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GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN NEPAL

PERSPECTIVES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN

MASTER'S THESIS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (MPHIL) IN CHILDHOOD STUDIES

Trondheim, November 2013

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Abstract

Gender discrimination is considered as problematic issues for promoting equality and attainment of universal rights of children especially, in south Asia. In Nepal, where a patriarchal system of social relations predominates, parental preference inclines to the male child and is reflected in the socio-cultural practices, status and economic potentiality associated. Yet, such preference tends to negatively influence the girls' educational right, welfare, health and survival opportunities. This study focuses on how boys and girls receive different allocation of resources within the family based on existing socio-cultural practices in Sarlahi district. It explores the impact of prevailing cultural values and gender discourses in schooling of children together with intra-household resource allocation from children's and adult's perspectives. Furthermore, the study examines the implications of the socio-cultural perspective of child work combined with schooling in the rural parts of Nepal. The study is drawn on the theoretical perspectives of the new social studies of children and childhood viewing children as independent, competent social actors having their own rights and perspectives. Qualitative fieldwork was carried out among the children of diverse socio-economic backgrounds involving multiple methods of data collection: observation, interview, essay writing and focus group discussion. Research participants primarily included 20 children (10 boys and 10 girls) of 12-16 years age. In addition, 5 parents and 5 teachers between 37-52 years old were also included as adult participants. The empirical materials were analyzed qualitatively. The study found out that young girls were more disadvantaged in comparison to their male counterparts. These disadvantages encompass all aspects of their life including intra-household resource distribution in terms of health and nutrition, pocket money, play and entertainment. However, the study also reveals that girl's rather inferior position in resource allocation is shaped by such factors as age, and birth order within siblings. With reference to schooling, young girls were mainly discriminated against quality of education. It means all the children (both boys and girls) attended school but the discrimination was magnified in terms school they enrolled and the quality of education they received. Boys attend boarding schools that of superior quality than the government schools, where most girls were enrolled. Parental education and attitudes had negative impact on girls schooling. Gender discrimination against girls in schooling was mainly affected by the socio-cultural factors such as pro-male bias, household work burden, unequal access and expected returns in the labor market, educational costs, accessibility and proximity to the school and

religious factors. Yet, children continue to make significant contribution in the family livelihoods with routine and non-routine forms of household tasks beside their schooling activities.

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List of acronyms

ILO	International Labor Organization
UNCRC	United Nations on the Rights of the Child
GON	Government of Nepal
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
NOSEB	Norwegian Centre for Child Research
EFA	Education for All
NPA	National Plan of Action)
MGD	Millennium Development Goal
NDHS	National Demographic Health Survey
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VDC	Village Development Committee
IIDS	Institute of Integrated Studies
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
CBSC	Central Bureau of Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
NLSS	Nepal Living Standard Survey
SSRP	School Sector Reform Programme
ECD	Early Childhood Development
PPCs	Pre-primary Classes
MOE	Ministry of Education
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women

MOLJ	Ministry of Law and Justice
MWCSW	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
MGEP	Mainstreaming Gender Equity Program
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
NGO	Non-Government Organization
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
CREHPA	Centre for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities
USD	United States Dollar
RS	Rupees

1. Introduction

The contemporary world has been marked with a pervasive movement towards gender equality empowering women and girls for better opportunities, particularly in developed countries. On the other hand, in most of the developing countries the notion gender equality is still an outlying goal. As this study focuses on female inequality, I use the term discrimination largely with regard to gender. Discrimination occurs in various forms in everyday life. In this regards, ILO (2003a:16) defines discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion or preference in terms of the race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin of an individual bringing out effect in equality with reference to resource allocation, opportunities and treatment in employment or occupation”. Beside different forms of discrimination, gender discrimination is seen as one of the major forms (Busse and Speilmann, 2003).

Gender discrimination and son preference have been brought into being an issue in the context of South Asian country, Nepal. Son preference is generally viewed as socially determined bias. In a patriarchal society parents prioritise the child, who has culturally accepted characteristics, status and economic potentiality. This preference often influences their behaviour and may result in gender biases that negatively affect girls' and women's educational right, welfare, health and survival (Leone and Matthews, 2003). In this sense, girls are seemed to be disadvantaged in the patriarchal society resulting into gender discrimination by their own parents. Apart from the negative impacts of the gender discrimination on the girls' welfare, health and survival, they are equally deprived of their right to education as well. A number of discourses have been established deeply rooted in the rural Nepalese society to address children according to their gender.

Various determining factors such as: socio-economic, political, cultural norms and beliefs of the society have greater influences on the accessibility of the educational attainment of the children. Based on the gender preferences, the unequal distribution of the household resources among children is a major problem in many parts of the developing world especially, in south Asia and North Africa (Stash and Hannum, 2001). Such inequality is prevalent in their schooling as well. The decision about child education depends not only on the available resources but also parental attitudes towards educating their children. Therefore, parental

attitude brings out the inequality in the right to children's education. Girls are even more disadvantaged based on the rational of cost benefit analysis. For example, if parents feel that their daughters will be unable to take advantage of education in the labour market, they will be more likely to depend on sons for support in old age (Stash and Hannum, 2001). In other words, parents believe that sons are the long term contributors to the household economy since they stay with their parents as a crucial support in their old age. Conversely, daughters have to be married with someone else and leave their parents' home.

According to Ashby (1985), three factors are identified that lessen the motivation for investment in the education of the daughters in Nepal relative to the sons: (1) daughters are expected to leave their biological household after marriage in their mid-teens, while sons are expected to co-reside and contribute to the welfare of their parents in their old age; (2) non-farm work is perceived more appropriate and realistic for men (3) the traditional gender based division of farm work requires more routine work from females than males. Similarly, based on the stereotyped traditional gender roles, girls perform more house works than their male counterparts. Along with several light farm works, girls are engaged in reproductive house work, which is mostly substitutable with the mother (Robson, 2003). Furthermore, in case of mother's absence; it escalates more work burden on them. Therefore, gender disparity in the allocation of household resources with various discourses attached to it, results into poor health performance, educational attainment and child welfare as a whole. Beside disparity in household resource allocation, the extra work burden on the share of female children over male creates effect on the right to get education and enjoy their childhood freely.

Last two decades; Nepal's literacy rate has been dramatically increased. Yet, the gap is not diminished between boy and girl in the attainment of education. In line with the collective commitment of the Dakar Framework for Action 2000, Nepal adopted the strategy of "Education for All" (EFA) putting into effect a National Plan of Action (NPA, EFA 2001-2015) in 2001 to achieve its target by 2015 (Department of Education, 2004). In order to meet the target placed by MDG, Nepal has rigorously focused on ensuring all children (girls in particular), children in difficult situations and children from religious and ethnic minorities for a full-fledged, compulsory, free and qualitative primary education by 2015 (UNICEF, 2006). However, in rural part of Nepal, school enrolment is quite late among girls than boys. As a result 7 percent and 12 percent of girls age 10-14 and 6-9 have no education respectively.

Therefore, effective endeavours are to be employed for increasing the relatively low proportion of primary education attended girls (88 percent) to meet the target of the MDG securing 100 percent primary education by 2015 (NDHS, 2011).

1.1 Context

Socio-cultural beliefs, practices and parents' attitudes often do not favour girls in their pursuit of education to the same extent as boys in the Nepalese society (Bista, 2004). Within the household, girls receive unequal distribution of resources and care in terms of nutrition and health services, leading often to higher malnutrition and mortality (Reeves and Baden, 2000) pocket money, entertainment and play time and household work burden. The reason behind such unequal treatment is the discriminatory practices against girls and women which are deeply rooted in Nepal society. These unequal treatments to access the equal opportunities of life found between male and female have forced women and girls in many contexts to bear a subordinate position in a given society (Panday, et al., 2006). The discriminatory factors such as tradition of early marriage, son preference, viewing girl as others property limits the girl's enrolment and school attendance undermining the importance of girls' education as compared to that of boys. The discrimination against women and girls is a historical phenomenon and, as Panday, et al., (2006) contend, are supported by the ideological contents of culture and rules and regulations of society. They argue that the ideology of patriarchy is an institutionalized system of male dominance. It ties to the ownership of property, access to political power, and the attainment of social status (Panday, et al., 2006) pushing women and girls to have unequal treatments. They appear in different forms and to different extents in different types of social settings. Traditionally, daughters are to engage in more household chores. The opportunity costs of schooling are usually much higher for girls than for boys since girls are expected to do more domestic work than boys. In the Nepalese household work scenario, by the age of 10, girls might be working up to 10 hours a day in productive activity inside and outside the home (Watkins 2000:191). It is evident that girls' domestic labour contribution is regularly ignored in analyses of children's activities. Girls often must do engage for many hours each day in domestic chores, but is not captured in the conventional definitions of work (Assaad, et al., 2010). In particular, the literature on girl's household responsibilities often overlooks the potential benefits for the family pertaining to housework contribution and childcare responsibilities to put into risk of girl's schooling. Although girls education is free in public schools in Nepal but the direct and indirect costs of sending girls to

school as being too expensive in terms of supplies for books, stationeries and uniforms (Bista, 2004). In addition, the high opportunity costs of schooling combined with forgoing of vital help at home and on land undermine the demand for girls' education (Balatchandirane, 2007:25).

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 (Tuladhar, 2004:23).

Child labour is the outcome of social and economic factors, including socio-cultural norms, economic shocks, living conditions and access to services (Assaad, et al., 2010). The substantial burden of girls' domestic work results into lower rates of school attendance. In other words, the need for girls to contribute to domestic work influences parental decision to either keep them away or send to school. The relationship between work and schooling is complicated by the fact that work affects the ability to attend and get success in school. Failure in school eventually leads to a child to put at work (Assaad, 2010).

Girls encounter with several barriers to get an equal access to education. In most developing countries, there is indeed a pro-male bias in parental investment in children. Some possible explanations to uplift such discrimination in the allocation of resources are low-parental literacy levels (Tansel, 1997), the expected returns to girls' education especially the economic benefits that families receive (Glick and Sahn, 2000) and cultural and religious factors of a given society. Similarly, for the families under poor economic condition, it becomes more costly to send their children to school; as a result girls are more likely to be away from school. It is obvious that the precise causes and consequences of gender inequality in basic education are distinct from one country to another, but a common set of constraints are to be considered. According to Aikman & Unterhalter (2005) such common set of constraints are:

- Son preference
- Prevalent poverty
- Schooling costs

- The burden of household labour
- Shortage of school facilities, especially in rural areas
- Cultural and social practices that discriminate against girls, including early marriage
- Limited employment opportunities for women

1.1 Aims of the research

The aim of the research is to explore gender discrimination as the hindrance to attain the right to education for children in Nepal. The specific aims of the study are to:

- explore how differently boys and girls receive allocation of resources and care in Nepalese society,
- examine how prevailing gender discourses affect boys and girls differently,
- explore the impact of gender discrimination on boys' and girls' right to education/schooling,

1.2 Research questions

How does gender discrimination affect children's right to education is the main research question followed by the following sub-questions.

- What types of school do the children attend?
- What are the duties and responsibilities of children in the households?
- How do the intra-household resources allocated?
- What are the determinants of child schooling?
- How do cultural values affect children's perspective on their right to education in family decision making?
- What are the discourses behind gender preferences and how do they affect boys and girls differently in Nepalese society?

1.3 Significance of the Study

In general, little empirical work has been carried out on the determinants of schooling in less developed countries. In particular, research on determinants of school participation in Nepal is very limited. The research that does exist suggests that household economic factors, student health and nutritional status, school availability, school quality and relevance are all important. This study, therefore, tries to shed light on gender disparity in the allocation of

household resources with reference to nutrition and health, pocket money, play, entertainment in general and education in particular. Furthermore, it is supportive to expand the body of knowledge on how the distribution of resources is influenced by the socio-cultural factors in Nepalese society and the implication that has on child schooling. The study gives due importance on both children's and parent's perspectives.

My study on gender discrimination on the children's right to education helps to improve the understanding of children's lives in Nepal. Moreover, it helps to develop the understanding of how Nepalese children cope with work and schooling, their contributions and responsibilities to household maintenance.

The study is believed to be helpful for the government and policy makers to formulate and guide new policies and programmes based on the experiences and suggestions from children and parents on the given issue.

1.4 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis has been structured in 7 chapters in total. The first chapter has come up with the general introduction on gender discrimination and son preference along with the context of intra-household resources and child work. Furthermore, it provides the information regarding the objectives, research questions and the significance of my thesis. Chapter 2 provides detailed information about the country and study area in addition with the context of gender disparity. Chapter 3 presents basic theoretical concepts on the basis of research objectives to provide an insight for the further analysis and discussion of the empirical field work data. In addition, it provides the theoretical perspectives and frameworks which is the basis and the guideline for analysis and discussion. Chapter 4 focuses on the research methodology which includes processes of field work, methods of data collection and ethical consideration. Chapter 5 deals with the allocation of the intra-household resources along with household work burden, the daily live activities of Nepalese children and gender discourses prevailed in Nepalese society from children' and adult's perspectives. Chapter 6 deals with the socio-cultural factors to influence girls' education compared with boys' and its impact on child schooling. Finally, chapter 7 provides concluding remarks based on the findings of my study and recommendations for further research, policy and practice.

2 Background of the study

2.1 Geographical context of Nepal

The Federal Republic of Nepal is a landlocked country bordering India in its east, south and west, and China to its north. Nepal has a diverse geographic landscape covering approximately 147,181 square km, which varies from 60 to 8,848 metres above sea level (UNESCO, 2011:9). Nepal is rectangular in shape and stretches 885 kilometres in length (east to west) and 193 kilometres in width (north to south). It occupies an area from 26° 22' to 30° 27' north latitude and 80° 4' to 88° 12' east longitude; elevations range from 90 meters to 8,848 meters (Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, NDHS, 2011:1). The total population of Nepal is 26.6 million (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011a). Similarly, the Central Bureau of Statistics (2009) has recorded the crude birth rate as 27.7 and crude mortality rate as 8.3 per 1000 population. Likewise, the life expectancy rate is 64.1 percent, where female expectancy is slightly higher 64.5 percent than male 63.6 percent (CBS, 2009).

Topographically, Nepal is divided into three distinct geographical regions: mountainous region stands in the northern part, a central hilly region and a moist and fertile area in the southern part. Southern part of the country is known as Terai ¹ and commonly understood as the store of grains as well. Administratively, the country is divided into 5 development regions, 14 zones, 75 districts and 3,915 Village Development Committees (VDC). Kathmandu is the capital city as well as the principal urban centre (UNESCO, 2011).

The mountain region encompasses 35 per cent of the total land area, ranges in altitude from 4,877 meters to 8,848 meters above sea level. It covers a land area of 51,817 square kilometres. The region is not well developed in relation to transportation and communication facilities due to its geographical setting, very limited, and only about 7 per cent of the total population lives here (Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, NDHS, 2011).

In contrast, the hill region comprises of 42 per cent of the total land area. It ranges in altitude

¹ Terai: The plains located in the southern part of the country, bordering India

from 610 meters to 4,876 meters above sea level. The region is densely populated and about 43 per cent of the total population lives here, covering an area of 61,345 square kilometres. The region embraces the Kathmandu Valley, the country's most fertile and urbanized area. Transportation and communication facilities are much more developed here than in the mountains (Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, NDHS, 2011).

The Terai region, which lies in the southern part of the country, is regarded as an extension of the relatively flat plain lands of grainy soil. A large number of the population from the country rely on the grains and vegetables produced in this area. The region comprises only 23 per cent of the total land area. It is highly populated region in the sense that 50 per cent of the total population resides here and occupies area of 34,019 square kilometres. Similarly, it consists of dense forests, national parks, wildlife reserves, and conservation areas (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011a).

Nepal has a diversified ethnicity and culture. The 2001 census recognized 103 diverse ethnic/caste groups, each with its own distinct language and culture (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2003). The major groups are as follows: Brahmins, Kshetri², Magar³, Tharu⁴, Tamang⁵, and Newar⁶. Similarly, the census also identified about 92 mother tongues. Most of the ethnic groups have their own mother tongues and culture. Nepali is recognized as the official language of the nation which is also the mother tongue of about half of the population. Since it has been recognized as the official language, it is used and understood by most of the population throughout the country. In addition, the two other languages (Maithili and Bhojpuri) are also recognized as the major languages of the country which is spoken by about 12 per cent and 8 per cent of the population, respectively. The 2001 census identified

² Kshatri: privileged and the upper caste people

³ Magar: an indigenous ethnic group of Nepal

⁴ Tharu: an indigenous ethnic group in the Terai, the southern foothills of the Himalayas in Nepal

⁵ Tamang: inhabitants of the Himalayan regions of Nepal. They are one of the major Tibeto-Burman speaking communities and trace their ancestry from Tibet

⁶ Newar: people from Kathmandu valley, Nepal

Hinduism as the main religion of the nation since the majority of Nepalese are Hindus. However, there are also substantial numbers of Buddhists, Muslims, and Kirants ⁷(Central Bureau of Statistics, 2003).

2.2 Political history of Nepal:

Prior to the modern Nepal was formed; it was dispersed in different small kingdoms. In the latter half of the 18th century Prithvi Narayan Shah, the ruler of the small territory of Gorkha kingdom unified the country from a number of small independent hill states (Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, NDHS, 2011:1). After 1800, the heirs of Prithvi Narayan Shah were proved unable to maintain firm political control over the nation. The factionalism inside the royal family led to the emergence of the Rana ancestry with the Kot massacre by a military leader Jung Bahadur Rana. He assumed power by killing hundreds of military personnel and administrators loyal to Shah Rulers in 1846 (Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, NDHS, 2011:1). The condition had changed when the Rana family gained power. They established a new trend and deep-rooted itself through hereditary prime ministers limiting the monarch to being a “religious and ceremonial figurehead” (Caddell, 2007:1). The Rana regime was extremely criticised for their autocrat nature of ruling. This created the popular dissatisfaction against the family rule of the Ranas among the few educated people, who had studied in various Indian schools and colleges. Similarly, many of the Ranas were also marginalized within the Rana family due to Rana hierarchy ruling system. This recognized the return of the Shah family to power again. For this, king Tribhuvan was backed with newly emerging pro-democracy movements and political parties, which eventually, defunct the century-old Rana ruling system instituting a cabinet of government in 1951. During this period, a great deal of reformations had been set up in the system of government. Ultimately, multiparty democracy was established within the framework of constitutional Monarchy in 1990 (Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, NDHS, 2011:1).

The Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) was discontented against the system of multiparty democracy with constitutional Monarchy and launched a movement in 1996. During the constant conflict between Maoist and elected government, a large number of populations were

⁷ Kirat: indigenous ethnic groups of the Himalayas (mid-hills) extending eastward from Nepal

affected. They were displaced and migrated out of their usual places of residence to urban centres and neighbouring countries to escape the conflict and to search for employment (ibid). After a decade-long (1996-2006) civil war, Nepal is on the path to democracy. According to UN figures, the war left more than 13,000 people dead and an estimated 100,000 to 150,000 internally displaced (UNESCO, 2011). As the consequences of the conflict, a large number of children were directly affected. They were used in the war, killed or internally displaced with their parents. The people's mass movement of April 2006 compelled King Gyanendra to end his rule. The parliament was restored which initiated a peace movement that called for an end to the 10-year-long armed conflict (NDHS, 2011). After the restoration of the parliament, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was concluded in November 2006 and the monarchy was abolished a month later (UNESCO, 2011).

After the king Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah was dethroned with a public movement led by the alliance of seven-party, an interim constitution was drafted and dissolved the restored parliament to pave the way for interim government. The Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) also joined the democracy and the constitution assembly was held in April 2008. During this period the alliance of seven-party announced several remarkable structural reforms such as the abolition of the king ruling system, declaration of the country as secular and federal, civilian control over Nepal Army, nationalization of royal property, and empowerment of the prime minister as the head of the country (Dahal, 2008).

Educational right of the children had been explained and realized differently during the different political developments in Nepal. In the past, when Rana regime was in ruling power, no schools were operated for the general public. Education had been strictly prohibited for public. Only very few male people acquired education from the neighbouring country India. The reason behind why the public were not allowed to be educated was that the Ranas always wanted to be in power to rule over the country. They feared of the revolt against the tyrannical ruling system. Therefore, they never let the public to be educated during their regime.

Similarly, during Maoists home war, children could not enjoy their rights freely. A large number of children had been used for war purpose. The Maoists used to take shelters in schools compelling children to be away from school for several days and weeks.

2.3 Socio-economic context

Nepal has passed through many historical, social, political and economic transformations over past years. After the restoration of parliament in 2006, a new understanding among political parties has been created to provide hope for building a new Nepal. However, in the mid of 2011, the leading political parties were unable to reach to the goal pre-determined during the period of peace process agreement. Although some substantial developments have taken place after the peace process agreement between the government and Maoist, the main agenda is still in on-going process. According to the peace agreement, all the political parties along with Maoist went for the democratic competition of constitution assembly. Yet, the constitution is under-construction though the deadline has been expired time and again. The country has been facing several major developmental challenges such as establishing efficient and transparent government and administration, developing basic infrastructures (electricity, health services and roads), accelerating economic development and eradicating poverty at the moment. The political parties are struggling for their own government and power- share. As a result, the overall developments and the economic growth are retrieving far behind the prosperous economies of neighbouring countries. Beside its weak economic and political situation, the country is characterised by social inequality as well. Nepal is a common home for diverse ethnic groups and castes. Disparities in social status are the cost of a historical structured hierarchy, and the inequality in poor among the diverse social, cultural and linguistic groups. The unequal treatment between male and female is based on the gender hierarchy, considering male superior than female based on their ascribed role and responsibility. These various castes and ethnic groups speak different languages and follow different religious practices. They hold different status on account of where and which part of the country they are born. According to Hindu ideology Bramins and Kshetri⁸ are recognized as caste group and ascribed their status on the basis of the division of labour being highly educated, senior government officials and military officials (IIDS, 2008, Panday, et al., 2006). In contrast, ethnic groups are moderately homogenous as the members of this group are not further divided into sub categories in a hierarchical order internally. But the relationship between caste and ethnic people is governed by caste-based principles when they encounter each other. The ethnic groups of Nepal also differ from each other in terms of their religious faiths and practices, namely Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam (Pandey, et al.,

⁸ Brahmins and Kshatri: privileged and the upper caste people

2006). A person's status in Nepal is for the most part decided by birthplace, gender and caste/ethnicity (UNESCO, 2011:9). The discrimination against caste system was abolished in 1963 in Nepal. Yet, the country continues the deeply rooted concept of untouchability with the lowest castes that are being systematically excluded from the society. Untouchability is identified as one of the factors influencing non-enrolment or withdrawal of girls from school. Koirala (1996) asserts that Dalit and untouchable children are structurally and socially discriminated in education. The physical infrastructure and social environments of schools are discriminatory. Generally, Dalit children sit in back benches and are not paid proper attention by the teachers as well. Similarly, they do not have equal access to the resources and materials in school. School management committee also do not care much about such discrimination against Dalits by school teachers, peers, management committee members and guardians. They are discouraged to take participation in school activities, including teaching learning, extra- curricular and social activities (Koirala, 1996). As a result, Dalit children are distressed about their education.

