DALIT CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES REGARDING SCHOOL PARTICIPATION IN NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

The caste based discrimination has been a matter of great discussion in societal and governmental level in Nepal. Several scholars have discussed this matter focusing on how people have been discriminated in the ground of caste in society, and other social and governmental institutions. There are also some contributions focusing in particular on how dalit people have been excluded from education. It has been noticed, however, that children perspectives and voices about their schooling experiences has so far not been explored. Therefore my thesis focuses in particular on the dalit children's experiences and perspectives on issues related to school participation.

The main purpose of my study is to explore the experiences of Terai Dalit children with regard to their school participation and to see how social, cultural and economical aspects have been shaping their experiences in one context in the Sunsari district. It further examines children and parents perspectives on different aspects of school environment and further changes compared to earlier generations.

The project follows the notion of the Social Studies of Children and Childhood which views children as competent beings, having their own rights and perspectives on the matter that concern them. The project further makes use of a qualitative approach for data collection and its analysis. Data has been collected by using observation, interviews, focus group discussion and filing the time framed daily activities. Though children are the main informants of this study, I have also interviewed parents to make use of their perspectives on different social, cultural and economical issues and thus to explore the children's family context. The field work included 23 children participants from the age of 10-18. There were 20 school going children which include 13 girls and 7 boys. I have also interviewed and observed there boys aged who have recently dropped out from school and also 5 parents from the community.

The study realized that different social, cultural and economical aspects of the society and family have been restricting children to participate and complete their schooling in the community. According to what the children and the parents express, the disappointing outcome from lower quality education provided for Dalit children seemed to have greater impacts than children and parent's awareness level for the lower rate of Dalit children's participation in schooling. The findings also indicate that the government support has been encouraging to send children to school but it fails to sustain them to school till completion. The equality in 'quality education for all' than merely 'education for all' can be better option to bring changes among Dalits through education.

Contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAI	Creative Associates International
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CERID	Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
CERSOD	Centre for Educational Research and Social Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
DACAW	Decentralized Action for Children and Women
DEO	District Education Office/r
DoE	Department of Education
EFA	Education for All
HDI	Human Development Index
INGO	International Non- Government Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NDHS	Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NGO	Non- Government Organization
NLSS	Nepal Living Standard Survey
NOSEB	Norwegian Centre for Child Research
NRS	Nepalese rupees
NSD	Norwegian Social Science Data Service
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
UNCRC	United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
VDC	Village Development Committee
WFP	World Food Program

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1   My childhood memories and Interest towards the phenomenon

My interest towards this topic of study has something to do with some of my past memories and experiences. I was born and raised in one of the rural village of eastern terai[1]. I have completed my schooling in a government aided school of the same village where I have many friends including dalits[2] and minorities children. Our house was located near a dalit community where I used to spend most of my time playing with children from the community. I also used to go for fishing, and play marbles with them. We used to like each other's company. Although I used to go to their houses regularly, I remember they feared of coming to my house. They used to give signal from outside if they want my company. I also remembered my mother scolding me for roaming around with the boys from the community. Society at that time was more conservative than now towards the caste system. People from the community were not allowed to enter inside houses. I still remember sometime I used to go to watch some television programs on neighboring house. I was allowed to go inside and watch the programs but people from that community used to watch from outside through the windows and door.

After my schooling, our family moved to city where society is more open and also changing. Even now when I go to my village I meet my friends from the community. I have seen that none of my friends from the village has passed their schooling. Now they are either working in the field or went to foreign country or doing other labor works. These kinds of memories of my childhood had inspired me to observe the current experienced of dalit children of eastern terai regarding their schooling.

I have also worked in a school as a secondary teacher while I was doing my bachelor degree. The school was situated beside a city area in a dalit community. The community was situated in a public land on the bank of river and belongs to government property. It was a private school but it took minimum fees from children because it was funded by an INGO working in education

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[1] Plain land of Nepal at the foot of the Himalayan that spread south to the boarder of India.
[2] Dalits are a group of people who are at the bottom of traditional caste stratification of Nepal and also known as untouchable.

field. During my experience as a teacher in the school, I again got chance to experience the attitudes of minority children about schooling and their performance in school. I also got chance to interact with parents and to know about their perception about their children schooling process. I have witnessed that most of the children from poor household have problem of not attending school regularly.

I feel that all my memories and experiences have somehow motivated me to explore about the current experiences of dalit children with regard to their school participation. Since I was raised in eastern terai region and dalit from this part of country is considered as most marginalized among dalit castes, I choose a dalit community from terai region as my research setting.

1.2   Significance of my study

Nepal is a signatory country of United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and abides to the right of the child to education. Article 28 of UNCRC states that the state parties should recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall make primary education compulsory and available free to all. They should encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need (UNCRC, 1989). Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has also focused on 'Education for All' (EFA) by 2015 (MoES, 2009). EFA is committed to six specific goals among them one of them is 'to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstance and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality'.

Beside, the political situation of Nepal has been going through the phase of social and structural reformation; different minority's community has raised their voices against unequal access to facilities and opportunities in recent times. Inclusion of Maoist revolutionary party in to government is one of the examples. There has been a greater discussion around the issues of rights of minority castes and ethnic groups. Having realized the fact that education is the most important assets for the development of a nation and to achieve social equality, government has

implemented different schemes to uplift the educational status of the minority castes and communities. Government and Non-government organizations have launched different scholarship programs for dalit and minorities children to encourage school attendance. Taking the data from CERSOD (2010) and Acharya and Luitel (2006), the current scholarship program for Dalit children can be listed as follows:

Table 1: Scholarship programs for dalit and minorities children

Name scheme	Type	Recipients	Eligibility Criteria	Amount	Provider
Booster Scholarship	Monetary support	Individual Students	First son or daughter of those parents who were excluded from primary education	Rs.500 per student for the first year of his/her schooling	Gov. of Nepal
Primary School Scholarship	Monetary support	Individual Students	All dalit students and 50% of poor students	Rs.350 per student per year	Gov. of Nepal
Scholarship for Oppressed and dalits	Monetary support	Individual Students	Boys and girls from dalits community studying in Grade6-10.	Rs.500 per head per annum	Gov. of Nepal
Mid-day Meal	Material support	Schools	Students from Grades 1-5/1-8 students	4 litres of vegetable oil and fortified blended food	WFP
Incentive for Disadvantaged Children	Material support	Individual students	15 DACAW districts, OSP graduates and regular school going Children	Yearly, need based	DACAW/UNICEF

Source: Data from (CERSOD, 2010 and Acharya and Luitel, 2006)

The executions of above scholarship programs are based on the government and non-government organization's targeted areas. It means all the schools and children from the dalit and minority community does not get all the incentives. The primary scholarship program and oppressed and dalit scholarship program are found to be implemented in all the government schools of Nepal (Acharyra and Luitel, 2006).

Although government and Non-Government organization has been working on the schooling of children from minority groups, they are not able to bring considerable changes in the lives of poor children from these communities. Children are still out of the school and found to be working in the field. It has been sometimes criticized that the guiding documents for scholarship programs have been prepared at the central level without adequate interaction with the field realities, which does not seem to address the ground reality (Acharya and Luitel, 2006). It is not only in the case of scholarship programs rather most of the programs for the education of minority castes and groups found to be implemented without proper research of children's experiences in their social environment.

In the context of Nepal, there is very little research about the schooling of dalit children. Those which are available are mostly about social and caste discrimination and lack the voices and experiences of children. With this research, I tried to bring forward the perspectives of dalit children (Terai dalit) about their schooling process and explore some of the major factors that intersect with their schooling experiences in their local environment. My research can be helpful to bring some new insights for those who are working for the planning and implantation of the schooling support programs for the dalit children of terai region of Nepal.

1.3   Previous research

Most of the previous researches and reports are directed towards the issues of social and economic discriminations and inequalities among the different castes in Nepal. The issues of discrimination that had been portrayed in the past have very less relevant to present situation because of the change in the society and legal system. More than that, the issues relating to dalit

children has not been researched properly. It is obviously realized that education is backbone for the overall development of the nation and the government has initiated different quota and reservation programs for minority castes in the field of education however it is necessary to see the relevance of such system in the society and its overall impact among minority children. More than that it is also equally important to listen to the views of these children regarding reservations and its impact on their school participation and also to listen what they say about other social, economical and cultural factors that encourage and discourage them to participate in schools.

Afke De Groot (2007) had conducted a research on minorities children and their school participation in villages of four districts of Nepal; Rautahat, Siraha, Udayapur and Jumbla. Among these districts, Rauthahat and Siraha are the districts from terai, Udayapur belongs to hill and Jumbla belongs to mountain region of the county. He stayed three weeks in each village to find parent's and children's views on school participation. He mentioned in his finding that "due to a shift in customs and traditional occupations disappearing, education is increasingly considered as a tool to escape their current lifestyles. Work presently done by parents is perceived as hard work, and children hope they will be able to lead different lives. (Groot, 2007 P33). He further said that lack of potentiality for further economic benefits, child work, availability of schools on the areas, lack of teacher from the community and languages in the schools are the major obstacles for school participation of minority children. (Groot, 2007)

Similarly Margarita Pivovarova (2010) has presented a paper about the probability of school enrollment among the low caste girls in rural Nepal based on the data from the Nepalese Living Standards Surveys 1996 and 2004. The NLSS is a nationally representative survey of households and communities by the Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics with the assistance of the World. The report said that "the households' decision to send children to school is determined both by the adequate supply and quality of the schools, overall level of village development, and ethnic and caste composition of the community" (Pivovarova, 2010 p 22).

Apart from these government and non-government researches and reports, there are very little academic qualitative researches in this field. One of the qualitative researches on this field has been done by Kumari Ambika Shah in 2007. This is a small scale of qualitative research done in

one of the community of the terai dalit in Sunsari district . This research focused on status of primary level education participation of the children from the community. The major finding from the research suggests that poor economic condition and academic performance are the primary reasons behind low level of school participation in the community. Beside that lack of facilities for the girls like toilet, children involvement in productive works in the house, lack of interaction with other students and unprofessional teachers are some of the basic influencing factors for children school participation (Shah, 2007)

1.4 Objectives of the study and research questions

The main objective of my research is to explore the experiences and voices of the dalit children about their schooling process. While exploring the children schooling experiences, it also observes and discusses about major economic, social and cultural factors that has been influencing the children schooling, and try to see how these factors are encouraging or discouraging children from going to school.

Having understanding the fact that the respondents are from dalit community who have been marginalized from educational field in the ground of hierarchical caste system, I also try to discuss about children views about current school environment to see whether they find their schooling experiences and environment favorable for them or not.

The following research questions are used to achieve my research objectives:

- What are the everyday experiences of Dalit children from Terai with regard to their school participation?
- What are the major economic, social and cultural factors that have greater influence on children schooling progress and how do they influence children schooling process in the community?
- How children perceive their school environment?
- How children and parents are dealing with their schooling experiences in the social context?

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1.5 Organization of the thesis

The thesis is organized into eight chapters. The chapter one is the introduction of my thesis where I have first presented some reasons for interest towards the phenomena of schooling of dalit children of terai region of Nepal and my past memories around it. Then I have explained significance of study in present context and some findings of previous research. I have also mention about my research objectives and questions in this chapter. Chapter two will provide the country profile of Nepal along with information about education status of country, dalit community and study area. This chapter will shed some lights upon caste system and child work in the context of Nepal to form the context and background of my study. In chapter three I will discuss about my theoretical framework that I will used to describe and discuss my findings. In chapter four, I will present the methods that I have used to collect data in the field. The chapter will also describe about some ethical considerations, challenges of the field work and how I tackled these issues. Chapter five will present the first part of the analysis and discussion of my findings. Here I will discuss about some social, economic and cultural aspects of my participants experiences that have influence in their school participation in the community. In chapter six, I will discuss about children views and experiences regarding school environment which is also second part of the discussion and analysis of my findings. Then in chapter seven, I will try to discuss about some of the dilemmas of the people regarding schooling process of the children. This is also a concluding discussion where I have tried to do in depth analysis of the important issues that has emerged in this study. Eighth chapter will be the chapter to summarize and conclude my thesis along with some recommendation for further research.

2 COUNTRY PROFILE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

2.1 Nepal geographical and administrative description

Nepal is a small Himalayan country lies in south Asian region of the world, known as a land of Mt. Everest and a birth place of Buddha. It is a small landlocked country lies between the two big neighbors, India in the east, west and south part and the Tibetan region of people republic of china in north part. The capital city of Nepal is Kathmandu with population of 17, 40,977(CBS, 2011a). The total area of the country is 1, 47,181 sq. km. with 885 km. length from east to west and 193 km. width from north to south. The country is situated between 80° 04' and 88° 12' east, and 26° 22' and 30° 27' north, along with the southern slopes of the Himalayas (CBS, 2002:1). Although Nepal occupies 0.03 and 0.3 area of world and Asia respectively, the climate varies sharply with altitude, from arctic to humid sub-tropic.

The country has divided into three ecological zones: northern, mid and southern which is known as mountain region, hilly region and terai region respectively. Mountain region consists of high Himalayans including Mt. Everest. It occupies the 35 percent of the land but only 10 percent of the population lives there due to its complex geographical and climatic condition. Beside, this region also lacks basic facilities and infrastructure. The mid- range or hilly region is captured by gorgeous mountains, high hills, valleys and lakes. It occupies 42 percent of the land and around 43 percent of population lives there. It includes some highly populated cities like Kathmandu valley and Pokhara valley. Similarly, terai region is the southern part of the country consists of dense forest, national parks, wildlife reserves and cultivated land. Though it occupies 23 percent of the land, it is densely populated area of the country. Around 48 percent of the people lives here. Because of its relatively flat terrain, basic facilities like education, transportation and communication are more developed as compared to other two zones of the country (NDHS, 2011).

For administrative purpose, Nepal is divided into five development region: eastern, western, central, mid- western and far western development region. These five development region further divided into zones, districts and municipalities and VDCs. This administrative division is done to facilitate development activities, to bring about "balanced development", hereby minimizing

economic disparity (Shrestha 2005, p.10). Nepal is divided into 14 zones and 75 administrative districts. Districts are further divided into village development committee and municipality. Generally VDCs are rural area and municipality is urban. Currently, there are 3,915 VDCs and 58 municipalities. Each VDC consists of 9 wards, and the number of wards in each municipality ranges from 9 to 35 (CBS, 2006).

2.2 Demographic and economic description of Nepal

According to population census 2011, the total population of until 2011 June stands at 26,494,504, showing population growth rate of 1.35 per annum. The proportion of children below 15 years of age is 36.7 percent (CBS, 2011a). Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world and least developing country in Asia. According to the annual report published by United Nation Development Program (UNDP), Nepal's HDI for the year 2010 is 0.458 which give Nepal a rank of 157 out of 187 countries. The preliminary estimate of per capita GDP at current price stands at NRS 46615 (US $642) for the year 2010/11. The economic growth of the country measured by GDP is 3.47 percent per year in the year 2010/2011. About one fourth of the population (25.16%) still lives under poverty (CBS, 2011b). The political uncertainty, increasing gap between rich and poor, rural and urban life are consider to be the reasons for slow economic development in Nepal.

2.3 Historical, social and political background of the country

Historically Nepal has been ruled by different ethnic groups like Kirats, Aahirs, Gopals, Lichivvavi, Malla, Thakuri and Shah in different period of time. Before territorial unification of Nepal by King Prithvi Narayan Shah in 1769, it was divided into 22 and 24 principalities. He gave the shape of modern Nepal by winning these principalities that is why he is also called as a founder of modern Nepal. Though, Nepal was never a colony of any colonial power, it experienced the political instability throughout the history. Along with the monarchy of Shah Bansa, Junga Bahadur Rana and his brothers ruled from 1846 to 1950. After the fall of the autocratic Rana rule [3]in 1950, the Nepalese experienced democracy for some years but again King Mahendra dismissed 18-month old Parliament with B. P. Koirala of Nepali Congress party

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[3] Rana have rules as prime minister from 1846 to 1940. Like monarchy, they took the position of prime minster as an inheritance.

as the Prime Minister and introduced Party less Panchayat Political System with direct leadership of the king. This system collapsed in 1990 due the people's movement jointly launched by Nepali Congress Party and the United Left Front. Thus, democracy was reinstated in 1990 and multiparty political system was reintroduced. (Bhattachan, 2003).

Even multi- party system fails to bring expected development in the country because of corruption, centralization of government by region and social groups and misuse of power and authority. The development is only limited to some political and powerful group of the society which brings dissatisfaction among the people for ruling government. The dissatisfaction brings another turn in the political situation of Nepal by the insurgency of Maoist movement. The constant conflict between Maoist and ruling government lasted for the ten years (NDHS, 2011) The United Nation's figures shows that the war between the government and the Maoists rebels left more than 13,000 people and an estimated 100,000 to 150,000 internally displaced (UNESCO, 2011). The human rights have been violated and destruction of infrastructure push development programs backwards. Large number of children was also affected during this period. Children are either used as soldier or left parentless, or displaced. On 21 November 2006, a comprehensive peace agreement was signed between an alliance of the seven major political parties and the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) which brings the end of war and dethrone of long traditional monarchy system in Nepal. Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) inters into the mainstream politics and took part in constitution assembly election in April 2008 (NDHS, 2011).

After the election, Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) became the strongest party in Nepal and bring some major changes in structural reform, the rights of Madheshi, Dalits, Indegenious people and women has been highly prioritizes. Different reservation and quota schemes for these groups have been implemented in different sectors. (ibid) But due to disagreements among the parties regarding different political issues the constitution assembly was extended several times and finally it was dissolve on May 2012 without drafting new constitution with the declaration of new election on November 2012. Issues regarding vision of states and its naming with regard to different ethnic identity are consider as main reasons for the dissolve of constitution assembly.

Like geographically, Nepal is also diverse in its social and cultural composition. Socio-cultural diversity is characterized by diversity in caste, ethnicity, language, religion and culture. Because of the lack of caste/ethnic and language survey in all parts of the country in the past, it is difficult to come up with real number of caste, indigenous nationalities. However, according to the census of 2001, the total number of castes, indigenous nationalities and religious groups are 100 and three unknown/unidentified groups (CBS, 2001). Though there is diverse languages of different ethnic community in Nepal, majority of population speak Nepali language. Nepali is the official language and mother tongue of majority (Bhattachan, 2003).

2.4 Caste system in Nepal

The word 'caste' is of Portuguese origin and was applied to India by the Portuguese in the middle of fifteenth century (Madhusudhan, 2010).' Berreman (1967) has described the caste system as a 'system of birth-ascribed stratification, of socio-cultural pluralism, and of hierarchical interaction' (Berreman, 1967 cited in Madhusudhan, 2010). Similarly, in the word of Sinha (1967), 'caste is a hierarchy of endogamous groups, organized in a characteristic hereditary division of labour (Sinha, 1967: 94). Gerth and Mills 1947, states caste is... a fundamental institution of Hinduism. (Gerth and Mills 1947 cited Leach 1960: 2). It can be seen that there has been a debate in the literature over whether the caste system is a unique social phenomenon or simply one manifestation of processes of social stratification which have a wider generality (Leach 1960; Sinha 1967; Berreman 1968). Whether caste system is unique social or structural phenomenon, it divide particular social group with some social and cultural characteristics.

In the context of Nepal, the history of caste system (Varna system) can be traced back to 1380s in the reign of King Jayasthithi Malla of Kathmandu valley. During his reign, 64 different castes were allocated different tasks and ranks in the hierarchy. But for most people living in the territorial boundaries of the modern Nepali state –especially after the promulgation of the National Code or *Muluki Ain* in 1854 – the caste system has been a major determinant of their identity, social status and life chances. In this system everyone was organized in terms of their relative ritual purity into the four broad Varna of the classical Hindu caste system: the brahman;

priests, the kshatriya; kings and warriors, the vaisya; traders and businessmen and the sudra; peasants and laborers (Bennett, Lynn et al, 2008).

