

**High School Dropouts and Their Socio-Economic Status after theSchool**



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The Central Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University,  
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# DECLARATION

I, hereby that to the best of my knowledge, this thesis is my original part of this study was earlier summated for the candidate of the research degree to any university, college and educational institution. Whatever subject matter I have presented in this thesis belongs to my original work conducted in the community.

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**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

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**APPROVAL LETTER**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

BS:	BikramSambat
DOE:	DepartmentofEducation
MDG:	MillenniumDevelopmentGoal
MoES:	Ministryof Education,ScienceandTechnology
SDG:	SustainableDevelopmentGoal
SEE:	SecondaryEducationExamination
SLC:	SchoolLeavingCertificate
SOCE:	Office ofthe ControllerofSecondaryExamination
UNCRC:	UnitedConventionon theRights ofthe Child
UNICEF:	UnitedNationsInternationalChildren'sFund

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

School education is vital for children's socialization, empowerment, progress and overall development. Devkota and Bagale (2015) state that the education of school is an accelerator for changing and empowering society, that contributes for overcoming from conservative disparities based on gender, caste and class. So, it has an influential role for reducing inequalities of society that embedded in such bases. In spite of having and realizing such a great importance of school education, children in Nepal are facing the problem of school drop-out. Dropping out of children from school has become a serious problem in many places around the world (Young & Chavez, 2002) especially in low income countries like Nepal. It is one of the cross-cutting issues among the developing countries. According to Chugh (2011) school dropouts are conceptualized as the children who admit in school and leave from there without enrolling to next school and death. Like this way, according to Asharaf (1999) had stated that discontinuing the study of course without completing it is known as a school dropout. The same as MOEs (2003) has argued that the dropouts are those students who disappear from the school system before completing the grade or level. Price (2007) has mentioned that dropout is an event of escaping from the school without accomplishing the educational status. These definitions help to conceptualize dropping out from school indicates that leaving school without completing the studies of them. In other words, leaving school studies for several reasons is called dropout. In whatever way, the dropout from school does not comprise either death or transfer to another school.

Hunt (2008) explores a little further and argues, the previous enrolment of children at school determines the frequency of dropouts, so that if initial enrollment is low then there will be low dropout rate comparing to the countries where there is high enrolment rate previously. So that enrolment and dropout are positively correlated, especially in the context of Nepal. Likewise, Lewin & Sabates (2012) have found that poorer countries have endured the high ratio of dropping out from schools even if the enrolment is high there, especially in primary level. And, Hunt (2008) has perceived the dropping out from school as a process which is reasoned by multiple factors. Wagle (2012) has exclaimed that Nepal is a primary example where large number of children dropout from schools due to poverty and social backwardness. As the theories said, I have also witnessed many school dropout children due to various reasons in Nepal.

The term "After School" has been used here as a multidisciplinary phenomenon of being dropped out from school. This thesis is mainly concerned about impacts of dropout after class 10. In other words, the consequences which are brought by dropping out from school education on socio – economic status of respondents are emphasized under the term "After School". The results of being dropped out from school is applied as a dependent variable whereas drop out is independent one. Children drop-out from school due to various causes such as family poverty, gender disparity, early marriage, school related factors like teacher's teaching methods and level of learning etc. And, it is assumed that dropping out from school affects the whole life of children in their social and economic situations. This thesis has focused on the drop outs' life chances regarding their socio – economic status. The dropouts may face economically stressful, socially unequal and politically loathsome life, which results the chances of recurring the same to new generation too. According to Hawkins et al. (2013), the phenomenon of dropout from school influence economic condition and overall future of youth. Comparing to high school dropouts and non-dropouts, the dropouts have more probability to spend the loathsome life and stay in poverty. Likewise, Barton (2005) argues that in an every part of human life, we may notice the critical outcomes that occur because of school dropout for instance less opportunity of getting job in the market and adversely effects on the mental wellness of individual. Groot (2007) has explained that dropping out of children from school have been pushed for doing jobs so that school dropouts may not spend their blissful life. Hunt (2008) has also focused on the consequences of dropouts and exclaimed that if children dropout from the school they hardly come again for their formal schooling. There is bottommost chance of becoming skilled laborer, which forces to earn the lowermost level of income the large number of children who dropout from schools are in the threatening condition of doing illegal actions and behaviors likewise there may have the hazardous situations to adjust in social surroundings in the case of developing countries like Nepal.

The government of have been doing multiple deeds in making policies and programs for raising the rate of enrollment of children at school, and also to keep students at school before completing their education. The constitution of Nepal (2015) has evoked education as a fundamental right of every citizen. Article-31 states "every citizen shall have the right to get compulsory and free education up to the basic level and free education up to the secondary level from the state". Likewise, some of the eye catching efforts of Nepal government are: making tuition fee free up to grade 12, providing free textbooks, and various scholarships schemes for girls and certain disadvantaged group etc. In spite of those initiations taken by government the problem of

school dropout is still exists in Nepal. Flash Report 2017/018 by DOE states that the dropout rate of primary level (class 1-5) is 3.6% among them boys have 3.8% and girls have 3.3%, in lower secondary level (class 6-8) is 4.4% among them boys have 4.5% and girls have 4.2%, in secondary level (class 9-10) is 3.7% among them boys have 3.6% and girls have 3.7%. Likewise, in school education examination (SEE), the total number of dropout is 7604 among them boys are 3635 and girls are 3969. (SOCE Report 2074 BS.)

This research work is the study of cohort group of SLC batch in 2059 BS from the school of Syangja, Nepal. The physical area of school location is just looks like a fairyland. The school is located in 1600 meter high altitude with a flat land area. It is a tourism place too. Many tourists arrive there for paragliding and enjoying the time to make their life memorable. But, most of the parents of that school are engaging in survival types of agricultural works though some of them are doing local business too. In 2059, there were 60 students in class 10, among them 51 were taken the SLC examination but only 2 students passed the exam regularly and did continue their higher education. The other 49 students failed that exam and most of them dropped out their formal education. This is the scenario of 19 years back from today. What is happening in their lives nowadays? What about their life chances? The general focus of this study is about understanding the causes of their dropping out from school and exploring the socio-economic consequences of it. The researcher himself was one of the students among them who continued his formal education through many ups and downs and became rigorously interested to complete this research work in this issue & the field.

Most of the previous studies have focused on the causes of school dropouts but only few of them studied about socio-economic status of them. This research work has focused to investigate and explain the social causes and consequences of drop outs. Identifying and analyzing the causes and impacts of dropping out from class ten is the main purpose of this thesis in the context of multiplicity of society in terms of occupation, cast/ethnicity, income, personal attitudes etc. based on the selected school from hilly region of Gandaki province Nepal. The different social context varies the result of questions raised while conducting research. The lived experiences of drop outs are emphasized to make the claim strong. For this purpose, the researcher has selected comparative cum descriptive research design and used purposive sampling method due to complex character of the respondents. The qualitative method of data collection was used, presented and analyzed in such respected manner to enhance the result of this thesis.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Most of the scholars have done research on social causes of drop out, but neglected socio – economic status after school. The ways of engaging in economic activities for building better life chances of school dropouts are properly not researched yet. On behalf of the rights of children, Nepal is also an endorser and has promised to education for all. The article 28 of the UNCRC has enforced to acknowledge the right of education for its member countries and also it has focused on parity in opportunities. This organization has given the powerful emphasis on free and compulsory education for the children among the member countries and at the same time it has been encouraging for developing both the general and vocational stream up to the secondary level. It is the compulsion for making availability and accessibility of school education to the children of member countries. The government of Nepal has emphasized on the free and compulsory education up to the basic level and free education up to secondary level.

Multiple steps are taken by the Nepal government and formulated many policies and programs for enlarging the enrolment frequency of children at the school of Nepal. The constitution of Nepal (2015) has evoked education as a fundamental right of every citizen. Article-31 states "every citizen shall have the right to get compulsory and free education up to the basic level and free education up to the secondary level from the state". Likewise, some of the eye catching efforts of Nepal government are, making tuition fee free up to grade 12, providing free textbooks, various scholarship schemes for girls and certain disadvantaged groups etc. In my thought, the programs have reflected significant role to enroll students at school but they are not qualify to keep them there. So that the problem of school dropout still exists in Nepal. Tuladhar; (2004) has highlighted as: In developing countries the opportunity cost of time spent in education by pupil in primary school may be quite high, particularly for poor families, since even young children could contribute to the family income by working in the fields, carrying water or looking after babies and thus can free adults for more productive works. School dropout is a problem of importance in the educational community as a whole, due in large part to considerable percentage of young people who do not complete compulsory studies (Marquez-Vera et al. 2013).