Due to the political instability and lack of good governance, Nepal could not have followed the evolution in distinct potential sectors such as hydropower and tourism. In the recent years, many of the multinational investors have drawn their attention for the investments in such sectors. Lack of security and unnecessary disturbances by the workers and the trade unions are discouraging them in such prospects. On the other hand, the country's limited economy, lack of technological advancement, remoteness and the threat to the natural disaster stand to restrict the prospect of foreign trade (Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, NDHS, 2011).

The preliminary estimate of per capita gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices stands at Nepalese Rupees 41,851 for 2009-2010. The targeted economic growth of the country was 4.5 per cent in 2009-2010 but was reached only 3.4 per cent due to the slow economic growth in non-agricultural sectors. According to the Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010-2011, approximately one-fourth of the population lives below the poverty line (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011b). Since Nepal is an agriculture based country, most of the people's main occupation is agriculture. According to the Nepal Living Standard Survey (2010-2011) 76 per cent of the households are based on agriculture. Apart from this remittances have become one of the primary sources of income in Nepal, with nearly 56 per cent of households receiving some sort of remittance (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011c).

The watersheds in socio-economic development are entangled with politico-economics, and directly linked with the system of governance. Poverty has been a challenging issue for development in the current context of Nepal. Therefore, it becomes difficult to earn the daily wage for the survival of poverty stricken family who do not belong to sufficient resources such as land, education and other facilities. In such condition, as the family grows, all members have to earn by selling their labour. Accordingly, school-going children have to be dropped out in order to support the family (Devkota, 2007).

2.4 Research site

Sarlahi, one of the six districts of Janakpur zone, lies in Central Development Region of Nepal and the district headquarter is Malangwa. Sarlahi District Profile (2007) in Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2007) reports that the total land area of the district is 1259 square kilometres. It is surrounded by Mahottari district, Rautahat district, Sindhuli district and India in east, west north and south respectively. The district covers an area from 26°45' to 27° 10 ' north longitude and 85° 20' to 85° 50' east longitude; elevations range from 60 to 659 meters. The district is named after the name of a temple of Goddess Sarlahi which is located at Hempur, one of the VDCs in district. The district consists of 99 VDCs and a municipality (CBS, 2007).

Muslim, Dalits and Janajatis¹². In this district, various languages are spoken by different ethnic groups. Out of the total population of the district 37.2 per cent speak Nepali language (Sarlahi, District Profile, in CBS, 2007).

Since the district is bordered by the rivers with Bake and Hardi in the east and Bagmati in the west, it is severely affected by the flood in the rainy season largely destructing domestic property and agricultural land. The district covers the largest amount of arable land in the central development region. However, urban areas consist of some industries as well. The main resource for the survival of the livelihoods is agriculture with traditional tools and techniques. The district is rich in terms of arable fertile land, enough manpower, availability of electricity, easy access demographically, forests, rivers and open border to India. However, they have not been utilized effectively. The district is famous for cultivation of sugarcane, peanut, tomato and other vegetables (CBS, 2007).

Secondly, remittance is another major source of income and livelihood strategies of the general people. Beside this, very few people are engaged in small scale business and services in government and private sectors. The average living standard of the population among Dalit and backward ethnic communities is poor and illiterate.

Among the targeted population in study area of Sarlahi district poor, marginalized and disadvantaged groups have been deprived of social justice. The national policy and programmes organized by the government for the improvement of the socio-economic status has been out of reach to the target population due to corruption.

Among the total of 75 districts in Nepal, the Human Development Index reveals that Sarlahi district holds 39th position. According to the national population census of 2001, out of the total population of the district, marginalized and excluded communities comprise 206,543 occupying 37,553 households in total (CBS, 2007). Cast system

Teli: a caste traditionally, occupied in the pressing of oil in India, Nepal and Pakistan. Members may be either Hindu or Muslim

¹¹ Sudi and kaluwar: lower cast groups

¹² Janajatis: indigenous group of people

The recent political movements in the Terai have either created new or intensified old divisions based on caste, ethnicity, origin (e.g. Hill vs Madhes), and political affiliations. As these divisions have now become the basis for threats, extortions, bombings, abductions and killings, overall public insecurity, violence, and conflict have escalated jeopardizing the peace process. Terai/Madhes¹³ and its issues are, therefore, critical to the peace process, and there is an urgent need to support processes that would lessen the divisions, bring communities together to work towards a common vision, and deliver tangible peace dividends (UNDP,2002).

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2007) report based on Population Census (2001) reports that the district covers 0.86 percent and 2.75 percent of the total land and population of the country respectively. On the basis of the population, the district stands in the 6th largest district of Nepal. The total population of Sarlahi district is 635,701 in which 306,519 are females and 329,182 are males. The annual population growth rate of the district is 2.55 which come to be a bit higher compared to the national statistics. Mostly, the population of the district is rural in the sense that the urban population covers only 2.91 percent of the total district population. The district is relatively on the way for development in terms of the basic facilities like hospitals, markets, schools and transportation as compared to other districts of the Terai region. Since the facilities are more concentrated in urban areas, rural areas of the district still lack such basic facilities. A large number of marginalized and disadvantaged population like Madhesi¹⁴, Dalit are found in the district (Sarlahi, District Profile, in CBS, 2007).

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2007) report based on Population Census (2001) shows the overall literacy rate of Sarlahi district is 36.53 percent. The male literacy rate is much higher as compared to females. Similarly, the children's literacy rate is 45.29 percent, 30.74 percent and 11.15 percent in primary, lower secondary and secondary levels respectively.

¹³ Madhes: popularly used in Nepal interchangeably for its Terai region

¹⁴ Madhesi: people of Nepal those reside in the southern plains region, the outer Terai

2.5 Literacy and Education

The Nepalese education system turned into modern era after the end of Rana regime and education was given importance in Nepal. During Rana regime education was accessible to only the Rana family and few other people who were near to them. Broad-based development of popular education began only in the latter half of the twentieth century, in 1951, with the establishment of the Ministry of Education and the adoption of a constitution that made education a right for every Nepalese citizen (Stash and Hannum, 2001:360). Since then, various reforms were implemented with the aim for promoting universal and equitable access of education for all, at all educational levels, especially primary education. When National Education System Plan (1971) made the primary education free, a large number of children were advantaged. (Nepal Living Standards Survey 2010/11, statistical report vol. 1). Regarding the literacy rate in Nepal, a wide range of variety is found as shown by Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS, 2010-11). Overall, 61 percent of the population aged 6 years and above is literate. According to the data provided by (NLSS, 2011-2012), 72 percent of males aged 6 years and older are literate as compared to 51 percent of females. Especially, rural women are less literate as compared to urban ones. Gender disparities are explicitly realized in the rural- eastern and the central Terai, the mountains belt, and in the rural-mid and far western hills (CBS, 2011a).

Nepal made noteworthy progress in improving literacy from nearly five per cent (six years and above) in 1952/54, to 56 per cent (15 years and above) in 2008 (UNESCO, 2011). However, there are significant variances in literacy rate. Beside gender disparity, such variances include people from rural and urban areas, members of low and high castes, disadvantaged and privileged ethnic communities, and members of poor and rich families. The Government of Nepal launched a National Literacy Campaign in 2008 with the goal of achieving literacy for all within two years to balance such variation (UNESCO, 2011). The campaign was effective to raise the awareness about the importance of literacy among the general people. Yet, there remains a long gap between expectation of the campaign and the result it produced to achieve literacy for all. Despite some noteworthy achievements, yet, the country has to overcome major challenges of EFA by 2015. The greatest challenge is to ensure universal access and completion of primary/basic education. The challenge is even explicit within the disadvantaged and marginalized families. The main hindrance for achieving basic education for children is their level of poverty. Although the primary

education is free to all, the children from poor and disadvantaged are deprived of it due to their household responsibilities. Over five percent of children from disadvantaged communities are still out-of-school and repetition rates are also very high.

2.6 Education System in Nepal

The history of modern education system in Nepal goes back to the latter half of the 1990s when the formal education was opened for the general public. Thereafter, a number of reform plans were implemented including National Education System Plan (1971) and Education for Rural Development Plan during the 1980s. On the basis of the preliminary outcomes of these two reform plans and as a follow up of the “World Declaration on Education for All (EFA)” in 1990, the country introduced the Basic and Primary Education Programmes I (1992-1999) and II (1999-2004) in the education sector. Similarly, the country prepared the EFA National Plan of Action 2001-2015. Within its overall goals and objectives, the EFA Programme 2004-2009, and the Secondary Education Support Programme 2003-2009 were implemented. The plans and interventions adopted by the country helped to pave the way for moving towards a sector wide approach for a comprehensive development of education in Nepal (UNESCO, 2011).

According to the Article 17 of the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007), each community shall have the right to get a basic education in its mother tongue and that every citizen shall have the right to free education up to the secondary level. However, related acts and regulations need to be formulated (UNESCO, 2011).

The government of Nepal has implemented the School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP) to restructure the school education dividing into two levels from the school year 2009 with basic education (consisting of grades 1-8) and secondary education (consisting of grades 9-12). Basic education includes primary level which provides grade one to five years of education and lower secondary level provides further three years of education from grade five to eight. Similarly, Secondary schools offer two more years of education, while higher secondary schools also offer two more years of education after SLC (School Leaving Certificate). Early childhood development (ECD)/pre-primary classes (PPCs) are offered as building foundation and preparation for grade one. The age group population for ECD/PPC, primary, lower

secondary, secondary and higher secondary education has been prescribed as 3-4 years, 5-9 years, 10-12 years, 13-14 years and 15-16 years respectively (MOE, 2011).

In Nepal, schools are broadly categorized into four types: a) community-aided schools; based on the full support of the government for teachers' salary and other expenses, b) community-managed schools; fully supported by the government for teachers salary and other funds but community bears the management responsibility, c) community-unaided schools; getting partial support or no support from the government and d) the institutional schools; supported by parents and trustees). Besides these broad categories, there are several schools running on the religious grounds such as Madarasa, Gumba¹⁵/Vihar ¹⁶and Ashram/Gurukul ¹⁷(MOE, 2011).

The School Sector Reform Programme (2009-2015) has institutionalized the education sector structure with a basic level (grades 1-8) and secondary level (grades 9-12). The total number of schools registered at DEOs throughout the country in the school year 2011-2012 was 34,361 out of which 33,881 were primary and 13,791 were lower secondary. The distribution of schools by eco-belts shows that there are 4,176 schools in Mountain, 17,339 are in Hill, 2,213 are in the Valley and 10,633 are in the Terai. The government of Nepal has acquired significant progress in school enrolment in the past decade. From 2003 to 2010, net primary enrolment (grades 1-5) rose from 83.5 per cent to 94.5 per cent. During the same period, net secondary enrolment (grades 9-10) increased from 29.5 per cent to 46.5 per cent. In 2010, there were 6.6 million students enrolled in basic education (grades 1-8), and 1.1 million in secondary education (grades 9-12) in more than 33,000 schools (UNESCO, 2011).

The Government of Nepal has applied a number of strategies such as providing free tuition, textbooks and scholarships to bring all the boys and girls from the disadvantaged and marginalized communities into mainstream education. However, the enrolment rate of the marginalized and disadvantaged children is even worse due to their poor economic status. In particular, students from poor and disadvantaged families have least access to higher

¹⁵ Madarasa: religious school or college for the study of the Islam religion

¹⁶ Gumba/Bihar: religious school or college for the study of the Buddhist religion

¹⁷ Ashram/Gurukul: religious school or college for the study of the Hindu religion

education due to various reasons, including restricted financial assistance. The challenges seem to be more prominent in secondary education with low performance, effectiveness and learning quality. Similarly, there are very least number of students in science and technology stream from such poor community. Furthermore, the quality and relevance of higher education programmes need to make suitable to the labour market requirements in Nepal. Marginalized and disadvantaged population groups, particularly those in the rural areas, are still deprived of learning opportunities. The quality of literacy and non-formal education programmes in connection with income generation and lifelong-learning pose another challenge in the context of Nepal (UNESCO, 2011).

2.7 Legal provision and instruments to fight against gender discrimination

Historically, discrimination against women and girl had been formed and supported from the ground of religious belief. However, in course of time the country adopted and implemented a number of significant legislations to fight against the discrimination. The main areas in which women are discriminated against include their rights corresponding to nationality and citizenship, property, trafficking and sexual abuse, education, employment, health including reproductive rights, marriage and family and legal and court proceedings. In Section 2 of Article 11, the 1990 constitution states, “No discrimination shall be made against any citizen in the application of general laws on the grounds of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe, or ideological conviction or any of these” (MOLJ, 1999).

Considering gender parity for the welfare of children and empowerment of women, Nepal took another significant move to establish the ministry of women, children and social welfare (MWCSW) in 1995 following International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). It has actively given its due focus to mainstream gender into national development plans, policies, and programmes; advocating women’s empowerment and gender equality. Additionally, it has formulated initiating measures to remove socio-cultural, structural, and behavioural obstacles prioritising women’s full and equal participation in national development. The ministry paid its due attention for prioritising women in different government units to mainstream gender through training and sensitization workshops. With the aim of promoting meaningful participation of women in the national development process, the government of Nepal lunched a long term project ‘Mainstreaming Gender Equity Program’ (MGEP) under the ministry funded by UNDP. It took a leading and coordinating role in the successful engendering of the national census process in 2001 (UNFPA, 2007).

Furthermore, Interim constitution of Nepal (2007) in its article 13 (right to equality) states no discrimination against any citizen in the application of general laws on grounds of religion, race, gender, caste, tribe, origin, language or ideological conviction or any of these.

Nepal also ratified one of the key legal instruments United Convention on the Rights of the Child in November 1990. It submitted its first report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in February 1995. Since then, the major achievements made by Nepal in its implementation are the enactment of the Children's Act in 1992 and the approval of Children's Rules in 1994. Similarly, the nation ratified the ILO Convention against Child Labour in 1996, established the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare to address and ensure children rights. In addition, the development and implementation of the National Plan of Action to combat trafficking of women and children, and concerted efforts to implement the Children's Act of 1992 were some remarkable legislative steps (state party report, 2004). Such programmes are aimed at providing equal opportunities to girls reducing their work burden and improving access to school and health facilities. Programmes include extra-curricular education, early childhood development and water and sanitation in rural areas. Steps are taken to provide primary education in the mother tongue. The Government also provides scholarships for Dalit children (State party report, 2004).

Although the government of Nepal along with other related concerned authority adopted and implemented different provision on discrimination against women, the society still encompasses such discrimination.

2.8 Gender and Child work

In general, the unpaid work performed by the children is viewed positively in the sense of assisting in the family business and survival. In this regard, Punch (2001) opines the extent and nature of children's unpaid household work varies in different societies throughout the world. It largely depends on the cultural norms (particularly gender ideologies), wealth of household, parents' employment status, household composition and rural/urban setting. However, the paid work by the children under the hazardous condition is prohibited by the law and legislation. Nepalese law defines anyone below 16 years as a child. The Government of Nepal, as reflected in the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (1999), views child work as illegal under the age of 14 and hazardous work under the age of 16. Since the

law does not deal with family enterprises, domestic work, tea estates, agriculture and the informal sector (State Party Report, 2004), are taken as positive if it does not affect their schooling. Child labour is the product of the socio-economic condition of a country in the sense that if the family turns over through economic hardships, it directly affects the children and their education.

Nepal also cannot escape far from the problem of child labour. A large number of children are found working everywhere from disorganized to organized sectors (Pantha and Nepal, 2003). In this regards, NLSS (2010-11) report states that the overall incidence of child labour in Nepal is 42 per cent. The case is severe regarding the children between the ages of 10-14 years in comparison to children of 5-7 years old (CBS, 2011). The incidence is higher in females to males especially proportionate to domestic labour. Distribution of main sector of child employment shows that around three-fourth of children are in agriculture self-employment sector (CBS, 2011a).

There are sufficient evidences to attribute for the gender discrimination deeply rooted in the Nepalese society. Gender roles often affect parents' decisions on whether children should continue their schooling or go out to work. In families where resources are scarce, girls are often placed in a disadvantaged position compared to the boys. Consequently, their education is often sacrificed as the alternation of their brother's education. Domestic child labour is the continuation of the essential roles that men and women occupy and maintain traditionally. The high number of girls in domestic child labour reflects the impact of historical gender roles and reinforces gender segregation both in the home and labour market (CBS, 2011a).

3 Theoretical perspectives

This chapter presents basic theoretical concepts related to the research questions and objectives. The chapter comprises the theories to explain children's rights and voices from their own perspectives focusing on children as independent and competent actors. In addition, it further discusses fundamental concepts related to gender and discrimination.

3.1 The New Social Studies of Childhood

The new social studies of childhood came as a reaction to developmental psychology and socialization theory. Before 1980s, these two theoretical approaches were dominant in the researches on children and young people. Scholars used to be guided by the ideas and concepts of developmental psychology and socialization. However, these two theoretical approaches were exceedingly criticised by the scholars from sociology and anthropology during 1980s (James et. al. 1998, Jenks, 1996, Qvortrup, 1994, James & Prout, 1990). The work of Hardman (1973) was taken as the initiating point to challenge the previously existed mainstream theories with her explanation about children and childhood as self-regulating and autonomous phenomenon and should be studied from anthropological perspectives beyond the psychological explanation. Further, the most prominent book, *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*, James & Prout (1997) exclusively supported the idea of Hardman by viewing children as competent, complete human beings and not human becomings. The concepts and ideas propounded by them contradicted to the ideas and concepts of the dominant framework. As a result, the new social studies of children and childhood has been emerged as a new paradigm shift in the study of children and childhood.

The conceptual framework of dominant approach is based on child development and the three themes 'rationality', 'naturalness' and 'universality' pre-dominate to it in the study of children and childhood (James and Prout, 1990). Children used to be studied children and childhood on the basis of the ideas and explanations of these three themes. First, the dominant developmental approach to childhood is based on the idea of natural growth (Jenks, 1982). It claims that children undergo a natural growth order no matter where they are from. Second, it focuses on universality in the sense that children pass through specific pre-determined stages of growth and third, development into an adult representing a progression from simplicity to complexity of thoughts and irrational to rational behaviour in the same way (James and Prout, 1990).

Similarly, the theory of socialization asserted that socialisation was the process through which a child is transitioned from the state of human becoming into a human being. Socialization theory views at children as cultural dupes (Holt, 2004; James & Prout 1990) receiver of adult culture without creating their own. However, new sociology of children and childhood suggests that children are not only the receiver of adult culture to develop themselves from becomings to beings but also creators of their own cultures and values in the society.

The new paradigm of the Social Studies of Childhood represents six key features (Prout & James, 1990: 8-9). These are childhood is socially constructed; childhood as a variable of social analysis and can never be exclusively split from other variables like class, gender or ethnicity; children's social relationships and culture are worthy of study in their own right, independent of the perspective and concern of adults; Children are not to be viewed just as the passive structures but must be viewed as active category in the construction and determination of their own world in which they live; the useful methodology to study children is ethnography since it gives a chance to the children to use their direct voice and participation in the production of sociological data and the new paradigm of childhood sociology is a process of reconstructing of childhood in the society (Prout & James, 1990: 8-9).

The new sociology of childhood gives stress on voice of children looking at them as independent competent human beings with their own right (James and Prout, 1990) and studying them in their own right as units of observation (Saporiti, 1992 in Qvortrup, 2002). In addition, according to the new social studies of childhood, children are viewed as people with agency being capable of acting and taking decisions in specific contexts to influence and influenced by structures, systems and events in the family and society (Mayall, 2002; Qvortrup, 2002).

3.2 Childhood as Socially Constructed

The new sociology of childhood sees childhood as socially constructed phenomenon. Ideas about children and childhood change because they are dependent on their social, cultural and historical context (Montgomery, 2003:46) and varied across place and time. The paradigm of new sociology of children and childhood gives emphasis on the need to study children and childhood from a particular cultural setting rather than the universal perspective. A number of ideas and explanation are in practice to understanding children and childhood in different

society through historical time. Montgomery (2003) contends that the ideas and beliefs about children and childhood are the product of particular social and cultural settings. For instance, the ideas and concepts to understand children and childhood are different in the context of Global South than that of Global North due to a number of factors in play such as: gender, class, economy, cultural practice, socio-politico factors, ethnicity and so on. This is why the childhood practice in Nepal (Global South) is problematic to compare to that of Norway (Global North) and indeed, difficult to talk childhood as universal or single category. In this regards, Jenks (1996) argues that childhood cannot be understood as a natural phenomenon rather it must be understood as a social construct. In simplest words, children are not always and everywhere the same thing but are socially constructed and understood contextually. Since childhood is a social construct, children should be studied keeping in the mind of ethics and values of local context rather than applying the universal ethics in all the contexts ignoring the local, political, cultural, economic and social factors in play. In the context of Global North, childhood is the time of schooling and play and believed on work free childhood. On the other hand, child work is taken as natural phenomenon in the context of Global South combining with schooling and play. The important fact in this connection is that there are different ways of looking at and understanding children and childhood across place and time. Ennew et al (2005) put forward their opinion as child work depends on the way that society constructs childhood. Thus, ideas and understanding about children and childhood change as the societies and cultures change across time and place to which a child belongs.

