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"When girls don't have to work that much they are doing better in school"

Ethnographic case study on girls participation in Nepalese village school

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Pro gradu thesis

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JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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Tiivistelmä:
Naiset elävät nepalilaisessa kulttuurissa alisteisessa asemassa. Naisten sorrettu asema näkyy selkeästi muun muassa koulutussektorilla, keskimäärin naiset ovat miehiä vähemmän koulutettuja. Tähän epäkohtaan on pyritty puuttumaan erilaisin kansallisin ja kansainvälisin ohjelmin, mikä on johtanut peruskoulutukseen osallistuvien tyttöjen lukumäärän merkittävään kasvuun.

Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastelin tyttöjen osallistumista nepalilaisessa kyläkoulussa. Tutkimus on etnografinen tapaustutkimus, jonka myötä tutustuin opettajien ja tyttöjen väliseen vuorovaikutukseen opetustilanteissa. Lisäksi tutkin tyttöjen osallisuutta toimijuuden ja voimaantumisen näkökulmista ja pohdin löydöksiä laajemmassa yhteiskunnallisessa viitekehyksessä.

Tutkimus toteutettiin aineistolähtöisesti etnografisena tapaustutkimuksena ja aineistonkeruumenetelminä käytettiin havainnointia ja haastattelua. Tutkimusaineisto koostui Shree Pragatishil Milijuli Primary school:ssa viettämieni kenttäjaksojen aikana kerätystä etnografisesta havainnointiaineistosta ja haastatteluaineistosta. Tutkimusta varten haastattelin viittä koulussa opiskelevaa tyttöä sekä heidän opettajiaan. Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin syksyllä 2011 sekä tammikuussa 2012, ja analysoitiin aineistolähtöisesti sisällönanalyysillä.

Tutkimuksen löydökset osoittavat, että opettajan rooli tyttöjen osallisuuden tukijana on merkittävä. Opettaja, joka pyrki kannustamaan tyttöjä kriittisyyteen ja dialogiin sai tytöt osallistumaan aktiivisemmin kuin perinteistä opetusmetodia hyödyntävä opettaja. Merkittävä kannustin osallistumiselle oli myös perheen tuki. Tyttöjen osallisuuden ja osallistumisen tiellä on myös haasteita. Löydökset osoittivat, että opetusmetodit eivät yleisesti ole osallisuutta tukevia. Osallistumiseen ja osallisuuden kokemiseen vaikutti myös tyttöjen kulttuurinen tausta. Tytöt, jotka kuuluivat alempiin kasteihin tai olivat heimoyhteisön jäseniä, eivät osallistuneet kuten muihin ryhmiin kuuluvat.

Asiasanat: Osallisuus, Osallistuminen, Nepal, Koulutus, Naisten oikeudet, voimaantuminen
Säilytyspaikka
Muita tietoja

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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Abstract:
Nepalese women are living in a oppressed situation. Their oppressed status can be seen clearly in the field of education. In average women are less educated than men. This defect has been noticed and there are several programs trying to improve the education of Nepalese girls. These programs have led to significant increase in girls school attendance in primary school level.

In this research I have studied girls participation in a Nepalese village school. The study is an ethnographic case study in which I have observed interactions between girls and teachers in class room environment.
My objective was to understand girls participation and empowerment in a wider social context.

This study was implemented as an ethnographic case study. Data was collected by observing and interviewing the students and teachers at Shree Pragatishil Milijuli Primary school. All together five girls and their teachers were interviewed. The data was collected during autumn 2011 and also in January 2012 and the whole data was analyzed by using content analysis.

The findings indicate that the role of the teacher is significant as a supporter of girls participation. Teacher who supports girls to be critical and to dialogue can make them participate more actively than a teacher who is using more traditional teaching methods. Important for girls participation is also the support of the family. The study showed that there are also several challenges on the way of girls participation. In general teaching methods are not participatory and cultural background of a girl can have a negative effect on girls participation. Girls who were members of lower casts or members of some tribal community were not participating as actively as those who were members of other communities.

Keywords: Participation, Nepal, Education, Women rights, Empowerment

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1 INTRODUCTION

Education and ability to learn is important and necessary for everyone. One has to learn things in order to succeed and survive in life. Literacy alone can enable person to find out knowledge which is not possible for an illiterate person. Less developed countries are often also less educated. Programmes such as Education for All (EFA), coordinated by UNESCO, have studied the relations between development and education. According to several studies it seems clear that development of a country needs education. EFA is concentrated on education in less developed and developing countries. Learning happens everywhere and all the time.

United Nations (UN) launched millennium goals in September 2000. One of the goals is to achieve universal primary education. Universal declaration of human rights also states that compulsory education should be free and available for everyone (Article 26, 1948). EFA programme coordinated by UNESCO was established to promote this right to education. According EFA report (UNESCO 2003, 4) If children are excluded from access to education, they are denied their human rights and prevented from developing their talents and interests in the most basic of ways.

In this thesis I study the participation of girl students in a small Nepalese community school. Between September 2011 and March 2012 I did my internship at Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN). CWIN is a Nepalese NGO working for rights of child and against labour exploitation (CWIN 2011). Lately CWIN has paid more attention on girls education in rural areas of Nepal. The topic of this research was chosen on the recommendation of staff at CWIN Nepal. In my study I have studied girls participation and learning that happens in an official learning environment. Boys were excluded not because their learning and participation is less interesting but because as a researcher I needed to delineate the research. Also girls were chosen since they have been less privileged in terms of education globally.

Nepal is located in South Asia between India and China with a population estimated about 25,2 million inhabitants. According UNESCO (2008) literacy rate among adult

population (People older than 15 years are considered to be adults) is 57,9%. Statistics show that from the total population 71,1% of men are literate and 45,5% of women are literate. Literacy of youth is on the growth and has reached up to 80,8%.   (Unesco 2008.) Education For All programme was started in Nepal in year 2004. Most important effects of the programme has been increase in enrolment rate on primary education (Vaux, Smith & Subba 2006, 12). There has been positive change, but the literacy rates among men and women are still unequal. Also the enrolment to the secondary school is lower among females than males. (Unesco 2008; United Nations 2002, 2.)

The objective of this study is to find out how girls participate in class room and how their endeavours to participate are reacted by the teachers. The purpose was to understand and to describe how girls are participating in education and what motivates them to participate.

The study has been implemented by using ethnographic method, including observation and interviews.

This research is based on the observations and interviews I did during my internship at CWIN. The internship was implemented between September 2011 and February 2012, all together I spent six months in Nepal. During that time I had the opportunity to collect data for my thesis from the program areas where CWIN Nepal is currently working among educational issues.

CWIN is a Nepalese NGO working for rights of child and against labour exploitation (CWIN 2011). NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) is a definition for an organization that is development oriented and has been officially established as a participatory organization. NGO's are part of the so called voluntary sector, but what differentiates them from other voluntary-based organizations is that they usually have paid employees and that they are obtaining funds for particular development purposes. (Ghosh 2009, 475-476.) Many Non-Governmental Organizations do not have any particular political or religious views, but some of them are based on these values also (e.g. World Vision). CWIN has been established in 1987 and their main focus is to help

children living under difficult circumstances. (CWIN 2010.) In year 2010 CWIN had eight (8) different programs with a goal to improve the life of children living in poor conditions in Nepal. One of these programs is directly concentrating in improving quality of education in Nepalese villages. Purpose of this educational support project is to increase girls school attendance and participation in schools. (CWIN 2010.) One of the main regions in which CWIN is implementing the program is Dolakha, in which I also implemented my research.

CWIN (2010) is doing active work in order to improve the life of girl children living in Nepal. CWIN reports various objectives in their work against the exploitation of girls. They are also trying to upgrade the status of girls and women in society in general. (CWIN 2010.)

This research was done in cooperation with "Back to school" –program which is part of CWIN's educational support project. The aim of "Back to school"-program is to decrease dropout rates and increase girls' attendance in rural communities. (CWIN 2011.)

2 NEPAL AS A RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Nepal is a landlocked country in the heart of Himalayas. This former Hindu kingdom is now a republic.

2.1 Nepal in figures

Gross Domestic Savings/ GDP in Nepal was in 2010 6,66% and Gross National Savings/ GDP in same year was 30,92% (Nepal in figures 2011). When these figures are examined, Nepal is considered to be one of the poorest countries in the world. Poverty head count rate in Urban areas in year 2010 was 15,46% and in the rural areas 27,43%. Nationally in year 2010 the Poverty head count rate was 25,16% (Government of Nepal 2011). In 2010 UNDP Human Development Report ranked Nepal at position 138 out of 169 countries and the development score was only 0,428. Nepal was placed in the low human-development category. (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012, 13.)

In year 2011 (Nepal in figures 2011) the total population of Nepal was 26 620 809 inhabitants. The annual population growth was 1,4 % and in urban areas 17%. Approximately 4,52 million inhabitants lived in Urban areas and 22,09 million in rural areas. (Nepal in figures 2011). This indicates that most of the population still lives outside urban areas. According to Sharma (2003, 375) Nepal is one of the less urbanized countries in the world. Urbanization is important for economic growth and this is why development of urban areas is one of the main objectives of government of Nepal. This will be challenging because there are no minimum standards for infrastructure or services. (Sharma 2003, 375; 410-411.)

Nepalese people usually live in extended families. In average 1,16 households live in one house. In urban areas the average household per house (1,52) is higher than in rural areas (1,11). (Kayastha & Shrestha 2003, 184.) 46,8 % of these households have access to toilet facilities and 53,4% are served with piped water (Kayastha & Shrestha

2003, 186-193). According to research implemented by Kayastha and Shrestha (2003, 209) urban-rural variation in access to facilities is large.

One of the major components in household composition is marital status. Single person is not likely to be a head of a household. Nepal is a male dominated culture, so usually men are reported as household heads even though women are more commonly responsible in household activities. (Kayastha and Shrestha 2003, 206.)

Despite the small size of Nepal, there is a major cultural diversity and linguistic plurality. According Yadava (2003, 137) there are 92 languages spoken as mother tongues. In addition to these identified languages there are also "unknown" languages which have not yet been analyzed. Most of non-Nepali speakers learn Nepali language since it is commonly used in education, administration and media. Many Nepalese speak their native mother tongue and in addition Nepali language. (Yadava 2003, 137-138.)