The state party report (2004) has investigated and claimed that because of engaging in the supplementary work for the household income, there is the high rate of dropout in the case of Nepal. And, this is because of the low level of their family income. The other two reasons of children's easily dropping out from the schools are: not having the school and corporal punishment. We are not getting the actionable law for restricting the corporal punishment in the

schools of Nepal and they are not administered. Flash Report 2017/018 by DOE states that the dropout rate of primary level (1-5) class is 3.6% among the boys have 3.8% and girls have 3.3%, in lower secondary level (6-8) class is 4.4% among the boys have 4.5% and girls have 4.2%, in secondary level (9-10) class is 3.7% among the boys have 3.6% and girls have 3.7%. Likewise, in school education examination (SEE), the total number of dropout is 7604 among them boys are 3635 and girls are 3969. (SOCE Report, 2074)

The previous studies have suggested that dropping out from school hampers for building better life chances. That's why the above mentioned drop outs from school have to be concerned with their life chances. The evidences of engaging in other household work by leaving the schools are seen myself which are hampering the life chance of them. I became interested in studying the causes & current socio – economic status of school drop out of Rajendra Bhawani Secondary school Syangja, Nepal because many children were failed having the regularity because of multiple causes. This study has tried to figure out causes & effects associated with dropped out children from school hoping that it contributes to deep understanding about the way of shaping the life chances of them through their lived experiences. When opportunity comes in society the dropouts have failed to grab the opportunities then he/she may force to live within the low socio - economic status and political participation in their society. Here, it is clear that the issue of dropping out of children from school have multiple causes & consequences both in the society and individual. Thus, Dropping out of children from school is a serious issue to be concerned so it is to be understood and internalized sociologically. This study focuses on the way dropouts involve in economic activities after school and current socio – economic status of them in the hilly regional and socially diversified contexts of Nepal. School dropouts' current situation of employment, level of income, housing, health status, children's schooling etc. have been concerned by finding the answers of following questions.

1. What factors prompted students to dropout from class ten?
2. In what way they involved in economic activities after school and what are the current socio-economic situations of them?

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

- 1.3.2 To identify the prompted factors of being dropped out from school.
- 1.3.2 To explore & explain the life trajectories of high school dropouts.

## **1.4 Rationale of the study**

Although there are wide ranges of literatures that cover the area of dropping out from school focusing on causes of the phenomenon. The literatures have been centralized on barriers and constraints of school dropouts. But, those previous studies of school dropouts have rarely explored its consequences. Few of them have embedded the consequences of dropping out of children from schools within their studies but not as a central theme. This is why the study is needed to explore & explain the socio – economic status of school dropouts by comparing to non-dropouts. The previous studies which have disclosed the causes of dropping out from school are also based on different socio – economic context than this research. Identifying and analyzing the causes and impacts of dropping out from class ten is the main purpose of this thesis in the context of multiplicity of society in terms of occupation, cast/ethnicity, income, personal attitudes etc. based on the selected school from hilly region of Gandaki province Nepal. The different social context varies the result of questions raised while conducting research. The lived experiences of drop outs are emphasized to make the claim strong.

This research work is completely based on Rajendra Bhawani Secondary School's SLC batch of 2059 BS. The school is located in hilly region of Syangja, Nepal. So, the social context is different than other studies. According to the hunt (2008) there is the scarcity of research works and literatures that are responsible for finding the dynamic natures of social and economic causes of dropping out from the school. The contributing and enforcing factors of school dropouts are dynamic in their nature. I have found a few numbers of related literatures but they have strongly followed the quantitative aspects of producing the knowledge. Being a student of sociology, I have utilized the capability approach and the theories of life chances to study the relationship between dropping out of children from schools and their life chances in society. That's why; I strongly want to give my emphasis on that this study will be beneficial for exploring and explaining the socio-economic status of children who dropped out from the school twenty years back in the past. This thesis has explored the consequences of being dropped out from school based on multiple aspects of their life chances. The study of trajectories of high school dropouts really contributes to discover the importance of learning skills, capabilities, and its effects on individuals and society as a whole. Most of the previous literatures have only centered on the negative impacts of dropping out of children from school. And, by following those findings of the studies, multiple policies and programs have been formulated and applied in the case of Nepal. The interrogation about current socio – economic status of school dropouts could give the way of

understanding phenomenon by going beyond of those previous studies. The lived experiences of respondents are different according to their socio-economic contexts and reasons of dropping out. On the one hand, this study will contribute in sociological understanding about the causes of school drop-out. And, on the other hand, this study has focused on the way of involving economic activities after school. By explaining the current socio – economic situations of them, this study will strongly be beneficial in the debate of formal schooling system especially in the case of lower–middle class family of hilly region Nepal.

In nutshell, this study explores the process of involving in economic activities after dropping out from school which helps to understand the way of learning skills to sustain and grow their life after school. At the same time, it studies about the causes of dropout from school because the reasons of leaving school influence and somehow determine their future socio–economic conditions. This study also explain about the current status of them in society that will create a new issue of discussion about formal schooling with regard to economic betterment of school dropouts which may be beneficial in the field of sociology.

### **1.5 The Organization of Study**

This research work has been arranged in five chapters. First chapter is about introduction of the whole thesis in which background, statement of problems; objectives of the research work and rationale of the study are included respectively. The background of this thesis has tried to clarify the concept of dropping out from school. And, it also deals the dropout as an independent variable and the dropouts' socio – economic status after school as a dependent variable. Then, statement of problem has dealt the theme as a researchable issue and broken down into two research questions about causes and socio – economic situations of school dropouts. Mainly, there are two objectives of this thesis which are included in the respective sub – topic. Rationale of the study is another important concern of this thesis which deals the "why" question. It means why does it necessary to answer the questions mentioned in the research question section. Review of the literatures has been included in chapter two. Mainly, two different types of reviews have been done in this section: theoretical and empirical review of the literatures. Under theoretical review, the concerned issue has been viewed from multiple theoretical angles. And, empirical review has viewed the focused problem from global to local in varieties of time and contexts respectively. Then, a good conceptual framework has tried to make clear about the overall idea of conducting this research work. The last part of this chapter is about research gap that is written after reviewing the previous related literatures. Research method is kept under chapter three. This research work is qualitative

in its nature so that the procedures, tools and techniques of conducting research are applying accordingly as per the demand of it. Limitations of the research are presented at the last of this chapter.

Chapter four consists of interpretation and analysis of the collected data that deals with the social causes of drop- out from secondary school (class 10 and/or SLC), and the way they involved in economic activities in their life and their current socio-economic status. Mainly, family poverty, gender disparity, early marriage, corporal punishment and lack of quality teaching are emphasized and discussed as the social causes of school drop – out. And, the way of involving in economic activities of dropouts and current socio –economic status are also explored and explained in this chapter. Under this chapter, caste/ethnic composition of respondents, occupation and level of income, bad habits, family health and children's schooling are concerned for identifying and analyzing the current status of them. To analyze the aforementioned sub – variables some data are presented in tables and equally two stories are also presented to reach the depth to find answers of research questions. Summary and conclusion are presented in the last chapter by following references and appendixes in this thesis.



## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of the Literature**

#### **2.1 General Review**

Chugh (2011) has defined dropouts as young children who enroll in school and for some reason other than death leave school before completing the grade without transferring to another school. According to Chugh (2011) school dropouts are conceptualized as the children who admit in school and leave from there without enrolling to next school and death. Like this way, according to Asharaf (1999) had stated that discontinuing the study of course without completing it is known as a school dropout. The same as MOEs (2003) has argued that the dropouts are those students who disappear from the school system before completing the grade or level. Price (2007) has mentioned that dropout is an event of escaping from the school without accomplishing the educational status. These definitions help to conceptualize dropping out from school indicates that leaving school without completing the studies of them. In other words, leaving school studies for several reasons is called dropout. In whatever way, the dropout from school does not comprise either death or transfer to another school. Hunt (2008) explores a little further and argues, the previous enrolment of children at school determines the frequency of dropouts, so that if initial enrollment is low then there will be low dropout rate comparing to the countries where there is high enrolment rate previously.

Now, it is obvious to have an interrogation about the responsible factors for being dropped out from the schools of Nepal and other schools of developing countries. Sarkar (2004) has classified the enforcing factors for dropping out from the schools in four different categories. She has given the emphasis on accessibility, affordability, quality and relevance as the schools. According to the study, the focuses are on the fees that the school force to pay, the work they have to complete at their homes, the discrimination that exists in the society, the facilities that the school provides etc. are determined either being dropped out or continue the school education.

Furthermore, Koball (2007) has focused on the determining factors of dropout from the school are children's educational level and their parents' anticipation with children. On the other hand, Watson et al. (2008) have stressed on the positive correlation between economic hazards of students and the phenomena of dropping out from school. He investigated and explored that those students who have to be engaged for their household chores have the problem of dropping out from the school. According to Groot (2007), severe poverty and the requirement of additional labor, is

thus an important factor that keeps children out of school and pushes them into work. Likewise, De Witte et al. (2013) have explained various determining factors of premature school dropouts such as student-related factors: psychological and behavioral factors, and demographic factors of the student, factors related to family: the features of families or fundamental issues such as the web of relationships among the members of the society, the culture, the kind of school, economic resources, educational surroundings at school, the quality of teachers and teaching methods, the features of neighborhood and the opportunities of getting jobs in the market etc.

Similarly, Gil J. Alfonso et al. (2018) have centralized on three types of risk factors related to early school dropout of children. They are children's learning problems, social and economic status of their family and school-related factors which strongly matter for either being dropped out from the school or continue it. School dropout factors related to school – educational performance is strongly and positively correlated with both school infrastructure and educational resources of school. The student-teacher relationship is an extremely determining factor for school dropout of children.

