

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nepali Context

Nepal harbors diversity in different respects. Multiplicity can be experienced in terms of caste, ethnicity, languages, religions, class, gender, place and contexts. Due to migration, urbanization and other social processes, the number of the homogeneous settlements is dwindling and heterogeneity is in increasing trend.

The way of schooling and socialization can differ across the groups. One of the sources of these diversities is the historical blending of Buddhist and Hindu civilizations. Both civilizations opened schools. The schools along with others have been replaced, merged or sidelined by western type of schooling and education after the modernizing move of the 1950s. Consequently, mass and public education characterized by uniformity in different respects has been popular instead of education of different types and the access limited only to the high caste and class earlier. Being triggered by internal and external factors, the popularity of western type of schooling and education has increased in Nepali society with greater speed (Skinner & Holland; 1996). As education has been developed as a sector of development industry, different jargons and practices appeared in the scene.

Nepal began her history of aid receiving from the developed countries after 1950s (Mishra, 1997). As a component of the development aid, Nepali scholars got scholarship and training in foreign countries and they tried to apply the western model of schooling, university, training, and administrative expansion. The Ministry of Education, Department of Education, Regional Education Directorate (5), District Education Office (75), Resource Centers (1331), more than 26000 public schools (DOE, 2005) and five universities are the consequence of both evolution and diffusion. However, the increment in the number of schools and/or educational institutions has not ensured the enrollment, retention and success of the excluded groups (Koirala, 2007; Dahal, 2000). Chances of exclusion on the basis of caste, ethnicity, gender (Geiser, 2005), and language (Awasthi, 2004) are still considerable. If one is poor, illiterate, woman or *Dalit*, his /her chance to

be equal becomes less possible in Nepal (Mishra, 2005). This signifies an ardent need for inclusion of the *Dalits* from equity and moral perspectives.

The saying "caste system is more influential than the state in Hindu societies" (Macwan, 2006) is also true in the case of Nepal. Even the various ethnic groups in Nepal are highly influenced by the hill caste groups comprised of two broad segments. The so-called superior one known as *tagadhari* (those wearing sacred thread) or Khasa – Bahuns or twice-born caste particularly are the source of influence. The traditionally called "inferior section" popularly known as *matawali** (drinking liquor) that includes *matawali* Chhetri, Damai, Kami, Sarki and others (Haimendorf, 1966) are also acculturated in line with caste system. More than twenty ***Dalit* groups, who comprise of 13.3 percent of the 23 million national populations, are historically barred from education as reflected in their literacy rate of just 22 percent*** (CBS, 2002). They dwell in various parts of the country as an integral part of the caste system and societal framework. Traditionally, these people are put at the bottom of the society. The hierarchical social fabric and mentality have contributed to the exclusionary consequences in the teaching learning activities and interactions of the *Dalit* children in the school as well.

Multiple socio-historical forces are credited and/or blamed for their inclusion and/or exclusion in education. They can be religious orientation; poverty; inadequate political participation; bad governance; and illiteracy in considerable extent. The manifestation of the social exclusion, domination and discrimination in one way or other can be found in schooling in rural areas (Koirala, 2007). Globalization, increasing privatization and market driven consumer-oriented reforms have also contributed to the aggravation of the economic and social needs of the vulnerable students. All these factors have intensified the issues of equity, resulting in the need for yet more inclusion.

Realizing the exclusion of *Dalits* in education, government of Nepal has employed different policy measures which stress on inclusion. Such intents of inclusion have been

* *Mata* is derived from *mada* of Sanskrit meaning liquor. High caste Hindus were conventionally not allowed to drink liquor and therefore for those who drink intoxicating beverage are called *matawali* and treated as inferior to the *tagadhari*.

** Sarki, Kami, Damai, Badi, Gaine, Deula, Kuche, Kusale, Kasai, Chyame, Pore, Dushad, Chamar, Dom, Tatma, Bantar, Halkhor, Khatwe, Mushahar, Sarabhanga, Dhobi and etc.

*** The literacy rate of the hill Brahmins is 74.9%, Newar is 71.22%, Chhetri is 60.11%, Gurung is 59.79%, Magar is 55.90%, Gharti/Bhujel is 51.62%, Damai is 43.53%, Kami is 41.27% and Sarki is 38.33 (CERID, 2005).

manifested in different plans and policies such as Tenth plan, EFA Core Document, National Plan of Action (NPA) and current three year interim plan (2007-2009) for achieving the aims of Education for All Programme at national level. The plans have conceived education as a means of human development and developed provisions for providing free education and scholarship to the persons with disability, women, *Dalits*, poor and backward indigenous communities. They are found in every corner of the country. Whether the intents of the plan and policies have corresponded with the district and village level plans as well as with local needs have not been adequately studied empirically.

A recent study by Vaux et al (2006) has revealed that half of the children enrolled in school either repeat or drop out. Only 16 percent of enrolled children complete primary education regularly. The situation of the *Dalit* children is more vulnerable among the disadvantaged groups even though MOES has been distributing scholarships to the *Dalit* students but the amount actually received is commonly half of what was intended and very small in relation to the overall cost of education. Arguing that appointment of the female teachers has resulted in the increment of the girls' enrollment, the authors indicate that there are limited numbers of minorities and *Dalit* teachers. Apart from this, there can be absence and presence of several barriers and inclusionary forces while implementing the plans and policies of the governmental and non-governmental sectors. In this context, I carried out this study for analyzing micro-level perceptions and practices on inclusive education (IE) vis-à-vis the meso and macro level policy.

Topic and Purpose

The topic of the research is "inclusion of the *Dalit* students in education". Perception and practice towards inclusion of *Dalit* students in a school were explored during the study. Primarily, the schooling of the children of the disadvantaged groups of 6-15 age brackets in formal education was of central focus in the study. In this regard I have analyzed inclusion and exclusion of the *Dalit* students.

There are two types of social groups having segmental and organic social structure. Historically, caste system which is characterized by organic and hierarchical social structure has been predominant in Nepal. Different subgroups and clans among Hindus

and Newars have such social structure. These structures have been undergone through the processes of change. Simultaneously, some aspects of social structure and behaviors have also changed (Bista, 1989). The *Dalits* also might have undergone through the situation of duality. Even within the *Dalits*, there is diversity. Altogether there are 23 sub-groups: 17 in the Tarai and 5 in the hill districts. All the *Dalits* fall commonly in the lowest rung of the social hierarchy. Their lowest status results in negative repercussions such as social discrimination, untouchability, exclusion and persisting vicious circle of poverty which are cross-cutting problems. The social pattern of diversity, stratification and inequalities are also found in the schools to some extent because they are attended by the children from various backgrounds. Similarly, change and continuity can be found among the *Dalits*. This issue has also provided a basis for various researches on the same. For instance, Koirala (1996) found that the hill *Dalit* students were not differentiated on the basis of the lower caste membership but judged and behaved in term of merit and class in a school in the western hilly region of Nepal. This finding provides a clue that to an extent our society is, undoubtedly, changing from caste to class. Other researchers like Valentine (2001) found that there is still existence of caste hierarchy even among the squatters of the Ramghat Kathmandu while the hierarchical feelings are expected to have been minimized among the people migrated from different places. For local people caste is a day-to-day reality framing and reframing the relationship at the societal and individual levels depending upon different contexts (Parajuli, 2002). Different documents also show that caste discriminations are pervasive in Nepali society (Bhattachan et al, 2002; DFID/The World Bank, 2005). Besides, analysis of daily newspapers and listening to the *Dalit* activists also reconfirm the caste based discrimination. The following were my specific objectives:

- a) To assess caste discrimination and inclusion in the community , and
- b) To find out the situation of inclusion of the *Dalits** in formal education.

* There are different definitions of *Dalits*. In Nepal, the term "*Sudra*" is interchangeable with "*Dalits*". However, Kaundinnayan (2005) has, on the basis of review of religious scriptures, mentioned that there are two types of *Sudra* viz. *Sat* and *Asata*. The *Sat Sudras* are touchables. Therefore, *Sudra* is not appropriate term to denote *Dalits*. According to Koirala (1996), *Dalit* is an umbrella term to denote socially backward, economically poor and politically powerless groups. His definition is too broader. For me, *Dalits* are formerly untouchables (Biswokarma, 2003; DFID/The World Bank, 2006) as specified by the Civil Code of 1854 AD. My working definition of *Dalit* students in this dissertation is, therefore, "school going children of untouchable castes such as Kami, Damai and Sarki in the community".

Significance of the Study

There are some studies concerned with the education of the *Dalits*. My research is a fresh look of Bungkot, Gorkha. It has generated information on the micro level structure, perception, understanding and practices of the rural people about inclusion/exclusion. In doing so, the level of awareness about the inclusive policies being adopted by governmental and non-governmental sectors are dug out which I think has significance for the development workers and planners.

Similarly, context specific barriers of the inclusion are added after this research. The gap between the policy and practice has been analyzed on the basis of the findings of my research area. My perspective to view the reality, the methodology and the findings can be relevant to teachers, students, researchers, policy makers and the *Dalit* population to some extent. As this study is an addition to the many researches carried out so far, it has somehow shown some directions and areas for researchers in future. It will be my contribution if it mirrors (Wallot, 1988) a slice of community life (Gordon et al, 2001) or enkindle any academic or practical interest among the people having interest on education, development and caste.

Framework and General Research Questions

Framework

Philosophical and theoretical framework of research is the lighthouse while navigating the boat of research to specific destination. As I am oriented in sociological and anthropological tradition, I employed approaches of the social anthropology. Ontological focus of the study was thus on the social relations, interactions and belief systems of different groups in the community as well as in the school.

I believed in multiple realities in stead of relying on meta-theories. Hence I employed action approaches to carry out this research. Action approaches view the major or only object for sociology as human action. There are primarily two variants of action theory which deal with human action. They include Weberian individualistic and Parsons' systemic theory. Emphasis of Max Weber is on a need for science (sociology) which attempts to understand and interpret social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects. Action is all human behavior to which an actor attaches subjective meaning. Action is social in so far as, by virtue of the subjective

meaning attached to it by the acting individual, it takes account of the behavior of others and thereby oriented in its course. Weber considered the individual and his action as the basic unit, as its atom. For him the individual is the upper limit and sole carrier of meaningful conduct. He distinguished four types of action: traditional (customary), affective (emotional), value-oriented and instrumental (rational- means –ends) although historically much of sociological analysis has concentrated on the last two of these.

Talcott Parsons' focus is on social system. He has attempted to integrate Weber's individualism and Durkheim's holism. In his book, *The Structure of Social Action* (1937) he argued that the classical sociological theorists could be seen as moving towards a voluntary theory of action, conceiving human beings as making choices between means and ends, in a physical and social environment that limited choices. The core part of his analysis is AGIL schema. According to him, four functional imperatives or prerequisites have to be met if any social system is to operate. They are:

1. A = Adaptation to the environment. Any society must meet the physical needs of its member if it is to survive. To do this, it must make the required arrangements with its physical environment.
2. G = Goal attainment. Any society must have some common agreement between its members about their priorities and aims. Thus it must provide the necessary arrangements to identify, select and define these collective goals and provide the required structural arrangements for their attainment.
3. I = Integration. In order to maintain its existence, any society has to ensure a measure of coordination and control between the internal elements of the various parts of the social system.
4. L = Latency or pattern maintenance. Any society has to make sure that its members are sufficiently motivated to play the necessary roles required and to produce the necessary commitment to the values of the society. They also have to be able to manage the emotional tensions which can develop between members during day to day interaction (Cuff and Payne, 1981).

The four subsystems mentioned above – cultural, social, personality and biological – form what Parsons calls general system of action.

Both approaches concern themselves not only with the nature of action, but also with meaning and interpretation. A defining quality of action is, unlike behavior, it carries a subjective meaning for the actor. However, I employed Weber's theory for the analysis of my study findings.

Action theories, therefore, do not see sociology as a science like natural sciences, dealing with external, independent objects, rather sociology is scientific because it gives a rational, coherent account of people's action, thoughts and relationships. Thus theory of action prescribes a mode of analysis for explaining the action and meanings attached to it by typical individuals in typical situations. The actors have many goals. They select means to the attainment of the selected goals. Pursuit of the goals and selection of the means are influenced by existing knowledge base, mode of cognition, and perception of the situation of the actor (Cohen, 1979). The basic assumptions of the action theory are:

1. An actor has goals; his/her actions are carried out in pursuit of these.
2. Action often involves the selection of means to the attainment of goals; but even where it appears that it does not; it is still possible for an observer to distinguish analytically between means and goals.
3. An actor always has many goals; his/her actions in pursuit of any one affect and are affected by his/her actions in pursuit of others.
4. The pursuit of goals and the selection of means always occur within situations which influence the course of action.
5. The actor always makes certain assumptions concerning the nature of his/her goals and the possibility of their attainment.
6. Action is influenced not only by the situation but by the actor's knowledge of it.
7. The actor has certain ideas or mode of cognition which affect his/her selective perception of situation.
8. The actor has certain sentiments or affective dispositions which affect both his/her perception of the situations and his choice of goals.
9. The actor has certain norms and values which govern his/her selection of goals and his/her ordering of them in some scheme of priorities (Ibid.).

