CHILD PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOLS OF NEPAL: ROLE AND

CONTRIBUTION OF CHILD CLUBS

Bhola Prasad Dahal

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This thesis entitled *"Child Participation in Schools of Nepal: Role and Contribution of Child Clubs"* was presented by *Bhola Prasad Dahal* in January 19, 2014 and approved by:

…………………………. January 19, 2014

Prof. Mana Prasad Wagley, PhD

Thesis Supervisor

…………………………. January 19, 2014

Prof. Mahesh Nath Parajuli, PhD

Thesis Supervisor

…………………………. January 19, 2014

Prof. Kishor Shrestha, PhD

External

…………………………. January 19, 2014

Prof. Bidya Nath Koirala, PhD

Member, Research Committee

…………………………. January 19, 2014

Prof. Bhim Prasad Subedi, PhD

Member, Research Committee

…………………………. January 19, 2014

Associate Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD

Member, Research Committee

…………………………. January 19, 2014

Prof. Tanka Nath Sharma, PhD

Dean, School of Education

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

………………….………

Bhola Prasad Dahal, Degree Candidate

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…………………

Bhola Prasad Dahal

Degree Candidate

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my father late Chandra Prasad Dahal, my inspiration and guru hard who taught me all about the fruition of work and honesty (though departed from this mundane world, last year – during this study). Moreover, I am equally endebted to my beloved mother, Chhatra Kumari Dahal, even though an illiterate from the definition of 'formal schooling' system, she has always motivated me for further studies and good work.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to study the child participation in schools in Nepal and role and contribution made by child clubs in enhancing children's learning and school governance. The focus was to explore the various contexts underpinning the emergence and management of child clubs. Since the conceptual premise of children and their clubs essentially signifies the understanding of children as 'human beings' and childhood as a 'social construct', children's childhood experiences are diverse and thus, influenced by the perceptions, values, beliefs and mindset of people in the society.

In this context, in order to obtain in-depth, relevant, and rich responses to the research questions, I explored numerous pertinent literatures such as books, journals, research reports, policy documents in the beginning, and subsequently reviewed study-relevant theories, concepts, empirical findings and policy matters.

Moving towards research methodology, I chose qualitative research method and an interpretative paradigm, wherein, I subscribed the ontological philosophy that interprets reality as an individual's own perceptions, and epistemologically accepts inter-personal discourse in generating knowledge. I purposively selected three schools/clubs of Sindhupalchok as the main study area, and one child club of Lalitpur district for tools development and piloting purpose. I have employed multiple tools, multiple participants and multiple sources for data collection like case study and observation (3 schools/clubs), interactive interview (15 persons), focus group discussion (8) and review of documents.

I further coded, thematically analyzed, and interpreted the empirical data with reflexivity of research participants. They include students, child club leaders, teachers, and parents including SMC and PTA members, NGO activists, child rights officers, and education officers. Although there is an understanding that children are human beings

and competent actors for social transformation and learning in respective schools, NGO activists and government officials still feel children need guidance and support from adults to develop them as future human beings. However, there is a contradiction on beliefs and values among children and adults stakeholders of child clubs in line with pre-sociological and sociological studies of childhood respectively. Hence, the ideas of new sociological studies of childhood prevails among research participants that children's participation is important in all matters that are of interest to children, and simultaneously influencing the decision making process thereafter, that affect them in both explicit and implicit terms where there is a legend that child club meant child's active participation and learning. It further asserts that every child is entitled to have a say on the issues of affecting them, and for their views that needs consideration based on their age and maturity.

School-based-child-clubs have emerged in Nepal since 1993 to meet three goals i.e. make school child friendly, promote the citizenship rights of children, and increase children's learning competencies and abilities in line with the UNCRC articles 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17 that holds the State Party legally responsible. The research findings, therefore, revealed that the school based child clubs have become good forums for both girls and boys to get information on children's rights and other related issues, to develop their personal, social, and leadership skills that also promotes socialization and children's participation in school governance. Here, children themselves initiated to lead, manage, and implement the club activities and programmes. These clubs have brought positive changes in children, their families, schools and societies. Hence, children's agency is increasingly recognized and promoted in both schools and society.

Furthermore, child clubs have provided a space for both girls and boys to meet, to express views, to plan and implement action initiatives together on issues affecting

them. Thus, turning children into social change agents who are able to make adults and institutions more accountable and responsive towards children by informing, promoting and protecting children's rights in schools is significant. Therefore, child club members are raising their voices, making choices, and claiming their rights collectively to improve competency and learning along with school governance.

There are also few concerns among adults about child clubs that they only prioritized extracurricular activities, not on improving learning and socialization. Children of child clubs also blame child rights agencies for not supporting the needs, priorities and agenda of children and schools. Girls also feel that their voices on child clubs' activities less prioritized, whereas non-members have frustrations that child clubs only support its members, not to all students, especially from lower grades.

Supporting existing socio-cultural and economic forces (Fletcher, 2005; O'Kane, 2006), my research findings suggest that *personal, political and pedagogical* forces in schools also play both positive and negative roles in child clubs and child participation. When these forces are positive, they enable children to gain access to the multiple assets like 'agency', 'belonging', and 'competency' as asserted by Mitra (2004). In addition, I claim that children also get access to and practice '*democracy*' and '*empowerment*' in child clubs of South Asia. Together, these five assets "ABCDE" are fundamental for children to live a dignified life as 'human beings', not as 'human becomings' and practice their citizenship in both schools and respective communities. Key words: *child rights, child participation, children's learning and school governance*

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Degree Candidate   Approved by:

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To begin with, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the research participants (child rights expert group, Education officers of central region, child rights officers of all 75 districts, NGOs activists, teachers, students, and parents), especially children and the child club leaders from Sindhupalchok district for their valuable inputs and cooperation. They did not only provide me their insights and valuable time, but also made my field-stay and study a convenient and memorable one. This includes Mr. Hemant Dangal of Tuki Sindhupalchok and all the colleagues of Central Child Welfare Board, who supported me in selecting the sites, arranging research participants and making materials and relevant documents available whenever required.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Constituent Assembly
CAC	Citizen Awareness Centre
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CCWB	Central Child Welfare Board
CFLG	Child Friendly Local Governance
CFS	Child Friendly School
CRC	Child Rights Convention
CRO	Child Rights Officer
CZOP	Children as Zones of Peace
DCPC	District Child Protection Committee
DCWB	District Child Welfare Board
DDC	District Development Committee
DEO	District Education Office
DEP	District Education Plan
DoE	Department of Education
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EFA	Education for All
GoN	Government of Nepal
HT	Head Teacher
IPFC	Integrated Plan Formulation Committee
LBs	Local Bodies (VDCs, Municipality and DDCs)
LGCDP	Local Governance Community Development Programme
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development

MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
MoLJCAPA	Ministry of Law Justice Consitution Assembly & Parlaimentary Affairs
MoWCSW	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPA	National Plan of Action
NPC	National Planning Commission
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SC	Save the Children
SCN	Save the Children Norway
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SSRP	School Sector Reform Programme
SWC	Social Welfare Council
SZOP	School as Zones of Peace
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Education Science and Cultural Office
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VCPC	Village Child Protection Committee
VDC	Village Development Committee
VEP	Village Education Plan
WB	World Bank
WCF	Ward Citizen Forum
WCO	Women and Children Office

CHAPTER I

SETTING THE SCENE ON PHENOMENON

Any organization like a child club is a structure that socializes and educates children that provides a space for girls and boys to interact with one another in a more active and democratic way. People including children create structures for them and/or take membership of the existingly created structure where they live, work, interact and learn within one type of organization like the home, the club, the school (Afful, 2002). In the child club process, girls and boys learn the norms, values, beliefs, and culture of their society including of school. They also learn to conform the accepted ways of a social group, and appreciate the fact that social life is based on rules (Haralambos & Holborn, 2005). However, the child clubs also provide a space for girls and boys to work in a more independent and lively way, which may transform traditional norms, values and beliefs into the new cultural contexts, more logically and meaningfully.

Children as a 'human being' create their own organization for them or they take membership of the already created organizations for their learning and benefits. The process to associate children in their own groups or clubs was championed at the national and international levels as a part of their fundamental human rights discourse. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948, the International Covenant on Political and Citizenship Rights (ICPCR) 1966, and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 are some key international instruments that define children as human beings, right holders and as active members of society.

Child club is a group of boys and girls from diverse ethnic, religious or different income groups of similar age living in the same localities coming together with different skills and background to perform specific roles and duties of common

concern. In Nepal, there exist children's organizations, most notably the clubs and scouts for long, which have served the children of the country in many important ways since 1952. A few clubs as small associations were active until the late 1980s. The genesis of what can almost be described as a child club movement coincides with a time when the country as a whole was preparing for the inception report on the UNCRC, around 1993 and 1994 (Rajbhandary, Hart, & Khatiwada, 2002). Before the 1990s, there were *Charpate* clubs for agriculture field, student councils in Colleges and University, student organizations affiliated to different political parties, youth clubs for sports and cultural activities in different parts of the country, junior Red Cross circles and scouts in high schools. In this context, I am focusing to study child clubs formed with a notion of rights perspective to children's rights to participation.

Personal and Professional Interest

Born in a farmer's family in rural Ramechhap, I completed my 10 years of schooling with a challenge of a 4-hour-walk in a day. I was one of nine siblings at home who was fortunate enough to have access to school. Besides, I helped household chores, also supporting the family in agriculture every morning and evening. After appearing the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination, I was involved in teaching profession even without knowing the roles and qualities of a teacher at the age of 17 in 1985.

When I remember those days, it makes me so glad that how I enjoyed and engaged in extra-curricular activities and sports as a student and as a game teacher. I contributed as a teacher sponsor to facilitate and guide the Junior Red Cross Circle (JRC) of the school even before the birth of UNCRC, as a voluntary social work within and outside the school premises with a motto "*I Serve*".

I started my professional career as a development worker in 1992. I was working with/for (out of) school going children, adolescent girls, and youth groups to reduce their vulnerabilities by enhancing their capacities and competencies through education and health interventions. Form a child rights perspective, I firmly believe and advocate in promoting, protecting and fulfilling children's rights with their active engagement in school and local government's initiatives and decision-making process (Dahal, 2007- 2011). Furthermore, I am continuously engaged to lead and manage few campaigns, policy dialogues and advocacy initiatives since 2000 in my professional work with I/NGOs and bilateral agencies that have interfaces with policy makers and high-level government officials. These initiatives include: i) Ensuring child rights and child participation in the upcoming constitution and children's act amendment (Dahal, 2006); ii) promoting children/school as zones of peace; practicing child friendly school/local governance (Dahal, 2008, 2010b, 2012a); iii) advocating devolution of education and health service management from local government (Dahal, 2013c); and, iv) contributing to teachers' motivation and professional development through- "*Shikshyak"* monthly magazine (Dahal, 2008-2010).

I have gained experiences at home, and in professional job where children enjoy and learn when they are engaged in sports and extra-curricular activities in both schools and communities. I am convinced that we get more ownership and commitment from our own children when they are invited in decision-making process at home. Children like to play, learn and have fun more with their peer groups (Dahal, 2010c, 2011). Furthermore, children are good learners if they are cared, loved and consulted (Dahal, 2012b, 2013b) and given opportunities to think, plan, act and evaluate .

Child clubs are mushrooming in a short span of time in Nepal in both schools and communities (Consortium, 2012; O'Kane, 2006). Children engaged in child clubs

are outspoken, friendly, confident, assertive and social than other children (Dahal, 2009-2013; Fielding, 2006; Hart, 1992; Lansdown, 2005; O'Kane, 2006). Children are eager to work/study in-group, serve their communities and run programmes for themselves (Dahal, 2005, 2010b, 2013a). Thus, child clubs in schools is my personal and professional interest of doing research on an emerging but an unexplored agenda.

Setting the Scene on Child Club Phenomenon

This section includes the exploration and discussion of the South Asian and Nepalese context of child participation with an emphasis on child participation policies and practices in both schools and local government institutions.

Context of South Asia

The primary engine of change in promoting children and young people's participation in South Asian Region has been the NGO community (Singh & Karkara, 2002) to socialize children and to build their leadership in society. The child-to-child approach introduced into the region by NGOs in the late 1980s directly involved children in the process of health and education service delivery. In the early 1990s, as the concept of child participation came into existence with an increasing recognition among NGOs to make children visible in arenas normally dominated exclusively by adults when making decisions about children. The ideas of the Brazilian writer, Paulo Freire, also had profound influence on development and education discourse in parts of the region. His identification of children as one of the 'oppressed' groups within society, subjected to authoritarianism by both parents and teachers, gave rise to debates over how the education system could be humanized to empower children to engage in a critical dialogue (Freire, 1998). Accordingly, child rights NGOs began to explore models of participation rooted in community activity, which empower children to exercise their rights for their own and others' best interests (Hart, 1997).

Bhutan, Afghanistan, and the Maldives have witnessed relatively little activity to date, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, and to a lesser extent in Pakistan and Bangladesh (UNICEF, 2009b) have spawned a proliferation of projects encompassing a wide range of activities and methodologies on child participation through NGOs.

The Constitution of India, which came into effect in 1950, guarantees its citizens' fundamental rights. Moreover, child-specific legislation has been formulated in recent years, such as the Juvenile Justice Rules accompanying the Juvenile Justice Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, and these Rules acknowledge and encourage children's right to be heard (GoI, 2012). When it comes to policies and plans for children, the child-related sections of the Eleventh (2007–2012) and the draft Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017) mandate the fulfillment of children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation as the foundation of human development (GoI, 2012). They emphasize a need for institutionalization of child participation by incorporating children's views into mainstream policy and programme formulation processes. The standalone National Plan of Action (2005) on children also includes information on training professionals, government officials, family members and others in the right of the child to be heard (Heiberg & Thukral, 2013).