3.3 Children as social actors

The Social Studies of Children and Childhood acknowledges that children are not only passive recipients of adult investments and training but active social agents in their own right. Hardman (1973:87) suggests that children must be “studied in their own right and not just as receptacles of adult teaching”. This approach puts the position of children in the active determinants of their own lives and seeks to give a voice to them from their own perspectives.

Children have been useful members of the society throughout the historical place and time. Their contribution is regarded as constructive activity because of the social and economic roles they play in the society (Qvortrup, 2002). Additionally, James and Prout (1990) state that children must be viewed as the active members in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of societies in which they live but

not just the passive subjects of social structures and processes (James and Prout, 1990). Many children are far more than 'mere helpers', often assuming full responsibility for certain household tasks particularly in the majority world where their contribution can be crucial (Punch, 2001). However, children's economic and social contributions tend to be systematically overlooked (and therefore undervalued) denying their views, perspectives and experiences. Though, the fact children's contributions are given little recognition but are still must be regarded as significant social actors who are capable of shaping their own lives. However, Wintersberger (1994:215) argues that "the precarious role of children as economic actors is not so much an economic phenomenon as it is the consequence of their weak position in society at large."

3.4 Children's Rights and Children's unpaid household Work

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the first binding universal treaty dedicated exclusively to the protection and promotion of children's rights (Fottrell, 2000). It is an extensively accepted international human rights treaty, embraces a comprehensive set of rights which includes civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the children (Franklin, 2001). UNCRC is regarded as a strong legal instrument to talk about the rights of the children regardless of their nationalities, casts, cultures, religions, etc. As the UNCRC came in existence, it brought various noteworthy changes in viewing children in the society. It focused children as the independent and competent social actors who have valid perspectives and experiences of their own lives and others.

The rights of the children specified by the UN convention are broadly classified into four basic rights inherent to the children:

1. **Provisional or Survival rights:** basic rights to children including the right to life and needs, such as nutrition, shelter, an adequate living standard, and access to medical services.
2. **Development rights:** include the right to education, play, leisure, cultural activities, access to information, freedom of thought, conscience and religion
3. **Protection rights:** safeguard children from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including special care for refugee children, children in criminal justice system and rehabilitation who have suffered exploitation or abuse of any kind

4. **Participation rights:** incorporates children's freedom to express opinions, to have a say in matters affecting their own lives, to join associations and to assemble peacefully. They have been increasing opportunities to participate in the activities of their society along with their physical and mental development.

Recognition of children's work in non- industrialized society of global south is not new phenomenon (James et al. 1998). It is evident that the involvement of children in unpaid household work is seen apparently in rural areas. Children's participation in household is determined by the socio-economic condition and cultural tradition of the family to which they belong to. In this sense, if the children are from poor family economic condition, they are found to participate more in the household voluntarily. In this regard, Robson, (2003) says children are increasingly recognized by the geographers and other social scientists as independent actors who make valuable economic contributions to households and society.

Children help their parents in the household work but the amount and type of their participation accumulates as they get older (Cogle and Tasker, 1982). In other words they accumulate their work as soon as they are capable and from a very early age (Gill, 1987). Child work tends to be initiated earlier in the majority world than that of minority world (Boyden et al., 1998). It means in the majority world children's household work is expected from the very early age of their life based on their capability. Similarly, all the family members including children are equally responsible in household maintenance from their own side particularly in the majority world. Children are expected to undertake unpaid household labor in a routine basis to contribute to the survival of the household (Guigit et al., 1994).

3.5 Children and Work: key debates

The provision and policy on children's right are established by an international group of expert. Yet, it is largely recognized that such provision and policy can not include the local realities in universal legislation. Thus, importing such provision is challengeable without ensuring the local knowledge is prioritised. Regarding child work, childhood studies draw the distinction between the traditional model of childhood, which recognizes children's capacities to look after themselves, to care for siblings, and to perform a working role within the household and family farms. On the other hand, a modern childhood tends to see children free from work requiring protection (Baker, 1998; Hinton, 2000). But these two models pertaining

to child work are made distinct based on broad social, political and economic changes, including the increasing availability of schooling of the local context (Baker and Hinton, 2001). Based on the current debates and controversies regarding child labour in the contexts of Africa and Asia, Abebe & Bessell (2011) identify and explore the following three ‘meta-perspectives’: 1) the work-free childhoods perspective; 2) the socio-cultural perspective; and 3) the political economy perspective.

3.5.1 The perspective of work-free childhood(s)

The perspective of work-free childhood concludes that children should not work. It presents the view of childhood free from work as a universal norm stressing on the elimination of child work globally. The ideology of work free childhood states that childhood is the time for school and play, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and...caring adult. As such, childhood...is a precious time in which children should live free from fear, safe from violence and protected from work, abuse and exploitation’ (The State Of World’s Children, 2005).

The ILO defines child labour as work that prevents children to enjoy their childhood, their potential and their dignity, producing harmful effects to physical and mental development. Therefore, the convention has consistently identified an appropriate age for entering employment - age at which compulsory education is completed. As a response, the international community has created a series of treaties to combat child labor. Most importantly, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), in its article 28 states that government should make primary school free and compulsory. Similarly, Article 32 of the UNCRC designates state party to assure the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous and harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development (United Nations, 1989). The conventions recommend states to consider 18 years of age as the end of childhood.

The ideology of work free childhood views childhood as a period of dependence, vulnerability and importantly learning. It puts emphasis on parental responsibility to treat children, both morally and economically, creating the favourable environment to provide formal education in moulding future adults. The perspective believes on the development of

children to their full potential in terms of outcomes in adulthood such as educational achievement, economic security, and healthy attachments. In addition, it focuses on the lack of anti-social habits purely in a school environment rather in work environment instead. Although the international community has attempted to eradicate child labour, the reality is that the issue still plagues our world. The goal of international policy should not be to ‘improve the conditions of working children but rather to bring about gradually a world-wide denouement to the tragedy of child labor – a denouement that will be nothing less than its total and final abolition’ (Mendelievich, 1979, cited in Abebe & Bessell, 2011:766). The work free childhood perspective adopts the western ideological norms and values to describe the children and childhood all over the world. It discards the cultural, geographical and sociological variations in the shaping of childhood across the globe and therefore, criticised as Eurocentric. Currently, the drive to prohibit and eliminate all forms of child labor completely by the international community has become problematic ethically since child labor is admissible for developing countries which see it as a cultural component and economic necessity.

In order to ensure the provisions based on global ideology of work free childhood, Nepal has set a number of national legislations and policy and adopted international legislation as well focusing on children’s educational right over child labour. Nepal is a signatory to the significant international conventions and legislations against child labour including ILO worst forms of child labour convention (No 182), minimum age convention (No 138), forced labour convention (No 29) and UNCRC (1990). The children’s Act (1992) was enacted to protect the rights of the Nepalese children to ensure their mental, physical and intellectual developments. The act defines a child under the age of 16 and prohibits the admission to any work as a labourer until they attend the age of 14 years. Following the ratification of ILO minimum age convention (No 138), Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1999 enlists the hazardous works and prohibits the admission of children below 16 years of age in such activities. The act regulates the working hours for children aged 14-16 providing no child to work from 6 am – 6 pm. Further, ratifying UNCRC (1990) article 28, Nepal focused on education. Preparing a core Education for All (EFA), Nepal has targeted the universal access to quality education to all Nepalese children by 2015. Furthermore, the interim constitution of Nepal (2007) ensures the right to receive free education from the State up to secondary level as provided for in the law.

3.5.2 Socio-cultural perspectives

The second approach to analyse debates and controversies regarding child labour is socio-cultural perspectives which discusses children's work has its own socio-cultural meanings and contexts. It means the perspective looks at child work as cultural construct. The perspective suggests that it is inseparably linked to the social and cultural context in which it takes place throughout the world. In this regards, Bourdillion and Nieuwenhuys argue that in order to understand children's work across the globe a number of diverse material and cultural conditions are to be considered as crucial factors. They vary in terms of age, capability and gender of the children involved (cited in Abebe, 2008:12). The socio-cultural perspective asserts child work as natural phenomenon advocating the right of the children to benefit arising from work appropriate to their age (whether paid or unpaid). The perspective believes on as Abebe & Bessell (2011) say child work as an initiation of socialization. It enables children to find friends, learn skills and lessons to develop themselves into adulthood which school curricula do not always teach. On the contrary to western countries, child work is acknowledged as inseparable part of the children' daily life activities in rural Nepal. In the context of developing countries, to prevent children from working has been criticised as 'Eurocentric' in the sense that poor children are often harmed rather than protected when prevented from working (Abebe & Bessell, 2011). Work helps to develop a child not only economically but socially and intellectually also. Nsamenang (2004) argues that children who are sent on errands and perform domestic duties demonstrate greater cognitive development than their non-working counterparts. Children's work contributions (paid and unpaid) play significant role to support the family economy making them realize the feeling of pride and self reliance, worth and self respect that brings on them by supporting the family.

The socio- cultural perspectives believe that paid work performed by children in income-generating sectors becomes one of the powerful means to empower them. With the benefits from such sectors, they will be able to satisfy their needs such as (buy a range of consumer goods; fund much desired travel, contribute to essential items such as food and paying school fees and uniforms) creating a meaningful economic support to the family. Similarly, it makes them more adaptable to participate in the labour force more effectively in future (Abebe & Bessell, 2011). However, the common trend of child work in Nepalese society is mostly unpaid (household and agricultural). Yet, a large number of the dropped out children engage in paid work under hazardous conditions as well such as (brick factory, carpet factory and

other production companies) to support in the family survival economically. Therefore, the approach concludes child work as a sociological and cultural phenomenon and needs to be considered in the context where it occurs.

In Nepali society each and every individual has a set of roles to be performed based on their age, sex and position within the family as well as the caste/ethnic groups to which they belong. From the socio-cultural perspectives, children are recognized as an important part of the resource constrained families. They hold culturally shaped behaviour of being obedient and respectful to their elders and take the responsibility to contribute to household maintenance. In the context of western industrialised societies age determines the types of work children engage in (McKechnie and Hobbs, 2007). In such societies children are mostly kept away from work, and even if they work, they are allowed to carry out very simple and normal tasks within a scheduled time. However, for many families in a society like Nepal, both children and parents do not perceive work as burden but a shared responsibility (Giri, 2009).

3.5.3 The political economy perspective

The political economy perspective strongly asserts that child work should be viewed by situating the livelihoods of children from the perspectives of social, cultural, demographic, economic and political transformations to which they belong. The lives of children and young people are affected by the local economic and political transformations. According to Abebe & Bessell (2011), such transformations include poverty, debt, corruption, war, geo-political conflicts, epidemics, unfair trade; structural adjustment programs (SAPs), inappropriate policies and ineffective legislation. The devastating impacts of such transformation fall on the lives of children, even in remote villages (Abebe & Bessell, 2011). In the present context, Nepal has been entangled through a number of political-economic factors such as high rate of population growth and political instability affecting the lives of entire population in many ways. As a result, the nation has been facing burning problems like slowdown in economic growth, foreign debt, and high rate of corruption, severe educated and skilled unemployment among youths, forcing them to leave the nation for employment in foreign lands. Similarly, the effect of some aspects of the structural adjustment programmes that the nation has adopted, have negatively affected the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by the population, and especially the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of society.

Structural Adjustment and economic restructuring policies was adopted after 1985 in Nepal. They were financed by the World Bank Structural Adjustment Credits (Guru-Gharana, 1996) due to the country's poor economic growth. The programs were designed to liberalize the economy putting more emphasis on privatization. As a result, a number of cut off was made for the subsidies on fertilizer, essential goods and services drastically. As the prices of numerous public utility services and petroleum products were increased many times multiplying the inflation rate of both inputs and consumer goods affecting the poor population directly. In doing so, for the survival of household economically, the household work which are shifted to women tend to be shared with children and in some cases completely transfer on to children (Abebe, 2009) to use their time in wage earning labour. This implies that children's work cannot be separated from material difficulties facing children and their families (Aitken et al., 2006 cited in Abebe, 2009).

Unlike socio-cultural factors in play, child work is result of poor economic condition which is a bitter truth in developing countries. Children from such countries are engaged in agricultural work (paid and unpaid), reproductive household works and other wage earning activities to compensate their poor economic condition. In this connection, Bass (2004) argues, child work rate is higher in countries followed by a lower level of income and where agriculture forms a greater part of national income compared to that of higher incomes and agriculture forms only small percentage of national income. As I discussed earlier in chapter 2 and 5 that agriculture holds the main economy of Nepal followed by remittances especially from golf countries along with some European and American countries. For such purpose, mostly the males are found to leave the family handing all the responsibilities over their females and the members of the household left behind and females seek support from their children. This partly explains why in rural areas a large number of the children are always found taking part in family agricultural and household activities. Therefore, the role of political economic process is vital in shaping the lives and livelihoods of children.

3.6 Gendered division of household work and distinct responsibilities

Helping parents in household chores is one of the responsibilities undertook by the children in many countries. In many parts of the developing world, certain chores performed by children are acknowledged as natural parts of their roles in the households to help them develop and socialize in the adult world. The household works that children engaged in are mostly unpaid

ranging from managing the household, cooking, cleaning, washing the laundry, shopping, gathering fuel, wood and water, collecting fodder, handling cattle and caring for other family members (younger siblings, the elderly and sick members) as well. Beside these activities children's unpaid work also includes the production of goods for home use and services that can be marketable. From the gender perspective, child work uncovers distinct differences in the tasks performed and constraints faced by boys and girls.

Most of the studies of children's household work have focused on gender as the main determinant of child labour allocation (Johnson et al., 1995). Punch (2001:809) argues that 'children's work can only be divided by the gender if the household composition enables them to undertake traditional gender roles.' She found in her research in rural Bolivia that children's work in the household is determined by their gender allowing them to fulfill stereotypical gender roles. Gender relation among the family members determine their various cultural and social roles to be performed and influences the practice of behavior pattern as well.

The relations between men and women and also between boys and girls, embedded and visible in ideologies and practices including divisions of labour and the ascription of different roles, behaviours and spatial realms to men/boys and women/girls (Robson, 200: 195).

Based on the respective gender, female children help their mothers in the domestic arena whereas male children help their fathers with household maintenance (McHale et al., 1990) or with agricultural work (Robson, 1996; as cited in Punch, 2001:806). The role of girls in household production is similar to that of women. Robson (2003) carried out a fieldwork on children's work in rural northern Nigeria and presented the evidences of children as independent competent social agents with significant economical contribution to their rural household challenging the general assumptions on children and childhood in the context of global south. In Hausa society, children used to engage in agricultural work, livestock care, gathering (of firewood, wild foods and fodder), processing of agricultural food crops and construction (house building and repair). She also found that the contribution made by children to support the unpaid household productive work within public and private places in different activity reflected the allocation of the work in terms of their respective gender. In

this connection, the work contribution of boys in Hausa society is linked with their fathers, mainly in household maintenance and agricultural production. For this, male head person is responsible to control and allocate the work for the junior and unmarried male. On the other hand, girl's work contribution is linked with mostly household reproduction to substitute their mothers and engage less in labour intensive work and agricultural production (Robson, 2003).

However, only concentrating on gender dimension as the determinant of children's work and responsibility distribution in households, Punch (2001) argues that the effect of birth order and sibling composition have been overlooked in research. Birth order and sibling composition of children in a household is present beyond gender factors to determine the allocation of household responsibility for the children of both sexes. Punch (2001) argues that the role of birth order of the children is vital to determine the work responsibility as the first born children participate more and very often at an earlier age compared to their younger siblings. However, the gender division of work responsibility for both boys and girls become neutral if a single child is present in the household or the children of same sexes.

3.7 Large households and responsibility burden

Children as the independent social actor make several contributions for the betterment of households. Many children are far more than 'mere helpers', often assuming full responsibility for certain household tasks particularly in the majority world where their contribution can be crucial (Punch, 2001). In many poor rural societies, child work is viewed as a natural process of socialization which teaches the child survival skills (Bekombo, 1981). This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. These kinds of activities contribute to children's development and welfare of their families; they provide them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life.

The most prevalent types of child work appear to be domestic and household-related duties (girls) and agricultural labour (boys), which are for the most part unpaid, under-recognized, and take up substantial amounts of time (Hunt, 2008:11).

It might be commonly assumed that if the household resources are limited, children in smaller families with a smaller number of siblings are supposed to do more work than those in larger families. However, Bianchi and Robinson (1997) argue that the average amount of time a child spends in household work proportionally increases together with the number of children. In other words, the amount of time a child spends in household works is directly proportional to the number of siblings. The more number of siblings in a household, the more work burden is increased for them.

As I have discussed in chapter 5, household composition of my research participants were structured as both nuclear and large types. On the basis of the data, it is evident that it was not realized more household work burden on the part of the children in small families where the presence of 1 or 2 siblings exist. However, in several large households, children are found to engage more in domestic and agricultural works. In line with the findings of Nag et al., (1978), involving the children of six years and above regarding the household activities they perform from villages in Java and Nepal, it is reported that the children with two or more siblings were found to have involved more in all work inputs than the children with one or no siblings. The results show that children in large families tend to have performed more work and are productive than those in small families. They further suggest the logic behind their result as: (1) based on the presence of elder siblings in a large family, younger children are encouraged by their elder siblings to engage in all kinds of work as they become physically capable as early as possible. (2) The older children of large families engage in productive activities directly transferring their household chore to their younger siblings (Nag et al., 1978). As children get older they become physically stronger, socially more responsible and have acquired more knowledge through experience and practice to take on gender specific tasks autonomously and their workload increases. They gain new responsibilities and pass down their duties to younger siblings in the same way that parents delegate jobs to their children (Punch, 2001).

Yamanaka and Ashworth (2002) in their research found that girls are supposed to work two times than the boys in a day. They further explain that girls bear more work burden and responsibility than the boys. Girls are found to spend more time in domestic activities including cooking, grinding grain, fetching water, washing the cloths, cleaning the house, caring of younger child and collecting firewood. On the other hand, boys are found to spend

twice of the time in school and playing than girls do. Similarly, Brannen (1995) in his research found Asian girls to do more non-routine based tasks and among girls the eldest bears more responsibility and workload since she has to teach to her younger siblings. However, he further argues taking only those who had younger siblings in the family; it is believed to be the girl's duty to do babysitting rather than boy with no differences by ethnic origin.

3.8 Gender disparity in household resource allocation and its contributing factors

Girls are facing considerably less participation in education, poor health and nutrition outcomes, more housework burden, less time for entertainment and play than boys in many of the poor and developing countries. One of the explanations of such difference in child outcome is gender discrimination in the intra-household allocation of resources prevailed overwhelmingly. In many of the South Asian countries, Parent's first preference goes to boys over girls, both in monetary terms and in the time allocated to each child.

Empirical evidence suggests that gender bias is considerable in some developing countries. Rose (2000) found another fact that women spend more time with the children in the household after she has given birth to a baby boy. On the other hand, after the birth to a baby girl they should be busy in household and other works more rather than spending time with the children. There is considerable evidence of excess female mortality and morbidity in South Asia, especially amongst children (Das Gupta, 1987) that attributed to discrimination against female children in the intra-household allocation of food and health care (Basu, 1989; Harriss, 1990). In addition, girls are discriminated against the allocation of intra-household resources in education as well. They tend to have lower completed schooling than boys. Strauss and Beegle, (1995) suggest that the intra-household allocation of resources among children is not guided by inequality aversion or by needs alone but are consistently with parental preference of boys over girls, with the higher returns to investment in boy's education. In certain contexts, female members are allocated with fewer resources. One of the main reasons for not investing more resources in girl's education is the lower return expectation from girls as opposed to boys in countries where women and young girls have considerably fewer opportunities than men in the labour market. Similarly, the girls will not be able to fulfil the expectation of their parents as they are no longer the properties of their

natal parents after marriage and devote their time and resources towards husband's family (UNESCO, 2003). In the resource constrained household, fewer girls than boys may be able to attend school. Girls also may have more housework responsibilities than boys affecting their school attendance and performance with poor educational outcomes (UNESCO, 2003). The common explanation of gender gap in education is the outcome of labour market discrimination against women and young girls in developing countries (Kingdon, 1998). In contexts characterised by both limited resources and discrimination against girls, they do not have equal access to the nutrition and paid health services. Bhalotra and Attfield, (1998) found that regarding health issues in India, parents may have gender bias. They are found to wait longer time for a baby girl to take to the hospital for the treatment than they do with their baby boy, leading to differences in health outcomes. In such particular contexts, girls and young women are more likely to be undernourished than boys and young men.

Childhood is the period of play and entertainment, as article 31 of the UNCRC states "State parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and arts". The amount of time children spend for play and entertainment is different from one child to another (Alsaker & Flammer, 1999). Furthermore, children (both girls and boys) generally follow the diverse patterns of activities (Bianchi & Robinson, 1997) and basically depend on cultural context of a particular society to which they belong. The types of activities, individual choices, and socializing experiences provided in a particular country may also vary according to the gender associated with them (Crouter & Head, 2002).

It is identified that children enjoy their after-school hours as an important part of their day (Larson & Richards, 1989) since they remain free partly from the regular and controlled environment of the school. During after school time, they get an opportunity to play, socialize, do homework, participate in sports, listen to music and other enrichment lessons, and simply relax (Posner and Vandell, 1999). Free time of the children can be filled with a wide variety of unrestricted leisure and social activities, from playing sports to talking to idling (Larson & Verma, 1999).

3.9 Gender and discourses

Various discourses are associated with gender to make difference between boy and girl and so as the way to treat them differently is largely prevalent in most of the South Asian societies. In patriarchal nature of Nepalese society, such discourses are combined with rooted socio-economic and religious values along with traditional customs and gender roles to offer a different value for sons and daughters. Nanda et al., (2012) in their research report documented that the attitudes of the people towards son preference is superior in Nepal based on their age, caste and religion. People of older ages and caste as disadvantaged (Non-Dalit and Dalit) revealed higher degree of son preference respectively. Similarly, religious minority's caste had a higher proportion of men with higher son preference.