Out of these basic assumptions I have stressed on action approach to analyse the inclusion and exclusion of the *Dalit* students of a school and teacher's role to include or

exclude them. I am aware that the students present in the classroom occupy different statuses. They may or may not perform roles expected by others. The forms of the relationships and interactions among students, teachers and parents may also differ considerably. The teachers also have multiple statuses and roles. The parents' behaviors can be varied with respect to the performance of their children. The social reality encountered by the children in a heterogeneous society as well as in school is the topic of this study. Despite being member groups of great academic erudition, different groups even among the Hindus including *Dalits* have differential access to education and cultural capital of oriental philosophy (Ahuti, 2004).

Problems

Different ethnic minorities, *Dalits* and the marginalized groups are yet to be included in the mainstream of development. The hegemonizing policies of the government in different forms, including caste have lasting impact in society. These marginalized populations refer to the groups within a society whose interests are not represented by the core polity of the society. Because of their inferior or disadvantaged positions with respect to the socio-economic, political, or cultural power structure of society, they have rarely taken part in policy making on development and they are the last groups to benefit from the fruits of national development. They are often identified according to socio-economic or cultural characteristics such as income or wealth, ethnicity or race, gender, geographical locations, religion, citizenship status, or physical or mental conditions (Tsang, 1994:13). According to Tsang, examples of marginalized populations interchangeably excluded groups include native Indians, Black and Hispanic groups in the USA; most groups of non-Anglo-Saxon heritage in the United Kingdom, the native aborigines in Australia, lowest caste groups in India and Nepal, nomadic groups populations living in the rural areas in many developing countries, refugees and non-resident aliens, females in discriminatory community, and in general the poorest populations in any country.

In many societies, marginalized populations suffer from multiple disadvantages. These disadvantaged people need to be mainstreamed for at least two reasons. First, from a moral and quality view point, taking care of the most disadvantaged members is necessary. Secondly, of the different marginalized groups, historically backward *Dalits*

have encountered the multiple marginalities and therefore have limited opportunities in social spheres. My upbringing as a hill person of Gorkha enkindled me to think about the concerns of the hill *Dalits*.

Out of inquisitiveness I reviewed some policy documents and found that several governmental and non- governmental organizations have accorded high priority to uplift the *Dalits*. For instance, Ninth, Tenth plans (NPC, 2002) and three year interim plan have addressed the need for uplifting the *Dalits* through targeted policies and programmes. Similarly, social inclusion is one of the four pillars of Nepal Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Exclusion remains an important hurdle that Nepal has to overcome to realize the development objectives of both the PRSP and the Millennium Development Goals. All major development partners have now incorporated social inclusion as a core pillar in their assistance strategies (DFID and The World Bank, 2006). Nepal has also emphasized on the education of Dalits in the Education for All programme. However, do the inclusive policy measures for excluded groups in education at national level respond to the felt needs of the local people? Do they correspond with the reality at the district and local levels? How is the issue of inclusion addressed in District Education Plan (DEP), Village Education Plan (VEP) and School Improvement Plan (SIP) ? Are the policy discourses translated into reality? Have the policies and activities been fruitful for the Dalit population vis-à-vis the other excluded and included children? If not, why? Where are the gaps? Is it simply the function of social discrimination? Is their economic status responsible for their educational backwardness? What are the barriers for their inclusion? How do the students with different backgrounds behave in the class rooms and why? How do the teachers (often non-*Dalits*) respond to the silence or vocal behavior of the Dalits? How has the relationship among the teachers and students affected the achievement of the students? The study was centered on the coverage of the issues raised by above questions.

Limitations

This study emphasized on the academic analysis about the empirical findings regarding the performance of the *Dalit* children in formal education. Only some issues about their educational activities were observed from various perspectives. Focus of the

study was the educational situation of the *Dalit* children. As this study has been administered through individual effort and resources, it could not cover all issues related to the topic. Primarily, the approaches and methodology employed are that of the sociology of education and anthropology of education. Hence, the findings are suggested to be contextually and/or theoretically generalized.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This research follows the tradition of research on social policy and community study. In education, sociological and anthropological approaches have been employed more after 1950s and I have considered education as an integral part of society as whole. I am also aware that education of the *Dalits* occurs in socio-cultural space and their inclusion or exclusion therefore is interwoven in the social processes. Therefore, I have reviewed theoretical and conceptual aspects of the inclusion and exclusion and included part of it in following sections.

Concept of Inclusion

Education is the right of all children, and Inclusive Education (IE) aims to ensure that all children have access to an appropriate, relevant, affordable and effective education within their community. This education starts in the home with the family, and includes formal, informal, non-formal and all types of community-based initiatives.

Within schools IE is an approach which aims to develop a child-focus by acknowledging that all children are individuals with different learning needs and speeds. It is also a part of development, and development should be inclusive, i.e. responding to the needs of people who are all different. As with all children, disabled children have a range of basic needs which need to be met in order for them to benefit from education. These include nutrition, acceptance, love and basic health care. Poverty and lack of basic infrastructure (roads, transport) affects children's access to education, including disabled children. Regarding the education of disabled children it should be seen as integral to the development of education for all children. But the question is how many of us are aware of it. As literature shows many ignore disabled children's education because of exclusive planning (http://www.eenet.org.uk/theory_practice/whatisit.shtml).

Inclusion refers to discrimination-free environment and process (DOE, 2007). It is an opposite term of the exclusion. Exclusion is a coverall term to refer to deprivation of any kind. Broadly, exclusion can be from neighborhood, basic services, civic participation,

material resources and social relations (Scharf et al 2005). I have defined exclusion as deprivation from education in this study. Similarly, inclusion is a broader term which refers to the incorporation of the excluded people. According to Siegal (1995), inclusion is a conversational and theoretical ideal. He further posits that there is no significant moral or epistemological price to pay for embracing that ideal. The price of inclusion is low; its values exceedingly high. Philosophically, it is one of the most widely discussed themes. Postmodernists, feminists, critical theorists, discourse ethnicists, old fashioned liberals and others routinely extol the virtues of the inclusionary discourses and practices – discourses which seek out, make room for, and take seriously, and theories which adequately reflect the voices, views and interest of those who are and have traditionally been excluded from discussion and/or consideration. Philosophical base of all the adherents of the paradigms mentioned stems from the overvaluation of the universal, and undervaluation of the particular. Universalizing discourse and theory for example, discourses concerning the traits, interests, or obligations of, and theories which attempt to characterize all people – ignore the features of particular, especially marginalized individuals and groups, and in so doing, exclude them and their perspectives. Thus valorization of inclusion and inclusionary discourse and theory seems to lead naturally to the valorization of particularity, and as a consequence devaluing of the universality. Siegel further opines that mainstream (white, privileged and malestream) philosophy of education, is often criticized on the grounds that it mistakenly and immorally excludes the voices and perspectives of the marginalized, silenced, oppressed and unprivileged others. How might the mainstream philosophy of education accomplish this silencing and oppression? It is sometimes suggested that it does so by relying upon disciplinary "standards", standards which are portrayed as unbiased, neutral determiners of quality – standard of argumentative rigor, for examplewhich in fact, tip the playing field in favor of the dominant, hegemonic group of mainstream practitioners of the craft.

Both oriental and occidental philosophy have regarded that education is the fundamental human right and most basic need for every human being (Watkins, 2000). Nobody is daring to disagree that without education there is at least any single means and media to develop the quality of human life. For survival, protection and development of human life, education is one of the various factors. Though there is continual debate over

excellence and equity, the issue of equity and access has heightened the need of inclusion (Lupart, 1999).

Inclusion is a journey and process not a destination. The concept of inclusion is rooted in the western discussion and development in the field of Special Need Education and the world wide discussion on the right of the child and Education for All (Holst, 2000). The concept appeared in 1980s and 1990s in the course of initiatives for school reform. Before the immediate emergence of the concept, integration and mainstreaming were widely used. Both the terms regard individuals as subjects to be integrated while the connotation of the term inclusion is more empathetic to the needs of the individuals. In other words, the concept and process envisaged are more pro-people or democratic. Now-a-days, the concept of progressive inclusion has been in vogue (Naylor, 2005).

According to Chris Kliwer, Associate Professor of Special Education at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI),

"Inclusion involves all kinds of practices that are ultimately practices of good teaching. What good teachers do is to think thoughtfully about children and develop ways to reach all children. Ultimately good teaching is a relationship between two people; teachers get good results because they enter into that relationship. Inclusion is providing more options for children as ways to learn. It's structuring schools as community where all children can learn. But there's no recipe for becoming an inclusive teacher or an inclusive school. It's not a mechanized format."

Inclusive education at the local level largely relies on the knowledge, attitude and performance of the teachers. The teachers' behavior is also determined by the way of his upbringing, education, training, belief system, culture (Heath, 1988), use of language and examples often given. In other words, they are influenced by the macro environment of which they are integral part. The relationships and way of interaction between teachers and students play crucial part for inclusion. Some of the barriers in the pedagogical and sociological domains are influential for inclusion or exclusion. Other dimensions of IE have not been incorporated in this definition.

Susan Etscheidt, Professor of Special Education at the UNI views,

"Inclusion is based on the belief that people/adults work in inclusive communities, work with people of different races, religions, aspirations, and disabilities. In the

same vein, children of all ages should learn and grow in environments that resemble the environments that they will eventually work in."

Susan has focused on the diversity of the learners and their aspirations, belief system, needs and the environment. Not only the disabled, all learners and their specialty need to be addressed for better service.

While Dr. Melissa Heston, Associate Professor of Education at the UNI has focused on inclusive curriculum. She views:

"When good inclusion is in place, the child who needs the inclusion does not stand out. The inclusive curriculum includes parental involvement, students' choices, and a lot of hands-on and heads-on involvement" (<http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/philosophy/philosophy.html>, 24 July, 2006).

According to Booth (2005), inclusion involves an approach to education and society concerned with increasing the participation of all and reducing all forms of discrimination and exclusion.

Miles (2000) has tried to simplify and summarize the barriers faced in Mpika and the ways in which those barriers have been overcome. Inclusive Education (IE) is a strategy contributing towards the ultimate goal of promoting an inclusive society, one which enables all children/adults, whatever their gender, age, ability, ethnicity, impairment or HIV status, to participate in and contribute to that society. Difference is respected and valued. Discrimination and prejudice will be actively combated in policies, institutions and behavior.

Curriculum and texts can be barriers to inclusive education. Whether the curricula are coherent and manageable (Hargreave, 2002) is one of the crucial aspects in this respect. Similarly, the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 2002) also has a significant role to reduce or increase exclusion. However, my focus has been centered on micro-level interaction and practices.

According to an article (author not mentioned), inclusive education:

- a) acknowledges that all children can learn;
- b) acknowledges and respects differences in children: age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, HIV and TB status etc.;

- c) enables education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children;
- d) is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society;
- e) is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving;
- f) needs not be restricted by large class sizes or a shortage of material resources (http://www.eenet.org.uk/theory_practice/bonn_2.shtml).

In my reflection, inclusion is something to do with increasing access of people to basic services (including education), civic participation, material resources and social relations. It focuses on the need of paying special attention to the particularity of the excluded individuals. Thus the concept of inclusion incorporates both access and equity issues.

Policy Review

The perception and vision of the concerned people regarding inclusion can be manifested in different policy documents. Policy is not made in a vacuum. It reflects a broader socioeconomic, socio-cultural, historical, political and ideological framework in which it is embedded (Alur, 2000). For example, after the Soviet success of deliberate interventions, the rest of the countries thought that planned development can be a panacea to solve the contemporary social problems. Even the classical thinkers thought the necessity of the state interventions in some areas including education. Thus, state intervention has been in vogue both in developed and underdeveloped countries after the 1940s.

Half a century ago, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) stressed on education which is, not as a privilege to few, but as a right to all. The underlying meaning of the declaration has been the inclusion of all in education.

Education continued to enjoy high priority in developmental planning. It has been looked as a major developmental goal in itself and was also expected to contribute meaningfully to the processes of national development and social transformation (Dube, 1990).

After the postwar period, heavy amount of resources was invested in education and it was seen as an engine of economic growth as well as a means of promoting social justice (Brown et al, 1998). Despite sweeping expansion of education administration and institutions like schools and colleges globally, education system faced different crises because it missed to address the needs of the all. The criticism also stemmed from the

inability of the system to respond adequately the new urges and aspirations of changing societies. Opinions and critical remarks of liberal thinkers like Julius K. Nyerere and Gandhi (1968 cited in Dube) in their time and contexts also justify the reality.

Contradictory trends appeared side by side in education policy after late 1960s. Firstly, due to the growth in population, there was an increasing demand for education. After oil crisis, people were more conscious about the dwindling resources. Finally, erosion of confidence in the education system as such was also mounting. Some books like *World Educational Crisis: A System Analysis* (Coombs, 1968 cited in Dube), *School is Dead* (Reimer, 1971 cited in Dube), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1972) and *Deschooling Society* (Illich, 1973) are some reflection of this loss of confidence in education of the time. The rampant frustration was the consequence of the structural, curricular, pedagogical and other forms of exclusion of the majority.

