Making Dalit Friendly Schools in Nepal: An Ethnographic Study

Bishow Mani Subedi
M. Ed. (TU) /M.Phil. (KU)
Email: mani_bishow@yahoo.com

Abstract

Discrimination against Dalit is a socially structured, legally aligned, historically perpetuated, culturally institutionalized, and religiously distinguished phenomenon. In the context of this research, I felt that the inclusion of Dalits in mainstream education needs social, historical, legal, cultural, political, and religious interventions to emancipate them from the chain of ignorance. The strategy of inquiry was qualitative and ontologically it was based on multiple realities. Thus, I used an ethnographic research design using unstructured interviews and participatory observation. School teachers, head-teacher, Dalit students, parents, SMC members, and community people were selected purposely to collect the data for the fulfilment of the objectives. The data were analyzed and interpreted with the lens of Cultural difference theory and Caste hierarchy theory to generate meanings. I also used my reflexivity to be aligned with the research and experiences obtained in the field study.

Keywords: childhood experiences, problems, interest-based learning, issue-based learning

Introduction

Being one of the non-Dalit residents in the village where many Dalits resided, I often wondered during my childhood why Dalits in my surrounding appeared to be different from us in the social, cultural, economic and educational life world. Since the time I began to interpret my world around consciously, I observed that the way I resent myself in personal, social, cultural, and education-related activities were different from those of children who belonged to the Kami. I began to interpret them in terms of Dalits- the people who are supposed to be socially excluded. When I was just a child, I followed the culture of making social distance from Dalits as a taken-for-granted form and began to continue it further. Why should I be at distance from Dalits? What made non-Dalits perceive Dalits the way they did those days? What social stances and/or cultural

norms came into play while interpreting social relationships with Dalits? These questions subconsciously remained in my mind, which became prominent along with my growth and development- personally, socially, and educationally in the later stages of my life.

Similar with my feelings, the family orientation towards Dalits also resembled the community context. In many of the activities that carried social importance, I found such Dalits being excluded. For example, I observed that they were not allowed to enter into the temples and worship the God idol. I also observed that they were not asked to participate in feasts and festivals performed by the non-Dalits in the community. The sense and practice of untouchability (i.e., not coming into physical contact with Dalits) appeared to me so extreme that evoked me to play with questions of the kind: How do I feel if I am treated the way Dalits are in my social setting? What might be the relationship between feasts and festivals performed by non-Dalits and the participation of Dalits in them? So, all these questions made me think consciously regarding this issue.

While problematizing Dalits in Education- my research agenda, I would like to discuss education with Dalit life world and then reveal why and how the existing situation of Dalits education needs the attention of a researcher, social activists, and educators. In this context, my research writing makes me think of education as a cause of change in the personal, social, and professional life of an individual. With the lens as such, I would like to assess what changes I observed in the life of Dalits who lived, in a neighborhood of my village. But before doing so, I must articulate who Dalits are.

Linking it with the *Vedic* verse, I realize that every creature survives in the world with the knowledge they possess and that the knowledge of one creature differs from another depending upon the way of survival. If it is so, I see the problem in their existing way of life that bounds them to survive in the way they do. But as a researcher, I would like to ask some specific questions such as; what sorts of knowledge is possessed by the Dalits and how their knowledge contributes to their survival. If their life situation consists of the status quo, there must be a system of knowledge that reproduces the same situation in their life from one generation to another. Thus, it needs academic research to uncover how their way of life is integrated with their worldview and education.

In the context of problematizing my research agenda, I appear with the question like, what sorts of perceptions, concepts, and worldviews of Dalits and/or non-Dalits, especially in terms of education, caused such social relationship between Dalits and non-Dalits. This means whether the problem lies in the perceptions of Dalits in their existing education that they possess at present. The problem as such induced me to inquire about non/Dalit perceptions of education through this research. If so, I see the problem on the part of the schools and I would like to raise a question in the context: why the schools by their virtues could not address the needs of Dalits children. Overall, I saw the problem with perceptions, practices, and constructs concerning school education. I, as a researcher, attempted to address those problems through this research to enable the schools be Dalit-friendly.

