The Geneva conventional rights of the child (GCRC, 1924), the convention on the rights of the child (CRC, 1989), and optional protocol to the convention on the rights of the child on the use of children in armed conflict and the commercial sexual exploitation and pornography (2001) include the rights to life, protection and development that also guarantee children's right to participation and expression. Despite all these commitments, violation of the rights is common in most countries, and Nepal is hardly an exception. The slogan of social inclusion and children's concerns came to the existence of the democratic movement of 1990 and more recently, in the recent *Loktantra* movement. But such goals can hardly be achieved through conventional approach. Understanding and internalizing the plight of children and targeting initiatives towards the rights of these children must form an integral part of the new approach (Aditya, 2007).

Child labor in Nepal is a familiar phenomenon. Due to poverty and unemployment force, parents in the villages send their children to work. Children are involved in every sector of production, from farming to cattle grazing in the villages and from domestic services to factory works in the cities. Like other issues of people's empowerment, the issues of children have been left ignored in the development programs which lack broad vision and holistic approach.

The government has made several laws, policies, and programs for the development of children. But, their effective implementation yet remains to be seen. The decision-makers who generally come from political parties, bureaucracy, and academia are guided by traditional norms, and they are seldom sensitized on the issue of child rights. Children's issues, often taken for granted by them, cannot be

addressed through the welfare based approach. A basic radical change is needed in the thinking and attitude of policy and decision-makers (Aditya, 2007). The above discussion leads us to think that the situation of Terai girls, especially of the Dalit girls, would be even worse given the adverse situation that these girls have to live with.

International situation. One of the dominant forces is the population of women in work. Since the Second World Wars, the working force of women has increased to two hundred percent. Only in the United States of America (USA), two-thirds of millions of women with no children under 18-year age group are also involved in work. In the same way 67 percent women with children work which is almost as high a percentage as men. Half of the women with children also work in European countries. Women's position is still lagging behind than that of men in almost all developing countries. The much talked about United Nations fourth world conference on women held in Beijing, China, in Aug-Sept 1995 had passed many resolutions for the advancement of women in the world especially in the developing countries. The Asia and the Pacific sub-regional group had submitted the following demands during the conference: Eradicate poverty through ensuring equitable access to and adequate control over resources; promote equality in women's access and participation in economic activities and economic institutions; recognize and utilize the critical role and knowledge of women in environment management; strengthen factors that promote the full and equal participation of women in power structure and decision making in all aspects; establish non-discriminatory laws in all areas of public and private life to bring about equity, particularly in regarding property right, marriage, divorce and nationality; eliminate discrimination in the distribution of nutrition and health service among the children of the family; prioritize the

elimination of illiteracy among women and eliminate gender gaps in the contents of education; ensure women's equitable access to science and technology related skills; promote positive image of women in the media; and create adequate mechanism and strengthen them for advancement of women.

The Nairobi forward looking strategy for the advancement of women has emphatically recognized the importance of education, the advancement of women; and it states "Education is the basis for full promotion and improvement of the status of women. They need to be enrolled in the schools in order to play the role as the full members of the society. Governments should be strengthening the participation of women at all levels of national education" (CERID, 1998). Extreme inequalities are also linked to wealth and gender. In the Philippines, education poverty rates among the poor are four times above than the national average. In some countries, high levels of marginalization among the poor females account for a significant share of education poverty. Just under half of the poor rural females aged 17 to 22 in Egypt have fewer than four years of education and in Morocco the rate is 88 percent. Social inequalities also explain some striking cross-country differences. With a per capita income comparable to Viet Nam's, Pakistan has over three times the level of education poverty - a reflection of disparities linked to wealth, gender and region (GMR, 2010).

Globally, there have been much greater reductions in inequality in health and education in the last two decades than in income. This is partly because of the measures used- life expectancy and mean years of schooling have upper bounds to which all countries eventually converge. But for income, there is no upper limit. The world has made much progress in reducing inequality in educational attainment in both enrollment ratios and expected years of schooling over 1990-2010, particularly

in Europe and Central Asia (loss due to inequality in education declined almost 68%), East Asia and the Pacific (34%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (32%). In both developed and developing countries, the average enrollment ratio for primary education is nearly 100 percent and more children are finishing school (UNDP, 2013).

There is also a link between health and education. Better education for women, for example, tends to result in better health outcomes for them for the next generation. Thus life expectancy and educational attainment may move in tandem. Most inequality in education today reflects disparities in quality: many developing countries have dual-track systems, with the well-off attending good schools and universities, mostly privately funded, and the poor attending inadequate, mostly publicly funded facilities. Rising inequality, especially between groups, can lead to social instability, undermining long-term human development progress. Persistence of inequality often results in a lack of inter-generational social mobility, which can also lead to social unrest (UNDP, 2013).

The factors leading to marginalization in education do not operate in isolation. Wealth and gender intersect with language, ethnicity, regional and rural-urban differences to create mutually reinforcing disadvantages. Detailed deprivation and marginalization in education (DME) data for those aged 17 to 22 help to identify groups facing particularly extreme restrictions on educational opportunity and highlight the scale of national inequalities (GMR, 2010). Cross-country analysis reveals some complex patterns of marginalization. Some social groups face almost universal disadvantages. Pastoralists in sub-Saharan Africa are the example. In Uganda, which has made strong progress towards universal primary education, Karamajong pastoralists have average less than one year in education. Many countries also show large disparities linked to language. In Guatemala, average years

in school range from 6.7 for Spanish speakers to 1.8 for speakers of Q'eqchi'. The DME data set makes it possible to look beyond absolute deprivation to identify some of the key characteristics of those who are being left behind. Using surveys, it identifies people found in the bottom of 20 percent of the national distribution in terms of years in school. The results highlight the powerful influence of social circumstances, over which children have no control, in determining life chances.

They also draw attention to unacceptable levels of inequality. They are:

- The wealth divide means that being born into a poor household doubles the risk of being in the bottom 20 percent in countries ranging from India to the Philippines and Viet Nam.
- Regional divides mean that living in rural areas in the countries such as upper Egypt, northern Cameroon and eastern Turkey increases significantly the risk of falling into the bottom 20 percent.
- Generally, poverty, language and culture often combine to produce an extremely heightened risk of being left far behind. In Turkey, 43 percent of Kurdish-speaking girls from the poorest households have fewer than two years of education, while the national average is 6 percent; in Nigeria, some 97 percent of the poor Hausa-speaking girls have fewer than two years of education (GMR, 2010).

Some facts from the education for all global monitoring report 2008 about the out of school children including the girls are mentioned below:

- The total number of primary-school-age children not found in primary or secondary school worldwide was around 72 million in 2005.

- South and West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa account for 24 percent (17 million) and 45 percent (33 million) of all out-of-school children respectively.
- The share of girls among the out-of-school children was 57 percent (41 million) in 2005. In sub-Saharan Africa girls accounted for 54 percent of out-of-school children in 2005, compared to South and West Asia at 66 percent and the Arab States at 60 percent. ([http://www. Welthungerhilfe, de/fileadmin/media/pdf/Stopp_Kinderarbeit/Child_Labour](http://www.Welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/media/pdf/Stopp_Kinderarbeit/Child_Labour))

Similarly, the EFA global monitoring report 2013/14 presents clear evidence that 57 million children were still out of school by 2011. Girls make up 54 percent of the global population of children out of school. Around half the world's out-of-school population lives in conflict-affected countries, up from 42 percent in 2008. Of the 28.5 million primary school age children out of school in conflict-affected countries, 95 percent live in low and lower middle income countries. Girls, who make up 55 percent of the total, are the worst affected. Dropout before completing a full primary cycle has hardly changed since 1999. In 2010, around 75 percent of those who started primary school reached the last grade. Children are more likely to complete primary schooling if they enter at the right age. However, the net intake rate for the first year of primary school increased only slightly between 1999 and 2011, from 81 percent to 86 percent -and it rose by less than one percentage point over the last four years of the period. Some countries have made great progress in getting children into school on time, however, including Ethiopia, which increased its rate from 23 percent in 1999 to 94 percent in 2011(GMR, 2013/14).

Household poverty goes hand in hand with vulnerability. Even a small economic shock caused by drought, unemployment or sickness, for example, can force parents into coping strategies that damage children's welfare. Girls are often the first to feel the effects. In Pakistan and Uganda, climate-related shocks result in the situation of children being taken out of school; and this is applicable for girls more than boys. Child labor is another corollary of poverty that hurts education. In an estimate, there are 166 million child laborers in the world. Many of these children are locked in a losing battle to combine work with education. In Mali, around half of the children aged 7 to 14 years report that they are working. With labor activities taking up an average of thirty-seven hours a week, most of these children do not attend school (GMR, 2010).

Getting marginalized children into school is just a first step. Ensuring that they receive a good education poses significant policy challenges. Targeted financial support and programs to facilitate improved learning in schools in the most disadvantaged region can make a difference, as can programs that draw well-qualified teachers to the schools facing the greatest deprivation. Language policy is another key area. Reforms in Bolivia have emphasized the important role of intercultural and bilingual education in providing ethnic and linguistic minority children with good quality schooling, and in overcoming social stigmatization. Ensuring that children with disabilities enjoy opportunities for learning in an inclusive environment requires change in learning equipment. The convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2006) provides a framework for delivery that should serve as a guide to public policy (GMR, 2010).

According to global education monitoring report (GEMR) 2020, education resources and opportunities are distributed unequally:

- An estimated 258 million children, adolescent and youth or 17 percent of the global total, are not in school. The number out of school in sub-Saharan Africa is growing.
- In low and middle income countries, adolescents from the richest 20 percent households are three times as likely as those from the poorest to complete lower secondary school; of those who complete, students from the richest households are twice as likely as those from the poorest households to reach minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics.
- In 10 low and middle income countries children with disabilities were 19 percent less likely to achieve minimum proficiency in reading than those without disabilities (GEM, 2020).

International declarations have made commitments to non-discrimination since 1990, inclusion permits the 2030 Agenda, with its call to leave no one behind:

- The 2006 UN conventions on the rights of persons with disabilities (CRPD) guaranteed the right to inclusive education but stopped short of precisely defining inclusion in education. The struggle of people with disabilities has shaped perspective on inclusion in education (GEM, 2020).

Layers of discrimination deny students the right to be educated with their peers or to receive education: All over the world discrimination is based on gender, remoteness, wealth, disability, ethnicity, language, migration, displacement, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion and other beliefs and attitudes (GEM, 2020).

National situation. Education is indispensable for human capacity development and poverty eradication, and is an inevitable key element to promote

economic growth, create employment opportunities, and foster civic participation and personal development. Following the world declaration on education for all 1990, Nepal has put immense human efforts and financial resources for enhancing quality besides improving access to primary education. A number of donors are supporting the government of Nepal (GoN) in its mission for EFA. The international community re-affirmed its vision of EFA through the Dakar framework for action. The Dakar framework proposed 12 major strategies and set six major goals to achieve quality education for all by 2015. The development of basic and primary education in Nepal received an impetus from the international commitment.

Following education for all (EFA core document, 2004-2009) a comprehensive primary education intervention as part of Nepal's EFA national plan of action (NPA, 2001-2015) was implemented, and at present, the school sector reform plan (SSRP, 2009-2015) has been implemented. The national planning commission (NPC) provides the long-term vision and planning framework for the Ministry of education (MoE) and aims to achieve the 2015 millennium development goals (MDG) and the EFA goals by introducing systemic improvements in service delivery and planning mechanisms. The SSRP is a continuation of the on-going programs such as education for all (EFA), secondary education support program (SESP), community school support program (CSSP), and teacher education program (TEP). Building upon the lessons learnt and gains made in the sector, the SSRP also introduces new reforms characterized by strategic interventions such as the restructuring of school education, improvement in the quality of education, and institutionalization of performance accountability.

The constitution of Nepal 1990 regarded education as one of the fundamental rights. This constitutional provision encouraged the introduction of special policies

for educating girls, other disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minorities, and Dalits who have been historically marginalized in Nepal. Moreover, the interim constitution 2007 has envisaged basic and primary education as a right and it has to be made free and universal. The constitution is explicit regarding the provision of providing primary education in mother tongue and free education up to secondary level.

However, the publication of the department of education (2014-15) indicates about 3.8 percent of the school-going children are still out-of-school. While the percentage of out-of-school going children has significantly come down in the last few years, it is gradually becoming tough to track this population as they tend to be scattered in different urban and rural settlements. Failing to track this population would inevitably put us behind in meeting the EFA and MDG goals. Therefore, the department of education (DoE) and its development partners have taken out-of-school phenomenon seriously- making every bid possible to bring this population into mainstream education by addressing their diverse educational needs.

The other side of the out-of-school population is that students in significant number tend to drop-out from schools in their early grades. This, in turn, regularly adds up the number of out-of-school population. However, it remains to be explored as regards what size of out-of-school population has never been to the school and how many of them are school drop-outs. There are communities where out-of-school children are found in significant number. Knowing this would help understand whether the cause is inside the school or within the family and in the community. With broad areas to be explored in selected districts and VDCs, the department of education sponsored for conducting an independent study of out-of-school children in Nepal (DoE, 2012).

The situation of average girl children (especially Dalits) around the world presents a relatively sad picture. In the declaration of world summit for children held in New York in 1995, attention was drawn for special emphasis to the girl child. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in its recent summit in Maldives also declared 1990s as the decade for the girl child (Majpuria, 2007). The United Nations fourth world Conference in Beijing in 1995 marked a turning point for girls. Their voices were heard and their needs and rights recognized in a special section of the platform for action relating to the girl child. Yet 113 million children in the world still do not attend school, and two-thirds of them are girls (Kumar, 2007) and nearly 46 percent of the population (6+ year's age) is still illiterate. The literacy percentage status of all women is 57.4 percent in Nepal, whereas for Dalit women, it is only 34.8 percent (MoE, 2013; UNDP, 2014; CBS, 2011).

After the political change in 1951, the demand for education increased and the government policies like national education system plan (1971-76) and free primary education helped to expand access to education. However, most of the resources were consumed by the process of expanding access to education, and issues such as inequity of access, low quality of education and inefficiency in the system did not receive due attention (Thapa, 1993).

Nepal is not the exception so far as the pitiable condition of girl children (especially Dalits) is concerned. Despite the increase of schools and school enrollments, many children are not yet enrolled in schools. The government sources show about 4.9 percent of primary school-age children (5-9) are out of school, whereas 13.4 percent of the children in age group of 5-12 years currently are out of school. It shows wider gaps in terms of the participation of children from different gender and ethnic groups, specially Dalit girls (DoE, 2011). Although the data show

a gradual decrease in the percentage of the children who are out of school, the completion rates at all levels of education: primary (5 years), lower secondary (3 years), secondary (2 years), and higher secondary (2 years), are low due to high dropout. For example, the retention rate to grade five was only 55.7 percent in 2005 (TRSE, 2006). In the case of Dalits, the retention raises up to grade five was 7.9 percent in 2005 only (TRSE, 2006). Unschooling, illiterate and early dropout people are disproportionately high among Dalits, especially girls, women and some other minority groups (TRSE, 2006).

The government provides free textbooks and does not charge tuition fees for five year's primary education in government-funded schools. However, free education does not cover the cost of school uniforms, food, stationery, and it does not compensate for lost labour to families (Poudel, 2007).

TEAM consultants (1999) studied the conditions of Nepali Dalits and found that the conditions of Dalit women/girls could not improve in comparison to other groups of women/girls. More than 46 percent of the Dalit girls from the hill, 43.4 percent from the mountain, and 30 percent girls from the southern plain (Terai) dropout from the school.

However, share of girls' total enrollment in primary school (50.0%) shows significant progress in gender balance. Despite this encouraging trend, the enrollment of Dalit girls at primary and lower secondary levels, is less. The share of Dalit enrollment at primary, lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary levels is 21.7, 14.6, 10.5, and 6.8 percent respectively (DoE, 2011).

Dalit girls have suffered a lot due to several interrelated factors, viz- distance of school from home, irrelevance of the curriculum, ill health, heavy work burden and

poverty (Majapuria, 2007). Unschooling, illiterate and early dropouts are disproportionately high among Dalits, women, and some other minority groups (MoE, 2003). This indicates that the present schooling is a process of social selection, which continues to produce and reproduce social differentiation and hierarchies (Parajuli, 2002; Poudel, 2003). The human development report (UNDP, 2004) points out that selective education continues to produce and reproduce social differentiation with "Government subsidized education benefiting primarily the privileged". The policy of subsidy has not changed the existing discriminatory schooling practices considerably. The same reports of 2013 and 2014 have also reiterated this.

A CERID study has critically pointed out the following reality: "In the months of planting and harvesting (Mangsir, Baishakh and Bhadra), most of the students do not attend school. This creates learning difficulties for them. Students needed extra coaching but teachers were not willing. Faced with these difficulties, the children either drop out or do not pay attention to learning. Teachers concentrated only on finishing the course. They were not concerned with quality education. Thus, chances of dropout were high with irregular children. Teachers and SMC members never contacted parents to find out actual reasons for the dropout. The stakeholders also did not take any measure in this direction (CERID, 2005)". Exclusion of women, the disabled, Dalits, Janajatis, *haliyas*, *ex-kamaiyas*, and the people living in the isolated and remote areas of Nepal has been the social and national practice for centuries in education. Isolated efforts were made after 1951 for their inclusion by leaders of the disadvantaged groups, but their voices did not surface until the restoration of democracy in 1990. Although a great deal of efforts has been taken since then, the impacts have not been felt in accelerating the needed change. Disappointments

pushed many to join the Maoist movement believing it would bring them the desired emancipation (Aditya, 2007).

The other side of the coin is the condition brought about by the existing education system vis-a-vis the structural problems of the disadvantaged. Nearly half of the school children do not complete primary education. No alternative exists for them, and they have to join the job market without any skill. Unfortunately, the efforts made so far in education have not been able to take care of all the out-of-school children as they are from the underprivileged groups of people, viz., Dalits, *ex-kamaiyas*, *Haliyas*, *Badis*, disabled, ethnic and isolated communities, and children. The prolonged national political conflict further exacerbated the situation as many schools in the rural areas were closed and children even involuntarily dropped out of the school system. The challenge faced by the educators in responding to the issue of equity and inclusion is therefore enormous as the problem is multi-dimensional (Aditya, 2007). The existing technical education and vocational training (TEVT) system is not sufficient to respond to the needs of skilled human resources. The available technical human resource in number and quality is inversely proportional to the labor market needs, with added deficiency due to the elitist background of the highly educated.

The overall consequence is that the children and out-of-school youth, who do not complete ten years of schooling, come from the disadvantaged groups of people like women, disabled, Dalits, Janajatis, *Haliyas*, *ex-kamaiyas*, and the poor from remote, isolated community. As they land in the labor market without any skill in hand, they remain unemployed or under-employed and at times under-paid, if employed. Such conditions have reinforced the already existing exploitative

conditions creating increasing gaps between the “haves” and “have-nots”. Table 2.1 provides a glimpse of the status of the disadvantaged groups by population.

Table 2.1. *Status of the Disadvantaged Groups by Population*

Issue Variable	Women	Dalits	Janajatis	Nepal
Population	11,587,502	3,021,386	5,454,782	23,151,423
Life Expectancy (years)	59.8	50	54.55	59.5
Literacy Rate (%)	42.5	19.7	34.24	53.7
HDI	0.398	0.239	0.299	0.512

Source: South Asia Partnership-Nepal, 2007.

Nepal is a multilingual, multicultural, multiethnic and multi religious country. Though small in size, it enjoys various kinds of diversities. One of the diversities is linguistic and the distribution of language in population. National census 2011 records 123 languages in Nepal whereas 92 mother tongues were recorded in the previous census 2001 (CBS, 2012). National report of Census 2011 also states that 44.6 percent populations speak Nepali as their mother tongue. It was 48.6 percent according to census 2001. The mother tongues spoken by majority of people other than Nepali are Maithili (11.7%), Bhojpuri (6%), Tharu (5.8%), Tamang (5.1%) and Newari (3.2%) (CBS, 2011).

The above scenario obviously indicates that our schools welcome children with various linguistic backgrounds. They speak their own mother tongue in their home. So, it is difficult for them to learn in the school when they are exposed to the sole medium of instruction which is different from their mother tongue (Nepali in most cases). This observation is a hint to the fact that language and education are integrated in a complex way. Language is both a means and an end in the education system. As a means to learning, it manifests itself in countless shifting modalities, while an end or objective of learning, it is perceived as an autonomous, formal entity

(<http://www.academia.edu/1616400>). It is quite relevant to quote Wolff (2006) (www.hsrc.ac.za/HSRC_Review_Article-37.phtml) that "Without language everything is nothing in education". As almost all study materials are available in the Nepali language in school, teacher used the same language rather than local language. These things are the obstacles to Dalit students.

A study entitled "Ensuring free and compulsory basic education for disadvantaged groups in the context of EFA" was conducted by CERID in 2009 with purpose to identify the educational status and the provisions required for educating children from the disadvantaged groups. Further, the study endeavored to identify the measures and processes of how to ensure free and compulsory basic education for the disadvantaged groups in the context of EFA. The qualitative approach of the study on five disadvantaged groups was carried out in five districts covering Dalits (Tamata and Chamar) and Janajatis (Tamang, Chepang and Danuwar).

It was found that the overall educational status of disadvantaged groups has changed over time but they still lag behind in several ways. The study found that enrollment of disadvantaged students was satisfactory, except in the Chamar community. Among five ethnic groups, Tamangs, Chepangs and Chamars showed their willingness to learn in their own language. However, it has been difficult in the absence of textbooks.

Many disadvantaged families were unable to bear indirect costs of schooling. This was clearly reflected in the outlook of disadvantaged students. In an observation it was found that students of disadvantaged students were not well-dressed. Almost all of them did not have school dress, and they came with plastic bags, wearing slippers. In schools of the Chepang community, approximately 50 percent students

came barefooted. This phenomenon was natural as their family income was too inadequate to meet the expenses (as indicated by household survey).

The welcome to school program has been successful to increase educational awareness among the disadvantaged groups. The school environment of disadvantaged groups was not as good as required. These schools lacked one or more major physical facilities such as classroom, playground, sports items and toilets. Only 50 percent of the sample schools had employed teachers from their own communities. The provision of disadvantaged community teachers was necessary to respond to the key principle of child rights, namely that education should respond and be adapted to the interests of each child. In spite of the free education policy of the government, primary schooling was in fact not free. Schools raised annual charges and examination fees.

Early marriage and child labor did not appear as big challenges to the basic education of disadvantaged groups. The roles of DDC and VDC in ensuring basic education were inadequate under the framework of decentralization. DDC simply allocated funds to schools without sticking to any particular norm. The enrollment and retention of Chamar students was not found satisfactory. It requires special attention. To address this problem, the government should develop and implement an education guarantee program. In spite of the willingness on the part of children to learn in their own language, it has been difficult to instruct in the mother tongue in the absence of textbooks.

The government should continue the “Welcome to school program”. Schools for the disadvantaged children need more classroom space, playground, toilet, sports materials and educational instruments. Provision of local disadvantaged community teachers is necessary to respond to the interests of the children. Schools impose

annual and examination fees on the students. However, this was incompatible with the free education policy of the government. The government should eliminate all types of school related fees so as to make primary education truly free for all disadvantaged groups.

In Nepal, gender issues are also very critical in increasing the access of girls to basic education and also combat the disparity issue. In this connection, CERID conducted a study entitled “Gender Issues in School Education” in 2009. The study revealed that gender issues existed more at higher levels (lower secondary and secondary) of schooling than at primary level, lack of female teachers and head teachers was a problem at lower secondary and secondary levels. There was hardly one teacher at secondary and two teachers at lower secondary levels. Feeder hostel has made positive contribution in providing secondary education to the girls of remote areas. So there is the need for extending such programs in other districts by increasing its capacity, paying special attention on building toilets and providing water supply in schools, recruiting female teachers for lower secondary and secondary levels, in addition to the present policy of appointing them at primary level. In addition, the policy of giving priority to local teachers and upgrading their qualification also contributes to their appointment as head teachers of higher levels of school (CERID, 2009).

Innovative forum for community development (IFCD) in 1997 conducted a tracer study of out-of-school children’s (OSC) program. The study revealed that girls’ participation in OSC was very low, only few graduates of the OSC were enrolled in formal school. The study also showed that students’ engagement in household affairs, parents’ migration from the community to other places was one of the challenges in the participation of school age children in the out of school program

(OSP). As preferred by the children, formal school was better than OSP as it could not meet their expectations (IFCD, 1997). The facilitators' irregularity in class was also a distracting factor for OSP children.

Community owned primary education (COPE) as a pilot program was implemented by the GoN with support of UNDP/Nepal in six selected districts in 2002. A mid-term report of the program revealed that all primary school students were regular in class and they participated in variety of school activities. A full retention of girls and disadvantaged children in school was also reported in the findings. The other good practices revealed by the study were the student centered teaching and learning, and continuous assessment system. Thus, COPE program presented a good model of devolution of primary education to the community contributing directly to meet the EFA and UPE goals.

CERID conducted a study entitled "*Rights-based education and structural reforms in basic and primary education*" in 2007. The study found out that despite the provision of scholarship, textbooks and opening of the early childhood center, no satisfactory accomplishment was seen for providing rights-based education to children to suit their needs and demands. A need for the policies and programs for providing rights-based education and classification of the responsibilities of stakeholders was necessary.

Thus, the reviews of the related studies indicate that various efforts have been made in recent years with focus on improving the access and quality of education. But no adequate efforts have been made to assess the effects of the roles played by the HTs, SMCs and PTA members and parents in the changing context of school management. Significant attempts have not been made yet to expedite the level of

awareness and advocacy in the community about school affairs and the transformation in physical condition and learning environment of school.

In 2008 a study entitled “Gender equality and gender friendly environment in schools” was conducted with the purpose to find out the determinants of girls and the female teacher friendly school environment (CERID, 2008). As indicated by the study, most of the parents, students, school administrations and communities feel secure and confident when female teachers are available. Based on the findings, the study recommended launching of massive awareness programs on gender equality on regular basis in addition to the existing *Ghar Dailo* (door-to-door) program. In addition, program to change the attitude of parents towards the girls was suggested. Also the suggestions were given to address the demand for provisions of transportation, separate toilets with regular water supply, a good library and instructional/sports materials, and school uniform for girls. The study also indicated the demand of female teachers to make school environment more convenient and education friendly.

Access of Dalit Girls to Education

Rene Lenoir who published 'Les Exclus: Un Francais Sur dix' in 1974, has been credited for the invention of the term “social exclusion”. The French definition of social exclusion is a "rupture of social bonds". It is basically "the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live”. Silver's (1994) definition of social exclusion mentions two characteristics. First, it is a multi-dimensional deprivation because people are often deprived of different things at the same time. This kind of exclusion can also be referred to as exclusion in economic, social, and political spheres. Second, not discussed so much is the exclusion that implies a focus on the relations and processes

that cause deprivation. For example, people can be excluded from many different groups often at the same time: landlords exclude tenants from access to and control over land; elite political groups exclude others from legal rights; the so called high caste people may exclude scheduled castes from entering temple or using the same water source; minorities may be excluded from expressing their voice and even identity, and so on (Aditya, 2007).

Despite significant improvements in educational attainments, inequality persists in literacy rates across all regions, castes and ethnic groups and by gender. Three layers of exclusion continue: exclusion because of remoteness leading to low access to schools; exclusion because of caste and ethnicity; and exclusion because of gender (UNDP, 2009).

Department for International Development (DFID, 2005) describes social exclusion as the experience of groups who are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of their caste, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status, or geographical location. Socially excluded groups are excluded from social relations, livelihood, property, education, and full citizenship. Such excluded people could be women compared to men; Dalits (traditionally known as untouchables in countries like India and Nepal) compared to the so called high caste people; ethnic minorities and indigenous people compared to those who are large in number and concentrated more in urban and privileged centres; Muslims in a Hindu dominant community and vice versa; and so on.

Nepal national Dalit social welfare organization had undertaken a study entitled 'Ethnographic study of Terai Dalits in Nepal' (2006). This study had focused on the Terai Dalits with emphasis on their ethnography. The study also explored the

ethnography of Musahar community. It showed that adult literacy rate of Musahar community was the lowest (6.9%) among all groups in Nepal. The dropout rate among the children belonging to this community was very high and it was more so among the girls.

“Dalits of Nepal: Issues and Challenges” a book published by FEDO tried to explore some realities that will be helpful for the better understanding of the issues of Dalits in Nepal. It tries to highlight Dalit women and their positions in the domains of education, law, male hegemony and economic independence including the issue of representation in the context of Dalit community in Nepal. An article of this book titled “Education and Health Status of Dalit Women” expressed that Dalit women’s emancipation, educational status of Dalit women and the observable problems of Dalit women. The reality of Dalit women is even more problematic, more delicate and more serious. They (women) suffer from the double suppression of gender and caste discriminations. They suffer both within the community and outside of the community.

Pokharel (1997) in his study entitled ‘An ethnographic study of the Musahar in Morang District’ focused on the ethnography of the Musahar community. NNDSWO had conducted another study entitled ‘Demographic and Socio-economic Survey of Dalits’ (2006) in six districts representing all development regions of the country. The survey report focused on the demographic and socio- economy status of the Dalits. The report showed that more than 72 percent of Dalits were illiterate in Saptari. It was found that that low economic condition was the main cause of not attending school.

Similarly, a book entitled ‘Nepalka Dalitharu’ (Dalits of Nepal), (Pandey, 2002) has explained about the ethnography of Musahars who have the perception that

to study is the main function of the elite group people with well off economic condition. Due to such perception towards education, most of the Musahars are still illiterate; and their representation in the state machinery is almost zero. So they are limited to peon, guard, sweeper level service. Landlessness, unemployment, low income, etc- are the main causes of Musahars poverty.

National Dalit Confederation-Nepal (NDC, 2007) has published a research report on 'Terai Dalit Women'. The study focused on the Terai Dalit women's issues related to citizenship, political participation and good governance. Koirala has completed his Ph.D. dissertation with the title "Schooling and the Dalits of Nepal: A Case Study of Bungkot Dalit Community". His study shows that caste system is the major structural problem in Nepali society, not the economy or the political system or educational system. Besides, this research study concluded that a lot of intellectual work related to Hindu teachings about caste and the cosmogony relations of the world would be one of the main ways to address this problem, as well as some specific change in schooling.

Poudel in his PhD dissertation entitled 'Power, Knowledge and Pedagogy: An Analysis of the Educational Exclusion of Dalits in Nepal' (2007) has shown that perceiving Dalits as backward and pitiable, and blaming those for their non-inclusion is a problematic construction, not acknowledging the perspectives and struggles of Dalits. This study further shows that such pathological construction and blames are no more than a way of discouraging the self-confidence of Dalits. Educational exclusion of Dalits, as per the study, is prevailing due to the ineffective government policies and formal setting of school without considering the socio-cultural factors, economic situation and power relations in society and school.

Tharu (2001) in his study 'Educational Status of Tharu Women in Nepal' focused on the educational status of Kamaiya and Tharu labor women. This study revealed the educational attainment of Tharu females, which was higher in primary level than other levels. Similarly, the school dropout rate of Tharu girls was higher than that of boys. Due to poor economic condition, the females of Kamaiya and labor families have been found deprived from formal education. The dropout rate before completing the grade was also high in these families. More concentration of literate females was in the age group of less than 15 years but informally literate females were greater in number in the age group of more than 26 years. Dropout situation in these VDCs seems to be a major problem of educational development in the Tharu community. A large number of students go to school but rarely very, few of them complete their education. The dropout rate also increased with increase in the level of education. Out of total dropout students, more than 50 percent students dropped out at secondary level. These 50 percent dropout students were the females of Kamaiya and Tharu labor families. Poor economic condition and engagement of children in the farm were the major causes of dropout. Apart from this, ignorance of parents, early marriage and low interest of students were the other contributing causes of dropout.

Parajuli (2005) in his study 'Education Status of Women in Nepal' focused on the educational status of Tharu women. This study showed that the education status of women was generally lagging far behind men which causes women to have low status in occupations, health, nutrition, political participation, ownership of assets, decision-making etc. Not sending girls to school or keeping girls at home is still a common practice in Nepal and those who go to school leave it beyond the age of ten because of their value of the household work-both domestic and agriculture. Dropout rate is high even among those who have the opportunity to go to school. Girls have a heavy

work burden starting from the early age which includes siblings care, animal grazing, fuel collection, and domestic work and farm activities. These activities prevent young women from attending school. Strong son preference is another important factor that has kept women out of school and also led to high dropout rate.

Similarly, Dhakal's (2013) study shows that many Dalit children feel that they were poorly treated and discriminated in school even after the practice of the policy of inclusion; and the situation of exclusion has not been improved. A study conducted for Gender and Exclusion Assessment in 2005 found 32 provisions that discriminate on the basis of religion, caste and ethnicity, and 176 provisions in 83 pieces of legislations that discriminate against women (UNDP, 2009).

A study entitled 'Late comers in school: the status of Dalit girls in education' was conducted by a study team (Koirala,2010) to find out the problems of Dalit girls right from access to the completion of their school cycle. The information was generated from 12 VDCs of 4 districts viz. Kailali, Dailekh, Surkhet and Dhanusha. This study found that Dalit girls have access to education. In case of regularity in school, the Dalit girls attend less in school and perform less well in classroom. Dalit girl students felt no explicit gender and caste discrimination in school. But they observed gender and caste discrimination in the community. The study team identified number of reasons that compelled Dalit girls to drop from school. They were classified into five cycles viz., poverty, cultural, school, domestic, and community.

An article "COVID-19's impact on learning habits" (Sharma,2020) indicated, quoting the latest analysis from UNICEF and Save the Children that the ongoing crisis could increase the number of children living in monetary poor households by up to 117 million by the end of 2020. Immediate loss of income often means families are

less able to afford basics, including food and water. They are less likely to access health care or education and are more at risk of violence, exploitation and abuse.

A survey conducted among low income communities in eight countries of Asia and Africa give alarming statistics that around 1 in 2 girls, or approximately 49 percent, are at higher risk of not returning to school once they are safe to reopen. This research was conducted in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Tanzania this year (2020) by Room to Read, an NGO working on girls' education in low income societies to help them stay in school and realize their dreams of improving their and their communities' livelihoods. The research was conducted while many countries were under lockdowns imposed by their governments to prevent the spread of the corona virus pandemic (Sharma, 2020).

The same (2020) research exposed that in Nepal the risk was slightly more than other countries. Here too, the rounded figure came to be 1 out of 2 girls, but, approximating to 53 percent. Puskar Lal Shrestha, Nepal Country Director at Room to Read, said that most of the girls in the communities were currently involved in domestic chores and did not have access to remote education that other children were getting. As their families were having negative economic impact of Covid-19, they were being pushed into financial hardships and that there were possibilities that these girls would not be able to keep up with their academics and might not return back to schools after they reopen. He hoped that the findings of the survey would help local and national government and other similar organizations to develop strategies on how to retain these girls who were at high risk of being dropped out, thus pushing them into the vicious cycles of poverty.

Room to Read (2020) shows that among the 3,992 girls served in Banke, Bardiya, Nuwakot and Tanahun districts through June 2020, 45 percent of girls

reported their households had lost a job or income during the pandemic- a factor that leads to school dropout of girls. In the communities where the organization works, even a minor disruption to income can have devastating effects on family well-being and opportunities for education. Sixteen percent of the girls said they had stopped learning since school closure, introducing the risk that girls will hesitate to return to school or will have difficulty catching up and passing important gate-keeping examinations when they do return; and seven percent of girls' stated they were already concerned that they will not return to school. The reasons include they need to work or provide care, there is lack of parental support and they have limited financial resources.

The human development index (HDI) varies more widely by caste and ethnicity than by geographical area. For example, within the same Terai belt, Dalits have the lowest HDI value, whereas Brahman and Chhetri have the highest (0.383 vs. 0.625). Muslims have an index value of 0.401- lower than that for Dalits as a whole, but higher than Madhesi Dalits. These results are very similar to that of the inclusion index constructed by Bennet and Parajuli (2008). Health, education and income are the three components of the HDI, among them; education is the most significant driver. This accounts for the wide gap between Brahman/Chhetri and other castes. The lower HDI for Dalits, especially Terai Dalits and Muslims, derives largely from their very low educational attainment compared to other components of HDI (UNDP, 2009).

To address the above mentioned Dalits' realities, various struggles, efforts and movements have been made at the levels of policy making and implementation as well. But, still these efforts are not enough to bring parity between Dalits and non-Dalits. The gap between them is seen wider in Terai, more than anywhere in Nepal.

International situation. It is inappropriate to develop grand hypotheses about the circumstances and consequences of the regional meetings where the officials meet to plan, design, and formulate an international educational policy that intended to improve the state of education for all children in South Asia. What can we learn about the ways in which the documents address the concerns with children in the countries in South Asia in particular? How do they address the problems of girls' education? More than 113 million children lack access to schooling and some 880 million adults are still illiterate. Two-thirds of those of school children and illiterate adults are female. One out of every four children who enters school drops out before completing five years of primary education or acquiring sustainable literacy. It is projected that by 2015 more than 100 million of school aged children will still not be in primary school (UNESCO, 2006).

Also, the EFA monitoring global report (2013/14) represents the fact that 57 million children were still out of school by 2011. Girls make up 54 percent of the global population of children out of school. In the Arab States, the share is 60 percent, unchanged since 2000. In South and West Asia, by contrast, the percentage of girls in the out of school population fell steadily, from 64 percent in 1999 to 57 percent in 2011. Almost half the children out of school globally are expected never to make it to school, and same is true for almost two of three girls in the Arab States and sub-Saharan Africa. Participation in lower secondary education increased from 72 percent in 1999 to 82 percent in 2011. The fastest growth was in sub-Saharan Africa, where enrollment more than doubled, albeit from a low base, reaching 47 percent in 2011. The number of adolescents out of school stood at 69 million in 2011. Of the 82 countries with data, 38 are expected to achieve universal lower secondary enrollment by 2015. But three-quarters of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa are not included

among these 82 countries. Given most of these countries have not yet achieved universal primary completion, it is extremely unlikely that they will achieve universal lower secondary education by 2015. The number of illiterate adults remains stubbornly high at 774 million, a fall of 12 percent since 1990 but just 1 percent since 2000. It is projected only to fall to 743 million by 2015. Women make up almost two-thirds of the total, and there has been no progress in reducing this share since 1990 (UNESCO, 2013/14).

The enrollment situation is even more serious for both Pakistan and Nepal. Girls in Nepal and Pakistan fail to enroll at rates deemed acceptable by their national educational plans. The survival rates for girls in Bangladesh and Pakistan reveal other problems. Although these girls go to school, they drop out at alarming rates prior to reaching the grade five levels.

How long the psyche of the people worsens the existence of other marginalized people striving for equality has surreally been expressed by Wilkerson (2020) in her most recent book named 'Caste: The Origin of Our Discontents'. She assiduously makes the point on how African-Americans were and are considered inferior to the whites is worth mentioning here. The vast majority of African-Americans residing in North and South of the USA have been treated inhumanly during the 19th century. They were not only mistreated in public places but also informal institutions like schools and colleges as well. The tendency to keep separate sets of textbooks for the blacks and whites and segregating the places was the custom then that only denigrated the value of the black people in educational institutions. India and Nepal, for instance, have similar problems of segregating the lower caste people while performing religious or social rituals (Wilkerson, 2020).

National situation. Nepal has a total population of 26,494,504 (CBS, 2011). Bound on the east, west, and south by India and on the north by China, Nepal is divided into three longitudinal strips of land: the flat Terai along the southern belt, the low-lying mountains and valleys in the central section of the country, and the high Himalayas in the northern belt. About eight percent of the population lives in the high mountain region, 47 percent in the Terai, and the remaining 45 percent in the hill belt.

The national education system plan, introduced in 1971, was designed to prevent the present exclusionary system of education by reforming it into one based on egalitarian principles. The plan aimed to democratize education for all of the country's population of school-age children by building and staffing education facilities throughout the country, especially in remote and rural areas, and encouraging children to enroll in schools. The country's fifth national plan (1975-1980) was directly related to and based on the rhetoric of the series of education for all development plans, which were devised in the meetings held in Karachi and Sofia. Nepal's plan called for the extension of free primary education, establishment of residential schools, qualitative growth of education, and equal balance of educational opportunities in each region of the country. The celebration of international women year, held in Nepal in 1975, may have provided an impetus to address females' issues by the time that the sixth national plan (1980-1985) was promulgated, and a chapter was devoted to the enhancement of women's participation in development. Among the many, the major objectives of this plan are: improving the existing facilities; raising educational standards; reducing wastage (caused by dropouts); establishing new facilities with priority given to primary education and non-formal education; and developing special programs for "educationally backward areas" and women (p 35).

The nation's seventh national plan (1985-1990) recognized the dramatic increase in primary school enrollment and made provisions for a rapidly expanding educational system by providing additional primary schools and encouraging local communities to maintain the physical plants. The plan also called for girls' increased participation by hiring female teachers and endorsing the policy for privatization where leadership and resources were available. The eighth national plan (1992-1997) expanded the educational system further by instituting non-formal educational programs that offered out-of-school children (age six to fourteen) programs such as Chelibeti and Shikshya Sadan. Both programs used a curriculum that focused on national and local issues. The basic and primary education master plan, a part of the 1992-1997 documents, serves to organize the policy and outline strategies for achieving the goals and objectives set forth by the national education systems plan. The basic and primary education master plan (1991-2001) was prepared for the new government, and it provided a comprehensive set of policy options of the Basic and Primary Education Sub-sector. The Master Plan sought to improve the quality of basic and primary education through a variety of moves: curriculum and textbook development and dissemination; teacher training; improved and continued student assessment; development of regional resource centers; and enhancement of the physical plan facilities of schools. Also, Nepal's EFA country document (2004) follows the institutional rhetoric of its regional neighbors by drawing attention to the need for expanding programs, enrolling children in programs, and increasing achievement that will contribute to national prosperity.

The Dalits of Nepal are the most marginalized and deprived groups of the Nepalese society, who are subjected to caste-biased discrimination from ancient times. Despite the legal abolition of the caste system in 1963, and the legal

prohibition of caste-based discrimination, they continue to suffer from attitudinal discrimination in society. The historical exclusion of Dalits from resources and decision-making process has not only kept them outside the social, economic and political mainstreaming, but has also been a loss to the country in terms of their input to nation-building. The government of Nepal is committed to reducing the existing socio-economic disparities and has begun implementing special socio-economic intervention program aimed at improving the living standards of the marginalized groups like Dalits and other disadvantaged groups (NNDSWO, 2007). This has also to do with uplifting the situation of the Dalit girls in the Terai region.

The interim constitution of Nepal (2007) guarantees human rights without any discrimination on grounds of caste, creed, religion, race or ideology. The constitution has affirmed that every citizen should have the right to free education from the state up to the secondary level as provided in the law (GoN, 2007). Legal Aid Act, 1998 has sought to enforce the principle of state obligation to improve access to justice for the economically underprivileged and other DAGs like Dalit women and other ethnic groups. To make basic level education free, easily accessible and compulsory in a gradual way, the three-year interim plan (2007/08-2009/10) has laid emphasis on establishing a network, from the centre to the local level, to distribute scholarship, day meal and edible oil to the targeted deprived community. This plan for the sake of providing education in the mother tongue has stated that special attention will be paid to fill in the posts of school teachers from Dalits, Madhesis, Adibasi Janjati groups (NPC, 2008).

One of the goals of education for all (EFA) is to ensure basic education of good quality for all children, particularly Dalits, disabled and children in difficult circumstances and for those belonging to ethnic minorities, through free and

compulsory primary education in Nepal by 2015. The EFA national plan of action (2001-2015) and the EFA core document (2004-09) have stated that one of the primary strategies of government of Nepal is to provide education free of cost and to increase access. In order to make basic education free and accessible, parents of deprived and disadvantaged children will be assisted to reduce direct and indirect costs of education and will be targeted for assistance in addressing the opportunity cost of schooling. Ministry of education (2007) has formulated the vulnerable communities' development plan to address social exclusion in primary education. The plan indicates the need for state's commitment to free primary education and suggests the employment of bilingual female teachers from local communities, and to provide incentives for increasing Dalits' and girls' attendance (MoE, 2007). The core document of school sector reform plan has stated that free education will be implemented beginning from the academic year 2009 in grade 6 which will be gradually upgraded to grade 10. It has clearly mentioned that it is the right of children to receive quality basic education up to grade 8, and that free basic education will include cost-free service for admission, textbooks, tuition, and examination (MoE, 2008).

The local self-governance act (LSGA, 1999) has empowered VDC/ municipality/metropolitan city to supervise and manage the schools in their respective areas, assist improvising primary level education in mother tongue, arrange for providing scholarships to students of the oppressed ethnic communities that are extremely backward from economic point of view (MoLD, 1999). The department of education (DoE), with the implementation of the school grants operational guidelines (SGOG), has annually been distributing scholarships to 50 percent girls and Dalits with the aim of ensuring their enrollment at primary level (DoE, 2006). The budget

speech of fiscal year 2008-09 has proclaimed that primary education shall be made compulsory, and free in pursuance of the state's declared policy of making education a fundamental right of all and gradually making secondary education free (MoF, 2008).

The government has launched the educational guarantee scheme (EGS) to tackle the low enrollment and high dropout rates in primary level schools of 21 districts: Solukhumbu, Sunsari, Sindhupalchowk, Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Siraha, Saptari, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Dhanusha, Makwanpur, Kapilbastu, Rupandehi, Manang, Mustang, Bardiya, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Rolpa and Rukum. The government has allocated Rs. 24 million for EGS in 21 districts and Rs.25, 000 for each school as an incentive for the boost-up of the campaign for enrollment in all 77 districts. The implementation of constitutional and legal provisions made by government is very weak due to poor will- power of the responsible administrators (CERID, 2009).

A study entitled “Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups” was conducted in 2002 with the purpose of finding out the educational status and identifying the motivating (pulling) and demotivating (pushing) factors that affect special focus group children. Based on the findings of the study, provision for alternative schooling was recommended for the over-aged disadvantaged children. For those students whose parents are unable to provide basic educational materials such as books, pens, pencils, exercise books, tiffin and school dress, incentive program is recommended. Increased scholarship quota for *Dalits* and primary schools is needed. Similarly, regular assessment systems, increased school physical facility, appointment of female local teacher/facilitator, adequate supervision are also needed.

In 2005 another study entitled “Access of Disadvantaged Children to Education” was conducted by CERID to examine the access rate of educationally deprived children in the country and to find out ways to provide them access to

education. The major findings as indicated by the study were lack of physical facilities, irregularity of teachers, humiliation of the disadvantaged students by the upper caste children, engagement of students in income generating activities aiming at refunding family loans, and lack of learning opportunities for the children. Provision for temporary community school was recommended to avail school outreach programs on local initiatives for disadvantaged children.

CERID (2003) conducted another study entitled ‘Effectiveness of Incentive / Scholarship Programs for Girls and Disadvantaged Children’ in 2003 to find out the participation of girls and disadvantaged children in education and to identify the incentives needed for girls and disadvantaged children. As revealed by the study, participation of girls and disadvantaged children was low because parents wanted their daughters to get married rather than continue to go to school. High rate of failure and repetition in grade five was obvious from the study. As pointed out by the study, lack of physical facilities, unavailability of classroom space, and lack of adequate number of teachers were the other pertinent problems. It recommended distribution of incentives to all new comers and the *Dalits* in the school with further suggestions like initiating income-generating activities for parents of the most disadvantaged groups, conducting door-to-door awareness programs, and forming mother groups to mobilize them for creating awareness.

Girls’ perspective: situation of equity. Equity considerations call for the application of gender based perspective to review and assess the existing situation of gender responsive policies, programs and activities that aim at bridging the programmatic gaps between men and women. In the case of the present research, the consolidated equity strategy for the school education sectors in Nepal (DoE, 2014) bears many good references to the educational situation of the most disadvantaged

girls of the country, especially the Terai Dalit girls. Bringing gender parity in such a situation is both a daunting and much needed task where marginalization has played significant role to ensure the learning outcomes of the students. Referring to this imbalance, the consolidated strategy has highlighted three basic components that need to be considered for the planning and programming of activities that intend to bridge the existing gaps:

- Achieving equity in access, identifying the most marginalized groups of learners that have so far remained unable to access education, through utilizing same data, monitoring and initiatives – to ensure they are supported on a need base and thereby able to overcome their challenges in accessing education;
- Strengthening of equity in participation, retention and inclusion. Identifying learners that are currently dropping out of education and addressing their specific challenges, both school and non-school based challenges by addressing the knowledge gaps related to these challenges. There will be an alignment of efforts and initiatives to strengthen their educational survival rate; and
- Strengthening of equity in learning outcomes, reducing inequitable learning outcomes and addressing root causes of these discrepancies through targeted interventions focused on removal of challenges for learners and catering specific needs, with regards to the relevance of education to skills that translate into quality life outcomes in the context of the learner and labour mark (DoE, 2014).

In regards to strengthening equity, the strategic framework focuses on three equity areas; (i) equity in meaningful access, (ii) equity in meaningful participation and (iii) equity in meaningful learning outcomes. Meaningful learning has been

added to avoid confusion that the strategy's focus areas are seen in a superficial and physical sense. Access within the strategic framework does not mean merely enrollment, which specifies an administrative action, but a child entering education at basic and secondary level is welcomed. Participation goes beyond for example retention or attendance, it specifying a child physically being within the school, being engaged in the social and educational processes within the education system and feeling safe and accepted while doing so. Finally, learning outcomes, not just in the sense of being sufficient to pass tests, but aligned with the potential and the needs and context of the child's livelihood and life

skills. This has been highlighted in the following figure:

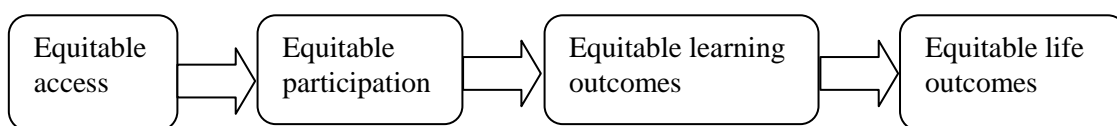


Figure 2.1. Equity Flow Chart

Equity in Access. The flow chart shows that during the EFA period (2001-2015), particularly within the first five years of the SSRP implementation, the education sector has seen a significant increase in access. However, both flash data and census data show that certain students are still unreached, and that these are disproportionately students from poor, remote, low caste, families or of disadvantaged ethnicities, as well as children with disabilities. Gender disparities persist if one looks at enrollment in institutional schools at secondary level. Girls from the lowest economic quintile and from Madhesi and Muslim communities are under-represented in terms of enrollment in secondary education. Studies (Unicef, 2010/11) on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in the education sector show that access to secondary education for girls from marginalized groups, remains an issue. Girls are expected to fulfill roles within the household after marriage, which could lead to a decreased relevance for them to complete secondary education and it may be given

low priority. Furthermore, harmful cultural practices such as isolation of girls and women during menstruation (*chaupadhi*), a lack of female friendly environment in schools, and being married at an early age to avoid high dowry fees causes severe marginalization for girls and young women. These factors increase their likelihood of exposure to gender based violence (GBV) and their educational outcomes and school attendance suffer.