Some scholars of the neo-Marxist strands put forward critical view regarding the inequitable distribution of the fruition of developmental activities. It was specifically, the poorest of the poor are still deprived of the basic social services viz, education, health, drinking water and sanitation. Education is a propelling force to the all round development of any society. Even in the educational sector, the number of population beyond inclusion is considerable. Coming nearer home to Nepal, the reality is much more glaring.

Though the concept of special education has been popular since 1970s, it primarily intended to support the disabled. Now the target of the inclusive policy has been socially deprived groups. The foci of different policy documents during different conventions have been dealt in following paragraphs.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989: Article 28) envisaged to: a) make primary education compulsory, available and free to all; b) encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of education and offering financial assistance in case of need....c) take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop out rates. However, it was not internalized in policy and practice to an expected extent in education system.

The global initiatives of Education for All was first held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 to which most national governments committed to ameliorate the plight of the children living in poverty and disadvantage, children who are working or living on the streets or in grossly overcrowded homes, as well as children who are dropping out of school after only one or two years of primary education. The declaration was consequence of gloomy analysis of the world wide state of (at least) basic education policy. In many countries, the conference concluded, there were three fundamental problems viz. education opportunities were limited, with too many people having little or no access to education; basic education was conceived narrowly in terms of literacy and numeracy, rather than more broadly as a foundation for a life-long learning and civic education; and certain marginalized groups – disabled people, members of ethnic and linguistic minorities, girls and women, and so on – were at particular risk of being excluded from education altogether.

Extending basic educational opportunities to all learners as of right, the conference concluded:

... requires more than a recommitment to basic education as it now exists. What is needed is an "expanded vision" that surpasses present resource levels, institutional structures, curricula, and conventional delivery systems while building on the best in current practices (Article 2.1).

In the article 2.2, the Jomtien declaration envisaged on universalizing access to all children, youth and adults, and promoting equity – by, for instance, ensuring basic education for girls , women and other underserved groups; focusing on continuous and sustained learning rather than simply on enrollment; broadening the means and scope of basic education – partly by ensuring the access but also by calling upon families, communities, ECDs, literacy programmes, nonformal education programmes, libraries, the media and a wide range of other 'delivery systems'; enhancing the environment for learning; strengthening partnerships – amongst all sub-sectors and forms of education, government departments, non-governmental organizations, the private sectors, religious groups, local communities and, above all, families and teachers. The conference paved the way for inclusive education but it had not still got full shape.

The UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain (UNESCO 1994) has been very influential in encouraging governments to adopt inclusive policies and in giving examples of progress in reforming schools to respond to a much greater diversity of need in their local communities.

In fact, basic education cannot simply be ensured by making schools available for those who are already able to access them. It is necessary to be proactive in identifying the barriers disadvantaged groups encounter in attempting to access educational opportunities. There can be barriers in policy level, curriculum, teaching learning materials, teachers, mode of teacher training, language of instruction, managing the schools, coordinating with other actors, identifying and mobilizing the resources available at national and community level to overcome those barriers (UNESCO, 2003).

World Education Forum meeting in Dakar (2000) also drew attention to the exclusionary processes which disadvantaged groups experienced. It is for this reason that the Forum declared that Education for All must take account of the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health, and those with special learning needs (World Education Forum, 2000, Note, 19). Even though inclusion has been a global agenda, more focus is laid on the school and classroom to the date. Many of the barriers remain outside the school such as educational policy, national system of schooling, teacher training, relation between education system and the communities it serves and the management of budgets and resources. The reasons pointed by the forum for the unsatisfactory achievement are weak political will, insufficient financial resources and its inefficient mobilization, burden of debt, inadequate attention to the learning needs of the poor and excluded, lack of attention to the quality of learning and an absence of commitment to overcoming gender disparity.

The marginalization and exclusion of learners from an educational system was addressed at the Dakar World Education Forum in April 2000 and it was aptly captured in the following statement:

"The key challenge is to ensure that a broad vision of Education for All as an *inclusive concept* is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. Education

for All... must take account of the need of the poor and the most disadvantaged...young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health: and those with special learning needs....."

'Including the Excluded' was the over-arching theme of the 5th International Special Education Congress (ISEC) which was held at Manchester University from July 24-28, 2000. Over 1000 people came from 99 countries to share their ideas, experiences, dreams and frustrations. There were 44 symposia and around 800 individual papers and posters (Mamun, 2000). What lessons can we learn from this wealth of information and experience? Despite enormous differences in background, culture and economic conditions, some common themes can be traced. First, there can be no doubt that the movement towards inclusive education is world- wide and knows no boundaries.

Second, some of the most innovative and radical developments can now be found in some of the poorest countries of the world where there is political will, leadership and a commitment to give first priority to children. Uganda, Laos and Lesotho are just some examples. In reconstructing its education system, South Africa is building inclusion of children with disabilities into its foundations.

Third, there can be already a lot of good practices on the ground, much of it taken for granted and not reported. Many teachers are already teaching inclusively; it is easy to exaggerate how much additional training they need.

Fourth, the biggest single obstacle to progress is not money or lack of legislation but negative attitudes on the part of many parents, teachers, community leaders and politicians. Although there are major obstacles and uncertainties, the evidence suggests that the doubters become much more committed and positive once they have experience of teaching children with special needs in ordinary schools.

Fifth, more and more parents are insisting on the rights of their children to attend ordinary schools and to receive the necessary support. Parents' organisations are pressing for changes at local and national levels and calling for legislation and resources to make this possible.

Inclusive education is concerned with removing all barriers faced by students to learning, and with the participation of all learners vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation. It is a strategic approach designed to facilitate learning success for all

children. It addresses the common goals of decreasing and overcoming all exclusion from the human right to education, at least at the elementary level, and enhancing access, participation and learning success in quality basic education for all (UNESCO, 2002).

In tune with the commitments expressed in international and national forums and conferences, the national policies in Nepal have incorporated the provisions for inclusion of the excluded groups. But they are too general. In my reflection, the policies employed for incorporating the excluded groups in Nepal are found to be influenced by the western thoughts. In this regard, there can be gaps in macro, meso and micro level plans and practices. The intent of this research was to explore the gaps.

Caste and Exclusion

As mentioned earlier, Nepali society is influenced by hierarchical caste system. As the high caste Hindus are rich in cultural capital supportive to teaching learning practices, the majority of teachers are from so called high caste in Nepal (Vaux et al, 2006). The rural communities have patron-client relationships and have contested and symbiotic relations. Therefore, a review of caste is necessary.

Caste is etymologically derived from Portuguese term "casta". It refers to blood purity of the social groups (Marshall,1998). There are different views about the origin of the caste system. Anthropologists like Berreman (1991) opine that caste has been originated and institutionalized to serve the purpose of the division of labour and further elaborated in the course of time. According to Bodley (1994), "Hindu civilization is most widely known for the caste system with its emphasis on hierarchy and ritual purity and pollution, which continues to be a major fact of life in India." Bougle (1991) has specified three characteristics of caste, viz. occupational specialization, hierarchy and repulsion. Srinivas (1991) focuses on the marriage rules, commensal taboos and village level politics while analyzing the caste in India.

Dumont (1970) takes more intellectual approach; describing Indian caste as an ideological system of categories based on: 1) hierarchically ordered social groups, 2) detail rules of separation, and 3) division of labor. His emphasis is that hierarchy is the embracing principle in caste which is based on purity and pollution. Gupta's focus is on two characteristics of caste, a) hierarchy (at subjective level which is consequence of

politico-economic power) and b) hyper-symbolism – a discrete character maintained through a multiplicity of ritualized practices (1991). Pettigrew's observation is notable regarding the cause of the hierarchical attributes of caste in Punjab (1991). Valor, strength and agricultural prowess are all important in Punjab for caste hierarchy.

Similarly, Ghurye (1932) has presented the outstanding features of caste. They are: 1) Segmental division of society, 2) Vertical hierarchy, 3) Restrictions on feeding and social intercourse, 4) Civil and religious disabilities and privilege of different sections, 5) Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation, and, 6) Restrictions on marriage. He has also sketched the social offences regarding caste and consequent punishments to the offender.

Mayer (1997) has explained about the change and continuity of caste in Indian villages. She has shown the changes and continuity in commensality and occupation. According to her, anti-caste legislation has been enacted in India together with the introduction of new political institutions. Similarly, the sense of caste-free equality has arisen in India.

In my reflection over the literature, social diversity, inequality and discrimination are lived reality in Nepal in one or other guise. Hierarchical feelings in terms of ascribed status like membership in *varna* system, ownership of land, agricultural prowess, purity and pollution and the like may have some reflection in the school and teaching learning activities. Presence or absence of their impact and their causes and consequences for educational activities of the students can still be found in rural setting. In other words, how the children including *Dalits* and the teachers cope with the social situation, particularly in school and what will be the impact of discrimination on the children are subjects of more interest for researchers like us.

Previous Researches

Some of the researchers have also shed light on the factors of seclusion/exclusion. Some of them focused on structural problems while others have focused on socio-cultural and cognitive behaviors.

Ogbu (1990) in his article "overcoming racial barriers to equal access" talks about the schooling and racial barriers. According to him, race alone does not explain the variability in school achievement. He has identified two types of barriers for achievement

in education. One is instrumental barriers, fairly overt and visible exclusionary activities such as discrimination in jobs, housing and education. Other barriers he terms expressive: conscious and unconscious derogatory treatment of a minority group by members of the dominant group that satisfies the latter's psychological needs such as scapegoat.

Keating (1990) has focused on gender exclusion in schools. She specifies three barriers blocking for real participation of the girls viz. organizational characteristics and corresponding power relationships, gender expectations for achievement, and curricular issues of representation and the control of knowledge. Male dominance is pervasive in the organizations and in America feminization of the teaching profession has created problems and made the environment competitive. Secondly, social expectation, awareness about the choices and role of school has limiting influence on the achievement of the girls. Thirdly, curriculum, textbooks, tests and academic counseling continue to foster sex role stereotyping.

Richardson and Colfer (1990) in their article "Being Risk at School" discuss about school seclusion as failure and dropping out attribute to events and relationships in the lives of the students at school and elsewhere. The meaning of "at risk" is relative and fluid. The connotation of the term itself indicates on the situation of blaming to the victims while the concept of inclusion blames the system instead of the deprived.

Sinclair and Ghory (1990) also dig out the process of school based seclusion. According to them, dropping out of the school is not a single event but a process. A student may start out well anchored in the center of the school activities; as the strains develop in school relationships, the students drift towards edges or margins of academic and social activities in schools. They have proposed umbrella term "marginality" for the sense of distance, disconnection, and estrangement a student may develop as s/he experiences strained and difficult relationships in the school or classroom environment. They also develop levels of seriousness, viz., testing, coasting, retreating and rebelling.

Stephen (1981) took up the issue of class and asked what social mechanisms operating in schools can explain the disappointing performance of working class pupils as exclusionary force. He combined interactionist and structural perspectives to explore the social construction of the pupils' identities and social careers in the process of educational innovation. His aim was to understand the school system through the participants' own

interpretations whilst analytically planning these in a wider social context and so moving beyond those interpretations. He also deals with the differentiation or polarization theory in terms of academic behavioral standard.

Hanna (1988) carried out an ethnographic study on "meddlin" a form of harassment as exclusionary force in a desegregated magnet school. "Meddlin" is an expression of aggression and takes many forms, some relatively subtle but most direct, disruptive and destructive. It occurs among the blacks more than with whites. Stressing on its functions, she also discusses on the historical and motivational reasons for the behaviors. Desegregation is difficult to accept in a democratic society, on ideological, moral and practical grounds. However, her ethnography on the desegregated schooling can also be important.

Heath (1988) also studied the classroom interaction in southeastern USA. Her study of the Trackton children is focused on the difference between the cultural background of the teachers and the children in the classroom as an exclusionary force.

Jackson (2002) in an article "Life in classroom" states that noticed school life is familiar to all of us, but unnoticed school life deserves more attention than it has received to date from those who are interested in education. Yearly, a student spends a little more than 1000 hours under the care and tutelage of the teachers. Classroom is also like the church or an auditorium or hospital wards in many respects. He argues that there are other much less obvious features of the school life such as crowd, praise and power. Learning to live in a classroom involves learning to live in a crowd, resulting in profound implication in the quality of life. Secondly, schools are constantly evaluative setting where the forward students in tests and games are praised. Similarly, the schools are the places where the division between the weak and the powerful is clearly drawn. How does the hidden curriculum influence the Dalits children and how do they feel as members of crowd, as potential recipients of the praise or reproof, as pawns of the institutional authorities can be interesting for this study as well.

Jeffrey et al (2004) carried out research in India and come to conclusion that the Dalits doubt the value of education for bettering their plight. In the initial stage, they hoped that legal amendment and reservation would improve their situation. The formal education has boosted their self-esteem but not stopped the processes of the caste and class

reproduction. The authors believe that only the economic redistribution, initiatives for land reform and progressive taxation can bring change in their life.

