



Education for All 2004-09 Formative Research Project

Study Report 30

Ensuring Free and Compulsory Basic Education for Disadvantaged Groups in the Context of Education for All



Tribhuvan University
Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID)
Balkhu, Kathmandu, Nepal
2009

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Abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organization
CERID	Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development
DACAW	Decentralized Action for Children and Women
DDC	District Development Committee
DEO	District Education Office
DOE	Department of Education
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRP	Formative Research Project
HT	Head Teacher
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NEFIN	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAF	Poverty Alleviation Fund
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RP	Resource Person
SGOG	School Grant Operation Guidelines
SMC	School Management Committee
SS	School Supervisor
SSR	School Sector Reform
VDC	Village Development Committee

Executive Summary

Government of Nepal has been making efforts for Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE) since the beginning of the nineties. The piloting of free and primary education was carried out in Banepa Municipality of Kavre district and Ratna Nagar Municipality of Chitwan district in 1995/96. The Local Self Government Act was introduced in 1999, on the above background, of which FCPE was later extended to Chitwan and Ilam districts. The main objective of this program was to ensure education for all including the disadvantaged groups.

The Education for All (EFA) program has given special attention to the schooling of disadvantaged groups. One of the goals of EFA program was to ensure basic education of quality for all children, particularly girls, *dalits*, disabled and children in difficult circumstances and children belonging to ethnic minorities, through free and compulsory primary education in Nepal by 2015.

To ensure basic education for disadvantaged groups, the government introduced several supportive measures at different times. It included free textbooks, scholarship schemes for *Dalit* girls (50 percent) and disabled, school feeding program, alternative schooling program including *school* improvement and expansion program in the areas of low enrolment.

Reaffirming clearly obligation to the child's right to receive quality basic education of up to Grade 8, the core document of School Sector Reform (SSR) has stated that adequate arrangements will be made to ensure free education to children from economically disadvantaged communities and children with disabilities. SSR has stated that free education will be implemented from the 2009 academic year in Grade 6 and gradually extended up to Grade 10.

In the light of all these, this study intends to analyze the educational status as well as provisions required, measures and process that are essential to ensure the rights of the disadvantaged groups to receive quality basic education. The study has primarily concentrated on the following research questions.

Research Questions

- What is the existing educational status of children of the disadvantaged groups?
- What provisions are required for educating children from the disadvantaged groups?
- What preventive measures should be undertaken to ensure educational rights of the disadvantaged groups?
- How can basic/free/compulsory/right based education for disadvantaged groups be ensured?

Study Design

This study is based on qualitative approach. This is a case-by-case study of 5 disadvantaged groups carried out in 5 districts. *Dalits* and *Janajati* were considered as disadvantaged sample populations for the study. From *Dalits* ethnic groups, *Lohar/Tamata* and *Chamar*, were selected. The study selected these groups from Dadeldhura and Kapilbastu districts. Likewise, from *Janajatis* ethnic groups *Tamang*, *Chepang* and *Danuwar* were included. The study selected these groups from Rasuwa,

Chitwan and Udayapur districts respectively. The study has mainly collected qualitative information about each disadvantaged groups from their schools and respective communities.

The required information was collected using interview, focus group discussion, survey and observation guidelines.

The source of information included district education office, school, head teacher, teachers, school management committee (SMC), parent teacher association (PTA), students, community and NGO. The schools and the communities were the primary source of information while FGD was extensively used for triangulation.

Major Findings

Educational status

The overall educational status of disadvantaged groups has changed over time but they still lag behind in several ways. The study found that enrolment of disadvantaged students was satisfactory, except in the *Chamar* community. However, retention was still challengingly persistent with the *Chamar*, *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities. In attendance and exam performance, *Tamang* and *Danuwar* students show/more or less a feature similar to that of the other students. However, in school attendance and final examination, *Chepangs*, *Chamars*, *Lohars* and *Tamatas* were outperformed by their counterparts.

The government seems to have been too late to execute the policy of teaching in the mother tongue. Instruction in the mother tongue had not been initiated in the sample schools. Among five ethnic groups, *Tamangs*, *Chepangs* and *Chamars* showed their willingness to learn in their own language. However, it has been difficult in the absence of textbooks.

Many disadvantaged families were unable to bear indirect costs of schooling. This was clearly reflected in the outlook of disadvantaged students. In an observation it was found that students of disadvantaged students were not well-dressed. Almost all of them did not have the school dress, and they came with plastic bags, wearing slippers. In schools of the *Chepang* community approximately 50% students came barefooted. This phenomenon was natural as their family income was too inadequate to meet the expenses (as indicated by household survey).

Provisions required

The welcome to school program has been successful to increase educational awareness among the disadvantaged groups. It has appeared effective to increase the enrollment of students. However, this program did not work as expected in schools of *Chamar* community.

The school environment of disadvantaged groups was not so good as required. These schools lacked one or more major physical facilities such as classroom, playground, sports items and toilets. This particularly contributed to the dropout of students.

Social discrimination was no more a hindrance to basic education. The study did not find any type of social discrimination in any school of the 5 ethnic groups, but it was reported that the discrimination still existed in the *Dalit* community.

Only 50 percent of the sample schools had employed teachers from their own communities. Students asked for teachers from their own community where there was no disadvantaged community teacher. The provision of disadvantaged community teachers was necessary to the key principle of child rights, namely that education should respond and be adapted to the interests of each child.

Supportive measures

In spite free education policy of the government, primary schooling was in fact not free. Schools raised annual charges and examination fees. Annual charges were levied to pay teachers hired by the schools. The practice was contrary to the free education policy. Likewise, textbooks were also not free in the true sense since students were asked to buy one or two extra textbooks themselves. It indicates that the right to free primary education had not been felt by parents.

The provision of scholarship had not been made for any of the 5 disadvantaged groups. It only benefited Dalits, 50 % girls and *Chepang* students. However, *Tamang* students said that scholarship was essential to them also. Likewise, the scholarship amount was not sufficient in relation to the indirect cost.

The local NGOs provided minimum support to the education of disadvantaged groups. NGOs were involved in all of the 5 sample disadvantaged groups but they were unable to create a positive impact, except on the *Danuwar* and *Chamar* communities.

Preventive Measures

Early marriage and child labour did not appear big challenges to the basic education of disadvantaged groups. Neither of them occurred in the disadvantaged groups. However, it still existed in the *Dalit* community. The practice of child labor was more pronounced than early marriage in this community.

Mechanism to ensure basic education

The roles of DDC and VDC in ensuring basic education were inadequate under the framework of decentralization. DDC simply allocated funds to schools without sticking to any particular norm. This mechanism benefited some schools but could not involve the schools of disadvantaged groups. Likewise, system of coordination had not been built between DDC and DEO. NGOs also launched their program independently, that do not benefit to the schooling of disadvantaged groups.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings given above the study makes the following recommendations:

- The enrolment and retention of *Chamar* students did not appear satisfactory. It requires special attention. To address this problem, the government should develop and implement an education guarantee program. A program of this nature should include both persuasive and supportive measures.
- In spite of the willingness on the part of children to learn in their own language, it has been difficult to instruct in the mother tongue in the absence of textbooks. In this regard government should respond quickly to the demand of textbooks by printing the textbooks on time.

- The government should continue the “welcome to school” program. However, flexibility is required for addressing the problems of different groups. In this regard, the government should authorize local stakeholders to launch the program.
- Schools of disadvantaged children need more classroom space, playground, toilet, sports materials and educational instruments. It requires collaborative efforts of the local government, community and school to improve the school physical environment.
- Provision of local disadvantaged community teachers is necessary to respond to the interests of the children. The government should formulate a policy according priority to local disadvantaged community teachers while recruiting.
- Schools impose annual and examination fees on the students. However, this was incompatible with the free education policy of the government. The government should eliminate all types of school related fees so as to make primary education truly free for all disadvantaged groups.
- Scholarships should be made available to specified disadvantaged groups. However, the criterion of economic status appears important in this issue as poorer households may require financial help. The government should also increase the amount of scholarship money to minimize the effect of indirect cost on disadvantaged students.
- The practice of child labor and early marriage should be discouraged to prolong the school retention of disadvantaged students. It requires a socio-economic empowerment program. The government and NGOs should formulate such a program and launch it effectively.
- Stakeholders' participation should be increased under the policy of decentralization. Local governments like DDC, VDC, and the Municipality should formulate education plans involving disadvantaged groups.

Acknowledgement

Government of Nepal has been making efforts for free and compulsory primary education since the beginning of the nineties particularly to address the schooling problem of disadvantaged groups. In this regard, the piloting of free and primary education and the introduction of Local Self Government Act, 1999 were some of the major steps taken by the government. The schooling problem of disadvantaged groups was kept in priority in EFA and SSR also. The main objective of these initiatives is to ensure education for all including the disadvantaged groups.

However, little is known about the educational status and about the provisions, measures and processes that are essential to ensure the rights of the disadvantaged groups to education. This requires a case-by-case study of the disadvantaged groups. The present research intended to analyze these issues, selecting 5 ethnic groups from 5 districts. There is ground to hope that the outcome of this study will assist in the planning and implementation of schooling programs for the disadvantaged groups.

This report has received a lot of support from various experts and organizations. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of them.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Context

With a view to ensure free and compulsory basic education several international and national commitments were made over the past few decades.

The right to primary education, free of charge, has been established by international instruments, notably Articles 13 and 14 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. Article 13 (2) (a) of the International Covenant recognizes the right of every child to primary education, free of charge. Article 14 of the International Covenant lays down state obligations for a detailed plan of action for progressive implementation of the right to compulsory education, free of charge. These obligations are similar to the political commitments made under the *Dakar Framework for Action* regarding the national action plan (UNESCO, 2008).

The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) has interpreted the right to free and compulsory primary education for all in its General Comment Nos. 11 (1999) and 13 (1999). General Comment No. 11 states that the requirement of free of charge primary education is unquestionable. Article 13(2)(a) states that the obligation to provide primary education for all is an immediate (para. 51) and core obligation (para. 57) of the States (*ibid*).

Article 13(2)(a) of the International Covenant states that primary education contains two distinctive features: A “compulsory” and “available free to all”. Compulsory schooling means that neither parents, nor guardians, nor even the State are entitled to treat as optional the decision as to whether the child should have access to primary education. In order to ensure universal primary school attendance, States Parties are obliged to set the minimum working age at no less than 15 years, (para. 41; see also Article 2(3) of ILO Convention No. 138 (1973) concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment) and to ensure that communities and families are not dependent on child labor (General Comment No. 13, para. 55).

Likewise, the requirements that primary education be available free for all has been interpreted by the CESCR as guaranteeing the availability of primary education without charge to the child, parent or guardian (General Comment No. 11, para. 7).

States Parties are thus obliged to eliminate all direct and indirect costs of schooling so as to make compulsory primary education truly free for all children. While direct costs such as school fees imposed by the government, local authorities or schools run counter to international obligations and must be eliminated, indirect costs such as expenses for schoolbooks, uniforms or travel to and from school may be permissible. Currently, the heaviest charge on a family’s budget comes from the indirect costs, notably for parents’ compulsory contributions (*ibid*).

An important question as regards the entitlement of children to receive free primary education is how to alleviate the effect of indirect costs on poorer households. States should adopt special measures to alleviate the negative effects of these costs on children from poorer households. Such measures include free provision of textbooks and school transport, as well as scholarships and other financial subsidies for financially disadvantaged children. To the extent that school uniforms are

compulsory, they must be provided free of charge to children from poorer households. The provision of free midday meals is the best practice of providing incentives for parents to send their children to school (*ibid*).

The action agenda of the third meeting of the High-Level Group on EFA was organized in New Delhi (India) in November 2003. Its Communiqué issued after the meeting contains, *inter alia*, commitments of the Ministers to “enacting national legislation to enforce children’s right to free and compulsory quality education, prevent and progressively eliminate child labor, and prohibit early marriage (UNESCO, 2008).

UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy (2002-2007) has stated that advancing the right to education as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is central to UNESCO’s mission. Central to this reflection is the concern to reach the un reached - children belonging to cultural and linguistic minorities, children from socially and economically marginalized groups, children in geographically remote areas (such as nomadic children) and in particular children from poor households, who are deprived of any means to bear the cost of primary education.

The Millennium Development Goals (2000) have also asserted that the goal of universal primary education will be achieved worldwide for every girl and boy by 2015 (World Bank, 2004).

Along the international line explained above, the Government of Nepal has made various commitments and efforts with a view to ensure free and compulsory primary education in the country.

The government has been talking about its obligation for free and compulsory primary education since the beginning of Nineties. For example, the concept of free and compulsory education was introduced in the Eighth Plan (1992-97). With regard to free and compulsory primary education this plan has stated two important aspects: its feasibility study and empowerment of local government by introducing decentralization act. Accordingly, the piloting of free and primary education was carried out in Banepa Municipality of Kavre district and Ratna Nagar Municipality of Chitwan district in the same plan period. As the piloting of free and compulsory education appeared to be a success, it was promoted to Chitwan and Ilam districts and also to one village development committee each of 40 districts during the Ninth Plan (1997-2002). The Tenth Plan (2002-07) also supported the policy of free and compulsory education with the provision of scholarship for girls and children from disadvantaged community (NPC, 2002).

One of the goals of Education for All (EFA) program is to ensure basic education of good quality for all children, particularly girls, *Dalits* disabled, and children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, through free and compulsory primary education by 2015.

The EFA National Plan of Action and the EFA core document have stated that one of the primary strategies of Government of Nepal is to provide education free of cost in order to increase access. As said in the documents, free education must not only mean waiving school fees, as access is hampered by both direct and indirect cost of education. Thus, in order to make basic education free and accessible, parents of deprived and disadvantaged children will be assisted in reducing direct and indirect cost of education, and will also be targeted for assistance in addressing the opportunity cost of schooling.

EFA has stated that the government of Nepal will make primary education compulsory in phases by working in collaboration with the local government bodies and the community-based organizations. Based on the willingness of the community and the status of enrolment, the government will take various measures including persuasive measures, supportive measures and legal provisions to ensure mandatory attendance of children in school. In a legal provision it has mentioned about the introduction of legal obligations for families to send their children within the age group of 5 to 10 years until they complete five years of schooling.

Reaffirming clear obligation to the child's right to receive quality basic education of up to grade 8, the core document of School Sector Reform (SSR) has stated that free education will be implemented beginning from 2009 academic year in grade 6 and gradually upward to grade 10. Free basic education will include cost free service for admission, textbooks, tuition, and examinations. Free basic education will apply to children of 5-13 years of age and it will be extended gradually up to the age of 15. Adequate arrangements will be made to ensure free education to children from economically disadvantaged community and children with disabilities.