Access to education decreases when girls come from low castes or disadvantaged ethnic groups. Getting married at an early age significantly decreases access to education. Those girls who are likely to marry young are also those who are less likely to have access to education in the first place (figure 2.2). Of the girls that get married young, 33.4 percent have had no access to education at all, versus 12.8 percent of the girls that do not get married before completing secondary education (UNICEF, 2010/11). There is a positive correlation between female age at marriage and years in education/highest educational attainment. National data (NDHS, 2006 and 2011) shows that the median age of marriage for women between 15 and 49 years with no education was 16.6 year whereas the median age for women to be married that had passed their SLC examination was 21.4 in 2006 (MTR Equity Analysis 2012).

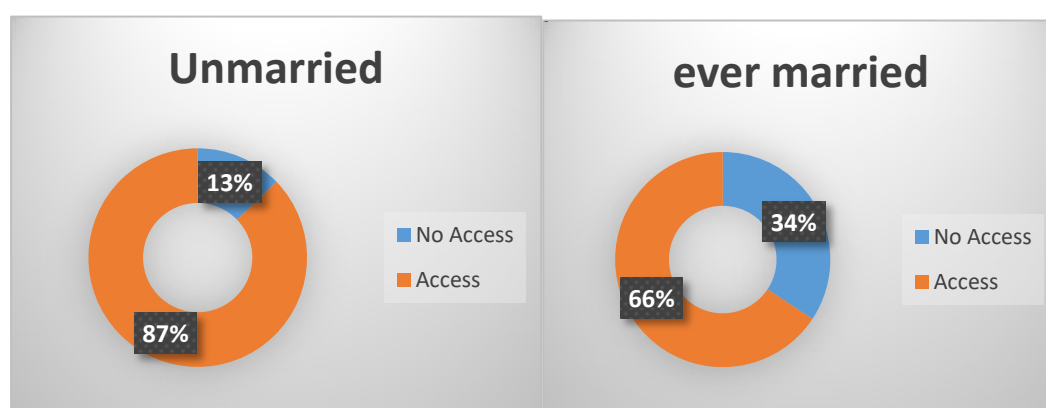


Figure 2.2. Correlation Between Marriage and Access to Education

Source: Consolidated Equity Strategy for School Education in Nepal(DoE,2014).

Family economics and willingness to send to school help to explain the differences between retention of boys and girls in basic education and access to secondary level (NDHS, 2011). National data shows that 31 percent women in the richest quintile against 53 percent of women in the poorest quintile have never have accessed education. This also shows the significant changes that have happened under the SSRP and the EFA/NPA with regard to this. Data demonstrate disconnect between education and parents, which is much stronger in the poorest quintile. The poorest and second poorest quintiles have twice as many children out of school compared to the average number out of school children (CBS, 2012). Twenty-five percent of the out of school population are below the poverty line (MoE, 2013).

The national living standard survey (NLSS, 2010/11) that is conducted since 1996 show a consistent correlation with an increase in socio-economic status being equal to an increase in access and participation in education. The concentration of out of school children is higher in the districts that have been identified as the most deprived in terms of poverty. This demonstrates the strong relation between socio-economic status and access to education.

Parents' education strongly affects children's access to education. Children with illiterate parents have 10 percent less access to education than those who have literate parents, (UNICEF, 2010/11). Access to lower secondary education grades has regional disparities and caste ethnicity disparities, which indicate high dropout and less emphasis on access to secondary education. Children that are currently not accessing education are mainly concentrated in three areas. The central Terai, with the exception of Chitwan, and the addition of Saptari and Sarlahi in the eastern Terai, has the highest numbers in absolute terms with 5 districts representing over 25 percent of the total population of out of school children, or 300,000 children between 5 and 16

years that remain out of school. A situational analysis of districts with high levels of deprivation has indicated that only a small percentage of these out of school children have never been enrolled and that the rest have dropped out of school (UNICEF, 2010/11).

Children from Dalit communities have the lowest access amongst the different caste categories to basic education with 88 percent, whereas in comparison Brahmins have around 99 percent access to education (CBS, 2012). The participation of Dalit students at primary level (20.3%) and lower secondary level (14.6%) is proportionately higher in respect to their share in the total population in the relevant age groups. Yet a stark decline occurs during the transition from basic to secondary education with an enrollment of only 10.6 percent against a population share of 13.56 percent. Furthermore, the proportion of Dalit teachers at primary (4.5%), lower secondary (3.1%) and secondary (3.6%) level is very low in comparison to the percentage of the population that they make up.

Children of Chepang ethnicity are the most severely marginalized ethnic group, only securing 50 percent enrollment against groups like Sherpa that have 100 percent enrollment and Newar 97 percent enrollment. The government of Nepal has identified 22 indigenous (ethnic) groups (Bankaria, Baramu, Bote, Chepang, Danuwar, Dhanuk, Hayu, Jhagad, Kisan, Kusanda, Lepcha, Majhi, Meche, Mushibadiya, Raji, Raute, Satar, Singasa, Siyar, Surel, Thami and Thunam) as marginalized within the education sector. Children within Muslim communities have the lowest overall access of all religious groups, around 80 percent (UNICEF, 2010/11) thereby significantly lower than children from Dalit communities. In regards to language, several ethnic groups do not speak Nepali as their first language, which may also explain low enrollment of some groups.

Children with disabilities are by far the most marginalized in terms of access and participation in education. The last three years Government data have shown a declining trend of enrollment of children with disabilities. Furthermore, access for children with disabilities is much less if they live in rural areas than in urban areas. There is a significant difference between disabled boys and girls, with boys accessing education, to a greater extent than girls. There are greater inequalities in access to education between genders in rural compared with urban areas, (UNICEF, 2010/11). Figure 2.3 also shows the correlation between the location (urban versus rural) in which children with disabilities live and the effect this has on their access to education.

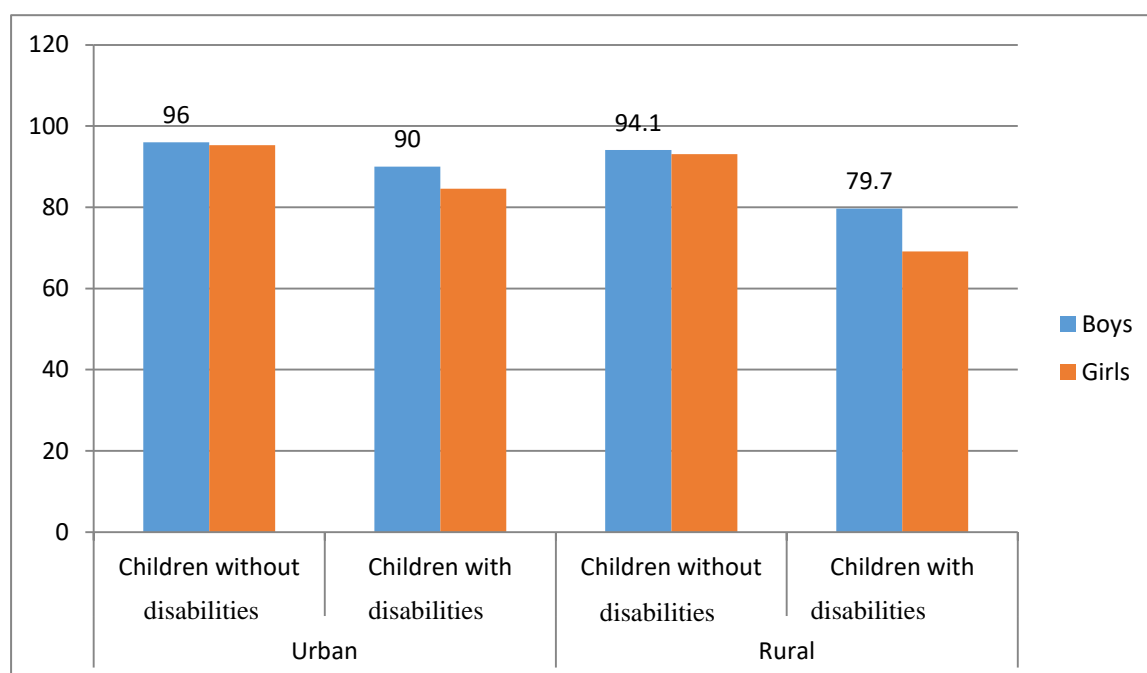


Figure 2.3. Access to Basic Education for Children with Disabilities

Source: Consolidated Equity Strategy for School Education in Nepal (DoE, 2014).

The national labour survey (2008) showed that 54 percent of children attending school are not working in paid or forced circumstances; 5.6 percent of the children surveyed were neither working nor attending school, nor 40.4 percent were working and disregarding school attendance. Of these, 79 percent children were

working and attending school and 21 percent were working but not attending school (figure 2.4). This dismantles the perception that working children are out of school children. However, although these children are in school, their employed status does have a negative impact on their participation and learning outcomes.

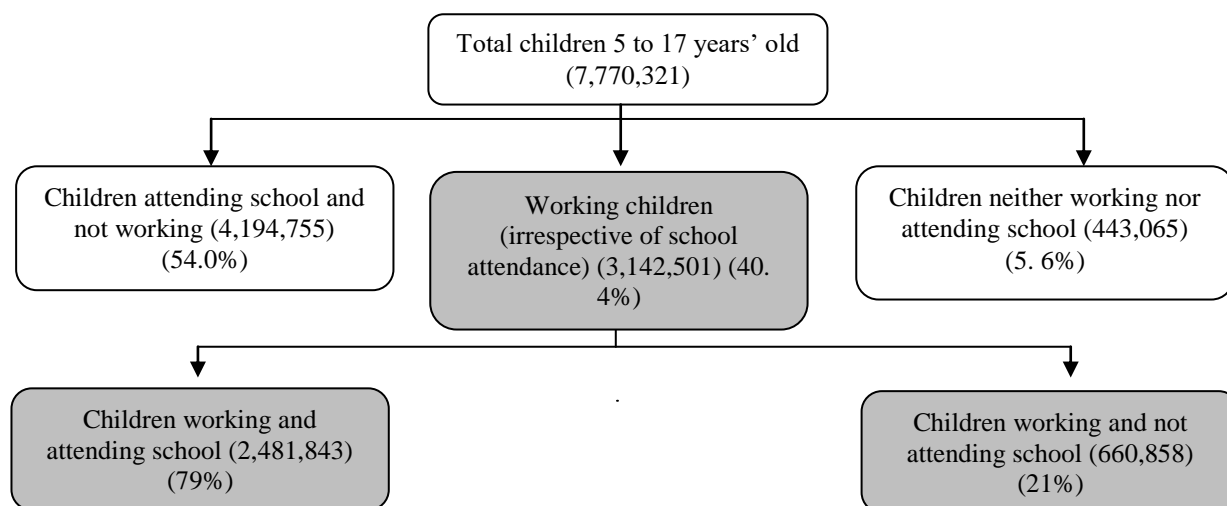


Figure 2.4. Status of Working Children in Nepal

Source: Nepal Labour Force Survey, 2008.

Equity in participation. Whereas Nepal has noted remarkable achievements with regards to increasing access, most children that are currently out of school have been enrolled at a certain point but dropped out. The public education system continues to see high repetition in grade one and low transition from basic to secondary level affects marginalized groups disproportionately (MoE, 2012).

Retention can be measured by survival rate, an indication of the percentage of students who remain at the school at measured levels out of the total students who are enrolled in grade one. Over the past few years, the survival rate has been steadily on the upward trend and this has been in favour of girls as to boys. Between 2008 and 2012, the survival rate in grade 5 went up from 54 percent to 84.1 percent and in grade 8 from 37 percent to 69.4 percent. This is in part the result of the investment in

education along with policy interventions, such as continuous assessment system (CAS), as well as various scholarship packages (MoE, 2012).

Women's representation in administrative and management levels within the education system has not improved much under SSRP and among teacher population; improvements have, mainly been observed at primary level for women and marginalized groups. Despite gender parity at both basic and secondary level in education, participation (attendance) among girls is much lower than boys, particularly at higher grades. Gender and poverty are strongly related to inequitable access and participation. Girls from poor families marry at younger age as there is a strong link with ethnicity and caste as prevalence of child marriage is high among ethnic groups in the Terai (National Women's Commission, 2014).

There is only a marginal difference in average income of women that have no education versus women that have completed primary education (annually NRs 15,000 versus NRs 17,000 respectively). However, women that completed lower secondary to SLC level are seen to double their annual income. One of the major challenges to equitable participation is that the supply side is increasing inputs but the demand side is gradually shrinking' (MoE, 2012).

A situation analysis of out of school children conducted in 15 districts showed that the main reason for not being able to retain in school is poor academic progress, suggesting limited participation and insufficient learning outcomes (24.5%), followed by children stopping to participate at home as they have to help out at home (21.5%) (UNICEF, 2010/11). This suggests that socio-economic situation plays the biggest role in participation with gender coming as the second as girls will be first considered to have to perform household chores (UNICEF, 2010/11). Family background plays a

major role when it comes to equity in participation; geographical distance seems to be the least crucial factor.

In Nepal, students go to school for 6 years on average, with the richest part of the students going for 8 years and the poorest 3 years (UNICEF, 2010/11). In the richest quintile urban areas have longer participation than rural whereas in the lowest quintile rural areas have longer participation than urban, with urban poor girls being the most deprived in terms of years of schooling scoring below averages in countries like Chad and nearing extreme education poverty international standard (UNICEF, 2010/11). Young women who have never been married remain in school longer than women who are married at an early age. Similarly, unmarried women attain higher levels of education (UNICEF, 2010/11).

Many of the times, reasons for discontinuing education are beyond the scope of school and hence are not readily fixable with school level interventions. According to National Leaving Standard Survey (NLSS) III, about 22.0 percent of the students dropped out of the school to support families with household chores, 6.5 percent because of economic reasons, 17.2 percent due to early marriage and 7.4 percent due to limited support from family. In the mountains and rural hills of mid and far-west region, the percentage of children dropping out of school to do household chores exceeds 33 percent each. Thus, directly or indirectly, poverty or economic reasons are one prominent factor in causing dropping out of students from the school. This is more so with the case of girls and more acute in the case of Terai Dalit girls.

Individuals belonging to the lowest income quintile spend four years less at school than those belonging to the richest quintile. Likewise, urban dwellers spend about two more years at school than their rural counterparts. The low level of the mean years of schooling suggests that the capacity of our school system to retain

students in school that should ideally be above 15 years is not adequate and equitable. Between 2003/04 and 2010/11, mean years at school have increased notably for students from two lowest income quintiles and the residents of the mountains. Targeted financial support at secondary level could enable completion of secondary education and an associate increase in the mean years of school.

There is not much disparity among ecological zones but significant inequities exist in the mean years of schooling among different income groups and locations. Net attendance rate in general is lower in Terai in comparison to the hills and the mountains. Similarly, Terai region has the lowest literacy (54.4%) in the age group of six and above and the region has the largest proportion of out of school children (11.2%)(CBS, 2012). All these data show that educationally Terai is a deprived region and this is the result of local social, cultural and economic factors. The other prominent reason for dropping out of school is related to poor academic progress. Improvements in the quality of teaching learning, strengthening of physical facilities at school, provision of extra support for weaker students, and targeted financial assistance to the poor can potentially play a role in reducing dropout rates.

Lack of sufficient health and nutrition status is said to be a major factor affecting regular attendance and meaningful participation in education. Malnutrition rates in Nepal are among the highest in the world, with 41 percent of children under five stunted, 29 percent under weight and 11 percent wasted (CBS, 2011). Lack of mother tongue teaching in the lower grades can be a significant barrier to learning, and may be aggravated as more schools opting for English medium, without sufficient human resources (CBS, 2012).

Table 2.2. *Net Attendance Rate of Ethnic Groups by Level of Education(In percentage)*

Ethnic groups/Level	Primary (%)	Ethnic groups/Level	Lower secondary (%)	Ethnic groups/Level	Secondary (%)
Terai Brahmin	88.4	Hill Brahmin	68.4	Hill Brahmin	49.6
Newar	87.7	Newar	58.4	Newar	46.7
Hill Dalit	85.6	Hill Chhetri	53.3	Hill Chhetri	37.6
Hill Brahmin	84.2	Nepal	42	Nepal	28.2
Hill Janajati	83.6	Terai Brahmin	40.1	Terai Brahmin	24.3
Hill Chhetri	82.8	Terai Janajati	39.6	Hill Janajati	22.9
Nepal	78	Hill Janajati	39	Terai Janajati	22.3
Terai Janajati	73.6	Terai Middle Caste	29.9	Terai Middle Caste	20.2
Muslim	67.6	Hill Dalit	28.6	Hill Dalit	14.4
Terai Middle Caste	66.6	Terai Dalit	18.8	Terai Dalit	9.6
Terai Dalit	64.2	Muslim	12.9	Muslim	8.4

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2011).

The above table 2.2 shows net attendance rate of ethnic groups by level of education in percentage and closely related to the dimension of caste and ethnicity are the issues, related to language and how they affect learning outcomes. Currently 123 languages have been recognized within Nepal, with 55 percent of the total population reporting to have a first language other than Nepali (CBS, 2012). Although the National Curriculum Framework from 2007 provides a supportive framework for the adoption of mother tongue and multi lingual education to be determined at local level, (human) resources available in terms of teachers and textbooks restrict the implementation of this framework significantly.

Equity in learning outcomes. National Assessment of Students' Achievements (NASA), carried out in 2011, results provide the means to assess learning outcomes especially in Nepali, Mathematics and Social Studies in the mean years at school. The

NASA report indicates that achievement in reading and writing is low in absolute terms and below that of international levels. According to Metsamuuronen and Kafle (2013), an average 8th grade reader of Nepali cannot read and understand newspapers independently and cannot write lecture notes or brief summaries independently. Likewise, students perform satisfactorily in areas of lowest cognitive level requiring only recalling and memorization but do poorly in domains requiring the use of higher abilities such as reasoning. This reflects low cognitive abilities and also in part the emphasis of Nepalese education on rote learning and memorization.

From the perspective of equity, achievements seem to vary with differences between schools, districts and the development regions. Institutional schools perform significantly better than the community schools. Consequently, districts and regions with high concentration of institutional schools possess higher level of achievement. The lowest performing districts have average scores below 40 percent while highest performing districts all in Kathmandu valley average above 55 percent. The achievement level of the students from the Eastern (41%), Far-Western (42%) and Mid-Western (43%) development regions is far behind than that of Kathmandu valley (NASA, 2013).

Among the ethnic groups, Dalits perform the worst in all 3 subjects, followed by Madhesi students. With regard to the Nepali language, the proportions of students who can only write simple messages related to everyday needs but not generate notes on events or past actions are most widely prevalent among the Madhesi population (about 42%), much higher than other castes, most of which have about 21-28 percent of students belonging to this category. Similarly, Limbu, Tharus, Magar and Gurungs are also among the low performing groups in reading and writing.

Theoretical Considerations

Sociological theories. Social inequality is an outgrowth of an imbalanced society. This has been pointed out by many important sociological thinkers. Karl Marx (1818-1883), one of the pioneer sociological thinkers, has commented that almost all societies change through the process of forming oppositional classes in the evolution of capitalism. These classes are based on property ownership and distributional outcomes rather than the distribution of power within the society (Wright, 1994; Rao, 2002).

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), a French sociological thinker, held a functional perspective of social inequality. He observed that the people in a primitive society were always bound together by collective conscience, which he called the mechanical solidarity. As Durkheim defined, law and religion were the major mechanisms or forces for mechanical solidarity in primitive society (Ritzer, 2000; Rao, 2000).

Max Weber (1864-1920), a contemporary of Durkheim observed social inequality within a society somehow differently. He claimed that the economic standing of a person or community is associated with social prestige or status for him or her, not only a result of economic relationship (Ritzer, 2000; Coser, 2010).

Ralf Dahrendorf, one of the new sociological thinkers of the 1950s, who criticized both structural function theory and Marxist theory, commented that the structural functional perspective gave little attention to social realities while the Marxist perspective ignored the role of consensus and integration in modern society.

Gerhard Lenski, another sociological thinker, argued that differential access to power produces social inequality in every society. He adds that power, privilege,

prestige, property, occupation, religion, gender and age create social inequalities in the society.

Another sociologist, Nicos Poulantzas, rejected the Marxist view of dogmatic economic determinism as explaining social inequality. He took the position that the worker class (As Dalits in Nepal) is polarized into a specific social position due to their function or work activity. Beginning in the later part of the 1970s, a new sociological perspective evolved to analyze the causes of social inequalities. Eric Olin Wright (1994), Frank Parkin (1981), and Anthony Giddens (1981) provided a theoretical frame to this perspective. Erik Olin Wright described the unequal society in terms of a command class and an obey class. Frank Parkin, on the other hand, identified two forms of closure, basic and secondary, in order to understand the phenomena of social inequality.

Anthony Giddens, a known modern sociological thinker, puts forward a structural theory for understanding social inequality. He observes that social inequality is developed by three factors: functional- separates menial laborers from educated non-menial workers, the authority-divides people into those with power owner and the powerless; and cultural factor- differentiates people by their life style, material consumption and habits. Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a philosopher, and influential theorist of critical pedagogy. He is well known for his influential work, 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' and 'Breaking Culture of Silence', which is considered one of the foundation texts of the critical pedagogy movement. Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed speaks about the voice of the voiceless which in Nepalese context, speaks a lot about Dalit children in general and Dalit girls in particular.

The sociological theories mentioned above (including the formation of oppositional classes and capitalism theory of Karl Marx, functional perspective of social inequalities of Durkheim and Oppressed Theory, Voice for the voiceless of Paulo Freire, social inequalities within the society of Max Weber, criticism of both structural functional theory and Marxist theory of Ralf Dahrendorf), all focus on the situation of the deprived class of the society. The Dalits are oppressed, depressed, untouchable and lower class of society. So the perspectives about social thinking engineering raised above are directly related to the study of schooling of Terai Dalit girls in Nepal.

Marxist feminism advocates women's property rights and goes against trafficking, prostitution, rape and domestic violence but lacks description on gender and racism. It believes that patriarchal system endorses capitalism and patriarchal capitalism is the fertile land for gender discrimination. This theory always opposes girl's reproductive works and unequal distribution of productive means and resources. According to this-ism, girl's education cannot be equal unless they are empowered. Radical feminists advocate for creating separate institutions for women's well-being. Radical feminists neglect patriarchy sexism. They believe that women are the most oppressed group of society and, have been dominated by male. This theory argues that male has dominated female's education. It advocates for separate provision for educating girls such as girl's scholarship, girl's school and college. Girl's separate class monitor, female teachers etc are the classroom level provisions stressed by this theory. Social feminism believes that patriarchy and capitalism are two separate aspects but if they are tied together, oppression upon women will be increased.

Similarly, socialist feminism points out that women's experience of difference, inequality and oppressions vary by their social location within capitalism, patriarchy,

and racism (Ritzer, 2000). This -ism explains the issues of girls critically and provides reasonable basis to analyze gender issues. It does not view one-sided effects on girl's education but neglects structural domination or oppression of girls in education. Feminist theory uses problems within social test, logic, reflexive method, multi-voiced text grounded theory in the experience of the oppressed people. It follows participatory action research with co-equal share of knowledge and looks for the dignity of women. It explores pluralistic identities. It provides reciprocal care and understanding. It looks for changed power relation and works for 'common good' concept (Kafle, 2010); the feminist theories provide a basis to analyze gender related EFA goals and classroom practices in relation to girl's education. Besides, feminism is the movement to eliminate the oppression of women. It advocates for women's understanding, perceptions, and experiences to deal with and overcome oppression. Feminist perspective claims that by providing equal education for both sexes, an environment would be created in which the individual women's potential can be encouraged and developed (Halsey, 1997 cited in Panthee, 2014, Distance Education). Thus, these feminist concepts give a basis to understand as well as deal with gender issues in education.

Cultural theories. To shed light on the research study, the researcher had made an attempt to relate different social and cultural theories particularly 'Cultural reproduction theory of Pierre Bourdieu' to the theme of the study. Cultural reproduction theory is one of the social stratification theories developed by Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist. In this study, the researcher has related Bourdieu's key concepts of habitus, field and capitals: economic, cultural, intellectual and social to the theme of the research. Economic capital is related to financial resources. Social capital is a network of social relation and identity. In other words, social capital is 'an

individual's or individual groups' sphere of contact' (Grenfell and James, 1988). Cultural capital is the sum of dispositions, educational qualifications and access to cultural goods. Therefore, cultural capital is a reflection of social location. Bourdieu argues that through cultural capital, social division and other distinctions are made in society. The symbolic capital includes prestige and social honour, which can be gained through the impact of economic, social and cultural capital. According to Bourdieu, these capitals are supportive to each other.

Bourdieu talked about the habitus as system of durable and transposable disposition through which we perceive, judge, and set act in the world (Bourdieu, 1997:238). According to Bourdieu, habitus is a concept that orients our ways of constructing objects of study, highlighting issues of significance and providing a means of thinking relationally about the social world. Formally, Bourdieu defines habitus as a property of social agents (whether individuals, groups or institutions) that comprises a "structure and structuring structure" (Bourdieu, 1994d: 170). This "structure" comprises a system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices (Bourdieu, 1990). The term "disposition" is, for Bourdieu, crucial for bringing together the ideas of structure and tendency (Bourdieu, 1977b). Habitus does a lot of work in Bourdieu's approach which can be applied at macro and micro levels. It can though, be difficult to define. As one commentator argues, "This very appealing conceptual versatility sometimes renders ambiguous just what the concept actually designates empirically" (Swatz, 1997).

According to Bourdieu, a social field is not fixed, and it is possible to trace the history of its specific shape, operations and the range of knowledge required to maintain it and adapt it. He also defines social field as the historical constellations that arise, grow, change shape, sometimes wave or perish over time. Bourdieu

believed that hierarchies are found in the social field. He argued that the purpose of the school system was the production and maintenance of elites: schooling operated to sort and shift children and young people into various educational trajectories-employment, training and further education and various kinds of universities. Education was, he suggested, a field which reproduced itself more than others and those social agents who occupied dominant positions were deeply imbued with its practices and discourses (Bourdieu & Passeron; 1977a, 1979b; Bourdieu et al 1994 a). So, every field is thus the site of an ongoing clash between those who defend autonomous principles of judgment proper to that field. Bourdieu defined the terms: 'habitus', 'field' and 'capital' as the necessarily interrelated terms - conceptually as well as empirically (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory in education sees a school's function as the reproduction of the dominant culture through 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bourdieu, 1977a). According to this theory, a school distributes legitimized knowledge, values, language and models of style and represents the dominant culture and their interest (Paudel, 2007). Bourdieu also accepts that school is not a direct mirror image of societal power relations. However, it works indirectly as symbolic institution that reproduces existing power relations by producing and distributing the dominant culture. One of the major functions of school is the reproduction of the social and cultural inequalities from one generation to the next (Harker, 1990). Bourdieu also explains the relations between society and school and takes school as an institutional mechanism which reproduces and legitimizes unequal social structure and culture. So school for him is a mechanism for reproducing the structure of relations between the classes and unequal distribution of cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Bourdieu calls pedagogical function of indirect

reproduction of domination as symbolic reproduction. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) further argue that, in the name of technical function, a school conceals this social function, gives prestige to socially advanced mindset, ignores the lower habits and culture of the disadvantaged groups like Dalits in the context of Nepal; and hence they are discriminated even in schools. As a result, they are compelled to be the victims of school dropout problem.

Social inequality and schooling theory. Anthropological research on schooling, which relates to inequality dates back to the early 1900's. Ogbu in his 1994 overview of schooling research states that some anthropologists such as Hewett (1976, originally 1905), Boas (1928) and Malinowski (1976, originally 1936), all conducted research on schooling. Hewett highlighted the educational problems of immigrants, American Indians and natives of the Philippines, and concluded that schooling forced them to learn the "higher" Anglo-American culture. Boas, foreshadowing Bourdieu's work of the 1970's, developed a theoretical perspective emphasizing cultural relativism, and argued that difference in culture brings about differences in school performance while Malinowski rejected such a claim contending performance differences were a result of, in his example, Africans receiving intellectually inferior schooling compared to Europeans.

Research on schooling took a more multi-disciplinary approach in the 1950s. Spindler (1963) in Germany, Wylie (1957) in France, and Read (1955) in Africa did ethnographic studies. These studies focused on school problems, and put forward a narrow view of culture (minority culture, school culture, mainstream culture, immigrant culture). In the 1960s and 1970s, a positivistic scientific tradition, which sought to prove or disprove the influence of specific variables on schooling outcomes for students became the dominant research orientation, while in the 1980s, a

humanistic trend emerged which analyzed schooling from a holistic, qualitative, and interpretive perspective (Husen, 1994; Landsheere, 1994; Angus, 1986). The earlier research had two main foci. It either assessed the role and effectiveness of schooling in a community relying on fact finding or head counting (the more children in school, the more effective it was) or analyzed class culture and the influence of class membership on school success. The more positivistic scientific tradition was initiated right after the World War II in Britain and was nurtured by the correspondence theory of Bowles and Gintis, among others, in the United States (Erickson, 1994; Angus, 1986; McPherson & Willms, 1986).

One of the concerns with the above studies was to cross-check macro data on schooling with empirical findings at the community, local, or micro level. From these works, we come to the conclusion that schooling perpetuated the social selectivity of specific class members, produced and supported the myth that schooling improves people, emphasized competitiveness, promoted certificating and credentialing, and through these functions, increased people's chances of gaining employment in the Asian continent, it conditioned people to become employees rather than taking initiative. In Britain, it contributed to social immobility, and, in Kenya provided legitimating for hiring people into higher positions (Dove, 1970). It promoted capitalist reproduction which included controlling access to education, limited educational expansion in "conditioned capitalist states" (Carnoy, 1990), and finally, produced culturally indifferent and socially "good and loyal" people while reproducing the class relations of the larger society among the Mexican Indians (Foley, 1991).

The potent force outside the school, which Ogbu emphasized, worked against the schooling of caste minority groups was job ceiling. The term 'minorities' means

that (a) members of caste- like minorities are not permitted to compete freely as individuals for any types of jobs to which they aspire and for which they are qualified, (b) caste- like minorities are either excluded from the most desirable occupations or not permitted to obtain their proportionate share of such jobs, because of their caste status, rather than because they lack the requisite training; and (c) as a result of these restrictions, caste- like minorities are confined largely to the least desirable jobs. In the society, occupations are thus, divided into two broad categories: those above the job ceiling and those below it (1978:29).

In the sociology of education, questions such as why a caste or caste- like minority group of people feels uncomfortable in the educational institutions of the dominant society were also asked. According to Emihovich's (1994) summary, prior to 1970 researchers addressing this issue often neglected the culture of minority groups by labeling it a "culture of poverty". They assumed that the students of the caste or caste like minority groups fail in mainstream school because of their poverty and the culture which was associated with being poor. But after 1970, other theoretical perspectives were developed to explain this situation, which are: (a) the cultural continuity/discontinuity approach, (b) the secondary culture discontinuity approach, (c) the cultural reproduction approach, and (d) the culture and cognition approach.

The cultural continuity/discontinuity theory focused on cultural-linguistic patterns in the environment through longitudinal studies. These studies determined that the school environment was not compatible with the home environment of the caste or caste- like minority children.

The secondary culture discontinuity theorists were of varied nature. Some of them focused on cultural discontinuity while others emphasized cultural conflict,

institutional deficiency, educational equality, or biogenetic inability. John Ogbu (1978) reviewed the theories prevailing in the United States that were used to explain the failure of the children of the caste or caste-like minority groups in the school of the mainstream society. Referring to the same theory of cultural deprivation as explained by Emihovich, he adds the point that educators following this theory devised collaborative programs between teachers and parents so that a parent could understand the school environment; and similarly a teacher can come to understand the home environment. Eventually, they should be able to work together to bridge the home and the school environment.

The cultural conflict theorists came up with the notion that the culture of the caste or the caste-like minorities conflicts directly with the school culture or the culture of the dominant group. This cultural conflict always creates tension for the students of the caste or caste-like minority groups which causes low achievement. Following this conclusion, the cultural conflicts recommended pluralistic approaches to school programs and a tolerant environment, which would foster cultural diversity in schools.

The educational equality theorists pointed out the availability of inadequate educational opportunities to the students of the caste or the caste-like minority groups. Based on their findings they recommended special package programs and positive discrimination policies to ensure educational access and equal opportunity for the children of minority groups. However, they also emphasized that, in the United States, Black and White children should attend the same school, have the same curriculum, and not pay tuition fees for school.

Jensen's (1969) biogenetic theory claimed that Blacks are genetically inferior to the Whites and have different mental patterns for thinking, understanding and

creating. The resulting policy recommendation was for special techniques of classroom instruction for the children of caste- like minority groups. The techniques included memorization or rote learning, trial and error learning and the like to ensure the success of these students in school. Without making a genetic claim, theorists that support different dominant brain hemispheres for minority and majority students make a similar curriculum and pedagogical recommendation.

The cultural reproduction theorists tried to understand the sociology of education from a different perspective. Coleman (1987, cited in Emihovich, 1994) developed the idea that the students of the minority groups came to school with no “social capital”. By social capital, he did not mean income but recognizing the importance of education which constructs social capital through schooling. This idea sounds somewhat like Ogbu's survival strategy of minority groups, and is another way of saying that such groups have 'low educational aspirations'. Coleman's ideas were challenged by Bourdieu, Passeron, and Willis with their cultural capital theory. These cultural capital theorists drew ideas from different sociologists – structural, functional, critical, and interpretive – criticized them, and came up with a strong theoretical perspective on the sociology of education.

Another critical pedagogue, Basil Bernstein (1973), addressed the crucial role of pedagogy in social reproduction. The underlying principle of the dominant society, Bernstein argues, provides a knowledge code that shapes the curriculum. The curriculum then defines valid knowledge, pedagogy denotes the valid transmission of that knowledge, and evaluation defines what counts as valid realization of the knowledge. Thus, as students learn that knowledge, they incorporate an understanding of themselves and the world, which supports the existing relations of dominance. Paulo Freire, on the other hand, drawing on Marxist literature, blended

with his Christian theological beliefs, and developed a libertine humanistic pedagogy to break the culture of silence, to promote critical knowledge and critical consciousness enabling students to replace the traditionally 'banked' knowledge of the capitalist system. That is, in Bernstein's terms, to identify the 'knowledge code' which shapes their world and finds ways to speak out against it and change it.

Bourdieu (1977) saw cultural and social reproduction as an accomplished role of schooling. He found that school holds the cultural capital of the controlling class and transmits this capital to students, but transmits it unevenly for children of the controlling class who already 'know' much of it, whereas other children do not get benefit from it so much. Thus, the structural dynamism of class relations is nurtured and replicated through schooling. Tradition approves what the school does, certification distributes the social category, which succeeds in school, pedagogic communication transmits the working code of the controlling class, and eventually the process creates a circle in which cultural capital is replicated through schooling.

Many other areas of educational research have explored the situation in Nepal and the situation of the Dalits, such as studies on the expansion of schooling and impacts of schooling on individuals and society. For example, at the broader theoretical level, and from a structural functional perspective, according to Goodlad (1979), "Schooling is expanded as a solution to a societal problem, as a foundation to freedom, as a guarantee for the future, as a cause of prosperity and power, as a bastion of political security, as a source of intellectual and philosophical enlightenment", and as a way to prepare children for adult roles (Wilcox, 1988:271). On the other hand, from a critical perspective, schooling is expanded to promote and maintain the social status quo (Peshkin, 1988; King, Edmund J., 1963) and to reproduce and maintain the existing class structure and international relations of imperialism (Carnoy, 1976).

Several more sophisticated arguments can be identified which claim to account for the expansion of schooling (human capital theory, consumption theory, modernization theory, political integration theory, social control theory, and ideological diffusion theory) but a single theory may not be able to explain or predict schooling expansion (Archer, 1982, Levy, 1982, Craig & Spear, 1982). However, according to Archer, (1982), there are researchers, who argue that economic changes and requirements are the primary force behind the expansion of schooling (Harbison & Myers, 1964; Clark, 1961); class and status competition are the factors behind the population's demand for education and, thus for the expansion of schooling (Collins, 1971 & 1979) and the desire to maintain the social status quo, especially to create and maintain hegemony through the transmission of appropriate beliefs. These are the reasons as to why the more powerful classes support the expansion of schooling (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Katz, 1974).

Politically, some researchers (cited in Archer, 1982) see the drive to build a nation or national consciousness behind the expansion of schooling (Ramirez & Bali, Archer, 1979; Rubinson, 1987; Bali, Ramirez & Meyer, 1985 cited in Archer, 1982). Others note that policy makers believe that schooling is a stimulus for the cognitive and affective changes needed for modernization, and that schooling ensures economic growth as well as individuals' search for a secure social position in the society. All these factors contribute to expansion (Lockheed, Verspoor & associates, 1991; Eisemon, 1987) of schooling. What is, sometimes called 'development theory', does not explain schooling outcomes so much as it seeks to shape them. The dominant paradigm of development "modernization" theory (evolutionary, structural functional, modernization, and human capital theories as classified by Fagerlind and Saha, 1989) has shaped the outputs of schooling in many ways. But the assumption of the

modernization paradigm that schooling promotes economic growth, ensures social mobility, develops cultural solidarity, and eventually makes a country developed has been questioned through a number of critical studies done in the nations of South. This research has focused on what Leys (1989) calls "inward oriented" development through schooling and claims that schooling has become instrumental in perpetuating social selectivity and reproducing inequalities in Ghana (Weis, 1981) and in Jordan (Qawasmeh, 1986), cultivating a false dream of upward mobility in Kenya (Nkyinyangi, 1982), marginalizing people of low income and scheduled caste tribal groups in India (Kumar, 1976) and the Philippines (Foley, 1976); and promoting a meritocratic class in Peru (Van den Berghe, 1978) and in African nations such as Upper Volta and Niger (Elion, 1976). Similarly, schooling in the nations of South has been a vehicle to alienate people from their home culture and maternal language (Bacchus, 1980, Illich, 1971; Carnoy & Werthen, 1979); and has promoted people to "fit in" the culture in Yap (Lingenfelter, 1981). As a result, there is conflict over maintaining the indigenous language in Mozambique (Mondlane, 1983), and about penetrating of the "western" values such as individualism and competitiveness in Vietnam (Kelly, 1978), in Malaysia (Watson, 1980), and in India (Basu, 1978).

Schooling not only has become a means to create social stratification and cultural oppression but also it has become an enrollment to encourage brain drain from the nations of the South to the nations of the North paradoxically benefiting the latter rather than developing the former (Toh, 1971; Watanabe, 1969). Similarly, it has become a factory to produce unemployed graduates (Simmons, 1980; Miller, 1990). In the same way, schooling has done political injustice to nations of the south (Toh, 1987), become an agent of oppression (by promoting the banking concept of knowledge and by denying a liberating role to schooling) in Latin American and

African nations (Freire, 1976), become a factory to produce "safe" people who support the colonial power (Berman, 1979; Bray, 1984). Moreover, schooling has contributed to gender inequality by becoming one of the safeguards of gender ideology in Ecuador (Rosemary, 1984), by reproducing gender inequalities of the society in Nigeria (Dim, Isaac Uche, 1985) and by supporting what Dale (1982) calls "licensed autonomy" or limited access to opportunity for women.

Review of Empirical Studies. This study has been carried out based on the review of relevant literature on Dalit girls related to schooling practices, empowerment and upliftment of Dalits from sources such as annual report, books and unpublished papers of various government and non-government organizations and individual. Empirical reviews on Dalit issues have been discussed in consolidated form here.

Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization had done an "Ethnographic Study of Terai Dalits in Nepal" (NNDSWO, 2006). This study was focused on the Terai Dalits with emphasis on their ethnography. The study also explores the ethnography of Musahar community. It shows that adult literacy rate of Musahar community is the lowest (6.9 percent) among all groups in Nepal. The dropout rate among the children belonging to this community is very high and is more so among the girls. But this study doesn't focus on the causes or affecting factors for the low educational participation.

"Dalits of Nepal: Issues and Challenges" a book published by FEDO tried to explore some realities that will be helpful for the better understanding of the issues of Dalits in Nepal. It tries to highlight Dalit women and their positions in the domains of education, law, male hegemony and economic independence including the issue of representation in the context of Dalit community in Nepal. An article of this book

titled “Education and Health Status of Dalit Women” expressed that Dalit women’s emancipation, educational status of Dalit women and the observable problems of Dalit women. The reality of Dalit women is even more problematic, more delicate and more serious. They (women) suffer from the double suppression of gender and caste discriminations. They suffer both within the community and outside of the community.

Pokharel, Bhawani, in the study ‘An Ethnographic Study of the Musahar of Kharji Kovara of Morang District’ (1997) focused on the Musahar community. This study concluded that Musahars are socially under-privileged people. They all live in lower standard of life. They have been neglected in all aspects of social life. Economically, they are also poor, and their social lives are too pathetic.

NNDSWO has done a research on 'Demographic and Socio-economic Survey of Dalits' (2006) in which the researcher selected six districts which covers all development regions of the country. The survey report focused on the demographic and socio-economic status. The report shows that more than 72 percent of the Dalits are illiterate in Saptari. Findings of the report indicates that low economic conditions are the main cause of not attending school.

Similarly, a book entitled ‘Nepalka Dalitharu (Dalits of Nepal) (Pandey, 2002) has explained about their ethnography of Musahar which simply includes introduction, occupation, population, surnames, tradition, culture, and educational status. He further explained that Musahar community has the perception that to study is the main function of the elite group who has well economic condition. Due to such perception to education, most of the Musahar are still illiterate as well as representation in the state machinery is almost zero and they are limited to the peon,

guard, sweeper level. He has revealed that landlessness, unemployment, and low income are the main cause of poverty among him.

National Dalit Confederation-Nepal (2007) has published a research report on 'Terai Dalit Women'. The study focused on the Terai Dalit women's issues related citizenship, political participation and good governance. Koirala's (1996) Ph.D. dissertation under the topic 'Schooling and the Dalits of Nepal: A case study of Bungkot Dalit Community' of Gorakha district shows the caste system as the major structural problem in Nepali society, not the economy or the political system or even the educational system. Besides, this research study concluded that a lot of intellectual work related to Hindu teachings about caste and the cosmology relations of the world are one of the main ways to address this problem, as well as some specific changes in schooling.

Poudel has completed his PhD dissertation in the topic 'Power, Knowledge and pedagogy: An Analysis of the Educational Exclusion of Dalits in Nepal' (2007). His study shows that perceiving Dalits as backward and pitiable, and blaming those for their non-inclusion is problematic construction, which do not acknowledge the perspectives and struggles of Dalits. This study has also shown that such pathological construction and blame are no more than a way of discouraging the self-confidence of Dalits. His study shows that educational exclusion of Dalits is prevailed due to the ineffective government policies and formal setting of school without considering the socio-cultural factors, economic situations and power relations in society and school.

Tharu in his study 'Educational Status of Tharu Women in Nepal (2001)' focused on the educational status of Kamaiya and labour Tharu women. This study shows that the educational attainment of Tharu females in level-wise high disparity whereas, educated female is found more in primary level than other levels. The school

dropped out rate of Tharu women is higher than men. Due to poor economic condition, the females of Kamaiya and labor families have been found deprived from formal education. The dropout rate before completing the grade is also high in these families. More concentration of literate females is in the age group of less than 15 years but more number of informal literate females are in the age group of more than 26 years. Dropout situation in these VDCs seems to be a major problem of educational development in the Tharu community. A large numbers of students go to school but rarely very few of them complete their education. With increasing the level, dropout rate also increases. Out of total dropout students, more than 50 percent students dropped in secondary level. Poor economic condition and engagement of children in the farm are the major responsible causes for dropout. As per the response of dropout students, due to the heavy load of household work, they do not get enough time to study at home. So, they become weak in study and fail in the examination. Apart from this, ignorance of parents in education, early marriage and interest of students are the other contributing causes of dropout.

Parajuli's study on 'Educational Status of Women in Nepal' (2005) found that women lagged far behind men in their status of occupation, health, nutrition, political participation, ownership of assets, decision making etc. Not sending girls to school or keeping girls at home is the common practice in Nepal. Very few Nepali women continue school beyond the age of ten because of their value of household work or female domestic chores and agriculture. Even among those who have the opportunity to go to school, the dropout rate is very high. Girls have a heavy work burden starting from the early stage which includes siblings care, animal grazing, fuel collection, and domestic work and farm activities. These activities prevent young women from

attending school. Strong son preference is another important factor that keeps women out of school and also leads to high dropped out rate.

Similarly, Dhakal's (2013) study shows that many Dalit children feel that they were poorly treated and discriminated in schools even after the policy practice of inclusion and the situation of exclusion has not been improved. Also, a study conducted for gender and exclusion assessment in 2005 found 32 provisions that discriminate on the basis of religion, caste and ethnicity, and 176 provisions in 83 pieces of legislations that discriminate against women (UNDP, 2009). Likewise, a team (1999) of consultants studied the conditions of Nepali Dalits and found that the conditions of Dalit women/girls could not improve in comparison to others groups. More than 46 percent of Dalit girls from hill, 43.3 percent from the mountain, and 30 percent girls from the southern plain (Terai) dropout from the school.

A study entitled 'Late comers in school: the status of Dalit girls in education' was conducted by a study team (Koirala, 2010) to find out the problems of Dalit girls right from access to the completion of their school cycle. The information was generated from 12 VDCs of 4 district viz. Kailali, Dailekh, Surkhet and Dhanusha. This study found that Dalit girls have access to education. In case of regularity in school, the study team found that Dalit girls attend less in school and perform less well in classroom. Dalit girl students felt no explicit gender and caste discrimination in school. But they observed gender and caste discrimination in the community. The study team identified number of reasons that compelled Dalit girls to drop from school. They were classified into five cycles viz., poverty, cultural, school, domestic, and community.

The meaning of caste. The word 'caste' has been defined differently by various sociologists such as Sir Herbert Risley (1915), Green, Arnold W. (1956) and

Anderson & Parker (1964). According to Risley, caste is a collection of families or groups bearing a common name. Green, Arnold W., in his book 'Sociology', defines the word 'caste' as a system of stratification in which mobility, up and down the status ladder, at least ideally, occurs. Anderson and Parker have defined the word 'caste' as that extreme form of social class organization in which the position of individuals in the status hierarchy is determined by descent and birth. Similarly, according to the Dictionary of Anthropology castes are corporate social units, which are ranked and generally defined by descent, marriage and occupation. Dictionary of Sociology (1989) defines caste as a hierarchical system of social control, with each sub-group assigned a ranked status depending on its origin and religious strictness. Ketkar (1979), an East Indian living himself in a caste culture, defines caste as a social group having two characteristics: Caste membership is confined to born members and the inexorable social law forbids caste members to marry outside the group. Traditionally, the meaning of the caste is determined by birth, is defined as whom one could marry and the occupation one could pursue (Samel, 2006).

Nepali caste rules normally prescribe isogamy for its members. Such a wedding is held lawful for the inheritance of property. Caste-endogamy is held sacrosanct, because heredity is the basis to the concept of caste purity. For children born of isogamy through socially approved marriages, there is no problem of attaining full ritual status. Isogamy is the only form of marriage allowed for Brahmans to retain their high caste status, although hypergamy is permissible for Brahmans. The issues of Brahmans from hypergamous marriages have a lower caste ranking. High caste like the Rajputs and the Chhetris have a first marriage done endogenously (Heimendorf, 1966, Caplan, 1974). Hypergamy involves in any notions of gradations for the purpose of full ritual acceptance for caste members, which an isogamous marriage

would never entail. Thus, the principle of caste endogamy in Nepal remains asserted despite the wide prevalence of hypergamy there.

Ritual purity or pollution to which Srinivash (1973) attaches a high significance in caste concepts is not only an inter-caste but an intra-caste behavior. Women during their menstruation period become ritually impure and likewise, widows are at times debarred from attending certain functions. The occupations apportioned to the high caste in the Varna model may be valid in a very general way in Nepal, as Brahmans still act as priest and some members of the Ksatriyas caste are in control of politics and government. But there are two categories of Ksatriyas in Nepal, those claiming Rajput origin (the Thakuris) and the others ordinary Chhetris. In the villages, the bulk of people belonging to these high- castes are peasants by occupation. The traditional occupations seem to apply only to the lower caste in Nepal. Tibeto-Burman speaking ethnic groups are classified in the old Legal Code as Matwalicastes (Sharma, 1977).

Caste ranking (hierarchy) presented in the Civil Code has tried to comprehend the plurastic cultures of Nepal into a single scheme of the Hindu caste universe. The large number of non-Hindu social ethnic groups have been made its member and are given a ranking in it. The totality of this caste universe has been paraphrased in the code as *char Varnachhattis jat* (four Varnas and thirty-six caste). This phrase shows the familiarity of the Nepalis with the Varna model and its being the main basis of social divisions (Sharma, 1977). As is known, the four Varna comprise as (a) the Brahman who study the veda and perform sacrifices for the two Varna below them; (b) The Ksatriyas, the Varna of the Kings and warriors; (c) The Vaisya who are peasant, merchants and craftsmen and (d) The Shudra, the lowest Varna, whose duty is to serve the three superior Varna. Brahmans, Ksatriya and Vaisya, “twice- born” i.e.

wearers of the holy cord, whereas the Shudra are not. This classification lacks the impure and untouchable groups which are outside the four Varna (Hoffer, 2012).

According to Das (2009), the four classic caste hierarchy are: the Brahmin, ‘priest, teacher’, is at the top, followed by the Kshatriya, variously ‘land holder, warrior, ruler’. The Vaishya, ‘business man’, comes third, and the Shudra, ‘labourer’, is last. Below the four are casteless ‘untouchable’ or the Dalits and tribal people (Das, 2009).

The Legal Code of 1854 nurtured the systematic hierarchy in the society, dividing people in five categories of castes within the two broad categories as in table 2.3 below. These five categories were: tagadhari (the twice-born, sacred thread-wearing high caste), namasine matwali (on unenslaveable liquor drinkers), mashine matwali (enslaveable liquor drinkers), impure but touchables (some Newar castes, Muslims and Europeans), and achhuts or untouchable (Hofer, 2004, as cited in Tamang, 2014). Placing Dalit at the bottom of the social hierarchy has lasting implications in the Nepalis society.

Table 2.3. *The Caste Groups of Legal Code 1854*

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wearers of the holy cord (<i>tagadhari</i>) 2. Non-enslavable Alcohol-Drinkers (<i>namasinya matwali</i>) 3. Enslavable Alcohol-Drinkers (<i>masinya matwali</i>) 	Caste category I: Pure castes (<i>chokho jat</i>) or water-acceptable castes (<i>pani chalya jat</i>)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Impure, but touchable castes (<i>paninachalya choi chito halnunarpanya</i>) 5. Impure and untouchable castes (<i>pani nachalya choi chito halnunarpanya</i>) 	Caste category II: Impure castes or water-unacceptable castes (<i>pani nachalya jat</i>)

Source: Adopted from Hofer (2012)

The above hierarchy of the principle social categories in the Civil Code has been determined from the order in which they are found mentioned in connection with laws which lay down punishment for different castes (Muluki Ain, 1854) with lower or higher caste. The Tagadharis who occupy the apex position in the above paragraph their representation consisted of several caste groups and sub-groups. This hierarchical order is as follows: Upadhya Brahmins (purbia and kumai), Rajputs (Thakuri in common language), Jaisi Brahmins and Chhetris.