Levine (2006) has also explored the determining factors of attending the school by the women of Kathmandu. She has explored that either going to school is determined by their economic condition, caste/ethnicity, gender, their cultural beliefs, geography where they live etc. The talented students were continuing their studies but those who were not good at their studies and had to work at their home had suffered from the problems of dropout. Likewise, according to Litchy (2003) new consumption patterns in combination with traditional sources of prestige and caste heavily determine school attendance as well as the quality of education received. Chugh (2011) has elaborated the prohibiting risk factors about children's access to begin school. For instance, the economic situations of children's family, guardian educational level, the relationships among the family members, the way of educating the children, not having the foundations of their proficiencies from the previous school. Low level of family income and other hazardous conditions from their home produce the worse situations that hamper the schooling of students. In the context of developing countries, Tuladhar (2004) has proclaimed that the time that students have to spend at school is sky-high especially in the context of Nepal. The Nepalese young students whose family's economic condition is not so good have to work at their home for contributing their elder members of the family. And, Dvekota & Bagale (2015) have also provided the reasons of dropping out of children from school. According to them, it is common of being

dropped-out among the students where their family is suffering from the poverty, low level of their earnings and their social capital.

Along these factors, I believe that dropping out of school is not only because of a single reason but it is the phenomenon caused by varieties of social and economic factors like failing in the exams, corporal punishment, behaviors of the teaching staffs, attitudes towards learning long absence in the class, unpleasing environment at school and low level of comprehension about the learning items and skills. For instance, failing in the exams may cause the frustration with low level of achieving the needed knowledge, comprehension and skill that contributes for being dropped out from the school. Devkota & Bagale have focused on difficulties for the poor, marginalized and socially excluded families to continue and support children's schooling where parent's income is even not sufficient to fulfill the basic needs such as food and clothing.

The dropouts may face economically stressful, socially unequal and politically loathsome life in their future, which results the chances of recurring the same to new generation also. According to Hawkins et al. (2013) has stress that individual's future life-chances and level of income may directly be affected because of high school dropout and they may face the economically poor life by earning less amount of money comparing to non-dropouts. Likewise, Barton (2005) argues that in an every part of human life, we may notice the critical outcomes that occur because of school dropout for instance less opportunity of setting jobs in the market and adversely affects on the mental wellness of individual. The phenomenon of dropout from school influence economic condition and overall future of youth. Comparing to high school dropouts and non-dropouts, the dropouts have more probability to spend the loathsome life and stay in poverty. Groot (2007) has explained that dropping out of children from school have been pushed for doing jobs so that school dropouts may not spend their blissful life. Hunt (2008) has also focused on the consequences of dropouts and exclaimed that if children dropout from the school they hardly come again for their formal schooling. There is bottommost chance of becoming skilled laborer, which forces to earn the lowermost level of income. The large number of children who dropout from schools are in the threatening condition of doing illegal actions and behaviors likewise there may have the hazardous situations to adjust in social surroundings in the case of developing countries like Nepal.

## **2.2 Theoretical Review of the Literature**

The theoretical review of literature helps to establish the associations between and among the theories

which previously exist in the academic field of study and it answer about the degree of investigations among them.

### **2.2.1 Conceptualization of Life Chances**

The term life chance has coined by Max Weber for which he termed "Lebenschancen". According to the words of Ligatti (2019) life chance refers to an outcome from the combination of social status, economic class, individual's opportunities etc. He further stated that life chance of an individual involves the power in society, strength in economy, social capital, participation etc.

Weber(1978) has focused on "class" by which we could conclude that the economic class of an individual determines having the better life chances. For instance having plethora of property may contribute to have the sky-high life chance in society. He further has clarified that the type of one's property directly determines the life chances of him/her. For example, the property gives the returns from the market or not answers of having better life chances or not of an individual. In the words of Fourcade and Healy (2017), life chances of an individual are based on the occupation or job and on the way of their going away. The individuals' health, education, behaviors, social relationships etc. may be determined by his/her occupation done in the market. Weber's idea of life chances indicates that opportunities are the determining factors for an individual's social and economic status. And, for the fulfillment of satisfaction of the mandatory needs of individual, the previously talked opportunities play the significant role in achieving such basic and mandatory needs. Likewise for having the prestige in society, race, religion, politics and power may contribute for an individual or families. Ligatti (2019) has emphasized that the word chance refers to the probability of being capable for doing actions in and among the societies.

Life chances are the combination of things someone can do and opportunities society can offer. It is a probabilistic concept, describing how likely it is, given certain factors, that an individual's life will turn out a certain way. According to this theory, life chances are positively correlated with one's socioeconomic status. Opportunities in this sense refer to the extent to which one has access to resources such as food, clothing and shelter, education, job, social position, political participation and health care etc. Here, school drop-out is linked with the opportunities they grab in their future. So the conception of life chances provides a theoretical platform for better understanding of life chances shaped by dropping out of children from school.

### **2.2.2 De-schooling Society**

The 'Deschooling Society' was produced by Ivan Illich in the 70s which became able to criticize the modern industrial education. Where he focused and stressed in the learning of skills than just continuing the formal education. For instance, tongue is far better than going to school just for reading theoretical books. Learning the typing in a computer is a skill by using that skill some individual may earn money to fulfill his/her basic needs in the life. He argued that current education of modern societies are not becoming capable for achieving and learning the specific skills which may be the powerful tool for individual to spend the better life in future. He further has claimed that education must play the vital role for individual's liberation and freedom that may result the overall development of him/her. The schools where children go for learning must focus on the meaningful and effective teaching emphasize the specific skills and experiential practices. And, those learn skills mandatorily implacable in the individual's everyday life. Ivan further strongly emphasized and appealed for not instructing and teaching to the theoretical books and material because of its hazards and focused and proposed for real learning which only happens by the free involvement of an individual in process of learning. The gist of his argument is "most learning requires no teaching". Illich has proposed a radical solution to the modern education system through his "De-schooling Society". He focused on the abolition of the present education system. Where first he has talked about the exchanging of skills where the real teacher will teach the skills to pupil by making the learning environment. Second is "the learning webs" which consist of individuals with similar interest.

### **2.2.3 Capability approach**

Sen (2006) argues that the prospects of capability are not only by passing the children's mortality but it also focused about the good health, education and learning, social and political empowerment, achievement and participation, no hesitation in standing in the mass and public and being a part of community life. This approach provides and directs the well defined destination for having and spending the life and living should be. This theory clarifies about capability deprived children. For instance, the death of infants or suffering from starvation, not having the ability of reading and writing are kept under the term 'capability deprived'. Redmond (2008) exclaims going to and enrolling in school may be delayed because of the family poverty. At the same time, social exclusion will be another enforcing factor for being dropped out from the school. This approach has guided for us to find the causes of dropping out of children from the school. Liechty (2003) has stressed on new consumption patterns in combination with traditional sources of prestige; caste increasingly determines school attendance as well as the quality of education received.

### **2.2.4 Social Capital Theory**

According to Meier (1999) the income of family and the education of parents determine for the well being of children. That means the financial and human capital are the main resources for their well being. Coleman (1988) has focused on the achievement of quality education which determines the well being. According to him social capital is the outcome of relationships between and among the individuals of any society. Social capital could be conceptualized by viewing the functions of it. He has emphasized the varieties of entities of social capital that are consisted in social structures. Likewise, Smith et al. (1992) has focused on the significance of social capital to study about dropping out from the schools in different socio-cultural contexts. This approach is all about social interaction and networks among the individuals which incorporates the attainment of children's education. The social capital occurs between and among the families which is depended on their relationships. According to Meier (1999) the achievement of higher education depends on the relations and networks: among children and their families, friends, schools and whole community. Smith et al. (1992) exclaimed that the values and norms, social networks and social interactions are such an important thing where we see the existence of social capital.

### **2.3 Empirical Review of the Literature**

Ross and Marieke Van Willigen (1997) conducted a quantitative research in the USA entitled "Education and the Subjective Quality of Life" and published in the Journal of Health and Social Behavior. They examined the education as an influencing factor for making the better quality of life in subjective manner. They talked about the education which may affect the well being of an individual. They further argued that well being of an individual could be improved through educating them. It is because education improves the opportunities of access for finding new paid jobs in the market. Education helps to form the better social relationships inside and outside the families and their members. The relationships between variables are examined by them. They answered how dissatisfaction, depression, anxiety, anger etc are determined by the education. By collecting the two samples in the fiscal year of 1990 and 1995, they had explored that highly educated individuals have the lower level of affliction or distress. They have concluded that education plays the vital role for reducing the distress and affliction of an individual.

McMahon and Moses Oketch (2013) published a research article about the effects of education on life chance and development of an individual. This research work was based on the UK. This

study has estimated that education creates the impacts on the life chances of an individual by producing human capital. The earnings of individuals are determined by the skills they learnt. At the same time, education plays the pivotal role for making the health better, reducing children's death rate and improving their health. In the process of asset management increase life expectancy and for being happy, the education impacts positively. Likewise, for democratizing the individual and society, generating new ideas, producing new knowledge, exchanging skills are supposed to be through the process of educating the children. They kiss the goal of their study by estimating the level of income with correlating to education. The argued that the degrees of short duration are more effective for the developing countries like Nepal.

