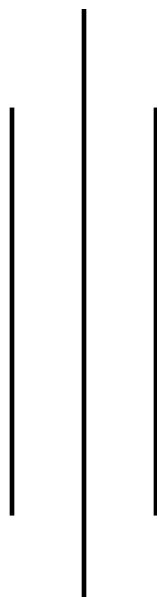


The High School Educational Status of Dalit in Nepal: From Exclusion to Success Story



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Abbreviation

AD	Anno Domini
AIT	Asian Institute of Technology
CPN M	Communist Party of Nepal Moist
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DEO	District Education Office
DNF	Dalit NGO Federation
FEDO	Feminist Dalit Organization
GCE	General Certificate of Education
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IDSN	International Dalit Solidarity Network
IIDS	Indian Institutes of Dalit Studies
INSEC	Informal Sector Service Centre
JUP	Jana Utthan Pratisthan
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCDN	National Committee for Development of Nationalities
NNDSWO	Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Government Fellowship Program
PHD	Doctor of Philosophy
SLC	School leaving Certificate
UMN	United Mission to Nepal
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
VDC	Village Development Committee
WW II	World War II

Abstract

The study particularly deals about educational exclusionary practices in Nepal on the ground of Dalit or untouchable. Basically, this research work is based on the data which are collected from the various literatures, documents, and field work in Nepal.

This study has been limited within the high school educational status of the Dalits in Nepal. It particularly attempts to find the reason behind the Dalit's low involvement and poor achievement in high school education and examines how the educational opportunity of the Dalit children is affected by their caste status. Similarly, some educational success stories of Dalit scholars have shown the clear pictures that they faced during their academic life. The study showed how social exclusion is determining the educational attainment of the particular caste group of the country.

The research is particularly in exploratory in nature and descriptive in characteristic. It set first the analysis of overall situation of Dalit children in their schooling and followed by the some success stories in the field of education amid the era of social exclusion on the ground of caste, gender or socio-economic status of the individuals. The qualitative research method has been applied to find the answers of the research questions of this research work. Similarly, the semi structural interviews have been done with the scholars to find the pictures of academic journey in the discriminatory society and education system.

In general, the research conclusion brings out the argument that caste based discrimination is interrelated with backwardness of Dalit on education. There should be especial educational provision for the limited time bond for the upliftment of Dalit in education from the government and Dalit should have awareness of the importance of education and its outcome.

Key Words: Education, Dalit, Social Exclusion, Caste Discrimination, Success Story

Pages: 89

Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study is to contribute the understanding of the high school educational status of *Dalit* in Nepal followed by the success story of few *Dalit* scholars who hold the PhD degree. Since, *Dalit* are the educationally deprived caste group in Nepal due to traditional caste based discrimination. Basically, this research work will try to find their schooling experience and obstacles that they faced during their academic life. This also examine the issues of caste based discrimination and existing practice of untouchability. Traditionally, *Dalit* are not only educationally deprived but also socially discriminated, politically unheard, economically poor, religiously impure since centuries. Because of the caste hierarchical system in the country that create the exclusionary practice in the education as well. Consequently, the literacy rate of the *Dalit* is far below than national literacy rate. Generally, this research work is exploratory in nature with descriptive characteristics of particularly high school education issues for *Dalit* communities in Nepal. The research work also tries to examine how *Dalit* student in the school are affected on school attainment and enrollment by their caste status.

Dalit are caste group in Nepal who has been discriminated on the ground of their caste status. In education too, most of *Dalit* children are facing the problems of getting admission, sitting and learning with other class fellows. This research work contributes to find the overall situation faced by the school children from *Dalit* community. Due to this exclusionary practice in the society, they have been excluded in education too. The research has also been focused on very few *Dalit* scholars' life history especially who hold PhD degree from the University.

1.1.1 Background:

Education is considered as the main driving force of any countries development. No country has made good progress in equality and dignified life within society in absence of quality education and educated people. Consequently, it is an integral part of development for the country. Universally, Education is known as the fundamental rights of the people and it enhances the quality of humanity and dignity. In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights laid down (Article 26) that,

“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit”.¹

Furthermore, education can be considered as the instruments that can bring the social change and economic transformation in the country. Thereafter, it leads the country in the path of development. Similarly, it plays the decisive role, in the overall process of development like social advancement and economic betterment.

The above declaration, declared that education is internationally birthright of every child. But, in practical term, the violation of this declaration has been clearly seen especially in developing countries and Nepal is one of those countries in the world. In general, there is no accessibility, availability and freedom in education in Nepal. The overall literacy rate of the country is 54.1% with male 65.5% and female 42.8% (Census 2001). The education in Nepal is structured as primary education, lower secondary education, secondary education, higher secondary education and university degree education. The high school includes up to grade 10 (10 years of education).A higher secondary Education (10+2) has been recently added in order to meet the international education

¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights ,1948 (Article 26)

standard and where as university degree is consists of Bachelor Degree, Master Degree, and M.Phil. Degree and PhD degree etc.

In Nepal, usually, the schooling starts at the age of 5-6 years of age. Now a days, the formal high school education is a period of 12 years, the successful completion of which a student graduates with a certificate of higher secondary education (10+2) which is equivalent to A level (Advanced level) study of University of Cambridge, UK or equivalent to most of the high schooling system of the western countries.. However, most of the schools, particularly in rural area of the country, have not upgraded as Higher Secondary School yet due to lack of adequate funds, qualified teachers, school infrastructures and other necessary resources. The old high school system with school leaving certificate examination (SLC) at the end of class 10 still persists in the country and popularly known as SLC or Iron Gate(*falame dhoka*²) Examination. Most of schools are public schools funded by the government and those schools are neither able to maintain the expected quality education with enough facilities for the student nor able to address the need of the students and their parents. Every year, SLC³ examination results of these public schools are seems not much satisfactory. In general, we could say that private school or boarding English medium school has much better facilities and other resources consequently they have been showing better performances than public schools in SLC Result every year.

SLC is stands for School Leaving Certificate; it is issued after passing grade 10 national final examination conducted once a year nationwide. It was started in 1934 after the SLC examination board was formed in Nepal. It is equivalent to GCE O level of University of Cambridge, UK and it can be compared to high school graduation in some foreign countries too. Now, the government of Nepal is on the process of phase out this old system to maintain the international standard of high school system like schooling of 12 years before starting bachelor degree in university.

² Usually SLC is consider as the hardest examination in school life that is why it is named as iron gate typically in Nepali term *falame dhoka* which is consider to difficult to cross.

³ SLC stands for School Leaving Examination which is taken at then end of class 10 nationwide and popularly known as Iron Gate Examination. It was started in 1934 after the SLC examination board was formed by government of Nepal.

Traditionally, after SLC, student used to study intermediate degree or proficiency certificate level degree at University affiliated Campus which would lead the bachelor degree after 2 years of study. Now there is choice of going to intermediate degree and going to grade 11 in school but the educational policy makers believe that after few years there is no more intermediate degree in Campus level which is fully replaced by the higher secondary education (10+2) in each school which is considered as the international standard and necessity for the country.

The educational status is one the major factors that determine the quality of life. The overall educational status of *Dalits* in Nepal is very lower than other communities in Nepal. If educational status is low, the quality of life goes down and vice versa. Therefore, the life standard of the *Dalit* is really very much pitiable. Save the children US Nepal had done research work in 1992 in the 5 selected districts of Nepal and found that over 90% of the males and 97% females among the *Dalit* community were illiterate (JUP 2001 p 16). It clearly shows the overall educational status of *Dalit* in Nepal. Similarly, According to the census of 1991 in Nepal, the overall literacy of *Dalit* is 22.8%, while the average national literacy rate is 39.6%⁴ .And the educational attainment of these community people are extremely low therefore, there are very few *Dalit* in public services, government employment ,and political participation in Nepal. All these facts show that *Dalit* are the most victimized community in the country who has been backwarded in all the sphere of the development because of existing caste based discrimination and practices of untouchability in the society.

Caste based discrimination is one of the major taboos in Nepalese society where people from the upper caste traditionally follow the rituals and rites from the century without any scientific reason behind it. Consequently, the *Dalit* are victimized in all the sphere of the development. *Dalit* have been facing the problems of getting proper education from the school because they have been facing with so many barriers in front of them. So tackling all those barriers and achieving the target are two tasks at the same time for them rather

⁴ According the national census 1991

than normal student who do their education without mental or physical torture in the society.

Educational success amid the era of caste based discrimination should consider the great achievement for the *Dalit* at that time because the scholars have faced not only academic load but also from the society with every step of the ladder to go ahead to achieve the goal. Regarding, *Dalit* in Nepal, there are only few scholars who hold their PhD degree from the different university around the world. There are no official statistics about it but the available literatures hardly shows about 4 Scholars who have already graduated their PhD Degree and 4 Scholar Undergoing PhD Program in different subjects around the world within the whole population of the *Dalit* community i.e. almost one fifth of the national population till now. So this reflects, there are some barriers that obstacle them to study higher education. Relative to their population in the country, this is underrepresented in the educational achievement, particularly, higher potential degree from the university.

In Nepal, the education has been developing and improving all over the country. The literacy rate has been increasing slowly every year. Although, the government of Nepal has made primary education for free but still poor families could not send their children to the school and but they wanted to send their children to the works to earn money around the city. Most of the *Dalit* in Nepal are discriminated on the ground of caste in society which has made denied in access to the free education. In Nepal, there is no more educational opportunity with enough facility in the rural area. But there are few schools around the urban areas. Because of the poverty, *Dalit* are not able to send their children to the city area which is quite expensive and it is beyond their imagination. Consequently, *Dalit* are excluded in the education because of the severe poverty and the existing caste based discrimination in Nepal. Thereafter, the reproduction of the structural exclusion and discrimination has been practiced in the society, which is still existing and causing on the development.

Formally, *Dalit* has started their education after the restoration of democracy within the country but still that time most of them faced a lot obstacle in front of them to continue their education because of traditional culture and practice of the high caste people in the society. But, very few of them have succeeded to continue their education both in Nepal and abroad and finally graduate their PhD degree. This achievement is one of the remarkable educational achievements even though they faced a lot of ups and downs in their academic life and there was no equal access to education for *Dalit* in the society. Consequently, most of the *Dalit* do not have confident and courage to do the education in the school.

1.1.2 Social Phenomena and Issues:

The overall aim of this research is to scrutinize the knowledge about how *Dalit* children are facing problems in education in Nepal on the ground of lower caste status. Since, my childhood I have been observing and experiencing a lot of discriminatory practices in school that teachers and class mates are not much co operative during the study and usually they do intentionally discriminatory practice even in other school activities beside the studies. Consequently, *Dalit* student started the feelings of discrimination or exclusion from the classroom because of dominant behavior towards them by both teachers and class mates on the ground of existing caste based discrimination practice. This is how, *Dalit* children in school faced the various problems even though they are good student and most of the student fails to achieve their goal because of so many obstacle arises in front of them.

In Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory, he argues that the school reproduces the culture and values of the dominant group in the society which would later on works as a form of violence which is called as "symbolic violence". Furthermore he argues that a school reproduces such beliefs of the dominant groups which later on transfer to human, through social structure, influence the school reproduction. In the case of *Dalit* children in school as well, they have been dominating on the ground of caste status since long which is the cultural parts in Nepalese cultures. Consequently, it has been reproducing educational exclusion through the social structures. (Bourdieu et al 1977 p 1-11)

I was always wondering about these phenomenons that why *Dalit* student started to fail to achieve their goal and why their educational performance also seems quite lower than non *Dalit* from the other community even in the same school. So over all we could say that because of such educational environment, student from the *Dalit* community has to do a lot of struggle to achieve the goal beside the actual academic work because of the social phenomenon against the *Dalits*.

In Nepal today, *Dalits* are almost one fifth of the population that have long been suffering from various practices of discriminations as if they are second-class citizens in the same country. The living standard is very poor because they are lacking educational opportunities and thereby consequently don't have access to economic resources and other income generating resources. Because of this, many of them have been hardly hit by the extreme poverty. Even they are hard to have enough food twice a day. This sort of phenomenon made them very frustration and hopelessness which lead them backward not forward in every sphere of the development.

Due to practice of caste based discrimination and untouchability and poor economic condition, most of the *Dalit* are far beyond the mainstream. Consequently, they are unaware about the importance of education. Even today, many school going children from the *Dalit* community are not in school even though the government has provided the primary education free of cost for all. Most of them prefer to send their children for work or look after small siblings in their own home, so that the free to work out and earn little money, to support their family.

Most of the *Dalit* are compelled to continue their traditional occupations and these work are poorly paid for their Services. In Nepal, 31% of the total population is living below the poverty line, and 70% of which comprises of *Dalit* community (Baniya, J. 2007 p 3). Still there is no particular and authentic provision for *Dalit* to uplift their social status and educational status which is essential for today.

Nepal is predominantly agricultural country and about 81% people depend on agriculture but most of the *Dalits* are landless and their economic condition is very pitiable. A study has shown that about 50% of the people in Nepal do not get sufficient food even twice a day due to severe poverty and insufficient food for the consumption, and 90% of those are belongs to *Dalit* community in Nepal. Considering their accessibility to the land in the country, almost 80% of them are landless whereas only 1% of fertile land is accessible to the *Dalit* community (Baniya, J. 2007 p 3)

Although, *Dalit* are Hindus but they have not free access to practice their religion as other people do. This is because of existing caste based discrimination which has been deeply rooted in Nepal. Because of this sort of practice in the society, most of people, they do not have courage to fight against it. As a result, the rulers in the society encourage continuing their practices in the society even though the government has declared the practice of caste based discrimination and untouchability is punishable.

The caste based discrimination is not only found from the high caste but it is also prevalent with the *Dalit* themselves. They have caste hierarchy between themselves and they do not accept food or water from the upper caste within the *Dalit* community. This is the most challenging part of the whole *Dalit* movements against the caste based discrimination.

Due to backward on education, their representation in the governmental position and other decision making position seems very insignificant as compared to their population size. Similarly, the representation at the village, district and national level of governmental and non governmental organization is insignificantly low. Even though, there is no special provision for from the government side to uplift *Dalits* in the mainstream. The practice of discouraging them from the representation in the higher decision making level or leadership level is still prevalent in the society. Consequently, they are victimized from the state and society both.