In a typical patriarchal Nepalese society, girls are considered as a financial burden for the family (Gittelsohn et al., 1997). It is believed that all the resources and investment on girls becomes meaningless as they leave their natal house once they get married. Further, financial burden is associated with the marriage system of young girls where the provision of dowry is intensely entrenched. Daughters might represent a substantial economic burden in places where their parents provide a dowry (Clark, 2000). The system is constant high-flying in Terai region, especially with Madhesi community. According to this culture, families having more daughters lead to the economic collapse severely affecting the family economy since they have to pay huge amounts of money as dowry. However, the system is not restricted to the Terai communities only, but is equally prevalent in hill communities as well. The only difference between these two communities is the form of dowry in which in Terai, payment is made in both cash and kind, while in hill communities, household items and ornaments. On the other hand, sons are supposed to protect the family property and status among the Nepalese. In this regards, the birth of a girl is considered to be followed by misfortune and occasionally, might result in abandoning a wife who does not bear sons. The married males become proud of themselves if they have sons in their family as fathering a son is believed to be an indicator of their masculinity (Nanda et al., 2012). However, the birth of the daughter is also preferred in some of the Nepalese families. The only fear is to bring shame in the family by running away with someone else without letting the parents know.

Although having at least one daughter in the family is said to be welcomed, but followed by the birth of some more daughters would be the matter of headache among parents. Nanda et

al. (2012) reported that most families do not celebrate the birth of a daughter. They further documented that if a daughter is born in the family, they let it know to their neighbour after some weeks and months only. On the other hand, the birth of a son is celebrated largely just spreading the news to all the relatives and neighbours as soon as possible. The high value paid to son is mainly entrenched in socio-cultural, economic and religious practices (Miller, 1981).

4 Methodology

This chapter discusses about the research methodology and methods that were employed to conduct this research following the procedures of data collection. Before entering into the procedure of data collection methods, it is worthy to make the clear distinction between methodology and methods in research. Methodology is the overall approach that guides the research and the choice of research methods. On the other hand, while methods refer to the particular tools employed in order to obtain empirical material. It is the imperative tool by which relevant information is elicited from the informants. Since the focus of my study is with children, therefore, the methods I chose was based on the research topic following qualitative research methods. The research trend in Childhood Studies over the course of the last two decades has been towards qualitative approaches to research that recognise children as sophisticated and credible commentators on their own lives (Christensen & James, 2008; Kellett, 2010). Elliot et al. (1999) further contend that qualitative research aims to understand and represent the experiences and actions of people as they encounter, engage, and live through situations. In qualitative research, the researcher tries to develop understanding of the phenomena from the perspective of those being studied as much as possible.

The chapter begins with the sampling procedure followed by accessing participants and gatekeepers along with background information of research participants (children and adults). Since the study was based on qualitative research, participatory methods such as observations, semi-structured interviews, essay writing and focus group discussions were used as the sources of data collection. In addition, the chapter deals with ethical consideration, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, field work challenges and limitations during field work. The data collection took place dated back from November 12 to December 28, 2012 in the rural area of Sarlahi district of Nepal.

4.1 Sampling procedure

For the purpose of sampling of my research participants, I employed non-probability sampling technique, known with various names as deliberate sampling, judgemental sampling and purposive sampling (Kothari, 2007). Founded on the aims of the research, the researcher selects the participants deliberately. Marshal (1996) states that in purposive sampling the researcher based on the practical knowledge of the research area actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research question developing a framework of the variables as

age, gender and social class that might influence an individual's contribution. It might be advantageous to study a broad range of informants (maximum variation sample) or informants with particular expertise (key informant sample) (Marshall, 1996). Since the informants were noticeable in the field area, therefore, it was a suitable sampling method over snowballing. Snowballing sampling is also considered a type of purposive sampling which is useful for recruiting hidden informants. It is exclusively based on participant-initiated referrals. Thus, only participants who share some social network would be reached. The inherent threat in simple snowballing is that the social network of members will be limited, accordingly limiting the application of the findings (Penrod et. al., 2003).

The target population of my study were children from secondary public school in the research site. The school where I conducted the research had included a large number of students around Nine Hundred in total. Therefore, for the sampling of participants, it was not required to visit different schools. I was supported by a local secondary teacher to get access with the research participants. For this purpose, I frequently used to contact him in order to get a detailed understanding of the context which best suit to my aims of the research from Norway. In course of the communication between me and the local teacher, I made him understand my aims of the research to find out the best suitable participants. When I reached to the field site and met him, he gave me a list of the participants including 10 boys and girls each from diverse background. I collected all the children in a classroom who were in the list to find out whether they were my appropriate participants. I made sure that the children have experienced unequal treatment based on their gender and have basic knowledge on the research topic. In this way, since this study intended to explore children's views and experiences of gender discrimination in education, I made sure the selected research participants were precisely applicable. Besides, by employing the purposive sampling method, I judiciously selected five teachers from the same school and five parents from the community.

4.2 Accessing participants and gatekeepers

Regrettably, I reached to the field area during festivals of the local population when I found the schools were closed for a week. In this situation, it was difficult for me to get introduced with my research participants in school setting. Therefore, to overcome this problematic situation, I took help of the same teacher whom I frequently used to communicate before

arriving in the study area. I got chance to meet with some of the children in the community with his support. When I met some of the children at their home, at first they were rather frightened and surprised because of the teacher who was with me. The teacher introduced me who I was, where I was from and why I was there which made the situation fairly comfortable. Then, I first introduced myself as a student studying abroad and have arrived in the study area for fieldwork with the aim of studying on gender discrimination and children's right to education. Introducing me as a researcher was not fruitful enough to balance the power difference between me and the participants. Therefore, to make the situation comfortable, I engaged myself with them in their Deusi Vailo programme during festivals. I invited them to my home and celebrate the festival. During this time, I got the opportunity to get to know with the parents of my research participants. I got the permission voluntarily from guardians and parents to employ their children for the study. After a week, the school was resumed. I went to the school and introduced myself in detail. For this, I presented a letter of introduction from NOSEB to the head teacher. Accordingly, he permitted me to conduct my study in the school setting. I was not escaped with the problem of getting access of the research participants again due to the absence of some of the pre-determined participants for the first few days. To manage this situation and fulfil the number of the participants, I changed the required participants by discussing with the class teachers from grade 7, 8, 9 and 10. Yet, I was confused whether the participants were suitable for the aims of my study. For this, I inquired them about their personal information and family background for the verification.

Getting access of the school teachers for the study was not much difficult. However, some of the parents and guardians mistook me as a person working for the donor organization (Abebe, 2009) from Norway as they knew very well that I have been there for more than a year. In this situation, I took help of some other parents to make them understand who actually I was and why I was there?

4.3 Background characteristics of participants

The research participants of my study were from a diverse society. The individual's perceptions in the society were influenced by the social variables such as age, gender, religion, occupation, socio-economic status as well as socio-cultural traditions and values.

Table 1: Child Participants

Age	Gender	Religion	Grade	Community
13	Male	Buddhist	7	Tamang
13	Male	Hindu	7	Kshetri
13	Male	Hindu	8	Madhesi
14	Male	Hindu	8	Brahmin
14	Male	Buddhist	8	Tamang
15	Male	Hindu	9	Brahmin
15	Male	Hindu	10	Madhesi
15	Male	Buddhist	9	Tamang
16	Male	Hindu	10	Madhesi
16	Male	Buddhist	10	Tamang
12	Female	Hindu	7	Kshetri
13	Female	Buddhist	7	Tamang

4.3.1 Age and gender of young participants

The research participants included in my study were ranges from the ages of 12 to 16 years including twenty children (ten boys and ten girls) altogether.

4.3.2 Family background of children

Most of my child participants were distinct from each other on the basis of their family structures, birth compositions, parents' occupations, their socio-economic status, level of education and so on. A large number of my participants were from nuclear family while some others were from joint family as well. The participants were from farming class and other backgrounds as I described below. The main occupation of Nepal is agriculture. Especially in the rural villages, most of the people earn their daily lives through farming. Despite farming some of them were engaged in various occupations such as working as migrant worker in abroad, teaching and small family business. The levels of education of the parents were from Junior/Senior secondary school to bachelor's degree and adult education for the few mothers.

4.3.3 Adult participants

Table 2: Parents/Guardians

Age	Gender	Occupation
37	Male	Migrant Worker
47	Male	Agriculture
48	Male	Agriculture
51	Female	Agriculture
52	Female	Shopkeeper

Table 3: Teachers

Age	Gender	Designation
58	Male	Head Teacher
52	Female	Secondary
39	Male	Secondary
46	Male	Lower Secondary
48	Male	Lower Secondary

I deliberately, selected five parents and five teachers as my adult participants. The teachers and parents whom I included in the study were within the age group of thirty-seven to fifty-two years. Out of five teachers one was head teacher (male), two lower secondary teacher (male) two secondary teachers (male and female each). Similarly, out of five parents three were male and two were female. Regarding occupation, out of five parents three were involved in agriculture as their main occupation. In addition, a male parent was migrant worker working in the gulf countries who came back just two weeks before and the other was a local shopkeeper. Adult participants were selected to go deeper inside the various gender discourses that influence the distribution of household resources differently for boys and girls.

4.4 Sources of data collection

The views, perceptions, motivations, reflections, etc. of children and adults were the primary sources of data in the research. Furthermore, various reports, journal articles, newspaper articles, books, previous researches, etc. written on the phenomenon were also consulted to get deeper insight of the issues for the theoretical back up and justification of the research. The following research methods were employed to elicit the information.

4.4.1 Observation

It is a useful method in child research since it enables the researcher to study a group of participants together. The main strong point of the method is that it directly observes the social phenomena under investigation enhancing the quality of information available. It has advantages over other qualitative methods of data collection to the ways in which the focus of research is on understanding actions, roles and behaviour- and how these can alter in response to situations and over time (Walshe et al., 2012: 1). Instead of relying on the report extracted from asking someone what they would do in a certain context, an observer actually observes and records their behaviour in a particular situation. On the other hand, using an interview or questionnaire method, for example, the participants may not always provide accurate or complete information. The information might be manipulated in ways that correspond to what is socially desirable. In its simplest term, an interview seeks the information from someone on what they do; an observation observes what someone does directly (Walshe et al., 2012). During the process of data collection, an observation method was followed in different settings, such as in school, home and community. The method was focused to explore the participant's behaviour regarding gender specific duties and responsibilities and its impact on their educational right. For this, the participants were observed without letting them know that they were being observed.

I employed non-participant observation method to have an observation of my participants regarding their daily lives and gender specific roles and responsibilities. It is a relatively modest qualitative research strategy which does not necessarily involve in interaction directly with the participants to elicit primary information about various aspects of the children's social world. In this regard, Spradley (1980) opines non-participant observation does not involve any level of involvement with insiders. He further contends that the observer can observe the participants from an entirely different environment without being present on the

scene. However, unlike non-participant observation method, participant observation method includes the absolute presence of the observer in some ways influences the behaviour of those being observed. In addition, it includes the observer's bias on as Dewalt and Dewalt (1998) state to what extent he/she will participate in the lives of the participants and whether to intervene in a situation. Similarly, participatory methods might create difficulties in maintaining the role of the researcher as well including subjectivity and bias as potential weaknesses (Walshe et al., 2012).

As a non-participant observer, I sometimes was physically co-presented with the children in a real-life setting but other times was absent. As soon as I identified the real participants for the study, I started studying the children in their native environment in order to understand things from their perspective (Baker, 2006).

Ennew et al. (2009) state Observation can also be structured according to specific times of day or night, with different groups and activities and at a variety of places (Manual 5: 5.5).

In order to observe children's daily lives based on their gender specific roles and responsibilities, I separated the time schedule from early in the morning to night. Accordingly, I divided the observation setting into morning and evening at home and in community and day time at school. Most of the children in the study were from grade 9 and 10 who had a different time schedule for their daily lives than that of the children from grade 7 and 8. In this sense, it was difficult to observe the children from grade 9 and 10 before and after the school hours since they used to be busy in extra tuition classes. The reason was that it was the time for preparation of school leaving certificate exams (SLC). Therefore, the time schedule of evening time after they returned from the tuition classes proved to be fruitful for the observation. The observation procedure during holidays was even more fruitful for me in the sense that during these days they had different schedule for their daily lives. During evening time and holidays I had close contact with the children to understand them and their daily live activities.

4.4.2 Interview

Generally speaking, interview is a conversation between two people to deal with a particular topic focusing on conceptual clarity and understanding. In an interview the act of asking questions and listening to the children flows simultaneously about their lived worlds, about their dreams (Kvale, 2007). It is a useful method to understand the interpersonal reasoning of the children in their own words, and learn about their school and work situation, their family and social life. He further defines that the research interview is an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and interviewee. In addition, Gudmundsdottir (1996) says that the interview situation is regarded as an interactive and structured context where information and interpretation flows both ways. Through this method the researcher not only collects the information of the children about their lives but also develops good interpersonal relationship. Similarly, Ennew et al. (2009) define interview as ‘a method of data collection involving a researcher asking questions of a research participant’. They further explain that ‘interview methods include informal, unstructured discussions on undefined topics, semi-structured interactions about pre-defined topics, and a variety of questions, which can be responded to by talking or writing’. Hancock (1998) suggests that interview method can be followed at two extremes; at one extreme, it is well structured and well prepared. It is presented in an identical way followed by a strict predetermined order to each interviewee. At the other extreme, interviews can be completely unstructured, like a free-flowing conversation. Semi structured interview method is very useful and effective in qualitative research since it makes uses of a number of open ended question based on topic to be covered. It provides more opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss upon the topics in more detail. Semi structured interview method was followed for the information collection because it could be useful to frame the follow-up questions that build on the responses received (Brenner, 2006).

For this, an interview guide was prepared before going to the field reflecting the main themes of my research questions. However, I realized some problems with my interview guide that I prepared before going to the field. The problem was some of the questions were not suitable according to the level of the children which I came to know during the first two interviews. Therefore, I had to make some changes to the interview questions based on the feedback. The questions were more theoretical to understand by the children. It was later solved by using child friendly language and concepts. For example, sometimes I found problematic for the

young children to understand the general term gender discrimination. I made the situation intelligible by replacing the general term into the child friendly language as unequal treatment among brothers and sisters to make my field work flexible and creative. I used some cues or prompt to get deeper upon the topic when the children gave very restricted answer but other times remained silent in the interview process (Hancock, 1998). Three different types of interview guides were prepared for children, teachers and parents/guardians respectively. Interview guide for the children was focused to explore the children's perspectives with reference to allocation of resources and gender discrimination on boys' and girls' right to education/schooling. Similarly, the theme of the interview guides for teachers and parents/guardians were based on prevailing discourses on boys and girls. In addition, the interview guide included the questions about the education children receive, influences of socio-cultural practices on child education from adult perspectives.

Out of 20 children 16 were interviewed in different setting such as in school and at home based on the comfortable situation for them. More number of interviews was conducted in school setting and few at the children's home. Similarly, a girl was interviewed at my home on the way to her home since after she reached her home she had to leave for harvesting paddy. The reason behind choosing school setting for interview was based on the factors and considerations as favourable place to conduct one to one interview, gathering of a group of children at a place for focus group discussion to save the time of research process (Solberg, 1996). Similarly, I interviewed some of the participants at their home during evening since they would be free after performing their household works.

Furthermore, five teachers from a local school where the children studied were also interviewed to collect more information from adult perspectives. Most of them were interviewed at school when they were in leisure period. However, a teacher whom I used to contact from Norway was interviewed at his own home. In addition, the interview with parents or guardians took place in their own houses in the morning and evening. The parents who worked in service sector were interviewed in the morning since they leave for the office only after 10 A. M. On the other hand, farming parents were interviewed in the evening when they had returned from their farm work. Both of the interviews with children and adults took place in Nepali language to which both (participants and researcher) was greatly familiar. But in interview with Madhesi parent, I realized language barrier on their part since they could

understand Nepali language moderately well but could not response. I managed this situation since I could fairly understand their local language. Besides, I sometimes took help of my child participants as an interpreter to make the meaning clear. During interview I noted down some of the key information followed by voice record. I managed to record all the interviews with the help a voice recorder that I borrowed from NOSEB. During interview some participants were outspoken and some were of shy nature. Mostly boys were outspoken and did not hesitate to express their views and experiences. But most of the girls were of shy nature and did not speak more than necessary. A large number of them were from Madhesi community. For such girl participants, I provided the clues of the responses to initiate the conversation under the topic of investigation. On the other hand, for the outspoken children I had to switch off the conversation to bring back to the topic. The interviews were ranged from short- long. They were twenty minutes long in average.

4.4.3 Essay writing

Essay writing was another method for the data collection in my study. Ennew et al. (2009) put their opinion that essays written by the individual children will be the most productive method in research with children (manual 5: 5.6). This research method is effective because children may hesitate to express all the information orally in interview while essay writing enables them to express the ideas freely in their writing. For this, I collected all the participants in a classroom with prior consent to take part on essay writing. I distributed a notebook and a pen for each of them. Then, I clarified the purpose of distributing note books and pens and told the theme about which they had to write. Further, I wrote the topic of essay writing as ‘Write an essay explaining your daily activities at school, at home and outside’. For this, I managed the best suitable time of after school on a Friday since during Friday classes used to be over after half time. The answers written by the participants were ranged from page one to three. Nearly half of the answers were similar while other halves were genuine. I was very much aware of the children’s time to be used in writing essay since their schedule was very busy. They had to do their school homework, perform household chores after their school and tuition period. In order to overcome this problematic situation, I gave them a week period so that they could use their free time during weekends as well.

4.4.4 Focus group discussion

Most researchers agree that focus group discussion is the purposeful use of interaction in order to generate data (Merton et al. 1990, Kitzinger, 1996, Morgan, 1996). At the simplest

level, as Wilkinson (2004) defines a focus group is an informal discussion among a group of selected individuals about a particular topic. In this method, a group of informants are facilitated by a facilitator (researcher) in the discussion process to generate the useful information on a given topic. Ennew et al. (2009) state it as ‘carefully planned discussion among small group led by a trained facilitator (or ‘moderator’), designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. It is very useful method to collect rich and detailed information about feelings, thoughts, understandings, perceptions and impressions of the participants in their own words.

It is a form of interview with group interaction as a distinguishing feature for reaching in-depth of the issues and constructing meanings but as Hennink (2007) not to reach on the consensus on the discussed issues. He further argues focus groups ‘encourage a range of responses which provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, behaviour, opinions or perceptions of participants on the research issues’ engaging them in a dynamic discussion for one or two hours (2007:6). According to Ennew et al. (2009) a focus-group discussion comprises of eight to fifteen children with the same characteristics based on their gender, age, work, education, etc. However, Stewart et al. (2009) put emphasis on the focus group method as a flexible research tool to elicit information from any topic, diverse groups of people and in diverse settings.

I employed this method with a group of children for open discussion on a given topic. They were encouraged to present innovative ideas. The first thing that I did before starting the field work was preparation of the interview guide for the focus group discussion. During my field work, I conducted two focus group discussions to get more understanding about children’s experiences and perspectives on gender discrimination. A total of 16 children from grade 7, 8, 9, and 10 were involved in the discussion. Out of them, 10 were girls and 6 were boys within the age group of 12 to 16. The reason behind the involvement of more number of girls than boys was that girls were supposed to be more interested in my research topic which was closely linked with their daily live experiences of gender discrimination as well. With the help of a school teacher, I collected the interested participants in one of the class rooms after school hour to prevent any distractions from others. I divided them into two (eight each) heterogeneous groups in terms of age, gender, grade, ethnicity,, economic, educational and cultural backgrounds in order to produce rich information (Calder (1977) and to increase the

dynamics of the discussion in order that many of the perspectives will be expressed (Flick, 2006). Then, I chose one of the groups to undertake focus group discussion that very day and let the other group to go for next day. Before starting the actual focus group discussion, I presented the themes to be discussed and some norms and values of the discussion. They were encouraged to express their perspectives on gender discrimination based on their everyday life experiences. I managed myself for the audio recording of the discussion with prior consent from the participants.

During the FGDs children were supposed to be confused how to initiate with the themes in the first few minutes. In this situation, I tried to manage it by giving some more cues based on the themes which made them comfortable. The process went progressively and effectively at the later part of the FGDs. Open-ended questions were used at the start of the discussion because they allow participants to answer from different angles. It gave the opportunity to express the life experiences from their own perspectives based on the specific situation (Escalada and Heong, 2009). They presented very interesting facts regarding their experiences on the themes. However, focus groups might be influenced by one or two dominant participants in the whole session resulting in to biased output, which is one of the main drawbacks of it (Sherraden, M. et al. (1995). During FGD, I faced some problems with the tendency of the participants. Some of them were found to dominate the discussion without letting others chance to present their views. Furthermore, some of the participants were of shy nature and found hesitated to take part actively in the discussion. To overcome with this problem and to provide everyone to share their views, I sometimes intervened the discussion as well. At last of the each discussion, I summarized the main themes and asked them again to let the chance to add anything that they were willing.

4.5 Ethical consideration

Ethics is "a set of moral principles and rules of conduct which relates to the application of a system of moral principles to prevent harming or wronging others, to promote the good, to be respectful and to be fair" (Sieber, 1993:14). However, Morrow and Richards (1996) argue as we (adults, parents and researchers) do not have a tendency to be more respectful to the voice of the children in everyday social life. As a result, it is more challengeable to develop the research strategies that are fair and respectful to the subjects of our research (Morrow and Richards, 1996). In such case ethical issues should be taken into consideration in the research with children since they are vulnerable enough. Vulnerable in the sense that as Lansdown

(1994) suggests in two respects; first they are inherently vulnerable because of their physical weakness, lack of knowledge and experience. Second, they are structurally vulnerable since they lack of political, civil rights and economic power. While researching with children and young people, an adult researcher needs to be much serious to avoid any harmful effects on the part of the children. Since children are vulnerable, they need to be protected and should not be put into any threat. During the research process a researcher may face a great deal of ethical dilemmas. Ennew at al. (2009) suggest such dilemmas need to be dealt with throughout the research process, from choosing a topic to disseminating the reports.

4.5.1 Informed consent

The first thing that I did before starting my field work was to obtain consent from the related stakeholders including children. As I was studying the children in both school and community settings, I had to go through some *professional gatekeepers* (Cree et al.) which included governmental, non-governmental and local authorities (Abebe, 2009). I was conducting my field work at a local school and community. Therefore, the professional gatekeepers whom I consulted for the consent were mainly the head teacher and the village secretary. Further, I did not discard the importance of adult gatekeepers as the parents and/or guardians of the research participants. At last, as children were my primary research participants, I took consideration of their interest to include them in my study. According to new sociology of children and childhood children are viewed as the independent social actor to make decision on their own. As a researcher I listened to children as competent participants, which involves respecting their informed consent to participate as well as their right to decline involvement or withdraw from research (Farrell, 2005).