Muluki Ain is a document of great historical, legal and cultural interests for scholars on Nepal, by which all people in Nepal, high and low, were supposed to have been judged. *Muluki Ain* divided Nepali people into the four main hierarchies (Hofer, 1979). They were *Tagadhari* : castes wearing sacred thread), *Matawali:* Alcohol-drinking castes, *Pani nachalne chhoi chitto halnunaparne:* Impure but touchable castes, *Pani nachalne chhoi chitto halnu parne:* untouchable castes.(Hofer, 1979; Gurung, 2004)

During the period of *Muluki Ain* (1884), the government of Nepal was more Kathmandu based so different social categories from terai region has been left out in this categories, among them are Chamaar, Mushaar and Tatma etc are the poorest dalit communities in Terai region (Bennett, Lynn et al, 2008). They have not been recognized by the law, which further marginalized their position in the society. After the Rana rule has been overthrown in 1951 and after the re-establishment of democratic system in 1990s, the issues government failure to ensure equal rights and opportunity to the people of lower caste and women have been highly discussed on social and legal level (ibid). The same inequality issue is considered as one of the reason behind Maoist movement in the country claiming for the equal access to everything not only in law but also in the practice. Recently after the election of constitution assembly and Maoist involvement in the mainstream politics, certain rights and quota have been reserved for the dalits and other minorities group in the society. But it seems that still some groups of people especially from terai region can't access to these facilities because of their illiteracy and unrecognized identity in the society.

2.5   Education status of Nepal

According to the Nepal living standard survey 2010/11, overall 61 percent of population over 6 years and above is literate. Literacy rate of urban area is 77 percent which is comparatively high with compare to rural area which is only 57 percent. There are marked gender disparities: 72 percent of male aged 6 years and above are literate compared to 51 percent of female. Similarly there is 57 percent of the adult population aged 15 years and over is literate among whom the

literacy rates of males and females are 72 and 45 percent respectively (CBS, 2011c). Talking about the school attendance, around 34 percent of population aged 6 years and above had never attained school, among the remaining 28 percent had attained school in the past and 38 percent are currently attaining school.(ibid).

The formal education system of schools in Nepal exits in three level: primary, lower secondary and secondary level of education. Primary level education offers education from class 1 to 5 which is of 5 years, lower secondary level of education offers from class 6-8 of 3 years and secondary level of education offers classes of 9 and 10 of 2 more years. (MoE, 2011). Most of the lower secondary level school perform primary level of education too and most of the secondary level school performs primary and lower secondary level of education. From the year 2009 government of Nepal started a SSRP programs which is aims to restructure the school education into basic (from class 1 to 8) and higher secondary level (from class 9 to 12). Recently government of Nepal had given authority for secondary level school to extend their schooling to higher secondary level to increase access of rural people to higher education. Higher secondary level includes classes of 11 and 12. Government of Nepal also provides financial and human resource support for the conduction of program (ibid). But rural schools are still unable to conduct higher secondary school program due to the poor condition of school and lack of qualified teacher in rural areas.

In Nepal, schools are categorized into four different types: community-aided schools; fully supported by the government for teacher's salary and other expenses, community-managed schools; fully supported by the government for teachers salary and other funds but their management responsibility lies with the community, community-unaided schools: either getting partial support or no support from the government and the institutional schools widely known as private schools which are supported by parents and trustees (ibid). Recently private schools are becoming more and more popular because of its better quality of education. A government school lacks the qualified teachers, required facilities and regularity of classes because of which people are more attracted towards private sectors. As a results children from minorities caste, who are poor and unable to afford fees of private school, are deprived of quality education which creates a discrepancy between student from poor and rich background. It also affects future

career of those poor children who fails to compete with the student from private school after the education.

According to the Ministry of Education publication of 2011, there are 33,160 schools running in Nepal. Among them Primary Level education is running in 32,684 schools and 11939 Lower Secondary schools, 7266 secondary schools and 2564 higher secondary schools are running in the country (ibid). Although Nepal had shown some improvement regarding the number schools and level of school participation in recent years, there is a still lot to do in the field of education. The school participation of girls and Dalit children in rural areas is still very low and the drop out among these groups of children is still very high. So to increase overall participation of children, government need to implement the program targeted for those minorities children and discrepancy between government and private school should also be filled by increasing the quality of education in government schools.

2.6   Educational status dalit Children in Nepal

The lower caste people who had been described as untouchable caste by *Muluki Ain* are called dalits. It is a term which is academically and legally used to refer to those marginalized caste people who had been dominated by so called upper caste. The literacy rate of dalit was 17% in the census of 1991 and it has increased doubled to 33.8% in the census of 2001. Though it was doubled, it was less than the National Literacy Rate of 53.7% and far less than literacy rates of Brahmin (74.9%), Kshatriya (60.1%), Newar (71.2). Among the dalits, literacy rate of Terai Dalit is even more miserable as it is only 21.1 percent (Sherpa, 2006 in Bhattachan et all 2009).

According to Flash report 1, 2009, the rates of enrollment of the dalit in primary, lower secondary and secondary level has shown some minor improvement:

Table 2: Enrolment rate of dalit children in different years

School level	2007	2008	2009
Primary level (1-5)	19.20%	20.20%	20%
Lower secondary level (6-8)	9.8%	11.4%	12.6%
Secondary level (9-10)	6.4%	7.8%	8.6%

Source: DOE, consolidated report, 2008 & DOE, Flash report 1, 2009

The above table shows how there has been some minor improvement shown among the dalits regarding the education. It also shows the gap between the levels in every year which shows that there is high dropout rates among the dalits. In every year, 2007, 2008 and 2009 (in the table), almost half of the students drop out from the primary level. And the same is with the secondary level. The reasons for such high rates of drop out among Dalit are considered to be their poverty, discrimination and their involvement in household work from early age.

As Madhusudhan (2007) stated the "the positive perception of parents toward their children education and government incentives including scholarship have made a positively impact in the school enrollment of dalit children, yet many dalit children at school going age are still out of schools" (Madhusudhan, 2007 p-32). Government and non- government organization incentives, scholarship programs and reservation have positive impacts in the dalits enrolment in school. But due to lack of access to the given facilities, child work in household and social context, poor economic background and parent's illiteracy, the plight of terai dalit is still same.

2.7 Child work in Nepal

Nepal has agricultural based economy where large numbers of the people are still dependent on agriculture. According to the National Child Labor Survey undertaken in 2008, about 21, 11,000 children aged 5 to 14 years, are classified as economically active out of a total estimated

population of 62, 29,000 children. Among them, 398,000 were aged 5 to 9 years and 17, 13,000 were aged 10 to 14. The labor force participation rate is 13.4 percent for children aged 5 to 9, and 52.7 percent for children aged 10 to 14. Participation rates are higher for girls than boys in both urban and rural area. The great majority of children (17, 21,000 or 82.1 percent of employed children) are engaged in agricultural activities, nearly all of it as subsistence agricultural workers (16, 37,000 or 78.1 percent of employed children). Beside, some children work as sales persons in shops (25,000), or provide housekeeping or restaurant services (17,000). Some others work in crafts or related trades (42,000), and a few are plant or machine operators around 3,000 (Nepal Labor Force Survey, 2008).

Financial situation of the families is cited as one of the important reason for such high rate of children participation in child work. Beside poverty, there are other factors like discrepancy of wealth, the growing market price and traditional social structure and inequalities which contribute for child work in society. Among many reason, caste based hierarchical system plays significant role in child work in Nepal. Traditionally caste based system categorize the people's occupations in the society. Most of the lower caste people are uneducated and without land. They have to depend on their wage labor for their sustainability and they generally choose their traditional occupation to sustain their life particularly in rural areas. That is why, Children of such lower caste start to involve in their family work early in their life to support their family for their living. That is also one main reason behind the low rate of school participation and high rate of dropout from school among the children from minority castes.

2.8   Background of study area

Sunsari district lies in the eastern development region and is one of the district of Koshi Zone. This district spread around the eastern terai region of Nepal and Dhankuta, Morang, Saptari and Udayapur are the adjusting district of Sunsari. According to the population census of 2001, the total area of Sunsari district is 1257 square kilo meter. The district consists of 49 VDCs, 3 Municipalities (CBS, 2001).

According to the CBS (2001) report, the total population of Sunsari district is 6, 25,633, among whom 3, 15, 530 are males and 3, 10,103 are females. The annual population growth rate is 3.00

which are higher with compare to total population growth rate. The total population of children (age 0-14) is 68.5 percent of total population (CBS, 2001).

The literacy rate of Sunsari district (aged 6 or more) is 60.6 percent. The female literacy percentage is quite low than the male, 50.30 percent of female are literate with compared to 70.90 percentage of male. The total number of schools in the district till the year 2001/2002 is 324 and total student number is 1, 32,541 (CBS, 2001).

As a district of terrain land, Sunsari district is known for its fertile land and the occupation of 49.44 percent of the people is agriculture. The majority of population works in the agricultural sectors. Among the ethnic groups, the population of Tharus[4] is higher than any other ethnic groups in this district. Maithali, Nepali and Tharu language are most commonly spoken language, which is spoken by 32.04, 26.15 and 15.62 percent of population respectively (ibid). The unequal distribution of land is the miserable plight for the marginalized group of the society. Though land is the main source of livelihood in this region, it is limited to particular group of the society. Most of the Terai Dalits does not own any land. They are forced to work as waged laborer in domestic level.

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[4] Ethnic indigenous group of terai region of Nepal.

3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter presents the main theoretical concepts and approaches which has been taken as guidelines for the research process. The theoretical basic of this research is the concepts and approaches of the social studies of children and childhood. First of all I would present and described the concepts from this perspective. Then I will present some key ideologies of child work and describe it in relation with schooling. Finally I would also describe human capital theory and some of its approaches that can be used to describe social and economic aspects of schooling experiences of poor children from global south.

3.1 Social studies of childhood

Theoretical perspectives steamed from the social studies of children and childhood is the back bone of my research. Social studies of children and childhood is the multi-disciplinary perspective which derives its components from different fields of studies such as sociology, anthropology and development theories. James and Prout's 'Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood' (1990) has taken as landmark of this approach which they called as 'emergent paradigm', an emerging and not yet completed approach (James and Prout, 1990). In the year 1973, Charlotte Hardman has first brought the concept of this approach by comparing children with women with the used of the term 'muted groups' and regarding children as people to be studied in their own rights, not just as receptacles of adult teaching (Hardman, 1973). However James and Pruot 1990 have brought it to the fore by discounting earlier developmental views of childhood which focus on biological and universal views of childhood. They described childhood as distinct from biological immaturity, is neither a natural, nor universal features of human groups but appear as structural and cultural component of many society (James and Prout, 1990).

The social studies of children and childhood emphasize on the social construction of childhood and approach children as social actors. By emphasizing on the socially constructive nature of childhood, it highlights the social and cultural aspects of childhood. Children quite simply, are not always and everywhere the same things; they are socially constructed and understood contextually (Jenks, 2004 p.78). Social construction of childhood has highlighted the historical,

geographical and social viabilities of childhood and moral, cultural and political context of assumption about children. The work of Philippe Aries in France has shown how the concept of children and childhood has been changed in different historical periods. (Corsaro, 2011). Socially constructed view point of childhood deconstructs the universal childhood model suspending the taken for granted assumption and meaning and highlights the plurality of childhood in different contexts. (James and Prout, 1998). The experiences of children and definition of childhoods is entirely depends on social context of the children. The social construction of childhood is relevant for my research to show the different experiences of minority children from my research setting. The children from minorities groups of Nepal and children in developed countries have entirely different experiences of their childhoods. Theoretical debate on work and school in global south and global north exemplifies how childhood in global south is characterized by school and play, and in global north school, play and work (Bourdillon, 2006 and Robson, 2004). Similarly concept of paid and unpaid work in different context also highlights the same plural notion of childhoods.

This approach views childhoods as a social group which cannot be distanced from the variables of the society like class, gender and ethnicity (James and Prout, 1990). It highlights the multiplicity of childhoods in given time because of the existence of different variables in the society. For example the experiences of boys and girls, higher class and lower class and dalit and non-dalit (in the context of caste stratification) vary in given society. In my research with dalit children of Nepal, I have witnessed such influences of social variables which play major roles to shape the childhood of minorities caste children.

Similarly it also highlights the children's social relationship and cultures and takes it as worthy of study in their own right, independent of the perspective and concern of adults (James and Prout, 1990). Earlier psychology and sociology were the dominant discourse to study children. They have focused on the physical development of children, and present children as incomplete adult and their activities are analyzed with the view point of developing as adults. Charlotte Hardman challenge this notion of childhood describing it as a self-regulating, autonomous world which does not necessarily reflect early development of adult culture whereby they can be seen

as social actors (Hardman, 1973). The new paradigm shift has presented children as being not becoming and worthy of study in their own rights.

Another important aspect of new social studies of childhood is to advocate for the ethnography as a tool for researching children. The ethnographical method for researching children allows children a more direct voice and participation in the production of sociological data than is usually possible through experimental or survey styles of research (James and Prout, 1990). It will help to bring the children everyday experiences and their though into surface. while doing my research, I follow the ethnographic method to study children experiences in their social setting.

3.2   Social structural perspective of childhood

The earlier developmental and individual view of childhood had separated children from the society by presenting children as supra historical individual and discounting its historical variability (Qvortrup, 2002). But with the emergent of sociology of childhood, the focus has been shifted from individual psychology to the collective sociological structure and its historical cultural and societal dynamics. Children have been placed into the social structure in order to capture the sociological meaning of childhood (ibid). This perspective presents childhood as continuous interplay with class gender and other social structure, and as being constructed and reconstructed within their interplay (Alanen, 2001). Regarding the social structural view point of the childhood Jens Qvortrup has said

Childhood constitute a particular structural form, which is defined neither by individual characteristics of the child nor by age- even if age may appear as a descriptive referent for practical proposes. As a structural form, it is conceptually comparable to the concept of class in the sense that it gains its defining characteristics by what the members of childhood are doing, so to speak and through the position to which childhood is assigned by and in relation to other and more dominant group in the society. (Qvortrup, 2002, p.47)

Childhood as a structural form of the society has its own characteristic, which is different from other structural groups and is commonly shared by the member of the group. It looks for the

commonalities within childhood and the features which all and only children share. For example all children attend school during considerable part of their childhood and children status in legal term as minor in relation to adults (ibid).

Similarly this perspective presents childhood as a structural group, which is influenced by the happening of the external world. This perspective shows us society as common terrain for all societal groups and it thus challenges the ideas that children live in a special world (Qvortrup, 2002). It freed children from microcosm of family and parents and brings it to the macro-societal parameter. As a part of the macro societal world children cannot avoid the influences of major events that happens in outside worlds. The changes on economic forces, environmental events, political decision does influences the children in one way or other but their impact might occur in indirect or mediated form because of their status in legal term as minor which does not make with consideration of children (ibid).

The social, cultural and economic status of the society does influence the everyday life experienced of the children in particular society. For example, among the dalit children of Nepal who are economically weak, the cost of schooling play a major role for children decision of attending and leaving school. (Hunt, 2008). Similarly social factors like trend of foreign migration, family occupation and household obligations, discrimination in school environment does influences the children everyday life and school participation in society which I will describe later in my analysis chapter.

Since childhood forms a structure in the society it also has permanency, it means even though each individual child leaves childhood in a biographical sense, childhood still remains and continues as a social structure in society (Qvortrup, 2002). Even though children pass the phase of childhood, the social category still exists. The changes on this category cannot be explained in terms of individual disposition; even if they may also manifest there, they must first of all be accounted for by changes in several societal parameters (ibid).

This perspective also highlights the intersection between structures an agency in any social context. As social structures of the society have influence upon the everyday life of the children,

the childhood as a social group also has an influence upon the structure of the society. Children's lives are not only shaped by the policies and practices but they are also agents who make lives for themselves through their relationship with adults and other children (Mayall, 2002). Qvortrup (2002) in this aspects, argued that childhood is also an integral part because it's very presence considerably influences plans and prospects of the social and economic fabric (Qvortrup, 2002 p. 58). He also presents how children have been evolved in the prevailing system of production from pre-industrial time to the new industrial age. He said that earlier children are involved directly in production activities as manual labour which still continuous in developing countries but in most of the industrial world children production activity has been shifted from manual labour to school activities. He tries to justify school activities as work and involvement in production activities. In his view, the changes in working environment in production has been changed along with the time from manual labour to mental activities so as the children work also shifted from manual work to the learning of codes and symbols to contribute in production. He presents children's school labour as a part of what one may call modern society's diachronic division of labour, in which there is built in time lag between activities and product (ibid).

It is now reasonable to say that children plays important role in societal division of labour and they put their claim upon the societal resources based on their achievement. It is also true that the children's achievement are somewhat limited by their family and societal resources they have especially in the context of developing countries like Nepal. The family resources of poor children like dalit of Nepal cannot afford to claim for higher resources in future as they cannot perform well in modern industrial world of schooling. They have to support their family in pre-industrial way by working as labourer in production which distanced them from schooling and development. Even though their mode of involvement is pre industrial and under developed, they are still expressing their agency by involving themselves in the economic activities of the society.

3.3 Minority group child

Minority group child perspective is viewed as politicized version of social structural child (Punch, 2003). Minority group child approach views children as disadvantage group in the world

where adults make and remakes discourses of the society. It views children 'as essentially indistinguishable from adults, but marginalized like other disadvantage group of the society like women and ethnic group. It also presents children as an active subject rather than object (James et. al. 1998). This approach explores children's perceptions of the adult-centered world in which they participate and is often concerned with children's rights. It present children similar to adult but most likely to be exploited (Punch, 2003).

I choose to mention this approach here because children, in my research context, are similar to the adult in different context like in work and responsibilities but they are marginalized by adult society in different way and also because most of the sociological and anthropological research in developing south is studied from minority group child perspective because of the children's position in the society.

3.4   Schooling and work

Debate regarding child work and schooling has taken the greater interest among theorists in the field of childhood studies. Different contrasting views have been forwarded about the view that whether work and school are compatible or not. Some scholars argue that work is the features of adult world and children should not work since it hinders school work and children development. One the other hand other scholars argue work is the preparation for adult world and family strategically behavior for survival in global south (Abebe and Bessell, 200 and Bourdillon, 2006). The relation of work and schooling is normally associated with three dominant discourse of child work which is work free childhood, socio-cultural perspective and political economy perspective. In the following, I describe these perspectives further.

3.4.1   Work free childhood

This discourse presents childhood as a time for schooling and play not for work. This perspectives demand the complete abolishment of child work rather than working on improvement of working condition of child labour (Mendelievich, 1979 in Abebe and Bessel, 2011). It presents the universal standard which every country should strive to follow where children are not allowed to work especially paid work. According to ILO (2002) work that does not interfere with children schooling are not considered as harmful or things to abolish which

includes helping parents at home, working in family business and work for pocket money during holidays (ILO, 2002). This does not fit for the poor children of developing countries where children does not have family business and money gained from work are taken as family income rather than pocket money (Abebe and Bessel, 2011). It is generally a western model of childhood which neglects the social and cultural context of children and their experiences.

International policies have been shaped by this perspective where children are not allowed to work before completing their compulsory education. In this model, childhood is characterized by school, and learning in school is emphasized to make children a better adult. It takes school and work as incompatible since work of children interface with children schooling which is the ideal work of children (ibid). Work is consider as world of adulthood and school as world of children where children learn to be a better adults in future. The most critical point of this approach is that it neglects the experiences working children of developing countries who are unable to fit into this international model of childhood and combine schooling and work as their survival strategy.