Levine (2006) conducted a research in Kathmandu valley entitled "Getting in, Dropping out, staying on: Determinants of Girls' School Attendance in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal" that published in the American Anthropological Association. She was conducted the ethnographic study for finding the determining factors in attending the schools. The research area was Kathmandu and the respondents were Nepalese ladies. Her study explored that the women were not able to go to school because of their caste, poverty and gender. Some talent students were also dropped out from the school because they have to work at their home. Some of her respondents were working for earning wages as domestic servants in the rich men's houses. Levine applied gender perspective in this study that may contribute to the study of schooling and gender in South Asia.

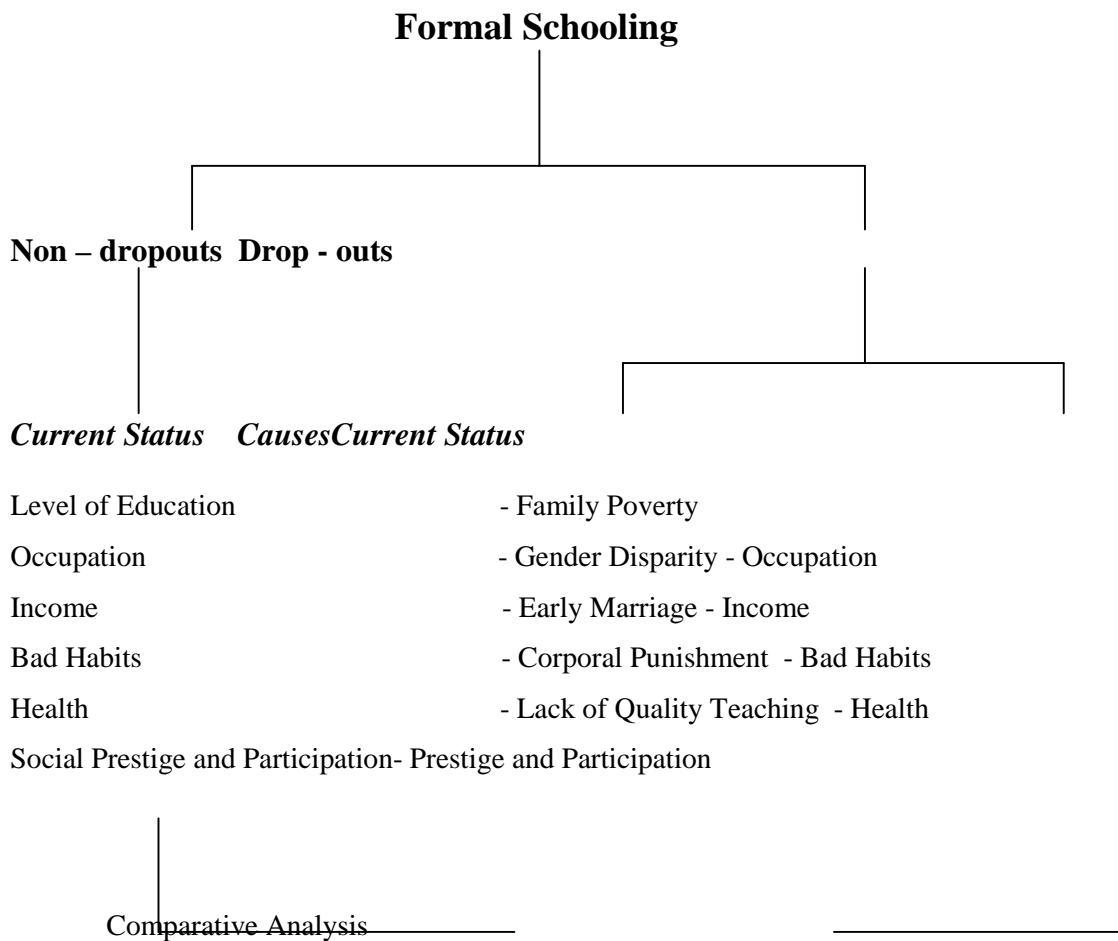
Wagle (2012) conducted a research work entitled "Dropout of Children from Schools in Nepal" for Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB) and argues that the large numbers of children are dropping from the school in South Asia. The socially disadvantaged children are more suffering from the problem of dropout. The students who belong to rural and remote areas have the same problem of being dropped out. He applied the qualitative method for his study where interview, focus group discussion and observation were used as the techniques of data collection. The field of study was based on Rupandehi district in Nepal and the total numbers of respondents were 20 children among them 10 boys and 10 girls. This study explored the causes of being dropped out from school where he noticed that low level of income, early marriage, child labor, family poverty etc. were the main causes of the mentioned problem. In nutshell, corporal punishment, family poverty, lack of quality teaching, failing the exams, gender disparity and early marriages were the noticeable causes of dropouts from the schools the context of Nepal.

Kunwar(2013)studiedaboutschooldropoutDalitboysinwestandeastvillagesofKathmandu valley and completed his Masters of Philosophy dissertation in education fromKathmanduUniversity.Thetitleofhisdissertationwas"LivedExperiencesofSchoolDropoutDalit Boys".Accordingtohim,afterexcludedfromthelightofeducation,theyhadto work in difficult working circumstances to fulfill their basic needs. Similarly, non-Dalits or so-called people used to misbehave them in working circumstances even using non-honorific words. This research has explored the caste based hierarchy in relation to educational exclusionary practices. It has also explored the underlying realities of educationally excluded Dalit boys. Likewise, he has focused on the barriers of School dropout Dalit youths (boys) to be excluded from the educational access. The analysis and interpretation in his work is based on the data from literature and documents, and the field experiences of two Dalit communities: West Village and East Village of Kathmandu District. He observed their daily activities and their life experiences to address the issue. He has interpreted how schooling in Dalit community has reproduced structural discrimination and inequality or symbolic violence. He has applied mainly the paradigms of interpretive under the multi-paradigmatic research design. Under the multi-paradigmatic research design, he applied critical ethnographic research method as his methodological position.

## **2.4 Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The conceptual framework of this study is prepared based on research questions and objectives as mentioned above. The main purpose of conceptual framework is to guide for research, prevention from deviation and completion of the study within time frame. Dropping out from school certainly have some causes and after being either dropped out, or continue to higher education directly affects to their life chances. This research has focused on that issue of concern. Formal schooling has two phenomena: the dropouts and non – dropouts. Mostly, this research has focused on dropouts but non-drop outs are also injected here for comparative study. Level of education, occupation, income, health condition, bad habits, social prestige and participation are comparatively studied between dropouts and non-dropouts. And social causes of dropping out from school are also investigated under this thesis. The conceptual framework has been designed as given below:





- |                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Level of Education                | - Family Poverty                    |
| Occupation                        | - Gender Disparity - Occupation     |
| Income                            | - Early Marriage - Income           |
| Bad Habits                        | - Corporal Punishment - Bad Habits  |
| Health                            | - Lack of Quality Teaching - Health |
| Social Prestige and Participation | - Prestige and Participation        |

## 2.5 Research Gap

Previous studies provide some important findings about the causes of dropouts and their daily behaviors which may be the useful tips for lowering down the problem. Multiple policies & programs have been launched to address the issue of school dropout but, sociological researches on causes & consequences of dropping out from school relating on their life chances have properly not done yet in the similar context as this research. So this thesis has tried to cover this gap. This study has provided the causes & consequences of being dropped out specifically hoping that it would be relevant in Nepalese hilly regional context in which area we see the problems of school dropouts that hinders the education of young students. On the other hand, it would be beneficial to know the life chances of school drop-outs for (re)constructing the policies and programs. I have done more in-depth study that could be interesting to focus on the current socio-economic situation of

school dropouts comparing to non-dropouts in the same cohort group.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methods**

Neuman (2008) explains that qualitative researchers begin with self- assessment and reflections about themselves as situated in a socio – historical context. He further says that qualitative researcher is likely to collect, analyze, and interpret data simultaneously, going back and forth between these steps. Thus, I applied this approach to study the socio – economic causes and consequences of school dropouts.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Kerlinger (1986) states a research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. The plan is the complete scheme or program of the research. It includes an outline of what the investigator will do from writing the hypothesis and their operational implications to the final analysis of data (cited in Kunwar 2013). This research has focused on the socio – economic causes and consequences of dropping out from school. This research work has concerned with dropped outs from school and their life chances with regard to income, job opportunity, housing, social prestige & position etc.

Qualitative research method has been applied to explore & explain the causes and mixed approach has been utilized to identify and interpret the current socio – economic status of school dropped outs compare to the non – drop outs. It is a comparative study of cohort group between dropped outs and non-drop outs in the similar socio-economic context. The findings has been analyzed and interpreted on descriptive and explorative way. Descriptive research design was made to describe the socio – economic condition of school dropped outs which enabled to present a clear picture of the phenomenon under investigation. At the same time, exploratory research design was applied to explore the hidden facts and realities of being dropped out from the school.

#### **3.2 Rationale of Site Selection**

The study was conducted among the school dropouts from Rajendra Bhawani Secondary School in the rural and hilly-remote area of Syangja, Nepal which was highly affected by the dropout problem in 2059 B.S. The respondents were from mixed communities such as Magar, Gurung, Newar, Kshetri, Damai, Kami, Sarki and Brahmin. The collection of data comprised of twenty students where there

were ten boys and ten girls. Seven respondents were chosen for personal in-depth interview others thirteen respondents were participated in messenger chat and telephone interview. The reason for selecting either individual interview or chat and phone call was because of the problem of COVID – 19 and some of them were lived in abroad. The head-teacher of school was also individually interviewed because he had taught these respondents and I believed that he could be useful informant in terms of studying dropping out from school.