Below the Tagadharis or the twice-born caste, the caste accorded place to all Nepal's ethnic groups under the name matawalis. There are two groups of these matawalis recognized those belonging to the unenslavable (namasine) class, who have been given an upper ranking, and those belonging to the enslavable (masine) class, who get a lower ranking. In the former class were counted the more prominent groups such as the Magars, Gurungs, the Newars, the Rais and the Limbus. The enslavable category of the Matawalis have been enumerated as follow: Bhotya, Chepang, Majhi, Danuwar, Hayu, Darai, Kumal, Pahari and Meche (Sharma, 1977).

The caste belonging to the third categories above have come almost entirely from the Newari society with the exceptions of the Muslims, the Mlechhas which probably refers to the European and the Teli, a low caste of Terai. Regarding the lowest category of castes described in the code, their ranking has been determined on the basis of a notion of a relative impurity which prevails among these low castes in relation to each other. Every caste, high or low, was required to own these values and not to violent them. In other respects, the ethnic groups were given independence to pursue their traditional cultures quite unhindered.

The Legal Coderefects the greatest concern of the rulers of Nepal for controlling the social behavior of all strata of society through Hindu norms and values

derived from ancient law books (called *niti smriti* in Civil Code). Sparing capital punishment to a Brahman was not taken but he was deprived of his caste status and reduced to the status of a Shudra. The severest of offenses consisted of eating rice together with inferior castes, committing state offences (treason, murder, etc.), cohabiting with women with untouchable caste or eating or drinking taboo food. Similar, violation of social rules by lower caste below the 'twice-born' castes would bring comparatively lighter punishment, if it was committed among their own ranks. However, if they had implicated high caste in their crime the severity of punishment increases (Sharma, 1977).

According to Saraf (1986), the Aryans were a homogeneous and cohesive group in the early *Rigved* period; in the middle *Rigved* period, the group was divided into Brahman and Kshatriya on the one hand and Vaishya on the other; in the late *Rigved* period, the group was further divided giving birth to a Shudra caste; and in the post Vedic period, some of the Shudras were classified as untouchable (*Asprishya*) and touchable (*Sprishya*). Khatri and Dahal (1987) explain the development of castes differently. In their opinion, prior to the writings of the book *Purusukata* (1000-500 BC), the ancient society was divided into different classes. They were: an economic class, power class, religious class and service class. These classes themselves were *Varnas*. The religious class was known as Brahman Varna, the power class was Kshatriya Varna, the economic class was Vaishya Varna and the service class was called Shudra Varna.

Who are Dalits? The term 'Dalit' was first used in journalistic writing as far back as 1931 to connote the untouchables. The term gained currency only in the early 1970s with the Dalit panther movement in Maharashtra (Michael, 2007; Samel, 2006; Sharma, 2006). Dalit castes, according to Hindu philosophy, belong to a caste group

of the further socially stratified ShudraVarna. Dalits, the person believed to have born from god's feet, according to Hindu Philosophy, a Dasa (slave) or Dasua (robber) or Dravidian, a black person or a snub-nosed person or an oppressed person of a non-Aryan person (Michael, 2007), are the people who belong to ShudraVarna. Under the ShudraVarna, there are two caste groups: *Panichalne तथा chhunahune Jat and paninachalne तथा chhunannahune Jat*. According to DR. B. R. Ambedkar, Dalits are socially weak, economically needy and politically powerless despite the protective policies followed by the government under the provision of the constitution, 2015 in guaranteeing those educational concessions and scholarship (Michael, 2007).

A paper presented by Bhattachan (2008) on 'the Dalits of Nepal and a new constitution: a resource on the situation of Dalits in Nepal ... on Dalit Issues: Who are Dalits' has called for many things. Some terms, such as 'paninachalne'(water polluting), acchoot(untouchable), doom, 'pariganit' tallo jat (low caste) used in Nepali society are derogatory, and other terms, such as 'uppechhit' (ignored), 'utpidit'(oppressed), 'soshit' (exploited), 'pachhadi pareka'(lagging behind), 'bipanna'(down todden), 'garib'(poor), 'nimukhan' (helpless), 'simantakrit'(marginalised), 'subidhabata banchit'(disadvantaged), 'alpasankhyak' (minorities), 'banchiti karanama pareka' (excluded), 'Harijan' (god's people) are non-derogatory, though some may be considered condescending. After initial heritation and controversy among Dalits and non-Dalits alike, use of term 'Dalit' has gained general acceptance, and has been widely used at national and international levels.

Although, Dalit identity debate raises larger issues in Nepal, some groups strongly argue that identity should be a key form of political organization for Dalit, and others oppose this. Among Dalits, a minority group are strongly advocating to

change identity from 'Dalit' to 'Shilpi'. However, the majority of participants interviewed in this research strongly argue that Dalit should remain in their identity. They claim that Dalit identity has been already established and it has been recognized by the present constitution (2015) (Bishwakarma, 2019). In this regard, a DFID and the world bank report (2006) aptly notes, 'A lingering hesitation to use the term 'Dalit' or to name caste-based discrimination head on – and a preference for euphemisms only serves to confuse issues pertaining to Dalit rights. The term 'Dalit' should be accepted universally.

There are Dalits scattered all over in Nepal. To name some of the few, there are Damai, Kami, Sarki, Lohar, Sunar, Badi and Gaine in the hills; Chyame, Kasai, Kuche, Kusule, and Pode in Kathmandu (capital city); and Tatma, Khatwe, Chamar, Dusadh, Musahar, Dhobi, Dom and Halkhore in the Terai (NDC, 2003). They vary in the size of population, literacy attainment, and political awareness but they receive a similar type of social treatment no matter whether they live in the hills, capital city and in the Terai region. Dalits are still subjected to discrimination based on the ground of untouchability. They are the worst sufferers of poverty, acute illiteracy, superstition, intolerable humiliation and other vices that are incidental to or connected with untouchability. These problems that have surfaced among the Dalits of India are equally applicable in Nepal as well. Dalits are vulnerable both as an economically and socially deprived segment and as a physically and psychologically dispossessed category to be despised by the upper castes. Legally, all the opportunities are available to the Dalits but the caste - based society does not allow them to enjoy. High caste people also have a low regard for the character, integrity, intelligence, cleanliness, and morality of untouchability (Samel, 2006).

The history of the Muluki Ain (1854). The first edition of the Muluki Ain (Civil Code) was prepared on the initiative of Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana and became operative on January 6th, 1854. Under Prime Minister Juddha Shamsheer Rana a new edition was prepared in 1935. The 1935 edition remained effective until the end of Rana rule 1951 (Hoper, 2012). Again, another edition was published in 1953 and reprinted in 1955 (Kumar, 1967).

In 1963, all these editions and versions were finally replaced by King Mahendra's Muluki Ain (Civil Code) based on the country's first constitution. Undoubtedly, both Jung Bahadur's as well as King Mahendra's new Muluki Ain (Civil Code) each marked two turning points in the social history of Nepal. Jung Bahadur's Civil Code was a codification of traditional social conditions. King Mahendra's Civil Code, while not explicitly abolishing the caste hierarchy, does not approve it any longer. King Mahendra's Civil Code was a reaction to a revolution which brought the Rana rule and Nepal's isolation to an end.

Jung Bahadur's Civil Code, by contrast, was the product of a dawning of political consolidation after a period of wars and internal unrest between 1769 and 1846. This Civil Code of 1854 was promulgated only eight years after Jung Bahadur's seizure of power and the establishing of the rule of Rana Prime Ministers (1846-1951). Also, the era following King Prithivi Narayan Shah's death in 1775 was marked by an overall political instability. The weakening of the power of a royal house, an economic crisis, frequent changes in key political positions and the lacking of legal continuity were the result of conquest which diverted the country from its internal problems. Military expansion was so rapid to allow political expansion and the establishment of an administration to follow. As the newly- formed state not founded on a homogeneous ethno-cultural basis it lacked loyalty and subjects. In the

second decade of 19th century, when the conquered areas in the west (Kumaun, Garhwal) and in the east (Sikkim) had to be renounced, Nepal was limited more or less to her present territory (Hoffer, 2012).

The Civil Code was at same time both product and implement of this strategy. It cemented a social order as a basis of a ‘centralized agrarian bureaucracy’ (Regmi, 1975) and strengthen the privileges of the state- bearing elites. The Civil Code demarcated the country’s society against foreign societies and cultures by defining it as a specifically Nepalese “national” caste hierarchy. The Civil Code was not a constitution, nor did it contain regulations with regard to the authority of the King or the Prime Minister. It was more or less limited to the fields of administrative or personal law, without fully guaranteeing the autonomy of administration and law in relation to political leadership (Regmi, 1975).

A Nepalese predecessor to the Civil Code was certainly the code (Sthiti) of the Newar King Jayasthi Malla, which also laid down a caste hierarchy. The social context of Jayasthi Malla’s code relates to is some 400 yrs older than that of the Civil Code and limited to the valley of Kathmandu. Historical research is complicated by the fact that records of deliberations and substantiations by the editorial council are passed over by the Civil Code. It is, however, a positive fact that the authors of the Civil Code reverted to a great extent to customary law and the previous legislation, especially that of Bhimsen Thapa’s times (until 1837). Thus, the Civil Code contains both (a) codified law in the sense of a reinforcement of something already known and practiced and (b) amendments changing what had been hitherto practiced or at least correcting its application (Hoffer, 2012).

Only from chapter no 87 onwards does the Civil Code deal thoroughly with purity rules and inter-caste relations. It contains food and water, the drinking of

alcohol and the sharing of hookah. Chapter 89 prescribes the cases of caste offences; the offender as to except punishment as degradation, imprisonment and fine. Chapter 90 deals with the violation of commensality rules. Chapter 91 with the right to wear the holy cord (Janai) and chapter 92 with consexuality. In chapter 93 hardly any indications relevant to caste are to be found.

In the Muluki Ain, the Brahmins, holding highest position in Hindu caste hierarchy, were excluded from capital punishment; while the other caste of people, including the Dalits were subject to such punishment. Accordingly, the, atrocities against the Dalit caste people were intensified. Dalits were denied the right to education and they were denied the right to acquire property. They were discouraged from constructing good house and touch persons of higher castes. So much so that certain section of the Dalits were almost forced to live either in the outskirts of the villages or in the filthy slums. In Nepal's rular areas, upper- caste individuals still practice ritual bathing in order to purify themselves following contact with a Dalit or a Dalit's belonging. The sprinkling of drops of water on impure objects or individuals is also practiced. Dalits are also denied entry into public places, such as hotels, shops, and restaurants. When they are able to enter public restaurants, they are made to drink water from separate glasses, tea from separate tumblers, and eat *daal bhat* (Rice and Lentils) from separate plates, still, Dalits have to wash the pots, which they used or touched in the houses of the 'upper-caste people', hotels and restaurants (Pyakurel, 2007).

Research on schooling in Nepal started in the early 1960s with the establishment of the Regmi Research Center in Kathmandu. Currently, there is one research center under Tribhuvan University, plus university faculties that exclusively carry out research in schooling including some private and non-government agencies.

The research studies done in Nepal to date have analyzed schooling from a structural-functional and utilitarian perspective and most of them are quantitative in nature. However, there is one ethnographic study (Ragsdale, 1989) on a Gurung community, and quasi -qualitative research in other communities (Gurung, 1984; Niroula, 1980; Upadhyaya, 1984). There was no research on schooling that was exclusively or partly, done with a Dalit community before the decades of the 80s.

Tilak (1994), by analyzing the secondary data available from UNESCO and the World Bank, concluded that schooling had a positive effect on Asian nations, including Nepal. Other empirical as well as evaluative studies also claimed that schooling had a positive effect on development at the community level in Nepal (Gurung, Huntington, & Pande, 1989; CERID, 1984; Niroula, 1980; Upadhyaya, 1984; Dharmavir, 1988). These researchers presented data showing correlation between education and earnings, employment, productivity and political development, and concluded that schooling contributed to economic growth, reduction of poverty, and strengthening of democracy in the Asian region including Nepal. Echoing the structural functional perspective, the literature also presents the conclusion that schooling helped develop self-esteem, persuaded people to participate in development, raised social status, and helped improve the individual's economy, whether high-caste Brahman or low-caste *Dalit* in Nepal.

Implications of theoretical perspectives. Regarding schooling of Dalit girls in Terai, no single theory has been seen as being fully functional. A combination of several theories is therefore sought for in order to help the research to head toward a meaningful direction. It has been found that most of the theories represent their views in different ways, with different perspectives and on different occasions, as time passes in course of generating knowledge or information from one generation to

another. To support the study theme “Schooling of Terai Dalit Girls of Dhanusha District in Nepal” with a sound conceptual /theoretical framework, the main theories, like Karl Marx’s (1818-1883) theory, Emile Durkheim’s (1658-1917) theory, Max Weber’s (1864-1920) theory, Cultural reproduction theory, Social inequality and schooling theory, Feminist theory, and Development theory, were referred to understand the social inequalities of the Nepalese society, especially in Terai / Madhesh region.

The multiplicities of Nepal like gender roles, the caste system, communal feeling, language policy and socio-cultural taboos attached to disability are such factors that have created significant disparities in education. Such disparities are reflected in all aspects of Dalit girls’ schooling (including access, quality, transition and achievement).

Dalits are the most disadvantaged people who suffer loss from education sector. Their overall educational attainment, including literary rate, is very low compared with other groups. The chance of succeeding in school is also very low for Dalit children who do attend. Among many factors, stories of school failure and poor self perception also contributed negatively to the poor image of the Dalits and the disadvantaged. Concerning Dalit girls’ participation in education, Mushahar and Danuwar think that they were born to dig the land and work in the field, and therefore, they see no value for their education (CERID, 2005). The low level of educational attainment has resulted in a low level of Dalit girls’ participation in teaching as well as other areas of the education system. Most of the female teachers belong to the so-called high castes (Bramhins and Chhetris) (Bista, 2005). Among the male teachers the situation is similar. There are only 4.5 percent, 3.1 percent and 3.6 percent Dalit teachers in primary, lower secondary and secondary levels respectively (DoE, 2012).

The share of Dalits among the head teachers at primary level is 3.0 percent (TRSE, 2005). Their participation in managerial/administrative position is negligible.

Dalit girls lag behind in education for many reasons, which can, broadly be considered from three perspectives- sociological, pedagogical and economic. Dalits are historically excluded from education primarily for social reasons. This continued to produce illiterate parents who are the influencing factors in any Dalit girls' education. The reasons for dropping out of school are associated with the classroom cultures as well. The teachers are not oriented to give examples from the Dalit community, nor does the curriculum demand it.

Furthermore, the way the teachers teach and the way Dalit girls are taught at home is different in many ways. The language used in school, which is more hierarchical and cultured than the language used at home, also makes Dalit girls uncomfortable in school. The mismatch between the cultures and the languages pave the way for a Dalit girl to leave the school. High absenteeism among Dalit girls, their inhibition to interact in science and mathematics classes, unfriendly classroom setting, the mismatch between the Dalit girls' ways of learning science and classroom pedagogy, inadequate study time at home, no additional tutorial support, mismatch between Dalit girls practical knowledge and content delivery, and the ceiling created by Dalit girls themselves, their families and communities with respect to Dalit girls' higher education are some of the commonly found factors that contribute to the Dalit girls' low participation in science and technology related subjects (Koirala and Acharya, 2005). Additionally, distance to secondary school has also tended to prevent older girls from attending school. Due to security reasons as well as the need for them to help at home, Dalit girls are often not sent to a far away school.

There are some sociological theorists, who have stated the reasons behind such inequalities for Dalit girls in school. According to them, law and religion were major mechanisms for mechanical solidarity in primitive society. Max Weber claimed that the economic standing of a person or community is associated with social prestige or status for him or her, not only a result of economic relationship. According to Dahrendorf, the structural functional perspective gave little attention to social realities while the Marxist perspective ignored the role of consensus and integration in modern society.

Marxists argue that social reproduction maintains the domination of certain groups over others. They view that there are class-based inequalities in the access to skills and knowledge, and these inequalities continue to work in schools (Levinson et al., 2001). Marxists view that such inequalities are determined by the individual's relationship to the means of production; in Marxists' terms, social class refers to economic class.

Gerhard Lenski adds that power, privilege, prestige, property, occupation, religion, gender and age create social inequalities in the society. Another sociologist Nicos Poulantzas points out that the worker class (such as Dalits in Nepal) is polarized into a specific social position due to their function or work activity.

The sociological theories including the formation of oppositional classes and capitalism theory of Karl Marx, functional perspective of social inequalities of Durkheim and oppressed theory, voice of the voiceless of Paulo Freire, social inequalities within the society of Max Weber, criticism of both structural functional theory and Marxist theory of Ralf Dahrendorf, all focus on the situation of the deprived class of the society. The sociological theories are fully implicative in the context of Dalits because the Dalits are oppressed, depressed, untouchable and lower

class of society. So, these sociological theories that deal with social inequalities in the society are directly related to the study of schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal.

Apart from these, gender discrimination and issues are stated as the major part of a new sociological paradigm. Such paradigm can be described as the feminist framework. Liberal feminism aims to promote girls' education and schooling because it believes that the girls and boys have equal capacity of thinking, and they should not be treated separately. This -ism does not view one-sided effects on girls' education but neglects structural domination or oppression of girls in education. Thus, these feminist concepts give basis to understanding as well as implication of schooling of Terai Dalit girls in education.

Another theory, "the theory of cultural reproduction" claims that social inequalities are reinforced, reproduced and legitimated by school (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Accordingly, a society is stratified by class, race, ethnic groups based on knowledge and skills of pupils. The cultural reproduction in education tells the function of school as reproduction of the dominant cultural groups. Bourdieu (1996 b: 273) argued that education was one of a series of strategies used by families to advance their social position. He also accepts that school is not a direct mirror image of societal power but it works indirectly as symbolic institution to reproduce existing unequal power relations. He explains relations between society and schools and takes school as an institutional mechanism, which reproduces and legitimizes an unequal social structure and culture. The school mechanism functions towards "reproducing the structure of relations between the classes by reproducing the unequal class distribution of cultural capital" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) further argue that, in the name of technical function, a school

conceals this social function, gives prestige to socially advanced mindset, ignores the lower habits and culture of the disadvantaged groups like Dalits in the context of Nepal, and hence they are discriminated even in schools. As a result, they are compelled to be the victims of school dropout problem.

In the sociology of education, according to Emihovich (1994), students of the caste like minority groups fail in mainstream school because of their poverty and the culture, which was associated with poor. The cultural continuity/ discontinuity theory showed that the school environment was not compatible with the home environment of the caste like minority children. In cultural deprivation, as explained by Emihovich, educators, following this theory, devised collaborative programs between teachers and parents so that a parent could understand the school environment and, similarly, a teacher can come to understand the home environment. Eventually, they should be able to work together to bridge the home and the school environment.

The cultural conflict theory recommended pluralistic approaches to school programs and a tolerant environment, which would foster cultural diversity in schools. The institutional deficiency theorists mean to say that the school by nature makes less serious efforts to prepare students to compete with dominant society. These theorists suggested various forms of institutional improvement in terms of resources and management.

Similarly, the educational equality theorists pointed out the availability of inadequate educational opportunities to the students of the caste or the caste like minority groups. So, this theory can be implicative for conducting special package programs and positive discrimination policies to ensure educational access and equal opportunity for Dalit girl students.

Jensen's biogenetic theory also suggests using special techniques for classroom instruction for Dalit girl students. The techniques may include memorization or rote learning, trial and error learning and like to ensure the success of these students. Development theory explains schooling outcomes so much as it seeks to shape them. The dominant paradigm of development "modernization" theory (evolutionary), structural, functional, and human capital theories, as classified by Fagerlind and Saha (1989), has shaped the outputs of schooling in many ways. According to this, the schooling promotes economic growth, ensures social mobility, develops cultural solidarity and eventually, makes a country developed.

These research studies on 'Critical research on schooling' are implicative of the observations that schooling fostered the adoption of modern values and beliefs by changing perceptions of self and society, by ensuring cognitive changes in the individual's ability, by increasing productive capacity through improved health, and by lowering women's fertility rate.

In the past, so many researches/ studies (Koirala ,1996), (Paudel ,2007), MoE (2007), CERID (2005), Parajuli (2005), Pokharel (1997), Pandey (2002), Tharu (2001), Koirala (2010), Dhakal (2013) and UNDP, NNDSWO, FEDO, National DalitConfederation-Nepal(2007)related to Dalit women/girls have been completed with a main focus on their ethnography, citizenship and political participation.

The present study is different from the previous ones, in the sense that the features stated below have not been studied previously. Moreover, these features have also been recommended in policy level and research level activities to further the case of Dalit literature. On the basis of present research work, the following key questions have been addressed: What specific contribution does this research make to policy and existing body of knowledge? What specific suggestion is made to this effect?

What is the new knowledge that the research has contributed?

As we know, there are multidimensional challenges to education for Dalit girl students. Despite the continuous advance for human civilizations, women/girls continue to encounter multiple challenges to educational attainment which also include caste/ethnicity, race, region, disability, income and location. The enormous benefits of educating girls are widely documented and there is strong evidence that the most effective pathway for human improvement in Terai region of Nepal is the schooling of girls. Uneducated girls are more likely to be marginalized, less healthy and less skilled with fewer choices and ill-prepared to participate in political, social and economic development of their communities. The children of uneducated marginalized girls are also at higher risk of poverty, infectious disease, sexual exploitation and violence. This gender disparity is embedded in economic, social and cultural factors that together make access to education more challenging for Dalit girls. Even those who are in school also face many challenges to quality education, with significant gaps across socio-economic groups (GMR, 2013/14). According to UNESCO (2010), 72 countries have huge gender gap in secondary education. These disparities are consequences of multiple challenges and ultimately undermine socio-economic development of national level, as well as individual health and prosperity.

Terai region of Nepal, has the largest number of out of school children and the quality of education is very low. The numerous challenges include school's unaffordable fees, unavailability of separate toilets with running water and abuse and neglects. Along with widespread of poverty and other deep-rooted socio-cultural factors, gender inequality with ethnic fragmentation is more complex than in most other regions of Nepal. The main challenges also include financial, infrastructural, mental, physical and other health related challenges. As a result of the above

mentioned challenges to education, lower caste groups and ethnic minority groups like Dalit girls score poorly on indicators for education. Lower secondary and secondary education statistics reveal that children from Dalits are less likely to enroll than other castes and their dropout rate is very high (CERID, 2009). Some studies suggest that caste system has a strong effect on school participation. There is a high level of educational deprivation among Dalits in Nepal, well below the national average. Among Dalit women, the literacy rate falls. This low educational status has remained one of the major challenges to Dalit's human development.

Nepal's government has declared its commitment to inclusive education. However, the issues were neglected for many years in Nepal's education policy. To implement inclusive education, three main issues must be addressed: adequate school space, parental demand, and discriminatory treatment in schools. Although Nepal's government has committed to inclusive education, effective implementation of such a program remains a distant prospect. The government's policies and priorities, especially for basic education, are set out in the EFA national plan of action (2001-2015). The right based approach aspires to an overall framework for school education from early childhood development to secondary level. However, the plans, programs and goals identified in the EFA national plan have failed to address the challenges of education.

The composition of ethnic groups contributes to the extent of challenges to education. It flows that no single policy to Dalits can be equally effective in all situations. In general, educational and other developmental gaps among socio-cultural groups must be understood in the local context. In course of exploring challenges to education, it is especially important to ask in detail about gender challenges, which are known to differ across ethnicity/caste and rural/urban context. It is equally

important to explore the prospects for education development in the local area, in terms of how many prospective teachers are available, what kind of education is needed and the current status of public and private schools in that area.

Nextly, there should be analysis of education inputs. While government budget provision is essential, it is even more important to understand education spending and available resources in order to identify both resource gaps and demand gaps. That also helps us to clarify the private and social cost of education at local level. Education goals and targets should be clarified on a timeline. Based on knowledge of local conditions and resource constraints and availability, a number of key questions must be addressed. What we want to achieve by when? What policies and programs are required to achieve these goals? What type of institutional framework is necessary? Most importantly, this demands significant resources (including the opportunity cost of Dalit girl's schooling) and efforts. The discriminatory behaviour can slowly fade away with the help of scholarship, mid-day meal, school dresses and other incentive measures.

Lastly, the next step involves an assessment of education outcomes and socio economic development, analysing the socio economic impacts of education. Economic condition in promoting Dalit girls' education could stand as the most striking factor. Importantly, there must be continuing and ongoing support as local situations change overtime, as does policy. Educational demand and supply also change overtime as technologies, and other inputs evolve. To transform society in a peaceful, healthy and prosperous manner, effective education development must remain dynamic and vibrant, addressing challenges to education of Dalit girls that are specific to the local context. This is indeed a significant contribution to the Dalit studies. The features studied were: Dalit girls' access to basic education, schooling

practices of Dalit girls, challenges related to Dalit girls' schooling and ways of mitigating them. Different school models have been developed in different times. All these models bear the importance for the present research.

Existing models for school effectiveness. As the main objective of the present study is to explore the schooling status of Terai Dalit girls as seen in the form of their change to education (in terms of context, input, process and outputs) mainly co-related with CIPP model, Scheeren's indicator model for meso level, 1989, Scheeren's integrated model of school effectiveness 1990, Ward and Helen's model of school effectiveness, known as world bank model, 1995, and Jaap Scheeren's context, input, process, output and outcome model(1989) of school effectiveness are some of the models considered to be suitable for this study.

Stufflebeam's CIPP model. At first, Daniel L. Stufflebeam developed CIPP model in 1971. It presents an overall evaluation based on the given definition that interrelates the evaluation and decision making concepts. Stufflebeam's approach to evaluation is widely known as the CIPP (Context, Input, Process and Product) model. This approach was described in a paper prepared for the Eleventh phi Delta kappa symposium on Educational Research to introduce the audience to the report of the phi Delta kappa study on evaluation entitled "Educational Evaluation and Decision Making". The concepts cover the definition of evaluation, decision setting, decision types and evaluation types. Basically the paper concludes presenting an overall evaluation model which is based on the given definition of evaluation, which interrelates the evaluation and decision making concepts.

Context evaluation. Context evaluation is the most basic kind of evaluation. The context evaluation aims to provide a rationale for determining objectives. It defines the relevant environment, describes the desired and actual conditions

pertaining to that environment. It makes one aware of the unfilled needs and unused opportunities, and tries to get treatment with these problems.

Input evaluation. The input evaluation in terms of CIPP model is to provide information to determine how to utilize the resources to achieve the program objectives. The research work is computed by identifying and assessing the adequate capabilities of the responsible agency, strategies to achieve program objectives and design for implementing a selected strategy. In essence, input evaluation provides information for deciding whether the outside assistance is to be brought to achieve the objectives- the strategy to be employed, and how to adopt the procedural plan for implementation of the chosen strategy.

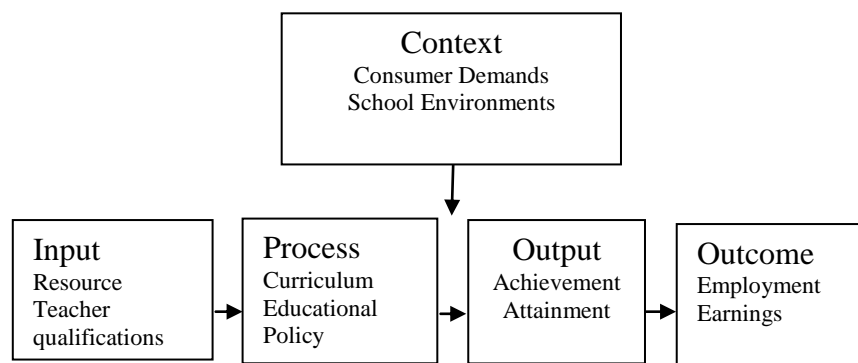
Process evaluation. After the approval of the designed course of action and when the implementation of the design has commenced, process evaluation is needed to provide feedback to those persons who are responsible for implementing the plans and procedures. Process evaluation detects or predicts about the defects in procedural design or the defects during the implementation stages, and it provide information about the programmed decisions and it maintains a record of the procedure that occurs. In nutshell, process evaluation supplies information to the programme decision makers about how to anticipate and overcome the procedural difficulties for making programs designs and interpreting program outcomes.

The output evaluation. The output evaluation is the fourth type of evaluation. It attempts to measure and interpret attainments as often as necessary during the program term, and not only at the final of the program cycle. In substance, output evaluation attempts to invest operational definition of objectives, to measure the criterion associated with the objectives of the activity, to compare the measurements with predetermined relative standards, and to make rational interpretations of the

outcomes using the recorded context, input and process information (Stufflebeam, 1971, cited in Hada 2007).

Other scholar Jaap Scheeren's followed this model. As this model has been very popular to evaluate the quality education system, the researcher has adopted this model as the main conceptual framework for this study. In order to build the conceptual framework of the study, several models were observed. Finally, the two models that appear to contribute to the study are briefly summarized below:

Scheeren's Indicator Model for Meso Level, 1989



Source: Scheeren's 1989 indicator model, cited in Hada, 2007.

Jaap Scheeren developed a model that indicated distinction between short-term outputs and long-term outcomes under the title: indicator model for the meso level, in 1989. The basis for indicator model is the theoretical assumption which has partly been corroborated in school effectiveness research, that each input, process and context indicator is positively related to the output indices.

Scheeren categorized this model into five parts such as context, input, process, output and outcome indicators. In the context part, Scheeren's included the variables such as consumer demands, school environment and educational policy, which are also included as reasonable factors in the present research. In 1971, Daneil L. Stufflebeam also developed this type of model, popularly known as CIPP model. In

this model, Stufflebeam introduced the variables such as unmet needs and unused opportunities in the context part which are still popular in the modern period. These variables are related to Scheeren's indicator model for the meso level.

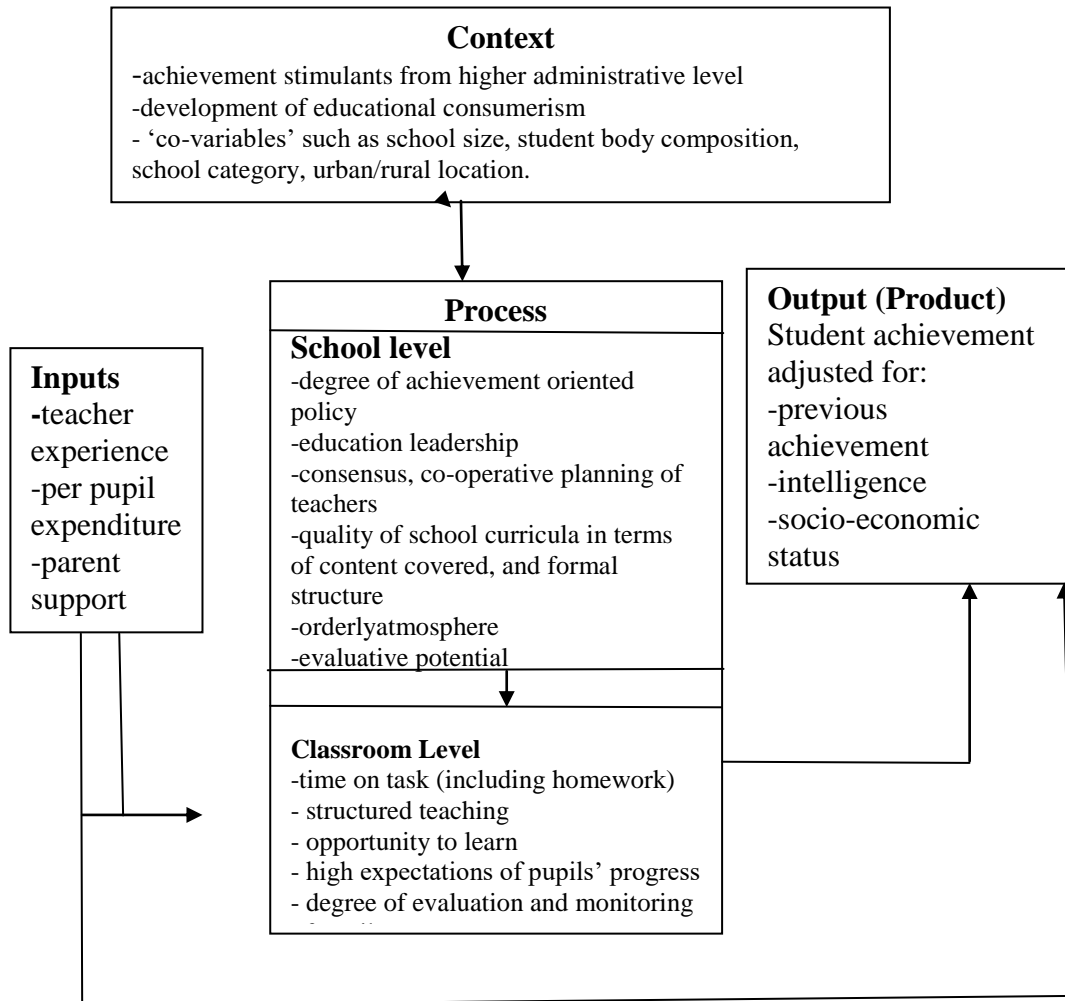
In the input, Scheeren has introduced the variables such as resources, and teacher qualification for the quality improvement of school, teacher qualification stands as an essential component. This is why the researcher has adopted this variable in the theoretical framework of the study.

The variables such as curriculum and school climate/organization are included in the process part. These variables enhance the teaching learning process and the researcher have also included this in his theoretical framework of the study.

Scheeren included the variables such as achievement and attainment in the output part; they bear significant meaning for the present research study, and therefore the researcher has used this variable in the study.

Lastly, in the outcome Scheeren included the variables such as employment and earnings which is also an indicator of schooling of Terai Dalit girls.

Scheeren's integrated model of school effectiveness, 1990. Jaap Scheeren developed and integrated the model of school effectiveness in 1990. He has divided the model into four parts: Context, Input, Process, Output. In short, this model is called CIPP model. This model is diagrammatically presented as follows:



Source: Adopted from Hada, 2007.

As the above model shows, in the context part, Scheerens has introduced variables such as achievement stimulants from higher administrative levels, development of educational consumerism and 'co-variables' such as school size, student body composition, school category, urban/rural location. The researcher has adopted the category part of the lowest caste (Dalit) and others caste education. In input, Scheeren has included the variables such as teacher's experience, per pupil expenditure and parents' support in his model. Among these variables of the input, parents support has been studied under the present research. Scheeren has divided process into two levels, one for school level and another for classroom level. In school

level, he introduced the variables such as degree of achievement oriented policy, educational leadership, consensus, co-operative, planning of teachers, quality of school curricula in terms of content covered and formal structure, in the process part orderly atmosphere and evaluative potential. Among these variables the researcher has introduced orderly atmosphere of the conceptual framework. Similarly, Scheeren determined time on task (including homework, structured teaching, opportunity to learn, high expectations of pupils' progress and reinforcement) as the major variables in the process at class room level. Among these variables high expectation of pupils' progress, which the researcher has introduced in his conceptual framework. Lastly, Scheeren stressed student achievement, previous achievement, intelligence and socio-economic status as the prime variables in the output. Among these variables the researcher has used socio-economic status in his conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study is guided by the flow and analysis of information that has taken into consideration the context, which is operative because of the community, school, home, or family background that may be either positive or negative to motivate or demotivate the Dalit girls to go to school and stay there for meaningful learning. Schooling of Dalit girls requires resources from the community, family and schools, which are converted into inputs that are necessary to keep the schooling practice intact. It is clear that in the absence of the required inputs, stay of the Dalit girls in the school cannot be prolonged to the desirable extent as they may demotivate them for the continuation of their schooling. Inadequate resources or their poor quality may distract the Dalit girls from making qualitative learning in the school. In the same way, pedagogic practice in the form of process has direct relation to the retention of

the Dalit girls in the school. If they find the practice of instruction quite distractive, their schooling may be affected. Therefore, pedagogic practice in this study is considered an important component of the framework. The out-put of this framework is the immediate result of the intervention made at the preliminary stage of schooling seen in the forms of enrollment, retention, primary cycle completion, dropout, promotion or repetition as a change in the status of Dalit girls. Thus, the conceptual frame of the study is drawn in line with the review of related literature and the themes derived from the objectives of the research. It is seen that the four components of the framework are interrelated with each other and at times may overlap due to their proximity in operation.

The flow chart, however, takes these components in a sequence, which is shown in the following figure:

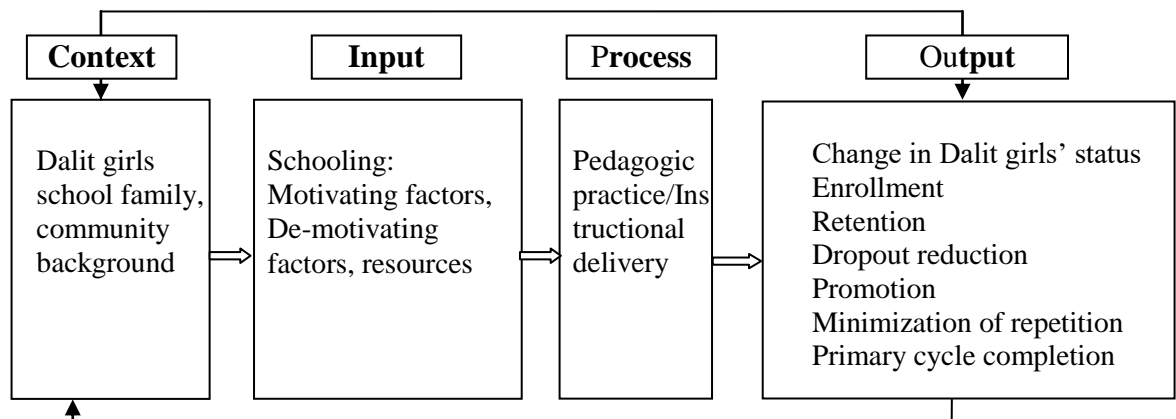


Figure 2.5: Flow Chart of the Conceptual Framework

Theoretically, the framework is very much guided by the sociological theories namely, Karl Marx's (1818-1883) oppositional classes and capitalism theory, Emile Durkheim's (1658-1917) structural and oppressed theory, Max Weber's (1864-1920) criticism of both structural and Marxist theory, Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory, Social inequality and schooling theory, Cultural continuity/ discontinuity

theory, Cultural conflict theory, Feminist theory, Educational equality theory, Jensen's biogenetic theory and development theory. These theories have interpreted inclusion- exclusion factors that lead to inclusion- exclusion of people from the mainstream practices such as schooling, socialization, conflict resolution or promotion, social justice, cultural assimilation or dissimilation, or development initiative.

The schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district is associated with a composite of factors as culture, economy, social relations and status, conflict and peace, familial situation, gender parity, casteism, and the inherent or explicit characteristics of social constructs that go a long way to make or mar the societal practices in favor of the downtrodden like the Terai Dalits, especially the girls who badly need proper education to raise themselves from the drudgery of traditionally exclusionary practices. The framework is therefore an outgrowth of both the theoretical references made in the earlier sections and the empirical evidences gathered from the related field.

CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

Methods and Procedures. This study was basically exploratory in nature in that it studied the schooling status of Terai Dalit girls as seen in the form of their access to basic education facilities. The researcher therefore has employed a number of techniques and procedural activities in order to study the schooling practices of these girls. This chapter briefly describes the research approach, research design, and research method along with philosophical paradigm, population and sample of the study, study instruments, data collection and analysis, and interpretation procedures and ethical considerations under the respective headings. Care has been taken to interpret the data qualitatively as well as quantitatively so that meaningful interpretation could be made regarding the schooling practices of the Dalit girls from the Terai region. What follows is a detailed presentation of the methods and procedures adopted by this research study.

Selecting Research Approach

A research approach is an assumption about the process of carrying out an investigation. The research approach is the plans and procedures for research that spans the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analyses, and interpretation. There are three main approaches of research i.e. quantitative approach, qualitative approach and mixed method approach (Creswell, 2019). Qualitative and quantitative approaches should not be viewed as rigid, distinct categories, polar opposites, or dichotomies. Instead, they represent different ends on a continuum (Newman & Benz, 1998). A study tends to be more qualitative than quantitative or vice-versa. Often the distinction between qualitative research and

quantitative research is framed in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative), or using open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions) rather than closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses). With this background, three main research approaches can be defined as follows:

Quantitative approach. This approach is the view of inquiry that emphasizes on examining the relationship between or among variables by means of experimental instruments (Creswell, 2014). It often translates into the use of statistical analysis to make the connection between what is known and what can be learned by research. Consequently, analyzing data with quantitative strategies requires an understanding of the relationships among variables by either descriptive or inferential statistics. True experimental, quasi-experimental and survey research are commonly used as research methodologies (Mertens, 2010) under quantitative approach.

Qualitative approach. It emphasizes on the exploration of meaning and conclusion by means of interpretation of the observation or experiences (Creswell, 2014). The principle is that a research problem or an issue is better understood so as to make its sense by contracting, comparing, replicating or by classifying its data resources (Mertens, 2010). Phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case study, and narrative are some common methodologies of qualitative approach.

Mixed method approach. It is a new view of inquiry that makes use of both quantitative and qualitative data so as to provide a more complete understanding of the issue raised by research problem (Creswell, 2014). The mixed method approach is a research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approach or method in a single study or a program of inquiry (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007).

The broad research approach is the plan to conduct research which involves the intersection of philosophy, research designs, and research methods. A framework that I used to explain the interaction of these three components is seen in figure 3.1. To reiterate, in planning a study, researchers need to think through the philosophical worldview assumptions that they bring to the study, the research design that is related to this worldview, and the specific methods or procedures of research that translate the approach into practice.

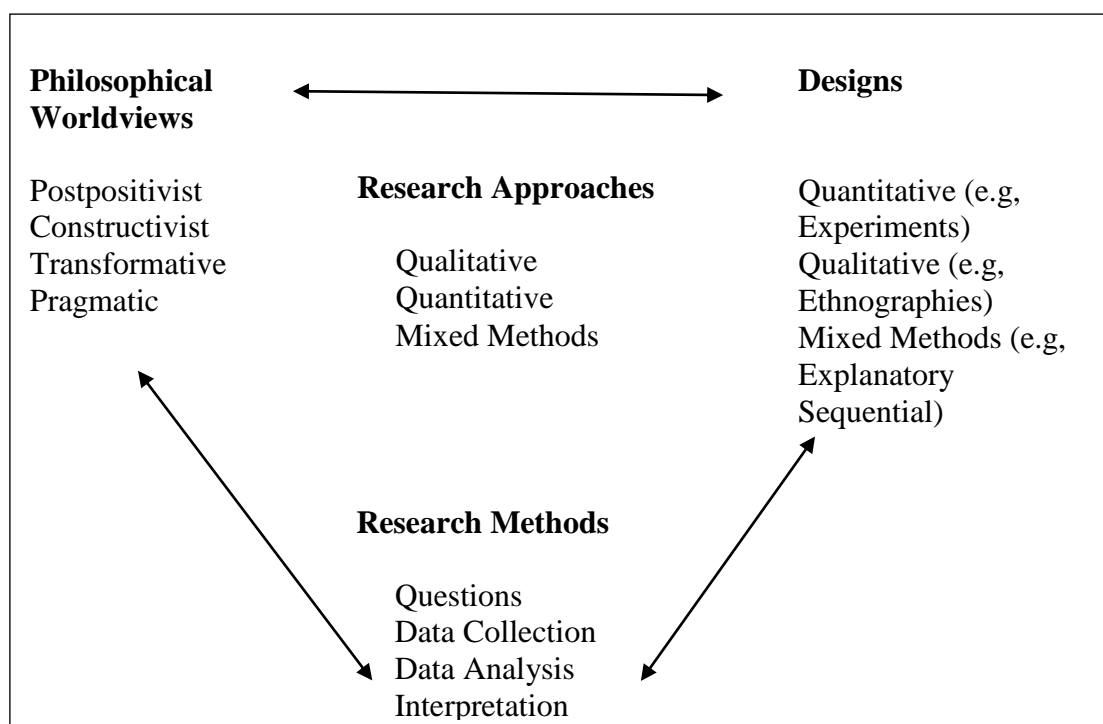


Figure 3.1. A Framework for Research Design, and Research Methods

Source: Adopted from Research Design (Creswell, 2019)

Philosophical paradigm of research. The first major element in the framework is the philosophical paradigm (worldviews) that involves different types of assumptions such as postpositivist, constructivist, transformative and pragmatic. I have chosen to use the term paradigm instead of worldview as meaning “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990 as cited in Creswell, 2019). Others have also called them paradigms (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). A philosophical paradigm

of the research is a set of practices of the philosophical viewpoints for the researchers to understand the complexities of human society. It is an approach of conducting a research. A philosophical paradigm of the research is 'the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed' (Kuhn, 1962). Research is the systematic inquiry of knowing or understanding the social subject matters that provides insights to social action and social transformation (Mertens, 2010). A systematic research is concerned with understanding the world, and that it is informed by how the researchers view the world (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005). This world view or 'the way of looking at the world' is research paradigm, and it is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct the thinking and action (Mertens, 2010). It is clear that research paradigm establishes a set of practices that direct the way the researchers do the things and the decisions they make to carry out a research study.

Philosophical paradigms of the research are the research frameworks that are derived from a belief system about the knowledge of the information. Defining philosophical paradigm of the research, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) wrote that a paradigm is a philosophical intent or motivation for undertaking a study. Similarly, Lincoln (2005) views that the paradigm is the net that contains the researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological premises. In educational research, the term paradigm is used to describe a researcher's 'worldview' (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). This worldview is the perspective, or thinking, or school of thought, or set of shared beliefs, that informs the meaning or interpretation of research data.

A paradigm is explained as a belief system that is helpful for the purpose of guiding the things as a set of practice. In this connection, research paradigm is a very

important aspect that should be properly defined for the effective research study. For the research study, the investigation is done by adopting the particular paradigm of inquiry. Paradigms are thus important because they provide beliefs and dictates, which are suitable for scholars in a particular discipline, influence what should be studied, how it should be studied, and how the results of the study should be interpreted. Creswell (2019) has organized paradigms into four categories. These four paradigms/ elements are listed with their major characteristics in table 3.1.

Table 3.1. *Categories of Paradigms*

<p>1. Postpositivism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination • Reductionism • Empirical observation and measurement • Theory verification 	<p>2. Constructivism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Multiple participant meanings • Social and historical construction • Theory generation
<p>3. Transformative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political • Power and Justice oriented • Collaborative • Change-oriented 	<p>4. Pragmatism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequences of actions • Problem-centered • Pluralistic • Real-world practice oriented

Source: Adopted from Creswell, (2019)

Research philosophy is concerned with nature of reality i.e. ontology, the way of knowing the reality, epistemology and the method through which the reality could be known (Creswell, 2009). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a research paradigm, a set of belief system, is based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. ' Ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions, which, in turn, give rise to methodological considerations, and these, in turn, give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection' (Hitchcock and

Hughes, 1995). Guba and Lincoln (2005) categorized research philosophy into four basic belief systems.

Similarly, Mertens, (2010) views that the educational and psychological research studies can be categorized into four types of major research paradigms such as post-positivism, constructivist, critical, and pragmatism. Among them, this study adopted constructivist paradigm because emphasis is placed on understanding the individuals and their interpretation of the world around them.

Therefore, guided by the constructivist paradigm and the nature of the research question, my standpoint for choosing research approach is qualitative approach. It was because of words instead of numbers, open-ended questions instead of close-ended questions, listening carefully to what participants say, and qualitative studies instead of quantitative experiments that this study on Schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal was carried out. In this connection, the constructivist assumption (paradigm) has been explained below.

The interpretivist paradigm/constructivist paradigm. Constructivism or social constructivism (often combined with interpretivism) is such a perspective, and it is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research. The central effort of the interpretivist paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This approach makes an effort to ‘get into the head of the subjects being studied’ so to speak, and to understand and interpret what the subject is thinking or the meaning s/he is making of the context. Every effort is made to try to understand the viewpoint of the subject being observed, rather than the viewpoint of the observer. Emphasis is placed on understanding the individuals and their interpretation of the world around them. Hence, the key tenet of the interpretivist paradigm is that reality is socially constructed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). It rejects the

view of objective reality that can be known (Mertens, 2010). Social constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live or work (Creswell, 2019). This paradigm thus focuses on multiple realities, multiple meanings, and interpretations.

Based on above research philosophy, it is seen that none of the methods is superior to another. The best research method depends upon the researcher's perspective and the nature of the study. Among some well-known philosophical worldviews in the educational research such as post-positivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatism, the research paradigm that guided me in this study was 'constructivism'. It grew out of Edmund Husserl's philosophy of phenomenology, and Wilhelm Dilthey's philosophy of hermeneutics (Bernard, 2006). Phenomenology emphasizes describing the world in words reflecting consciousness and perception rather than in numbers whereas hermeneutics stresses discovering meaning through constant interpretation and reinterpretation. Constructivists believe that individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences in the world, and therefore, their understanding and interpretation of meaning are varied and multiple (Creswell, 2014).

Constructivism is an approach to qualitative research that is characterized by certain assumptions. The constructivist's axiological assumption is that there should be a good understanding and relationship between the researcher and researched as an ethical practice of qualitative research. For this, the qualitative researchers should give priority for rigor as trustworthiness and authenticity including balance and fairness (Mertens, 2010). Similarly, the constructivist's ontological assumption is that reality is not absolute but it is socially constructed.

The constructivist's epistemology is that knowledge consists of those constructions about which there is relative consensus. The researcher and the subject

of investigation are assumed to be linked so that the findings are literally created as research process. Likewise, the constructivist's methodological assumption is hermeneutical (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Individual construction can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among the researcher and respondents.

A researcher can use any method for solving his/her problems or unraveling the answer of research question. Then, the question arises: how does a researcher select a research paradigm? In this study, I raised the following questions prior to determine the research paradigm.

- a. What is the educational status of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district?
- b. How did parental support encourage Dalit girls to schooling?
- c. How to understand the underlying causes and nature of Dalit caste-based discrimination and untouchability in school and society?
- d. How to remove the existing challenges of Dalit girls to schooling?

Being based on the above questions, I have formulated the research questions of this study pertaining to subjective / naturalistic phenomena. In addition, individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences in the world, and therefore, their understanding and interpretation of meaning were explored from multiple perspectives as stated in Creswell (2014). Besides, the aim of the qualitative research is to find out answer to the question 'how' and 'why do people think and behave' in a particular way (Ambert, Adler, & Detzenr, 1995). Therefore, I have selected constructivist paradigm as qualitative research philosophy to this study and as an approach to explore the schooling status of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district as seen in the form of their basic education. The primary goal of research in constructivism depends on the participants' views of the situation. Therefore, I have conducted this study in the 'field' where the participants live and work in order to

gain their understanding and saying (Creswell, 2014). Similarly, constructivism is an approach to qualitative research that is characterized by certain assumptions, which are presented below.

Axiological approach. It is the branch of philosophy that deals with the questions related to value, aesthetic value or ethical value (Collins & O'Brien, 2003).

Ontological approach. It is the branch of philosophy that studies being and existence and attempts to explain systematically what there is and what there is not (Collins & O'Brien, 2003). It studies the nature of reality. Guided by the constructivist paradigm, my ontological stand point in this study was that there is no objective reality. The social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of those social actors concerned with their existence. Ontology is concerned with the nature of being and the interaction between social structures and individuals. In this connection, Bryman (2001) distinguishes between ontological positions i.e. objectivism and constructionism. Objectivism in general asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors (Bryman, 2001). In this approach, structures within the society are objective entities that are not influenced by humans or other social factors. It seeks to explain situation and is closely linked to positivism. In contrast, a constructionist believes that humans have an active role in constructing social norms, values, realities and social structures. Therefore, social phenomenon is in a constant state of flux as people and their society changes (Bryman, 2001). Thus, constructivism is closely linked to interpretative approaches.