During getting consent from the school principal as professional gatekeepers and village secretary as local authorities, I went to them and explained the purposes of the study, its objectives and intentions along with a letter of introduction from NOSEB. It helped them to understand me as a student who involved in the data collection for his studies and nothing else. They recognized the value of the field work and co-operated positively in granting their institutional consent (Abebe, 2009).

I took the consent verbally from the concerned authorities including children. For this, I orally explained the purpose of the study and intension towards the research participants. They were

informed that I was there for the purpose of collecting data as a student from Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Then, children were asked to take part in my research study voluntarily. They were informed explicitly the duration it takes place and possible advantages on children and allowed to terminate it as per their wish at any time, ((Davis, 1998; Balen et al., 2000/2001; MacNaughton et al., 2001; Parson & Stephenson, 2003) which helped them to make an informed decision about the participation. It is extensively documented that in order to gain children's consent and involvement in research, one has to go via adult gatekeepers who are able to limit researchers' access to the children (punch, 2002).

It was not much complicated to get consent from professional gatekeepers and local authority including children. However, permission from the parents to use their children for the research is an important ethical consideration. While seeking consent, I faced some problematic situation to make the parents and/or guardians understand for involving their children in my study. Some of the parents did not allow me to involve their children thinking that it would hamper their study for a period of one and half months. I sought consent from them after I was able to make them understand the possible benefits for their children. I also made them sure that children can withdraw the participation in case of problems regarding time management for study and household works. The research participants for my study were not only the children but adult participants were also involved. Some of the teachers, parents and community people gave their consent to include them as my adult participants and their children as well. On the other hand, some others did not allow me to involve them and their children as my participants showing their busy work schedule for paddy harvesting. In such situation, I sought consent from other children.

4.5.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

It is the researcher's responsibility to protect the children from any harm due to the information they provide. Thus, as a researcher I assured the participants that the information provided would be kept confidential to preserve their anonymity. I tried to preserve anonymity of the information by not including their names at any data. The name of the individual and place were disguised to protect anonymity and confidentiality (Morrow, 2008; Matthews, 1998). Similarly, I also assured them that the information provided would not be recognised in reports or presentations of the project and disclosed to anyone else along with

their parents and teachers as well (Hill, 2005). I did not insist them to open such information which they did not want to share putting them under threat and danger after I leave the field respecting their child rights (Ennew and Boyden, 1997). During interviews the participants shared a lot of negative things of their teachers. They complained that the teacher did not use to come to the class as soon as the bell rings; consume tobacco inside the classroom and punish all the students severely for the mistake of a single student. During FGDs, I had to record the voice of the children. I took prior consent to use the audio recorder and everyone agreed. However, some girls stood in opposition when I asked them to take some photographs. According their wish, I took the photographs for those who gave consent. Similarly, informed consent was also taken from the adult participants (teachers and parents) assuring them that the information provided will be kept confidential and only be used for the study purpose.

4.5.3 Power relationship

Children have experienced that their lives have been dominated by adults, expect to have adult's power over them and are not always taken care of equally by the adults (Punch, 2002). Children are different from adults due to some inherent qualities related to the life world experiences and the knowledge as well as reasoning and thinking capacity (Ennew, 1994). In addition, the limited and simplified vocabulary, understanding of words, the world view perceptions, etc. which are precisely different from that of adults (Boyden and Ennew, 1997). Therefore, the negotiation of power relations is a central ethical aspect in research with children and young people. It is particularly magnified in adult child relationship (Abebe, 2009). Researchers employ different approaches to reduce the imbalance in power relationship. Corsaro (1996) uses the term 'atypical adult' suggesting to adopt the role of an 'incompetent adult'. Furthermore, other approaches as: practicing the 'least adult role' (Mandall, 1991) including changes in appearance, speaking styles and dress code (Abebe, 2009) are supportive for the researchers. These approaches help them to win children's acceptance familiarising with child behaviour and activities to perform during the research interaction. The common theoretical perspective to the qualitative child research is not to impose the researcher's own perspective but to facilitate the children to express their views and perception freely (Punch, 2002).

I tried to minimise the issue of power imbalance through the establishment of good rapport with the children assuming a least adult role (Mandall, 1991). As I discussed earlier, I engaged myself in Deusi Vailo ¹⁸(a tradition of celebrating cultural festival to ask for bread, money etc. by singing and dancing) programme with children until late night for two days. I ate the food given by the people as gifts sharing with the children in the programme. The next day, I invited them to celebrate at my home as well to go deeper inside the behaviour and activities to learn the child like behaviour. During this programme, I was able to present myself as a friend avoiding being stranger that helped the children to have a good faith and trust towards me. I was able to develop equal relationship with the children to gain their acceptance and win confidence (Ennew et al., 2009).

I did not lie the children about my identity, purpose of the study, etc. with negotiation in various situations without being rigid. Since every child has dignity and is worthy of respect, I always had respect towards the behaviour of the participants (Ennew et al., 2009). I spent considerable amount of time with my research participants in school and community setting to understand each other sharing facts of daily lives. I had good time with the children when they had leisure period in school. During these periods, I shared my experience that I got during my stay in Norway with the help of the photographs that I had in my laptop. Furthermore, during break time, I played football with the boys and pebbles with the girls. Besides, I sometimes played hide and seek with all the participants. When I realized to have established a good relationship between us, I asked to meet them for further discussion at the suitable time and place of the participant's choice (Ennew et al., 2009). Usually, the place and time for discussion was classrooms after school hours.

4.6 Fieldwork challenges and limitation during field work

It was not greatly complex for me to accumulate in the society since I was also one of the members of it. Being the part of the society and culture, I was recognizable with its members, diverse culture and social tradition and practices. But the problem located at the heart of Eurocentric ethical practices that I had visualised in the context of Global North, were

¹⁸ Deusi vailo: a tradition of celebrating cultural festival to ask for bread, money etc. by singing and dancing

challenged. Such ethical practices had to be modified on how the study could proceed ethically (Skovdal & Abebe, 2012) based on the conceptual framework of children and childhood and its understanding in the local context of developing country. Being part of the same society, my insider position was not realized to be unproblematic to enter into the field since the society was diversified with reference to its culture, class, language, ethnicity etc. In such multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual society both language and cultural practice had been a barrier even for a native researcher like me. As I discussed above, although having their own mother tongue, all the child participants had fair command over Nepali language in which the medium of discussion was held. Nevertheless, I encountered with some modest problem regarding female parents from Madhesi community who were migrated from the neighbouring country, India after marriage. They did not have fair command to response in Nepali language but could understand well. In this situation, sometimes I failed to make them understand my points and vice versa. I tried to negotiate this situation by taking help from their children who were my participants as well. Furthermore, the cultural practices and traditional gender roles associated to boys and girls were later proved to be problematic due to their busy schedule and restricted environment. As a result, I did not have free access to them at the time I wished. For this, I had to follow them according to their schedule especially the little free time at their own home after they had prepared dinner. Since my role as an ‘outsider-insider’ enabled me to understand the diverse cultural and social environments contextualizing children’s actions, behaviours and realities (Skovdal & Abebe, 2012), proved to be fruitful to find and access to my research participants with the help of a local school teacher. Due to the limitation of the time, I had to complete my field work within one and half months. Therefore, I chose the school where I graduated from and the community where I was born and brought up as my field site to finish the field work within pre-defined schedule.

I reached to the field during the second greatest festival of the Nepalese people. I knew that the school was closed during festivals and planned to start my study from community. However, as it was the time of festival, I got in contact of very few children in the community since they were out of village during festivals. Therefore, I had to struggle a lot to maintain the number of target population for a week. But the problem was fixed after a week when the school resumed.

Similarly, the other problem that I faced during my field work was the appropriate time for observation. Most of the children have kind of fixed schedule during school days due to extra tuition classes. Accordingly, they were not available at their home from morning to evening. Therefore, I had to go to their home during night only. I had very little time to observe their daily lives activities before they went to bed. During weekends, most of the children used to be busy in their farm as it was the time for paddy harvesting.

Another challenge I encountered with the distribution of some notebooks and pens to each participants in order to write an essay on their daily activities at school, at home and outside. The children whom I did not involve in my study were also expecting the things that I provided to others. They were raising their voice to include them in the study in the hope of getting such things. I handled this situation informing them about the limited number of participants I need for the study. I further made them understand the reason why I did not include them in the study saying that very few children were present at the day of selecting participants.

Furthermore, I faced some methodological challenges during FGDs. I tried to compose a heterogeneous group for the FGDs on the basis of the age, gender, grade and different social and cultural background keeping in mind that more diverse information will be elicited. However, I happened to face some problems regarding the tendency of the individual students. Some of the children especially girls from disadvantaged ethnic group (Madhesi) were found to have less participation in the discussion. Similarly, the children from lower grades (7 and 8) were also remained silent most of the time as they were younger from others. The FGDs were mostly dominated by the children who were from upper grades (9 and 10). Moreover, I selected one of the classrooms of their school to conduct focus group discussion after their school hours to avoid distraction from external surroundings. But as I planned the FGDs were not totally free from external distraction with the presence of other school children. They turned back to the school to learn what I was doing with their friends. Though they did not come close to me, but I realized it a bit problematic situation.

Apart of these limitations and challenges, I could not escape from the official problems in order to collect secondary data from district education office. It was nearly 30 km far from my place where I went for three times. The first two attempts were meaningless since I did not

find the responsible person to listen to me and other juniors were found to neglect my request. They replied me as they did not have any authority to deal with my proposal for the sake of confidentiality although I presented the letter of introduction from Norwegian University.

5 Analysis and interpretation of Data

In this chapter, I analyse and discuss the data collected from the field corresponding to the children's and parents' perspectives on gender discrimination. For this, I have linked related theories and concepts with the research questions and the objectives of the study. In doing so, I examine the children's everyday life experience and attitudes of the parents in relation to prevailing stereotyped discourses in Nepalese society. Views and attitudes of the parents\guardians and teachers are also discussed and analysed along with children. The areas of discussion and analysis of the chapter includes the allocation of household resources between boys and girls. Moreover, the distribution of household resources received by children in the family is analysed and discussed in terms of nutrition, pocket money, entertainment and play time and household work burden. In addition, I examine prevailing discourses about gender preferences to influence the allocation of above mentioned household resources between boys and girls differently.

5.1 Family structure and household composition of children

Family structure is the way that a family is set up where the members are linked to one another through legal or kinship relationship. A household is formed of its members who live together sharing all the resources available in the family. However, it is different for every family as families may have single parent, both parents or step parents and children involved. Family does not only include father, mother and children but also goes beyond of these and include other members such as brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents.

On the basis of the information I collected, family structure of the children were different from one another in the sense that there were not fixed number of family members in each family. Some of the household were structured as nuclear family whereas some others were of large types. Approximately, the three fourth of child participants of the study were from small or nuclear family comprising parents and children and a very few participants were from large family. Further, nearly a fourth of the participants were from single parents and female headed since their fathers were found to have gone abroad as a migrant worker. It has become a major coping strategy of rural households, as they sought to take advantage of greater economic opportunities (Ritchey, 1976). From the interview, it was revealed that there was a person from nearly a half of the household from such community working as a migrant

worker in gulf (Middle East oil rich) countries. These migrants send remittances back to their families regularly.

Further, some of the household members of the research participants from Tamang minority groups were migrated to cities to work in carpet factories. It started to begin when the magnitude of child labor increased by informal sectors like garment and carpet industries were massively established in urban areas. This is partly fuelled by rapid urbanization like Kathmandu valley (Pradhan, 1995:42) and as a domestic worker in Delhi, India. Some of the reasons behind such trends were family pressure to help in households (push factors) and being with friends and visiting of foreign country (pull factors) for the young people. Migration of people to the cities in search of work is the result of poverty. However, people migrating to gulf countries as a migrant worker, is not always the outcome of poverty rather a common trend in farming class people. Financing for the visa process and air ticket is far beyond from the access of poor people, only well off and farming class people can access it. In this regards, a 16 years boy from grade 10 who belongs to Madhesi community said as follows when I asked him about his future plans:

My elder brother is working in Malaysia to earn to support for the survival of the family. Some of my seniors from the community have already left for gulf countries and they are sending considerable amount back home. By this, my parents also want me to go abroad and earn to support for the households. I have the responsibility to listen to them. And I am thinking of not continuing higher education and go abroad to earn after some years.

Among child participants, the case of a Tamang boy from grade 7, aged 13 was different as his parents were passed away when he was at the age of 8. He was being brought up by his grandmother. Similarly, another girl participants of 16 belonged to the family having two mothers in the family.

5.2 Occupation, educational status and social connection of research participants' parents

The field site where I conducted my study was one of the remote villages from Nepal. The main source of income of the local population is agriculture. As majority of the Nepalese

people live in rural areas and around 74 percent are dependent on agriculture, the dependency of the economy on agricultural sector is immense (GoN, 2010). The main occupation of most of the parents of my research participants were also not apart from it. Most of them owned their own lands which was almost sufficient to live for a whole year. People grow vegetable and sugarcane as the cash crops. Those people who owned a little land, especially Madhesi and Tamang community, grow vegetables and sell it to maintain their daily expenses. On the other hand, those people who owned sufficient land grow sugarcane which is harvested and sold once in a year. Furthermore, the second largest occupation of the parents of research participants was working as migrant labour in abroad especially in gulf countries as I have already discussed. The process of being migrant labour has been institutionalized in some households in the sense that from the same family father and sons were observed in abroad for the same work. Apart from these majorities of the occupation, some other parents were observed to involve in teaching, holding small business, driving and working in NGO.

As far as the education status and social connection of the parents concerned, it was observed ranging from illiterate to bachelor's degree. Nearly two third of the parents attended up to high school education. Very few of the parents were illiterate and bachelor's degree holder. The educational status and social connection they hold, has determined most of their occupation. In the past, the government and non- government jobs were not used to be very competitive than the case of present situation for the educated people. In this regards, those who were bachelor's degree graduated, had affiliation with government and non-government services. Most of the illiterate parents earned their livelihoods from agricultural work and other parents with basic education preferred to work abroad or joined military forces.

5.3 Distribution of household resources

Some studies have further revealed evidences of discrimination against female members in the allocation of household resources such as income, food, nutrition, health care and education. In this regard, Reeves and Baden (2000) argues that the pattern of bias against girls is largely well-known in South Asia. In the following section, I draw some of the factors to which female children are discriminated against in equal distribution of resources among their siblings.

5.3.1 Nutrition

During interview with the children regarding the distribution of the nutrients available within the households and brought from the market, most of the children responded that they were equally distributed the nutrient resources. All the foods were collected in one place and distributed equally to all the members and they take it how much they wanted. However, some of the female children responded that their brothers were given fairly more than them. In this regards, a female child of 14 years from grade 8 responded as follows:

Mother cooks pudding, snacks and fruits like banana, mango for my brother in breakfast during his Tiffin hour in the school. He reads in a private school which is far from our village while I read in a local government school. Mother does not send me any food to eat during break time instead I have to come back home to have the left over rice and again return back to school.

Strong son preference is observed leading to the unfair allocation of food resources in favour of boys and to the inconsistent undernourishment of female children in most of the South Asian countries. It is evident that even boys and girls are provided equal and same amount of food, yet, there persist discrimination. Boys might be given more nutritious and protein-rich food (Arnold, 1992). Differential feeding leads to differential nutritional status between boys and girls in societies where son preference is strong.

In their research conducted in rural Nepal, Gittelsohn et.al, (1997) found that in most of the households two main meals are consumed in a day, although snacking for children is quite common during their school hour. They define a meal as a gathering of the household members at a place for the purpose of food consumption, in which food is served by one household member to another particularly the person who prepares it.

Distribution of food and nutrients differ by family composition and birth order of the children. A Tamang girl of 13 years said:

I am the middle daughter in the family and I have brothers and sisters. All the nutrients available in the households and bought from the market are equally distributed among members. Yet, my younger brother and elder sister are given slightly more than me. And at times, they give me the food which is given by my parents to them.

A number of studies (Miller 1981; Lloyd 1995) note that the first-born child in Nepal is usually treated well, irrespective of its sex. But the later-born girls are likely to face unequal treatment relatively than their brothers and older sisters (Ware, 1984). In addition, Behrman & Taubman, (1986) and Horton, (1988) focused on the role of birth order and sibling composition of the children in the distribution of the household resources and nutrients. They argue that children from earlier siblings are more advantaged compared to the siblings who are born later.

However, this is not the case for eternity regarding the distribution of the household resources based on their birth order and sibling composition. From the fieldwork, it is evident that the youngest siblings irrespective of their sex have been prioritised in the food and nutrient distribution. It is proved by the experience shared by a female child of 12 years during fieldwork. She said:

My parents equally distribute the nutrition produced within the household and bought from the market. But sometimes I am given fairly more because of being the youngest daughter in the family.

Similarly, a Madhesi girl of 15 years shared her experience as her parents love to a large extent to her youngest sister allocating more dairy products and fruits than her. Beforehand, her younger brother also used to get more food when he used to live together. But now he stays in hostel and the girl said she did not know how much does he get nowadays.

During my field work, I chose the participants with a diverse cultural, religious, social status and educational background in order to elicit vivid information. The group of the research participants were different from each other due to the background of the households that they belonged to. Regarding the distribution of food and nutrient female children were seen to have discriminated against. Such discrimination was primarily found important within the parents and guardians who were from upper caste and more educated. A Brahmin girl of 13 years from a well off family responded that her brother is given some more meat and fruit items. She further said:

I have a small brother and he is given more meat and fruits because he is too small and my parents say that he needs more things to eat.

Although the educated parents claimed not to discriminate girls against distribution of household resources, it was found their theoretical perspectives only but not in practical. Warriar (1992) gave an example of India where upper-middle caste groups favour sons more in food allocation than lower status groups and tribal groups. Further, Miller's (1992) review of the intra-household food distribution in South Asia, without a doubt also finds that greater disparities and malnutrition against female child are found more common among propertied and more educated people.

Gittelsohn et al. (1997) additionally found that allocation of the food and other resources are influenced by household wealth and caste. As expected, wealthier households do better nutritionally than poorer households. However, the expectation contrasts for economic effects, where the people from higher castes and wealthier households eat a decreased variety of foods and run a greater risk of certain nutrient deficiencies.

5.3.2 Pocket money

Pocket money is a small amount of money given to children on daily, weekly or monthly basis by their parents or guardians for their private use (Shah et al., 2012). Having pocket money is good for a child. Pocket money and allowances help the children to make feel more responsible for the money they receive, creating greater efforts to deal with it. Accordingly, it may develop the understanding and make more knowledgeable about money (Abramovitch et al., 1991). Some families don't give pocket money regularly and just hand over it to their children when they want it. At times, people in the family give money to their children for birthdays and festivals. Some of them might turn out to be pocket money - money that they can spend on what they want.

5.3.2.1 Should children be given pocket money? Parents attitudes towards pocket money

During field work, I interviewed five parents and guardians to elicit their attitudes towards pocket money for children. The information I collected from the parents and guardians were incongruous each other. Two out of five parents spoke in favour of children should be given pocket money. The parents who favour pocket money for children view it rather positive in the sense that pocket money builds up their confidence helping them to buy the things that

they need. It gives a sense of independence, and a measure of choice in making decisions about how the money is spent.

On the other hand, three parents and guardians out of five stood against of giving pocket money to the children. They view pocket money for children are not as a good practice since it encourages the habits of spending money in nonsense works as well. They claimed that they do not give money to their children instead they buy the essential thing their children need. They further opined that if the children are given pocket money in their early ages it may build the negative habits of consuming non eatable things such as tobacco, cigarette and alcohol. In this regards one of the parents of 52 years explains as:

I never give any pocket money to my child since I think it can be misused in unnecessary things. If my child ever needs something and I realise it as a reasonable request, I will buy it for him. By doing so, I will have more control over my child's unnecessary desires and possessions.

Children are supposed to consume this amount according to their own free will. Cheng and Westwood (2007) in their research concluded that the majority of primary school children are least worried about their pocket money. However, it is considered to teach the children money management skills and economic system.

5.3.2.2 Pocket money and child work

Pocket money is an important resource for young children especially at school ages (Dustmann et al., 2004). There are some debates, particularly about whether or not an allowance should be made conditional upon the performance of household chores. Some think that children learn a valuable lesson when allowance is linked to the performance of household chores: children learn to work for pay (Sloane, 1991).

During field work, most of the parents tried to equate children's pocket money with the household works they perform. According to the parents, they are trying to teach their children "no work no pocket money". A man of 37 years from the community responded to my question whether he gives pocket money and how:

I would not give pocket money to my children in a lump sum on a weekly or monthly basis. They should earn it. If they help me by running some of my errands and working on farm with me or help their mother with household chores, I would reward them accordingly. If they do not perform any work, then I have to either hire some other people to perform it or I should do myself. I think this helps children realize that "money does not grow on trees" and it requires hard work to earn.

Findings from other studies, however, indicate that allowance should not be conditional upon household chores (Balter, 1988; Baran & Tarrant, 1981; Gruenberg, 1965; Horton, 1988; McKitric, 1986). These studies suggest that the practice of pocket money helps the children not to realize any responsibilities towards the household as one of the members undermining the collective character of the family.

Performing household chore by children is thought to be an important part of participating in family life for the survival and maintenance of the household but not for the financial earning from the parents and other household members (Gruenberg, 1965; Henderson, 1988; Horton, 1988). They agree that children should not be paid for routine or regular household chores but can be paid for some special household works for example working on the farm, rearing cattle, collecting firewood and fodder which otherwise have to be hired a person from outside and must be paid.

Furthermore, if the children are given allowance with the aim of making them understand the effective money management skills, it is argued that allowance should not be based on reward or punishment for desirable or undesirable behaviour of the children (Balter, 1988; Sloane, 1991).

