

Girls Education in Nepal: History, Challenging factors and Promoting Factors

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Abstract

This study attempts to explore girls education history, challenging factors and promoting factors in. Similarly, it has raised the questions in girls' education like how they are getting education .in different type d socio-cultural values and norms. Therefore, government made many efforts to create girls friendly environment in schools but it has not been achieved as we have targeted. So, how the parents' biased mentality and socio-cultural mind hampers the girls' education is the major concerning part of this study. It is found that some school and household related factors promote girls' education. It is based on field data generated through interaction with participants.

Keywords : Education, Challenges, promoting, factors & history.

Introduction

Education is important and essential for human being. Education is the origin of consciousness. It is difficult to develop a person, community, society and nation without education (Gautam, 2004). In addition, education is the most important even for the girls to lead an independent life when they grow up. If they do not have education. So, education is the backbone of country development. Education plays a crucial role in girls' all round development. So, the slogan "let us educate women let us educate a nation." Adopted by the international literacy year 1991 is still very popular and relevant.

On the basis of this situation in Nepal, our government made a commitment to provide quality education to all school-age children. In addition, education is the prime source for human beings but there is some gap between boys and girls education. For instance, there are a number of school age children (4.9%) out of the school age population, Flash Report, DOE (2011). These out of school children belong to the disadvantaged and the deprived communities. As a result, CBS (2011) report shows about 35% of people above 6+ of age of the population are still illiterate in Nepal. These facts indicate the girls' education level is lower than boys. Similarly, EFA (2015), Goal five stated that "eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality". However, still, girls and women are discriminated against based on gender helpless person. Therefore, they do not get enough time to study at home. As a result, female literacy is lower than

male literacy (Male 75.1% and female 57.4%) (CBS, 2011). There are still challenging and promoting factors for girls' education.

Statement of Problem

Problem statements help to identify and explain the problem of study .

The problem statement describes the context for the study and also identifies the general analysis approach (Wiersma 1995). As per my reading and related literature review. The Nepal government focused on girls' education.

Although in the twenty-second century. Nepalese people are excluded even in school education. They are suppressed, neglected, and forced to live deprived life due to lack of education, poverty, and social discrimination. As a result, their participation in education is very low. So, how to bring them to the mainstream of education is a major challenging factor for the government. To produce capable, productive, disciplined, and socially responsible female citizens is still not easy .But nowadays girls' education is developing gradually.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to find out the history, challenging factors and promoting factors of girls Education in Nepal.

The specific Objectives of the study are following;

1. To explore history, challenging factors of girls' education.
2. To analyze promoting factors of girls' education in Nepal.

Methods and Study Area

This study adopted a qualitative research procedure with interpretive way. Similarly, Interpretative way Qualitative research takes place in a natural setting. (Creswell, 2003). In order to derive substantive meaning from uncovered knowledge, researchers conducted interviews as principle sources and observation, to observe the participants behavior as well as circumstances with the help of observation checklists in a natural setting. In here, researcher, derived meaning from analysis and presents girls educational challenging factors and promoting factors. Moreover, researcher interpreted the meaning relying on participants' understanding of challenging and promoting factors in girls' education.

This study was carried out in the Chitwan district of Kalika Municipality- , Sidhi village of three schools. Here, primary data were collected through interview and observation. These both tools (interview and observation) were used as a tool to capture the real situation of the field. In this relation, sample population were taken from sample schools and communities

Sample population type and number are given below in tabular form.

S.N.	Participants	Type	Number of participant	Used tools
A	Teacher	Head teacher	3	Interview observation
B	Teachers	Class teacher	6	
C	Students	Girls	15	
D	Parents	Father and mother	6	

Similarly, three school head teachers, six teachers, fifteen girls and six parents were selected. In order to make this study more reliable, researcher visited related sites and selected participants for the process of data collection. Analysis of qualitative data/information was drawn finding and conclusions. Research site and participants were selected on the basis of purposive sampling.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are time and cost resources .These two are the limitations the researchers faced in the process of carrying out this research .The time limit is due to numerous teaching activities in Tribhuvan University. This study was carried out in the Chitwan district of Kalika Municipality. All participants were taken from three schools and communities were taken. The findings and results of this study might not be generalized among the entire girls education situation of Nepal.

Historical context of study

History learning is the mirror of the past and it empowers people to make present life fruitful. In addition, history is often said to be the "queen" or "mother" of the social sciences" (Kochhar, 2002).From our history, females were not schooled instead they were participants in political conspiracy by the trick. Gradually, for many years in the past, women were discriminated not only socially but also by the existing laws of the country. With the political change in 1951, those laws and social prejudices against women began to change gradually. The constitution of Nepal 1962 guaranteed equality of treatment for all citizens in the application of law irrespective of caste, creed, sex, religion and colour. This constitution can be regarded as a landmark for ensuring legal provision for raising women's status.