It is believed that realities are inseparable in life-world. The nature of the human beings is that they are active in the construction of knowledge in their social settings. Therefore, there are multiple realities socially constructed and apprehended

by multiple mental construction. Similarly, it is believed that human beings can and do influence the social world and, therefore, take a constructivist ontological view point. The idea of schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal is created by school, community or society and the parents within society, and it has changed over time. Similarly, it is argued that the concept of basic education of Dalit girls has a meaning that is connected to people and a whole society rather than having an object that is not influenced by people. The school for example, has undergone a variety of changes in the last fifth decades and its existing functions and role along with the perceptions about a school may be quite different from those of 70 years ago. In addition, knowledge is tied to cultural, political, social, economic conditions of the society and the philosophical assumption (NFEC, 2007 as cited in Dahal, 2021).

Epistemological approach. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that is defined as the study of knowledge. It is the study of the nature of knowledge and the relation between the knower and would be known (Mertens, 2010). It explains how we know what we know or believe in and attempts to establish the criteria that are essential to prove validity and truth (Collins & O'Brein, 2003).

Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know (Trochim, 2000). It is concerned with what can be observed as acceptable knowledge and 'a theory of knowledge with specific reference to the limits and validity of knowledge' (Cope, 2002). It assists to answer the questions of 'how do I know what is true?'. It focuses on looking at how individuals understand the world around them. It consists of basically three positions i.e. positivism, realism and constructivism. (Cope, 2002). Also, it is intimately related to ontology and methodology. It is believed that knowledge is softer, subjective and depends on experience and insight of a person. That is to say, knowledge is perceived as created in the mind of the individual. Hence,

the subjective stance was adopted in this study ‘that seeks knowledge as something created through interaction between the world and the individual’ (Richards, 2003).

Interaction makes an individual experienced, trained and practical.

My epistemological ground in this study was not objectivity but conformity as the principal nature of knowledge. Data interpretation and outcomes are rooted in contexts and the persons. Therefore, it is thought that level of experience differs from person to person. It means schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in this research, of course, differs from respondent to respondent depending on their phenomena. Similarly, the individual has his/her own preferences and priorities. Therefore, each of the respondents (head teachers, teachers, parents and students) of basic school at grade six, seven and eight also have their own understanding and meaning about schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal.

In this research, my responsibility was to integrate all knowledge (information) into one approach in regards to schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district. Hence, this research employed qualitative approach to explore schooling practices. As this research was conducted with the constructivist approach, I believe that the social world and the present study are not fundamentally the same. Furthermore, I did not consider there to be single truth and believe with multiple realities. Therefore, instead of the application of positive and realistic approach, I considered the constructivist approach to be the best approach to find out the realities of schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district. Because, considering the changing contexts and situations, the social world can be examined through a variety of methods that seek to understand the existing reality of schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district and the schools and parent-teacher relationship within it. The

research was framed within interpretive approach and at the same time, I considered that generalizations are possible within broad categories.

Concerning methodology, my priority was on multiple data collection strategies such as document review, FGD, interview. I believe that social construction of reality in this research can be conducted only through interaction between and among researcher and head teachers, teachers, parents and students. Considering these circumstances, I have carefully chosen qualitative research method to obtain knowledge regarding schooling of Terai Dalit girls in Danusha district.

Methodological approach. It is the branch of philosophy that deals with the question how the knower can go about obtaining the knowledge (Mertens, 2010). It is the general research strategy that outlines the way in which research is to be undertaken and among the things, identifies the methods to be used in it. It explains the designs and instruments of the research procedures of finding out or achieving goals. Therefore, research philosophy guides the research by helping the researcher to adopt pertinent research methods (Dooley, 2007). Hence, method selection for research is very important and requires much thinking on the part of researcher.

Research design. The second major element in the framework is the research design that involves quantitative, qualitative and mixed method research designs. A research work is a systematic activity of searching and investigating about a subject. A systematic inquiry requires a certain design or pattern of the activities involved. A research design is blueprint that shows how the elements of the research are coordinated to answer the research questions of the study. According to Yin (2003), a research design is the logic that links the data to be collected to the initial questions of study. There must be a plan by which specific activities of the research can be conducted and brought to successful end.

Research design is procedures for collecting, analyzing and reporting research in quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). Research design is also called strategy of inquiry, under an approach that provides specific direction or procedures for carrying out the research (Creswell, 2014). Similarly, research design is a type of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches that provide specific direction for procedures. Others have called them strategies of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Also, a research design is governed by the notion of fitness of purpose (Manion & Morrison, 2005). Therefore, there is not a single research design for conducting research. Creswell (2019) discusses three types of research design i.e. quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method research design. Among these designs, this study has adopted qualitative research design which is presented below.

Qualitative research design. It is derived from the qualitative approach of research that reflects the constructivist philosophical assumptions. The main principle of qualitative research design is that it relies on text or image data from which the researcher draws the inferences by analyzing ever-expanding data sources. Creswell, (2014), Hatch (2002), and Marshall and Rossman (2011) highlighted the main characteristics of qualitative research design as: (i) natural setting, (ii) researcher as key instrument, (iii) multiple source of data, (iv) inductive and deductive data analysis, (v) participant's meaning, (vi) emergent design, (vii) reflexivity, and (viii) holistic account.

Qualitative research design is influenced by the philosophy of anthropology, sociology, humanities and evaluation. The research procedures followed under these philosophies are interview, FGD, school data collection form, document review and observation which are the main bases for interpretation of meaning of qualitative

research design. For interpretation, inductive logic is used in (i) data analysis and collection of information, (ii) analysis of data, and (iii) generalization and interpretation.

Creswell (2014) has discussed five main designs of inquiry under qualitative research design such as (i) narrative research, (ii) phenomenological research, (iii) grounded theory, (iv) ethnography, and (v) case study.

Based on the above reflection, this study aims at presenting the description of the lived experiences of individuals to explore the issue of schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal i.e. Dalit girls' access to basic education, determinants of Dalit girls' access to basic education, schooling practices, challenges of schooling and implications for the policy makers. For studying these issues, I have chosen qualitative research design as the strategy/design of inquiry. There are three conditions for the selection of qualitative research design i.e. (i) many educational and psychological programs are based on humanistic values, (ii) there are no acceptable valid reliable appropriate quantitative measures for studying an event or program, and (iii) qualitative methods can add a depth to quantitative study that can give a complete picture of the phenomena under study (Patton, 2002; Mertens, 2010). I believed the above concept for which my choice met all these conditions and therefore, I selected qualitative research design for this study.

This study has adopted qualitative research design with supplemental quantitative research approach. There are a number of circumstances in which researchers can investigate different aspects of the same problem using the elements of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative and quantitative approach adopted in this study is thus termed as both qualitative and quantitative

research design (Creswell, 2005; Mertens, 2005; Punch, 2005 as cited in Drew, Hardmann and HOSP, 2008).

According to Creswell (2011), the researcher has access to both qualitative and quantitative data and both types of data, together, provide a better understanding of the research problem than either type of data in absence of the other. This research is a good design to use if the researcher seeks to build on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data yields specific numbers that can be statistically analyzed, can produce results and can provide useful information. However, qualitative data, such as unstructured interviews that provide actual words of people in the study, offer many different perspectives on the study topic and provide a complex picture of the situation (Creswell, 2011).

Basically, this study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection. As quantitative data, the researcher collected data on Dalit girls' enrollment flow, physical facilities, instructional materials (school level information) through school profile form. As qualitative data, the researcher had information on Dalit girls' situation and the perceptions of different stakeholders of school through interviews and focus group discussion (FGD).

Research method. The third major element in the framework is the specific research methods that involve the forms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation that the researcher has proposed for his study. Bryman (2004) states that qualitative research normally emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Although the processes are similar, qualitative methods rely on text and image data have unique steps in data analysis and draw on diverse designs.

Qualitative research strategy is characterized as inductive. McMillan and Schumacher (1993) defined qualitative research as 'primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying relationships among categories'. It implies that information and meaning emerge naturally from the research context or natural settings. Saunders *et al.* (2007) state that inductive approach involves the development of a theory as a result of the observations of empirical data. It is an inductive process of building from the data to broad themes to a generalized model or theory (Punch,2005). The logic of this inductive approach is shown in figure 3.2. In inductive approach the researcher begins his/ her study by gathering information from participants and then forms this information into categories or themes. These themes are then developed into broad patterns, theories, or generalizations. Finally, it is compared with personal experiences or with the existing literature related to the topic. Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to “Pattern theories” as explanations that develop during naturalistic or qualitative research. Therefore, it is common to conclude that inductive approach in qualitative research strategies are related to theory generation.

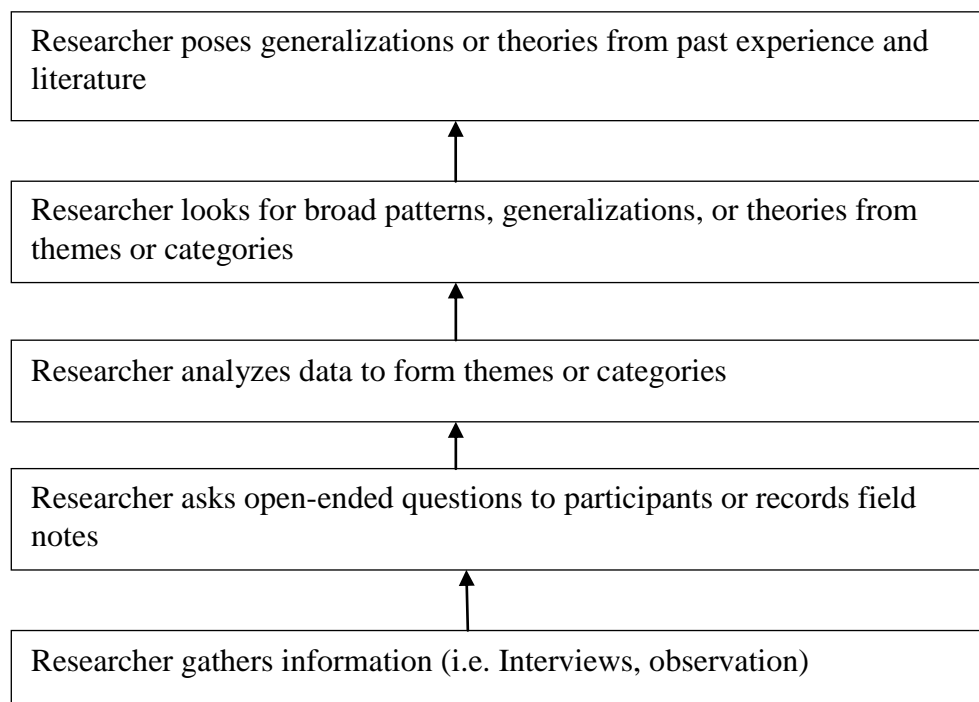


Figure 3.2. The Inductive Logic of Research

Source: Adopted from Creswell, (2014)

Creswell (2012) points out the following major characteristics of the qualitative research approach process: exploring a problem and developing a detail understanding of a central phenomenon; having the literature review play a minor role but justify the problem; stating the purpose and research questions in a general and broad way show as to the participants' experiences; collecting data based on words from a small number of individuals show that the participants' views are obtained; analyzing the data for description and themes using text analysis and interpreting the larger meaning of the findings; writing the report using flexible, emerging structure and evaluative criteria, and including the researchers' subjective reflexivity and bias.

Qualitative research relies more on the views of participants in the study and less on the direction identified in the literature by the researcher (Creswell, 2014). Researcher collected data on an instrument or test (e.g., a set of questions about attitudes) or gather information on a behavior of individuals. On the other end of the continuum, collecting data might involve visiting a research site and conducting an interview in which the individual is allowed to talk openly about a topic, largely without the use of specific questions (Creswell, 2014). The type of data analyzed may be numeric information gathered on instruments or text information recording and reporting the voice of the participants. Researcher makes interpretation of the statistical results or he interprets the themes or patterns that emerge from the data (Creswell, 2019).

Qualitative approach was employed to obtain detail explanation of the issue of schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in the context of Nepalis school education. In fact, qualitative approach to research is for inquiring and understanding the meaning to social events, activities and human problems. It studies the contexts and settings of the participants in collaboration by using open-ended questions, text,

and image data. In addition, it uses collected data interpretation technique by analyzing their themes and patterns. Qualitative approach is appropriate to achieve understanding of a particular issue such as schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal, and to generate a new theory giving detailed narratives.

For this study, qualitative approach was thought to be a suitable method to explore schooling of Terai Dalit Girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal. The available literature might yield little information about the lower access of Dalit girls to basic education or less participation of Dalit girls in schooling practices and, therefore, it was considered important to learn more from research participants such as head teachers, teachers, students and parents through exploration. A central phenomenon is the key concept, idea, or process studied in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Hence, schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal was considered central phenomenon of this research which requires both an exploration and understanding because the researcher needs to know better how to increase Dalit girls' access to basic education, their schooling practices as well as complexity of their parental support in education.

Population and Sample of the Study

The basic level schools of Terai region were treated as the study population. However, four basic level schools of the then Janakpur municipality were purposively chosen as sample schools for the study.

A population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristics. For example, all teachers would make up the population of teachers, and all high school administrators in a school district would comprise the population of administrators. As these examples illustrate, population can be small or large. The researcher can decide what group he would like to study.

In practice, quantitative researchers sample from lists and the people available. A target population is a group of individuals with some common characteristics that the researcher can identify and study. Within this target population, researchers then select a sample for study. A sample is a sub-group of the target population that researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population. In an ideal situation, the researcher can select a sample of individuals who are representative of the entire population (Creswell, 2011).

In the same way, population can also be defined as all or everything within a clearly described group of people, events or objects constituting the focus of a research study. Population may be quite large or they may be fairly small.

Population of the study. Regardless of the techniques to be used in selecting a sample, the first step in sampling is the definition of population. Gay (1992) stated that a population is the group to which a researcher would like the result of study to be generalizable. In addition, Gay stated that a defined population has at least one characteristic that differentiates it from other group. For example, the number of Dalits in Nepal is 3,593,825, which is 13.56 percent of the national population (26,494,504) (CBS, 2011). Similarly, the number of the Dalits in Terai according to the census 2011 is 1,442,199 which is 5.44 percent of the national population. So far, Dalit population of Dhanusha district was 120,902 which is 16.01 percent of the total population of Dhanusha (754,777). It has 6344 Dalit students, among whom 3237 are girls and 3107 boys. If we go beyond Janakpur municipality, their population is 74,192, and among them 3010 children are studying at basic level (1592 girls, 1418 boys). The sample schools' Dalit population is 1483 (750 girls and 733 boys). In this scenario, the research population includes all (1 to 8) Dalit students of Dhanusha

district. To be particular, all the Dalit girls of basic school age group (5 to 12 year) of Dhanusha district were treated as the population of this study.

Selection of the sample. As both quantitative and qualitative research methods were adopted in this study, selection of sample was based on purposive sampling technique. In purposive sampling, researchers intentionally select the samples (individuals and sites) to understand the central phenomenon. The standard used in choosing participants and sites is whether they are “information rich” (Patton, 1990). Thus, purposive sampling was applied to both individuals and sites. The literature identifies several qualitative sampling strategies (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990) as maximal variation sampling, critical sampling, extreme case sampling, homogeneous sampling, and typical sampling and so on. To meet the specific purpose of the study, purposive sampling technique was used to select the desired and the specific sample of the Dalit girls.

The selection of sample site was based on a number of factors as the population of the targeted groups, location of the study site, familiarity with the study site and the density of the intended population i.e. the Dalit population. The Terai region consists of 21 districts (CBS, 2011) and out of these, Dhanusha was selected as the research site for the study due to its characteristic features as mentioned above. Selection of sample schools was based on purposeful sampling technique. On the basis of population size of Dalit girls studying in schools, four schools of the then Janakpur municipality were chosen as the sample schools. From the four sample schools, four head teachers, eight teachers, 48 Dalit girls and their parents (48) were selected as the participants for the interview.

Selection of the district. Geographically, Nepal can be divided into three regions: The Terai region, the hilly region and the Himalayan (mountain) region. The

Terai region consists of 21 districts. Out of them, Saptari is the largest district in terms of Dalit population followed by Siraha and Dhanusha. Dhanusha was selected as the third largest district in terms of Dalit population because of the accessibility and familiarity of the study site, concentration of the targeted population and the presence of nearly all categories of the Dalit population in the district. The total population of Dalits in Dhanusha district is 120,902 which is 16.01 percentage of the total population of the district (754,777) (CBS, 2011).

Selection of the schools. There are 338 community schools in Dhanusha district, and out of them 282 are basic level (1-8) schools. There are 101 village development committees (VDCs), now called municipalities, and one municipality (sub-metropolitan) in Dhanusha district. The population of Dalit is scattered all over the district. However, the researcher found the concentration of Dalit students in certain community schools of the then Janakpur municipality according to the documents available from District development community (DDC), Dhanusha district education office and department of education. There are 22 community schools in this municipality with Dalit students. Based on the study of the available documents regarding the number of Dalit girls and boys studying in the schools, the researcher thus found four schools out of 22 with more than 100 Dalit students in grades 1 to 8. As the study focuses on Dalit girls, the four basic level schools (namely secondary school, Sohani-Mujelia, secondary school, Kuwarampur, Saraswati model secondary school, Janakpur and Janta secondary school, Belahi-Rajaul) of the then Janakpur municipality were selected as the sample schools for the study.

The selected four sample schools were found to have the following number of Dalit students in terms of their caste and gender (girls and boys). Table 3.2 shows number of castewise Dalit students in the sample schools at basic level (For details, see Appendices- P.347).

Selection of students. As the researcher selected four different schools of the then Janakpur municipality depending upon the concentration of the Dalit students, the number of Dalit student dominant schools was only four. The number of Dalit students studying in these four schools was 107, 144, 163 and 219 respectively belonging to different Dalit castes and genders. The main different castes from Dalit community were Dom, Dushadh, Musahar, Chamar, Tatma, Khatwe, Dhobi, and Halkhorand therefore, their number was high in these schools. On the basis of gender, the total number of Dalit girls was 119 and Dalit boys 100 as sample of the study. Dalit girls from grade 8 and 7 were randomly selected as they were the eldest at the basic level, mature, self-confident and interactive to express their views. The researcher selected 6 Dalit girl students from grade 8 and 6 Dalit girl students from grade 7 separately from each sample school. Thus, 12 Dalit girl students were selected as participants from each sample school. In total, 48 Dalit girl students were selected as participants from four sample schools.

Selection of teachers. All four head teachers from the four sample schools were selected as the key participants for the study. The main criteria for selecting two teachers each from four sample schools were priority given to Dalit female teachers, and the teacher teaching at basic level (6-8). Thus, eight teachers were selected from four sample schools. Therefore, out of 12 teaching force, four head teachers and eight teachers from class 7 and 8, were selected as the key participants from the four sample schools.

Selection of parents. The parents were selected from those Dalit girl students of grade 8 and 7 who were the sample of the study. Thus, the researcher selected 6 each Dalit girls' parents of grade 8 and 7 from each sample school. Thus 12 Dalit girls' parents were selected as the key participants from each sample school. In total 48, Dalit girls' parents were selected as the other key participants from the sample schools.

All together, 108 participants such as four head teachers, eight teachers, 48 Dalit girl students and 48 parents of Dalit girls were selected from four sample schools. This is shown in table 3.3.

Table 3.3. *Distribution of Participants by Number*

Sample schools	Participants				Total
	teachers	Teachers	Students	Parents	
Secondary school Sohani-Mujelia	1	2	12	12	27
Secondary school Kuwa- Rampur	1	2	12	12	27
Saraswati sec. sch. Janakpur	1	2	12	12	27
Janata Sec. Sch. Behali – Rajual	1	2	12	12	27
Grand Total	4	8	48	48	108

Source: Field survey date, 2013

As the table indicates, a total of 108 participants (twenty-seven participants each from four schools) were selected for the study.

Study Instruments

Both qualitative and quantitative data and information were collected by using various types of instruments reflecting the tone of the objectives of the study. The researcher developed interview guidelines, focus group discussion (FGD) guidelines, and school profile form as the instruments. Reviewing documents was the other technique used for the study based on the research questions and the objectives of the study. The interview guidelines for the concerned participants namely head teachers and teachers were administered separately. Focus group discussion guidelines were used for collecting shared understanding of Dalit girls and their parents. School profile forms were used for gathering background information and various numerical data related to school.

Before proceeding to actual data collection from sample schools, these instruments were pre-tested in Paudeswar school of the study district, Dhanusha, which was not the sample school but with Dalit girls studying in the school. By incorporating the reflection of this field test, the study instruments were finalized for their wider application. The instruments tested in this way were prepared in consultation with the research supervisor. The supervisor provided his feedback and suggestions to the instruments which were incorporated together with the field feedback before their actual field administration. The list of study instruments used for collecting the field data is shown in table 3.4

Table 3.4. *List of Study Instruments*

Type of Information needed	Information source	Study instruments
Opinion of head teachers on schooling practices, educational policy and school environment, school initiatives for increasing girls, student enrollment and management of school system	Head teachers	Interview schedule
Opinion of teachers on schooling practices, education qualification and experience, and teaching - learning process	Teachers	Interview schedule
Opinion of students on school, parental support, teacher behavior (treatment), order and discipline, and teaching and learning process	Students	Focus group discussion guidelines
Background information, parents opinion on children's study, parental expectations and support, and parental status	Parents	Focus group discussion guidelines
Background data on school including the data on student's flow, physical facilities, instructional materials and school environment	School	School profile form
Characteristics of the school including establishment, location, type, no. of students and teachers, contribution of community and other organizations and observations of the surroundings	School	School profile form

Source: Field survey date, 2013

A brief description of each study instrument, as used in the study field, is presented below.

Interview guidelines. As a researcher, I used interview instruments to collect the field data. More than simply a collection of participants' view, these interviews involved a "joint production of 'accounts' or 'versions' of experiences, emotions, identities, knowledge, opinions, truths, (Rapley, 2004; as cited in Paudel, 2007). The nature of the interviews, used in this study, was 'non-directive', 'unstructured', 'non-standardized' and 'structured' (Davies, 1999). "The purpose of interview is to find out what is in or on someone else's mind. The purpose of structured interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind but to access the perspective of the person being interviewed (Patton, 1990 as cited in Creswell, 2011)". In conducting interview, it is important to keep this quote from Patton in mind. Interview data can easily become biased and misleading if the person interviewed is aware of the perspective of the interviewer. The researcher used interview guidelines to collect the information from the head teachers and teachers as the participants.

Interview guidelines for the head teachers. The interview guidelines were developed in order to solicit information, opinions, feelings and experiences of head teachers on different aspects of schooling of Dalit girls in Dhanusha. The interview guidelines sought information related to Dalit girls' behavioral change, enrollment trend at basic level, causes of not attending school, issues and challenges for un-schooling the Dalit girls, parental as well as community support and school environment. The interview guidelines are presented in Appendix 1A- P.356. The interview was taken with the four head teachers individually by using the interview guideline. The researcher conducted all the interviews without any language barrier between the participants and the researcher as they could speak both Nepali language

as well as their first language, Maithili. The researcher could understand and speak their first language Maithili, fluently, because the researcher's first language is also Maithili. The head teachers were asked about their opinion /feeling on the situation of Dalit girls' schooling, school supporting environment, their scholarship scheme and other incentive program along with their performance in school. Most interview questions were semi-structured, and the researcher did not try to limit their answer.

Such flexibility demanded sufficient time and patience that the researcher had tried to maintain by giving more than one session to the same interview. The researcher set the time, place and date after consultation with the head teachers. The time and place (school) was set in such a way that the participants would be able to express their views without any hesitation and in a relaxed way. The rules for 'how to do' interviews were generally irrelevant because of the situational encountering nature of unstructured interviews (Brewer, 2000). The researcher tried to allow the research participants to express their voices freely, with less control by him as the researcher (Brewer, 2000; Denzin, 1989). In other words, the research participants were encouraged to answer in their 'own terms' (May, 1993, cited in Pole and Morrison, 2003). As a result, such interviews provided context bound and situational data (Brewer, 2000) and thereby produced contextual and situational knowledge. However, the researcher tried to conduct interviews within a "big theme or issue" (Wolcott, 1995) of inclusion and exclusion that helped to concentrate the interviews on the research questions.

Interview guidelines for teachers. An interview schedule was used for soliciting opinions and feelings of the teachers on different aspects of schooling practices of Dalit girls in Dhanusha. The interview schedule was related to Dalit girls' behavior (in school), teachers' and students' -participation in classroom

activities, causes of Dalit girls not attending school, issues and challenges of schooling and opportunity provided to them. The interview guidelines are presented in Appendix 1B- P.359.

The interview was taken with eight teachers of the sample schools individually. The teachers were asked about their opinion and feeling on teaching-learning process along with the expectations of the Dalit girls. The interview questions were unstructured and were conducted entirely by the researcher himself. The researcher applied almost all the techniques and rules of conducting interviews guidelines with these teachers as described in the interview with the head teachers.

Focus group discussion guidelines. There are a number of approaches to interviewing and using structured questions for collecting information. The interview approach to be used depends on the accessibility of individuals, the cost and the amount of time available. Considering this, the researcher used focus group (interview) discussion in this study. Focus group discussion can be used to collect shared understanding from several individuals as well as to get views from specific people. A focus group (interview) discussion is the process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people, typically four to six. The researcher asked a small number of general questions and elicited responses from all individuals in the group. Focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees would yield the best information and when interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other. They are also useful when the time to collect information is limited and individuals are hesitating to provide information.

While conducting a focus group (interview) discussion, all participants should be encouraged to talk and take their turns for talking. A focus group can be challenging for the interviewer who lacks control over the interview discussion.

Another problem while conducting focus group discussion is that researcher often has difficulty in taking notes because so much is occurring (Creswell, 2011). A brief description of the FGD guidelines prepared for students and parents is given below.

Focus group discussion guidelines for parents. The FGD guidelines were developed in order to collect shared understanding and views from parents on different aspects of schooling of Terai Dalit girls in Dhanusha. The FGDs guidelines for parents were related to their background information, central theme of the study i. e. schooling practices, parental expectations and parents' participation in school activities. The FGD guidelines for parents are presented in Appendix 1C- P.360.

The researcher conducted focus group interviews with parents on the issues of Dalit girls' schooling in Dhanusha. Six parents each were selected for group discussion in the focus group. General and broad questions using FGD guidelines were asked and the responses were recorded simultaneously. The focus group discussion lasted for two and half hours and the researcher took notes during discussion. As the groups were small, the researcher did not have difficulty in taking notes and identifying individual voices. At the beginning of the interviews (discussions), each parent said their first name and qualification.

Focus group discussion guidelines for students. Focus group discussion guidelines were developed in order to collect shared understanding and views from students on different aspects of schooling of Dalit girls. The FGD guidelines were related to the supporting factors for attending school, satisfaction from schooling, expectation from school, extent of parental support, school environment, measures for increasing the participation of Dalit girls in school activities, and issues and challenges in funding girls' education. The FGD guidelines for students are presented in Appendix 1D- P.363.

The researcher conducted eight focus group discussion with students on Dalit girls' schooling practices in Dhanusha. Six students were selected for each focus group discussion. Questions were asked using FGD guidelines and responses were then collected simultaneously. The FGD lasted one and half hour and the researcher took notes during the discussion. Because the groups were small, the researcher did not have difficulty in taking notes and identifying individual's voices. At the beginning of the focus group discussion, each student said his/her first name and grade.

School profile form. The school profile form was developed to collect background data of sample schools that included information mainly on students and teachers in relation to the schooling of Dalit girls, physical facilities of the schools and the measures taken for bringing out of school Dalit girls to school. The form was also used to draw information about literacy situation and source of income of the parents (family). The school profile form was divided into four sections based on the areas (contents) mentioned in the profile of the school.

Profile of the school. This section generated information on the name, date of establishment, the type (level) of school including the list of the head teachers with training and teaching experience.

Student related information. This section generated information on the number of students enrolled by grade at Basic level, the number of Dalit students enrolled by grade and age group (5-12), the number of Dalit students by caste and their rate of promotion, repetition and dropout.

Teacher related information. This section generated information on the total number of teachers by gender at basic level, the number of Dalit and Janjati teachers

by sex/gender and the percentage of Dalit and Janjati teachers in the total teaching staff by level. The school survey form has been presented in Appendix IE- P.365.

Reviewing Documents

In addition to the above instruments used for the study, the researcher reviewed a number of documents collected from various sources. A thorough review of the related documents, research reports, and reference materials, different publications from the government offices and authorized agencies / organizations, published magazines, studies, available international, regional and national related literatures worked as the secondary source of information for the study.

An extensive review of documents related to Dalit girls and practices of caste hierarchies, educational exclusion of Dalits and their schooling practices has been made. Also, the reviewed documents provided a basis for developing a framework for analyzing the theme of the study.

Similarly, various research reports and reports of different agencies such as census report, 2011, flash reports of DoE, UNESCO, UNDP, DFID, NPC, NDC, World Bank, the international institute for educational planning (IIEP), the United states agency for international development (USAID), the international development research center (IDRC) and research center for educational innovation and development (CERID) also served as the source for similar kind of data. Unpublished doctoral and master's dissertations also served as a significant source of information on Dalit girls' schooling policies and practices. After a preliminary study of certain prominent articles, reports and documents, a broad outline for the review was prepared for the dissertation report and the review was carried out accordingly.

Similarly, the researcher made an extensive use of resources of central library, TU, national library, Pulchowk, the national center for educational development (NCED) library, Keshar library, Kesharmahal and the library of research center for educational innovation and development (CERID), TU.

Data Collection Procedures

A number of factors made data collection a challenging task. Firstly, schools had not kept data in a systematic way. Secondly, the researcher had to visit every sample school at least four or five times to collect the needed information. Thirdly, during the survey time, few head teachers who were contacted for the stated interview, did not appear in scheduled time due to their sudden engagement elsewhere. However, all of them extended their help to the researcher to complete the survey, the researcher being a familiar person from the same location. The interview questionnaire, focus group discussion guidelines and other instruments were pre-tested in one basic level school of Dhanusha district. That school did not form the part of the sample schools. After pre- test of the study instruments, necessary corrections were made in the study instruments upon the suggestions of the research supervisor. The researcher visited all the sample schools at least three times to collect the data over a period of six months.

Also, the researcher visited every sample school to meet the head teachers and teachers. It was noted that head teachers and teachers were happy to provide and share information after they knew the purpose of the study. The researcher proceeded to schedule interviews and FGDs with related participants, conducted interaction there, took notes and acknowledged the views of them.

The researcher applied the following process to collect the data to generate field-based information. Data collection process were facilitated by the researcher himself because the researcher worked as the field enumerator as well. Vidich and Lyman (1994) state the importance of observer in qualitative research. According to them, in qualitative research, the observer is at the centre of the research process (cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In this study, the researcher observed himself the four sample schools in order to assess Dalit girls' situation. The researcher was free to search for the real situation of the four schools through observation.

The researcher visited the sample schools several times to complete the data. Most of the schools did not have the data in organized form. Despite such difficulties, data collection work went on smoothly for several reasons. Firstly, the researcher himself visited the schools for data collection with a "request letter" obtained from District Education Office. Secondly, the personal experience of the researcher in data collection of similar nature helped to collect the type of information expected from the defined sources. Thirdly, the head teachers of the sample schools were attracted toward research title as they found it highly motivating and thus they were positive towards the study. Finally, the research's working status as a government official of education for a long time also gave advantage to collect the school information easily. For the purpose of data collection, the researcher prepared a tentative list of the prospective interviewees with the help of the research supervisor. The researcher then contacted the respective District education officer (DEO), Local development officer (LDO) and Janakpur municipality officer for their help in facilitating the data collection work.

The researcher also contacted prospective interviewees (head teachers and teachers) personally, explained the purpose, research approach and the importance of

the study to them, and assured them of anonymity with respect to the information provided. The researcher himself conducted four interviews with head teachers and four interviews with teachers separately. Field notes also were taken to record key information that was not supplied by the instrument used. Similarly, the researcher also organized eight focus group discussions for Dalit girl students and the same number of focus group discussions with their respective parents in the four sample schools. In line with the FGD guidelines, the researcher noted down critical aspects of the study themes based on the discussion in group. In each discussion session, the researcher gathered together a group of about six people in order to avoid what Morgan (1988) calls “social loafing”. In the same way, the researcher visited the sample schools to collect the information based on the school profile form.

The researcher used the explanatory sequential design in this study. Instead of collecting data at the same time and merging the results, the researcher collected quantitative and qualitative information sequentially in two phases: with one form of data collection following and informing the other so as to help, explain or elaborate the quantitative results. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problems; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection, was needed to refine, explain the general picture.

While collecting the data, the researcher followed the principles of Patton (1990) who states that the qualitative methods consist of three kinds of data collection via, in depth open-ended interview, direct observation and written documents.

Sources of data. Data were obtained from three different sources, viz. related documents, literature and primary data from the field. Thus data were procured

mainly through two sources: primary and secondary sources. The primary and secondary sources of data have been described briefly below.

Primary data. Primary sources of data are eyewitness accounts. They are reported by an actual observer or participant of an event. The opinions of the head teachers and teachers on schooling practices of Dalit girls were the significant primary source of information in the study. Also, the FGD guidelines of parents and students regarding Dalit girls' education were another major primary source of data for this study. Similarly, the school survey form provided the information related to students' enrollment which was also the study's primary source of data. Besides these, direct observation of four sample schools formed another primary source of data.

Secondary data. Secondary sources of data are the accounts of an event that were not actually observed by the reporter. Secondary sources may sometimes be used, but because of the distortion in passing on information, the researcher uses them only when primary data are not available. Related documents such as research reports, reference materials (textbooks, encyclopedias, etc.), different publications from the government offices and authorized agencies/organizations, published magazines, studies, available international, regional and national literature worked as the secondary source of information for the study.

Nature of data. Basically, the study was based on primary data. However, the secondary information was also used substantially. The researcher himself visited the study area to collect the qualitative as well as quantitative data in order to answer the research questions. In qualitative research, the researcher poses general broad questions to the participants and allows them to share their views and perceptions. Varied nature of qualitative forms of data can be put into the following

categories: Observations, interview questionnaires, related documents and literature, and audiovisual materials (cited in Creswell, 2012).

Also, regarding different forms of qualitative data, Patton (1990) states:

“Qualitative methods consist of three kinds of data collections: In-depth open-ended interviews, direct observation, and written documents.

The data from interviews consist of direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feeling and knowledge. The data from observation consist of people’s activities, actions, the full range of interpersonal interaction, and the organizational processes that are parts of observable human experience.

As the quantitative research mainly collects factual information (cited in Creswell, 2012), the researcher, in order to record quantitative data, used school profile form. Through school survey form, the general background of the school, students’ enrollment, number of Dalit girls according to grade, caste and age group, and number of Dalit/Janajati teachers were collected.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

Different types of data were collected through primary and secondary sources. The data collected through the selected interviews and focus group discussion (FGD) were organized into specific headings (theme-wise) and analyzed qualitatively. The data collected through school survey form were analyzed quantitatively. The review and analysis of related documents, researches and reports on Dalit girls’ schooling were done with a focus on the following components: Dalit girls’ access to basic education, schooling practices, challenges, and implications for improving schooling practices.

Based on the qualitative and quantitative analysis and interpretation of these data, implications were drawn for improving the existing situation of Terai Dalit girls. The researcher's method of data analysis was basically qualitative in nature. Analysis of data means studying the tabulated materials in order to determine the inherent facts or meaning. It involves breaking down complex factors into simple parts and putting the parts together in new arrangement for the interpretation (cited in Nariwal, 2001). Also, data analysis is a combination of description, analysis and interpretation (Wolcott, 1994). Analysis is the process of understanding the meaning, which also includes sequencing and categorizing the data. The data analysis also includes interpretations and conclusions. Interpretations are the process by which an ethnographer attributes meaning to data (Brewer, 2000). Analysis of data is important because "the analysis and interpretation of the data involves the objective material in the possession of the researcher and his subjective reactions and desires to derive from the data the inherent meanings that the methods used will provide for definite answers. The researcher must determine whether or not the factors chosen for the study will satisfy all the conditions of the problems, and whether the sources to be used will provide the requisite data" (Rummel, 1958, cited in Nariwal, 2002).

Data analysis procedures vary from researcher to researcher. In this study, at the beginning, the collected data were organized according to the responses of the participants. After processing the data, necessary interpretation was made in a descriptive and analytical way. Interpretation is the heart of analysis through which findings occur, explains Patton (1990). Also, Best and Kahn (1999) suggested three steps of data analysis process. According to them, the first step is organizing the data, the second step is description of data, and the final one is interpretation of data. The researcher made necessary analytical interpretation of data on this basis.

Thus, the information collected through the review of related literature, interview with selected participants, focus group discussion, and school profile form were quantitatively analyzed and interpreted qualitatively to accomplish the objectives of the study. In this research, the researcher analyzed the data systematically with a focus on Dalit girls' challenges in schooling, school's initiatives for increasing enrollment, school environment, teachers' behaviour towards Dalit girls and motivation of teachers, parental status, expectations and attitude, under-age marriage, and engagement in domestic chores in order to address the basic intent of the study.

The researcher identified and established certain themes for ease to analyze the data obtained from different instruments used in the study. The analysis was based on the data collected through document review, interview guidelines, focus group discussion, and school survey form. Mostly, qualitative data were usually recorded in the form of words. Most analysis of qualitative data was also undertaken with words as the researcher attempted to isolate theme, identify trends, interpret, explain and even undertake conceptual comparisons. Some consider the qualitative data to be less about intensions, meaning and consequences (Dalute & Lightfoot, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Newman, 2006). The study thus made an attempt to incorporate the techniques that would most suit the analysis of the data from also triangulation perspective.

Data Triangulation. Triangulation is a method of verifying information through different perspectives with different tools. In this regard, Stake (1994) states triangulation as "To reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation, we employ various procedures, including redundancy of data gathering and procedural challenges to explanations. For the qualitative research work, these procedures are generally called triangulation". According to Merriam (1992), triangulation is the use of multiple

investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings. Triangulation in its broadest sense explores one set of research questions through a combination of methods.

According to Denzin (as cited in Janesick, 1994), there are four types of triangulation: (i) data triangulation (the use of variety of data sources in a study); (ii) investigator triangulation (the use of many researchers or evaluators); (iii) theory triangulation (the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data); (iv) methodological triangulation (the use of multiple methods to study a single problem).

For this study, I myself was the observer as well as the field investigator. So it was not possible to offer perspectives of different investigators to this study.

Based on the nature of this study, I used three triangulations: (i) for data triangulation, I explored the information from different sources, for example, primary sources, secondary sources and document analysis; (ii) theory triangulation has been done through review of different literatures and perspectives in sociological theory and social-inequity and schooling theory; and (iii) methodological triangulation has been done as suggested by Denzin (as cited in Janesick, 1994), for that I used multiple tools, such as, interviews, FGD and school profile form to interpret as methodological triangulation.

Ethical Considerations

I considered the following ethical considerations while conducting this research.

- a. I relied on the intellectual properties honestly. The materials taken from books, journals, internet, and other sources were properly cited and referenced in APA format.

- b. I was conscious of my multiple roles. I communicated the purpose of the research clearly with the research participants and established rapport with them.
- c. I took approval from the concerned school prior to data collection. The informants had full rights not to participate in the research or to withdraw from the research once it started.
- d. The participants had rights to confidentiality and privacy. The data were not shared and used for any other purpose than the research. The participants had full right to know or change their data.
- e. I respected and abided by the relevant laws and policies.
- f. I maintained non-discriminative environment and demonstrated unbiasedness to collect participants' views and to incorporate them in the present study.

Expectations from this research. The main expectation from this research was to explore the schooling status of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in the form of their access to basic education. Apart from these, the researcher expected to explore Dalit girls' access to basic education by caste and age groups, to assess their schooling practices, to identify challenges and obstacles related to their schooling and to explore ways to mitigate the challenges with implications.

Moreover, the researcher expected to find out the severe gaps in terms of access of Dalit girls to education, and their share to education from the perspective of equity, equality and inclusion. What are the reasons that Dalit girls are not sent to school? is the question to be answered by the research; similarly, how they can be sent as the same as Dalit boys to schooling? of questions to be answered by the very research.

The researcher expected to help the Dalit girls to achieve quality education. Their challenges to schooling are typically related to poverty, illiteracy, domestic chores, underage marriage, caring siblings, malnutrition and lack of proper health counseling. These are the main reasons for Dalit girls not to be established in main stream of education. That's why the researcher tried his level best to find out the ways to mitigate the challenges so that he could recommend ways to address them. The researcher further expected to find domestic, agricultural, social, religious, parental, and academic challenges, of the Dalit girls, and what can be done to meet these challenges. It was the expectation of the researcher to have implemented the policies made for them into practices. Specially, the schooling practices should be improved and changed for the bright future of Dalit girls with a smile of hope in their faces.

CHAPTER IV

Access to Basic Education

This chapter mainly focuses on the access of Dalit girls to basic education by throwing light on the background regarding their access to basic education by enrollment, caste, age group and gender along with determinants of their access to basic education. It was done on the basis of school's initiative for increasing their enrollment under welcome to school program, home visit, booster scholarship and other incentives like day-meal, tutorial support, school environment, teacher's behavior, parental socio-economic status, expectation, support, attitude and so on. Further, the data related to these specific themes are analyzed themewise.

The Context. In education, the term access typically refers to the ways in which educational institutions and policies ensure or at least strive to ensure the students to have equal and equitable opportunities to take full advantage of education. Universal access to education is the ability of all people to have equal opportunity in education, regardless of their class, gender, ethnicity, background or physical and mental abilities. It is now 30 years since the world conference on education for all, at Jomtien, Thailand promised education for all. Yet, as many as 250 million children remain excluded from completing a full cycle of nine years of education successfully. For this reason, the new sustainable development goals include a renewed commitment to universal access to learning through basic education.

When children receive education, they are able to achieve their full potential and help further society. Educated girls go on to become successful women. These women contribute to economy, ensure their family to be healthy and hygienic, and become active political leaders. In spite of the existing laws

providing girls with the right to an education, there are a number of reasons why girls either aren't enrolled in school, or drop out of school early. One reason is that some families cannot afford to educate their children. Even if they can, they sometimes prioritize educating the boys because they are traditionally viewed as breadwinners, while girls are often expected to carry out household or child-care duties. There is also financial reason, another factor, that makes girls sometimes dropout of school early as a cultural pressure to marry young. Sometimes, girls' dropout of school because it can be an unpleasant environment for them. This may be because of sexual abuse from other pupils or even teacher or because there often are not separate toilet facilities for girls, which is a deterrent once they start menstruating. A mixture of cultural, financial and health reasons means that often girls end up leaving school before receiving a meaningful education.

Ensuring access to school education was an important component of SSRP (2009-015). Under this component, there are three sub-components: basic education, secondary education and improvement in school physical facilities. The SSRP has emphasized increasing access to and participation in, promote equity and social inclusion in, and improve quality and relevance of basic education. It has also intended to restructure the current structure (grade 1-5 as primary level, grade 6-8 as lower secondary level, grade 9-10 as secondary level and grade 11-12 as higher secondary level) to integrated school structure with grades 1-12 (grade 1-8 as basic education and 9-12 as secondary education) with high priority to basic education (DoE, 2013).

In the past, the focus and efforts went mainly on access with less priority given to quality. After implementing the SSRP, a considerable effort was made to

ensure equitable access to quality basic education. The GoN has already decided to implement free education up to grade 8 and to prioritize several incentive schemes to support schooling of children and ensuring minimum enabling conditions (MECs) in all schools for delivery of quality education. The provision of free basic education includes the waiving of admission, tuition and examination fees and the cost of textbooks. Moreover, the GoN has already expressed its commitment to make basic education compulsory and the implementation has already been started in selected VDCs of all 75 districts (MoE, 2014). Education review office (ERO) and education policy committee (EPC) have been established becoming operational in their respective areas. ERO has developed and tested various enrollments and templates for students' assessment and the recently published grade eight students' assessment (NASA, 2013) report provides key information, which is helpful in benchmarking students' learning status in the country with information strategies on improving learning outcomes in the coming years.

To increase commitment and motivation amongst teachers and management team, a performance-based incentive scheme has been introduced. Recruitment of about 13,000 new teachers is expected to build the institutional base for quality improvement in school education. School safety and disaster risk reduction (DRR) has been mainstreamed and will be further strengthened through the implementation of the school safety action plan with linkage to an indicator on climate change for the purpose of risk mitigation (MoE, 2014). This has undoubtedly implications for the education of the girls especially from the disadvantaged community, which bears the brunt of the climate change more than the other communities.

Status of Access to Basic Education

The DoE has been implementing early childhood education and development (ECED) program in collaboration with INGOs, community based organizations (CBOs) and local bodies. According to the flash I report 2014-2015, there are altogether 35,121 ECD/ PPCs throughout the country. Around 85.5 percent (30,034) are government funded community and school based centers. Out of total ECD/PPC centers, around 14.5 percent (5087) are institutional school based as nursery and kindergarten classes. The GER in ECD/PPCs has reached to 77.7 percent with 77.3 percent girls and 78.1 percent boys (as compared to 76.7 percent with 76.2 percent for girls and 77.2 percent boys) in the school year 2014/15. The percentage of new entrants in grade one with ECD/PPC experiences has been 59.6 percent for 2014-2015, as compared to 56.9 percent in the last school year. ECD/PPCs enrollment was 63 percent (881,247) in base year 2008/09 which has increased to 77.7 percent (10,14,339) in 2013/14 and it is increasing continuously. According to the flash report I, 2013-14, the enrollment of ECD/PPC is as shown in the following table 4.1.

Table 4.1. *ECD/PPC Enrollment by Sex and Social Group in 2013-2014*

Students	Number of children in ECD/PPC			Percentage share in total children	
	Total	Dalit	Janjati	Dalit	Janjati
Girls	488,628	91,747	189,484	18.8	38.8
Boys	525,711	91,337	202,207	17.4	38.5
Total	10,14,339	183,084	391,691	18.0	38.6

Source: Flash Report I, 2013-14.

Table 4.1 shows that in all the three social groups, the number of girls enrolled is higher than boys. The number of students in total (1,014,339) has decreased as compared to last year's total which was 1,047,117. The number in Dalit and Janajati groups has increased slightly but the number has increased rapidly in other social groups.

The figure below shows that the share of Dalit and Janajati social groups, out of total enrollment, is 18 percent and 39 percent respectively; however, the share of ‘Others’ category occupies larger portion. The share of enrollment in ‘Others’ social group has increased by one percent in 2013-14 as compared to the last year’s share which was 42 percent. The composition of ECD/PPC enrollment by social groups has been presented in figure 4.1.

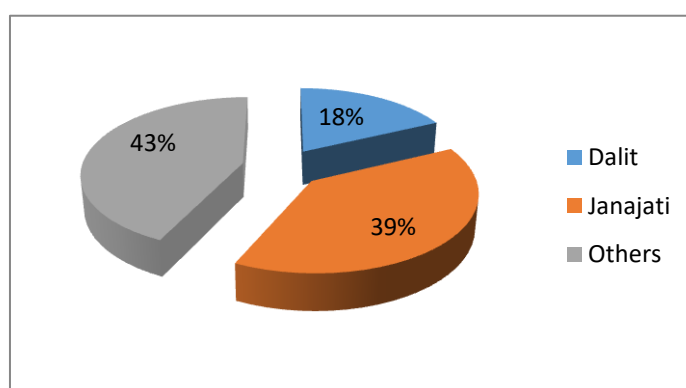


Figure 4.1. Composition of ECD/PPC Enrollment by Social Group

Source: Flash Report, 2014-15

Trends of enrollment at basic levels. The total number of enrollment at basic level with a disaggregation of primary (grade 1-5), lower secondary (grade 6-8) and overall basic level include primary and lower secondary levels (grade 1-8). Table 4.2 shows the trends of enrollment at primary, lower secondary and basic levels, 2013- 17.

Table 4.2. Trend of Enrollment at Primary, L. Secondary and Basic Levels, 2013-17

Levels	School Years					Avg. annu. grth. Rate
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Primary (1-5)	4,401,780	4,335,355	4,264,942	4,135,253	3,970,016	-9.8
L. Sec.(6-8)	1,828,351	1,835,313	1,862,873	1,859,359	1,866,716	2.1
Basic (1-8)	6,230,131	6,170,668	6,127,815	5,994,612	5,836,732	-6.3

Source: Flash I Report 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017.

Table 4.2 shows the trends of total enrollment at basic level over the period 2013-17. It shows the national total enrollment at basic level, which is 5.84 million in 2017. At the primary level, the average annual growth rate in this period shows the number of students has decreased by 2.5 percent points. Similarly, the enrollment at lower secondary level reached to 1.87 million in 2017 from 1.82 million in 2013, with an average annual growth rate of 0.5 percent point during this period. Likewise, at the basic level, on average the enrollment has decreased by 1.16 percent annually during this period. Due to the decreasing trends of enrollment at Primary level, the enrollment at the basic level has also decreased by 1.6 percent. Similarly, total Dalit enrollment share in national total enrollment at basic level over the period 2013-17 was 18.3 percent, 18.3 percent, 18.1 percent, 19.1 percent and 18.7 percent respectively. The share of Dalit enrollment in the total enrollment has slightly (1%) increased in 2016-2017 to 18.7 percent in the academic year 2017-18.

Likewise, the number of enrollment share of Dhanusha in total enrollment at basic level over this period was 2.5 percent, 2.5 percent, 2.5 percent, 2.4 percent and 2.2 percent respectively with the share of student's enrollment in the total enrollment at basic level slightly decreasing in the academic years 2016/17 and 2017/18. The reasons behind the effects were the earthquake 2015/16 and the political unrest specially in Terai districts. Also, the number of enrollment share of Dhanusha Dalit students in total enrollment at basic level over the period 2013-17 was 0.65 percent, 0.65 percent, 0.65 percent, 0.60 percent and 0.48 percent respectively. The trends of students' enrollment have decreased in the academic years 2016/17 and 2017/18 due to the effects of earthquake and the political unrest (Flash I Report, 2013-17).

Dalit girl students' enrollment by caste. Table 4.3 presents the enrollment of Dalit students by caste at basic level from 2009/10 to 2011/12. The castes mentioned

in the table are Dom, Dusadh, Musahar, Chamar, Tatma, Khatwe, Dhobi and Halkhor. In 2009/10, Tatmas had the highest enrollment (313) in the sample schools but in 2010/11, Khatwes had the highest participation (213). Similarly, in all three academic years, Halkhors had the least enrollment: 29, 19 and 12 in 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively. Moreover, it is also clear from the table that Tatma girls had the highest enrollment in 2009/10 and 2010/11, while Dusadh girls had the highest enrollment in 2011/12. This variation was seen fluctuating over the years.

Descriptive statistics like ratio analysis provides the researcher with tools to analyze the status of Dalit girls' access to basic education. The researcher generally uses ratios to evaluate and compare the status of Dalit boys with Dalit girls enrolled in the sample schools. The status of Dalit girls' access to education during the three consecutive years in four different schools indicates that the ratio of Tatma Dalit girls to the total number of Dalit students of Kuwa-Rampur was found very low(0.31) in comparison to other three sample schools. Similarly, the ratio of Tatma Dalit girls in the total number of Dalit boys of four sample schools was 0.46. In order to identify the reasons behind this huge difference, the researcher sought further qualitative information(For details, see Appendices- P.348).