The main purpose of this study was to explore in what ways the schools can be made Dalit-friendly. This study is important in multiple ways. First, it incorporated the section of Dalits in *Tanahun* district where no research as such was carried out in the past. This research however attempted to find out some ways to enable the schools be Dalit-friendly. The knowledge claimed through this study will add up to the body of knowledge related to Dalit education in Nepal. Besides these, the teachers and the head teacher will get help from the findings, especially on the way to transforming the school environment to make it Dalit-friendly. The finding of the study will be helpful for Dalit children and parents as well, especially in empowering and informing them of their complexities in getting access to school education.

Literature Review

Literature shows that the caste system was practiced from Malla period in Nepal. King Jayasthiti Malla (1360-1395) formally divided society into different functional and occupational groups (Subedi, 2010). Later, King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of the kingdom of modern Nepal, also accepted the caste stratification in the society by announcing Nepal as a "*garden of four castes and thirty-six, Varnas*", all caste and ethnic groups, including the Dalits, have been dominated, excluded, marginalized, deprived, exploited, conquered for centuries by so-called 'high caste' people (Bista, 1991). So, we can say that caste-based untouchability is one of the worst forms of violation of human rights.

Similarly, Dalits' status and role in society are particularly depressing and humiliating. Dalits have no dignity in the community or society they live in due to untouchability and other discrimination. Further, says that "the division of the caste system was highly influenced by the classical *Varnas* model of Hindu system illustrated in the code of *Manusmiriti* that classified people into four major castes as *Brahman*, *Khastriya*, Vaishya and Sudra" (p. 43). Bista (1991) holds the view that the caste concept only entered Nepal for the first time at the beginning of the *Licchavi* era (p.35). Historically, Nepali society holds deep roots in the Hindu caste system, with a hierarchy of different groups of people within the system (Sharma, 2006).

Manusmiriti is the book of Hindu laws legitimated by Manu. It includes different aspects of social life like *Varnshram*, family, marriage, law justice, rites, and sacraments and so on. Manu also proves that Varna is caste with birth although it is colour, not caste. Thus, *Manusmriti* was the constitution of Hindu directed to the social stratification based on caste imposed several laws and rules which is sheer justice to the lower caste (p. 14). Koirala (1996) argues that the *Geeta*-the holy book for the Hindu 'Guna' and 'Karma' are the bases for the stratification of *Varna*. Here '*Guna*' means the quality of a person and 'Karma' denotes works. Similarly, Dahal et al. (2002) write "in the past, the schooling system was based on the Varnashrama model during the Vedic and Post Vedic periods and there was a restriction in access to schooling to Shudra (Dalits), especially, *pani-nachalne* groups in *Vernashram* system of education because their prescribed duty was to serve the people of other castes" (p. 29).

Nepali society constitutes of various castes and classes. The former is religiously and historically produced while the latter is the subject to be changed. The documents show that

learning and teaching were limited to one caste called *Brahmans*. Since *Kshatriya* remained close to the *Brahmins*, they also possessed knowledge but of limited areas such as how to run the nation. The *Vaisyas* could learn about trade and commerce. But *Sudras* were prohibited to learn any sort of knowledge.

Theoretical Framework

In this research, I went through the insights two theories. They are the Culture Difference theory and Caste- hierarchy theory. Ogbu (1982) argues that 'the cultural differences existed before the two groups came into contact and that they are specific differences in terms of language, learning style, and academic concepts. He also believes that students experiencing this type of discontinuity are more motivated to overcome their difficulties because they see the ultimate value in learning the academic content, and appropriate behaviours valued by the host culture and do not feel that their own cultural identity is threatened by the acquisition of this knowledge (p. 294).

Similarly, the social setting in Nepal is based on caste hierarchy. That is, the social category and/or identity of the people living in the given community is built up on their caste. This means people under different castes have different identities that shape their social positioning, economic opportunities, educational participation, and social relationship. Although the practice of caste-based codes is illegal and/or unconstitutional, it is found to be in effect covertly. The hierarchy of castes in Nepal is social, cultural, and religious agenda in Nepal. It is in practice since the dawn of the Hindu civilization, which is particularly being traced to the time of King Manu. According to (Sharma, 2006), King Manu in ancient times, categorized people depending upon their duty/work. People in society are divided into four different castes namely, *Brahmins*, *Kshetri*, *Baisya*, and *Sudra*.