5.3.2.3 How do children earn pocket money?

Culturally, festivals are one of the resources to collect pocket money for Nepalese children. During festivals, especially female children are given money by their parents and relatives with blessings. They are found to use the money as their pocket money to buy the necessary things as they wish. A girl of 12 years said as:

During Dashain ¹⁹ festival I will be given a lot of money by my parents. Similarly, I go to visit my relatives as well. My relatives give me some delicious foods and money with blessing. I collect money and buy the things that I like. Last year I bought a pair of shoes with that money and went to watch movie with my friends.

On the other hand, during Tihar ²⁰ festival boys are supposed to go to their neighbours and villagers in a group. They dance and sing and ask for money. They are supposed to organize a group picnic programme with that money and the rest of the money they share within the group members.

In this study, children shared their experience that they receive not only pocket money but some other goods such as buying bicycle, watch, video game etc. as the reward from their parents when they do well at school or in exams. A boy of 15 years from grade 9 said that he received a new wrist watch when he became first in the final exam of grade 8. He further said:

I am the first boy of the class. Every year I am given either money or some other goods when I become first. This year, my father promised to buy a good pair of shoes for me if I again become first in the final exam of grade 9.

Parents try to motivate their children towards study by purchasing different goods and materials of their interest. Nepalese children receive pocket money by their parents and family members as a reward for their academic excellence and good results at school (Barnet-Verzat and Wolff, 2002).

Children are found to have earned pocket money with some fraudulent way as well. During field work, some of the boys from grade ten revealed their involvement in gambling cards and marbles. I ask them how they get money for such thing. In response, they said that they cannot ask money to their parents directly to play cards with friends and found to adopt some other ways to make money for such works. According to them, the fraudulent ways of making

¹⁹ Dashain: it is the longest and the most auspicious festival in the Nepalese annual calendar celebrated by Nepalese people of all castes.

²⁰ Tihar: a festival celebrated among brothers and sisters

money were creating margins in the purchase of daily goods, asking for extra value for buying some necessary stationeries, etc. A boy of 15 years from grade 9 responded as:

Usually, I am sent to the market in order to buy some daily goods for household. When I return the change to my father I will create some margins regarding the price of the goods and make some pocket money.

Furthermore, parents can't fulfil all the desires and expectation of their children. Children like to buy and have the things as their friends have. In such situation, children may cheat their parents and make money to spend on the way they want to do. Another boy of 15 years from the same class said:

Most of the time my father does not give me money when I ask for it. All of my friends buy something to eat during lunch time in school. I also like to buy the things which I like most but I will not have money. Sometimes, I take some small amount from my father's pocket and buy the things that I like.

To finance their personal consumption, children may rely on transfers in the form of pocket money made by their parents and on personal resources earned from labour market activities (Wolff, 2006). Most of the children were found to expect from their parents and elders to finance for their personal consumption. However, the story of 2 children out of 20 was something different. They earned their pocket money by themselves from the labour market activities.

A boy of 16 years from grade 10 shared his experiences as he teaches tuition classes for the small children in the same community and earns his pocket money for his personal consumption such as lunch during break in school, stationary materials etc. he said:

I teach tuition classes for small children in my community and earn around 12 USD per month. I mostly spend that amount to buy exercise book for practicing mathematics and lunch during break time in school. I buy the essential materials like pen with the same amount. And the amount which will be saved at the end of the month I will give to my parents.

Similarly, another boy of 15 years from grade 9 responded as he is engaged in some seasonal work during his school holidays. The seasonal work that he mostly involved is planting sugarcane. He said:

During the sugarcane plantation season, I go to work in others field and earn some money. I spend that amount to buy clothes, pen and exercise books.

From the above data, it is clear that children not only expect financial support from their parents but also earn independently on their own to help the family income. Firstly, they are found to fulfil their needs and desires with the earning and secondly, they contribute to the family economy as a responsible member realizing the feeling of pride and self-reliance.

5.3.2.4 Pocket money: age, gender and household wealth

Allocation of pocket money for children is influenced by their age, gender and household wealth they belong to. The age of the child is undoubtedly the main source of disparity in the allocation among children. During focus group discussion, children stated that their sisters and brothers who are studying in higher secondary level get more pocket money and frequently. They further said that their elders have more expenses than them regarding breakfast, stationary materials, gathering with friends in coffee shop etc. A boy of 15 years from grade 9 said that his brother studies in grade 12 and his school is a bit far from the village. He goes to school at 6 am and returns at around 11 am by cycling. During his break time in school, he needs to have some snacks with friends therefore he always takes some money from the parents. He further said:

Occasionally, I get money to have snacks in school. For that, I have to ask and I get fewer amounts than my brother gets and not always as he does.

In their research with children of different age, sex and class, Furnham and Thomas (1984) found that older children got significantly more money than younger ones. They further state that there are predictable difference in the allocation of pocket money on the basis of children's age and class. Based on the age variation, children of older ages receive more pocket money frequently than that of younger ages and working class children are given more

money and more irregularly. Furthermore, almost all the participants claimed that both girls and boys were given pocket money when they ask for it. But the case of a boy of 15 years from grade 9 is something different as he said:

I never ask for pocket money with my parents but my mother sometimes gives me some money even if I do not ask. But she always gives money to my sisters for lunch.

During field work, most of the children stated that they are not given pocket money unless they demand for it. According to the participants, the people who are involved in providing pocket money for them are their parents, grandparents, uncle, aunt and brothers. Some of the female children claimed that they did not get the amount at the same time of demand and had to wait for days because not all the children were from financially well off households. Based on the varied information I elicited regarding pocket money, some of the children were unaware of the pocket money while some others claimed they would get it irregularly when they are in need of it. A girl of 15 years said:

In my family no one is given pocket money. I am also not given any money without any reason but my parents give me some money in order to buy stationery materials when I am in need of it. But sometimes I have to wait for days to get it or my parents themselves buy the things I demand.

Barnet-Verzat and Wolff (2002) show that children are given irregular allowances more frequently than the fixed amount regularly given to them and such children are from better off households financially. As long as the children are young, irregular allowances are more frequent than the regular ones. But as they grow up, their pocket money also becomes common and both regular and irregular types of allowances are used equally.

However, the case of boarding school children was rather different in the sense that they get it in a regular basis for their snacks during lunch hour in school. Some of the girl participants shared their experiences as they do not get pocket money regularly but they get it only when they are in need of it in order to buy essential things. A girl of 15 years said:

Mother gives me pocket money when I ask to her. She gives around 0.11 USD-0.17 USD at a time. But my brother is given 0.23 USD every day because he reads in the private school which is far from the village.

Regarding the allocation of pocket money for children, age and household wealth of the participants were proved to be more influencing factors rather than the gender of them. In the same way, the allocation had been influenced by the type of school (private and public) and level of education (senior and junior).

5.3.3 Entertainment and play time

This section analyses children's entertainment and play time dividing into two sections on the basis of the empirical data I elicited. During field work, I observed children's entertainment and play time have been divided in two parts: during school and after school. Further, the activities and performances by children during weekends for entertainment were also taken into account.

Children have very limited time to play during school. They generally play during lunch break time. Some of the children come to school earlier than the actual school time. They normally use this time for play with their friends. Most of their games are linked with physical activities. During lunch break, children were found to play football in a team, running and chasing each other around the playground, playing hide and seek as outdoor games and playing chess, police and thief, singing and dancing inside the classroom. Girls mostly chat with their classmates, play pebbles in a group of 4-5 girls and sometimes sing and dance. During leisure periods, all the children either play indoor games or stay inside the classroom since it is not allowed to come out of class and play. Children said that every Friday they have extra-curricular activities when they have a lot of fun and less study.

During focus group discussion, in response to my open-ended questions regarding children's leisure activities and entertainment after school, most of them focused on use of media, playing and gossiping with friends. In response to my question about the general time to watch television, a large number of children responded that they watch it before they go to bed. Watching television is the largest source of media use mostly practiced by the children

and young people. The amount of time that children spend in watching TV reports it as their primary activity after school (Larson & Verma, 1999).

During interview a boy of 13 years focused on watching television for entertainment. He said:

When I come back from school, I will have my breakfast and watch television for two hours daily. But I sometimes go to play football with my friends if there is power cut.

During observation, it was evident that children (boys and girls) were engaged in various indoors and outdoors activities for entertainment such as: (a) playing: riding bicycle, playing football (b) personal hobbies: swimming in the canal, listening to music, dancing, drawing, painting, hand writing (c) outings with family and friends: family gatherings, going to temple, movie or other event, visiting relatives, watching siblings' sports), (d) organized sports, (e) routine works: eat, sleep, chores, personal care. Mainly boys are interested in outdoor games such as playing football, riding bicycle and roaming around community, swimming in the canal whereas girls preferred indoor activities for entertainment such as listening to music, dancing, drawing, sleeping and personal care. A girl of 15 years said:

After school, I have to go for tuition classes and I return in the evening. I have to cook food for the family. While cooking, I tune the cassette player on with high volume. Some of my friends come to my home. When I will have finished cooking, me along with my friends dance and enjoy for around one hour till my parents arrive from work.

Regarding children's play time and entertainment, gender variation has been observed. From the data, it has been justified that boys have freer time out of their school to girls. Boys have enough time to play after school. They mostly play football with their friends in riverside, ride bicycle around the community. On the other hand, girls normally do not go outside of their home. They play with their small siblings with care, chat with their around friends in the evening only after completing their daily household chores. A girl of 16 years from Madhesi community shared her experience as:

I do not play but if I get time after the completion of some household chores, I chat with my friends who are residing next to my house. I like to play but it is taken not good to play by grown up girls in our community. People start to comment negatively. My younger sisters and brother play by going to their friends.

The above quotation resonates with the findings of Fuligni & Stevenson (1995) who concluded that boys frequently moves within and outside of their neighbourhoods involving in a large number of activities than the girls of the same age. Boys spend more time than girls do in sports and other recreational activities such as watching television, whereas girls spend more time doing homework and performing household chores.

Most of the children responded that they watch movie in television during weekend. Some of the children do not have television in their home and they go to their friends and relatives. In addition, some of the children responded that they sometimes go to cinema hall to watch movie during Saturdays and school holidays. However, the experiences of the children who are studying in grade 9 and 10 are something different. Their daily routine has been followed by busy schedule since they are attending the board exam of SLC (School Leaving Certificate). They actually do not get enough time for play as they have to go for extra tuition classes before and after school hours.

5.3.4 Household work burden

During field work, I asked all the participants to write an essay describing the household work they perform every day. The data suggests that in the rural Nepalese society girls are the most responsible for the domestic work to replace their mother in the family. Most of them revealed their daily routine based household work out of school hours. A large number of girls shared their experiences as they have to perform a lot of household work before and after the school. The works include cleaning utensils, cleaning of house, sweeping yard, collecting fodder, cattle herding, taking crops to the mills in order to get flower and rice, cleaning of animal's shed, producing bio-gas through cow dong and so on. A girl of 13 years wrote as:

When I return from school, first of all, I have breakfast along with my siblings. But sometimes, there will not be anything to eat and I have to prepare it for me and my siblings. Then, I clean all the utensils, clean house and sweep house yard, give fodder to goats and clean their place. In the evening, again I have to cook dinner for the family.

On the other hand, a large number of boys specified their after school hours as play time, mostly either watching television or playing football with their friends. However, some of the boys claimed that they help their mother in household work. The works include chopping fire wood, shopping of daily household goods from local market, cutting grass, grazing cattle, cleaning cattle place followed by agricultural works during farming seasons and so on. In the global south context, children are perceived as minors or dependents; with more autonomy on the side of the boys (Boyden & Levinson, 2000); yet, girls have a greater household work burden than boys (Reynolds, 1991, Robson, 1996).

A large number of my research participants are involved in unpaid household work which is frequently underestimated and undervalued. Children perceive such unpaid household work as their responsibility for the maintenance of households. They are engaged in such work as early as they become physically capable. However, some of the participants are involved in wage earning work outside their home as a seasonal worker mainly in sugarcane plantation season. But they are found to utilize that amount as their pocket money to spend as their wish. They mainly buy clothes and other necessary cosmetics to contribute the household economy indirectly. A boy of 16 years said:

I normally do not work outside as wage earner. Yet, I have some experience that I earned some amount during sugarcane plantation season. During that season, school will be closed because of more than a month long festival Dashain and Tihar.

It is not sufficient to analyse children's household work only from gender perspective ignoring their age, birth order and sibling composition. Punch (2001) argues that along with gender dimension some other intra-generational aspects such as age, birth order and sibling composition are also taken into consideration to influencing children's household work.

A boy of 15 years said:

As I am grown up, I can now chop the firewood and collect the fodders, transporting of grains to the mills in order to refine it, taking milk to the collection centre in the morning. I am helped by my younger sibling in general household work such as running errands, giving fodder to the livestock and sometimes sweeping the yard.

Household work burden on the part of the children is influenced by age and sibling composition. A woman of 48 years explains:

I used do a lot of work in the past but in few recent years, I am feeling somehow relief because of my older daughter. She helps me in some of the domestic household works such as cleaning utensils, cooking, cleaning of house and yard, giving fodders to cattle. Since most of the domestic household work is performed by her, I collect grass for the cattle two times during a day and will be busy in farm work with my husband.

Older children are expected to perform more household work in comparison to younger ones. By the age of six, a girl is looking after other children, fetching water and doing some domestic works in Nepal. As she grows older her duty and responsibilities also expands including cooking and washing. When a child becomes able to carry a sickle and basket more demanding burdens fall on them, especially on girls whose tasks includes fodder collection, fire wood collection and farm work (Yamanaka and Ashworth, 2002) narrowing the work burden on the part of the mother.

Besides performing daily household chores, the work burden for the older siblings is more where there are small and younger siblings. A girl of 13 years shared her experience as she is the middle child of the family and has a small brother and an older sister. When she along with her sister returns from school, their mother gives them breakfast. She asks to clean utensils, sweep yard and kitchen for her older daughter and caring of small brother for her younger daughter so that she can cultivate vegetables in the farm. However, in some of the large household where there is the presence of senior members, the work of baby care has been transferred to them allowing children to have free time. On the other hand, some of the boys are also found to have involved in babysitting since they do not have older female siblings at their home. A boy of 14 years said:

I have to look after my small sister during school holidays because there is no one to take care of her. During school holidays, my parents go to work in the farm which is far from the house asking me to take care of my small sister.

Apart from daily routine based task performed by both boys and girls, they are engaged in some non- routine based tasks as well. One of such non- routine based tasks was found as babysitting and mostly stereotyped in Nepalese society. Stereotyped in the sense that if there are older girls in the household babysitting responsibility goes on their part.

5.4 Daily activities of the children

During my field work, children were interviewed and observed about their daily habits. They were asked to share their everyday life activities since they get up in the morning till going to bed at night. Children from grade 9 and 10 were found to follow a routine based activities from they wake up to bed at night. Most of their time has been used in school and tuition classes during weekdays. On the other hand, the children from grade 7 and 8 were found to follow the schedule not much structured as the students from grade 9 and 10. They have sufficient time except school hour. But the weekend and holiday activities for all the children are mostly different that of weekdays. Large number of children shared their experiences that they were involved in different types of works inside or outside home. Girls said that they are busy with their household activities along with working in farms in the farming seasons. Among boys, there was mixed opinions. Few boys said that they were involved in household works which are mostly known to be performed by girls. Boys were mostly found working in the agricultural sectors during the farming seasons and raring cattle. Children are more likely to work if the household has some resources such as land at the household level (Bhalothra, 2003).

Work is more common place and visible in majority world childhoods (James et. al. 1998:103) and taken to be the process of socialization for the preparation of adult life. Children combine their responsibilities with both play and school, by negotiating their own time and space to unite these diverse activities (Punch, 2001) within households and school. Children managed their time to play while working combining both work and play simultaneously within households. Similarly, children reach to school before the school time starts to manage their time for play along with their study. Children are supposed to be carried out the responsibilities delegated by elders along with school and play. A girl of 13 years from grade 8 shared her experiences describing how she copes with her household responsibilities along with school, play and entertainment.

I wake up at 5 in the morning. I do some of the household works like sweeping house yard, cleaning utensils and making tea for every family member before I go to tuition class. When I come back from tuition class, I take my meal and again go to school at 10 am. I return home at 4 pm from school. Then, I do clean the kitchen and utensils, give fodders to the cattle. When I complete my work, then I play pebbles with my small sisters for some time. My mother cooks dinner for all. I take my dinner and do school work. I watch television and go to bed.

Work is an inseparable part of daily lives of the children in the majority world including Nepal and workload for the children is directly related to the household composition. Abebe (2007) states when the household faces severe economic stress, elder members of that family are compelled to get occupied themselves in alternative form of livelihoods transferring domestic work burden to children. Similarly, a 15 years boy of grade 10 shared his everyday life experiences during school days as:

I wake up at 5 in the morning. I will be fresh and ready to go for tuition. I take tuition class from 6 to 8 am. I study math, English and science subjects along with my friends. When I arrive at home after tuition, I do my school homework .After that I eat my meal and will be ready to go to school. I take rest for some time when I return back home from school. Then I do the household works that my mother has assigned me such as: collecting cow dung for bio-gas production and giving fodder to the cattle. I listened to the radio in the evening. When I have my dinner, I watch television with all the family members and go to bed at 10 pm.

During weekdays, most of the children pass through the similar daily activities. But during weekend, I observed some different patterns of their daily live activities since they do not have to go school and tuition classes. The pattern is observed from the time of waking up in the morning to going to bed at night. It means they normally wake up lately and also go to bed lately. However, a girl of 16 years from grade 10 shared her experiences as she has to wake up around usual time as she wakes up during weekdays. She has to perform the household works such as sweeping, cleaning, taking cattle out of their shed and giving fodder to them, fetching water. After finishing these works, she has to prepare tea for all the members. She further said:

During school holidays, my parents go to the farm as early as possible. I have to prepare meal for them and go to the farm by taking meal for them. I normally do not work more in the field but sometimes I have to water the field. I do not stay more in the farm since I have to perform a lot of work on these days including my own personal care.

During weekend, children were found to focus on their personal care and cleaning such as washing school uniform and other clothes, cleaning of their bed room. But boys are normally found not cleaning of their bed room by themselves and are done by either mother or sisters. Parents seem to be happy during weekend because especially mothers get rid of the burden to prepare food and preparing children to send school on time during school days. During weekend, parents do not feel more household work burden because children are free and they can perform some of the works according to their age and gender.

During my field work, I observed how a child's economic, social and cultural contexts affect his/ her everyday life experiences to create a balance between school, play and work. Children's such everyday life experiences have been affected by socio-cultural factors as class, gender, ethnicity and nationality of the children (Holland et. al., 2008). Societal expectations of children from particular socio-economic and cultural background strongly affect how adult treat the children and how these children develop their own coping strategy to fit themselves in the society.

5.5 Gender discourses in Nepalese society: Children's and adults' views

Nepal, mostly a patriarchal society placed the role of woman and female children in low value and inferior. As a result, a prevailing generalized tendency exists to give preferential treatment to boys over girls. In such society, parents may simply have internalized certain norms and values regarding the gender preference. It leads them to allocate better resources and care for sons to daughters (Gupta, 1987) since male gender is associated with the culturally accepted norms and values, status and future economic potentialities (Leone et al., 2003). During interview, a large number of community people favoured son rather than daughters directly and/or indirectly.

During field work, the various discourses about different treatment between boys and girls have been categorized and analysed mainly on the socio-cultural practice, economic advantage and religious grounds in Nepalese society.

a) Socio-cultural practice:

During interview with teachers and community people, some of the responses they gave were based on the cultural practice, norms and values producing various discourses about gender differences. The reasons why boys and girls are treated differently and why girls are discriminated against in a patriarchal society given by the respondents were largely name and fame enjoyed by the family with the birth of son, old age security, protection and expansion of the family property, continuation of the generations, etc.

A female secondary teacher of 52 years old from the school where I carried out my field study explained that traditional culture and social structure of a patriarchal society is responsible for various discourses about boys and girls assigning stereotypical roles in the society.

Our country is dominated by patriarchal society where daughters are not given more freedom. According to the traditional belief and social structure if a daughter goes anywhere freely, then it is thought to be not a well manner. Parents will be ashamed of their daughters. Furthermore, they are restricted within their household only being responsible for most of the household works from cooking, cutting grass, collecting firewood to washing clothes and cleaning of house. On the other hand, traditionally parents do not allocate more household work to sons rather they are focused on study more. They are given more freedom. And sometimes, due to such freedom to their sons parents have to face difficult situation as well in the society.

Daughters are restricted within the household only without allowing them to move freely. They need to get permission if they have to go somewhere for some reasons. During interview a man of 47 years said that daughters are the matter of prestige for a household and with their wrong doings the whole family will be ashamed.

Generally parents have their daughters get married earlier when they stepped into the adolescence stage with the fear of being ashamed. If their daughters commit any

wrong doings, the parents have to lie down their head in front of the community people in the society. A large number of girls will have married during their schooling either by their parents or themselves. Therefore, there will be very fewer numbers of girls to continue their higher study.

Sons are culturally believed to be the support of parents in their old age when they become helpless. A woman of 51 years said:

When we are strong we can feed ourselves but when we become older we do not have the same energy to work and earn. In such stage, if we have sons they will feed us and care us but daughters not because they will have already left for their husband's house.

During my field work, I tried to elicit the information from both children and parents' perspectives. In response to my open ended question of why people treat boys and girls differently; a woman of 48 years responded as if they have sons they will be their old age support but daughters leave to their husband's house once they get married. She further said:

We need at least a son in the family otherwise we will not have our existence in next generation. Our name and blood both will be extinguished.

In the same way, another woman of 51 years from the community also focused on the value of son as they keep respect and name of the family no matter wherever they are. She said:

Sons introduce themselves as our sons and grandsons everywhere. This helps to continue the family name generation to generation. On the other hand, daughters are known after their husband's name after marriage.