Dalit girl students' enrollment by age group. Table 4.4 presents the number of Dalit girls' enrollment by age group(5-12). In 2009/10, Tatmas had the highest enrollment (291) followed by Dusadh (210) in the sample schools. Similarly, in 2010/11, Tatmas had the highest enrollment (200) followed by Khatwe (139) in the sample schools. In 2011/12, again Tatmas led the enrollment (160) followed by Dusadh (134) in the sample schools. On the other hand, Halkhor and Dhobi had the first and second lowest enrollment in the sample schools during the same time (For details, see Appendices- P.349).

Students' enrollment by gender. Table 4.5 below presents the picture of Dalit students' enrollment at the basic level in the academic years 2009/10-2011/12. In 2009/10, the total number of Dalit students admitted in SM, KR, SR and BR was 268, 540, 376 and 394 respectively. On the other hand, the total number of Dalit students enrolled in SM, KR, SR and BR was 259, 483, 339 and 256 respectively in 2010/11. In 2011/12, the total number of Dalit students was 176, 396, 206 and 290 in SM, KR, SR and BR respectively. Thus, the table shows that total Dalit students' enrollment at basic level had decreased by 15.3 percent in 2010/11 and by 20.1 percent in 2011/12. Similarly, the table further shows that total Dalit girls admitted in the sample schools was 738, 670 and 545 in 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively. It indicates that Dalit girls' enrollment at the basic level has decreased by 9.2 percent in 2010/11 and 18.6 percent in 2011/12 (For details, see Appendices- P.350).

Total enrollment of students by grade. Table 4.6 below shows the number of students by grade and school at the basic level in the academic years of 2009/10-2011/12. In 2009/10, the total number of students admitted in SM, KR, SR and BR was 673, 1302, 973 and 769 respectively. Similarly, in 2010/11, the total number of admitted students in SM, KR, SR and BR was 668, 1182, 902 and 624 respectively. In 2011/12, the total number of students enrolled in SM, KR, SR and BR was 656, 998, 524 & 545 respectively. To sum up, the total number of students admitted in the sample schools was 3717, 3376, and 2723 in the academic years 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively. This shows that students' enrollment at the basic level has decreased by 9.1 percent in 2010/11 and by 19.3 percent in 2011/12. Also, it shows that girls' enrollment was increasing and boys' decreasing in the academic sessions of 2009/10 to 2011/12. In the same way, the ratio of Dalit students to the total number

of students of Saraswati model secondary school was found very low (0.39) in comparison to other three schools (For details, see Appendices- P.351).

Characteristics of sample schools and participants. *Characteristics of sample schools.* As the study focuses on Dalit girls, the four basic level schools namely secondary school, Sohani Mujeliya, secondary school, Kuwa Rampur, Saraswati model secondary school, Brahmapuri and Janata secondary school, Belhi Rajaula were selected as sample schools for the study. A brief description of these schools is given below.

Secondary school, Sohani -Mujeliya. The school is for the progress and development of the society. The school and the society are not different. The school is acting as the center of social life and therefore school should be included in the society. This school was established in 1957 as a primary school. It lies in the north-western part of the Janakpur sub-metropolitan city, Sohani- Mujeliyatole, ward no. 14. Later on, this school was upgraded to middle school (basic level) and to secondary school (1-10), due to joint co-operation of school administration, school management committee and society members. The school is situated around Dalit communities: Tatma, Khatwe, Chamar, Mushahar and so on. Also, there are Yadav, Brahmins (Mishra, Jha), Sah, Kalwar and other different communities near the school. At present, the school is led by head teacher, Mr. Bholu Yadav, who is both enthusiastic and dedicated to his profession.

At the time of data collection, as the study is focused on basic level, total number of students studying at basic level (1-8) in 2012 was 656, in which the number of girls was 342 and the number of boys 314. Among them, in primary level (1-5), the total number of students was 406, in which the number of girls was 204 and the number of boys 202. Similarly, in lower secondary (6-8), total number

of students was 250, in which the number of girls was 138 and the number of boys 112. The above data shows the number of girls was higher than the boys.

Among the students in the school, the total number of Dalit students in basic level (1-8) was 176, in which the number of girls was 104 and the number of boys 72. Among them, in primary level (1-5), the total number of Dalit students was 127, in which the number of girls was 71 and the number of boys 56. Similarly, in lower secondary (6-8), the total number of Dalit students was 49, in which the number of girls was 33 and the number of boys 16. Near about 27 percent Dalit students (including both girls and boys) were studying in this school at basic level (1-8).

In the total number of teachers, 13 teachers are teaching at basic level (1-8) in this school. Among them, in primary level (1-5), out of 9 teachers, there are 5 female teachers and 4 male teachers. Similarly, in lower secondary level (6-8), there are only 4 male teachers. The data indicates that there is low access of Dalit teachers to teaching in this school as indicated by only one female teacher. However, one-fourth (25%) proportion of students are from Dalit community, they are very poor and hardly in a position to bear the cost of study as well as others expenditure.

The school is not so well-equipped with physical facilities. The school was opened in the beginning upto class 8 in limited land area but later on, it grew upto high school (1-10) without the expansion of land. So, the school does not have good school buildings, play grounds and gardens, due to lack of wide compound area. Inadequate number of class-rooms, staff-room, head teacher's room, library, science lab and others necessary buildings mark the physical character of the school. No students' welfare organization is formed in the school. Separate toilets

for girls with running water and safe drinking water and others necessary facilities are also lacking in this school. Furniture such as benches, desks, chairs are insufficient and so are wooden blackboards as well as wall-blackboards in the school.

The school runs three examinations like terminal, half-yearly and annual each year. Liberal promotion system through CAS seems to be poorly utilized in this school. School management committee and parent teachers' association are not formed yet according to education Act but Janakpur sub-metropolitan city has recently managed to form a management committee under the guidance of related ward chairperson temporarily. The school has prepared a school improvement plan and flash report I & II (two times) in the beginning and at the end of the academic session. Necessary decisions are made by management committee and the head teacher implements them. There is provision of admission campaign in the beginning of the academic session. Thereafter new textbooks provided by the government are distributed free of cost. Dalit students also receive yearly allocated scholarship. Sometimes the school conducts ECA and CCA. The result of the school is satisfactory.

Secondary school, Kuwa-Rampur. School is a part of community and this school too was established for the progress and development of the society. The school was established in 1960 as Rastriya primary school. It lies in the southern part of Janakpur sub-metropolitan city, Kuwa-Rampur tole, ward no.12 (old Lohana VDC). Later on, the school was upgraded to middle school (1-8) in 2000 and to secondary school (1-10) in 2005, due to joint efforts of school management committee, school administration and society members. Most of the villagers are Dalit and marginalized groups around the school premises. Dalit children of

Tatma, Khatwe, Chamar, Dushad, Mushahar, Paswan, Halkhor and other castes as Yadav, Sah, Mishra, Jha, Thakur, Mandal were enrolled in this school. At present, the school is led by head teacher, Mr. Ram Autar Yadav, an energetic and dedicated person to his profession.

Of all the students, the total number of students studying at basic level (1-8) in 2012 was 1068 of which the number of girls was 572 and boys 496 at the time of data collection. At primary level (1-5), the total number of students was 756 of which the number of girls was 424 and boys 332. Similarly, in lower secondary level (6-8), total number of students was 312 of which the number of girls was 148 and boys 164.

The total number of Dalit students was 396, in which the number of girls was 209 and the boys 187. Among them, in primary level (1-5), total number of Dalit students was 298 of which the number of girls was 169 and boys 129. Similarly, in lower secondary level (6-8), total number of Dalit students was 98 of which the number of girls was 40 and boys 58. Near about 37 percent Dalit students (including both girls and boys) were studying in this school at basic level (1-8).

So far the total number of teachers is concerned, there are 19 teachers teaching at basic level (1-8) in this school. Among them, in primary level (1-5), out of 13 teachers, there are seven female teachers and six male teachers. Similarly, in lower secondary level (6-8), out of six teachers, there are one female teacher and five male teachers. The data indicates that there is low access of Dalit teachers to teaching in this school as indicated by the presence of only one male Dalit teacher in the school. However, 37 percent Dalit students from Dalit community are

enrolled at basic level (1-8) in this school. Most of them are very poor and their parents are hardly able to pay the expenditure of school as well as other cost.

The school has inadequate physical infrastructure like school buildings, class rooms, head teacher room, staff rooms, science lab, and library and computer lab. The existing roof of the school buildings, class rooms and others are of tin; so it is very cold in winter as well as very hot in summer. Due to this reason, some classes of the students are spent in a leisurely fashion. Furniture like desks, chairs, benches are insufficient and so are wooden blackboards as well as wall-blackboards in the school. Problem of safe drinking water is there and separate toilets for girls with running water, appropriate playground and small gardens in the school do not exist.

The school runs three examinations like terminal, half-yearly and annual each year. Liberal promotion system through CAS is poorly utilized due to its lengthy process. The school has formed school management committee and parent teacher association according to the education act. It has prepared a school improvement plan, and statistical data in the form of flash report I & II are prepared in the beginning and at the end of academic sessions on yearly basis. The major decisions are made by school management committee and these are implemented by the head teacher.

There is provision of admission campaign in the beginning of the academic session. Thereafter, new textbooks are provided by the government which are distributed free of cost. Dalit students also receive allocated scholarship yearly. Sometimes, the school conducts ECA and CCA as well as annual anniversary program also. The result of the school is satisfactory. However, Dalit friendly

environment is still lacking in the school though the feeling of untouchability is slowly fading away.

Saraswati model secondary school, Brahmapuri, Janakpurdham. Saraswati model secondary school, Brahmapuri, Janakpurdham, a recent name of the school, was established in 1947 before the establishment of democracy in 1951. In the beginning, the school was named as ‘Saraswati high school’ at the time of its establishment. Later on, it was renamed as “Saraswati Multiple Vocational School”. Again, it was renamed as “Saraswati higher secondary school”. Presently, Nepal government has selected this school as a model school and renamed it as “Saraswati model secondary school”. The school lies at the centre of Janakpurdham, Brahmapuri tole, ward no.9, in the recently declared Janakpur sub-metropolitan city in Dhanusha district of province number 2 of Nepal.

Saraswati high school is one of the oldest schools of the then Janakpur zone carrying 73 years of grand history. The school is historical as the first President of Nepal, Hon. Dr. Rambaran Yadav, is the product of this school. At present, the school is led by head teacher, Mr. Satya Narayan Mandal, who is dedicated to his profession.

At the time of the data collection (2012), the total number of students studying at basic level was 524 of which the number of girls was 190 and boys 334. At primary level (1-5), total number of students was 249 of which the number of girls was 88 and boys 161. Also, at lower secondary level (6-8), total number of students was 275 of which the number of girls was 102 and boys 173. The total number of Dalit students was 206 of which the number of girls was 70 and boys 136. At primary level (1-5), total number of Dalit students was 95 of which the number of girls was 37 and boys 58. Also, at lower secondary level (6-8), total

number of Dalit students was 111 of which the number of girls was 33 and boys 78. Near about 30 percent Dalit students (girls and boys) were studying in this school at basic level (1-8). Tatma, Khatwe, Chamar, Dhobi, Mushahar, Halkhor and Dom children were studying in this school

So far the total number of teachers is concerned, there are 13 teachers teaching at basic level. Among them, in primary level (1-5), out of six teachers, there are four female teachers and two male teachers. Also, at lower secondary level (6-8), out of nine teachers, there are one female teacher and eight male teachers. The above data indicates that there is low access of Dalit teachers to teaching force in the school as indicated by number of Dalit teacher, either male or female, teaching in the school.

Some new buildings were added to old buildings with sufficient number of classrooms, administrative building, staff rooms, science lab, library and ICT lab. There is a great temple of goddess Saraswati in the east-south corner of the school premises. There are separate toilets for girls with urinal facilities but no running water in the toilets. Sufficient and safe drinking water in the school premises is still desired. Different plants and variety of gardening are there in the school compound. For security purpose, there is a long boundary wall around the school premises.

Three types of examinations are conducted like terminal, half-yearly and annual in the school. Liberal promotion system through CAS seems to be nominally utilized in the school. The school has not formed school management committee yet and parent teacher association, but Janakpur sub-metropolitan city administration has recently managed to form a school management committee under the guidance of related ward chairperson. The school has prepared a school

improvement plan and statistical data in the form of flash I & II report are prepared in the beginning and at the end of the academic session on yearly basis. Necessary decisions are made by management committee and the head teacher implements them.

There is a provision of admission campaign in the beginning of the academic session. Thereafter, new textbooks provided by the government are distributed free of cost. Dalit students also receive allocated scholarship timely and regularly each year. The school conducts ECA and CCA and also celebrates annual anniversary program as well as Saraswati puja yearly. The result of the school is satisfactory. However, Dalit friendly environment is still desired in the school though the feeling of untouchability is slowly fading away. There are different students' organizations working for the support and welfare of children such as junior Red Cross circle and child right forum and peer support group in this school. School's canteen, students' health clinic, sanitary napkins for girls and tutorial support for students, especially Dalit girls, are still desired despite the school being one of the oldest and good schools of the whole district.

Janata secondary school, Belhi-Rajaula. School is a part of community and this school was established in 1980 as a primary school in the community. It lies in the northern part of Janakpur sub-metropolitan city, Belhi-Rajaula tole, ward no. 14. Later, this school was upgraded to middle school (1-8) and to secondary school (1-10), due to mutual co-operation of school management committee, school administration and society members. Mostly Dalit communities are settled around the school premises. They are Khatwe, Tatma, Chamar, Dushad, Paswan and other Dalit caste residents. Generally, they are not conscious about education and there is a striking poverty in the area. So, some of them earn their daily livelihood by

working in field, others in the shop, some as Tempo driver, Rickshaw puller, and some do menial work in hospital and factories. At present, the school is led by head teacher, Mr. Bindeshwar Yadav, who is dedicated to his profession.

At the time of data collection, total number of students studying at basic level in 2012 was 545, of which the number of girls was 312 and boys 233. At in primary level (1-5), total number of students was 378 of which the number of girls was 212 and boys 166. Similarly, in lower secondary level (6-8), the total number of students was 167 of which the number of girls was 100 and boys 67. The total number of Dalit students at basic level (1-8) was 290 of which the number of girls was 162 and boys 128. At primary level (1-5), the total number of Dalit students was 193 of which the number of girls was 100 and boys 93. Similarly, in lower secondary level (6-8), the total number of Dalit students was 97 of which the number of girls was 62 and boys 35. Near about 53 percent Dalit students (including both girls and boys) were studying in this school at basic level (1- 8). It is also interesting to note that the number of girls was higher than that of boys in the school.

So far the total number of teachers is concerned, there are 16 teachers teaching at basic level (1 - 8) in this school. Among them, in primary level (1-5), out of 12, there are eight female teachers and four male teachers. Similarly, in lower secondary level (6-8), out of four teachers, there is one female teacher and three male teachers. The data indicates a low access of Dalit teachers to teaching in this school as indicated by only two (one female and one male) Dalit teachers.

However, the school has large number of Dalit students although the school is very poor in terms of the number of Dalit teachers. The school is still desired to be well-equipped with physical infrastructure such as sufficient school buildings,

classrooms, head teacher's room, staff rooms, science lab, library and others necessary buildings. Furniture such as benches, desks, chairs are insufficient and so are wooden blackboards as well as wall-blackboards in the school. Separate toilets for girls with running water, safe drinking water and other necessary facilities are also lacking in the school. There is a large school compound, bounded by walls but due to improper management of school, students are not getting opportunity to play games in the school premises, neither there is any plantation of different types of flowers and plants around despite large play area of the school.

Liberal promotion system through CAS seems to be poorly utilized in this school. Terminal, half-yearly and annual examination are also in practice in the school. The school has formed school management committee and parent teacher association according to education act. The school has prepared a school improvement plan as well and prepares statistical data for flash report I & II in the beginning and at the end of academic session yearly. Necessary decisions are made by school management committee and the head teacher implements them. At present, the school is led by the head teacher, Mr. Bindeshwar Yadav, who is dedicated to his profession. There is a provision of admission campaign in the beginning of the academic session. Thereafter new textbooks provided by the government are distributed free of cost. Dalit students also receive allocated scholarship timely and regularly every year. The school conducts ECA and CCA as well as annual anniversary function regularly. The school result is satisfactory. However, proper sanitation, nutritious mid -day meal and need of good health facilities are still the priority. And Dalit friendly environment is still to be there in the school. Untouchability and caste-based discrimination should be eliminated from the school. The school management committee and other social organizations

are working together for the betterment of eliminating such ill-practices present in the school.

Characteristics of participants: Educational attainment of Dalit parents.

Literacy rate of Dalit is very low, and the gap between male and female within Dalit is huge. Central Bureau of Statistics (2011): reported literacy rate of Dalit women to be 3.2 percent and men's 10.7 percent. Among the literate Dalits, their access to higher education is quite nominal.

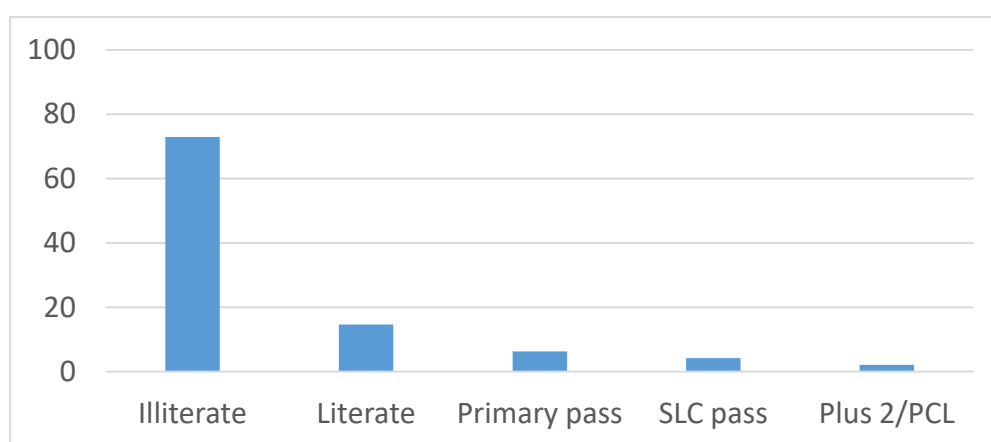


Figure 4.2. Educational Attainment of Dalit Parents

Source: Field survey date, 2013

The data collected among 48 Dalit parents on their educational status as represented in the above figure 4.2 indicates that the percentage of illiterate parents was dominant over literate. Among the Dalit parents in the study, the largest portion (73%) was illiterate followed by literate (15%). Those completing primary level occupied the third position (6.25%), followed by SLC passed (4.16%) parents. Certificate level (+2) and above pass parents secured the least portion (2%). The higher the educational achievement, the better the employment opportunity. Dalit parents' low access to education can directly or indirectly effect the occupation they choose and their income level.

There is high rate of unemployment among Dalits in Nepal. A participant gives a typical example of how Dalit is deprived in the local job markets: “*Dalit are living through complexities of caste discrimination, landlessness, poverty and illiteracy. A Dalit cannot get even a helper’s role in local schools and offices even if they pass the SLC [school leaving certificate] examination*”.

Financial position of Dalit parents. Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world, the economic inequality of Dalit, whose average per capita income USD 361 as compared to USD 712 for other Nepalese, more than 35 percent of people are illiterate, and 25 percent of people live under the extreme poverty line. Poverty is higher in rural areas (27%) than urban areas (15%), and in the mid-and far west, there is a higher incidence of poverty. Dalits have a much higher incidence of poverty at 43.6 percent compared to the advanced ethnic group Newar at 14 percent (CBS,2011b). As a total of 48 Dalit parents had participated in FGD, and on the basis of their field reporting, their financial position is shown in figure 4.3 below.

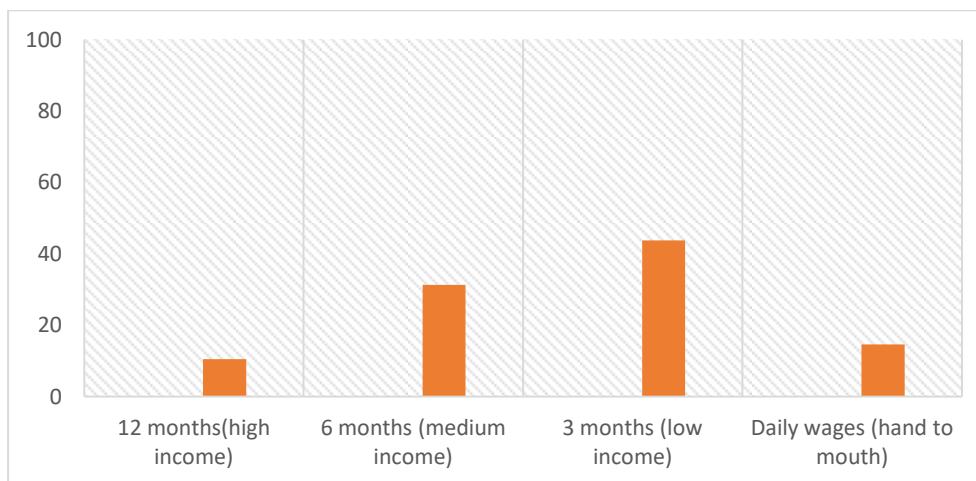


Figure 4.3. Financial Position of Dalit Parents

Source: Field survey date, 2013

Majority of the participating Dalit parents were involved in wage labour and their earning is reported to be quite unstable due to the nature of job. A few parents

had only 12 months (high income) (10.42%) survival income but they held largely low position in the society, mainly due to their low level of education. Occupational variation effects their income level, which also eventually influences their participation in economic activities. In the above figure 4.3, the largest portion (43.75%) of the participants had income holding for three months (low income) indicating their low access to economic activities. Among the groups, those earning sufficient for six months (medium income) (31.25%) reported that their income was insufficient to earn their lives. Few of them (15%) were involved in daily wage labour with low pay and unstable job.

The proportion of landless people in Nepal is highest among Dalits with 90 percent still being landless. The higher prevalence of landlessness among Dalits continues despite agrarian reform efforts in Nepal (Nepali et al., 2011). As mentioned by one Dalit parent participant: *“We are facing tremendous problems being landless. Most of us do not have land ownership and we are living on public land which makes our survival difficult. We are not able to access government services and income opportunity”*.

Composition of castewise girls’ participation in FGD. The total number of Dalit girls who were involved in the focus group discussion was 48. Separating those girls, according to castewise, who were participated in FGD of the study, were as Tatma (21 or 43.7%), Khatwe (11 or 22.9%), Chamar (9 or 18.8%), Paswan (5 or 10.4%), Dhobi (1 or 2.1%) and Mushahar (1 or 2.1%). This composition of castewise girls indicate that 6 caste categories had participated in the FGD from the sample schools. Figure 4.4 shows the composition of girl participants by Dalit caste category.

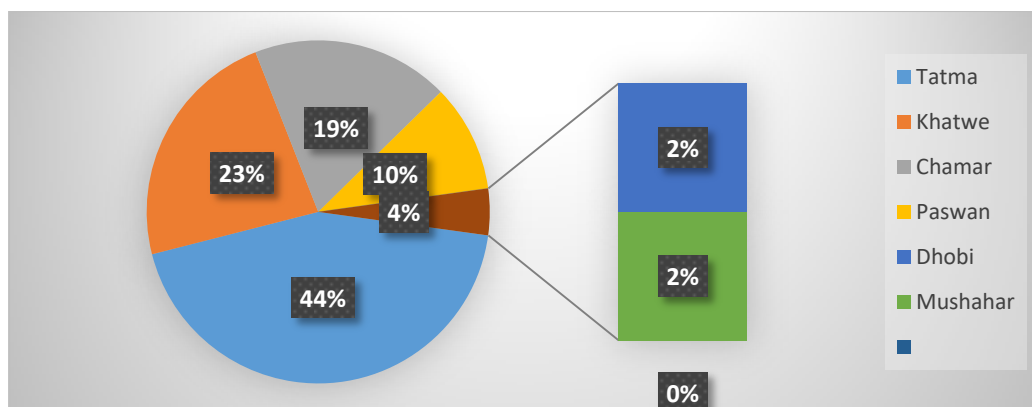


Figure 4.4. Composition of Castewise Girl Participants in FGD

Source: Field survey date, 2013

As the above figure 4.4 shows, Tatma (Das) Dalit caste girl participants have been enrolled in basic level (1-8) as compared to other Dalit caste girls indicating that they are more conscious to education than others. Although government has identified 17 sub-caste categories of Dalits in Terai region, it was not feasible to involve all these caste categories in the FGD due to limited resources and time. In class seven and class eight, all Dalit caste girls were not enrolled in the sample schools either.

Determinants of Dalit Girls' Access to Basic Education

The factors affecting Dalit girls' access to basic education as articulated by the participants, such as, low family income, limited resources, unemployment, poor school's initiative, poor school environment, unsupportive teacher's behavior, poor parental socio-economic status and educational status were found similar across families. Almost all Dalit parents as well as their daughters who participated in FGD and the head teacher and teachers interviewed agreed that conditions of the parents such as unemplod, lower level of education, busy in daily wages, and overall, limited resources affected the girls' access to basic education in the school. Various factors affected the status of Dalit girls' access to basic education which are briefly described below.

School's initiative for increasing access. The head teachers and teachers of the sample schools had expressed their views regarding their initiative to increase Dalit girls' access to school education. On the whole, the head teachers and teachers had almost the same opinions in increasing their access to basic education. Their opinions and views are presented themewise below.

Welcome to School Program. The researcher found that the head teachers had adopted various measures to increase access of Dalit girls to school. At the beginning of the academic session, 'welcome to school program' was organized in the schools. Children and their parents were invited to the schools and they were acknowledged for their contribution to the school. The head teachers often convinced Dalit guardians to send their daughters to schools regularly. They were provided textbooks, school bag, school uniforms, and stationery materials in order to attract their regular participation and presence in the schools. Schools seemed to be not taking tuition fees from them. They had monthly meeting with the school teachers to discuss about progress, weakness, regularity, punctuality of Dalit girls in the schools and also, they discussed about the possible ways of bringing Dalit girls to the school in big number. The schools have parent teacher association (PTA) to maximize participation of Dalit girls through good relation with Dalit guardians. Moreover, they also request NGOs and INGOs to conduct some special programs for Dalit girls to increase their access to school.

Home Visit. The schools conducted door to door campaign at the beginning of new academic session. The head teacher along with other teachers visited home of those students who were out of school. The teachers took part in school campaign programs and went house to house of Dalit girls who were out of schools. They requested and convinced them to do so by highlighting the

importance, advantages and good impact of education in human life. Though they were not fully convinced, they felt compelled to do so because of the teachers' presence in their houses. They were very glad to find the teachers with them and were encouraged to send their children to schools.

The teachers were found serious about Dalit girls' access and participation in school education. Although Dalit guardians were little aware of education and its outcomes to the extent expected, the teachers did their best to change their attitude towards girls' education and convinced them to send their daughters to schools. The teachers made it clear that they, together with the school, were following some other effective measures to promote and maximize the participation of Dalit girls in schools. In this regard, a teacher shared his long experience that he applied new idea to invite meaningful involvement of parents for their children's especially Dalit girls for schooling through the '*home visit strategy*'. Further, he added: '*I started visiting children's home aiming to motivate parents to treat their child's first; and as a teacher, I started extending my support and mentoring parents without resources, education, and experience*'. This model helped *increase parental engagement (FGD) and improved children's readiness for schooling, classroom behavior, attendance, test score, and academic performance*. The parents with such teacher support became more comfortable working with them.

The teachers were found treating both Dalit and non-Dalit girls equally in the classroom. They did not do any kind of discrimination against Dalit girls both inside and outside the school. They ensured the opportunities and freedom to sit wherever Dalit students liked in the class and seek support from them in the

school. Thus, they were found using just treatment regarding sitting, asking questions, taking part in teaching-learning activities. The teachers encouraged them to take part in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to maximize their participation and regularity in the school. They did not bring the feeling of untouchability into practice both inside and outside the school. To abolish these kinds of feelings or social evils, they often sat together with Dalit children, told them to bring water for them and the teachers visited their houses occasionally for little chit chat with their parents and informed the head teachers about the guardian who were not sending their daughters to schools.

Booster Scholarship. The Dalits are provided special kind of scholarship. So is the case with Dalit girls. Schools as well as teachers in coordination with NGOs and INGOs provided Dalit girls some stationery materials, uniforms and school bags to foster Dalit girls' participation in basic education. They sometimes provided financial support and moral support to encourage them towards achieving education. Most of the parents, however, were not informed about the governmental and non-governmental provisions to support Dalit girls. In this regard, parents and their girls who participated in FGD claimed that schools do not invite poor parents (especially Dalit) in schools' programs. A parent expressed his experience in these words: *'The school invites parents to its event according to their wellbeing. For instance, if parents seem financially sound, school invites them with individual letters, even reminding them by phone call, whereas financially poor parents, are neglected and even missed out to invite'*. The NNDSWO's programs are mainly dominated by education scholarships such as the Nepal children scholarship endowment program (NCSEP) implemented in 15 districts of Nepal with the support of Save the Children US and USAID and basic

education for least educated (BELE) programs initiated in Jhapa, Chitwan, Kaski and Surkhet districts (NNDSWO,2015). In regard to the role of Dalit NGO's, one of the participants opined that: *'While there are many Dalit NGOs registered all over the country, only a few of them such as DNF, NNDSWO, FEDO, JMC, DWO are leading NGOs and actively working for the rights of Dalits in Nepal. Among others, NNDSWO is one of the oldest NGOs continuously working to empower Dalit and conduct rights-based programs in different district's.*

Other Incentives. Apart from some NGOs and INGOs, no other incentives or support was seen to be provided to the Dalit girl students to increase their access to school education. Sometimes financial support was provided to the Dalit girls in coordination with NGOs and INGOs. The Dalit girls were provided school uniforms, bags and some stationery materials as support from those organizations. But the scenario was that not all Dalit girls were facilitated with that opportunity. Only selected Dalit girls were given opportunity to get such facilities.

So far other incentives are concerned, parents of Dalit girl students were found to be getting from school favorable environment in the school, inspiration from head teachers and teachers, motivation, mutual co-operation, positive vision for their children, discrimination free environment, and mental, psychological and emotional support. Parents who were involved in FGD stated that they were not supporting their girl students for their study. Dalit girl students were engaged in their home affairs such as, caring younger sister/brother while mother is in kitchen, and working as helping hand during their leisure time. According to them, sending girls to school was their responsibility and the rest was the responsibility of teachers. A parent shared his faith regarding education that *'neither his grandfather nor father became literate, but they spent better life through their own business'*. This view indicates that rather than

sending their children to school, involving them in parent's business would be better. Thus, it is mostly due to parental attitude underlying a fatalistic view of education that affects schooling of Dalit girls. Similarly, some parents labeled other parents who did not send their daughters to school as being proud, lazy, negligent, and irresponsible.

The parents in the SMC and PTA also helped them to be respected in the community. Participation of parents of Dalit girl students in schooling practices made them feel that they were provided incentives for their upliftment and their changing livelihood.

School environment. School environment plays a vital role to inspire, encourage, motivate and or de-motivate the learners. Therefore, all the concerned people need to think over creating conducive educational environment in the school in order to provide quality education to the students. The head teachers, teachers, parents and the students had nearly similar views about school environment. Majority parents reported that the school invited them only when it is in need of donation or volunteer service. Further, they added that no one was found responsible to address their queries on fundamental issues. The school staffs better know how to provide readymade answers to the parents. Some parents reported that the schools denied paying attention to their voices during dissemination of annual report of the school. Some parents complained that they had experienced indecent behavior such as *'sit in behind, even though seats were vacant'*, *'no opportunity for speaking at the function'*, *'ready-made answer when asking about children's performances'*, *'poor care service in the school'*.

Parents further explained that the school environment has undermined their contributions, and there was confusion about their engagement due to lack of

guidance, and little or no information reaching them which acted as the influencing factors.

It is obvious that parents are likely to feel better if they are given necessary support in welcoming environment in schools. Almost all parents expressed their views that if school provides them '*welcoming environment*', then they will be more comfortable, free and willing to share necessary information with teachers/schools.

The head teachers claimed that their schools have fair, healthy, inviting, welcoming and receptive teaching-learning environment for both Dalit and non-Dalit students. They were completely against all kinds of discrimination and ill treatment within their school premises. They were concerned to create true learning environment by even instructing all teachers, guardians and staffs not to misbehave or ill-treat any student in the name of caste, religion, sex, and ethnicity. They demonstrated equal respect for the students with diverse background expecting and motivating their equal participation (both Dalit and non- Dalit students) in curricular and extra- curricular activities.

Similarly, the teachers had respect and love for both Dalit and non-Dalit students. They expressed their happiness that they were teaching Dalit and Non- Dalit students together in the same educational setting. Some teachers were happy because some Dalit girls were more intelligent and had outstanding performance in curricular and extracurricular activities. They did not feel any kind of hesitation or discomfort to mix with non-Dalit students and provided academic support even outside the class.

All the students admitted that they did not become the victims of any kinds of discrimination and ill treatment in the schools. Both Dalit and non- Dalit students had good relation with one-another. They could sit, study, stand, play, drink and eat together. They did not have any kind of dissatisfaction with the school environment.

They were happy that head teachers and teachers had good attitude, feeling and treatment towards them. Whenever Dalit girls needed any kind of help or support, both male and female teachers were ready to offer them their help.

Teachers' behaviour. In the context of education process, teacher's behaviour is supposed to be vital for the development of good behavior of children who come to school as students in the form of raw materials. The teacher contributes to shaping these materials in the desirable forms and the school as a garden facilitates the blooming of these flowers (students). The role of the teacher to motivate, reinforce and promote learners' learning, including their evaluation as per the national standard is very much expected. There is a popular saying that "Student is a book which the teacher has to read from page to page" as cited in GMR, 2013/14. Teacher's vital role in shaping the behavior of students from negative into positive and constructive behavior cannot be simply exaggerated. Schools should try their best to make the students feel well, comfortable, unbiased, treated equally both inside and outside the classroom in order to develop healthy and positive relationship between teachers and students.

In community schools, some misbehaviour like gender violence or discriminations and works of violating code of conduct can be seen. Gender-based violence, which encompasses sexual and physical violence, intimidation and verbal abuse, is a major barrier to the achievement of quality and equality in education - whether it is perpetrated by teachers, community members or pupils. In addition to physical and psychological trauma, gender-based violence has long - lasting health consequences such as unwanted pregnancy and the spread of HIV/ AIDS, which often prevent students from completing their education. Gender-based violence in schools is also not reported, so much of it may remain hidden. It is often committed by male

pupils, although male teachers may be the main perpetrators of the most extreme forms of abuse and exploitation (GMR, 2013/14). The cases of Dalit girls in the schools may have been worse than this scenario.

The secondary data and research interview indicate that some insensitive teachers were not serious about Dalit girls' problems like stomach pain, headache and dizziness, which were also found to have caused their school dropout. An interview with Dalit girls indicate some of the reasons like this: *“Gender based violence which encompasses sexual and physical violence by teachers and friends in the form of abuse, bullying, ragging and touching on their sensitive organs in the schools, stood as the reasons for their poor or no schooling. Similarly, toilet problem in the schools caused the Dalit girls' absence from schools as they hesitated to attend the school regularly during the menstruation (period)”*.

To stop violence against girls, especially Dalit girls in the school program, working with a network of civil society organization can publish a detailed analysis of laws and policies relating to girls' education and protection. Awareness workshop can be conducted for school supervisors, and school management committee (SMC) members who then can run sessions with teachers, pupils, counselors and parents on the code. Working directly with teacher unions is a way to build support for taking action against teachers who violate the code of conduct. In order to take action against the teachers involved in violence or abuse of pupils or discrimination, it is crucial to ensure that reporting procedures are transparent and child-friendly (GMR, 2013/14).

With regard to teachers' behavior towards Dalit girls, whether it was discriminatory or unbiased, or encouraging or discouraging, it was seen that most of the head teachers and teachers had demonstrated unbiased and positive relationship

with the Dalit girls. They were found to have been treating the Dalit girls equally without any discrimination. The teachers as well as head teachers always encouraged the students for better learning. They tried their best to make them disciplined and involved in all those activities that non-Dalit students are also involved in. They claimed that they often get the Dalit students to participate in the activities like quiz contest, dancing, music and other recreational activities.

Most of the parents involved in FGD agreed that their engagement in children's schooling mostly depends upon teacher's behavior. If teachers presented themselves in a friendly manner with parents, then they could be more positively engaged in their children's schooling. Parents disliked participating in school's activities due to teacher's dominating behaviors. Such teachers do not listen to parent's views, and stop parents while they are putting their views.

Teacher's arrogant attitudes especially toward poor parents may send a message of belittled educational value to their children. Another Dalit parent reported his bitter experience regarding teacher's behaviour saying, *'I had participated in a result sharing meeting with teachers where I put my query regarding my daughter's performance. The teacher neglected my query saying that I better send her to work for earning instead of school'. Parents may feel that school staff do not trust them or that there is a judgmental attitude towards them by teachers* (Griffin and Galassi, 2010) and consequently, it negates their involvement.

Almost all parents who participated in FGD agreed that the teacher's behavior towards them was the major factor affecting their engagement in school activities. Also, parents shared their view, *'We are always interested to meet the teacher/school, but teachers show negligence to us by supposing that we are unknown about education and that they are superior to us'*. Further, they added that teachers were

seen hesitant even to call them respectfully with their name. Parents further stressed, *'We feel like sub-humans as if we have no options but to follow their instructions'* (FGD). It indicates that there was infrequent interaction between teacher and parents in reality. Not only the teachers but also *'the head teacher demonstrates similar behavior'* reported a Dalit parent. It was blamed by parents that the teacher's negative attitude and words toward them such as *'illiterate', 'ignorant', 'irresponsible'* negate their self-confidence. Some educated and rich parents on the other hand reported that teacher shows them friendly behavior which in turn encourages them to increase their engagement in school activities.

Some students and parents, however, expressed their dissatisfaction over some teachers who were not taking full time class and Dalit students were made to clean the dirty classes. Moreover, they also blamed the teachers for not having interest in teaching Dalit students. Sometimes they had to suffer from the biased treatment in the schools because of their being Dalits. Students reported that they had to often sit on the back benches and blamed teachers for not taking extra classes for them, neither they were provided proper guidance and counseling service. Dalit girls friendly teaching methods were not utilized for them nor were some non-Dalit female teachers from higher status were liberal to them. This finding from the side of some Dalit girl students and their parents was in contradiction with what the teachers and head teachers reported.

Bhattachan et al. (2008) found that mostly Dalit students sit separately at the back of the classroom, and in some schools, Dalits are still not allowed to enter at all. The higher- caste students still fear Dalit as they can touch their lunch (Bhattachan et al., 2008). A Dalit girl participant highlighted some of the prejudiced behaviours in schools:

'Teachers abuse Dalit children by using their surnames, which humiliates them. They do not use water touched by Dalit students. Teacher inspire non-Dalit children to sit separately from Dalit'.

Thus, it can be seen that the teachers had both positive and negative behaviors towards the Dalit students. But teachers should always display good and fair behavior toward all students irrespective of their diverse backgrounds. Positive and balanced behavior from the teachers is required to generate positive changes in the thoughts, attitudes and ambitions of the students; it is so important for the Dalit students, more so for the Dalit girls. Schooling practice is mainly shaped by the behaviors of the school family, mainly by the teachers and head teachers. Schooling practice viewed from this perspective is in need of renewal when the perspective of Dalit girls is brought into focus.

The parents who were not engaged in school related activities indicated that they did not have any concern with the schools. Teacher could play a critical role in supporting parents for their involvement in children's home assignment by providing ideas about their involvement. The reality is that many schools are never going to have 100 percent parental involvement in school activities. However, there are strategies that can be implemented to increase their involvement significantly. Improving parental involvement in children's schooling will make teacher's job easier and improve student's overall performance.

Parental socio-economic status. Parents are the guardians, caretakers, basic-needs providers for the children as their earning or economic condition plays a vital role in their schooling. Generally, economic condition, the source of earning, social position, political situation, academic condition etc. are directly or indirectly related to the economic status of parents. There are diversities in parental status, especially in

the Terai region. Parents' ability, skills, involvement, literacy, income etc. are such indicators that go in tandem with their capacity to send their children to school, more so in the case of the Dalit girls. Majority of Dalits have poor socio-economic condition. Regarding the parental status, especially the status of Dalit girls' parents, the researcher had asked some questions to the head teachers, teachers, students and parents themselves so as to find out their social, economic, employment and educational status and the relation between their socio-economic status and schooling of their girls.

Parents of Dalit girls, who could be divided into various categories due to differences in their socio-political, economic and educational status, were further sub-categorized under the economic status according to agriculture, main occupation, working place and other occupations. Most of the parents of Dalit girls were engaged in agricultural work, firewood collection, and collection of green leaves for the fulfillment of their subsistence level needs. Some of them were working as sweepers at schools, hospitals, municipalities, factories and public places. They were also found taming animals, collecting grass and firewood and selling them in the market to maintain their hand to mouth problems. Not only this, some other parents of Dalit girls were also going to foreign countries for earning their living. Those who were unable to spend money for going abroad were found engaged in physical labours such as plumbing, rickshaw pulling, carrying bricks and the like.

The rigidity of traditional occupations has trapped Dalits in poverty. The occupations of Terai Dalit include washing clothes, road cleaning, digging outfields, catching rats, weaving and cleaning animal carcasses. The data indicate that Dalits have a higher dependency on their traditional occupations rather than other forms of employment such as official jobs. One Dalit research participant explained: *'We are*

heavily dependent on traditional occupation because we donot have an alternative option. We are not highly educated to get government jobs. The local level job such as teaching in school also are taken by other groups. We are not included in the decision- making level’.

The following categories of economic status of the parents of Dalit girls from the sample schools are presented in table 4.7.

Table 4.7. *Economic (subsistence level) Status of Parents of Dalit Girls*

S. N.	Schools	Total parents	12 months (High-income)	6 months (medium-income)	3 months (low-income)	Daily wages
1.	S. M. Second School	12	2 (4.17)	5 (10.43)	2 (4.17)	3 (6.25)
2.	K.R. Sec. School	12	1 (2.08)	3 (6.25)	6 (12.5)	2 (4.16)
3.	S. M. Sec. School	12	1 (2.08)	4 (8.32)	6 (12.5)	1 (2.08)
4.	B.R. Janta Sec.School	12	1 (2.08)	3 (6.25)	7 (14.58)	1 (2.08)
Grand Total		48	5 (10.42)	15 (31.25)	21 (43.75)	7 (14.58)

Source: Field survey date, 2013

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage and the numbers outside the brackets show the number of parents. The months 12 to 6 indicate the sufficiency of food for the family from their agricultural land.

S.M. = Sohani-Mujela, K.R. =Kuwa Rampur, S.M. = Saraswati Model
B.R.= Belahi-Rajauia.

Table 4.7 shows that out of 48 parents, only a few (10.42%) could produce sufficient food from their field for 12 months and the rest suffered from food scarcity. Also, the above table shows that 14.58 percent parents did not have any land of their own and thus they depended only on daily wages.

Parents’ lower socio-economic status influences their children's schooling (Hornby, 2011) because they are less involved, less informed, and more likely to have problems associated with language, communication, level of education as well as

caste. Almost all parents agreed that their socio-economic status is influencing their engagement in children's schooling. According to them, parents with better status have higher chance of participation in children's schooling, whereas the low status parents have less possibility to be engaged in children's schooling. It was perhaps due to the fact that school generally invites those parents who have higher social prestige considering their contributing capability to schools. Similarly, the parents with low status, generally, have to engage themselves in day to day work to earn money.

A parent shared his experience as: *'I have 6 members in family, and most of them are unemployed, we (husband and wife) have to work daily to feed the whole family'*. It indicates that the lower socio-economic status families have no option but to go to work every day for their survival. In such situation, they usually remain absent or are unable to support school's activities. However, all families with poor financial status and doing hard labor along with lower education should not be blamed. These families could have good parental engagement and learning environment at home. Supporting this, a Dalit girl participant shared her experience as:

'My father works as a laborer in a construction site and my mother works in a field for whole day, seven days a week. They both are illiterate but my father checks all the copies page by page to see whether there is a cross sign by teacher with red ink, and if not found any, says 'thanks 'xori' (daughter)' whereas my mother teaches me to sing a song, tells stories, and shares her past experiences'.

She further added: *' My mother always visits school upon their invitation and she asks about my performance with the teacher '*.

Similarly, the following words of another head teacher reflects this student's sentiments:

'Most of the parents who belong to higher socio-economic status are more engaged in their children's learning because they can provide learning materials compared to the parents from lower economic background. Parents with lower incomes often work long hours where they have less time to get engaged in their children's schooling. Generally, schools organize events in daytime and working parents are busy in their work during day time. And, parents with lower caste such as Dalits are also less likely to involve themselves in school's events due to their self humiliation' (Field notes).

All parents who participated in FGD agreed that occupational status and level of earning were the influencing factors of their children's schooling. It was believed that parents with high *socio-economic status are more involved in their children's school work than parents from low socio-economic status* (FGD).

A Dalit girl shared her experience, *'My parent's quarrel each evening concerning their earning and expenditure disturbs my study at home. I am not comfortable with my study at home when they quarrel'*. Likewise, a head teacher expressed his views that parental involvement in their girls schooling can be affected by their socio-economic condition. Furthermore, he added that parent's income level also affects the level of their involvement.

The above discussion clearly indicated that poverty has affected Dalit girls' schooling. Parental involvement in children's schooling is multi-faceted. Some parents have been scheduling issues that make attending meetings between parents and teachers possible. Others like low income parents feel that teachers make them uncomfortable. A teacher shared his experience saying, *'Parent-teacher relationship was established early in the academic session where parents know that they are welcome in the school'*. Some parents, however, were more at risk for low

engagement in children's schooling because of poverty, speaking only their mother tongue, and being only literate. A parent, who participated in FGD, offered his perspective on why some parents might be less engaged, *'In my experience, many of our parents are very much engaged in their own lives, their own occupations, their own problems. However, I still believe that parents do care, but some are better equipped and well-off'*.

Poor financial status of parents was thus found to be a challenge for their engagement in Dalit girls' schooling because they could not afford the school fees (though it was free, schools were charging in the name of game fee, exam fee, library fee, computer fee, extra subject i.e. English fee etc) and they could not even buy the learning materials for their girls. Most illiterate parents have lower social status in an intellectual circle and their low level of education was hampering their engagement due to lack of capacity to support their children's learning.

The researcher also categorized the status of Dalit girls' parents according to their 'educational status' as presented in table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8. *Educational Status of Parents of Dalit Girls*

S. N.	School's name	Total parents	Illiterate	Literate	Primary level	SLC pass	+2/PCL
1.	Sohani-Mujelia Secondary School	12	9 (18.75)	1 (2.08)	1 (2.08)	1(2.08)	-
2.	Kuwa-Rampur Secondary School	12	8 (16.66)	2 (4.16)	1 (2.08)	-	1 (2.08)
3.	Saraswati Model Secondary School	12	9 (18.75)	3 (6.25)	-	-	-
4.	Shree Rajaul Janta Secondary School	12	9 (18.75)	1 (2.08)	1 (2.08)	2 (4.16)	-
Grand Total		48	35 (72.92)	7 (14.68)	3 (6.25)	2 (4.16)	1 (2.08)

Source: Field survey date, 2013

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage and the numbers outside the brackets show the number of parents.

It is interesting to note from the above table 4.8 that majority of Dalit girls' parents (72.92%) were illiterate and only a few (2.08 percent) had SLC and +2/PCL pass degrees. This naturally indicates that very few of them had access to higher education. The schooling practice of the Dalit girls can be easily estimated from this low literacy levels of their parents.

The low level of educational status of parents was found to be another influencing factor of Dalit girl students' schooling. A teacher reported his experience on parental engagement in their girl students' literacy as:

'Illiterate parents mostly either avoided to participate in the school events or if participated, seated as passive listeners in school events. They never even open their mouth till the event ends, whereas the literate parents look for sitting in Dias or in front of the program with an intention of giving speech'.

It indicates that parents with lower educational background are less likely to participate in discussion or interaction. Likewise, a parent, who participated in FGD, reported,

'I believe that I would be the least knowledgeable person in the meeting because I am illiterate, but others were SLC passed and they definitely know better than me. Thus, I used to be a good listener rather than a speaker'.

The above case indicates that illiterate parents hesitate to put their ideas during meetings. Further, an illiterate parent added his experience:

'Once I was attending a meeting where the head teacher asked me for signature. I showed my thumb to put 'lyapche' (finger print), but other participants began to 'otha lapryauna'(gesture with twisted lips) which forced me to be very introvert in my life, and believed that level of education is one of the best means to determine one's social prestige'.

These types of 'negative experiences' of the parents lead them towards less engagement in children's learning. Another teacher in this connection said. *'If parents have low or no education, they have problems in assisting their children with homework. Even when such parents attend school events they are hesitant to take part in decision making because they feel they have nothing valuable to offer'*. However, there is no guarantee that parents with better education status may engage themselves in children's schooling related activities. A teacher further pointed out about educated parent's involvement as: *'One of our parents is working as a head teacher with M.A. in a nearby Plus Two school, but he never visits us during school events related to literacy activities even upon humble request, because he supposes himself to be a superior person.*

A teacher added that parents with low self-efficacy are more likely to avoid contact with teachers. Therefore, illiterate parents may be less involved in children's learning because they do not feel self-confident to support their children. Besides, parents with higher level of education have more attendance in the meetings organized in school. Such parents talk more about school's issues. They are also more involved in their children's work, because they know about the learning requirements and can set high expectations for their children. Therefore, the educational background of the parents was found affecting their engagement in girls schooling.

Almost all parents and their daughters who participated in FGD and the head teacher as well as teachers who were interviewed agreed that the parents with better educational background have greater involvement in children's schooling activities, and they understand the importance of encouraging their children to do well academically. Parents with low or no educational background have less engagement

in children's schooling activities. Therefore, parent's educational background was found to be one of the most affecting factors in their girls schooling.

As the researcher also made an investigation into the social status of parents, it could not be expected to be high as the educational status is tied with this. Most of them were found to have been ignored in decision making with their less participation in vital social relations like SMC, PTA, school discipline committees and the like. As they had less moral power and strength to raise their voice, they suffered deprivation at different levels including the social rights. Some of them were found not to be even aware of educational benefits and even if they had good source of income, they spent their earnings on drinking, gambling and playing cards instead of investing in education.

The lower participation of Dalit and domination of the higher caste in the decision-making process was also confirmed by other researches (Gilmour & Fisher, 1991; Shrestha & McManus, 2007). Shrestha and McManus (2007) find that 'wealthy and higher caste people (i.e. elites) have captured the decision-making and implementation powers, resulting in inequitable decision-making processes and distribution of outcomes'. As mentioned by the research participants, *"Dalits are very few in the local community development committees, and the local elites (high social status, wealthier and educated) dominate local decision-making processes. The main reason is Dalits' lower socio-economic condition"*.

