

GIRLS SCHOOLING: HISTORY, PERCEPTION, EXPERIENCE AND ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOL

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Abstract

This paper analyses girls' schooling history, perception of schooling experience and school activities. The study reveals that parental role, occupation, social beliefs, and school activities influenced their schooling. So girls' schooling is essential though it is still difficult for school, and this study has focused on starting a particular class for deprived girls to improve their education. In this relation, the Nepal government made many efforts to improve their education, but it has not been achieved as we have targeted. Therefore, the study special concerning part is girls' schooling experience based on the schools' context. Field-based data was generated through interaction with participants, and the researcher organized the study into four subsections.

Keywords: Schooling, History, Experience, Essential Activities

INTRODUCTION

Nepal is a beautiful and small country but has a multicultural, multilingual, multi-caste system and geographical diversity with a huge amount of natural resources. Though poverty and education are major agendas for development. So, only education could play a crucial role to develop the country. Therefore, children's schooling is essential and it is the origin of consciousness. In addition, schooling is a means to reduce poverty and inequality and empower children (UNESCO, 2004). So providing education to all children has become the central goal of the countries around the world either developed or developing. Similarly, education is taken as the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, promoting human rights and strengthening democracy, protecting the environment and controlling population growth (as cited in Hall & Middgley, 2004).

Thus, education is the prime source for human beings but there is some gap between male/boys and female/girls education. For instance, there are a large number of school-age children (4.9% of the school-age population, (Flash Report, DOE, 2012). The children belong to the disadvantaged and the deprived communities and girls constitute a large proportion of this population. Similarly, the census report 2012, shows about 35% of above 6+ of age of the

population are still illiterate in Nepal. These facts indicate that girls' schooling status is lower than boys'. But fifty per cent population is covered by females in this world. It is essential to pay more attention to girls schooling to improve this situation. Therefore, education for girls is essential. Realizing this fact, the government made many efforts. Likewise, MOES's (2008) "policy state that the government will ensure the inclusion of children from the socially disadvantaged group in education".

And it is necessary to achieve what we have targeted in our country. Though the government has brought different types of programs to provide girls access to education. Special scholarship and incentive programs are conducted for primary-level girls to provide them with education. Textbooks are provided free and tuition fee is waived. Awareness programs are conducted in the community to make parents more aware of the need for girls' education (CERID, 2004). Therefore, four subsections history, perception of schooling experience and their activities in schooling have been discussed and analyzed.

Statement of the Problem

Girls' education is essential for all but it was considered a low-level status, so this study is mainly concerned with exploring the situation and status of girls' education. According to census report 2011, there are one hundred three castes in Nepal. Among them some caste groups are related to ethnic groups and some caste groups are related to Dalits. The majority of the women especially from disadvantaged ethnic and Dalit communities are illiterate and their literacy rate is low; they have lower educational attainment. It has proved that their real educational status is very low. So, they seem disadvantaged in education.

To address this situation several programs and policies have been implemented to promote girls' education. Similarly, several treaties and conventions have been made; programs are designed and implemented at the international and national level as well as local level. Among these, some of the programs are targeted to specific groups.

To bring them into the educational mainstream, different educational programs/activities need to be launched. However, ethnic girls are not getting such educational access yet. There are reasonable questions for this study like, what keeps them away from educational opportunities? And why do they have such lower educational status with the poor situation? For these reasons, the researcher decided to find out the affecting factors their education. Thus, this study is important for the schools' teachers and head teachers because the finding of the study is likely to contribute to them creating ethnic girls friendly environment within the school premises. So that marginalized class and caste children can enjoy learning. It will be helpful to them to make their teaching more inclusive and effective.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore ethnic girls' history and their perception of schooling
2. To analyze ethnic girls and other girls' activities in schools.

METHODS AND STUDY AREA

This study adopted a qualitative research procedure in an interpretive way to derive substantive meaning from the uncovered knowledge. For the information/data, the researcher interviewed principal sources and observed related participants' behaviour and circumstances with the help of an observation checklist in the natural setting. Here, the researcher derived meaning with analysis and present the experience, perception and values of research participants. Moreover, the researcher interpreted the meaning relying on the participant's understanding of the girls' schooling history, perception of schooling experience and their activities. This study was carried out in the Chitwan district of Kalika Municipality, Siddhi village of two (Secondary and Basic level) schools.