Similarly, history is a scientific study and a record of our complete past (Ghate, 1972). Similarly, history recalls our past events and it helps human beings to improve the present. Thus, history or past events are very important for all people to improve their present life. In the context of girls schooling history in Nepal, the first formal school was established in 1853 but it was intended to serve children from elite families without girls. The birth of Nepalese democracy in 1951 opened up classrooms to a more diverse population. The Education Plan in 1971 secured the development of education in the country (CBS, 2011). After that few girls went to school.

Nepal had emphasized girls' education for three decades.. Through the Nepal governments' effective steps such like placement of female teachers in schools helped to attract girls for education.

Result and Discussion

The information collected through the interview and observation was presented and discussed in three sub themes, which is presented as follows.

Challenging factors for girls education in Nepal

There are different challenging factors for girls' education in Nepal, which is responsible for girls' low access in education.

Gender Factors

There is gender inequality in girls' education. Regarding, gender is a term referred to the parallel and socially unequal division into femininity and masculinity (Luitel, 2008.). But in the study area, gender discrimination has happened knowingly or unknowingly. In this context, gender discrimination is not new issue in our country because discrimination has happened in many ways (Bista, 2006). Particularly in schools, gender discrimination has seen as soft and stereotype. For instance girls and boys have separate sitting arrangements and they mostly play in different groups. These given activities clarify that gender concept was already shaped in their mind. Whatever, they perceive these activities as their responsibilities as a different sex. Though teachers of study areas are not trained about gender issues, they were found positive on girls schooling as well as gender issues. They are trying hard to minimize gender discrimination in class. In this regard, one of the teachers explained,

One teacher treated girls and boys. Similarly teachers taught reading and writing equally for all. But almost all girls are work loaded such like, household work, and field work in farming seasons. I found, almost all girls do not come on school time during the farming seasons and these girls are very tired.

(Interaction based on Ram Tamang(Teacher) on 12,Chitra2078)

Obviously the role of the teacher is a very important and influencing factor for girls' education. While visiting the field, I interviewed one schooling girl in relation of schooling process, she replied:

My mother enrolled me at the age of eight years but my younger brother at the age of five. However, I was not able to attend the school regularly because of household and field work load. But my brother keeps regularity in school, so he could pass the exam but I could not pass the exam

(Interaction based on Gita Chepangf (student) on 15,Chitra 2078)

These different (failed and passed) statuses have exhibited girls' educational status. It reflected how the girls have to struggle for schooling. In this regard, Koirala (2003) says that girls' low involvement in education is not a result of natural constraint but it is because of man made restrictions .Thus, in comparison with boys, she could not be regular in school because of gender biased roles in society.

Socio-cultural factors in girls Education

Social group activities are guided by cultural beliefs and values, so it is the mirror of human civilization and it tells the background of society. Culture is attached with human civilization and development. To understand a society, it is important to understand their culture which is based on human being like many other

societies. Children's schooling initially started from home and family are the sources of learning. Making girls or women educated means educating the family and the community (CERID, 2004). But our socio-cultural beliefs are related to gender bias. For example, from the very first day of marriage, a Nepali couple starts thinking about having a son, "let it be later, let it be a son", a very famous and still popular proverb (Sanjel, 2001). Thus, above given lines, clearly present the socio- cultural reflection. Regarding the gender issues one girl said,

When I was five years old my father died. Then my mother married again. She brought me here. Now I am studying in class seven. My step father is forcing me to leave school due to a culturally biased mind, He has no importance of girls' education. Instead, she preferred household and field work for girls.

(Interaction based on Nita Tamang (student) on 25, Chitra 2078)

This type of parents attitude is the result of cultural practice as well as patriarchal values in society. In this reference, parents' attitudes and behaviors are guided by social norms and customs and it determines the role of girls/women and boys/men (UNESCO, 2005). Illiterate traditional parents, especially some mothers did not prefer the girls' education and they regarded daughters as other properties regardless of whether they studied or not. In the process of data collection, I met a woman who has a cultural mind. Then I found her argument based on social belief and her words are as follows:

As I believe daughters are liberated up to they can read and write. This helps them for self-help in future. If daughters are more educated then there will be a problem, firstly, in arranging her marriage and secondly to take care of home and family especially father-in-law and mother-in-law. It is better for them to be skilled housewives. (Rita Chhetri, directly conversation on 27, Chitra 2078)

According to our socio-cultural beliefs, daughters are not encouraged to gain a higher level of education because they are usually oriented in housewives activities. Regarding this, Sanjel (2001) states that socio-cultural factors are equally responsible in creating gender biased education. Thus, they can be more skilled in handling home. Furthermore, they think girls are physically and mentally weaker than male. In this way, conservative social beliefs are deeply rooted in our society. Hence, only education will be meaningful to reduce such a type of social and cultural belief..