The society has been taking advantages from the *Dalit's* illiteracy, poverty and lack of awareness. So that most of the people use them as only voters or vote bank. *Dalit* have been discriminated from all the sphere of the development. Consequently, they have been treated as second class citizen in the society. Some of the dalit have difficulties to arrange two times enough food daily because of extreme poverty.

According to the Census 2001, the overall literacy rate of the country is 54.1% whereas *Dalit's* literacy rates is only 35%, similarly, the overall literacy rate of women is 37.2% in Nepal where as dalit women's rate is only 7.2%. Even the *Dalit* from the terai are

having lower literate rate than this. This indication shows that *Dalit* are far below the national level so that state should provide some sort of special provision make the egalitarian in education in the society.

A research done by Poudel, L.N. (2007) revealed that there is low rate of school enrolment and high rate of drop out of from the early school and large number of unschooled children from the Dalit community. It indicates that *Dalit* communities have been educationally excluded on the ground of caste, which has been traditionally practiced in the society. Furthermore, the drops out rate are more in Terai *Dalit* children than in Hill *Dalit* children in School. This statistics clearly showed that *Dalit* children are educationally excluded on the ground of caste based discrimination and untouchability. Since, it is believed that through the education, it can open up the equal opportunities by maximizing each individual's capacity and strength. Afterwards, disadvantage groups get chance to expand their knowledge, skills, and strength. (Pande, B.D. 2006). In this way, educating *Dalit* in Nepal also create the equality in the society, which is the today's need in Nepal.

1.1.3 Dalit: A short Description

The term *Dalit* is originally derived from the Sanskrit⁵ word and literally means oppressed. This terminology is commonly used in Nepal and India to describe such community group who has been discriminated from the society and was labeled as untouchables since long because of their low caste status. According to the Nepal's National *Dalit* Commission⁶, Proposed Bill, 2003 (Page 2) *Dalit* is defined as

“Dalit Community refer to communities identified in Annex 1, who have been left behind in social, economic, educational, political and religious spheres and deprived from the human dignity and social justice due to caste based discrimination and untouchability.”

But the first chairman of the National *Dalit* Commission describes the term *Dalit* like this

“Actually, I would say that Dalit are not caste or caste groups which are being conceptualized everywhere in today's society, but I would rather say it is the exclusionary situation of poor people that made by the so called upper caste, clever groups or rulers people in the society. Consequently, these people are socially excluded, politically neglected, educationally deprived, economically exploited and religiously oppressed. They are most victimized community in Nepal in every sphere of the development. Previously, they have been named as untouchables or Sudra now finally called as Dalit”

(Based on informal talk with ex chairman of the National *Dalit* commission, 12 January 2009 at Kathmandu, Nepal)

⁵ An ancient language of India belong to Indo-European family, in which Hindu holy text are written and on which many modern language are based

⁶ Government of Nepal has established National Dalit Commission on 8 march 2002 to monitor the rights of *Dalit* in Nepal

C. Wright Mills define the concept of the power elite as it is small groups of the people who hold the power, wealth, privilege because they have intelligent and enough wealth. He also argues that the average person are excluded from the participation and control over it especially in the decision making process, which shape the country's social, political path and its priority. Similarly, in the context of *Dalit* in Nepal, they have been excluded from the participation and control over the major decision making process in Nepal, that one's which shape their social and political direction and priority. This is the most important part of the *Dalit* in Nepal to uplift from the current position.

In Nepal, officially the term *Dalit* does not mean any caste but it is the umbrella term which indicates some existing caste groups, falls on the bottom of the Hindu *Varna*⁷ hierarchy, who are socially excluded, politically neglected, educationally deprived, economically exploited and religiously oppressed. They are vulnerable and poor group of people who are discriminated on the basis of their caste. The discrimination takes in the form of untouchables, by any physical way, specially handling of the food and drinks. They are treated as animals in the society. *Dalit* have been compelled to live in very poor condition due to lack to educational opportunities and thereby consequently do not have access to economic resources.

In Nepal, 31% of the total population is living below the poverty line, and 70% of which comprises of *Dalit* community. This reflects very clear pictures how poor *Dalit* are. It is estimated that there are 260 million *Dalit* people around the world who are living in the segregation and exclusion under the caste or decent based discrimination. Among many countries in the world, Nepal has been experiencing the deeply rooted Hindu caste system, with hierarchy of various castes within the system. (Baniya, J. 2007)

After the restoration of democracy in the country, the issues of *Dalit* is become popular because most of *Dalit* had started movement against caste based discrimination and untouchability. But still there are so many problems inside the *Dalit* movement. For

⁷ Varna is a Sanskrit term means "color". However, it has come to be associated with the qualities and divisions of Brahmin, chhetri, Vaisya and shudra.

example, the identification of the *Dalit* is becoming confusion as who are included in this community? This sort of confusion has been created because of the various governmental organizations in Nepal who has listed different caste groups in *Dalit* category in their own way. In 1996, *Uppechhit, Utpidit ra Dalit Barga Utthan Bikash Samiti* (Ignored, Oppressed and *Dalit* Groups' Upliftment Development Committee) has been formed under the chairmanship of Ministry of Local Development. They have listed 23 caste groups as *Dalit* community.

Similarly, National *Dalit* Commission has been formed in 2003, which has listed the caste groups in the *Dalit* category but they are not fully similar to the list categorized by the Ministry of Local Development. (Bhattachan, K., Sunar, T., Gauchan, Y., 2007) That is why, sometimes it makes difficult and confusion while doing some officials work for the *Dalit* in Nepal, like providing scholarship for the *Dalit* community, finding the exact population of the *Dalit* Community and even it is difficult for researcher while conducting research on *Dalit* issues in Nepal. Consequently, final result of the research might give the wrong information in different issues especially for the policy makers and decision making body of the government.

Koirala, et al (1996) believes that *Dalit* are the group of people who are religiously, culturally, educationally, economically oppressed in the society. Similarly, Rijal et al (2004) clarifies that it is politically coined word used to refer to socially backward community in Nepal, who are discriminated on the base of their caste status in the society. It has been practiced the untouchability on the base of caste based discrimination in Nepal. But anyway, *Dalit* definition can be used in two types namely a definition given by National *Dalit* Commission and Ignored, Oppressed and *Dalit* Groups' Upliftment Development Committee (*Dalit Bikash Samiti*), Ministry of Local Development and another definition are Local definition of *Dalit* in terms of Untouchable caste group in Nepal. This is how the terminology *Dalit* has been practicing in Nepal. Similarly, some *Dalit* activist in Nepal believe that the word *Dalit* itself is the hindrance of equitable society because the meaning of the word *Dalit* is "Oppressed" and generally people takes

this word as negative sense in the society. So that now a days, replacing the term for *Dalit* is the major debatable issues that has been discussed by the *Dalit* activist in Nepal. But still it is believed that *Dalit* is the globalized terminology that has been using since long to identify the vulnerable and oppressed caste group of Nepal and its scope is widely covered worldwide with this terminology so that there is no meaning of replacing only the term.

Table 1: Caste group defined by different governmental organization in their own way

Identified by National <i>Dalit</i> Commission 2003	Identified by Ministry of Local Development 1996
<p>1 Bishwakarma (Kami,Sunar,Lohar, ,Chunara, Aod) 2.Pariyar (Damai,Darji,Hudke, Dhobi) 3.Sarki(Mijar,Charmakar) 4 Badi 5 Gaine (Gandarva) 6 Kapali* 7 Khadgi* 8 Deula* 9 Kuche* 10 Dhobi 11 Rajak * 12 Tamta 13 Dusadh (Paswan, Hajara) 14 Dom 15 Batar 16 Khatwe 17 Musahar 18 Halkhor 19 Pattharkatta 20 Chamar 21 Wantar</p>	<p>Hill 1 Lohar 2 Sunar 3 Kami 4 Damai 5. Sarki 6 Gaine 7 Badi Terai 8 Tatma 9 Khatwe 10 Dusadh 11 Batar 12 Dhobi 13 Dom 14 Halkhor 15 Santhal # 16 Sattar # 17 Musahar 18Chamar Newar 19 Kusule 20 Khadgi (Kasai) 21 Pode 22 Chyame (Chyamkhal) 23 Halahulu</p>
<p>* Caste group that have asked not to include in dalit</p>	<p>#Although the committee has identified Santhal and Sattar as two different caste groups but they are the same group (They identify themselves as santhal and outside refer as sattar)</p>

Before listing the above mentioned list, National Code (*Muluki Ain*) 1854 has listed 10 caste groups as untouchables or *Dalits*. Those are *sarki, kami, sunar, chunara, hudke, damai, gaine, badibhand, pode, and chyamkhalak*. Similarly, INSEC's annual human rights year book 1993, has listed 9 different caste groups⁸. Similarly, the above listed table makes confusion in the way that some caste groups have been included in the list of *Dalit* without their acknowledgement and some of groups who have been included in the *Dalit* groups especially Newar *Dalit* has filed request letter to National *Dalit* commission expressing not to include them in the list of *Dalit*. Some caste groups who have been included by the INSEC in *Dalit* list namely *kumal, kisan, jhangad/jhanger* and *santhal/sattar* are listed by National Committee for Development of Nationalities (NCDN) under the ministry of local development inside the 61 indigenous nationalities of Nepal. Due to this fluctuation in the group of *Dalit* in the country, it affects the whole population of the *Dalit* in the country as well. That is why, currently, it is estimate that the population of the *Dalit* in the country is range from 12% to 20% of the total population. This is one of the factors that hindering the better understanding and studying of the discrimination and untouchability in the country for the researcher as well as policy makers.

In Nepal, The term *Dalit* has been interpreted in various ways. The groups of people who are religiously, culturally, socially, educationally and economically oppressed are the *Dalit* in Nepal. (Koirala, 1996, pp 15-16).furthermore, he argues that *Dalit* is not caste groups but a politically coined word used to refer to socially backward community people in Nepal. They have been discriminated on the ground of low caste in the society since centuries. Similarly, the practice of untouchability is also one of the greatest obstacles for *Dalit* to go ahead. Because of these obstacles, they are poor, deprived and socially backward. Even, the basic needs like food, shelter and safety are not available for them because of these taboos in the society.

⁸ INSEC(Informal sector service centre, Nepal) 1994 : 355-359

The term *Dalit* has replaced the word untouchable which was used before to indicate these caste groups. Even in India, Mahatma Gandhi has initiated to replace term *Dalit* by *Harijan* (Children of God) but still this term has been conceptualized in negative manner although the meaning is very good and acceptable by all. Therefore, there is no use of changing only the name.

The practice of caste based discrimination is one of the major problems in Nepal. Consequently, the practice of untouchability still exists in the Nepal. Since, these caste groups have long been underrepresented, segregated, marginalized and exploited in the mainstream. According to the census 2001, the literacy rate of the *Dalit* is only 35% where as the overall literacy rate of the country is 54.1%. Similarly, the literacy rate of the *Dalit* women are far below then the average literacy of the women. The prohibition of *Dalit* in educational participation has been continued since the hierarchical caste system and *Varna* system, which is still exists in Nepal.

1.1.4 Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability:

In Nepal, Caste system began during the king Jayasthiti Malla (1380-1394)'s regime in Kathmandu Valley. He had formulated a religiously code named *Manav Naya Shastra* in 1380 and classified the people in 64 castes group according to occupation. Similarly; the country code (*Muluki Ain*) 1854 set by King Surendra Bikram Shah restructured the Nepali society into four hierarchy 1) *Tagadhari* (Twice born) which includes Brahmin, Thakuris and Chhetris 2) *Matawali*(Liquor Drinking) 3) *Pani nachalne chhoi chhito halnu naparne* (Untouchable castes group from whom water is not acceptable and does not require purification by the sprinkling of holy water) 4) *Pani nachalne chhoi chhito halnu parne*(Caste groups from whom water is not acceptable and require purification by the sprinkling of holy water). People who fall on both 3 and 4 category are *Dalit* or untouchables. Later on in 1963, the new country code abolished such legal provisions stating that every citizen is legally equal irrespective of caste, creed and sex. But that was not much effective in the society because of deeply rooted practices. After the restoration of the democracy in Nepal in 1990, the new constitution promulgated that all form of discrimination based on caste, ethnicity and religion as punishable in law. But still the law has not been implemented practically in Nepalese society. (DNF, 2006 p 4-5)

Due to such practice in Nepal the *Dalits* are affected in the field of education as well. The people from the *Dalit* community are very poor and even they are not able to afford their children to send in the school and get education but some of *Dalit* even they are not able to find the good education even though they have enough money.

The caste based discrimination is global phenomenon, affecting not only *Dalits* of Nepal and India but also so called low caste communities in some other South Asian countries including Malaysia, Japan and some African countries as well. In Nepal, *Dalits* that constitutes almost one fifth of the total population have been suffering from practice of discrimination in society as if they are second class citizens. Consequently, still they are compelled to live with second class citizen in the same country.

In the civil code in 1963, the caste based discrimination has been clearly mentioned as illegal but it was made punishable at that time but in 1990 the constitution, Article 11 (4) has declared that,

“No person shall, on the basis of caste, be discriminated against as untouchable, be denied access to any public places or be deprived of the use of public utilities. Any contravention to this provision shall be punishable by law”.

The exclusionary practice on the educational opportunities has been continued in Nepal against *Dalit* despite the legal provision in the constitution and various government acts, plan and policies like education act 1951 and its amendment 2001. As a result, despite the availability of free education, many children from the *Dalit* community are out of the opportunity.

The discrimination takes place with the practices of untouchability imposed by dominant caste of Hindu communities, such as denial of access to the public tap, upper caste houses, temples, and hotel/restaurant and so on. Consequently, they face discrimination even in employment, education and other services in the society. Caste based discrimination and Untouchability are related each others. It would be better to define the untouchability to clarify the caste based discrimination in the context of Nepal.

National *Dalit* Commission, Nepal (Proposed Bill 2003), Untouchability has been defined as,

“Caste based untouchability refer to those communities, who have been discriminated as water polluting, purification required, if touched ,untouchable or any form of discrimination against any community that was identified as untouchable before the promulgation of the New Civil Code,1963.”

Untouchability is one of the worse practices against the *Dalit* in Nepal. Practically there are two types of untouchability still existing in Nepal. One is temporarily during the period of menstruation and child delivery, both *Dalit* and not *Dalit* women and men are practice the untouchability but it last only for short term but another one, it is year round untouchability practice on the base of lower caste. People can not touch the untouchables or *Dalit* especially Non-*Dalit* can not accept the food and drink touched by untouchables. But there is no any scientific reason behind this practice in the society.