The recent National Policy for Children (2012) underlines children's right to participation in all matters affecting them (GoI, 2012). In spite of these entitlements recognizing children's participation, children are still not allowed to register their own organizations, the government's argument being that legal registration entails legal liability and children cannot be held accountable by law (Heiberg & Thukral, 2013). The 2000 Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (amended in 2006 and 2011) and 2007 Rules articulate the child's right to be heard and respected at every stage in the justice process (UNICEF-India, 2011). They call for the creation of age-

appropriate tools and processes to interact with the child and promote children's active involvement in decisions regarding their lives. Children's Committees are also to be constituted in every public care institution and children are to be represented on the Home Management Committees and in schools. However, the role of child participation in public care is still not practiced and the central and state governments are currently responding to the issue with international pressures especially through UNCRC periodic reporting process (UNICEF-India, 2011).

As for Children's courts catering to child victims, these have been set up in India as part of the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act 2005 (GoI, 2012). Children have been evaluated as reliable witnesses in several judgments, including in cases of sexual abuse. Children are to be heard if the judge considers them as capable of understanding the questions and the importance of the oath of truth, and ascertains that they have not been influenced. Child-friendly court procedures and personnel are evolving, for instance, in-camera proceedings are in place, and children's names are not disclosed or permitted in the media (Heiberg & Thukral, 2013). In addition, a child who has to file or defend a case shall be entitled to free legal services. Very rarely School Management Committee consisting of teachers and parents in each school invites children's representatives. Such representations are not included in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009.

The Sri Lankan Constitution guarantees the right of freedom of speech and expression to all. However, there is no record of child participation made as an explicit obligation in child-specific legislation. As for policies and plans, the 1992 Charter on the Rights of the Child is explicit on child participation, although not on awareness-raising of child participation through CRC training for professionals working with or for children (in practice, however, the government has provided this kind of training to

professionals as well as parents). The Rights of Children section in the National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (2011–2016) does not cover the right of the child to be heard in general, although other sections of the plan mention participation of children with disabilities. While not a legal acknowledgement, children's clubs can be registered by the Probation Commissioner. When courts are not legally obliged to consider children's views while deciding matters affecting them, in practice, the Probation Officers interview children out of court in care and within protection proceedings, who report to the court later. Magistrates are not to act on the probation report alone but must also conduct a full inquiry to be satisfied with the facts. The right of parents to be heard is also recognized. These are all applications of a general right to be heard on the part of anyone affected by a judicial order. Police officers and magistrates have been trained to apply a child-friendly approach in court but these principles are still not practiced as a norm. Moreover, it is a legal provision to obtain the statement of a child victim through video recording in the Colombo area, but this opportunity is not always properly utilized because of a lack of priority and capacity building of local administrators.

Governmental standards for children in public care underline the important role of child participation in state and private institutions (Heiberg & Thukral, 2013). However, this is still not practiced as a norm and there is no periodic monitoring of compliance with these standards. Although not a requirement, children are part of the School Development Societies and represented on the School Management Committees. Mostly, students are handpicked up by teachers and head masters and not selected by student unions.

Child club has been responsible for bringing friends back into school, expanding the school building, and involving government in providing access to

education (Hart, 2008, 2004). In the context of war-affected eastern Sri Lanka, a children's club developed in a small community trapped between the armed resistance movement and the government forces. It developed slowly in order to be sensitive to the local culture and governance system.

The children who were aged 12–18 years selected from children's organizations and children's clubs, and by the children in these organizations themselves (CRC, 2010). Currently children participate in the village child rights monitoring committees through representatives of children's clubs that are operating at village level. They are registered as societies with the provincial and central authorities. About 150 children's councils exist at divisional level and their views feed into the Divisional Child Rights Monitoring Committees (CRC, 2010). CRC Committee in 2010 recommends government to develop child-friendly approaches in schools and ensure effective child and community participation in decision-making and management of schools.

The Constitution of Bangladesh contains explicit guarantees for a wide range of civil and political rights, including the freedom of expression for all citizens and special measures for children (GoB, 2013). Moreover, the 2011 Children's Policy embodies the principles of respecting children's participation and opinions and the 1974 Children's Act provides for the participation of children in all stages of the judicial process. In the National Five Year Development Plan, also a separate section on Children's Advancement and Rights mentions child participation.

Child-friendly court procedures for child offenders, victims and witnesses are yet to be introduced in spite of the 1974 Children's Act (and the corresponding 1996 Children Rules) providing for child participation in the judicial process. Under the 1985 Family Courts Ordinance, the Family Courts have exclusive jurisdiction for settling family-related issues and the guardianship and custody of children, although the

Ordinance does not specify children's rights to be heard. There is yet no legislation in Bangladesh requiring children in public care to be heard and there is a tendency to view children as not being sufficiently mature to take part in decisions at family and political levels (Heiberg & Thukral, 2013). The Ministry of Education has issued a circular calling for the formation of Student Councils to ensure child participation and democratic norms in each school. However, School Management Committees are not required to have student representatives.

In Bangladesh, children cannot register their own organizations as it is only possible to register an organization by persons having a National Identity Card, which people get at the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2009b). Government of Bangladesh has recently opened children's gallery at the national parliament that has created an opportunity for children under the age of 12 to be present at the parliament during the sessions (ASK, 2012). The children organizations have also taken initiatives to create a common platform where children can raise their voice and thus enable themselves to claim their own rights. ASK further claims that Bangladesh has ensured Child Participation through child focused and child led organizations like Ichchey Media Group (IMG), Child Brigade (CB), Child Congress/Parliament (CP), Child Protection Movement (CPM), Child Club (CC) and National Children Task Force (NCTF).

From these literatures and discussions on child rights and child participation in South Asia, it reveals that all South Asian Countries, after being the State party of the UNCRC in 1990s, prioritize child rights from welfare perspectives on their agenda. The periodic hearing process on CRC reports influences the state party to consider and prioritize child participation in state mechanism including in school as an obligation to UNCRC (article 12). The rights based approach to development has been a public discourse in periodic plans including on children's issues. Thus, the understanding of

children and importance of their participation in state mechanism including in schools

in South Asia has been gradually changing, as they are social construct, I conclude that:

i) Children are no longer incompetent and passive 'becomings' in the region; they

are competent, active social actors who know far much better about their own

issues and the way to deal with them as well (Dahal, 2012b, 2013b). However,

most of the countries in South Asia define child as a person below the age of 16

years without any legal responsibilities.

ii) Child club is an organization led and managed by children for themselves to

deal with their issues in the community and in their schools (Dahal, 2009b,

2013b). It is a common platform and an effective medium for children to make

their voices reach to the policy making level as a right. Child club has been a

new local phenomenon after ratification of the UNCRC to fight for the rights of

the children.

iii) Purpose of child club is to gather children in order to inform them, promote

their rights, and empower them through their own organizations (Dahal, 2008).

iv) Involvement of children in club activities enhances their confidence, makes

them aware of their rights and develops skills necessary to access these rights.

This leads to greater participation in family, in schools, in adult institutions and

community life, increasing their sense of social responsibility and civic duty,

qualities essential to future citizenship and leadership roles.

v) A good starting point for realizing a more child-friendly school and society is

the formulation of child-related laws and policies. In recent years, countries of

South Asia are incorporating children's rights to be heard and invite them to

participate in policy formulation process. In addition to various child-specific

legislations, all countries in the region have a National Plan of Action for

Children or Child Policy that includes child participation – and some of these plans and policies mention child participation as part of the CRC training for professionals working with or for children including teachers.

vi) Children may have the freedom to establish child clubs and informal networks in most countries in the region. However, they can only register their associations with the government authorities in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

vii) Schools can provide a significant 'space' to encourage girls and boys to work together with their peer group, their teachers and the wider community to become productive and respected citizens. Child club in school is a means to bridge between children and teachers, schools and communities and sources of information for both children and their parents (Dahal, 2010b). The education system can provide considerable scope for increasing children's knowledge, skills and values as active citizens as they become involved in making choices about the curricula, teaching methods, teacher-pupil relations, peer-to-peer interaction, school management, and school- local community interactions.

It is obvious that child clubs are mushrooming in South Asian countries and are being part of local government structures including in schools with an influence of the Committee and efforts of I/NGOs and UNICEF. From the inception report till date, the Committee in Geneva is continuously raising its concern that the general principle of the right of the child to be heard (Article12) is still absent from most of the legislations concerning children and is not applied in legislative administrative and judicial proceedings or in family, school and community in South Asia. The Committee draws attention to its General Comment No. 12 on the right of the child to be heard (CRC, 2009). It further reiterates its previous recommendations that the State party: i) Integrate, in an appropriate manner, the general principles of the Convention in all

relevant legislation concerning children; and ii) apply them in all legislative, judicial and administrative proceedings and ensure that it is respected in family, school and community (CRC, 1997, 2005, 2009, 2010). The following section will briefly highlight the practices of child club mechanisms, structures and its contributions to children, schools and society in the neighboring countries of the region.

Context of Nepal

Child clubs in Nepal began as a result of child-to-child-activity under child centered community development programme from 1989 in Lamgunj and was expanded to Palpa, Tanahu and Udayapur by Save the Children Norway (the then Redd Barna). The child to child programme included health, hygiene, injury prevention, educating siblings, care for younger children and promotion of child rights. Children learned these subjects of the child-to-child initiative in active, practical ways, which are, then, taught by them to younger siblings and neighbors. There was no specific focus on child participation at the beginning as their rights. Currently they claim working with more than 5000 child clubs across country as they promte child participation as a one of the five working principles in all countries (SC, 2012).

Plan International started child clubs in 1991, and now emphasizes that there should be a child club or children's forum in each of the village/school where they work. SCUS initiated child-to-child programme in Nuwakot in 1995 and in Siraha in 1996 and SCUK in Sindhupalchok in 1995. The children's clubs of Action Aid began with a participatory research in 1993/94 (Johnson & Hill, 1995). Since 1997, Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) initiated child rights awareness groups in 41 districts in government schools. In mid-1998, Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN) started the Child Rights Forums in schools (Rajbhandary et al., 2002).

UNICEF has been working in Nepal since 1968 on different child rights and child protection issues. Very lately, it explored feasibility study of child clubs in 1996 in line with the Committee's recommendation (UNICEF-Nepal, 2003). As a result, it supported consultation with children and child club in the first CRC reporting process in 2002. Following the rights perspectives incorporation in the country programme 2002-2006, Decentralized Action for Children and Women Program (DACAW) 2006-2008 prioritized formation and strengthening child clubs for the first time as one of the three priority areas including child friendly local governance initiatives (UNICEF-Nepal, 2010). It continued recognizing children and young people participation (CYP) as one of the three cross cutting issues in its all interventions. UNICEF Nepal follows three main approaches in supporting CYP, namely: i) Capacity development of children and young people, mainly through child clubs; (ii) support for CYP in local governance with formulation of appropriate polices and legislations; and (iii) promote an extensive network of child clubs, each with 15-30 members at all levels. UNICEF alone claims supporting more than 5,000 child clubs and its network throughout country in partnership with MoFALD and NGO partners (UNICEF-Nepal, 2012).

Child clubs in Nepal are functioning at schools, and in communities with an initiative and support of various child rights organizations (CWIN, 2007). The approval of child friendly school national framework for quality education in 2010 by MoE played instrumental roles for rapid expansion of child friendly schools. Besides other, the framework has an expectation that SMC/PTA of each school will form and mobilize child club including their representation invited in these school meetings.

With a promising need of human resources for child club facilitation and promotion of child clubs almost in each district by many child rights organization, the Consortium of Organizations Working for Child Clubs (Consortium) in Nepal was

established in 1999 to facilitate and build capacity of the child clubs and concerned

NGOs working on child rights issues (O'Kane, 2006).

Structures and Contributions of Child Clubs

Children are integral members of a society, families and communities. Hence, children and childhood are both social constructs. However, in many child clubs, orthodox adult structures are being imposed on children, rather than encouraging dialogue among children to develop and establish their own alternative structures that may be more egalitarian, less hierarchical and thus more empowering to all children within the clubs (Ratna, Shrestha & Maharjan, 2012). Nevertheless, the change is emerging in the organizational structure of the child clubs ranging from a structure of a single leadership, a hierarchical structure, a structure that reinforces collective leadership, and clusters of collective leadership (Seneviratna, 2008) in Nepal. Children generally preferred clusters of collective leadership that are different from traditional adult organizational structures and is more conducive to right-based child participation.

In the context of Nepal, the majority of the child clubs have the same structure as adult organizations have in their committees influenced by NGOs norms. Later on, the child participation guideline issued by MoWCSW in 2007 reinforces this provisions and structures for operation and management of child clubs (CCWB, 2006a). Most of the members in child club are from 10 to 16 years of age with some exception up to 18 years. There is an executive board of seven to eleven persons, which includes a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and sometimes a joint secretary. This structure, as described by Rajbhandary et al. (2002), was introduced to children during the training sessions provided to child club facilitators mostly from NGOs. These child club facilitators mostly follow these norms without questioning the rationale. Child club leaders and schools frequently get the same advice from

facilitators/NGOs. This structure is based on 'leadership' model with much emphasis on the direction being given by a few talented children but little participation of majority of children in decision-making process.

Although there is still the predominance of leadership model in the organizational structure of the clubs, some interesting models have evolved in a number of clubs (Rajbhandary et al., 1999). Some children have named coordinator of the committees on their executive board instead of Chairperson in order to facilitate and coordinate the communication between the executive board and the members. However, there is no great deal of variation in child clubs' organizational structure since children were only introduced to one kind of structure and they have not been encouraged to challenge it. I also did not find the different structure in the clubs of those children who participated in my research. They have the same conventional adult type of organizational structure where only the smarter children get chances to have leading position. There are few girls in leading positions. I also reflect upon children's views on this kind of structure in the analyses and interpretation chapters later.

I concisely discuss child clubs in different parts of the world, particularly in the South Asia in order to draw comparative views on the contribution of club to children, schools and society. The analysis revealed a sense of mutual trust; respect and engagement gradually emerge in learning between adults and children through child clubs. Children's participation takes place in collaboration between adults and children when they have shared understandings, and adult respect for children's autonomy and independence as an actor of the society.

Four categories of children's contribution in learning and education setting emerged from the above studies of child clubs. They are: i) Children's competence as observers in social settings; ii) learning through engagement with others in social

settings; iii) children as autonomous learners; and, iv) children and teachers as learning partners. In line with this, my study will focus to explore the emergence, evolution, management and contribution of child clubs with a particular emphasis on students learning and school governance.