Geographically Nepal is divided into five regions. These regions are Terai plan, Siwalik hills, Middle mountains, High mountains and High Himalayas. (Agrawala, Rakshakultai, van Aalst, Larsen, Smith & Reynolds 2003, 10.) These zones reflect the climatic condition and variation of agricultural land and other resources (Pantha & Sharma 2007, 40). Climate has a lot of variation in Nepal. In Terai region climate is described as humid and tropical, in Siwalik hills as moist and subtropical, in Middle mountains temperate, in High mountains as cool and sub-alpine and in the High Himalayas as alpine to arctic. (Agrawala et al. 2003, 11.)

When effects of climate change are examined Nepal is said to be 4th most vulnerable country worldwide. In year 2009 over 4000 people died in climate related catastrophes and yearly 1 million people are directly impacted by climate induced disasters like flood, drought and landslides. (Government of Nepal 2010, 1.)

2.2 Education in Nepal

According United Nations (2010) Nepal faces limitation in the educational sector. The magnitude of problems varies by the region, by gender and by different social groups. Most disadvantaged groups in terms of attaining education are people living in remote rural areas, females, ethnic minorities, dalits (untouchable, casteless according the old traditions) and the poor. (United Nations 2010.) However there have been good results in enrolment of children to basic education. Education for all -programme has increased literacy and also enrolment of girl children to basic education. (Vaux, Smith & Subba 2006.)

Literacy rate in Nepal in year 2011 was 66% (United nations 2012). Growth in literacy rate is notable since in year 2007 the literacy rate was 57,74%. Karki (2007, 75) mentions that literacy rate is higher among men (65,1%) than women (42,5%). Girls under 14 years are enrolling to education as much as same aged boys. However the enrolment og girls decreases as they get older and in result preponderate in secondary and higher education. (Karki 2007, 75.)

Primary education is free in Nepal. Also the material, such as books, should be provided free for students studying in primary level. However reports indicate that some schools have not been effectively materialised. Also the quality of education is partially low due to lack of professionally trained personnel. Government is now facing a challenge to ensure that education facilities reach all target groups. (Karki 2007, 75-76.)

The Ministry of Education and Sports of Nepal states that in year 2007 about 17% of the government budget was allocated to the Education Sector. In addition to public expenditure, households and communities are spending a substantial proportion of their resources on their children's education. The government of Nepal has committed to provide free basic education for all children. (Ministry of Education and Sports 2007, 11.)

Education for all (EFA) is a programme coordinated by UNESCO. EFA's basic objectives are ensuring access to and equality in primary education; enhancing the quality and reverence of primary education; improving efficiency and institutional capacity. (Hossain, Siitonen & Sharma 2006, 90.) The programme is based on six key education goals that are planned to be achieved by 2015. These six goals are 1) early childhood care 2) primary education 3) youth and adult learning 4) literacy 5) gender equality and 6) education quality. (UNESCO 2010, 4.)

Since the programme has started there have been many positive changes in the field of education. Due the programme the number of children out of school has dropped by 33 million since 1999. According UNESCO (2010, 4) the largest reduction to children out of school has taken place in South and West Asia. The number of children out of school has halved from 1999. Also the gender gap in primary education is narrowing in many countries and the share of girls out of school has declined from 58% to 54%. (UNESCO 2010, 4.) As we can see EFA goals are slowly reached. However there are many issues that still need to be taken under great concern. Even though the share of the girls out of schools have declined, there are still more girls out of school than boys. About 759 million adults are lacking literacy skills of which two thirds are women. One big problematic issue is also the lack of skilled teachers in the developing world. At the moment there are about 1,9 million new teachers needed to meet the goal of universal primary education by 2015. (UNESCO 2010, 4.)

In Nepal EFA has reached some marginalized people so that they are now enrolling basic education more. EFA has provided scholarships, school lunches and school uniforms for those who are facing social and economic obstacles. It also assists in improving the physical environments of school and encourages recruitment of female teachers and those from dalit, indigenous and disadvantaged communities. EFA has also provides improved teaching materials for teachers and pupils. One of the major components of EFA is Early Childhood Development. In order to ensure that every one has possibility to access school different kind of "welcome to school" programmes have been carried out nationwide. (Hossain ym. 2006, 91.)

2.2.1 Girls education in Nepal

Women in Nepal are often oppressed and they are not considered to be equal with men. This can be seen already at the attitude towards girl children in the country. Nepal has ratified the UN convention of the Rights of the Child and according the convention, girls and boys should be treated as equals and neither sex is more valuable than the other. However still today, in Nepal, girls are considered to be burden to their parents and birth of a boy child is a blessing. Often girls live in oppressed situation without way out. (i.e CWIN 2010, UN 2000.) Villanueva (2000, 3) states that in education field, girls meet gender-specific barriers to access and achievement. These barriers are socio-cultural, political, economic and structural for example male-preference, early marriage, negative attitudes towards girls education, lack of female teachers and lack of toilets. (Villanueva 2000, 3.)

The girls' dropout ratio was reported proportionately high. For example,girls are engaged in household works and have less time to go school. Also, rural people still have the perception that girls are not expected to go to school. Patriarchal beliefs and customs still rule large to dissuade poor parents from sending their daughters to school. The government has not come up with lucrative provision of education subsidies to promote girl education and change the prevailing perceptions of people. (Karki 2007, 75.)

According to studies (IDCA 1998; UNESCO 2000) women are less privileged and less educated gender in Nepal. Many traditions, like early marriage and low value placed on girls education, has limited girls attendance in schools (IDCA 1998, 2). Also government of Nepal has recognized that there are less female than male students at secondary and higher levels of education. The government has stated that raising participation among female is one of their key challenges. (Ministry of Education and Sports 2007, 11.)

There has been a positive change in school attendance of girls to education since EFA (Education for All) program was launched. According to Ministry of Education and

Sports of Nepal total school enrolment among female students is above more than 45, 5 % when earlier this was much lower. However there are still some challenges that particularly girl students are facing. Many girls are having problems in completing their school, especially in rural areas. (UNESCO 2008, Ministry of Education and Sports 2007, 11-12.)

Some strategies have implemented and planned to promote girls education in Nepal. These strategies include reducing direct and indirect costs of female education; providing toilets for girls; locating schools close to communities; appointing more female students and involving more female professionals in educational management system. (Ministry of Education and Sports 2007, 12.)

One of the objectives of EFA program is to eliminate gender disparity. In Nepal 20 % out of EFA budget has been used for this purpose. Focus has been on scholarships for dalits and for those girls who come from poor families. However According to study implemented by the Embassy of Finland (Vaux, Smith & Subba 2006, 15) it seems that in some schools these scholarships are not always targeted according to need, but according to other factors like educational achievement or social connections. It has also been stated that the scholarships are not enough to compensate the loss of labour when children are sent to school (Vaux, Smith & Subba 2006, 2). Other focus areas are development of gender-sensitive curriculum and recruitment of more female teachers. Most of the recruited female teachers work in primary schools. (Vaux, Smith & Subba 2006, 15.)

According UNESCO's study (2004, 117) inequality in educational participation and outcomes reflects in broader inequalities in society. These embrace social norms and customs, which create powerful incentives that guide people behaviour, and determine the roles that men and women can have in the family and community. (UNESCO 2004, 117.)

2.2.2 Conflict and education in Nepal

Nepal is now facing a post-conflict era. Between 1996-2006 Nepal was in a civil war and the consequences can be seen still today. More than 10 000 people died during the Maoist insurgency. There are many reasons for the insurgency, but one of the major reasons for the growth of it was the inequality and injustice in Nepalese society. (Lawoti 2005, 13.)

According EFA report on conflict and its impacts to education (UNESCO 2011, 131-133) conflict is destroying opportunities for education on global scale. Children living in conflict affected area are not just less likely to be in primary school but also drop-out rates in such countries are higher. Armed conflict also increases national inequalities. There is evidence that conflict strongly reinforces the disadvantages associated with poverty and gender. (UNESCO 2011, 131-133.)

Conflict can also interrupt the progress in education. Children spend less time in school and fewer years spent on education translates into slower economic growth, diminished prospects for poverty reduction and more limited gains in public health. In Nepal more funds are used on military than on primary education. (UNESCO 2011, 136; 151.)

The conflict has had its effects to educational system in Nepal. During the civil war multiple schools were closed and damaged, pupils were abducted for political indoctrination and recruitment and in most severe cases pupils, teachers and other staff members were killed. Positive thing is that despite the conflict and current post-conflict situation many children continue to be educated on daily basis. Also there has been an increase on children enrolling in primary education in Nepal. (Vaux, Smith & Subba 2006, 8.)

Even though Nepal has been affected by the conflict some actions has been done to reduce them. Government of Nepal has provided a paper that promises 4,6 million rupees to response to the impact of conflict on education (Vaux, Smith & Subba 2006, 8). This follows the recommendations of UNESCO's EFA program. According to

UNESCO (2011, 157) peace and post-conflict reconstruction are the foundations for achieving accelerated progress towards universal primary education and wider goals in conflict-affected countries (UNESCO 2011, 157).

2. 3 Religion, caste system and ethnical diversity

"*Nepal has a very diverse society in several dimensions. Although the majority of the population belongs to the Hindu religion, there are deep caste divisions in the Nepalese society, and discrimination and human right abuses against the lower castes are not uncommon.*" (Do & Iyer 2010, 9).

As Yadava (2003, 137) states, Nepal is culturally very rich. There are some issues that define Nepalese culture more than others like religion and caste system. Also there are many tribal communities in which certain cultural habits can be found.

2.3.1 Religion in Nepal

According to "Portrait of Nepal" research report (2007), Nepal is 80.6% Hindu, 10.7% Buddhist, 4.2% Muslim, 3.4% Kirat (an indigenous Nepali religion, sometimes spelled 'Kirant') and 0.4% Christian, with roughly 0.6% of the population not belonging to a particular religious tradition. In addition to these religions, there are small groups of Jains, Sikhs and Baha'is, which combined amount to less than 0.1% of the population. This indicates that Nepal is primarily consisted from Hindus and that there is a significant Buddhist minority. (Portrait of Nepal 2007.)

Hinduism is not just a religion, but a way of thinking and way of life. It is not an organized religion and it does not have central authority. This is why Hinduism can be described as non-dogmatic religion. It emphasizes experience and intuition over dogmatic believe or intellect. (Londhe 2008, 27.) There are multiple religious books in Hinduism and these scriptures can be divided into two groups: 1. Shruti, which are heard and 2. Smriti, that are remembered. There are also traditions that have been transferred from person to another trough verbal ways. (Londhe 2008, 28.) The believe in "Karma" is one of the issues that define Hinduism. Karma is believed to govern

person's life from the birth until death and live after that. Karma is shaped by individual actions. The things one does now will be ahead in the future. The ultimate goal is to cut the cycle of birth (birth, death and rebirth). (Londhe 2008, 30.)