Bhattachan et al (2002) listed a total 205 existing practices of caste based discrimination which can be grouped into nine categories. They are

“(i) denial of entry into houses, restaurants, temples etc. (ii) inability to perform important religious service because wearing sacred thread is not permitted etc. (iii) access to common resources such as using water from the tap or pond used by upper caste is denied (iv) denial of participation in public activities or entry into public places such as religious functions, government functions (v) forced labor or discriminatory practice of labor (vi) dominant behavior towards Dalit such as Jadau⁹ system (Practice of Obeisance) (vii) atrocities such as more rape cases among dalit women than others (viii) social boycott- if a high caste Hindu member marries with a dalit of either sex, he or she is banned from the society (ix) Attitudinal untouchability such as if one sees a kami(An Untouchable) early in the morning it is considered inauspicious, or if there is a dalit teacher then children of high caste group will not attend the school.”

Untouchability is one of the practices in caste based discrimination in Nepal. It is believed that the practice of caste based discrimination is originated from the Hinduism and its ritual process. Consequently, Padam Singh Bishwakarma, ex-chairman of National *Dalit* commission, says that

⁹ It is the practice of Obeisance in the Nepalese society which is common especially in Hill areas. Usually, untouchables use it while talking with high caste people in Hill areas.

“Religion particularly Hinduism is the most responsible factors of hierarchical arrangement of people on the ground of caste and the practice of untouchability. Therefore, without eliminating this practice of untouchability, it is almost impossible to create caste free society.”

(National Dalit Strategy Report, 2002)

Similarly, some *Dalit* activist blaming the state for not taking it as serious problem within the country and not taking more policy and provision to rule out the practice of caste discrimination in the society.

Recently, Government of Nepal (House of Representative) has declared the country as secular country from the previously labeled “Only Hindu Kingdom in the World” which is more or less in favor of *Dalit* rights in the country. As it is believed that the practice of Caste based discrimination and untouchability has started from Hinduism and later on it is incorporated by the society for the sake of their benefits.

1.1.5 Education and Dalit:

The education or the level of educational attainment is one of the major factors that determine the quality of life. Nepal has made significant progress in Educational during the last three decades. The national literacy rate was 13.9% in 1971 where as the latest statistics in 2001 shows that the national literacy rate is 54.1%. But due to lack of existing statistics, it is not possible to find how far *Dalit* had made progress in Education. (NNDSWO, 2006)

But, still *Dalit* in Nepal has been depriving on not only in educational but in all sphere of the development since long due to existing practice of untouchability and caste based discrimination. Untouchability is one the major problems that *Dalit* has been facing from high caste people. As the history says, during the age of Aryan, *Vedas*¹⁰ was one the educational books which used to open the door in education for the individuals but due to deeply rooted practices of caste based discrimination *Dalit* have been depriving from the opportunity to learn and read this book. Most of *Dalits* are compelled to leave their elder children at home rather than sending school because to look after the other siblings in the home. This is how; most of the *Dalit* are not able to attend the school even though the government has provided them free education. The factor why *Dalit* are backwarded in the society is severe poverty and ignorance. Most of them are illiterate consequently they do not get very good job. Similarly, due to existing practice of untouchability, they are not able to run the business like running hotel, restaurant, tea stall or other small business. They are compelled to do their own traditional work like making shoes, making utensils and playing music, dancing and these are very low paid because of new technology and technical products or readymade products within country. Even, some Dalit women are compelled to do prostitution to earn some money. Thereafter, most of them are victims of HIV/AIDS and other sexual diseases.

¹⁰ The term has been originated from the Sanskrit and it means that knowledge. It is the largest and oldest literature of Hinduism. It has been divided into 4 parts to clarify the meaning and its importance.

The previous study has been revealed about the gender disparity in education because of male dominated Nepalese society and it applies to the *Dalit* community as well. Acharya et al (2001) reported that 44% *Dalit* men are literate where as only 24% female are illiterate and the *Dalit* from terai have comparatively lower literacy rate than hill *Dalits* because of lack of awareness, extreme poverty and caste based discrimination. As the government of Nepal has described literacy as ability to read and write simple Nepali language. *Dalit* literacy rate was only 22.8% in comparison to the national literacy rate 39.6% in 1991 census (Baniya, J. 2007 p 16). But in 2001, there has been some improvement in the literacy rate of along with the national average rate. According to the census 2001, the overall literacy rate for *Dalit* was 33.8% where as overall national literacy rate was 54.1% (BK and Gandharba, 2007). The terai *Dalit* are extremely victimized by the caste based discrimination along with educational exclusion in the Society so that they are having literacy rate which is far below than the *Dalit* from Hill in Nepal.

It is believe that education is the only gateway from where any *Dalit* can go forward in the society. Different study on education has revealed that educated people, no matter, where is he or she from, has been highly honored and accepted them positively in every sectors. In the case of *Dalit* in Nepal, the perception of caste discrimination system, mostly educated people are against the caste based discrimination and untouchability which has no any scientific causes. (Koirala et al 1996)

Chapter Two

2.1 Educational Development of Nepal

2.1.1 A Glance of Nepal:

Nepal is small land locked country situated between two giant neighbors: china to the north and India to the south, east and west. According to the latest census (2001) of the country the total population of the country is 23.4 million but the estimated population of Nepal is 29.51 million (2008)¹¹. More than 80% population are living in rural areas of the country where rest of people living in urban area. Geographically, Nepal is small country but it is having a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural society. Consequently, it is considered as one of the most diverse country in the world .Beside the Nepali language, 91 different living languages are spoken in Nepal (Census 2001). Nepal is of roughly trapezoidal shapes. The average width of 193 km north-south cross section whereas length of 885 km east to west, the country, covering an area of 147,181 sq. km (CBS, 2000) with the altitude range of 100 m to 8848 m above the sea level.Mt. Everest is the highest peak in the world and it is famous worldwide.

Geographically, Nepal has been divided into three parts running roughly north to south: Himalayan Region (Mountain), Hilly Region (Hill) and Terai Region (Plain Terai) in terms of the elevation (Gururng, 1998). Similarly, it has been divided into five development regions, 14 zones and 75 districts for administrative and planning purpose. . Similarly, there are 58 municipalities in Nepal including one metropolitan city (Kathmandu) and four sub metropolitan cities. The lowest political unit is a village development committee (VDC), now there are altogether 3992 VDC in the total in Nepal.

¹¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal> cited on 11-06-2009

Fig. 1. Map of Nepal



Source: <http://www.geocities.com/kishore2027/logoPic/nepalMap.gif> (browse on 31/03/2009)

Nepal is the one of the least developed country in South Asia (UNESCO, 2000), has an overall literacy rate of 54.1% percent with male 65.5% and female 42.8% (Census, 2001) Nepal was under the dictatorial regime of *Rana* regime for 103 years and was ruled by autocratic *Panchyat*¹² system for 30 years until the multiparty democracy was reestablished in 1990 after people's movement. The multiparty system on its way experienced another revolution led by Communist Party of Nepal Maoist (CPN-M), which is in the mainstream politics after the recent people's movements against the direct ruling of the king. Recently, they have won Constituent Assembly Election in 2008 securing about 38% seat from 601 seats overall .

¹² Party less panchyat system had been made to govern the Nepal during 1959 to 1989 for 30 years.

Nepal is developing country within the South Asian country. The per capita annual income is \$ 340 (2007)¹³ and but the annual income of the *Dalit* is far below than this that is \$ 39 (Jha et al 2005 pp 1-8) because of lack of opportunity for them to do good work.

Table 2. **Demographic Information about Nepal**

Official Name	Government of Nepal
Area	1,47,181 Sq. Km.
Official Language	Nepali
Currency	Rupees (Rs.)
Population	27 million (Estimated 2007)
Capital	Kathmandu
Religion	Hindu 90%,Buddhist 5%,Muslim 2% & others 3%
Castes and ethnic groups	103 (Nepal Census, 2001)
Life expectancy	Male 60.43 years and Female 59.91 years
GDP Per capita	1490 US\$ (2006)
HID	138 th
Literacy	54.1% (Census 2001)
Government	Republic
Head of the state	President
Head of the government	Prime minister
Highest Elevation	Mt. Everest 8,848 m (29,028 ft.)
Lowest Elevation	100 m (Near Janakpur)
Longitude	80° 4' and 88° 12' East
Latitude	26° 12' and 30° 27' North
Electricity Power	220 volt, AC, in large lowland town
Time	GMT+5 and three quarter hour

Source: The World Fact book Nepal: Central Intelligence Agency (2006)

Nepal has been popularized worldwide as the tourist destination for its natural beauty and

¹³ Statistics from the UNICEF/ Nepal (http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nepal_nepal_statistics.html cited on 25/05/2009)

World's highest peak in the world. Every year thousand of tourist comes to Nepal from the different countries of the world. Most of the people depends on the income by the tourist trade, either as market for handicrafts and other small scale of business that attract tourists or, receiver services for the tourists like porters , tourist guides, hotel staffs.

2.1.2 Schooling in Nepal:

In Nepal, modern education had begun in 1853AD (1910 BS) by establishing its first and only one school in Kathmandu, the capital city during the *Rana* Regime (1846-1950). However, this school was only for the members and relatives of ruling families of the country. The education was beyond the reach of large majority of the people of the country at that time because it was virtually prohibited to general people of the country. Until 1951, there were only few schools like 321 primary school and 11 high schools within the country. The enrollment ration of the country was only 0.9% and state used to give very small amount of grant for the study. (GC et al 2006). After almost a century in 1951, general people began their schooling, after restoration of democracy, by ending an autocratic family regime with a popular people's movement against *Rana* regime (1846-1950) in the country. At that time, there were few public schools around the country but at the mean time there were some private school introduced in the country. The first private modern school was Tribhuvan Adarsha School, established on 23 September 1951, in Pharping which is situated about 17 Km south of the Kathmandu valley. It was started with 60 students at that time and student used to pay tuition fees. During those past years, there has been some educational progress in the country. As a result the country has succeeded to achieve the literacy rate 54.1% (2001 Census) as overall national literacy rate. According to the ministry of education and culture, literacy is equated with capacity to read and write of the individuals. It was endorsed by the government in mid 80s.

The School education system has been divided into primary, lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary levels which are consists of from the grade one to five, six to eight, nine to tenth and eleventh to twelfth grade (class) respectively. Now a days, early childhood Development or Pre-Primary classes are gradually running almost every school with the support of local people as well as by the school administration. Usually the pre primary classes running in institutional or private schools are called nursery or

kindergarten whereas in community (Public) schools are called as “*Shishu Kachha*”¹⁴.” The prescribed age groups for pre primary school are 3-4 years, 5-9 years for primary, 10-12 years for lower secondary, 13-14 years for secondary and 15-16 years for higher secondary education program in Nepal. Most of the lower secondary , secondary and higher secondary schools are running with the all levels, whereas very few lower secondary schools are running without primary section with offering the grade 6-8 only, likewise there are some secondary schools without the primary and lower secondary section offering the grade 9-10 only. Similarly, at the higher section level some schools are running only with having the separate grade 11-12. So this is how there are varieties of school model in Nepal.

According to Ministry of Education and Sports, Government of Nepal, the school has been categorized into four types namely community aided¹⁵, community managed¹⁶, community unaided¹⁷ and institutional schools¹⁸. Besides these, there are some schools running as religious schools such as *Madrassa, Gumba/Bihar, and Aashrams/Gurukul*¹⁹ since long but recently when the country became secular state on June 2007, it has been recognized all these school in the country (Flash Report I 2064).

Most of the schools (both private and public) run for ten months of the one academic year and five days and one half day per week. And most of the schools are closed for winter vacation within the country. There are some international schools in the Kathmandu valley specially designed to cater for students from the international community but Nepalese students are also accepted in school admission which are quite expensive and far beyond the reach of general Nepalese people

¹⁴ Typically Nepali word that refer to kinder garden Classes for the children, which is run in the governmental (public) school in the Nepal usually which starts from the age of 3.5 to 4 years.

¹⁵ The school which are fully supported by the government for the teachers salary and others funds

¹⁶ The schools which are fully supported by the government for teachers salary and other funds but their management is transfer to the community and also getting additional grants

¹⁷ The schools which are getting partial funds by the government or completely not supported by the government

¹⁸ The private school or supported by parents and trustees

¹⁹ These are considered as the religious school in the country which has been recently recognized by the Government of Nepal

2.1.3 Dalit in High School:

There is no available source or evident that shows the fact that when did *Dalit* pupil start their schooling in Nepal? But it is believed by *Dalit* activists in Nepal that very few of *Dalit* pupil started their schooling after 1950s when the western type of schooling broke a socio-religious taboo against *Dalit* schooling in the traditional system (Sanskrit system) but the participation of *Dalit* in education was very low because of socio-economic condition and social exclusion on the ground of caste. *Dalits* are poor group in Nepal .According to the study done by Bennett, Lynn (2006) 86% of *Dalit* households have an income lower than the national average. Similarly, he also found through the survey that these poor families are less likely to enroll their children, particularly girls, in the primary schools.

According the Report prepared by the Ministry of Education and Sports, in Flash book I 2007/08. The composition of the different social group background student and their sex are as follows for the

Fig. 2. Enrolment at High School level by different social groups

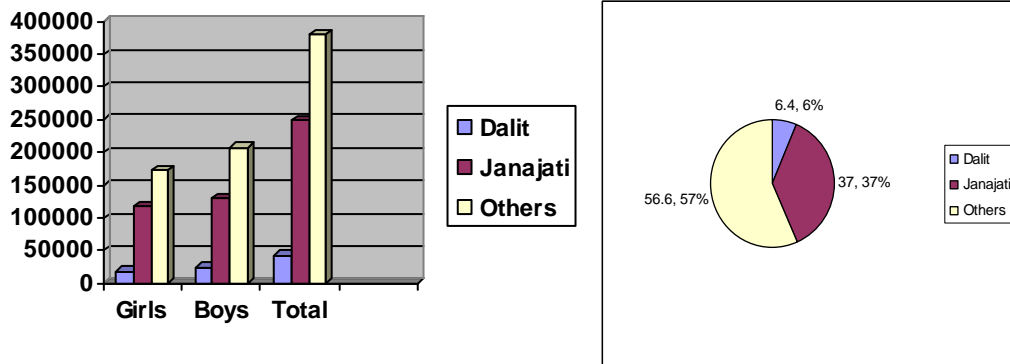


Fig 2.1 Enrolment by social groups

Fig 2.2. Percentage in total enrolment

The above figure shows that the enrolment composition at the high school level by the different social groups and sex. The *Dalit* enrolment seems very low compare to *Janajati* (Indigenous people) and regarding the pattern of girl especially *Dalit* girl shows very negligible.