3.4.2 Socio-cultural perspective

Socio-cultural perspective of work highlights the social and cultural aspects of child work which cannot be separated while studying experiences of children. This approach was highlighted with the emergent of social studies of childhood. The social studies of childhood transformed the 'natural' category of the child into a 'socio-cultural' construction (Jenks, 1996 in Abebe and Bessel, 2011) which paves the way for this approach. It criticized the universal and Eurocentric model of work free childhood for neglecting social and cultural context of the children and present child work as an integral part of everyday life and indispensable to family livelihoods (ibid). This approach sees childhood as continuous with adulthood and work as initiation to enter the world of adults when their competence develops and opportunity arise (Abebe and Bessel, 2011 and Bourdillon, 2006). This approach bring forwards some benefits that children can get from work like economic assistance to family, practical knowledge that can be gained by formal education, growing of confidence and satisfaction from work etc.

Regarding the school and work, it says that preventing children from work does not always increase the school participation rather it can put extra burden to the children and can also lead

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children towards harmful and more dangerous form of work (Abebe and Bessel, 2011 and Bourdillon, 2006). It says that work is not always and anywhere bad for schooling and exclusive to each other rather work can also be helpful for schooling for poor children to buy school materials and uniforms. Ansell has shown that many boys and girls in the global South manage to combine both, even when formal education may not be in their best interests (Ansell 2002 in Abebe and Bessel, 2011). Majority of children in the context of Nepal combine school and work in their everyday life. It cannot be said that children work has positive impact upon the children welfare and development but it is also important that abolishment is not the solution rather we should tries to look for different dimension of work and its impact on schooling and look for the appropriate solution. The socio-cultural perspective does not romanticize the child work rather it advocates to look for the cultural and contextual factors while studying children experiences. It highlighted the need for a balanced understanding of a complex and heterogeneous issue, as well as the need to understand the context within which children live and work (Abebe and Bessel, 2011).

3.4.3   Political- economy perspective

Political economy perspective of child work focused on the impact of political and economic factors along with social and cultural factors upon the children's everyday life and experiences. The political and economic policies, poverty, corruption, conflict, war, structural adjustment programs etc have varied impact upon the children lives (Abebe and Bessel, 2011). The urbanization and market led economy creates the gaps between poor and rich and poor people has to suffer from high market price. Similarly the international polices like Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) has put the pressure on developing nation and act as a factor to cut the wages and increase in market price which even worsen the condition of the poor. Because of the low wages and high market price poor people has to send their children for work to sustain their family (ibid).

Although poverty has most visible and direct impact on children work and schooling, there are also other political and economic factors which have even wider impact on poor children work and schooling. Educated Unemployment plays one of the major roles for children's exclusion

from schooling in the context of developing world. A study in India by Professor Craig Jeffrey (2009) showed that

At almost the precise moment that increasing numbers of young people formerly excluded from schooling have come to recognize the possibilities held out by education for individual improvement, opportunities for these groups to benefit economically from schooling are disintegrating (Jeffery, 2009 p.182).

Even in the context of Nepal, children are not motivated to go to school because of the educated unemployment. Groot (2007) said that it is the lack of possibilities to go for further education and to find a job that holds parents back from sending (all) their children to school. Parents in Nepal are not positive towards getting jobs after education which work as a discouraging factor for sending children to school (Groot, 2007). similarly, Katz said that the gap between what children learn in school and what they use in their future also effects the children schooling and work (Katz, 2004)). Children, in some context, learn the knowledge in school which is inappropriate in their local context and everyday life.

As we have discussed different ideology of child work take the relationship of school and work differently. But most recent works in the field of childhood studies incorporates the social, cultural, political and economic aspects of the child work and its impact in schooling to show the different dimension of work and schooling in different social contexts. The economic aspects of work and school has been considered as one of the most influencing reason for children lower rate of attendance and performance in school in developing countries. Therefore discussion about the economic aspects of poor children from developing countries seems to be necessary to describe the schooling experiences of these children. While viewing from economic aspects, I would like to present the concepts of human capital theory which views knowledge as a form a capital which is in line with the concept of education for poor people from developing countries like Nepal.

3.5   Human capital theory

When discussing about the education attainment of the poor children of developing countries I feel that human capital theory would be an appropriate tool to guide for my research. Treena wu (2010) has used this concept to analyze the constraining factors to human capital investment in the context of Indonesia over the period 1997 to 2000. She tries to show how family income and physical facilities works as constraining factors for the investment in education among poor people. For the context of my research I would like to see how family status of income work as constraint factor for human capital.

3.5.1   Definition of human capital

The origin of human capital theory goes back to the classical theory of economy. But theorist like Gary S. Becker (1964 and 1993 updated), Ted Schultz (1961) has forwarded the recent concept of human capital**.** Backer presented human capital as stock or knowledge that is directly useful in the production process. The knowledge and skill, virtue that people gain from education, training , medical care etc are regarded as human capital which cannot be separated from human (owner) like physical and financial capital (Becker, 1993). The concept of human capital refers to investment in education by family and state with the expectation from future earning and productivity. It also presents the link between birth rates and investment in education and training and how family influences the human capital of their children and the relation between investment in human capital and economic process (Becker, 1993 updated). He further said that earlier human capital theory has been motivated partly by a desire to evaluate proposals to improve the quality of the work force through schooling, training, medical services, and child care. Its main purpose, according to him, is to remove a little of the mystery from the economic and social world that we live in. (Becker, 1993)

Recently, the growing importance of human capital theory is to analyze the societal function especially in relation to education and development of human capital among different societies. As Treena wu (2010) has described there is family investment in education in developing countries is much lesser that developed countries and she points towards the two basic constrains to human capital one is resource constrains and monetary constrains.

3.5.2 Human capital and family

Family has the most important role on deciding the children education in developing countries where the cost of education has to be funded by family. So decision of investment on education of children has to do a lot with family so as the knowledge, skills and habits of the children. We can see low education; welfare dependence, early pregnancy, and marital instability pass from parents to children among under class families (Becker, 1993).

Becker has also pointed out that among the poor families the income of parents and children is strongly related. He said richer family can spend on the children's training and education and children can allocate their time on entirely on training but among the poor family, children also has to allocate their time for work (ibid). Treena wu (2010) has also finds the trend of shifting towards work when income of the families goes down in the context of Indonesia. Regarding combining work and school she said for children who are in the labor force while simultaneously attending school, this raises the question as to the extent that the child's labor supply affects the amount of time available to develop Skills (ibid). Even in the context of Nepal, dalit children whose family income is very low face the situation of combining school with work. Thus results in underperformed in school education which pushes them out of school and finally backward in society like their parents for not being able to develop and update their skill and knowledge.

Another aspect of family and human capital is the negative relation between number of child and investment in human capital. An increased number of children raise the effective cost of adding to the spending on each child, because an additional dollar or hour of time spent on each child then means a larger total addition to spending (Becker, 1993). So family has to choose between their children for the investment in education. In the context of developing countries like Nepal, When there is situation of choice among children come, parents in the generally choose to invest on boys than girls. Because of the social attitude towards the girls who is considered as other property and will not bring any outcome of their investment later when boys are supposed to take care of his parents in their old age (CERID report 2006, hunt 2008).

3.5.3 Opportunity cost in education

Opportunity cost is considered as cost of choice, a fundamental economic law, which expresses the "relationship of interdependence between the volume, structure and intensity of needs, on the one hand, and the quantity, quality and structure of resources, on the other hand, translating a

"constant tension, but with degrees of different intensity the unlimited needs and resources (including economic goods) under specified conditions of place and time" (Dictionary of Economics, 2001, p. 260). The needs are always unlimited and the resources are always limited so one has to sacrifice something to gain other. Opportunity cost measures gains by losses.

In a more direct way, opportunity cost shows how much I would have won if I had chosen another option and, therefore, how much I lost on choosing it. Opportunity cost is supposed to be recovered by the option that has been chosen (Voiculescu, 2009). To apply this concept in education, we can say that education is also a need among others and one has to sacrifice other needs to achieve it. One has to take into account losses from sacrificing at least one (the best) of the eligible options that have been given up in given context to describe gain from education. In the context of my research participants, the most eligible option children have given up for schooling is the option of work which can bring income for the family. To calculate the total cost on education, one has to take account of the opportunity cost along with direct and indirect cost. The measurement of opportunity cost does not only include the physical factors like time and money but also psychological factors like satisfaction and dissatisfaction during and after investment. Therefore, the decision for one option or another cannot be only explained by reasons of physical or financial bill, but by the issues, the nature of motivation, aspirations, interests and choices, maybe the "philosophy of life" of the individual or of the community (Voiculescu, 2009). The availability of opportunity of return after investment, degree of risk for investment etc plays as a factor for motivations, aspiration and interest in some context. For example in the context of developing countries like Nepal where unemployment is common problem, the risk of return from investment in education is very high. So the opportunity cost of education in such situation is even higher than other context where risk factor is low.

The investment in education is supposed to bring returns in the form of knowledge and skills, which is supposed to enhance the revenue of the person. G.S. Baker described the return from human capital are determined by two main factors: money and time. The first factor is the growth of money income which is brought by one's expertise in education in relation to the situation "without education" and the second is the duration (usually measured in years) required

because, at that income growth, the investment should fully recover and should bring additional revenue (Baker, 1962 in Voiculescu, 2009).

There are some critical aspects on the concept of opportunity cost and its measurement because of his sole focus on earning and brought by education. Voiculescue (2009) said that there are many "non-market incomes" and "non-monetary effects" of education that are related mainly to the role that education has on the quality of life. As a long term investment, education brings a permanent increase certainty on a "better" situation and increases the hope of evolution and of social development; education generates careers (ibid). Even though we cannot neglect the earning and loss dimension of education especially in the poor family of developing south where family has very little space to choose schooling from their different needs.

3.6   Gender biased practices and schooling

Gender is a culturally constructed phenomenon which put men and women in different categories with specific social characteristics which determined their identities and relation in the society. Rogers Stainton(2003) explains that gender is created and re-created through human interaction and it is a product of human meaning making and it is something we do rather than something we are. (Stainton, 2003) .Some people mistakenly takes sex and gender as same things but there is vast difference between them since former is natural and biological phenomena and later is cultural construction and products of social discourse which has nothing to do with biological attribute of men and women. In this matter Judith butler in Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex (1986) said sex is biological attribute of the human body and natural phenomena whereas gender is cultural meaning and forms a body acquire which no longer acquires meaning and definition from biological necessity (Butler, 1986). Even though gender has nothing to do with biological necessity, it does influence how a men and women in a society should behave and also determine their roles and relation should be in a particular society**.**

Nepal is highly stratified countries along the line of gender. There is a social and cultural tradition of favoring boys than girls in the field of education because of social and cultural construction on about girls and boys in the society like early marriage, returns of benefits for

parents, household division of labour between boys and girls (Colclough et all, 2000 and Stash and Hannum, 2001). My research setting also has the same kinds of construction for girls and boys, and parents choose to favor boys than girls when household resources are tight.

Gender plays important roles for household division of labour in the society. The traditional gender-based division of framework requires more routine work from females than from males (Stash and Hannum, 2001). Especially in rural setting and among poor households girls are normally restricted inside the boundaries of house. People think that a girl should have very good skill of cooking for their future life rather than education. So girls are mainly given the works like cooking, cleaning, taking care of sibling, washing clothes, helping in the field and so on Whereas boys are engaged more in paid works outside the house. Because of nature of the work girls has to engage in routine works. The gendered division of labour within the household can sharply affect the relative chances of girls and boys attending school. Where girls are expected to perform household chores, and to look after younger siblings, the demands on their time may be greater than upon the boys, and their school attendance may be more affected (Colclough et all, 2000 p.7).

The benefits point of view also plays to create gap between girls and boys in the community. Labor market is not favorable for girls since girls works are considered as labour for household. So the investment in education for girls is not considered as beneficial for household as they are not meant for paid works and they will go to other house after marriage. In this matter Hanna Papanek (1985) state that

In countries where children's schooling faces many barriers of direct and indirect costs, as well as accessibility of schools, family decisions about children's schooling depend not only on available resources but also on what it is hoped that education will do for the children (as individuals) and for the collective interests of the household" (Papanek, 1985 pp 319).

People who have lack of household resources like the Dalit and poor household of Nepal considered investment in boys as more fruitful compared to girls as they hope that their son will

take care of them in their old age as compared to girls who is supposed to go with other family. So parents for their future benefits chose son in the expense of girls.

Similarly adverse cultural practices like early marriage, girls as socially dependent and vulnerable have also negative relation with schooling (*Papanek, 1985*). In the context of research community early marriage is a common phenomenon because of people illiteracy and dominant practices of traditional culture. Because of this tradition, girls are encouraged to marry early which take girls out of school. It also discourages parents for sending girls for school as they are not going to complete it rather they would emphasize in preparing them for marriage from early age. Girls are traditionally expected to know how to prepare meals, to clean the home, to do the laundry and care for young children, and to be obedient and submissive than learning in school. They are also tagged as dependent and vulnerable in society which confined them to house and restrict their movement for education like boys (ibid).

4   METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research is research based on personal experience where the data and outcome of the research depend on methods we have used for the purpose and how we have used the method in given context. In this chapter, I will discuss about the methods I have used for my research and will also discuss ethical and methodological challenges that I have faced during my research process. I used qualitative research method. The selections of the methods are based on the context of the research that is the age, gender, social and cultural background of the participants and the issues of the research. I used multiple methods like participant's observation, focus group discussion, semi structural interviews and record of time framed daily schedule. As Allison Clarke says the use of multiple methods create some spaces and opportunities' where multiple listening can take place (Clark, 2005). It also enables children to express their views differently. In addition to primary research data, I have also used secondary data from different government, scholars and non- government research and reports on the issues.

4.1   Research with children: Finding children perspectives

There is a no particular guideline and definite ways for a researcher to decide how to do research with children. As Abebe said 'fieldwork is a personal experience rather than a mere academic pursuit' (Abebe, 2009: 460), so it is a researcher who need to decide how to react in certain social and cultural background. The basic guideline for researcher while researching children is to take children as subject of research rather than object, respect their perspectives and rights and enable them to express their views using the appropriate methods (Beazley et al., 2009). Article 12 and 13 of the UNCRC also state the same things with regard to children right to be properly researched.

Children should be seen not as passive objects in the research process or in society in general but as a social actor who is "beings not becoming" (Qvotrup et al, 1994, p. 2), I interacted with children as competent beings of their own lives who knows their world better than others. Their views were not judged with categories of rights and wrong. Since I was interested in views of minorities caste children regarding the factors which push and pull them from school, I tried to establish intimate relationship with them to know their everyday experiences and circumstances

they were in. The issues of research was sensitive in the sense that it one way or other touch with the issue of caste based discrimination because my participants were from lower caste in the society and the current political debates regarding the caste based division of state in Nepal getting higher attention among the general people of the society so I chose was very conscious about the discriminatory words that are practice in societies and also tried not to ask direct questions about their feelings on caste discrimination.

The issue of participation of children in research process is very important aspect while researching with children. Children participation in research process is to bring the children voice into the fore since they are consider as an expert of their own world. As Sirkka Komulainen (2007) has argued we as researchers need to become more aware of how children's voices are constantly constrained and shaped by multiple factors such as our own assumptions about children, our particular use of language, the institutional contexts in which we operate and the overall ideological and discursive climates which prevail (Komulainen, 2007). As a researcher it is important to consider the constraining factors for children participation in society. It is more important while dealing with the minorities' children in society since they have been constrained to express their views. In my case, I was working with children from Dalit caste whose voice in the society was mostly unheard and was not habituate to express their own views on the issues. They were most likely to say what they had heard from their parents so I spent more times with them first to get their confidence and also I will tried to let them feel that they are talking with their friends rather than mature adults. Playing and learning some games also helped me to establish friendly relationship and adopt "least adult role (Mandell, 1991).

Greene and Hill (2005) said that the choice of methods might influence the kind of answer one receives: similar issues explored through different methods might yield different results (Greene and Hill, 2005, p.17). I used multiple methods for my research. There were children who did not feel confident to speak in group and there were also children who were good speaker in groups so I used both focus group discussion and individual interview which helped me to gather more information. Similarly, I had chosen my method keeping social and cultural context of my participation which plays a vital role while choosing methods. Children might lack the competencies for certain method in certain settings. For example, my respondents or research

participants were mainly from the ethnic minority's caste and poor background so using methods that require some technological knowledge would not be helpful. Similarly, I was not in the position to use many methods that need writing skills so I tried to gather more information from individual interviews, focus group discussion and observation. Other methods and some games helped me to build rapport and maintain the research environment refreshing as well as it provides background information about the issues to be discussed further.

4.2 Research site

The purpose of my study is to describe the experiences of dalit children in relation to their school participation. As per my research objectives, I did my research in one of the village of Sunsari district, Madhesha VDC where a community of terai dalit Caste resides. Though village has a remote setting, it is not very far from nearby cities and has basis facilities like schools, electricity and highway etc. The district headquarter is only 3 kilometer away from the village. As I have described above my respondents are one of the marginalized caste of Teria and have very little education rate. Their main occupation is agricultural manual works. As people don't have their own land, they take others land as Adhiya[5] and Batiya[6].

There are two government schools near to the village whereby, one is a primary level school and the other a high school. The primary level school is mostly attended by children from poor family and backward communities. The facilities and the number of teachers are inadequate to the number of class and education. When I had visited the school during my research, there were only four teachers including head master. And the children were seen mostly outside the class. There is another high school around 2 kilometers away from the village where children after passing the primarily level education go. It is also called as a big school in the community. Large number of children from the VDC attends this school for their secondary level education and now also for their higher secondary education. Mostly the families, who cannot afford for private sector school and college, send their children to school. I am familiar to the school since I have been to the school before when I used to work in the community as a social worker in a NGO.

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[5] Tradition of taking other's land in lease for agricultural purpose. Person who take the land in lease have take care of all the necessary things to grow crops while required cost except labour and final product will be shared equally with land owner.
[6] It is also like Adhiya but here land owner fix the required product while doing the agreement; before crops get ready.

The research site is around 30 kilometer away from my home so I normally went to the field area from my house area. But I had also spent some nights in my research area.

The selection of the research sites is mainly based in my previous knowledge about the research area. Since I have worked in the VDC under a NGO, I have some basic information about the community. Prior to my field work I contacted some of my colleagues and VDC to know the possibilities of access to the community and my participants. Similarly I chose community setting as my research setting rather than school. Since children are from minority's caste and not used to share experiences with elders, I feel children participation would be disturbed in school setting with the presence of other children and teachers. Similarly my participants are not regular at school and my interest is also to see the experiences of those irregular and drop out children so I though community setting would be best for my research. I think my decision of choosing community as my research setting turned out as good decision. I got time to develop myself as a friend to the children. I think children perspectives towards me have been changed through the time and I become their friend from teacher like figure with my involvement in their daily setting and experiences.

4.3   Research participants and selection

Sampling of the participants forms an important aspect on the qualitative research process. In accordance with the nature and purpose of my research, I chose purposive sampling method to select the participants for my research. It involves choosing people or documents from which the researcher can learn about the experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005). With this method a researcher select the participants from which he can learn about the phenomenon. I chose the participants with the basis of age, gender and school grade. Because my participants were from the same community and share almost same social and economic background, I did not have to be more selective regarding the social and economic aspects while selecting participants. The selections of the participants were held during the information and interaction program which I have conducted during first two days into the village. I asked the selected participants for their consent at the beginning of each program.