According to traditional accounts, Siddartha Gautama, the man who was to become the Buddha, was born in what is now Nepal in the year 563 BC. Although many scholars doubt the historicity of these accounts, it is clear that both Hinduism and Buddhism were established in Nepal at a very early date. Both, Hinduism and Buddhism have a significant role in the history and culture of Nepal. Until parliament declared Nepal as a secular state, it was known as a Hindu nation. (Portrait of Nepal 2007.)

2.3.2 Caste system in Nepal

Caste system was abolished in the 1960's which makes it is illegal in Nepal. However despite the abolition of the caste system in Nepal, caste-based discrimination is still widespread. There are several laws that prohibit caste system and discrimination based on it, but the implementation of laws has not been effective. The state has an obligation to make sure that inequity does not happen, but caste-based unfairness can be found even in government organizations. (Karki 2007, 10.)

There are no fundamental differences between the caste system in Nepal and India. It is a system in which people are divided into different casts according their family background. (Hitchcock 1978, 111-112.) Basically there are four different castes. These four castes are *Brahmins* (the priests), *Ksatrias* (the warriors), *Vaishas* (the merchants and the farmers) and *Sudras* (the servants). These four castes are again divided into hundreds of sub-castes. (Parpola 2005, 160-161.) Usually the members of higher castes are more respected than members from lower castes. However, the most discriminated group is the *Dalits* (untouchable), people without any caste.

The discrimination of dalits can be seen in many different situations. Dalit men, who work with other people belonging to some caste, are not allowed to take food or drink

with their fellow men. In several public schools dalit children have to sit at the back of the class in separate seats. (Karki 2007, 10-11.)

2.3.3 Ethnic diversity in Nepal

There are numerous amount of ethnic groups living in Nepal. According to study implemented by Dahal (2003, 88) there are more than 100 ethnic groups living in Nepal. Even though there are more than 100 ethnic groups, it is possible to arrange these groups into five different groups. (Dahal 2003, 89.)

First group is the cast origin Hindu groups. Cast origin Hindu groups can be recognized from their typical habits. These distinct cultural habits include hierarchical structure (as mentioned above), heredital basis of the membership, marrying inside own cultural group and caste and purity and pollution, which govern daily life. (Dahal 2003, 90.)

The Newar is the second group. They are known for their complicated social structure that has its origins in Hindu varna groups. Newari population is divided into two categories; to hindus and to Buddhists. Their mother tongue is Newari and most of the Newari population lives in the Kathmandu valley area. (Dahal 2003, 90.)

Muslim or Musalman live mostly in Tarai region. There is also a small community of musalam group living in the hill region, known as Churoute. There are also other groups living in Nepal mostly in urban areas. These groups are such as Sikh, Jain, Bangali and Marwari. (Dahal 2003, 92.)

The Janajati or nationalities are also known as the ethnic groups. They usually have their own culture and maternal tongue. They cannot be identified into any Hindu varnas. Some of the ethnic groups are well recognized (for example Tamang or Gurung) in Nepal when others are very little known (for example Thangmi). Usually they don't have decisive role in the government, but they can be identified as marginalized groups. (Dahal 2003, 91.)

This research is mainly concentrated to study girls education in Thangmi (or Thami) dominated community, one ethnic group inside Janajati. Thangmis are indigenous people living in two districts in Nepal. These districts are Dolakha and Sindhupalcok. "Thangmi" is a word used by Thangmi population by themselves and word "Thami" refers to the ethnic group in Nepali language. (Turin 1999, 2.) As many other ethnic groups, also name "Thangmi" refers to the language spoken in the community. In everyday speech, the Thangmis call their language as *Thangmi Kham* or *Thangmi Wakhe* and refer themselves as Thangmi. (Shneiderman & Turin 2000, 2-3.)

Thangmi population is not very large, there are about 22 999 Thangmi people in Nepal. Most of the community uses Thangmi-language as their maternal tongue, but the spoken Thangmi is decreasing. (Turin 2003, 19-20; 1999, 2-3; 1998, 446.) However it has been estimated that the Thangmi population is larger than what national census refers (Turin 2003, 20).

Many Thangmi people live in remote and inaccessible areas. This is has led to the situation that their existence of their ethnic group is not commonly known, unlike some other ethnic groups in Nepal (like Tamang or Gurung). Thangmi people are one of the most poorest ethnic groups when their lives are examined in economic terms. Most Thangmi own land, but this land rarely can provide all year-round food supply for the family. Majority of Thangmi earn their money on un-skilled sector. (Shneiderman & Turin 2000, 3-6.)

Thangmi people follow bilinear system in which men and women belong to different clans. Women inherit their clan identity from their mothers and when they get married this identity is transferred to their daughters. This kind of system is unique in Nepal and rare also in other parts of the world. This bilineal clan structure consists seven clans for both sexes. (Shneiderman & Turin 2000, 11-13.)

2.4 Dolakha region

As mentioned earlier this study is a case study from Babare village which is located in Dolakha region. Dolakha is located approximately 133 kilometers east from the capital Kathmandu in the Central Development Region. Dolakha is quite large district, since it covers 2191 square kilometers. (Shrestha & Dillion 2003, 81.)

Dolakha is one of so called mountain districts of Nepal and the climate can vary inside the district a lot. The climate is ranged from sub-tropical to alpine and the temperature is between 8 to 35 celsius degrees depending on the time of the year. (Shrestha & Dillion 2003, 81.)

The main source of livelihood in rural areas is usually farming. Though there are some problems in labor intensive farming. The soil is fragile, so it gives low return. This lead to insufficient food security. (Pokharel, Carter, Parajuli, Byrne & Gurung 2009, 3.) This is often the case also in Dolakha region, where people are depended on farming (Shrestha & Dillion 2003, 81). Biggest ethnic group in Dolakha region is Chettri's (one cast origin hindu group) (Dahal 2003, 99). There are also other ethnic groups living in the region, for example Thangmi people and Dalits (Turin 1999, 13).

3 TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

"Though the Gender Equality Bill has brought about 56 reformations in various legal provisions, there are still 117 legal provisions that directly discriminate against women." (Karki 2007, 23.)

3.1 Millennium Development Goals

Globally, women often live in an oppressed situation and globally majority of poor are women. In many places there is still considerable domination by men over women. Usually this domination is based on the "man is the head of the house/family" – thinking. Women are paid less than men and there are fewer women in the leading positions than men. Because of the reasons mentioned above gender equality needs to be improved and the role of women movements is vital in the fight against poverty. (Ulvila & Pasanen 2009, 47-53.)

This oppressed situation of many people and especially women in the world was answered when the UN launched Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). The main target of these goals is to half the amount of people living in extreme poverty. MDG's consists eight development goals that are aimed to be achieved by year 2015. (UN 2012, 5-60). (These goals and the targets can be seen fully in appendix 1.)

As can be seen from the table above (table 1) at least in two out of eight MDG's women are the direct target group (goals 3 and 5), in three MDG's they are indirect target group (goals 1, 2 and 4) and in three MDG's both genders are equally targeted (goals 6, 7 and 8). This shows that the oppression and in general, the poor situation of women has been noticed.

According the MDG report for year 2012 (UN 2012) there has been progress in achieving the goals. Some of the targets have been achieved ahead of deadline. For example the parity in primary education has been achieved. There are more and more children enrolling school. The girls have benefited most. However there are still many

areas in which the development has not been achieved. For example decrease in maternal mortality is far from the target set for 2015. (UN 2012, 4-6.)

It is clear that gender equality and women's empowerment are playing a key role in achieving many of the MDG's and this acknowledgment is good progress. However, unfortunately, gender inequality still persists and women are facing oppression and discrimination in many stages of life, For example violence against women is still a big problem. Without progress in these areas mentioned above, the goal 3 cannot be achieved by year 2015. (UN 2012, 4-6.)

3.2 Differences in education between girls and boys

In education, gender equality means that both, boys and girls have similar opportunities to education and in education. This would mean that both sexes would be offered same chances to go to school, enjoy education without any stereotypes and most importantly, the outcomes of education would be similar for all. (UNESCO 2004, 119.) As mentioned earlier, there has been improvement between genders in school attendance since the launch of MDG's. For example the girls enrolment ratio in relation to boys enrolment ratio grew significantly in Southern Asia. When in 1999 the enrolment of girls was only 83 in relation of 100 boys, in 2010 the difference was only 98/100. (UN 2012, 20.)

Despite the improvement in educational sector, the disparity between genders can still be seen particularly clearly in education. It seems that in many places the gender gaps appear already on the first day of school. The education of girls is less valued and in many regions boys are favored over girls. (UN 2012, 20-22.) Villanueva (2000, 3) has also studied the disparity in education in Southern Asia. She states that educating girls is a significant and distinct challenge from educating boys. According to her, the dropout rates among girls are also concerning. (Villanueva 2000, 3-4.) There are many reasons why boys are favored over girls. In many cases this emerges from the gender-based discrimination in family and in society in general. Other major reasons for girls not attending school are: Early marriages of girls; the worry about the security of girls;

lack of female teachers; lack of toilets; cultural taboos and male preference in education. (UN 2012, 21; Villanueva 2000, 3-5.) The disparity can be especially clearly already in secondary education.

The recent MDG report (UN 2012, 18) indicates that girls are more likely to be out of school than boys, regardless of the wealth and location of the household. Nevertheless, the greatest disparities are found between the richest and the poorest households, and between urban and rural areas. (UN 2012, 18.) It also seems that there are more illiterate girls/women than boys. Even the enrolment rate to primary education has improved in Southern Asia, the greatest gap between genders in literacy is in Southern Asia where there are 86 literate women for every 100 men. (UN 2012, 19.) Poverty is one reason to under-enrolment to school. In countries where enrolment rates are in general low, also the enrolment of girls is low. In these countries the male-preference can be seen clearly. When families have less money, boys education is valued more, since it is believed that sons will take care of the family later, when girls will be married into another family. (UNESCO 2004, 117.)