Recently, the government has initiated “Education for All” program with the help of World Bank. Within this program, educational development, educational materials, scholarships and educational loan has been included but unfortunately there is no special package program for the *Dalit* community. Consequently, *Dalit* are not benefited from this program.

Nepal has been running technical and vocational program from the council for technical education and vocational training (CTEVT) within country. Most of the *Dalit* activist believed that it is very good idea to upgrade the skills of traditional occupation that has been following from the most of the *Dalit* in Nepal from the CTEVT curriculum. That might help to modernize the traditional occupation. Since, *Dalit* are known as the skilled craftsman groups in the society. If the government is paying more attention about this skillful work which has been following by the *Dalit* community, it helps directly both the government and *Dalit* themselves in the economic status.

Recently, the government has applied the free Education for *Dalit* community up to grade 12 but it is not working practically due to various reasons. *Dalits* student have been having so many discriminatory and exclusionary practices in the school especially when they go for the enrolment in the school. Most of the school administration asks child’s birth certificate or parent’s citizenship certificate during the admission process for the first time. But due to lack of awareness, most of the *Dalits* parents do not have those certificates. Even they have never given more emphasis on this sort of administrative work rather than working for enough food twice a day. Even most of *Dalits* are hesitating to the administration to get this certificate because of the practice of humiliation from the upper caste people who are working in the administration.

Dalit have been deprived from the Education since long due to various causes. The Nepalese history has been revealed that *Dalit* are the most victimized caste group on the ground of existing practices of caste based discrimination. In the field of Education too, they did not have good access and equal opportunity. Consequently, they are having very negligible literacy rate compare to national average literacy rate. *Dalit* are lacking most of the basic rights from the state and society. Due to their economic condition, even they are not able to participate on the activities in the society. Furthermore, *Dalit* are facing educational exclusionary practice both from teachers and class fellows. Although, the government has initiated some special provision for the *Dalit* in Nepal but in practical term almost all provision are limited on paper version. A study has shown that to achieve the educational achievement in the academic life, there should be at least five keys that help for the well being in children and in the later life. Those are being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and finally achieving economic well beings. (Black- Hawkins, et al 2007, pp 25-26) So the children should be physically, mentally, emotionally, sexually healthy.

Exceptionally, there are some few *Dalit* who have been succeed in their academic life with potential degree amid the era of caste based discrimination and untouchability in the society. Most of *Dalit* in Nepal lives in rural area and village where there is no facility of school, transportation, health and so on. In Nepal, even today, a child learns in a remote village is entirely different from what a child learns in a school in Kathmandu. Now, the mushrooming of private boarding schools have created situation even worse. Most of *Dalit* are not able to afford their children to send such school for their betterment. Finally, most of them drop out from the school and discontinue their education. They compelled to study nearby school in the village with discriminatory environment. Finally, most of them felt humiliation and drop out from the school and discontinue their education.

Chapter Three

3.1 Conceptual/Sociological Interpretation

3.1.1 Social Exclusion and Social Stratification:

The terminology Social Exclusion has been originated from the France in 1970s. During that time it was used particularly to indicate the groups of people who are mentally regarded, physically disabled, over and under aged, marginalized, abused children and girls etc. Now a days, this term has become so popular and has been used in different field of the social science to describe the different situations and circumstances. Social exclusion is a concept that is used in many parts of the world to characterize contemporary forms of social disadvantage and social hierarchy (BK et al 2007).

In general, social exclusion is process of deny certain groups and groups of the people to access on the mainstream life within the country. But it can be defined as per the situation and circumstances where it has been used. In the book entitled *Tackling Social Exclusion* written by John Pierson, defined the concept of the social exclusion as,

“Social exclusion is process that deprives individuals and families, groups and neighborhood of the resources required for participation in the social, economic and political activity of the society as a whole. This process is primarily a consequence of the poverty and low income, but other factors such as discrimination, low educational attainment and depleted living environments also underpin it. Through this process people are cut off for significant period in their lives from the institution and services, social

*networks and developmental opportunities that the great majority of a society enjoys*²⁰.”

Social exclusion and social stratification are different terminology but it has good relationship between these two terms. It is rather better to define the term stratification as well to clarify the term social exclusion. The term stratification is derivative form of the word strata, the geological concepts of the rock layers by the natural process. But in general, social stratification is the process of hierarchical arrangement on the ground of caste, class, social status with the society.

In Nepalese society, there has been practices of caste based discrimination and untouchability which made *Dalit* community on the bottom of the hierarchical arrangement in the society on the ground of caste. This sort of hierarchical arrangement is also considered as the social stratification in the context of Nepalese society. Since, this is particularly, studies about the educational status of this *Dalit* community in Nepal. As different previous studies has revealed that social status of their father in society is directly related to the educational achievement of the pupils (UNICEF 2007). Like wise, in the case of Nepal, there are so many *Dalit* families who are illiterate and their children are also illiterate because of lack of awareness about the importance of Education in the society.

Now a day, the terminology social exclusion and social stratification has been widely used by the development experts, social scientist and politicians. But the meaning of the term has been used in various fields with different meanings. Generally, social exclusion is referring the process of deprivation from the mainstream partially or fully on the ground of various causes. Finally, this results the backwardness in economic, education and sociocultural status in the society. The term is used to describe the different phenomenon in the society particularly deprivation. Regarding this research work, the

²⁰ Tackling Social Exclusion, Pierson, J., P.7 .from <http://books.google.com/books?id=hoyUIdqKPB4C&printsec=frontcover&dq=social+exclusion#PPA7,M1> cited on 13/04/09

term social exclusion has been used to describe the deprivation of the educational opportunities of the particular caste group in Nepal on the ground of their caste status. Caste based discrimination practices have been deeply rooted in Nepalese society since long. They have been isolated in the society because of this taboo in the society.

The term social exclusion has been used these days every field to describes it different way. In the field of education, some marginalized group or caste group, who has been discriminated in their educational accessibility and other school activities, this sort of phenomenon, is considered as the educational exclusion.

In the case of *Dalit* in Nepal, The problem of social exclusion is very complex. The existing practice of caste based discrimination and untouchability made them deprived from the main stream life in the society. Consequently, they are back warded in the education too. Therefore, it is seen the necessity to build the inclusive educational system in Nepal to uplift the *Dalit* community and It helps to reduce the magnitude of educational exclusion and social discrimination in the society. In Nepal, *Dalit* have been systemically discriminated on the base of low caste status in the society. It is sort of social exclusion process for them. Although, in the society, social exclusion may occurs not only the status of low caste, but also gender, age, health condition, disability, where they live. Especially the discrimination occurs in the public place.

Usually, socially excluded, can not participate on the social activities in the society freely because, they have already been categorized in different hierarchical arrangement on the ground of caste in the society. Finally, this process lead the individuals and group of individuals become isolated from social mechanism and deprived from the educational, social, political and cultural life in the society. In the case of *Dalit* in Nepal, they have been compelled to live their life in very isolated place with lack of education, health, food and good environment, on the ground of lower caste.

3.1.2 Social Exclusion and Caste :

Social exclusion is multi dimensional concept which covers different issues of the society. Concerning this research work, the terminology has been interpreted in the field of education on the ground of caste status. Social exclusion and caste are two different issues but these are interconnected in the context of Nepalese society. Caste is an institution of great complexity which is system of division characterized by hereditary, social status and endogamous practices in Hinduism. It is the typical pattern of social class in Hinduism. Particularly in Nepal, Caste is the kind of social stratification and social restriction characterized by hereditary endogamous group which is transferable from generation to generation. It is believed that caste system has been existed in the society for more than three thousands year in India. It is system of social segregation which is depends on the purity and pollution. Consequently, the practice of untouchability has been started in the society which is now deeply rooted in the society. According to the Hinduism, the society has been divided as four folds hierarchies like, Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Shudras. *Dalit* are falls under the Shudras. Because of these hierarchies in the society, there is inequality and discrimination between these people or group of people.

In the Nepalese society, the caste based discrimination and untouchability have driven the *Dalit* community in very backwarded in all the sphere of the development in the society. Traditionally, *Dalit* of Nepal was deprived from the education since long because it has been limited only for the high caste people in the society. Even, if some *Dalit* happen to learn or self learn then that would be punishable by the society.

The social exclusion of the *Dalit* in Nepal has been seen in various ways like denial of access on every sphere of development. At present stage, *Dalit* are interested to fight against the caste based discrimination and untouchability which has been practiced in the Nepal. Most of the *Dalit* in Nepal are still following that menial work because of lack of good education and their skills. This menial work is very poorly paid and with this money

it is hard to eat food twice a day in the family. Consequently, they can not give more priority on education for their children.

According to the Hinduism, Caste is kind of system of the division which is characterized by social status, hereditary and endogamy. The system has been practicing in Nepal since thousand years. Sometimes, it is believed that it is the division of the social status on the ground of their occupation. The socially excluded caste group *Dalit* has their own traditional occupation. Usually, they do most of the menial work like cleaning, washing, scavenging dead body, which is very poorly paid and considered as unhygienic work. And even it is difficult to survive with that money. Thereafter, people started to hate the *Dalit* and started to practice of untouchability towards them. In this way, *Dalit* are socially excluded because of their caste status.

3.1.3 Educational Exclusion and Dalit in Nepal :

Social exclusion can be defined as the situation that where certain community groups are excluded or discriminated on various ground like race, caste, gender or religion and they are not allowed to enjoy the same right of the rest of the population in the society. Basically, social exclusion issues has focused mainly on caste based exclusion in Nepal. *Dalit* are socially excluded group in Nepal who has been depriving justice from both from government and society. The existing data clearly shows that social exclusion on the basis of caste has been significantly seen in educational field as well. It is also directly influenced on lagging behind in the literacy achievement and their enrollment of the *Dalit* in school is either decreasing or remain unchanged since long.

Dalits are the most victimized group in Nepal. They have been deprived from the almost all sphere of the social phenomenon on the base of their low caste status in the society. Even though, education is one of the important parts of life to enhance individuals' status. *Dalit* are very low involvement on this activities so that we they are marginalized in every step of the development.

Although, the government of Nepal has formally decided to provide free education for the *Dalit* student all around the country for up to High school level but these are only within the rule but not in practices. Even in most of the school, *Dalit* children faced a lot of problems while getting admission into the class. Most of the time, they need to stay separately while sitting and eating at the school. Teachers usually do not pay more attentions towards the *Dalit* children in the school and compelled them to sit separately either on the back or on the ground. Such practices made them humiliation in the class and finally drop out the school. Most of the school , they ask birth certificate or birth registration certificate from the VDC or metropolitan city but *Dalit*, who are least educated are not aware about it and even they felt difficulties to get it from the concerned authorities. Consequently, the upper caste people in the society put them in segregation and servitude situation because they are afraid that *Dalit* would revolt against their activities in the society once they became educated and learnt everything. (Poudel et al

2006). Consequently, such intentional activities lead them socially excluded in the society.

A research done by Mckeever, M. and Jao, J. on *Ethnic Inequalities and Educational Attainment in Taiwan* shows that both ethnicity and children's father educational and social class affect the attainment and success in the education. (Mckeever, M. and Jao, J. 2006 pp 137-138). If we comparatively study these findings with the educational success stories of the *Dalit* in Nepal, it reflects the positive information. Since, It has been already noticed through the face to face interview with those scholars who have already graduated the potential degree, most of them were from the background of economically good and their father were also in very good position compare to other *Dalit* in the village. As we know, the *Dalits* of Nepal are the poorest in the society. They need to depend upon the so called high caste people in the society for their daily food. But some of them are well off because of their talent.

Similarly, A study done by Nobuo K. Shimahara on Burakumin, Japanese minority group who has been living in segregation because of caste based discrimination, clarify that because of continuous structural exclusion of Burakumin parents, the children are facing low academic performances and the inequality of the school they receive. Consequently, they are compelled to limit their access to culturally defined skills, knowledge, work and symbols, as a result of which Burakumin children could not get prestigious employment that would enable them to move for the higher academic career and social status. Furthermore, De Vos and Wagatsuma explained that parental fluctuation towards achievement in the majority society may have played an important role in the development of children's perception of the utility of schooling in society.

Today, social exclusion has been one of the problems of existing society. It may be the because of racial prejudice or social strata. Education is essential factors for the development of the country but if some people from the society is excluded or discriminated for the right to education then this may lead the country backward.

Throughout the Nepalese history, *Dalits* have been either denied or have poor access to education. Even today; their access to education is very poor because of various seen or unseen causes. According to Ramya Subrahmanian in the paper entitled *Education Exclusion and the Developmental State*, There are two sort of exclusion in the society one is on the form of exclusion with constitutive relevance (Caste based discrimination) and two, instrumental relevance (Educational exclusion). No doubt, it has impact on the other form of social entitlement. *Dalit* and *Adivasi* (Indigenous People) are most educationally deprived in India. The writer believes that the reasons for these are overlap between economic disadvantage and caste status and the disempowerment of *Dalit* and *Adivasi*²¹ in their relation with other social groups. In the context of Nepal, It is believed that *Dalits* are excluded from the society because of they are lag from the economic directly or indirectly.

There is link between prejudice and educational level that has been demonstrated in various countries after WWII, by empirical surveys exploring the presence of racial prejudice. Stember's (1961) analysis of US research shows that higher level of education is associated with a lower level of prejudice is widely acknowledged. Stember's (1961) finding can be compared with existing caste based discrimination society in Nepal. In Nepal, a study conducted by NGO reveals that, most of children, women, poor and illiterate *Dalits* are more vulnerable in society by discrimination and untouchability.

A study done by Jo Sparkes (1999) in UK, the educational attainment has been strongly connection with the unemployment and rate of earning. It has been found that unemployment rate decreases the rate of educational attainments.²² This study can be compare with the *Dalit* in Nepal. Aforementioned documents revealed that *Dalit* is the deprived in employment in the country that is why their children's attainment in the school seems very low. But this is not only applicable for the low attainment of the *Dalit* children in the school in Nepal but there are so many others causes behind this. Similarly, it has been found on the same research work that there are number of non school

²¹ Indigenous people in India and Nepal

²² Study done by Jo Sparkes, Nov 1999 on School, Education and Social Exclusion, London school of economics, London, UK

variables which are associated with the educational attainment of the children in schools. Those are student's personal attitudes and characteristics, socio-economics status of the family, parent's educational qualification and their skills, family structures, and parental interest on children's education. The similarities have been found from the interview with the scholars who have succeeded on their potential educational degree.