Methods and Procedures

This study has produced a rich interpretation on Dalits in terms of schooling and education through my intense research experience and for this, I employed ethnographical study. The strategy of inquiry was qualitative and ontologically it was based on multiple realities. Participatory observation and unstructured interviews were used as the research tools. Thus, I observed participants regarding their process of learning. I went to their school, observed learning activities and their participation. I stayed in their class and observed the way they participate in the classroom activities. I observed how they participated in classwork, group activities and what they did during their participation in the classroom activities. Immediately, I noted them whenever I got any new information. I went to their home and community with them. I distinguished their behaviour different from home to school. I observed their actions and behaviours in their family and community setting. I also observed the way they performed relationships in their family and community.

Similarly, I used the unstructured interview i.e., in-depth interviews with the head teacher, SMC chairperson and parents (two male and two female) and children (three boys and three girls).

While conducting interviews, I had a dialogue with my participants too. The purpose of the interview was to explore their in-depth understanding, enriched descriptions and detailed account of their culture, the process of being educated, and the roles of schools as they perceived. It was an open-ended, discovery-oriented method (Hart, 2001). While interviewing them, I felt to have increased my understanding, insights, and personal views towards Dalits' ways of approaching schools. The goal of the in-depth interview was, therefore, to explore their deep understanding, feeling and perspective. The unstructured interview was to generate rich and thick descriptions of the phenomenon observed in the natural setting of the research sites (Hartas, 2011). After collecting the data from the field, they were coded, categorized and thematised (Attride-Stirling, 2001) for further analysis. The analysed data were interpreted with relevant theories. Triangulation and member check were used to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research.

Results

I analysed and interpreted the data in line with the research question - in what ways the schools can be enabled for Dalit-friendly to treat the Dalit students? After collecting information from the participants, I organised them into two themes: interest-based learning/school environment, and issue-based learning/school environment. The information representing these headings have been presented and discussed using relevant theories and literature under the following themes:

Interest-based Learning/School Environment

On the way to exploring the ways for making schools Dalit-friendly, information obtained from study respondents encouraged me to develop a heading namely, Interest-Based Learning/School Environment. Advocacy for interest-based learning in school has long been observed in the field of education. Teaching-learning activities in school need to be aligned with the learners' interests. The role of learners' interest plays an instrumental role in learning in the sense that their interests motivate them to participate actively in the learning process that takes place in the classroom (Valerio, 2012). Whether the schools in the Dalit community are friendly to them can be measured concerning their level of presence, participation, and interest in school activities (Bishwakarma, 2009).

In this connection, I had interaction with the parents of Dalit students. One of them explained: *'I want to send my son to school to get knowledge and skill but unfortunately he goes for some days and then stops going'*. Dalit parents asserted that their children did not continuously attend school and they also accepted that it was unknown why their children do not often intend to go to school. As a researcher, I would like to connect students' irregularity and parents' ignorance of their children's education with some scholarly explained ideas to reveal why Dalit children do not show their interest in going to school. In this regard, Arvaja et al. (2003) argue that children enjoy the learning environment when they find it "physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling" (p. 6.).

School irregularity was mostly observed among the children from the families, especially those who are bound to live in exclusion, hatred, poverty, and the disadvantaged situation in the

community (Valerio, 2012). After retrieving the information as such from the literature, I wanted to explore why Dalit children do not intend to attend school. The perspective of Dalit children in this regard, for me, appeared to be important to examine whether the world of literature is the best fit for the context of my research sites.

I then interviewed one of the Dalit students to bring forth his ideas regarding his presence and participation in school activities. In this connection, he said: *'Teachers at school teach and give us lots of homework to do. My friends do homework regularly because they understand the content nicely, but I don't do it because I don't understand it'*. Thus, why Dalit students do not show their interest in going to school has been a debatable issue. Some claim personal issues (Desai, 2012) and some claim social issues (Beinart, 2015) to be responsible for it.