Globally girls attend school less than boys and girls also drop-out from school more often than boys. In her study about Women's education in India Velkoff (1998, 3) found out that in some cases girls are taken out of school when they reach puberty. This is done in order to protect girls honour. Girls are also more likely to be taken out of school to take care of family responsibilities, such as taking care of younger siblings. The higher the education level is, the less the girls are attending. Poverty is also one of the major reasons why girls are not educated. Girls need to work at home and when parents have to choose weather son and daughter will be educated, usually the son is chosen. (Velkoff 1998, 3.)

In general, inequality in education is connected to broader inequalities in society. Son-preference is one of such social norms which are creating parity between genders in society. In such societies daughters are discriminated from the early years. These societies exhibit strong forms of patriarchy (for example many countries in Southern

Asia) and gender inequalities in education are just one aspect of generalized and systematic discrimination against girls and women. (UNESCO 2004, 118-119.)

Educational preference to boys is interesting when the performance in school is being examined. It seems that girls are outperforming the boys. In general, girls are less likely to repeat a grade than boys. Also girls progress faster to the last grade of primary education than boys. Achieving parity in education is an important step towards gender-equality. (UN 2012, 20.) Perkiö (2009, 133) states that the education of women is a way to equality, empowerment and democracy.

Enrolment rates to primary education have grown globally. This is positive improvement in many ways. However it is also important to examine the rights of girls within the education and trough education. When gender issues are neglected in education gender-parity cannot be achieved. As mentioned in EFA report 2003/4 (UNESCO 2004, 116-117), gender-aware school systems are crucial if the participation of girls and boys is to be sustained. When gender inequalities are been eliminated, foundation for broader gender equality can be built.

3.3 Promoting gender equality through education

Schooling and literacy are beneficial for women. It is a way to empower women; improved literacy skills give women better control over modernizing life. Studies show that higher literacy rate on women is associated with lower child and maternal mortality rates. (Perkiö 2009, 133.) It seems that literacy indeed is playing a key role in many cases. According to different researches it is clear that in order to meet many of the MDG's, education is needed. For example, Schnell-Anzola, Rowe and LeVine (2005, 30-34) noticed in their research that there is a clear linkage between literacy and health-related issues. Women who had better educational background and literacy skills were also able to understand the importance of health in their life. Especially they had better knowledge in maternal health. (Schnell-Anzola, Rowe & LeVine 2005, 30-34.) When literacy rates are compared between sexes, it seems that in many countries women have lower literacy skills than men. Illiteracy has impacts not only in

woman's life but also in her family's life. However, literacy alone can build more equal society. Studies show that when women are educated are healthier, have more autonomy in house hold and also their children are healthier. (Velkoff 1998, 1.) EFA report on gender (UNESCO 2004, 30) also shares this view. Education plays a key role in democratic process by giving women and men the opportunity to influence what happens in their society.

As mentioned earlier, literacy alone affects many demographic indicators. For example women who are literate have fewer children and those children live healthier life. However the studies show that there is a minimum threshold of education before women can achieve autonomy in household. According to researches, in order to reach equality in households, women need to study more than five years. This means that at least secondary level must be reached. (Velkoff 1998, 3-5.)

EFA program is promoting education globally. One of the major objectives is to create education system that is equal for girls and boys. For example in Nepal 20 % of education sector donor funding funding has been channeled to eliminate gender disparity. This includes scholarships for girls and recruiting more female teachers. For many families scholarships are playing very valuable role. More and more girls have been accessing school because their education is being supported. (Vaux, Smith & Subba 2006, 13-15.) Inequality in education means losses to the whole society. Removal of gender gaps in education should be the first priority in all programs of expansion and qualitative improvement, since equality in education has many positive effects. These include improved economic growth; enhanced well-being for the children; better future for the future generations; increased farm output and the incomes of the poorest; nourished citizenship and lower fertility. (UNESCO 2004, 266.)

The state has a great responsibility in building school system free of gender parity. Legislative and policy reform in needed and the system needs to promote equality in education and other parts of life also. Gender needs to be mainstreamed within the institutions. This means that the government has to ensure that both men and women benefit from equality, development decisions and interventions need to be gender

aware. (UNESCO 2004, 267.) In grass-root level this means that also in schools some changes needs to be done. All schools should have proper facilities to make schooling possible for both, girls and boys. This includes proper sanitary facilities and water. The studies indicate that lack of proper facilities makes fewer girls attend school. Also it is important that government supports girls' education by removing the school fees and increasing the amount of female teachers. (UNESCO 2004; Velkoff 1998.)

Education is important also when empowerment of women (MDG number 3) is considered. Levitt (2008, 50) points out that in order to realize the ways how people can be exploited, students need knowledge and skills and to become a democratic decision maker people need to be able to ask critical questions about their daily life. Students must recognize their possibility to affect inequality. (Levitt 2008, 50.) Basic education is human capital.

4 PARTICIPATION

"Participation and empowerment facilitate individuals' discovering who they are and what they want" (Bachrach and Botwinick 1992, 31)

4.1 Participation in education

Paolo Freire is one of the most remarkable education and development theorists of the 1900-century. In year 1970 Freire published his most well-known book *The Pedagogy of the oppressed* (originally published in Portugese as *Pedagogia do oprimido*). Freire emphasized the importance of involving the participants to the learning process. From the beginning, Freire's pedagogy was considered as a pedagogy that happened on a grass-root level and it was used especially when poor people were educated. Freire himself used his pedagogy to educate adults, but pedagogy of the oppressed has been applied also in the education of children for example in Sweden. (Hannula 2000, 4-6.)

Freire (2005, 75; 103) states, that education can be used as a tool to oppress people. This happens when the teacher is telling stories to the students and the students do not have possibility to participate. Instead they taught to listen and absorb the information as it comes, without critical thinking. The objective of this kind of education is to remember not to change things. The objective of this kind of oppressive education is to make people think similar way and to make them change for the reality. (Freire 2005, 75; 103.) Freire (2005, 85) introduces a different kind of way to teach. His method is based on equality and dialogue. The teacher is no longer the teacher, but also a student who learns in a dialogue with the students. (Freire 2005, 85-86.) Dialogue is one of the most important factors when students are wanted to participate to education. Freire (2005, 97-99) states that in order to realize who we are as human beings, dialogue is necessary. This kind of education gives people a possibility to think critically and to express their thoughts freely. Freire (2005, 103)

continues that such situation people are trying to change the reality they live in together, instead of trying to change people themselves. Dialog is a way of learning together, it is a possibility for everyone to share their ways of seeing. Reconstructing the reality and the requirement for knowing the truth is possible through dialogue. This way people can see different angles of different issues. (Freire 2005, 96; Hannula 2000, 82.)

Saxena (2003, 75-98) has studied the linkage between community participation and literacy in India. He discovered that literacy programs based on community participation had many positive effects. He mentions that usually the illiterate people are the most marginalized and oppressed group inside Indian society. Their status in the society is low and they are living in deprived conditions. However, their status in the society rose after literacy programs. (Saxena 2003, 86.) Perkiö (2009, 129) states that illiteracy is one of the most remarkable reasons for low socio-economical living conditions. However, he continues that by teaching people to read by using empowering methods, these conditions can be changed (Perkiö 2009, 129).

Participation and empowerment in education are also mentioned in EFA goals. According EFA Global monitoring report (UNESCO 2004, 204) society's participation in school governance can provide more opportunities to people to be heard. This can be a way to development. However at the moment these opportunities are limited in many parts of the world. (UNESCO 2004, 204.)

The teacher has important role in participation in education. When the teacher is willing to have real dialogue with the students, even empowerment process is possible. Genuine dialogue needs trust in order to succeed. The teachers need to be ready to face criticism and to learn from the students. It is also important that the students feel that they have a possibility to influence in their future. (Freire 2005, 100; Siitonen 1999, 121.) Levitt (2008, 48) points out that the teacher must encourage students to critically consider or even to challenge their learning. She continues that in order to do this, the teacher must develop her/his self-image. The teacher also needs to be aware that in order to promote learning, he/she must focus the attention and

discussion to the students. (Levitt 2008, 50.) The teacher has to be a facilitator who makes the dialogue possible. As Freire (2005, 186) refers, cooperation is vitally important in dialogue and dialogue makes empowerment possible.

Sometimes the problem in schools are the power relations. The teacher is the authority who the students need to obey. These power relations might be harmful when empowering education is considered. The students don't feel equal with the teacher and so they are not willing to express their thoughts freely. Freire (2005, 82-83) highlights that this kind of use of power considers people as objects instead of giving people the change to think themselves. They become robots who repeat what they have been taught instead of human beings trying to change the world. (Freire 2005, 103.)

4.2 Participation making difference

Participation can make a difference. Different participatory methods are often used in poverty reduction since it is assumed to be the most appropriate tool to implement, enforce and encourage change in development (Masschelein & Quaghebeur 2006, 310).

Empowerment is often linked to participation. According to Ulvila and Pasanen (2009, 47) sustainable culture for poor (struggling class) can be achieved through empowerment. They state that poverty is clearly a symptom of powerlessness. When the struggling class would have right to equal say in political and other issues, the future would look completely different. They also remind that the empowerment of the struggling class will not happen without a struggle. (Ulvila & Pasanen 2009, 47.)

Empowerment and democracy are also connected to each other. Kurki (2000, 57-62) introduces the concept of cultural democracy. According this concept culture is important part of everyday life. Everyday people are looking for answers to their daily problems and these problems are solved on the basis of the culture people live in. According this view, there is no uncivilized person, but all people are equally civilized.

Facilitating empowerment cultural democracy can be reached. Also one of the foundations in political democracy is the change to make a difference. (Kurki 2000, 57-62.) Development and participation are linked to each other. It has been studied that participation is important part of rural development. Participation is based on voluntary relationships between different actors and it takes place in normal day-to-day life. (Nour 2011, 79-80.) This is why participation of people is a good method when sustainable development is wanted.

Participation goes hand in hand with empowerment. According to Masschelein and Quaghebeur (2006, 310) participation is assumed to make a change or to make difference compared to earlier situation and to open new perspectives. In order to have successful participatory development project, those people who are involved will need to be part the project in every stage. This includes the needs evaluation, identification of problems, planning, management, implementation and evaluation. (Yazdani, Yaghoubi, Shakeri & Azadikhah 2011, 1896.) These stages are equally important in empowerment processes.