As the Dalit parents are poor, their girls suffer from the poor economic status of their parents. Not only the parents but also their daughters thus are victimized by poverty with its dire consequences becoming more visible in education. In this context, an article "Public education in Nepal: Inequality problems" (Wagley, 2014) published in 'The Himalayan Times' on January 3, 2014 states, "The parents of

millions of children go to work but what they earn is not adequate to sustain their families on a daily basis. Many of them do not have land or other fixed property. So, how can we assume that the children of these families do better in schools?" The high dropout rate of children in our public schools is the result of these prime factors.

Research has shown that parents play a vital role in making decision on education of their children and that most parents support their children to receive education equivalent to or higher levels than their own. Parental role thus can have positive impact on enrollment of children and progression of their children beyond secondary levels (Eve Malmquist, ed. 1992). The case of the Dalit girls cannot be an exception.

Promotion, Repetition and Dropout at Basic Education Level

Nepal has made achievements in basic education in terms of access. However, there are still some challenges as about four percent of the school age children are still out of school. They belong to the hard core group families and communities like Dalits. It is a major challenge to bring them into the system. The pass rate of SLC examination is far behind the target set by the SSRP. Quality and achievement level at school education is not so satisfactory as some of the major challenges of SSRP are still lurking in the education system: mainstreaming OSC, teacher management, capacity development for implementing ICT, ensuring the quality of school construction and participation of community in construction, ensuring the minimum enabling conditions in all schools with child friendly environment (MoE, 2014).

The GER at basic level is in descending trend over the past few years. The NER in the past three years was continuously increasing but it started decreasing in 2013. This decrease in NER at basic level has occurred due to the fall in NER at

lower secondary level. The data shows that there are 13.3 percent basic education age group children who are still out of school. This suggests that more efforts should be made by GoN to ensure basic education for these children (DoE, 2013). GoN through SSRP has made immense efforts to improve quality education. Quality is an overarching term, which is linked with all the components of SSRP. Activities and priorities in ASIP/AWPB are directed towards enhancing quality in education. While analyzing other components, quality aspects are also dealt with. The indicators related to internal efficiency of basic education systems show below in table 4.9 the achievements made so far.

Table 4.9. *Achievement Indicators of Basic Education System*

Indicators	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Repetition rate grade 1	26.5	22.6	21.3	19.9	17.5
Dropout rate grade 1	9.9	8.3	7.9	7.7	7.1
Promotion rate grade 1	63.5	69.1	70.7	72.5	75.4
Repetition rate grade 5	6.7	5.7	5.4	5.3	5.3
Dropout rate grade 5	7.4	6.5	6.2	6	4.5
Promotion rate grade 5	85.8	87.8	88.4	88.7	90.2
Dropout rate primary level	6.5	6	5.4	5.2	4.7
Promotion rate primary level	79.1	81.9	83.1	84.2	85.5
Repetition rate primary level	14.4	12.1	11.5	10.6	9.8
Promotion rate grade 6-8	-	-	-	-	89.4
Repetition rate grade 6-8	-	-	-	-	4.9
Dropout rate grade 6-8	-	-	-	-	5.7

Source: DoE, Flash I, 2013-14.

The above table 4.9 shows that the repetition rates in grades one and five are in increasing order whereas grade one repetition has been reduced significantly from 26.5 percent in 2009 to 17.5 percent in 2013. It shows that promotion in these grades has increased continuously as the promotion rate in grade one has increased from 63.5

percent in 2009 to 75.5 percent in 2013. The dropout rate has also been reduced from 9.9 percent in 2009 to 7.1 percent in 2013.

According to Flash I, 2013-14 the survival rate to grade five and eight students has reached 85.4 percent and 73.3 percent respectively. The survival rate of grade five and grade eight children by sex over the period 2013-17 has been shown in table 4.10.

Table 4.10. *Trend on Survival Rate to Grade 5 and 8 by Gender*

Students	Survial Rates to Grade 5			Survial Rates to grade 8		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
2013	86.2	84.3	85.3	73.3	70.1	71.7
2014	87.5	86.5	87.0	76.0	73.3	74.6
2015	87.9	87.1	87.5	77.4	75.9	76.6
2016	87.2	86.6	87.0	76.2	75.2	75.7
2017	89.3	87.3	88.3	77.7	77.1	77.4

Source: Flash I-II, Report 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017.

The above table 4.10 shows the trend of survival rate to grade five by gender during the period of school year 2013-17. In particular, the average survival rate to grade five in all school years was higher for girls than the boys. Similarly, the table also presents the trend of survival rate to grade eight by gender during the period of school year 2013-17. The average survival rates in 2013 and 2016 are 71.7 percent and 75.7 percent respectively. The rate has improved steadily and reached 75.7 percent with 76.2 percent for girls and 75.2 percent for boys but there is a slight decrease as compared to the school year 2015. Although, the survival rates have been improved, it again reveals that the outputs against the inputs provided at the basic level are very low as compared to the primary level (Consolidated Report, 2017-18).

The improvements have been the results of grant supports to schools provided to implement their school improvement plans (SIPs), free textbooks, scholarships, per

child funding (PCF) teacher support, mid-day meal program and implementation of continuous assessment system (CAS) over the years.

Trends of Promotion, Repetition and Dropout at Basic Level. Promotion, repetition and dropout are key indicators to determine the system's efficiency in terms of providing children's access, retention and completion of education. The trend of promotion, repetition and dropout at basic level over the period 2013-17 is given in table 4.11 (For details, see- Appendices - P.352). Table 4.11 shows the flow rates of student in the school year from 2013-17 for the basic level. The table illustrates that the grade wise progression of students in all grades has improved significantly since 2013. These flow rates show the status of internal efficiency of students as well as the overall effectiveness of inputs provided. The table illustrates that out of the total students enrolled in the school year 2016-17 in grade one, 82.5 percent was promoted to grade two, there by restoring an increase. Furthermore, 13.9 percent repeated grade one in the current school year 2013-17, and 3.6 percent dropped out of grade one, which is a significant decrease compared to 4.8 percent that dropped out in the previous years. Also, the grade wise student flow rates at primary level has restored a moderate positive trend, which is continued at upper basic level. At overall basic level, this is specially encouraging except school year 2016-17. The temporary decrease in promotion and increase in repetition and dropout in the year 2016-17 has been found to be caused due to the effects of the earthquake and also, the effects of the political unrest specially in the Terai districts, as most of the schools were closed for longtime, which caused low attendance of the students and also shortened their learning opportunities (Consolidated report, 2017-18).

The aforementioned issues, situations and prevailing scenario pose major challenges to government of Nepal. The researcher has shown the prevailing situation

of sample schools regarding the rate of promotion, repetition and dropout of Dalit students at basic level in the table 4.12 (For details, see- Appendices - P.353). Table 4.12 focuses on the rate of promotion, repetition and dropout of Dalit students at basic level. The number of Dalit students who were promoted in the sample schools was 1418, 1234 and 996 in 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively. The number of Dalit girls who were promoted was 662 in 2009/10, 609 in 2010/11 and 503 in 2011/12. In the case of Dalit girls, the table shows an increasing trend which was 46.7 percent in 2009/2010, 49.3 percent in 2010/11 and 50.5 percent in 2011/12. The number of students who had repeated the same class in the sample schools was 126, 103 and 68 in 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively which shows significant decrease in repetitions since 2009/10. The table shows 18.3 percent and 33.9 percent decrease in repetition in 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively. Similarly, the number of girls who had repeated the class was 60, 55 and 41 in 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively. This also shows a gradual decline of 8.3 percent and 25.4 percent in the number of repetition of Dalit girls in the school years 2010/11 and 2011/12. In the same way, the dropout rate of students in the sample schools was 12, 50 and 6 in 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively. Thus, the table shows a decrease in the dropout of Dalit students in the sample schools.

CHAPTER V

Schooling Practices

This chapter mainly focuses on the schooling practices and challenges of Dalit girls schooling at basic level education. The practices are related to background of schooling, parental expectation, support and schooling practices, participation in ECA and CCA, tutorial support at school and home, presence of Dalit female teachers and impacts of schooling. Each of these components is analyzed in the following paragraphs under respective heading.

Schooling Practices

Schooling practice is an educational enterprise which involves students and school staffs in direct collaboration. It is the formal way of educating children in preschools, schools and higher education. It usually involves teachers instructing students in a formal curriculum or syllabus comprised of distinct subjects. But, one can be educated without formal arrangements by reading books and learning from experience. Ivan Illich is one of the most famous critics of the modern institutions, including the school (Illich, 1973). How does schooling as an institution regulate people's lives with what effects? We explore a number of practices of schools and preschools and discuss how this regulates students and teachers according to socially and politically desirable skills, knowledge, attributes and values.

Concept of schooling. School is an agency where a learner achieves the goals of education with people responsible for contributing to the accomplishment of this intention of the learner. The key roles of the teachers are to create and facilitate proper learning environment in the classrooms and schools so as to help the learners to get their needs, interests and expectations fulfilled. Individual difference in the

classroom is also a key issue to be dealt with by them. Learners are different by nature, age, intellectual competence, skills, attitude, aptitude and the like as they are from different socio-cultural and economic background. Teachers have to apply various techniques and methods to help them gain the defined objectives and address their psychological and emotional disposition. Apart from this, various activities like extra-curricular activities and co-curricular activities need to be conducted to enhance students' progress and to help their inherent potentiality come out so that they can be good citizens in the future.

Schooling practices in this study are considered to include social demeanor (relation), teachers' behavior, students' participation in curricular and extracurricular activities, impact of schooling, tutorial support at school and presence of female teachers. Schools, therefore, are expected to address various issues and challenges that are equally related to the Dalit girl students as well. They are neglected and do not get due respect from the society and this neglect may continue to creep into the schools as well if the school family is not aware of it. The girls themselves are not aware and conscious enough to raise voice against this neglect of their rights. Proper schooling, however, is expected to be responsive to this issue. Unawareness of this issue further pushes them to remain far away from the right and access to education.

However, the impact of modern mass media and several other factors is beginning to unfold, and some Dalit girls have started coming out of the four walls of their homes for the cause of schooling. Though this has been one of their bold steps, their performance in the schools is below the expected standard. They are living amidst various obstacles that inhibit them from obtaining their goals and also influencing their schooling practice. Student's academic achievement was also found as an influencing factor of parental involvement in Dalit girls' schooling. Most of the

parents agreed that if a child holds higher learning achievements, it encourages them to provide further support, but low performance of their children discourages them to actively engage in their schooling. A parent expressed his frustration concerning his engagement saying *'I provided a month long tutorial support to my daughter, but she scored lower than pass mark'*. It indicates that student's low performance also influences parental engagement in their schooling.

Improving quality and learning is likely to be more central to the post 2015 global development framework. Such a shift is vital to improve educational opportunities for the 250 million children who are unable to read, write or do basic Mathematics. In some contexts, the presence of female teachers is crucial to attract girls to school and improve their learning outcomes. Yet women teachers are lacking in some countries with high gender disparity in enrollment. Teachers need good quality learning materials to be effective but many do not have access to textbooks. Poor physical infrastructure is another problem for students in many poor countries. Children are often squeezed into overcrowded classrooms, particularly those from the disadvantaged groups in early grades. One in four schools has a toilet, and only one of three of those toilets is reserved for teachers' use. Disadvantaged children may already be out of the school system, and therefore unlikely to have reached minimum learning standards. Therefore, information on the quality of education systems should be included in the assessments (GMR, 2013/14). The Dalit girl students' case, in this connection, cannot remain an exception.

Whenever people talk about equity in education, they think it is related to gender equity. Basically, in public education, countries around the world have raised their voices for girls' education, women empowerment and female literacy. Achieving gender equality is still a cry throughout the world. It does not even focus

on women who have never seen the schools. To be more specific, there are two major challenges before the government. Firstly, the government has to bring everyone to the mainstream of education. Secondly, it needs to provide equitable opportunity not only for access to education but also to other facilities. One should not forget social equity while talking about equitable access to education (GMR, 2013/14).

Most of the Dalit children do not have enough to eat at home nor do their parents have enough money to send their children to schools by purchasing their basic learning materials. On one hand, basic education is being made compulsory for each and every citizen. On the other hand, Dalit parents are not able to send their all children to school. This situation gives birth to various questions regarding equity. Factors like parental economic status, balanced diet and health facilities, learning environment and time at home, parents' support to children at home, school workloads as well as children's domestic chores, all have direct impact on children's schooling.

The ignorance of parent's tutorial support to the girl students was another affecting factor of parental involvement in their girls' schooling. Perhaps the children little trusted their parents due to their lower level of education as well as profession. A Dalit girl student shared her ideas saying *'I rejected parent's support in doing my homework because they are not familiar with the text and if father sits together with me, I felt his smell too'*. It was perhaps due to the hard work in day time and no time to take shower in the evening, they have bad sweating smell.

A teacher said that some students resisted their parents, because *they feel that parents do not have necessary knowledge to assist them with school work*. The interviewee children said that parents have lower capabilities. A Dalit girl student

said, *'Many times it was found that the homework was full of error but the parent supported such homework'*. A teacher also supported this version of the student by saying that *'Most of the parents have lower capability to teach their children at home'*. It clearly indicates that majority of children had not trusted their parents regarding their capability to provide tutorial support at home. In such situation, children possibly would not ask for parental support.

Similarly, almost all parents who participated in FGD were found busy in their day to day works. They usually leave home around 8:00 am in the morning and return back home around 6:00 pm in the evening from their work. Such situation will permit parents to have little time for their children's learning due to their involvement in labor intensive work. The students also experienced that their parents were usually unable to support them due to *'tiredness'* as most of them were doing physically hard labor. A girl student expressed her experience in these words: *'My father advised me to read aloud in the evening and I used to ask word meanings of difficult words only with my father without delay, but I could not get the answer because he was already on the bed and asleep (snoring)'*.

Another girl student shared her experience as: *'I wake up early in the morning, and just after tea, I start reading seeking help from my parents but both father and mother are already engaged in their daily business and therefore, I do not have a chance to ask them for support'*.

Most of the parents were found doing hard work daily even on Saturdays, all seven days a week, to earn their livelihood. The main purpose of their hard work is to solve 'hand to mouth' problem for two square meals a day. As they continuously work for at least nine hours a day, they become so tired in the evening that they go to bed just after dinner without being much helpful for their children.

The Dalit parents do not dream of a better future of their daughters through better education. They are uneducated and victims of dire poverty, and therefore, are reluctant to send their children to school. Instead, they send their children for collecting grass, taming animals, washing clothes, cleaning other's houses, working in other's houses and field etc. Small children, instead of going to school, are engaged in caring siblings and domestic chores rather than doing home assignment or getting tutorial support at home.

At school, girls, especially Dalit girls, are being provided nominal scholarships, and textbooks are not available in time. In the name of girls' scholarships in schools, girls from richer families are served more than girls from Dalit families. Another challenge for Dalit girls is that they cannot express their problems such as menstruation or diseases related to women due to the lack of female Dalit teachers in their school. There is vast gap in life style between Dalit girls and other girls who belong to higher advanced families. The major causes of such a huge gap are: poverty, illiteracy, superstition, and negative attitude of Dalit parents, traditional thoughts and life style. To be more specific, poverty, illiteracy, superstition, and negative attitude of Dalit parents, traditional thoughts and life style are the major challenges for Dalit girls. As Dalits are backward and poor, they do not have their participation in any kind of decision-making process. Some NGOs and INGOs are trying their level best to uplift the life style of Dalits to ensure their access to school education (GMR 2013/14).

After the reinstatement of democracy in the 1990s, registration of NGOs significantly increased, which was not possible in the autocratic panchayat system. Except for the Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO), all the other Dalit NGOs were founded after 1990. Among those NGOs, the Dalit NGO

Federation (DNF), NNDSWO, the Jagaran Media Centre (JMC), the FEDO, the Dalit Welfare Organization (DWO) and the Samata Foundation are active in raising Dalit issues at the national and international levels as well as implementing needs-based programmes in targeted districts, as mentioned by one research participant. Another research participant further highlights the importance of Dalit NGOs for Dalit rights saying: *'Dalit NGOs are playing a vital role to raise the concern of Dalit. These NGOs are also playing vital role in advocating the issues of Dalit'*.

Parental expectations, support and schooling practices. Parents of the sample schools had their expectations from schools and their children. Nearly all the parents had similar opinions and views regarding their expectations. Almost all parents who participated in FGD expressed their various expectations from schools. (i) asking and allowing parents to observe teacher's teaching, (ii) observing their children's classroom work, (iii) convening parent meetings to discuss the importance of schooling, (iv) parenting education classes, (v) identifying how parents are expected to assist schools, (vi) showing parents how to assist their children with reading at home, (vii) giving parents the freedom to visit schools at convenient times, (viii) creating welcoming environment for parents in schools, (ix) recognizing parental initiatives, (x) following the community mobilization guidelines, and (xi) effective communication between home and school. However, in practices, very few schools were found practicing these activities.

One of the parent participant opined like: *"They wanted to educate their children despite their poverty as they did not want their children to be like them both socially and educationally by sending their children to school, they wanted to build their bright future"*. They expected the schools to teach their children good manners and behaviors without any discrimination. As their financial condition was very poor,

the other research participants demanded, '*The concerned people, authority and agencies to manage and provide their children bicycles, day meal, uniforms, stationeries, and the schools, not to take any kind of fees*'. They further expected that the schools should provide financial support to them to meet or compensate for the opportunity cost as they sent their children to schools instead of sending them to work in the field. They wanted participation of Dalit people in school management committee (SMC), PTA and suggested to maintain transparency in scholarship distribution.

The parents, despite their poverty, showed their courage to send their children to schools. Some parents wanted their children to learn good manners, acquire quality education and live a disciplined life. They hoped that their daughters, with school education, would have a bright and better life after their marriage, and they would take part in all kinds of development activities in the society. Dalit girls would be able to express their desires and opinions openly and boldly anywhere. They would also help their parents to solve the domestic matters and financial problems at home. They would develop good quality manners required for living a good life. They would learn about their rights and fight for those rights in the future if needed. They would also learn about the ways of keeping themselves healthy. They could be free, frank, open, bold and direct. They could express themselves and fight against all kinds of social evils and discrimination in the society. They would get good jobs and be economically independent. They would be able to write their names with pride and get government jobs. Thus all of the parents wanted their children to have better life than they have for themselves.

Most of the Dalit parents who participated in the FGD reported that they visited the teachers to discuss their daughter's learning under these conditions: (i)

when called by teachers, (ii) to collect assessment report, (iii) visited the teacher during meeting time, and (iv) meeting the teacher during result sharing. These practices were however, carried out in negligible number. Also, almost all parents in the FGD realized the need to increase parental engagement in their children's learning under these requirements: (i) teacher should perform as a role model for the learner, (ii) collaboration and co-work with both parents and students, (iii) inspirational and motivational role to be played by teachers, (iv) extra care for needy students, (v) friendly behavior with students and parents, (vi) active listening to parents, (vii) counseling /orientation to parents concerning home learning environment and supportive system, (viii) prior communication in the convenient time for the parents, and (ix) equal and respectful behavior with parents.

Parents also expected the provision of scholarship assistance and distribution of books, bags and stationeries to their children. They expressed their dissatisfaction over the lack of good toilet, sports materials, extra-curricular activities and libraries in school.

Participation in CCA and ECA activities. Classroom activities alone are not found to be sufficient and fulfilling the aims and objectives of education. In the present context, learners' demands are increasing day by day. That is why learners need to be given the opportunity to participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities that supplement and complement the learning of the students. According to the present curriculum, these two things are necessary to be addressed by the teachers to respond to the issues of inclusiveness, equity and quality, life related skills, cooperative learning, reflective thinking, learning by doing etc. Extra-curricular and co-curricular activities should be conducted side by side along with teaching-learning

activities to support, enhance and address the demand of learners, school, society and ultimately, the nation.

Participation of Dalit girls in CCA and ECA activities, as informed by the head teachers, teachers, students and parents, was encouraged by the schools by conducting related activities to facilitate their skills. Both research participants i.e. the head teachers and teachers mentioned their views, *'They were found to have encouraged the Dalit girls to participate in co- and extra-curricular activities like games and sports, dancing, music, quiz contest, story writing, essay writing, poems writing, drawing, paintings, gardening, speech programs and others'*.

Some teachers were found motivating the Dalit girls for taking part in different ECA and CCA groups according to their interest. Meanwhile, few teachers were found not paying attention to ECA and CCA and not getting the students to involve in such activities. Students were however much interested to participate in co- and extra-curricular activities as they underscored such activities being vital for their learning. They could build good rapport among the students and between teachers and students as well. The head teacher and teachers expressed their views, *'Dalit and non-Dalit students would also have friendly, healthy and close relationship through such activities. Moreover, their participation in ECA and CCA could abolish all types of discriminatory practices from the schools'*. Parents also wanted to have their girls actively participate in such activities for confidence building and equality. Almost all parents participated in FGD predicted that, *'Their daughters would be qualified, intelligent, disciplined and socialized as and when they participate in ECA and CCA'*.

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities can benefit the students, both boys and girls equally, because they can help them to be recognized, to get value, to feel protection, and to co-operate each other. At the same time, these activities help them

to get satisfaction from social needs as they encourage them for participation achieving value, discipline, self-confidence, morality etc. Through these activities, students can fulfill their needs for adulthood as they help them to fulfill social, economic, educational, and creative life needs including the need for entertainment. These activities help them develop physically through exercise, dance, athletics and special qualities which cannot be fulfilled only through theoretical knowledge like honesty, truth, justice, obedience, feeling of co-operation, good habits and behaviors, and self-confidence (CDC, 2015).

So far the organizations and theory of CCA and ECA are concerned, the school is seen as a crucial factor to play dominant role for the all-round development of the students. Sampled schools were found conducting different intra-class debate competitions and extra activities on annual sports day, school foundation day, and parent's day annually. According to head teachers and teachers, *'Through these activities, students can be socialized and taught democratic behaviors'*. The sports teachers informally expressed their views as, *'ECA and CCA can be conducted by school considering several factors in a planned way: selection of the activities with specified objectives, rules and regulations, upgrading the programs, providing equal opportunity according to the student's capacity, interest level, and adopting criteria for talent hunt, inspiration, guidance and counseling services including record management'*. In short, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are considered inevitable and compulsory for all schools to provide training on psychological, recreational and social aspects of citizenship including educational, physical, moral and cultural aspects (CDC, 2015).

Broadly speaking, extra-curricular activities and co-curricular activities are considered to be the gateway to life for the students. Schools should try their level

best to transfer the theoretical knowledge into practical behaviors and to utilize those things in real life. Schools should also motivate the teachers to manage these activities for the students so that they can take great interest in those activities. Those activities provide trainings to develop 4Hs (Head, Heart, Hand and Health) in the form of qualitative, behavioral and practical education as important competencies of the school. For this very reason also, good school, competent students, qualified teachers should be utilized in every way for ECA and CCA (CDC, 2015).

Tutorial support at school and home. In the case of assessment, classroom-based assessment can help teachers identify, monitor and support the learners at risk of low achievement. Assessment techniques designed to provide immediate feedback to the pupils and teachers can enhance pupil's learning. Targeted additional support is vital to helping children master the basic literacy and numeracy skills, they need for future success. Assessment allows the responsible teacher to determine the areas in which their students are lacking. As a result, they focus on the subjects like Mathematics or English and try to cover the gaps. This is a great help. Because of the assessments we do, our children are less worried before examinations. Their course is covered, their preparation is good and the blunders are minimized. Classroom-based assessments can provide quick results by giving feedback on group progress and on individual pupils to help in diagnosing difficulties. Combined with additional instructional support, assessments can make a real difference for the poor learners. Teachers need classroom assessment enrollments that are clearly linked to instruction, are relevant and simple to use, and can assess performance even among the learners with little or no ability/skills. Students can make considerable gains if they are offered more opportunities to monitor their own learning. Activity based learning that builds on innovative, multi-grade teaching methods can be developed.

However, in poor learning environments with large classes, as is often the case in community schools, using assessment to generate feedback and promote active learning is quite challenging (GMR, 2013/14). In such a situation, the Dalit girls remain shadowed, their participatory role often being ignored. Thus, assessment based tutorial support both at home and school can help uplift the learning status of these needy girls.

Some Dalit parents were providing necessary stationeries such as books, copy, pencil, eraser, bags, sharpners, uniform, shoes etc. to their children. The conscious parents would sit with their children during their study time to observe and encourage them for better learning. A literate research participant shared his view as *“I love sitting with my daughter during her reading so that I would be able to solve the problems immediately upon her incorrect reading”*.

There are some technologies that have the potential to support classroom teaching. Interactive radio and television programs can lead to improvement in learning outcomes for the marginalized and disadvantaged groups. Computers and portable electronic devices can supplement- but not replace- classroom teaching as long as teachers are trained to make the best use of the technology available. If new technology is to have wider benefits for learning among the disadvantaged groups like Dalit girls, learners need better access to information and communication technology within and outside school. Interactive radio programming is an enduring and successful example of the use of technology to deliver basic education to the underserved groups. Dalit girls lack such support either which could have helped to raise their learning status (GMR, 2013/14).

Almost all Dalit parents and their girl students who participated in FGD and head teachers and teachers, who were interviewed, jointly agreed regarding effective

communication to increase parental support in their children's learning through these measures: (i) *build trust between parents and the teacher*, (ii) *listen to parents*, (iii) *use several means of communication, such as official letters, SMS, phone calls, and parent-teacher meetings*, and (iv) *establish regular communication with parents*.

Effective communication was stressed particularly by parents to overcome the situation concerning less parental engagement in school activities and their children. Further, they suggested to the schools these ideas: (i) *send invitation letter writing the name of both parents, agendas/issues prior to at least a day before*, (ii) *communicate with parents in straightforward way*, (iii) *use simple sentences avoiding 'jargon'*, (iv) *ensure that all parents have invitation letter or message, and easily readable*, (v) *ask parents to share their concerns and opinions about children's learning, and address those concerns*. School may communicate with the parents using various means of communication, such as official letters, SMS, and making phone call concerning learning events. It helps for parental participation in events such as literacy events, reading campaign and parent-teacher meeting.

In poor countries like Nepal, the availability of information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure remains a crucial consideration because schools lack the internet access or even electricity supply. So, teachers remain central to curriculum delivery, particularly for the low achievers needing additional support (GMR, 2013/14).

In order to foster students' achievement and promotion rate, remedial instruction and tutorial classes are essential. Tutorial support is the extra support provided to the students for increasing learning achievement. If students lack something, they need support from the head teachers, class teachers or subject teachers as well as parents. Tutorial support at school or home fulfills the gap

between students' pace of learning and teacher's instruction. Thus, tutorial support at home or school helps to bring the students to the mainstream of learning achievement. Specifically, Dalit girls need tutorial support both in school and at home as they are weak, engaged in domestic chores, and not so conscious about their study. So, to bring Dalit girls to the mainstream education, tutorial support either in school or at home is essential. This is observed as a reality to improve the learning status of these girls and the school has to make extra effort for this cause due to unavailability of such support at home (GMR, 2013/14).

Almost all Dalit girl students of FGD expressed that they were more positive about their parents going to school. In such a situation, school needs to shift their mind-sets with regard to how best they can engage parents in school activities as well as change their attitudes towards girls' schooling. Thus, creation of stimulating learning environment in school is a much needed strategy for increasing parental support.

Parents stressed that *'School events must be scheduled in accordance with their convenient time rather than school's time and school needs to communicate effectively with the parents prior to their participation'* so that they would be able to participate in the schooling events in school. Further, they added: *'Teachers must visit struggling student's home for support'* which may support for *maintaining good relationship with parents to work as co-partner*.

Questions based on the tutorial support at school/home were asked to the head teachers, teachers, students and their parents. The questions were asked especially about studying opportunities at home, difficult subject areas and remedial teaching and the extent of parental support. Highlighting the importance of tutorial support, *Teachers' responses were found to be focused on "difficult subject areas and*

remedial teaching through the application of cooperative learning strategies, providing tutorial support to children's learning, providing counseling and guidance services, utilizing local expert resources, coaching and mentoring”.

Regarding tutorial support by parents at home, providing sufficient time to children's learning, helping children explicitly or implicitly to do their home work, giving ample opportunities and services to children for stationeries or other essential goods and allocating or managing special time for study are done rarely by parents, though there were very few parents who did this.

It is seen that only parents or head teachers or teachers cannot provide tutorial support in school or at home. But Dalit girls can benefit from tutorial support from their peers, friends, subject teachers, class teachers, head teachers, most often by their parents and by themselves if the time management is done properly by the schools.

Presence of Dalit female teachers. In the present context, female education is given more priority. There is a provision of 33 percent reservation quota for females in each and every sector of the nation. The majority of teachers still come from the higher-caste groups—Brahmins and Kshatriyas. Only 3.3 percent of teachers at the secondary level and 2.7 percent at the higher secondary level are Dalits, which is the lowest among all caste groups (GoN, 2012). Regarding Dalit female teachers, only 3.9 percent Dalit female teachers have been working in schools at the basic level according to the data provided by CEHRD, 2018. Dalit girls are not in a condition of sharing their internal problems such as puberty, menstruation, gender and sex etc. with the male teachers. Therefore, presence of female teachers in the community schools helps to facilitate easy communication with their girl's students that can contribute to their learning.

The presence of Dalit teachers can provide role models to both Dalit parents and children to make them realise the importance of education. Despite the ninth Government plan (1998-2002) that required that there be one Dalit teacher, the policy was not implemented effectively. If properly implemented, this type of policy could play a vital role creating an inclusive teachers' force in Nepal, and Dalit would benefit from it. Highlighting the Dalit exclusion from the teacher force, one of the participants says, *'Dalit is also excluded in the teaching force. At the local level, the school management committee hires their relative or the person who is affiliated with a political party. There is a higher discrepancy in the local hiring process. The government plan also is not implemented effectively. If the plan is implemented, it would help Dalit to be included in the schools'*.

The reasons behind no appointment of Dalit female teachers are various but the main being they are not highly educated and they have not gained the pre-requisite criteria as trainings, teaching license or another degree for their selection. Thus, ample educational opportunity given to Dalit girls can work as a model for increasing the number of Dalit female teachers in the long run.

Another solution to the problem of teacher deployment is to recruit teachers from within their own communities. Female teachers are vital for girls for increasing their enrollment in school, but women face cultural challenges in seeking work in areas where they are not supported by family members. Dalit communities, most of which are in remote and unsafe areas, there are no female teachers with minimum qualification. Local recruitment of female teachers is also one solution to such extreme inequality (GMR, 2013/14).

Local recruitment has its benefits, such as teachers' greater acceptance of a rural posting and reduced alteration, but some of the most disadvantaged communities

lack competent applicants where access to primary schooling is low. Local recruitment can bring challenges in deploying teachers effectively over the span of their career. Among the several legal provisions, the Education Act, 1971(8th amendment, 2004), is one of the important laws in safeguarding free education for Dalit children. Education by law (2002) has directed community schools to manage free education for poor Dalit, ethnic groups and girls. However, the implementation of the law is not effective as mentioned by the participants: “...*the inclusion of Dalit in school mainly in its school management and teaching force are significant for Dalit because that could motivate Dalit children in school. However, Dalits are rarely included in school management and teaching force*”.

At basic level, the latest flash report 2017/18 shows the number of female teachers in community schools being 89,672 out of 259,420. On the other hand, the number of female teachers teaching in institutional (private) schools was found 27,750 out of 67,300 (CERHD, 2017/18).

Among the teachers teaching at basic level of Nepal, the number of female teachers is seen higher than the number of male teachers in institutional schools. In the same way, the number of female teachers at basic level is seen less than the number of male teachers teaching in community schools. So, the recent (2017/18) data shows a large difference between the male and female teachers teaching in the community schools. In other words, only one-third of female teachers are working in community schools, on the other hand, nearly more than forty-one percent of female teachers are working in institutional (private) schools in Nepal.

The above explanation indicates that participation of female teachers in various types of schools needs to be increased in the sense that they have low participation and low access to education. Number of female teachers should be

increased, particularly female Dalit teachers are to be encouraged to join teaching profession in order to inspire other Dalit girls for their access to, and success in education.

Absence of female teachers in schools can be addressed as a problem through the adoption of a suitable policy that gives priority to Dalit females for their selection to join the teaching profession. Table 5.1 shows the presence of female teachers in the sample schools at basic level.

Table 5.1. *Number of Teachers by Gender and School*

Schools Level	SM			KR			SR			BR		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Primary (1-5)	5	4	9	7	6	13	4	2	6	8	4	12
L.Secondary (6-8)		4	4	1	5	6	1	6	7	1	3	4
Basic Level (1-8)	5	8	13	8	11	19	5	8	13	9	7	16
Total (percentage)	38.5	61.5	100	42.1	57.9	100	38.5	61.5	100	56.3	47.7	100

Source: Field survey date, 2013

Note: F = Female, M= Male, T=Total, SM = Sohani-Mujelia Secondary School, KR= Kuwa Rampur, Secondary School, SR= Saraswati Model Secondary School, BR= Belahi-Rajaul, Janata Secondary School.

The above table 5.1 shows the presence of female teachers in sample schools. The total number of female teachers was found in the four schools to be 5 in SM, 8 in KR, 5 in SR and 9 in BR. The highest number of female teachers was found to be 56 percent and the lowest, 38.5 percent in a school. Though the data shows satisfactory situation regarding the presence of female teachers in the sample schools, the number of female Dalit teachers is only two out of 27 female teachers indicating the sorry plight of the Dalit female teachers in the schools. Table 5.2 presents number of Dalit/Janjati teachers by gender and level.

Table 5.2. *Number of Dalit/Janjati Teachers by Gender and Level*

Schools	Social Groups	Primary Level			Lower Secondary Level			Basic Level		
		Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
SM	Dalit	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1
	Janjati	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	4	4	8	-	4	4	4	8	12
	Total	5	4	9	-	4	4	5	8	13
KR	Dalit	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1
	Janjati	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	7	6	13	1	4	5	8	10	18
	Total	7	6	13	1	5	6	8	11	19
SR	Dalit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Janjati	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	4	2	6	1	6	7	5	8	13
	Total	4	2	6	1	6	7	5	8	13
BR	Dalit	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	2
	Janjati	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	7	4	11	1	3	4	8	6	14
	Total	8	4	12	1	3	4	9	7	16

Source: Field survey date, 2013

Note: F = Female, M= Male, T=Total, SM = Sohani-Mujelia Secondary School, KR = Kuwa Rampur, Secondary School, SR= Saraswati Model Secondary School, BR= Belahi-Rajaul, Janata Secondary School.

As the researcher collected data on the presence of female Dalit teachers in sample schools, separately from primary level to lower secondary level, it was interesting to note that no Janjati (ethnic) teachers were available in these schools. The number of male teachers was higher than that of female teachers. Also, the number of total Dalit female teachers was found only two out of 27 female teachers. In percentage, the number of Dalit female teachers was found to be only 7.4 percent, a negligible share to the Primary level teaching force. Table 5.3 presents the share of Dalit/Janjati teachers in percentage.

Table 5.3. *Share of Dalit and Janjati Teachers (In percentage)*

Social Groups	SM			KR			SR			BR		
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T
Dalit	7.4	-	7.4	-	5.3	5.3	-	-	-	6.3	6.3	12.6
Janjati	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	31.1	61.5	92.6	42.1	52.6	94.7	38.5	61.5	100	50.0	37.4	87.4

Source: Field survey date, 2013

Note: F = Female, M= Male, T=Total, SM = Sohani-Mujelia Secondary School, KR = Kuwa Rampur, Secondary School, SR= Saraswati Model Secondary School, BR= Belahi-Rajaul, Janata Secondary School

The share of Dalit teachers (male and female) to primary teachers was found to be negligible whereas the number of Janjati teachers was zero in the sample schools. The number of Dalit teachers was found to be 7.4 percent in SM, 5.3 percent in KR, 0 percent in SR and 12.6 percent in BR. Similarly, the number of ‘Others’ (Jha, Mishra, Yadav, etc) teachers were 92.6 percent in SM, 94.7 percent in KR, 100 percent in SR and 87.4 percent in BR. From the analysis of the whole data, it can be seen that maximum percentage of Dalit (male and female) teachers in a school was 12.6 percent and the minimum 0 percent. This is indicative of the fact that the number of even Dalit male teachers was very low. Therefore, Dalit male and female candidates need to be given more priority in teacher selection by the schools as well as by the concerned authority of the nation.

Impact of schooling. The world is changing rapidly due to several factors like the level of intelligence, scientific technologies, new inventions and demand of the people, society and nation. This means various changes have to be made in schooling practices as all the aspects related to schooling are to be changed. Changing schooling practices are also related to the return which is sought after the schooling process is over. Schooling changes relate to equality, equity, progress, change in value, skills, behavior, knowledge, attitude, creative thinking etc. After

schooling, students should have self-expressive power and knowledge of different areas of day to day life so that they can spend their life smoothly and meaningfully. They should have the ability to earn their livelihood and change according to their society. Thus, schooling should guarantee the learning of all these activities that prepare the students for their future life (GMR, 2013/14).

Parent's involvement in Dalit girl students learning either at home or in school is the first step to ultimately develop partnership between teachers and parents. Almost all parents who participated in FGD, head teachers and teachers who were interviewed agreed in unison: *'Dalit girl students with engaged parents have their regularity in school, higher self-esteem, and advanced graduation rate'*.

Almost all Dalit parents who participated in FGD were found interested to be engaged in their children's schooling considering their miserable past experiences of life. They have now experienced that their education could have changed their living standard along with social prestige. They had shown keen interest to get engaged in children's schooling due to value of money, social respect, skill development, knowledge building, consequence of uneducated lives, and employment generation/opportunity for better living standard.

Extending girls' education could save many more lives as it is seen that literate mothers are more likely to seek support from a skilled birth attendant. Education plays a major role in controlling diseases. Education keeps hunger away. In this way, education promotes healthy societies by building the foundations of democracy and good governance and raising political participation. Education leads to more engagement in alternative forms of political participation. It promotes tolerance and social cohesion. It helps prevent conflict and heal its consequences. Education is essential for the justice system to function. Education needs to be part of

the solution to global environmental problems. Education improves knowledge and understanding of the environment and promotes environment friendly behavior. So, these benefits of education can be achieved through schooling especially in favor of women who are disadvantaged (GMR, 2013/14) such as Dalit girls.

The researcher had asked two questions to the head teachers and parents of Dalit girls about the significance of education in Dalit girls' life and the changes observed in their life after schooling. The head teachers reported: *'Dalit girls' change in ability to develop their expressive power and their capacity to express themselves in the Nepali language is visible. They were developing the ability to earn their livelihood which had increased mobility in peers and society. They had self-confidence and positive images of self'*. They were bringing their learning into practice in their day to day life by helping their parents to solve simple mathematical problems and participating in social activities.

The parents were happy for changes education brought in their children after schooling. They reported that their girls would get good job opportunity in the future and shape up their life for their betterment. One Dalit (parent) participant of FGDopined,

'Their girls, after education, would marry people of their own choice and interest, get higher education for their better life and develop their social network'.

They had been aware of various things including their rights in the society. They would take part in the group work inside and outside of school premises as they expected. In sum, Dalit girls had been aware of education, potential job opportunities, and self development after schooling. Schooling had undoubtedly brought desirable

impact in their life with confidence and the ability to deliver in their future. The backwardness that they lived with for times unknown was slowly fading away with the changes in the Dalit girls that became visible in their ability to accept and respond to changes.

CHAPTER VI
Challenges of Dalit Girls' Schooling
and
Ways of Mitigating Them

This chapter is about the challenges of Dalit girls' schooling and the ways to be adopted to respond to them. They are discussed in the light of the background the Dalit girls come from and their schooling situation. Challenges to Dalit girls' schooling are related to factors of poor schooling, under marriage/early marriage, parental attitude, poverty situation and provision of mid-day meal, engagement in domestic chores and the ways of mitigating them.

Challenges of Dalit Girls' Schooling

Poverty stands out as a major barrier to schooling of the Dalit girls. Dalit parents are little aware, nearsighted and ignorant enough to foresee the results of education in their daughters' life. Even if the Dalit girls are enrolled in schools, the aim of education is to reinforce their subordination. Patriarchal ideology and a social system makes discrimination against women/girls permeate through the formal system. In this manner, the existing system of education reproduces not only the social class power structure, but also existing gender differences (Eve Malmquest ed., 1992).

Regarding Dalit situation in education, one research participant says that:
'...education at situation of Dalit is still pathetic, and this case is severe in Terai regions of Nepal. There is widespread caste discrimination at school. Dalit girl students are not encouraged properly, and there is no learning environment. There

are certain national and international laws against discrimination and initiative taken to reduce the gap, is indeed not working well'.

Country's targets for improving learning outcomes should pay attention to raising the standards for children from the most disadvantaged groups, whose learning is often weaker. However, many countries do not yet have targets and indicators geared to this, nor a nationally standardized assessment system is in place. Similarly, many factors limit the number of women recruited into teaching, particularly in the disadvantaged areas. There simply may not be enough women educated enough to become teachers, especially in rural communities and among the indigenous and minority populations. More stringent qualification requirements can limit the pool of women to be able to enter teaching, especially those from the disadvantaged groups. The Dalit women teachers are therefore few and far between in overall Nepal, more so in the Terai area.

Challenges to schooling are various in numbers, typically related to poverty, illiteracy, domestic chore, underage marriage, caring siblings, dowry system, malnutrition and lack of proper health counseling. They specifically refer to the reasons for Dalit girls not attending schools, little or no participation in education, challenges faced by them in school, problems related to operation of school. Kunwar (2013) in his thesis, "Lived Experiences of School Dropout of Dalit Boys" stated five types of schooling challenges namely student-centric challenges, teacher-centric challenges, parent-centric challenges, school-centric challenges and caste and culture-centric challenges.

Based on the data obtained from the head teachers, teachers, parents and students regarding challenges to schooling, they are sub-categorized as following:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| (i) Domestic challenges | - | Taming animals, caring siblings, cooking, bringing water from long distance, washing clothes, cleaning rooms. |
| (ii) Agricultural challenges | - | Collecting leaves and firewood, working for others in the field, farming, collecting fodder for cattle etc. |
| (iii) Social challenges | - | Social backwardness, underage marriage, dowry system. |
| (iv) Religious challenges | - | Touchability/untouchability, |
| (v) Parental challenges | - | Poverty, lack of awareness, illiteracy |
| (vi) Academic challenges
(teaching) | - | Teachers' low interest in teaching-learning, discrimination in school, less participation in school's activities, lack of female Dalit teachers |
| (vii) ICT challenges | - | More attention to mobile, TV, film, face book, internet rather than going to schools. |

Regarding the challenges to schooling of Dalit girls at the basic level, the head teachers said, '*Dalit girls' had faced several challenges as the core challenges resulting from domestic and field work, social and religious practices, parental illiteracy and ICT use*'. Similarly, teachers also reported various challenges to the schooling of Dalit girls as being related to schooling for literacy purpose only, no future planning for higher study after completing the basic level education and the inept attitude of parents to stop them from getting higher education for their potential failure to get suitable grooms when they become educated. They also mentioned social pressure on early marriage and dowry system of Dalit girls as another strong barrier.

Regarding the challenges to their schooling, the Dalit girls themselves made it clear that they were the victims of several challenges as lack of transportation, lack of day meal, parental pressure on meeting the opportunity cost for their schooling, lack of residential arrangements, school's demand for examination fees, tuition fees and admission fees along with developmental charge. Moreover, schools were not

providing school bags, stationeries, and they lacked separate girl's toilets including the lack of Dalit girl friendly environment as the other challenges.

A Dalit girl participant expressed her challenges of schooling in these words:

I passed class five from primary school and came to this school. It takes more than half an hour to reach here as there is no transportation facility. I have lots of problems like unavailability of stationeries, extra books, school's demand for unnecessary fees except textbooks and nominal scholarship given by school. I do not have tuition facility due to which I face problems while doing my homework. I have to sit in back bench and rarely get chance in extra activities like quiz contest and debate. There is no proper toilet, wash basin and canteen in school. Therefore, I feel much difficulty at school.

Dalit parents also reported several challenges to the schooling of their daughters as, *'unsatisfactory teaching process, lack of administrative support, school's expectation to take fees, lack of transparency in scholarship distribution process, irregularity in distributing textbooks, and lack of resources to meet opportunity cost'*. They also claimed, *'schools were ignoring the Dalit girls for their failure to pay developmental fees and canceling their admission, and no participation of Dalits in school management committee remained to be the main challenges to the schooling of their daughters'*.

Factors related to poor schooling. According to the policy of Nepal government, no children of school age should remain out of school. To implement the policy, stakeholders (teachers, head teachers, school, SMC, DEO, DoE, education ministry) and other NGOs and INGOs working in the field of education are trying their best to send the out of school age children to school. For this, some NGOs have

played a significant role in sensitizing Dalits at the grass-roots level through literacy programs, micro income generation, development and political awareness programs including free textbooks, scholarships for admission and other facilities. They do not have to pay fees for schooling. However, despite all these facilities, there are some factors, which lead to poor schooling or no schooling of the students from certain backgrounds. To be more specific, there are numerous factors that prevent Dalit girls from schooling such as poverty, illiteracy, social and religious factors, academic factors, domestic factors and lack of awareness.

The analysis of the data indicates that several factors have contributed to the irregularity of the Dalit girls in the school and therefore, eventually dropping out. Indifferent pedagogy to the girls from socially, economically and intellectually diverse backgrounds at the cost of their special needs and desires with teachers' less interest in the students' expectations and needs worked out negatively toward their schooling. This indifferent attitude of the teachers contributed to students remaining behind to cope with the lessons that were taught during their absent days. Consequently, these absentees turned out to be the school dropouts.

Some teachers were not serious about Dalit girls' problems like stomach pain, headache and dizziness, which caused their school dropout. Sexual harassment by teachers and friends in the form of abuse, bullying, ragging and touching on their sensitive organs in the schools stood as the other reasons for their poor or no schooling. Similarly, toilet problem (lack of toilets in schools) caused the Dalit girls' absence from schools as they hesitated to attend the schools regularly under such conditions.

School records showed that Dalit girls used to have better performance in their early years than with their later grades. The head teachers opined, '*Dalit girl students*

were found to have poor schooling due to the absence of Dalit role models to inspire them for further learning. Other prominent causes responsible for this scenario are teachers' inadequate attention to Dalit girls, increased domestic chores that fall on Dalit girls with the girls' increased age, hopelessness of employment opportunities among the Dalit girls due to lack of access and social stigma that stopped them from being regular in the schools'. The teachers who were participated in interview reported, 'Lack of self employable technical skills, poor allocation of government funds to support Dalit girls like day meal, fear of sexual violence, distraction due to interest in television, mobile set and dressing up were the other major factors behind their poor schooling'.

Underage marriage/early marriage. Around 2.9 million girls are married by the age of 15 in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, equivalent to one in eight girls in each region, according to new estimates from Demographic and Health Surveys based on data for 20 to 24 years old. These shocking statistics mean millions of girls are robbed of their childhood and denied education (GMR, 2013/14). The case of Dalit girls from the Terai region is not an exception.

Ensuring girls' stay in school is one of the most effective ways to prevent an unpleasant event like child marriage. If all girls had primary education in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, child marriage would fall by 14 percent from almost 2.9 million to less than 2.5 million; and if they had secondary education it would fall by 64 percent to just over one million. Education's contribution is evident in the links between literacy and child marriage. While just 4 percent of literate girls are married by age 15 in sub-Saharan Africa, and 8 percent in South and West Asia, more than one in five of those who are not literate are married by this age in sub-Saharan Africa, and almost one in four in South and West Asia (GMR, 2013/14).

One reason as to why girls with more years in school are less likely to give birth early is simply that girls who give birth dropout before they have a chance of more education. Staying in school longer also gives girls more confidence to make choices that prevent them from getting pregnant at a young age. In sub-Saharan Africa and, South and West Asia, early births would fall by 10 percent from 3.4 to 3.1 million, if all women had primary education. If all women had secondary education, early births would fall by 59 percent to 1.4 million (Infographic: learning lessens early marriage and births, 2014).

Underage marriage refers to marriage before the proper marriage age. Generally, the age for girls' marriage has been decided 18 years in the context of Nepal. Even according to the law, marriage before 18 years is justified to be illegal. So far as the growth and development of a girl is concerned, girls after 12 to 14 years of their age fall under puberty. Puberty is viewed as the age of growth and development of their sexual organs. They are neither adult nor mature. But in the schools of the Terai community, it has been seen that most of the Dalit girls get married before the proper age without completing proper education. That is why their access to further/higher education is very low - which results in lack of job opportunity and failure to address the issues of equality and equity.

The underage marriage, in the eyes of the responding head teachers, teachers, students and parents, is related to the low or no education of the parents who give very low value to it. Poverty, as said earlier, together with their conservative and traditional views about life, has worked well to stop their daughters from sending to schools. Consequently, they felt compelled to get their daughters married at early age.

Most of the parents were found to have sent their daughters to school before puberty but after that, they got them married. Almost all the parents who participated in FGD expressed their dissatisfaction, *'They were unable to find suitable grooms for their educated daughters. They had the tradition to get their daughters married at early age, which was the social pressure as well'*. Another parent also expressed his views like: *'Dalit parents had the belief that their daughters were not the permanent members of their family as they would go to their husbands' houses after marriage'*.

Therefore, investing more on their education was of no use. It can therefore be seen that the *"main cause attributed to underage marriage is lack of education"*(Majpuria, 2007).

Parental attitude. Attitude of parents' plays vital role in the modification of behavior; what a learner will become in future is determined on the basis of parental attitude. Attitude generally refers to personal beliefs, assumption, and concept about something. There are two types of attitude seen with the parents in the society: positive attitude and negative attitude. As a result of positive attitude, positive environment is created; and such kind of attitude is reflected in positive behaviors. On the other hand, due to negative attitude, negative environment is created and negative behaviors are reflected. There are several factors responsible for determining positive or negative attitude. Some of them are: the knowledge of subject matter, intelligence level, social beliefs, economic background, position in the society and literacy (GMR, 2013/14).

So far as the attitude of the Dalit parents is concerned, the head teachers and teachers who were interviewed expressed their views as, *'Most of Dalit parents have narrow concept about education due to their negative attitude. Their negative attitude has been the result of their illiteracy, traditional life style and way of living, value*

about education, tradition, custom, culture and ritual, poverty, male-chauvinism, political context, and many other similar factors'. To be more precise, in the male-oriented society, parents are themselves discriminating between sons and daughters. There is great influence upon educational achievement of their children. Dalit girls are deprived of education and they are put inside the four walls of the home. Thus, negative parental attitude has been found associated with poor and low performance of the Dalit girls in the community.

On the contrary, there are some parents, who always gain positive results due to their positive attitude. These parents do not discriminate between sons and daughters and thus send both sons and daughters to school opening up the avenues for access to higher education as well as different job opportunities. The government has allocated reservation quota for the Dalits. So, if they have positive attitude, they can gain positive result and their life will be better and prosperous. For example, Dalits or any persons who go to foreign country for earning are found to have changed their attitude toward work and even education. Due to their changed attitude, they inspire their children to go to school. In this way, Dalit parents' attitude towards education is beginning to change slowly with the times.

Parental attitude about the community support to school activities and their effort to relate the values of education to their life has been reflected in the responses of the participants. Dalit parents were found to have been dissatisfied with school and school management. Some parents were found not participating in school activities except in the selection of SMC members. A Dalit girl participant, who was dissatisfied with the amount of money provided as scholarships, claimed: *'To increase the amount of scholarship to reach Rs. 1000 for Dalit students, especially the girls' is necessary for minimal survival.*

The Dalit scholarship is one of the major visible programs of government to support the education for Dalit. The school sector reform plan (2009-2015) focuses on basic education. It includes a free education provision, that is cost-free services for admission, textbooks, tuition and examinations. The Dalit development committee has been distributing higher education scholarships to Dalit students every year (Bhattachan et.al., 2008). However, the scholarships have been misused by teachers and school management committee members, who deprive the needy Dalit students of those scholarships.