Finn (2010) stated that children stop going to school when they see the school setting is unwelcoming to their attitude and interest. But for LaRocque et al. (2011), it is the personality traits of children which often inhibits or promotes their participation in learning. While connecting these literary claims with the students' opinion revealed in the data, I realized that children's personality is not aligned with the activities performed in the schools. They therefore often feel to be at distance from the schools. In the context of my research, the personality of Dalit students does not help them be ready for school activities such as doing homework assigned by the teachers in the schools. I thus feel that the school setting and the personality of the Dalit children do not go together; rather they challenge each other affecting their learning and/or participation in the school education programs.

In this context, a question has been raised as: Why does the personality of the Dalit students do not go in line with the school setting? To respond to this question, I had interaction with a Headteacher (Bishwakarma, 2009) and learned that the cultural orientation that the children in marginalized and deprived families receive from their parents is often less likely to prepare them to be fit in the school setting. Similarly, I learned (Finn, 2010) that social hierarchy often tends to communicate its effect on the relationship between and among the children in schools. The children from Dalit and non - Dalit families maintain a hierarchy among them while performing social activities. They often tend to carry out such social experiences in school where the Dalit students feel themselves being at distance or being excluded from the mainstream school activities. As a result, they do not often perceive themselves as part of the school.

Reflecting on the idea of Beinart (2015), I would say that children cannot enter schools giving up their traits which are the products of their experiences in their cultural, social, and economic life world. These personal traits often become the source of their interest to join educational activities in the schools. After arriving at the idea as such, I realized that the schools could ensure an environment which may induce the personal interests of Dalit children.

Issue-based Learning/Environment

While exploring the ways for making schools Dalit-friendly, information obtained from study respondents encouraged me to develop the theme namely, Issue-Based Learning/School

Environment. Arvaja et al. (2003) argued that among many, one purpose of school is to enable the children to deal with the issues in their life. So, I raised a question as: What are the issues related to Dalit children and how the schools in question can help them address those issues? With reference to Pariyar and Lovett (2016), I realized Dalit issues in terms of their social, cultural, economic, and pedagogic aspect of life. Culturally, they are supposed to be untouchable (Poudel, 2007). Socially, they are supposed to be the section of the society that receives the lowest rank in the caste hierarchy (Bista, 1991). Economically, they are deprived of mainstream economic activities (Hartas, 2011).

Again, another question can be raised as: how can the schools be made friendly to the children who belong to such a community? Addressing this question, I interacted with teachers, parents, and Dalit students. One of the Dalit parents in this regard said: *'Although I am poor, I am sending my son to go to school to get a better education. I hope, my child will get a better education and he will not get any economic problems in his life.'* However, economy and education are interrelated components of life. Several scholars claim that education influence family income. For example, Hartas (2011) argues that the increased level of education proportionates with the increased income in the family. Since education contributes to creating economic opportunities, education on the part of the Dalit children is also expected to perform a similar role. I, therefore, realized that schools can be friendly to Dalit children if it contributes to enhancing their income level.

On the way to exploring data from the participants, the SMC members focused on social issues related to Dalit children. On the way to explaining the social issue, one of the SMC members said: *'Dalit children are often seeming at risk of caste discrimination and injustice in the community. The experiences of discrimination and injustice do not support them continuing school.'* Nepal has caste-based societies. People in the country belong to 125 different caste and ethnicities (Saud, 2020). These castes/ethnicities are divided into 4 generalized/mega caste groups namely Brahmins, Chhetri, Baisya and Sudra (Vermeer, 2010). These castes are traditionally organized hierarchically and are categorized depending on their work (Manandhar & Leslie, 1994). In the caste hierarchy, people belonging to the Sudra caste are supposed to be at the lowest rank. As a result, they are supposed to be untouchable and that they are to be excluded from the mainstream social discourse.

Due to unequal distribution of power and resources, hatred, opportunities, etc. the Dalit children are always vulnerable to inequality, discrimination, and injustice. Since Dalit children are often exposed to caste-based hierarchy and its consequences (exclusion, marginalization, poverty, etc.), they also think that these social circumstances would be reflected in the school setting. Their experiences in the community/social setting often convince them that the school would also be an important social site where the practice of exclusion, participation and child protection is apparent.

Connecting data with the literature mentioned above provided me with a sense of interpretation of Dalits in terms of their social positioning. To me, it is their social positioning

that caused them to live to be apart from mainstream social activities. Their social rank in the traditional sense convinces the non-Dalits to interpret Dalits as unworthy social beings (Poudel, 2007). Their level of unworthiness is supposed to be so extreme that non - Dalits treat them as untouchable and the subject to be humiliated, exploited, and excluded (Korde & Paulus, 2017).