Empowerment is a process that leads to individuals' personal and social growth (i.e. Wilska-Seemer 2005, Freire 1992; 2005). Empowerment means change and development of an individual or community. Also according to Siitonen (1999, 84) empowerment is inner change of a person and inner feeling of strength of a person, empowerment is transformation. However personal change can lead to participation and trough participation also the environment around the person changes. (Siitonen 1999, 84.) Freire (2004) describes empowerment as process where a person becomes a subject instead of object. Hannula (2000, 81-83) summarizes Freire's thoughts; one will become aware of situation and becomes aware of the need of change in one's life. Person will find out that the oppression in life has to be ended in order to gain a perfect society.

According to Siitonen (1999) empowerment is a process which starts from a person itself. The process begins when person decides to change his/her life. However, social contacts are needed in order the empowerment process to proceed. Process can start

when a person realizes that he/she has possibilities to change him/herself and he/she as a person is important. According the empowerment theory empowered people are active, creative and free and they are willing to reach new goals in their lives. (Siitonen 1999.)

In order to empower, the environment usually has to be favourable for the environment process. Because most people need conditions that will benefit the empowerment process, other environments are more beneficial than the others. An environment that is secure allows freedom of choice and provides appreciation is more favourable for the empowerment process of an individual than an environment that lacks all or some of these qualities. (Siitonen 1999, 181.) Empowerment in a non-favourable environment is also possible, but more unlikely than in a favourable environment. Freedom is one of the key elements of empowerment (i.e. Siitonen 1999; Kurki 2000). Siitonen (1999) points out that especially in the beginning of empowerment process, the importance of freedom of choice cannot be highlighted enough. When people are voluntarily participating and their opinions are heard and respected, empowerment is possible. (Siitonen 1999.)

4.3 Children and participation

Children are usually separated from adults. It is natural, since children are not yet developed physically or emotionally like adults and this makes children depended on adults. However there is one major error about children adults often have that leads to omission of them. Often people think that children are too young to participate to decision making or to understand critical thinking.

In fact this thought is incorrect. Children are capable to participate and to understand. Balen, Blyth, Calabretto, Fraser, Horrocs and Manby (2006, 43) also support this view. According to them children have a right to be heard. Instead of working *for* children or *on* children Balen et al. (2006, 43) studied the role of children in research and they state that children should be given a voice and they need be taken seriously. Children are active beings and they should be more involved in society. Kellett (2005,4-6) has

studied participation of children in very particular way. Instead of children being the target, children were the researchers. According to Kellett (2005, 5) children are the best experts of children, only a child can see the world through the eyes of a child.

Kiili (2006, 94) has studied participation of children. According to her possibilities for children to participate in current society are minor. She adds that school can offer a forum for children to have an impact. In her study she found out that children who were given an opportunity to decision-making learned responsibility and their identity as citizens became stronger. (Kiili 2006, 196-198.) When active citizenship is wanted, participation of children should be supported.

Adults have important role in participation of children. Kiili (2006, 61-88) states that adult is a role model to a child when she/ he want to be an active participant. Supportive attitude of an adult is important. An adult who is supportive towards participation encourages children to discuss with each other and to solve problems with each other first.

5 THE METHOD

5.1 Research task and presuppositions

The objective of this research is to understand, describe and interpret interactions between students and teachers that happen in class room environment and to find out how students participate in education. More specifically this study concentrates in studying interactions between girl students and teachers and girls participation in class room. This task was formulated into two research questions. First research question "How do girls participate in education?" is designed to find out about girls participation in education. The question is divided into two sub questions: "How often the girls are making initiatives to participate", "How girls initiatives to participate are reacted by the teachers". Second research question is "What motivates girls to participate in education?". This question is designed to find out what are those issues which are encouraging girls to participate and also to examine what kind of challenges and barriers there are to girls participation. The purpose is also to find out what is the role of teachers in girls participation. Second research question is divided into three sub questions which are: "What kind of methods teachers are using when motivating girls to participate?"; "What other issues besides teacher's encouragement motivate girls to participate" and "What kind of challenges there are in girls participation?". The purpose of the sub questions is to clarify the main research questions.

Before collecting the data I had some presuppositions about the school community, the quality of interactions between the students and teachers and also about teaching methods used in village schools. My presuppositions were based on my visits to Indian village schools in which I had visited before my internship in Nepal. Some of my presuppositions were correct and naturally some of them were incorrect. My presuppositions about teaching methods met the reality. I believed that the primary method used in the class room would be repetition. This presupposition was correct. The teachers mainly used repetition as a teaching method in education. I also believed

that the majority of teachers in the school would be men. Also this presupposition was correct. In the school there was only one female teacher and rest of them were men.

Some of my presuppositions were incorrect. As a following note from my research diary reveals, I believed that teachers would use violence against children like they had used in Indian village schools:

> *For me it will be difficult to witness the violence towards children. I hope there will be also other means to show children their behavior is not desirable than beating them (September 10th 2011)*

However I was positively surprised when I realized that violence was not used as a punishment in Shree Pragatishil Milijuli Primary school. Children were reprimanded verbally but they were never punished physically. I also assumed that majority of students would be boys. After observing and interviewing students and teachers, I realized that even though attendance of female students was lower than male students, they were the majority in the school.

5.2 Research environment and data collection

This research is a qualitative case study from Shree Pragatishil Milijuli Primary school. The school is located in Babare village in Dolakha region in Nepal. Also other schools were visited during field visits (two other schools in Babare village and one school in Kopachago village), but finally Shree Pragatishil Milijuli Primary school was chosen. Reasons why Shree Pragatishil Milijuli Primary school was chosen were many. First of all Babare village was visited more often than Kopachago village. Way to Kopachago village passes Babare village, so every time Kopachango village was visited, also Babare was visited. Distance to Kopachago is much longer than to Babare which made the choice between these two villages easier. Second, Shree Pragtishil Milijuli Primary school was located near to the house where I stayed during my field visits. After some time I was able to visit the school without a guide. This made access to the school for me easier. Third, children of the school were in appropriate age for the study since initial objective in the beginning was to study the education of primary school aged

children. Last, there were lot of girls in the school which made the observation of girls easier and possible.

The school is located in Babare village. Babare village is located approximately two to four hours walk away from the closest city Singadi. It is difficult to estimate the distance between Babare and Singadi in kilometers, since at rural areas in Nepal distances are usually told in hours (five hour walk, one hour walk etc.) and paths to the city vary depending on the person who walks them and also by season (rainy, dry or cold). Depending on the season and path it takes between 2 to 4 hours to walk to Babare. From Singadi there is a bus connection to another city Charikot (largest city in Dolakha region) and from there again to Kathmandu.

All together there are five teachers working in the school of which four are male teachers and one female teacher. In data teachers are called teacher 1, teacher 2, teacher 3, teacher 4 and teacher 5. Teachers do not have teachers education, but all of them have passed the 10th grade. Primary school teachers are not required to have teachers education in Nepal, passed 10th grade is sufficient for them to teach. The amount of students at Shree Pragatishil Milijuli Primary School is 130. From these students 55 are boys and 75 are girls. According the principal the distribution between the genders is same as in Nepal in general. The teaching is provided to classes one to five. Majority of students belong to cast origin hindu groups (Chettri and Brahman 50%). The second largest group are students with indigenous background. At Shree Pragatishil Milijuli Primary School the largest indigenous group are the Thagmi's (30%). There are also small minority of Newari and Dalit students (approcimately 10% of both).

The school is easily accessible for most of the students. The distance to the school for students is between 15 minutes to one hour walk. Since Shree Pragatishil Milijuli primary school is government school, studying is free for the children. However the parents are required to pay an exam fee thrice a year. This exam fee is five rupees for first grades, 10 rupees for second graders, 15 rupees for third graders, 20 rupees for fourth graders and 25 for fifth graders. Also parents need to buy their children a school

uniform. Otherwise all material used in class are provided by the school. The government of Nepal pays the salaries of the teachers. There are no other staff members at the school except the teachers.

The school is divided into two buildings. All together there are five class rooms and one office/principals room. Classes one to three and office are in one building and classes four and five are located in the other building. There is also a separate building in the school area, which has all together four toilets (two for girls and two for boys). Most of the class rooms are equipped in similar way. They have two bookshelves, one blackboard, mirror, desks and benches for children. The class room for first graders is equipped also in similar way, except that the children do not have desks and benches, but they are sitting on the floor on rugs. There are also two computers at the office for the teachers, but these computers are only used once in a week. The electricity for the computers comes from a battery that is charged with solar energy.

My visits were always structured in similar way. In the morning I left from Kathmandu with a bus to Charikot where I stayed over the night in a hotel or guest house. In the morning I took another bus to Singadi where again I stayed overnight in a local guest house. I always had someone waiting for me in Singadi, with whom I spent the night. In the morning I and some employee of CWIN walked up to Babare where we again spent the night in a private house. In the morning I left to the school where I spent the day observing and interviewing the children and teachers. After one or two weeks again I returned to Singadi from there again to Charikot and Kathmandu.

This research is an ethnographic case study. Ethnography was chosen as research method, since it offers a deep and comprehensive understanding of the topic. It enabled for me to see the status of a girl child in a class room society. Because I used ethnography as a research method, I can describe what kind a typical school day is for a child. Ethnographic research is a qualitative research method which allows diverse data collection and also this was one of the reasons it was chosen. Since I had a chance to spend long periods of time in the Babare village, for me it was logical choice to use an ethnographic case study approach. Data was collected during autumn 2011 in

Dolakha district in Nepal. Data was collected by using various means, including observing, interviewing and by reading documents available about the educational arrangements in the school.

Participant observation is very common in ethnography. As Wolcott (1999, 44) demonstrates the label is used in different ways, in some cases referring to all activities in which field workers engage. In this research one part of the data collection was participatory observation. Participatory observation is one of the most common data collecting methods in ethnography. This means that the observation is done in such way that the people who are been observed are aware of the researcher. In school environment the researcher first tries to get an overall impression of the culture and habits in the classroom and after receiving that he/she will start to look things more thorough. Objective is that the researcher will be fully integrated to the class, so that he/she will not be outsider, but a part of the class. (Syrjälä etc. 1994, 84-85.) There is a concern that while the observer is present, those who are being observed are acting and thus their behaviour is not "real". As Wolcott (1999, 44) admits this possibility it is also necessarily to remember that even though people might be acting for some time, ethnography is done over a long period of time. People cannot keep up their act so long. (Wolcott 1999, 44.) My part was to empathize in to a role of a girl in a class room. I executed this by being a passive observer.