Parents of Dalit children were also found to have been using education for their children's personal, social, economic, educational, cultural, political and religious development. They also made it clear that education had helped them in reducing caste discrimination.

A head teacher indicated that a lot of visible changes in Dalit girls had occurred from their schooling. He also expressed his views, *'Dalit girls have become bold in their expression, gained knowledge in different areas of their day to day life, acquired the ability to earn their livelihood and increased their self-confidence by developing positive self- image and bringing changes in their social and economic life'*. Most importantly, their motivation towards higher education had been boosted up.

Poverty situation and mid-day meal. Poverty has been a matter of overriding concern in the development agenda of Nepal. The emphasis of overall development plans has therefore been on the strategies to minimize it. Ministry of Education (now, Ministry of Education, Science and technology) has, therefore, designed the day- meal program for the needy students in the poverty hit districts. In this connection, figure 6.1 shows the relation between poverty and education.

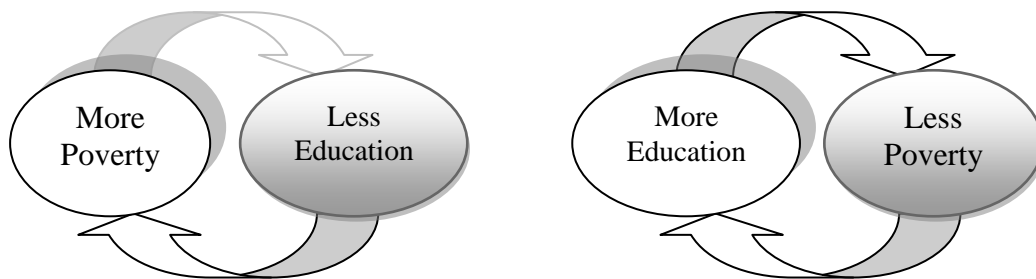


Figure 6.1. Relation between Poverty and Education

Source: UNESCO/ IIEP 2005.

Poverty has been a major factor causing school dropouts of Dalit girls. Because of this problem, Dalit parents have been promoting child marriage, turning their deaf ears and keeping their mouth shut against the demands of their children, engaging their children in household chores, and pulling children back from school for their domestic chores. This type of poverty has deprived them from the opportunity of having the information that could be related to their improved life, pushed them to be illiterate, compelled them to be superstitious, become a victim of socio-economic and cultural ill-practices, and thus becoming potential dropouts of the school system.

Poverty also starts with inadequate access to information. Parents are not informed about the governmental and non-governmental provisions to support Dalit girls. Because of this information gap, Dalit girls are compelled to give up their study, and they have become the victims of the socio-cultural taboo associated with them. Feminization of poverty is also associated with Dalit girls. They are sent to school and then pulled out from the school for domestic chores.

It is also seen that Dalit girls are more likely than boys to be required to stop their education in families pressed hard by poverty. Girls may have to support their parents by working or looking after siblings while parents work. Dalit families are

poorer than non-Dalits, so these pressures are more likely to negatively affect the education of Dalit girls. Dalit girls are more obedient than boys and it is due to this they are forced to support their parents, raise their siblings, and obey to be irregular in school if the parents do not have the money to pay their children's school fees. Dalits mainly belong to poverty-stricken families and are strangled by domestic problems after problem. They have no fixed and reserved property for living and they suffer in such a way that they cannot supply food materials to their children. Consequently, their children get malnutrition. In this regard, Wagley (2014) states that Dalits' poverty invites malnutrition in children's health, as a result, their children become weak, physically and mentally. Wagley urges all not to encourage people to competing with rich family children by coping with the school running pace, and their children's performance. Children's performance becomes weak and weak day by day when compared with the children of high rich family. This is nothing but a fatal attack by poverty on the Dalits' poverty.

Poverty is one of the main causes of Dalit girls' in access to education, with girls often being kept out of schools due to direct costs (school fees, cost of uniform and learning materials) and indirect cost of their labor (domestic chores) and servitude as well as agricultural work (Sinha, 2007).

World food program (WFP) started activities in Nepal in 1996 and has been providing support to the Ministry of education (MoE) in implementing school meal program (SMP) in all highly and moderately food insecure VDCs of 10 districts in hills and mountains of mid- and far- western development regions. The school mid-day meal program aims to increase enrollment, attendance and attention of the school children through the provision of a nutritious school meal, finally contributing to overall school sector development program's (SSDP) goals. In the long term, the

program aims to break the cycle of hunger by promoting education. WFP is also collaborating with UNICEF to implement water sanitization and hygiene (WASH) program in school in order to improve sanitation, hygiene and the overall school environment so that the school children would be healthy for better participation and learning. This is an investment in human capital and a step towards breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty and hunger.

The data of FY 2012/13 shows that WFP conducted three types of programs:

1. *Mid-day meal for grades 1 - 5 children of selected schools in 11 districts (1635 schools and 1123 ECEDs):* A bowl of haluwa, a nutritious porridge like meal was provided for children.
2. *Mother and child health care program in 9 districts:* To improve the health condition of pregnant women or mothers of newly born babies, and new babies.
3. *Girl's incentive program in 12 districts:* To improve access and retention of girls, cooking oil is provided (2 liters per month) for the girls of grade 1-5 of selected schools(DoE, 2013).

The provision of day meal managed by DoE in collaboration with WFP is praise worthy. But the access of Dalit girls or other marginalized people has not been well defined. Moreover, the criteria of selection and duration have not been mentioned.

So far as poverty is concerned, it is the root cause of not getting access to education for Dalit girls. However, education reduces poverty, boosts job opportunities and fosters economic prosperity. Educating girls and women, in particular, has unmatched transformative power. Boosting their own chances of getting jobs, staying healthy and participating fully in society, educating girls and

young women has a marked impact on the health of their children to accelerate their country's transition towards stable population growth (GMR 2013/14).

Education is a key to helping individuals escape poverty and of preventing poverty from being passed down through the generations. The government should therefore have the provision of day-meal during daybreak at schools. There should be the provision of nutritious diet for Dalit girls also who are both physically and mentally weak in order to ensure their access to, and retention in the school.

Engagement in domestic chores. There are several factors, which are responsible behind engagement of Dalit girls in household works such as socio-cultural, economic and political factors. When families are given options to choose whether they want to educate their sons or daughters, undoubtedly, they choose sons to be educated. So, in our society, sons are preferred for better educational opportunities than girls. Then, what about the girls, especially in Dalits' community? The answer is predictable: girls are preferred for household works. Educating a daughter is considered a no-return investment whereas educating a son is the investment for enabling him to look after his aging parents. Majority of girls in Nepal are daughters of subsistence farmers living near or below the poverty line. They are found engaged in farm and domestic works, which prevent them from going to school. Hours of daily siblings' care, domestic and farm work reduce girls' attendance and leaving them with little time than boys to study, contributing to their under achievement and dropout (Majpuria, 2007).

It has been observed that girls' workload is more excessive than that of boys. Some studies document girls in some age groups having twice the average daily workload as boys' (UNICEF, 1996). Women are overloaded with work and have little time to participate in literacy and non-formal education. Despite the workload, their

work is undervalued. Education is little perceived as an efficient investment in increasing the cash, crop or other benefits they bring to the family. Although women invest more time in domestic work than men, they are viewed narrowly “as reproducers, not producers” and often have marginal control of how they spend their time (UNIFEM, 1998).

To be more specific, Dalit girls are engaged more in domestic chores which have pulled Dalit girls from school to the world of work in early ages. Domestic chores are more of a problem for Dalit girls than the other girls because Dalits are poorer when compared to the other communities. There are two types of domestic chores: simple domestic chores and heavy domestic chores. Simple domestic chores are those by doing which Dalit girls enjoy and they can do easily. On the other hand, heavy domestic chores are those by doing which they feel difficulty: such as care for siblings, cattle grazing, labor intensive wage, sharing their hands to the parents for additional earnings. It is true to say that whenever Dalit girls are over-worked, their potentialities decrease day by day reducing their potentialities throughout their life. “Domestic chore functions as the violence for Dalit girls. It is the family that creates such type of violence” (Majpuria, 2007).

In addition to the above challenges, there are also some pertinent issues or challenges such as caste- based discrimination and prejudice, abuse and neglect, forced and early child marriage (incorporated *Gauna*), gender norms (inequality), equity issues as the major challenges for schooling of Dalit girls in Terai.

Caste-based discrimination and prejudice. One of the most severe forms of social discrimination is the denial of opportunities and rights to certain groups of people on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity, age or disability (International Encyclopedia of sociology.vol. I). In common, discrimination is defined as prejudice

transformed into action. Dalits are discriminated not only by so-called high caste people in Hindu model, but also they have intra-caste discrimination within them. Generally, Dalit women are more discriminated in society by a male Dalit. The extent and form of discrimination against Dalits are found in enormous evidences (Bhattachan,2002). Bhattachan et al. (2002) have listed a total of 205 existing practice of caste-based discrimination, which they consolidated in nine broad social categories: denial of entry into the house, hotel/ restaurants, temples; service worship conducted by Dalits is not acceptable; denial to common resources such as using the water tap, pond; denial to public places such as the religious functions, government functions; forced labour such as *balighare*, *halia partha* etc; atrocities such as more rape cases to Dalit women, practice of social boycott; attitudinal untouchability such as if one sees Dalit early in the morning, if there is Dalit teacher, children of high caste group will not attend the school and children of high caste do not want to sit with Dalit pairs and so on (Nepali, 2007).

Legal initiatives to eliminate caste discrimination date back to 1963 when the country Code introduced a law against caste discrimination in Nepal. King Mahendra in his autocratic partyless panchayat regime amended the old country Code of 1854 as the new country Code of 1963. The modified Code had a provision to abolish untouchability and other forms of caste-based discrimination. Other factors that have been identified and that have come through ages are prejudice among prosecutors and reluctance of others within state institutions to take action to insure the implementation of laws protecting Dalit rights (Bishwakarma, 2019). If discrimination, to some extent, can be out-lawed by sensible legislation and enforcement, prejudice as a state of mind and a psychological predisposition can be

overcome over a long period of time. It will take long time for it to disappear even if antidiscrimination legislation is enacted and enforced (FEDO,2005).

Abuse and neglect. The survey of Nepal national Dalit welfare organization (NNDSWO) conducted in 2004/2005 in six districts to find out why more than 50 percent children are not going to school has the finding that dropping out from the school was related with adverse economic situation (NNDSWO, 2006). Poverty compels Dalit to wage labour and most children work with their parents; sometimes, the school going age children are supposed to help their parents to look after other siblings in home. In such a situation, the Dalit students (especially girls) remain absent and shadowed or they are the backbenchers in the schools of in the Terai regions of Nepal. In such a situation, some teachers abuse Dalit children using different humiliating words such as *dom, dushadha, mushahar, chamar* etc. Some teachers do not encourage Dalit children to participate in class room activity and many Dalit students face problem while renting a room at the time of final examination. There are some teachers who do not help Dalit children in such situation and neglect them in class also.

Gauna.The ones who get married at their early age have to perform an activity when they become adult. The adult boy goes to the girl's home with *Barati* to perform an activity called *Gauna*. After performing the activity of *Gauna*, both of them are free to visit each other's home. This tradition is more popular among rural Dalits of Terai who are also known as skilled occupational caste/ethnic minorities of Terai. But it is becoming rare now (Chaudhary, 2011).

Gender norms (Inequality). Gender is derived from Latin word *genur* or *genus*. It includes behavioral (social), cultural or psychological traits typically associated with male or female sex in a specific society (Majpuria, 2007).

There are gender- discriminatory practices in the legal, economic, political and social affairs. It could be at home, through domestic violence or child labour or outside, at the work place or in court. In the Dalit society, women suffer more than males and condition of Dalit women is therefore pathetic. Dalit women are more extensively exploited by men of upper caste and also by their own men. Livelihood problem of Dalit is mainly due to lack of farm land. They are mainly dependent on artisan occupation and wage work. Education of Dalit women is much lower than in comparison to upper caste women. They want their rights in every sectors including education (FEDO, 2005).

Occupying the lowest social status within the caste hierarchy has multidimensional effects on the socio-economic, educational and political situation of Dalit. Unequal status underpins unequal distribution of power and other resources (Olsen, 2011). Evidence shows that these different dimensions have a reciprocal relationship with each other. For example, the places or settlements where Dalit live tend to lack basic infrastructure, such as road access, tap water and electricity, which in Nepal are provided based on individuals' social status. The caste hierarchy and access to power thus influence access to these very basic resources. Dalit status inequality similarly is directly related to their economic marginalization. Forced or bonded labour and landlessness are a common phenomenon for Dalits. Similarly, status inequality affects the education of Dalit, who have a literacy rate of 52.4 percent as compared to the higher-caste Brahmin's literacy rate of 81.9 percent (Sharma, 2014).

Ways of Mitigating the Challenges

No children of school age should remain out of school according to the policy of Nepal government. To implement the policy, stake holders (teachers,

head teachers, school, SMC, PTA, DoE, MoE, DEO, local government) and other I/NGOs working in the field of education are trying their best to send the out of school children to school. For this reason, students are facilitated with free textbooks, scholarship and other facilities. Despite these facilities, the present study shows some challenges that prevent children, especially Dalit girls, from schooling: illiteracy, poor socio-economic status, social and religious factors, domestic chores, lack of awareness, motivation and well manner, negative attitude, caste-based discrimination and untouchability, abuse and harassment, and lack of well defined policy.

To mitigate these challenges, the following measures are suggested:

- Receiving a good quality basic education can help Dalit girls to improve their life chances. Research shows a positive correlation between education, healthy families and greater earning potential. In keeping with its commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, focus should be given on improving girls' access to education. Educated mothers are more likely to send their daughters to school.
- Improving access to quality education is a national priority, however, despite progress in increasing the proportion of children in schools, developing effective national plans and policies, and implementing large scale training for teachers and administrators with a focus on managing the issues of Dalit children is still desired.
- Constructing school building with enough toilets for girls and improving school facilities, fostering community involvement in school management and supporting bilingual inter-cultural education should be

ensured. Disadvantaged and marginalized girls like Dalit girls should be motivated through these measures to complete their basic schooling.

- Overall enrollment rate in basic education should be raised with safe learning space created for Dalit girls.
- The quality of education is the key to student retention and achievement with community involvement and ownership of the school system.
- Innovative education programs are to be launched to include Dalit girls' indigenous language, curriculum and textbook to address their demand for increased learning. Bilingual teaching materials can be developed with the help of local communities and teachers to this effect.
- The number of scholarships and other support should be increased to enable the Dalit girls to attend and complete at least basic and secondary education.
- Target programs for Dalit girls must be implemented focusing on key development indicators such as education, employment, food security, access to clean drinking water, health and sanitation and also to combat intersecting discrimination.
- Women from caste affected communities should be supported to increase participation at all levels of political governance as well as decision making structures. High level skills and capacity building training for Dalit women should be given a priority in order to provide them with opportunities for employment which will lead to increased development and financial support to eliminate caste-based discrimination.

- Dalit girls also face hardship because of child marriage, dowry practices, inter-caste marriage that continue to prevail despite having been officially outlawed. These practices should be strictly forbidden by strictly enacting the caste discrimination and untouchability law giving priority to their cases by the state agencies.
- The model school concept should incorporate untouchability free and discrimination free concepts as one of its determining components.
- Head teacher and teachers, school management committee, parent teacher association and concerned bodies related to school should provide support to Dalit girls in providing incentives, scholarship and other forms of facilities to boost their enrollment and retention. There is possibility of using those incentives by guardians for household works instead of spending them for Dalit girls' requirements. Government schemes must reach the hands of Dalit girls timely.

CHAPTER VII

Findings and Discussion

This chapter is drawn on the previous chapters, especially analytical one, to derive findings and carryout discussions for improving the schooling practices of the Terai Dalit girls. In this research, the researcher aimed to explore Dalit girls' access to basic education as well as to identify issues and challenges related to their schooling. The researcher looked towards the social, economic and cultural factors which intersect with the Dalit girls schooling to see how these factors of the society influenced their schooling progress. Then the researcher tried to discuss about Dalit girls, their parents, head teachers and teachers' views about school environment to see whether current school environment is favorable for them for their schooling.

Findings and Discussion

The findings from the study are grouped under ten major categories: (i) poverty (socio- economic status of Dalit girl students) (ii) Household chores (iii) Gender based division of labour (iv) Gap between knowledge and reality (v) Gap between parent's expectations and outcomes. (vi) Present schooling system (vii) Participation and utilization of their equal rights in political and social spheres. (viii) Challenges (domestic, agricultural, social, religious, parental, academic related to ICT) faced by girls, (ix) Under/ Early marriage and dowry system and (x) Dalit advocacy through NGOs.

Poverty (socio-economic status of Dalit girl students). It is found that family struggle hard to bear the cost of schooling of the Dalit children, particularly the girls as Dalits being one of the economically poor groups of society. Among the costs of schooling, indirect cost and opportunity cost of schooling had been highlighted in the

discussion with the participants. Normally, it is found that direct cost is covered by the scholarship programs by different government and non-government organizations. Family struggled hard to pay indirect cost of schooling, which includes cost for school materials, dress and food. The large numbers of the participants have talked about the influence of opportunity cost of schooling, which made participants to think about their decision of access in schooling.

Regarding parental status, especially the status of Dalit girls' parents, the researcher had asked some questions to the head teachers, teachers, students and parents themselves so as to find out their social, economic, employment and educational status and the relation between their socio-economic status and schooling of their girls. It is noted that out of 48 parents, only a few (10.42%) could produce sufficient food from their field for 12 months and the rest (89.58%) suffered from food scarcity. Also, 14.58 percent parents did not have any land of their own and thus, they depended on daily wages (See table 4.6). It is interesting to note that majority of Dalit girls' parents' (72.92%) were illiterate and only a few (2.08%) had SLC and above passed degrees (See table 4.7). The schooling practices of Dalit girls can be easily estimated from this dire poverty and low literacy levels of their parents.

Wagley (January 3, 2014) in the context of parental socio-economic status, states, "The parents of millions of children go to work but what they earn is not adequate to sustain their families on a daily basis. Many of them do not have land or other fixed property. So, how can we assume that the children of these families do better in schools?". According to Sinha (2007), poverty is one of the main causes of Dalit girls' inaccess to education, with girls being kept out of schools due to direct costs (school fees, cost of uniform and learning materials) and indirect cost of their labour (domestic chores) and servitude as well as agricultural work. A study (Koirala,

2010) organized by Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO), Nepal of “Late comers in school: The status of Dalit girls in education”, suggests that poverty has been the major factor causing school dropouts of Dalit girls. The chain of poverty had kept Dalit girls from being aware of the information that could be related to their improved life; it pushed them to be illiterate and compelled them to be superstitious; they have become victim of socio-economic and cultural mal practices, and would be potential dropout of the system.

There are different theoretical perspectives and explanations about the functions of education in society and the relationship between school and society. The works of Marx, Weber and Durkheim have influenced western discourses in understanding the implicit and explicit functions of education. The main theories like Karl Marx’s (1818-1883) oppositional classes and capitalism theory, Emile Durkheim’s (1658-1917) functional perspective of social inequality theory, and Max Weber’s (1864-1920) social inequality theory, all sociological theories, are related to the realities of Nepalis society marked by disadvantage, exclusion and suppression, especially in Terai region. The sociological theories are fully implicative in the context of Dalits, because the Dalits are oppressed, depressed, untouchable and lower class of society. So, these sociological theories that deal with social inequalities in the society are directly related to the study of schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal.

Household chores. Household chores seemed to be one the major constrains for schooling of Dalit girls’. Household chores in the community are considered to be the results of economic instability of the family. Agricultural labour is the main profession of the family which demands more number of working members of the family in the field that made elder Dalit girls as one of the

sources of labour making them vulnerable for school dropout. Most of the children in the society are involved in some kinds of work, either paid or unpaid, because of family obligation, lack of family resources, or for pocket money. So, they started to combine their schooling and work from early age. Even though work sometimes helps to minimize the indirect cost of schooling, it mostly hampers their performance at school; that is why it works as a pull out factor for their schooling in long term.

Regarding the schooling practices of Dalit girls, the researcher raised some questions to their parents like what are the main reasons for Dalit girls not to attend the school? It was found that almost all the parents/guardians have similar reasons behind their poor schooling: engagement in domestic chores, taking care of siblings, cattle grazing, labour intensive wages earning, and sharing their hands with the parents for additional earnings. So, domestic chores have pulled Dalit girls from school to the world of work in early ages. In the same question, one parent of Sohani –Mujelia school, an illiterate one, has a different reason: “Most Dalit girls are engaged in household chores for overcoming their hand to mouth problems. For example, they utilize their morning time in collecting the leaves of trees to cook meal, which is also the time of schooling (school hours). As a result, they are obliged to leave school or be absent from school though they are enrolled.” Also, the parent suggested that appropriate or special facilities for Dalit girl students regarding their arrival and departure time (as expected by them) should be considered.

In Belhi Rajaula school, one parent, in response to the above question, said that domestic chore starts with grass cutting work for the girls and they sell it in the market and then come to school. Grass cutters were insulted by their friends at

school, and this led to girls' hesitation to be proud of their occupation and gradually, left school.

In the case of Kuwa-Rampur school, a mother said that domestic chores that pulled Dalit girls had delayed food in the morning due to their parents going for labour work in the morning as well. The girls were late arrival in the school, and teachers' had intolerance towards these students. Eventually, these girls would be irregular to the school and hence, hamper their schooling practices.

The educational equality theorists (Vygotsky, 1934) pointed out the availability of inadequate educational opportunities to the students of the caste or the caste like minority groups. So, educational inequality theory can be implicative for conducting special package programs and positive discrimination policies to ensure educational access and equal opportunity for Dalit girl students.

Jensen's (1969) biogenetic theory also suggests using special techniques for classroom instruction for Dalit girl students. The techniques may include memorization or rote learning, trial and error learning and like to ensure the success of these students. Without making a genetic claim, theorists that support different dominant brain hemispheres for minority and majority students make a similar curriculum and pedagogical recommendations.

Gender based division of labour. Gender based division of labour is another important factor that deteriorates the schooling progress of the girls, especially Dalit girls in the society. Girls may have to support their parents by working or looking after siblings while parents go to work. Dalit families are frequently poorer than non-Dalits and so these pressures are more likely to negatively affect the education of Dalit girls. In the study period, Dalit girls were found more obedient than their

brothers because of the gender based construct of the society. Because of their obedient nature, they were forced to (a) support parents (b) raise their siblings (c) obey to be irregular in school if the parents do not have the money to pay school fees (d) give up the school homework for domestic chores, and (e) obey if parents refuse to admit them in public school. Girls are mainly considered as temporary members of the society and parents seemed to be less interested towards the investment for their schooling.

It was seen that most of the head teachers and teachers had demonstrated unbiased and positive relationship with the Dalit girls. They were found to have been treating the Dalit girls equally without gender biasness. They claimed that they often get the Dalit girl students participate in the school activities like quiz contest, dancing, music and other recreational activities. However, some Dalit girl students and parents expressed their dissatisfaction over some teachers who were not taking full time class and not interested in teaching Dalit students.

Erik Olin Wright (1994), Frank Parkin (1981), and Anthony Giddens (1981), the sociological thinkers have put forward structural theory for understanding social inequality. They observe that social inequality is developed by three factors: functional- separates menial laborers from educated non-menial worker, the authority- divides people into those with power owner and the powerless; and culture factor- differentiates people by their life style, material consumption and habits. Cultural factors which differentiate people and speak about the voice of the voiceless. This, in Nepalis context, speaks a lot about Dalit children in general and Dalit girls in particular.

Gap between knowledge and reality. The findings from this study suggest that the children's lower rate of school participation and higher rate of drop out in

the community schools is not only because of the lack of knowledge among parents and children but also because of the gap between knowledge and reality. The participants seemed to be aware with the benefits of schooling but they are somehow not able to materialize their knowledge into practice. It is observed that social, economic and cultural factors like cost of schooling, child work and other social and cultural factors as child marriage, trends of migration play a major role to constrain their knowledge into practice. As the Dalits, more so with women, had less moral power and strength to raise their voice, they suffered deprivation at different levels including the social rights. Head teachers opined that some of parents were found not to be even aware of educational benefits and even if they had good source of income, they spent their earnings on drinking, gambling and playing cards instead of investing them in education.

The parents were found to have been using education for their children's personal, social, economic, educational, cultural, political and religious development. It was clear to them that education had helped them to reduce caste discrimination. Their responses further indicated that a lot of visible changes in their girls had occurred from their schooling. They have become bold in their expression, gained knowledge in different areas of their day to day life, acquired the ability to learn livelihood and increased their self-confidence by developing positive self-image and bringing changes in their social and economic life. Most importantly, their motivation towards higher education had also been boosted up. On the other hand, it was also found that due to financial problems, all their desires remained to be addressed. Parents expected that the school should provide them financial support so that children could be sent to school instead of sending them to work in the field. Reality showed Dalit girls were not able to express their desires and opinions openly and

boldly. They performed their activities in a suppressed way and were not able to get good jobs and opportunities for themselves. In Terai, especially in Dalit community, giving priority to son over daughters, educating girls means seeking high profile grooms, lack of women empowerment, equal rights not practiced in reality, more responsibilities to women in household chores (*Chulha chauka*), negative attitude towards girls especially Dalit girls, all indicate gap between knowledge and reality.

John Ogbu (1978) reviewed the theories prevailing in the United States that were used to explain the failure of the children of the caste or caste-like minority groups in the school of the mainstream society, say like cultural deprivation theory. Emihovich (1994) adds the point that educators following this theory devised collaborative programs between teachers and parents so that a parent could understand the school environment; and similarly a teacher can come to understand the home environment. Emihovich points out that gap between home and the school environment should be bridged to narrow down the gap of knowledge and reality.

Gap between parents' expectations and outcomes. One of the findings of this study states a gap between parents' expectations and outcomes from schooling, which stands as constraining factor for Dalit girl students for school participation. Most of the parents have expectations from their girl students that they will provide support for the family and bring economic stability at home. They consider education as a means of bringing change in living standard but their inability to perform well in school is a blow to the expected outcome in that it may develop negative attitude towards their schooling. Similarly, parents are also discouraged in sending their girl students to school because they did not find the level of education as being satisfactory to their daughters. In the community, it has been observed that there

exists a gap between expectations and outcomes from schooling making Dalit girls' access to school more problematic.

Regarding parental expectations from school side, nearly all the parents had similar opinions and view such as by sending their girl students to school they expected the schools to teach their daughters quality education, good manners and behaviours without any discrimination. As their financial condition was very poor, they expected the concerned people, authority and agencies to manage and provide their girl students bicycles, mid-day meal, uniforms, stationeries and the like. Interestingly they further expected that the schools should provide financial support to them as they sent their children to schools instead of sending them to work in the field.

In response to the same question, some Dalit parents expected their girl students to learn good manners, acquire quality education and live a disciplined life. They hoped that their daughters, with school education, would have a bright and better life after their marriage; they would take part in all kinds of development activities in the society, and also they could express themselves and fight against all kinds of social evils and discrimination in the society. They expressed their dissatisfaction over the lack of good toilet, disciplinary problem and non availability of nutritious food.

The cultural reproduction theorists (Coleman, 1987, cited in Emihovich, 1994) tried to understand the sociology of education saying that students of the minority groups came to school with no "social capital". By social capital, he did not mean income but recognizing the importance of education which constructs social capital through schooling. This idea has relevance to the Ogbu's survival strategy of minority groups, here, Dalit girls who develop 'low educational aspirations' because of the

inequality factor in the society. Coleman's ideas were challenged by Bourdieu, Passreon and Willis with their cultural capital theory as these cultural capital theorists drew ideas from different sociologists- structural, functional, critical, and interpretive- who criticized them, and came up with a strong theoretical perspective on the sociology of education.

Present schooling system. Findings from this study also suggest that lack of trained teachers and their due attention to the Dalit girl students' problem, lack of female teachers, especially the Dalit teachers, inadequate proper facilities, which can attract them to school, and lack of appropriate curriculum play major roles to demotivate Dalit girl students from schooling, rather than the caste-based discrimination in school setting.

Findings from the parents' view suggest that the school should manage all possible facilities for their children. They emphasized that the school should operate extra classes (remedial) for their weak students and supply other related educational materials (like reference materials, practice books, etc.) except textbooks free of cost. They were found to be dissatisfied over the high examination fees, disciplinary problem and non-availability of nutritious food. Parents wanted their children to achieve knowledge and virtues required for an ideal life.

ECA and CCA should be conducted side by side along with teaching-learning activities to support, enhance and address the demand of learners, school, society and ultimately, the nation. ECA and CCA are to be practiced by the teachers to respond to the issues of inclusiveness, caste-based discrimination, equity and equality, life related skills, co-operative learning, reflective thinking, learning by doing etc. It was teachers complain that students were not paying attention to ECA and CCA and they did not take any initiative to involve themselves in such activities. Some parents

reported that poor environment with large classes in schools and Dalit girl students' participatory role was often ignored. They demanded assessment based tutorial support at school which could help uplift the learning status of the needy girls, especially Dalit girls. Dalit girls lacked technical support in using computer, television, internet, projector, laptop, radio and other electronic devices in their schools.

Among the teachers teaching at basic level, only one third of them being female teachers working in community schools indicates the need of female teachers, especially Dalit female teachers (only 3.7%). Significant presence of Dalit female teachers at basic level is expected to increase Dalit girls' access to basic education. These challenges and issues seemed to be the root causes behind promotion, repetition and dropout of Dalit girl students at basic level.

Jensen's (1969) biogenetic theory claimed that Blacks are genetically inferior to the Whites and have different mental patterns for thinking, understanding and creating is under consideration. In existing schooling system, Jensen's biogenetic theory, regarding the Dalit girls as having different mental patterns for thinking, understanding and creating. The resulting policy recommendation was for special techniques of classroom instruction for the children of caste-like minority groups. The Dalit girls are no exception to this commonly thought concept which, however, has no scientific basis.

Participation and utilization of equal rights in political and social spheres.

The findings from the study suggest that Dalit girl students, after getting education, have great desire for a healthy society by building the foundation of democracy and good governance. It is noted that economic condition, the source of earning social position, political situation, academic condition, involvement in political activity etc.

are directly playing vital role that indicate parental capacity to send their children to school, more so in case of Dalit girls.

Parents of Dalit girls were found not having good socio-political status as they are engaged especially in agriculture as their main occupation and others like firewood collection and collection of green leaves for the fulfillment of their subsistence level needs; some of them were found working as sweepers at schools, hospitals, municipality, factories and public places. They were also found taming animals and selling them in the market to maintain their hand to mouth problems. Some, who were not able to spend money for going abroad to earn money, were engaged in physical labours such as plumbing, rickshaw pulling, carrying bricks in brick industry, cobbling shoes in the market and the like.

Most of the Dalits were found to be ignored in decision making with their less participation in vital social relations like school management committee, parents teacher association, school discipline committees and the like. It is so because they had less moral power and strength to raise their voice; they suffered deprivation at different levels including their equal social rights.

As education is the mirror of the society, Dalit girls wanted to show their image through their access to education as well as involvement in political and social cohesion utilizing their equal rights and opportunities. In conclusion, Dalit girls and their parents were found to be aware of education, potential job opportunities, self development, and participation in socio-political cohesion after schooling. Schooling can undoubtedly bring desirable impact in their life with confidence and the ability to deliver different services in their future. The backwardness that they lived with or have been living for times unknown was slowly fading away with the changes in them that became visible in their ability to accept and respond to changes.

The structural dynamism of class relations is nurtured and replicated through schooling. Tradition approves what the school does, certification distributes the social category, which succeeds in school, pedagogic communication transmits the working code of the controlling class, and eventually the process creates a circle in which cultural capital is replicated through schooling. Many other areas of educational research have explored the situation in Nepal and the situation of the Dalits on the expansion of schooling and the impacts of schooling on individuals and society present a broad structural functional perspective. According to Goodlad (1979), "Schooling is expanded as a solution to societal problem as a foundation to freedom, as a guarantee for the future, as a cause of prosperity and power, as a source of intellectual and philosophical enlightenment", and as a way to prepare children for adult roles (Wilcox, 1988). However, schooling for the Dalit girls seems to be promoting and maintaining the social status quo (Peshkin, 1988; King, Edmund J., 1963).

Challenges (Domestic, agricultural, social, religious, parental, academic related to ICT) faced by girls. Findings from the study also suggest challenges related to Dalit girl students' schooling, being domestic, agricultural, social, religious, parental, academic related to information and communication technology (ICT).

Regarding the challenges to schooling of Dalit girls at the basic level, the head teachers and teachers responded that they had observed several challenges as the core challenges resulting from domestic and agricultural work, social and religious practices, parental illiteracy and ICT use. They reported that schooling of Dalit girls was related to literacy purpose only, there was no future planning for their higher study after completing the basic level education and the inept attitude of parents to stop them from getting higher education for their potential failure to get suitable

grooms when they become educated worked behind Dalit girls' poor schooling. Dalit girls themselves made it clear that they were the victims of several challenges as lack of transportation, lack of day meal, parental pressure on meeting the opportunity cost for their schooling, lack of residential arrangements, school's demand for examination fees, tuition fees and admission fees along with developmental charge. Moreover, schools were not providing school bags, stationeries, and they lacked separate toilets including the lack of Dalit girls' friendly environment as the other challenges.

Dalit parents also reported a number of challenges to the schooling of their daughters as unsatisfactory teaching process, lack of administrative support, school's expectation to take fees, lack of transparency in scholarship distribution process, irregularity in distributing textbooks, lack of resources to meet opportunity cost, schools ignoring their girls due to their regular punctuality and canceling their admission, and no participation of Dalits in SMC, PTA and others school activities.

Some Dalit girls from sample schools opined that insensitiveness of teachers towards Dalit girls' physical problems at school, sexual harassment by some teachers and friends in the form of abuse, bullying, ragging and touching their sensitive organs in the schools. As claimed by teachers lack of technical skills, poor allocation of government funds, distraction due to interest in television, mobile set and dressing up were found to be major factors behind Dalit girls' poor schooling.

Dalit girls' challenges are multi-faceted ranging from their reproductive role to unequal distribution of productive means and resources. As radical feminists believe women to be the most oppressed group of society under maledomination, female's education should be at the heart of their upliftment. To minimize these challenges, equal access to educational opportunities should be the determining factor. Feminist perspective claims that by providing equal education for both sexes, an environment

would be created in which the individual women's potential can be encouraged and developed (Halsey, 1997 cited in Panthee, 2014).

Under marriage/Early marriage and dowry system. Under marriage and early marriage largely refer to the same thing: marriage before 18 years is justified to be illegal. But in the schools of the Terai community, it is seen that most of Dalit girls get married before the proper age without completing proper education. That is why their access to further schooling or higher education is very low which results often in lack of job opportunities and failure to address the issues of equality. It can be said that under age marriage is also one of the major issues and challenges to schooling that has negative impact upon Dalit girls and Dalit communities. Early marriage (problem in getting boys for marriage to the girls of Dalit, especially *dom* community) meant that if parents wanted their daughters to marry, the girls had to leave school and get married. Parents are compelled to pay a handsome amount of money for dowry if they had to marry their uneducated daughter with an educated groom. Main cause attributed to early marriage is the lack of education and existing social caste tradition.

The national Code of 1963 has completely banned underage marriage. According to the law, no girl could be married before the age of 14 and no boy before the age of 18 even with the consent of their guardians. Though government has enforced several laws and rules for preventing early marriage, it is still in vogue in rural areas. In Nepal, legal age at marriage was 16 and 18 years for female and male respectively with the consent of parents; without parental consent, the minimum ages were 18 for females and 21 for males. However, recently according to the Muluki Ain (Civil Code) 11th amendment, (2001), the legal age at marriage for both sexes is 18 years with the consent of guardians and 20 years without consent of guardians.

Most of the parents were found to have sent their daughters to school before puberty (12-14 years) but after that they got them married. They expressed their dissatisfaction over their inability to find suitable grooms for their educated daughters and have to pay a handsome amount of money as dowry to the groom's family. So, they had the tradition to get their daughters married at early age, which was the social pressure as well. Dalit parents had the belief that their daughters were not the permanent members of their family as they would go to their husband's houses after marriage (Majpuria, 2007).

Gender issues like early/under marriage, which is true to Dalit girls' educational loss too, point out that women's experience of difference, inequality and oppression vary not only by their social location but also by their level of education. Girls' education, that too Dalit girls' education, has inadvertently been related to their marital status and the value given to it by their parents.

Dalit advocacy by NGOs. The Dalit NGOs have emerged after the reinstatement of democracy in 1990 as registration of NGOs significantly increased after this date which was not otherwise possible in the autocratic Panchayat system. Among several factors, advocacy and human rights programs were key targets for opening the NGOs in Nepal. Many NGOs focused on the provision of basic needs of Dalits. But the Nepal national Dalit social welfare organization focused on the rights. Among such NGOs, the Dalit NGO-Federation, NNDSWO, the Jagaran media centre (JMC), the FEDO, the Dalit welfare organization and the Samata foundation are active in raising Dalit issues at the national and international levels as well as implementing needs-based programs in targeted districts. NGOs have mostly played a significant role in sensitising Dalits at the grass-roots level through literacy programs, micro-income generation, development and political awareness programs. The DNF is

a common forum for raising collective voices in the Dalit community to ensure their rights, dignity and opportunity by influencing policy, networking and alliance-building. NNDSWO's programs are mainly dominated by education scholarship. The JMC and Samata foundation are making unique contributions through media advocacy and academic discourse. The scattered nature of Dalit activists in numerous NGOs, rather than one strong organization, has further weakened Dalit voices. It is reported that there were more than 1,000 NGOs upto 2010 working for the rights of Dalits (Sharma, 2011 as cited in Bishwakarma, 2019). NGOs are bound by the rules and regulations of donors, which restrict NGOs to be radical in demanding Dalit rights. However, Dalit NGOs have contributed to the broader Dalit movement against discrimination.

International initiatives have provided an alternative opportunity structure for Dalits, also providing solidarity with other movements. Dalits, in these international forums mostly organized by United Nations bodies, are participating and raising their voice and concerns (Lamsal, 2012).

Summary of Findings, Results and Their Importance

In this research, the researcher's attempt was to explore Dalit girls' access to basic education, schooling practice as well as to identify issues and challenges that influenced their schooling progress. So taking Dalit girl students as active agents of the society, the main thrust of this research was to look into the phenomena from the perspectives of Dalit girl students and analyze them accordingly.

At the beginning of the academic session in the school, 'welcome to school program' was organized and children and their parents were invited to acknowledge their contribution. The monthly meetings with the school teachers to

discuss about progress, weakness, regularity of Dalit girls and also to explore possible ways of bringing them to the school contributed to maximize their participation in school.

Schooling practice is mainly shaped by the behaviors of the school family, mainly by the teachers and head teachers, and therefore, it is to be viewed from this perspective.

Schooling practice also includes social demeanor (relation), teachers' behavior, students' participation in curricular and extracurricular activities, tutorial support at school and presence of female teachers.

Dalits, being one of the economically poor groups of society, had to face family struggle to bear the cost of schooling of their children, particularly the girls. In the cost of schooling, indirect cost and opportunity cost of schooling had been highlighted in the discussion with the participants. Normally, it is found that direct cost is covered by the scholarship programs by different government and non-government organizations. Family struggled hard to pay indirect cost of schooling, which includes cost for school materials, dress and food. The large number of the participants had talked about the influence of opportunity cost on schooling, which forced the participants to think about their decision of schooling.

Similarly, household chores seemed to be one the major constrains for schooling; household chores in the community are considered to be the results of economic instability of the family. As agricultural labour is the main profession of the family, it demands more number of working members of the family in the field compelling elder Dalit girls as sources of labour and making them vulnerable for school dropout. Most of the children in the society are involved in some kinds of

work either paid or unpaid because of family obligation, lack of family resources, or for pocket money. So, they started to combine their schooling with work from early age. Even though work sometimes helps to minimize the indirect cost of schooling, it mostly hampers their performance in school, which works as pull out factor for their schooling in the long term.

Gender based division of labour is another contributing factor to deteriorate the schooling progress of the girls in the society. As there is a cultural practice of early marriage, girls are mainly considered as temporary members of the society and parents seemed to be less interested towards the investment for their schooling. Rather they prefer to teach them about the household chores and other family works that they are culturally supposed to do after getting married. It also makes Dalit girl students to leave the school for marriage purpose at early age.

As indicated by the findings from this research, children's lower rate of school participation and higher rate of drop out was not only because of the lack of knowledge among parents and children but also because of the gap between knowledge and reality. The research participants seemed to be aware with the benefits of schooling but they were somehow not able to materialize their knowledge into practice. It is also observed that social, economic and cultural factors like cost of schooling, child work from early age, child marriage and trends of migration, play a major role to translate their knowledge into practice.

The gap noticed between parents' expectation and outcome from schooling, which works as a stressful factor for Dalit girl students for school participation, that they will provide support for the family and bring economic stability, is unjustifiable. They consider education as a means of bringing change in living standard but their inability to perform well in school is not the expected outcome.

Such a parental attitude demotivates the Dalit girls to be interested towards their schooling. Similarly, parents are also discouraged to send their children to school because they don't find the level of education as being satisfactory to their children. In the community, it was observed that a gap between expectations and outcome from schooling was easily noticeable making Dalit girls' access to school more problematic.

Similarly, inadequate number of trained teachers and their inconsiderate attention to the Dalit girl students, lack of female teachers, especially the Dalit teachers, inadequate proper facilities that can attract them to school, gap between quality of education between community school and private school and lack of appropriate curriculum, all play major roles to demotivate Dalit girl students from schooling.

The results should be taken into account when considering ways to address the challenges of Dalit girls' schooling. The data contributes to a clear understanding about the relevance of education for Dalit girls and helping them overcome social stigmatization. Expanding entitlement and opportunities for education also involves enforcing laws against discrimination, providing social protection and redistributing public finance. It is important for government to develop financing formulas that ensure the targeting of poorest groups for support. Increased aid need to be accompanied by stronger commitment to basic education, especially for the Dalit community.

The researcher organized, described and interpreted the data according to the themes of the objectives. The information collected through the review of related literature, interview with selected participants, focus group discussions with selected participants and school profile form were quantitatively, analyzed and interpreted

qualitatively to respond to the themes of the study. The data in this research were analyzed systematically with a focus on Dalit girls' schooling and related challenges, school's initiatives for increasing their enrollment, school environment, teacher's behaviour towards Dalit girls, parental status, expectations and attitude, underage/early age marriage, and engagement in domestic chores in order to address the basic intent of the study. Qualitative data were recorded in the form of texts rather than numbers to capture the perception of the research participants.

As the study mainly intended to explore the status of Dalit girls' access to basic education, the researcher as discussed earlier has made an attempt to analyze their status with a focus on why they are not participating in education. Also, what can be done to overcome different types of challenges faced by Dalit girls in school, what policy options are to be developed in order to ensure their access to basic education and what changes Dalit girls aspire from their education in future were the answers expected in the study.

The study explored the answers to the above questions to indicate the status of Terai Dalit girls in the district of Dhanusha. In conclusion, it can be said that the results met the expectations of the study.

To support the study theme, 'schooling of Terai Dalit girls in Nepal' with a sound theoretical framework, the main theories of Karl Marx (1818-1883), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), Max Weber (1864-1920), cultural reproduction theory, social inequality and schooling theory, were referred to understand the inequalities of the Nepalese society, especially in Terai/Madhesh region.

However, based on the findings of the study, the multiplicities of Nepal like gender roles, the caste system, the communal feeling, language policy, and socio-

cultural taboos attached to Dalit girls schooling are such factors that have significant disparities in education as reflected in all aspects of Dalit girls' life in the school (including access, quality, transition and achievement).

The results from the study clearly present the status of Dalit girls schooling which, in the absence of required inputs, affect their stay of Dalit girls in the school and can not be prolonged to the desirable extent as they may demotivate them for the continuation of their schooling. Inadequate resources or their poor economic status may distract the Dalit girls from making quality learning in school. In the same way, pedagogic practice in the form of learning process has direct relation to the retention of Dalit girls in the school.

Social theories namely, Karl Marx's (1818-1883) oppositional classes and capitalism theory, Emile Durkheim's (1858-1917) structural and oppressed theory, Max Weber's (1864-1920) criticism of both structural and Marxist theory, Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory, social inequality and schooling theory, cultural continuity/ discontinuity theory, cultural conflict theory, educational equality theory, Jensen's biogenetic theory and so many others have integrated inclusion-exclusion factors that lead to inclusion-exclusion of people from main stream practices such as schooling, socialization, conflict resolution or promotion, social justice, cultural assimilation or dissimilation or development initiative.

The schooling of Terai Dalit girls is associated with composite factors as culture, economy, social relations and status, conflict and peace, familiar situation, gender parity, casteism and the inherent or explicit characteristics of social constructs that go a long-way to change the societal practices in favour of the downtrodden like

the Terai Dalits, especially the girls who badly need proper education to raise themselves from the drudgery of traditionally exclusionary practices.

The results suggest clear vision, if Dalit girls' stay in school is to be ensured, that their early marriage should be stopped and they should be empowered. So, education's unique power should secure central place in the days to come, in the plans of policy makers.

A thorough and comprehensive study on Dalit girl students, particularly, in the context of Madhesi Dalit girls, the most disadvantaged one of all the Dalit girls in the country, can help explore representative situation so as to draw ground base implications in order to improve their schooling practices. Dalit's political movement against discrimination and exclusion may also be other possible areas for further research.

Knowledge construction of this study may not be contextualized in other Dalit communities, especially from those in the mountain and hilly areas of the country. Besides, further research study can be conducted on caste-based issues in relation to educational inclusion and exclusion of Dalits, school dropout problems of Dalit girls, educational access of Dalit and non-Dalit girls, new direction for school dropout of Dalit youths etc.

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusions and Implications

This concluding chapter draws on the previous chapters, especially the analytical one, to derive conclusions and implications at both policy and practice level for improving the schooling practices of the Terai Dalit girls. As stated earlier, they remain to be the most disadvantaged of all in the Terai region of the country despite some intervention support provided to attract and retain them in the school. The conclusions and implications are drawn at the three levels: Policy level, research level and practice or implementation levels.

The Context of drawing Conclusions and Implications. It is the belief of the researcher that the context of drawing conclusions and implications justifies their contribution to the existing body of knowledge on the education of the disadvantaged, e.g. Dalits people.

Among the developing countries including Nepal, poverty alleviation has been one of the major agendas for many years of developmental initiatives. There could be multiple reasons behind being poor or the poor becoming poorer. Some of the basic causes of poverty could be ignorance, lack of knowledge, skill and attitude, lack of protection for the weaker section, lack of opportunities for employment or income generation, and lack of provision for basic services, e. g. health, water supply, food, security, nutrition, shelter, sanitation and education. The poor are mostly illiterate with high concentration on rural remote areas living mostly in isolation, far from roads with restricted access to information, public services and markets. The poor have a low status in society with little or no role in decision making processes.

Marginalization in education matters at many levels as having opportunity for meaningful education is a basic human right. It is also a condition for advancing social justice. People who are left behind in education face the prospect of diminished life chances in many other areas including employment, health and participation in the political processes that affect their lives. Moreover, restricted opportunity is one of the most powerful mechanisms for transmitting poverty across generations (GMR, 2010).

Various initiatives and declarations (for example, the Dakar declaration and the millennium development goals) have stressed the importance of universal primary education. The millennium development goals, declared in 2000, have set 2015 as the year in which universal education and gender equality are to be achieved. As the right to education has been incorporated in human rights and child rights, it has been the responsibility of the nation to educate all the children without discrimination of any kind. Everyone has a right to education and it is in this context that half a century ago, governments around the world made a clear statement of their intent on convention against discrimination in education (UNESCO, 1960).

Going backward in 1990, from around the world including Nepal, 164 governments together with partner organizations made a collective commitment to dramatically expand educational opportunities for children, youths and adults by 2000 or providing basic education to all children without discrimination of any kind, such as race, gender, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or any status. Nepal also made its commitment to EFA and prepared a National Plan of Action for EFA as an obligation of the nation to educate all the children. The EFA Plan of Nepal made the provision to ensure that all children in the country have quality basic primary education in a caring and joyful

environment (MOE, 2003). It has made a provision that they will have primary education in their mother tongue without any kind of cultural, ethnic or caste discrimination. This educational opportunity, defined by the EFA core document, definitely implies that the Terai Dalit girls cannot remain an exception to this provision.

So far as the situation of women is concerned, women's position is still lagging behind than that of men in almost all developing countries. The Asia and the Pacific sub-regional group had submitted the following demands during the United Nations fourth world conference on women held in Beijing, China, in Aug-Sep 1995 regarding education.

- Prioritize the elimination of illiteracy among women and eliminate gender gaps in the contents of education.
- Ensure women's equitable access to science and technology related skills.
- Create adequate mechanisms and strengthen them for advancement of women.

According to the education for all global monitoring report 2008, the share of girls among the out-of-school children was 57 percent (41 million) in 2005. In the Nepalis context, the constitution of Nepal 1990 regarded education as one of the fundamental rights which encouraged the introduction of special policies for educating girls, and other disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minorities and Dalits who have been historically marginalized in Nepal. The interim constitution 2007, now the constitution of Nepal (2015), has envisaged basic and primary education as fundamental right to be made free, compulsory and universal at the school level. The constitution is also explicit regarding the provision of primary education in mother

tongue and free education up to secondary level. For those students who are out of school, the DoE (now, CEHRD) and its development partners have taken out of school phenomenon seriously making every bid possible to bring this population into mainstream education by addressing their diverse educational needs. The Terai girls, that too the Dalit girls, cannot remain an exception to this initiative.

The literacy percentage of all women is 57.4 in Nepal, whereas for Dalit women, it is only 34.8 percent (MOE, 2013; UNDP, 2014; CBS, 2011). More than 46.0 percent of the Dalit girls from the hill, 43.4 percent from the mountain, and 30.0 percent from the southern plain (Terai) drop out from the schools. The share of Dalit enrollment at primary, lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary level is 19.10 percent, 14.5 percent, 11.0 and 6.7 percent respectively (DOE, 2014/15).

Dalit girls have suffered a lot due to several interrelated factors, viz. distance of school from home, cost of schooling, irrelevance of curriculum, ill health, heavy work burden and poverty (Majapuria, 2007). Unschooling, illiterate and early drop out cases are disproportionately high among Dalit, women and some other minority groups. Exclusion of women, Dalit, and people with disability of Nepal has been the social and national practice for centuries in education. Efforts were made after 1951 for their inclusion by the leaders of the disadvantaged groups, but their voices did not surface until the restoration of democracy in 1990. Although a great deal of efforts has been made since then, the impacts have not been felt in accelerating the needed change. Concerted efforts are to be made in education to take care of all the out of school children as they are from the underprivileged groups of people like Dalit.

The challenge faced by the educators in responding to the issue of equity and inclusion are enormous as the problem is multi-dimensional. The existing technical education and vocational training (TEVT) system is not sufficient to respond to the

needs of skilled human resources. The available technical human resource in number and quality is inversely proportional to the labor market needs, with added efficiency due to the elitist background of the highly educated technical expertise.