Perceiving the context as such in the social setting, Dalit children often similarly assume the school environment. They think that they would face discrimination, injustice, inequality, and exclusion in the schools in similar ways as they feel in the social setting. In this context, I think their feeling of untouchable, humiliation, and exclusion, which they cultivated in the social setting, does not encourage them to think of themselves as a part of the school.

The issues of untouchable, exclusion, humiliation, injustice, and inequality prevailing in the social setting, especially on the part of Dalits encouraged me to raise the question: How can these issues be responded to make school friendly to the Dalit children? As I perceive, Dalit children enter into the schools with their experience of untouchable, exclusion, humiliation, injustice, and inequality that they acquired in the social setting. Such unhelpful experiences often inhibit them from enjoying the academic setting prevailing in the schools. The opinion of the participant above encouraged me to conclude that the school environment should be free from discrimination, injustice, inequality, and exclusion if it is to be ensured Dalit friendly.

In this context of the research question, I doubt whether the school environment is unappealing to Dalit children. For Hofer (1976), a school is a neutral social component where children from all sections of society feel being treated equally. I found similar ideas in the policy documents of the government. For example, school education is provisioned for all children disregarding their class, caste, ethnicity, location, etc. (Pariyar & Lovett, 2016). My observation reflects that the government has provisioned a scholarship program for Dalit children which, as I feel, is a praiseworthy effort to make schools Dalit-friendly. If so, why school is not supposed to be Dalit-friendly?

With these contexts and questions in mind, I approached teachers to explore their opinion on why schools are not supposed to be Dalit-friendly, especially with the lens of Dalit children and parents. In response, one of the teachers under this study told: '*While making sitting arrangement of children in the school, forming child-club, disseminating study materials to students in the school, ensuring children participate in school, we invite Dalit children.'* The social positioning of Dalits as discussed by Poudel, (2007) is not so much helpful to them, especially in creating educational opportunities. But I do not support this idea. In my opinion, Dalit social positioning began to get changed along with the commencement of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal (Devkota, 2005). When the global outlet for skilled, semi-skilled and non-skilled human resources in Nepal opened, most of the Dalit youths got opportunities to go to foreign countries to sell their labours (Pyakurel, 2021). As I feel, they realized the importance of education and their own rights as a citizen of the country. This made them present themselves in society as different from the way they used to live in the past.

The constitutional provision of education for all, participation of the citizens in economic activities, an increased sense of socio-political rights among Dalits in federalized context largely contributed to bringing change, to some extent, in their social positioning (Hofer, 1976). These opportunities available to Dalits helped them enhance their economic status and thereby altering their decision of school choices for their children. Yet, there were many Dalits residing in the remote rural hills in Nepal who could not get access to these opportunities and, thus, they remained with their traditional and historical ideas of living confined life. Since these Dalits still had feelings of being discriminated against, excluded, and unequally treated by non-Dalits in the community, they took such an unhelpful idea in a taken-for-granted form. As a result, although there was an improved situation in school for Dalit children, they felt discriminated against and excluded from mainstream school activities.

In this context, I would like to connect the above-mentioned idea with the one revealed in the data. The teachers in the school claimed that they made efforts for making school Dalit friendly but, as they said, it was the traditional feeling of Dalits that appeared to be an obstacle for them while approaching the school. If it is so, I then feel, in line with the study participant, that the change is required not only in the school but also in the attitude, concept and feeling of the Dalits which are largely influenced by the caste-based experiences acquired in the past.

Discussion

On the way to inquiring about making school Dalit friendly, some key strategies, measures and opinions were put in place. First, the school environment was claimed to be developed ensuring to address the need and interests of Dalit students. For example, it was found that they needed to experience social justice in terms of teacher-student relationships, peer support, group activities in the classroom and school as a whole. Second, the schools in question needed to maintain an environment in which Dalit students can realize the meaning of being students in general, and the students from the Dalit community in particular. Since they belong to poor, marginalized, disadvantaged, and excluded groups in the communities, they require special care and support in adapting school environment and learning culture. A higher resemblance of Dalit culture in the school setting strengthens the possibility of increased interest on the part of children in school education.

