

# CHAPTER – I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The right to education for all has been an international goal for more than a decade. Since the 1990s, women's education and empowerment have come into more focus. Several conferences including the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo, and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, placed these issues at the center of development efforts. The Millennium Development Goals -- agreed by world leaders at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000 - call for universal primary education and for closing the gender gap in secondary and higher education. These high-level agreements further produced initiatives around the world to increase girls' school enrollments. Changes since 1990 have been remarkable, considering the barriers that had to be overcome in developing countries. In many traditional societies, girls are prevented from attaining their full potential because of lower priority on educating daughters who marry and leave the family and the lower status of girls and women (Ashford, 2012).

Nestled between the Asian economic giants -- China and India, Nepal shares with India a caste system in which discrimination is still a fact of everyday life. Its population of 30 million includes more than 100 ethnic groups, nearly as many languages, and sub-castes. Caste and gender remain the major barriers to the education. According to recent reports, the Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010-2011 (NLSS- III) has found out that Nepal has an adult literacy rate of 56.6 per cent with a huge variation between men and women. While male literacy rate is 71.6 per cent, it is only 44.5 per cent for women. This shows that there is still a belief among Nepalese people that girls are limited to go to schools and providing opportunity for them to go school is forbidden. Women receive only about 16.0 per cent of undergraduate and 11.0 per cent of doctorate degrees in engineering; less than 22.0 per cent of doctorate degrees in math and physical sciences; 28.0 per cent of undergraduate and 15.0 per cent of doctorate degrees in computer and information sciences. By contrast, women continue to earn the largest proportion of degrees at all levels (associate through doctoral degrees) in the fields they have traditionally dominated, such as health professions which includes nursing, physical therapy and health administration (83.0 per cent) and education (77.0 per cent).

The forms of structural discrimination, alienation, and abuse that dalit children face in schools are more defaming than they are oftentimes forced to drop out of school. One of the main issues is the discriminatory practice conducted by teachers. In 2006, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education noted that “teachers have been known to declare that dalit pupils cannot learn unless they are beaten” (HRW, 2007). Discriminatory practices against dalit children exercised by teachers may include corporal punishment, denial of access to school water supplies, segregation in class rooms, and forcing dalit children to perform manual scavenging on and around school premises (International Dalit Solidarity Network and Navsarjan briefing note, 2010). A Nepalese study on caste-based discrimination in school documented that indirect discrimination by teachers, such as neglect, repeated blaming, and labeling of Dalit students as weak performers, lead to social exclusion of dalit students in schools. The consequence was irregular attendance in classroom, less concentration in studies, less participation in school activities, lower performance, failure, and school drop-out (Bishwokarma, 2010 p 2).

Financial hardships have been identified as the main reason for children failing to pursue their education. Education being a particularly expensive commodity for dalit families, it is important for them to be assured that it will result in employment. With no assurances from the state it is unlikely that dalit communities will choose education over trying to make a living. This is especially true for dalit girls who will be married at an early age and for whom parents think education is not a necessity (One World Action, 2011 p 1). Thus, a girl child out of school contributes to a vicious cycle, eventually preventing her from giving her own family a good start in life and slowing economic growth and social development of the country as a whole. It has been proved that entire societies develop when girls and women are enabled to be fully contributing community members.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The barriers to girls and women education are a maze of socio-cultural, economic, and political realities that vary by community and even by family. Girls’ education of dalit community largely depends on parents’ perceptions (generally, their perceptions are guided by conservative thinking due to illiteracy), indeed their perceived thought has led to impede their daughters’ education. For instance, in dalit community when families choose which children will or will not be educated, or which will have better educational opportunity, sons are preferred. Providing opportunity for girls to go school is regarded as

waste of time and money. They have such a conservative concept that at the end girls have to go to her husband's home after marriage so if son is educated he will support the family and look them in their aging period.

Educating a son is perceived as investing in his ability to look after his ageing parents while educating a daughter is considered a no-return investment at all. Furthermore, when she marries, she becomes another family's asset. Both the opportunity and cash costs of education lock girls out of schools. On the other hand, ignoring these facts, the government also could not contribute a lot to change the parents' perceptions by sensitizing the dalit community (Panthhe, 2015).

The majority of girls in dalit community are daughters of subsistence farmers living near or below the poverty line. Eldest daughters often provide most of the sibling care as well as in farm and domestic work. Although tuition and books are free in public schools, other forms of student fees (indirect costs) prohibit from schooling (Panthhe, 2015). Demographic surveys show that most of dalit girls get married before they reach 18 years of age (MoE Country Report, 1998 p 8). With few exceptions, marriage ends their schooling. This adds to the cycle of maternal illiteracy that diminishes the chance of their daughters being schooled.

Similarly, dalit community is acknowledged as a deprived community. In general, education in this community is not given much priority yet; more specifically girl child education seems to be extremely vulnerable. Hence, girl child education– the panacea of poverty reduction, family disorganization, and societal true development seem to be suffered due to socio-cultural, economic, and political factors in this community.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

Prime objective of the study was to probe out the knowledge gap (contradictions) in perceptions and practices of dalit community on the girl child education. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- (i) study the perceptions of dalit community on the girl child education
- (ii) find out the existing practices in dalit community on the girl child education
- (iii) explore the constraints and potentials of the dalit on girl child education

#### **1.4 Rationale of the Study**

Nepal is a densely women populated developing country where girls face many obstacles to pursue their education despite their humble willingness (Arends-Kuenning & Amin, 2001; Raynor, 2005; Shekh, 2001). In this line, the women from deprived/ marginalized community are ultimately more vulnerable, for example women of Dalit community. Due to lack of education, a large proportion of women have suffered from social stigma and economic hardship (Raynor, 2005 p 14). A number of studies largely emphasize the importance of girls' education as being the key to power and opportunities (Nussbaum, 2003). Nussbaum (2003) study identified girls' education as an urgent priority for women's overall well-being. Therefore, to dig out the ground reality, existing knowledge gap (contradictions) in perceptions and practices that are impeding girl child education in dalit community of the study area, this study immensely contributes with its findings and recommendations to different stakeholders for creating conducive milieu with supportive policies for prompt actions. This study is expected to contribute on mapping the wider society's perceptions on potentials and challenges to the women education specifically on the deprived and marginalized girl child education.

#### **1.5 Organization of the Study**

This study report is divided into five chapters followed by the references and annexes. Chapter I is the basic introduction of the study. background, statement of the problem, objective of the study, rational of the study and organization of the study are included in this chapter. Chapter II is all about the review of theoretical and imperial review of literatures. Chapter III is the brief of research methodology whereas chapter IV is the results and discussions. In chapter V summary and conclusion are mentioned. At the end of the report, references and the questionnaire used for the data collection is attached.

## **CHAPTER – II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Women's education is the key to sources of power and opportunities that may otherwise hinder women's lives as stated by (Arends-Kuenning & Amin, 2001; King & Hill, 1995; Nussbaum, 2003). Daniel (2006) opines that at the individual level, education is perceived to be the ultimate liberator, which empowers a person to make personal and social choices. At the national level, Daniel said that educated citizens are believed to be the foundation of well-functioning democratic institutions to achieve social consistency. A number of studies recognized that girls' education is not only crucial but also an urgent priority of the nation (Nussbaum, 2003; UNMP, 2005).

Girls' education both formal and non-formal increases their empowerment including self-respect, self-confidence, and capability. Burchfield (1996) highlighted, the sense of economic security, ability to earn a living, control over income, household decision-making, self-confidence, and self-respect for women's empowerment. She further emphasized that the ability to act effectively in the public sphere, to participate in public protest or political campaigns to be politically aware, all can be earned through education. Stromquest (1995) argued that empowerment was not limited to concerns about personal identity, but extended to the broader context of human rights and social justice.

Haider (1996) view, incomplete schooling led to poor self-image and to perceptions of inferiority. Nussbaum (2003) identified that girls' capabilities for self-respect; ability to develop social relationship and to achieve the important social good of self-respect; living with dignity; and cultivation of power of thought and expression; all these she noted, can be earned through education. Further, he stressed that access to legal systems and resources, and socio-political participation and rights are all opportunities girls can gain through education. Education enables and increases girls' earning capabilities, thus reducing their poverty and dependence on male dominant society (Nussbaum, 2005 p 16).

The report of the United Nation Millennium Project (2005) revealed that girls' education better prepares them to extract: The most benefit from existing services and opportunities and to generate alternative opportunities, roles, and support structures. These empowering effects of girls' education are manifested in a variety of ways, including increased

income-earning potentials, ability to bargain for resources within the household, decision autonomy, and participation in public life.

Educated women tend to exercise control over birth rates, which slows population growth. In doing so, this has the effect of eventually increasing women's power and economic well-being as they are freed from persistent child bearing and child-rearing responsibilities as stated by (Arends-Kuenning & Amin, 2001; World Bank, 1994). Burchfield (1996) surveyed two groups of women in Nepal. Furthermore, women's participation in literacy program increased respect for women's opinions by family and community and improved the women's confidence in expressing their opinions.

In addition, literacy program increased women's self-awareness to participate in credit programs and checks their children's attendance and progress in school. As well, women gained self-confidence after attending literacy program, which was translated into the outcome that they would not be cheated in the market either as vendors or as purchasers. In the same way, a member of women group disclosed that adult literacy program increased the opportunities for women to interact with other women and enhanced self-concept, capabilities, and confidence.

## **2.1 Theoretical Review**

Strain theory of Deviance, the symbolic interactionist theory and Functionalist theory (functionalism), are certain educational theories by which the perception and practices on child education can be studied.

Émile Durkheim, the founder of functionalist theory, identified the latent role of education as one of socializing people into society's mainstream. According to Durkheim, education is a key component of the social body, just like the heart is integral to the functioning of the human body, education is fundamental to the health of the social body. It does this by: passing on society's culture – education functions as a key mechanism (functional prerequisite) through which a new generation of children acquire the 'central' norms, values and culture of their society. This unites or glues people together by giving them shared values, what sociologists' term as a value consensus, through the 'hidden curriculum'. Durkheim argued that schools are a 'society in miniature' – a small scale version of the wider society in which people live and work. this standpoint, take over the

primary socialization role of parents. This means schools are sites of secondary socialization. The schools, provide a bridge between the 'particularistic' values of the family and the 'universalistic' values of meritocracy of contemporary industrial society.

Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson conducted the study for symbolic interactionist theory (1968). This theory focus on how teacher expectations influence student performance, perceptions, and attitudes. They examined a group of students with standard IQ tests. The researchers then identified a number of students who they said would likely show a sharp increase in abilities over the coming year. They informed teachers about results, and asked them to watch if this increase did occur. When the researchers repeated the IQ tests at the end of the year, the students identified by the researchers did indeed show higher IQ scores. The significance of this study lies in the fact that the researchers had randomly selected a number of average students. The researchers found that when the teachers expected a particular performance or growth, it occurred.