In another article about the *Dalit* students, the authors (names and date not identified) have shown that the enrollment and access to schooling have been encouraging in India. The authors question whether the current emphasis on inclusion sufficiently tackles the reality. Increasing trend of upper caste and better off households abandoning government schools for private school is observed, leaving most public primary schools in urban and semi-urban areas with substantial majorities of *Dalits* and *Adibasi* (indigenous) students and predominantly upper caste teachers. The researchers report that the *Dalits* and *Adibasi* students suffer from wide spread verbal abuse from upper caste teachers. As a result, the first generation school attendees feel inferior and develop low esteem. There is a high rate of drop out from schools and the authors label them as "push outs". The teachers blame the students for being "slow", and having poor hygiene. Their parents are often blamed for drunkenness and idleness. The *Dalit* children are given cleaning tasks and not allowed to serve water and tea. They are humiliated while talking in native language. Little academic help is available to them in home and they fail to finish homework in time. After completion of the study, they have less chance of getting job. All these factors push them out from the school. The finding shows that the teachers are so insensitive because they are local functionaries of the government and information about the state and development are flown via the teachers, resulting in their upper hand. The finding has also shown that higher the level, lesser the discrimination and lesser the number of *Dalits* and *Adibasi*.

In my reflection over the earlier researches, different factors can trigger the exclusion and inclusion in education. Such concepts and practices are fluid in nature rather than fixed or stable. Koirala (2006) has dealt on the structural barriers. Similarly, attitudinal barriers has been mentioned by Timmins (2004). Awasthi (2004) has shown monolingualism as barrier while Bernstein has found that (cited in Mann, 1986) elaborated and restricted codes within a language a barrier to the lower class students. Here, different barriers for inclusion have been mentioned but I will additionally explore the inclusionary forces as well.

Koirala (1996) carried out his doctoral research on "Schooling and the *Dalits* of Nepal: A Case Study of Bungkot *Dalits* Community". His aim was to explore the expansion of schooling and its effects on the *Dalit* individuals and community as a whole. He employed methods like case study, participant observation, group discussion, life history and interview. His approach was critical interpretive. He found that education has played positive role for the reduction of the caste discrimination and the teachers behave with the students on the basis of the merit. Finally, he concluded that *Dalits* children being treated poorly for not doing well in school are related to class rather than the caste (117p).

Baidhya (2002) carried out quantitative study among the secondary level students in the schools of Kathmandu valley. With the survey of 350 families, he concluded that most of the high achieving students are likely to belong to optimal functional families whereas their low achieving counterparts have a dysfunctional family background.

Valentine (2001) in his study of the squatters of the Ramghat, posits that education in Nepali society is a modernizing and secularizing agent. Even after the enactment of the anti-discriminatory provision of the Civil Code 1963, caste is, however, a major factor for social identity and widely practiced among most families. Whether the caste system has limited the achievement of the Dalits or not is a very intriguing question to date.

According to Hata (2001), patron-client relation named by "*afno manchhe*" characterizes Nepali society. This relation forms "social capital" of social groups, but it differs in each group. This limits individuals launching into social life, and affects his or her incentive to study hard. Children in lower strata are apt to give up school education at the early stage owing to lack of personal relationship of nepotism (= "social capital") to launch into society. It is also a fact that people in lower strata are also very poor in their economic position with poor economic capital. Thus the difference in social strata brings difference in cultural capital, social capital and economic capital, and affects children's educational achievement. He employed quantitative method and gathered data from Gorkha, Dolakha and Kathmandu. He found that lower caste groups show higher drop out and get lower learning achievement. The difference of learning achievement is small in first graders, but it becomes wider as grade advances. This fact suggests that the gap is made by school process, but not inborn. His study also reveals that students of lower caste have attendance below than the average. Their working hours at home is also longer

than the learning hours. He concludes that disadvantaged groups are annoyed with uneasiness or distrust against school education, abject poverty threatening their lives, losing incentive to get social promotion and hopelessness for future. These disadvantages influence their children badly, causing their "losing incentive to study hard", loss of self-esteem, pessimism for future and inferiority complex in classroom which brings their "poor learning achievement" and "low enrollment and retention rate". Poor educational attainment brings them "poor social attainment". Even if they get high educational attainment, they will not always be able to get advantageous occupation, because of lacking social capital.

Parajuli (2006) in an article entitled "*Nepali schoolma Dalits bahiskar ra bibhedka kura* (On deprivation and discrimination of *Dalits* in Nepali school) has taken school as a space of deprivation and discrimination as well as a place for struggle against deprivation and discrimination simultaneously. According to him, elites played an active role in development and expansion of school in Nepal. Participation of *Dalits* and excluded groups in the campaign of school expansion was lower. *Dalits'* contribution was confined to free labour during construction and maintenance of the school and donation of cash or kind when required. Thirdly, he noticed struggle between tradition and modernity in rural areas. However, the pace of change regarding *Dalits* has been slower. Establishing linkage with the concept of cultural reproduction, he argued that the *Dalit* children are conditioned to see, experience and hear exclusive, discriminatory and suppressive behaviors in the community. Similarly, they neither study about the history of atrocities and discrimination to *Dalits* nor their causes and consequences. They have felt that it is a sin to born in a *Dalit* family. As a result, they believe in fatalism as mentioned by Bista (1991). Regarding the low performance of *Dalit* children, he is of the opinion that they lacked cultural capital like that of the elite children. In stead of helping them, they are called slow, blunt, lazy and escapee. The *Dalit* children start life from failure in the school.

Through the review of literatures I became aware of the research questions. And from the review of concept of inclusion, I hold following understanding:

1. Inclusion is an often-extolled theoretical and conceptual ideal from several perspectives.

2. There are several barriers to inclusion of an excluded group.
3. Situation of inclusion of *Dalits* in education can empirically be studied.

Similarly, by reviewing the policy documents and declarations of different conferences, I was aware of following issues:

1. International and national policies and declarations of different conferences have increasingly laid emphasis on inclusion.
2. There can be gaps in different levels of policies and practices.
3. There can be often taken for granted and not reported good practices regarding inclusion. They can be explored by an empirical study.

Likewise, in the process of reviewing documents on caste and exclusion, I became aware of following issues:

1. Caste is mostly pervasive in Nepali rural setting.
2. Caste can be barrier for inclusive education.
3. Influence of caste discrimination on education and vice versa can be assessed during a study.

Finally, after reviewing the previous studies I became aware about the problems of students of excluded groups in general and *Dalits* in particular.

Previous studies did not focus on the inclusion and/or exclusion of the *Dalit* students in the school. They overlooked the perceptions and understanding of the individual actors. This is where I used Weberian action theory to explore the situation of caste discrimination and situation of inclusion of the *Dalit* students in a school. However, I was aware of other theories that nurture inclusionary and exclusionary practices. These theories are functionalism and conflict. Both theories focus more on social system. Functionalism depicts positive aspects of the social system where individuals play harmonious role for perpetuating the social whole. Contrary to this, conflict theory shows contradictions of the society and individuals play role to dismantle the established social pattern. Both theories undermine the particularity of the individual actors and their deeds. Weberian action theory pays due attention on the individual actors. Therefore, I used Weberian action theory.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Approach and Rationale

As I am reared in social anthropological tradition, my overall approach was socio-anthropological. Units of analysis of this study were *Dalit* students in and out of school and the catchments. School is a social space where different actors, in addition to students, come and interact with each other directly or indirectly. Therefore, students, teachers and the parents were consulted during the study. The focus of the study was the performance of the *Dalit* students and the factors contributing to their different levels of performance. Trends of success, failure or situation of drop out of the *Dalit* students and the reasons behind the situation were explored. For that the teachers in the school were interviewed. The data available from the documents of the school were taken. Students, School Management Committee (SMC) members, guardians and other possible sources were also consulted. The settlements of the *Dalits* in the catchments area of the school were also visited for ascertaining the causes and consequences or situation of their schooling.

Issues about inclusion and exclusion of *Dalits* students have been reflected in terms of absence or presence of caste-based discrimination, merit, gender, class, ethnicity, language, identity and power relation. A list of excluded, included and normal students was prepared and cross checked as per the advice of different teachers. The documents available at school including School Improvement Plan were reviewed. Successful, moderate and failed *Dalit* students were identified for qualitative case study.

I made myself an instrument and performed role of the several bricoleurs (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). In this process I made myself familiar for immersing into the community. While returning from the community, I was only a researcher. I employed both emic and etic perspectives for making sense of any phenomena in the school and community. I wrote field notes in the evening so that the people in the community would not feel any disturbance. The rationale for doing so was to reduce any effort contributing to reactivity.

As the reality covered by the topic was multidimensional in nature, I used the multi-method approach to understand the inclusionary and exclusionary forces in a rural setting. Use of multiple methods ensured the deeper understanding on the topic. On the basis of

the concepts filtered from the literature review information was generated to realize the aims of the study. I developed and modified the methods of the research as per the experience of the field work each day.

Site Selection

I selected a site in hill District Gorkha of western Nepal. In the first place, I met the officials of the District Education Office, explained my objectives and asked them to suggest some names of potential schools. Their information thus I obtained were verified and the site was finalized in terms of two criteria. First criterion was the number of the *Dalit* students studying in the school. Secondly, I accorded high priority on a school in rural hill nearby the market center. I selected Bungkot of Gorkha as my study site on the basis of the conversation with a school supervisor of education office. Only a school called Shree Shahid Smrity Higher Secondary (out of eleven schools in the community) was selected for in-depth study. I liked to compare my findings with that of Professor Koirala who carried out a study a decade ago in the same community.

The community I selected is heterogeneous in nature. Ethnic groups like Magar, Gurung, Newar and Bhujel outnumber the so-called "high caste" people viz. Brahmins and Chhetris. The number of *Dalits* residing in the community is also considerable. Among *Dalits*, there are Kami, Sarki and Damai.

Definition of Some Concepts Employed

There can be different definitions of any concept. But I have defined some key concepts as follows:

Caste discrimination: prejudice for interaction in terms of membership of a caste group.

Inclusion: incorporation of any group members in terms of behavior, representation and policy.

Dalits: formerly untouchable caste groups as per the civil code of 1854 AD.

Students: children of school going age (6-15).

Research Design

A research design is a plan of the proposed research work (Ghosh, 2002). Research designs differ depending upon epistemological and ontological approaches employed. Similarly, they depend on the purpose of the research.

To meet the purposes set I employed both descriptive and exploratory research designs in the study. The findings from the literature review were justified, modified or falsified by field study. The known information was observed again, verified and described. The unexplored aspects of the information were further dug out and findings thus derived have been linked with local and broader social framework.

Data Collection Methods

After I visited the school, I interviewed the teachers and head teacher. They told me that there were not cases of caste-based discriminations and exclusion as such. Not a single *Dalit* student was deprived from education due to the direct cause of the school. There were multiple realities. Even the students from so-called high caste group had left school and sought employment instead of pursuing study. The *Dalit* students had left school due to other reasons than the school. Each individual student had his/her own typical story regarding schooling, level of performances and problems encountered. Then I decided to employ action theory of Max Weber for the study. The case of each individual was different. Therefore, I employed case study as an overarching method of data collection in this study.

Case study is a common way to do qualitative inquiry. It optimizes understanding by pursuing scholarly research questions. The case is singular, but it has subsections, groups, occasions, dimensions and domains. Each of these may have its own contexts and the contexts may go long way towards making relationships understandable. Qualitative case study calls for the examination of these complexities (Stake, 2005).

Case studies are broadly of two types viz. intrinsic and instrumental. Intrinsic case study is undertaken for the better understanding of the particular case whereas in instrumental case study, a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. I selected instrumental case study though I was not in position to draw any generalization. To draw the individual cases, list of the excluded

students, students potential for exclusion, rescued and normal students were worked out with the help of the teachers. Suggestions obtained from every teacher were noted down for triangulation. The list of the students for case study was finalized by employing purposive sample. As my units of analysis were individual students, different dimensions of their success or failure or moderate state were explored from them, their parents, peers, seniors, relatives and teachers. Out of ten cases, six cases are included in the analysis.

To backstop other necessary information audio-observation, interview and group discussion were employed. Observation – the fundamental base for all research and mainstay of the ethnographic enterprise- is one of the several methods (Wilkinson and Bhandarkar, 2004). School environment, classroom activities, home culture, body language and other gestural cues were obtrusively or unobtrusively observed. Key informants such as priests and SMC members were interviewed for the information.

Group discussion was administered to know the people to be included in the local setting, the causes and contexts of their exclusion and the better ways to include them.

I also interviewed five *Dalit* activists about their experiences of school life to supplement and verify the information generated from the field.

While writing, recording and taking photos, I was alert to reduce the reactivity effect. For qualitative information, I employed semi-structured questionnaire or checklists for own convenience. I triangulated the information collected adequately. I updated information and the methods constantly during the field study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

I employed action approach for analysis and interpretation of the data collated. I have also paid due attention to the meanings attached by the actors on chosen cases. I thematically ordered, edited and classified the generated information. For analysis and interpretation of the information, I used critical lenses. For the presentation, I used narrative style.