The SSR Core document 2009-2015 has stated about compulsory education that local government will be encouraged to adopt a compulsory education policy over its jurisdiction in consultation with local stakeholders. As an incentive, the central government will provide additional support to local government and the later may develop strategies to provide additional support to encourage disadvantaged parents to send their children to school. These activities will help compensate for opportunity costs for sending children to school. From the date of enactment of the compulsory education law only children of age stipulated will be encouraged to enroll in schools (MOE, 2008).

With regard to illiteracy and free education, the budget speech of the Government of Nepal (2009-10) has stated that all Nepalese' easy access to education will be ensured a fundamental right. Mandatory education will be legally provisioned. Illiteracy eradication program will be conducted to literate all Nepalese within two years. Education will be made qualitative, skill-oriented and vocation-oriented. All the Nepalese will get opportunity to complete their primary education in their mother tongue. Free education will be provided up-to grade 10 gradually (MOF, 2009).

Rationale

Despite these various efforts explained above, the participation of school age children in the first cycle of education has not been satisfactory. The net enrollment rate (NER) at primary level is 91.1 percent in the school year 2008-09. It has increased by more than one percent from the last school year. But the growth of NER is slower than the respective age- group's population. It has been estimated that approximately three hundred forty eight thousand children are still out of primary school in the country (DOE, 2007). It is apparent that access of the out of school children is one challenge and ensuring basic education of up to Grade 8 for all children is another. The problem of access and retention is primarily linked with disadvantaged groups in spite of several policy and programs launched in their favor.

The disadvantaged groups as defined in School Sector Reform Core Document involve girls, women, *Dalits*, (centrally defined 23 caste groups)¹ ethnic minorities, *Madhesis*, disabled persons, poor and marginalized population², the conflict-affected and so on (MOES, 2008). To bring them into formal schooling and ensure basic education for them is quite a big challenge since the government has already introduced several measures, such as, free textbooks, scholarship program for *Dalits*, 50 percent girls and disabled, and school improvement and expansion program (in areas with low enrolment), school feeding program and alternative schooling program (MOES,2003).

There are very few studies that have examined the educational problems of disadvantaged groups from the prospective of free and compulsory basic education. However, these studies have not covered the relevant areas that include analysis of educational status, provision required, and measures and processes that are essential to ensure rights to education of the disadvantaged groups. Thus, little is known about the effectiveness of the policies, programs and legal measures so far introduced in favor of the disadvantaged groups. Finally, it can be argued that the efforts made in favor of free and compulsory program has appeared inadequate in their inquiry process and vague in their implementation procedure.

This study thus originated from a desire to know the educational status and identify the provisions required for educating children from the disadvantaged groups. The study will also identify the measures and processes of how to ensure free and compulsory basic education for the disadvantaged groups in the context for Education for All.

Research Questions

The study fought to answer the following research questions.

- What is the existing educational status of children of the disadvantaged groups?
- What provisions are required for educating children from the disadvantaged groups?
- What preventing measures should be undertaken to ensure educational rights of the disadvantaged groups?

¹ As mentioned by Department of Education (2003), *Dalits* include **Lohar**, *Sunar*, *Kami*, *Damai*, *Sarki*, *Badi*, *Gaine*, *Kasai*, *Kusle*, *Kuche*, *Chyame*, *Pode*, **Chamar**, *Dhobi*, *Paswan*(*Dusadh*), *Tatma*, *Dom*, *Bantar*, *Khatwe*, *Mushar*, *Santhal*, *Satar*, *Halkhor* caste groups.

² The Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NFIN) has categorized the ethnic groups *Sunuwar*, *Tharu*, **Tamang**, *Bhujel*, *Kumal*, *Rajbangsi*, *Gangaai*, *Dhimal*, *Bhote*, *Darai*, *Tajpuria*, *pahari*, *Topkegola*, *Dolpo*, *Fri*, *Mugal*, *Larke*, *Lohpa*, *Dura*, *Walung* as marginalized groups and the ethnic groups *Majhi*, *Siyar*, *Shingsha*, *Thudam*, *Dhanuk*, **Chepang**, *Santhal*, *Jhagad*, *Thami*, *Bote* **Danuwar**, *Baramu* as highly marginalized groups. (NFIN, 2008)

- How can basic/ free/ compulsory/ right based education for disadvantaged groups be ensured?

Organization of the Study

This report has been divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces context, rationale and key research questions. Chapter 2 presents a review of research literature on free and compulsory basic education with reference to the disadvantaged groups. Chapter 3 presents the study design adopted for the study. Chapter 4 presents and analyzes the field findings on status, requirements, measures and mechanisms to ensure basic education for the disadvantaged groups, chiefly following the research questions. Chapter 5 presents the major findings of the study. Finally, chapter 6 presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

This chapter deals with review of literature that provides the fundamental base for how to ensure free and basic compulsory education for disadvantaged groups in the context for Education for All. The review consists of four parts.

The first part of review presents the international framework on the subject of free and compulsory primary education with special reference to disadvantaged groups. It basically provides the explanation of the 4-A Scheme of Tomasevski and also introduces UNESCO's *Convention on the right to primary education, free of charge, for all*. The second part of review presents a national framework on how to ensure free and compulsory primary education in Nepal. This part highlights the objectives, policies, strategies and programs as mentioned in the periodical plan of action/ core document of Education for All program, school sector reform, and national development plan. Likewise, it also gives the relevant statements on free and compulsory education program as mentioned in the national constitution, local self-government act and school grants operational guidelines. The third part presents the review of the findings and conclusions derived from related studies. This part covers topics like free and compulsory primary education including the right based education. Finally, the fourth part of the review presents the reflection on previous FRP studies in the area of free and compulsory primary education and its linkage to the present study.

International Framework to Ensure Free and Compulsory Primary Education

Tomasevski (2004) has describes the 4-A Scheme that explains government's human rights obligations to make education *available, accessible, acceptable* and *adaptable*. The word *available* means ensuring free and compulsory education for all children and *accessibility* refers to the elimination of discrimination as international human rights law mandates. Likewise, the meaning of *acceptability* is linked with the quality of education, and that of *adaptability* to the key principle of child rights, namely that education should respond and adapt to the best interests of each child (UNESCO, 2004).

The norm for the right to primary education, free of charge, is established by international instruments, notably Article 4 (a) of UNESCO's *Convention against Discrimination in Education*, and Articles 13 and 14 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. Article 13 (2) a of the international covenant accepts clearly the right of every one to primary education, free of charge. Likewise, Article 14 lays down State obligations for a detailed plan of action for the progressive implementation of the right to compulsory education, free of charge, for all. These obligations are similar to the political commitments made under the *Dakar Framework for action* regarding the national action plan of EFA (UNESCO, 2008).

In the plan of action for primary education, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) has interpreted the right to compulsory primary education, free of charge, for all members in its General Comment No. 11 (1999) as well as No. 13 (1999). The General Comment No11 states that the nature of this requirement for primary education free of charge is unquestionable. Article 13(2) (a) General Comment No. 13 states that the obligation

to provide primary education for all is an immediate (para. 51) and core obligation (para. 57) of these States (*ibid*).

Article 13(2) (a) of the International covenant has stated that primary education has two distinctive features: “compulsory” and “available free to all”. Compulsory schooling means that neither parents, nor guardians, nor the State are entitled to treat as optional the decision as to whether the child should have access to primary education. In order to ensure universal primary school attendance, States Parties are obliged to set the minimum working age at no less than 15 years, (para. 41; see also Article 2(3) of ILO Convention No. 138 (1973) concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment) and to ensure that communities and families are not dependent on child labor (General Comment No. 13, para. 55).

CESCR has interpreted the requirement that primary education be available free for all. It has clearly stated that States Parties must ensure the availability of primary education, without charge to the child, parents or guardians (General Comment No. 11, para. 7).

To make compulsory primary education truly free for all children, States Parties are thus obliged to eliminate all direct and indirect costs of schooling. Direct costs such as school fees imposed by the government, local authorities or schools run counter to the international obligations and must be eliminated. However, the indirect costs such as expenses for schoolbooks, uniforms or travel to and from school may be permissible but subject to the examination. Currently, the heaviest charge on a family’s budget is from the indirect costs, notably for parents’ compulsory contributions (*ibid*).

The question how to alleviate the effect of indirect costs on poorer households is difficult to settle. States should adopt special measures to alleviate the negative effects of indirect costs on children from poorer households. Such measures include the free provision of textbooks and school transport, as well as scholarships and other financial subsidies for financially disadvantaged children. If the school uniforms are compulsory, they must be provided free of charge to children from poorer households. The free provision of midday meals is the best practice in providing incentives for parents to send their children to school (*ibid*).

The action agenda of the third meeting of the High-Level Group on EFA organized in New Delhi (India) has made commitments to “enacting national legislation to enforce children’s right to free and compulsory quality education, prevent and progressively eliminate child labor, and prohibit early marriage (UNESCO, 2008).

Following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the Medium-Term Strategy of UNESCO (2002-2007) has stated that advancing the right to education is central to UNESCO’s mission. Central to this reflection is the concern to reach the unreached children belonging to cultural and linguistic minorities, children from socially and economically marginalized groups, children in geographically remote areas (such as nomadic children) and, in particular, children from poor households are deprived of any means to bear the cost of primary education.

National Framework to Ensure Free and Compulsory Primary Education

The Eighth Plan (1992-97) has mentioned that the feasibility of introducing compulsory primary education will be studied. In the event of free and compulsory primary education being found to be feasible, local bodies (VDC / Municipality) will

be provided with necessary authority to implement the free and compulsory education plan. This plan has stated that compulsory primary education schemes may be launched on pilot basis by the local bodies with their own initiative and on the basis of their own demand (NPC, 1992).

The Ninth Plan (1992-97) had two objectives related to free and compulsory education: (a) To make primary education easily accessible to people and conduct program for making primary education gradually compulsory and (b) To provide educational opportunity to disabled backward ethnic tribes and deprived sections of people living in remote areas and bring them into the national mainstream. The plan has stated that in the process of making the existing free primary education program compulsory, scholarship will be provided to children of backward ethnic tribes and oppressed classes (NPC, 1997).

The policies and action plan of the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) has outlined that in correspondence with the declared policy and international commitment of providing education for all by 2015 AD, the Government of Nepal will gradually implement the program of compulsory primary education and improve institutional, managerial and physical infrastructure accordingly. To achieve this goal, the government will encourage the programs of teaching in the mother tongues to increase participation of linguistic groups of different ethnic communities in education and take steps to gradually make free primary education compulsory. The government will arrange scholarship for the children of backward communities (lowest castes or *Dalits*, indigenous groups, women, persons with disability and children of economically backward communities) with priority while doing so (NPC, 2002).

To make basic level education free, easily accessible and compulsory in a gradual way, the Three year Interim Plan (2007/08-2009/10) has laid emphasis on establishing a network, from the center to the local level, to distribute scholarship, lunch and edible oil to the targeted deprived community. This plan for the sake of providing education in the mother tongue has stated that special attention will be given to fill in the posts of the teachers from *Dalit, Madhesi, Adibasi Janajati* groups (NPC, 2008).

One of the goals of Education for All (EFA) is to ensure basic education of good quality for all children, particularly girls, *Dalits*, disabled and children in difficult circumstances and for those belonging to ethnic minorities, through free and compulsory primary education in Nepal by 2015.

The EFA National Plan of Action and the EFA core document have stated that one of the primary strategies of government of Nepal is to provide education, free of cost, to increase access. As urged in the documents, free education must not only mean waiving school fees for access is hampered by both direct and indirect cost of education. Thus, in order to make basic education free and accessible, parents of deprived and disadvantaged children will be assisted to reduce direct and indirect cost of education, and will also be targeted for assistance in addressing the opportunity cost of schooling.

EFA has stated that the government of Nepal will make primary education compulsory in phases in collaboration with the local government bodies and the community-based organizations. Based on the willingness of the community and the status of enrolment, the government will take various measures including persuasive measures, supportive measures and legal provisions to ensure mandatory attendance of children in school. Under legal provision it has mentioned about the introduction

of legal obligations for families to send and keep their children, to school who are in the age group of 5 to 10, to school until they complete five years of schooling.

MOES (2007) has formulated the Vulnerable Communities Development Plan (VCDP) to address social exclusion in primary education of vulnerable people for the Nepal Education for All, 2004-2009 Program (NEFAP) as mentioned in the EFA Core Document 2003. This study concludes that a number of groups—specifically girls, indigenous peoples and occupational castes—continued to be excluded from mainstream of primary education regardless of the promise of the program set out by EFA core document. To mainstream these groups, the Plan indicates the need of State's commitment to free primary education and suggests the employment of bilingual women teachers from the local communities, and to provide incentives for increasing Dalits' and girls' attendance (MOES, 2007).

The core document of School Sector Reform (SSR) has stated that free education will be implemented beginning from the 2009 academic year in grade 6 and gradually upward to grade 10. It has clearly mentioned that it is the child's right to receive quality basic education of up to Grade 8, and that free basic education will include cost-free service for admission, textbooks, tuition, and examinations. Free basic education will apply to children between 5-13 years of age and it will be extended gradually up to age of 15. Adequate arrangements will be made to ensure free education to children from economically disadvantaged communities and children with disabilities.

The SSR document has stated that local government will be encouraged to adopt a compulsory education policy in their jurisdiction in consultation with the local stakeholders. As an incentive, central government will provide additional support to the local government and the local government may develop strategies to provide additional support to encourage disadvantaged parents to send their children to school. These activities will help to compensate for the opportunity costs involved in sending children to school. From the date of the enactment of the compulsory education law only children of correct age will be encouraged to enroll in schools (MOE, 2008).

The Local Self-Governance Act, 1999, has empowered VDC/Municipality to supervise and manage the schools within their respective areas, assist in providing primary level education in the mother tongue, arrange for providing scholarships to the students of oppressed ethnic communities that are extremely backward on economic point of view (MOLJ, 1999).

The Interim Constitution, 2007, had affirmed that every citizen should have the right to free education from the state up to the secondary level as provided in the law (IC, 2007).

With the implementation of the School Grants Operational Guidelines (SGOG) the Department of Education has annually been distributing scholarships to 50 % of girls, and *Dalits* with an aim to ensure the enrolment of girls and disadvantaged children at the primary level. These students receive Rs 350 per annum in two installments, one on Jestha 4 and the other on Falgun 7, twice a year. SGOG has also made a provision of scholarship for the disabled of various categories as follows: 'A' category -Rs 10000 for ten months at the rate of Rs 1000 per month; 'B' category-Rs 5000 for ten months at the rate of Rs 500 per month; 'C' category-Rs 3000 for ten months at the rate

of Rs 300 per month; 'D' category-Rs 500 for ten months at the rate of Rs 50 per month (DOE, 2006).