I chose 23 children participants from the ages of 10 to 18 for my research. Among them 20 participants were schools going children which include 13 girls and 7 boys. Similarly, I chose three boys who recently dropped out of school. Beside children I also chose five parents for individual interview. I had fewer boys than girls because boys are normally very busy in their work after school and also because there were many girls than the boys during interaction and information program. There were 20 school going children for focus group discussion however 13 out of 20 children were available for individual interview. Similarly while selecting drop out children, I was unable to find girls participants because girls normally get married and goes to another village after they left schooling and also they were not willing to participate because of fear that they will be asked why they left the school. The fear was also found among boys initially but they were ready after they saw other children participating with fun and enthusiasm. Among parents I chose five parents from different household among which two were female and three were male. All my participants were from the same village and they are from same caste and share common social and economical background. Most of the household also had similar profession like agricultural labour and foreign migration.

4.4   Access to informants

Access to the informants is one of the important and challenging tasks for the researcher. It is very necessary to plan about how to get access to informants before going to field work. For me, I had worked in the area for some time as a social worker under a NGO; I knew some key persons who could help me to get me to the participants. I had contacted them and asked for their time before going to field work. I had also taken general information about the participants especially about the schedule during my appointed field work periods. Since I had only limited time for my field work, it was very necessary for me to get to my participants as soon as possible so I sent information about my research to the Village Development Committee (VDC) prior to my field work. VDC normally asked for registration of research for their record and I have registered my research activities to the local VDC which is Madhesha VDC.

As soon as I got to my country from Norway, I contacted my gatekeeper who is a person from the same village and involved in some social activities. I was in contact with him before so it was not difficult to get his time. On the very first day of my village, I met some key personals of the

village and discussed about my research and its objectives. During my discussion, I tried to focus about the nature of my research and convince them that I am just a student and want to learn about the experiences of children regarding their school participation. I asked to manage a community level information gathering on the next day with my gatekeeper and other personnel I met on first day. My plan for this gathering was to give information about my research and its objectives to the people. I got help from a man, who is also in managing committee of the primary school near village, to gather children and community people. The community level gathering was very useful to me to get to know the people from the village. During this gathering I selected my participants and also asked for their consent.

The major challenge for me was busy schedule of the people. People are quite busy in their works because it was harvesting season and they have to go to field after taking their meal. So I have only time from 6:00 am to 9: 00 am in the morning and evening after school. I conducted two days of community level information program so that everybody can attend. I also appointed a girl as my field assistant who helped me to gather children and allocate time for interview and focus group discussion. She is from the same village and is only girl who have passed SLC in the community.

4.5   Methods of data collection

Choice of methods plays deciding roles while researching with children. A researcher has to be attentive towards the participant's context and background before choosing the methods. My research participants are considered as minorities of the society because of their status as a children in the society and also because they belong to the marginalized caste of traditional social hierarchy. I was more flexible and conscious enough that some of the children might not be habituated to speak. Similarly since their schooling is not regular and there were some drop out children among participants, I choose to use multiple methods in my research to give them options to express themselves in different ways. I also focused more on interaction and observation on my initial days of research.

While using my method I tried to be more interactive with children because this was the only way to gain children's confidence and it also made my research more participatory. As Bazely et

al (2009) argued that simply adopting the participatory approach and using participatory methods does not make research participatory rather it should be viewed in border societal level (Bazely et al, 2009). So I tried to maintain the power differential and develop rapport with participants to maintain participatory nature of my research. I used participant observation, semi structural interviews, focus group discussion and time framed daily activities. For drop out children and parents I used individual interviews because of the numbers of participants and limited time and its relevance. I used audio recorder to record interviews and focus group discussion and make notes of observation.

4.5.1   Observation

As Ennew et al (2009) says observation is the basis of all good research and very vital to understand the context of the data, as well as for writing an interesting and believable research report (Ennew et al, 2009). It is also helpful to develop a good relationship with participants and to prepare the further direction of the research process. Observation started from the day I reached my research setting. Since I was somewhat familiar to such setting from my childhood and can share the same language, it was not much difficult to get involved in the discussion from the very first day. I generally took note and recorded the sound and environment of all the incidents that happened during my field work which I think helped me to bring some positive changes in my research questions during field work and obviously to understand the data and its implication throughout the discussion with participants.

Observation started with the very first day on the village and continued until the last day. I used to give some time after my field work to study my field notes and to listen the recording of my interviews and focus group discussion so that I can see where my research is going and what kinds of information has been gathered. It also helped me to bring some changes and bring focus on discussion.

When I first went to the village, I met an old man and two boys who were very eager to talk about their personal and communal history. The old man talked about how the village has been changing during the course of time and also talked about the general attitude of the people towards different caste in community. Similarly boys also shared their schooling experiences in

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the past and present situation of schooling in the community. The discussion helped me to see the general pictures of the community history and schooling experience which was more than what I expected in the very first day of my field work. The following two days were the social gathering about the information programs which was also very helpful to know the general opinion of peoples and establish the relation with participants and other people of the community.

I had very limited time for my field work which gave me little time to spend with children before I started my other methods. But the observation was continued along with other methods. The focus group discussion was conducted before other methods which provided me more space to observe children activities and get along with them. I used to note the details of interesting events and discussion. Sometime recording cannot capture the on-going situations so noting down the small details about the events and discussion helpful to capture how things are happening. I, sometimes, also walked to the school with the children, went to the field with some of the children where we talked about the random things about their daily habits and general working environments. My rapport with the children developed quite well along with the time because of my involvement with their daily schedule and also because of my familiarity of the setting and environment. I was aware of their kinds of daily schedule since I was also brought up in similar kinds of setting.

Even though I was everywhere in their daily setting, I never tried to intervene their setting rather I had to adjust myself to their environment. Because of the objectives of research, I decided to base my research setting in the community rather than school which I think helped me to gather valid information. Because they are more comfortable in their communal setting than school, I found them more open and interactive. I was also aware that because I would be asking about the school related question they might be more conscious of their answers with the perception of right and wrong in the school environment.

4.5.2   Focus group discussion

Focus group is aimed at researching with children instead of on children and to understand their views and knowledge rather than observing, measuring and assessing them from an adult

perspective (Dixey et al., 2001). I chose to use this method because it is helpful to generate more data in limited time. Beside that focus group discussion is also helpful to open up children and develop rapport with them. Some of the children can feel shy to speak alone so such children can be encouraged to speak in group. The choice of focus group discussion was also relevant for me because my participants were from the same community and share similar kinds of experience so discussion in groups helped to understand their perception more clearly. It was also useful as I gained rich insight about their thoughts not only through their interaction with me but more importantly in their interaction among themselves. During the focus group discussion, I realized that it adds some validity to the data since children correct themselves while discussing about the issues. As I have mentioned earlier, I have used this method before individual interview because I thought it would help me to develop relation with participants before entering into in depth individual interview. Similarly, I would also know the general ideas of children about the issues so that I can modify and bring changes in my questionnaires to direct my focus to the main themes.

Table 3: Child respondents in focus group discussion

S.N.	Participants	Age	Sex	Grade
1	Participants-1	12	Boy	5
2	Participants-2	12	Girl	4
3	Participants-3	13	Boy	5
4	Participants-4	13	Girl	5
5	Participants-5	14	Girl	6
6	Participants-6	14	Girl	6
7	Participants-7	14	Girl	8
8	Participants-8	14	Girl	6
9	Participants-9	14	Boy	6
10	Participants-10	14	Boy	7
11	Participants-11	14	Boy	6
12	Participants-12	15	Boy	7
13	Participants-13	15	Boy	7

14	Participants-14	15	Girl	8
15	Participants-15	15	Girl	8
16	Participants-16	15	Girl	8
17	Participants-17	15	Girl	6
18	Participants-18	16	Girl	8
19	Participants-19	16	Girl	8
20	Participants-20	18	Girl	10

I selected 20 children for focus group discussion and divided them into four groups with each group consisting of five participants. I divided the group with reference to gender so that there would be uniformity of their experiences and also can share their experiences without feeling shy and fear of what brothers or others boys might think. Especially girl participants wanted this division and I was quite convinced of their idea. There was one mixed group where participation was based on respondent's consent. The discussion in mixed group was also very interesting because they found to be interested in exposing each other's activities and sometime I had to step in to change the topic and make the environment comfortable. Focus group discussion turned out to be very fruitful because of children active participation. My role was to direct them and ask them guiding questions so that their discussion would be in line with the theme of my research. During the focus group discussion, I had tried to direct the children into my themes by asking the questions from my interview guide. As Alison Clark says, "the researcher is at times 'architect': a creator of spaces and opportunities where multiple listening can take place and at other time more of an intermediary relaying different perspective between different groups and individuals" (Clark, 2005). I tried to minimize my presence to let them more space to discuss and interpret their ideas about the topic of discussion.

4.5.3   Filling the time framed daily activities

This method was used with the motive of capturing children daily activities in home and school setting. Initially I was planning for essay writing which does not seem relevant because there were children who studied in class five and can't express themselves properly in words and also children were not so interested in writing like school homework. So I chose to use this method

which is simple and easy for children to do. I made a time framed tables of one hours with two columns where in one column there is time framed of one hour and in another activities they did. I told them to write what they did during this time from waking up early in the morning to getting to bed. I divided it in small time framed so that small incident can be captured. I have given them the tables and asked them to fill it and gave it to me next day without writing their names on it. Anonymity was necessary to make children comfortable to share small incident that they are engaged in.

As I said earlier, my main intension was to captured the children's normal day in community like what they do, how much time they spend on certain activities such as work , study, play etc. I continued this for two days to make this more valid and to see the recurrent activities and time they spent. I found this method quite fruitful with different aspects like to see the gender and age division of work and responsibilities in community. Choosing this method also helped me bring variation in my methods. This is unlike an interview situation where responses are more spontaneous and fast (Shaver et al., 1993). I observed that those children who seemed less active during the discussion and interview write their daily activities clearly and tried to express more than they were doing in discussion. I have distributed the tables to all my participants and also told them that they are free for not writing anything but most of them had filled their time sheet.

4.5.4 Individual interview guided by Semi structural questions

Interview is considered as one of the important tools and most applied method in research with children because it provides more information and deeper knowledge about the issue with the joint effort of researcher and researched. The interview is a process where two parties engaged in the construction of meaning and interpretation of the data. Misher took interview not only as a tool for information gathering but also as a site where partner meet and converse and through their conversation, they jointly construct meaning (Misher, 1986). He also emphasize on the rapport between informants and researcher for the smooth meaning making process. In qualitative research, researchers are more focused on the experiences and perceptions of the participants to their everyday life rather than objectives truths that is out there for the researcher to gather. Interview is basic tool to gather stories of participant's everyday experiences and how

they perceive, understand and interpret their everyday events by interacting with them and letting them participate in constructing the knowledge (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Individual interview was one of my major methods of data collection during my research process and it was also most useful and fruitful for the point of view of gathering data. I used the semi structured interviews method. Semi-structured interviews are relatively informal interviews with a list of guiding questions/themes which the researcher is free to phrase and order, followed by the broad research themes (Ennew et al, 2009). Semi structure interviews, as argued by several scholars have the capacity to draw the researcher and the informants as co-producers of knowledge (Kvale, 1996). I choose semi structure interview because it is helpful to interact more freely and explore the topic with the children going deeper into the children point of view. Because of its interactive and flexible nature, it provides space for me to listen to the voice of my participants. But sometime, there are also possibilities of going out of track misguided by the discussion and interaction. Children always speak more about the topic which interest them so it is up to researcher how to guide children towards the basic theme without being forceful. During interview I found that children do not speak much when I asked about the school environment, facilities and friends but when asking about their works and daily routine in their houses they are more interactive and have many things to say. They even started to say what others do and what happens recently in the community. So it was interesting to see different aspects that dominated children's lives.

I have conducted most of my individual interview inside a room which was provided by one of the family in the community. But sometime because of the frequent disturbance of other children, I had to change my location to open space like in a field and under a tree near village to maintain the privacy of my participants. Since my participants were from the age group of 10-18, individual interview helped me to get much information about their views on schooling and their experiences around that. Most of them were capable enough to share their experiences and tell their stories. I also found children are more comfortable sharing their experiences and perception rather than writing. I had already informed on the very first day that there would not be any right and wrong answers to my question and I would be interested about their experiences rather than

answers of the questions. I even made jokes about myself and my past inability to study in school to demonstrate that being wrong is not bad at all.

I used Nepali language as a language of interaction which was also a language spoken by my participants. They used the same language in school and house. But there were some of the words that they could not understand because of the dialectical variation in different contexts. Children are also not used to speaking very formal language so I had to be as informal as possible and speak in very simple daily used language. Sometimes children understood differently of what I said so I had to rephrase it differently or asked it later after they understand the context of discussion. I realized that some children understand more quickly and speak more and some children feel shy and not used to speak and share so often. So it was necessary to vary my approaches to the participants individually.

I also interviewed drop out children to gather some information about their experiences in school and in the community. I found it more difficult to gather the drop out respondents in the community. During the first few days, I realized that drop out children were not interested to talk to me and participate in interview. After some days, I realized that they were maintaining distance with me because they perceived me as a teacher or government official. Later during my stay in the community, I participate in a cricket match with them. It was quite interesting for me since I got chance to know them more and also some older children became close to me. This game brought them close to me and I was able to interview three drop out boys later.

Table 4: Child respondents in individual interview

S.N.	Participants	Age	Sex	Grade
1	Participants-1	12	Boy	5
2	Participants-2	12	Girl	4
3	Participants-3	13	Boy	5
4	Participants-4	13	Girl	5
5	Participants-5	14	Boy	6
6	Participants-6	14	Girl	6
7	Participants-7	14	Girl	8

8	Participants-8	15	Boy	7
9	Participants-9	15	Boy	7
10	Participants-10	15	Girl	6
11	Participants-11	16	Girl	8
12	Participants-12	16	Girl	8
13	Participants-13	18	Girl	10

Table 5: Drop out child respondents in individual interview

S.N.	Participants	Age	Gender	Dropped out age
1	Participants-1	18	Male	16
2	Participants-2	18	Male	15
3	Participants	17	Male	16

I have also interviewed parents of the community to see how they perceived their children school participation. I was also interested to look for the changes they feel when they were kids and when they have their own kids. Interview with parents was very interesting and fruitful to see household obligation of children and to compare between what they want and what is happening regarding their children school participation.

Table 6: Parents respondents in individual interview

S.N.	Participants	Gender
1	Participants-1	Male
2	Participants-2	Male
3	Participants-3	Male
4	Participants-4	Female
5	Particicpnts-5	Female

4.6   Researcher role

While researching with the children, the roles of the researcher during the Field work plays important role. My participants were from lower caste background, if we look at it from caste stratification system, and also deprived from the basic facilities that a child should get. In contrast to that I belonged to the higher caste background in caste stratification. So maintaining my role as a researcher has important aspect for me during my field work. During the first few days in the community, I was trying to be conscious of these factors but after interacting with participants and people from the community, I realized that the situation is not as complicated as I had imagined. People have already surpassed the phase and it is only me who had imagined the situation differently. So I started to be open a little bit more even in the matter of caste system and its past and present impact on schooling and tried to observe their reactions. I found that children and parents do not hesitate to express their views on this matter and take it as another topic of discussion.

Now taking about my role as researcher with children, I was conscious about the issues of power differentials between me as adults and children. According to Punch (2002), "the nature of childhood in adult society means that children are used to trying to please adults, and may fear adults' reactions to what they say". Similarly Alderson and Goody said "the main complications do not arise from children's inabilities or misperceptions, but from positions ascribed to them."(Alderson and Goody, 1996: 106). Children position in society normally prescribed as immature of expressing their views by the adults. This perspective held by the adults, does not bring out the exact thinking of children. A researcher should try to resurface those hidden perspective of children by taking different roles.

Firstly I tried to take the "least adult role"(Mandell, 1991) to reduce the power differentials between me and my participants. I dressed up very informally unlike teachers and other adults they knew. I also talked with them very informally using common spoken language rather than speaking academic language. Similarly I was always eager to express my experiences as a child if I encounter any similar situation. So my approach was to be their friend not like their teacher and strict and commanding adults. Researchers must find ways of participating in the same activities with children rather than trying to equate power differentials (Gullov and Hjøland 2006

cited Sørenssen 2007: 24). As I have said earlier I have participate with them in the game of cricket which they sometimes play in the evening. So adopting roles of friends and minimizing my adult roles certainly helped to change the children perception towards me.

Children called me as 'Sir' because my gatekeeper also introduced me to them calling me as 'Sir which children normally used for teachers. I have been telling them time and again that" *I am not your sir rather I am also student just like you*" but children feel comfortable calling me sir and continued saying so. Once when one of the children called me as 'Sir', another child correct him saying "*he is not our 'Sir' he does not teach us in school*". That made me realized that I had somehow succeed to change their earlier perception and children were feeling more comfortable with me. Another incident was with the drop out children who were not ready to talk to me initially with the fear of asking question about their study finally came to me and ready to participate.

I have also time and again reminded them about what I wanted for them. I used to say that I was not interested on the right answers rather I want to know what they think and feel. And I have never tried to be judgmental for what they said and correct them. Adopting these roles helped me to gain trust among my participants and also enrich my data with validity.

4.7   Ethical consideration

Sometime participation in research process can have harmful effect upon the participants so the consideration upon the ethical aspects of research became important for preventing participants from such probable harms. It is even more important while doing research with children because of their vulnerability in certain situations. Since I am working with children from marginal group of the society, I should be more attentive towards such issues because of their double vulnerabilities as children and as member of the minority caste. During my research process I have tried to maintain the ethical consideration that a researcher has to go maintain while researching with the children.

4.7.1 Informed consent

Informed consent is the voluntary participation of participants in research process. It means participants have been informed about all aspects of the research and how the information will be used. Participants should also be aware that they can refuse to take part, or stop their participation at any time, for any reason, without negative consequences (Ennew and Plateau 2004). It sought for the voluntary participation of the children without any external force. Sometime, especially in the developing countries like Nepal, it is very hard to say that whether children are voluntarily participating or they have been forced by gatekeepers or some other who is facilitating the research so it is necessary to ask the children about their consent before participating in any research study.

Prior to field work, the project was reported to the Norwegian social science data service and the project was recommended by NSD which is the basic requirement to start any research as student from Norwegian university (see appendix). During the field work, I informed all my participants and other stakeholder about the nature and objectives of my research before I started my field work. First of all, I informed about my research nature and objective to the VDC representative and asked for written consent. Then I met some key persons of the community and discuss with them about my research and why I chose their community. As planned before the field work, I conducted two days of information and consent program among the people of the community. Information and consent program was necessary because most of the people in community were illiterate and asking for their written consent in person could be problematic. As Abebe (2009) said, in developing countries, people feel uncomfortable to sign and give finger prints to some strange person. I realized that this program was very helpful for me to gain community level trust which was a very necessary things while working in the community of developing country like Nepal. Discussion with the people in group about the research objectives and consent provide them chance to know the whole research process better. Those who were illiterate and hesitate to asked questions also got answers through other peoples questions. After seeking the consent of my participants in the group, I also asked for their personal consent with parents and children during and after the program. Beside that I asked for their children consent before using any methods and also told them time and again that they are free for not answering my question if they feel uncomfortable.

During the discussion in the information and consent program, most of the people asked about the probable future benefits of this research for their community. I realized that people have misconception that this research can bring some program for the improvement of the community. I cleared their misconception about the probable program for the community. I said I am just a student who is doing his master and this research was a part of my study and will use the information I collected during the field work to write a thesis under my master program and submit it to my department. I also told them that I will maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the information during field work and also while writing my thesis. Regarding the benefits of the research to the community, I told them that the information I give through my thesis can be read by different personal in different either form the country and outside the country which might make them think and write more about your condition. People might be little bit disappointed initially but giving this information helped me to gain trust and also to have reliable information. Now they talked to me freely about the issues and without having any prejudices of gain and loss.