Sample population

S.N.	Participants	Type	Number of participants	Used tools
1	Teachers	Head teachers	2 head teachers and	Interview and observation
2	Teacher	Male and female teacher	6	
3	Ethnic	Girls	7	
4	Other	Girls	7	

Similarly, school, H/teacher, Chepang girls and other girls were selected based on purposive sampling. To make this study more reliable, a researcher visited a related research site and selected participants in the process of data collection. Analysis of qualitative information was used to arrive at findings and conclusions.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this study, some limitations are mentioned. Primarily, this study was carried out Chitwan district of Kalika Municipality, Word No- 7. All participants (two school head teachers, teachers, Chepang girls and Others Girls) were taken from hilly parts but not from other parts of Nepal. Subsequently, the result of this study might not be generalized among the entire schooling population of girls in Nepal. Thus, the result of the study might be different based on the participants' girls' schooling perception.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

History of Girls schooling

History is interesting and important to understand the human being development process. Similarly, history learning is the mirror of the past and it empowers people to make present life fruitful. In addition, history is often said to be the "queen" or "mother" of social science (Kochhar, 2002). Similarly, Gardiner and Wenbern viewed: The idea of history saturates our lives; it informs our understanding of the world, not just in school or college textbooks, but in newspapers, magazines, films, radio and television. It colours our understanding of the built environment, and natural landscape took, shapes our opinion about people, nations, societies, communities, and individuals, and it gives us ways of thinking about politics and religion, war and about culture. Thus, in modern times (nowadays) history is not only concerned with the

political happenings in the life notion; it is also concerned with the economic, social, cultural, religious and international relationship to the well-being of human beings. So, historical perspective and context would be reasonable to analyze for girls' schooling process.

The very first beginning of schooling history was started in religious ways such as Gumbas, Vihars, Gurukals and Madrasas. Each institution has historical and religious importance from an educational point of view. Later, the religious institutions brought a change in their tradition by including formal education. In this context, Nepal's education history dates back 150 years. Education back then was a male domain. Girls were not considered as a part of the education system. Then only a few girls were fortunate enough to get educated at their own homes if their elders wished to and could afford a private tutor or guided by educated elders (Bajarachariya, 2009). Therefore, female educational status is lower.

Above mention history of schooling clear that formal schooling was then meant for boys and girls were not meant to be educated. In this regard, radical feminism is concerned with the male monopolization of culture and knowledge of everyday school life (as cited in Yokozeki, 1998). It is found that sample schools of girls and their classroom activities is very related to stereotypical gender role based on their parent's behaviour and attitudes guided by social norms and customs. Thus, girls' schooling process was discriminated against. Similarly, Koirala (2003) says that girls' low involvement in education is not a result of natural constraints but it is because of man-made restrictions (p.80). Realizing this fact Nepal government is committed to providing universal access to basic and primary education for all. Ethnic /Chepang girls and other girls' perception of schooling

Girls' Perception of Schooling

Students' readiness and promptness are essential factors in education. Some Kumal girls leave school after grade five or six because they do not have motivation towards education or lack knowledge about the importance of education. Although there is no more parental discrimination between sons and daughters ethnic girls are not interested in education. In this research, teachers expressed the reasons:

First of all ethnic parents spend money on festivals and ceremonies because they feel nice doing that and they hesitate to spend money on girls' education. And they make them very busy with household work. Another reason is ethnic parents have no educational dream for their daughters, they think that they are living nicely and their daughters also could do so even without acquiring higher education.

It was found that, in this study area ethnic parents and ethnic girls were not interested in education. Due to the lack of parents' education, the student is also unknown about the importance of education. They never think about educational opportunities. Therefore they leave schools even after being enrolled. Other girls and ethnic girls have different attitudes towards education. It was found that despite the long distance from home, other girls from different villages were studying in this secondary school. Similarly, other girls from poor families are also studying and doing their best in school. According to teachers even other poor parents and girls are sincere in their studies. Despite the household work, they managed time

for their studies. They have the feeling of competition in acquiring education. However, some rich ethnic parents and ethnic girls are not sincere in their education. They are more interested towards work or enjoyment than towards reading and writing. Even if they have time for reading, they don't like to touch books. But they did not study adequately for achieving enough knowledge in the subject matter. This means that they don't have a strong willingness towards reading and write.

Ethnic girls and other girls' schooling experience

Ethnic are disadvantaged and marginalized in many ways. Generally, hearing is that every child has a right to receive an education of good quality which has been ensured by legal provision but in this area of girls schooling is full of difficulties related to households and schools. The researcher compared here, two (ethnic and another girl) schooling girls' experiences. In this relationship girls expressed.

Name changed, Gita Chepang/ethnic (grade 3 age 11)

I got admitted to the school when I was eight years old because I am the elder child in my family and I had to help my mother in household and fieldwork. Anyway, nowadays I liked to go to school but I felt sad when I failed in classes one and two. But I will try my best to learn in school.