The budget speech of fiscal year 2008-09 has proclaimed that primary education shall be made compulsory and free in pursuance of the State's declared policy of making education a fundamental right of all and gradually making secondary education free. The school launch program shall gradually be extended throughout the nation to attract all to primary education. Beginning from this fiscal year, school education up to class 8 shall be made free and the fee for classes 9 and 10 shall be gradually reduced to make them free. Free education opportunities shall be provided to all public school students of Karnali Zone and such a privilege shall extend up to class 12 in the public school for all *Dalit* students across the nation (MOF, 2008).

The government has been final preparing to launch a two-tier scheme to tackle the low enrolment and high drop-out rates in schools of 21 districts. The educational guarantee scheme (EGS) is set for launch in the beginning of the new academic session.

The EGS targets school children are generally from backward marginalized and poor communities particularly those out of school between 6 and 10 years of age. The government, with the slogan "The expectation of New Nepal is free, quality and inclusive education" aims to encourage children of school going age to enroll in school, where EGS is to guarantee completion of the primary level education.

The scheme is expected to contribute to the realization of the Millennium Development Goal and the national target to raise school enrollment to 100 percent from the current 91.9 percent and reduce the drop-out rate to zero by the year 2015.

An estimated 266,000 children between 5 to 10 years age group are out of school according to the Ministry of Education. This comprises 8 percent of the total school going children population. The average dropout rate in class 1 is quite alarming with six students staying back from school every year.

The government has allocated Rs 24 million for EGS in 21 districts and Rs 25,000 for each school as an incentive for the boost-up of the campaign for enrolment in all 75 districts.

The government has so far decided to distribute necessary school accessories, namely textbooks and copies, uniform, day meal, scholarship and others to increase enrolment. DEO will fix a program to ensure that more children enroll and complete their primary education.

The 21 districts targeted are: Solukhumbu, Sunsari, Sindhuplachowk, Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Siraha, Saptari, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Dhanusa, Makawanpur, Kapilbastu, Rupandehi, Manag, Mustang, Bardiyaya, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Rolpa and Rukum (www.ekantipur.com).

Related Studies

Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) conducted a study on Free and Compulsory Primary Education in the Context of Education for All (2004) with the objectives to document the past compulsory primary education (CPE) experiences, analyze how the initiatives were conceived, planned, executed and monitored, and assess the impact of these initiatives in order to draw lessons for the future EFA plan. This was a comparative case study carried out in the Banepa

Municipality of the Kavre district and in the Ratna Nagar Municipality of the Chitwan district. The findings of the study have indicated that the program of Banepa was highly successful while Ratna Nagar program could not achieve much, though both of them had received equal support from the center. The study has concluded that the program was successful in Banepa because it got necessary program prerequisites such as eradication of illiteracy with the help of the community learning center (CLC), and ran advocacy campaigns in partnership with local level stakeholders. The other causes that helped Banepa were strong commitment at the local level to program implementation and good attention to program monitoring (CERID, 2004).

Another study that appears relevant was a study of Rights-Based Education and Structural Reforms in Basic and Primary Education conducted by CERID in 2007. This study had found that in spite of efforts such as scholarship, textbooks and opening of the early childhood center, the existing situation did not appear satisfactory for providing rights-based education to children as per their needs and demands.

The overall findings of the study indicated that the policies and programs were neither sufficient nor efficient for providing rights-based education. There was a need to classify the responsibilities of the stakeholders. The government has to manage regular sources of income to run schools so that rights-based education could be imparted to children representing each of the section of the Nepali society (CERID,20007).

Reflection on Previous FRP Studies

Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) had undertaken two studies in the area of free and compulsory primary education and rights-based education in 2004 and 2007 respectively. The first study had documented the experiences of two free and compulsory primary education programs to draw lessons for future education for all programs. This study had given emphasis to programs rather than students and it had evaluated the achievement of programs in terms of all types of students. Thus, this study presented a general case without focusing on particular groups. Likewise, the second study highlighted the issues of deprived communities from the prospective of right-based education. In terms of title it appears that the present study is related to earlier FRP studies because all of these are related to non-schooling and retention problems of free basic primary education. However, it is a case by case study of five disadvantaged groups intended to highlight education related issues such as, educational status, provisions required, preventing measures and mechanism to ensure free and compulsory education for them. Thus, the present study is different from the earlier studies in terms of scope and objectives.

CHAPTER III

Study Design

This chapter presents the study design used for the study. The key approach of this study was a case-by-case study of the sampled disadvantaged groups because the focus of this study was to gain a deeper understanding about how to ensure free and compulsory basic education for them. This study is based on primary data collected through an extensive field work carried out in 5 districts. From each district, the study has collected qualitative information of one disadvantaged group from their schools and respective communities. The study has also gathered quantitative information to cover areas, such as economic status, including the nature and scale of direct and indirect cost of education of the sample disadvantaged groups.

Study Framework

The framework of this study is based on the review of national and international literature presented in the preceding chapter. This study has identified three components as essential measures to ensure the basic compulsory education for the disadvantaged groups.

- Persuasive measures
- Supportive measures
- Legal measures

This study assumes that persuasive measures, such as admission campaign, awareness program, easy schooling access, school environment, inclusive behavior, and teacher from disadvantaged groups, are essential for enrolling and retaining the disadvantaged students in school.

The study assumes that the government should provide supportive measures, such as textbooks, scholarship, school dress, day meal etc., to meet the indirect cost of poorer households. On the other hand, school should not charge annual fee, examination fee and tuition fee on the students.

Social behaviors and cultures are some of the factors which hinder the process of enrolling and retaining children from the disadvantaged groups. These systems are explicitly and implicitly associated with early marriage, child labor, discrimination and large family size. The study assumes that the higher the incidence of such activities, the larger will be the problem of enrollment and retention of the disadvantaged children. The ultimate solution to these problems is the introduction of legal measures.

For compulsory education, these three measures should go simultaneously/consecutively depending upon the nature of disadvantaged groups. If after these measures the goal of universal basic education is not achieved, then the state should introduce legal measures to make primary education compulsory.

Population and Sample

To select five disadvantaged groups the study has followed the definitions of the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) of the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) of Nepal. SSRP was followed to find out who are the disadvantaged groups in Nepal. SSRP has stated

that disadvantaged groups involve girls, women, *Dalits*, ethnic minorities, *Madhesis*, people with disability, poor and marginalized population, conflict affected people and so on (MOES, 2008). From among these disadvantaged groups, *Dalits* and marginalized population were identified as sample populations for this study on the suggestion of the FRP advisory committee.

The list of *Dalits* was prepared looking through the School Level Educational Statistics, Form 2004 of the Department of Education brought out to collect school level education statistics of Nepal. This statistical form states that *Dalits* refers to 23 castes: *Lohar*, *Sunar*, *Kami*, *Damai*, *Sarki*, *Badi*, *Gaine*, *Kasai*, *Kusle*, *Kuche*, *Chyame*, *Pode*, *Chamar*, *Dhobi*, *Paswan (Dusadh)*, *Tatma*, *Dom*, *Bantar*, *Khatwe*, *Mushar*, *Santhal*, *Satar*, *Halkhor*.

From *Dalits*, the ethnic groups *Lohar* and *Chamar* were selected as the sample for the study. The origin of *Lohar* is the Hill *Dalit* and of *Chamar* the Terai *Dalit*. The reason for their selection was that among *Dalits* these ethnic groups were higher in terms of percentage in the population of Nepal. Likewise, their literacy percentage was also below the national average. To study their cases Dadeldhura and Kapilbastu were selected, as their number was found higher in these districts.

To select the ethnic groups from among the marginalized groups, the caste categories defined by The Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), was followed. The list of caste categories are given in Annex 1.

From the caste categories, *Tamang* was selected from marginalized groups and *Chepang* and *Danuwar* from the highly marginalized groups. The ethnic group *Tamang* comes after *Magar* and *Tharu* in terms of population but its literacy rate is the lowest in these three groups. Likewise, the reason for the selection of *Chepang* and *Danuwar* was that their literacy rate was lower in the highly marginalized groups in spite of their higher percentage in the national population.

To study the case of *Chepang* and *Tamang*, the districts Chitwan and Rasuwa were selected since their population was found higher in these districts. But the *Danuwar* ethnic group was selected from Udayapur district which comes after Sindhuli in terms of its population, chiefly to avoid sampling repetition from the Central Development Region. This criterion permitted the inclusion of one district from the Eastern Development Region. However, after following this criterion for these disadvantaged groups the study could not include any other district to represent Mid-Western Region.

The ethnic sample groups and districts are given below.

Table 3.1

Sample Caste by District, Region, Ecological Zone and Caste Categories

S No	District	Development Region/ Ecological Zone	Sample caste	Caste Categories
1	Kapilbastu	Western /Terai	<i>Chamar</i>	<i>Dalit</i>
2	Rasuwa	Central/ Mountain	<i>Tamang</i>	Marginalized
3	Chitwan	Central/ Terai	Praja	Highly Marginalized
4	Udayapur	Eastern/Hill	<i>Danuwar</i>	Highly Marginalized
5	Dadeldhura	Far western/Hill	<i>Lohar</i>	<i>Dalit</i>

Procedure

Two schools and their respective communities were selected from each of the five districts presented in Table 3.1. The selection of school was done in a consultation meeting at the District Education Office on the basis of the judgment of student population: the school where the student population of sample ethnic group was higher and the school where they were mixed with other ethnic groups. If there were several similar schools, the schools that were comparatively better in terms of primary level enrolment and retention were eliminated. The selection of the mixed pocket was guided with the expectation that there might be discriminatory behavior against the sample disadvantaged groups and that it might affect such things as attendance and results of disadvantaged students. In the sampling, school level adjustment was also done; for example, if the primary school was selected from a mixed community, the lower secondary or secondary school was preferred from the community with a single ethnic group.

In each of the 5 districts a group discussion in presence of District Education Officer, section officer, school supervisors and resource persons was organized to decide on the sample schools for disadvantaged groups. The selection criterion and selected schools are as follows.

The group discussion of Rasuwa suggested that the study should be carried out in Saraswoti Primary School of Dhunche Village Development Committee and Dhunge Lower Secondary School of Lahare Pouwa Village Development Committee and their respective communities. Saraswoti Primary School was selected because it had a higher student population from the Tamang ethnic group. Dhunge Lower Secondary School was selected to represent a mixed settlement. Saraswoti Primary School and Dhunge Lower Secondary were 9 and 25 Km far respectively from the district headquarter.

In the Chitwan district group discussion concluded with a suggestion to carry out field work in Chaturmukhi Secondary School and Kalika Primary School and their respective communities based on these criteria. First, the Kalika Primary School was located at Sidhi VDC with a 90% *Chepang* population. Second, Chaturmukhi Secondary School was situated in Shaktikhor VDC with a school of mixed settlement close to Sidhi VDC. Finally, government as well as NGOs had launched several programs such as hostel, scholarship etc. to assist the *Chepang* students in these areas. These schools were around 25 km. far from the district head quarter, Bharatpur.

In Udayapur a group discussion revealed that the *Danuwar*s had settled in Chuhade, Katari, Tribeni, Risku and Rajbash in the district. As the *Danuwar* student population was higher in Rajabash, a consensus was made to visit Ambeber Janata Higher Secondary School and Madan-Asrit Primary School and their respective communities. The former represented the school of mixed settlement and the later the school of almost *Danuwar* ethnic groups only. These schools were situated in Ward 16 of Trijuga Municipality, 6 km. far from the district head quarter, Gaighat

In Kapilbastu, it was revealed in a group discussion that the settlement of *Chamars* was not concentrated in a particular location but was scattered in different locations of the districts. This led to the selection of schools where the Chamar student population was higher. As such, the discussion reached a consensus to choose Moti Bhari Primary School and of Labani VDC situated in the sub-urban area of this district and Basu Dev Janata Secondary School of Rangapur VDC situated just 1

Km from the Indian boarder. The communities of these schools were also included in the study.

In Dadeldhura, the discussion revealed that the settlements of the *Dalits* were scattered in different locations of the district. Here the *Dalits* included *Lohar*, *Tamata Bhool*, and *Chunara*, and the student population of *Lohars* and *Tamatas* was higher in the district. Since it appeared difficult to find two schools for *Lohar* ethnic groups, one school of *Lohar* was replaced by *Tamata*. Thus, both the *Lohars* and the *Tamatas* were included in the study. As population of *Lohar* was higher in Navadurga VDC, the discussion reached a consensus to choose Mastabaija Nath Lower Secondary School and its community from this VDC. It was 30 kilometers far from the district headquarter. Likewise, Lateswor Lower Secondary School and its community were chosen to represent the higher student population of *Tamata*. It was schools of the district headquarter located at Amargadhi Municipality-1.

At the outset, the district education offices were consulted to decide on the sample schools in each of the five districts. An informal meeting was organized in these offices in the presence of the district education officers. This meeting was participated in by 4-6 officials that included section officers, resource persons and school supervisors of the district education office. The research team explained the purpose of their visit and asked the participants to suggest the sample schools. Once the sample school was decided, the team visited schools and respective communities. In schools, the head teacher, teachers and SMC members were consulted. In the communities, local leaders and household head were consulted.

After completing the field work the team came back to the respective district education offices. Here a three-hour workshop was organized inviting participants even from District Development Committee and NGOs. Approximately 10 persons participated in each of the seminars in which discussions were made on field findings and on the issue of free and compulsory primary education.

In each field activity, the research team received anticipated help from the respondents.

Study Tools and Respondents

The required information was collected using guidelines, focus group discussion guidelines, survey guidelines and observation guidelines. These guidelines were developed based on the advice and suggestions of resource persons and were presented thereafter in the FRP consultative meetings. They were improved following the comments made in the meetings.

Necessary information was collected from District Education Offices, schools, head teachers, teachers, school management committee members, parent-teacher organizations, students, communities, and NGOs. The schools and the communities were the primary source of information while FGD was extensively used for triangulation. The researcher and associate researchers themselves organized group discussions, interviews and school surveys. As many 9 FGDs were conducted in each of the five districts to increase the reliability of the field work. Table 3.2 gives the types of study tools and kinds of respondents.

Table 3.2

Study Tools and Respondents

S.N.	Institutions	Frequency in each districts	No. of respondents	No. of districts	Total participation
Workshop					
1	DEO	1	10	5	50
	Total	1	10	5	50
Focus Group Discussion					
2	School (HT,T)	2	8	5	80
3	SMC/PTA	2	8	5	80
4	Students	2	8	5	80
5	Community	2	8	5	80
6	CBO/NGO/INGO Representatives	1	8	5	40
	Total	9	8	5	360
Interview					
7	DEO	1	1	5	5
8	HT	2	2	5	10
9	SMC Chairperson	2	2	5	10
	Total	5	5	5	25
School survey and observation					
10	School	2		5	10
	Total	2		5	10

The information/data for the study was gathered from other sources as well.