4.7.2 Privacy and confidentiality

It is considered as one of the basic ethical issue in research with children. In right base research it is considered that children (as well as their family and community) has the right to privacy (UNCRC, Article 16). Researcher need to respect the confidential nature of the information gathered during the research and preserve the anonymity of participants. This ethical issue has always been discussed in relation to harm and protection to children (Williamson et. al., 2005). Children are vulnerable and expressive in some situation which can have some negative consequences so it is researcher who has make sure that children does not fall into such situation because of their information.

Before research began, participants were informed that no information given by them will be divulged to any other purpose other than for our research. Also, their anonymity was assured. Since my participants were from minority caste background, the assurance of privacy to the participants became more necessary. I have interviewed each child separately in a closed room and sometimes in open spaces away from intruder. Regarding the anonymity, I have not used the

name of the participants for my research, only age and gender has been used. While taking the notes and writing time framed daily activities I asked children to write only age and gender. Similarly data have been kept with me out of reach of anybody who can misuse them.

As Solberg said that mistake can be productive in research process (Solberg, 1996), I have also faced a situation during focus group discussion, which made me more aware of my role to maintain privacy and confidentiality during field work. Although I have informed my participants that they should not take anybody names during discussion, one child, during focus group discussion, had taken some names of their neighbors who got scholarship money and never send their children to school. It became problematic when another child present in the discussion revealed it to the concern party. The next day, a woman from the community came and tried to scold that participant for taking her names. I and my assistance called both party and told them that the child was just taking random names and it would not be problem since no name would be disclosed. She was irritated but calmed down when everyone insist that it was just child taking. From that day, I tried to avoid discussion of confidential issues in focus group discussion. Rather I noted down the probable issues of discussion for individual interview. Beside that I, sometimes, also interrupted children when I realized that they were taking about some confidential issues. Confidentiality and privacy and children protection from probable harm is very sensitive issues while doing research with children and it also differs according to the context. Because of my participant's vulnerabilities as child and being from minority caste, I have to be very much conscious of these issues.

4.8   Reciprocity

Another ethical aspect that has come along during the field work is the issue of reciprocity. Reciprocity is giving back something to the participants for their use of time and labour. Short term reciprocity means compensating the researched with service and/ or material and/ or monetary payments to offset their time and time and labour; whereas long-term reciprocity goes beyond material benefits to incorporate the ability of the researcher to communicate his or her finding back to participants and policy makers and to use the finding to improve the life of the former (McDowell, 20011 in Abebe, 2009).

There are debates among researcher whether giving monetary help as short term reciprocity is relevance or not. Some researchers viewed giving monetary to the participants as buying information and against codes and conduct of social researchers while some researcher argued that giving monetary compensation for using the time of poor people which they can use for their daily earning is helpful and necessary in different context. I feel it depends on the context of the participants and importance of their time researcher has used.

For me I have not given them money as reciprocity of their time and labour but I obviously tried to compensate them in different manners according to their needs. During the information and consent and final concluding day of my research, I gave them breakfast. During these days all the children gathered early in the morning which means they did not have enough time for their breakfast so I felt that it was required. Similarly I also felt that the breakfast concept during information program helped me to gather children at one place which was necessary for that period of time to circulate the information about my research. Similarly I have also bought children some stationary items like notebooks and pencils. I had also taken some random photographs during my field work which I have developed and gave it to my participants during the final day of my research. Similarly as a token of remembrance for our cricket match, I had also given boys a bat. It was not only me who is giving; I have also received some gifts from children like cards with some popular lines of appreciation. Beside that I had been invited for breakfast by different families. I normally take my tea in the community because of my early morning schedule. Regarding the long term reciprocity, I did not promised anything for their benefits from my research. I just described them that how my finding can be helpful for further research and in long term for policy makers. I told my participants that I would send the copy of my final thesis for them if possible in Nepali language.

4.9   Some limitation and challenges of my research

There are some challenges and limitation that I have faced while doing my research with the children. I have already described some of them in some of the discussion above but will try to elaborate more of it in this section. The first limitation of my research was the limitation time for research. I have conducted my research in community setting and children were found in community either in morning or in evening. Even in the evening children had to help in their

household work so I have conducted most of my field work between 6:30 to 9:00 in the morning. I also went there in weekend when there was no any school and sometime also in the evening for individual interview. Though children were enthusiastic to take part in research activities, sometimes I used to feel whether I was taking valuable time from children which they supposed to spend in other activities. Beside that due to my limited duration of field work I had very hectic schedule and could not spend more time with children talking and doing other things which have less relevance for my research.

Similarly I was also planning for going to other minority community for my research but I had to leave this idea because of the same reason of time limitation and distance between two communities. I thought it would take longer time for me to establish relation with other participation as I did in this community so I focused on same community.

Another challenge was finding appropriate place for my research. I had managed to arrange a room in a house of a family from the community for my research but there were lots of people coming and going all the time. Children come and try to hear what kind of conversation was going on and in the process; they interrupt the flow of the interview. Sometimes parents also used to come and talk in between. Since there were some incident of privacy and confidentiality so I have to be conscious of these things. Because of frequent disturbance, I had taken my participants to some other places too like under a tree which was a bit outside village and crowd, on the open field.

I also faced the challenge of maintaining my research role in the field work. When I was there in the first time, I was called as sir which is commonly way of addressing someone a stranger who is well educated. Because of this children started to call me as sir which for them is a teacher. My research questions and objectives were also related to school participation of children which made them think me more as a teacher. I was aware of the consequences and tried to clarify my position as student but still children feel comfortable that way. Initially I was not comfortable with this title and used to correct them all the time but by the course of time I realized that children are aware of my position but they were just not comfortable calling me by my names.

I have also found very difficult to manage the drop out children for interview. Initially, I had planned for interviewing some drop out children along with school going children. But I was not able to approach drop out children as my participants so I had to start my field work without them. During the course of research I found that children mostly drop out after certain age in the community and they were mostly busy in their works inside and outside the house. Girls who were drop out were mostly got married and went to other village or those who were newly married and in the village were mostly not allowed for such activities. Similarly boys were either in cities or in foreign countries for labor work. Those who were in the village were not comfortable with me and maintained the distance with me. When I had a short conversation with drop out boys, I felt that they were taking me as someone who will question them for leaving their school and try to take them to school again. Later I took part in cricket match with them. One day I taught one boy how to take photograph and asked him to take photos of myself and other children. These kinds of small things brought these older children closer to me and know me better. Later with the approach of one child, I approached this group of children who recently dropped out. After finishing my interview with my school going participants, I took their interview. It was very interesting part of my research because every drop out child have logical stories of their drop out.

5 ISSUES OF ECONOMICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

In this Chapter I discuss and analyze my data and finding that I have collected during my fieldwork with my participants. During the process of data analysis, I have tried to back up my discussion with different theories and concepts of childhood studies. The aim of my research is to discuss about the everyday life experiences of dalit children of terai with reference to their school participation, so I will discuss their experiences with reference to their social, economic and cultural environment to see the influences it has upon their decision of schooling, and their school progression. I have interviewed both children and parents from the same locality and caste. As the discussion and analysis of data is based on the participants from same caste and community, it is not expected to represent whole country rather it probably share similar characteristic with other dalit community of terai region.

During the interviews and discussion with participants, it has been observed that social, economic and cultural aspects of the society has been playing most important role to shape the present experiences of children in the society. Participants have expressed their views about how these aspects of the society are working presently and how children are being guided by it. So in this chapter I would like to describe these influencing factors in details. Before I start my discussion I would like to say that it is hard to distinguish between which aspects of people's lives that's to say, how the social, economic and cultural factors have greatly influenced schooling experiences of dalit children. In fact I feel that it is not relevant to categorize the influences among these categories because it seems all of these aspects of society are equally and simultaneously influencing to most of the issues participants described. So without categorizing the influences among these aspects of society I would like to describe these issues.

5.1 Socio- economic status and family structure of the participant

All of my participants are from same village and belongs to the same caste, *Chamar*. The Chamar are the highest populated madheshi dalit in Nepal. According to CBS Report 2001, the total population of Chamar is 269,661 in Nepal, among them 4,243 lives in Sunsari district (CBS, 2001). The Chamar are concentrated in the terai areas of the Central and Eastern

Development Regions of the country. Traditionally, the occupation of this caste was to work in processing, manufacturing and trading in leather and leather goods. The word itself derived from Sanskrit word "Charmaker", means leather worker (Subedi, 1998 in Shyam Sunder Shah, 2008). But, along with the modernization, they shifted their traditional occupation and start to work in agriculture either as laborer or as tenants.

In my study area, most of the family members work as agricultural laborers. However they also work as a tenant of the land owner, it is called "Adhiya" and "Batiya". This is very common in terai by those who does not has their own land but have man power to work in the field. Besides working as an agricultural labor, it is found that there is also trend of going to foreign country for work. Those who can arrange some money, go to Malaysia and Gulf countries to work as laborer and those who cannot manage money for that mostly goes to work in India as labourer. The Chamar has multiple caste names such as Harijan, Ram, Rabidas etc. (Bhattachan et all 2009). In my study area children used Harijan as their surname.

Most of my participants are from extended family where the number of family members is more than 10 which also includes grandparents and son in law. Most of the family of my participants is headed by father or grandfather. In some cases mother take role of head of the family like in the case of father has gone to foreign country for work and grandparents are old enough to take care of the family.

5.2   Household income and family occupation

The low household income is the main reason of being poor in the society and the low household income is the outcome of the occupation they are involved. As I state above, taking Adhiya and Batiya, and going to foreign country is main source of income and the family occupation of my participants. One of the parents, describing about their family occupation said,

We do not have our land , we live working as laborer in other field daily, it is very hard to survive properly with single person income, and we take land in Batiya with the hope that we can use our human resources from the house, so we are compelled to get help from our children in work, and children also knew that properly so they take interest on work looking their current

condition, we have some cows and goats in house, and there also should be someone to look after house.

The family income and occupation put every member of the family with some specific duties and responsibilities to perform. Because of the nature of occupation they are engaged in and their low household income, everyone from the family is expected to contribute their part. For example, for girls taking care of sibling, preparing food, washing and seeping in house, helping parents in the field, working in neighbor field to get money or help in return are some of the common responsibilities. Similarly for grown up boys, working in field, going to market and shop, taking care of animals, and also work in others field are common things. Children who are younger does not have so many duties to perform, generally they stay in the house looking cattle and other things when their parents are away for work so everybody has their part of work to perform in the family. The kind of responsibilities they hold from their early age has an impact on their schooling. A boy, aged of 14 years who studied in class 6 said,

I have not gone to school for 3 days, I going to cut the crops, my father take land as Batiya, so I go there with my family, that is our work and we need to do that. Showing other children, this man and this man go to work in another´s place for money but I work in my own.

Though most of the children do not take these works as burden but it does affect their schooling and leads them to temporary or permanent withdrawal from the school in one way or other. When asking about their feeling towards the work they perform, many children expressed they are happy because their parents feel happy and they also get gifts and money to spend for doing their work.

5.3   Cost of schooling

Cost of schooling has been highlighted in most of the earlier literature and research finding as a major factor to decide children school attendance and their decision of continuing or leaving it (Hunt, 2008). Schools fees do not only lead to under-enrolment and drop out; they also limit attendance at school and lead to temporary or permanent withdrawals (Mukudi, 2004). Lack of money to buy essential school materials for children's schooling is likely to cause lack of

enrolment in the first place and potentially high dropout at a later stage (Kadzamira and Rose, 2003). Since my participants belong to the group of the society who is economically and socially backward, the cost of schooling plays important roles in their decision of schooling. In the context of dalit or minorities of my research area, government and non- government organization has implanted different scholarship programs. They received money under the scholarship program like primary school scholarship program and dalit scholarship by the government of Nepal (CERSOD, 2010) and they also received scholarship for their food, dress and other stationeries from different non-government organization like UNICEF, World Vision, and WFP etc. Though scholarship amount does not cover all the expenses of children, it certainly lesser the burden. While discussing about the cost of schooling with children and parents, a girl, aged 13 who studies in grade five expressed that

They give us Rs 450 (4 €) annually and they also give us money for breakfast in the school (12 rupees per day), they pay per month 300 (2.67€), they give book themselves, and notebooks they don't give, they also give money Rs 400 (3.56€) for dress.

The monetary and material support from government and non-government organization seem to have a positive impact on the children's schooling decision. It especially helped for the enrolment into school for younger children. Especially the children from the primary school are entitled to many scholarships as mentioned above but when children passed primary level of education, they stop getting scholarship for dress and food and their indirect cost increase. The direct cost of schooling which is the school fees does not seem to appear as a greater hindrance for schooling in the community because most of the children attained government school and received some kind of scholarship program under dalit and minorities categories but it seems indirect cost and opportunity cost of schooling has greater impact on children school progression in the community. One of the children of 18 years who was drop out from the school at the age of 15 from grade six and now working as a tractor driver expressed his experience as follows,

Parents always said that we have been doing everything for your education very often but the reality is different, I remember my school days, when I used to ask for copy, book or pen with my parents, they did not seems to be concerned and used to say wait for some days. Due to lack of

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pen and copy, I have bunked my school for many days, it was not good to get scolded in front of class for same reason. I know sir; I left my school because of our poverty and to earn money.

As many scholars and researchers has said in their earlier research, Parent's inability to bear the cost of schooling plays a vital role for children decision of leaving and continuing schooling. The above line from a drop out children shows the same things but beside that it also shows how this can also turned into a psychological pressure for children and directs their interest from school and education to work in early age. The cost of schooling does not only include the admission fees that parents or government pays, it also includes cost for schooling materials like book, pen, notebook, dress, lunch etc. so while talking about the cost we have to take all these factors in consideration. The cost to buy stationeries for school use, school dress, lunch during school hours etc are considered as indirect cost of schooling which always put the poor children and parents into backseat compared to other children of the society.

With regard to poor children from developing countries like Nepal who have limited source of income for their family, opportunity cost also plays an important role for children's and parent's decision of schooling. Opportunity cost is the cost of choice. In a more direct way, opportunity cost shows "how much would I have won if I had chosen another option and, therefore, how much I lost on choosing it (Voiculescu, 2009). In this sense, children who go to school loose the opportunity to earn money during school hours. The loss will be further heightened if the outcome of the chosen option is negative. One of the parents I have interviewed described,

We have three children going to school and so many things needed for children, and a person to work for clothes, food, Tiffin. I marriage two daughter with my single income now I have debt in my head, if my son did not go to school from early at least there would not be debt in my head, but still I tried, I was hoping that he will study and do something for us but as you can see he is unable to finish his school.

Here parent choose the option of sending his children to school than work. Because of his option he sacrifices the probable income his children can brought during these hours. If his chosen option cannot compensate the probable income it is loss on the part of investment. But if the

children got drop out or cannot complete their schooling, the loss will be further heightened and would work as discouraging factor for investment further.

Some of the Parents are not satisfied with their decision of sending their children to school because of the loss of opportunity cost. They feel that their decision of sending their children for schooling does not bring any positive outcome rather it turns out be a waste of productive time which can be used for earning some money by helping them in their work. Voiculescu had argued that to estimate the total capital investment in education, it is necessary that one should add to the loss of wages (as a result of not getting a job) both the direct and the indirect costs of school (Voiculescu, 2009). It has been realized that the loss of probable income for the family, which is opportunity cost, and lack of expected outcome in the society from the schooling are major dissatisfaction in the community regarding schooling.

One of the issues that I frequently encounter during interviews and discussions is the variation of cost among younger children and elder children and its impact on school progression. Those Children who studies in primary level of school are less affected by schooling cost in comparison to the children who studied in lower secondary and secondary level. As I said earlier one reason is the availability of different scholarship programs for primary level student which can cover direct as well as indirect cost. Another reason for the variation of cost is the presence of high opportunity cost among elder children. When children are young, they are less likely to help their parents in the field or in other occupation but when they grow up their labour can be much more productive for the family income. Children cost of schooling increase as opportunity cost comes into act. The family decision of sending children to school started to be reconsidered because of the sacrifice of probable income of the family. Because of this, most of the younger children in my study area go to school in their early age and they seem to left and school when they get older or when they are studying in secondary level of schooling. Similarly the demand for the material and pocket money for the children increase with their age and grade but scholarship amount does not increase along with their grade rather it decrease in some cases. A girl age of 15 who studies in grade 6 said,

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I used to study in small school (primary school), there except from regular scholarship amount, they also give us money for Tiffin, dress but when I reached the class 6 they do not give money for Tiffin and dress. They only give NRS 450 (4 €) and that's all.

She further said that

During our primary school parents used to forced us to go to school but now they did not care about whether we are going to school or not. Sometimes they keep us at home to help them in field or in other works.

Children and parents state that when children pass the primary school, they will not receive primary school scholarship. They also do not receive dress and Tiffin money which was the most important support for them. Because of cut off in incentives, the cost of schooling seems to be increase for elder children which seem to have a negative impact on children and parents decision of continuing schooling. Parents start to fill extra burden in household which made them reconsider about their decision of sending their children to school and start to prioritize work than schooling.

5.4 Child work in the social context

Child work is commonly found issue in the developing countries like Nepal. Most of the children in one way or other contribute their labor for their family. Most of the international literature on child work mostly focus on the work in manufacturing industries and export industries but in the developing countries where state economy is mainly base on agriculture, children seems to be engaged in agricultural sectors and household work which is normally unpaid (Admassie, 2003). As Abebe said, "Children's productive and domestic work within the household constitutes the core of social reproduction in rural areas of global south. Their labor does not only provide the economic support for the family, rather it works as a continuation of social system itself" (Abebe, 2007 p. 82). Work is considered as a part of growing process which most of the children has to undergo. In my research area, poverty seems to be the main cause of child work. Because of the low household income, children are supposed to contribute in the family. Most of the parents and adults in society have said that they depends their life on their wages they get from

their day to day labor, and only parents contribution is not sufficient for the large family like they have. So they are obliged to take labor advantage of each and every member of the family to manage day to do expenses. They have to provide food, shelter, money for school and for all other things for their children and children also help in field and household work according to their capacity and strength. So it is reciprocal for them.

Most of the finding from my interview with the participation shows the family obligation and support for the family as their main reason for their participation of work but there are still some children who do not feel any pressure from the family but still work as for example illustrated in the following quotation from a 14 years old boy,

Me: What do you do with the money you get from work?

Child: I buy food in school, everybody buy food and eat at school so I also buy different food with this money.

Me: Then you don't give it to your parents

Child: No. my father is working in Dubai. He sends some money regularly and my mother does not expect money from me.

Me: Then why do you go to work?

Child: It is not good to stay in house without doing anything since everybody is busy in their work so it is fun sir.

From the above conversation, we can see that children do not only go to work because of their family poverty or obligation but also by the influences of the activities of their peer group in the society.   As Qvortrup (2002) said, "Children can also be viewed as a special class of the society which gained its characteristics with what other member of the class is doing and through the position to which they have been assigned by in relation to other and more dominant member of the society". (Qvortrup, 2002, p. 47). As the new sociology of children and childhood remove children from natural realm and put them in cultural context (Jenks, 1996), it is obvious to see children as a member of society influence by the social, cultural, economical aspects and happening of the family and society. Beside that child work in such context is also seen as something that prepares them for future and makes them responsible (Abebe, 2009).