Observations were done between September 2011 and January 2012. All together I spent 6 weeks in Babare, usually one week in a month. In December I had a possibility to stay for two weeks. As a researcher doing an ethnographic research I would have wanted to spent more time in the village and with the children in the school. However due to factors independent from my wishes (festivals, holidays etc.), it was not always possible. Note from my research diary reveals some of problems I faced during my data collection:

> I had planned to stay in Babare for two weeks, but I just heard that there will be a two weeks holiday and the school will be closed. I have to return to Kathmandu, since also the people I'm staying with are going to spend Dasai there.(October 8th, 2011)

I also had made a very clear plan how to collect the data. However in very early point I discovered that it was impossible to make too accurate plans which made me at first feel frustration:

> *Nothing goes as planned in Nepal. Yesterday I was certain that I will be doing my research in Balika-center near Panauti (village about three hours away from Kathmandu), but today I heard I will be collecting the data from Dolakha. It is annoying when plans are changing all the time. (September 12th, 2011)*

However after some time I got used to into the uncertainty and felt that it was actually quite liberating.

For observing I did not use any recording device, instead I made notes to my note book. During my stay I decided to concentrate in observing the 3rd class. The decision to observe class 3 was made based on the recommendations of the staff members.

Other form of data collection was interviews. Interviews were semi-structured interviews and they were taped into mp3-form. For recording the interviews I used my mobile phone which has recording function. Semi-structured interviews have an open-ended quality about them, the interviewing takes place as it progresses (Wolcott 1999, 53). The interviews were conducted as relatively informal and loosely structured conversations around a few main thematic areas. These thematic areas were: 1. Participation, 2. Teaching methods, 3. Equality/ Inequality and 4. Outlook to future.

These thematic areas were chosen to support the research questions and to answer those questions that arise from observations but could not be answered only based on the observations but needed some clarification. Interviews were also conducted during the field visits to Babare. All together three teachers and four girls were interviewed. The interviewees among teachers were chosen according their language skills (teachers who had good or average language skills) or according their position in the school community (the principal). The interviewees among children were chosen according their gender (only girls were interviewed) and according their school attendance (girls who attended school on those days when interviews were done).

On my first visit a member of CWIN staff accompanied me and he also acted as an interpreter. However later on I did not have anyone with me who could have interpreted the classes. In the beginning it was hard for me to observe and understand, but when I visited Babare for the last time, observing was much easier for me:

> *Following the teaching is almost impossible. Only during the English classes I understand something. Good thing is that when I don't understand what people are speaking I can concentrate on the interactions between teachers and students. But I'm sure this would be easier if I understood something…(October 5th, 2011)*

> *I'm amazed how well I understand Nepalese! I can understand fully some sentences! I feel that observing is little bit easier now. (January 10th, 2012)*

5.3 Ethnographic research

This research is an Ethnographic case-study research. Ethnographic research has developed from the curiosity to research people in their natural environment (Syrjälä, Ahonen, Syrjälä & Saari 1994, 68). If researcher wants to get deeply familiar with the people's life he/she is studying, ethnographic research is the best way to implement the research.

As in every research, also in ethnography, research question is vitally important. The research question needs to be asked in such way that ethnographic research makes sense. (Wolcott 1999, 68.) Wolcott (1999, 68) reminds that there is always a strong descriptive element in ethnography. This is why ethnographic question must implicate what it is that the ethnographer is to describe as a result of exercising the two major fieldwork components described earlier, experiencing and enquiring (Wolcott 1999, 68). Wolcott (1999, 70) also states that in order to ask an ethnographic question one needs to have some kind of idea what an ethnographic answer looks like.

When doing an ethnography researcher must spend long periods of time with the people he/she is studying. During this period in field researcher tries to understand the life of the research-participants. All participants, including the researcher, are active during the research process. People's experiences and their own context of living is

important in ethnographic research. These experiences are the spine of the research. Ethnography is a process, where different interpretations of reality meet. (Syrjälä etc. 1994, 68.) Willis (2000, 34) states that it is fundamentally important in ethnography to comprehend creativities of the everyday. He continues that structures not immediately and present in the field are undoubtedly "there" in ethnographically observable relations and sensuous effects (Willis 2000, 34).

Ethnography is challenging. Ethnography does not suit all research problems and it certainly is not easy to conduct. As Wolcott (1999, 71) demonstrates a research that tell too little about too many is not necessarily best to conduct with ethnography. However ethnography is suitable when something needs to be studied carefully and when something needs to be fully understood. According to Wolcott (1999, 71) in those instances where ethnography is well suited, it achieves its fullest potential when the researcher is free to work independently. He adds that it seems better use of ethnographic talent than simply having ethnographers run interference for large-scale studies. (Wolcott 1999, 71.)

Anthropology traditionally associates ethnographic research to intention of studying cultures (Wolcott 1999, 67). However ethnography can be more than that. As Wolcott (1999, 67) states as viewed from outside its discipline of origin, ethnography has slowly become dislodged from the conceptual framework. Ethnography is now a method of inquiry that is independent of the study of the culture. (Wolcott 1999, 67.)

Case-study research has also some features that are typical only for it. It concentrated only into few cases and seeks to examine many features of these cases. Cases can be individuals, groups, organizations, movements etc. (Neuman 2011, 42.) As Neuman (2011, 42) states case-study research intensively investigates one or a small set of cases, focusing on many details within each case and the context. Case-study clarifies our thinking and allows us to link abstract ideas in specific cases we observe and they are likely to procedure the best theory. These are clear strengths of case-study. (Neuman 2011, 42.) In this study the case is the school community and features in it. To study phenomenon in the school community and to understand them,

ethnographic case-study is the best solution. Case-studies have the ability to make visible the details of social processes and mechanisms by which one factor affects others. (Neuman 2011, 42.)

5.4 Data analysing methods

After observations and interviews were conducted they were transcribed into a written form and transformed to computer. Since observations were already in a written form, transcribing them were relatively easier than transcribing the interviews since they needed to be decrypted from the tape. After transcribing the data I had 52 pages observations transcribed and 37 pages interviews transcribed. All together the transcribed data was 89 pages.

Data was analysed by using content analysis. As Neuman (2011, 361) describes, in content analysis the content of text is gathered and analysed. Content can be words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any communicated message. The text is anything written, visual or spoken that serves as a medium of communication. (Neuman 2011, 361.) I chose content analysis since it can reveal messages in a text that are difficult to see with casual observation. Themes, biases or characteristics that are unaware can be seen more clearly when the content is been carefully analysed. (Neuman 2011, 361.)

I started analysing the data by reading it carefully and dividing it into different thematic groups based on my research questions. These thematic groups were a) Girls initiatives to participate, b) Teacher's reactions to girls initiatives to participate, c) Teacher's method's to encourage girls to participate, d) Other issues that encourage girls to participate and e) Challenges and barriers to girls participation.

The data was carefully decoded and similarities were united. I wanted to find out whether there are systematic ways of interact, participate, communicate or react in the class room. The objective of the analysis was to find out the typical behaviour of girl students and teachers in the terms of research questions. After perusal reading, similarities were found and coding of the data became easier. According to Neuman (2011, 364) coding requires that the text is carefully read and it will be converted in a very systematic manner into measures of significant words, symbols or messages.

6 RESULTS

This chapter will introduce the findings from the collected data. Sections 6.1 and 6.2 are giving an answer to the first research question "How do girls participate in education?" and sections 6.3 and 6.4 are answering to the second research question "What motivates girls to participate?".

6.1 Initiatives to participate

In general it seems that girls are willing to participate and they are making initiatives in order to be part of the classroom situations. The collected data indicates that there are many different ways for girls to make initiatives in order to participate in daily classroom work.

First, girls were participating to the education by *interacting with other children in the classroom*. These interactions had many different forms. First form of interaction with other children that could be seen as active effort to participate was help girls offered to other children. Usually girls offered to help their peers in different tasks teachers gave them during the class:

> *English class… … One of the girls (girl 1) has finished he school work. She looks at girl (girl 2) next to her and realizes she has problems with the task. Girl 1 starts to help her (girl 2), together girls finish the task and ask the teacher to look over their note books.(December 6th, 2011. Teacher 5)*

> *One of the girls is reading a poem in front of the class. She is having lots of problems when reading. Every now and then another girl from the back of the class helps the reader by telling her what the next sentence is. (October 3rd, 2011. Teacher 2)*

As the following samples from data indicate, girls offered their help to others without separate request. This shows that girls wanted to help others and to participate in learning process of others. This can be seen as active participation to education. Also

the interview data shows that girls want to take active part in classroom by helping others:

 …I want to help others when they are having problems with school work…(Sherpa girl, 10 years)

…When I can, I always help others… (Thangmi girl, 11 years)

Helping others could be seen also in other way round. Sometimes girls interacted with other children by asking them to help with school work. Data shows that these interactions happened when girls were having problems with the task the teacher had given them. When girls were interviewed, they said that usually they ask help from their peers when they are not getting help from the teacher.

Girls also participated to education by discussing with other children about school work. These interactions happened either in the class room or during the recess. Discussions about school work were usually more relaxed compared to the concrete help children gave to each other. Girls also participated by asking other children to concentrate more to the education. According the teachers interviewed, girls who were succeeding in school were stricter about work peace than those girls who were having problems in daily school work.