I have witnessed many children who have dropped out from schools in Bhirkot municipality Syangja. The reason of dropping out from schools or their continuity for higher education may vary according to their gender, caste, class or the other socio-cultural and family context. I selected Rajendra Bhawani Secondary School of Syangja Nepal for this research work because this was the school where I was educated, and this was the place where I grew up. So that, I believed that I have the necessary expertise about the field to conduct this research. On the other hand, there was a mixed community in terms of caste and class where I could find both the school dropouts and non-dropouts. The third reason was about my affordability with regard to time and money. The data which I needed could be found from there so that the field was chosen.

### **3.3 Collection and Interpretation of Data**

The qualitative studies are those in which the description is not ordinarily expressed in quantitative terms. It is not that numerical measure but that other means of description and interpretation is emphasized. The research was conducted among school dropped outs and non – drop outs from Rajendra Bhawani Secondary School Syangja which is located in hilly region of Nepal. The respondents were class ten students of the school in 2059 BS. In that year, the total numbers of students were sixty and among them only fifty one had taken the SLC examination. The other nine students had left the school at the middle of the year. And, among the fifty one who had been participating in the final SLC examination, only two boys had passed and all other forty nine failed and suffering from the problem of dropping out from the school. And, from that universe, respondents were chosen randomly. The respondents were of heterogeneous category in terms of caste and class but at the time of their schooling they were homogeneous in terms of class. There were half male and half female respondents to conduct this research. And, all are of the ages above thirty-five. The researcher has applied in-depth, semi-structured interviewing as an instrument of data collection. The interviews were transcribed and translated. The interviews were open-ended, in-depth and informal in a way that the conversations bended on several directions many times. So that, interview were not completed in a sitting. The researcher followed-up respondents

until the targeted task completed.

In spite of claiming semi-structured, the interviews were structured to some point: the school & SLC batch was previously chosen and the respondents were predetermined. The researcher started interviews after the access to respondents and receiving consent with friendly talks that slowly brought into the check-listed themes. The researcher began to ask each of them to remember and describe the past time while they were at school which came out to be detailed. The respondents took this topic amusing & exciting so that they realized once again just to be like an adolescent of their time. The respondents remembered of their childhood and everything while talking and the mood of happiness was spreading from their face & gestures. In-depth individual interview, phone call and messages from social media technique were applied for exploration of causes & current status of dropped out children from school. The researcher conducted this technique to collect the data because of COVID-19 pandemic. For this, unstructured interview schedule tools (check-list) were applied for understanding and exploration of the causes and effects of dropping out phenomenon. This research work is qualitative in its nature. The collected data through individual interview and by using phone call or messenger chat were in Nepali language. So, all the data were transcribed and translated into English first. Then the researcher has presented them accordingly by emerging themes parallel to the research objectives.

### **3.4 Nature, Source, Processing and Presentation of Data**

On the basis of nature, qualitative data have been agglomerated in order to fulfill the specific objectives of the study. The analysis is mainly based on primary data that is collected during the entire research process. The interview and observation techniques are applied in this study as the primary source of data collection. The collected data were transcribed and translated into English language as per the need of this study that are presented in different tables and Italic font paragraphs accordingly.

### **3.5 Universe and Sampling**

The total number of students at Rajendra Bhawani Secondary School in 2059 B.S. was sixty. And, out of them, fifty-eight students had dropped out from the school in that year whereas only two students did continue their formal schooling. Among them, nineteen dropouts and one non-dropout students are selected randomly to reach at the goal of the thesis. The respondents were class ten

students of the school in 2059 BS. In that year, the total number of students were sixty and among them only fifty one had taken the SLC examination. The other nine students had left the school at the middle of the year. And, among the fifty one who had been participating in the final SLC examination, only two boys had passed and all other forty nine failed and suffering from the problem of dropping out from the school. And, from that universe, respondents were chosen randomly. The respondents were of heterogeneous category in terms of caste and class but at the time of their schooling they were homogeneous in terms of class. There were half male and half female respondents to conduct this research. And, all are of the ages above thirty-five.

### **3.6 Limitations of the Study**

Some noticeable limitations of the study because of limited time and money are listed below:

- a) Random sampling was not possible so that convenience sampling applied.
- b) This small size study may not represent whole scenario of dropout in Nepal and abroad.
- c) All of the variables are not covered in this study related to causes and status of school dropouts.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Social Causes and Current Status of School Dropouts**

This chapter has analyzed the collected data from the field that the respondents were suffered from the problem of being dropped out nineteen years back in the past. Along with dropped outs' responses of being dropped out; the views of head-teacher of that school are directly or indirectly linked with the problem to discuss. The researcher has linked and analyzed the theories and literatures according to their relevancy and necessities. The discussion and interpretation area of study of this chapter has covered the social causes and current socio-economic status after being dropped out from the school. The causes of dropping out provide analytical answers of the reasons they suffered from the problem. The barriers and constraints of being dropped out have been revealed and interpreted in this section. Or, any opportunity, motivation and hope had played the role for them to quit school has also discussed. By following this, the study explores and explains the way of involving in the economic activities by the respondents. Finally, I have emphasized on the current socio-economic status of dropouts after the school.

#### **4.1 Introduction to the Research Area**

As I mentioned above in the introduction chapter, this research work is a study of a SLC batch of 2059 BS in Rajendra Bhawani Secondary School Syangja, Nepal. The school is located on the very top of the Sworek hill which is about 1600 metres in height. On the top, the land is flat and the scenario look from there is really beautiful. In that fairyland, the school was established in 2031 BS and contributing to educate children of far and near 9 villages. Students came to study there from one to two hours of walk. The service areas of the school were Thulibhanjyang, Sirkot, Kavre, Saundi, Mahapur, Dauwa, Sworek, Kokhe, Dangse etc. In terms of caste, the students belonged to Magar, Gurung, Newar, Kshetri, Damai, Kami, Sarki and Brahmin. Most of the parents at that time were depended on agricultural work though a few of them were engaging themselves in local business too. Still, the people from there only grow food crops like millet, corn, wheat etc. The economic condition of them was not so good. According to the head-teacher of that school, parents were socio-politically less conscious so that it was difficult even to enroll the children at school. They applied door to door information service many times to bring the children at school that time.

Keeping children at school was another big deal for the school staff at that time so that the drop-out rate of children was very high. After being passed from grade 8, 9 or 10, most of the boys chose to army and police service either British, India or in Nepal. And, in the case of girls, some of them do marriage and others go for higher education if they pass the SLC examination which was taken as the iron-gate at that time.

#### **4.2 An Outlook of High School Dropouts**

Twenty respondents were chosen among the fifty eight school dropouts. In terms of caste/ethnicity, there were five Dalit, nine Janajati and six Brahmin/Kshetri school dropouts among them. This shows that the highest percentage (45%) Janajati students were left the school in 2059 BS. And, only twenty-five percent of Dalit students had left the school. Brahmin and Kshetri were somewhere in between them. This scenario of dropping out from school raised two basic questions. The first, why did more Janajati students leave the school? And the second, why less number of Dalit students left? At the time of conversation, the head-teacher of the school said that most of the boys from Janajati community were trying to be either Indian or Nepali army. Some of them got success and others not. And in the case of Dalit students, number of enrolment in secondary school was less than other. This can be concluded that some children drop out from school hoping that of getting jobs and other opportunities.

The occupations of respondents are driving, plumbing, army/police, self-business, cooking and housewife or jobless. Among them, there are two drivers and five plumbers who all are male. Among the respondents, three school dropouts are doing the job of army/police in which one female and two male. There are three female respondents who are doing their self-business and two male do the same among five in this category of occupation. One male respondent is a cook where other two females are doing the same. Two female respondents are housewife and they do not work to earn money. They depend on their husband's income to fulfill the needs. This shows that only ten percent of the school dropouts are either jobless or housewife. And, the highest numbers of school dropouts are engaging in either plumbing or the self-business. This result can be concluded that only a few is suffering from joblessness. Most of the school dropouts are currently doing their own respected jobs. But, the important point to be noted here is that, the skills they have learnt are not from the school. And, they also did not get any support from the side of state while learning those skills even though they have learnt some skills going through many ups and downs and doing works in the market to survive.



While conducting the interviews, the researcher had asked about the respondents' per month income. The income of them is categorized into three levels such as below thirty thousand, thirty to sixty thousand and above sixty thousand. The findings are shown on the table below:

**Table 4.1: Level of Income**

Income per month	Number	Percentage
Below 30,000	3	15
30,000– 60,000	12	60
Above 60,000	5	25
Total	20	100

Source: Interview, July 2021

The above mentioned table 4.1 shows the level of income of the respondents. According to the table, large numbers of school drop outs have earned the money between thirty to sixty thousands. Only fifteen percent of school dropouts have less than thirty thousand income. And twenty five percent of the school drop outs have earned more than sixty thousand per month. This result indicates that at least all of them have some kind of income. During the conversation, researcher found that those respondents who have highly sellable skills are earning higher level of income than those who are semi-skilled. It doesn't matter either the student dropped out from the school or continue schooling in terms of their earning but the skills they have learnt matters.