Based on the above-given data illustrated that Chepang/ethnic girls hardly get time to study at home because their parents are occupationally farmers and suffering from bitter poverty. Due to the lack of parents' education beliefs and awareness. Even students are also unknown about the importance of schooling. According to the teacher (respondent), Chepang/ethnic girls feel sleepy in the classroom because of the workload and they were tired of actively participating in class. In this concern, one other girl viewed that:

I read in class three and my father enrolled me in school at the age of six. Then I became class first and I ever like to go to school. My parents are farmers. So, I have to help them in the farming season. In addition, I take care of my little brother and sister to eat and study at home though I could manage my study.

The above-given expression shows that she was admitted to school at the proper age and she was too excited to go to school and became first because of parental good role. Similarly, she managed her study time.

It has been found that both girls are positive about schooling but the other girl was highly motivated towards schooling because she was full of educational importance. But Chepang/ethnic girl failed the exam and she was not found interested in education. According to Bourdieu, the school examination system does not help working-class children instead it plays the role to fail them in exams to exclude them from education (Haralambas of Heald, 2007). Thus, Chepang/ethnic parents were not seen as aware of schooling, for instance, they admitted their daughter at a late primary school age.

In this relation, one teacher said that to improve Chepang/ethnic girls' education, we should run a special class in extra time. Thus, the teacher should adopt child-centred methods to

motivate such disadvantaged girls.

Ethnic Girls' Activities in Classroom Situation

Classroom activities are important for the teaching-learning process. Most of the learning activities occur in classroom teaching. According to the teacher's view: If students are confused in any subject matter, they ask their teachers and can do better. That's why it is important to attend class regularly. Comparatively ethnic groups' girls perform lower than other girls. In this relation one ethnic girl said,

My parents encouraged me to study and they decided to admit me to school at the age of five. I love to go to school if I accomplish the homework, If not I don't want to go to school. But I like Friday because the students enjoy singing and dancing. My parents love me very much but my mother sometimes beat me saying that when I did not study and work.

Anyway her parents want to see their daughter being well educated. She doesn't like guests at the festival time because she has to work a lot these days instead of studying. According to her, it will be easier for her if drinking water is accessible.

Similarly, another ethnic girl expressed,

When I was admitted at the age of eight because there were no schools in the village and all my daughters didn't use to go to schools in our communities. I became very happy to go to school because all of my friends went for schooling. One I felt sad when I failed in the same class and I left school. Nowadays I regret leaving school. My mother suggested she study well but she could not.

According to her, she is the eldest one to help them with fieldwork. In addition, she has to take care of her younger. She was sent by the school peon to fetch water when there was a scarcity of it in school so she could not understand anything during the first period because of her exhaustion. However, she likes Nepali subjects but she doesn't like mathematics. She felt unhappy about her frequent failure. Her message to friends is to continue her study and not leave school earlier.

According to a teacher, ethnic girls were found shy, passive and quiet in the classroom. Mostly Ethnic girls didn't want to participate in classroom activities. This kind of teacher perception reflects patriarchal notions. Radical feminism also explains such subordination and biases against girls in school as a result of patriarchy and power (as cited in Bajracharya, 2009). As they were frightened of teachers, they didn't like interaction in the classroom. Teachers notice that ethnic girls have more shyness and inferior feelings. Different ethnic girls have been presented here based on schooling activities.

CONCLUSION

Analyzing and interpreting field study made me draw the following conclusion that girls' schooling is the most important to lead their life independently and without education they will not be able to contribute to developing our country. So girls' education is very essential for all

but their schooling history was dominated by male supremacy as a result they have lower educational status. Here, parental role and attitude highly influenced their children's schooling but they did not know that basic education is a right of their children. Due to the educational benefits, they were not able to demand education for their children as well as girls. Hence, two girls perceive education as a means to improve their life skills. So it is required to provide special classes for dominated and deprived girls to promote their schooling. Girls are full of workload therefore, it is needed to consider mean not to engage them in such work and parents' education as well as awareness is important for girls' schooling.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is an essential subject in the sector of girls' education and their perception of the experience of schooling history and parents' perception of schooling experience in the context of Nepal. This study is qualitative and it generates several opportunities for additional research, regarding girls' schooling. This study's result will be useful to the Nepalese government and other NGOs in the context of girls' schooling. Similarly, this study will uncover the actuality of ethnic and other girls schooling history and their perception as well as school activities. This study will play an important role to picture our girls' schooling scenario in Nepal.

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