Social strain theory was developed by famed American sociologist Robert K. Merton. "Strain" refers to the discrepancies between culturally defined goals and the institutionalized means available to achieve these goals. This theory states that social structures may pressure citizens to commit crimes. Strain may be structural, which refers to the processes at the societal level that filter down and affect how the individual perceives his or her needs. Strain may also be individual, which refers to the frictions and pains experienced by an individual as he or she looks for ways to satisfy individual needs. These types of strain can insinuate social structures within society that then pressure citizens to become criminals.

### **2.1.1 Educational Theories and its Relevance for this Study**

The reason why the Strain theory of deviance has become the relevant theory to this study is that in the country like Nepal where, low caste (so called) and low class people are marginalized and oppressed by classism and caste discrimination are most likely to experience this particular strain because they aim for the same goals as the rest of society, but a society rife with systemic inequalities limits their opportunities for success. For such marginalized citizens to achieve the social justice, society needs to provide access to education, employment, etc., and it's true that there isn't doing a good enough job. When individuals are faced with a gap between 'what ought to be' and 'what is,' they will feel

strained and frustration that can lead to deviance. They also experience anomie, or feelings of being disconnected from society and these individuals are therefore likely to turn to unsanctioned means as a way to achieve economic success or get involved in anti-social activities. For an example, in the Nepalese context after completing their School leaving certificate (SLC), lets, say 90.0 per cent of the students have been accepted at various colleges. Five percent do not want to go to college, and the remaining five percent want to go to college but cannot (i.e. they are from marginalized and so called low caste people in Nepalese Society), for any one of a number of reasons. All of the students want to get better and brighter future, and attending college is generally accepted as the first step toward that goal. The five percent who want to attend college but can't probably feel frustrated. They had the same goals as everyone else but were blocked from the usual means of achieving them, it might be either they are financially poor and cannot afford it or are not allowed to continue further education as they are girls and also from dalit community and so on. They may act out in a deviant manner.

The symbolic interactionist theory adopted in study is one of the most applicable and factual theoretical approach in this study it's because when we talk about girls' education, our Nepalese society is such a narrow- minded that we think, girls have to go to their husband's home after marriage, so there is no use of providing education to them, it's the wastage of time and money, instead if we provide education to the son he looks and support properly during aging period. At the same time, parents, teachers and guardians perceived that the girls (especially from the dalit community) are frail, too emotional, are not capable and cannot do any remarkable achievement even though they are educated. Their job is just to get marriage, have children and look after her family. They do not support them properly and do not expect progress and achievement from them. Such an erroneous perception and practices dispirit girls from achieving better education and success. Fundamental aspects of our social experience and identities, like race and gender, can be understood through the symbolic interactionist lens.

Functionalist theory is much more significant because functionalism interprets each part of society in terms of how it contributes to the stability of the whole society. Society is more than the sum of its parts; rather, each part of society is functional for the stability of the whole society. The different parts are primarily the institutions of society, each of which is organized to fill different needs and each of which has particular consequences



for the form and shape of society. The parts all depend on each other. For example, the government, or state, provides education for the children of the family, which in turn pays taxes on which the state depends to keep itself running. The family is dependent upon the school to help children grow up to have good jobs so that they can raise and support their own families. In the process, the children become law-abiding, taxpaying citizens, who in turn support the state. If all goes well, the parts of society produce order, stability, and productivity. If all does not go well, the parts of society then must adapt to recapture a new order, stability, and productivity. Education helps maintain society by socializing young people into values of achievement, competition and equality of opportunity. Skills provision is also important: education teaches the skills for the economy.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Female education is an important pre-requisite for development. While Harvard was established in 1636, females weren't going to college in equal number as that of males up until the 1980s. However, women are still lagging behind in developing countries like Nepal. In Nepal, females constitute more portion of the population than males. Thus, female education is even more necessary in Nepal.

Female education was started in Nepal during the rule of Rana Prime Minister, Padma Shumsher. He established Padma Kanya School at Dillibazar, Padmodaya High School at Putalisadak and Padma Kanya Mandir at Chhetrapati which triggered female education in Nepal during his rule of three years (2002-2005 B.S.). At present, the male literacy rate is 75.1% in comparison to female which is 57.4 %. School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education) is 13 years of female and 12 years of male. The literacy rate among Adolescent & Youth is 92 % (boys 95%; girls 88%) (MoHP, 2012)

Study on gender relation in access to education among Dalit community in Lalitpur district by Nepali (2009) found that gender relations are changing along positive line, particularly in relation to schooling. There were several instances of gender discrimination in providing education to girls. Knowingly and unknowingly household members are discriminating between their sons and daughters. This way of discriminatory behaviors, attitudes and practices of parents are the reflections of socially and culturally detained patriarchal norms. Although such norms are not officially declared, their roots had surrounded in society as customs and become a matter of everyday act.

Discrimination is expressed by parents in the form of biased behavior, assignment of household chores only to daughters, supporting sons by giving more emphasis in their studies and neglecting studies of their daughters at the same time. Parents also have different expectation from their sons and daughters. Such practices result constraints in regard to access and continued participation of girls in education. So, girls have access to schools. But still they have to fulfill the responsibility at home, which has hampered their study. Consequently, repetition and dropout rate among girl is high. Though parents give priority to boys' education, the educational attainment of boys was also found not good.

A comparative study of Dalit education in Nepal has concluded that Dalit enrolment in primary level is higher but their continuation is major challenge in upper level. Major impeding factor of drop out and lower attainment of secondary schools are caste based discriminations, poverty, illiteracy in Dalit parents, no teachers' inspirations and discrimination by peers and society. The policy has showed positive indication however there is still challenge in the implementation of these policies (BK, 2011).

Another study by Educational Journalists Team (EJT) on girls' education in Nepal was carried out based on field case study from 20 selected VDCs in four different priority districts across the country. The four districts selected for case study were Kavrepalanchowk (Bagmati), Saptari (Sagarmatha), Kapilvastu(Lumbini) and Dadeldhura (Mahakali). This study revealed that the role of female teacher has been the most influencing factor for girl's education and enrollment. But the policy of employing minimum one female teacher in each primary school has not been implemented properly. None of the 8,000 schools have a single female teacher. It has been a clear proof that schools, which have female teacher have enrolled more girls' student and have less dropout trend. Similarly, recruitment of female resource person trainers and staffs should also be encouraged. Since most girls in rural areas have to keep themselves busy in daily household chores, out of school program should be introduced for them. Such program should be related with their daily life as well as employment- oriented. Women Education division, Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) is supposed to establish a central - level monitoring unit in association with the Ministry and Department of Education. If the monitoring unit is decentralized in the districts and VDCs level, it would work as a catalyst to encourage housewives for sending their daughters to school. This unit can also

monitor policy implementation and the incentive programs. UNICEF, UNDP, Action Aid, Nepal, Save the Children and EJG, which are working as units can also be included.

Another study on caste-based discrimination in Nepal (2009) found that there is a significant gap between the share of the Dalit population in relation to illiteracy rates and enrollment shares. In Nepal, the literacy rate of Dalits increased from 17 % in 1991 to 33.8% in 2001. At the same time the national literacy rate had increased to 54%. The share of enrollment of Dalit and indigenous peoples in Nepal is also lower than their population size. Dalits and indigenous peoples comprise approximately 57% of the total population but their children's representation in primary school is 34%. The national enrolment in higher education is 17.6%, but Dalits' average is 3.8%. Only 15% of the total Dalit population in Nepal has educational attainment, which is almost half of the national average. Dropout rates, especially in the first grade, are high. The completion rate is equally low in primary schools, especially for Dalit girls.

Study on Schooling and the Dalits of Nepal: A Case Study of Bungkot Dalit Community by Bidhya Nath Koirala PhD research dissertation found that, the dawn of democracy in the country in 1950 and the rapid expansion of western type schooling in the following years provided schooling opportunities for all including Dalits, although there remained a social taboo against them. this study also found that many Dalits do not benefit from schooling, and the current school system requires certain readjustments in order to be very useful for the Dalits of Nepal.

### **2.2.1 Educational Status of Dalit in Nepal**

Education is empowerment. Applying this indicator if we examine in Nepal, the data shows that the literacy rate has increased slowly every year. Access to primary education has increased for past three decades due to liberal establishment of public schools as well as due to various effective actions of the government such as free for primary education, textbook free, scholarship program etc. Nearly, 90 percent of children can now get to primary school within 30 minutes. And efforts have also been made to improve quality of education and efficiency of the system under the Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP-I, 1992-1998 as cited in UNDP, 2004). However, till now universal primary education is not achieved yet. The enrollment rate of Dalit in the total population at around 12%, at primary level the enrolment share of Dalit is 21.5%, whereas the shares at

lower secondary and basic levels are 14.2% and 19.6% respectively. (DoE, 2010/11). This means there is a substantial number of Dalit children who are not in school.

Literacy is perceived that it can work towards encountering generation of caste based structural thinking and practices. This means literacy education has also been considered an important force to reduce various forms of caste-based discrimination in society. The above empowerment indicator was proved by the study of Save the Children (2007), which revealed that higher literacy rate corresponds to better socio-economic situation of *Chamar* the Dalits in terai district.

But the question is portrayal of Dalits because they are also the artisans of the country. Despite this portrayal of Dalit as artisan it is a class and caste group of Hindu society of Nepal. In Nepalese society, they are in last position from the economic sense and more exploited and vulnerable group from the political and socio-cultural point of view (Ahauti, 2004). Textbooks present negative portrayal of *Dalit* by using certain discriminatory words and phrases (Bhattachan et al, 2007). Apart from it, there are inadequate and ineffective policies initiated by government in favor of *Dalit*. These policy statements are not addressing these issues The Education Act (1971) (8<sup>th</sup> amendment), Education bylaws 2002 and Inclusion Provision in Annual Strategies Implementation Plan (ASIP) 2006-07 are the examples. In these documents, there is a provision of *Dalit* Scholarship program for primary, secondary and higher level but they do not talk about the abolition of caste-based discriminations.

The overall observation from reviewed literature shows that, the perceptions on girl child education vary from community to community, individual to individual as per their family background, educational status, caste, ethnicity, geographical region, and in some-way the pertinent policy of the government. The literature distinctly shows that the perceived perceptions and practices (field reality) do not go together. The practices might be unexpectedly different from the presumed perceptions, for an instance, though the parents have acknowledged that they have to educate their daughters without any biasness between girls and boys, however, this is not the field reality.