Dalit children, as they enter into the labor market without any skill in hand, remain unemployed or under employed and at times under-paid, even if employed.

Dalit community has the perception that study is the main function of the elite group, who have good economic condition. Due to such perception towards education, most Dalit girls are still illiterate and their presence in the state machinery is almost negligible. So, they are limited to the service level like peon, guard, sweeper etc. Landlessness, unemployment, low income, illiteracy etc. are the main causes of their poverty.

Conclusions

The study has come to the conclusion that the role of economic factor in promoting Dalit education stood as the most striking factor that negated the schooling of the Dalit girls in particular. Problems related to economic factor are money for tiffin, expenditure for their school's stationeries, school uniform, feeling of sadness due to poor clothes and shoes unlike their friends, stress due to failure to pay the school (examination) fees and other contingency expenditures.

It is obvious that teachers, administration and their colleagues' behavior along with their parents' attitude and lack of support services can affect the learning of Dalit girl students. The persistence of discrimination and inequality has been the effect of the social reproduction of the caste system. The data support that caste stratification has penetrated the Dalit lives. Legally, discrimination due to unfair economic activities on the basis of poverty, caste, gender and ethnicity is punishable though this is still in practice in rural areas of Terai region.

The discriminatory behavior can be slowly done away with the help of scholarship and other incentives and facilities provided to Dalit girls. They are gradually empowered through incentive measures like scholarships, mid-day meal, edible oil, school dress, and reservation policy of government in many areas of services.

Not only the government but also NGOs, INGOs, and other local level organizations are supporting Dalits for promotion of their education with a focus on girls. Institutional biases and the weak enforcement of existing legal provisions against discrimination and the incidents of caste-based discrimination are now increasingly reported by the mass media. Institutions need to become responsive to implement the anti-caste discrimination laws and provisions. However, targeted intervention for the appropriate schooling of the Dalit girls is still the need.

Implications

The government of Nepal is committed to reduce the existing socio-economic disparities by implementing special socio-economic intervention programs aimed at improving the living standard of the marginalized groups like Dalit (NNDSWO, 2007). Almost every conceivable strategy and approach has been covered in policy documents of the government of Nepal. Government policies are basically developed from the legal code 1963, interim constitution of Nepal 2007, constitution of Nepal 2015, ninth, tenth, fifteenth and other development plans and various documents. Similarly, activities of various NGOs/INGOs and donors were recorded to assess the effectiveness of Dalit focus programs. The constitution of Nepal (2015) guarantees human rights without any discrimination on grounds of caste, creed, religion, race or ideology. Legal aid act (1998) has sought to enforce the principle of stable obligation to improve access to justice for the economically underprivileged and other

disadvantaged groups like Dalit women and other ethnic groups. To make basic level education free, easily accessible and compulsory in a gradual way, the three-year interim plan (2007/08-2009/10) had laid emphasis on establishing a network from the central (federal) to the local level, to distribute scholarship, mid-day meal and edible oil to the targeted deprived community. This plan for the sake of providing education in the mother tongue has stated that special attention will be paid to fill in the posts of school teachers from Dalit, Madhesis, Adibasi Janjati groups (NPC, 2008). One of the goals of education for all (EFA) is to ensure basic education of good quality for all children, particularly Dalit, disabled, children in difficult circumstances, as well as for those belonging to ethnic minorities, through free and compulsory primary education in Nepal by 2015 education for all deadline.

The EFA national plan of action (2001-2015) and the EFA core document have stated that one of the primary strategies of government of Nepal is to provide education free of cost and to increase access. In order to make basic education free and accessible, parents of deprived and disadvantaged children will be assisted to reduce direct and indirect costs of education and will be targeted for assistance in addressing the opportunity cost of schooling. MoE (2007) has formulated the vulnerable communities' development plan (VCDP, 2007) to address social exclusion in primary education. The plan indicates the need for state's commitment to free primary education and suggests the employment of bilingual female teachers from local communities. It also suggests to provide incentives for increasing the attendance of Dalit girls (MoE, 2007). The core document of school sector reform plan (SSRP, 2007) has stated that free education will be implemented beginning from the academic year 2009 in grade 6, which will be gradually upgraded to grade 10. It has clearly mentioned that it is the right of children to receive quality basic education up to grade

8, and free basic education will include cost- free service for admission, text-book, tuition, and examination (MoE, 2008). This commitment has now been reiterated by school sector development plan (SSDP, 2016-21) with renewed emphasis on quality and equitable access to educational opportunities with a focus on the equitable access of the disadvantaged children to quality education.

Implications for policy. Few years back, the government of Nepal initiated the provision of free and compulsory primary education, which was basically a tuition fee free and free textbook only. When asked about the parental support needed for the schooling of the Dalit girl students, a strong voice among the parents, teachers, students and even the head teachers were that the basic needs for schooling should be fulfilled to send their children to school or retain Dalit girls in school. Nepal, for a long period, has very positive experience that a variety of incentives have been provided to the Dalit students for encouraging their participation at primary level to attain EFA goals. The typical examples of incentives are free education, provision of free textbooks, provision of mid-day meal in certain schools, uniforms by different agencies (INGOs, NGOs, CBOs and Clubs), and scholarships of different forms. It is, however, difficult to make a solid conclusion on whether there is actual decline in the drop out of Dalit girls as a direct consequence of the incentives or that the Dalit girl students are motivated to be enrolled at primary schools due to the incentives. Most of the Dalit girl students and their parents have made a demand for school uniform, edible oil and regular day meal service for the continuity of their education.

In some places, shortening the school day may be useful in attracting the Dalit girl students to join school, which can also support preventing drop-out rate to some extent. It would be logical to have school day only for three to four hours than the prevailing time (hours) because it would be more attractive for working Dalit children

to spare time from within the school time for their domestic chores as they cannot escape from their regular involvement. It could be tried out with some pilot projects to address the real needs of Dalit girl students to deliver education with recognition of their valuable time to earn their own livelihood. A new way for late entrants to the primary school and preventing drop out to hold them in school might be shortening the school cycle or school day, but not at the cost of the quality of their education. It would be more attractive for grown up Dalit girls than for the younger ones who are placed in the beginning grades. It would also be very beneficial for Dalit girls to utilize their time of schooling in their own way as there is the provision of fixed time table for arrival and departure in school.

Most Dalit girls are engaged in household chores for overcoming their hand to mouth problems. For example, they utilize their morning time in collecting the leaves of trees to cook meal, which is also the time of schooling (school hours). As a result, they are obliged to leave school or be absent from school though they are enrolled. So, appropriate or special facilities for Dalit girl students regarding their arrival and departure time (as expected by them) should be considered. This flexibility of time can also help in preventing the problem of their early drop out from the school.

Several studies have indicated that involving the Dalit community in school affairs is a positive step not only in improving the standards of teaching-learning activities but also in enhancing enrollment and preventing drop-out. It is apparent that increased Dalit parents' participation in school activities, educational process and the scheme like continuous assessment system (CAS) and liberal promotion (practiced earlier) can hold the Dalit girl students in schools. The efforts of government to form parent teacher association (PTA) and involving Dalit community in school management committee (SMC) are very positive measures in motivating Dalit parents

for sending their daughters to school and in preventing school drop-outs. There should be co-ordination among Dalit parents and those from other communities so that they would be actively involved in educating the Dalit community about the importance of education, especially for Dalit girls.

Field survey in four sample schools showed that one of the main causes of never schooling or drop-out of Dalit girls was related with parental attitude. Dalit girls' parents should be the focus of the awareness program for sending them to school. As revealed by the study, the door- to-door campaign for students' admission in the beginning of the academic session was found running as a day event, which should be run on regular basis by addressing the Dalit girls' specific needs and interests. Dalit parents' 'education and training' should be supportive and motivational to sending their daughters to school with the values of education embedded in the contents of the training.

Some schools, in a consolidated effort, should be providing all educational accessories including textbooks, reference materials, pencils, copies, school uniform, day meal, transportation facilities or allowances and appropriate living facilities (residential hostels) to those who cannot attend school due to long distance from their home. If such facilities are provided to the Dalit girl students they will not only be motivated toward schools but also seek parents' co-operation, to enjoy their study. Moreover, the schools of this type will also satisfy Dalit girl students' parents who do not wish to have their daughters stay at home due to poverty or engagement in household chores.

Some studies have shown that female teachers might be one of the solutions (ways) to have pedagogical improvement and retention of the girl students as well as improvement of their performance. As per the spirit of this study, Dalit female

teachers should be appointed in each and every school to address the pedagogical problems of Dalit children, particularly Dalit girl students. As more Dalit girl students are shy and introvert (they do not express their internal feelings with male teachers or other teachers who are non-Dalit), it would be a suitable provision in favor of Dalit girl students to have an opportunity to be taught by female teachers especially from their community. However, this is observed as a difficult proposition.

The study has also shown that marriage before appropriate age is one of the major causes of Dalit girls' absenteeism in the school. Despite legal provision of marriage system under the defined age bracket for the girls in the country, their parents think that they would feel themselves pious and can stop their daughters' malpractices regarding sex or sexual activity if their daughters are married at an early age before the legitimate age. It is with their preconceived notion that they get their daughters married before the actual marriageable age for their safety and psychological comfort. As a result, Dalit girl students are compelled to leave school or cannot achieve proper education. Some Dalit girl students were seen continuing their study even after their marriage but it had also some side effects as those who got married earlier were suffering from weak health or illness. At the same time, there was greater chance of becoming pregnant in the course of schooling. So, it is important that Dalit girls as well as their parents be made aware of their sufferings after their early marriage, and there should be a strict policy to ban their early marriage.

Parental education, especially of mother, plays vital role in order to facilitate the education of their children. So, an appropriate parental participation in education could be an extra but essential program for the continuation of Dalit girl students' education. Dalit girl students are being provided scholarship by different agencies.

These scholarships are centrally collected, and distributed on quota basis. But there is little effort to mobilize the local and district resources to create scholarship fund at the grassroots level. It is therefore necessary to develop scholarship fund in the Dalit community, especially for Dalit girl students by mobilizing school, community, and other types of resources. This is more so given the power currently shared by local government under the federal constitution of Nepal (2015).

There are several agencies working for Dalits, especially for Dalit girl students' education. But these agencies, in many cases, are working in isolation. So, a systematic sharing, joint planning and programming, constant and continuous advocacy, joint supervision and monitoring, collaborative feedback programs, joint re-planning and built-in mini researches could be the future policy implications.

Girls and women are considered the “second sex” and hence doubly disadvantaged. Moreover, the girls of Dalit community are triply disadvantaged in the community- the third factor being a culturally “untouchable person”. In order to address these issues, a monthly dialogue and discourse sessions with both the males and females of this community could be organized. In these sessions, they will be informed of the policies, programs and opportunities available to them. At the same time, their constraints will be explored to design a framework for special incentive package with focus on early childhood development activities, motivational programs, educational package for both the formal and non-formal education, health packages, condensed courses for school dropouts, and post- literacy as well as continuing education program for them.

Nepal's constitution and the educational regulations have made provision of teaching through mother tongue for basic and primary education. But limited efforts have been made from MoE side in producing reference materials in different

languages. Some INGOs and NGOs are producing literacy and post-literacy materials in different languages such as Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi. Individuals or group of individuals should be asked to produce such materials, some of which could be prescribed for the structured as well as unstructured educational programs, while others may be used as reference materials in the school library and village reading centers such as CLCs, which the Dalit girls can utilize during their free time.

Social protection policy for Dalit, especially for Dalit girls inside as well as outside the school, and minimum social security and support to individuals and communities suffering from poverty, diseases and insecurities, can help them lead a life with human dignity. Such protection policy should be designed and implemented for the upliftment of Dalit community, especially for the Dalit girls.

Policy on women's representation in the state, especially of Dalit women, is very much expected. Allocation of gender sensitive budget, more specifically for Dalit women, is another necessity Dalit women development program should be expanded in each and every corner of the municipalities. The recently concluded local elections have shown that Dalit women are being strongly represented in the local administration and governance.

Equity-based targets that focus on Dalit girls could be defined in terms of narrowing the disparities based on wealth, gender, language and location. National and international reporting on movement towards such targets would help increase the visibility of Dalit girls, identify areas of progress and problems, and inform policy choices. The government needs to use data to target the resources to under-performing schools and areas with Dalit girls' enrollment. Marginalization in education is the product of inherited disadvantage, deeply ingrained social processes, uneven power relationships, unfair economic arrangements and unscrupulous policies.

The overall effect of marginalization is to restrict opportunity as a result of circumstances over which children have no control, such as parental wealth, gender, ethnicity and language (Khanal et al., 2012; DoE, 2014; & Tamang et al., 2014).

Implications for practice. The government of Nepal (GoN) has given high priority to education sector and implemented various reform initiatives to meet the varied needs, demands and expectations of its citizens. Effort of the government towards socially marginalized and deprived communities by working intensively for establishing more inclusive educational environment (DoE, 2013) are there but they need to be translated into practice.

The Ministry of education (MoE) has been implementing various educational programs to improve the status of educational sector and to achieve the national and international commitments (such as world conference on education for all by 2015, Dakar and millennium development goals–MDGs and now, education 2030, SDG 4) emphasizing inclusive and equitable access to quality education for all. The ultimate aim of all these programs is to ensure the opportunity of school education as a fundamental right of all children with focus on marginalized sections of the population- e. g. women, Dalit, children with disabilities, and ethnic and linguistic minorities.

Basic and primary education plan I (BPEP-I, 1991–96), basic and primary education plan II (BPEPII, 1997–04), education for all (EFA, 2004–09), and school sector reform plan (SSRP 2009-15), were the major programs completed in the education sector. Similarly, secondary education support program (SESP, 2003-08), teacher education project (TEP, 2002-07), and the community school support program (CSSP, 2006-2011), were the other important programs implemented in the country (MoE, 2014). With the gainful experience of all these earlier educational programs,

the school sector reform plan (SSRP) had been designed and DoE has completed its implementation throughout the country. Now, school sector development plan (SSDP, 2016-21) is already in operation, which places special emphasis on quality education. Similarly, second higher education project (SHEP, 2007-14) has also been implemented with a view to improve higher education. UNICEF and UNESCO are assisting / supporting DoE with various field level activities focusing on equity, equality and gender responsive strategies. Dalit girls from Terai, cannot therefore remain an exception.

Free and compulsory basic education program has been already implemented in 13 districts (Dhankuta, Saptari, Bhaktapur, Parsa, Kaski, Rupandehi, Surkhet, Bardiya, Dadeldhura, Kanchanpur, Dolpa, Mustang and Manang) in fiscal year 2013/2014 and in 8 districts (Pachthar, Siraha, Lalitpur, Syanja, Humla, Jajarkot, Baitadi and Doti) in fiscal year 2014/2015. The new constitution of Nepal 2015 has given right to every citizen to get free and compulsory basic education from the state. This should automatically entail Dalit girls to have easy access to education at the right time.

A comprehensive strategy paper is expected to bring the out of school children, especially the Dalit girls, to boost their enrollment. The gender equity consolidated strategy paper (2014) should be made fully functional to this effect as well both to avoid the potential absence of the female teachers who would be more positive to attract the Dalit girls to the schools and invite the left out Dalit girls to the school. Dalits, especially Dalit girls, should be encouraged to be a teacher, by making a license optional to them in the beginning with a gradual switch to the licensing system later.

There should be an initiation of supporting mechanism in districts, now 753 local units, to conduct action research on the issues of Dalit girl students. Village education plan (VEP) is to be there to ensure the representation of the Dalit community in SMC and the issues to address the problems of Dalit girl students in the VEP locally.

Mapping of out of school children, especially Dalit girl students (who, where, how) should be conducted through disaggregated household data by location so that this may positively give feedback for the design and implementation of appropriate interventions to bring them to the schools. Educational strategy for Dalits, especially the Dalit girl students, is the need with a focus on the most excluded ones from the most deprived sections of the communities of the country.

The amount (cash) provided as scholarship is not sufficient to meet the necessity of the needy students i. e. Dalit girl students. So, sufficient scholarship to meet the basic needs of the disadvantaged students (including Dalit girls) should be made available. Similarly, the number of students including the Dalit girls receiving different scholarships should be increased to avoid inequality in access.

Mid-day meal for grade 1-8 children, especially for Dalit girl students, mother and child health care programs, attending and pregnant Dalit mothers and mothers of newly born babies should be considered not only to improve their health conditions but also to increase their enrollment, attendance and retention through the continuation of nutritious school meal program.

To improve access and retention of Dalit girls, girls' incentive programs in the form of materials like cooking oil, wheat flour, and school dress should be continued.

In the same way, user friendly toilets along sufficient supply of water to avoid potential girls drop out, especially the Dalit girls, be constructed.

Education can empower women to claim their rights and overcome the challenges that prevent them from getting a fair share of the fruits of overall progress. To ensure that girls stay in school is one of the most effective ways to prevent child marriage. This is more so in the Terai Dalit girls. Staying in school longer also gives girls more confidence to make choices that avert the health risks of early births and births in quick succession. Currently, one in seven girls has children before the age of 17 in South Asia. Women with more education tend to have fewer children, which benefits them, their families and society. So, education's unique power should secure central place in the days to come, and in the plans of policy-makers in poor and rich country alike (GMR, 2013 /14); the Dalit girls should be no exception to this initiative.

Implications for further research. It is a daunting task to assess a diverse context of Dalit girls from the Terai community in a single piece of research. Further need is therefore wider research to study and understand the real scenario of Dalit women, especially Dalit girl students, who are living in the Terai-Madhesh community from multiple perspectives. It is also very significant to understand their situation and make every effort to ensure their equitable access to schooling opportunity. A thorough and comprehensive study on Dalit girl students, particularly in the context of Madheshi Dalit girls, the most disadvantaged one of all girls in the country, can help explore real situation so as to draw ground based implications in order to improve their schooling practices.

There can be several areas for further research in the area of Dalit girls' schooling. One of the important areas can be the analysis of present curriculum and

textbooks of schools so that relevance of these materials to the needs of Terai Dalit girls can be studied, measured and their equitable access judged. The effects or roles of present curriculum and textbooks regarding the schooling of Dalit girls can be investigated.

Another research area can be the analysis of teacher education curricula and teacher education practices to explain how Dalit girls' values are included. The issue related to Dalit women and girls' participation in education can be an important area of studying inclusion in and exclusion from education in the case of Dalit community with a focus on girls' access.

Comparative studies between hill Dalits and Madheshi Dalits or between various groups of Dalit, between urban and rural Dalits, between language groups, and between schools can be other important studies for more comprehensive analysis of the schooling of Dalit girl students in the Terai region. Similarly, comparative studies between Nepalese Dalits and Dalits from other countries (mainly India as the word Dalit came from there) can also be a significant study to find out the status of schooling of Dalit girl students. Some detailed life history-based studies of Dalits can also be the potential areas for further research. Dalits' political movements against discrimination and exclusion may also be other possible areas for further research.

A study on effectiveness of girls' scholarship program, especially for Terai Dalit girls, can form other possible areas for further research. In the same way, a study on free and compulsory basic education for Terai Dalit girls with focus on its impact, roles and forms can be an imperative study for developing critical literacy programs. Action research is very important for developing a contextualized program in the education of the Dalit children with a focus on the girls.

Knowledge construction of this study may not be contextualized in other Dalit communities, especially from those in the mountain and hilly areas of the country. Besides, other research studies can be conducted on caste-based issues in relation to educational inclusion and exclusion such as comparative study between Hill and Terai Dalit, school dropout problems of Dalit girls, educational access of Dalit and non-Dalit girls, and new direction for school dropout of Dalit youths, and many more. Moreover, the issues raised in this study might be studied by applying the methods of data collection other than the ones employed by this research.

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Appendices

Schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal

Tables and Figures

Table 3.2. Number of Castewise Dalit Students in the Sample Schools

Caste	Sample School Gender	Secondary	Secondary	Saraswati	Janta Secondary
		School, Sohani- Mujeliya	School, Kuwa- Rampur	Secondary School, Brahmapuri	School, Belhi- Rajaul
Dom	G	0	0	0	0
	B	0	2	2	0
	T	0	2	2	0
Dushadh	G	0	4	4	64
	B	0	8	10	49
	T	0	12	14	113
Musahar	G	5	0	1	0
	B	7	4	4	0
	T	12	4	5	0
Chamar	G	23	6	7	38
	B	15	9	10	26
	T	38	15	17	64
Tatma	G	27	22	22	7
	B	30	25	28	7
	T	57	47	50	14
Khatwe	G	0	21	21	10
	B	0	30	34	18
	T	0	51	55	28
Dhobi	G	0	5	5	0
	B	0	8	10	0
	T	0	13	15	0
Halkhor	G	0	0	3	0
	B	0	0	2	0
	T	0	0	5	0
Total	G	55	58	63	119
	B	52	86	100	100
	T	107	144	163	219

Source: Field survey date, 2013

Table 4.3. *Dalit Girl Students' Enrollment by Caste*

Caste	Year	2009-10					2010-11					2011-12				
		School	SM	KR	SR	BR	Total	SM	KR	SR	BR	Total	SM	KR	SR	BR
Dom	G	-	5	19	-	24	-	-	31	-	31	-	-	12	-	12
	B	-	5	26	-	31	-	4	20	-	24	-	4	25	-	29
	T	-	10	45	-	55	-	4	51	-	55	-	4	37	-	41
Dusadh/Paswan	G	-	5	25	98	128	-	3	24	69	96	-	6	11	97	114
	B	-	25	31	95	151	-	12	26	57	95	-	13	23	63	99
	T	-	30	56	193	279	-	15	50	126	191	-	19	34	160	213
Musahar	G	18	-	28	-	46	14	-	18	-	32	10	-	8	-	18
	B	18	3	29	-	50	8	10	26	-	44	8	7	15	-	30
	T	36	3	57	-	96	252	10	44	-	76	18	7	23	-	48
Chamar	G	16	9	27	62	114	30	11	12	37	90	25	11	3	47	86
	B	17	15	27	49	108	17	11	24	33	85	12	15	8	35	70
	T	33	24	54	111	222	47	22	36	70	175	37	26	11	82	156
Tatma	G	88	15	22	18	143	68	15	16	9	108	52	36	9	7	104
	B	60	60	34	16	170	58	41	18	10	127	36	41	8	10	95
	T	148	75	56	34	313	126	56	34	19	235	88	77	17	17	199
Khatwe/Khang	G	12	23	32	35	102	22	24	28	20	94	8	31	22	11	72
	B	25	58	44	21	148	16	43	64	21	144	12	58	45	20	135
	T	37	81	76	56	250	38	67	92	41	238	20	89	67	31	207
Dhobi	G	6	8	6	-	20	12	2	6	-	20	85	8	-	-	13
	B	8	4	9	-	21	14	9	7	-	30	4	10	5	-	19
	T	14	12	15	-	41	26	11	13	-	50	9	18	5	-	32
Halkhor	G	-	-	12	-	12	-	-	10	-	10	-	-	5	-	5
	B	-	2	15	-	17	-	-	9	-	9	-	-	7	-	7
	T	-	2	27	-	29	-	-	19	-	19	-	-	12	-	12

Source: School Profile Form, 2013

Note: G = Girls, B= Boys, T=Total, SM = Sohani-Mujelia Secondary School, KR = Kuwa Rampur, Secondary School, SR= Saraswati Model Secondary School, BR= Belahi-Rajaul, Janata Secondary School.

Table 4.4. *Dalit Girl Students' Enrollment by Age-Group*

Caste	Year	2009-10					2010-11					2011-12				
		School	SM	KR	SR	BR	Total	SM	KR	SR	BR	Total	SM	KR	SR	BR
Dom	G	-	3	21	-	24	-	-	17	-	17	-	-	6	-	6
	B	-	3	26	-	29	-	3	14	-	17	-	2	12	-	14
	T	-	6	47	-	53	-	3	31	-	34	-	2	18	-	20
Dusadh	G	-	4	24	69	97	-	2	12	44	58	-	4	4	64	72
	B	-	17	39	57	113	-	8	18	33	59	-	8	5	49	62
	T	-	21	63	126	210	-	10	30	77	117	-	12	9	113	134
Musahar	G	10	-	22	-	32	10	-	21	-	31	5	-	3	-	8
	B	10	2	23	-	35	-	7	19	-	26	7	4	13	-	24
	T	20	2	45	-	67	10	7	40	-	57	12	4	16	-	32
Chamar	G	11	6	23	36	76	25	7	13	19	64	23	6	2	38	69
	B	10	12	28	42	92	10	8	15	21	54	10	9	8	26	53
	T	21	18	51	78	178	35	15	28	40	118	33	15	10	64	122
Tatma	G	80	10	42	12	144	60	11	21	4	96	37	22	14	7	80
	B	55	45	38	9	147	50	33	17	4	104	30	25	18	7	80
	T	135	55	80	21	291	110	44	38	8	200	67	47	32	14	160
Khatwe/Khang	G	-	16	28	18	62	17	16	6	6	45	-	21	23	10	54
	B	21	46	53	12	131	12	35	36	11	94	-	30	2	18	73
	T	20	62	81	30	193	29	51	42	17	139	-	51	48	28	127
Dhobi	G	-	5	8	-	13	10	2	7	-	19	-	5	2	-	7
	B	3	2	12	-	17	-	6	4	-	10	-	8	5	-	13
	T	3	7	20	-	30	10	8	11	-	29	-	13	7	-	20
Halkhor	G	-	-	12	-	12	-	-	5	-	5	-	-	3	-	3
	B	-	2	15	-	17	-	-	8	-	8	-	-	2	-	2
	T	-	2	27	-	29	-	-	13	-	13	-	-	5	-	5

Source: School Profile Form, 2013

Note: G = Girls, B= Boys, T=Total, SM = Sohani-Mujelia Secondary School, KR = Kuwa Rampur, Secondary School, SR= Saraswati Model Secondary School, BR=Belahi-Rajaul, Janata Secondary School.

Table 4.5. *Students' Enrollment by Gender*

Grades	Year	2009-10				2010-11				2011-12				
		School	SM	KR	SR	BR	SM	KR	SR	BR	SM	KR	SR	BR
Grade 1	G		44	40	10	17	34	32	9	13	24	42	14	27
	B		50	45	15	23	25	20	10	11	24	18	25	33
	T		94	85	25	40	59	52	19	24	48	60	39	60
Grade 2	G		26	58	15	25	24	37	12	9	15	35	6	30
	B		18	51	18	30	18	22	16	13	10	25	9	29
	T		44	109	33	55	42	59	28	22	25	60	15	59
Grade 3	G		11	43	18	30	24	40	16	10	17	26	5	21
	B		6	63	23	20	18	58	22	11	9	15	7	15
	T		17	106	41	50	42	98	38	21	26	41	12	36
Grade 4	G		8	26	20	35	11	51	20	17	10	40	6	17
	B		4	36	25	30	6	48	22	19	10	36	8	11
	T		12	59	45	65	17	99	42	36	20	76	14	28
Grade 5	G		3	25	25	30	8	22	22	12	5	26	6	5
	B		5	38	30	20	4	36	28	14	3	35	9	5
	T		8	63	55	50	12	58	50	26	8	61	15	10
Grade 6	G		27	12	25	30	21	14	21	29	11	16	7	25
	B		20	29	30	20	23	18	26	21	4	17	23	4
	T		47	41	55	50	44	32	47	50	18	33	30	29
Grade 7	G		17	12	20	30	12	21	20	26	8	19	9	21
	B		17	27	32	20	8	12	35	19	4	20	25	17
	T		34	39	52	50	20	33	45	45	12	39	34	38
Grade 8	G		4	11	28	16	12	27	25	19	14	5	17	16
	B		8	27	42	18	11	25	35	13	5	21	30	14
	T		12	38	70	34	23	52	60	32	19	26	47	30
Grades (1-8)	G		140	224	161	213	146	244	145	135	104	209	70	162
	B		128	316	215	181	113	239	194	121	72	187	136	128
	T		268	540	376	394	259	483	339	256	176	396	206	290

Source: School Profile Form, 2013.

Note: G = Girls, B= Boys, T=Total, SM = Sohani-Mujelia Secondary School, KR = Kuwa Rampur, Secondary School, SR= Saraswati Model Secondary School, BR= Belahi-Rajaul, Janata Secondary School.

Table 4.6. *Total Enrollment of Students by Grade*

Grades	Year	2009-10				2010-11				2011-12				
		School	SM	KR	SR	BR	SM	KR	SR	BR	SM	KR	SR	BR
Grade 1	G		107	95	24	41	64	65	21	44	45	107	34	57
	B		118	83	33	49	61	62	26	37	49	58	65	46
	T		225	178	57	90	125	127	47	81	94	165	99	103
Grade 2	G		64	101	23	46	60	73	23	28	45	88	15	51
	B		41	88	30	52	67	71	36	46	51	49	25	42
	T		108	189	53	95	127	144	59	74	96	137	40	93
Grade 3	G		44	133	38	52	38	136	22	27	44	70	12	42
	B		30	112	58	34	44	101	36	45	43	55	23	31
	T		77	245	96	86	82	237	58	72	87	125	35	73
Grade 4	G		21	87	47	58	30	103	46	51	33	75	13	36
	B		29	93	80	57	21	81	60	42	26	84	22	27
	T		50	180	127	115	51	184	106	93	59	159	35	63
Grade 5	G		29	85	52	65	31	79	48	28	37	84	14	26
	B		27	103	65	54	29	86	64	35	33	86	26	20
	T		56	188	117	119	50	165	112	63	70	170	40	46
Grade 6	G		23	525	75	50	55	60	63	47	53	56	22	36
	B		30	79	112	45	30	65	113	34	42	47	53	16
	T		53	131	187	95	85	125	176	81	95	103	75	52
Grade 7	G		36	47	70	50	46	40	72	45	43	56	30	35
	B		25	59	114	35	29	63	115	37	34	60	55	27
	T		61	106	184	85	75	103	187	82	77	116	85	62
Grade 8	G		26	36	64	42	42	45	67	35	42	36	50	29
	B		20	49	88	37	21	52	90	41	36	57	65	24
	T		46	85	152	79	63	97	157	76	78	93	115	53
Total	G		353	636	393	406	366	601	362	305	342	572	190	312
Grades	B		320	666	580	363	302	581	540	319	315	426	334	233
(1-8)	T		673	1302	973	769	668	1182	902	624	656	998	524	545

Source: School Profile Form, 2013

Note: G = Girls, B= Boys, T=Total, SM = Sohani-Mujelia Secondary School, KR = Kuwa Rampur, Secondary School, SR= Saraswati Model Secondary School, BR= Belahi-Rajaul, Janata Secondary School.

Table 4.11. *Trend of Promotion, Repetition and Dropout at Basic Level, 2013-17*

Level	PRD	School Years														
		2013			2014			2015			2016			2017		
		G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T
1	Promotion	75.7	75.1	75.4	78.3	78.4	78.4	81.9	81.1	81.5	80.9	80.9	80.9	83.0	82.0	82.5
	Repetition	17.3	17.7	17.5	15.0	15.4	15.2	13.4	14.0	13.7	14.4	14.2	14.3	13.7	14.1	13.9
	Dropout	7.0	7.2	7.1	6.7	6.2	6.5	4.7	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.9	4.8	3.3	4.0	3.6
2	Promotion	88.5	88.0	88.3	89.0	88.4	88.7	89.7	89.4	89.6	89.4	89.0	89.2	89.9	89.0	89.5
	Repetition	8.1	7.9	8.0	8.3	8.0	8.1	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.4	6.5	6.4
	Dropout	3.4	4.1	3.7	2.8	3.6	3.2	3.8	4.1	3.9	3.9	4.3	4.1	3.7	4.5	4.1
3	Promotion	89.9	89.3	89.6	90.2	89.4	89.8	90.7	90.6	90.6	90.4	90.2	90.3	91.3	90.5	90.9
	Repetition	6.9	7.0	7.0	6.8	6.8	6.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.3	5.6	5.5
	Dropout	3.2	3.7	3.4	3.0	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.4	3.9	3.7
4	Promotion	89.7	89.3	89.5	90.0	89.3	89.6	91.8	91.1	91.5	91.6	90.8	91.2	92.2	91.1	91.7
	Repetition	6.7	6.9	6.8	6.4	6.7	6.5	5.0	5.5	5.3	5.1	5.7	5.4	4.6	5.3	5.0
	Dropout	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.6	4.1	3.9	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.6	3.4
5	Promotion	91.3	90.0	90.2	91.7	91.5	91.6	92.5	92.0	92.2	92.3	91.8	92.0	93.2	92.5	92.9
	Repetition	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.4	5.3	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.3	3.9	4.3	4.1
	Dropout	4.4	4.6	4.5	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.4	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.8	3.7	2.8	3.3	3.1
1-5	Promotion	85.7	85.2	85.5	86.9	86.5	86.7	88.7	88.2	88.5	88.4	88.0	88.2	89.9	89.0	89.5
	Repetition	9.7	9.9	9.8	9.0	9.2	9.1	5.7	7.8	7.6	7.7	7.9	7.8	6.8	7.2	7.0
	Dropout	4.5	4.9	4.7	4.1	4.3	4.2	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.0	3.3	3.8	3.6
6	Promotion	90.2	88.9	89.6	91.5	89.3	90.4	92.3	91.3	91.8	91.5	90.4	91.0	92.6	92.0	92.3
	Repetition	4.8	5.2	5.0	4.3	5.1	4.7	3.8	4.4	4.1	4.2	4.9	4.5	3.7	4.4	4.1
	Dropout	4.9	5.9	5.4	4.2	5.7	4.9	3.9	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.7	4.5	3.7	3.5	3.6
7	Promotion	90.1	90.1	90.1	90.5	90.3	90.4	92.1	91.8	92.0	91.4	91.0	91.2	92.4	91.7	92.1
	Repetition	4.7	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.0	3.8	3.9	4.4	4.2	4.3	3.9	3.9	3.9
	Dropout	5.2	5.5	5.4	4.9	5.3	5.1	3.9	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.8	4.5	3.7	4.4	4.1
8	Promotion	88.2	88.8	88.5	89.3	89.6	89.5	91.0	90.8	90.9	90.1	89.9	90.0	90.9	90.3	90.6
	Repetition	5.4	4.8	5.1	4.6	4.5	4.5	3.8	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.4	4.3	3.8	4.1	3.9
	Dropout	6.4	6.3	6.4	6.1	5.9	6.0	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.3	5.6	5.5
Grade (6-8)	Promotion	89.5	89.3	89.4	90.4	89.7	90.1	91.8	91.3	91.6	91.0	90.4	90.7	92.0	91.4	91.7
	Repetition	5.0	4.8	4.9	4.5	4.7	4.6	3.9	4.1	4.0	4.3	4.5	4.4	3.8	4.1	4.0
	Dropout	5.5	5.9	5.7	5.0	5.6	5.3	4.3	4.6	4.4	4.7	5.1	4.9	4.2	4.5	4.4
Basic (1-8)	Promotion	87.6	87.3	87.5	88.7	88.1	88.4	90.3	89.8	90.1	89.7	89.2	89.5	91.0	90.2	90.6
	Repetition	7.4	7.4	7.4	6.8	7.0	6.9	5.7	6.0	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.1	5.3	5.7	5.5
	Dropout	5.0	5.4	5.2	4.6	5.0	4.8	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.6	4.5	3.8	4.2	4.0

Source: Consolidated report, 2017-018

Note: G=Girls, B= Boys, T= Total

Table 4.12. *Rate of Promotion, Repetition and Dropout of Dalit students at basic level*

Grade	Year School	2009-10											
		SM			KR			SR			BR		
		PRD	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B
Grade 1	Promotion	24	18	42	40	45	85	10	15	25	14	17	31
	Repetition	16	28	44	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	6	9
	Dropout	4	4	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 2	Promotion	24	18	42	55	48	103	15	18	33	20	22	42
	Repetition	-	-	-	3	3	6	-	-	-	5	8	13
	Dropout	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 3	Promotion	11	6	17	43	63	106	18	23	41	24	16	40
	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	4	10
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 4	Promotion	7	4	11	23	36	59	20	25	45	27	24	51
	Repetition	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	6	14
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 5	Promotion	3	5	8	25	38	63	25	30	55	24	16	40
	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	4	10
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 6	Promotion	7	5	12	12	29	41	25	30	55	25	18	43
	Repetition	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	7
	Dropout	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 7	Promotion	17	17	34	12	27	39	20	32	52	26	20	46
	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 8	Promotion	4	8	12	11	27	38	28	42	70	13	14	27
	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	7
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade (1-8)	Promotion	97	81	178	221	313	534	171	215	386	173	147	320
	Repetition	17	29	46	3	3	6	-	-	-	40	34	74
	Dropout	8	4	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Contd/

Source: Field survey date, 2013

Note: G = Girls, B= Boys, T=Total, SM = Sohani-Mujelia Secondary School, KR = Kuwa Rampur, Secondary School, SR= Saraswati Model Secondary School, BR= Belahi-Rajaul, Janata Secondary School.

Grade	Year School	2010-11											
		SM			KR			SR			BR		
		PRD	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B
	Promotion	21	15	36	32	20	52	9	10	19	10	8	18
Grade 1	Repetition	24	18	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	6
	Dropout	13	10	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 2	Promotion	15	15	30	37	22	59	12	16	28	7	15	22
	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	6
Grade 3	Dropout	9	3	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	19	14	33	40	58	98	16	22	38	8	8	16
Grade 4	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	5
	Dropout	5	4	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 5	Promotion	11	6	17	51	48	99	20	22	42	14	14	28
	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	8
Grade 6	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	8	4	12	22	36	58	22	28	50	9	10	19
Grade 7	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	7
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 8	Promotion	19	19	38	14	18	32	21	26	47	21	17	38
	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	4	12
Grade 9	Dropout	2	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	11	11	22	21	12	33	20	35	55	21	15	36
Grade 10	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	9
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 11	Promotion	12	11	23	27	25	52	25	35	60	14	10	24
	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	8
Grade 12	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	116	95	211	244	239	483	145	194	339	104	97	201
Grade (1-8)	Repetition	24	18	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	31	30	61
	Dropout	29	21	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Contd/

Source: Field survey date, 2013

Note: G = Girls, B= Boys, T=Total, SM = Sohani-Mujelia Secondary School, KR = Kuwa Rampur, Secondary School, SR= Saraswati Model Secondary School, BR= Belahi-Rajaul, Janata Secondary School.

Grade	Year School	2011-12											
		SM			KR			SR			BR		
		PRD	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B	T	G	B
	Promotion	22	21	43	42	18	60	14	25	39	21	29	50
Grade 1	Repetition	9	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	4	10
	Dropout	2	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	15	10	25	35	25	60	6	9	15	26	21	47
Grade 2	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	8	12
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	10	7	17	26	15	41	5	5	10	17	11	28
Grade 3	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	8
	Dropout	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	10	10	20	40	36	76	6	5	14	13	9	21
Grade 4	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	6
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	5	3	8	26	35	61	6	9	15	5	4	9
Grade 5	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	10	5	15	16	17	33	7	23	30	20	4	24
Grade 6	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	5
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	8	4	12	19	20	39	9	25	34	15	14	29
Grade 7	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	3	9
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	14	5	19	5	21	26	17	30	47	13	13	26
Grade 8	Repetition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	4
	Dropout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promotion	94	65	159	209	187	396	70	136	206	130	105	235
Grade (1-8)	Repetition	9	4	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	23	55
	Dropout	2	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Field survey date, 2013

Note: G = Girls, B= Boys, T=Total, SM = Sohani-Mujelia Secondary School, KR = Kuwa Rampur, Secondary School, SR= Saraswati Model Secondary School, BR= Belahi-Rajaul, Janata Secondary School.

Appendix-A. Instruments

Appendix – 1A Interview Guidelines for Headteachers

1. How do Dalit girls relate the values of education to their life?
 - a. personal development
 - b. social development
 - economic development
 - c. educational development
 - e. cultural development
 - f. political development
 - g. religious development
 - h. reducing caste discrimination

2. What has the school done to ensure equitable access to education for Dalit girls?
 - a. school enrollment campaign
 - b. community awareness
 - c. mobilization of CBOs/NGOs
 - d. applying local curriculum
 - e. practicing mother tongue based multilingual education
 - f. launching an early childhood development class
 - g. recruiting Dalit teacher

3. What could be the reasons for Dalit girls not attending schools?
 - a. domestic chores
 - b. school factors
 - c. social factors
 - d. family factors
 - e. parental factors
 - f. peer factors
 - g. religious factors
 - h. cultural factors
 - i. opportunity and cash costs of education

4. What are the changes observed in Dalit girls after schooling?
 - a. increased self expressive power though main stream language Nepali
 - b. gaining knowledge in different areas of their day to day life
 - c. acquiring the ability to earn their livelihood
 - d. increased mobility in society (peers)
 - e. increased self confidence and a positive self image
 - f. bringing changes in relation to their social life
 - g. bringing changes in their economic situation
 - h. bringing changes in their psychological situation
 - i. increased motivation toward higher level of education.

5. What type of relation have you observed between socio-economic status of Dalit parents and schooling of their girl child?
 - a. occupation factors (parents)
 - b. land area factors
 - c. qualification of the parents
 - d. separate study room for students
 - e. availability of computer
 - f. availability of study table
 - g. availability of TV or other electronic device

6. What are the issues and challenges for the schooling of Dalit girls that you have observed in your school?
 - a. poverty
 - b. illiteracy
 - c. awareness
 - d. distance from the school
 - e. under age marriage
 - f. siblings
 - b. household work/grazing cattle
 - h. elite domination in the school
 - i. untouchability in the community
 - j. opportunity cost
 - k. lack of female teachers

7. How has the school managed to reduce/bridge the gaps between Dalit and non-Dalit students?
 - a. scholarship
 - b. free textbooks
 - c. educational materials
 - d. school enrollment campaign
 - e. heterogeneous classroom management
 - f. special effort (launching ECD prog, compulsory ed.)
 - g. involvement of Dalit parents in school activities (SMC, PTA, ECA)

8. What are the problems related to the operation of the schools?
 - a. teacher's low interest despite training
 - b. playground not used
 - c. underprivileged children not benefitted
 - d. little number of female teachers
 - e. insufficient physical facilities
 - f. poor attention of guardians toward children is learning
 - g. less regularity of teachers and students in school

9. How do you observe the classes?
10. How often do you call the meeting of the parents (PTA)?
11. How many times do you call teacher's meeting in an academic year?
- What are the agenda of discussion?
 - What are the achievement of discussion?
12. Do the teachers spend full time in the class?
- Yes No
- If not, give reasons:
- c.
 - d.
 - f.
13. How does community support the school activities?
- donation f. arranging resources
 - labor support g. arranging resource person at times of need
 - participation in school activities e. involving in decision making process
 - involvement in decision making process
14. What is the situation of Dalit girls in your school life?
15. What are the main causes of little participation of Dalit girls in school?
16. What could be the measures to improve schooling practices of Dalit girls?
- increase scholarship or incentive amount
 - income generating program
 - opportunity cost (providing)
 - residential provision
 - special coaching and mentoring
 - special guidance and counseling

Appendix – 1B**Schooling of Terai Dalit Girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal****Interview guidelines for teachers**

Name of teacher:

Position:

Name of school:

Type: permanent/temporary

Qualification:

Training:

1. What have you done as a teacher to attract Dalit girls to school?
2. How have you treated the Dalit girls in your classroom?
3. What are the reasons for Dalit girls not attending schools?
4. How do you find Dalit girls' classroom behavior?
5. How do you encourage Dalit girls' participation in class activities?
6. How do you create equalization of educational opportunities for both Dalit and non-Dalit girls?
7. How have you perceived parental support to the schooling of their girls?
8. What are the issues and challenges for the schooling of Dalit girls?
9. What type of pedagogy have you used for promoting Dalit girls' performance at school?
10. What types of incentives should be targeted specially for Dalit girls in school?

Appendix– 1C

Schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal

Focus group discussion guidelines for parents

1. Profile of parents:

S. N.	Name of parents	Qualification	Eco-Status	Remarks
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Municipality: Janakpurdham

Name of school:

Ward No.

Date of establishment:

Location:

2. School going age (5-12) children at the family and those already in the school.

S. N.	School going age children	Qualification
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

3. Parental expectation from school side

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| a. monetary support | e. balanced social life |
| b. quality education | f. breakage of social cultural Challenges |
| c. quality of life | g. self-employable skills/knowledge |
| d. economically productive life | h. compensation for child (opportunity cost) |

4. Parental expectation from their children
 - a. disciplined behavior
 - b. active participation
 - c. qualification & intelligence
 - d. confidence building
 - e. Mixed up in society (socialization)

5. Reasons for not sending their children to school.
 - a. poverty (financial constraints)
 - b. value of schooling (low level)
 - c. school distance
 - d. shortage of textbooks
 - e. early marriage
 - f. students' failure
 - g. lack of parental awareness/qualification
 - h. unsatisfactory teaching process
 - i. household chores (daily sibling care, domestic and farm work)
 - j. lack of school administrative support
 - k. little relation perceived between education and employment opportunity

6. Favorable environment at school and community
 - a. removable of social stigma on untouchable
 - b. enabling school environment (curriculum and textbook, classroom participation, teacher behavior)
 - c. parental and community awareness
 - d. welcoming school environment
 - e. child friendly pedagogy
 - f. receptive and welcoming community

7. Issue and challenges of schooling of their children
 - a. availability of textbooks in time
 - b. unknown about school activities
 - c. lack of transparency in scholarship distribution process
 - d. municipal and varied sources of Dalit scholarship
 - e. lack of female teachers in school
 - f. little relevance of curriculum and textbook
 - g. little use of mother tongue

8. Suggestion for school environment and scholarship
 - a. wider participation in school activities
 - b. child friendly teaching in school
 - c. incensement in scholarship funding
 - d. residential arrangement for girls
 - e. non-discriminatory behavior from teachers

9. Increasing disadvantaged parents' participation in school
 - a. legal provision in SMC/PTA/VEC as member
 - b. providing opportunities in school activities
 - c. favorable environment in class/school
 - d. no discrimination in school children
 - e. transparent scholarship distribution process

10. Impact of school education on Dalit girls
 - a. behavioral change
 - b. communicative confidence/competence
 - c. increased class participation
 - d. increase in regularity/school attendance
 - e. increase motivation toward learning

Appendix – 1D
Schooling of Terai Dalit girls of Dhanusha district in Nepal
Focus Group Discussion Guidelines for Students

Name of school:

Name of students:

S. N.	Name	Age	Class

1. Supporting factors for attending school
 - a. family (parents)
 - b. school (teacher/ht)
 - c. friends/colleagues
 - d. social factors
 - e. curriculum and textbook
 - f. media support
 - g. community

2. Satisfaction toward schooling practices
 - a. teaching-learning (child friendly class) process
 - b. non-discriminatory treatment by peers, students, teachers
 - c. encouragement for classroom participation/school activities
 - d. support services
 - toilet facilities for girls
 - sanitation activities
 - counseling and guidance
 - use of visual material
 - presence of female teachers

3. Expectation from school
 - a. relief from household work
 - b. improvement in quality of life
 - c. better economic return/job/career
 - d. lifelong education/continuing education
 - e. improving poor social practices
 - f. self-employment skills, knowledge
 - g. better marriage opportunities
 - h. relief from early marriage

4. Extent of parental support
 - a. providing sufficient time to children is learning
 - b. helping children explicitly or implicitly to do their homework
 - c. giving prompt services to children for stationeries or other goods
 - d. allocating special time for study
5. Engagement in household chores
 - a. No heavily engagement in household chores
 - b. parental guidance on specific household chores
 - c. both study as well as household chores taken simultaneously
 - d. engagement in siblings' care
6. Learning/studying, opportunities at home?
 - a. learning friendly physical set-up at home
 - b. adequate of learning/reading/reference materials at home
 - c. tutorial support at home
7. School environment
 - a. child friendly school environment
 - b. safe, secured and non-discriminatory behavior (in terms of gender, caste, ethnicity, language, religion etc.)
 - c. supportive school management
 - d. encouraging school participation
8. Difficult subject areas and remedial teaching?
 - a. co-operating learning strategies
 - b. providing tutorial support to children's learning
 - c. provision of counseling and guidance services
 - d. utilizing local expert resources
 - e. coaching and mentoring
9. Measures for increasing Dalit girl's participation in school activities
 - a. effective teaching-learning
 - b. removing bad practices from classroom/school
 - c. increasing healthy competition
 - d. participation in extracurricular activities (ECA)
 - e. treating the Dalit girl equally with non-Dalit girl
10. Issues/challenges in funding girls' education
 - a. rural families surviving below the poverty line
 - b. more investment of time in domestic/farm work
 - c. parents have to pay partial cost of students
 - d. public schools charge a one-time fee (admission, examination)

f. Rate of promotion, repetition and dropout of Dalit students

Academic year	Category	Gender/ Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	
2012	Promotion	Girls										
		Boys										
2011		Girls										
		Boys										
2010		Girls										
		Boys										
2009		Girls										
		Boys										
2012		Repetition	Girls									
			Boys									
2011			Girls									
			Boys									
2010	Girls											
	Boys											
2009	Girls											
	Boys											
2012	Dropout		Girls									
			Boys									
2011			Girls									
			Boys									
2010		Girls										
		Boys										
2009		Girls										
		Boys										

3. Teacher related information

a. Total no. of teachers by gender at basic level

Level	Female	Male	Total
Primary (1-5)			
Lower Sec. (6-8)			
Basic (1-8)			

b. No. of Dalit and Janajati teachers by sex

Social group	Primary		Lower Secondary		Basic		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Dalit							
Janajati							

c. Percentage shares of Dalit and Janajati teachers in total teachers by level

Social group	Primary		Lower Secondary		Basic		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Dalit							
Janajati							

4. Guiding questions to head teacher
 - a. Are all the Dalit children of basic age group (5-12 years) of your school catchment area coming to this school?
 - b. If no, what are the causes of net attending the school?
 - c. Which is the most pertinent barrier in your opinion?
5. What is the family's social status of Dalit girls in this school?
 - a. elite b. update c. moderate d. poor
6. What is the family's economic status of Dalit girls in this school?
 - a. employed b. semi-employed c. unemployed d. under-employed
7. What types of employment do Dalit girls' parents have?
 - a. govt b. non-govt e. private d. self
8. What is the educational status of parents of Dalit girl students?
 - a. literate b. illiterate c. primary level pass d. more than primary level
9. Among Terai Dalit caste, which one is socially, economically and educationally more progressive?
 - a. Mushahar b. Dom c. Tatma d. Khatwe
 - c. Dusadha f. Chamar g. Dhobi h. Halkhor
10. In your opinion, what measures should be taken for bringing the out of school Dalit girls/children of basic age group to the school?
 - a. scholarship b. meeting opportunity cost c. awareness
 - d. literacy/consciousness

11. What role should be played by school, local govt. (municipality), district education offices and central govt. to educate the out of school Dalit girls?
 - a. School: awareness/literacy
 - b. NGOs/INGOs: awareness/literacy/income generating activities
 - c. Municipality: causes, information, poverty reduction
 - d. DEO: awareness/literacy/scholarship/meeting opportunity cost/income generating programs
 - e. Central: policy, budgeting, capacity building, poverty reduction
12. What kind of educational activities/techniques/measure/steps should be taken as interventions to increase the regularity of Dalit girl/children in your school?
13. What difficulties have you faced in addressing the issues of Dalit girls?
14. In future, what will you do to retain all Dalit girls/children of basic age group of this locality in the school?