### **4.3 Social Causes of School Dropouts**

Hunt (2008) has conceptualized the problem of dropout as a process by arguing that it is not because of the single cause, it has at least more than two reasons. The cultural and contextual realities play some significant roles for being dropped out from the school (Sebates et al. 2010). There may have multiple pushing and pulling factors that contribute for enforcing children to dropout from school. The researcher has drawn those variables which were responsible for respondents' school drop out before completing their school education. The reasons of dropping out from school were asked to the respondents. Those reasons are categorized as family poverty, early marriage, corporal punishment and fail in the exam.

During the interviews with the respondents it is found that varieties of influencing factors play the vital role for being dropped out from the school. For instance, the respondent 'A' was dropped out from the school due to several of the mentioned reasons at least more than two. The result as numbers and percentage are shown on the table given below:

**Table 4.5: Reasons of Dropping out from School**

Causes	Number	Percentage
Family Poverty	3	15
Early Marriage	2	10
Corporal Punishment	1	5
Fail in the Exam	14	70
Total	20	100

Source: Interview, July 2021

The above mentioned table 4.5 shows that seventy percent of school dropout was due to fail in the exam that means it was because of the quality education. Only five percent of the total respondents were left school because of the corporal punishment. All these sub-variable are discussed and interpreted below in a subjective manner.

### **4.3.1 Family Poverty**

Family poverty is a state or condition in which the particular lacks the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. According to Sen (1992), being poor does not mean living below an imaginary poverty line, such as an income of two dollars a day or less. It means having an income level that does not allow an individual to cover certain basic necessities, taking into account the circumstances and social requirements of the environment. The Capability Approach is defined by its choice of focus upon the moral significance of individuals' capability of achieving the kind of lives they have reason to value. Here 'poverty' is understood as deprivation in the capability to live a good life, and 'development' is understood as capability expansion. According to Noble et al. (2007) poverty can be measured through the calculation of household income. Higher level of income reduces the problem of poverty. Likewise, the families having with lower level of income suffer from poverty. Poverty has to be conceptualized as the multi-dimensional phenomenon. The members of society who are suffering from absolute poverty may not have the opportunities of better quality services and they cannot participate fully in society.

While conducting interview, the researcher identified the main cause of being dropped out from the school that was because of their family poverty. Pooja whose age is 35 now, who dropped out school from class ten realized that it was because of sustaining problem even for five month by

their family earnings which they got from the farming. That condition had made her to be engaged in the works for earning wages in daily basis for another seven months. Going to the school was very difficult for her because of the family poverty. For instance, investing money to buy school uniforms, necessary materials, fees to pay for the exams and other demands of her could not be met by their earnings. Parteus et al. (2010) said that school dropouts are primarily determined by the poverty of children's family. During the interview, Pooja, aged 35 said:

*We were altogether 9 family members in our family.....Seven of us and my father and mother. I am the oldest one. The other three of my younger brothers and sister were continued their schooling. I used to go to school up-to grade ten but when I failed the SLC examination; my parents forced me to leave school. My father had worked in Delhi as a cook but that time income was very low. My mother used to work at farm. Nobody had been in our house. Completing the household chores and looking after the cattle was my mandatory works. After completing those works, sometimes I worked in the farms for earning the wages. Buying clothes for myself and giving the remaining money to my parents was not just a joke if remember now.*

By the painful story of Pooja, what can be understood is the reason of dropping out from school is failing examination but if we go to the depth from that we can easily find that failing school examination is caused by family poverty. The individual who has to struggle for joining hand-mouth two times a day cannot and do not care about future through formal schooling. Such individual works to fulfill their very basic needs of their life. According to Hunt (2008) the children who are suffering from the family poverty get pressures to dropout from the schools where they study. My respondents also realized that their parents became happy when they received the money earned by their children at their early age. At the time of interview, Mahendra, aged 36 said:

*I had sometimes worked as a ploughed in the field.....I earned around Rs. 300. I had used Rs. 150 for myself for example buy foods that I like the most, watch cinema at hall, buying the clothes etc. After that the remaining other Rs. 150 was given to my father and he became more than happy to me and love me.*

Mahendra's narration has suggested us to understand that the guardians who have lower level of income mostly emphasize on earning money than the academic degree due to their economic situations. Atkinson (1998) has claimed that the parents of children often do not want to withdraw their children from the schools but they remove from the school because of their family poverty. That is their last option for sustaining themselves economically. The families who are suffering from the absolute poverty could not be able to think more than the present situations of them. At the time of conversation with the head teacher of that school, pointed that there was no possibility

for investing the time and money to their children especially in the case of poorer families. And they were not capable to think the bright future of their children. The father and mother desire the current profits and benefits from their children because of their poverty. Even if they want to send their children to the school they cannot. According to Chugh (2011) the family's absolute poverty is the most vital cause for the continuation of children's schooling in the remote areas. It is also found in the hilly regional contexts of Nepal where families are based on agricultural activities. In hilly area, farmers do farming in the traditional way by which they grow very low to sustain their life.

### **4.3.2 Gender Disparity & Early Marriage**

According to Wagle (2012), the children who are belonging to the families under poverty cannot continue their schooling. If we look from the gender perspective, we find the majority of school dropouts are girls. It is an important interrogation to rethink that the ratio of dropouts' girls are higher than the boys in the schools of Nepal. The continuing factors for gender disparity are important concern in this sub-topic. According to Colclough et al. (2000) the responsibilities provided in terms of gender determine either dropping out or continuing from the school. The contexts of families and their cultures either increase or reduce the gender disparity. In Nepalese contexts, men are the leaders of society and the female are being responsible for their household works.

Pratima, aged 35 was said:

*I had been doing all the household works for example cleaning, washing, cooking, planting etc. That is because of my gender. My brother went to school but I had the mandatory to complete the works at my house. The men of our house are responsible for employment outside the home.*

By Pratima's story, it is found that societal and cultural norms and regulations directly associated with the gender disparity and that becomes the cause of school drop out in the contexts of Nepal. Parents had thought that if they educate their sons, they will get return in their old age comparing to daughters. A lady respondent aged 36, who had dropped out without attending SLC in 2059 BS, was married in the same year at the age of 16. This lady was belonged to Dalit community "Sarki". Now, she had three children and all of them go to one of the private school in Butwal. The lady strongly stressed that she had no power to go against the decisions of her father and mother at that time. The values and norms play the significant roles for early marriages of girls in the contexts of Nepal. The parents think that if their daughters are getting old than their age of marriage it will be difficult for finding the boys to be married. The child marriage directly

hampers for the continuation of schooling which is determined by the social, cultural and economic factors. The Nepalese parents at that time wanted to educate their boys in schools and made engage girls at their home though it was depended according to their caste and class.

#### **4.3.4 Lack of Quality Teaching**

According to Hunt (2008), the satisfactory goals of teaching are determined by the preparation of lessons, the work schemes, marketing pupils' books etc. The lack of students' textbooks at the beginning of the academic year is worthwhile for the observable learning in the class. The teaching methods should be child friendly to make the meaningful learning. It is the time of teaching learners how to learn the particular learning item. But at that time teachers had taught books and they seemed to hurry to finish the course rather focusing on learning. Drilling and memorization techniques were applied as the rote learning process. Some teachers were focused on the understanding of learning items by their students. According to Chugh (2011) children may drop the school because of being unsuccessful in the process of learning and understanding the course. Sometimes children get insufficient time for completing the course too. Some children were frustrated to complete their homework. This could be one of the reasons that most of the students being failed in the school because among fifty one students forty nine had failed the exam and there was no repetition in the class. Most of my respondents said that after being failed in SLC exam they had felt shy to study at the same grade again.

Social and economic resources shape the life chances of an individual. Socio – economic status is a measure of an individual's social position relative to others. This chapter deals with the socio-economic status of school dropout. The study has revealed current socio-economic status after being dropped out from school nineteen years back in the past. In the previous chapter, I have discussed, explored and described the causes of school dropout. The findings have suggested that there is no single reason for being dropped out from school. The causes of dropping out from school depend on the economic, cultural and other social factors. The focus of this chapter is mainly about the life chances of my respondents who were dropped out from the school before nineteen years. So, what is happening in their lives now? Their current social and economic status has been revealed and explained in this section by comparing to non – dropouts at the same time.

Previous studies argued that the school dropouts may face economically stressful, socially unequal and politically loathsome life in their future, which results the chances of recurring the same to

new generation too. According to Hawkins et al. (2013) the future economic condition of youth can be highly affected by dropping out from the school. There is high degree of probability to be stayed in the poverty for high school dropout comparing to non dropouts. Likewise, Barton (2005) argues that the dropouts from the school seem to be faced the problem of less job opportunities and lower life chances. Groot (2007) has explained that dropping out of children from school have been pushed for working so that almost the school dropouts may not be able to enjoy their life in future. Hunt (2008) has also focused on the consequences of dropouts and exclaimed that the school dropouts have the less chance of returning back to their class for formal schooling. According to Beauvais et al. (1996) there are huge numbers of children who dropout from the school and they really are under the risk of social and economic deprivation. The school dropouts may face the problem of unemployment in the case of developing countries like Nepal. MenschandDeniseB.Kandel(1988)conductedaresearchtoexploretherelationshipbetweendroppingoutofchildrenfromhighschooland found that they smoke cigarettes and use drugs but high school non dropouts rarely use those illegal things.