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework

Equitable access to quality education and sustainable livelihood are proportionate process. Sustainable livelihood is determined by the equitable access to quality education. While equitable access to quality education is the function of good financial condition, apposite infrastructure, unprejudiced socio-cultural values and abolition of discrimination. Therefore, sustainable livelihood seems to be depended variable for equitable access to quality education and equitable access to quality education is the depended variable for finance, infrastructure, sociocultural values and status of discrimination. Finance includes the fee, capacity to pay for the facilities like stationeries, for the hostel etc. Infrastructure indicates the school buildings, class room facilities, gender friendly toilets and play grounds etc. Sociocultural value is how son and daughter are treated for the education in the family. Discrimination indicates to the long rooted practice of hierarchy among different caste in Nepalese society. Thus, the conceptual framework of this study is based on the assumption that the sustainable livelihood among dalit community can be increased through equitable access to quality girls' child education and quality girls' child education can be achieved through proper financial wellbeing, apposite infrastructure facilities, unprejudiced sociocultural values among son and daughter and abolition of discrimination in a community. The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 3.1 below presents the most important variables hypothesized in the study area.

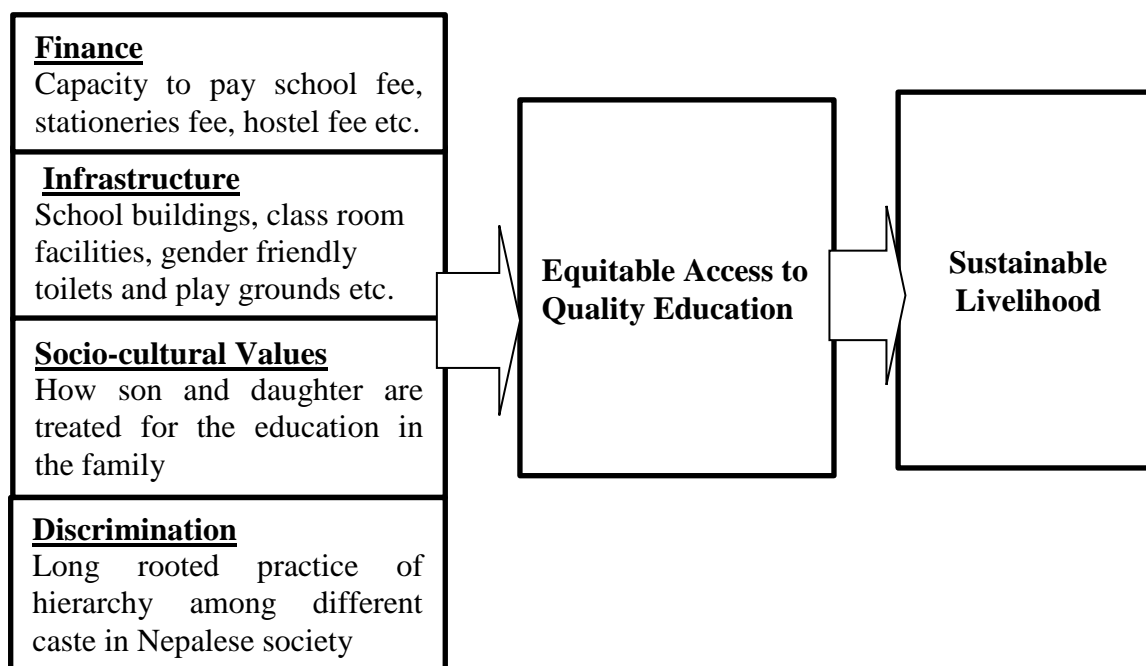


Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework

## **CHAPTER - III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Rationale for Selection of the Study Area**

As per the census 2011, there are 13452 people living in Mustang among them, 7093 are male and 6359 are female. The total number of household is 3354 with average family size 4 and the population growth rate is -1.08. Among more than 20 different caste people living in Mustang, Dalit comprises Kami (1085), Damai (545), Sarki (80) and other Dalits (59). Mustang is famous for the tourism where the people mainly the Gurung and Thakali are engaged in tourism sector. However, as per the data by DDC Mustang, more than 60% people in Mustang are in agriculture profession. As per the human development report 2014, the human development index of this district is 0.527 which falls at 15<sup>th</sup> position in Nepal. Similarly, the human poverty index on this district is 31.16 and ranked at 30<sup>th</sup> position among 75. The report revealed that the per capita income is NRs 85,957.

Among the VDCs of Mustang district, the study was conducted on the two VDCs - Jomsom and Marpha. These VDCs were selected on the basis of preliminary study that the status of dalit seemed comparatively weak. Dalit girls are further deprived from school education. Thus, the study is to identify the distinct nature of people's perception on girl child education in this mountainous district as most of the study on girl and dalit are focused only on hill and Terai region, so this study aims to collect the practices of girl child education from mountainous district.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study is carried out on the basis of exploratory research design because the study was focused on to investigate perceptions and practices on child education. Moreover, the objective of the study was to find out the perceptions of dalit community on the girl child education and existing practices. In this regard, it is an exploratory research.

Besides, the study attempts to describe the constraints and potentials of the dalit on girl child education on the basis of the dalit community's perception and explored findings is described. Thus, this is both descriptive and exploratory.

### **3.3 Data Collection Tools**

Interview schedule, some case studies and observation were the main tools identified to conduct this research. For knowing the settlement pattern and livelihood of people, observation technique was used. Key informant interview was conducted to collect qualitative information and insights from informed people. Relevant documents, information, maps and pictures were obtained from VDC office during the course of survey. Some focused group discussion among the different stakeholder on Dalit and girl's education were also conducted.

### **3.4 Sampling and Sample Size**

Among 1769 dalit population the sample size was determined at 60 which is the 3.39 percent of total dalit population. This number of sample were selected by using convenient sampling. This method was applied because of the time and resource constraints in the study. As there are limited numbers of Dalit household in the district and it is geographically complicated to reach to those household who live far from the accessible place, the researcher has to rely on those respondents who were accessed on comfortable way. Two VDCs of Mustang (Jomsom and Marpha) were purposively selected and 30 respondents from each were interviewed for the data collection.

### **3.5 Data Processing and Analysis**

The structured questionnaires and check list used for the interviews and discussions was reviewed to find out inconsistencies in facts and figures. Following the review, some editing wherever required for consistencies were made. Information noted in the dairy and the questionnaires were verified and listed. The edited questionnaires were then entered into excel sheet of each of the households corresponding with the variables determined in terms of options given for answers for the study. Each of the frequencies from total population was counted. Some of the questions were coded wherever; open questions were posed and required further explanations. Once the figures and variables were entered the dummy tables were prepared to be presented in the text and the information entered was converted into the tables together with calculations. Simple statistics – averages, ratios were used for simplifying the analysis. Cross tabulations were done for cross analysis between and among the variables. Presentation of the information

in this study was based on a descriptive analysis supported by the household based responses tabulated and quantified for simple presentation in tables, charts and graphs and figures and discussions were based on cross verified between the variables from each of the frequencies and critically reviewed documents.

### **3.6 Limitation of the Study**

This study is an academic practice for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters in sociology. Considering the time and resources factors, the scope of the study assumed the following limitations:

- i. Since this study was conducted in a mountain district, where there are limited types of dalit population, the findings of the study may not be generalized to other mid hill and Terai districts.
- ii. This study focused on finding out knowledge gap in perceptions and practices of dalit community on the girls' education; indeed, it also explored the potentials and constraints of the girl child education. However, it is not necessarily focus on social dynamics and other allied issues of the dalit community.
- iii. For this dissertation research, limited numbers of respondents were planned for the data collection. However, due consideration for the validity and reliability of data was given.



## **CHAPTER - IV**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Perceptions of Dalit Parents on Girl Child Education**

##### **4.1.1 Outlining Different Perspectives of Dalit Community**

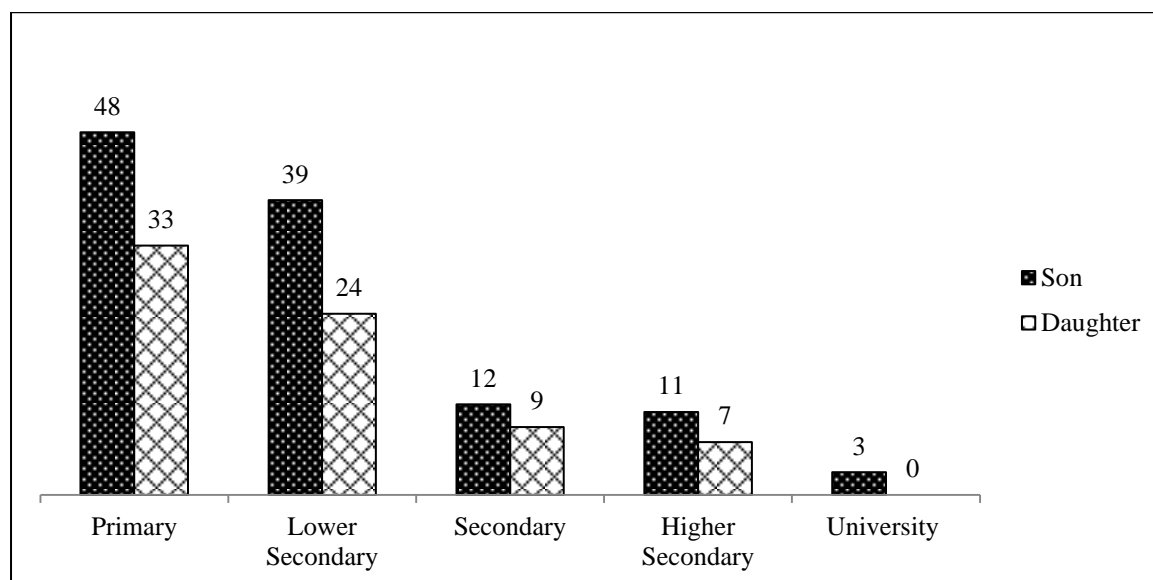
Most parents of Dalit community- those disadvantaged economically in particular, schooling seems to be a place to pass time especially for younger children. When children grow up, girls in particular, their labor is needed for family support. Most poor parents tend to support the fallacy that “it is advantageous to educate a boy rather than a girl (a wife to be) who would benefit another family when she finishes school and get married in another community, far away from home.” In general, most children and girls in particular, fail to enroll or to complete schooling because their parents do not value education, in most cases because the parents themselves are uneducated/ illiterate.

In discussions, most parents opined that that they do not discriminate their children, on the other hand, the majority of parents revealed that boys are more intelligent and useful than girls, so they support their education, if resources are scarce. Similarly, a large number of informant (44 respondents) stated that women play vital role to manage schooling time for girls’ education as well as also help by providing a good moral supports to ease for girls’ education (45 respondents). In additions, 32 respondents revealed that women of their family help in managing pocket money for school/ college going daughters. Further, women also help in doing school assignments by creating suitable reading family environment for their daughters.