The findings of the study were triangulated with other researches. Action theory mentioned earlier was guiding thread for analysis. Weber used *verstehen* method (internal understanding) in the study of social facts. Within *verstehen*, two methods are employed viz. sympathetic introspection and typological analysis. Sympathetic introspection has

brought the reality in line with the people's experience and typological analysis has brought typological categories of the people regarding caste discrimination. I have used both methods. Besides, emic view of the people in the community have been compared with the westerners' and researcher's perspectives. Due emphasis was laid on the contextuality of the meaning. The meaning of the data were linked and compared with that of larger framework of the community or vast geographic cultural areas.

Ethical Consideration

Only the pseudonyms of the persons interviewed are mentioned. The purpose of the depersonalization of the information is to avoid any harm to the informants from anybody else due to the information. Even their photographs would not be published without permission. I have not distorted their meaning to serve my arguments. I have elicited information and verified it with anonymity.

I believe in secularism and do not have any hunch on false illusion of the Brahmanhood. Any value judgments have not been made from my side. I led simple life and behaved as per the expectation of the people.

In present context, I was silent on the political debates. My focus was only on academic analysis on the topic and I convinced the informants gently if they went out of track.

CHAPTER IV

CASTE DISCRIMINATION AND INCLUSION IN THE COMMUNITY

Both caste and ethnic groups live together in my study site. Magars, most populous group, are indigenous people of the community. Though they speak Magar language, they also speak Nepali language as a second language. Despite their majority, they have been acculturated in the caste system. During the administrative unification campaign of nineteenth century, they played remarkable role and have long association with high caste Brahman and Chhetris. Consequently, they began to follow caste norms. *Most of them still employ Brahman priest in life cycle rituals. They celebrate *Satyanaraya Puja* and read *Swosthani* story. Economically, most of them eke out their survival from cultivation. They have patron-client relationship with the *Dalits*.

The Newars are second populous ethnic groups in Bungkot. As they were/are business people, they established good relationship with the so-called high caste people and have settled in the village. All of them write their surname as Shrestha. Unlike elaborated caste divisions in other Newar settlements, their social structure is found egalitarian. Like the Magars, they have also adopted the cultural traits and behaviors of the twice-born caste as explained by M. N. Srinivas (1972). They also employ Brahman priest for their life cycle rituals. From the religious viewpoint they regard caste system propagated by the so-called high caste people. From the economic point of view, they are also subsistence farmers and have patron client relationship with the *Dalits*.

Brahman and Chhetri are in third position in terms of their number. Among Brahmans, there are Upadhyaya and Jaisi. By birth, the Upadhyayas can perform the role of priest. Some of the Upadhyaya Brahmans have been de-Sanskritized as explained by Rao (1978). They have left to wear sacred threads, have started to plough, have not followed commensal rules and have taken tabooed food items like chicken, egg, pork, buffalo, liquor etc. Only the Brahmans who follow traditional caste norms can play the role of the priest. Similarly, some of the Jaisi Brahmans and Chhetri have also breached the traditional caste norms. Despite change and continuity among the high caste groups, their behavior to the *Dalits* has not been changed in the community.

* Some of the Magars have advocated to employ priest of own caste in stead of the Brahman priest. Their number is nominal.

Caste hierarchy in Bungkot

Upadhyaya Brahman
Jaisi Brahman
Chhetri
Bhujel/Gharti/Magar/Newar/Gurung
Sarki/Kami/Damai

Bhujels and/or Gharti are the caste people. They are descendents of emancipated slaves and have long association with the Brahman and Chhetris. Above all, caste system was influential in the community. "We" and "they" feeling was distinctly observed among Dalits and non-Dalits in the community.

The overarching frame of the caste to bind people together was and is the *varna* system and its norms. The *varna* system in Nepal is different from that of India. In Indian *varna* system, there are Brahman, Chhetri, Vaishya and Sudra. In Nepalese *varna* system there are no Vaishyas. Similarly, the people in the communities have been divided broadly into two groups viz. *tagadhari* (wearer of the holy cord) and *matawali* (drinkers of the liquor). Generally, the *tagadharis* fall on the top of the societal hierarchy whereas the *Dalits* fall at the bottom. In the selected community, the Brahmans who follow ** caste norms are ritually on the top of the hierarchy. They feel high self-esteem. The Brahmans who do not follow conventional caste rules are not honored like the followers. The Chhetris come beneath the rank of Brahman. Magar, Gurung, and Newar fall in the third rank. The emancipated slaves of Brahmans and Chhetris such as Bhujel and/or Gharti are touchable caste groups and regarded parallel to Magar, Gurung and Newar. Sarki, Kami and the Damai are untouchable *matawali* and fall at the bottom of the hierarchy. The *tagadhari/matawali* categorization has been blurred after the so-called high caste people started to drink liquor and left to wear sacred threads (*taga or janai*). However, the *Dalits* are regarded untouchables by the rest of the people. The hierarchical mentality of the people is rooted on the conception of purity (Koirala, 2007). The civil code of 1854 codified the practices of hierarchical social divisions (Hofer, 2004). The then state

** There are some Brahmans who do not follow the traditional caste norms. They drink liquor, have meal prepared in hotel and do not sprinkle water after mixing with the *Dalits*.

mechanisms enacted and monitored the hierarchical norms (Pandey, 1987). The caste feelings pervasive in every part of the country still persist in the community even though the civil code of 1963 has abolished any discrimination based on caste. Some of the deep-rooted belief system and practices are transferred from generation to generation through the socialization process (Parajuli, 2006). As a result, there is still inter-caste discrimination.

The Brahmans who perform role of the priest do not accept *pukka* (cooked food particularly rice and pulse) from other caste and ethnic groups. They are rigid in commensality. Jaisi and Chhetris also do not accept cooked rice and pulse from Gurung, Magar, Shrestha, Bhujel and/or Gharti. All groups mentioned are touchable and therefore water is accepted among them. However, Sarki, Kami and Damai are untouchable. Therefore, to touch them is also polluting. Even the water is not accepted from them. The *Dalits* are excluded in social relationships and activities.

As my informants reported the norms of the caste were stricter in the past. The *Dalits* would not walk northern part of the way if there were so-called higher caste people. They were not allowed to enter the house of the higher caste people. They were excluded from hearing *Puranas* (a variant of NFE in Nepali village). They were excluded from formal schooling as well. If the higher caste people touched *Dalits* physically, they would become polluted and the upper caste people had to bathe. If they could not bathe, they would sprinkle water to be purified.

Case 1

Legal equality has boosted the morale of the Dalits!

Bala Bahadur is Kami by origin. Once he was passing through a way. A Brahman called Chhabilal was coming from opposite side. When they met together they stopped walking. Chhabilal ordered Bala Bahadur to walk from the southern part of the way. He resisted walking from the southern part of the way. Chhabilal was angry and started to quarrel with Bala Bahadur. Bala Bahadur warned him to take legal action against caste discrimination. Chhabilal also warned Bala Bahadur to take social action. Both shared the incident with their fellow beings. All of them thought over the issue. Legally Bala Bahadur was correct. After the incident, staunch supporters of the caste discrimination have been discouraged. The dignity of the Dalits has been increased.

Personal Conversation - January, 2007.

There is a *Dalit* community messenger (*Katuwal*). He informs all the people to be gathered for specific purpose. *Dalits* are not called specifically in public gathering. According to the so-called high caste people, the *Dalits* are not intentionally excluded in the public gathering in the community. However, they do not take part in the meetings. The reasons behind their rare participation are poverty, lack of awareness and lack of attention. If they came to the public gathering, they had to maintain certain distance.

As the informants told me that the caste rules have been liberal after the enactment of the civil code of 1963. The code for the first time declared legal equality of all human collectivities residing within the boundary of nation irrespective of their caste status. It took three decades to spread the message of the code in the community which is situated in two or three hours walking distance from district headquarters.

After the political modernization, representatives for cameral and local bodies started to be elected. The *Dalits* have been allowed to vote in the elections from the very beginning. The voting right has contributed them to realize their space in local dynamics (Caplan, 1972). The voices of the *Dalits* have been more pronounced after the change of 1990. They have been compounded due to the increasing number of educated *Dalits*. *Dalit* focused programmes being circulated from radio and TV have raised critical awareness among both *Dalits* and non-*Dalits*. Consequently, they are not discriminated in the public spheres these days. They do not clean the cup of the tea in the public tea shop. If they are expected to do so, they do not drink tea in the shop. Similarly, *Dalits* are not discriminated in the offices such as health posts, * post office, veterinary and schools.

They are not represented in the forest and water user committees. However, educational status makes representation of *Dalits* possible. For instance, two educated *Dalits* are represented in parent teachers association of the school (See annex 4).

In any function of the peasants the related *Dalits* are included and they can take part as per the social expectation. For example, in any ceremony like marriage, worship and festivities, Kami and Damais (to some extent Sarki as well) are invited. In marriage Damais perform the role of musicians. Their role is inevitable to carry out marriage, *Bratabandha* (holy cord wearing ceremony) and worship of ancestral deity. They are called for playing different musical instruments during the beginning and end of the

* The post office is joined with a Dalit house in the community.

plantation of paddy. They can take part in the ceremonies but need to maintain certain distance especially in sitting and eating.

Case 2

Community is still rigid in commensality!

Once there was marriage in the village. The teachers in the school were invited in the marriage feast. One of the teachers was *Dalit*. He also attended in the ceremony and indiscriminately sat on the same mat with other teachers. The community reacted negatively against the teachers.

Because of social stigma regarding caste the rest of the teachers were also annoyed. The *Dalit* teacher felt disrespect. Since then he has not taken part in such ceremonies.

Personal Conversation - January, 2007.

In the public tap stand, *Dalits* are still discriminated. They should not touch the water pot of the so-called higher caste. Except that, caste discrimination has been reduced in the public spheres in comparison to that of the past.

In the recent years, critical awareness has been increasing among both the *Dalits* and their non-*Dalit* counterparts. In the beginning, the educated *Dalits* had pronounced voice against discrimination. Later on all the *Dalits* have been conscious about discrimination in the public spheres and have been argumentative. Similarly, radical political group has exerted pressure to the discriminators to leave the traditional practices. Consequently, some people have left discriminatory practices. However, in the private and religious spheres, discrimination still persists.

Case 3

Social stigma is the cause of persistence of caste discrimination!

Biswo is a resident of a settlement of the catchments area of the school. He is 32 years old. He is also a priest of some 20 clients. As an educated person, he is aware that caste discrimination is an inhumane practice. Therefore, he does not use any derogatory words* while speaking with the *Dalits* but avoids the situation to be touched with them. The norms about untouchability in the community are still rigid. Even the Magar, Newar and other touchable caste become very sensitive in this regard. Therefore, he has been conforming the social taboo so far. Otherwise, his clients would make a great fuss of the issue. It may pose threat to his profession as priest.

Personal Conversation - January, 2007.

* In the past, derogatory terms were commonly used while speaking with Dalits. The Dalits used to take these behaviors for granted.

The analysis of the above deliberations shows that there are three types of people in the community. Firstly, the people who are elder, confined within the community and mostly who lack modern formal education follow the traditional ways of social interaction. They accord high priority on ascribed status. They are found well informed about voices and concerns pronounced by *Dalits* these days. They get information from radio, TV and discourses on changed social ways in the locality. They do not mix up with the *Dalits* but have changed their speech and behavior as far as possible. If they have to mix up with *Dalits*, they participate in any function but do not eat or drink any thing. They do not have meal prepared in hotel. If they touch *Dalits*, they sprinkle water to purify themselves when they return home. Their thought and behavior are governed by the feelings of purity and pollution. They follow the way they were socialized in the past. They cannot influence the unfolding process of inclusion in public spheres. However, they have kept caste feeling intact in domestic and religious domain. They are not forced to do against their faith. Their action can be analogized with the traditional action as typified by Max Weber.

Secondly, educated non-*Dalits* mix up with *Dalits* and do not sprinkle water to be purified. According to them, *Dalits* are different due to their sanitary practices, food habits and culture. They do not accept food prepared or touched by the *Dalits* in their community. Outside the community, they do not care about the caste membership of the server or cook and accept food prepared in hotel. They resist if they are accused of caste discrimination. They behave people as per their ascribed and achieved status. They claim themselves as adherents of equality. They do not think and behave in discriminatory way in public sphere but are reserved in private places. The reasons behind their behaviors are outside exposure and modern education. They showed transitional behavior in Koirala's term (Koirala, 1996). Their action can be compared with the rational action specified by Weber.

Finally, some people are against caste discrimination of any form. They accord high priority on achieved status of the people. From the *Dalits* they accept even food and water. They accuse so called higher caste people of discrimination and prefer to end the discriminatory social system without delay. They have started to allow *Dalits* to serve

water and tea in public functions. They fall in the radical category. Their action is value oriented.