AsI mentioned above,the causes of school dropout is completely based on the social,culturalandeconomiccontexts.Itdependsonthesocietyinwhichtheschoolislocatedandthe child is grown up. For instance, the reasons for dropping out from the school located inKathmandu and the Himalayan region may vary. And, the reasons for dropping out of a girl,of Muslimcommunity may be different of a modern Christian girl in Pokhara. So, if thecausesofdroppingoutaredifferent,thenitiswisetosaythattheconsequencesofschooldrop-out arealso different accordingto thecontexts.

According to Ali and Hina Jalal (2018) the need of higher education is for getting the jobs in market. There is positive correlation between education and employment. That means employment is highly affected by the education achieved. Likewise, Teicler (2015) argues that the individual's level of education directly determines the opportunities of getting jobs or being unemployed in the market.

#### **4.4 A School Dropout: Journey from Dishwasherto Paragliding Pilot**

It was an evening and Waling looked slightly fuming, the sky was overcast, and it wasdrizzling too. Bijay welcomed me at his home with friendly smiling face. Up to half an hour,we talked ourselves. Then, I informed him about my specific purpose of that meeting. Hestarted:

*When I failed SLC, I started to work at home with my father such as cutting grass, cleaningthe*

*shed, feeding and caring cattle, ploughing the field and sometimes working as a wageman in village etc. I spent more than two years by doing so. And, one day, an elder brother of our village came to our house and said to me that he wanted to bring me to Lakeside, Pokhara to work in a hotel as a dishwasher. My mother was disagreed at that time. But, our family was suffering from having less income and as an elder son of the family, all the responsibilities were started to come on my head.*

*I decided to work as a dishwasher at a hotel in Pokhara, moved there and worked. After six months, I got a job of porter for paragliding pilot. By quitting the job of dishwasher, I started to work as a porter. My boss, David from the UK, was very kind person. The work was very hard but I enjoyed all the trips how difficult it was. At the same time, I learned to cook the food for foreigners. Then, after two years of work as a porter, my boss selected me as a cook for them.*

*When I started to work as a cook, the remuneration and other facilities were also increased. Then one day, I requested to my boss that I want to be a paragliding pilot. He laughed and said, "Ok!" "Ok!" That day I became glad. I did very hard work for learning paragliding, some theoretical and a lot of practical. After five months of working hard, I became a paragliding pilot.*

*I became pilot at the age of 24, from then I am continuously doing this job. This journey of work has provided me the chance of visiting different parts of Nepal. I have two children and they go to a private school here in Waling. I made this house by myself (invested myself)..... Uhh... income... It is about ten to fifteen hundred thousand per year.*

*It depends on the flow of tourists. But, now the tourism sector is also suffering from COVID-19..... sodo I!*

The above mentioned talks with Bijay enforced to think differently than the claims of previous studies about consequences of being dropped out from school education. According to Ali and Hina Jalal (2018) the need of higher education is for getting the jobs in market. There is positive correlation between education and employment. That means employment is highly affected by the education achieved. Likewise, Teicler (2015) argues that the individual's level of education directly determines the opportunities of getting jobs or being unemployed in the market. But, in the case of Bijay, the quality of life what he is spending is quite better than the average Nepali spending. He has a well-furnished and beautifully decorated house in Waling. He is capable to send his children in a quite expensive private school. The family relationship is good according to him. He is satisfied with his job and income. The family members have no economic problem to reach to the hospital for their health issue (if any occurs). He is invited to join the meetings of school management committee of his village and participated in community social work. So, all

these things shows that learning any skill to sell in the market for making sufficient level of income is important even if they couldn't continue their formal schooling. Even the school dropouts can make higher level of income if they get the chances of learning skills. If individual learn some kind of skills and apply that for earning moneys/he can make the life better.

#### **4.5 School Non-dropout: Journey and Experience of Being Health Assistant**

It was a rainy morning in July. I reached to Padam's home at tea time. He welcomed me with a sweet cup of milk-tea. His mother was preparing food. After a few moments, I requested him about my visit this time. He needed to go to health-post for duty at 9:00 am. He started:

*I passed my SLC exam at first attempt in 2059 BS. My father was a teacher at primary school. He told me to study CMA in Pioneers School in Waling. I went there. After fifteen months, I did complete my CMA. Then, I moved to Pokhara for studying HA (Health Assistant). After completing this, I took an examination of Public Service Commission (PSC), and I passed, being selected from there. And started to work from that time to till now.*

*I did love marriage. My wife also works at health sector. We had met in college. Now, we have two children. They go to a private school here in Waling..... Yes. Days are going well.*

*But, sometimes it is very difficult to work with patients. From last year, it is more difficult because of COVID-19.*

*Sometimes, my mother asks me to leave this job. Last year, I became a victim of COVID and all my family members scared of that..... In terms of money, it's ok..... I didn't earn big amount. But, when I see the thankful smiling face and gestures in patients after being treated I really become satisfied with this.*

Most of the previous studies have argued about negative impacts of dropping out from school. They argued that school dropouts have less life chances compared to non-dropouts. For instance: According to Ali and Hina Jalal (2018) the need of higher education is for getting the jobs in market. There is positive correlation between education and employment. That means employment is highly affected by the education achieved. Likewise, Teicler (2015) argues that the individual's level of education directly determines the opportunities of getting jobs or being unemployed in the market. Bijay is a character of our society, especially hilly region of Nepal. He is a school dropout. But now, he has a beautiful house in the city area, children are getting quality

education, family members are happy, in terms of having property he is satisfied, he is not suffering from unemployment, income is better and enough in his opinion etc. This is the current socio-economic condition of



him.

So, in the context of this research, only dropping out from school does not matter for the better life chances of an individual. The school dropouts may have the better life chances in the future. There are two important things to be noted about. The first is about the causes of being drop out from the school i.e. why did somebody drop out from the school? Or, what were the factors that kicked out an individual from school? And, the second is about the engagement after dropping out from school i.e. what did somebody do after being dropped out? So, the causes and engagements or involvement after dropping out from school matter for the life chances of individual.

Above mentioned case of school dropped out has revealed that Bijay's family was suffering from poverty and at the same time the school had less quality education. He failed SLC examination and quit the school. But later, he did struggle in his life and become a paragliding pilot. He learned piloting. Now, it is wise to say that dropping out from school did not matter for the betterment of life chances. So, important thing is about the learning. Learning skill is significant for the betterment of socio – economic status. According Illich (1971) focused on the particular skills and learning such skills must be applicable in the everyday life. He argued that current education of modern industrial societies is not concerned with the acquisition of particular skills. Bijay had got the chance of learning piloting so that he became pilot. So, if school dropouts get the chances of learning skills they can make their life better.

During the conversation, Binod, aged 36 said that after being dropped out from the school, he got the chance of learning plumbing in India. After learning that he returned back to Nepal and started to work in Pokhara. Now, he has built a house there and started his own business. His children are going to a prestigious school in Pokhara and getting quality education according to him. He and all his family members are satisfied nowadays. This helps to conclude that learning skill is more important than just continuing school education for the betterment of life chances. Sen (2006) argue that the prospects of capability are not only by passing the children's mortality but it also focused about the good health, education and learning, social and political empowerment, achievement and participation, no hesitation in standing in the mass and public and being a part of community life. If individual learn some kind of skills and apply that for earning money/he can make the life better.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

This section has dealt about the current socio- economic status of school drop outs. This means it is ultimately a study about the consequences of dropping out from school. The consequences have been studied with regard to aspects of life chances i.e. it is the study about employment, income, prestige in society, children's education and their satisfaction with the life. The current socio-economic status of respondents (who were the dropped out from school in 2059) is quite better. They are satisfied with their lives and they have sufficient level of income. It is because almost all of them have learnt some kind of skills such as cooking, plumbing, driving, piloting, electrician or some kind of family-business. At least they are engaging themselves and living with family. Most of the school drop outs' children are going to the private school because of quality education in their opinion. By all of these, It is concluded that learning life-skill and applying that for making money is far more important than just continuing formal education without any skill. Learning some kind of skill which is sellable in the market is significant for the better life chances. Dropping out of children from school is a result of multiple factors. There is no single reason for being dropped out from the secondary school. And, those factors may vary according to the socio-cultural and economic contexts. In the case of this research field, family poverty, early marriage gender disparities, corporal punishment and low quality of education were playing the key role for dropping out from class ten among the respondents of this research work.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The summary and conclusion of the whole study are covered under this chapter. I have studied about social causes and current socio – economic status of school drop outs.

#### **5.1 Summary**

This research work has aimed to study about social causes and the current socio – economic status of school drop outs based on the school of syangja district which lies in hilly region of Nepal. The respondents were dropped out from the school in 2059 BS. So, what were the causes of dropping out from the school is the first concern of this study. And, on the other hand, what happened after being dropped out in their lives, and how they are doing in the present is another concern of this thesis. It is said that society has inequalities based on caste, class and gender and the education plays the role of catalyst to overcome from that problem. Education should be for the betterment of human life and it is taken as the right of every citizen. By guiding with this claim, I have completed this work for the partial fulfillment of my master's thesis.