##### **4.1.2 Status of Children Education**

The number of students going school was found to be comparatively less in Mustang compared with the national data. In the recent years the literacy rate and the school going children i.e. especially girl child is increasing. During the field survey among the 60 respondents from the VDCs (i.e. of Jomsom and Marpha) in Mustang, it was found that 186 children including 113 boys and 73 girls were admitted in the education. Despite of the fact that the national level literacy rate is increasing but in the study area the gap between girls and boys school going child was observed to be distinct. Following diagram 4.1 shows the details of education status of the children of Dalit community in Mustang.

Figure 4.1: Status of Children Education



Source: Field Survey, 2016

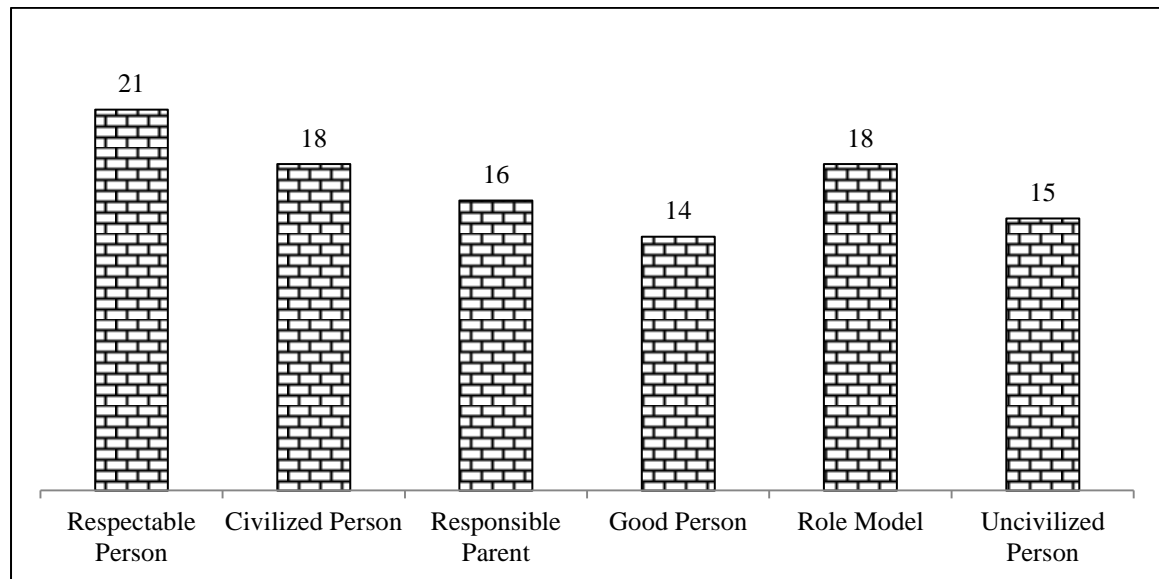
According to the above diagram, 48 boys and 33 girls were enrolled in primary education whereas 39 boys and 24 girls were at lower secondary education in two VDCs of Mustang. No girls were enrolled in university education. The data revealed that Dalit students in higher education were gradually decreased and girls were comparatively lower than the boys in education in these VDCs. It was also found that the children from the economically sound family within the dalit community were found to be admitted in school than that from the low economic status family. Also, it was found that the some of the family despite they were not economically sound but their awareness level towards the importance of girl education was remarkable and they had send their daughter to the Jomsom (the headquarter of Mustang) for higher education.

#### 4.1.3 Society's Reaction while Sending Daughters for Education

In the light of society's reaction while sending daughters for education, a majority of (21 respondents) urged that the parents those who were sending their daughters for formal education is seen as the respectable person in the society. In similar line, 16 respondents stated that those they were sending daughters for education are of course the responsible parents. Furthermore, 14 respondents opined that they are the good parents. Indeed, 18 respondents revealed that they are the civilized parents and thus are the role model for the ill-society. Some of the parents claimed that they were sending their daughters to the

education for multiple reasons which includes more than two among the reasons mentioned above. The figure 4.2 below shows the details.

Figure 4.2: Society’s Reaction While Sending Daughters for Education



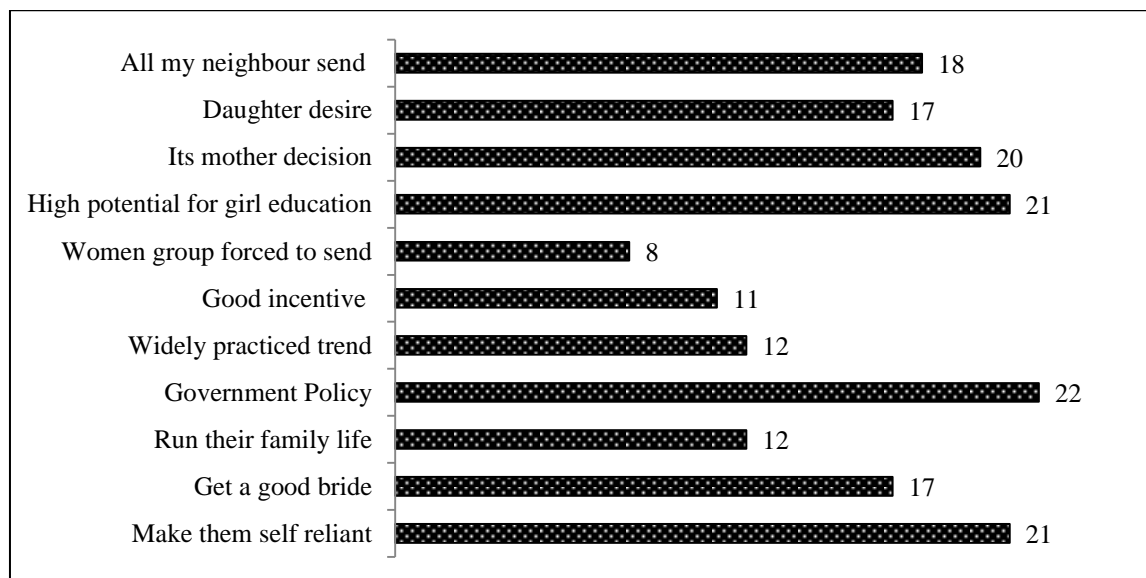
Source: Field Survey, 2016

However, looking to the old generation women respondents’ views, it was found that there still lied negative perceptions on girls’ child education. The old generation women believe that there is no use of education for daughters since they have to go in brides’ home so that should be perfect in household work rather than education. In their perspective, the parents those who are sending daughters for education are uncivilized person in the society. In addition, they are breaking traditional values and norms created by the older generations. They think that sending girls to school is the waste of time and money, instead they could look after household and livestock.

#### 4.1.4 Reasons Behind Sending Daughters for Education

Most of the respondents believed that their life would be improved and be better for their daughters if they go to school. The more education they have, the more secure is their future. It guarantees them a better life than compared to that of their parents who have little or no education at all. Realizing this importance of education some of the family despite their poor economic condition, they have send their daughters to school for education. In this line, Figure 4.3 clearly illustrates the reason behind sending the daughters for education.

Figure 4.3: Reasons for Sending Daughters for Education



Source: Field Survey, 2016

Respondent gave multiple reasons in the same questions in this regard. In line with Figure 4.3, a majority of respondents (18 respondents) revealed that they were sending their daughters for education because all the neighbors send but it may not be necessarily the keen interest of the parents. In addition, they opined that to live in the society we should follow what other people do. Indeed, 17 respondents stated educating their daughters was only because of the great interest of their daughters. It was found that women some women have a decisive power in the community since 20 respondents revealed because of her mother's decision they are getting opportunity for education.

It was revealed that there are high potentials of and good incentives for daughters if they are educated as opined by 11 respondents, whilst 17 respondents believe that it is very easy to get a good bride in good family if the daughters are educated. Further, 11 respondents stated that girls' education is a widely accepted trend that is why we must send them by following global trend to compete with the global market.

#### 4.1.5 Need of Education

In addition to the reason, a connecting question (up to what level is good?) was posed to them. Majority of the respondents revealed that it's good to provide their daughter up to university level. However, at the same time they shared that their financial condition is not sufficient enough to send their daughter up to the university education. Dalits in

Mustang district are still relying on their traditional profession – sewing the cloths of so called upper caste people and the incentives collected from this profession is not sufficient to send their daughter to the university education.

All the respondents expressed that they would like educate their daughters and to continue higher education because of wider potentials and opportunities for them. Interestingly, now of the respondents revealed that they wanted to educate their daughters' upto primary level only. In their view:

In response to the queries on the need of education for daughters, 62.5 per cent of the respondents opined that it was an urgent need to empower women to fight for their rights. They were illiterate/ unknown about their rights. Hence, through education they could be empowered, and thus could be brought into mainstream of development as revealed by 80 per cent of respondents. Indeed, 20 per cent of the parents assumed that education helps their daughters to be independent and self-reliant.

One fourth of the parents only showed the solidarity in this opinion because in their community only a very few daughters are able to be independent and self-reliant. This was because of various reasons, like marginalization, equal job opportunities, access to information etc., moreover, after their marriages they have go to the bride's home and thus possibly may not be allowed to go into the outer world freely as per bride's home environment, culture, and traditional belief of the elderly people.

#### **4.1.6 Parents' Expectations from Daughters' Education**

As illustrated in Table 4.1, the data generated from the Dalit community shows that, the majority of the respondents had many expectations from their daughters' education. In line with this, about half of the respondents revealed that if their daughters were highly educated, they would be able to earn good social prestige in the society so that they could live respectable life. In addition, they opined that they were not educated that is why living disrespectful life in the society.

However, 50 per cent of the parents opined that after their education, they would have highly paid job so that they would financially contribute to the family. On the other hand, educated daughters will spread the light of education in their respective community as

revealed by 36 parents. They will be as a role model to change the society's traditional beliefs and perceptions towards girls' education.

10 informants saw that their daughters' education will certainly help them to get a good bride in prestigious family. Indeed, 15 informant parents have strong confidence that after education, their daughters will bear the responsibility as a son, thus, there is no difference between boys and girls, if we give them the equal opportunity of education, they can compete with boys in all aspects, as education leads them to be self-reliant and independent citizen (18 respondents).

Hence, they would definitely support for family as well as society's education (23 respondents). They would be looked as role model in the society (14 respondents) since they would put their efforts to aware the family as well as society, thus be as a change agent of the Dalit community (22 respondents).