Third, the school environment was found to be aligned with the issues related to Dalit children. The key Dalit issues in the community under this research comprised their social, cultural, economic, and pedagogic relationship and behaviours. Culturally they were found to be untouchable, socially they were supposed to be in exclusion, economically they claimed to be poor and educationally they were deprived of. The school management, administration, learning approaches, student-teacher relationship, pedagogical construct, strategies in the classroom, etc. were needed to be in line with such students and for this, it required a greater level of effort in the school. Fourth, caste-based confinement in the community was also in some ways found to be creating problems in Dalit education. Although such confinement was not claimed to be in school, Dalits' children made it responsible for their poor participation in schools. Fifth, since

Dalit children belong to poor, marginalized, excluded, and disadvantaged family, they hardly find to have possessed a similar capacity to acquire school education compared to non-Dalit children.

Caste hierarchy in a caste-based social system is prominent. With reference to the caste hierarchy in Nepal, Dalits are placed at the lower level of the caste hierarchy (Manandhar & Leslie, 1994). Based on the placement of the people in the caste-hierarchy, they enjoyed power, prestige, and properties in the past (Rothenberg, 2010). So far, as the matter of education is concerned, Dalits in the past were not supposed to get an education. As a result, they were prevented from school education from one generation to another.

Due to the political, social, and economic movements in the country, the Dalits were recognized as equal to non - Dalits based on the principle of social justice. Their entry into education, politics and economy was ensured constitutionally. Although school education for Dalit children was constitutionally provisioned, their access to education was not observed prominently. The school environment was supposed to be one of the reasons behind this (Ray, 2009).

Issue-based school environment was discussed to be another way of making Dalit friendly. Connecting the issue-based school environment with the children's education in the Dalit community provided me space to interpret the key issues related to the Dalits in this context. The key Dalit issues in the community under my research comprises their social, cultural, economic, and pedagogic relationship and behaviours. Culturally they are untouchable, socially they are in exclusion, economically they are poor and educationally they are deprived. The schools were claimed to be Dalit-friendly if they ensure to respond to these issues duly. In this context, I would like to raise a question: How do schools ensure an appropriate response to these issues? I would like to bring forth the idea of cultural difference theory to explain how the schools can address Dalit issues such duly to justify themselves as Dalit-friendly schools.

Culture, social positioning, and economy in the context of the caste-based society in Nepal are often interpreted in terms of the caste-based confinement on the part of the individuals (Pariyar & Lovett, 2016). Caste-based hierarchy in the social setting also gives birth to the cultural, social, and economic hierarchy (Manandhar & Leslie, 1994). Since the Dalits are supposed to be a lower-ranked group of people in the caste hierarchy, their culture, social positioning, and economy also go in the same rank. In the community, they feel that they are discriminated against, unequaled, and exploited based on their unhelpful ranking in the social hierarchy. The schools, in this context, can claim to be Dalit-friendly only when they justify themselves by creating such a learning environment in which these issues are duly stressed. In this sense, school culture and the culture of the community in which the Dalits reside must not go together.

Conclusion

The issue of Dalit education is not new in Nepal. It has been under the observation of educationists, scholars, community leaders and development workers for decades. Several efforts have been made to address the issue of Dalit education. For example, interventions by I/NGOs for bringing those who are out of schools are continuously being made to respond to Education for

All (EFA) and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). The government on the other hand has made constitutional provisions for Dalit education based on human rights, social justice and the principle of equality, equity, and inclusion. As a result, the participation of Dalits in school education seems to have increased in comparison to the past. In the context of this study, however, Dalit participation in schools seems to be less encouraging, inadequate, and unfruitful so far, as the matter of their learning outcome is concerned. Although they join the schools, they do not continue to come to school by the end of school education. The dropout rate is still considerably high. Their irregularities in school are also seemingly high. They are mostly observed to be indifferent to school education.

The efforts so far made for addressing the Dalit's education appeared to be external, borrowed, and conditional. To promote the status of Dalit education and to ensure their active participation in education, the Dalits are supposed to enter the schools in the same way as done by non-Dalit children. But their presence in schools often seems to have been challenged by the school culture which is not supposed to be fully aligned with Dalit culture. As a result, the school appears to be an unfamiliar space for Dalit children. Reflecting on the finding of this study, I feel that the issue of Dalit education cannot be duly addressed unless the schools turn to be Dalit friendly.