World fertility surveys documented the considerable level of son preference in 1980s for the first time in Nepal. According to the document, sons are highly preferred by the parents as they continue the family name for the next generation; perform funeral rites and old age security (Haughton and Haughton, 1995; Leone et al., 2003; Nanda et al., 2012). One of the reasons behind why people prefer boys to girls is associated with the cultural belief and practice that daughters will get married and be the part of other lineages and households. It is

believed that parents are supported by their sons in their old age whereas daughters move away to her husband's house once they get married. They become no longer the properties of the parents who gives birth them but of their husband's family but sons are needed to maintain the family line. Karki (1988) points out the main reasons for son preference as: old-age security, respect enjoyed by the family, and continuing the family legacy.

b) Economic advantages:

Sons are given high value from the economic point of view as well in Nepalese society expecting to be the future breadwinners for the family. The provision of rooted dowry system is the main economic reason why girls are discriminated. The case of this system is even worse in Terai communities where sons are considered as the means to attain dowry. People are compelled to spend a lot of money for the dowry. The higher a son's level of education and employment status, the more dowries will be demanded either in cash or goods. In this sense the parents of sons are the recipients of dowry and daughters are givers in Madhesi community.

During interview, a Madhesi girl of 16 years shared her experience as: her mother does not want her to study more. Her mother says that she can only read up to class 12 and will have to be married. The reason why her mother does not want her to continue her higher study as she said:

In our Madhesi community, girls are not taught more because it will extend the family expenditure. Girls are the economic burden for parents mainly in marriage. If a daughter has studied more, she needs to get married with a more educated and employed boy from a well off family. Therefore, the more educated and employed bridegroom, the more demand of dowry which tortures the parents.

The economic value of a son is due to not only they bring dowry from the bride's family but can earn through their labour and employment as well. The recent trend, especially in Terai and hill districts, of Nepal is the evidence of this fact as grown-up sons are sent to foreign countries for employment mostly in gulf countries and in some other European countries. Families with sons working abroad enjoy a higher social status in their villages. A man of 52 years tried to make equivalent son with property.

The more sons we have, the more property we can collect unlike daughters since girls are the property of their husband's family. If we have sons they bring money from outside by earning and we can feel secured, healthy and wealthy in our old age. If we fall sick we would not die in the lack of medication and there will be our sons besides us to take care.

Although some of the girls are also found to have been to abroad for learning and earning in some of the households. But the majority are boys as they are more responsible for the improvement of their economic status in the society. During field work, I observed a large number of males have been to abroad. In some of the households, I found even two generations in abroad for earning. During interview, a female teacher of 46 years gave stress on economic advancement as the major role of a son. She shared her experience as she has two sons the younger is studying in grade 12 in the local higher secondary school and the elder is in Dubai earning as a migrant labourer. She wanted to let her elder son study more but with the companionship of his friends he did not continue his study after the completion of secondary school. But now he is supporting his brother in his study and family economy by sending remittances from abroad in a regular interval.

The traditional and cultural role assigned to a girl places the inferior value of girls in the society. As they hold low status in the society, they have to be discriminated against investment in education and distribution of other resources compared to their male counterparts. During interview, a man of 37 years said:

According to our culture, it is obviously found some kinds of different treatment between girls and boys but not exactly always the same case. For example, people do not focus more on their daughter's education thinking that they are no longer their properties. It means daughters have to perform the same traditional typical role of a woman such as rearing children, cooking and cleaning and helping their husband and other family members in their work. Though we invest on them, it will not be returned unlike sons.

c) Religious reason:

Son preference among Nepalese is based on religious beliefs as well. A man of 52 years who believed on Hindu religion responded:

Son is son and daughter cannot take the place of sons during life and after death. Son is important when we are alive and after death as well. After death according to the religious convention, son is needed to perform the funeral rites without which our soul will not be purified and stuck between heavens and hale.

In Nepalese society, the most important role of a son is at the time of his parent's death when only sons are expected to perform the funeral rites. From a religious point of view, some view sons as the means by which they can reach heaven after death (Karki, 1988). The widespread traditional belief is that the door of heaven will be opened for the people when they die if they have a son. Such a religious belief and value always put son in a higher value than daughters in Nepalese society.

Yet, daughters are also valuable from religious point of view since their values are associated mainly with the festivals Tihar, Rakshya Bandan ²¹and Teej²². If there is not any daughter in a family, then it is believed to be meaningless of these festivals.

Since my field site is one of the districts from Terai region, I have given more focus on the Terai culture. People from Terai communities believe that meeting a sonless woman early in the morning can bring bad luck for the whole day. These social beliefs and misconceptions put tremendous pressure on women to bear a son. A secondary level teacher of 46 years said:

There are various superstitions and misbelieves entrenched in some traditional society regarding a woman without son. They have to face a lot of psychosocial torture from their own family first and society later. People from the society give them a lot of pseudo names and are believed to be misfortune or bad luck.

CREHPA (2007) documented that in Madhesi community women are treated ill if they do not give birth to a son. The more serious matter for those women is they are commonly not

Rakshya Bandan: a Hindu festival primarily observed in India and Nepal, which celebrates the relationship between brothers and sisters

²² Teej: a festival celebrated by Nepalese women

given nutritious food to eat after giving birth to a daughter. Such women are also compelled to go to work quickly after delivery, whereas to those women, who give birth to a son, receive more care. They are not allowed to go back to work earlier. It is evident that the women who give birth to sons are receiving more care so that they can give more care to their son (CREHPA, 2007, Karki, 1988)

6 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The chapter discusses the allocation of the household resources to boys and girls in the study area. In this chapter, I examine the socio-cultural processes affecting children's right to education.

6.1 Right to education

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) outlines what every child needs to have for safe, happy and fulfilled childhood irrespective of their sex, ethnicity, religion, social origin, and where and to whom they were born. According to UNCRC, no discrimination should be made on the basis of the gender, caste and religion forcing children to be deprived of their educational right. According to Article 28 of UNCRC, it has been discussed that all children have the right to a primary education, which should be free. For children to benefit from education, schools must be run in an orderly way – without the use of violence. Any form of school discipline should take into account the child's human dignity. Therefore, governments must ensure that school administrators review their discipline policies and eliminate any discipline practices involving physical or mental violence, abuse or neglect. The convention places a high value on education. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable.

During field work, I have asked my research participants to share the information based on their knowledge about children rights. Although most of the children were observed to have been unaware of their rights; nearly a third of them shared their understanding about children rights as the right of children to get education, to get sufficient time for play, foods to live and place to stay.

Nepal has made considerable achievements in promoting children's rights after the restoration of multi-party system in 1990. The contemporary Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal and other relevant laws prohibit the segregation and discrimination against child on the basis of race, caste and gender. However, such discrimination still prevails in some communities. The government and non-government agencies are found to have been working to combat such discrimination in the society implementing child-centred programmes. Such programmes have aimed at providing equal opportunities to girls by reducing their work burden and improving access to school. Programmes include extra-curricular education, early childhood

development in rural areas. Steps have been taken to provide primary education in the mother tongue. The Government also provides scholarships for *Dalit* children (State party report, 2004). *Dalit* refers to a group of disadvantaged, exploited, marginalized and backward people, who are religiously, culturally, socially and economically oppressed, and could belong to different language and ethnic groups (Gurung, 2005). In line with the available data on level of education and prevalence of poverty, a correlation between caste hierarchy in one hand, and literacy and economic status, on the other, is evident. That is, lower the caste rank, higher the illiteracy and propensity to poverty (Gurung, 2005). Thus, the situation of high illiteracy limits the *Dalit* from access to higher education. As a result, the absence of required qualification restricts their entry into bureaucracy or better employment opportunity. Caste based discrimination, poverty, illiteracy or low level of education, lack of awareness etc. all prevent *Dalits* improving their livelihood and social status (UNDP, 2008). Therefore, the government of Nepal took initiatives to maintain the gap between the advantaged children and disadvantaged, marginalized and lower caste children to integrate themselves in the mainstreaming of social development by providing scholarship to uplift their level of education.

According to Nepal Millennium Development Goals Progress Report (2010), Nepal has made considerable improvements in gender equality in education over last five years. The target of MGD to have equal access of primary education for both girls and boys is expected to have been achieved by 2015. Nevertheless, the quality of education and learning achievements need to be further analysed and strengthened.

However, along with these improvements and developments for gearing up access to school for girls, a number of prevailing contributing factors are still in existence to influence. On the basis of field work data, such influencing factors as parental education, Pro-male bias, unequal access and expected returns in the labour market, educational costs, accessibility and proximity to the school and cultural and religious factors have been analysed and discussed exploring its impacts on children's right to education.

6.2 Parental Education:

Various studies on child schooling found that parental education is one of the important factors to determine child schooling and especially about the decision for the girl schooling (Glick and Sahn, 2000).

During field work, while interviewing with community people and parents, it has been observed that parents were conscious about child schooling to some extent. According to the current trend of the society where I conducted my field work, most of the parents send their children to either private or government school based on their economic status. Among such parents female parents over male were seen much sincere in girl's schooling. During interview, a female parent of 51 years shared her experience explaining how in her time it was unusual to send daughter to school since they had to be busy in household chores. Her parents used to send her brothers to school and her to household and farm related work. She felt very sorry for such discrimination by her own father. Therefore, she does not want her daughter to encounter with the same problem. She always stands in position to educate her daughters. She further says:

During my childhood, I always wanted to go to school with my brothers but I never had the chance. And every day, I had to engage with the chores at home to help my mother, collecting fodder for the cattle and wood for fuel. I requested my father a lot to let me go school but he never heard me though my mother wished. She further says, instead, my father emphasized that I had to learn how to perform household chores so that I could run my homes when I got older.

The value of girl education has been culturally and socially constructed in rural Nepalese society. They are trained to bear the responsibility of a matured woman since very early stage of their life. Therefore, parents give more focus to learn household related chores from the beginning accompanying to schooling. Using the data from West African countries, Glick and Sahn (2000) concluded that within the parental education, paternal and maternal education have different influence over the child schooling in which improvements in father's education raises the schooling of both sons and daughters (favouring the later more). On the other hand, mother's education has significant impact only on daughter's education. It is widely believed

that maternal education has more influence in the wellbeing of the children compared to paternal education because mothers tend to be the main provider of care within the household. She spends more time with their children than fathers do. Parents' literacy level and attitude towards education directly influence the educational attainment of the children in a family. Similarly, Tansel (1997) analysed the influence of parental education in the schooling of their children. During his study in two African countries Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, he found strong evidence in supporting the facts that in both of the countries the schooling attainment of children of both sexes is closely connected with both of their parents. As a result, the effect of father's education is stronger than that of mother's for both sexes. The data from my field work suggests that gender disparity towards child education ignoring girl's education has been primarily found more on the part of the fathers from working class people. A clear distinction between girl's and boy's education is observed. In most of the households, father is found the main breadwinner and the dominant person to make decision in every respects including child education. Around two third of the households, people send their daughters to public school and for sons to private and boarding school. The girls who were from public school state the main reason to be in public school is due to their poverty. A girl of 13 years from grade 7 responded that her family does not have good sources of income to study in a private school.

We do not have any lands and my parents work as agricultural wage labourer in the farm of other people who have a lot of lands.

On the basis of the field work data, it was true that poverty, as the main reason for girls to be in public schools. However, it was not applied for all the girls studying in public school since some of the girls were from economically sound households as well. Therefore, the main reason behind girl's education in public school is due to their parental education, attitudes and cultural practice rather than poverty in particular although very few girls were really from poor background.

In this regards, Colclough et al. (2000) argued that the poor performances and under enrolment of girls are caused by cultural practice, rather than of poverty at both national and household levels. Using detailed case study material from two African countries, evidence is presented to show the variety and extent of adverse cultural practice which hold back the attendance and performance of girls at school, relative to boys.

On the other hand, the responses given by the economically well off girls were varied. Some of them explained that they study in public school just to be with friends while others focused on the decision made by their parents.

A Tamang girl of 14 years from grade 8 who studied up to grade 5 in a local private school responded to my question why she was in a public school leaving the private ones as:

I did not have many friends in the school where I used to study. All of my near and close friends were in public school. Every day they used to share their own experiences of the school and I had to only listen to them. I felt very interesting of their school according to their chatting. They told they did not have more home works. They had a lot of free time but I used to have a lot of home works. Thinking so, I insisted my father to admit me in a school where I had my friends.

From the above data, it is clear that being with friend and peer pressure is proved to be one of the contributing factors to motivate the school going children for choosing the types of school in which they study.

Colclough et. al. (2000) argues that household contexts and cultural practices tend to increase gender disparities changing the balance between boys and girls to attend school. During field work, about two third of the parents explain that a matured daughter is a great burden in the sense that as they grow older, it becomes more difficult to find a suitable groom for them. However, parents further say that most of the girls will get married during their schooling. In this regards, early marriage has been observed another contributing factors for gender discrimination and early drop out from education for girls.

In societies where men are considered as the main leaders, girls are generally married earlier. This means girls' future are seen as being devoted to home and family, the incentives for girls to attend and continue schooling is generally lower than boys (Colclough et. al., 2000). Mohammed (2000) stated that when a favourable marriage proposal arises, a girl might be withdrawn from school. Early marriage is a socio-cultural factor that hampers the girl child's continuation to school. When girls marry, their attachment will be with groom's family which

makes their parents feel that they will not benefit economically by educating a girl child. Therefore, the focus of parents is only to educate boys (Colclough et. al. 2000).

Another reason for not sending girls to schools is the illiteracy of the parents. During field work, it has been observed that the children from literate parents have well learning progress than the illiterate parents. Literate parents were found positive towards their child schooling and learning achievement. Such parents were involved in the children's academic activities directly paying a frequent visit to school and receiving progress of their children's improvement establishing good communication with the teachers.

On the other hand, illiterate and working class parents were not seen much serious about their child's schooling and academic achievement. A teacher of 48 years from the school shared his experiences as: illiterate and working class parents never come to the school even when they are called. Some of them do not even know which class their wards are studying in.

Illiterate and working class parents have conceptualized that to be educated is to earn money. But due to the current situation of political instability and unemployment problem in Nepal, poor people fear of investing in child education. Daughters are especially victimised of this fact and are engaged in family business and farm work. If they send their children to school, they will not be continuing their higher study after School Leaving Certificate (SLC).

6.3 Unequal access and expected returns in the labour market

Unequal access and expected returns in the labour market is another contributing factor to enhance gender disparity in schooling and educational attainment. During field work, I found more numbers of girls in the school than boys where I conducted my study which was a government school. One third of them were from economically well off family and about two third were from farming class and had comparatively low income status in the community. However, on the other hand, the number of boys was greater than the number of girls in private boarding school which is near by the same school in the same community. The data suggests that most of the working class people send their daughter to government school and sons to private boarding school. As I explain below, the trend is even higher in Madhesi community due to the socio-cultural values like dowry system, parent's attitudes, economic benefits realized by parents as the outcome of the investment in boys' education and simply

the unwillingness to invest more on girl's education perceiving them as others properties after marriage.

During interview, a Madhesi girl of 15 years who had two brothers and one sister responded as she and her sister used to study in the same private school along with their brothers. But later on, she and her sister had to leave the school and got admitted in government school in class 8. In response to my question why you left the school where your brothers are still studying, she said:

When I was studying in grade 7 in a local private school with my brothers, at that year my mother fell sick seriously and still she has not been recovered. Due to my mother's sickness, we have been spending huge amount of money. My father told that he did not have much money to pay the fee for our schooling and I along with my sister have been shifted into government school.

In environments where household resources are constraint, parents first prioritise their son to invest on quality education than daughters to get economic advantage in return in their old age. Filmer (2005) says parents may invest more in sons as a way of increasing their resources in old-age. According to cultural tradition of dowry system in Madhesi society, parents prefer to invest more on their sons in education. They believe that all the investment in son's education will be returned back in the name of dowry from the newly bride's home in marriage.

On the other hand, the parents realized that educating a daughter has a number of disadvantages. First, for Madhesi girls it is difficult to compete in the contemporary labour market since they lack of social network and influential political power. Furthermore, they face two fold discrimination based on gender dimension and as a member of marginalized ethnic group. As a result, Madhesi girls face unequal access to employment and cannot meet the expected return of their parents. Second, all the investment on girls education might be meaningless for the parents since they leave their natal house once they get married. And third disadvantage that parents realize of economic burden in the marriage ceremony of girls. The more educated a girl is the more dowries should be paid in order to find capable groom for

her. Therefore, within Madhesi society, parents might realize double disadvantage after educating girls and which push them to discriminate girl in educational investment.

In settings such as rural Nepal, the consequences of perceived gender specific role can be made more intense by gender differences in marriage patterns and parental dependence increases on children for old-age security. In the South Asian region, most parents depend on their children for economic support in their old age. Furthermore, in Nepal, daughters generally leave their parents' household at marriage to reside with their parents-in-law. As a result, parents are much more inclined to invest in their sons' human capital than in their daughters', as parents perceive investments in daughter's education are generally supposed to benefit in-laws, not natal families (Beutel & Axinn, 2002).

The general belief persists in many cultures that it is more beneficial to send the son to school because sons will stay in the family, whereas girls leave the family to join her husband's house after she gets married. This reinforces gender stereotypes that a woman's place is restricted within the four walls of their home taking care of children, cooking, cleaning and doing other unpaid work.

Woman and girl are disadvantaged to have an equal access to labour market due to the overall labour market discrimination. In the context of Nepal, prestigious jobs with high pay in government and private sectors are far beyond the access of poor and general people. They scarcely have good relationship and out of circle with the people who belong to the group of entrepreneurs in the field of labour market. Due to the unemployment problem of the nation, the prestigious jobs in renowned firms and companies go in the pocket of elite groups whether they are well educated or not because of their circle in the society. Therefore, the poor and general people are found to have been disappointed of equal access of their educated children in the labour market. The case of educated girls regarding the access to suitable jobs based on their academic qualification is even problematic. A number of contributing factors are in play to get a suitable job for an educated girl. More job opportunities are found in urban areas and cities but their parents do not want their daughters to go far from their house. The traditional beliefs and attitudes of parents are also one of the obstacles for the girls to find a suitable job. Most of the parents desire to make all their daughters SLC graduates in order to find a good husband. During field work, a large number of working class parents responded that they do

their level best to make their daughters SLC graduates. The reason behind it was especially for their marriage purpose. Parents further said that if their daughters are not at least SLC graduates, it would be a great challenge for them to get their daughters married with a suitable groom. The grooms also demands the girls to marry who are at least SLC passed. During this period, about two third of the girls will have been married and only a few girls continue their higher education if the colleges are accessible for them.

Girls face poorer economic incentives to invest in schooling than boys because they bring in lower labour market returns to education than boys, (Kingdom 1998). However, it is not always the actual difference in the labour market returns between male and female workers that contribute towards the gender issue in child schooling. It is rather the differences in returns realised by parents through their male and female children. According to Colclough et. al. (2000) where many jobs are reserved, either formally or informally for males, unemployment is higher or the gender balance of formal employment is strongly male. In such situation woman and girls are discriminated against in the labour market: it is difficult for them to access to job. If they get it, they are not paid equally as their male counterparts with similar abilities and qualifications. Benefits of schooling are greater for boys than for girls based on the perceived labour market trend and expected outcomes of education.

6.4 Educational costs

The cost involved in educating a child is also one of the significant contributors for the existing gender disparity in schooling. Both the direct and indirect costs along with opportunity costs of education are considered quite important for this purpose. The direct and indirect costs of schooling are great burden on the poorest and slightly better off households in Nepal causing a significant barrier to education. On the basis of quality they provide, two types of school are in existence in Nepal. A large number of parents from economically well off family send their children to private school. Gender disparity in education has not been observed prominently in economically well off and educated family. On the other hand, it has been highly observed in poor and economically slightly better off family having more than one child with daughters. Not all the children have equal access to quality education and the effect is much stronger for girls because in such wealth constraint household parental preferences go on the hand of male child (Drez and Kingdon, 2001). As a result, for poor and

economically slightly better off households, their first priority goes for male child to admit in private school and girls for public school or without school respectively.

During field work, it has been observed that the number of girls is greater than boys in public school. From the interview with teachers, it has been revealed that the reason behind less participation of boys in public school is due to sending them to private schools by a large number of parents whether they are economically sound or slightly better off family. But the case of poor family is different since their parents cannot afford the fees and other direct and indirect costs of private school and are compelled to go public school. A boy of 13 years from grade 7 whose parents were dead and brought up by his grandparents shared his experiences as:

I studied up to grade 4 along with my sister in a local private school. I was shifted to this school by my grandmother before two years after my parents passed away and my sister was dropped out.

Investment in quality child education is directly linked with household wealth since it includes direct and indirect costs. In this connection, poverty plays a vital role to bring out gender disparity in schooling in some of the households resulting into discontinuation of schooling or acquiring poor quality education by many children. The children from slightly better off family may have access to private schools but not the children from poor family. Therefore, they either send their children to public school or no school. Poor family face economic burden to send their children in public school as well maintaining its direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include fees, expenses for exercise books (books are free up to grade 8 in public schools), uniforms, pencils and pens. It is more or less linked to the household poverty of children. Although education is free in public schools in Nepal, schools ask extra money from children in order to meet different demands. The cost of schooling for poor families in Nepal is still high although school education is free. The direct annual cost of schooling, covering admission and examination fees and the cost of educational materials like exercise books and pencils, is about Rs. 819 (\$ 10) for a child studying at primary level and Rs.1819 (\$ 25) for a child studying at secondary level (IIDS, 2004). But the case of private and boarding school is totally different since they collect huge amount from the student in the name of different titles which is far beyond of access for poor people. During study gender

disparity has been observed in extra tuition class for girls, an example of direct costs in public school. Since the quality of the public schools is not good and in order to maintain the student's academic achievements, it requires extra tuition classes causing economic burden on households. In this regards, boys were found to have been taken tuition classes for three subjects such as English, Math and Science throughout the whole academic year whereas for girls only the last three or four months before the final examination. A girl of 15 years said:

Every day one or other teachers remain absent and usually the classes will be closed just a period after lunch break time. Generally, the teachers come 10 to 15 minutes after the bell has gone and leave the class before the bell rings. Especially for so-called hard subjects such as English, math and science the classroom teaching will not be effective. Therefore, we have to take extra tuition class to catch it though our parents do not focus more on extra class.