Problem Statement

Nepalese society is diverse and complex. Therefore, children's involvement may vary from one group to other. Children's participation in decision-making is a way of fulfilling new roles of citizenship participation and meeting human rights standards (Hinton, 2008). After the ratification of the UNCRC, children are no more object and invisible. They are subject of society and a human being with full rights to protection, provision and participation. All children are equal and have access to all rights equally without any discrimination. Children having their basic needs met are requesting a voice in decision-making. This has created a tension between child clubs and adult institutions in both schools and communities and State mechanism due to weak legal provisions. Children are usually ignored in decision making as a result they fail to develop leadership and enjoy citizenship.

Children and childhood is a social construct. Academia and researchers are doing studies about children and their roles in society. However, child participation in school is still taken as a normative agenda in absence of enough empirical studies. Mushrooming of child clubs also entered into schools in resulting more than half of 17,000 child clubs in educational settings of Nepal but they are not yet studied.

Child clubs are promoted as an institution in Nepal as a means of child participation in both schools and communities (Dahal, 2010b). However, there are no specific empirical study on emergence, evolution and management of child clubs in

schools. Promoters of child clubs are not prioritizing their support to children's learning, socialization and school governance.

There are some complaints from parents and teachers that children's engagement in child clubs jeopardizes their rights to education as they missed classes while taking part in child club activities. However, there is also anecdotal evidence from children and parents that some parents express happiness that their children are more interested in study and are doing better in their studies since being part of Child Clubs (Feinstein & O'Kane, 2009).

Adult institutions for different agenda and activities are using child clubs without analyzing its value and contribution to children and society. Because of this, children and child clubs get blames –being spoiled and used as NGO workers going far beyond learning and socialization. Various research and studies (Hart, 2004; O'Kane, 2006; Sharma, 2008) have documented the contribution of child clubs in children's development and societal change. However, these research and studies are not exploring the contribution of child clubs in children's learning and school governance. This is where I thought to undertake this academic research to fill these gaps.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to understand the evolution and management of child clubs in schools and their contributions to children's learning, socialization, and school governance. In this regard, I am exploring to generate new knowledge and perceptions of multiple stakeholders of the child clubs on:

- emergence, evolution, and management of child clubs in schools;
- roles and contributions in students' learning and school governances; and
- policies and practices on child rights and child participation in Nepal.

Research Questions

My study aims to answer the following questions to meet the study purpose:

1. How have child clubs emerged, evolved and managed in schools?

2. What are the perceptions of stakeholders (children, parents, teachers and authorities) on child clubs, and its contribution?

3. What are the roles and implications of child clubs on children's learning and school governance?

4. How child rights/participation policies and practices evolved and institutionalized in Nepal?

Significance of the Study

The child rights organizations and educational agencies are promoting child clubs as a means to prepare democratic citizen through socialization and schooling to realize their rights without proving it as evidences through research and studies. The child rights movement and child participation practices are taking place at local and district levels with the support of child rights organizations and government institutions. However, there are no clear-cut legal mandates and procedures for its formation and mobilization meaningfully. There is a tension, both at community and at institutional level, between child clubs and adult institutions. More than half of the child clubs are in educational settings especially in schools. However, there are no empirical studies about its emergence and contribution on children's socialization and learning in schools. My study will fill this gap by bringing debate among academia and child rights practitioners.

Considering these significance of the study, I am exploring the new knowledge about child participation in school emphasizing on role and contribution of child clubs. How have child clubs emerged? What is the status of the child clubs in schools? How

have child clubs been managed, so far? What are the impacts of child clubs on children's overall development in schools and in society? What are the contributions of child clubs in children's learning and school governance? The study explores and analyzes to answer such questions. In this sense, this study directly contributes for child rights activists, planners and educationists in developing appropriate policies and programmes related to children and child clubs for materializing child rights in schools and communities. This study furthermore informs policy and practices on role and contribution of child club in children's learning and school governance as rights.

<div align="center">**Limitation and Delimitation of the Study**</div>

The following are the limitations and delimitations of this study.

Limitation

This is a descriptive study of child clubs in Nepal under interpretative paradigm. Therefore, conclusion, findings, and reflections of this research are based on qualitative evidence, literatures, field data, and my personal understanding and experiences on the phenomenon as a qualitative researcher.

I believe in multiple realities, and do not claim that my findings and conclusions are generalizable. While understanding of children and childhood as a social construct that differs from one context to another the outcomes of the study can be adaptable in contexts similar to the study locations. Hence, this is the first in its nature and type of study focusing on child clubs in educational institutions.

Delimitation

There are delimations—that is, how this study was narrowed in scope (Creswell, 2009). Putting children and child clubs in the center, there are multiple perspectives and theoretical frameworks to study child participation in schools. Child participation can be studied from the Western 'rights perspective' thoughts and the

Eastern 'duty perspective' thoughts when child clubs are evolved from an indigenous process of socialization of children from bottom up approaches, and also devolved from a legal mandate as a UN Agenda 'consumerism perspective'. However, there are blames for INGOs as killer of *sadans* or federation of sadans to a modern child club as a vehicle for change.

As a child rights practitioner and social science researcher, I have taken the children and childhood as a social construct from sociological perspectives and child participation in schools as fundamental rights for children, and an obligation of the State and adult institutions from rights perspectives.

Organization of the Chapters

This thesis has eight chapters. The first chapter deals with introduction of the topic, its importance and objectives and research questions. The second chapter explores theories and literature related to children, childhood, child rights/participation and students learning. The third chapter is about research methodologies and study area. The fourth chapter summarizes the evolution and institutionalization of child rights/participation policies and practices. The fifth chapter presents the findings and analysis on evolution and management of child clubs and child participation including its challenges and problems. The sixth chapter continues with findings and analysis on child clubs' contribution to children's learning and school governance. The seventh chapter consists of key findings and discussions of the entire study. Finally, the eighth chapter presents the conclusions and implication of the study. The reference and appendix are at the end of thesis in substantiating the findings and conclusions.

CHAPTER II

EXPLOING THEORIES AND LITERATURE

This chapter begins with defining childhood and child participation and measuring its results and impacts including associated aspects. It contains findings of literature review of relevant theories, concepts and empirical research on childhood and child participation. Since this research is on child clubs in schools and their contribution on children's learning and school governance, this literature review chapter also contains theories related to the study, review of empirical research highlighting their research objectives, measures and methods used, and their findings.

The definition and understanding of children and childhood is a social construct. Children are getting recognition as social actors and change agents for their rights and development. Child participation on issues affecting their life including in school is a fundamental rights. The social discourse about children as citizens of today is in forefront. Child participation in schools and their learning has been an integral element of quality education. School as a social institution and a means of socialization is instrumental in bringing generational change for democracy and good governance (Matthews, 2003; Pokharel, 2005). Accountability and transparency of school plans and policies towards children is in high agenda for each school reform initiatives.

There are different modes and typologies of child participation. I am concentrating on collective decision-making model of child participation between adults (parents and teachers) and students in schools. I argue that child club as a means of child participation that increases access of children to information about their rights and duties of adults and institutions. This leads to respect and recognition of children as an actor for their development and learning by adults and institutions that generate

leadership and self-efficacy skills among children. Children's engagement in classroom activities and management of schools contributes to better learning achievements among children and school governance. Hence, children are an integral part of learning and education process in schools. They are bridge between schools and society. They are also source of information for their parents to claim and enjoy their rights. The following section will critically review different literatures, theories and practices around child rights and child participation including the characteristics of Nepalese society and its understanding on childhood and children's citizenship rights in schools.

Characteristics of Nepalese Children: A Deprived Group

Nepali society is a homeland of multiethnic (more than 125 ethnic groups), multi-caste (4 major castes in Hindu setting), multi-religious (more than 4), and multilingual (more than 110) people (CBS, 2012). Purity-impurity, caste based structural and social hierarchies continue the patterns of social discrimination and social exclusion (Bennett, 2006) including of children. Access to assets and services, and voice, influence and agency are the part of empowerment process. The cultural construction of the domestic domain and social construction of gender perpetuate the patriarchy led social hierarchy preferring boys. All these factors including poverty and marginalization interplay in constructing the childhood (Paudel, 2009). Such childhood construction establishes the value such as children are needy, scared and economic being; children are moral, innocent, immature and dependent being; domestic, wage, bondage and street labor/ work are common to all children; and moral order, hierarchical interdependence make social life possible where individuals have no being or value. Empowerment and social inclusion play complementary roles in promoting equity of agency and sustainable prosperity for all including children (Bennett, 2006).

Today, Nepal stands at the crossroads in redefining role and functions of the State in multiple transitions from (UNDP, 2009): i) A monarchy to a republic; ii) authoritarianism to democracy and human rights; iii) a hegemonic to an inclusive and participatory system of governance; iv) a state wholly pervaded by one religion to secularism; and v) a heavily centralized unitary system to decentralization and autonomy at the regional and local levels. This socio-political reality raises several concerns associated with children and childhood in Nepal. Children of all castes, ethnicities, religions and topography have disclosed several childhood conditions (Paudel, 2009). The *first* condition is that children have to perform the duties in the form of child labor, child worker or supporter to the parental occupation as 85% of the population depend on agriculture (CBS, 2012).

The *second* goes to the economic condition of the family. The rampant poverty, low employment rate, poor social security, agrarian based economy has interplay in creating the condition of child labor or child work jeopardizing their access to or retention in schools. *Thirdly*, the socio-cultural structure, where gender based discrimination is common in all regions and ethnicities. Limited mobility of the girls and the women, feudal-patriarchal oppression, confined household work and limited opportunities to them have promoted the son preference culture.

Fourth, the existence of the caste system, which has promoted the un-touchability practices, created the oppressed / oppressor situation, continued the caste-based relations, perpetuate the social discrimination and make the lower caste children marginalized from the use of available opportunities and services offered by the state including education. Finally, the *fifth*, unequal and unbalanced development practices of the government in urban and rural settings. This trend has further marginalized the ultra-poor, disadvantaged groups and the rural children especially in the hilly and the

mountain regions (Paudel, 2009). With the rise of citizens in 2006, new Nepal is

demanding equality, liberty and social justice of all including children in all spheres of

life so that government is accountable and responsive towards its citizens.

Children, Childhood and Child Rights - Still Invisible and Informal

Childhood is the foundation of hopes for a better future. Adults' negative

attitude requires cultivating spaces for children to claim rights by having their voices

heard and being active decision-makers about factors that affect their lives. Unless

children lobby and claim rights themselves, children's rights will remain

paternalistically conferred. Children's claims for rights may not present themselves in

the same way as adult claims. New ways of thinking about children, childhood and

children's citizenship are required to open avenues for children's claims for rights. In

this line, the following section will assess and analyze the definition of children,

childhood, child rights and citizenship rights of children.

Definition of Children: Below 18 Years of Age

Children and young people have become the focus of much attention in recent

years among academia, researchers and policy makers (Young, 2000). Children and

childhood are defined and understood in numerous ways throughout the history, across

cultures, and countries (Archard, 1993) based on socio-cultural, political, educational

and economic environment. Childhood studies as a field of academic endeavor offers

an interdisciplinary outlook and an emergent paradigm to research and theorize a new

ways of looking children (Kehily, 2004). A number of developments have contributed

to this increased focus on children and childhood. Fundamentally, the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) plays a significant role in this

direction. The UNCRC (UN, 1989) defines 'child' as all those under the age of 18

years, but people often overlook the latter part of UNCRC's Article 1 - 'a child means

every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier'. Childhood may be qualified in relation to such factors as the commencement of work, the end of schooling, the onset of marriage, entry into armed forces and criminal responsibility (Boyden & Levison, 2000).

The 1992 Children's Act is the basic law that takes care of the matters relating to children in Nepal. The children below 10 years of age are immunized from criminal and civil liabilities and depending upon the offence there is provision of penalty for children between 10-14 years of age (MoWCSW, 2013). Similarly, it provides half of the penalty that is given to an adult for the same offence for children between 14-16 years of age. Various legislations have variations of age in defining a child. The GoN has drafted a new Bill on "Children's Act" to replace the 1992 Children's Act with the provision of defining a child as a person below18 years of age (MoWCSW, 2013).

The definition of a child varies in different legislations and policy documents (MoWCSW, 2013). Some difference, for instance, include: i) Human Trafficking (Control) Act of 2007 defines 'child' as a person below the age of 18 years; ii) the legal marriage age for boys and girls is 18 years with parents' consent and 20 years without such consent; and iii) children's policy of 2012 and CFLG national strategy of 2011 define the age of a child as below 18 years. It clearly indicates that there is a diverse understanding of children and childhood in Nepal from legal, social and cultural perspectives. Being Nepal as the State party of the UNCRC is bound to accept and formalize children as the any person below 18 years of age. The Treaty Act of 1990' section 9 (2) nullifies the earlier definition as this Act holds the supremacy of the international law in a situation where there is a conflict between international treaties or convention and any law of Nepal. However, I have taken persons of 10 to 18 years as children to study child participation in schools. This is a middle way of combining the

two policy documents that gives an age range for eligibility to be in child clubs. For instance, CCWB defines 10 to 18 years age and CFLG includes 12-18 years age.

Understanding of Childhood: A Social Construct

The concept of childhood is a relatively recent construction (Aries, 1969; DeMause, 1976) and is generally agreed to have developed with the establishment of schooling for children (Luke, 1989; Postman, 1994). James (2007, 2011), and Prout and James (1998) encapsulate the ideas of childhood as a social construction, and a variable of social analysis where children's social relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own rights. Furthermore, children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them, and of the societies in which they live. It therefore entails a paradigm shift in attitudes towards children in stressing their existence as social actors shaping as well as being shaped by their circumstances or social 'structure'.