Dalit children enter the school along with their emotions, feelings, dispositions, habitus, etc. The schools can be claimed to be Dalit-friendly if they respond to these features of Dalits adequately. The Dalit students can participate in the school activities equally as non-Dalit children if their issues, interest, capacity, and safety matters get space in the school curriculum, pedagogy, textbooks, extracurricular activities, and so forth. Based on the findings, the responsibility of the schools, in connection to addressing the issue of Dalit education, seems to have increased, especially by identifying their perception of education and the socio-cultural challenges that block their ways of education. Based on these, the schools can make efforts for justifying that they are Dalit-friendly, especially by paving the way for their transformation.

References

Arvaja, M., Rasku-Puttonen, H., Hakkinen, P., & Etelapelto, A. (2003). Constructing knowledge through role-playing in a web-based learning environment. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, *28*(4), 319-341.

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, *1*(3), 385-405.

Beinart, W. (2015). Reflecting on Unruliness. *RCC Perspectives*, *3*, 69-74.

Bishwakarma, G. (2009). *The high school educational status of Dalit in Nepal: From exclusion to the success story*. University of Joensuu.

Bista, D.B. (1991). *Fatalism and Development: Nepal' struggle for modernization*. Orient Longman.

Dahal, D., Gurung, Y., Acharya, B., Hemchuri, K., & Swarnakar, D. (2002). *Situational analysis of Dalits in Nepal: National Dalit Strategy Report: Part*, *1*. AAN/Care Nepal/Save the Children US.

Desai, Z. K. (2012). *A case for mother tongue education?* [Doctoral dissertation]. The University of the Western Cape.

Devkota, P. M. (2005). *Dalit of Nepal: Issues and challenges*. FEDO.

Finn, P. J. (2010). *Literacy with an attitude: Educating working-class children in their own self-interest*. Suny Press.

Hart, T. (2001). *From information to transformation: Education for the evolution of consciousness*. Peter Lang.

Hartas, D. (2011). Families' social backgrounds matter: Socio☐ economic factors, home learning and young children's language, literacy, and social outcomes. *British Educational Research Journal*, *37*(6), 893-914.

Hofer, A. (1976). *A settlement and smithy of the blacksmiths (Kami) in Nepal.* https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1810/227173/kailash_04_04_04.pdf?sequence=2

Koirala, B. N. (1996). *Schooling and the Dalits of Nepal: A case study of Bungkot Dalit community* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

Korde, R., & Paulus, P. B. (2017). Alternating individual and group idea generation: Finding the elusive synergy. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *70*, 177-190.

LaRocque, M., Kleiman, I., & Darling, S. M. (2011). Parental involvement: The missing link in school achievement. *Preventing School Failure*, *55*(3), 115-122.

Manandhar, U., & Leslie, K. (1994). Empowering women and families through literacy in Nepal. *Convergence*, *27*(2), 102-118.

Ogbu, J. U. (1982). Cultural discontinuity and schooling. *Anthropology& Education Quarterly, 13*(4), 168-190.

Pariyar, B., & Lovett, J. C. (2016). Dalit identity in urban Pokhara, Nepal. *Geoforum*, *75*, 134-147.

Pyakurel, U. (2021). *Reproduction of inequality and social exclusion: A study of Dalits in a caste society, Nepal* (Vol. 2). Springer Nature.

Ray, P. (2009). From the Dalits to the Dalits: A plea for performance ethnography. *Contemporary Voice of Dalit*, *2*(1), 1-8.

Rothenberg, M. A. (2010). *The excessive subject: A new theory of social change*. Polity.

Saud, M. S. (2020). English medium public schools in Nepal: A new linguistic market in education. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, *23*(2), 319-333.

Sharma, M. (2006). *Schooling and social change: A study of a disadvantaged community of Nepal* [MPhil. dissertation]. Kathmandu University School of Education, Lalitpur, Nepal.

Vermeer, P. (2010). Religious education and socialization. *Religious Education*, *105*(1), 103-116.