Indirect cost includes exam fees and school maintenance fees. Children in this research stated that they paid fees for exam at school. Even teachers realised that according to the number of students teachers are not sufficiently available. Thus, children are compelled to support economically in order to cover the cost of the teachers hired by school, for which government is not responsible to pay. Similarly, children are asked extra money for the maintenance of school building. These extra costs increase extra pressures for children who are poor and finally force children to leave schools forcing them to be deprived of their right to education. Boyle et al. (2002) state that unexpected costs like contributions to teachers' leaving or joining schools, funerals, repair of buildings affected by natural calamity etc. also featured as a major difficulty for parents and children to meet.

Opportunity costs as one of the influencing indirect cost factors push into gender disparity creating more effect on the part of the female child. It consists of lost chore time, children's foregone earnings, and especially for mothers' foregone earnings. The fact is that poor families are dependent on each of its members to contribute for household economy. The opportunity costs of children's time in school, especially for girls than boys are higher for poor families. During interview, a woman of 48 years said as she has to keep her daughter away from school especially during farming time to prepare breakfast and lunch for all the people working in the farm. She further said:

Sometimes, they do not go to school if I have to go to market, mills and somewhere else. My husband, most of the time will be busy in farm and there will not be anyone to take care of cattle and home.

The data shows that due to high opportunity costs of girl child's time she becomes educationally more deprived than boys. Ghosh and Sengupta (2012) in their research at Pancha Block in India concluded that severe poverty compels rural women to keep their daughters at home to take care of younger siblings, time-consuming tasks on the farm and various household chores like cooking, cleaning, fetching water, collecting fuel, etc. In most cases the eldest girl child becomes the victim.

The opportunity costs of schooling can be even higher for poor families in the sense that they will not be able to sustain themselves without involving their children in agricultural production and household activities. On the basis of the traditional norms and values in Nepalese society, girls are expected to contribute more on household chores in comparison to boys. Due to such expectation, the opportunity costs of educating a girl can be higher, and are away from school. The high opportunity costs combined with informal fees make schooling too expensive, which undermines the demand for girls' education (Bista, 2004; Herz et al. 1991).

6.5 Accessibility and proximity to the school

Another factor I realized to contribute gender disparity in education having more effect on girl was the accessibility and proximity to the school. The field site village consists of one secondary school, a lower secondary school and six primary public schools in ward no. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 respectively. The village also includes a lower secondary and two primary private schools. Regarding the accessibility and proximity to school for primary education, it was considerable for all the children from every ward. The only one public secondary school is at the centre of the village and equally accessible for the children. Since the village consists of 3 private schools, children from economically capable family have access to it. However, for the continuation of the secondary education in private schools was not of equal proximity of its distance since it is nearly 3 km far from the village to another market. And exactly the case of gender disparity comes here for the continuation of secondary education in private

schools for girls. They need to either travel by school bus or by cycling themselves. Around one third of the parents withdraw their daughters from private schools to admit in public secondary school which is located in the same village. They fear of unwanted accidents and activities of their daughters bringing shame in the family and to compensate extra economic burden.

During field work, with reference to my question why she left private school and joined the public one, a Madhesi girl from grade 9 responded as the school where she used to study was up to 7th grade only. She had to travel nearly 3 km. to another market for the continuation of her study in private school. After completion her 7th grade, she was forced to withdraw and admitted to a local public high school by her parents. However, her brother is continuing in private school in another market. She further said:

My father thinks that due to long distance to the school, I have to spend my almost day time. Therefore, I cannot help my mother in household work. Moreover, he said it will extend our expenditure since he has to pay to the school extra amount for school bus, lunch and other direct costs.

Girls do not have much opportunity to continue their study due to lack of school in easily accessible points. Parents do not want to send their daughters far from their eyes as a matter of safety for them on their way to school or home (Rena, 2005) and the unnecessary economic burden as well.

Gender disparity appears not only in school education but higher education also. During field work, very few parents stood in favour of girl's education. They are found to have sent their daughters with their brothers in the cities for higher education. Nevertheless, the other are found to send their daughter in a local public college which is of 8 km distance. On the other hand, economically capable parents send their male child to continue their further study to cities far from their villages sending them economic support every month. Proximity and accessibility to schools and colleges matter a lot for girls to continue their study. Girls get opportunity to continue their higher study only when the colleges and higher secondary schools are accessible for them. If not, they are either stay at home just engaging themselves

in family farming along with household works or wage earning activities to compensate for their brothers expenses till they are not get married.

Girls are culturally bound to support in household related works. Household work to be performed by girls has direct impact on school attendance on time. Some households assign some particular work to be performed by girls before they leave for school. In this connection, if the household chores are enough, it results into either away from school or late attendance based on the distance to school and lack of transportation facilities.

During field work, a girl of 14 years shared her experience as follows: she has to either walk for nearly an hour or travel with cycling for nearly 25 minutes every day to reach to school. She does not feel tired to go to school in the morning but while returning she feels almost tired due to long hour schooling and hunger. She further said:

When I return back from tuition class, I have to perform some household chores like cleaning of utensils and preparing curry. After performing such work, sometimes, I will be late to school due to the long distance and lack of transportation facilities. Similarly, if my family employ the wage labourer in the farm, I should be away from school. I have to prepare breakfast, lunch for them and take care of cattle throughout the whole day.

From the data given, it is proved that considerable distance to school and lack of transportation facilities matter a lot to reach school especially by girls on time after completing the assigned household chores. Due to the lack of transportation facilities, children in the rural areas encounter with serious problems to travel long distances to and from schools, causing tiredness and absenteeism. It is to be noted that in some of the areas the students walk (one-way) 10-18 Km to reach their schools. Such long distance to school will be one of the barriers for children's school attainment when they are needed at home for work (Rena, 2005).

7 Conclusion

This chapter summarises the key empirical findings that I gathered during field work from children and adult perspectives. I also included the ways in which my findings help to improve the understanding of children's lives in Nepal. Moreover, it includes recommendation for the concerned stakeholders who work on gender discrimination on children's right to education/ child schooling and further research in the given theme.

7.1 Summary of the findings

During my field work, I chose the participants with a diverse cultural, religious, socio-economic status and educational background in order to elicit vivid information. During study, my aim was to observe the unequal treatment between boys and girls from gender perspective. It was found that young girls were more disadvantaged in comparison to their male counterparts within the households in rural Nepalese society. With reference to the key objective of my study as the impact of gender discrimination on boys' and girls' right to education/schooling, it was found that young girls were mainly discriminated against the quality of education they receive. It means all the children (both boys and girls) attended school but the discrimination was magnified in terms of the types of school they enrolled and the quality of education they received. For this, it was found that a large number of girls were enrolled in public school where the quality of education and available resources were critical. On the contrary, boys were in private and English boarding school where quality of education and available resources were superior to public schools. The main reason behind girl's education in public school was due to the parental education, attitudes and cultural practice rather than poverty in particular although very few girls were really from poor background. Parental education and attitudes towards girls' education had negative impact on girl's schooling. Gender discrimination against girls in their schooling was mainly contributed by the socio-cultural factors such as pro-male bias, household work burden, unequal access and expected returns in the labour market, educational costs, accessibility and proximity to the school and religious factors.

Gender discrimination and son preference had been found deeply rooted in the rural Nepalese society; as a result daughters and young girls were treated unequally within the family. The reasons why boys and girls were treated differently and why girls were discriminated against in a patriarchal Nepalese society were associated with a number of gender discourses based

on socio-cultural practice, economic and religious grounds. The socio-cultural reasons I observed during my study regarding son preferences were that boys were believed to be the old age support for parents, protection and expansion of the family property, continuation of the generations, etc. On the other hand, daughters and young girls would be the part of other lineages and households once they get married. Sons were believed to be equally important from the grounds of economic benefits for family through the labour and employment whereas daughters as the source of expenditure mainly in marriage ceremony due to dowry system. Finally, it was also found that sons were important religiously as well in the sense to perform the funeral rites to purify the dead souls.

The young girls were treated unequally in the allocation of intra-household resources (nutrition, pocket money, play and entertainment and so on). Discrimination was primarily found prominent within the parents and guardians who were from upper caste and more educated. Furthermore, such inequality in resource allocation would have been manipulated by the factors such as age, and birth order within the siblings. Apart from these variables, household wealth was observed the other influencing factor in the allocation of pocket money for children. In addition, discrimination was found between boys and girls in relation to entertainment and play time. Particularly, boys had freer time out of their school to girls. Boys spent more time than girls do in outdoor sports and other recreational activities such as watching television. Nevertheless, girls spent very little time playing with friends and siblings within home only after completing school homework and daily household chores in the evening.

Based on the available data during field work, girls were proved to be most responsible for the domestic work to replace their mother in the family. Most of them revealed their involvement in daily routine based household work out of school hours. Most of the works they involved in were households and agricultural and were unpaid. During field work, the specific household chores performed by both boys and girls were mostly gender stereotyped. Girls are involved in cleaning utensils, cleaning of house, sweeping yard, collecting fodder, cattle herding, taking crops to the mills in order to get flower and rice, cleaning of animal's shed, producing bio-gas through cow dung and so on. On the other hand, the involvement of boys in labour intensive works as chopping fire wood, carrying loads, cleaning cattle place followed by agricultural works during farming seasons and so on. However, shopping of daily

household goods and caring of cattle were observed to be gender neutral. Along with gender dimension other intra-generational aspects such as age, birth order and sibling composition were also observed to influencing children's household work.

Lastly, apart from daily routine based task performed by both boys and girls, they were engaged in non- routine based tasks as well such as baby sitting and mostly gender stereotyped in Nepalese society.

7.2 Concluding discussion

Gender-based inequality and discrimination in education are a part of deeply rooted socio-cultural values and practices of a patriarchal society. They are pronounced as a reality rather than an accident in rural Nepal (Bista, 2004). Along with right to education, children are discriminated against opportunities, resources, services, benefits and decision making power. Such discrimination has been based on the socio-cultural beliefs and practices where male child enjoys a privileged status from the day of birth. On the other hand, female children are ignored and poorly granted the same educational opportunities.

My research findings mainly suggest that young girls are more disadvantaged in comparison to their male counterparts within the households in all aspects of human life including intra-household resource distribution. However, these patterns do not apply universally in all the contexts across the world in the sense that it will be manipulated by the factors such as age, and birth order within the siblings. In most social settings, an individual's status within the household is largely determined by three main variables: age, gender and kin relationship (Gittelsohn et al., 1997). The interplay between individual's age, gender and kinship in the allocation of resources within a household is an important component. Within a family generally, parents may have different preferences with respect to investment in boys and girls with the expectation to receive higher returns later to these investments. In this regards, it is argued that female children are perceived to be an economic burden for the family. Most of the resources and economic inputs with respect to food, health and education are unlikely to be returned as female children grow mature, except in labour extracted before they marry and leave the household. This is what one of the reasons to make female children busy in household activities. The daughters leave her natal house and move to her husband's house after marriage. Hence, investing in their education is perceived to have no economic and

social benefits to the family, especially in rural areas. On the other hand, boys are generally considered as a source of old age security for the parents, and hence, are more likely to be preferred. Furthermore, they are desired and valued for carrying forward the family name from generation to generation. These biased preferences and socio-cultural practices are reflected in the lifelong neglect of women and female children. In terms of their given low status, they are restricted not only access to good nutrition, health, education and employment opportunities but also to prevent them taking part in key household decisions.

From the field work data, I conclude that parental attitudes and cultural practices play significant role to make the decision on the type of school and the quality of education a girl child receives. This finding supports Glick and Sahn (2000) who argue that parental education and attitudes are the important factors that determine child schooling and especially the decision for the girl schooling. The core of my research finding sheds light on the discrimination between boys and girls schooling with the quality of education rather than mere school attendance. In countries where children's schooling faces many barriers of direct and indirect costs, as well as accessibility of schools, parental decisions about children's schooling depend not only on available resources but also on their understanding of what education will do for the children. On the basis of the field work data, poverty played least role for the girls to study in public schools. The economic condition of my research participants was relatively not poor due to the land they hold and income sources through remittances from their family members. In this connection, my research findings support Colclough et al. (2000) who argue that the poor performances and under enrolment of girls is caused by cultural practice, rather than of poverty at both national and household levels. However, the researchers as (Ray, 2002; Behrman and Knowles, 1999) have given more emphasis on household poverty and parental income as the determining factors in child schooling. They claim poverty as the main contributing factor to keep the children away from their right to education forcing them to involve in child labour.

The value of girl education is culturally and socially constructed in rural Nepalese society. My research findings help to understand the lives of Nepalese children from socio-cultural perspectives. I analysed children's daily life activities on how they combined both work (unpaid household) and schooling together. The present work mainly sheds light on the preferential socio-cultural practices to distribute household resources and its impact on child

schooling. These practices are rooted in patriarchal values where woman and girls are disadvantaged in terms of their basic rights. In this context, girls are focused on household works followed by schooling. In Nepalese society, children are considered to be an important source of labour for the family. The social value associated with child work is based on the concept of socialization to develop the understanding about family responsibility, home living skills, and accompanying attitudes that may carry over into their adult lives. In doing so, female children, being most responsible for the domestic work to replace their mother in the family, are focused to engage on household duties from their early age as the preparation for their married life. As a result, they are deprived of enjoying their basic rights freely. Their rights are confined within the document only. The new paradigm of sociology of children and childhood views children as independent, competent social actors having their own rights. However, Nepalese children – despite their valuable contribution to family livelihoods – are treated as mere dependent on adults. Generally, the voices of the children are not heard and the children are imposed with the best interest of the parents rather than their own.

7.3 Recommendations

It has been explicitly known that there are major data gaps within the studies on child and discrimination in Nepal. Some major national surveys (such as NLSS, NDHS, National Population Census, etc.) have not been found to collect the in-depth information on the child discrimination based on their age, gender and siblings composition. As a result, there are a number of weaknesses for improving the ability to monitor the progress of discrimination reduction and the plan of formulating policies and programmes in favour of children. Based on the key findings of my study I suggest the following recommendations for the stakeholders who work on child education. The Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education is recommended to maintain the gender disparity in education by:

- Developing gender-friendly curriculum materials and school environment.
- Fostering gender-sensitive policy and management.
- Improving physical facilities of public schools to strengthen quality of education.
- Introducing alternative schooling programmes to all girls and other children who cannot attend full-time, formal schools.
- Providing authority to local schools for rescheduling school hours to fit local lifestyles.

- Establishing a system of reward and punishment to reinforce teacher's academic performance encouraging a better work ethic in the profession.
 - Providing incentives (scholarships, free textbooks, uniforms and nutrition) for girls and disadvantaged children.
 - Establishing schools at short walking distances for children.
 - Improving the quality of teacher training with increasing supply of female teachers.
 - Giving due focus on educational planning, implementation, monitoring and follow-up.
 - Strengthening community mobilization, advocacy and communication for promoting gender education.
 - Removing socio-cultural barriers to girls' enrolment and retention.
- ❖ NGOs and INGOs working on the lives of the rural Nepalese children are suggested to make their awareness programme effective to change the attitudes of parents and guardians in the direction of girl's education.
 - ❖ Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare should promote the local programmes to eliminate harmful socio-cultural practices against young girls such as early marriage, dowry system, keep away from schools for the sake of household maintenances.
 - ❖ The government of Nepal should develop strict legal provision on domestic violence against young girls.
 - ❖ The local authority should encourage the parents and guardians not to force their children in household works during their schooling hours.

In general, the study aims to provide useful information on gender discrimination in education. Furthermore, it sheds light on impact of rooted socio-cultural practices and gender discourses in the distribution of household resources and children's daily activities combining work and school. The study is predominantly based on socio-cultural factors for gender discrimination. It does not go deeply through the politico-economic factors such as poverty. Therefore, it is suggested that further studies need to be conducted beyond socio-cultural factors including the politico-economic factors as well. The study focuses on various castes and cultural groups of people dwelling in the society of Sarlahi district. In this connection, I

suggest further studies can be done focusing a particular ethnic group to identify an overall level of discrimination and a comparative study between cast and ethnic groups can be done to make the comparison. Moreover, further studies can include rural-urban variation of discrimination based on gender. Furthermore, my work does not intensively study the role of generational, age, birth order and sibling composition to influence discrimination between boys and girls. Therefore, further studies can be conducted including these variations beyond gender with reference to children's right to education. Lastly, I further suggest to study on the plan and policy practices adopted by the nation to balance the level of discrimination with children.

8 Reference

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9 Appendix

Interview Guide for children

Background Information of Children

Would you please introduce yourself?

- Age
- Caste
- Gender
- Religion
- Marital status

Family Background

Where do you come from?

How long have you been here?

Are you brought up in your family?

Do you still live with your family?

Is your family single or large?

Do you live with your own parents?

How many family members do you have?

Are you an elder or the younger one?

Life-form Interview on Children's Daily Habits

Please share about your daily experiences which you have. How do you spend your daily time?

When	What	With Whom	Where	Remarks
Children wake up-8 AM				
8 AM-10 AM				
10 AM-12 PM				
12 PM-2 PM				
2 PM-4 PM				
4 PM-6 PM				
6 PM-until go to bed				

Educational Status and Social Connections

- Could you please tell me about your educational status?
- Please tell me about your school where you are studying.
- 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 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. Is your school comfortable for you in every situation?
- Share me about the activities you liked the most and the ones which you do not prefer in your school and family about your teachers and parents/elders.

Different allocation of resources and care of family that the boys and girls receive,

- Entertainment materials (television, radio, cycle, computer, etc used by you/sisters/brothers)
- Dresses/clothes (how much in a year)you/sisters/brothers
- Nutrition (available in household and buying from market)

- Education(type of school, how much time do you get to study at home, do you get the same time as your siblings get)
- Love and reciprocity (how often do your parents punish when you make a mistake, do you get the same sort of punishment as your siblings get, your father /mother /other family in laws who stand against punishment you get)
- Household work burden (what types, within household/across households, how often/much, more than/less than their siblings, who do your parents want to work,
- Have you missed your school when you have household work unfinished, in such situation you only miss the school or your other siblings(brothers/sister)as well, are you sometimes late for your school when you have not finished your daily work)
- Are you younger/elder brother/sister? If you are younger do your elders makes you work and control regarding household works and support from them in your work?
- Have your parents/elders prescribed any daily works that you have to perform before and after your school hour?
- Pocket money (how much by boys and girls by whom)
- Entertainment (what types, how often, where, with whom)

Examine how the prevailing discourses about gender preferences affect boys and girls differently in Nepalese society.

- What do people say about the boy and girl? Who is more or less stronger? Who is much less smarter?
- What do you think the ways people treat toward boys or girls?
- Why do you think people prefer boys to girls?
- What do you think the ways to eliminate gender gaps?

Impact of gender discrimination on boys' and girls' right to education/schooling,

- What every day experiences do you have on unequal treatment between you and your siblings?
- Do your parents support you in your study and how?
- Do your parents and elders support you in your study at home how?
- Who do your parents pay more attention in the study (you/brothers/sisters?)

- Where/when do you do your homework (at school/home) do your family members teach you to do your homework. If you do your homework at school why reasons?
- Do your parents/elders buy necessary stationeries in need for you? Who gets more facilities brothers/sisters?
- Are you sent to govt. school just because you are boy or girl? Why reasons?
- How far is the school from your home?
- Do you take extra tuition and your brothers/sisters? Why? How many subjects?

Knowledge of gender and discrimination:

- Have you ever heard/seen about gender discrimination?
- In your opinion how boy and girls are different and girls are discriminated against and why?

Support from Family

- Do you think your parents love and treat equally with other siblings/family members?
- Please tell me about your parents' daily activities. What do they do?
- Could you tell me about the responsible person for your schooling and other siblings except you?

Personal Feelings and Attitudes

- Do you feel that you are weak/strong as compared to your sisters/brothers physically mentally, socially...?
- How do you see your general life situation and your future plans?

Measures to Reduce the Problem of gender discrimination in education

- What type of support did you get from school while you were at school? Could you share your experiences about the programmes conducted by schools to help children keep at school?
- Can you tell me any developmental programme to improve the problem of gender discrimination?

Conclusion

- Do you have any personal and special thoughts and wishes?
- Do you have any further to add?
-

Focus group discussion guide for children

- What kinds of foods are available in your house?
- How the foods and nutrients available in house and bought from market are distributed among family members?
- Do you think pocket money should be given to children? Why?
- How often do you get it? How much at a time?
- How do you earn pocket money?
- What activities do you prefer in your leisure time?
- What are your household responsibilities during weekdays and weekends?
- What are some of your responsibilities at school and community?
- Do you wish you only go to school and play without any responsibilities?
- What is your parent's attitudes regarding your study?
- Why are you studying in public school?
- Any comments or questions?

Interview guide for parents/guardians

- Age
- Gender
- Occupation
- Marital status
- Number of children
- In what way or ways is your family structured?
- What do you think of gender discrimination?
- What is your attitude towards child education?
- Could you please share your schooling experience?
- How do you distribute household resources among your children?
- Should pocket money be given? Why?
- How often do your children get it? How much at a time?
- Do you have specific tasks for your children? Like male and female tasks? Why?
- Name some of the gender responsibilities for children?
- Contribution of children to family livelihoods?
- What are the leisure activities you allow for your children?
- What are the socio-cultural practices to treat boys and girls?
- Why son is preferred to daughters? Give reasons?
- What are the socio-cultural factors to contribute gender discrimination?

Interview guide for teachers

- Age
- Gender
- Marital status
- Designation
- Number of children
- How long have you been teaching here?
- Could you please share your experiences regarding the students in school (economical, academic, social,)
- Physical facilities and academic achievement
- Relationship between teachers and parents
- Professional ethics and academic qualification
- Treatment between male and female children
- Academic excellence of the children (regularity in homework, attendance and other moral ethics)
- Do you suggest any changes and improvement in the existing programmes to reduce the problem of gender discrimination?
- Could you please suggest the introduction of the new programmes which can help keep children at schools? Please share your expectations regarding supports for your schooling?

Pictures during FGDs





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Vår dato: 20.07.2012

Vår ref:30973 / 3 / MAS

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 29.06.2012. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

30973	<i>Effects of gender discrimination on the children' right to education: A case of Nepal</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	<i>NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
Daglig ansvarlig	<i>Tatek Abebe</i>
Student	<i>Lila Dhoaj Basnet</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

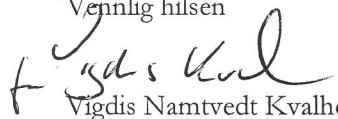
Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 20.07.2013, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen


Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim


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