Recent sociological, anthropological and developmental research has begun to show that children are far more capable than once thought, with the social and economic power to actively determine not only their own lives but to also influence those of their larger society (James & Prout, 1998; Mayall, 2000, 2002). Child focused institutions, development agencies, academics and adults in general are now starting to realize the multitude of ways in which children exert their agency like child clubs, particularly when faced with the adversity that was previously thought to render them helpless, passive victims (Baker & Hinton, 2001; Punch, 2001). In its broadest sense, child agency may be seen as 'the transition from 'the child' as an instance of a category to the recognition of children as particular persons'(James, Jenks & Prout, 1998, p. 6). It therefore entails process in attitudes towards children in stressing their existence as social actors shaping or being shaped by their circumstances or social 'structure'.

James and Prout (1998) assert that the conventional theories of childhood have failed to account the world of children and their agency. They propose that "the immaturity of children is a biological fact of life but the ways in which it is understood and made meaningful is a fact of culture…childhood is both constructed and reconstructed both for and by children" (p. 7). There is a growing body of knowledge that identifies an 'emergent paradigm' to study childhood. The key features of the paradigm outlined by James and Prout (1998) are: i) Childhood is understood as a social construction; ii) childhood is a variable of social analysis; iii) children's relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right; iv) children should be seen as active social agents; v) ethnography is a useful method for the study of childhood; and vi) studying childhood involves an engagement with the process of reconstructing childhood in society. Childhood is more than just the time before a person is considered an adult (UNICEF, 2004). The quality of childhood is largely determined by the care and protection children receive or fail to receive from adults.

This way, it clearly highlights that the definition and understanding of children and childhood are changing over the time in each culture and context along with the speed of global discourse on child rights. With the emergent of child rights discourse among academia and researchers, children have been strongly perceived as independent human beings, who have valid views about their world and issues around them (Jans, 2004). They are no longer innocent, incompetent and cruel. They are social actors and subject of chief concern of the society. Thus, child is both an individual and a member of larger society like school.

Evolution of Children's Rights: A State Obligation

Rights are legal, social or ethical principles of freedoms or entitlements. As Dershowitz (2004) suggests, 'most people see rights as something special, to be

respected and not to be treated lightly'. Children's rights are defined in numerous ways, including a wide spectrum of civil, cultural, economic, social and political rights. Rights of children are both a legal and normative rights. Children first received social rights (drafted by Englentain Jebb, founder of Save the Children Union, in 1923) through the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the League of Nations, which was then endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959 (Van Bueren, 1995). According to Isin and Turner (2002), children are better served by international human rights instruments in protecting the rights of those not protected by the state. However, there was no reference to civil or political rights, as the purpose of these rights was to protect children and not to increase their autonomy.

It took almost one decade to come up with the comprehensive final version of UNCRC on the draft proposal submitted by Poland on 17 January 1978 (Cantwel, 2009). Cantwel (2009) further stressed that the NGO Ad-hoc group formed in 1983 and UNICEF engagement from 1986 were instrumental to iron out controversial issues in a consensus between GOs and NGOs and also between West and East arguments. NGOs had unprecedented impact on the draft text by caring out an in-depth review of adults and institutions attitudes towards children so that their welfare, development, protection and participation were established finally as human rights issues. The formulation of the UNCRC in 1989 went beyond protective social rights and included some civil and political rights (Archard, 1993).

Child rights is a claim, which entails that another person has a duty to the right-holders. The acceptance of the UNCRC was made possible through the modern understanding of children's separateness from adults, with marked distinctions in expected behaviors, roles, and responsibilities (Archard, 1993). Campbell (1992) categorizes children's rights into four groups: i) Universal human rights -children hold

simply by being human beings, such as the right to life, health care, right against torture and discrimination; ii) specific rights for children such as protection against abuse, to care, and the right not to be illicitly transferred abroad; iii) rights as future adults (particularly the right for development and participation); and iv) specific rights for adolescents, such as the UNCRC's provision of adequate standard of living according to the child's age, development and maturity.

Similarly, Eekelaar (1992) divides children's rights into three groups: i) Basic interests to physical, emotional and intellectual care; ii) developmental interests to fulfill the child's potential; and ii) autonomy interests -freedom to choose a life style, this is under my study. UNICEF (2007) clearly articulates that children's rights are of three natures: provision, protection, and participation. Provision rights include children's right to an adequate standard of living, health care, education and services, and to play and recreation. Protection rights consist of protection from harms, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination including right to safe places for children to play, constructive child rearing behavior, and acknowledgment of the evolving capacities of children. Participation rights ensure children's participation in schools and communities and have program and services for themselves including involvement of children as decision-makers.

The CRC is the most widely ratified human rights treaty with 193 ratifications except South Sudan, Somalia and the USA. The CRC is based on four core principles (UNICEF, 2007), namely the principle of non-discrimination (Article 2), the best interests of the child (Article 3), the right to life, survival and development (Article 6), and considering the views of the child in decisions which affect them (according to their age and maturity) (Article 12). Children's rights are the social, economic, cultural, political and civic rights of children with particular attention to the rights of special

protection and care afforded to minors in respecting their views. UNCRC makes us all adults and institutions particularly the State mechanism obligatory and responsible to fulfill their rights. Thus, children are rights holders and we all adults are duty bearers.

Citizenship Rights of Children - A Communitarian Approach

Citizenship is defined in different ways in different disciplines and in different countries. Legal, social, sociological, and socio-political definitions of a good citizen are also relevant to children's citizenship. Citizenship requires reason, rationality and autonomy (Stasiulis, 2002) as a competent member of the society. Many of us who still consider children do not possess these attributes, as children are viewed as innocent and developing. One view of citizenship is simply as a legal status of nation-state membership that granted through birthright or naturalization (Faulks, 2006; Gareth, 2005). This defines citizenship from rights to vote perspectives only. Citizenship is not restricted to the act of voting but also taking part in public discussions and socially shared actions aimed at improving collective life (Fonseca & Bunjanda, 2011). Thus, even if children are not eligible to vote, they can fulfill and enjoy the citizenship rights by taking part in public discourses and social work.

The emphasis on rights in sociological definitions of citizenship draws from Marshall's theory of citizenship (Marshall, 1981; Turner, 2001). Marshall (1981) defines a typology of citizenship rights for citizens in three parts. They are: a) Civil - the rights necessary for individual freedom, b) political -the right to participate in the exercise of political power, and, c) social - a range of rights from economic welfare and security to the right to share in one's social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being. Research that theorizes and conceptualizes children's citizenship rights is growing and changing (Cook-Sather, 2006)). This has brought three main consequences on children and their life. They are: i) A new approach to children and

childhood, in which children are seen as subjects of rights, with their own perspectives; ii) the realization that children are not simply passive objects of concern or victims but that they make important contributions to society; and iii) a demand for more and better information about all aspects of children's lives.

The view that citizenship offers more than rights that increases children's status in society so that their voices are heard in decision-making process that affects their lives (Lister, 2007). Even though children gain the legal status of citizenship in their country of residence by virtue of birth or naturalization, Lister explained that children are entitled to a passport as symbolic of this legal identity of citizenship, not the right to vote (James et al, 1998). Citizenship comes from democratic norms, values, principles and systems. To Loenan (2007), democracy and citizenship are mutually reinforcing. Democracy as a process is a means of enabling citizenship and the participation of citizens sustains democracy. According to Young (2000), political theorists claim the idea of democracy for how it provides greater participation and voice for the lives of active citizens and restrains rulers from the abuses of power.

There are two principles of democracy: i) All members of society have access to power, and ii) all enjoy universally recognized liberties and freedoms, such as freedom of speech and freedom of choice (Dahl, Shapiro & Cheibub, 2003). These principles are applicable to a claim for children's citizenship rights. As acknowledged above, children do not have the same access to universally recognized liberties and freedoms as adults through their reduced access to rights and resources (Lister, 2007). Based on this deficit, attention to principles of democracy is required to enact a socio-political definition of children's citizenship.

There are four approaches of citizenship in modern political theories, namely: i) Liberal; ii) republican; iii) communitarian; and, iv) cosmopolitan or global citizenship

(Isin & Turner, 2002). A rights-based view of citizenship implies within liberalism as a primary concern of individual. A liberal approach to citizenship emerged from theories of John Locke (1869) and John Stuart Mill (1999) on individuality, self-interest and private property (Schuck, 2002). A republican approach to citizenship has a solid commitment to civic virtue for nationhood, lending itself to strong patriotic identity and fundamentalism (Dagger, 2002; Honohan, 2002; Maynor, 2003). The approach to citizenship that offered greatest relevance to young children's active citizenship in response to education/schooling is communitarian citizenship.

The relevance of communitarian citizenship lies in the definition of citizenship participation as purposeful group action to create a cohesive just society and a strong sense of community responsibility (Delanty, 2002; Janoski, 1998). Recent theorizing of a notion of children's citizenship builds on communitarian understandings of citizenship, making a case for children's agency in the public sphere or wider community (Kulnych, 2001; Lister, 2008) including in schools. Hart (1992) considers participation a fundamental right of citizenship but contends that Article 12 of the UNCRC only makes a very general (although strong) call for children's participation.

Children who participate in their communities are regarded as active citizens, particularly by the local authorities and organizations providing the participatory structures. Thus, Theis (2010) points to the following four main opportunities for children to exercise and develop their active citizenry in both schools and communities:

- **Citizenship competencies and civic engagement**: Children get opportunities and encouragements to learn the skills of citizenship. This can take many forms from peer education, community service and community mobilization and activism, such as environmental movements.

- **Children as active citizens in the media**: The media can provide access to information and opportunities for expression through radio, newsletters, newspapers, television, film and websites. It can also be used to project positive images of children as active citizens.

- **Children influencing public decisions**: Here children are involved with local government councils, policymaking and legislative reform – the focus of this study.

- **Child-led associations:** Through such associations, children learn key organizational skills and get support from other children to campaign collectively for their rights.

By defining citizenship in terms of rights and consideration of citizenship approaches and spaces, I am using an overview of the UNCRC and the context of citizenship in the broader society from rights based perspectives. Children's citizenship and participation is used in this study intermittently. The following section reviews models and practices of children's participation as a citizenship rights in schools and communities.

Models of Children's Citizenship/Participation

Participation refers to the active involvement of children in the decisions, processes, programmes and policies that affect their lives (Chambers, 2012). Article 12 of the UNCRC is one of the pillars - together with articles 13 and 15 - for the development and implementation of the concept of child participation (Doek, 2009). The right of children to participate in all decisions concerning their lives and adults to hear their views is a fundamental element of the UNCRC and is explicit in Article 12 (Lansdown, 2011; O'Kane, 2006). Article 12 has two paragraphs. The first paragraph assures the child's right to express views, as every child is capable of forming his or her own views. They also have right to express views freely on all matters affecting them

and adults and State mechanism have an obligation to give due weight in accordance with children's age and maturity.

The second paragraph emphasizes the child's right to be heard in judicial or administrative proceedings including in schools directly or through a representative body like child club (CRC, 2009). This article acknowledges that children have abilities to share insights about their lives, process information, develop opinions and make decisions. The child has a right to speak, participate and decide as a citizen. This means we all adults are listening, observing and respecting the child's viewpoints when she is speaking, gesturing, playing, creating, and choosing.

Children's participation is an 'essentially contested' concept (Lister, 2002). This is deliberate at every level, from its meaning, its importance and benefits, its political and social application, to its implications for children (Crimmens & West, 2004; Cox, 2009; Lister, 2003). This is also highly a contextualized concept as it is practiced in diverse ways in differing places and spaces, and its meaning and interpretation vary according to contexts (Lister, 2006, 2008).With this distinction in mind, I am 'unpacking' a number of substantive and deeply embedded assumptions about child participation. Children may experience different levels of participation. They include: i) Being given information – but adults make the decisions; ii) consultation – being asked their opinions and adults take this into account when making decisions; iii) adult initiated – adults start projects and share decisions with children; iv) partnership – children are authorized to come up with ideas and set up projects (Dahal, 2004).

There are many reasons why children as a member of society should actively participate on issues that affect their lives in schools and societies (Hart; 1992; Lansdown, 2010; O'Kane, 2011; Tisdall & Davis, 2004; Theis, 2007). They include, but not limited to: i) Participation is a basic human right for children; ii) children are

the only ones who can describe issues from their perspective; iii) participation builds

children's self-esteem and confidence and also communication skills; iv) while

participating, children learn to cooperate with adults and other children; and v)

children's participation raises public awareness of children's needs makes adults

responsive to it. In this regard, the following section reviews different models and

typologies of child participation that exist in the child rights literature and its practices.

Child Participation – An Emerging Phenomenon

Children's participation is still a relatively new but an emerging phenomenon.

Within the last two decades starting from 1990, there has been a visible shift, in

principle at least, toward children being viewed as participants in social and political

life (Cairns, 2001, 2006; Fletcher, 2002, 2005; Prout & James, 1997; Smith, 2010;

Taylor & Percy-Smith, 2008). There are many models of child participation under

discussion among child rights activists, organizations, and academia. The dramatic

growth in interest in children's participation, including the flourishing of empirical and

conceptual literature on the subject does not, however, make the task of defining

children's participation any more straight forward, but also increase complexity.

Children's participation refers to children taking part in decision making in a

range of settings, both collective (for example, voting, participating in youth

parliaments, schools, local councils) and personal (for example, having a say in family

care and protection matters, family relations) (Davis & Hill, 2006). As Lansdown

(2005) says, child participation is an ongoing process of children's expression and

active involvement in decision making at different levels in matters that concern them.

There is no common definition on child participation. As Beers, Invernizzi and Milne

(2006) suggest that there is a need of doing some crucial conceptual work by and

within organizations that are promoting children's participation. According to Kofi

Annan, children's presence in the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (UNGASS) held in May 2002 transformed the atmosphere and gave life to the value of the UN when children brought their ideas, hopes and dreams (UNICEF, 2002a).