Table 4.1: Parents' Expectations from Daughters' Education

Expectations	Total Responses
Earn good social prestigious	30
Get highly paid job	30
Spread the light of education	36
Support for family education and society	23
Get good husband in prestigious family	10
Be self-reliant, an independent citizen	18
Bring social change in the society	22
Play a role model in the society	14
Bear responsibility as a son	15

Source: Field Survey, 2016

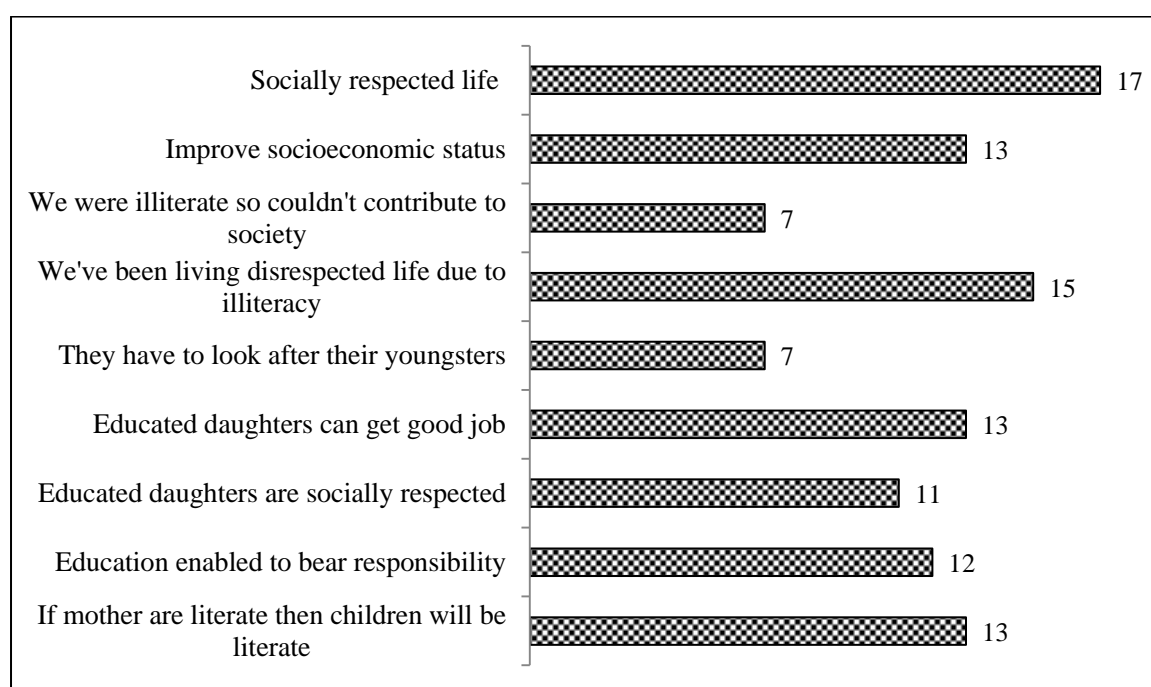
#### 4.1.7 Reasons of Expectations from Daughters' Education

In response to reasons of the parents' expectations, 17 respondents revealed that they wanted to live socially respectable life with their daughters' education. In addition, it was found that due to illiteracy they have been facing a couple of inconveniences in their day to day life, thus, indeed, they assume that they would live respectable life only by educating their daughters without any biasness between boys and girls. Similarly, 13 respondents opined that because of illiteracy, they have to do labour class job, i.e. a very

low-paid job. Thus, if they would educate their daughters, they would be engaged in highly paid job and would contribute to improve socio-economic status of the family.

In addition, 7 respondents revealed that they wanted to contribute their society but due illiteracy they could not, thus they do not do the same repetition by not educating the children. They also opined that the lack of education makes them to live disrespectful life (15 respondents). Furthermore, 7 respondents revealed that educated daughters would look after and guide the youngsters. Similarly, 13 respondents believed that a well-educated daughter could easily get a good bride in a prestigious family, in which she would leave her life happily with freedom.

Figure 4.4: Reasons of Expectations from Daughters' Education



Source: Field Survey, 2016

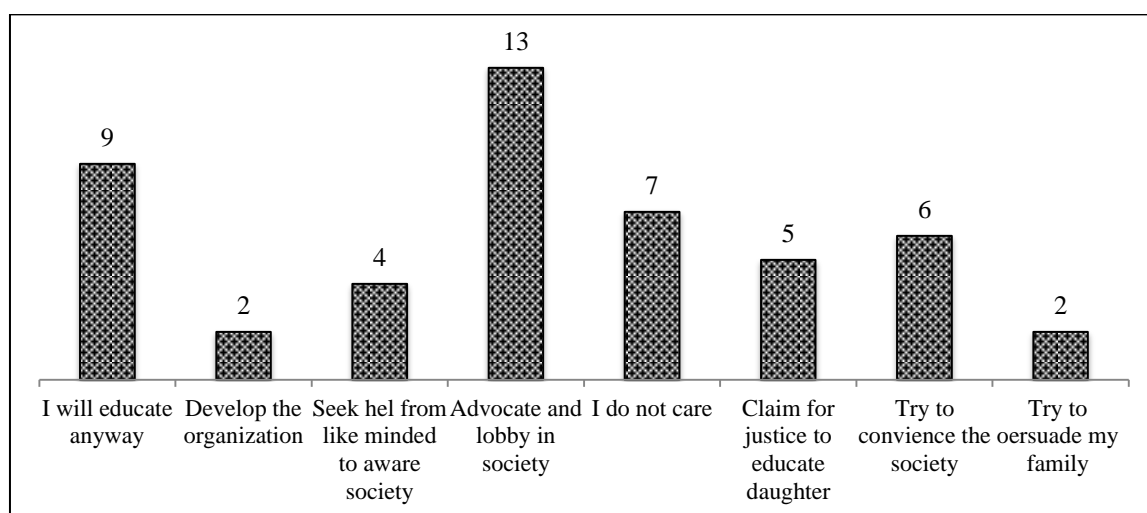
In addition, 11 respondents urged that educated daughters are socially respected, and thus, daughters' social respect make the parents happy and thus feel that they did their responsibility proving as a good parent. Furthermore, 12 respondents urged that education leads their daughters to be a good and responsible citizen of the nation who would contribute to develop and aware the society because education guides to be obedient, responsible and honest for the nation's development. On the other hand, 13 respondents have a strong believe that if mothers are literate then child would be literate.

It was found that the mother does not teach only her sons or daughters but also to the nephew and nieces. Thus, they wanted to educate the daughters so that they will be a good mother and the good citizen of nation by education their child without any biasness between boys and girls and teach all the socialization skills to her children so that they would contribute for the development of the society and the nation as well. These opinions are illustrated in the Figure 4.6 below.

#### 4.1.8 Coping Strategies to Educate Dalit Girl Child

In line with the jeopardy about society's views against sending daughters' for education, 13 respondents revealed that they would advocate and lobby by creating groups and networks for daughters' education. Similarly, 4 respondents urged that they would seek help from the like-minded people to aware the society about advantages and potentials of educating daughters. Indeed, 2 respondents have a strong believe that they would develop the organizations and federations to aware the parents and society to educate daughters of the society. Nevertheless, 2 respondents stated that they would try to persuade their family to educate daughters.

Figure 4.5: Coping Strategy to Educate Dalit Girl Child



Source: Field Survey, 2016

In addition, 6 respondents revealed that they would try to convince the society to break the traditional values and beliefs that is against daughters' education. On the contrary, 5 respondents stated that if the society and traditional beliefs are against their daughters' education, they would claim for the justice through media and other media channels.



However, 7 respondents opined that they would just do not care about the traditional and cultural beliefs that are against daughters' education. Furthermore, 9 respondents opined that they would send their daughters anyhow at any cost though the society is against them as portrayed.

Based on the analysis in the above section, it is found that parents have different perception on the girl child education in the two VDCs of Mustang district. Their perception towards their daughter's education is not totally different than the usual perception of other parents from hill ND Terai region in Nepal. Some of the parents were found highly eager to send their daughter until higher education where as other are reluctant to send their daughters to the higher education because of social, economic and geographical constraints.

Hence, from the data explained in the earlier sections specifically the lower enrollment rate of girls in the higher education revealed that girl child education in the Dalit community of Mustang district has been perceived with the low priority. Respondents showed multiple reasons behind the weak girls' education in the study site. Some of the parents are found to be aware on their girl's education however, due to the financial, geographical and infrastructural constraints, they were not being able to send their daughters up to the higher education.

## **4.2 Practices of Dalit Community on Girls Child Education**

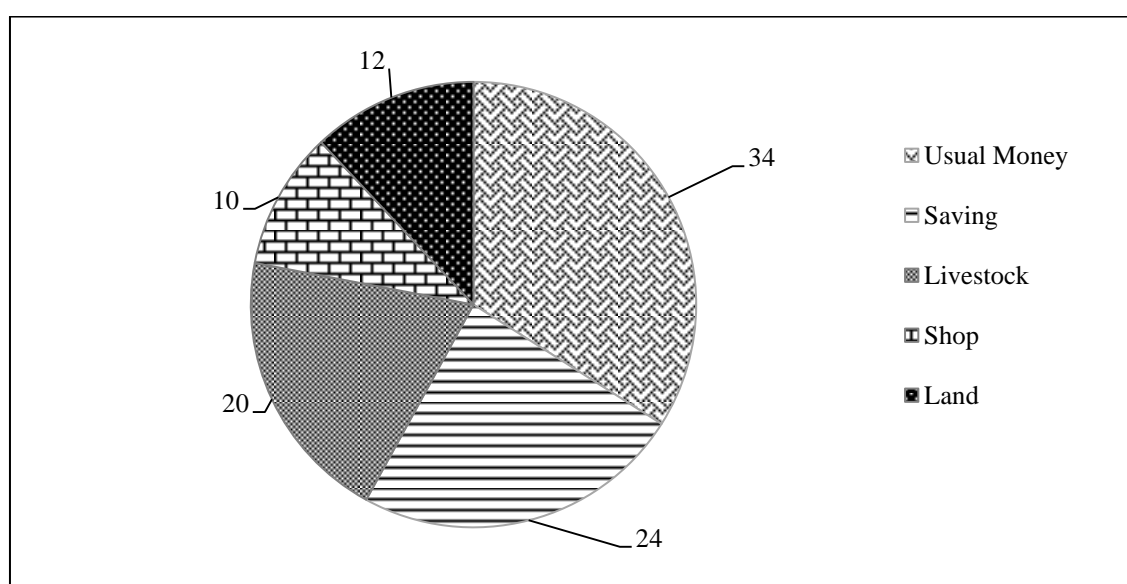
### **4.2.1 Financial Plans for Daughters' Education**

In line with financial plans for daughters' education, 35 percent of respondents urged they have thought some sort financial plans to handle financial problems for their daughters' higher education. However, 65 of the informant revealed that do not have thought any financial plans for their daughter education. The Figure 4.8 presents the financial plans of the parents to cope up for their daughters' education. The 34 per cent respondents opined that they have operated saving account in women's group cooperative. Similarly, 20 per cent of the respondents stated that they have separated livestock (goats, hens, cows etc.) as a gift (pewa) for their daughters' education. According to Mustang culture, in pewa, only the girls have rights to enjoy the benefits; no boys have rights to claim in pewa. Almost similar number of respondents opined that they have stated putting a small

amount of money regularly for their daughters' education; however, they stated that this saved amount would not be sufficient to educate their daughters.