There is contradiction among the groups. Majority of new generations go to the school and have left the customary occupations. Except children of the priests, the people of younger generation do not discriminate other people on the basis of caste. Hence level of education has triggered change in the caste system. The educated children of *Dalits* are treated respectfully whereas their parents are found treated discriminatorily. The educated *Dalits* are included in any social function in comparison to the uneducated people.

Case 4

Class and education augments one's social status!

Bir Bahadur B.K. of 36 is a resident of the Khabdi Bazaar. He passed SLC in 1989. Then he worked as a teacher. He then worked as a technical assistant of the Village Development Committee. Now he runs an electronic shop in a market which is cosmopolitan in nature. Because of his high income level, he has managed his household affairs very effectively. Therefore, he is treated more favourably even by non-*Dalits*. He is responsive to public information. Besides, his house is nearby the venue of public gatherings. He participates in the public meetings and his voice is heard by other people as well. On the contrary, his father still works in a furnace. Unlike his son, he is not treated favourably by non-*Dalits*. Personal Conversation - January, 2007.

The people of elder generation have been found influenced largely by informal religious education which promotes hierarchical mentality and discriminatory norms and values. The people of the younger generation are educated in modern schools which impart sense of equality, secularism and inclusion. Therefore, older the generation, higher the caste discrimination and younger the generation, lower the caste discrimination. The reason of the liberal behavior is the increasing liberal outlook among the younger generation of the higher caste people. The younger generations of the Dalits also do not hesitate and do not hold inferiority complex. Besides, the people of younger generation have access to education and exposure outside the village, resulting in liberal outlook and behavior.

Above all, caste discrimination is on decrease order in the community I studied. In the public domain, it is nominal. Caste was rigid when the community was relatively closed. Now –a-days, it has been open due to flow of out-migration. Outside community, caste membership is rarely identified. Hence, they can hide their identity. They can easily mix up with the crowd. Similarly, modern education has inculcated sense of equality. Twelve schools in the community are providing such modern education. As a result, the hierarchical mentality is being dismantled. Consequently, community has been gradually changed towards class. Above all, caste feeling is facing all round attack these days.

In order to examine the above findings I reflected Dalits' situation of a decade ago with the present context. For this I used information contained in the doctoral dissertation of Bidya Nath Koirala.

Social practices then and now:

Ten Years Ago	Now
Lower caste people were scolded, threatened and cheated.	Morale of the Dalits has been boosted. They have been argumentative.
Dalits had to stay outside the tea-stall and clean the glass.	They do not drink tea in the tea-stall if they are expected to clean the glass.
They could not enter into the house of the touchable caste.	They are not still allowed to enter into the house of the touchable caste.
The educated people were in dilemma. On the one hand, they had to accord high priority on equality; on other, they had to preserve their religious values which promoted caste discrimination.	The educated and other people have started to avoid practice and behaviors that provoke debate. Maoist insurgence emerged in the community and exerted pressure on the people for equality.
The Dalits used to eat <i>sinu</i> (carcass).	They have left to eat the carcass.
People scolded bare-footed and poor <i>Dalits</i> and welcomed well-dressed schooled <i>Dalits</i> .	People have been alert while speaking and behaving with the <i>Dalits</i> who have been more sensitive.
<i>Dalits</i> perpetuated a culture of silence in the name of a culture of respect and tolerance.	The <i>Dalits</i> have been politically and legally more aware due to both increasing political activities and access to media.

<i>Dalit</i> children used to be sent for wage labour and had to be baby sitter.	Most of <i>Dalit</i> children have been sent to school because of increasing wave of education and "welcome to school campaign."
<i>Dalits</i> could not afford dress for school, copy and pencil for their children.	EFA has launched a scholarship programme for <i>Dalit</i> students.
There was no <i>Dalit</i> teacher in the school.	There is a <i>Dalit</i> teacher in the school.
There was not representation of <i>Dalit</i> member in SMC. Source: Koirala, 1996	Though there is not a <i>Dalit</i> member in SMC. There are two <i>Dalit</i> members in PTA. Source: Field Research, 2006/7.

According to the matrix, morale of *Dalits* has been boosted and consequently they have been argumentative for ensuring their rights. The non-*Dalit* counterparts have also been responsive to the changes occurred among *Dalits*. As a result, the *Dalits* are not discriminated in the public places. They are being included in the social activities. There are five major causes for bringing positive changes in the community. They are:

- a) Legal measures: Government of Nepal has amended the laws. In the amended laws, there are provisions to punish the people who discriminate *Dalits* in the public places. Both *Dalits* and non- *Dalits* have been found aware about the new legal provisions. In tune with the changes, they have also modified their speech and behaviors.
- b) Maoist insurgency: After 1996, Maoist insurgency emerged in the country. The community has been one of the command areas (refuges) of the insurgency. Some *Dalits* have been involved in a decade long armed conflict. Maoists have been in favour to end all kinds of discriminations in the society. In some cases, they even threatened the rural people to treat the *Dalits* equally. Such environment enkindled the *Dalits* to pronounce their voices.
- c) Policy measures: The governmental and non-governmental sectors have increasingly addressed the needs of the *Dalits* and employed different policy measures in order to mainstream them. To ensure positive discrimination,

scholarship schemes to *Dalit* students have been implemented. As a result, *Dalit* students have been increasingly attracted to education. "Welcome to school campaign" also brought considerable number of *Dalit* children in the school. All these forces have increased level of awareness among *Dalits* and consequently, they have started to analyze discriminatory social practices from critical lenses.

- d) Struggle to enter into Gorakhkali temple: The *Dalits* were not allowed to enter into the Gorakhkali temple. In order to challenge the discriminatory practice, *Dalit* activists from different parts of the country gathered and tried to enter into the temple. There had been a struggle between orthodox people and the *Dalit* activists. Ultimately, the *Dalits* were successful to safeguard their equal access to the temple. Both *Dalits* and non-*Dalits* in the community heard the rumor. That event encouraged *Dalits* to organize against caste discriminations.
- e) *Dalit* focused radio and TV programmes: There were not any NGOs active to uplift the *Dalits* in the community. However, some NGOs at national level circulated *Dalit* focused radio and TV programmes. Such programmes spread information about struggles of the *Dalits* to end caste-based violence. Thus, critical awareness has been increased among the *Dalits*. Even the non-*Dalits* have been aware about unfolding criticality among the *Dalits* and have changed their discriminatory speech and behavior to avoid any kind of debate.

CHAPTER V
INCLUSION OF *DALIT* STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL

Education in the village was only informal and nonformal before 1958. Very few people were educated in the village under the *Gurukula* system, according to SIP, 2004. Few high caste males in the community used to go to Seprak and Bakrang* to acquire education from *Gurus* (teachers). Traditional education in Sanskrit was in vogue at the time. The students used to stay in the house of the *Guru* or his neighbours. The *Guru* would teach them as per his convenience. In return, the students had to pay money and do work even in *Guru's* field occasionally. Only the rich and elite could afford education then. Some of them used to send their sons to Banares and Kathmandu for education. There was saying in the community "Padhe lekhe kaunai kam halo jote mamai mam" meaning there is no use of studying but if one ploughs, it will produce enough to eat. Most of the people used to involve in agricultural activities.

Few high caste people and/or local elites realized the need and significance of formal education; they were united and established a modern school in 1958 in the community for the first time. On the one hand, the *Dalits* were not legally allowed to read and write then. On the other hand, they could not afford the education being imparted. One of the *Dalits* claimed that he had contributed money for establishing the school but other people did not justify his claim. "They were backward and poor to contribute," one of the leaders said. However, they provided free labour during the construction of the school building.

In the beginning, the school was short-term and run in the winter only. The school was run by community with occasional grant from the government until 1971. After 1971, the government supported the school for the salary of the teachers. As a consequence, the amount of the contribution required from students decreased, resulting in high possibility of enrollment of the poor. Similarly, the classes started to be regular and all the year round. Since then, the school has become a part of the large educational bureaucracy.

Though the community has contributed a lot for the development of the school, the teachers are found loyal to the District Education Office (DEO). They get salary from DEO regularly. In addition, they get training from the government. The community can exert influence through headmaster but he is in favour of his staff and DEO. The staffs of

* Other villages in the district.

the school have secondary relation with the people in the community. The school has different organizational culture than the community.

In the beginning, the school was primary and only one in the community. Then it was upgraded to lower secondary level. Again, it was upgraded to high school level in 1980s. With frequent government and community support, the school has been upgraded to a higher secondary level now. The popularity of modern schooling has increased rapidly and now there are twelve government run schools in Bungkot VDC. My focus of study is only in the Shaheed Smrity Higher Secondary School.

For five years of establishment, *Dalits* were not allowed by law to study in the school. They used to serve the higher caste people for their survival. They had not understood the significance of education then. They used to say "sana jatle padhera ke garne? (What can the lower caste people gain by studying?)" Civil Code of 1963 allowed *Dalits* to go to the school for studying. Some of the parents of the first generation's students were self-motivated and enrolled their children in the school. The *Dalit* and non-*Dalits* parents used to express discouraging ideas and opinions regarding the education of *Dalits*.

The Civil code of 1963 guaranteed legal equality of all citizens of the country irrespective of their caste, class, ethnicity, religion or ideology. According to the informants, the code opened the door of the school to the *Dalits* for the first time in the history. The *Dalits* had not understood the message of the civil code in the beginning.

People were for and against the legal provision in the beginning. Then the traditional people including *Pundits* were critical of the new legal provision. The *Dalits* were not informed about such a colossal change. This provision pushed the teachers in dilemma. To pacify the discontent, the high authority posed question whether the sons of *Pundits* were ready to involve merely in traditional occupation instead of going to the school. Neither the *Pundits* nor their sons were in favor of leaving formal education being imparted in the school. Then the *Pundits* were confounded and the resistance was minimized. Because of enactment of the legal provision, the teachers started to let the *Dalit* students study in the school; however the caste discrimination was retained. Then the *Dalit* students in the community could go to school but had to sit separately and obey the caste discrimination. Then the number of school going *Dalit* children was limited. One of the students of first generation said that caste discrimination was stricter then. If

Dalit students were thirsty, they had to request other touchable people to pour water. They would drink water with two joined palms. Then, water pot used to be put in the office room only. They were not allowed to touch the water pot and jar. Therefore, some *Dalit* students would not drink water during school time. Similarly, they could not sit in the front benches. During *Saraswoti Puja*, they were segregated. Others would get the **Prasad* but *Dalit* student would not.

During upgrade of the school, several graduates having modern education joined in the school as teachers. Some of them were politically left and promoted equal behaviors in the school. Its continuity can be observed even today.

In the course of wave of education, even the poor and *Dalits* started to send their children to the school in considerable numbers. Now-a-days, the norms based on caste have been liberal because of increasing critical consciousness among *Dalit* and non-*Dalits*. The discriminations in the public spheres have been almost diluted. The *Dalit* students interviewed said that they did not feel caste discrimination in the premises of the school. Now a tap stand has been built in the school. They directly open the tap and drink water without any hesitation. They can touch the water pot and jar kept in the classrooms. The students clean the classroom in rotation. They sit in the bench with other students irrespective of their caste status. The high caste pupils do not sprinkle water if they touch the *Dalit* students. New generation do not take care of the traditional norms because of increased awareness and outside exposure. The new generations go to the school where they learn sense of equality. They do not face stereotypical outlook in the school. Instead school is a platform for equal treatment. There is no special provision for interaction and such a rule has promoted sense of equality.

Case 5

There is no discrimination in the school!

Sarmila Nepali is a student of Shree Saheed Smriti School. She studies in class eight. She has not experienced caste discrimination in the school. However, she is conscious that she is a *Dalit* girl. She is receiving booster scholarship. According to her, there is caste discrimination in the community and people with so called high caste background do not accept water and food touched by her.

Personal Conversation - January, 2007.

* Edible offerings during worship which are distributed to all afterward and taken as good omen.

Cases of caste-based violence and visible caste discrimination were not observed and reported in the school during field study. According to an informant, caste discriminations are invisible but they can be felt.

Case 6

Idioms are still replete with discrimination!

Ram Bahadur B.K. is studying in Bachelor Level. He is an ex-student of the school. According to him, the teachers show equality in their behavior but their perspective is still discriminatory. They scold the student by citing the reference of the *Dalits*. Idioms used by the people are still replete with discrimination (such as *Jyalama namileko dum*, *Damai Kamiko boli barsha din toli* etc.). They punish the *Dalit* students severely. Most of the *Dalit* students are not nicely dressed. The students are harassed in the class over some issues such as sanitation, dress, and home work. Due to poverty, their parents cannot provide money to buy materials such as dress, soap, copy, pen, book, ink, etc in time. These issues are normal to the teachers but they are pinching to the *Dalit* students. Conscious and unconscious derogatory treatment has bad effect on the psychological make up of the *Dalit* students. Personal Conversation - January, 2007.

Additionally, there are some inclusionary forces playing an active part. The inclusionary forces playing vital role in the school are statutory provisions of civil code, preference of the pundits' sons to formal education, introduction of non-traditional i.e. English type of education; say of new generations, critical orientation of the people and increasing circulation of *Dalit* focused programmes from radio and television.

I have also analysed inclusion of *Dalits* in the school in terms of behavior, policy and representation in the structure of the school.