Children's participation is therefore seen as allowing children to be full members of the community by asserting their entitlement to take part in decision making in social, economic, cultural and political life (Kulynych, 2001; Lister, 2008; O'Kane, 2006; Taylor & Smith, 2009). A pivotal aspect of membership is rights and most accounts of children's citizenship take the UNCRC as their starting point, in particular Article 12, as the source of children's participation rights, which along with provision and protection rights, covers all the contexts of children's lives- civil, political, economic, social and cultural. Child participation has multiple dimensions and understandings that I discuss as follows:

Dimensions of Participation – An Inclusive Democracy

Democracy begins with children (UNICEF, 2002b) and their participation. Much of the literature draws distinctions between different dimensions of participation in relation to decision-making, including the level, focus, content, nature, frequency and duration of children's participation (Cashmore, 2002; Lansdown, 1995; Neale, 2004; Thomas, 2007). Sinclair (2004) suggests that consultation is contrasted with more active forms of participation, which envisage that children and young people can legitimately and rightfully put forward their views in the expectation that they will be listened to and respected. Roche (1999) further clarifies this difference between consultation and participation, observing that the purpose of consultation is often to persuade children of the rightness or inevitability of a certain outcome, rather than necessarily acting on their ideas. Participation, then, is more than mere consultation and involves more than simply 'taking part'.

A more recent development is the way in which children's participation is emerging as a chief prerequisite of an inclusive democracy. According to Cairns (2006), children's participation is 'the fundamental right of citizenship, the means by which democracy is built and the "axial" principle of post-industrial liberal democracies'. Hart (1992) supports this broad definition describing it as 'the means by which a democracy is built and it is a standard against which democracies should be measured'. Rather than viewing children's citizenship as residing in national identities and entailing a bundle of rights, children's citizenship is increasingly being reconceptualized in more inclusive terms as the exercise of children's agency (Cook-Sather, 2002, 2006).

According to Roche (1999), participation is about being counted as a member of the community; it is about being governing and being governed. Through participation, children and young people are seen as being able to claim the status of citizen within a community (Cairns, 2006; Kulynych, 2001; Neale 2004; Roche, 1999). For example, Kulynych (2001) argues that the crucial axis of children's citizenship in the contemporary world is membership in the common political culture, and the key to children's citizenship lies in their incorporation into that political culture.

According to Lansdown (2001; 2005), there are a number of factors that governs and facilitates effective and meaningful forms of participation and children's agency. The factors influencing child participation are: i) Children understanding what the project or the process is about, what it is for and their role in it; ii) transparent power relations and decision making structures; iii) early involvement of children; iv) equal respect for all children regardless of their age, situation, ethnicity, abilities or other factors; and, v) the establishment of ground rules with all children at the beginning and voluntary participation. The researchers like Alderson (2000), Chawla

(2001), Fletcher (2005), Hart (1997), Mitra (2007) and Theis (2010), and others also argue the similar factors for supporting child participation.

Participation has a role to play in respecting the identity of children as citizens with a valuable contribution in their social and political life and, in turn, as enhancing their self-esteem. As Mathews (2003) contends, children's participation is 'an essential and moral ingredient of any democratic society in enhancing quality of life; enabling empowerment; encouraging psychosocial wellbeing; and providing a sense of inclusiveness'. For Davis et al. (2006), participation helps children to feel connected to and respected by their communities, as it enables them to contribute to processes of change in cooperation with adults. The UNCRC gradually made the child participation as an integral part of inclusive democracy. Based on engagement of children, there are multiple steps and practices of child participation in democratic society, which are reviewed below.

Models of Child Participation – Tokenism to Decision Makers

Children as participants in social and political life, including in school, has been influenced by a number of developments in the way we understand children and childhood, and which go some way to explaining why children's participation has come to occupy a central place in social life and policy. The UNCRC is the most potent and symbolic recognition of children's participation, with its near universal ratification, including by Nepal in 1990, widely acknowledged as signaling a new era in the relationship between children, the state and the international community (Davis et al., 2006; Greene & Hill, 2006).

There are various models conceptualizing child participation ranging from non-participative consultation to meaningful participation. In citizenship literature, the eight-step ladder of children's participation (Hart, 1997), the pathways to participation

model by Sheir (2001, 2010), cyclical model of Fletcher (2005), evolving capacity of children advocated by Lansdown (2005, 2011) and participation pyramid of Mitra and Gross (2009) are perhaps the most significant models in practices. They argue that child participation creates change and develops autonomy according to a child's experience, capacity and socio-cultural context. This reinforces the arguments of DeWinter (1997) and Minow (1999) that children need opportunities to participate so that their citizenship capabilities can grow.

Hart's (1992, 1997) modeling of children's participation as a ladder shown in the next page, with its eight rungs from manipulation, decoration and tokenism representing non -participation, assignment and consultation as part of informing children about how and why they are involved, to young people initiating, directing and sharing decisions with adults at the top.
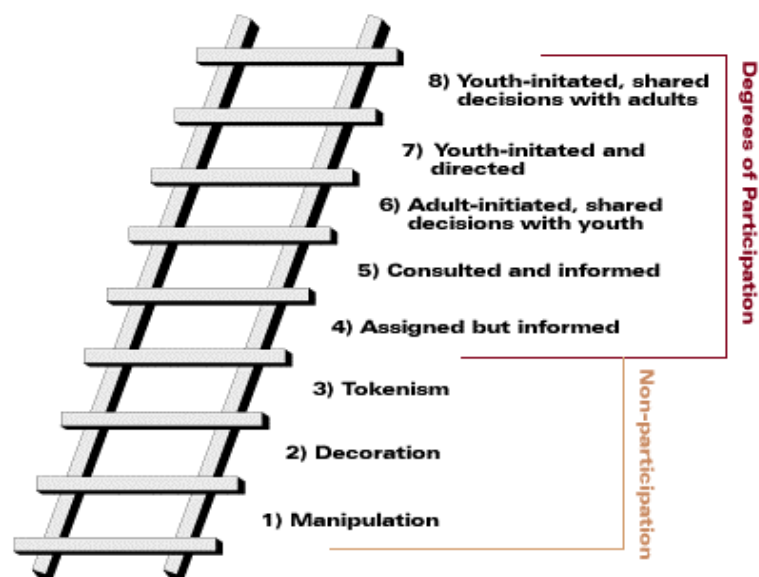
Figure 1. Child participation ladder of Hart (1992)

This model ranges are from manipulation, where adults use children's voices to carry their own messages, to child initiated participation with shared decisions with adults. The highest rung of the ladder includes decision-making with adults, as Hart asserts that children's proposed actions could exceed their abilities to execute them due

to their limited access to civic institutions and resources. The adult-child divide in social structures of contemporary society makes it necessary for children to engage with adults, though to support children's autonomy there needs to be joint decision-making.This model provides a solid base for advocating and enabling children's active citizenship and participation.

Shier's (2001) model of pathways to participation distinguishes between consultation and participation based on decisions which are 'actually made', as opposed to where children's views are invited. The most basic form of children's participation in Shier's model begins with the question, 'are you ready to listen to children?' before progressing through a number of pathways to the question 'are you ready to share some of your adult power with children?' Taylor and Smith (2008) are also consistent with Lister (2003) that children take a socially constructed approach to citizenship, which entails 'helping to society/ community, being a good neighbor and supporting the vulnerable', and at its less proactive entailed 'being polite, courteous and considerate, and abiding by the law and being non destructive'.

In addition, Fletcher (2005) defines meaningful student participation in a cyclic model from passive, tokenism, disconnected activities into a continuous five-step process leading to student achievement and school improvement. The five steps include listen, validate, authorize, mobilize, and reflect as shown in the next page.
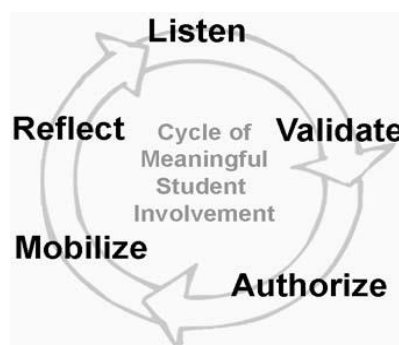
Figure 2. Cycle of meaningful student involvement (Fletcher, 2005)

The cycle starts from: i) Listen – the first step for the ideas, knowledge, experience, and opinions of students to be shared with adults; ii) validate – students are acknowledged as purposeful and significant partners who can and should hold themselves and their schools accountable; iii) authorize – students develop their abilities to meaningfully contribute in school improvement through skill-sharing, action planning, and strategic participation; iv) mobilize – students and adults to take actions together as partners in school improvement plan through a variety of methods; and v) reflect –together, adults and students examine what they have learned through creating, implementing, and supporting meaningful student involvement, including benefits and challenges. Reflections are then used to inform Step 1, Listen. The connection of all the steps in a cycle is what makes partnerships between students and adults meaningful, effective, and sustainable for both children and adults.

Furthermore, Mitra and Gross (2009) made the Hart's participation framework more simpler by categorizing them into a pyramid with three parts where institutions like school will be placed in terms of how they work with and use children's views. The base of the pyramid - 'being heard' - is the most common and most basic form of participation. At this level, teachers or institutions listen to children to learn about their unique knowledge, opinions and experiences in school in a partnership mode.
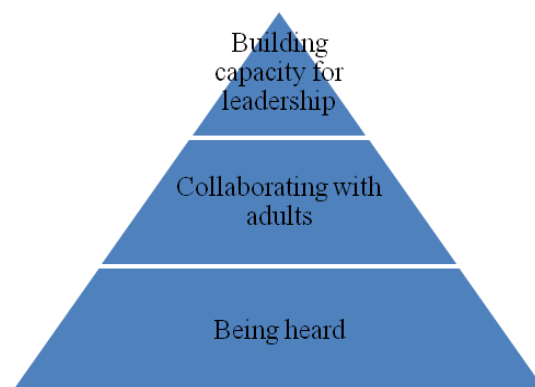
Figure 3. Pyramid of student participation (Mitra & Gross, 2009)

The second level is 'collaborating with adults'. At this level, children work with adults on how to improve their school, including collecting data on school problems and implementing solutions which leads to many academic improvements. This creates better conditions for learning in classrooms, pupil-teacher relationships (Flutter, 2006; Flutter & Ruddock, 2004) and also transparency and accountability of the school administration towards children's needs and interests (Dahal, 2012a).

The final (and smallest) level at the top of the pyramid, 'building capacity for leadership', is the least common form of children participation and includes an explicit focus on enabling children taking leadership position in questioning issues such as structural and cultural injustices within schools (Mitra & Gross, 2009). This pyramid advocates child club as a responsible, reliable and important factor in school decision-making that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers, and increasing pupils' voice in schools, offers a way to re-engage them in the school (Fielding, 2001, 2004).

Similar to this, Lansdown (2010) advises to categorize children and young people's actual participation in three levels. Namely, they are: i) Consultative participation - as an adult-led but they recognize children's expertise and seek their views in order to increase adults' knowledge and understanding of their lives; ii) collaborative participation - as children have a greater degree of partnership with adults to engage in design, research and policy development; and, iii) child-led participation - where children and young people being afforded the space and opportunity to identify issues of concern, initiate activities and advocate for themselves.

There are many models and opportunities for children's engagement. Local and national authorities need to introduce and support such initiatives, provide funding where necessary, and take account of the views that are expressed through these mechanisms (Lansdown, 2011). Some approaches and mechanisms that are necessary

to promote child participation include (Lansdown, 2001, 2011): i) Children's parliaments; ii) youth advisory committees; iii) national or regional consultations; iv) dialogue with children through electronic media; v) focus groups on specific issues; and, vi) collaboration with existing children's organizations like child clubs. There are different forms of child participation practiced worldwide. The most common forms of child participation in South Asia including in Nepal are:

Child-led Initiatives and Organizations

Child led organizations are to enable children organizing themselves to identify those issues of concern to them and to determine how to take action to address them (Lansdown, 2005; O'Kane, 2006; Paudel, 2009). In Nepal, for example, child clubs have organized themselves to tackle their common issues in the society as wide-ranging as discrimination against girls in respect of education, early marriage, and drunkenness in the family and its impact on levels of violence and harm to children. Networking among child-led organizations should be actively encouraged to increase opportunities for shared learning and platforms for collective advocacy.

Representation on Local Bodies

Children or representatives of child clubs are included in local bodies including in School Management Committee (SMC) with responsibility for management of local issues (Dahal, 2013c). Local committees with responsibility, for example, for education, forest management, housing, child protection and water conservation and utilization should include representatives of child led organizations. In addition, children can play a key role in the management and updating of data and information related to their local community and schools. Their active engagement will enable improved planning and monitoring of the situation of children and young people by local governments. For instance, club representatives are official members in Ward

Citizen Forums (WCFs) at Village Development Committee (VDC) level planning

(MoFALD, 2012) and in PTA for doing social audit of schools (MoE, 2012).

Targeted Consultations on Local Policy Issues

Child clubs or specific groups of children are invited to contribute their

perspectives on local policy issues. For example, children are actively taking part in

formulation of school code of conduct and classroom rules under child friendly schools

and learning without fear campaigns in Nepal. Children are source of information to

comment on the design of parks, school playgrounds, health facilities or local transport

systems and design of child friendly cities (Dahal, 2013d) in order to ensure appropriate

services for them. Children across a wide age range in a given area might be involved

in determining how safe that area is for children and what should do reduce the dangers

to which they are exposed.

Political Consultations

Political parties will do consultation with children and their representative to

raise their issues and to make communication with leaders. Children in Nepal were

consulted to give their inputs on election manifesto since 2008 (CZOP, 2009) and their

voices were heard during the thematic discussion in the last Constitution Assembly

(CA). Major political parties have included key child rights issues in their manifesto for

2013 CA election (CPN (UML), 2013; UCPN (Maoist), 2013; NC, 2013). Local

councilors or members of parliament can set up sessions specifically for children, and

publicize where and when those sessions will take place. They can also undertake visits

to schools and kindergartens in order to hear directly from children.

Local Youth Parliaments and Municipal Children's Councils

Local councils of children and young people create opportunities for

participation in decision-making process that affect them (Haug & Regmi, 2012; Reddy

& Ratna, 2002). Children and young people themselves manage these bodies with the active support of and facilitation by adults. They need to have formal and regular access to local elected decision-making bodies and get respect their view seriously at that level. For instance, *Makala Panchayat* in Bangalore, India, are set up, and in some cases they are allocated budgets by local *panchayat* to spend on issues of children and their local concern (O'Kane, 2002, 2006). Similarly, children's participation in Ward Citizen Forum, Integrated Plan Formulation Committee, VDC, Municipality and District Development Councils under Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP) and Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) Programme aims to make at least 10% budget allocation on the agenda and priority of children (Haug & Regmi, 2012), however this has not been practiced and followed up properly.