Being a distinct group of the society children also have their distinct desires which they want to fulfill along with their friends. While discussing about this aspects in the focus group discussion, many children have said that they want to go to work to fulfill such desire like buying different foods in school, going to the market and buying different things, going to watch movies with friends, playing marbles and *chiya*[7]. They have also said that most of the parents does not give pocket money for children after they reached specific age, they expects us to earn themselves and children also does not expects from parents rather they work. In focus group discussing about the type of paid work they engaged, a boy, age 13 said,

Elder brothers go to plough the field but we normally cut the crops in other fields. We also carry hays from field to the home. We do it in a group, they pays us NRS. 3-5 (0.044 €) per bundles of hays. It depends on how far we need to carry. We three (showing other friends) are in one group and we work together and there is also another group in our village. Normally people from neighboring village call us for such work.

It seems that children have created their own working environment in the society. They know the types of work they can engaged in, and work accordingly. They have also made their small peer groups to share their work and money. More importantly society, it can be seen that the society has already accepts their working existence.

5.4.1 Gender and age factors for work division in the society

During my field work I have conducted time framed activity log of the children where children had filed information regarding what they do during a whole day. So with the help of these logs, focus group discussion and individual interview, I have found that almost every child involved in work either paid or unpaid, whether she/he is attending school or not. In my research area, children are found mostly engaged in agricultural activities and household chores. Most of the children work in field with their family as a part of their routine since most of them had taken land as Adhiya and Batiya. During the field work, it is found that types of work children engaged and the working environment are mostly directed by the factors like gender and age.

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[7] A type of local games popular among kids

Even though, the objectives of my research do not directly deal with the issues of gender based issues, I have encounter with some gender specific issues which holds important argument for the discussion of children schooling experience in the community. One of these issues is gender based division of work in the society. I feel it as important to discuss here to show its different impact on their schooling behaviors. Gender plays an important role in deciding the types of work children engaged in. Girls seem to be much busier than the boys with the burden of work in house. During interview, many of the girls have state that they have to work more than boys in the house. During the interviewed a girl of the age of 15 said,

There is discrimination among boys and girls. Parents does not tell sons to work in the house and we work all the household work and also work in field all the time and boys roam around without doing anything.

Boys normally consider as the manpower for outside work and girls as inside household. This demarcation led girls to involve in daily and routine work inside the household like cooking, cleaning, taking care of cattle and sibling while boys go outside for work like taking things from market, working in the field etc which is not routine work like girls do. I also have witnessed this through the time framed daily activities where girl children included so many works in their logs and boys does not have much to write. According to my data girls and boys do the gender specific role where most of the girls start their day with settling their bed sheets and cleaning the house and most of the boys start their day with going to toilet and brushing their teeth. I will present examples of a boy and a girl logs from same family to show what boys and girls mostly do (here I will only mentioned the time they spend in house). A girl of 14 years of age has presented her log like this

I wake up and settle the bed sheet and clean the house. My mother was cleaning the dishes so I pick up the cow waste. Then I wash the hand and cooked the rice and curry. After preparing food I eat the rice. Then I comb my hair, wash my face and put on uniform and went to school. I come back from school and clean the dishes. Then I play marble for some time with friends. Then I sweep the floor of the house. Today my brother has bought fish so I clean the fish and cook it. I

serve the food and eat myself too. Then I study for some time and go to my uncle house and watch television and I come back and sleep. (Here I have not mentioned the time)

The boys have quite different activities than girls. A boy of 15 years of age, present his log like this,

I wake up and went to toilet. I brush my teeth. I play marbles with friends for some time. Then I went to my aunty house and come back and eat the rice. Then I put my uniform and went to school. After I came back I went for fishing with friends. I catch some fishes. I came back in the evening and bath. Then I eat rice and studied for some time. Then I went to my uncle home to watch television.

This is one of the examples of logs of boys and girls of a day from same family. I present it here to show the differences in their daily activities. It only shows the general trend of the society that girls do the household works and boys are normally exempted from it and works outside. In other logs, some of my participants also mentioned that they have worked all day in field without going to school and some of the participants also have little relaxed day irrespective of gender. From the above two logs we can see that the girls have lots to do than the boys. Girl's works are more focused in household works which is continuous and they have to do the same things everyday so they are left with very limited time to focus on their schooling. But boys work on outdoor activities and field works which is seasonal or they don't do it every day so they have more time than girls to focus on their studies. In the community, Even though girl has been contributing more for the family, it is normally not taken as importance because it does not bring income to the family. Colough et all (2000) writes that "Even though girls labour directly assist the family economy, it may not be recognized as being as beneficial as that of boys in cases where it generally does not generate cash income" (Colcough et all, 2000). Girl's works are mostly confined to household, socially and culturally they are mostly taken as mother, wife and daughter who manage the house hold activities. This cultural construction of girls does not only hinder their school participation through the burden of works but it also limits their opportunity in future even after they passed their education. Groot (2007), who has done a qualitative research in sample VDCs of four different regions of Nepal about the education status of

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deprived children, said that "In rural Nepal it is not common for women to get job outside the household or village. Generally the future of girls is defined by the roles as mother, housewife, and daughter in law and extra helper for on the field. Thus people do not consider education as relevant investment for girls" (Groot, 2007, p.56).

Beside gender, age also plays an important role for the types of works they engaged in. The participation rate of children in domestic and farm activities usually increases with age (Admassie, 2003). Those children who are too young to work in field work in minimal household works. They mostly look after houses and their younger siblings. But those who are physically grown up work along with their parents in field. Regarding this issue a boy, aged15 years, expressed,

When I was young, I don't have so much to do. I generally stay in the house looking after the house and play with my friends and goes to school regularly but now I have so many things to do. I helped to plough the field and plant the crops during the monsoon and I also help to cut the crops and transport it to the shop during harvesting season. Beside that sometimes I also go to work in other places for money when I am free.

It seems like the responsibilities of children towards the family increase along with their age which has a negative influence in their schooling. Children who are young are quite free from the responsibilities compared to older children and they generally continue their schooling but when they get to the socially defined age of work, their responsibilities put adverse influences on their schooling. In this context we can also refer back to human capital theory which said that capital value of grown up children increase because of the opportunity cost of the children, so family choose to utilize their human capital as a survival strategy (Colclough et all, 2000).

5.4.2   Work and schooling: Ranking of Priorities among parents and children

There have been different opinions regarding the relationship between school attendance and child labour. Some perceived it as negative since education and child labour are believed to be mutually incompatible and some take is a compatible (Bourdillon, 2006). Whether child labour is compatible or not, it is necessary to take the social and economical context of the children before

defining its relationship. Mostly, in the debate of child labour and its impact on schooling the focus has been put on the paid labour and industrial works neglecting the unpaid domestic and agricultural works which formed the activities of majority of working children in developing countries. The domestic and unpaid work which is considered to be less harmful can turned out to be much more harmful than the paid work if the burden of work is more than a child can endure. Not only this, a child helping their parents in field for whole day has greater impact than another child who carry another person's hays from field to home for some hours. So it can be argued that whether school attendance and participation in work could be compatible or not largely depends on the type of work activity and the duration of work (Admassie, 2003). While asking about the compatibility and incompatibility of work and schooling, children and parents both seem to be in dilemmatic situation because of their condition which forced them to work, and their desire for bright future which pushed them to send their children to school at the same time. Most of the parents and children shared that in the current situation of the family, it is necessary to combine work and school and feels that it is very hard on the part of children and parents both to take their education and work together. A boy who is 17 years of age and was dropped out from the school one year ago from grade 7 has shared his situation as follows,

I have to go to school and also go to plough the field and also expect to get passed in school that is not fair. Student comes back to home in the evening getting tired of whole days of work, and now what to do whether to sleep or read and how can we concentrate on study in such situation.

The situation described by the boy shows the tension between his desire for schooling and the social and cultural reality that is distancing him from his desire. Children from the younger age have to engage on work whether it is domestic or paid. Because of their involvement in work their focus has been diverted from their study and cannot perform well in school. Child employment interferes with schooling by absorbing too much time of the child. Work also requires a lot of energy so that children cannot have the necessary energy for school attendance or for an effective study. Even for those children who might be able to combine farm work or domestic work with schooling, long hours of work will leave them exhausted (Admassie, 2003). The family and teacher further pressurize them with their repetitive comments and finally

children leave the school and start to work. Most of the drop out children I have interviewed said that they leave school because they get failed once or twice in the same class.

With regard to schooling and work and its coexistence in the community situation, Parents seem to be more concerned about the loss of time and money because of their dilemmatic situation between work and school. They said they have been sending children to school with the hope of bright future but children are not doing as expected and drop out. They feel that they have done their best with what they have but the outcome of their sacrifice does not seems to be encouraging and positive in anyway. They also points towards the lack of interest among children as one of the reason for this outcome. One of a parent described that

Sometime I feel that our children are not showing necessary interest for study in the community. They are not busy all the time it is just in monsoon and harvesting season. Other time they just hang around with friends and went missing from school without telling anything to parents.

But children have different view point in this matter. A girl, aged of 16, who is studying in grade eight state that

During the monsoon season, two months passed without school because we need to go to field for planting and preparing crops. We cannot catch the study progress in school because of the gaps of these two months; even attendance is very low to take part in exam.

Another girl from the age of 15 who also studied in class eight added,

Now it is harvesting season, we cannot go to school regularly for one and a half months and the final exam is approaching, no time, money and teacher for extra class so how can I do well.

It seems from the date that work related factors have some influence on children for not performing well in school. They contribute a lot of their time towards supplementing family income and this makes it very difficult for them to manage both schooling and work. Since the main income source of their family is based on their labour in agricultural sector, children are

very busy during the monsoon season and harvesting season. They said that it is very difficult to get labourer during these season because everybody has to do their own work, even if they get they ask for more money. Those who can afford the expensive labour can send their children to school but the poor people like them who have to make a profit by using their own labour had to struggle and they are left with no option than temporary drop out.

They seem to know that education can help them to uplift their status in different ways but in practical level they put work in higher priority than the school. A girl, aged 18, who studied in class 10 said,

I am daughter and I can see my parents working throughout the day so being a bit mature how can I stay without doing anything, I also have the feeling that father is working also and I feel like helping him so study get into second priority.

Here it seems that priority has been decided by the social and economic condition of the family as well as tradition of the society. They set their priority according the social values and in this context to help their parents got higher priority than finishing their assignment. During my research, I found out that Girls were more involved in learning different foods, planting crops in the field, fletching water and firewood. It can be observed that these things are prioritized higher than going to school for girls.

From the above discussion it can be seen that children work whether it is paid or unpaid can have a negative influence on their schooling. Children, who have to contribute their labour for their family for longer hours, get exhausted from work and cannot focus in their study and prone to drop out in future. However, not allowing children to work in the context of rural area of developing countries like Nepal does not seem to be realistic not only because of the poor economic condition of the family but also because of the social and cultural values attached to the work. So compatibility and incompatibility of schooling and work depends on many factors like types of work they engaged, hours they spend, the family occupation and income and other social and economical factors.

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5.5   Early marriage

Beside household division of labor another equally contributing factor that influence schooling in the community is early marriage. Girls, in the community, are taken as temporary member of the family and they are supposed to go to another house. Parents are more focused in getting husband for their daughter. In the research community, girls normally got married in early age. Most of the girl got married before they reach the age of eighteen. While discussing about schooling most of the girls talk about marriage with shy look. I will present one of my interview parts with a girl, who is studying in grade 8 and of 16 years of age,

Me: *Why girls in your community can not finish schooling?*

Girl: *After 15, 16 years of age, the girl is gone (smile). Parents find a boy and send her with him. So cannot finish schooling, my sisters were studying in class 8 and they get married and leave the school. It is same for all.*

Me: *your parents might be looking for a groom for you?*

Girl: *smile… and said they have come to my house last month I will be getting married in coming April.*

Me: *Do you want to get married?*

Girls: *I don't know… but I want to study.*

Here it can be seen that the social and traditional system of early marriage has become a major problem for the progress of girl education in the community. Their desire has been restricted through social conduct. When the girl says I don't know to my question, I realize how deeply the social values of early marriage have been rooted among peoples. Here we can see how the agency of the children has been neglected in the face of social values and norms. Children themselves seem in dilemma how they can express their agency in such matter.

While taking about early marriage and its effect on schooling, one of the girls who is studying in grade 10 describe her experiences of marrying in early age, she said that,

I was married in 15 years of age, when I went to groom house, I have to work more than in my house because I have to satisfy all the family members with works beside that it is different place,

I have to be conscious of what other thinks so can't speak about my desire. now I start continuing my schooling after one year of break since my husband wants me to study and I am now living with my parents here and my husband is in foreign country.

She describes how the change comes in life after marriage. The experience she has described is considered as common experience a woman has to face after marriage. I choose to put her experiences here because it does not only describe how a girl has to cop up with the new condition in new family but also positive attitude schooling that has been developing among new generation. Because of the pressure of changed life, it is difficult for girl to continue schooling. But there is also some example where a girl has continued her schooling after marriage. The attitude of the people towards schooling seems to be changing along with time in the society.

5.6   Foreign migration as an alternative to schooling

The growing trend of foreign migration is a matter of higher debate in Nepal. People have different opinions regarding its effects in social and economic status of the family and the country. But here I would like to distanced myself from this debate and focused on micro level. I would like to discuss foreign migration as household strategy among deprived community and its impacts upon the children schooling decision in the community. As I have been mentioned earlier, there has been a growing trend of migration in the researched community. People normally migrate to Gulf countries, Malaysia and India. People who can afford the expenses for migration normally go to gulf countries and who cannot afford the cost of migration go to India because of attached border and non-requirement of visa. Most drops out children in the community have gone to gulf countries or preparing themselves for that. An 18 years boy who was dropped out from the school at the age of 16 said,

This has been a trend here, 15-20 young sons from this village has gone to foreign country and everyone has left the school after 8 0r 9. They have gone to school and left. Student who is studying in class 8, 9 and even 10 is working in the field as we did or went to foreign land as laborer.

The foreign migration generally initiated by the growing unemployment in the society and also with the hope of higher wages in foreign countries. Due to the trend of migration to gulf countries and India, children focus towards the education seems to be diverted. Children have talked about their future plans to migrate to foreign countries to work as laborer where they will be paid more than what their parents and other in the society have been earning.

People in the society take migration as an alternative to schooling. They feel that schooling is not providing expected outcome from the society. Children whether they have been to school or not ends up working in the field which compelled them to rethink about their decision. People think that children who will go to gulf countries will have better standard in the society. The examples in the society and the nature of short term outcome of foreign migration divert family decision towards foreign migration than education. One of the parents of the community said,

I sent my son to Saudi Arab last year taking loan. Now he had already paid his loan and also sending some money for household expenses. His friends who used to study with him are not able to pass the grade eight and pass their time drinking, smoking and playing cards.

It can be said that People take examples in the society to get motivated or discouraged for something. Regarding the school participation of children, they will see what other has done and how fruitful it turns out to be for others in the society. In researched community, nobody has brought any significant changes in life with the help of education but those who have gone to foreign countries are living better life than others in the community. These kinds of examples discourage children and parents from investing their time and money in education rather it motivate them for migration even taking loan in high interest because of its return value.

Some of the positive impacts of the foreign migration into the schooling of the children have also been observed during the research process. The most important factor that has been observed is the positive effects of the remittance on the household income of the family. Those families where, parents or family members have gone to the gulf countries for work live better life than those who depends entirely on agriculture. Because of the improvement in household income

children feel fewer burdens of agricultural work and other paid work. A girl from the age of 14 said that

I now do not have to work outside the house. My two brothers are in foreign country and they send the money for the household expenses. Me and my parents are at home and don't have much to work. I have enough time to study and my parents and brothers encourage me for that

One drop out children aged 18, talks about the changing scenario of the community with regard to school participation. He said

The support from the family for schooling is much higher than our time regarding the schooling. Now parents are economically stronger and also want their children to go to school regularly. I hope things will improve in coming days.

It can be seen that the economic stability of the family give more spaces to the newer generation of the children for their schooling and foreign migration have help people of the community to have certain amount of economic stability in current situation.

During the discussion of foreign migration and schooling, some of the parents and children have also mentioned the possibility of better job if passed the certain school level of education. The realization of the importance of education even in foreign migration can work as a motivational factor for children and parents to finish their schooling even if they plan are planning to migrate in near future. The realization seems to be arising from the examples in the society. A parent have described how schooling can be helpful for foreign migration and said,

I have told my son and daughter at least to pass SLC. Even while going to foreign country, they can get a job of security guard if they have passed SLC. Government also provides skill development training after SLC. But my son cannot finish his schooling and went to Malaysia to work as labourer.

Education can extend the opportunities even in the context of foreign migration to some extent. Educated person can communicate using English language and it also helps them to learn the things easily. Stark and bloom (1985) said that the knowledge and skills gained from school may also increase an ability of an individual to complete a journey and cope up in a new place, thereby decreasing the cost and risk of migration (Stark and bloom, 1985). Migratory examples in the society made people aware of the importance of education in the foreign migration. They have seen educated migrants have done better than those who are not educated which to some extend motivate children and parents for schooling.

Though most of the participants talks about the foreign migration as their current strategy for survival but there were also some examples of migration towards the cities especially towards the capital city and other big cities. I have found that some of the children also work as a labourer in nearby cities. I have asked about the trends of working in a cities and industrial areas to some of the elder children. One drop out children aged of 18 said that

It is not easy to find a job in an industry in cities. There is also competition and salary is also not so well. We can earn that much money by taking 'Adhiya' and 'Batiya'. Right now the trend is for foreign migration because of payment. Earlier our father and uncle used to go to India and bigger cities for work.

When I asked about the reason for people's attraction towards the foreign migration, most of them have similar kinds of answer. The most important reason is unemployment. Because of their household obligation and poor economic condition, they cannot manage take their education progress to university degree like others and because of their inability to complete their study, they again have to fall into the category of labourer with limited wages. Even those who passed their school are working in the field or at best working as a tractor driver which discourage them from schooling and those who have gone to foreign county have managed to buy TV, mobile phone and also reconstructing their house which is attracting new generation towards it with the discount of schooling.

6   IMPACT OF SCHOOL RELATED FACTORS ON THE SCHOOLING OF THE DALIT CHILDREN

In any society school environment plays a vital role for children's interest and disinterest on school participation. Children decision of continuing or leaving school, their performance and motivation for schooling to some extend depends on how they perceived their school environment. As my participants are dalit who belongs to the lowest caste in the traditional hierarchies of caste system and have been suppressed and exploited in the society from hundred years with discriminatory behaviors, I feel it is necessary to see how children and parents perceived their school environment in the community. In this chapter, I present my participants views on their school environment and try to discuss it to find some encouraging and discouraging factors for their schooling progress. Previous researches on Dalit Caste have always highlights the discrimination in the school as a most important factors to discourage the children from school participation, here I would also like to see whether children from current generation faces the same problems or not.

6.1   Discrimination

If we go around some years back, school environment was not favorable for Dalit children since they were taken as untouchable. The participation of school among these groups of society was very few but now society has changed and most of the people have moved from it. Now government has sanctioned laws against any kinds of discrimination on ethnic ground. In school discrimination is prohibited in legal ground and people seemed to be aware of such things. Teachers and parents are much aware of these issues and the younger generation has been changed and taught accordingly. It is a fact that society has been changing, the issue of caste discrimination in school is not now as influencing as it was in the past but there still exists some indirect form of discrimination in the society and schools. The recent research has shown that previously rooted discriminatory behaviors towards the dalit children cannot be found even in the school of rural Nepal but there is still some underlying discrimination exists (Bhattachan et all, 2009). The underlying discrimination can be observed through peer groups among children, sitting order in class, use of derogatory words etc.