The act of creating favorable environment for free and compulsory basic education relies heavily on the policy of the government. Thus, one major task of this study was to make a thorough review of the education policy, Act and Regulations governing free and compulsory basic education. Available literature that explained on how to ensure free and basic education for disadvantaged groups was reviewed. Research works conducted in Nepal on this issue were reviewed. The literature that focuses on the compulsory/ basic education of disadvantaged groups in other places was also reviewed.

Finally, the collected information was presented and analyzed to deduce findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Scope of the Study

This is a quantitative study seeking to gain an understanding of how to ensure free and compulsory basic education for disadvantaged groups. The sample size of this study included 5 ethnic groups, 10 schools and 10 respective communities. The study has collected the information and data from 3 *Janajati* and 2 *Dalit* groups. The information and data were collected covering wide areas of free and basic education from the sample groups. The field findings were crosschecked for the school and the community. The field findings were disseminated at the district level workshop of each district, to verify the findings of the field work. This way, a rigorous process was completed during the course of the field work with an intention to increase its reliability. Thus, the findings of the study may be useful to *Janajati* and *Dalit* groups who are living in similar geographical settings. However, these findings may not represent all *Janajati* and *Dalit* groups living in the country.

CHAPTER IV

Data Presentation and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the data related to free and compulsory basic education for the sample disadvantaged groups. It first presents the educational status of the children of *Tamang, Chepang, Danuwar, Chamar, and, Lohar and Tamata* ethnic groups. The aim here is to find out the current educational status of these disadvantaged children. Second, the chapter makes an in-depth examination of provisions required for educating these disadvantaged children. To this end, the study has also presented the nature and magnitude of the direct cost of schooling and present economic situation of these groups in order to ascertain the provisions required for now and the future. Third, it presents preventive measures to ensure the right to education for disadvantaged groups. Finally, an attempt has been made to explain the mechanism to ensure basic education for them.

Educational Status of Disadvantaged Groups

As per the research questions the information regarding the education status of children of five disadvantaged ethnic groups was collected from each of the five districts as shown in Table 3.1. This information, which covered such areas as access, dropout, and instruction in the mother tongue, school attendance and annual examination results of class 5, were collected from head teachers, teachers, parents, SMC members and students of sample schools. The findings regarding each ethnic group are presented below.

Tamangs

Rasuwa was selected to study the case of Tamang ethnic groups. According to the census data of 2001, Tamangs constituted 63.75 of the total population of this district. This ethnic group stands out first in the total population of the district. At national level, the percentage share of Tamang population is 5.64 with a 45.04 percent literacy rate. Saraswoti Primary School and its community Thade and Dhunge Lower Secondary School and its community Dhunge were selected for the study.

Saraswoti Primary School was approximately 9 Km far from the district headquarter. Ward number 2 and 3 of Dhunche Village Development Committee were the catchments of this school. The school survey indicated that it had enrolled 93 students from Tamang, 7 from Lohar and 4 from Newar ethnic castes in the academic year 2065. The four teachers, two of them female, were from the Tamang ethnic group.

Dhunge Lower Secondary School was approximately 27 Km far from the district head- quarter. Ward numbers 4, 5, 7, 8 of Laharepauwa Village Development Committee were the catchment areas of this school. The school survey indicated that it had enrolled 109 students from Tamang, Newar, Brahmin and Chhetri ethnic castes in the academic year 2065. This figure also included 5 Dalits and 4 disabled students. The survey indicated that the ethnic composition that prevailed in the community was completely represented in the school's enrolment. Two out of three students were from the Tamang ethnic group. The catchment areas had a settlement of approximately 1200 people. This school was taught by 7 teachers, one of them female (for ECD).

Saraswoti Primary School and Dhunge Lower Secondary School were located at half an hour's distance of the Thade and the Dhunge communities. In separate group discussions of head teachers, teachers, parents and community member it was reported that there was no non-schooling case in either community. The head teacher and teachers of Saraswoti Primary School claimed that they did not have any drop-out case either. However, Dhunge Lower Secondary School reported two drop-outs from class 5 and 2 dropout from below class 5. These droppers were over-aged students who either left school to get married (girls of class 5 dropped after marriage) or to engage in earning. One case of dropout was a 13 year old boy. Please read the Box below.

Box 4.1

Overage : Cause of Dropout (Primary Level)

Lalu Tamang (Sanu Kancha), 13, the permanent dweller of Dhunge, Laharepauwa VDC, lived with his father, mother and his 7 year old brother. As with others, agriculture was the main occupation of his family. The family also owned a buffalo and a cow.

As the income from the farm was not sufficient for the family of 4 members, Lulu's father started a water mill for grinding grain into flour near his village. This venture gave good income for the family. The parents worked in the farm and water mill and the siblings went to Dhunge Lower secondary school at grade 2 and 1, only 15 minute away from their home. However, Lulu dropped out when he was in grade 2. He loitered in the village, doing nothing for 6 months. Then, he encountered his cousin Sirjan. Sirjan advised him to engage in a work rather than stay home idling. He told Lulu to go with him to Kalikasthan to work in a restaurant. Lulu accepted. Lulu had been working in Nawadurga Bhojnalaya and Lodge as a helper for one and a half year. He was drawing Rs. 700 as salary with free lodging and food. He said that he was satisfied with his work and that he was planning to work as Khalashi (helper) to a truck driver in the near future since his only ambition was to be a driver. He said that he was not interested in study and the only reason behind his dropout from the school was 'no interest' in the study. But he was aware of the importance of education. He said he would ask his younger brother to continue his study.

In the above case, Lulu was aware of education and its advantages. He was also well acquainted with the free education system. A family need not bear any direct cost except the examination fee. He said he neither had any threat from his parents and teachers nor did he feel any kind of discrimination from his friends. His family did not have any problem about paying for the education of their two children. For Lulu, everything was all conducive for schooling. Even so, he was out of school for he was an overage students doing grade 2.

However, the dropout after primary graduation was approximately 25 % in the Thade community as revealed in the discussion. For enrolment at grade 6, the students had to go to Rasuwa Secondary School located at Dhunche, the headquarter of the Rasuwa district. This school was approximately 9 Km far from this settlement. Since this school was so far, the parents could not persuade their children unless they promised them good jackets, shoes and money for day meal and transport expenses, said the parents. In this case parents had to spend a lot for winter dress, shoes, bus fare and day meal. According to the parents, these costs would not have incurred if the school was in their own community. For example, the *Barkhu* (local winter coat) could be used instead of the winter jacket; slippers instead of shoes. On the average,

the day meal and transport expenses came as high as to Rs 30 a day. This amount was for one-way trek to school. The general practice was that students went on foot in the morning but travelled by bus to come home. The home schooling distance was the major cause of drop-out which made the indirect cost higher for the poorer parents.

Dhunge Lower Secondary School used the Nepali language as the medium of instruction. But Saraswoti Primary School started to use the *Tamang* language in 2065. The head teacher/ teachers claimed that two reference books written in *Tamang* were taught at grades 4 and 5. They said that students of grades 1, 2, 3 were mostly used the *Tamang* language. The head teacher said that the school was planning to set exam questions in *Tamang*, except for English and Nepali, effective from 2066. One feature of Saraswoti Primary School was that even the students from *Lohar* and *Shrestha* ethnic groups also used *Tamang* at school.

It was revealed in district work shop that there was a high demand for instruction in the mother tongue in this district. Till date, two schools have initiated the use of (two) reference books written in the mother tongue and 10 schools are preparing to begin from 2066.

This study also collected the information on school attendance and examination of class 5 students of the year 2065. The attendance records of Jestha and Falgun, 2065 indicated that the school attendance of *Tamang* students was satisfactory in both the schools. In Falgun both the schools opened 23 days and the average attendance was 21 days. In Jestha these school opened 17 days indicating with an average attendance of 16 days. These figures indicate that *Tamang* as well as other students were regular in the schools.

Tamangs were ahead of other students even in the final examination. The annual result of class 5 for the year 2065 indicated that the *Tamang* children came among the top 5 in Saraswoti Primary School and 4 were *Tamang* among the best of 5 in Dhunge Lower Secondary School. The student composition of Dhunge Lower Secondary School was that only two out of three students were from the *Tamang* ethnic group. It indicates that *Tamang* were leading even in the mixed group.

That these students were not economically well off was reflected in their physical look. In an observation it was found that approximately 50% of the students came to school without wearing school dress; the rest were seen in school dress. Likewise, almost all children put on slipper but not shoes. The students of grades 1, 2, and 3 held their books and paper holding on arms. This was also more or less true of the students of grades 4 and 5 because only one out of four students carried books in bags.

The district level workshop revealed that the primary level NER was 96.8 % in the school year 2008/09. The dropout rate at this level was 6.1 %. The workshop also revealed that the enrollment gap, which was 3.2 % in NER, was due to non-schooling of *Tamang* children. Access of these children to school was difficult, as the *Tamang* settlements was scattered over some hilly and remote villages of the district. It was reported that the children required schools with hostel facilities because it was not possible to set up schools near these small settlements.

Chepangs

For the study of *Chepang* ethnic group, Chitwan district was selected. According to the census data, *Chepangs* constituted 4.5 % of the total population of this district. At national level, the percentage share of the *Chepang* population is 0.2 with an 26.2 percent literacy rate.

Chaturmukhi Secondary School and its community Shaktikhor and Kalika Primary School and its community Siddhi were selected for the study. These schools and communities appeared alike in many respects. The children of Siddhi, Kaule and Shaktikhor VDCs were enrolled in Chaturmukhi School. In Kalika School approximately 90 % students were enrolled from Ward no 2 of Siddhi VDC. The primary graduates of Kalika were generally admitted to Chaturmukhi for the secondary level.

The school survey indicated that number of *Chepang* students was larger in both the schools. In Chaturmukhi Secondary School, 1 was *Chepang* student out of 3. The school had enrolled 387 students at primary level. However, 2 students were *Chepang* out of 3 students in Kalika Primary School. It had a total of 158 students.

Similar types of *Janajatis* were enrolled in both the schools; *Newars, Gurungs, Tamangs, Magars*, besides *Chepangs*. But Chaturmukhi was more inclusive in terms ethnicity. It had also enrolled *Dalits* and other ethnic groups. *Dalits* included *Damais, Kamis*, and *Sarkis* and the other groups *Brahmins* and *Chhetris*. In Kalika Primary School, the number of *Dalit* students was insignificant and it did not have students from other ethnic groups.

The head teacher and teachers of Chaturmukhi Secondary School and Kalika Primary School claimed that they did not have any non-schooling case. However, only a few children of both the communities who had registered their names but were not regular. The head teacher of Kalika Primary School said that four students of 5-9 years had registered their names but did not go to school. The community members of Shaktikhor also said that they did have such cases but could not produce the figure.

Absenteeism was reported in the Siddhi community. Here the students became irregular after Kartik i. e. after the harvest ended. However, absenteeism was not reported in Shaktikhor. The dropout at class 5 was reported in both the schools and it was a bit higher among the *Chepang* students. For example, in Kalika the one dropout student that appeared at class 5 was *Chepang* and 6 of the 11 dropouts of Chaturmukhi were *Chepangs* too.

Nepali was used as the medium of instruction in both the schools. It was found during the survey that approximately one-third of the primary teachers in these schools were female. Each school had one teacher from *Janajati* but none of these students had a *Chepang* teacher. The teachers of Kalika School used the *Chepang* language while teaching classes 1 and 2.

From the attendance record of Jestha and Falgun of class 5, it was found that the average attendance of the *Chepang* students (15 out of 18) was one day less than the average of other students (16 out of 18) in Kalika. However, the average attendance of *Chepang* students was the same as that of other students in Chaturmukhi.

Chepang children were very close to but not at par with other students as regards the examination results. The class 5 final-examination record of Kalika School indicated

that only 2 were *Chepang* out of the top 5 in 2065. They were further behind in Chaturmukhi because *Chepangs* did not come to top 5.

Students came wearing the school dress in both the schools. Teachers distributed school uniforms using the scholarship fund, in Kalika Primary School. The head teacher said that if the students were given cash they would not come to school or come without wearing uniform. But in Chaturmukhi students received cash instead of kinds. The students of both the school wore slippers instead of shoes. It was also observed that half of the students of Kalika went to school barefooted. School bags were not seen in either school.

In the district level workshop it was reported that the primary level NER was 92.7 % in Chitwan. The dropout rate at this level was 9 %. The seminar revealed that the enrollment gap, which was 7 % in NER in the school year 2064, was due to non-schooling of *Janajati* and *Dalit* groups. The *Janajatis* included *Chepangs*, *Majhis*, *Botes*, *Mushahars*, *Kumals*, *Darais*, and *Tamangs*. The non-schooling problem of *Chepangs*, *Majhis* and *Botes* was much more serious. The *Dalits* identified were *Bisawkarmas*, *Sarkis* and *Damais*.

Likewise, dropout occurred with hard-core groups. As revealed in the workshop, this could be resolved by adopting persuasive and supportive measures.

Danuwar

The *Danuwar* ethnic group of Udayapur district was selected for the study. The census data of 2001 had estimated that the *Danuwar* constituted 2.5 % of the total population of this district. At national level, the percentage share of the *Danuwar* population is 1.1 with 41.2 percent literacy rate.

Ambeber Higher Secondary School and Madan-Asrit Primary School and their respective communities were selected in the Udayapur district. Both the schools were located in the Rajabash community, 6 Km far from the district headquarter, Gaighat.

Ambeber Higher Secondary School was located in the Ward no. 16 of Trijuga Municipality but it also served nearby localities, such as Wards 10, 15, and 17 of the Municipality. It was estimated in a group discussion of head teacher/ teachers and SMC members that this school served for approximately one thousand (1000) households, half of them of the *Danuwar* ethnic groups. The school record also showed that of the 1136 students, approximately half (675) students were *Danuwar*s. The other students were from the *Tharu*, *Rai*, *Tamang*, *Magar*, *Braman*, *Chhetri* and *Musahar* groups.

The school record of Madan-Asrit Primary School showed that there were 128 *Danuwar* students (total 155) the school in 2065. This school mostly drew students from Ward no. 16. The enrolment pattern of the school indicated that the number of boys was equal to the number of girls. Asked about it, the teachers explained that the educational awareness of parents have developed so much that every child, Boy or girl is sent to school. There was no non-schooling and dropout case in the catchment area.

Box 4.2

Positive Impact of WOREC on the Rajabash Community

Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC), a non government organization, launched a literacy program and a child development program by forming a community level organization in Rajabasha. The child development program conducted child development centers and extended financial support to the children of poor families for access and retention. As claimed by SMC and PTA members, these activities initiated in 1992/93, brought positive changes in the community-one of which was educational awareness among the Danuwars. Expressing concern about education, parents/guardians of the community said that a child without education is blind. So they felt it was their responsibility to provide quality education to the children. This might be the good reason why there was less non-schooling and dropout, and no practice of child labor in Rajabasha area.