3.1.4 Research Question:

In my own educational journey, I had faced few obstacles to come up to this position. I had experienced and seen different social hierarchical events and incidents in the society. Since, Nepalese society has been deeply rooted the system of caste and caste discrimination and practice of untouchability. As social scientists are naturally curious to know causes and effects of social phenomenon that is being running in this world. From my childhood, I was really very much interested to know about the causes behind the existing caste based discrimination and untouchability which leads *Dalit* in very segregation and servitude situation in the society. Although, this is very broad issues that I can not find the whole questions that came in my mind during the entire my life but I am quite interested to know about the educational situation of the *Dalit* in the country because my own interest in this field aroused through my work as *Dalit* rights defender in *Dalit* Human right organization in Nepal. I have known that *Dalits* are the most victimized group in the country in all the sphere of the development through the various angles. No doubt, education is one the major issues and without education there is no possibility to do proper development of the country. *Dalit* have been discriminated in education too. Once I happen to hear the news that A *Dalit* student top the nation wide SLC examination with first division in the first position .I was really so happy to hear the news and behind my happiness there was the only one cause that he belongs to *Dalit* community. After that so many questions aroused in my mind that even *Dalit* can top the examination if he or she does hard labor. I was always eager to know about him and his academic history. Finally, I got chance to talk with him by phone. This first time talk with him impressed me a lot and encouraged me to study about the educational situation of the *Dalit* in Nepal. Consequently, I set my research plan about this issue and shared with my colleagues and professor during research seminar in class room. Although there were a lot of questions around on mind about *Dalit* and education but for my academic research work I had limited those areas within high school educational status of *Dalit* in Nepal.

I was highly influenced by the most popular Nepalese epics *Muna Madan* by Laxmi Prasad Devkota, which we used to study in our Nepali text book during the schooling. He was emphasizing that “*Manish Thulo Dil le Hunchha, Jata le Hudaina* (A person can be great by her/his deeds but not by the caste status). Of course, a person can be great by his or her deeds but not by the caste status but in Nepalese society, caste hierarchy is still in practices which lag the *Dalit* to participate on social activities freely as others do. Finally, those who were born on the high caste family will automatically become great even though they did not do any good work. Consequently, *Dalit* are compelled to live their life inferior to them. The hierarchical arrangement of the caste has been practiced since long in Nepal. It always encouraged me to think about the social phenomenon that leads the *Dalit* in back warded. Education is one of the most important things in our life. But I have been observing and experiencing that *Dalit* of Nepal are depriving from the opportunities to get proper education from the government and governmental body. If we look back the statistics, the literacy rates of *Dalit* are far below than the national average literacy rate. There might be so many reasons behind it but previous studies literatures revealed that in general, caste based discrimination and untouchability towards them are the one of the great factors that they are lagging in education .Since, I was very much interested to study about educational issues from the different prospective. But for the sake of this research work, I have set the question as follows for my research work.

My main research question was: *what are the socio economic and educational barriers to the Dalits student in school enrollments and learning achievements?* This is the question that try to find the general barriers that faced by the *Dalit* in Nepal while doing their education in School. I hope to find the answers of this question from the previously done research and literatures. To make the research work easier and understandable, I have included some subsidiary question to fulfill the aforementioned question. These questions are: *what are the socio economic problems of Dalits that obstacle them to send their children for schooling?* This question especially focused on socioeconomic problems faced by their parents specially while sending their children in the school. Since economy is one of the great means that help to start every sort of work in today’s world. Due to lack of opportunities, most of *Dalit* are very poor and even they can not afford for

meal twice a days. Similarly, I have set another question focused on the relationship between their lower caste status and educational opportunities. The question goes like this: *how the educational opportunities of Dalit are affected by their lower caste status?* And finally I was encouraged to find the answer of question when I got chance to read the articles about the boy from *Dalit* Community, who secured broad first position in SLC examination nationwide. Although, it was very old but that was the only one achievement in the SLC Examination history till date. That is why; I was interested to study about some of Dalit scholars' educational history. To cater this study, I had set the question as: *What are the major elements that influence scholastic achievement of some Dalits amid the era of caste based discrimination and untouchability?* The finding of this question might help to analyse between the situation of caste based discrimination and educational achievement. Since, there are so many question arises on my mind but it is good to delimit those question and study area to make it clear and right answers of those questions.

In general, I am trying to find the current situation of *Dalit* children in School followed by some exceptional *Dalit* scholars who had already achieved their potential degree amid the era of caste based discrimination and untouchability. This will be exploratory in nature by reviewing the literatures, previously done research reports and face to face interviews with some *Dalit* scholars.

Chapter Four

4.1 Research Methodology

This is my first endeavor in particularly *Dalit* issues of Nepal although I was very much interested to study about it before in my home country. Basically, this research work is exploratory in nature with descriptive characteristics of particularly high school education issues for *Dalit* communities in Nepal. It tries to find the current educational status of *Dalit* in Nepal through the existing data from the governmental and non governmental organization, previous research papers, and other related literatures.

The study has been limited within the high school of country of particularly *Dalit* communities, which is easier for me to find and collect the data and documentation. To find the answer of the research question, the related literature about the status of *Dalit* in education particularly in high school, has been intensively reviewed. Similarly, to find the answer of the other subsidiary question, the face to face interviews and interviews through e mail with *Dalit* scholars has been done in Nepal and Abroad. The main aim to the taking interviews was to explore some hidden reality of their academic life and their struggling part which lead them in success even though from the era of deeply rooted caste based discrimination and untouchability. The questionnaire has been prepared to meet the objectives of the research work by giving emphasis on the issues of childhood, family background, economic situation, situation of caste based discrimination, attitude of teachers towards them, and their own effort to achieve the goal. An informal talk with some *Dalit* activists and expert has also been done to know more about the educational status of *Dalit* in Nepal especially in high school. The qualitative research technique has been used to find the answer of the research questions, more precisely semi-structured, in-depth interviews particularly on educational and caste based discrimination issues. This research work has helped me to build a social network and professional contacts

among the groups or individuals specifically those who are working on *Dalit* rights oriented organization. Since, I was already member of nepaldalitinfo yahoo groups, from where I learnt and studied so much knowledge about the *Dalit* in Nepal.

4.1.1 Field Approach:

This research work is modeled as comparative study about how *Dalit* student are facing the problems in schooling on the ground of lower caste in the society and in another side, how some of scholars who belongs to *Dalit*, have succeed their academic life with potential degree, amid the deeply rooted practice of caste based discrimination and untouchability in the country. To find the answers of these core questions, all the literatures related to the status of *Dalit* education in Nepal has been thoroughly studied and reviewed to know more about the academic life. Due to unavailability enough literatures particularly related to *Dalit* and their education in Nepal, I had gone to Nepal to do my field work for 2 months. Through that trip, I have found so many hidden issues that I have never known before. During my visit in different organization in Kathmandu, I found that every body was really very much co operative on this approaches and they were ready to help me whatever they can do for it.

The existing literatures and statistics clearly show that there are only few scholars from the *Dalit* community in Nepal who have already done their PhD degree in various field. Since, I was always interested to learn their academic biography which is one of factor of this research work. From my childhood, I have been observing and experiencing the overall worse situation of *Dalit* Community in Nepal. Even in the field of education, I myself have faced different kind of difficulties and obstacles on the ground of caste hierarchy which is deeply rooted in the society. During my own schooling, there were only two students from the *Dalit* community in my class of about 300 students during the Class 10. Because of the under representation of *Dalit* children in Schooling, I encourage

to find the causes behind it. At the mean time, I was also interested to find the people who have already done their PhD degree from the *Dalit* community. I found only 4 scholars who had already done their PhD degree and some who are their under going PhD degree around the world. I have started sending them e mail concerning my interest and objectives of the studies. Instantly, I found the positive response from all because as they found it as new initiation in the field of education for *Dalit* in Nepal and they believed that this research work might help for the upcoming student from the *Dalit* community to enhance their knowledge and educational career. Since, I told them about my research plan and its main ideas before starting the work. All of them were agreed with my proposal and ready to give their interview for my research work. Thereafter, I managed to go to Nepal to do my field work concerning my research work. Actually, I managed to visit them through various *Dalit* activists, who have been working in the field of *Dalit* in Nepal. Similarly, I have visited almost all main *Dalit* NGO in Nepal to know more knowledge about the *Dalit* and their educational status in school. Even, at the same I managed to visit some scholars who have done their PhD dissertations on the issues of *Dalit* Education in Nepal, to take some guidance, comments and suggestions from them. I met two of them, who had done their PhD from Canada and UK respectively on issues of *Dalit* in Education. In this way, this frequent visit with them builds me confident and mature on these particular issues.

4.1.2 Data Collection and Analysis:

Social research is my field of interest and wanted to be good social researcher as my future career. My interest areas are social exclusion and inclusion, pedagogical phenomenon, caste discrimination, social inequality and social stratification. Concerning this research work, I am interested to study about the educational status of the particularly the high school educational status of *Dalit* in Nepal. I have been experiencing and observing social inequality, social exclusion on the ground of lower caste in Nepal. Few years, I have worked as *Dalit* Human Rights defenders in Nepal so that I have known few colleagues and social network friends who have been working in the field of *Dalit* orientated organization, which is dedicated to empower and uplift the social status of *Dalit* community in Nepal. Before starting this research work, I used to do discussion with the *Dalit* forum on *nepaldalitinfo international yahoo groups network*. Through this network, I came to know more and more emerging issues of *Dalit*, its problems, consequences and its complication. The collection of data has been done by visiting different organization both governmental and non governmental in Nepal who works particularly in the field of Education and *Dalit*. There are few organizations that are particularly dedicated to empower and uplift the *Dalit* in mainstream of the development within the country. I have traveled almost all main *Dalit* oriented organization in Kathmandu to find the related literatures and information about the educational status of *Dalit* in Nepal. Similarly, at the mean time, the face to face interviews have been done with those scholars who had already done the PhD degree from the different University of the world. The information collected data through face to face interview has been thematized in different groups by developing themes from the different cases. And code a phrase has been done to make it easy to categorize them with different category

My main concentration was on status of *Dalit* student in high school in Nepal. But it was really difficult to find the exact situation of the country because there are still controversies on the issues of *Dalit* in the country because of its undefined caste group under *Dalit* community. The existing data revealed that National *Dalit* Commission and Ministry of Local Development has listed different caste groups as *Dalit* differently. This

makes really confusion for the researcher to find the real situation of these *Dalit* group in Nepal. The another point is many research work concerning the *Dalit* issues has not been conducted and only few scholars and researcher have touched this topic and most of them are found in Nepali language. So it was quite difficult job for me to find the article related to the *Dalit* education in Nepal, especially in English version. Based on both primary and secondary information, semi structured interviews; informal talk with few activists from the *Dalit* orientated organization were the research tool that has been used to formulate the issues very clearly.

The questionnaire has been prepared for the interview particularly concerning about the life history of the individuals, focusing on education, economic background and so on, who have already finished their PhD degree from the *Dalit* community. The data has been collected to carry out the interview and rest of the detail information has been collected in written format as well from the latest CV and their biography published in local papers. The second major tool for this study was discussion on the subject matter with *Dalit* activists, developmental expert from Nepal. The task has been carried out simultaneously during the interview schedule in Nepal. The main objective of this task was to collect the information about the current situation of *Dalit* in Nepal especially in the high schools.

Basically, the collected data has been analyzed in different ways for its reliability and validity. The information collected from the secondary sources has been organized orderly and incorporated with the findings of the research. Similarly, the descriptive information has been collected through the various literatures both from Nepali and English languages. The information has been given more attention to skip the false or unreliable information on the research.

Regarding the success stories of the *Dalit* scholars, the biographical sketch has been applied to analyze those data collected during the face to face interviews with them. As per the plan, the face to face interview has been done with them concerning the educational journey across their lives. Due to unavailability of the female scholars from

the *Dalit* community, all four scholars were selected from the male with that potential degree. These particular scholars were selected as the case studies because they had already hold PhD degree from the prestigious universities of the world and they were born and raised on *Dalit* community from the different places of Nepal.

In qualitative research, the collected data can be analyzed from the different angles so that there is no particular rules and regulation for analyzing those collected documents. A preliminary analysis identified the memorable events both negative and positive during the entire educational journey of them. Similarly, most of them faced caste based discrimination during the schooling that made them humiliated and segregated in the society.

The study used life history interviews data to construct the life histories focusing on educational part of the life of four scholars from the *Dalit* community to examine the interpretations of their educational experiences and observations and also the factors which they influenced during the entire educational journey. For this purpose, I have sorted out some important transformative and significant movements which could be most important parts for the future students.

4.1.2 Validity and Reliability :

Most of the social scientist believed that validity and reliability are the terminology which does not follow exactly the technique of the qualitative research. But that does not mean each and every qualitative research follows the same. But regarding my research work, an extra care has been given to follow the validity and reliability to achieve the right answers of the research questions.

Usually validity refers to the degree of accuracy what the researcher expected from the research work. Since, my research work was exploratory in nature on the issues of caste based discrimination and its relationship with the education in Nepal. To ensure the validity, I had collected the latest and authentic data from the *Dalit* oriented organization in Nepal during my field visit. Although, this issues was the least studied issues in Nepal. Consequently, finding the related literatures particularly in English was quite difficult. But, I had consulted with the expert, scholars, *Dalit* activists to make sure for the data of my research work.

Concerning the life history interviews, I have made at least two times visit for the one scholar to make the environment more familiar and easier. Since, I started with informal talk with each individual which gave some information that I need from the interviews. Usually, in Nepalese culture, people are not ready to share their personal issues towards others. To access on this issues, I have promised them to preserve their identity anonymity and used the materials only for the study purposes. Finally, I took interviews with them. To ensure the all materials that I need, I have collected some materials on paper versions beside the tape recorders.

4.1.4 Limitation and Delimitation:

The research itself is the process of investigating new ideas on particular problem issues or subject matter by scrutinizing it. It is a sort of learning process based on review of previous research reports, officials' documents, perception of interviewee, participant observations and non participant observation.