I mentioned the aspects of discrimination in school among children because some of the children have indirectly or directly talked about it as things which they don't like and which is indirectly making school unfavorable for them. But while discussing about this issues in focus group discussion, some of them have talked about how other student still call them *Dalitian*[8] even if they write their surname as 'Harijan' and how people called this village as 'Dalitian village'. This was very interesting for me too because I have also noted that all of my participants have given their surname as 'Harijan' because the term 'Dalitian' has been used as derogatory word and everybody called this village as Dalitian village, even the VDC representative called it with that name. A boy, aged of 15 who studied in class 7 said,

I don't like when somebody called us by names because they use our surname as 'Dalitian' even though I have written my surname as 'Harijan' in register, sometime even teacher called us 'Dalitian'.

Another boy of the same age said that *"my father has written my surname as 'Dalitian' even in school, I don't like that"*. Another important thing that emerged from discussion is the sitting order in class. When I asked them about with whom they sit in school, most of them replied that they sit with their friend from community; some of them sit with friends from other community which is from same caste and some with others Madheshi dalit castes. Most of them sit in last bench. I ask why last bench? Don't you like to sit in front? A girl of 14 years who is studying in grade 6 said,

We do not sit in front because they have been occupying the front desk from small class and once they occupied it is not possible to change so we always sit behind, we can't hear half of our teacher said". Another added that *"so we talk and play there and sometime do our homework.*

It seems from their discussion that they are not used to sit in front desk since they have been sitting at the back and also because others are have been sitting in front. They are mentally prepared for this which can affect their performance. The sitting order in public school where the number of children in a class in very high affects the performance of children because those

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[8] The name has been changed for ethical reason

children get lesser attention, cannot hear properly if teacher does not move around regularly. A boy of the age of 15 who studied in class seven said

We there boys from this village and other three from another village (they are also from minorities caste) sit in the last bench and I feel comfortable there because we do not hear what teacher said and teacher also cannot see what we are doing.

It seems they have been psychologically prepared for being back in school and feels comfortable on it. But although teachers and school management aware of it, they are not doing anything to bring change. Dhurba Raj Biswakarma (2010), in his research paper on caste based discrimination in school has argued, "The discriminatory behavior made psychological effect to child and they actually could not learn freely and their performance and achievement remained low" (Biswakarma, 2010). The discrimination that has been being practiced in school nowadays seems to be influencing children performance and interest for schooling.

One of the positive aspects about the discussion on the issues of discrimination is that the people now do not hesitate to talk about it. Parents are happy that their children are now able to go to school, live their life without being called untouchable. One of the parents shares his experience of his school days. He said

In our time, very few students from this village used to go to school and nobody wants to sit with us. When we go to drink water from tap, others will leave the tap and did not take water from that tap at least for some time but now it is all changed.

It says that there was higher form of discrimination in the past and people have physically and mentally humiliated. But he thinks that the earlier caste based discrimination is no more in practice in the community. For example, Students are not forced to leave school because of discrimination as they used to do; they are not prohibited from using same taps and toilets. Children, now, talk and play together without caring their caste. Children, now in my research area, do not seem to be drop out because of the issues of caste discrimination. Rather children inabilities to perform well in school, poor school facilities affect the interest of going to school.

Teacher's behavior and punishment in school and most importantly poor quality of education of government school with comparison to private school has influential impacts on children's decision of schooling.

6.2   Government school and private school

In the context of Nepal, the quality of education and facilities of government schools are comparatively very low compared to public schools. Public schools are commonly associated with low achievement, poor infrastructure and facilities, low quality teacher and weak management and regulation (Thapa, 2011). The large gap between the pass percentage among government and private school in School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exam exemplified the better quality of education in private sectors. The recent development in Nepal shows the trend that most of the students in private schools are from richer and medium class family and belongs to the higher caste and students in public schools are mostly from medium class or poor families. The majority of the students from the lower caste and disadvantage families go to public school (ibid). The issues of discrepancy between the quality of education among public and private school is necessary to discuss here because most of the children of my research area go to public school. Because of the economic status and being a lower ethnic caste; it is not possible for them to send their children to private boarding schools. Private boarding schools take large amount of fees which in not affordable for the children of the community. So children are forced to seek their place in comparably lower education quality than others in the society.

People have complained regarding the quality of education in school. Some of the parents said that they have been sending their children to school from some years and now they are studying in grade two and three but still they can't properly read and write. Such factors obviously discourage people to send their children to school because their expectation cannot be materialized with such quality of education. Regarding this issues Hunt (2008) said that,

In many cases, it is about how households perceive educational quality in relation to their own contexts, often in terms of the aspirations/expectations for children and the perceived relevance and ability the education they are receiving has to achieve this (Hunt, 2008, p.42).

After sending their children for schooling, parents have expectation that their children can live a better life with better opportunities in future. The realization of the fact that their children cannot compete with others in future with this quality of education, parents compelled to think for their decision of sending them to school. Having very limited choices because of their household income, parents look for another option to secure their future which can be work in their context

Another important aspect that has come forth in the discussion is quality of primary school in the village; they called it as small school, where most of the children from the community start their education. The primary school situated near their community but according them, only students from minorities' caste and poor attend this school. One of the parents said,

There is negligence among the teacher in primary school of our village. Only the students from poor family, Dalit, Madheshi and Chaudhari go to this school and students are all the time found to be out of class without teacher.

A boy, aged 12, who is studying in that school in grade 5 expressed,

There are only three teachers except headmaster in our school so teacher has to move from one class to another during one period. Sometime they stay in the office without coming to class. Most of the children goes for register and come back.

Such negligence on the part of school management teacher obviously affects the further study progression of the students. Because their foundation of learning is not build strongly, they feel very hard to continue their study progression beyond that. In the context of Nepal, it seems the previous discrimination on the basis of caste and occupation has now been changed into the form of student studying in private and public schools. Those who have enough money to spend on education can get better facilities and better quality of education and the poor children are deprived from these facilities and prepared as less competent students.

6.3   School Facilities and infrastructures

School facilities and infrastructures can play influencing role for children interest and disinterest to go to school. Most of my participants go to public school. With compared to the private schools public schools have very poor facilities and infrastructures. The same desk and bench has been used for more than a decade without any maintenance. Even the number of benches is not appropriate with compared to numbers of students. A girl, studying in class 6 has described their condition in class as follows,

We are 64 students in our class and we have 10 desks. I sit with the friends from here. We 8 students sit in a single desk. It is very difficult and we cannot manage to write sitting on the desk.

Most of the girls have complains about the girl's toilet in the school. A girl, aged of 14 expressed,

I hate the toilet of our school. We have one girl toilet and it is very dirty and nobody cleans. I cannot even enter there because there is dirt all over the floor. We generally wait for Tiffin and go outside.

Such kinds of problems can create disinterestedness for schooling among students. The availability of (separate) sanitary facilities is important for female retention, particularly as girls get older and starts menstruation (Colclough et al, 2000). Because of the lack of such facilities, girls normally do not attend school during menstruation period.

Children have also complains regarding the lack of playing facilities in school. Most of the children said that they don't have any playing materials. They said school provide one football and one volleyball and students from small classes are not allowed to play with seniors. So they want some playing materials, so that they can play with their peers. A boy aged of 14 said,

There are different kinds of playing things in boarding schools. They can play ludoo, chess, businessman, and also swingers. Some of the boarding school also has basketball court and computers rooms.

Children seem to be comparing their facilities with the boarding school around them which made them realization of what they lack and feel inferior. Children should be provided the playing facilities in school because they spend half of their day at school. The monotonous environment of school can bring disinterest among children towards going to school every day.

6.4   Teacher behavior and corporal punishment

Teachers are the best instructor for the children to show the right way in school and they are considered as agent of change and reformer in the society so their behavior plays an important role for children in school. Religiously and culturally teachers are placed in higher ranked in the society. Sometimes teacher's behaviors and attitude towards the students can have very negative impact on students. Especially the physical punishment and the attitude towards the underperformed students work as a discouraging factors for children to go to school. Taking about the punishment, in the school of Nepal corporal punishment is taken as common activities. Corporal punishment, as a means of disciplines, is often taken for granted as an excuse to enforce obedience (Mishra et al, 2010). Even the parents and students take it as normal and advocate for its necessity in some situation. But sometimes such punishment make student physically and mentally vulnerable for drop out.

Although Nepal has ratified the united nation convention on the right of the child (UNCRC), there is no explicit prohibition on corporal punishment (Mishra et al, 2010). Nepal child act (1992, enforced in 1993) has prohibited child violence but it also allowed normal betting by mother, father, teacher for their goods (State Party Report, 2004). The issue of corporal punishment has not been addressed properly in Nepal. Children and parents I have interviewed have also take punishment in school as normal. A boy aged of 14 said, *"If you did not do your homework, teacher beats us. It is normal and happens all the time"*. Though, it has been taken as normal, it can be seen that it is playing an important role for children for not attending school in long run. It can bring changes in some students in some cases but it normally brings fear for school among the students and can have a larger impact for the students who might need motivation and encouragement than punishment. Most of the children said that they normally do

not ask the question to the teacher because of fear of getting scolded. A girl, aged 14 studying in grade 6 said,

We sit in the last bench and cannot hear the entire things teacher said if I ask any question sometime teacher answer the question but sometimes scolds us badly. So I don't take chance and keep quite.

Another boy said, "*Teachers beat very harshly they beat until my hand turns red so I sometimes left the school*". Teacher still follows the traditional methods of teaching in school and believes in correction through punishment. In the name of keeping children disciplines they forced harsh punishment. "Harsh disciplines hampers children's motivation and ability to learn leaving them in a vicious circle of low achievement, repetition, rejection and ultimate withdrawal from the education process" (Mishra et all, 2010).

One of the drops out boy with the age of 17, during the individual interview, mentioned that he left the school because he has been getting beaten up in school like every day. He mentioned how his relation with one teacher was not nice and how he reacts to the situation. He explains his feeling as follows,

My math teacher used to scold me and beat me like every day. When he used to enter the class first he asks for my homework and I was very poor in math so I usually got beaten up. One day I scold back the teacher. Then I left to go to school. Everybody asked me to go but I did not go. I did not attend exam and left completely.

The experience of this child can itself tell us how children can be psychologically distributed because of punishment. Some of the teacher have also tendency to favoring talent student and harassing underperformed students which does not help to get them better rather it can cause drop out in some cases. Mishra et all (2010) has said that children who continuously get corporal punishment behave more aggressive than others and also can have longer effect like turning violent to themselves (ibid).

In rural area of Nepal, there is still lack of teachers. School recruits the untrained and poorly trained teacher who is not capable of address the demand of the students and makes the learning difficult to students. While discussing about the issue some of my participants give an example of their math teacher who speaks very fast and scolds if ask anything. Nobody understands what he teaches and nobody is allowed to ask anything. They also said that most of the students do not take his class, "*only books were there, students are out in the school*". The corporal punishment is common problem in Nepal especially in government school because of lack of trained teacher and also because of the negligence of authority. Government schools are considered for poor and minorities people of the community which is true in most cases. Parents often do not visit the school because of their busy working environment and illiteracy so children are forced to deal with what they have or leave it.

7 DILEMMAS REGARDING SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

In this chapter I would like to discuss some of the existing dilemmas that have emerged from the discussion on different topics of school participation of dalit children. I would focus on some of the major and interesting themes that have come across throughout previous two chapters and that was running through the different cases and the empirical findings as a whole. I would like to highlight some core findings/dimensions that cut through the children's stories / my informants' stories as a contribution to understand the dilemmas the informants meet and have to deal with.

7.1 Gap between knowledge and practice

One important issue that has come across throughout my research finding and discussion is the gap between children and parents knowledge about the issues of children schooling and its actual practices in society. Most of the earlier works on schooling of poor children consider parent's lack of knowledge as deciding factors for children's decision of schooling. Boyle, S., Brock, A., Mace, J. and Sibbons, M., who in their research looked at barriers to education for the poorest households in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia, in the year 2002, expressed that the Teachers and community leaders often expressed the view that the poorest parents (who they believe to be uneducated) have little or no understanding of the benefits of education and many children do not attend school (or attend irregularly) because their parents do not value education (Boyle et al, 2002). Finding from my research suggest that the children and parents from my research area are now aware about the importance of education in their lives. However it has been realized during the course of field work that the knowledge is not materialized in the practical ground. So the gap between knowledge and practices is playing a major role to decide children schooling participation in the community.

The works of government agencies, different NGOs and INGOs on the field of awareness raising program for education and people's increasing approach to media technologies in recent times have contributed to a larger extend to make my participants aware of current situation however they does not seem to exercise their knowledge in practice. While asking about the important of education to the participants most of the parents and children have talked about the importance

and values of education. Parents seem to have a certain ideas about why they or their children should go to school and what can have its influences on the future of the children. The positive attitude is reflected with the fact that most of the household have been sending their children to school. Most of the children I have interviewed had positive reaction to the question why they want to go to school? Children usually use the word like to become *great person, to get knowledge;* some of them also said that *they want to become teacher, doctor or police officer.* When I asked children about who told you about the importance of education, they mostly referred to their parents. A girl, aged 12 years, who is studying in class 5 said,

My parents have told me that if I go to school, I can be great person. They always push me for getting pass the School leaving certificate. There is only one girl in our village who passed the SLC and I want to be second girl.

Even though parent's motivation does not seemed to last very long because of the family income and responsibilities, it seems that children have been hearing about the importance of education from their family. In my research area people seem to have an access to information technologies which help to spread the information on education and its importance Besides, there are some NGOs and INGOS working in the area which also provide them information about importance of education.

It has been noticed that People normally take education as a means to improve their current lifestyles. In other words, they expect some economic gains in future from their present investment in education. People are not satisfied with their current living standard and considered education as a means to bring changes in the future generation. They consider education can enable them to leave this traditional occupation and find a new job. A school dropout boy, aged 18, said

The coming generation has a support from family; now people have realized their mistake and encourage children for schooling hope this generation can do some good and set an example.

Some of them also said that even in the agriculture or foreign employment sector, what they are doing now; education can be helpful. A parent in this matter said that

If you pass the School Leaving Certificate, you can get some skill development training by different organization, you can speak and understand English which can help to get better job in foreign country also.

With the interaction with parents and children we can be positive towards the future because in one way or other people have shown their awareness level which is quite exciting for future generation. However looking at the present scenario of the community, it is difficult to reach to any conclusion.

People seem to be aware of the importance of education and can talk about its importance however we can see the mismatch between their awareness level and what is happening in their community. Although people have expressed their awareness towards the schooling, children are still kept out of the school. The views from children and parents suggest that the dilemmatic situation of the people in the society is mainly created by their economic instability and socio-cultural practices.

Most of the participants expressed that they have to focus more on family stable income than education because of their poverty and minimal income. Children have to help their parents at home, contribute in family income with paid works and also go to school. Such burden from early age seemed to influence their performance in school because of which they are not able to get expected outcome. Even though parents and children are aware of the situation they feel themselves helpless because of poverty and other family obligation. Beside, Parents still lack motivation to send children to school regularly. One of the reasons behind this dilemmatic situation or gap between their awareness and current practices can be created because of the gap in their expectation and outcome from schooling.

7.2 Expectations vs. Outcome

It is witnessed that there is a gap between expectation and outcome regarding the experiences of schooling among children in the community. Here expectation is something positive that people of the community expect from the schooling. One the other hand outcome is something that people are experiencing in real life; the actual results in the community from schooling. It has been realized through my experiences in the community that the gap between these two aspects of schooling is found to be a major contributing factor in the community for their lower rate of school completion and underperformance.

While talking about the expectation it has to be mention that people normally thinks that education should provide them quick return in the form of job or new opportunity which is not surprising in the context of poor children from Nepal. Parents spend certain amount of money in direct and indirect cost of schooling for their children even though there are some scholarship programs for them. In the context of Nepal, parents are considered as the one who take care of all the required necessity for the children and also have authority over their decision. The sense of authority over children comes from their responsibilities to raise their children and also with the sense that they have greater experiences than children (Nick Lee, 2001). Parents send their children to school with the hope that they will find a job after completing schooling. But the reality seems to be different in the context of study area. One of the school dropout boy aged of 17 said

Children who have passed school leaving certificate are still working in the field with their parents or have gone to foreign country like others who have not gone to school

They feel that the time and money they have spend for this duration does not pay off which discourage the newer generation of children and their parents to send them to school. Hunt (2008) has expressed that "in many cases a 'lack of hope' both on the part of parents and children seems to infuse decisions to drop out of school, particularly for boys" (Hunt, 2008 pp 24). The current situation of children who have been to school and who have never been to school is quite similar in the community as far as their working environment and standard of life is concerned which obstruct children to continue schooling. There are also no examples of

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students who have taken her/his education to university level so that the outcome would be visible in greater level. The knowledge they acquired in their schooling does not seems to be helping them in their real life. One of the parents one this matter state that,

I have not attended school but I can do all sorts of work, along with agricultural work I can work in furniture, I can make all the equipment required for agriculture but these kids does not even know how to drive cart properly.

It seems that there is lack of relevance of the schooling curriculum in the practical life of the children which is creating gap between knowledge and practice in some ways. Children does not get chance to learn practical and professional skills during their schooling. Cindy Katz talks about the 'deskilling' of young people in the contemporary societies who is unlikely to have knowledge and skills that is necessary for their future (Katz, 2004). Children in the community who will most probably work in the agriculture sector are not taught anything about that which makes parents to think that children are being less productive and competent.

7.3   Effectiveness of the scholarship program

Earlier under the heading of cost of schooling I have discussed about how scholarship programs helped to minimize the cost of schooling for poor and dalit people. Here also I tried to present children and parents views about the impacts of scholarship program upon schooling and also tries to see inherent dilemma about its effectiveness. Participants have talked about the contribution scholarship programs have upon their life and state that it has helped to increase the number of school enrolment in the community. It can also be observed that the school enrolment rate of children is improving; most of the family has at least one school going children in the community. The presence of the scholarship programs in the society is taken as the primary reason for improvement in enrolment and school participation. One of the parents among my participants said,

Government and other organizations give us money, books, dress and food so that we send our children to school. Now I think most of the children from the community are going to school.

It has been realized that the scholarship amount has been working as a motivation factors for parents and children to start their schooling in the community. However there are some inherent programs in the part of social conception and government strategy which hinder the schooling progress in a long term and results in drop out after certain age.

Parents and children have also mentioned some of the existing problems in the part of management and society with regard to scholarship programs. Talking about problem from the part of scholarship management they said that the scholarship programs are mostly directed to primary education but when children reach in the secondary level, they stop getting the incentives as before despite the increase in cost of schooling in secondary level. Regarding this issue one of a parent said,

When children get bigger their demand is high but scholarship amount decrease. They give NRS 500 (around 4.5 €) annually but they spend it in a month. They need notebooks for ten subjects and they will finish ten notebooks in a month, and 25 rupees per day for Tiffin. When children get older, it is hard to bear the expenses.

In contrast to the increase in schooling cost in lower secondary and secondary level, the scholarship incentives decrease. The available scholarship programs are mostly targeted to intelligent student which normally goes to higher caste children because of the underperformance of poor and dalit children. So parents and children feels extra burden of schooling and result drop out. It seems that the policies of scholarship programs are mostly focus to increase the enrolment rate of the children rather than helping them to finish their schooling.

Some of the participants have also talked about some of the misconnection of the people in the society as a reason for not getting desired outcome from scholarship programs. They said that some of the people in the society are more concerned about the money than the schooling progress of their children. They send their children to school only to get scholarship amount and does not focus on education process. A boy aged 15 said,

Some of the parents go to school only before the day scholarship amount is delivered and quarrel in school for scholarship. Children mostly do not have sufficient attendance but they insist for scholarship.