Local Media for/with/by Children

There lies an abundant learning, and experiences of media initiatives managed by children themselves in providing opportunities for children to develop their own local newspapers, wall magazines, to run their own radio programmes and contribute to the mainstream media. These spaces for children are becoming a means of enabling them to share information on rights with other children, raise awareness of issues of importance for children and campaign for changes they see as necessary (Hatemalo, 2004; Thakuri, 2010). This has resulted stick out from teacher's hand in schools.

Peer Educators

Child rights organizations are using children as peer educators in different programmes. Children provide information, support and awareness to other children. Examples include initiatives where children take literacy programmes out to children working and living on the streets, and health education programmes to share information on HIV and AIDs or hygiene and sanitation (SCN, 2006; UNICEF, 2006).

In Nepal, child club leaders run out of schoolchildren programme and also run bridge classes to support weak children on their homework.

Children as Monitors or Auditors of Local Services

Children are involved in investigating local hospitals and health services, the police and schools, to monitor whether they are complying with the principles and standards of the UNCRC. For example, child club in Nepal is also engaged to monitor the progress against child friendly schooling indicators and child friendly local governance indicators (UNICEF, 2012). Children have a clear opinion about the education system they want, a school they prefer, a teacher they like and the types of education materials they enjoy (Dahal, 2011). It is important to exchange experiences and learning of children about the good practice at the community and grassroots level with adults, and to encourage networking among child led organizations to increase opportunity for shared learning and platforms for collective advocacy.

The above review and analysis of different forms of child participation gave me insight to explore the child participation practices and its contribution in schools. I believe through my study children's status in society as active member will be recognized and play an instrumental roles as an actor in schools. All of these models position children as social agents and actively support children's participation in society at all ages, but they are still adult constructed. Cockburn (1998, 2007), Hart (1997) and Lansdown (2005) recognize the importance of repositioning children's place in society and advocate for children as competent contributors.

This repositioning contrasts with the views of children as incompetent, irrational, and irresponsible. Kulnych (2001) foregrounds children's ways of being and inclusion in the wider political culture. The domination of adult conceptions and articulations in the domain of children's citizenship makes notions of children's

citizenship susceptible to paternalism. Adults invariably speak for children, especially young children, on claims for children's citizenship rights. However, young children's reduced access to resources and their economic dependence on adults limit their capacity to speak for themselves. This points to a central problem of young children's active citizenship, that is, young children's dependence on adults (Lister, 2008).

Values and Benefits of Child Participation

There is a growing demand for school democracy. School governance is based on human rights values that demands empowerment and involvement of students, staff and stakeholders in all-important decisions in school (Backman & Trafford, 2006). The school democracy guarantees rights and responsibilities with active participation and diversity of students (ibid). Listening children and giving due consideration to their voice in overall policy leadership, direction and coordination make children's interests more visible and create a future society in which opportunities for children's participation are universally present (Fielding, 2006; Mitra, 2009).

Child participation will lead to multiple benefits for children, school and society as a whole. Firstly, participation contributes to making informed decisions and outcomes. Children have a body of experience and knowledge that is unique to their situation, which are sources for better decision (Lansdown, 2001). Policies drawn up by governments in many cases have a profound impact on children however these policies are still being implemented widely without taken the lives of children on a day-to-day basis into consideration. Therefore, when adequate attention is paid to children's opinions, policies and decision-making can be improved at all levels of education.

Secondly, when children participate actively and express their views, they will have confidence and get valuable social skills to advance their competences and prepare them systematic to adult life. The World Youth Report (2003) states that the

more opportunities a young person has for meaningful participation, the more experienced and competent he or she becomes. Thirdly, participation strengthens a commitment to, and understanding of, democracy (Lansdown, 2001). Democratic decision-making inextricably link to a profound respect for human rights. When children are aware of what their freedoms are and how their freedom is limited by rights of others, they can respect rights of others as well as develop the capacity and eagerness to listen. For Lansdown (2001), this will lead children begin to understand the processes and value of democracy.

Finally, children want to participate and share their views, knowledge and experiences with adults and take actions themselves. According to Aidoo (2009), children are doers, their minds are always going, and they want to participate in life rather than watch it go by. After the ratification of UNCRC, it is also widely accepted that children do want to be heard. Fletcher (2004, 2005) advocates that meaningful student involvement is the process of engaging students as partners in every facet of school change in strengthening their commitment to education, society and democracy.

Active engagement for all learners is a goal of many educators; however, the ability to incorporate meaningful student involvement is a learned disposition and skill (Fletcher, 2005). This also supports adults as they learn to engage the knowledge, perspectives, and experience of students in diverse education settings. Many education reformists argue that schooling can be a powerful, positive and motivating force when it respects and values the contributions of each and every student (Cook-Sather, 2006; Fielding 2001, 2007; Fletcher, 2005; Lansdown, 2001; Mitra, 2008). Fielding (2001) further says meaningful student involvement transcends schools.

As partners in school change, students are virtually ensured this positive, powerful, and productive future (Fielding 2001; Fletcher, 2005). The complex

leadership skills and applied learning that all students can experience through

meaningful student involvement serve as vital components in any education system and

society that calls for a more engaging, sustainable and just democracy. The following

table summarizes the benefits of promoting children's rights to participation at all

levels as argued by various scholars like Cook-Sather (2006), Fielding (2001), Fletcher

(2005), Lansdown, (2010), Mitra (2008) and Sinclair & Franklin (2000):

Table 1

Benefits of Child Participation

Benefits	Assumptions and Characteristics
Uphold children's rights	Children are citizens and service users and share the same fundamental rights to participate as others, meaning adults
Fulfill legal responsibilities	The rights of children to be listened and heard is defined as obligations of adults and state in UNCRC articles 12 to 17
Improve services	Consulting with children enables services to be improved and adapted to meet changing needs that children can help define; participation gives them a level of influence and an element of choice about the provision offered and can help them understand their own wants and needs
Improve decision making	Participation leads to more accurate, relevant decision which are better informed and hence more likely to be implemented
Enhance democratic processes	Representative democracy can be strengthened as children gain new opportunities to become active members of their community, whether in schools, local authorities or organizations
Promote children's protection	A recurring theme of successive enquires into abuse has been the failure to listen to children, thus, participation is an important aid to protection
Enhance children's skills	Participation helps in developing skills useful for debate, communication, negotiation, prioritization and decision making
Empower and enhance self-esteem	Effective participation can provide a sense of self-efficacy and raise self-esteem among children

Children's participation in decision-making can help bring about better

functioning of institutions. For instance if schools actively involve children in making

school rules and regulation, they will be training them to understand institutions and

systems of governance and democratic processes such as human rights values and

standards, at the same time as instilling tolerance and acceptance (James, 2004, 2007;

Lansdown, 2001). Such processes help facilitate social development resulting in

communicative ability, sensitivity; empathy, mutual respect, good humor, and close

collaboration (Hart, 2004; Schiller & Einardotirr, 2009). However, in addition to disagreement and lack of clarity on what constitutes the exact definition of children's participation, age of maturity and who needs to participate in decision making, there is also a lack of clarity concerning what the capacity to enhance decision making processes entails.

Meaningful participation and space to come together with their peers to share their experiences and express their views (Fletcher, 2005), can give children strength and increase their life skills and self-confidence especially in situations characterized by conflict or insecurity (Hart, 2004). In Nepal, child clubs, groups and associations of girls and boys are participating actively to ensure their own protection and to contribute to peace building through various means (Koirala, 2010; Parajuli & Naylor, 2009; Sharma, 2008). They include: i) Organizing children's meetings, how to live, to relate to each other and to respect each other, and to better protect themselves; ii) preparing poems, songs, dance, drama, debates, (wall) magazines and radio programmes to sensitize peers, family, school and community members on child rights and peace; iii) promoting conflict transformation, dialogue and supporting peer advice, peer support, peer education and peer counseling; iii) encouraging all girls and boys to go to school and to study (including children who were formerly associated with armed forces, and children with disabilities); iv) raising their voice to tackle discrimination, abuse, violence and corruption within school and community settings; v) promoting children's participation in school governance, local governance and policy and practice developments to address issues which affect them; vi) taking specific action according to the particular socio-cultural, political context of their country and immediate environment. This clearly reflects children's roles as social actor and child club as an agency of children to interact with adults and institutions in society.

The conceptualization of children as competent, social actors has not necessarily translated into children being taken seriously as participants, and nor has it progressed significantly the ways in which their status and voices are recognized in social and political life (Arnott, 2006; Kulynych, 2001; Lister, 2008; Prout, Simmons & Birchall, 2006). The section below discusses on theoretical aspects of children, childhood and their participation. They include ociological and socio-cultural theories that promote childhood as a social construct and children as the actor of society.

Theories of Children and Child Participation

Before 1970's, studies on children were dominated by two theoretical approaches; developmental psychology and socialization (Archard, 1993). After this period, scholars from sociology and anthropology started to challenge these mainstream approaches (James et al, 1998; Jenks, 1996; Qvortrup, 1994, 2005). For instance, Hardman (1973) gave explanation about childhood beyond the psychological explanation from anthropological perspectives. She said that childhood is self-regulating and autonomous phenomenon. Children represent one level of a society's beliefs, values, and social interactions. I have studied and reviewed the sociological and socio-cultural theories of children and child participation. Among them pre-sociological, sociological and socio-cultural theories are dominant that define children and childhood from diverse perspectives as follows.

Pre-sociological Theories of Children

The profounder of pre-sociological theories are mostly western sociologists. James, James and Prout (1998) classified these theories into five models that shape children, childhood and their citizenship differently. They are: i) Evil child as shaped by the Christian Old Testament and theories of Hobbes (1996); ii) immanent child as shaped by Lock's (1959) tabula rasa theory; iii) innocent and individual child as shaped

by the theories of Rousseau (1762, 2007); iv) naturally developing child as shaped by the theories of Piaget (1972); and v) unconscious child as shaped by theories of Freud (1923).

These five theories have informed and continue to inform different conceptions about children and adult interactions with children from the 1600s to the present. However, these theories do not acknowledge the social context, have become part of conventional wisdom surrounding the child, and continue to influence possibilities for children's citizenship as shown in the next page (Archard, 1993; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; Freud, 1923; James et al, 1998; Kulnych, 2001; Lansdown, 2005; Piaget, 1972; Rousseau, 1762, 2007):

Table 2

Childhood in Pre-sociological Theories

Pre-sociological theories	Characteristics of children and childhood
Evil/demonic child	• Children recipient of adult social order • Standardization of curricular content and rules in school to minimize children's agency • School to apply discipline and control making them good adult citizens
Immanent child	• Children as incompetent, blank slates dependents with adults and becoming citizen • Adult being aged, experienced and knowledgeable to exercise higher status and control over children • Schools serve to filling the blank slates with knowledge and experiences • Exclusion from agencies, social practices and responsibilities
Innocent and individual child	• Children as angelic, uncorrupted by the world, and naturally good • Adults maintain the natural goodness of children as gatekeepers by protecting them from violence and corruption through surveillance, limitation and regulation • Children do not have rights and capabilities as active citizens
Naturally developing child	• Children as incomplete, incompetent, and irrational as a result of their developing status • Each child is considered individually against universal standards of developmental stages • Children are seen to be in preparation for future participation, not agentic in the present • Adults are positioned as competent and capable beings to understand, translate and interpret children's comments and actions

Unconscious child	• Children were uncontrolled and impulsive • Adults have the role of managing and supporting children's free expressions of instincts and impulses with the purpose of integrating them into the adult world • Gradually acknowledging and welcoming children's instinctive and impulsive expressions of anxiety, incoherence and disorder

.

Each of these pre-sociological theoretical model views children as citizens of the future to shape both social and educational practices with them (James et al., 1998). This view is common in Nepal, as children are known as the future of nation (MoE, 2001). Understanding how these ways of viewing children shape their positioning and participation in society enables recognition of influential thinking on possibilities for young children's active citizenship participation. This contributes significantly for a knowledge to an inquiry into possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

Sociological Theories of Children

According to James et al (1998), there has been rapidly growing sociological interest and attention to children and childhood in recent times. As a result, there has been a shift away from the influence of the individualistic doctrine of pre-sociological theories. Sociological understandings acknowledge children as agentic with social, political and economic status as contemporary subjects, that is, as citizens of today. Socialization from a sociological perspective is seen as a process of appropriation, reinvention, and reproduction in which children negotiate, share and create culture with adults and each other (Corsaro, 2005). This differs from pre-sociological theories and early sociological theories (Ritche & Kollar, 1964), which view socialization as a matter of adaptation and internalization.