Furthermore, they are thinking on how they can save a bit large sum of money that their daughters' education would be ensured. In addition, 10 per cent of the respondents opined that they have run small shop from which they will save the money and educate their daughters at higher level. The parents those who have daughters only, have separated land for their daughter's education. Furthermore, they revealed that after all it is their (daughters) property then why not to use for their education to empower them for social change and financial freedom as represented in Figure 4.6

Figure 4.6: Financial Plans for Daughters' Education



Source: Field Survey, 2016

#### 4.2.2 Motivating and De-Motivating Factors for Girls' Education

In line with the key factors that drive the Dalit parents as motivating factors, 67.5 per cent respondents urged that it is easy to get a good job if a girl child is educated. On the other hand, 57.5 per cent of the respondents opined that an educated daughter becomes an agent of social change in the community. Moreover, the educated daughters gain a good social prestigious in the society as revealed by 47.5 per cent of respondents. Nevertheless, 45 per cent respondents believe that if a girl is well educated it is sure that they well get opportunity for good jobs thus at same time would support financially to the family and they would have financial freedom being independent and self-reliant to live socially

respected life as opined by 40 per cent of respondents, indeed, the similar number of respondents opined that it is easy to get a good bride in a good family, if the daughters are educated. This vested interest of parents also could be positive factor for girls education.

Furthermore, a minority of respondents (12.5 per cent) opined that if the daughters are educated, it becomes easier to the parents since they do not need to offer much more dowry. However, it is also found that if the daughters are highly educated, it is difficult for parents in the sense that the highly educated daughters needs the highly educated bride; thus, sometimes the bride's family may demand a large sum of money as a dowry. Indeed, a few respondents (10 per cent) also believe that the educated daughter helps in youngsters' education.

Table 4.2: Motivating and De-Motivating Factors

Motivating Factors	%	De-motivating Factors	%
Easy to get a good bride in good family	40.0	Our culture doesn't allow	25.0
Easy to get good job opportunity	67.5	Grandparents traditional beliefs	27.5
Educated girls gain social prestigious	47.5	They don't support for domestic work	40.0
Educated girls become self-reliant	40.0	They don't obey parents	25.0
After education financial support	45.0	No trend to send daughters for education	12.5
Support for community empowerment	37.5	Poor school infrastructure	17.5
Be a change agent of the society	57.5	No toilet and drinking water in school	17.5
No need to give a lot of dowry	12.5	No easy access of school/ college	12.5
Help to educate youngsters	10.0	Do not to marry as per parents' choice	12.5

Source: Field Survey, 2016

On the other hand, in line with de-motivating factors, a majority of (52.5 per cent) respondents urged if they have to go to farm work whole day. If we send all the daughters for education, we cannot manage working human power and more over we do not have money to send in school since we can afford educational expenses. Similarly, 40 per cent of respondents opined that their daughters have to support for domestic work because their mother has to be in farm work. However, 27.5 per cent of respondents urged that grandparents' traditional belief do not let the daughters to go school. They have a strong believe that, female are for domestic work and male are for outside/ public work. In

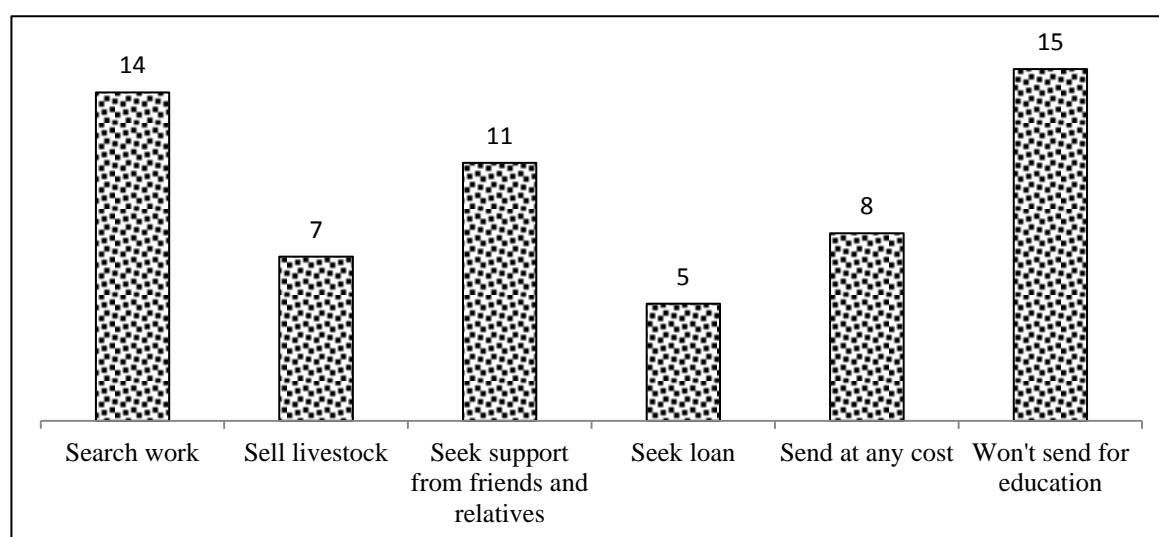
similar line, 25 per cent respondents believe that their culture does not allow daughters for formal education because they believe that girls do not need education at all. Nevertheless, a minority of respondents claimed that they do not have easy access of school/ college. The infrastructure is also poor. There is no availability of separate toilet for girls and clean drinking water and first aid materials.

On the other side, one fourth of illiterate respondents revealed that they are not educated and thus if they educate their daughters they do not listen and obey them. In fact, it was found that the educated daughters are clever so they fight on the bad habits and wrong decision of their parents, but the illiterate parents assume, now they are educated that is why they are not obeying the parents. These opinions are articulated clearly in table above in table number 4.2.

### 4.2.3 Strategies Applied to Tackle Over Financial Problems

The Figure below presents the response of the parents in line with the strategies that the parents have applied to send their daughters for education if they do not have sufficient money for their daughters' education. In similar line, a minority of respondents (5 respondents) opined that they would seek the loan at any interest rate for their daughters' education. While the majority (i.e.15 respondents) urged that they won't send for education. Instead they will be send to work for wage labour to run their livelihood.

Figure 4.7: Strategies Applied to Tackle over Financial Problems



Source: Field Survey, 2016

Indeed, it was found that the informant parents have taken up to 500 Rs. monthly for their daughters' education at approximately 15 per cent – 20 per cent interest rate. In addition, almost the similar number eight of respondents were ready to send their daughter for education at any cost. It was found that they have very strong determination to educate their daughters for their daughter's bright future.

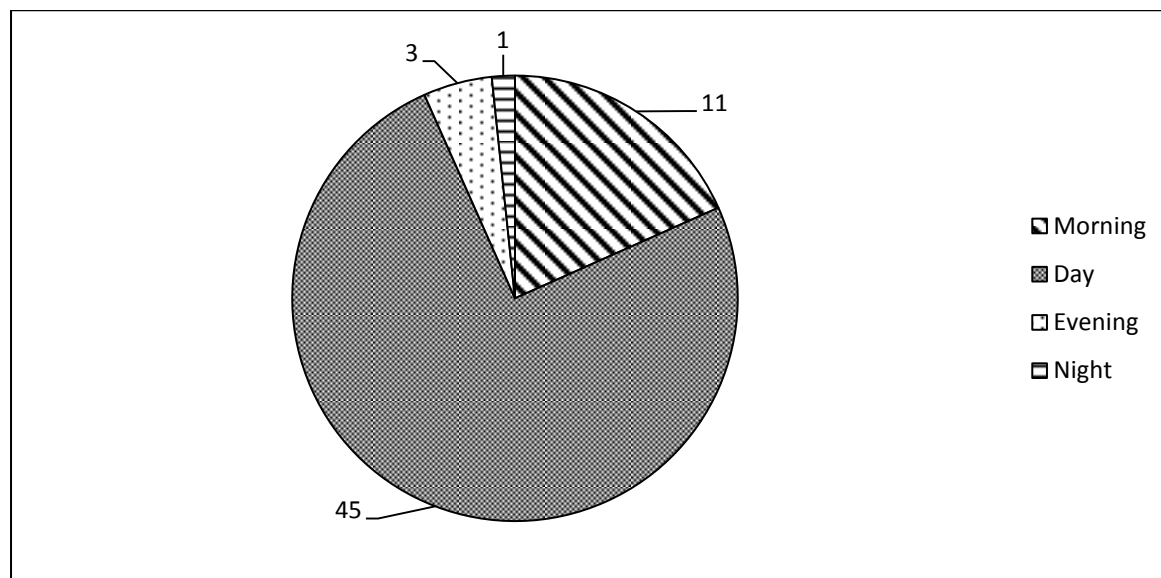
On the contrary, some of the respondents stated that they would not send their daughters for education by seeking loan if they do not have money. They assume that it is no use to educating daughter by taking loan since they will go to the bride's home and thus their education is worthless of them. On the other hand, the similar number of respondents opined that they would search paid work for their daughters on holidays so that they could collect some money to pay for their tuition fees and other expenses.

Indeed, seven respondents stated that they would sell the livestock that they had separated as a *pewa* for their daughters. Furthermore, they revealed that after all *pewa* is for their financial empowerment. By contributing in their education, they will be empowered so that they would enjoy financial freedom as presented in above Figure 4.7.

#### **4.2.4 Appropriate School Timing and Levels**

As most of the schools' timing begins from the morning i.e. at around 10:00 am to evening at around 4:00 pm. But, in rural areas most of the children especially daughters are not send to school during this time as it is the productive time where they could instead do other activities to run their livelihood. So, timing also plays a key role for the children to attain school. In this regard, in the study area, what time could be the most appropriate for them were asked as a survey question with the respondents. In the response almost all the respondents preferred day shift, however only a few respondents preferred morning time. In their view, if the classes are run in the morning shift then the daughters would get ample time to help their mothers in domestic chore. At the same time, they can join paid work during daytime so that they do not have to ask money with parents for their educational expenses. Those respondents who had younger daughters opined that evening or night shift would be good for them since girls would fully get time to support the parents' work. And the parents will also be happy and can support them for going school. A detailed is illustrated clearly in fig. 4.8 below.

Figure 4.8: Suitable School Timing for the Girls Dalit Community



Source: Field Survey, 2016

Similarly, in line with classroom, 65 per cent of the respondents revealed that combined – heterogeneous classes are good. However, 33 per cent respondents opined that female teachers are good to motivate girls towards education, thus there should be only female teacher for girls’ education. It was because female teacher could understand the problems of girls as well they could easily share their problems without any hesitation than with male teacher. and also act as a catalyst or role model for them. The girls could be motivated towards attaining school. The girls can feel secure and trust by having a female teacher. On the contrary, some respondents would prefer the homogenous classes so that the girls would feel safer and confident from the other male teachers.