It has been observed that the mentality of people in the society is more concerned about the scholarship amount. Parents admitted their children to school for the scholarship but children do not go to school. Scholarship amount is generally taken as a earning of the family. Since the motivation factor for such situation is only money it does not guarantee that the children will remain at school if he/she find better source of earning.

Another reason is the misuse of the scholarship amount. Scholarship amount are given to support children schooling process and to buy necessary material. It is observed that people use this money for their foods and household activities. Children do not even know how the money has been used in the house. A girl of 12 years of age said,

Father goes to school to take the money, I don't know how it is used but I think it is used for what is necessary for that time. For us it is same whether scholarship is there or not.

Most of the Children mentioned that they really do not know about the amount of scholarship because everything is done by parents. They also don't know how it is used by the parents. Children expressed that they find books, school dresses and other school materials quite helpful for them than monetary support since it is directly used. The parents and children relationship in the community somehow found to be in line with so called dominant framework where adults are considered as compete and self- possessed beings who have the abilities to make good decision and to discharge their responsibilities to children who are vulnerable, dependent and in the state of becoming adults (Nick Lee 2001). Even though children are considered as economically and socially dependent on parents, they are found to be contributing equally economically through works and socially through love.

It seems that the scholarship programs for dalit children provides the opportunity for children to experience the schooling which they were previously deprived of however it does not seem to

contribute to the whole process of school completion. Although the school enrolment is increasing in the community, the number of children who finish the schooling is still very low. Children are not finishing their schooling despite of support and incentives because of which the scholarship programs are not generating the intended impact up on their life. Children are found to be going to school in government data but actually they are still working in field and house. So there need to be better implementation guidelines for scholarship programs. The current guidelines seemed to be made without consideration of grassroots reality and the actual experiences of the targeted participants. According to CERID report submitted to Department of Education on scholarship management and its effectiveness in term of enrolment and retention,

The guidelines for scholarship management have been either little understood by the grassroots level organization like the schools or the DEO has not been able to relate the intent of the guidelines to the management, implementation and monitoring of the scholarship program. Variations in the scholarship program and discrepancy between the program (scholarship program) and its implementation clearly indicate that grassroots level mistakes are to be corrected for making the program effective (CERID, 2010, pp.80)

The guiding documents for scholarship programs have been prepared at the central level without adequate interaction with the field realities which does not seem to address the ground reality (Acharya and Luitel, 2006). So there is need of proper research to address the socio-cultural reality of the participants and to achieve the intended motives from the programs.

7.4   Gender and schooling

Gender was not a main issue that I initially wanted to discuss during this research. As I started my field work, I realized that the discussion on schooling experiences of children in my research area cannot be completed without discussing the influence gender roles have upon it. The issues of gender roles among children come in almost all the influencing factors that have been described in above chapters. The findings from the research on gender and caste in Nepal by Sharon Stash and Emily Hannum suggest that the issues of gender differences may be somewhat larger in high-caste than in low-caste households (Sharon, S and Emily H, 2001). However, being a highly patriarchal society, the discriminatory behavior towards girls and boys exists in all

castes and classes in the Nepalese society. Colclough, while describing about poverty, gender roles and schooling, said that low income of state and household, adverse cultural practices like household division of labor, existing trends of labour market and school and social environment are the main factors that influence the boys and girls participation of school in poor state and household (Colclough et all, 2000). My participants have expressed their opinion about different prevailing gender discourses in the society and its influences in children schooling

As I have discussed in chapter 5 under the heading child work, the household division of labor with the basis of gender roles does not favor the school participation of girls in the community. They have to engage in different household chores from morning to evening throughout the year whereas boys are exempted from this duty and mostly busy in different season like monsoon and harvesting season especially outside house. Similarly social practices like early marriage, boys as inheritance of parent's properties make girls more prone for leaving school than boys. In the context of Nepal especially among poor families, it has been seen that when a family reach to the situation where they cannot afford all of their children for schooling, they are found to be support boys schooling in advance of girls. (Hunt, 2008). Normally boys are considered as the inherent of parents who will stay with them throughout their life unlike girls who has to go to husband house after marriage. So, parents have tendency of favoring boys than girls for education expenses.

Although the social reality of schooling among girl is not encouraging with the fact that there is only one girl who has passed schooling, some of the parents and children have shown their positive attitude towards girls schooling in the community. It has been observed during the field work that the parents have now started to send their daughter to school along with boys. One of the parents said, "It is same as boys; I am sending my two daughters to school expecting that it will help them in their future". The development of positive attitude towards the girl's education in the community have be observed and witnessed during the discussion. But it has also been observed that the family poverty, children household obligation and people's confinement to the traditional social practices are working as restricting factors for not completing the schooling for girls.

7.5   Change in the form of discrimination in school

The finding from my research suggests that the discrimination that had been practiced earlier in school setting has been changed in recent times. Now discrimination on the ground of caste is taken as conservatism. So discrimination in school setting is not a very common like in the past. However there still exists some indirect form of discrimination in rural setting of Nepal. As I have discussed in chapter six, children from my research area still feel some discriminatory behaviors like use of derogatory words, teacher's negligence on the part of dalit children's performance and issues of sitting order which affects in children performance level. A Nepalese study on caste-based discrimination in school documented that indirect discrimination by teachers, such neglect, repeated blaming, and labeling of dalit students as weak performers, lead to social exclusion of dalit students in schools. The consequence was irregular attendance in classroom, less concentration in studies, less participation in school activities, lower performance, failure, and school drop-out (D.R. Bishwokarma, 2010). So the discrimination now should be analyzed and discussed differently than in the past where Dalit children normally are not allowed to touch and sit together with other students.

The most important aspect of discrimination that has been noticed from the discussion with my participants is about the equality on access to quality education among dalit children and higher caste children. Most of the participants have expressed that they have been discriminated to get the equal quality of education which affects more in the society to encourage and discourage for schooling.

Dalit children due to their poverty cannot afford private school which have better education qualities and facilities in Nepal. It is found that the gap between the qualities of education creates competency gap between students from government school and private school. Private school takes huge amount of fees and provides good quality of education whereas government schools are considered for poor and marginalized people and do not provide standard quality of education. Beside their teaching environment is also very bad with lack of facilities and trained teachers. Such gap made children less interested to school and they also find themselves less competent on education than other children from their generation which finally does not bring any expected outcome and discourage whole community from schooling.

The Government has brought some special measures targeting Dalits but these are not sufficient to address the magnitude of educational marginalization of the Dalits (Bhattachan et all, 2009). In a nutshell, discussion and observation from my research take me to the conclusion that inequality in educational system is more influencing cause for lower rate school participation for Dalit children than discrimination inside the school environment in recent times.

8   SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

8.1   Summary of the findings

In this research, my aim was to discuss about the experiences of dalit children with regards to the school participation. To observe the children experiences, I first of all looked towards the social, economic and cultural factors which intersect with children experiences of schooling to see how these factors of the society influenced their schooling progress. Then I also tried to discuss about children views about school environment to see whether current school environment is favorable for dalit children or not. So taking children as competent active agent of the society (Qvourtup et all, 1994), the main guideline of this research is to look at the phenomenon from the perspectives of the children and analyze it accordingly without destroying their intended meaning. Since the research is done in small scale focusing on one of the community of terai dalit of Sunsari district, it is not necessarily applicable to all the dalits and minorities caste from Nepal.

Being one of the economically poor groups of the society, it is found that family struggle to bear the cost of schooling. Among the costs of schooling, indirect cost and opportunity cost of schooling had been highlighted in the discussion with my participants. Normally it is found that direct cost is covered up by the scholarship programs by different government and non-government organization. Family, normally, struggled to pay indirect cost of schooling which includes costs for school materials, dress and food. The large numbers of the participants have talked about the influences of opportunity cost of schooling which made participants to think about their decision of schooling.

Similarly Child Work also seemed to be one of the major constrains for schooling in the community. Child work in the community is considered as results of economic instability of the family. Agricultural labour is the main profession of the family. It demands the more numbers of working members of the family in the field which made elder children as one of the source of labour and vulnerable for school dropout. Most of children in the society involved in some kinds of work either paid or unpaid because of family obligation, lack of family resources, for pocket money. Sometimes they were also found to be involved in work to incorporate with the social environment where every children work. So children started to combine their schooling and work

from early age. It has been realized in the community that even though work sometimes help to minimize the indirect cost of schooling (Bourdliour, 2001), it mostly hampers children performance in school which work as pull out factors for their schooling in long term.

Gender based division of labour is another important factors that deteriorates the schooling progress of the girls in the society. Because of the cultural practices of early marriage girls are mainly considered as temporary members of the society and parents seemed to be less interested towards the investment for their schooling. Rather they prefer to teach them about the household chores and other family work that they are culturally supposed to do after getting married. It also made girl children to leave the school for marriage purpose in early age.

Another important aspect of social trends is migration towards the city and gulf country which have visible impact on children schooling. Because of the current trend of labour migration in the society, children seemed to be dropped out and focused on migration. It is found that People of the society are more positive towards the foreign migration specially gulf country than completing schooling because they perceived investment in migration more fruitful than investment in schooling. They considered migration as their current and most favorable household strategy which in long term will helped their children to have better education.

The findings from my research suggest that children lower rate of school participation and higher rate of drop out in the community is not only because of the lack of knowledge among parents and children but also because of the gap between knowledge and reality. My participants seemed to be aware with the benefits of schooling but they are somehow not able to materialize their knowledge into practices. It is observed that social, economic and cultural factors like Cost of schooling, child work, and other social and cultural factors like child marriage, trends of migration play a major role to constrain their knowledge into practice.

Finding of my research deals with the gap between people's expectation and outcome from schooling which work as constraining factors for children school participation in the society. Most of the people have expectation from the children that they will provide support for the family and bring economic stability. They consider education as a means of bringing change in

living standard but their inability to perform well in school and example of society, where schooling does not seemed to bring expected outcome in the society, made children less interest towards schooling. Similarly parents are also discouraged for sending their children to school because they don't find their expectation to be fulfilled with the level of education their children are having. In the society it has been observed that there exists gap between expectation and outcome from schooling which made dalit children's school participation more problematic.

Similarly findings from my research also suggest that the lack of trained teacher and their attention to students, lack of facilities which attracts the children to school, and gap between the quality of education between government school and private school plays major role to demotivate dalit children from schooling than the caste based discrimination in school setting.

I considered my research is quite new for the context of Nepal because most of the research that has been done in the past has put their effort mostly to discuss about the discriminatory behavior of the people towards the dalits. The findings of my research have provided some new insights about the issues of school participation of dalit children of Nepal.

8.2   Conclusion

Even though Nepalese culture is moving forward from the traditional caste based discrimination and exploitation, the status of dalit in the community as a socially backward and marginalized in the society is still intact. dalits are still the poorest among other groups of the society. Social understanding of the people has been changing along with the time but the social structure is still the same. Education is considered as a basic tool for bringing the change in the society which is now accepted by all the groups in the society but the school participation of the children from the dalit community is still very low with compared to other higher caste in the society. Most of the children from these social groups seemed to be drop out early in their schooling progress.

In Nepal the issues of dalit community has been an issues of debate in recent times, there are many researches on dalit experiences especially about the issues of social discrimination but there are very few researches which observes the experiences of dalit children from their own perspectives. So the concept of research with children itself is a new concept in the context of

Nepal because parents and teachers are mainly stand as a spoke person for children in community and school. In my research I tried to focus on children perspectives and give the children proper space to express their views. I hope this approach which is quite new for Nepalese researchers can be quite helpful to understand and explore more about children views in the society. Beside that I think some of my findings are also very important for the researcher and policy makers.

Lack of awareness level and parents illiteracy was considered as the main reason for low rate of school participation among dalit and minorities children in most of the earlier literature and researches. However findings I have gathered from the discussion with my participants do not considered awareness level of people as a main factor for low rate of participation. The research realized that there exists a gap between awareness level and reality in the societies. People are being more aware about the importance of education along with the times but they are not able to materialize their knowledge because of economic instability, social and cultural practices in societies and also because of existing mismatch between expectation and outcome from schooling. The research also directs the focus from school based discrimination to the perspectives of equal access to quality education for dalit children which shows the changing scenario of these children of Nepal.

Since my findings pointed toward the need of new intervention to tackle the changing scenario of the dalit children's schooling process, it can be helpful for the policy makers and academies who are working to uplifts the education status of dalit children of Nepal. It implicate the message that dalit children now need equal access to quality education than certain scholarship programs and parents need outcome from schooling rather than knowledge about importance of education. As long as there is gap between expectation and outcome, the dalit children will not be motivated to go to school; parents will not be motivated for sending their children to school. And from the experiences of my participants, it has been realized that equal access to quality education can make children competent enough to fill that gaps.

8.3   Recommendation for further research

Even though the objectives of the current studies encompass both social and school environment, the society is chosen as an appropriate setting to observe the children. So I consider an extensive research which encompasses both school and social settings and also among different dalit castes of the societies would be helpful to get more clear result of dalit children experiences on schoolings. I also like to underline that the comparative studies about the daily habits and experiences of children from dalit caste and other higher caste of the society will be interesting. It can provide insights how social, economic and cultural factors can differently or similarly influence their schooling activities.

The currents research has brought some insights that the children unequal access to quality education between higher and lower castes in the society is demotivating dalit children from schooling. I suggest further studies can be done in this issue to see how the mechanism of higher and lower caste, government and private school and their facilities is working to create the gaps and what kinds of effects it has upon the dalit children. I think it can also provide some suggestion to tackle this problem. Similarly a comparative study on gender discrimination among children from higher and lower castes of Nepal can provide some new insights to describe how gender based discrimination works among these castes

This research has talked about the different programs from Government and Non- government organization to uplift the dalit children school participation however it does not deal with these programs in details. I can see that an extensive research about current scholarship programs and observation on its effectiveness and approaches to address the ground reality can be helpful for further planning.

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APPENDICES
Appendix-1

Interview guides

I would like to thanks you all for your willingly participation in this interview. I will assure you that the information will be treated anonymously and protected from any other person and organization. No names and personal information of any participants will be disclosed. My interest is to gathers your views and experiences about the schooling process of the community. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw your

Interview guide for children

Background information of the participants

- Where do you live?
- In which grade are you studying now?
- How many members are there in your family?
- What do your parents do? Did they go to school?
- How many siblings are you in your family?
- What are they doing? Do they go to school?
- Which types of school are you going now and how long does it take for you to reach there?

Children views about their experiences in the community

- How many members are there in your family? What are they doing now?
- Can you tell me, what are the most reoccurring things you normally do at home?
- How long do you spend on study at home?
- Do you participate in household activities? Tell me some of the activities you normally do?
- Do your parents asked you for household works? If they would not have asked you, what do you think you would have done?

- Do you also participate in paid works in the community? What do you normally do? What other children in the community do?

- What do you do with the money you get from work?

- What is your perspective about going to school and helping your parents at home? Do you think it is affecting your performance at school, if yes how?

- For you, what are the best and worst things about work?

Children views about their experiences in the school

- Tell me how often do you go to school?

- How long time do you normally spend in school? Do you find it good for you?

- How many friends do you have in your class and school? Do you have friends from other community as well?

- Where and with whom do you often sit in the class?

- How is your relation with your teachers in school? Do you like them?

- Which teacher do you like most and why?

- How often do your teachers beat students in the class? Do you get scare with him\her?

- Do you asked with your teachers if you don't understand? Do they encourage you to ask questions in the class?

- What kinds of facilities you have in your school?

- What do you like most about your school?

- What are the things that you don't like about your school?

- What do you wish to get changed in school?

- Do you have any personal experiences in school for being children from Dalit community?

Perception about scholarship programs

- Have you got any scholarship? What kinds of scholarships students from this community normally get?

- How do you use the money that you get from scholarship programs?

- Do you find scholarship programs helpful for you for schooling? How is it helping you?

- What do you think should be changed about the scholarship programs to get more advantage from it?

Future perspectives and schooling
- What do you want to be in future?
- Do you think your schooling will help you to become what you want to be? How?
- What do you think about continuing or leaving school in future?
- Why do you think children stop going to school in the community?
- What do you think motivate you to continue your schooling in future?
- Tell me, what can be done to motivate children to go to school in the community?

Conclusion
- Do you want to add anything?
- Do you want to share any experiences with me about your school, family or work?
- Do you want to share anything particular of your community which you want me to know?

Interview guide for parents
- Can you tell me something about yourself?
- How many children do you have? Do they go to school?
- Had you go to school when you were child?
- What do you do? Do you want your children to continue your profession?
- Why do you send or do not send your children to school? What are your views about the importance of schooling of children especially from your community?
- What expectation do you have from the education of your children and what do you think about its chances of fulfillment?
- What do you think are the barriers for children from continuing their schooling in the community?
- Do you think you have problems for sending your children to school because you belonged to dalit community?

- What do you think your children working in the house and going to school? Do you think it has affected your children performance at school? How?
- What do you think about sending daughter to school? Do your daughters go to school? Do you think that it will help them in future?
- What do you think about existing scholarship programs for dalit in the community? Do you find it helpful for you and your children for schooling?
- Tell me, what can be done to make the scholarship programs more fruitful for children's schooling in the community?
- What can be done to motivate people from your community to send their children to school?
- Do you have any personal suggestions for government and other organizations for the betterment of dalit children education as a whole?

Appendix 3

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS

NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Gry Mette Dalseng Haugen
Norsk senter for barneforskning
NTNU
Loholt Allé 87, Pavillion C
7491 TRONDHEIM

Vår dato: 29.06.2012	Vår ref:30866 / 3 / HIT	Deres dato:	Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 18.06.2012. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

30866	*Caste based System and its Influence in Educational Participation in Lower Caste Children in South East Nepal*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Gry Mette Dalseng Haugen*
Student	*Suraj Budhathoki*

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, 01.06.2013, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Hildur Thorarensen

Kontaktperson: Hildur Thorarensen tlf: 55 58 26 54
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Suraj Budhathoki, Moholt alle 12-31, 7030 TRONDHEIM

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

The main aim of the project is to see how Dalit (low-caste) children experience school and family obligation in Nepal society. The sample consists of 15-20 participants from about 10 families, including children from the age of 12.

The participants will give oral consent to participation, and receive oral information about the following:
- The purpose of the project, and that the information will be used in a MA-thesis at NTNU
- That interviews and observation are the methods to be used to obtain information
- That participation is voluntary and that participants can withdraw at any time without having to give any reason
- That no-one will be recognizable in the final thesis

In order for the participants to give an informed consent, the Data Protection Official for Research presupposes that they also are given information about the following:
- That the project is scheduled for completion June 1st 2013, that the information will then be anonymised, and audio recordings deleted
- Name and contact information of the student and supervisor

For participants under the age of 18, the DataProtecion Official for Research presupposes that informed consent is obtained by parents in addition to the participants themselves.

Data will be collected through interviews and participant observation. Directly identifiable information will be replaced by a reference number that refers to a separate list of names. Audio recordings will be saved and processed on a computer.

The Data Protection Official for Research takes into account that sensitive information regarding the respondents' racial or ethnic origin, or political opinions, philosophical or religious beliefs may be registrered in the project (see Personal Data Act § 2 subsections 8 a).

Data will be stored on a personal computer. The Data Protection Official for Research presupposes that this is in accordance with the internal guidelines for information security of NTNU.

The data will be anonymised by the end of the project, June 1st 2013. For the data to be anonymous, names (on consent forms and name list) have to be deleted. In addition, indirectly identifiable personal information has to be deleted or rewritten so that no individuals can be recognized. Audio recordings are to be deleted.