Past sociological theories of socialization position the child as passive in a process of becoming socialized to an adult world. Recent sociological theories of children view them as competent and capable social actors. To understand how recently formed theoretical models of children in sociology have enabled children to be viewed

as citizens of today (James et al, 1998). The table in next page summarizes the

characteristics of five major models namely: i) Socially constructed child, ii) tribal

child, iii) minority group child, iv) social-structural child, and v) political child (James,

et al, 1998; Lister, 2007; Oakley, 1994; Prensky, 2001; Turner, 2003):

Table 3

Childhood in Sociologies Theories

Models of child	Key features and Characteristics
Socially constructed child	• Accepts plurality and diversity of each child in her social, political, historical and moral context • Childhood is understood as historically contingent, unfixed and contextual • Children construct meaning agentically through interactions with others, including peers and/or adults and their institutions • Adults question, analyze, and reflect on the influence of social constructions of children's learning and participation
Tribal child	• Children are understood as inhabiting an autonomous world separate from adults, where children have their own rules, cultures, priorities and agenda • Adult recognizes and honors children's views, difference, and autonomy in citizenship
Minority group child	• Children positioned as a group as powerless, disadvantaged/oppressed • Adults make decisions for them on the basis of the claim that it is in their best interests (Alderson, 2000; Lansdown, 2001) • Advocates for (or ideally with) children by arguing that children should have the same rights to citizenship participation as adults • Children endeavors to question and challenge practices of domination
Social structural child	• Childhood as a social phenomenon with universal characteristics across different societies having all features of citizenship • Children are understood as a body of social actors and as citizens with needs and rights • Recognizable components in social structures in different places and different times are seen as common to all
Political child	• Children as active citizens with agency in questioning normalized practices and taking action to redress unjust practices • Children as political/agentic engage in activities of common interest • Welcomes children's participation as active citizens in the public sphere and matters that affect their life

All of the pre-sociological and sociological theoretical models of children

discussed can shape young children's active citizenship participation. The socialization

and acculturation of those engaging with children and the context within which the

children live influences the way children are viewed. Many of these different ways of

viewing children influenced children's participation in this study. Recognizing and understanding theoretical models of children provided solid groundwork for investigating possibilities for young children's active citizenship as provoked through a practice of formation and mobilization of child clubs and their networks at different levels. Sociological theories are the most advanced to have an understanding of children and their influential thinking and shaping of possibilities for active citizenship.

In concluding this discussion, it is important to emphasize that a commonality between the different approaches to the study of childhood, outlined above, is an epistemological turn towards recognizing children's social relationships and cultures as worthy of study in their own right, and not just in respect to their relationship to adults and to society. These newer conceptualizations of childhood have contributed in a significant way to thinking about children as active social beings, creating and negotiating social relationships within the social, political and discursive frameworks of their lives. It has also contributed to shaping understandings of childhood as a phenomenon that is neither politically neutral nor value free and so unable to be separated from negotiations over power, knowledge and the production of truth. Socio-cultural theories take this stand and pay attention on relationship and interaction between children and adults, which are reviewed below.

Socio-cultural Theories of Children and Child Participation

Socio-cultural perspectives on the nature of childhood have significantly shaped contemporary views of children's participation by drawing attention to the relationship between the child, interpersonal interactions and his or her broader historical and cultural context (Tudge & Hogan, 2005). The theories of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) and of the American psychologist Urie Bronfen Brenner (1917-2005) have been highly influential in the development of socio-cultural theory (Tudge

& Hogan, 2005). As per this theory when children participate and engage in collaborative activities, they develop new skills, concepts and knowledge based on the child's own characteristics, skills and experiences (Tudge & Hogan, 2005). Children's development occurs through their activities in particular social and cultural contexts, especially their relationships and interactions with other people. In this way, socio-cultural theory places the social, cultural and historical frameworks at the Centre of inquiry, rather than as background information (Smith & Taylor, 2000; Taylor, 2007).

While developmental and sociological theories of childhood have traditionally set parameters around the age and tasks to accomplish by children. Socio-cultural theorists believe that there is no one pathway for development as children progressively move ahead. This theory emphasizes that childhood development and socialization are creative, fluid and relational processes that are worked out in dynamic and complex ways in the lives of individual children (Neale & Flowerdew, 2007). By approaching development in this way, socio-cultural theory suggests that the competence of children is achieved within a reciprocal partnership whereby (Smith, 2008). Children gradually come to know and understand the world through their activities in communication with others in the context of cultural processes located in a particular historical time. The greater the richness of the activities and interactions that children participate in the greater will be their understanding and knowledge.

Because of this partnership between adults and children, instruction and support for children will be more closely linked with the child's potential level of development, rather than to any level of measured, actual development (Taylor et al, 2002). Rather than waiting for developmental readiness, skilled adults and peers can greatly extend a child's competency by stimulating their development within the range between what a

child can do on their own and what they can achieve with the assistance of others who are more skilled in a particular domain of knowledge.

The socio-cultural view of development has been instrumental in provoking adults to consider the nature of the support they provide to children as participants in order to enable their participation in social and political life. In Smith's (2002) words, this requires 'providing enough, but not too much support'. Building on the work of Vygotsky (1978), Smith (2002) uses the metaphor of 'scaffolding' to explain the gradual assistance provided to children by skilled partners to support their participation until they can acquire competence to perform independently. As a child's competence increases, the scaffolding is gradually withdrawn, until the child can do alone what could only be done before with the support of an adult. Children's capacity to participate is highly dependent on the social and cultural context of children. A key aspect of children's participation is the nature of the relationships between those skilled adult partners and children (Smith, 2002).

For children to become active and competent participants they require a trusting and reciprocal relationship with adults so that they can learn to communicate their intentions and views, from a very early age, and so that adults can be responsive to their views (Smith & Bjerke, 2009). There is a practice among child rights agencies in Nepal to provide services of adult facilitators for child clubs in both schools and communities.

The influence of socio-cultural theory in shaping the current study is evident in several ways. *First*, it draws attention to the need for this study to pay critical attention and to be sensitive to the social needs of children as they find their way in and around the processes of participation available to them. *Second*, it calls for an emphasis placed on the processes for undertaking this study, including in the interviews with children, the analysis of the data and on the ways in which children understand the role as a

researcher. In some circumstances, children's participation relies heavily on the development of children's agency and in others; focus is more on children's voice.

Whatever argument applies to one's societal context, 'voice' or 'agency', the fact remains, children's participation in decision-making is a fundamental human right that needs to respect, promote and fulfill (Lansdown, 2010). Therefore, the realization of other children's rights is largely dependent on their participation right, which becomes both as a means and as an end to achieve the rights of children. Both voice and agency functions related to children and child participation are described and analyzed from four paradigms (Hart, 1992; Lansdown, 2010; Smith, 2002; Warshak, 2003), namely, i) Socio-cultural, ii) sociological, iii) democratization, and iv) empowerment. Now, I will briefly review and discuss these paradigms.

Socio–cultural Paradigm

The socio-cultural paradigm has its root in western orthodoxies of childhood. In the socio-cultural paradigm, childhood is compared to development that takes a universal path or stages beginning from immaturity and incompetence to rationality, competence and autonomy. Therefore, social roles are taught thought socialization where children are said how to do things (Smith, 2007). Through socialization, authors like those that Lansdown (2010) argues; children can develop capacities as well as competencies to fulfill social and economic responsibilities within their families and societies. It is true that children develop capacities and competence through socialization but their voices and choices are not heard in the process to exercise their autonomous rights (Lansdown, 2010).

Sociological Paradigm

Sociological paradigm sees children's participation as part of their socialization activities during which children learn and develop competencies. The process and

development occur within complex patterns of reciprocal activity that are progressively

learn and develop over time (Smith, 2008). In the process, the developing persons

(child), in addition to competence and knowledge, develops strong and enduring

emotions that result is shifting the power imbalances.

In line with children's rights advocates, the sociological paradigm accepts

children's agency and analyzes how society constructs children's social worlds as

subjects not objects of control or concern. Consequently, instead of seeing and treating

children as individual persons with own mind, capabilities and potentials, the

sociological paradigm collectivized children as an undifferentiated class of immature

beings (Smith, 2002). A similar categorization is also identified in the works of Hallett

(2000) and Shier (2001) featuring the 'new' sociology of childhood' theory as earlier

propagated in James and Prout (1998) and Quortrup (1994). The new sociology of

childhood emphasizes children's participation through individualism, autonomy,

capacity, competence and agency over voice (Hallett, 2000).

Democratization Paradigm

Lansdown (1995) and Smith (2002) advocate that child participation involves

both including and respecting children's civil and political status through recognizing

their personhood and citizenship. Globally, there is a big difference on understanding

the democratic processes and governance between the developed and developing

countries. I argue that children are socialized to participate in decision making at an

earlier stage in the West, they grow to understand the process better and respect others

rights as well. Contrary to what prevail in the socio-political and cultural conditions of

majority world, especially those from South Asia in general and the Nepal in particular,

the socialization is completely different because children in these places do not

generally join in democratization processes, neither do they voice out their opinion

because of certain structural and cultural barriers. Therefore, adults tend to undervalue the democratization process and the importance of children's participation in national development. There are enough data and evidence that teachers are not accountable to children and their learning in schools of Nepal (MoE, 2009).

Empowerment Paradigm

Empowerment paradigm believes that children's participation can result in direct and visible benefit to children and their families. If children are recognized and included as active participants instead of remaining dormant or passive individuals, they can contribute to development efforts and initiatives or even help resolve an issue. Warshak (2003) justified this claim using a divorce situation in which children's opinion helps find solutions to challenging situations in circumstances adults often consider complicated and/or intractable. In such situations, adults use children's voices as a responsive mandate to make stated preferences (Warshak, 2003).

Empowerment paradigm consists four elements of interventions (WB, 2002), namely, i) Increase access to information (*rights and responsibilities*); ii) increase access to basic services and entitlements (*choices*); iii) improve participation, inclusion and representation (*rule of the games*); and, iv) strengthen collective voices (*agency roles*), italic added. Thus, empowerment paradigm advocates increasing critical knowledge and awareness among children on their rights and responsibilities so that they can change their roles and rules of the game in schools and society. This will ultimately enable children to raise their voices, to make choices and to enjoy their rights by making adults and their institutions accountable and responsive towards children and their issues.

In all the above stated paradigms, it is necessary to note that children's participation occurs in different circumstances or levels as demonstrated in the three

ladders of participation (Hart, 1992; Mitra & Gross, 2009; Shier, 2001). The models are

constituted by several elements or dimensions that include listening to children,

allowing them to express their views, take those views into account, involve children in

decision-making processes, and promote equal participation (Hart, 1992; Shier, 2001).

These paradigms are positively contributing to recognize children as a human being and

gradually welcome their views and participation on the issues that affect them.

Whatever, the argument in favor of 'voice' or 'agency', the fact is that children's

participation in decision-making, as noted by Lansdown (2010) is a fundamental human

right, integral to respecting, and promoting the realization of other rights. Children's

participation rights in this sense can be both a means and an end to achieving rights of

children (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010).

Main argument supporting children's 'agency' over 'voice' is that involving

children in decision-making (voice), may not be effective by itself. This is because in

most situations this process is adult driven and decisions shaping individual lives are

dependent on everyday conditions and experiences, rather than political structures of

government and governance (Lansdown, 2010). Whatever school of thought one goes

with, the bottom line should be, as Ehlers and Frank (2008) believe, children's

participation should be in the best interest of children as it facilitates their individual

identity, competence and responsibility. Through this process, adults can enhance

children's social identity and democratization and at the same time provide adults

access to essential information that could help them in making decisions that are in the

best interest of children (Ehlers & Frank, 2008). I will now explore and review the

empirical studies around child right and child participation that are relevant to my study

on roles and contribution of child clubs in school governance and students learning.

Empirical Review

The empirical reviews consist of reviewing doctoral theses, journal articles, research report and working papers on the relevant topic. While exploring these documents on child clubs, child participation in school and its contribution, I found very few literatures about Nepal and are mostly from various I/NGOs and UNICEF. I chose few literatures, which are directly relevant to my study and accessible that were helpful for enhancing my understanding and research works.

Bhuvaneswari (2005) carried out a qualitative research for her PhD dissertation on 'Child-friendly School Systems in Chennai Corporation Primary Schools' from Department of Social Work, Loyola College, India. The phenomenological study under descriptive research design was done in 16 primary schools with multiple stakeholders including children of 6-11 years, head teachers, teachers and parents. The study also used a simplified four-point scale with 30 statements to assess the teachers' perception on child-friendly education especially their attitudes towards learning, children, disciplining and parents. The study was also enriched data and information from FGDs with children, as they were effective enough to plan their own destiny.

The research reveals that child-friendly schools are effective tools in ensuring childhood for the child in schools minimizing the wastages in education. It further claims that child friendly school is the only solution to bring and retain all the children in the school looking at the child as a 'whole child'. A child who feels wanted and respected is the need of the nation. Children who know the meaning and purpose of their life are assets that whose value cannot be measured. Bhuvaneswari argues that if there are child friendly schools, the word dropout, can be removed from all education reports. This I feel an over claiming fact from a PhD research with limited samples. However, the study records the changes taking place in Chennai Corporation schools

after establishment of child friendliness. These include education officials or teachers started admitting their children in these schools.

To make the school child friendly, Bhuvaneswari (2005) suggests: i) Introduction of child friendly and child centric teachers' training, ii) incorporation of child-friendly education and child-rights into national and local school curriculum, iii) promote teaching without punishments, disciplining through alternate methods such as 'Behavior Modification Technique', iv) start campaign to make education officials or teachers admit their children in common schools, iv) involve children and respect their views in any school plan related to children and classroom practices, v) keep suggestions box in school to voice grievances of students and parents and take immediate action, make them feel part of the school. Bhuvaneswari (2005) finally concludes that children are the best judges to their own choices and likes which leads to improve their sense of belonging with the school and thereby learning as well.

Winther-Lindqvist (2009) carried out a PhD thesis on "Children's Development of Social Identity in Transitions- a comparative study" from Department of Psychology, University of Copenhagen. From a qualitative perspective, the ethnographic study explores how children create, change and maintain social identities through acts of identification in everyday life in the classroom and in the day care centers in Danish Society. The descriptive and elaborative thesis consists of four papers with different age of children, all informing different aspects of the phenomenon of social identities among children who are part of peer groups that are changing during transitions.

Findings suggest that both older and younger children use friendships as enlargements of their self and negotiate their own position in these friendships as part of their preparation for transit and both older and younger children accentuate themselves and their social strategies as part of presenting themselves when actualizing

in the new situation. Without denying that older children possibly are capable of reflecting and acting at higher level of participation- the older children are not in general applying these abilities in their practicing social identities in everyday life. The young children seem to be no more or less skilled or successful in actually achieving, keeping, and managing positive social identities among their friends and peers. She concludes that social identification processes, as they appear across different age groups, are more fully comprehensible when employing a strong and articulate persistency as supplementary rationality to the dominant focus on changes in development psychology.