One feature of Madan-Asrit Primary School was that it had 6 teachers, half of them female, from the *Danuwar* community. However, there were approximately 10 % students were from other *Rai, Biswakarma, Karki, Dahal, and Thapa* communities.

It was revealed in a group discussion of head teacher/ teachers and SMC members that the situation of *Danuwar*s in terms of education had improved adequately. There were many non- schooling and dropout cases around 10-15 years ago. Today such cases are rare in the community. Each student from this community was performing well in school. At present, the SMC chairperson of the school is a *Danuwar* personality. Likewise, the school had *Danuwar* teachers. The head teacher/ SMC members of the school claimed that the *Danuwar* students were as good as others in study. The community members were not worried about *Danuwar* but they were worried about the *Mushahars*. The *Mushahars* who had been victims of landslide did not have their own land and thus it was difficult to support the schooling children out of their daily earnings from agricultural labor hood.

What played the role in improving the situation of *Danuwar*s? It was chiefly the Women Rehabilitation Center (WOREC) that created positive impact on the community of Rajabash area, according to head teachers/ teachers, SMC members, parents/ guardians and local leaders of the community. WOREC set up in 2049 BS has launched several programs, such as, literacy, child development, community health and income generating activities, giving priority to the *Danuwar* ethnic groups. These activities altogether helped to improve the level of awareness among *Danuwar*s. It brought so a big change in the *Danuwar* community that the current situation could be calculated as 95 percent improvement over the past, said the head teacher looking back on his past 15 year's experience. Currently, WOREC does not have any programs for *Danuwar*s. However it is providing some support to *Mushahars*. The impact of WOREC is presented in Box 4.2.

It was also claimed in the district workshop that the enrollment gap, which was 5 % in NER in the school year 2065, was due to non-schooling of *Dalits* and other groups. The *Dalit* groups of the district such as *Kami, Damai, Sarki, Mushahar, Chamar* and *Pasawan*, and some other groups such as *Thami, Hayu, Bote, and Majhi* were far behind in education the *Danuwar* groups.

In the district level workshop it was said that *Danuwar*s were at par with others in terms of education. It was also said that *Danuwar*s of the district were educationally backward some 15-20 years ago. Now their status has changed and they have arrived

at the mainstream. It was the opinion that *Danuwar*s did not want any special focus, they only wanted equal treatment in education.

Both schools used Nepali as the medium of instruction. The *Danuwar* teachers of the schools revealed the fact that they did not even have an idea about their mother tongue, *Danuwari*; either did the other *Danuwar*s of the Rajabash community have. As disclosed by the SMC members and community members, the *Danuwari* language had almost disappeared from the community. Recounting their past experience, they said that only the grand father of the current schooling generation used their mother tongue which for want of movement to the next generation ended up with them. Today, children and youths speak Nepali at home and outside.

The result of Madan Asrit School of class 5 showed that *Danuwar* students had come to top 5 in the final examination held in the year 2065. However, their attendance record was not very different. In average these students attended school one day less than other students in Jestha and Falgun. In the average, the attendance of other students was 18 out of 19 school-open days in Jestha. Likewise, this average was 10 out of 11 in Jestha. When asked about it, the teachers explained that the *Danuwar* students stayed home longer during festivals and cultural activities. Such activities of the community are dominated by *Danuwar*s.

In Ambeber Higher Secondary School, two *Danuwar* students came to top 5 in the final examination of grade 5. School attendance was the same as that of Madan Asrit School.

Finally, *Danuwar* students were good at study. A group discussion revealed that they had a friendly environment in the school.

Chamars

The Kapilbastu was selected for the study of *Chamars*, who constituted 5.37 per cent of the total population of the district, according to the Census. At national level their percentage share is 1.2. The national literacy rate of the *Chamars* is 17.3 percent. *Chamars* are popularly known as "*Harijans*".

Two schools, Moti Bhari Primary School of the Labani community and Basu Dev Janata Secondary School of the Rangapur community, were included in the study. Field work was carried out in both the schools and also in their respective communities.

Moti Bhari Primary School was situated in Labani VDC -1 which is a sub-urban area of this district. The catchment area of this school included Wards 1,2,3,5 and 6 of Labani VDC. This School had enrolled 559 students of whom 139 were *dalits*. Among these *dalits* 59 were *Chamars*. The numbers of *Dalits* other than *Chamars* were also considerable: *Pasi* 31, *Kori* 23, *Dhobi* 21 and others 5. There was only one female teacher, among 7 teachers, and there was no teacher from the *Dalit* community.

Basu Dev Janata Secondary School was situated in Rangapur which was just 1 Km apart from the Nepal-India border. Wards 1/2/3/4 and 6 of Rangapur VDC were the catchment areas of this school. The school had enrolled 424 students at primary level, 73 of them *Dalits*. *Dalits* included more than fifty percent students from the *Chamar* ethnic group. Two *Dalit* teachers, one female, were working in the school.

The group discussion of teachers, SMC members admitted that more than 20-25 percent children were still out of school in the Labani community. Non-

schooling was even higher in the Rangapur community. About 20-30 percent school aged children were out of school. It was also reported that those who were out of school were Dalits, particularly *Chamar*.

It was said in discussion that the main cause of low enrollment of *Chamar* in the school was financial hardship. Parents said that *Chamars* owned not above 2 ropanis of land. It was inadequate to sustain even 2 persons the whole year. So they had to engage their children in work from an early age to eke out the household income.

The District Education Officer indicated his awareness about the field findings of both Labani and Rangapur. He said in the district seminar that non-schooling and dropout of *Dalits*, particularly *Chamars*, were higher in these communities.

Nepali was the medium of instruction in both the schools. However, the students of both schools pleaded in a group discussion for teaching in *Avadi*.

The records of both the schools indicated that *Chamar* were behind other students in school attendance and the annual results of class 5. The attendance record of Moti Bhari School showed that the average attendance of *Chamars* was 14 days in Jestha whereas it was 16 out of 18 school days. Likewise, their attendance appeared lower in Falgun too. Against 22 days, the average attendance of *Chamars* appeared 14 days, 17 days of other students. The record of Moti Bhari School revealed that only one *Chamar* student came in top 5 in the class 5 annual examinations of 2065.

Likewise, the record of Basu Dev Janata school showed that out of a total of 18 school days in Falgun, *Chamar's* average attendance was 10 days whereas it was 14 days for other students. However in Jestha their attendance was close to that of other students. In this month *Chamar's* average was 17, and other's 19 out of 22 school days. In the annual examination only one *Chamar* student came in top 5 at grade 5.

Lohars and Tamatas

To study the case of *Lohar* and *Tamata* ethnic group Dadeldhura district was selected. The census data of 2001 estimated that *Lohar* and *Tamata* constituted 7.6 % of the total population of the district. At national level, the percentage share of *Lohar* and *Tamata* population was 3.9 % . Their literacy was 40.1 %.

Mastabajanath Primary School and Lateswor Lower Secondary School and their respective communities were included in the field work. Mastabajanath was located in Ward no. 4 at Nawadurga VDC, which was 20 Km from Amargadhi, the district headquarter. The catchment area of this school was about two kilometers around. In this area, *Dalits* represented approximately 40% of the total district population. More than half of these *Dalits* were *Lohars*. In more or less same proportion, *Lohar* students were enrolled in this school.

Lateswor Lower Secondary School was situated in Ward no. 1 of Amargadhi Municipality. The catchment area of this school is about 2 km .More than 15 percent students belonged to the *Tamata* community. There were 48 students from this community.

It was found in the survey that there were 3 teachers from the *Lohar* community out of 8 in Mastabajanath School. However, Lateswor Lower Secondary School did not have any teacher from *Tamata* community. In both the schools, the number of

female teachers was satisfactory. In Mastabaijanath school, there were 5 female teachers (among 8) and 3 female teachers (among 9) in Lateswor school.

Non-schooling case was not found in either community. But dropout of *Lohar* and *Tamata* students was noticeable. The attendance record of Mastabaijanath School showed that the 3 dropouts from class 5 were *Lohar* students. Likewise, the 2 dropouts from class 5 were *Tamatas* student in Lateswor Lower Secondary School.

In response to a query about the dropout of *Dalits* students, DEO said that it was a big challenge to retain the student in school. The chief cause of dropout was poverty of the *Dalit* community. Lack of awareness was another reason.

Nepali was used as the medium of instruction in both the schools.

The attendance record revealed that *Lohar* and *Tamata* students were irregular compared to other students. The average attendance of the *Lohar* and *Tamata* students was one day less (17 out of 20 days) than that of other students (18 out of 20 days) in Jestha. The average attendance of *Lohar* and *Tamata* students was (16 out of 21 days), two days less than that of other students (18 out of 21 days) in Falgun.

Examination records of the schools showed that *Lohar* and *Tamata* students were also good in study. In either schools one *Lohar* and one *Tamata* students had been able to make a place in top 5.

Almost all the students put on school dress in both the schools. These students used slippers in place of shoes and carried their books on plastic bags.

The teachers of the *Tamata* community said that they looked at education as the path to employment rather than to knowledge. As many villagers were unemployed despite their qualifications, *Tamatas* were not much interested in further study. This was the reason why the parents did not force the children to continue their study. On the other hand, the children of 12-13 also wanted to go for work with their parents. The immediate benefit, daily wages, took the children to work. The SMC members stated that the parents of *Tamata* were reluctant to spend money in education. That's why they defended the ignorance of their children's decision to dropout from school. The head teachers/ teachers of the school of *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities said that they sent their children to school till they were small. When they grew up, the parents persuaded them to work and earn money.

Provisions Required for Disadvantaged Groups

This study had collected information on persuasive measures, supportive measures and empowerment of local communities under the provision required for disadvantaged groups.

Persuasive Measures

This study had assumed that persuasive measures such as admission campaign, awareness program, easy schooling access, school environment, inclusive behavior and teachers from disadvantaged groups were essential for enrollment and retention of the disadvantaged students in school.

Welcome to School Program

The 'welcome to school' program seemed to be very effective in all of the sampled districts except Kapilbastu. This program had been successful to enroll

students from *Tamang, Chepang, Lohar, Tamata* and *Danuwar* communities. Under this program, drama and parent counseling were launched simultaneously. It was revealed that the school faced the problem of retention after the increase in enrolment. In Kapilbastu the program had drawn more children from the *Chamar* community but had not been able to motivate all the *Chamar* students. Here non-schooling was 20-25 %. The head teachers/ teachers teaching in the schools of the *Chamar* community said that this program would be more effective if the program contained a stimulus/incentive package such as day meal, scholarship and school dress. The 'welcome to school' program was effective; it achieved 100 % NER in the Dadeldhura district. The success story is presented in Box 4.3 .

Box 4.3

Claim of 100% NER in Dadeldhura

The District Education Officer of Dadeldhura claimed that they had achieved 100 % NER at primary level. This success came from the effective implementation of the 'welcome to school' program. In an interview the DEO said that It was a big achievement to enroll all school-aged children in the school. He said that both motivational and coercive measures were extensively exercised, to get success. Several meeting of resources persons and head teachers were convened to meet this target. The DEO said that he had personally met all the RPs and directed them not to leave any child unenrolled in the catchment area. He asserted that he did not hesitate to tell them that their performance would be evaluated for promotion and other good purposes. He appreciated the efforts made by the head teachers, RPs, employees of DEO office and NGOs/INGOs. He acknowledged that their hard efforts were the major reason behind the success.

Finally, the DEO pointed out that the next big challenge was the retention of the schooling children. As he claimed, 100 % NER were reported by the sample schools during field work in the district.

Access

The schools sampled for disadvantaged groups were easily accessible. Students could reach the schools within half an hour. However, the *Tamang* and *Lohar* parents had said that they faced the problem of dropout after class 5 only because the secondary school was too far for them. As reported, the reason was that a distant school was expensive for them.

School Environment

The environment of the sample schools was not so good as expected. These schools lacked one or more major facilities. The school of the *Tamang* community lacked playground and toilets. The classes of *Chamar* were overcrowded. Likewise, the classes of *Lohars* were overcrowded. So the teachers had reported that three students of class 4 fell unconscious during classtime. Moreover, all of the sampled schools lacked such things as play kits and game materials. Teachers and SMC members argued that the school was not childfriendly primarily in the absence of these matrial supports. In this respect one statement of the head teacher of the *Chepang* School is worth recall. He said that children of the *Chepangs* would not have run to collect small crabs if the school had enough facilities; they would be at school full day.

Inclusive Behavior

It was found in observations and group discussions that the teachers and the students of 5 sample ethnic groups mixed up, indicating no sign of discrimination in

and outside the class or while playing, drinking water and going to toilet. The students of 5 different ethnic groups said that the school had given them an equal opportunity for classroom learning activities. The school teachers of these ethnic groups claimed that they had rather supported disadvantaged students. However, the teachers of Lateswor school of Dadeldhura reported that discrimination was still in existence at public places such as restaurants and temples. The practice of discrimination at public places was reported in Kapilbastu too.

Disadvantaged Teachers

All the sample school did not have teachers from local disadvantaged groups. There were 4 *Tamang* teachers in one school of the *Tamang* community. However, non-*Tamang* teachers were teaching in another sample school of this community. The school sampled for *Chepangs* had one teacher from *Janajatis* but none of them had a *Chepang* teacher. As reported the teachers of Kalika school were required to use the *Chepang* language while teaching classes 1 and 2. One feature of the one of the sample schools of *Danuwar* community was that it had all the 6 teachers from the *Danuwar* community. Two *Danuwar* teachers were teaching in another sample school of this community. Likewise, there were two teachers from the *Dalit* community in only one school of the *Chamar* community. But there was no *Dalit* teacher in another sample school. But most of the teachers were local in the schools of the *Chamar* community. There were 3 *Lohar* teachers in the sample school of the *Lohar* community. But the school of *Tamata* community did not have any teacher from their local group.

Each of the 5 communities claimed that the present deployment of the local disadvantaged teachers was inadequate. They argued that the school should include at least one or two teachers from their own groups to facilitate learning. They said that the teachers from their own community would help to increase interaction and thereby instill enthusiasm in their children to learn. In a field work it was found that only 50% of the schools of disadvantaged communities had employed teachers from their own community

Supportive Measures

Group discussions and interviews were conducted to deduce supportive measures required for the disadvantaged groups. Questions such as what types of supportive measures were currently available, what was the nature and of direct cost of schooling and what else was necessary were raised in group discussions. However, interviews were conducted to record present situation covering such indicators as occupation, literacy and size of the households of the school community. The interview included a total of 20 disadvantaged households located close to the respective school areas.

Current Supportive Measures

The schools of *Tamang* and *Danuwar* communities distributed *Dalit* and Fifty Percent Girl's Scholarship. The head teachers/ teachers claimed that the quota of the *Dalit* scholarship was proportionate to *Dalit* students. However, the quota of the fifty percent girl's scholarship did not match the stated figure. Scholarship in the form of cash was handed out to students in the presence of their parents/ guardians. These schools also distributed textbooks free of cost.