Observations show that girls are willing to participate in education. Girls want to get attention from the teacher and also from other students. This initiative to participate can be seen in the form of *concrete action*. This action was executed in many ways; usually girls were actively doing something that could evoke attention that had focus on them. When the data is examined it points out that typical way for girls to seek for an attention is something that could be defined as normal class room behavior. For example girls raise their hand, pass their home/school work paper towards the teacher or change their seat from the back to the front. However, the following data shows that sometimes girls are prepared to use extreme means when seeking for an attention:

…children are working on English assignment. One of the girls has already finished her work and is trying to get the teachers attention. However, the teacher cannot see that the girl has raised her hand. All of a sudden the girl takes her book and slams it to the floor. After this the teacher runs to the girl. (December 7th, 2011. Teacher 2)

When girls were interviewed, many of them felt that it is necessary for them to seek for an attention from the teachers and also to use concrete action in order to participate in daily school work:

When teachers ask questions, they never ask from me…but I don't mind. I answer without raising my hand (Sherpa girl, 10 years)

This kind of form (answering to questions without raising a hand) could also be seen in the class room:

The teacher is asking questions from the class. One of girls is clearly very enthusiastic about the questions. She shouts the answers before anyone else has even raised their hand… (January 10th, 2012. Teacher 1)

Many initiatives to participate were addressed to the teacher. The third category of initiatives girls are making in order to participate can be seen as *contact taking to the teacher*. Observations revealed that taking contact to the teacher was most common initiative girls made in order to participate. Most common way to take contact to the teacher was to raise hand when teacher asked a question or when girls had a question to the teacher. Raising hand can be considered as a typical classroom behavior. Other typical way to take contact to the teacher was to pass the note book to the teacher when he/she was passing the seat one was sitting. However girls also had other means to take contact to the teacher:

…one of the girls runs to the teacher and takes him by the hand. (January 10th, 2012. Teacher 4)

Children are working in pairs…one of the girls stares at the teacher so intensively he asks the girl whether she has something to ask or tell. (October 3rd, 2011. Teacher 3)

Other means to take contact to the teacher were not always used. When and where these means were used seemed to be depended on the teacher. For example girls seemed to be more active to take contact when teacher 4 was teaching them. Also, when teachers 3 and 4 were teaching the children, girls were asking more questions from the teacher. It seems that personality and teaching methods of a teacher effects

directly how active girls are to participate. Observations and interviews also revealed that the gender of a teacher had only a small effect to how girls are participating. One of the girls interviewed described her relationship to the teachers as follows:

> *When I want to go to the bathroom I ask from miss (the lady teacher), but otherwise I think she teaches like others (Girl, 9 years)*

As can be seen, when she wanted to use the restroom, she felt that she needed to ask the permission from the female teacher. Otherwise the girl felt it mattered whether the teacher was male or female.

It seemed that girls liked teaching method that emphasized dialogue with the teacher and other children. When children had the possibility to have a "relaxed" dialogue with the teacher and with other children they participated to the education in more active manner. The following sample from the data supports this finding:

> *Teacher 5 is teaching children. They are repeating some poem. One of the girls is sleeping in the back of the class. Atmosphere in the class room can be described as sleepy. All of a sudden the teacher changes and teacher 4 starts to teach the children. The girl who has been sleeping wakes up and starts to smile. She moves her seat from the back to the front. Teacher starts to talk with children. Everybody laughs and talks back to the teacher.(January 9th, Teacher 4 and Teacher 5)*

6.2 Teacher's reactions to initiatives

The data indicates that the teacher has a remarkable role in girls participation and in how they are making initiatives to it. The teacher can either support or obstruct the participation. This section introduces the findings on how teachers react to initiatives girls are making in order to participate.

Positive feedback from the teachers seemed to be one of the most supporting factors to girls participation. Teachers were giving positive feedback to girls initiatives in different ways. Most common way to the teachers was verbal positive feedback. This could be seen as giving the girl an opportunity to speak when she raises her hand and when the girl has done something right, teachers flatter them. This method of verbal positive feedback was used by all of the teachers. Some teachers also used other means to give positive feedback:

…girl has raised her hand and when the teacher sees that she wants to answer to the question he mentions this to the class and starts to clap his hands. The girl smiles and answers to the question she had been asked. (September 12th, 2011. Teacher 4)

When teachers were giving positive feedback, it affected to girls participation in a positive manner. The data supports this finding:

One of the girls gives her notebook to the teacher. The teacher smiles and flatters the girl. She smiles and starts to ask questions from the teacher. Teacher answers and taps the girl on her shoulder." (January 9th, 2012. Teacher 4)

I have noticed that when I tell girls they have done a great job, they want to learn and be part of daily class room activities. That is why I try to be supportive, even when a girl is not academically that talented."(Teacher 1)

Positive feedback could also be seen in a form of giving a girl a possibility to do something which is considered valuable or important in the classroom society. One of the examples of such was when girl had been actively helping others in the classroom:

Children have been asked to go out….children start to dance and one girl has been given a drum to set the rhythm. When I ask why she is the one to set the rhythm, I am told that she has done a good job by helping other children in the class. Being the drummer is a price for her. (September 14th, 2011)

Sometimes teachers gave concrete rewards to those children when they had been active in class. When teachers were interviewed they also mentioned that they had a scholarship program for girls who were succeeding in studies, but whose family was poor. According to the teachers this scholarship program had improved the participation of girls in some level.

Positive feedback was not the only kind of feedback children faced when making initiatives to participate. Occasionally the feedback the teachers gave to girls was based on negative foundation. This was when teachers debunked or minimized their initiatives and could be seen in many situations. In most cases of debunk girls initiatives were simply left without attention by the teacher. The data reveals how leaving a girl without an attention appeared:

Nepali language class….one girl has been asking for teachers help for some time. Teacher is not paying attention to the girl, instead he is writing to the blackboard. Finally the girl gives up and stops working with her assignment. (September 13th, 2011. Teacher 1)

Girl is passing her note book to the teacher. The teacher seems more interested in reading a newspaper. The boy next to the girl passing the notebook to the teacher starts to help her. (December 6th, 2011. Teacher 3)

Usually when girls were debunked, teachers were concentrated in something else besides the teaching. These situations were solved so that some other child gave the girl what she needed (help, an answer, missing material etc.) or the girl gave up on her effort to participate. Occasionally teachers minimized girls efforts for example by flattering a boy in front of a class when a girls success was only mentioned to the girl.

Most of the teachers were very strict about the work peace in the classroom. This affected to the girls initiatives in such way that sometimes when they were answering to the questions teachers had asked, instead of letting them to answer, teachers forbid them to speak. In most cases a girl had answered without raising her hand, but other kind of action also made teachers to forbid children. In most extreme case the teacher threated to use violence against children:

…a group of girls is sitting in the corner. They are helping each other with the assignment and talking while doing it. The teacher walks to them and raises his hand like he is going to hit the girls. Girls fall silent. (September 14th, 2011. Teacher 5)

Threatening with violence was occasional and carried out by two of the teachers. However, during my field visits I never saw either of the teachers put their threat in practice.

6.3 Teacher as a motivator

The teacher has a remarkable role in motivating girls to participate and the collected data also supports this finding. The data shows that teachers have various methods to motivate girls to participate. *Encouragement* is the most common way to motivate the girls.

The data shows that teachers encourage girls to participate in education by giving them instructions and recommendations. Instructions were usually give on about assignments the children were supposed to do either in school or at home:

The teacher is teaching English. He writes questions to the blackboard and asks children to do them at home. One girl arrives late to the lesson. The teacher walks to her and tells her what she needs to do. The girl nods as a sign of understanding.(January 9th, 2012.Teacher 2.)

Most common situation in which teachers gave a girl recommendations were when a girl was passive or concentrating into something else than lesson:

One girl is sleeping on the her seat. The teacher wakes her up and asks her to look at the table (December 6th, 2011. Teacher 5)

This kind of encouragement seemed to be the most typical way to encourage children to participate. Instructions and recommendations were given daily and especially recommendations were given more often to girls than boys. Interview data also supports this finding:

We as a teachers try to encourage the girls more than boys. I think girls need more support than boys because they are oppressed in Nepalese society. (Teacher 5)

The teachers also encouraged girls in a more direct way. Most usual way to encourage girl to participate to education was to cheer them and embolden them. Sometimes teachers asked girls some questions or encouraged them when they felt insecure:

Lesson on mathematics…one girl has finished her assignment. The teacher sees this and asks whether the girl would like to help someone else with it. (December 7th, 2011. Teacher 1)

Children are reading one at a time in front of the class. It is time for one girl and she does not want to go to read. The teacher asks why and she answers. The teacher encourages the girl and smiles to her and finally the girl goes in front of the class. (October 3rd, 2011. Teacher 3)

When girls were interviewed, they felt that the verbal support the teachers gave them encouraged them to be more active in the class.

When the teachers tells me I have done a good job, I feel good. It makes me work harder and attend during the lessons. (Sherpa girl, 10 years)

The teachers also gave the girls material supports in order encourage them to participate and also to make studying possible. Material support was given when a girl was missing something that was needed in class:

One girl is not working on the task the teacher gave to the class since she is missing a notebook and a pen. The teacher gives them to her. (September 14th, 2011. Teacher 2)

Material support was necessary for many girls. Some of them were entirely depended on the material support provided by the teachers or school. Some girls felt that without the material support their attendance in school might be impossible.

One method the teachers used to support participation was participatory teaching methods. Teaching methods included open discussions about some social issue and debate. Open discussion were discussions in which the children could express their opinions freely and challenge the teachers view:

I like to make the children to think. Sometimes I want to make them talk about issues that are wrong in our society. I tell them something that is clearly wrong and they can challenge me on that. I want them to be accurate and to explain why they think something is wrong or right.(Teacher 4)

According the teachers girls need more support when participatory methods are used. They think the reason for girls being passive in situations where active participation is needed is the fact that they are not used to such situations.

6.4 Other issues that motivates girls to participate to education

The study showed that there were also other issues besides the teacher that motivate and encourage girls to participate in education. These issues could be found inside the school and also outside the school.

When girls were interviewed and they were asked what kind of issues encourages them to take an active role in class almost all mentioned the support from the family. For girls their parents opinion about education was important and when parents thought education was important, the girls wanted to succeed.

Education is important and my father wants me to learn. This encourages me to try harder and to participate to daily activities.(Sherpa girl, 10 years)

…and of course because of my mother and father I want to try harder. (Girl, 9 years)

When parents supported girls education they succeeded in school better and also participated more. Also the teachers had noticed that girls who were supported were getting better grades and were more active than those who did not get support from their parents:

" When girls don't have to work that much they are doing better in school. In general they are more active than those girls whose parents are not supportive." (Teacher 4)

Friends or siblings were also important incentive for the girls. When their friends or siblings were active and participated to the education, girls also wanted to act in similar way:

My best friend is very good at school. He is always answering to the questions. Sometimes I want to be like him at school." (Thangmi girl, 11 years)

My Dai (older brother) is very very good in school. He is the top of his class. I want to be top of my class too. (Sherpa girl, 10 years)

As the data indicates, it seems that academic performance was important for the girls. When they were doing well in academic sense they were also more active in school. Some of the girls had a strong desire to learn, which made them more participative.

Teachers had noticed that girls who are members of Sherpa-community had more stronger desire to learn and also those who were members of higher casts (Brahmin and Chettri). The principal framed the previous as follows:

Sherpas have more positive attitude towards education. Children from Sherpa-community are always very active and participate to education remarkably well. This is both, Sherpa-girls and Sherpa-boys. Brahmin and Chettri are also very good. Even girls are active. (The principal)

It seems cast and tribes have relation to girls motivation to participate education. According to the teachers, members from these groups are also attending school very regularly. It looks like school attendance and participation are connected to each other some way. Citation from my research diary supports this hypothesis:

Sad but true, I noticed that those girls who were attending school regularly were participating more than those who attended school once or twice a week. The principal said that more often those attending school regularly are boys. (January 8th, 2012)

One main motivation to attend school was financial support. According the teachers the main criterion for getting the financial support is the gender. The financial support is given to the family

There are scholarships that are designed to increase the school attendance and participation.