I found there few inclusionary behaviors. They were observed during my visit to the school. They are: a) there is sitting arrangement under which pupils have to sit first to last row of bench on a rotation basis. This type of arrangement has aroused sense of equality. b) There is provision of school uniform and the girls are not allowed to wear ornaments. c) Water pot and jar can be touched by all. d) Every student has to clean the classroom on a rotation basis. e) The *Dalit* students can stay in the hostel of the school. The typical

situation in the school is not discriminatory. Lack of discrimination means there is greater access of the *Dalit* students in the school activities.

District Education Plan (DEP) prepared by District Education Office has clearly mentioned the concept of inclusion. It possesses general comments about inclusion but there is no specific focus on how to include the excluded groups. Due to the transitional political scenario, no village educational plan (VEP) has been prepared. However, the school has prepared School Improvement Plan (SIP) in 2004. It is the first formal policy document of the school and yet there is not a single word in SIP which indicates the concept of the inclusion. However, it contained information on the different groups and their diverse cultures. The teachers were not familiar with the fanfare of national and international discourse about inclusion. Whatever they have practiced is as per their personal reason and judgment.

There are 16 teachers in the school, including a *Dalit* teacher. There are few non-*Dalit* teachers who are affiliated to radical political group. They are sympathetic to the cause of *Dalits*. They negotiate between *Dalits* and non-*Dalits* to maintain balance. The number of students in the school is 734 and among them, 41 are *Dalit* students. Besides, there are three committees of the school. First is school management committee. Second is construction committee. Thirdly, there is an eleven membered Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Out of three committees, there are two *Dalit* members in the PTA. Both of them are educated. It implies that there is inclusion in behavior and representation in the structure of the school despite the fact that the policy document of the school is silent about the concept of inclusion.

The result shows that performance of the *Dalit* students is proportional to their number. The number and performance of the students by ethnicity in academic session 2005/6

Caste/Ethnicity	Students Participated in exam		Students passed	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Dalits	19	3	15	3
Ethnic groups	514	74	398	72
High caste	162	23	136	25
Total	695	100	549	100

Source: Documents of school, 2005/6.

The performance of the students of ethnic groups is lowest proportionally. The result of the so-called higher castes is better in comparison to other groups. According to the teachers, *Dalit* students have not secured first to tenth position in any class. The *Dalit* students I have interviewed told that they would pass somehow. Their performance is below average. The reasons of their low performance are their parents' low understanding of school education, their involvement in work in home, hopelessness for future and the feeling of inferiority. *Dalit* students also said that they would not get meal on time.* As the school is far from *Dalit* settlements, they have problem of time management. Above all, their home environment is not conducive for education.

The *Dalit* students rarely asked questions in the class. The reasons behind not asking questions according to the students were a) they felt inferiority complex due to their low caste membership, b) they did not understand the codes of the teachers, c) there was not asking culture among students, and d) they did not feel homely at school and were afraid of the teachers.

The teachers also suggested that most of the *Dalit* students were below average in educational performance. According to *Dalit* students and parents, this is because they lacked educational environment in the family and community. Moreover, they did not get encouragement. They were beset with various problems at home and school. They lacked negotiation skills to cope with the problems. They were equally treated by the teachers in class. In such a situation, the "blanket treatment"(Koirala, 1996) in the school is not sufficient for the *Dalit* students because they are deprived from education from time immemorial. They have to work hard than other students. As they are vulnerable groups, they need special attention. The system needs to be flexible and sympathetic to the *Dalits*.

One of the key informants said that the *Dalits* had been deprived from information historically though they were integral part of the Hindus who were rich in academic erudition. Their customary occupations were under threat. They had tiny parcels of land generally. Therefore, most of the *Dalit* pupils were poor. Because of poverty, the health status of the pupils seemed poor. Their mental development had been late. They enrolled

* The morning meal is very important for the students. They cannot afford anything to eat in the school. If they do not have meal in time, they cannot reach school by 10 O' clock. If they do not take meal, they have to suffer from hunger all the day.

in the school late. They were in the vicious circle of backwardness. They were unable to sever the circle.

According to a priest, *Dalits* have been consumerist since several generations. They consume edibles which increase pride and anger. They accord high value in consumption and entertainment than in perseverance and hard work for education. The home culture of the *Dalit* students is not compatible with the school culture. An educated *Dalit* also agreed with the arguments of the priest.

My informants also reported that considerable number of students drop out from the school. Out of 41 *Dalit* students, four dropped out this year. Contrary to the finding of Hata (see literature review for detail), school and its staff are not direct causes of the incidents. One girl left school due to poverty. Then there was no provision of booster scholarship. She is sad that she missed opportunity of studying in the school.

Case 7

Economic is cause vital for exclusion!

Menuka Nepali is eighteen years old. She used to study in class five. She was aspirant to pursue her study. However, her family could not afford the cost of her study. They owned only five ropanis of unirrigated land. Her father was a mason. His earning was so meager that it could not meet even their basic requirements. One of her brothers had passed SLC. But her brothers were unemployed. Therefore, she left school. Then there was no provision of any booster scholarship like these days. It has been six years. She feels shame to join school again. She involves in household and agricultural activities.

Story of her younger sister Sarmila is just opposite than her. She studies in class eight. One of her brothers joined in Nepal army and other brother is employed in India. Now, their economic status has been increased. They can easily support her economically. She is good in her studies. Personal Conversation - January, 2007.

The deliberation led me to infer that the income level of the guardians has greater influence in the continuity of the education of the students. From this case we can draw two implications. Firstly, class is responsible to ensure the access of the *Dalit* children to school. Secondly, even the cases of the siblings can be different.

Case 8

Goal of life changed!

Nanda Pariyar of 17 is a resident of Kotgaon of Bungkot VDC. She used to study in class seven. As a *Dalit* student, she also received and /or benefited from booster scholarship being provided by the government. Her educational performance was above average. She used to take active part in the classroom. She left school all of a sudden. The teachers asked her friends about her whereabouts in my presence. Instead of replying, they only laughed. I went to her house. According to her mother, she secretly eloped with a man of the adjacent VDC few weeks ago. Her mother was not aware of her development beforehand. She was not happy with her daughter's action. Personal Conversation - January, 2007.

She enrolled late in the school. She came to the influence of the local environment* . According to her mother, some people in her locality made environment for her elopement. She changed her goal and opted to join in conjugal life instead of continuing education. Therefore, her course of action has been altered.

Some of the teachers said me that school has been waiting platform for both girls and boys. The girls leave school when they are married. The boys leave school when they get employment. I also observed some incidents.

Case 9

Social environment influenced students to leave school!

Chandra of 18 used to study in class nine. His family is rich enough to afford the cost of his study. The family members are in favor of continuation of his study. His house is nearby the school. According to the teachers, his performance in class was satisfactory.

He was influenced by his friend and classmate Kiran. Kiran had gone to join in army but in vain. Then he tried to go to foreign country for employment. His brother has passed SLC but now he is unemployed. He cannot afford higher education due to poverty. Their sister is studying in class eight. If she is not married, she is supposed to complete school education.

Several students in the community left school for employment. In the beginning Chandra had not thought to leave the school. He went to the district administration office for citizenship certificate. Then he lost interest in study. Kiran and Chandra were in the process of applying for visa for Malaysia. They were absent in the class. According to them, they would not go to the school again. They happily said, "We left the school." They said that they had not met the teachers and informed about their developments. Personal Conversation - January, 2007.

* In the *Dalit* settlement, the girls and boys who reach to puberty, flirt with each other. They sing songs and try to impress each other. Then the girls elope with the boys they liked.

Above cases imply that the students are individual actors. They enjoy individual freedom to pursue any course. They have attached meaning to their actions (here study). Parents and teachers have also expectation from them. It means their cognition is shaped by the social situation. Their goals are influenced by their mode of cognition and the situation. As per the changed goals, they select means and their course of action is influenced accordingly.

Home environment and family background are crucial for better study performance of the students. Following case substantiates the argument.

Case 10

Family background is crucial for success in the study!

Ramila B.K. is now 18 years old. She studies in class nine. She failed in the class. She left school for a year. The teachers were irritated because she became unconscious time and again. However, her interpretation was different. She said, "My mother died when I was child. My father got married with another woman. My step-mother ignored me and asked to do household work. She used to treat me badly. Due to the mental stress at young age, I fainted. As I had no sound foundation for study, I failed in class nine. Therefore, I left the school for a year. "

She was rescued by her maternal uncles. Her maternal uncles are educated. They persuaded her to continue her study. Now she stays at her maternal uncle's house and has started to go to the school regularly.

Personal Conversation - January, 2007.

Menuka, Sarmila, Nanda, Chandra , Kiran and Ramila are all individual actors. The situations they faced are typical. Menuka could not cope with the situation and left school because of poverty. Sarmila does not face the problem like her elder sister.

Nanda was independent in her decision to join in conjugal life. She could not alter the situation to continue her education. Her parents and brothers could do nothing for her career. Chandra was prematurely influenced by the wave of foreign employment. He also married and was influenced by his classmate Kiran. Chandra's brother was employed. He could pursue his study in several ways but he left school. Economic condition of Kiran's family is pitiable. His elder brother is also unemployed. They do not hope that he will get

employment. He has passed SLC. Now, class eleven is being run in the school which is in three minutes walking distance. He could not study due to poverty. Kiran is over sensitive about his elder brother's plight and determined to go foreign country for employment.

Ramila is a fortunate *Dalit* girl whose relatives are also educated. She had left school. But her maternal uncles have supported her to resume study. All these cases justify the appropriateness of action theory I employed (see basic assumptions of action theory for detail).

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter of my research contains findings, conclusion and discussion. It also includes implications.

Findings

Reflecting over the fourth and fifth chapter of this thesis I derived the following findings.

Caste Discrimination

1. *Dalits* are regarded untouchables even by the ethnic groups like Magar, Newar and Gurung. They are involved in patron-client relationship with both caste and ethnic groups. The so-called higher caste and ethnic groups behave them in the same manner.
2. Change and continuity in caste have been found simultaneously in the thought and actions of people residing in the community.
3. Some of the behaviors based on caste are persisting even today through hierarchical norms, belief system and social stigma. They have been transferred from generation to generation through socialization process.
4. Some aspects of caste are changing. Three types of actors were found in the community. All groups are found responsive to changes occurring over time. They have tried their best to interact with others in debate-free manner as per the changing context. Basically, there are four factors for changes in caste related behavior in the community. They are flow of out-migration, wave of education, increasing political activities, mounting legal awareness and growing access of the people to media.
5. Caste discriminations are in decreasing order in the community. Liberal expression and behavior are shown to *Dalits* by younger generation in comparison to the people of older generation.
6. *Dalits* are regarded equal in legal and political arena even by a group of non-*Dalits*.

7. Caste norms are still rigid in private and religious spheres. Caste discriminations have been reduced in public spheres of the community. Outside community, caste norms do not work.
8. Income and educational levels have positive relation with inclusion. Respectful language and behaviors have been used with educated and well to do *Dalits* even if they are discriminated.
9. The people who are involved in customary occupations follow discriminatory practices. Those who are involved in modern occupations do not follow discriminatory practices themselves and are not discriminated to a greater extent.
10. People who are exposed outside the community are found liberal regarding caste discrimination. The people confined within the community follow the discriminatory practices more.

Inclusion in the School

1. Before 1958, there was not modern formal school in the village. Dalits were not included in informal and nonformal education. There was legal and social ban for their education.
2. The local elites and so-called high caste people established a modern school in the community in 1958. *Dalits* did not participate in the process.
3. Though the school was opened in 1958, it was only after 1963 *Dalit* students could enter into school but had to sit separately in the classroom. They were not allowed to enter in office room. Water pot used to be kept in the office room. They had to request touchable students to pour water if they were thirsty. Now-a-days, situation has been changed because of different socio-political alterations.
4. When the school was upgraded to high school, several graduates having modern education joined in the school as teachers. Some of them were left politically and promoted sense of equality in the school. Its continuity can be found even today.
5. The pace of reduction in caste discrimination has been slower in community in comparison to the school. Caste-based discriminations can still be observed in the community whereas school is almost free of caste discrimination.
6. School has been new and secular institution in the community. It has not reproduced caste discrimination. Instead it has been platform for equal treatment.