The *Chepang* students reported that they have been receiving government scholarship at the rate of Rs 600 per annum since 2064. Forty two (42) of these

primary graduates were awarded the DDC scholarship of Rs 3500 per year and provided hostel facility to continue their study up to the secondary level. These provisions were given to the *Chepang* students enrolled at Chaturmuki School.

Likewise, *Dalit* and Fifty Percent Girl's scholarship were distributed in the schools of *Chamars*, *Lohars* and *Tamatas*. But the head teachers of the school of these ethnic groups admitted that the scholarship quota for *Dalits* did not match for the student number so that the total amount of scholarship was divided as per the student number. In one school of the *Chamar* community it was distributed in kind but in other schools an amount of Rs. 350 per student per year was distributed. In these schools textbooks were distributed free of cost. However, students were required to buy one additional textbook in each of these schools.

The study presents the kind and magnitude of the existing direct cost of schooling and the economic condition of the groups in order to ascertain the provisions required for them in the future.

Direct Cost

This study has defined different types of fee as direct cost (for parents). Nine out of ten schools charged one or another type of fee on the students. Eight (8) schools charged the examination fee. In one school annual fee was also raised. Mostly, the examination fee was charged three times a year, but in a few schools this fee was raised only two times a year. The examination fee was different in different schools. In the schools of the *Tamang* community the examination fees were: Rs 5 for class 1, Rs 10 for class 2, Rs 15 for class 3, Rs 20 for class 4 and Rs 25 for class 5. These fees were raised three times of a year. However, for the *Dalit* students the examination fee was waived because their income was considered comparatively lower in the community

In schools of *Chepang* community examination fee was raised three times a year: Rs 20 per term at class 1; Rs 25 per term at class 2; Rs 30 per term at class 3; Rs 35 per term at class 4; and Rs 40 per term at class 5. In one of the schools of the *Chamar* community the examination fee was charged only one time in the final term: Rs. 10 for class 1, Rs. 20 for class 2, Rs. 30 for class 3, Rs. 40 for class 4 and Rs. 50 for class 5. In another school students paid Rs. 10,20,30,40 and 50 two times for classes 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively. In the schools of the *Danuwar* community students paid the examination fee two times a year, which however was not more than Rs 50 per student per year.

No fee was raised in the school sampled for the *Lohar* community. But the school of the *Tamata* community charged annual fees: Rs. 20 for class 1, Rs. 40 for class 2, Rs.50 for class 3, Rs. 60 for class 4, Rs. 70 for class 5, Rs. 200 for class 6, Rs. 250 for class 7 and Rs. 300 for class 8. However, the examination fee was not raised.

The propose to raise the examination fee was to meet the examination expenditure incurred. As reported by the head teacher, teachers and SMC members, the annual fee in the school of the *Tamata* community was raised for paying the additional teacher hired by the school.

This way, the schools charged annual and examination fees on the student. However, the suggestion to declare primary level education free and the claim that it can be made 100 percent free of cost is presented in Box 4.4 below.

Box 4.4

Free Basic Education in the New Constitution

Kantipur, Monday, June 08, 2009

Stakeholders have suggested to the members of Constitutional Assembly that education of primary level should be declared fundamental and free in the new constitution. In a discussion with the Assembly members they also demanded that primary education be made compulsory for every citizen.

One of the participants in the discussion, former vice-chancellor of Tribhuvan University Kedar Bhakta Mathema claimed that primary education could be made free without increasing the volume of investment. He added that free education should be defined in terms of State investment. He made the remark that distribution of textbooks alone would not ensure free education. Mathema suggested that the new constitution should accord priority to quality and free education to increase the educational opportunity for all.

www. ekantipur. Com (unofficial translation)

Economic Condition

The survey of *Tamang* community revealed that 8 households out of 20 completely depended on agriculture as the major source of income but the other 12 supplemented their income working as agriculture labourers, contractors of construction work and low paid public services such as peon. Agriculture as occupation supplied food for 3 months to four families, for 6 months to ten families and for the whole year to six families.

Chepangs stated agriculture was as their occupation. They harvested maize and millet only. In livestock too, only goats were raised. Food production fed them only for three months and the income derived from the sale of goats supported them one month more. Thus, it was found in the survey that they faced food problem for 8 months. As revealed in a discussion almost all *Chepangs* worked as a laborers in these activities; agriculture, house construction, road construction. One forth of them also produced bamboo made articles such as basket, roof and broom. A few of them also went to Manang and Mustang districts to work as porters. The survey of World Vision Advocacy Forum has mentioned that food problem faced by *Chepangs* was the main hindrance to the schooling of their children. The essence of the survey extracted from The Kathmadu Post is presented in Box 4.5.

Box 4.5

Food Insecurity, A Major Obstacle to Access (of Chepang Children)

The Kathmandu Post, Tuesday, May 26, 2009

Only 23 percent of ethnic Chepang population is literate and the female literacy rate is so meager that it is limited to only one percent, reports a study conducted by World Vision Advocacy Forum, a non-governmental organization.

This study also claims that only 127 Chepang children have passed the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination. Of them only 25 are females. Only one has completed Master's degree out of approximately 70,000 Chepang people in the country. Chepangs are found in Chitwan, Makawanpur, Dhading and Gorkha districts of Nepal.

As reported food insecurity is the major factor that has hindered the schooling access of the Chepang community. The crops produced by most of the Chepang can hardly feed them for four months or so. This forces Chepang children to assist by hunting or working as laborers instead of going to school since many of these families still rely on hunting and scavenging tubers. (www.ekantipur.com). (Unofficial translation)

Thus, it clearly indicates that food insecurity is a major obstacle to the schooling access of the Chepang children.

The community leaders, school teachers, SMC members of the *Danuwar* community said that 400 households out of 600 of the school catchment area did not have sufficient food production to feed the family for the whole year. For them agriculture production lasted only for 6 months as they owned less than one bigha of land. In a survey of 20 households it was found that these families supplemented their agricultural income performing extra activities such as woodcraft, mud-worker, driver, cement factory worker, agricultural and non-agricultural labor.

The survey of *Chamar* community revealed that half of them had given up their traditional caste-related occupation as cobblers, skinners of dead animals, tanners, shoe-makers and scavengers. As their land ownership was not more than 3 Katthas of land agriculture production sustained them only for 3 or 4 months. They earned Rs. 100 per day working as agricultural and construction laborer, which they consider not enough to meet the expenses of their 6-7 members family.

Dalits as a whole were the poorest community in Dadeldhura district. The survey revealed that the average land-owning per household of *Lohars* and *Tamatas* was approximately 1 to 2 Ropanis. The households surveyed indicated that the food grains they produced supported them for less than three months. One person each from the *Lohar* and *Tamata* families had gone to India to work as gatekeeper, potter or cook. Their earning as said was higher in India. As a result children dreamed of going India after they became young enough. (The dream of a young boy to work in India is presented in Box 4.6.). In their own country they also worked as agriculture and construction labor force. In construction they worked chiefly as masons. The wage rate of a mason was Rs. 250-300 per day in Dadeldhura. Because of their fondness of relaxation with alcohol, they could hardly save from their earnings. As a result, they could not improve their economic condition as others did in their community.

Box 4.6

Dream of Working in India

Deepak, 16, who had recently returned from India, said in an interview that he had dropped out from school at the age of 13 while studying in class 5, to go to India for work. According to him, there were many children from Nepal who were working in India. He earned around Rs. 3000 a year there and sent home Rs. 4000 -5000 per year. Asked about what inspired him to go to India, he said that the changed lifestyles of the seniors who returned from India and their improved economic status were the major reasons for him to decide to go to India. Because of their poor economic condition, his parents did not interfere in his decision. SMC members of the schools of Lohar and Tamata communities said that it was a culture to go to India for work. Boys start a dreaming of going to India at an early age. In some cases, children went to India even their parents were able to sustain the family.

This indicates that the dream to work in India is one of the reasons to increase dropout of the Dalits of Dadeldhura. In this regards, it appears logical to suggest that that the government formulate policies to retain these students in school.

In the *Danuwar* community it was claimed that all were literate. The survey of 20 households supported this. The average family size of *Danuwar*s was smaller than that of other disadvantaged groups. They had a family of 5 persons, and 2 to 3 children were enrolled in school.

Only 34.13 percent of *Chepangs* were reported as literate in the SIP document, 2064, of the schools of the *Chepang* community. The literacy percentage of *Tamangs*, *Chamars*, *Lohars* and *Tamatas* was more or less the same as was indicated in the Census Report, 2001. The survey estimation of *Tamang*, *Chepang*, *Chamar*, *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities showed that each family had an average family size of 6 persons and approximately 3 children were enrolled either in primary schools or secondary schools.

Parents paid examination and annual fees to the school. Besides, they also had to spend on school dress (shirt, pants, jacket, and shoes), school bag, and paper and pencil. In a group discussion, 4 students of class 4 and 5 said that they also attended tuition classes last year. Such a practice was generally not expected at primary level. Asked about the fee, 2 students of class 5 said that each of them paid Rs 250 for 5 months. This charge was Rs 60 for student of class 4 for 2 months.

The parents/ guardians when asked about the total educational cost of their children revealed that it was really difficult for them to shoulder the educational burden since each family on an average were sending 3 students to school. As said they require Rs 5-6 thousands annually to meet the schooling cost of each family. The scholarship beneficiaries said that the amount was not sufficient even to pay for the school dress.

Parents revealed that the examination fees raised by the school were not a big challenge nor were the costs of additional textbooks for the primary level. However, indirect cost such as expenses for school dress, shoes, jacket, bags, education materials and day meal consumed larger segments of their income. As claimed, these families had been following a simple expenditure pattern to minimize expenditure on such items; for example, parents bought slipper instead of shoes, it was affordable to them because their price was Rs 100. Likewise, school dress of cheaper quality was bought at around Rs 350 for a set.

Parents said that they did not buy school bags as it cost a lot for 2-3 children. These families had adopted the system of interchanging textbooks among the students. Parents were of the opinion that this practice helped to reduce the indirect cost of education, particularly for those families whose children were also studying at secondary grades. But how to bear this cost when the number of children is too large? A similar case is presented here (Please see Box 4.7 below.)

Box 4.7

Educational Investment: Expectation of High Returns

Almighty God has given every support to Ganesh Bahadur Danuwar (name changed), aged 38, a dweller of Trijuga Municipality-16, to help him bring up his family as he imagined. He is leading a happy family life even without any tangible property and income. What really accounts for his prosperous life is the enormous courage that others hardly possess.

Ganesh is living with his wife, four daughters and two sons. His eldest daughter, Nisa, took School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination this year. The other three daughters Barsa, Jharna and Sima, are studying in Ambebar higher secondary school in Class 10, 8, and 5 respectively. His two sons Ana and Rajesh are also enrolled at Class 4 and 3 in the same school. So Ganesh has to spend a lot of money as direct and indirect cost for the education of his children.

No direct educational costs occur till the class 5. The school charges approximately Rs 200 as annual fee and Rs 100 as examination fees only after Class 5. But the indirect educational costs that he requires to pay for tiffin, school dress, shoes, bags and stationery materials have hit him hard. Likewise, he also pays for tuition classes. This year, Nisa joined the tuition class, making an expense of Rs 1800. It was found from the home visit to Ganesh that he did not have any land or house. He has illegally settled near the forest making a makeshift home. In a talk he said he did not have any permanent occupation as a source of regular income. His wife too did not have any permanent job. She took care of one cow, one buffalo and four goats besides looking after her family.

Ganesh said that of his four daughters only one had received girl's scholarship one time till date and no other support. When asked about how he has bore the educational expenses of his six children at a time without any tangible property and job, he revealed that he occasionally earned some money helping those who wanted to buy and sell land in his area. He eked out that income taking loan from his friends and relatives. He was of the opinion that the financial trauma will end once the senior children start to earn. It was found in the course of home visit that he took every care of his children and by the same token the children had proved they were good at study. Thus, Ganesh is living in a dream of high return from his investment in the education of his children. If there is a situation like this? What provisions are to be made to ensure free and compulsory education? This might represent the case of several Ganeshes in the community. To enclose rage such types of families, The Government should make the provision of financial support that required to meet all types of schooling expenditure.

Provision Required for Future

In a discussion on the Tamang community it was asked why there was no provision of scholarship for Tamang students. They said that the economic status of Tamangs and Dalits were almost the same in the community. It was also claimed that some Dalits had a better economic position than that of Tamangs. But the government had provided scholarship to the Dalits students only. However, such complaints were not made in the schools of the Danuwar community.

Parents of the *Tamang* community proposed a two-pronged strategy as a solution to compulsory basic education. Either all costs, the direct cost as well as the indirect cost had to be borne by the government, or the government should empower the parents to make them able to pay all the indirect cost. However, they appeared skeptic about the support of the government for the indirect cost. So they advised that the government should work for economic empowerment by mobilizing local resources such as forest and water resources. The local could benefit from herbs, fuel wood and timber from the forest. Tourism was another facet of economic empowerment. The head teacher/ teachers of the *Tamang* community strongly said that the programs of social awareness and economic empowerment were necessary pre-requisites to compulsory basic education.

In district level seminar the District Education Officer said that provision of boarding schools was necessary for the Himali districts like Rasuwa. In Rasuwa district, the settlements were immensely scattered. She said that two three houses were on one hillside and other houses were very far from them. So it was not possible to establish schools for every small communities. Besides, parents did not send their children if the school was very far. They see the problem of up-and-down paths between home and the school. The District Education Officer including her subordinates were convinced that only the establishment of boarding schools can solve the problem of enrolling all children.

For *Chepangs* it was proposed in the workshop that supportive measures should include literacy programs in the non-schooling areas. It helps the family to realize the importance of education. The current practice was that the senior children took care of their siblings when their parents were out for work in the field. It created more dropout. These practices were adopted in nine remote VDCs of the district. Similarly, the number of schools should also be increased in these areas. Children did not go to school in some areas because the schools were too far to go.

Danuvars said that they did not need any special favor from the government. They pleaded that the government should help *Mushahars* as they were poorer in the community.

In response to the query about the provision required for educating all the children, parents of one of the schools of the *Chamar* community said that the amount of scholarship was too small to meet the indirect cost. They argued that nothing could be expected with Rs. 350 per year. The SMC chairman reiterated that the scholarship should be distributed on the basis of economic condition not alone by caste. He asked how it could provide justice to the families whose economic status was very low. A few *Brahmins* and *Chhetries* of his community were poorer than *Dalits*. According to him, a financial database should be prepared to distribute scholarships. He concluded that this activity would do justice to all parents.