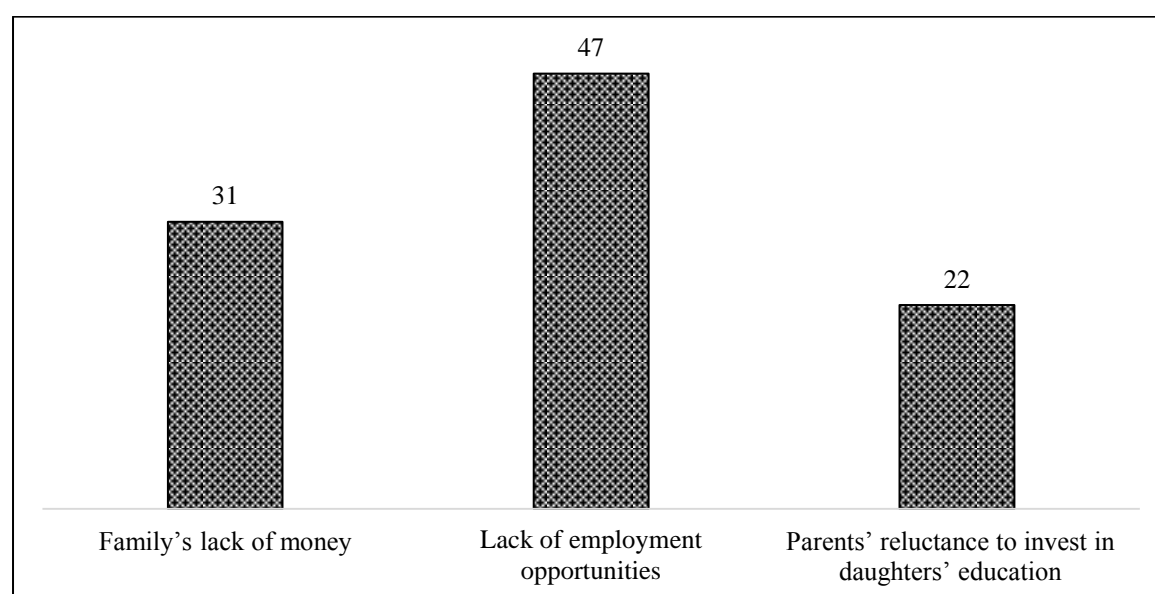
Overall, the data revealed that the practice of girl child education in Mustang seems similar to the wider region. Most of the parents had their own financial plan for the girl’s education. Some of them have even borrowed loan for their daughter’s education. This indicates that the practice of sending girls to the school has been raised over the period of time. Family from high economic status were found of sending their children for education even far away from their locality. And even the family from poor economic status were also found to be interested and motivated towards the importance of education in girls live and were supporting their daughter in education.

### 4.3 Constraints of Girl Child Education

#### 4.3.1 Financial Constraints

All respondents identified financial constraints as one of the leading causes of Dalit girls' low participation in education. All respondents revealed on a similar belief that families' lack of money, lack of employment opportunities, and parents' reluctance to invest in their daughters' education are major facets of girls' financial constraints for education.

Figure 4.9: Financial Constraints Girls Child Education



Source: Field Survey, 2016

##### 4.3.1.1 Family's Lack of Money

All the respondents from both the VDCs Jomsom and Marpha expressed that a large portion of people in dalit community live under the poverty line. About 31 respondents shared that family's lack of money as a constraint factor for girl child education. (as shown in above fig. 4.9). It is difficult for poor families to invest for their daughter's education. Sometimes a girl cannot continue her education due to her family's lack of money even though she and her family have strong interest to continue her education. Girls from poor families face this disadvantage disproportionately. Similar observations were made in other studies found in the literature. A large number of studies underlined "poverty" as one of the leading causes of girls' low participation in education in developing countries including Nepal (Dundar & Haworth; Haider, 1996; UN Millennium

Projects; Nussbaum; World Bank). It was found that, due to financial constraints, poor families often consider girls' schooling a luxury. In case of Jomsom and Marpha VDC, Dalit household are totally dependent on subsistent types of agriculture and livestock and daily wage labor. This status put them under poverty line and most of them are not able to afford for the education to their girl child.

#### **4.3.1.2 Lack of Employment Opportunities for Women**

Respondents articulated that lack of student employment opportunities make difficult for female students to pursue a college education. 47 respondents uttered, lack of employment as a key constraint factor. (as shown in above fig. 4.9). Since job opportunities, especially for female students, are limited and the environment for working is not suitable for women in Nepal, most female students depend on their parents to maintain their education costs. Further the respondents said that while a male student might take odd jobs to support his education, it is very difficult for female students to be financially self-sufficient. Even employment opportunities for educated women are limited, which discourages poor parents from sending their daughters for higher education. In the study site, there are no specific job opportunities dedicated to female which discourage women to go to school for the higher education.

#### **4.3.1.3 Parents' Reluctance to Invest in Daughters' Education**

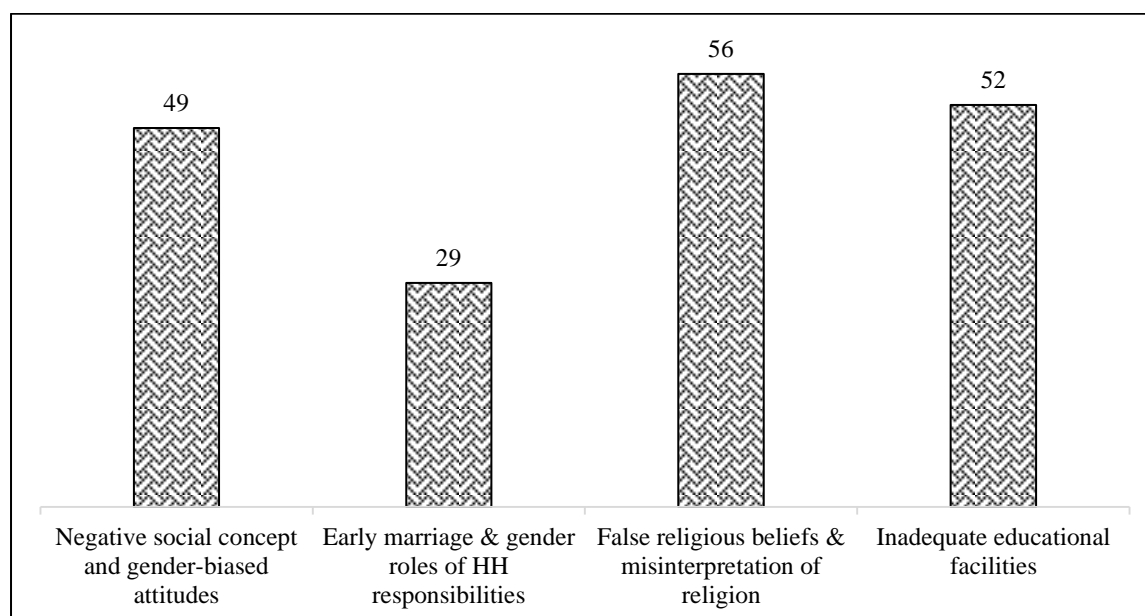
Parents' reluctance to invest in daughters' education is identified by the 22 respondents as one of the major factors for girls' low participation for higher education in dalit community. They revealed that parents' investing differently in their children's education deters the female children from achieving their educational goals. One informant commented, "Daughters of both poor and solvent families face this barrier directly and indirectly." Respondents from Jomsom and Marpha VDC shared the same belief as a reason for parents' biased investments. They explained that when parents invest in the education of their children, they expect a good return. When parents do not foresee any returns from their investment from their daughters' (who leave their parent after marriage) educational careers, they are reluctant to spend an equal amount of money for their daughters' education.



### 4.3.2 Socio-cultural Practices and Social Attitudes

All respondents repeatedly referred to the mountain Dalit community long-held socio-cultural practices and pressures as another leading barrier strongly associated with girls' low involvement in higher education. They identified various social and family related factors within the theme of socio-cultural practices and social attitudes that negatively influence girls' education in many ways. The findings pointed out that all the respondents were impacted negatively by the socio-cultural practices and attitudes. For instance, few respondents faced barriers from the traditional socio-cultural practice of early marriage including gender roles as the wife, household responsibilities, and from her family's conservative negative attitudes. Their education was impacted negatively by her family's gender biased investments and negative attitudes, the social pressure of early marriage, gender roles as a mother and wife, and by household responsibilities. The other respondents faced barriers from social pressure of early marriage and traditional gender roles as a mother and wife, including household obligations. Since all the respondents had similar socio cultural barriers, their perceptions did not vary widely. A majority of them identified the following factors as considerable constraints to girls' education in mountain Dalit community.

Figure 4.10: Socio-cultural Practices & Social Attitudes Constraints on Child Education



Source: Field Survey, 2016

#### **4.3.2.1 Negative Social Concept and Gender-Biased Attitudes**

It was found that gender-biased and negative social and family attitudes towards women's education is a major factor which works as a deep-seated barrier impeding girls from obtaining a higher level of education. In Dalit community, parents have different attitudes towards male and female children. Generally, they perceive women are born to look after the family, raise children, and cook for the family members. 49 respondents shared negative social concept and gender-biased attitudes as a key constraint factor (as shown above in fig. 4.10). Men, however, are considered the 'breadwinners' of the family. From this attitude, most parents usually invest more in their sons' education than in their daughters' education. Majority of the parents have a tendency to get their daughters' married at early ages and justify that higher education is not necessary for females since their husband is responsible for providing them food and shelter.

It was identified that in Dalit community, the discriminating treatment begins at birth and continues through the different phases of life. Girls' education is considered as a threat to their traditional culture as many fathers who strongly opposed girls' formal education. These fathers believed that as breadwinners of the family, boys should be more educated than girls. Hence, parents' gender biased outlook is one of the reasons for women's low participation rates of Dalit girls in education in the study area.

#### **4.3.2.2 Early Marriage and Gender Roles of Household Responsibilities**

29 respondents (as shown above in fig. 4.10) revealed that the traditional practice of early marriage is another very large factor in lowering the rate of women for higher education in Dalit community. The respondents believed that, due to the social norms and practices, parents are pressured to marry off their daughters at an early age. According to respondents, most of the girls in Dalit community in study area get married at the age of 15 or 18 when they are at higher secondary school, just completing higher secondary education, or at the beginning of a post-secondary education. Moreover, early marriage and household responsibilities are interrelated for girls in Dalit community; men are reluctant to perform household tasks. Due to traditional gender roles, women bear the burden of the majority of household responsibilities. It is undoubtedly difficult for a woman to manage heavy family and household responsibilities and study successfully with little or no support from the family.