Parents' attitude on Girls education

In this study area almost all Kumal parents prefer their children's education but mostly children are engaged in the household work. It is also true that most of the participants' concepts were found that education makes children's life meaningful but I met an old woman who said that girls' education was meaningless. Instead, girls should learn all household and farm related works. Such learning would be very helpful in her future life. In this context, feminism gives emphasis to understand the gender inequality in literacy and educational attainment (Mathur, 2001). Thus old people have discriminating value specially in girls' schooling but some parents who are positive on children's

schooling but due to poverty, they have many difficulties to spend money on children schooling. Regarding this, (UNESCO, 2004) report states that discrimination and poverty keep girls out of classroom. However another respondent (male, age 45) had different view on girl education :

Parents and I realize that girls' education is very important but our community, due to poor economic conditions and lack of educational awareness, are not serious about girls schooling. However, my son and daughter have been enrolled in the school at the age of five and they are continuing their studies. I have a dream to make them educated and high-skilled workers.

(Ram Gharti , directly conversation on 29,Chitra 2078)

Based on the above data, more parents prefer girls' schooling. They view that education makes their girls wise and capable to solve problems and can face challenges. My analysis is that the people of the old generation are not so positive on girls' education. According to the informants, poor parents expect their girls to be literate after completing the primary level of education.

Almost all parents' main occupation is farming and their socio-cultural structure has given more household and field work responsibility to children. Though some parents know workload is harmful.

Promoting Factors of Girls'

There are promoting factors in their education. In reality they spend their time at home and school. Their promoting factors are also around there and they really play the roles. The promoting factors help them in their study while push factors impedes their study. In this context one girl said :

"Although my head sir does not beat me, I am afraid of him. But other teachers beat me. The teachers use only the lecture method and they do not let us ask any questions. The teachers scold all the students when some of my friends make a noise in their absence. I hate exams because my friends leave me alone at that time. All my friends do not fully utilize their time during exam and the teachers also frequently ask us to complete before the allowed time. We enjoy if our teachers teach us by asking than by beating. It will be easier for us if there is accessibility of drinking water.

(Ganesh Gurng, directly conversation on 30, Chitra 2078)

It is seen from the above expression that she is not afraid of her head teacher. She hates the exam because her friends leave her alone and the teacher also irritates her to finish in time. She said that it would be interesting for them to study if the teacher taught them by creating activities. Similarly, she added that they needed water in school in the dry season. Similarly, she said that affecting factors were there in her house as well. that it would be helpful for her, if her mother washed her clothes. One girl said it was necessary to create a child friendly environment in the school. UNESCO (2004) has said

that an inclusive, learning friendly environment welcomes, nurtures, and educates all children. She also expects to have such an environment and good drinking water facility in the school.

She can improve her study if she does not have to work a lot and if there is no seasonal farming work . Now, here is Sita Maya expression:

I liked the Nepali subject very much. My Nepali subject teacher taught me very affectionately. I think I could improve my mathematics, if the teacher taught with examples. I could easily solve mathematical problems if I talked with my friends. I had limited time to study and did homeworks.

(Sita , directly conversation on 5,Baisakha 20789)

She said it would be easier for her if other teachers also followed the Nepali subject teacher's method. She also said that she felt more comfortable to learn with female teachers than male teachers and she could improve her mathematics if the subject teacher taught with examples.

The teachers are required to create a child friendly environment in order to improve their standard in education.

Conclusion

Collected data and analyzed and interpreted field data/information made me draw the following conclusions that schooling girls is inevitable. Education is the basic requirement for human development and the right to education is a fundamental human right (Kumar & Anita, 2012). Every child, whether a boy or girl, should have the opportunity to receive education. Due to the parents' economic problems all girls have difficulties to be educated . But some parents send boys regularly to school but not girls due to the gender biased mentality. In order to provide good education to girls' improvement needs to be made in all aspects. Parents need to keep a positive attitude on girls' education. A handful of attempts have been made by some NGOs and Government to create a gender friendly environment for girls' education. Our practices are not adequate for gender equality. Therefore, both governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations of Nepal should be active to promote education. **Further Research Related Recommendation**

Nepal has a diverse background in language, caste, and geography, but not a single research enough to address through girls education . Due to the lack of clear policy, it is being difficult to promote all girls education at the school level. Therefore, this study will be given future ideas to research in areas of girls education.

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