The parents of another school of the *Chamar* community said that they required facilities similar to those provided by the Indian government. This community was just 1 Km away from Nepal-India border. As reported, the students need not to pay any type of tuition fee in India. Schools provided day meal which included *Dalia, Khichadi, Dudha, Puri, and Sabji* (pulse, rice, milk and vegetables) as well as education materials (school bag, books, copy, pencil etc.) and dresses, shoes. They also said that Indian government also encouraged parents by providing opportunity

for social employment. How the students make effort for Indian education is presented in Box Diagram 4.8.

The parents claimed that in Nepal it was a big challenge even to rear children. They asked how to sustain children in a state of landlessness and unemployment at home and how to create an environment to send them to school. They expressed their disappointment at the existing system and asked for facilities as provided for them and their children in India.

Box 4. 8

Education in Indian Schools

Suraj Chamar, 10, dweller of Rangapur VDC-4, was studying at Basu Dev Secondary School, Rangapur, till 1 year before in Nepal. But now he is studying in class 4 at Junior High School, Siddhartha Nagar, in India.

His family's economic condition was not sound. He had 2 elder brothers and 1 younger sister. This family had difficulty rearing the children and sending the children to school was almost impossible. This was the reason why Suraj's two elder brothers had not gone to school till now. However, his parents had somehow managed to send him to Basu Dev Janata Secondary School. As days passed by, his parents succeeded to admit him to Junior High School at Siddhartha Nagar of India with the help of his aunt. In India, Suraj need not pay even a single Rupee to school. He got all things such as textbooks, dress, shoes were free of cost. Even he got the day meal with Dalia, khichadi, paudar milk, puri, sabji. The quality of education was also good. Like Suraj, every child of Rangapur dreamed of studying at Siddhartha Nagar, India.

Siddhartha Nagar was only 1Km away from Nepal. The study team found that some of the children of this community including the children of teachers had also enrolled in India. It appears that this trend is likely to increase in future. In this situation it appears logical to say that the government of Nepal should think of formulating policies to keep these students within the mainstream educational system of Nepal.

In the *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities most of the parents stated that the present scholarship amount was not adequate at all. They said nothing could be done with Rs. 350 while the price of one pair of shirt-pants cost more than Rs. 350. But the head teachers/ teachers of these communities said that the earnings of *Lohars* was satisfactory but they did not save money to invest in the education of their children for of lack of awareness. So they demanded scholarships of a bigger size as well as awareness program.

Teachers of these communities highly appreciated the day meal and oil distribution program of the government. These two programs were very effective in increasing enrollment and retention. Parents got willing to send their children to school because this fetched oil and day meal which they would miss if their children stayed home. As said, this program had been discontinued and parents were not so eager to send their children to school. In *Dadeldhura Dalits* were reluctant to send their children to school because of fear of loss of the opportunity cost also. Here children earned up to Rs. 1000 per month if they worked in restaurants.

Empowerment Activities

Race Nepal, Search Nepal, Manecore Society, Noulekh foundation and *Krishi Ban Pratisthan* are some NGOs currently involved in the empowerment program in Rasuwa. Until last year, WINGS had provided the skill-oriented training to

empower women. The head teacher of the *Tamang* community said that in Rasuwa there were various resources such as water resources, forest, wildlife and herbs. By utilizing these resources, the economic status of the people could be raised. Tourism was another aspect to promote the economic status of people. But, unfortunately, the trainings were limited to the distribution of allowance to the participants and its effect on the community was zero.

In Chitwan, Nepal Indigenous Development Society (NIDS), *Jana Sewa Abhiyan*, *Yuwa Sewa Nepal* and *Nari Jagaran Kendra* were some of the NGOs which had launched empowerment programs. However, their activities had little effect on the *Chepang* community.

In Udayapur, NGOs especially WOREC, had contributed to female empowerment through literacy class, reproductive health training and skill development trainings. These trainings raised the consciousness level and economic status of the community. The participants of the community FGD said that before the implementation of these programs, females only stayed within four walls, but now they appeared in all social activities including income generation. As a result of this, there was no non-schooling and dropout case in the community.

In Kapilbastu, *Sahaj Nepal*, *Siddhartha Samajik Bikash Sanstha*, *Pari*, *Dalit Janajagan Sewa Sangh*, *Kalika Swablamban Bikash Kendra* were some NGOs working to empower *Dalit* families. Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) had initiated the "*Ghumti Kosh Parichalan*", which gives loan, without any collateral, to *Dalits*. It distributed loan of Rs. 20,000 for animal farming and of Rs. 15,000 for Business. *Sahaj Nepal* and *Siddhartha Samajik Bikash Sanstha* conducted the literacy programs. Participants of the community FGD said that the program of PAF was very effective. It was creating positive impact on *Dalits* particularly to improve the economic condition of the community.

In Dadeldhura, many NGOs/INGOs were involved to empower the *Dalit* community. These organizations launched several programs with an aim to enhance skills and knowledge of *Dalits*. The head teachers/teachers of *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities said that there were approximately 30-35 NGOs working for *Dalits* but the situation of *Dalits* had not improved as expected. Only a limited number of persons had been successful to benefit (from these NGOs). When the NGOs organized training, only the same set of persons would be called again and again. If any NGOs distributed agriculture seeds, only a few selected persons got them. If there was any reservation for the *Dalit* students, only the children of these parents were given opportunity. Thus, the NGOs had frequently given favor to particular persons instead of working for the community as a whole.

Preventives Measures

Preventive measures include program denouncing early marriage, child labor and social discrimination.

Early Marriage

The tradition of early marriage still existed in disadvantaged groups. It was found that child marriage was still in practice in *Tamang*, *Chamar* and *Chepang* communities. Children got married before they reached 15 years.

In the *Chamar* community, early marriage was an established culture. If parents failed to get their daughters married at an early age, there could be a dreadful chance

of life long celibacy for them. If by chance some educated groom was found, the parents would have to give a lot in dowry. Thus, they preferred marriage at an early age.

In the *Danuwar* community, the practice of child marriage was in the decline. The teachers of Ambeber school said that the parents of this community were very conscious about their children's future so they preferred on-time marriage. The practice of early marriage was not found in *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities either. In these communities, NGOs were actively involved in preventing early marriage.

Almost all the participants of the FGD of the five ethnic groups said that the law against early marriage should come.

Child Labor

Child labour normally refers to 5-14 years of age people, who are working under Various conditions for their own livelihood or for support to the family.

Children were used as labour force in *Tamang*, *Chamar*, *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities. The children of *Tamang* community worked in restaurants and as helper in vehicles. They also crushed stone for concrete. This study also found that even students were crushing stone in the morning and evening. They said that this work helped them to pay for educational costs, and buy copy, pencil, school dress, shoes etc.

In the *Chamar* community parents said that child labor was not desire, it was compulsion for survival. Only parents' earnings could not sustain the whole family. Therefore the child had to work. The stakeholders said that insufficient land and minimum wages were some reasons behind the system of child labor in this community.

Child labor was found in the *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities. Some children of these communities were engaged in hotels as dish-washers and cleaners, some were seen in micro buses working as helpers, and some were working as helpers to masons in construction work. Likewise, many *Lohar* and *Tamata* children went to India for work.

In the *Chepang* community, child labor was not seen. The SMC members of Kalika Primary school said that *Chepang* used *Bhyakur*, *Githha*, *Jaluko*, *Taki*, *Niuro*, *Sisnu* as food. These foods contained nutrition but did not give a balanced diet. So most of the *Chepang* children suffered from malnutrition. As a result, most *Chepang* children could not walk keeping the body balance until they were of 5-6 years. Because of this, child labor was not found in this community.

There was no child labor in the *Danuwar* community. The head teacher/ teachers of the school of this community said that *Danuwar*s were very much aware of education for the bright future of their children. So in spite of their low income they were sent their children to school.

Almost all the stakeholders of all the five ethnic groups said that the system of child labor should be discouraged and the law against child labor should be enacted. However, they also said that before enforcing law the government should run various programs to improve the economic situation of poorer households.

Discrimination

In a school observation and discussion with parents and students it was found that social discrimination did not exist in the schools. However, parents of *Lohar, Tamata* and *Chamar* communities said that there was caste discrimination in the community. Because of such discrimination, the children of *Dalit* families felt inferior and often showed unwillingness to school. The respondents of *Lohar, Tamata* and *Chamar* communities said that the law against discrimination should be strictly enacted to give relief to parents as well as children.

Mechanism to Ensure Basic Education

Stakeholders were asked to state their opinion on how to ensure free/ compulsory basic education for disadvantaged groups. This question was answered differently by the stakeholders of different ethnic groups. However, the stakeholders expressed some common feelings about particular issues. So their opinions are presented in two parts: individual mechanism and common mechanism.

Individual Mechanism

About the mechanism of ensuring basic education the stakeholders of *Tamang* community asked for literacy program, female empowerment program and education in the mother tongue. They said that making education free was not the only way of making it accessible. They needed scholarships for their children and income generating programs for themselves. Likewise, the parents also asked for hostels to accommodate the children whose schools were far from home.

Chepangs said that they lagged in literacy in their own communities. They accepted that many of them did not have the feeling that the children should be sent to school. In this connection they pointed out the need of literacy programs and female empowerment programs. They had the food problem for more than 8 months. Therefore, the *Chepangs* pleaded for income generating activity programs which would enable them to retain their children at school.

The District News Bulletin of the Chitwan district education office (Year 2, No 2, 2008) stated that the ethnic groups *Chepang, Musahar, Bote, and Majhi* were highly marginalized in the district. It had also mentioned that these ethnic groups were in minority and were on the verge of becoming extinct. The enrollment gap, which was 3.2 % in NER in the school year 2065, was due to non-schooling of *Chepangs* also.

Danuwars were educationally aware. There was no non-schooling case and no dropout case in their community. This ethnic group was at par with others in terms of education. *Danuwars* did not require any special focus but an equal treatment in education. The district level workshop claimed that the enrollment gap, which was 3.9 % in NER in the school year 2065, was due to non-schooling of *Dalits* and other groups, not of *Danuwars*.

In the *Chamar* community, more than 20-25 percent children were still out of school. To persuade them for schooling, programs such as door to door visit and street drama were conducted in their community. However, these programs did not entice them. As reported, which the cause of this was not the lack of awareness but the burden of indirect cost needed for the education of the children. On the other hand, the parents got the benefit of being engaged in work. These factors compelled them to send their children to work rather than to school. Parents of the *Chamar*

community demanded scholarship, day meal, school dress, bags, shoes and education materials for their children and employment for themselves. They cited examples from the Indian education system. Teachers and SMC members of the school of the *Chamar* community pleaded for additional schools as the school catchment area was too large.

In *Lohar* and *Tamata* community there was no-schooling case. However, dropout occurred on a larger scale because of overaged children. Parents of these children preferred work to study. It was revealed that *Dalit* couple had on an average, four children in Dadeldhura. However, the income of *Dalits* was not enough to meet the basic needs and schooling expenses of such a large family. On the other hand, the immediate benefits like daily wages had lured the children to work. So the parents did not encourage their children to continue their study. As a result, the children of 12-13 wanted to go with their parents to work rather than pursue student carrier.

District level stakeholders of Dadeldhura said that poverty of the *Dalit* family was the major hindrance to the retention of the children. In their opinion, the provision of free education alone would not ensure the schooling of *Lohar* and *Tamata* children. In a discussion the stockholders indicated the importance of awareness and economic empowerment programs for *Dalits*, particularly *Lohars* and *Tamatas*.

Common Mechanism

Every disadvantaged stakeholder explicitly or implicitly accepted that the number of children also was one of the main reason for not sending children to school. However, the indication that they preferred small family was reflected in the discussion. It was clear that they were looking for female empowerment programs focused on reproductiv health and self employment opportunities for women.

Every disadvantaged parent pleaded for supportive measures to ensure the education of the disadvantaged groups. It included incentives such as scholarship, day meal and education materials.

Parents raised a voice for prohibition of child labor by law. But they said that the government should help them for economic independence before introducing the law. The case of child labor was not found in *Danuwar* and *Chepang* communities, whereas the children of *Tamang*, *Chamar* and *Tamata* communities had been involved in income earning activities. In the *Tamang* community children were working as part-time earners.

The parents of disadvantaged groups did not show much interest in the issue of early marriage of girls. Early marriage was vanishing from the *Danuwar* community but in other communities it had persisted. In the *Chamar* community parents justified early marriage as they considered it as a good way to escape the spending large sums of money on dowry.

The concerned District Education Offices demanded that they should have the authority to fix necessary program to ensure that more children from the disadvantaged groups enroll and complete their primary level education. They also said that the budget allocated to them was inadequate.

Box 4.9

Tackling Low Enrolment and High Dropout through EGS

The Kathmadu Post, 15 April 2009

The government has made final preparation to launch a two-tier scheme to tackle the low enrolment and high drop-out rate in school in some 21 districts. The educational guarantee scheme (EGS) is set for launch with the beginning of the new academic session.

The EGS targets are children from backward, marginalized and poor communities, particularly out of school children between 6 and 10 years of age. The government, with the slogan "The expectation of New Nepal is free, quality and inclusive education" aims to encourage children of school going age to enroll in schools, where the EGS is to guarantee completion of primary level education.

An estimated 266,000 children between 5 to 10 years age group are out of school according to the Ministry of Education. This comprises 8 percent of the total school going children's population. The average dropout rate in class 1 is quite alarming with six of the students staying back from school every year.

The government has allocated Rs 24 million for EGS for 21 districts and Rs 25,000 for each school as incentive to provide a boost to the enrolment campaign in all 75 districts.

The government has so far decided to distribute necessary school accessories, namely textbooks and copies, uniform, day meal, scholarship and other incentives to increase enrolment. The respective district education officer will fix necessary programs to ensure that more children enroll and complete their primary level education.

The 21 districts targeted are: Solukhumbu, Sunsari, Sindhupalchowk, Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Siraha, Saptari, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Dhanusa, Makawanpur, Kapilbastu, Rupandehi, Manag, Mustang, Bardiyaya, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Rolpa and Rukum.

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Partnership for Free and Compulsory Primary Education

The respondents said that decentralization was the main instrument for the implementation of the free and compulsory education program. In this respect, the local government, VDC and Municipality should play effective roles to address the issues of non-schooling, non-attendance and non-completion of basic education. On the other hand, school should prepare School Improvement Plans; involving local stakeholders. It was said that the local government should be empowered, to the required extent, before implementing the program. It was emphasized that monitoring mechanism of the program should be more effective.

In each of the 5 sample districts, the District Development Committee (DDC) had allocated a sum, either for school physical facility or for teacher salary. In Chitwan, DDC had supported the hostel of *Chepang* students. The local level stakeholders said these funds were fixed randomly without sticking to any particular norm. As said a fixed percent of DDC budget should be allocated to the education sector particularly to address the problem of disadvantaged groups. Thus, stakeholders commented on the vague policy of DDC.