Regarding this study, it is based on reports from the previous studies and my own observational on the issues of educational exclusion for the dalit in school. Since, this might not be applicable while generalization to the whole perspectives in the country. As I have already mentioned that this issues are more sensitive from the eyes of *Dalit* themselves. But still there is no governmental organization and non governmental organization that has seen it very seriously.

Collecting data took much more time than what has been expected because of frequent visit with the scholars for the interview appointments in Nepal. Similarly, because of the political instability, strike, *banda*²³(closed) in Nepal the proposed work has been delayed. But anyway, I had done all the field work that I need to do in Nepal during my visit in Nepal which make me easier to analyze all those collected documents.

The limitation of the study means it is sort of methodology that set interpretation of the study within framework which makes easier for the researcher to work on the particular issues. Usually, it is very hard to control the limitation by the researcher which is necessary too for the sake of validity and credibility. Similarly, the delimitation is the process of setting the boundaries or scope of the research question to narrow the study. For example, I have delimited my study work within the high school education. Although, it is the issues of education but if I concentrate on only high school, which would be enough for this research work

²³ Banda is Nepali word, means kind of protest done by political party in Nepal, where they do closed all the transportation, all business and almost all shop within the country, to secure their demand.

4.1.5 Ethic and Access:

Ethics is very important part of the research. If we do it properly of course the outcome will be the fair and accurate. Regarding my research work, I have been totally concern about the academic ethics. Although, research itself is the process of searching the new ideas and new innovation that can contribute the social change and development.

I have cited so many literatures concerning the issues of *Dalit* in Nepal. As we have already known that *Dalit* issues itself are the least studied issues that is why finding the papers especially focused into the upliftment of the *Dalit* are really difficult.

As per the understanding between informants and I myself, I have preserve anonymity of the participants to secure from misusing their life history .I have given all pseudo name for the those participants who participate as the informants. I have promised them to use these collected materials only for the study purposed and not transferable to others without their consent.

Gaining access to the scholars has not been problematic for me to conduct this research work. Since, I was already member of the international network of *nepaldalitinfo yahoo groups' forum*. Basically, this forum is created by the Nepalese Dalit in 2003 for the Dalit intellectuals and friends of Dalit in Nepal and abroad. Currently, there are around 400 e mails listing as members. First, I had circulated my research plan through this network and later on I found response from different people concerning on research. I found those scholars's e mail ID that I was looking for and contact them individually. Afterwards, I explained them in detail about my main purpose of this research and finally all of them response me positively and ready to give me their interview. During the Christmas break, I managed to go back Nepal to meet them and collect my essentials documents concerning the research. For the convenience, I had already given them sample questionnaires that I am going to ask with them. This made them easy for preparation for the interview. Afterwards, I took interview with them separately and recorded it. Later on, I did transcribe all those recorded interviews in the script.

Chapter five

5.1 Case History of Successful Dalit Scholars

“A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.”

Robert Yin (1989, p 23)

Basically, the aim of this part of the research is to find the pattern of educational journey of the individual's life history, which can not only stimulate the policy makers to pay more attentions about the educational priority for the *Dalit* in Nepal but also encourage the individual for their further education. Relatively, there are extremely low numbers of PhD holder from the *Dalit* community in Nepal, so that the case histories of these successful *Dalit* scholars are needed for the sake of upcoming students particularly from the same community. And It is believed that learning about the past educational experiences that would shed the light for future educational pursuits especially it is applicable from the few who have succeed from the large population from the same community group. A biography is a description about someone's life which is usually published in the form of a book. But on this research work, It has been tried to find the someone's life course on education consequently it is being called as educational success stories.

5.1.1 Biographical Sketch of Ram:

Ram was born in a village in the western part of Nepal in a poor *Dalit* family. He had started his early child education in a roofless school in his own village, but finally made it go to several prestigious Universities in Nepal and abroad. He was being the oldest male child in the joint family, in which he grew up; he had a definite advantage of enjoying all the privileges. His father was more of outgoing person, and traveled a lot; he used to visit large cities of India and travel the hills and Terai within Nepal. In fact, most kids born in *Dalit* family would not have that sort of living style back then. This had immensely raised his level of self-confidence overcoming some of his psychological inferiority complex that any kid born in a *Dalit* family could have. So, all in all his childhood was very good. He spent his childhood in his village until he was 16. After that, he left for Kathmandu for rest of his educational journey.

His village area was entirely inhabited by *Dalit* community. The caste based discrimination and practice of untouchability was extremely rooted on the society. Most of the *Dalit* were victim of such practices in the village. But, *Sunar* (Goldsmith), who are in majority in their village, have relatively better life due to their economic advantage of doing businesses in precious metals and jewels in their occupations. And even, villagers treated them socio-culturally as low in respect and dignity, but, equals when it came to business matter.

He has three brothers and three sisters. He was the only one among seven, who is a University graduate. His brother next to him is a primary school dropped out because; his father wanted him to support from him with his traditional occupation of goldsmith and business and even he felt easy for doing this work rather than studying.

He started his early schooling in his newly opened roofless school in his own village. Later on he went to an Indian Government supported District Soldiers' Board School in a his village. Again, He moved to Rambha Vidyalaya High School after 1 year then moved to Shaubhagya Vidyalaya High School for grade 6 .For his grade 7, he was back to

Rambha Vidyalaya, where he continued his grade 8 and 9. This is how he moved here and there to find the better place for the study.

Right from the beginning of his early schooling, he was declared brilliant student by his school teachers. He was encouraged by everyone around him, teachers or near and dear relatives to study hard to express his brilliance. In most of his schooling classes wherever he went, he stood outstanding, first or second position in most classes. He was awarded the honor of standing in the position of Whole School First in grade 4, Whole School Third in grade 9. He stood fourth highest in grade 10 sent-up examination at the Padmodaya High School. To everyone's surprise, he was declared Board First Position in the annual SLC examination of Nepal in 2028 BS (1972 AD).

This led him to a path to study science at the Intermediate level so that he could study Medicine later to become a Doctor. He could not meet the expectations in his I Sc examination. He was not successful to get a scholarship for Medical MBBS degree. but he succeed in getting a Colombo Plan scholarship to study Veterinary Medicine and finally became a Veterinary Doctor, which was a middle path between his original ambition of being agriculture graduate and later ambition to become a Medical Doctor.

His own family support was the only financial resource he got until he passed SLC. Even after he stood Board First in SLC, he could not get any scholarship in his first year of I Sc from any government and other private organization. There was New Education Plan just implemented. The transition from old education system to new education was taken as simple excuse not to award him any Governmental medal or scholarship for his position in SLC. As soon as they realized a boy from *Dalit* Community got the position, the government officials all belonging to higher caste were morally demotivated to award anything to honor him. During his first year of his I.sc. Degree²⁴, he got a lot of frustration from the Education Ministry not awarding him any financial assistance. Finally, he approached the Royal Palace through a fellow Palpali person, who was the

²⁴ I.sc. Degree is Intermediate Degree in Science in Nepal which is equivalent to 12 year schooling majoring pure science in most of the western countries, which lead the bachelor degree program in the university.

Personal Secretary of King Birendra. After that, he got monthly stipend of Rs. 200 for 10 months in his second year from the Royal Personal Expense Secretariat. The Ministry of Education simply got away without doing anything for him at that time even though he stood board first in the SLC examination.

He had faced few caste based discrimination in the school too. He remembered one very memorable event and talk about it like this,

“It was then a customary practice of grade 9 students hosting a farewell party for outgoing grade 10 students after their sent up examinations. I was the lead planner for the event because I was the class monitor. We collected money from each student and prepared to plan how to do it. After all planning and purchasing of party items (including oil, ghee and meats and all grocery items) was done and cooking had already started under my leadership and direct supervision. There were other four classmates, who were also from untouchable castes. They along with all others were participating in cooking and fetching water, firewood etc. without any hesitations. Suddenly, one Newar caste teacher entered in the cooking area, and called out one of our classmates, who were usually rough and rowdy in nature. After a few minutes of whispering between the teacher and that classmate, the class mate came to the cooking areas and called out all our classmates except five of us untouchable for some private conversations. Soon after that environment changed totally. Everyone of whom we now call Non-Dalit students in one voice asked us to leave the kitchen and stay outside and still participate in the party. That shocking proposition made to me was not acceptable to me, who was the main organizer of the event nor was it acceptable to other four of my classmates of my kind, who had contributed not only equal financially but also had done a lot of work already for event by

then. This lead to a rough exchange of words in the beginning, followed by physical gang fight between them and us. We did not shy away from our fight, most of us got injured, and our cloths were torn. At that mean time, our Sanskrit and Nepali teacher came in and asked us to follow him away from the arena. He told us that we were in a small minority (5 in 35) and cannot fight physically, and there is no way we could win over the adamant group of the other side. He advised us to leave the party and not attending it to face the humiliation and discrimination. We agreed and left the place.”

This incident compelled him to go out of his village for study. Finally, he went to Kathmandu for his rest of his schooling and joined Durbar High School in Kathmandu. He did not like the educational pattern and reputation of that school and left that school after few weeks and joined to another school, Padmodaya High School, where he completed his SLC sent up followed by his final SLC examination. In this way, he had studied in many schools during his schooling, because his father always wanted to find the best school for him.

During the early childhood, he used to work occasionally with his father to help him out in his work of a goldsmith. But he never motivated to become Professional Goldsmith, his father’s occupation. He was always interested to study and do some contribution to the society. He got married at the age of 27 with a lady from a Sunar family nearby village another district. His marriage was kind of traditionally arranged by his family. His wedding followed the Hindu traditional practice

The turning point of his life was selecting for the scholarship program to study veterinary medicine in India, selection for scholarship for Master’s degree in animal genetics in the Philippines, selection for a graduate fellowship for PhD degree at the University of Manitoba in Canada, selection for a job as the Provincial Coordinator at a National Swine

Traceability Pilot study (2003), selection for job the chronic disease epidemiologist in the Ministry of Health in the Government of Saskatchewan Province.

He had bitter experienced during this schooling at that time. That is why; he talks about the educational system in Nepal as follows,

“First of all the Nepal must of a deliberate strategy to have universal access to education in place. Universal access must be in the sense of everyone having access not because of one’s ability to pay, but because of one’s need and ability to succeed. All statistics have shown that Dalits are the most oppressed and excluded people in Nepal. Clearly, they have a lowest level of access to school.”

When he graduated with PhD degree he was 50 years of age, which is a late age for the potential, especially in the context of Nepalese culture, that he had pursued that path. It was because of his low status in the society which always became obstacle to go ahead.

He got a lot of educational experience in his entire life from the different country. He explain about the situation of Dalit education in Nepal as,

“The government of Nepal is doing too little to educate Dalits. As you know, Dalits are the most oppressed, neglected and backward people in the country. The basic quality education is a fundamental right of all children. Dalit children will not be receiving basic quality education, if special efforts are put in place for all Dalit children to have equal access to such education. About 20% of Nepal’s population belonging to Dalits, most of whom don’t have access to education, the government of Nepal must have a massive initiative in place to provide this access to them. The government is not paying any substantial amount to this.”

His parents had supported him for his schooling more than what they could have afforded back then. They went out of their way to support him at the expense of his other siblings. Most of his parents' resources available to support their children were diverted to him so that he could be an achiever in life.

In his case, for first few months, He was having lots of hangover of being the "Board First" in SLC, because, he was by nature a very quiet person not so interested to talk to people much. Suddenly due to his SLC position, he had to talk to all the people, who saw and knew him the guy No. 1. This situation disturbed him too much, and he could not focus on his studies initially. In addition, he was supposed to receive Board First Scholarship from Ministry of Education, Government of Nepal. Every now on then he went to Ministry of Education to inquire about his scholarship. The officer used to tell him 'Come Tomorrow, we may have some answer for you!' He used to bunk his classes to go to the Ministry of Education during office hours. But, That Tomorrow with promised answer did not come for long time. Finally, he got the answer from the Ministry of Education that they had changed the SLC Scholarship stipend to simply a *Mahendra-Ratna Vidya Padak* (a Gold Medal). They told him to wait for few days to be awarded to him. But, that day never came. He received no medal, no scholarship or no stipend from the Ministry of Education even though, he topped the SLC examination.

He was not in need of a gold medal. All these incidents of his ordeal had only wasted his valuable time from his study hours. In this way, he had had difficulties to catch up with his study back then. Somehow, he maintained his status, but could not make it to the general level of expectations from a Board First guy.

His departure to Katmandu for SLC Examination, farewell party scandal in the village's school, was perhaps the greatest turning point in his life. He further describes himself,

"The thought of me being traditionally placed at the lowest caste stratum comes to my mind all the time from the day ever since I started to know this world until today. The thought has been scary and totally

unacceptable to me right from the beginning. So, I have been rebellious against the notion of believing that as a real thing. So, when it came to my educational endeavor or professional career, in my heart and mind, I placed myself totally as a different person. Therefore, my journey of education was not affected by my own thinking about any social taboo of being lower caste.”

His family has supported him for his schooling more than what they could have afforded back then. They did manage all of their resources that could be available to their children were diverted to him to educate him up until he completed his I Sc. He thought, his family would not be able to support him financially for doing further education. For this reason, he took the first available opportunity to get a scholarship to study veterinary medicine. He did not wait for any other upcoming opportunity for going to medical college, which was thought to be the most desirable for him.

He had participated in many programs of Nepal National *Dalit* Peoples’ Development League in early 1970s. Later during his professional career as Veterinary Doctor in Nepal, he was not active in an organized way, but assisted several *Dalit* communities in several villages with their income generation programs. In 2003, He founded an international network of *Dalit* intellectuals and friends of *Dalits* of Nepal. The network is a vibrant network with an email-list group of 400 members, and two functional website working for create awareness of *Dalit* unity in Nepal and defining their rights and defend them, internationalization of *Dalit* rights, promote research and publications of *Dalits*.

Main themes from Ram's life history:

A theme identified in the Ram's life history involved the personal characteristics of social and cooperative. He was always wanted to do change in the society because he has been experiencing and observing the discriminatory practices in the society since his childhood. He was from the poor family background in the village of western Nepal. His father used to work as occupational profession as Goldsmith. Beside this profession, he used to travel around to find the better opportunity to do his kids.

Ram has started his education from the roofless school in the village. At that time, it was hard to mingling with the other friends in the school due to discriminatory practices in the society. Once, it was happened like some sort of riot in the school on the name of caste based discrimination during the farewell party that compelled him to leave that school and went to Kathmandu for continuing his education. Because of his talent, he stood board first in the SLC examination which was the record for the *Dalit* community in Nepal.