### **4.3.2.3 False Religious Beliefs and Misinterpretation of Religion**

The study found that false religious beliefs and religious misinterpretation is another key factor slowing down girls' education rates in Dalit community. In 56 respondents' (as shown above in fig. 4.10) point of view, no religion prohibits or restricts women's freedom and their education, and true religious practices are not a threat to women's education and empowerment. However, respondents shared similar perceptions that some uneducated people and religious bigots take advantage of religion and deliberately misinterpret religious doctrines in their own words to keep women in an inferior position in the family and society. It is especially difficult for girls from uneducated families to address these challenges in order to pursue higher education.

### **4.3.2.4 Inadequate Educational Facilities**

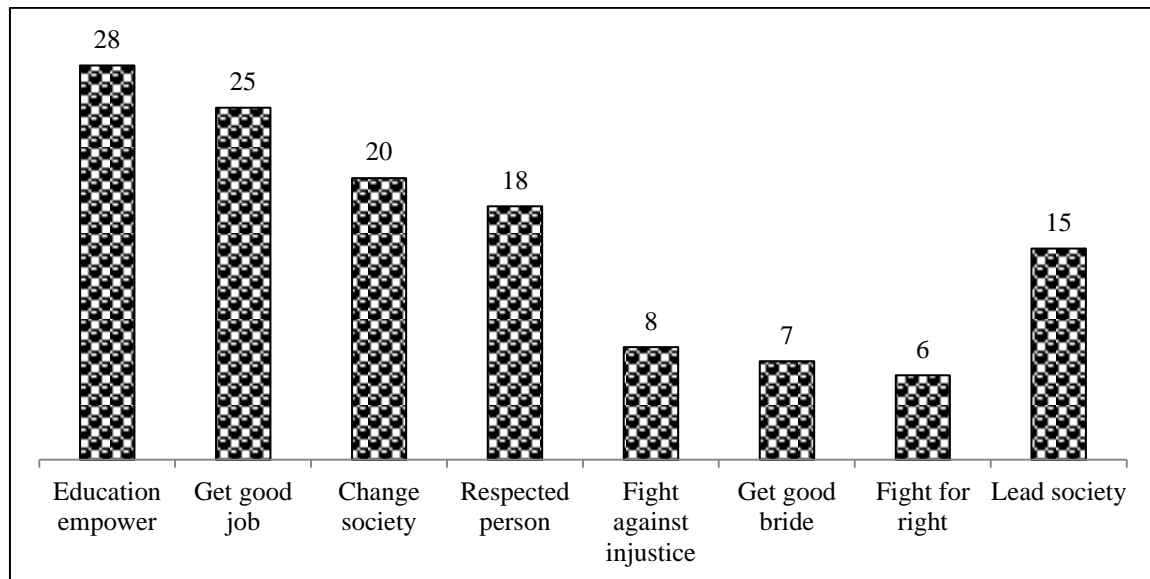
52 respondents (as shown in above fig. 4.10) mentioned that the inadequate educational facilities are one of the major barriers to girls for higher education. In their perception, no available higher education institution exists for girls in close proximity to their homes. They perceived that the poorer education system and lack of educational facilities (e.g., higher education institution, library, inexpensive hostels, and a transportation system) are fundamental barriers to girls. respondents' background in which they grew-up might be a significant factor here. They urged that in Marpha there is higher education institute, so in order to gain higher education they had to go to headquarter i.e Jomsom which is quite not possible for family from poor economic condition and for the girls. However, the respondents suggested that improving educational facilities is necessary to elevate the post-secondary education rates for girls.

## **4.4 Potentials of Girl Child Education**

In line with potentials of girl child education, all the respondents revealed that there is a high potential of daughters' education in today's world. They viewed that Nepal is in the threshold of development, indeed, in this regards, the role of women is seemed to be prominent than ever before. They shared that it's not like past age where education was not of much importance and they could run their life by depending in agriculture but, nowadays it's the age of science and technology and even to plough farm one need to be

educated. The opinion of the 60 respondents who gave multiple reasons behind the potentials of Dalit girl child education are presented in Figure 4.11 below.

Figure 4.11: Potentials for Dalit Girl Child Education



Source: Field Survey, 2016

High majority the informant (28 respondents) opined that education empower them to be independent so that they can enjoy the social and financial freedom. In addition, financial freedom widens the door for social freedom. They get good job opportunities only because of education as stated by 25 respondents. If they are educated, they would be able to change the society because “if you educate a man you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family” as opined by almost half of the respondents. Education also helps them to be recognized in the society as a respected person (18 respondents). Nevertheless, 8 respondents opined that educated girls could fight against social injustice. They can advocate, lobby, and develop organization to fight against social injustice. Moreover, 7 respondents told that if the girls are educated, they could easily get a good bride in a prestigious family. In addition, 6 respondents opined that educated daughters are empowered so that they would be able to fight for their rights. Indeed, if they are educated, they are enabled to lead the society as opined by 15 respondents during the field survey.

During the field visit it was furthermore observed that the status of girls’ education in the Jomsom was superior compared to that of Marpha, its might be because Jomsom is the

headquarter of the district. There is proper access of higher education till bachelor level and most of the people are aware about the importance of education in humans' life (especially in girls' life), whereas the Marpha's case is just opposite. It lacked access of higher education, so even though they want to attain higher education it seemed quite impossible for girls to go and stay out of village in order to obtain education. Daughters of almost every studied household of Jomsom were found to attained school and the perception of parents were also found to be motivating and supportive towards their daughter's education, while in Marpha the case is reverse.

## **CHAPTER - V**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Summary**

The research work was started with the concept on identifying the problems on girls' child education of dalit community. For the exploration, it studied the perceptions and practices of dalit community, based on both literature reviews and reality experienced. With this idea, some research objectives –study the perceptions of dalit community on the girl child education, find out the existing practices and explore the constraints and potentials of the dalit on girl child education, were developed with the guidance and a series of discussions with the research advisor which encouraged on bringing out a critical thinking and thought provoking concepts. Both primary and secondary sources were used for information collection. The secondary sources included review of literature, web sites observation, journals, articles, annual and progress reports related with girls child education. Similarly, different data through the primary sources were collected through household surveys, focus group discussions and key informants. The research was conducted on the basis of both the exploratory and descriptive methods. Exploratory methods focused on with why questions and, the descriptive methods focused on the collection of wide range of socio-economic information.

The study revealed that the Dalit girls face a number of barriers from multilevel social subsystems like family, financial, economical, socio-cultural, political, and governmental in the pursuit of formal education. Within these subsystems, the study identified various factors that play certain roles to deter Dalit girls' involvement in formal education. As some large factors, the study found, namely financial constraints; inadequate educational facilities; long-held socio-cultural beliefs and practices including family's gender biased attitudes towards women; early marriage; household responsibilities; religious misinterpretations; patriarchal attitudes and activities including male harassment; political instability; student politics; and inconsistent implementation of law and punishment.

The results also uncovered that all these multifaceted factors are deeply interrelated with the broader social system of the government. Informants contended that the dishonest and dormant government system generated and prolonged all these multifaceted factors that

function as roadblocks to girls' education. Besides poor facilities such as poor infrastructure, sufficient teachers and textbooks, denying many children access to education, local traditional and cultural beliefs, and perceptions and practices of the society are exacerbating the situation. This is most evident in the circumstances of the girl-child, whose needs and interests are often marginalized by intra-families' priorities. Socio-cultural beliefs cause parents to see the formal education of a girl as a deviation from accepted societal norms and practices. Formal education is therefore, sometimes not perceived as appropriate for girls and is consequently not valued.

Cultural attitudes are so entrenched that even young girls of school age feel that they need only to learn how to cook and farm activities. In contrast, girls are now able to acquire any role by choice and these are generally based on personal ability, aspiration, and educational and professional qualifications, for example formal education. Therefore, the marginalized girl-child as an individual when given the opportunity to formal education, she becomes an instrument in the regeneration of her society and the eradication of poverty in the next generation. In the study area, local Dalit culture has marginalized and discriminated against girls in terms of access to attainments of formal education. It came out that, the discrimination of girls in the study area begins at birth. Moreover, it was realized that girls are denied for education because formal education is an investment to be reaped tangibly in the future by which time they would have been married. It also came out that boys are preferred to girls because the boys will plough back into family any benefits associated with formal education. The local culture perceives formal education as a time wasting as it delays marriage and the related bride price and children the ultimate symbol of womanhood. The majority of informants told that early marriages are common practice in the study area. These practices do not allow the girl-child to enroll and complete schooling.

The field returns also revealed that some parents were giving their daughters hands in marriage, and also replacing girls with boys at the lower-secondary level. The head teacher remarked that the enrollment and retention of girl-child in schools is not encouraging due to early marriages. One female informant in her mid-15 also did not get the opportunity of going to school, because she got married at the age of 14. The field returns further revealed that the local Dalit culture has assigned certain roles to girls. All that has to do with childcare, with the handling of what the family eats, with firewood and

water, cleaning and washing, traditionally was and still is within women's domain. A parent informant opined that it is the creation of God; girls are made to do whatever they do in the home. The findings further revealed that because they are girls, there is the need to teach them how to do these domestic works. It came out that when girls are not taught, they would bring disgrace to their family. Indeed, girls in the study area are faced with different roles within the household where they have to combine these works and academic work.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The overwhelming response that girls' schooling is discontinued because she has a gender role to help in housework including sibling care, farm-work, and contributing to family income. However, boys can continue to attend school because housework is not suitable for them as boys— indicates that there will be no substantive changes in improving girls' access to education if the principles of gender equity will not be given equal important attention along with poverty and other social issues in improving education outcomes in Dalit community. There is a critical need, therefore to systematically link the gender and poverty issues in the analysis and development programming in education. The findings of the research strongly confirm that constraining gender socialization in the family and parental perceptions towards the benefits of education for their daughters combined with socio-economic and cultural disadvantages result to mark gender imbalances in education outcomes in Dalit community, which significantly favor males more than females. This is further challenged by the complex contradictions between cultural beliefs regarding girls/women's mobility and demands of survival faced by a stagnant and poverty-stricken agricultural household economy, which characterizes majority of contemporary Dalit households. Cultural beliefs and traditions in allocating gender-based division of labor in a poor, subsistence agricultural household provides a convenient rationale to decide against equal access of girls to schooling: "Girls would become mothers and housewives and will not need much education. Education will be more relevant for boys as they will become heads of their households. Education can give them skills to earn income and support families."

These beliefs and biases are further reinforced by parental ideas of coping with poverty: "When parents are too poor, daughters should stop going to school because they have to



help in household work and in earning income. The boys can continue their schooling because they cannot do household work like girls.” On the other hand, the need to overcome poverty poses significant questions to the gender socialization embodied in the Dalit community. Parents and girls would defy gender traditions when girls would be allowed to leave home and travel far away to earn income for the family.

While majority of the respondents believe that boys and girls have equal rights to education and support the idea that women should participate actively in the economic sphere and contribute to household income, this poses challenges to the non-questioning attitude that housework and child care are the exclusive responsibility of women and girls.

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