Specifically, there are two objectives in this research work. The first is to identify the social causes of dropping out from school. It is said that without finding causes of any phenomenon we can't dive into the depth for solution. And, the second objective of the research work is to explore and explain the current socio – economic status of school drop outs. To reach to the goal of second objective, I have studied multiple aspects of life chances such as employment, income, children's education, housing, property and social prestige.

By defining school drop-out as a phenomenon through the help of previous scholastic writings, I have conceptualized the causes and consequences of dropping out from school, though those articles were written in different context. I have reviewed Theory of Life Chances, De-schooling Society, Capability Approach and the Social Capital Theory to make clear the position of this writing and utilized wherever necessary. Dropping out from school certainly have some causes and after being either dropped out, or continue to higher education directly affect to their life chances. This research has focused on that issue of concern.

This study has provided the social causes & current situations of being dropped out specifically hoping that it would be relevant in Nepalese hilly regional contexts. It is important to

study about school dropout because it is a crucial issue that hinders the children's education. On the other hand, it would be beneficial to know the life chances of school drop – outs for (re)constructing the policies and programs. I have done more in-depth study that could be interesting to focus on the current socio – economic status of school dropouts comparing to non – dropouts in the same cohort group.

Qualitative research method has been applied to explore & explain the social causes, and mixed approach has been utilized to identify and interpret the current socio – economic status of school dropped outs compare to the non – drop outs. It is a cohort group study between dropped outs and also non-drop outs in the similar socio-economic context. The findings has been analyzed and interpreted on descriptive and explorative way. Descriptive research design was made to describe the socio – economic condition of school dropped outs which enabled to present a clear picture of the phenomenon under investigation. At the same time, exploratory research design was applied to explore the hidden facts and realities of being dropped out from the school.

I have applied in-depth, unstructured interview as an instrument of data collection. The interviews were transcribed and translated. The interviews were open-ended, in-depth and informal in a way that the conversations bended on several directions many times. So that, interview were not completed in a sitting. The researcher followed-up respondents until the targeted task completed to enhance this work.

Chapter four has dealt with the social causes of being dropped out from school, the way they involved in economic activities and current socio – economic status after school. Dropping out from school is a result of multiple factors. There is no single reason for being dropped out from the school. And, those factors may vary according to the socio – cultural and economic context. In the case of this research field, family poverty, early marriage, gender disparities, corporal punishment and low quality of education were playing the key role for dropping out of my respondents from school. It is ultimately a study about the consequences of dropping out from school. The consequences have been studied with regard to aspects of life chances i.e. it is the study about employment, income, prestige in society, children's education and their satisfaction with the life. The current socio – economic status of respondents (who were the dropped out from school in 2019) is quite better. They are satisfied with their lives and they have sufficient level of income in their income. It is because almost all of them have learnt some kind of skills such as cooking, plumbing, driving, piloting, electrician or some kind of family-business. At least

they are engaging themselves and living with family. Most of the school drop outs' children are going to the private school because of quality education in their opinion. By all of these, it is concluded that learning life-skill and applying that for making money is far more important than just continuing formal education without any skill. Learning some kind of skill which is sellable in the market is significant for the better life chances.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The main themes of this research work are: identifying the social causes of being dropped out from the school and exploring and explaining the current socio – economic status of them with regard to employment or occupation, income, children's education, property ownership, having bad habits, and the social prestige or capital.

The first concern of this thesis work is about the causes of being dropped out from school. In which, the findings imply that most of the respondents were dropped out from the school because of family poverty, gender disparity, early marriage, corporal punishment and lack of quality education. Among these factors to kick out children from school, lack of quality education is the most powerful one. Most of the respondents left school due to failing in the SLC examination. And, another important point to be noted here is that there is no any single reason of being dropped out from the school. The causes of dropping out from school are depended on the particular socio – economic context and individual's family background. The third finding related to reasons of being dropped out is: children were dropped out from the school not only because of the socio – economic constraints but also the some kind of hope and motivation of building their life better. In this context, some Janajati boys were left the school with the hope of joining either Indian or Nepali army.

The other focus of the study is about current socio – economic status of school dropped outs. The above mentioned chapter five has dealt with this issue. Social and economic resources shape the life chances of an individual. Socio – economic status is a measure of an individual's social position relative to others. The findings of this study are: first, the current socio – economic status of school drop - out is somehow depended on the causes of his/her reason of being dropped out. If somebody has dropped out because of getting better job opportunity or other chances s/he will have the better life chances. But, if the reason of being dropped out from school is family poverty they need to face more struggling life ahead in the future.

Second, learning the skill is far better than just continuing school education without any marketable skill. Because the ultimate goal of the education is about building the life better both economically and socially. For instance, in this study, one of the school dropped out has become a paragliding pilot. He earned enough money for his family. All of the members of his family are happy and satisfied. And, the work that he has done is socially prestigious too. This has happened because of his skill of piloting. According to Illich (1971) education should emphasize on the learning particular skills that could be used in everyday life. He argued that current education of modern industrial societies is not concerned with the acquisition of particular skills.

Third, there is no specific program from the side of government in the context of Nepal for school drop outs. Dropouts can also learn some skills according to their desire so that they make their future socio-economically easy. But, government is focusing on keeping the children at school. By the way, is somebody leave school because of various reasons then what happened? There is no one to look after them. All the school dropped outs in this research have built their life themselves. If school dropouts get any support for learning skills they sell those skills in the market and spend their life more happily. The current socio-economic status of respondents (who were the dropped out from school in 2059) is quite better. They are satisfied with their lives and they have sufficient level of income in their income. It is because almost all of them have learnt some kind of skills such as cooking, plumbing, driving, piloting, electrician or some kind of family-business. At least they are engaging themselves and living with family. Most of the school drop outs' children are going to the private school because of quality education in their opinion.

To sum up, there is no single reason of being dropped out from the school. School dropouts are also engaging themselves by learning some kind of skills. Skills that are sellable in the market help for building better life chances than continuing formal education without lifelong skills.

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## **Appendix-InterviewSchedule**

### **Interview GuideforSchoolDropOuts**

Theinterviewwillstartbyintroducingtheinterviewerhimselfandthepurposeoftheresearch. The interviewer will assure the respondent that the data collected during the fieldworkwill beunnamed and treated confidentially.

#### **BackgroundInformationofSchoolDropOuts:**

Wouldyoupleaseintroduceyourself?

Name: MonthlyIncome:

Age:

Caste/Ethnicity: Any Bad Habits (Smoke, Alcohol, Tobacco):

MaritalStatus:

NumberofChildren:

Hobby:

Occupation:

Whereareyoustayingnowadays?

Howlonghaveyoubeen there?

Whendid youdropoutfromyourschool?Or,inwhichyearhadyoubeendroppedout?

Whathothinkabout thecausesofyour droppingoutfromschool?

Doyou haveanylamentation of beingdroppedout from school?WhyorWhynot?

Whatwas youragewhenyou gotmarried?

Was yourmarriagearrangedorloved?

Wheredidyoumeetyourspouseatfirst?

#### **FamilyBackground:**

Whowasresponsibleforyourchildhood?

Do youstilllivewithyourfamily?

Isyourfamilysingleorextended?

Howmanyfamilymembers arethereinyour household?

Whathasyourfamily'smainincomesourcewhen youwerechild?

Would yousharemeabouttheeducationalbackground aboutyourparents?

Howfardidyouthinkthatyour familybackgroundmatterforyourdroppingout?

**School Drop Outs' Daily Habits:**

Would you mind sharing me about your daily experiences which you have.

How do you spend your daily time?

Would you tell me your current profession?

Are you satisfied with the job that you do?

Please share me the things that have made you either satisfied or unsatisfied.

What are the best daily activities that you think and do and what bad behavior you do in your opinion?

Why do you think that those behaviors are either good or bad for human life?

**Educational Status and Social Connections:**

Could you please tell me about your previous educational level which you achieved?

Please tell me about your school where you were taught.

What are your experiences about your friends and teachers in schools?

How did you feel about the teachers in your school? About your teacher's teaching method?

Were you punished at school? If yes, how did you feel about the punishments given in schools?

How did you feel with the subjects that you learned in schools? Were they interesting?

Please share me with your grades and the subjects you found the most interesting and the difficult ones.

Please tell your thoughts about the facilities provided by schools from which you were benefited? Such as playgrounds, toilets, drinking water, transportation facilities, scholarships, uniforms, health facilities and mid-day meals.

Share me about the activities you liked the most in school and the ones which you did not prefer.

Please tell me about your parents' daily activities. What had they done?

Could you tell me about the responsible factors for your dropping out from school?

Please share about the obstacles regarding your discontinuation to school in terms of your family conditions?

**Personal Feelings and Attitudes:**

Please share about your experiences of dropping out from school?

Do you see any negative or positive effects of not attending school?

Do you feel that you are excluded as compared to school going children? For e.g. lack of important skills, experiences, earnings etc.

How do you see your general life situation and your future plans?

What type of support did you get from school while you were at school?

Could you share your experiences about the programs conducted by school to help children keep at

school?

Do you think that the dropping out from school is a serious problem? Does it reduce the opportunities in life?

What are the things that you get or lose after dropping out from school?

**Conclusion:**

Do you have any personal special thoughts and wishes?

Do you have any further to add that I missed to ask?

*Thank you very much for participating!*