He was the eldest son from the family. He has 3 brothers and 3 sisters. He is one who graduates from the university from his family. His father has created him very good studying environment by knowing his interest, dedication and effort on studies. He was the eldest one that is why; he automatically got more opportunity to utilize the resources provided by the parents.

Ram was originally from the occupational caste group of Goldsmith (*Sunar*). But he never attracted to follow the same occupation rather than studying very well and doing some academic profession. Once, he was scold by father while helping him on work, from that day onwards he never touched that profession and studied hard.

The transition from the roofless school in the village to current position was the great obstacles in his life. He faced a lot of problems during his entire academic life. But because of his will power, dedication and effort, he achieved the goal. He served in

Nepal almost 25 years in the field of animal health and livestock production. And voluntarily, he has served in the field of *Dalit* to unite them in one platform through *nepalidalitin* info yahoo groups Network.

Finally, his life story is the vivid example of a struggle for educational and professional attainment that can be adopted by those of the struggling but talented students from the *Dalit* community.

5.1.2 Biographical Sketch of Hari:

Hari was born in terai belt of Nepal. Traditionally, he belongs to *Dalit* from the hill area but his father has been living in terai since long consequently his childhood and adulthood has been passed in the terai belt. He was from the poor family background. His father used to work the traditional occupation of tailoring in the village but tailoring was the lowest paid work in the village. He grew up in the same village where he was born. Regarding siblings, he had 2 elder brothers and 4 sisters and now all of them are doing the same traditional work as father did before. Since childhood, he was very talented and excellent on a study that's why he never felt any sort of caste based discrimination in the society and in school but all the time he was honored and felicitated with his brilliancy around the village. He was multi talented person. Even in sports, he used to win all the time. Most of class fellows used to come and ask with him about the study task and related stuffs. Although, it was difficult time for education him to go school at that time because his family was not economically strong. His father had big responsibility to look after all the children and wife with simply a traditional occupation in the village. Since, this job was extremely low paid and even sometimes people used to give grains instead of money for the work. Also it was very difficult to go school during that time because of existing social phenomenon like social stratification, caste based discrimination and

untouchability. Tackling all these problems, he started his schooling from the nearby school from his village which was the governmental school. There were no private schools nearby our village at time. Being the talented student from the school, every teachers and students encourage him to go ahead. Even he used to get scholarship from the school administration being the first position in the class. Although, he was not the single one from his community to attend the school but he was the one who had continued his studied and finally hold the PhD degree from the University.

Although, he was from the *Dalit* community from the hill but residing in the terai region, he never felt caste based discrimination on the ground the caste or stratum. And even he did not feel, he was from the *Dalit* community. Of course, poverty is one the major problems for him to continue his studies but he always used to get scholarship from different places. He did his intermediate degree from India. After that he got scholarship from the USAID for doing his bachelor degree in the agricultural engineering. After this study, he went to Thailand to do his master degree in AIT. He found full scholarship to do his master degree. Being a very good student, he secured very good grade in his master degree and finally got chance to do his doctorate degree in engineering.

In Nepalese culture, the eldest one should take more responsibility once father and mother become very weak and can not work properly. Being a youngest one from the family, he got chance to utilize the time on more concentration on studies and even his siblings help him to go ahead for the studies. Although, his brother and sister are not much educated because of their own interest and effort. They have only primary school drop out. They were engaged in the traditional occupation from the early age with following the father's occupation. Also because they didn't have much more interest on education so that they are backed in education.

Since, He was the very good and talented student from the school that is why few teachers who always encouraged him to go ahead and study hard to do better in the future. Both school teachers and student used to help him a lot to do better for the study. Actually, at that time every parent wished to make their children as doctor or engineer,

because these two professional was highly demanded, well paid and prestigious job in the society. Even, his parents also like to make him engineer.

He got married with a girl from the neighboring town .It was traditional marriage. Currently, he has 3 sons and 1 daughter. They are doing their education very good way. He talks about the Educational situation in Nepal:

“The educational status of Nepal is not much satisfactory till now .Even, if we look back the situation of Dalit; they are poor and very low status in the education. Because of the caste based discrimination and untouchability, they have been compelled to drop out from the schooling and other opportunities from the societies. That is why, we have to create healthy environment for the Dalit student especially while taking admission and teaching in the school. The government should provide them special provision for the upliftment and betterment for their educational status within the country. As we have seen that the government is not taking more responsibility for them and general attention has not been that much effective whatever seen in media. In my opinion, there should not be alternative education for Dalit in Nepal but it should more involvement of Dalit student in the education. They have been difficulty in the past. People from this community have not been given justice or justified involvement. I am not exception of this part. They should have good education and struggle for their rights. My education and my experience have brought me here. Education should be acceptable to everyone. As we have seen Dalit community has been excluded from all the sphere of the development from the society. More focus, more attention should be provided to uplift them in the mainstream.”

After schooling, he went to India to do his Intermediate Degree. After that he has finished his bachelor degree in Agricultural engineering in 1973 followed by master degree in engineering in 1989 and finally with the Private Scholarship, he did his doctorate degree

in engineering of resources and planning management from the AIT, Bangkok, Thailand in 1994.

His Parents were the most instrumental in deciding or bringing him on this position. They were the one who help him on his entire life to make on this position. Although, he was from the middle class family background but his talency has been understand by the parents and play very important role to fulfill his dream to come as renowned and prestigious person in the society. The most influencing things were his own ambition, determination, dedication to mission and objective that what he did in his life. He did a lot of struggle to come up to this position. The most important things are he never faced any sort of caste based discrimination in the society and even in his academic journey. Even he never cared about it. He faced some sort of financial problem for his educational life. But most of the time, he used to get scholarship for his studies and managed by himself.

Main themes from Hari's life history:

Hari was born and raised in terai (plain area) of Nepal. He was curious on every matter by nature from the childhood. He always loved his childhood days, because he believed that childhood is the best part of life for human beings. He was from the joint and big family.

Economically, he was from the poor family background. His father used to do tailoring in the village to look after all children and wife. He started his schooling from the nearby government school. He was very talent on studies that is why he used to get scholarship from the school administration. All the family members have created him very good study environment in home. He had 2 brother and 4 sisters along with father and mothers. It was big and joint family. In Nepalese culture, elder brother supposed to support the whole family after the father. So that he was free from that traditional practices. He was

the only one who graduates from the university from his big family. Originally, he was from the Hill *Dalit*, but he has been born and raised in the Terai so that he never felt caste based discrimination towards him.

5.1.3 Biographical Sketch of Shyam:

Shyam was born in western part of Nepal. He is typically from the middle class family background. His family used to work in the field beside the traditional work. He has grown up in the same village where he was born. He was from the large Joint family. In the siblings, he has 5 brothers among them 2 are elder and 3 are younger and 3 younger sister and 1 elder sister. Currently, all of them are involve in business and one of his elder brother is working in terai of Nepal. Most of his siblings failed to achieve higher education because most of them are not much interested to do their education properly. Out of them 2 brother did their up to 12 years of schooling. He has started his schooling from the village school nearby home. It was governmental lower secondary school. Although, there were only one private school in nearby city but that was not affordable for him because of his family's economic status. He finished his schooling from the nearby city's governmental school which was quiet famous because of the quality education. Every year student from this school, they used to pass a lot of student with very good grade.

He grew up the on the same village where he was born. The village was culturally and ethnically diversity. The majorities were high caste people in the village and the neighborhoods were very much helpful. Although, caste based discrimination and untouchability has been deeply rooted in the society but they used to co operate his family a lot rather than other houses in the village because of their good status and very good relationship with other villagers. Since, his father and mother were famous and everybody was talking about them because of their helpful and kind hearted towards others. Because of this, he did not feel any caste based discrimination during his

childhood although they are from the untouchable's caste in the society. Only he recognized about caste based discrimination and untouchability from the 7 grades in school. Because of his talent, dedication and obedient student in the class, teachers and friends used to treat him fairly and most of school friends used to learn with him about the school task. He was the first student among the class. He never faced any trouble being *Dalit* in the society. He did not face any sort of caste based discrimination that is why he has never attempt to fight against it although he was aware of caste based discrimination in the society. He has achieved first position on different school activities like essay writing competition, quiz competition in different time. In the annual function of the school, he used to get a lot prizes from the school administration being a talented and first position of the class.

During the schooling, He has not any sort of dream or plan but after schooling, he was always wanted to be engineer. He believed that his mother and father was the most influencing person in his whole academic life. Because of their support, and his own effort and dedication on the study, he became the PhD holder from the Dalit community in the society. His parents always used to encourage him to study hard although they are not much educated at that time. They knew the importance of education at that time. They always tried to make good environment for study. After passing his SLC examination from the Pokhara, nearby city from his village, he moved to PN campus Pokhara, biggest campus in Nepal, for Intermediate degree in science but he didn't finish it because of bad environment in the college. So skipping these studies he went to Kathmandu and joined Pulchok Engineering campus for the Overseer course (Civil Engineering- road Department). At the beginning, there were no scholarship programs so that he had financed him self but later on when he stood very good position during his study the government used to give him some sort of scholarship. This is how his study began very smoothly and he was encouraged to finish his study with very good marks. After getting degree from the college, he went to *kule khani Hydro electricity Project*²⁵ as Overseer and Instructor. He was appointed there for 2 and half years. During that tenure, he happened to see an announcement for the scholarship that was suit for him on the basis

²⁵ One of the Hydro electricity Project in Nepal.

of criteria. It was free competition for that scholarship. He applied for it and, he was selected for the program. At 1981, he got scholarship for both bachelor and master degree program in abroad. Since, he was very good student among his batch in the university. Finally he finished his both bachelor and master degree from the same university. When he worked on his master degree thesis, his supervisor was really influenced by his work and gave him very good grade. After master degree, he came back Nepal to contribute some knowledge that he gained from the foreign university. After few time, his old Professor was offer him to do PhD Degree at the same university. Since, he was born in naturally rich country and he was highly influenced by nature, water resources and others. That is why; finally he decided to do his PhD in the same university. He remembered his those school days and wanted to share something as,

“In my opinion, there should be compulsory schooling up to 12 grade for every individual within the country. It should be divided into technical and non technical education. After the 12 year of education, individuals can go wherever they like for the further education. Education, health and employment are the basic rights for the every individuals government should provide it properly. Since, Dalit are the most victimized caste group in Nepal. They have been backwarded because of state policy and rulers practices in the society. These communities are the segregated in the society from the different opportunities because of the deeply rooted caste based discrimination and untouchability practice in the society, As the compensation, the government should provide them education free of cost upto 12 years of schooling and special provision for the higher education. Since, over population is the one of the major problems in Nepal, the government should manage it properly, land reform system should be applied for the equitable society, unemployment problems should be solved by the government and every individual should work hard. There should be job oriented education within the country and the course should be updated all the time according to need of the time.”

During his academic journey, sometime he had faced some sort of small obstacles but for the time being, he had solved it instantly. He always faced very challenging moment in his entire academic life and tackled the problems to achieve the goal. Since, he was from the middle class family from the village so that he had never faced big financial problems during the entire study time. But because of his effort, dedication and constant work lead him to the field of success although he was from the so called untouchable community and poor family background.

Main themes from Shyam's life history:

Shyam was born in the village of western Nepal in poor family. He had big family with 5 brothers and 4 sisters. The majority of high caste people are there in his village. But the relationship with them is very good although they are from the untouchables in the village. Economically, his family was not much strong but her mother was very kind hearted. She used to give something whoever comes to her house. This made them very popular in the village

Shyam was very much talented in the study. Every year, he used to get prizes and medal from the school securing the first or second position. Considering this achievement in school, he used to get scholarship from the school. Although, the caste based discrimination was deeply rooted in the society but due to behavior towards him from others, he knew it only at the age of 13. He never felt so much discrimination in school and in the society. He finished his schooling from the nearby city's public school. It was famous for its quality education and other infrastructures.

Although, he was from the large family, he always managed to do the best for his study. He was the only one who graduates from the university from his family. He has started his professional career from the Overseers (Civil Engineering) Job at *Kule khani Hydro project* in Nepal.

During his study, he has done very well in his master thesis. The professors from the university impressed with this work and finally offer him for the PhD program at the same university.

5.1.4 Biographical Sketch of Krishna:

Krishna was born and raised in village of western part of Nepal. He was from the traditionally goldsmith (*Sunar*²⁶) family background. Most of his family used to do agricultural work since they had enough land to work for agriculture compare to other *Dalit* houses in the village. His family was reasonably well because of that he didn't face any sort of financial problems during his study both in school and university. But the problems he faced were mingling with the friends and neighborhood. Regarding his siblings, he has 1 elder brother and 1 elder sister. He is the youngest one from his family. His brother is doing profession of goldsmith as his father did before. And also sister is married with the guy who does the same profession.

He started his schooling from the nearby government school. It was primary school and for the High school, he needs to go little further away from the home. Since, he was very good student in the school. In the economic term, he is from the reasonably good family background so that he had not faced so many problems in the society especially on the matter of economy. But the society was deeply rooted by the caste based discrimination and untouchability

He used to study extra knowledgeable books beside the school text books. He was influenced by Marxist philosophy and read a lot of books about them. The Marxist's thought encouraged him to think about individual's freedom, human rights, class/caste based discrimination, gender discrimination and social stratification. Later on when he went to city for the further study, he met many people from the different background and started to do some awareness campaign program concerning the caste based discrimination and untouchability that he perceived and experienced in the village during his childhood. Even they started helping *Dalits* to get education, encourage them for further education and collecting effort to do overall betterment for the *Dalits*. During the schooling, he was the first student in the class. There was tradition of giving cash prizes

²⁶ Caste from the Dalit community, who works as making jewelry and ornaments and do business related with it.

for the top one student in the sent up examination. But when he stoop top one in the same examination, they did not give that sort of cash prize intentionally. From that day onwards, he felt some sort of exclusion from the teachers indirectly but he didn't bother about it. He had dream of becoming medical doctor. During that time, doctor and engineers were the highly prestigious profession on the society and every parent have dream to make their children as either doctor or engineer. But the circumstances led him to study about engineering. He talks about the education in Nepal,

“There are so many things that have to be changed in Nepal. The fundamental thing for the schooling is free and compulsory education for all. The highly discriminated, marginalized and segregated community Dalit community should be encouraged and given more priority in education and also even support them to continue their education after schooling within country and abroad through scholarships, grants or study loan. Usually, most of the Dalit parents would like to keep their school going children at work outside to earn some money or grain instead of sending to the school. Similarly, because of the economic condition compelled them to send their children for work or look after younger children in home instead of sending them to school. Even most of them don't have patience on studying and earning money. That is why the state should provide them income generating activities by providing interest free loan or job facility through the reservation or quota policy.”