Me: To whom these scholarships are meant for?

Only girls can get them. It is provided by the government and it is given to the parents, all together 390 rupees per month.

Me: So the parents get the money?

Yes…so that they would let the girls come to school (The principal)

Positive attitude of self and others was clearly important factor to girls participation. Positive future prospects also motivated girls participation. Those girls, who had a desire to become something (a doctor or a teacher etc.) were more active than those who did not have such desires. One reason to participate for some of the girls was desire to be married into a wealthy family:

I want to be a doctor, that is why I am helping others and study hard. (Sherpa girl, 10 years)

I hope I will get a rich husband. To have a rich husband I have to be successful in school.(Newari girl, 9 years)

Believe into a benefits of education were strong on some girls. These girls believed that studying is good for them.

6.5 Challenges of girls participation

Some major barriers could also be found. Cast and tribe were beneficial in the light of participation to education for some girls but for some girls cast or a tribe was a barrier. According to the teachers because of cultural traditions education of girls is not appreciated among Thangmis (tribe) and Dalits (cast). Collected data supports this

view since it illustrates that girls from mentioned communities do not feel their education matters:

> I like to go to school but I don't see what's the use for me since I will be working in the field as my mother when I grow up.(Thangmi girl, 11 years)

> School is just something that prevents me helping my mother at home. (Dalit girl, 10 years)

As the previous samples show, the girls do not think it is worth for them to educate themselves. For them education is not as important as responsibilities they have at home. Also teachers have seen the same problem:

> Thangmi girls have problems in school. We have to work very hard to make them commit to education. Nepalese culture is oppressive towards women and in some communities the problem is even bigger. (Teacher 4)

When supportive attitude of the family effects on girls in positive manner, it seems that non-supportive attitude affects them in negative way.

Children from Thangmi tribe have also language problems when attending school. The lessons are given in nepali language, when these children speak their own language. This problem is emphasized among girls, since their attendance at school is lower than boys:

> Thangmi children are having problems in learning because many of them don't speak nepali. Especially the girls who are having pressure at home learn really slowly. This is problem when they should move for example from class 1 to 2. Many of them don't have the sufficient knowledge! (The principal)

This could be seen clearly when classroom activity was observed. Some children could not keep up when lessons were given in nepali language.

As mentioned, negative or minimizing attitude towards girls and to their education is a big challenge in girls participation. In school male preference was clear. When teachers wanted children to do something (to read in front of the class, to be teachers helper), 8 out of 10 times they chose a boy for the job. Male preference can also be seen in the society every day:

> If my parents have to choose whether I stay home to look after for the siblings or should my brother stay, it is always me who stays. That is my duty. (Sherpa-girl, 10 years)

I know my brother is more important than me. In future, he will take care of my father. (Thangmi-girl, 11 years)

Girls felt that they are less valuable than their male gendered siblings. They also felt that staying out from school and taking care of housework was their duty. Housework at home also led to low school attendance and to inactive behavior in school in general.

One challenge to the participation of girls in school is the teaching culture. The existing teaching culture is not encouraging children to participate, but instead it is almost oppressive. Teaching method that emphasizes repetition does not leave much room to initiatives to participate.

7 DISCUSSION

There is clear increase in girls school attendance than earlier. Statistics show that in 2001 less than 54 % of girls attended school in Dolakha when in 2011 almost 90% of girls attended school (Census Report 2011, UNESCO). Also attitude towards education of girls is more positive than earlier and current policymakers support equality between genders. The collected data shows that girls are willing to participate and they are being active in class. Girls are making a lot of initiatives in order to participate and many of them want to be active. It is highly positive change that the attitude towards girls education is better than earlier since education of girls will have effects to future also. Studies show that the best way to improve the future employment and livelihood prospects of disadvantaged young people both in rural and urban areas is to ensure they stay in school until they are at least functionally literal and numerate. (Bennell 2011, 17.) Without attendance their cannot be participation either.

The data reveals that the teacher has significant role in girls participation. If the teacher supports the initiatives girls are making in order to participate girls are more active in class. Also theories (Siitonen 1999; Freire 2005) support this finding. Teacher can take a role of a facilitator who can make participation to education possible. As a facilitator the teacher can make the dialogue and empowerment possible, as Freire (2005, 186) refers. When teachers supported girls initiatives to participate girls were more motivated to learn than when their initiatives were not noticed. Girls whose initiatives were noticed also helped others and they had future plans, for example one of the girls wanted to study to be a doctor. It is vitally important that the students think they have possibility to influence to their future (Siitonen 1999, 121). Teacher who has a good self-image can help children challenge their learning and encourage them (Levitt 2008, 48).

Teaching was always teacher-lead at Shree Pragatishil Milijuli Primary School and even though some teachers used dialogue as a teaching method, participatory methods were not widely used. Most common teaching methods used were repetition and copying. This places some challenges to participation. Problematic with girls participation at the school was that girls were encouraged to participate to education in a passive way. Teachers were paying attention more often to school attendance (asking for girls to look at the table etc.) instead to their active participation (dialogue and critical thinking). Sometimes girls participation was even smothered. An example of a situation like this was when a girl was forbidden to speak after the teacher had asked a question. When the possibility to dialogue and to critical thinking has been prevented, people become oppressed and passive (Freire 2005, 100). Oppression could be seen as hopelessness which some of the girls expressed.

Male preference in Nepalese culture places challenges to girls participation. Oppression of girls is still widely spread everywhere in Nepal, not only in education system. As the data showed, many families still believe that it is more important for them to educate their sons than their daughters. UNESCO's (2004, 117) report supports this claim. Education of boys is valued more, since supposedly they will take care of the family in future and the daughters will marry into another family. Also teachers have discovered the same problem. The government of Nepal has tried to solve this problem with scholarships that are indicated to girls and partially succeeded. Teachers are also willing to help girls to participate but cultural habits are deep. Attitude change is needed, but the change is slow. Equality in education is one of the EFA goals (UNESCO 2004, 44). Girls and boys should receive the same treatment and attention, follow the same curricula, and enjoy teaching methods free of stereotypes and gender bias. This does not yet come true in Shree Pragatishil Milijuli Primary School.

Globally girls are more oppressed than boys. The data showed that the situation is even worse if you belong into some minority group. It seems that dalit and Thangmi girls were the most oppressed group in the Shree Pragatishmil Milijuli Primary School. The observations revealed that girls belonging to these groups were extremely passive and they themselves also had very negative thoughts about future. According to Subba, Vaux and Smith (2006, 15) Scholarship programs (EFA, government of Nepal) has been established to support financially these groups, but clearly other kind of support is also needed.

Quality of education is not very high. Teachers are not educated which is one of the key issues why the quality is inadequate. Teachers are willing to support the girls (and boys too) to participate but they are lacking tools for it. According Subba, Vaux and Smith (2006, 13) quality education plans has been established. However it seems this has not yet reached all rural areas. Government of Nepal has made a school sector reform plan, which is supposed to be executed by year 2015.

8 RESEARCH ETHICS

Social research always contains issues that need ethical consideration. In ethnographic research ethical discussion is even more relevant since the study includes long term relationship of the researcher with the informants.

First, I would like to estimate my own role as a researcher. At the beginning I felt I had difficulties to merge in to the school society. I did not know the language and either children nore teachers could forget my presence. This was problematic since I wanted to observe their regular behaviour. However later when we became more familiar with each other I felt it was easier for me to take my role as a researcher. As a researcher I aimed at all times to be as objective as possible. When observing and writing notes, I tried to write them with neutral tone. Problem with observing was that I did not have any equipment to film the classes so I was purely dependent on my own observations and notes, but I believe the time I spent at Babare was sufficient for implementing a small-scale ethnographic research.

Second it is necessary to examine the privacy of the informants, harm and exploitation. The name of the school is mentioned in this research. I felt as a researcher that the name of the school does not harm the privacy of the informants. However, even though the name of the school is revealed the privacy of the informants has been protected. Their names have not been revealed and their identity cannot be recognized from the citations. Instead of names I have used number identification with teachers and cast/tribe and age identification with girls. I decided to use cast/tribe identification with girls, since later I noticed that the cast and tribe as significance in how girls participate.

The children and the teachers were aware that I was collecting data for my research. They were informed about the research and what was it about on the first day I visited their school with a letter I wrote. I wrote the letter in English (Appendix 2) and it was also translated to Nepali-language. Naturally all the people did not know all the details about the study, since the focus and the details also changed during the process. During the observations everyone were observed, but when children and teachers were interviewed, nobody was interviewed without their consent. Research permission was asked from the institution and from those who were interviewed.

Sometimes it was difficult for me to understand some cultural habits or procedures concerning educational principals. However, when I faced such situation, I tried to ask people why things were done like they were done. During the whole research process I always tried to follow the ethical guidelines and personal principles. I also wanted to respect local customs and learn as much as I could.

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Appendix 1

Millenium Development Goals

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Targets: Reduce by half the people living on less than dollar a day Reduce by half the people who suffer from hunger
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	Target: Ensure that all girls and boys complete a full course of primary education
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	Target: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 , and all levels by 2015
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	Target: Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	Target: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Targets: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	Targets: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse the loss of environmental resources Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development	Targets: Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and nondiscriminatory. Address the least developed countries' special needs. Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies— especially information and communications technologies

Millenium Development Goals, UN 2000

Appendix 2

Dear teachers and students,

My name is Heli Pikkarainen and I study education in Finland at the University of Jyväskylä. At the moment I am doing my internship in CWIN Nepal at Kathmandu and this is one of the reasons why I am privileged to visit you here.

CWIN Nepal has launched a program that studies education of girls in rural Nepal. Mrs Sumnima Tuladhar (Founder secretary of CWIN) has kindly asked me to do a small scale study about girls participation at your school as a part of my internship. At the same time I have been given a possibility to collect, with your permission, data for my master's thesis.

In my master's thesis I am interested in girls participation in school. The data would be mainly collected by observing your daily classes and partly with interviews. In order the data to be as truthful as possible, you won't have to change anything in your daily routines.

Thank you for your cooperation

Mrs Heli Pikkarainen