- It has promoted meritocracy. Traditional derogatory expression and behaviors to the *Dalits* have been downsized considerably in the premises of the school. No case of caste-based violation was observed or reported during this study.
7. Role of the three actors viz. teachers, parents and students was vital for teaching learning activities. This study found that teachers promoted equality but did not pay attention to give special treatment for addressing educational problems of *Dalit* students. Parents, on the other hand, remained indifferent or confounded that sending their wards to school is enough for them. Similarly, students lacked negotiation skills to cope with different problems encountered in home and school. They could not mold the situation in their favor.
 8. Central level commitment to inclusion of *Dalits* has been reflected in district level education plan. School Improvement Plan is silent regarding inclusion of the *Dalits*. However, the teachers practiced inclusive processes with their own reason and judgments.
 9. There is equal access for all students to participate in school activities. Rules made for smooth functioning of the school are not also discriminatory. Two *Dalit* members are represented in Parent Teachers Association.
 10. The government of Nepal has made provision of booster scholarships for *Dalit* students. The scholarship being distributed to the *Dalit* students had positive effect on increasing enrollment. But the norm of *Dalit* students was found lower than the students of non-*Dalit* community. The reasons as this study found in relation to their low performance were as follows:
 - a) *Dalit* students lacked conducive environment in home because their parents remained indifferent and were unable to provide educational support. Even most of the siblings and relatives of the students were not familiar with their educational problems.
 - b) The *Dalits* cherished consumerist culture. They accorded high priority on entertainment and consumption rather than in perseverance and hard work for education in comparison to their non-*Dalit* counterparts.
 - c) Due to caste discrimination in the community, *Dalit* students had humiliation and inferiority complex. So, they were hesitant to establish

and maintain relation with talented classmates for collegial learning.

Besides, their participation in school activities was found lower.

- d) Their specific problems and learning needs were not addressed by the teachers.

Conclusions

The findings of this study led me to draw following conclusions:

1. Caste discrimination begins to reduce in public spheres and gradually moves towards private spheres.
2. Out-migration, wave of education, growing level of legal and political awareness and increasing access to media are the forces to dismantle caste and to ensure inclusion.
3. Higher the class of the *Dalits*, lower the caste discrimination.
4. If educational status increases, inclusion of the *Dalits* also increases.
5. Frequent interaction and mix-up between *Dalits* and non-*Dalits* have promoted inclusionary practices.
6. Lower the sanitary condition of the *Dalit* students, higher the problem of interaction and mix-up with non-*Dalit* students.
7. Higher the inferiority complex among *Dalit* students, lower their participation in school activities. Lower their participation, lower their educational performance.

Discussion

There was discriminatory and hierarchical social system among the caste groups of Nepal. The Civil Code of 1854 codified the discriminatory social behaviors on the one hand. On the other hand, it nationalized the caste norms (Hofer, 2004). In tune with the civil code, discriminatory legal provisions were also formulated and implemented by the state. Consequently, discrimination on the basis of caste was pervasive in all spheres of social life. People were socialized in such a discriminatory system.

After the political change of 1950, western model of statecraft was followed in Nepal. Then, all citizens of the country started to be treated as equal. Different political parties also propagated such democratic ideology. In the light of democratic norms, effort to

review the discriminatory legal provisions was started. The Civil Code of 1963 was consequence of the process. The code declared the discriminatory behavior and practice illegal. The legal declaration alone could not end the discrimination in the society. There was gap between the spirit of the law and social mentality and the gap was wider in the past.

The *Dalits* were not aware about their legal right in the beginning. It took some decades for people in the community to be aware. They had not radio. NGOs were not in their proximity. Social hierarchy had blocked person to person communication regarding new legal provisions which were against caste discrimination. The level of awareness increased gradually among *Dalits* and they started to resist discriminatory speech and behaviors. The critical awareness among *Dalits* also brought changes among the non-*Dalits*. The people in the community heard stories of caste-based violences and their repercussions from radio and TV. Politicians and developmentalists included agenda and indicators about *Dalits* as basic requirements. Now the *Dalits* have been alert to expression and behavior of the non-*Dalits*. The non-*Dalits* are also sensitive to deal with the *Dalits*. The *Dalits* strongly demand discrimination-free public spheres. As a result, the non-*Dalits* do not discriminate *Dalits* in public places.

According to evolutionary theory, society always tends to transform towards progression and equality. The findings of the field also show that movement to the equality has been successful in the public spheres. According to Fuller (2004), similar trends have been seen in India as well. Caste groups have been ethnicised in India. The "vertical social system" defined by hierarchical relationships is decaying and castes are becoming like "horizontally" disconnected ethnic groups, putatively differentiated by their own style of life. Additionally, anti-caste legislation, as well as the introduction of new political institutions provided further avenues for social mobility and the national ideology which stressed the caste-free equality of its citizens provided a counter-value for those who wished to adopt it. Some symptoms of ethnicization of caste groups have been appeared in the community. Latter trends are also unfolding in Bungkot where I conducted this study.

By culture, ritual and religious orientation, the non-*Dalits* have not allowed *Dalits* to enter into their houses. The *Dalits* also do not expect to enter into the non-*Dalits'* houses.

Even the radical groups do not interfere in the private spheres. All of them have started to respect individual freedom. The non-*Dalits* have started to overlook the breach of caste norms regarding untouchability. The *Dalits* have also begun to honor liberal non-*Dalits*.

Different forces increasingly played role to dismantle the traditionally established caste norms in comparison to the past. Then, the villages were small self-sustaining pockets. They were relatively closed. The caste norms were strict. All the residents were subsistence farmers. They had limited outside contact. Educated people were very few and their education was primarily based on religious and Sanskrit texts. Very few people in the community were aware about new and changed legal provisions.

In the course of time, some people started to migrate in urban areas in search of employment. Different offices were set up in the community in the course of development. The employees in newly extended offices like health post, agriculture center, veterinary and post office were from outside the community. Consequently, contact of the villagers with outside people has increased in recent decades and years. Wave of formal education has also expanded unprecedentedly. The level of legal and political awareness has also increased among all sections of society. Increment in the number of radio and television in the village has enhanced the access of the people including *Dalits* to different information. Due to above forces, the villagers have increasingly been better informed and therefore started to challenge and change the established way of interaction in general and caste based behaviors in particular. In this way, traditionally set up caste norms are facing all round attack. As a result, exclusion based on caste has been decreased considerably. This implies that inclusion of traditionally lower caste people in social spheres has been increased.

I captured linkages between class and caste discrimination. According to the Marxist thinkers, behaviors of people in society are governed by economic factors. The say of the people having high income level is higher in comparison to those having lower income level. They have higher potentials to manage their household affairs effectively. Because of their economic capacity, they need not depend on others and can also influence other people. Other people also show honor while interacting with them which is manifested in respectful expression and behaviors of other people.

Mishra (1987) in this respect analyzed Nepali society and concluded that capitalism has penetrated into Nepali society. The norms based on class have been influential even in the rural communities. In line with these trends, few *Dalits* in the community were found well to do. They were in frontline to oppose the traditional caste behaviors to *Dalits*. Their level of awareness was also found higher than poor *Dalits*. The non-*Dalits* were also aware of the changes appeared among rich *Dalits*. The magnitude of caste discrimination to the rich *Dalits* was decreased in the community I carried out this study. Gradually the caste consciousness was blurred and eroded by class consciousness among both *Dalits* and non-*Dalits*. All these references imply that higher the class of the *Dalits*, lower the caste discrimination.

Like economy, education also worked to augment the level of awareness among people. It is a source of honor in itself. The more education one has, the better equipped is one to deal with problems of everyday life, and the more control will one have over one's destiny (Tumin, 1985).

Like others, *Dalits* of Bungkot attained education through individual effort. This helped them achieve honor and social status in addition to personal benefits. Similarly, education worked as one of the major modernizing agents in the village (Sharma, 2004). Achieved status like educational status of the people is increasingly honored irrespective of their ascribed (caste) status as specified by Talcott Parsons (Cited in Cohen, 1979). Actors in this case *Dalits* of Bungkot have become more rational even with their minimum education.

Only few *Dalits* in the village have been found educated. The educated *Dalits* participated in social activities more in comparison to their uneducated counterparts. Two educated *Dalits* are included in the Parent Teachers Association of the school selected for this study. This implies that if the educational status increases, inclusion of the *Dalits* also increases.

The relation between *Dalits* and non-*Dalits* in my study community was unequal. Interaction between them occurred as and when necessary. They were not mixed up in the community. However, the *Dalit* and non-*Dalit* students were mixed up regularly in the school irrespective of their caste membership. This means school provided them platform for frequent interaction. Their relationship was primary and their status in the

school was regarded as equal. All of them participated in all school activities without any restrictions. The period of interaction and mix-up was longer. This implies that frequent interaction and mix-up between *Dalits* and non-*Dalits* promotes inclusionary practices in the long run.

Improved sanitary condition was the next force that increased interaction of *Dalit* and non-*Dalits*. A study carried out by Stand Nepal (2002) has revealed that *Dalits* are discriminated due to their poor sanitary condition. Traditionally, they keep pigs which are associated with dirt and poor hygiene. Some of the *Dalits* even consume the meat of the dead animals. Such habit is often disliked and even hated by the so-called higher caste people (Koirala, 1996; Koirala, 2007; Gautam and Thapa Magar, 1994). Similarly, some of the practices of the *Dalits* are regarded impure religiously.

Because of increased educational status, the students in the school were conscious about their sanitary condition. They cared minutely about the sanitary habits of their friends as well. They accorded high priority to interact with neat and clean friends. The students poor in sanitary condition were not attractive to the clean students. They had limited chances of interaction with their colleagues and consequently were deprived of collegial learning opportunity.

Culturally *Dalits* inculcate inferiority under the hierarchical society. This hierarchical dealing of caste people nurtured discriminatory practices which was pervasive in the community. Different actors and agencies in the community segregated *Dalits* during interaction. From discriminatory social interaction, the children of the *Dalits* were compelled to know their lower status in the community. Psychologically, the discriminatory treatments in the community cropped up in their mind time and again while being at school as well. They suffered from inferiority complex. As a result, they hesitated to participate in the school activities. In the absence of full fledged participation in school activities, their achievement in the education was lower.

Implications

I had gone to the field with an assumption that caste discrimination has influenced the level of inclusion in the education of the *Dalits*. When I interviewed some teachers and students I found that variables other than caste discrimination were also influential for

inclusion of the *Dalits*. There were multiple realities and therefore I changed my theoretical angle. Earlier I had assumed to view the reality I found from conflict or functional perspectives. Some actions of the people were oriented to perpetuate the social whole and there were some contradictions as well. However, the social system in the community was found very loose and, role and actions of the individuals were found more vital. Individual actors could enjoy more freedom and choices in the rural setting I selected. As my focus was on educational performance of the *Dalit* children, it depended more on individual efforts. Therefore, I adopted action approach to view the multiple realities I encountered. The actors I met were typical individuals in typical situations. A reality faced by an actor did not match with others. The situation, context, knowledge and perception toward the situation, mode of cognition of each individual actor were different. Above findings and conclusions fit well with the action theory of Max Weber. From the above discussion, I infer that actor based approach can better serve to cognize the educational situation of the excluded.

Going through the field, literature and action theory I understood that basically three areas need hammering by developmental activities. Firstly, the idioms often used are still replete with discriminatory overtones. They need to be corrected. Radio and television programmes can be useful in this regard. Public sensitization campaigns can correct them to a great extent.

Secondly, socialization process has been perpetuating the discriminatory practices and expression. On the one hand it has inculcated discriminatory values and norms among non-*Dalits* which results in continuity of discrimination. On the other hand, it has inculcated humiliation and inferiority among *Dalits*. Counter values and norms based on equality need to be promoted. Socializing agencies like school (curricular changes) and media can curb discriminatory socialization and boost sense of equality.

Thirdly, programmes focused on individuals are necessary. As discussed in analysis, there are broadly three types of individuals. Traditional people (both *Dalits* and non-*Dalits*) need to be convinced with references of religious scriptures which are replete with several examples of equality. Polite and convincing way can have lasting impact in this regard. The rational groups need to be encouraged for equal treatment with *Dalits* even in private spheres. However, we cannot challenge their individual freedom. Radical

groups need counseling for presenting in convincing way. Actor-based model can be employed for it, for instance. Following this model, the people who discriminate *Dalits* can be interviewed. Their knowledge base, the meaning attached to their discriminatory actions and their typical situation can be understood. By knowing their posture sympathetically, more realistic anti-discriminatory programmes can be formulated and implemented.

On the basis of above discussion, I came up with the following implications.

a) Implication for Policy Inclusion

The government is emphatic on inclusion of the excluded groups in general and *Dalits* in particular. This is reflected in national level policy. In the district level policy document, there is mention of the concept of inclusion. But local level policy is silent regarding inclusion because the teachers were not familiar with the thrust of the national and international discourse about inclusion. However, there are good practices of inclusion at local level. At this point policy could harvest these practices and teachers need to be trained about these approaches of inclusion.

The education act 2001 has made a provision to incorporate female members in SMC. Similarly, it is worthy to make a provision to incorporate a *Dalit* member as well.

The problems and needs of the excluded groups are diverse. To address and solve them, policy should be developed to introduce counseling section in every school.

b) Implication for Curricular Inclusion

Curricula of different subjects are not found inclusive. This implies that diversity of the people, their diverse features, *Dalits'* knowledge and skills need to be incorporated in the curriculum. Teachers can be reoriented to incorporate indigenous knowledge and skills including inclusionary practices around the globe while teaching the national and international systems.

c) Implication for Pedagogical Inclusion

The teachers have hardly used *Dalits'* knowledge, skill and practices as examples while teaching. It is where teachers need training on how to employ inclusive pedagogy and facilitate both situated and peripheral learning environment of the *Dalit* children.

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