After finishing his 12 grade education, he had started his professional career as teacher at high school in Kathmandu. Then he continued teaching in school in his own village for few months. After that he started his studies in Kathmandu and become engineer and started job as the engineers. When he was studying in the college. He met her and she was very enthusiastic. They had racial discrimination forum, and he was coordinator, they had a team of student were working together for making company. He has two daughters one is doing civil and environmental engineering in Norway and another one is doing a level education in Kathmandu. He had good and strong attachment with the own

country. He was very much interested to study autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther king that encouraged him to think about the caste based discrimination and untouchability in the Nepalese society. During his campus life, he also served on so many campaign program against the caste based discrimination and untouchability. Since, he was very talented in a study that is why he finished his bachelor of engineering with good grade. Although, he studied this degree with parents own financial support along with some few scholarships from the college because he was from the economically good background family from the village. Later on, he got chance to study his master degree in Norway through NORAD scholarship. He did his master thesis on very critical and important issues which was very important for Nepal and as well as abroad. That research report becomes one of the best dissertations and Professor was very happy with that final report of his research work. Then he came back Nepal and worked for next 4 years in the field of hydropower. During that tenure, he got chance to present his research paper on the seminar which influence the most of the key personnel, along with his Professor, of the seminars. Later on his Professor offer him to do PhD on that issue which is very much necessary issues. Finally, he accepted his offer and ready to do the PhD degree in the same university in Norway. He worked hard both on his PhD research work and his office work in Kathmandu. Although, it was very difficult job to maintain both at the same time but his willingness, confidence and effort made it success on both track with very good grade.

Although, it was very easy for him to settle down in Norway because they had spent almost 7 years but he was always wanted to go back Nepal and work for the country. His wife and daughters wanted to come back a lot because his wife had already contributed some extend to the society through different social work on caste based discrimination and education for the *Dalit*. Institutionally his wife was volunteering working or contributing to help these people for higher education. Though he was born in very remote village in Nepal. It was almost dream for him to be PhD holder from the *Dalit* medium class family. During his secondary school education, he became sick many times which hampered his studies. Even he could not appear in the final examination. Otherwise, rest of the journey has come very easier to him. His inspiration were teachers

when he was studying, he was good student so they encouraged him a lot. There was one teacher who always takes care about him and encourages him. Because of this courage from the teacher, he is now in this position. His parents are too old they can not make decision about his studies but they helped him to get education in very good environment. That was very important for him to continue his studies.

When he was studying Bsc in India, a big turning point came on that time. He was thinking to become a scientist before. Unfortunately, he became sick during his study. That is why he came back Nepal for the treatment. It took almost 7 months to be come clear from the malaria. After that his parents stop him to sending there again and that turned off his study there. He felt a lot of pain and sorrow in his academic life. That is why; he studied the life very well.

Main themes from Krishna's life history:

Krishna was also born and raised in village in the western part of Nepal. He was from the traditionally goldsmith (*Sunar*) background family. Since, they have enough land for agricultural work. His family was economically good because of the business and enough land in the village.

He started his schooling from the nearby school in the village. He never faced any financial problems during his entire academic journey. Since, he was from the small family and he was the youngest one. He was very clever and talented student. He always used to see the opportunity and grab it.

During the school days, he felt some exclusionary practices towards him. Traditionally, the school administration used to give some cash prize for those who hold the first position on Sent-up Examination. But when he became the top most position on the same examination, the authority intentionally cancelled the provision from that year and he did not get any prizes although he was deserved for it. But he was not care about it. He faced

the problems of mingling with the friend and villagers in the village due to his caste status. But when he went to city for further education, he got chance to mingling with so many friends from different background.

He had one brother and one sister and both are elder than him. Being a youngest one, he got chance to freedom from the home to do his study very well. He is only one who graduates from university from his family. He did his master and PhD degree from the foreign university with full scholarship.

Chapter Six

Results and Discussions

The above four case studies provide the biographical information of the individual's educational history. Although, they all are from the *Dalit* community in Nepal but their origin, family background, socio-economic status, personal characters, family structures were totally different with each others. There were some similarities as well, like they struggled a lot to succeed on their educational journey. They all were from the poor family background and their father used to do the traditional occupation that usually *Dalit* used to do.

In Ram's case, his family was male dominated family since long. Being the eldest son (male) in the big joint family, he got all the advantage of privilege. He was very talented student in the school. Consequently, he was the only one who graduates from the university from his family. During the schooling in the village, he happened to involve with farewell party scandal, a discriminatory practices in the school premises. From that day onwards, he felt humiliated and left that school and went to Kathmandu for the rest of schooling. Being a brilliant student, humiliated from the class fellows, from the *Dalit* family and willing power to do something change in the society, he worked hard and did very good in the annual SLC examination. Finally, he stood board first in the SLC examination, breaking the history of SLC examination result for being the first *Dalit* SLC board first. His caste status became a source of Identification because he was originally from the *Dalit* community.

In Hari's case, there was no mention of caste discrimination during his schooling. Immediately, after schooling, he went abroad to do his rest of his educational journey with scholarship. His effort, talent and will power lead him in the path of success. He was

from the Terai belt of Nepal where there is no more awareness of education. He was benefited from the different scholarship during the schooling and even in the rest of the education.

In Shyam's case, he was from the large joint family. His family used to do the agricultural work beside the traditional occupation of tailoring. He was very talented student from the early school. That motivated their parents and care about his education than other siblings. His case illustrate that talent student will not get more discrimination by the class fellows and teachers, even though, he is from the untouchables or *Dalit*.

In Krishna's case, he was from the economically good family background. Similarly, he was the youngest one from the small family in the village. He has done up to his Bachelor Degree in the university with the help of parent's finance. Because of his talent, he got full scholarship for both master and PhD degree in the foreign country. He was originally from the village where caste based discrimination was practicing between high caste and low caste. He also felt this caste based discrimination in the schooling but he never bother about it. He was just concentrate on his study and finally succeeds.

The biographical examination of these four scholars revealed that the present educational structures, educational policies should be changed for the inclusive and equality in education. Because of their bitter experience during their schooling, they urge the government to implement the inclusive education. Since, *Dalit* are the most victimized caste group in education. It should be some special provision for them to uplift in the education in Nepal. Interestingly, all of them have done their master and PhD program in abroad with full scholarships and beside one; three of them are working in Nepal in their professional field.

The caste based discrimination is one of the barriers in the educational opportunity and achievement particularly for the *Dalit* in Nepal. Caste based discrimination has compelled the *Dalit* to be back warded in all the sphere of the development in the society. Since, this research work has been limited with the High school educational status of

Dalit in Nepal. Especially, the study has been focused on the scholars' subjective interpretation of the existing sociocultural factors which influenced their educational journey across their life.

Some previous related study has revealed that the educational success might be related to the status of his or her father and his educational achievement in the society. For example, Parental level of education, student's educational aspiration, influence of the place also plays very important role in their children's' schooling and rest of the education. This has been found through the various research works particularly on education (Warrington et al 2008 pp 290-296) So this study is also shows almost the same because those who have succeed in their academic career where the son of those who have already good reputation and good status in the society from the different angles.

Similarly, it is said that economic factors is very important to achieve the educational opportunity. Since, there are few scholars who have been succeeding in their career without strong background of economy. But overall it is found that economy is very important factors that lead the pupil in successful hand. *Dalit* in Nepal are backwarded in education because of the extreme poverty and inaccessibility in the education freely in the society.

In Nepal, most of the *Dalit* are victimized in education, as previously discussed, and it affects directly with the life standard. Those who have achieved potential degree with good marks; they have very good and standard. They have far better life standard than general Nepalese people in the country even though they fall on the *Dalit* community. And they have not faced any sort of problems because of his or her status and reputation in the society.

Chapter Seven

Reflection and Implication

The overall of this research gives some sort of reflection in the existing social phenomenon to change the ongoing practices towards *Dalit* in Nepal. Nepal has been deeply rooted by caste based discrimination and practice of untouchability since long without any scientific reason behind it. It is found that *Dalit* themselves also are not much aware and united to protest against this issues. It is being carried out as reproduction process in the society consequently it is still practicing in the society.

Specially, the case history of the scholars would be useful for upcoming students from the *Dalit* community who has been lacking the encouragement for further education. The research particularly attempts to find the situation of the educational status, so the findings or result of this work will be guide for policymakers, planners and donors in Nepal to give *Dalit* education more attention.

The study of this work could raise some awareness and education among the parents, students, school teachers, member of civil society and planners so that the phenomenon of the discrimination and untouchability becomes a matter of enquiry for all.

The study will include some life history of the scholars from *Dalit* Community who have achieved their academic goal amid the era of discrimination within the society, those life history may influence in the society to shed light on ways to reduce the discriminatory practice for the so called *Dalit* Community in Nepal.

It is believed that this study will open the eye of many people and thereby motivate them to see the dalit in equality in all the mainstream of the development.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

This study of the four scholars' life history made very easy to view their educational journey amid the era of caste based discrimination in Nepal. Since, the study was focused on the problems that they faced during their academic journey. This biographical sketch allowed examining the socio culture factors, caste status, family structure and personal characteristics which influenced their educational opportunities and experience even in the exclusionary practice in the society.

The four case studies have revealed that, more or less they faced caste based discrimination in the school environment but still their intelligent, dedication, confidence and will power lead them to the ground of succeed. The biographical sketch used in this study especially suitable for the student who comes from *Dalit* community. Every individuals have their own life history but in this case it has been generalized those academic journey to find difficulties and social difficulties because of their taboo in the society. Finally, it showed that if *Dalit* are access to the opportunity, they can do very well what other do in the society. Those were the few students who have finally achieved this dignified and prestigious life with the potential degree.

Primarily, the research found that most of the students who belong to *Dalit* are facing so many obstacles and difficulties during the studies no matter where they are from. Every year hundred of such atrocities towards *Dalit* student happens in the school on the ground of *Dalit* that impact directly their mind and feels humiliation and compelled to drop out from the school. In addition, there are so many barriers which lead the *Dalit* backward in education. Most of *Dalit* are living in the rural area and they have no more access in the education geographically, physically and mentally. They are poorest community in the poor country Nepal so that they can not send their children for schooling outside the village or far from their own village, where they need expend money for rents and other

associated. Even due to existing caste based discrimination and untouchability in the society; it is hard to find the living place in another place.

On the other hand, some scholars who have good support from the family and good economic background, they have faced lower degree of caste based discrimination compare to others *Dalit* during the schooling. Through the interview with scholars, it was revealed that some of them faced caste based discrimination where as some of them faced lower degree of caste based discrimination, even though all of them were excellent on studies during the schooling.

Furthermore, it is found that home environment is one the major factors for the success in the journey of education. Concerning this study, most of them had very good home environment and support from the family as compared to peer fellow from the *Dalit* community in the society and they have never faced such problems on the ground of lower caste in the society. And the second factor is most of their father or fore father had been leading in the village from the different way that is why no body attempt to do any negative role on them. That is why, they were free from such discrimination which is being carried out within the country and there are so many kids who are victims of such practice in the society.

Finally, the study has revealed that the concept of social exclusion in Nepal is linked with caste discrimination and untouchability. Furthermore, this caste based discrimination is some how linked with educational exclusion as well. Consequently, without elimination of the caste based discrimination in the country it is really awful for apply the inclusive education within country which is needed in Nepal to increase its literacy rate. Inclusive education is the one of the best idea to increase the literacy rate in the country especially in the culturally, socially diversity country like in Nepal.

It has been revealed through the interview with the scholars, most of them did not get fare treatment from the school teachers and class fellows in the school particularly because of their caste status and existing caste based discrimination and untouchability.

Consequently, they did face a lot of obstacles and problems while doing their schooling and beyond the schooling education. According to the *Dalit* activists, *Dalit* Community has been discriminated in the education and their rights to education have been violated by both government and society on the ground of Hinduism.

The study has indicated that educational achievement is directly related with the accessibility, student aspiration, family environment, economic background and other factors. Those who have succeeded their academic journey have almost managed everything that is why they succeed. Similarly, the academic guidance has also very important role in the successful journey of education.

Inclusive education or reservation system like quota should be available in the country which can help to reduce the barriers which is faced by the *Dalit* in Nepal. Since, the country has been deep rooted by the caste based discrimination which directly affects the educational activities. In the case of implementing the inclusive education system in the school, there should be at least three indices namely creating inclusive cultures, producing inclusive policies and evolving inclusive practices in the school. (Booth and Ainscow 2002)

ANNEXES

Annex 1: National Dalit Commission, Government of Nepal

Government of Nepal, National Dalit Commission has identified the following caste groups as Dalit: Bishwakarma (*Kami, Sunar, Lohar, Chunara, Aod*), Pariyar (*Damai, Darji, Hudke, Dhobi*), Sarki (*Mijar, Charmakar*), Badi, Gaine (*Gandarva*), Kapali*, Khadgi*, Deula*, Kuche*, Dhobi*, Rajak*, Tamta, Dusadh (*Paswan, Hajara*), Dom, Batar, Khatwe, Musahar, Halkhor, Pattharkatta, Chamar and Wantar.

Note: * Caste group from the newar community that has asked not to include in *Dalit Community*.

Annex 2: UN Declaration on the Elimination of All form of Racial Discrimination (1963)

Article 1 Condemns discrimination on the grounds of race, color and ethnic origin as denial of the principles of the *charter of the United Nations* and the *universal declaration of human rights*.

Article 3 Stresses effort in Education

Article 8 All effective steps shall be taken immediately in the field of teaching, education and information, with a view to eliminating racial discrimination and prejudice and promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial groups, as well as to propagating the purposes and principles of the *charter of the United Nations*, of

the *universal declaration of human rights* and the *declaration on the granting of Independence of colonial countries and peoples*.

Annex 3: International Convention on Elimination of All form of Racial Discrimination (1965)

Article 7 States parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the field of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which leads to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethical groups, as well as to propagating the purposes and principles of the *charter of the United Nations*, The “*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination*, and this convention.

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