The education sector received support from non-government organizations also. Organization like UNICEF had assisted the 'welcome to school' campaign in the DACAW district as part of the program. Other organizations such as Youth Club,

Janasewa Campaign, Youth Service Nepal, *Seto Gurans*, *Sathi*, *Newa*, *Race Nepal* had provided supports for orphans and poor students. Some of them distributed education materials and others worked for drinking water and sanitation. No doubt, NGOs/INGOs made contributions to education but it appeared that these contributions were occasional rather than regular and only minimum in

Consideration of the need of the disadvantaged students. It was the opinion of teachers, parents and students that such occasional supports only spoiled the habit of schools and students. These stakeholders said that each NGO should formulate education program assigning approximately 5-10 percent share of the total school budget. This work should be done in collaboration with district education office so that these organizations could play supplementary role for the schooling of disadvantaged group children.

Box 4.10

Effort to Manage Indirect Cost by Students Themselves

Nine school children of Kalikasthan Higher Secondary School, Kalikasthan were crushing stone at the road side. Of them, three were from class 5, two from class 4, two from class 3, one from class 2 and one from class 1. Four of them were girls and five boys. They said that their final examination is over. They had come here to earn some money. The money would be used in buying education materials such as copy, pencil, ball pen, bag etc. Some of them said that they utilized their long holiday time as working to earn some money which they would use to pay the examination fee and other costs. They unanimously said that their parents were not capable of bearing the cost of their study. So they had to do such a risky work (to earn some money). One of the grade 1 child described her bitter experience while crushing the stone. She showed us the wound she incurred during work last year.

In this case, the students were under pressure to earn money for their study despite the government's declaration of free education. The government has proclaimed that primary level education was free for all. But in practice, schools raised money in the name of examination fee. Also the students had to buy additional books. This direct cost was one cause, but also they had to work for meeting the indirect cost, which would help to mitigate the economic burden of their parents. The hands which should be holding the pen were today holding the hammer. What else could be more unfortunate than this for the children of New Nepal?

CHAPTER V

Major Findings

This chapter presents the major findings based on the presentation and analysis in the preceding chapter.

Educational Status

Enrollment and Dropout

Non-schooling was not found in *Tamang*, *Chepang*, *Danuwar*, *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities. But approximately 20-25 percent children were still out of school in the *Chamar* community. The chief reason of low enrollment of *Chamars* in school was financial hardship. Because of these facts children of this community engaged in work from an early age to earn for the household.

Dropout case was not found in *Tamang*, *Chepang* and *Danuwar* communities. However, a few children in the *Chepang* community who had registered their names were not regular in the school. Dropout was seemed among *Chamar*, *Lohar* and *Tamata* students. These students left school when they felt they were able to engage as child laborers.

Instruction in Mother Tongue

Instruction in the mother tongue was not initiated in any sample school. The schools of the *Tamang* community had used two reference books written in the *Tamang* language. Nepali language was the medium of instruction in all sample schools. But willingness to learn in the mother tongue was also expressed by *Tamang*, *Chepang* and *Chamar* students. However, such type of demand was not made by *Danuwar* students as they were not familiar with their own mother tongue.

School Performance

The school regularity of *Tamang*, and *Danuwar* students was satisfactory. The average attendance of these students was more or less similar to that of other students. *Chepang* attendance was a little bit low because they were occasionally absent from school due to food problem. *Chamars* fell behind other students in average school attendance. The attendance of *Lohar* and *Tamata* students was 1-2 days less than that of other students.

Tamangs and *Danuwar*s were ahead of other students even in the final examination. But *Chepangs* fell behind of other students when evaluated in terms of best 5 in the final examination of class 5. In the case of *Chamars*, *Lohars* and *Tamatas* the final examination results were not so good as those of other students. Among *Dalits*, *Chamars* appeared behind *Lohars* and *Tamatas*.

School Dress

In school dress the students of all 5 ethnic groups were more or less similar. Most of them came in uniform but without bags. All of them used slippers instead of shoes. However, in one schools of the *Chepang* community approximately 50% students appeared barefooted. They put on neither slippers nor the shoes.

Provisions Required

Persuasive Measures

'Welcome to school' seemed to be very effective in all the sample districts except Kapilbastu. It indicates that this program had been successful to enroll children from *Tamang, Chepang, Lohar, Tamata* and *Danuwar* communities. In Kapilbastu the program had attracted a majority of the *Chamar* children but not all.

Schooling Access

The schools for the disadvantaged groups were generally easy of access. But in the *Chamar* community additional schools were demanded because the school was far. Likewise, the *Tamang, Lohar* and *Tamata* parents said they faced the problem of dropout after class 5 only because the secondary school was too far for them.

School Environment

The school environment was not so good as expected. The schools lacked one or more essential physical facilities (such as, classroom, playground, sports items and toilets). The head teacher, teachers and parents said that this was the chief cause of irregularity of students.

Inclusive Behavior

Social discrimination was not found in any schools for the 5 ethnic groups. Students indiscriminately mixed up, showing no sign of discrimination in and outside the class or while playing, drinking water and going to toilet. The students of all 5 ethnic groups said that the school had given them an equal opportunity for classroom practices. The school teachers of these ethnic groups claimed that they had supported disadvantaged students. However, the ethnic group *Chamar, Lohar* and *Tamata* reported that they still suffered discriminated in their own community.

Disadvantaged Teachers

Local disadvantaged teachers were not employed in all the sample schools. The study finds that only half of the sample schools had employed teachers from local disadvantaged groups. Stakeholders asked for teachers from these groups.

Supportive Measures

Agriculture was the main occupation of all the 5 disadvantaged groups. But it supplied food for about 6 months in each sample community. The food problem was more acute with *Chepang*. For them, agriculture production lasted only for 3 months. *Danuwar*s were literate 100% and the literacy of others was more or less similar to what was indicated in Census 2001.

This study has defined different types of fees charged by schools as direct cost. The study found that 8 out of 10 schools charged examination fees. Annual fee was raised in one of the sample schools.

The schools of all 5 disadvantaged groups distributed *Dalit* and Fifty Percent Girl's scholarship. *Chepang* students have been receiving government scholarship of Rs 600 per annum since 2064. These schools also distributed textbooks free of cost. However, these textbooks did not cover the current curriculum. Students were required to buy one extra textbooks.

Tamangs regretted for the non-award of scholarships to their children. They asked for income generating programs based on local resources. *Lohars* and

Tamatas questioned about the economic value of the *Dalit* scholarship and asked for programs such as day meal and oil distribution. However, such a demand was not made in the schools of the *Danuwar* community. They said that they did not need any special favor from the government. *Chepangs* demanded literacy and empowerment programs. They also asked for more schools. *Chamar* parents faced big problems in the rearing of children. They said that the amount of scholarship was too small to meet the whole indirect cost. They asked for the facilities similar to that provided by the Indian government.

NGOs were involved in all of the 5 sample communities but they were unable to exert positive impact, except on *Danuwar* and *Chamar* communities. These two communities benefited, to some extent, from the income generating activities conducted by these organizations.

Preventive Measures

Early Marriage

Early marriage was common in *Tamang*, *Chamar* and *Chepang* communities but it was vanishing from *Danuwar*, *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities. However, all the 5 ethnic groups expressed their concern over early marriage and asked for effective execution of the prevailing law against early marriage.

Child Labor

Child labour was found in *Tamang*, *Chamar*, *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities. Mostly children of these communities worked in restaurants and vehicles. However, child labor was not found with *Danuwar*s and *Chepangs*. The execution of the law against child labor was demanded in all of these communities. But the parents of *Tamang*, *Chamar*, *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities demanded economic security before coming of the law.

Discrimination

Social discrimination was not found in any disadvantaged group. However, it still existed in *Chamar*, *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities. These *Dalits* pleaded for effective enforcement of the prevailing law against social discrimination.

Mechanism to Ensure Basic Education

Every respondent said that decentralization was the main mechanism for the implementation of free and compulsory education program. In this connection, they said that schools should implement the program under the leadership of VDC / Municipality.

The respective district education office demanded that it should have authority to fix programs to ensure basic education for the disadvantaged groups. They also said that the current budget allocated to them was not adequate to address the problem of disadvantagedness.

Stakeholders said that the District Development Committee (DDC) should follow particular norms while providing support to the school education system. In formulating the norms it should take account of the problem of disadvantaged groups. Likewise, NGO should allocate a fixed percentage of their budget for disadvantaged groups.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendation which are based on the major findings. Conclusions are presented in the first part, while recommendations in the second part.

Conclusions:

Educational Status

The overall educational status of disadvantaged groups has changed over time but they still lag behind in several instances. The enrolment of disadvantaged students was satisfactory except in the *Chamar* community. However, retention was still a challenge in *Chamar*, *Lohar* and *Tamata* communities. In attendance and examination records, *Tamang* and *Danuwar* students were more or less similar to students of other groups. However, in school attendance and final examination, *Chepangs*, *Chamars*, *Lohars* and *Tamatas* were all outperformed by their counterparts.

The government seems to be too late to execute the policy of teaching in the mother tongue. Instruction in the mother tongue had not been initiated in any sample schools. Children of *Tamang*, *Chepang* and *Chamar* communities showed their willingness to learn in their own language. However, it appeared difficult in the absence of text books.

Many disadvantaged families were unable to bear the indirect costs of schooling. This fact was clearly reflected in the outlook of disadvantaged students. Students of disadvantaged groups were not well dressed. Most of them did not have the school dress, and they came with plastic bags, wearing slippers. In the schools of the *Chepang* community approximately 50 percent students came barefooted. This phenomenon was natural because their family income was too inadequate to meet such expenses.

Provisions Required

The 'welcome to school' program has been successful to increase educational awareness among the disadvantaged groups and effective in increasing the enrollment of children. However, this program did not work as expected in the schools of the *Chamar* community.

The school environment of disadvantaged groups was not so good. The schools lacked major physical facilities such as classroom, playground, sports items and toilets. This particularly caused the dropout of students.

Social discrimination was no more a hindrance to basic education. There was no social discrimination of any type in any school of the 5 ethnic groups; however, the discrimination still existed in the *Dalit* community.

Teachers from disadvantaged communities was inadequate in schools of sample communities. Only 50% of the sample schools had employed teachers from their own communities. Students preferred teachers from their own communities. Disadvantaged teachers were necessary to the key principle of child rights, namely that education should respond and be adapted to the interests of the child.

Supportive Measures

In spite of the government's free education policy, primary schooling was in fact not free. Schools raised annual charges and examination fees. Annual charges were imposed to pay the teachers hired by the schools. This practice was contrary to the free education policy. Likewise, textbooks were also not free in the true sense, since the students were asked to buy one or two additional textbooks themselves. It indicates that the right to free primary education was not truly realized by the parents.

The provision of scholarship did not cover the students of all 5 disadvantaged groups. It benefited to *Dalit*, 50 percent girls and *Chepang* students. However, *Tamang* students claimed that the scholarship was essential to them as well. Likewise, the scholarship amount was not enough for the indirect cost.

NGOs provided minimum supports to the children of disadvantaged groups. NGOs were involved in all the 5 sample disadvantaged groups but they were unable to create positive impact, except on *Danuwar*s and *Chamars*.

Preventive Measures

Early marriage and child labour did not appear a big challenge to the basic education of disadvantaged groups. Neither of them was there in the disadvantaged communities. However, it still existed in the *Dalits* community. The practice of child labor was more pronounced than early marriage in this community.

Mechanism to Ensure Basic Education

The role of DDC and VDC was inadequate from the standpoint of decentralization. DDC simply allocated funds to schools without sticking to any particular norm. This mechanism provided benefit to some schools not to the schools of the disadvantaged groups. Likewise, there was no coordination between DDC and DEO. NGOs launched educational programs working independently which however did not benefit to the schooling of disadvantaged children.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions given above the study makes the following recommendations:

1. The enrolment and retention of *Chamar* students was not satisfactory. It requires special attention. To address this problem, the government should formulate an education guarantee program. A program of this nature should include both persuasive and supportive measures.
2. Children were willing to learn in their own languages, but it has been difficult to instruct in the mother tongue in the absence of textbooks. In this regard the government should respond quickly to the demand of textbooks and print the textbooks on time.
3. The government should continue the 'welcome to school' program. However, the program needs flexibility to address the problem of different groups. In this regard, the government should authorize the local stakeholders to formulate and launch the program.
4. The schools of disadvantaged children lacked spacious classroom, play ground, toilet, sports materials and educational materials. It requires

collaborative efforts of local government, community and school to improve school's physical environment.

5. A provision of local disadvantaged teachers was necessary to respond to the interests of children. The government should formulate a policy, according priority to the recruitment of local disadvantaged teachers.
6. School raised annual and examination fees from the students. However, this was incompatible with the free education policy of the government. The government should eliminate all types of school-related fees so as to make primary education truly free for all disadvantaged groups.
7. Scholarships should be available to the specified disadvantaged groups. However, the criterion of economic status appears important in this issue as poorer households may require financial assistance. The government should also increase the amount of scholarships to minimize the effect of indirect cost for disadvantaged students.
8. The practice of child labor and early marriage should be discouraged for the retention of disadvantaged students in the schools. It requires a socio-economic empowerment program. The government and NGOs should formulate such programs and launch them effectively.
9. Stakeholders' participation should be increased under the mechanism of decentralization. Local bodies like DDC, VDC, and Municipality should formulate education plans by involving disadvantaged group's representative in the planning process.

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Appendix-1

Categories of Indigenous Nationalities of Nepal by NEFIN

Endangered Groups

1. Kusunda
2. Bankariya
3. Raute
4. Surel
5. Hayu
6. Raji
7. Kisan
8. Lepcha
9. Meche
10. Kuswadiya

Highly Marginalized Groups

1. Majhi
2. Siyar
3. Lhomi (Shinsaba)
4. Thudam
5. Dhanuk
6. Chepang
7. Santhal
8. Jhagad
9. Thami
10. Bote

11. Danuwar

12. Baramu

Marginalized Groups

1. Sunuwar
2. Tharu
3. Tamang
4. Bhujel
5. Kumal
6. Rajbangshi
7. Gangaai
8. Dhimal
9. Bhote
10. Darai
11. Tajpuriya
12. Pahari
13. Topkegola
14. Dolpo
15. Fri
16. Mugal
17. Larke
18. Lohpa
19. Dura

20. Walung

Disadvantaged Groups

1. Chhairotan
2. Tanbe
3. Tingaunle Thakali
4. BaragaunleThakali
5. Marphali Thakali
6. Gurung
7. Magar
8. Rai
9. Limbu
10. Sherpa
11. Yakkha
12. Chhantyal
13. Jirel
14. Byansi
15. Yolmo

Advanced Groups

1. Newar
2. Thakali