Brenner-Camp (2011) wrote a PhD dissertation on "Student Voice in Education Decision Making Processes: A Key Component for Change in School Models for the Future" from School of Education, Jones International University, United States. The qualitative, descriptive, comparative, grounded theory study focused on revealing and comparing students and school administrators' attitudes regarding inclusion of student voice in curricular and instructional decisions within a K-12 public school system. The study was supported from literature review in the areas of democratic schools, student voice, restructuring schools, and student motivation and engagement. Focus group interviews with 25 students of grade 6-8 in 3 groups and survey interviews with two school administrators were used for the study.

This study revealed that students wish to have a meaningful voice in academic decisions and that administrators agree with this theoretically, but have reservations about the practicality and viability of such voice-inclusion models, citing standardized testing constraints and inability to make guarantees to all students that their voice can be included in academic decision-making processes. Brenner-Camp found that the most convincing results were from the student data as students were transparent, honest and

direct. The surprises in the study were the depth of answers from students inferring parallels between student voice in the school context and the role of voice in democratic processes and the societal implications of responsibilities for their roles as democratic citizens.

The research concludes that : i) Students are ready and they think their voices should be included in decisions directly impacting their academic study in meaningful ways, and ii) administrators embraced the concept of student voice inclusion in academic decisions. This conclusion supports student voice as a function of new models of teaching and learning that address learner needs in the context of an ever-changing global society. These new student-centric, voice-driven models will provide a blueprint that is needed for the philosophical, theoretical and cultural transformation of school models for the 21st century. Brenner-Camp further elaborates that change to a voice inclusion model for public schools would require a cultural shift to change the roles of students to instigators of the educational decision-making processes and the role of educators from primary planners, deliverers of instruction, and sole evaluators of learning to those as process facilitators and advisors.

Sainju (2012) in a PhD Thesis on "Child Labor in Nepal: Socio-Economic Implications" from Faculty of Management, Tribhuvan University, Nepal has applied a mixed research design methodology with structured interview questionnaire, focus group discussions, case studies, workshops and meetings, child centered participatory research application and field observation. Quantitative techniques were used to estimate the magnitude and extent of child labor with 1990 child workers mainly engaged in portaging, stone quarry, restaurants/tea shops, brick kiln and carpet factory where as qualitative techniques were used to get an in-depth understanding of problems

faced by the child labor and their socio-economic conditions through focus group discussions and case studies.

The study found that growing awareness and concern about child labor has led activists and lobbying organizations to force the government and the public to take action against perpetrators and condemn factories/institutions using child labor and exploiting them in an inhuman way. It has become a public concern that child labor did not stop but continued in its worst forms in informal settings. It highlights the dilemma that voices are being raised against child labor but children's voices were not heard on this issue as an vast number of families depend upon the income of the their children.

It reveals that children and their parents working in all studied sectors did not have enough knowledge about the rights of the child. Given the condition of the workplace and nature of work, all studied five sectors are the most hazardous and worst forms of child labor in Nepal. Working conditions were unbelievably poor, dangerous and unhygienic where children want to improve, but no one listen them. Most of the child workers wanted to join and continue their education alongside work but those provisions are not available. Several child focused NGOs found to be highlighting the issue of child labor nationally and internationally as a business but they were found to be less concerned about improving the socio economic conditions of children and their families and did not hear their voices.

Paudel (2009) in another PhD thesis on "Child Right-duty Dichotomy in Schooling in Nepal" from Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University used qualitative research paradigm with multiple tools and methods i.e. focus group discussion, interview and observation including document review. The study explored perceptions of multiple stakeholders (28 parents, 14 teachers and 24 students) of 7 districts in Nepal

about child rights, duties and child labor; curricular response to them; factors contributing to perpetuate right-duty dichotomy and the ways of managing it.

The study revealed that adults and teachers posited the traditional mindsets including labeling mindset, whereas children posited the right-oriented, equity driven and global mindsets. The intergenerational gap was distinct due to the exposure to education, media and knowledge of the global society. The study found that children managed their dichotomies themselves through four ways: i) Compromise, ii) denial/refusal/avoidance, iii) revenge, and iv) self-management. More importantly, this study has generated two new strategies of managing dichotomies by: i) damaging the most favorable things and growing crops as revenge; and ii) doing creative work such as creating a poem, story, writing autobiography and letter to their best friends.

Ratna et al. (2012), in the national study "Support for Child Clubs in Nepal: A Strategic Review 2011-2012" focusing on the development of child clubs over the last two decades in Nepal have focused on the qualitative study mainly through focus group discussions, consultations and document review drawing extensively the inputs from members of 181 child clubs in ten districts of Nepal including Kathmandu valley. The study revealed that over the last decade, child clubs have become an integral part of the work of most child-rights agencies with widespread acceptance of child clubs, nationwide coverage, and a policy links of child clubs directly to government agencies. The team appreciates that high level of state acceptance of child participation is unprecedented in Asia. The national provisions for child clubs and child participation in decision-making are extremely progressive and reflect the value given by the government to a child's right to self-determination, especially at local level.

The study highlights benefits enjoyed by child club members include enhanced self-confidence and recognition in the community, better access to information, and

better access to basic services and protection. Moreover, many child club members are now involved in local government planning processes as the full members (out of 25 members, 2 representatives of child clubs are members in each ward citizen forum all over country). The study also claims that child clubs also enjoy widespread support from parents and other community members, as the benefits enjoyed by child club members can often be extended to adults within the community.

The report also indicates few key concerns about child club including: i) The exclusion of the most marginalized children from child club membership; ii) many of the child clubs met under this study maintained a high level of financial dependence on agencies run by adults; and iii) high adult influence in child club visioning exercises, its functions and agenda among all stakeholders at both the management and grass roots levels. The study concludes that the responsibility of every adult in Nepal is to ensure that there are child clubs in every village and community in the country; only by listening to children, learning from them and working in partnership with them can the rights to participation and self-determination be fully realized.

A researcher on student voice, Mitra (2004) writes a qualitative research article with the topic "the significance of students: can increasing student voice in school lead to gains in youth development?" in Teacher College Record, Columbia University following grounded theory approach. Mitra (2004) argues that student voice or a student role in the decision-making and change efforts of schools has emerged as a potential strategy for improving the success of school reform efforts. The article concludes that student voice activities can create meaningful experience for youth that helps to meet fundamental development needs- especially for students who otherwise do not find meaning in their school experiences. This includes a marked consistency in

the growth of three assets "ABC" namely '*agency*', '*belonging*' and '*competence*' that

are central to chidlren and their overall development that I have summarized as follows:

Table 4

Assets of Child Participation

Assets	Meaning	Contributions/value addition
Agency	Acting or exerting influence and power in a given situation	Increasing ability to articulate opinions to others constructing new identities as change makers developing a greater sense of leadership
Belonging	Developing a meaningful relationships with other students and adults and having a role at the school	Developing a relationship with a caring adult Improving interactions with teachers Increasing attachment to the school
Competence	Developing new abilities and being appreciated for one's talents	Critiquing their environment Developing problem solving & facilitation skills Getting along with others and speaking publicly

Diana (2011) published an action research article on "Children's right to

participation: a European perspective" in Children's European Citizenship Journal. The

objectives of the research were to: establish what is the child participation in the school

decision-making process, child initiatives and participation outside school (involvement

in projects, voluntary work), how active citizenship is encouraged within the school and

most importantly what the understanding of the child's right to participation is.

The qualitative research data were obtained through participatory observation

and interview with 111 students from five to 12 grades. She defines that participation is

a process that needs to evolve along with social changes based on her interaction with

children. The study confirms that children's ability to learn and play allows them to

give active meaning to their environment. Both adults and children can make progress

and give active citizenship a new meaning by working together. The study shows that

the appetite for social involvement for children is the same as the one in the adult

groups, but children show a great potential for changing (most of the respondents

would like to collaborate with the teachers in order to make the student council more

efficient and accessible) and a great concern for problems related to the environment: climate change, pollution and the extinction of species.

Diana (2011) strongly believes with students views that the process of building an active citizen starts in school so it should be the place where children learn how to participate. Although there are structures within the educational institution designed to ensure child participation (as school councils), they sometimes lack the means to do it and remain just a formal student organization, conducted and controlled by teachers. Diana (2011) concludes her findings that the school is a community, therefore, all the members should be allowed to participate in the decision-making process and in order to achieve active citizenship adults need to become peers with children. She also highlighted a need for more research in the child participation area to completely understand the social impact on children and the social involvement of the child because of its unique condition.

All the reviews of empirical studies are directly or indirectly related to my research as they focus on understanding and exploring meaning and application of child rights, child labor, rights and responsibility dichotomy, student voice, child clubs and child participation. Most of the study on child rights and child participation issues are of qualitative nature. The studies show change in understanding of childhood and children as an innocent child to an active citizen, a human becoming to human being, object of parents to a subject of society, recipient of education to decision maker of her education. The changes on socio-political, economic and cultural status of children is taking place mainly due to child friendliness in school, more knowledge and awareness and acceptance on the rights of children among stakeholders after ratification of UNCRC by Nepal in 1990.

Furthermore, I have also found such changes about children and their participation in Nepalese schools as well. Children are getting more information, space and voice on their rights and entitlements due to a continuous work of none-state actors like UNICEF and child rights I/NGOs. Because of awareness on child rights and promotion of child clubs in the last one decade, social status of children is changing as the agent of peace, and as an active member of the society (Koirala, 2010; Parajuli & Naylor, 2009; Sharma, 2008). This has further took gradual changes in rules and roles assigned to children by adults and institutions with more respect and consultation with children and child led organizations (Khatiwada, 2011; Lansdown, 2010).

The Gap in Literature and Empirical Studies

I realized after reviewing the literature and empirical studies that they are more focus on documentation of changes taking place in societies, than about the understanding of children and childhood. There is no doubt that childhood is a social construct, and children are no more objects or incompetent human becoming. They are already human beings and actors of the society. However, there is no specific study about evolution and management of child clubs in schools and their contribution to children's learning and school governance. I am focusing to fill this gap among academia and child rights practitioners.

Available literatures are reproducing knowledge and practices towards children to create space for participation in schools and society. In addition to studying changing status of of children in school through attitudinal changes among teachers and policy reform on child rights issues, I have focused more on documenting the evolution, power sharing and contribution of child clubs to children, parents, teachers and society as a whole. There is also lack of empirical evidences on how social, political and cultural aspects of child clubs improve their learning and school governance in a more

democratic and participatory school processes in new Nepal that listen and respect children's views. To fill this research gap, I have designed a conceptual framework that guides my study from interpretative framework under qualitative research paradigm.

Conceptual Framework

My study is about the evolution, management and contribution of child clubs and child participation in schools. It seeks to create new knowledge on children's space in educational institutions like in schools and the impact of child participation in schools on children, schools, communities and society. Child participation in school and society is influenced by political, social, cultural and economic factors of the society where children live and grow. I have taken children's participation in education and school management as per their age and maturity as a fundamental right.

I am applying an interpretative paradigm within the qualitative research frame in exploring the field reality of child clubs in schools. The field realities are assessed and interpreted with the sociological and socio-cultural theories and supported by relevant literatures. I have collected data using multiple tools and consulting multiple stakeholders including children with an assumption that knowledge is a social construct and there are multiple realities from ontological point of view based on our socio-cultural values, experiences, learning and exposures. Through this process, I have generated different themes that critically reflected the evolution and understanding of child clubs from the perceptive of children themselves, their parents and teachers, NGOs activists and government officials who are interacting with child clubs in a day-to-day basis.

Theoretical Link	Child Participation in Nepalese Schools	Qualitative Research Methodology

Theories/Paradigm
- Sociological
- Socio-cultural
- Child Rights

National and International Child Rights contexts

Empirical Review

Themes
- Evolution of Child Clubs
- Management of Child Clubs
- Roles of Child Clubs
- Contribution of Child Clubs
- Learning & School governance
- Opportunities & Challenges

Emergence and Evolution

Roles and Contributions

Children's Learning and School Governance

Institutionalization of Child Participation

Critical Analysis, Reflection and Interpretation

Perceptions of children/child club leaders, parents/SMCs, NGOs, teachers, CROs and DEOs

Ontology:
Multiple Realities

Epistemology:
Subjective discourse by research participants

Interpretative Research Inquiry

Piloting and Using Expert Group

FGD
Interactive Interview
Case Study
Observation
Document review
Perception survey

Figure 4. Conceptual framework for child participation

From this framework, I have included themes like evolution and management of child clubs, benefits and contribution to children's learning and school governance, and opportunities and challenges on child participation in schools and societies.

Concluding the Chapter

This chapter helped me to locate my study within the child rights framework and theoretical contexts. The meaning and understanding of children, childhood and child participation are contextual and essentially contested phenomenon in each society. The new sociological and socio-cultural theory of childhood and the UNCRC

have contributed positively to children's participation as a central place in social life and public policy. The concept of children's participation gets influence by broader political processes including socio-economic, political and democratic culture of society. This shapes and influences the conditions for children's representation in decision-making structures and processes accepting children as active citizens.

There is a shift on understanding child participation as a negotiated space in dialogical nature. The common understanding about child participation acknowledges that children have a fundamental right to be part of every decision that affects them in all countries without exception, including babies and very young children. This requires adults to learn new ways of listening and hearing children of different ages and a cultural change in all government agencies with the introduction of new legislation, policies, services and programmes. This demands different ways of working, and necessitates welcoming children into social, economic, political and cultural debates.

Furthermore, it respects children, along with adults, as citizens of their societies having a stake now, as well as in the future, in what happens in their lives. This understanding offers a win-win outcome between children and adults that recognizes the unique and invaluable contributions of children to build society around them that leads to multiple benefits including personal development, improved decision-making, greater protection, and enhanced capacity for citizenship and democratic engagement. However, there is a research gap (no specific empirical studies) on child clubs in schools and its contribution to children learning and school governance.

I strongly agree with common findings shared in the literature that child participation brings values, benefits and contribution to children learning, socialization and overall development as well as transformation and democratization of school and society as a whole. This gave me enough insights to design my conceptual framework

and select a qualitative research paradigm to explore the child club phenomenon and its

practices in schools from manipulative to decision-making level of participation.

CHAPTER III

DECIDING ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researchers have different beliefs and ways of viewing and interacting within their surroundings. As a result, the way in which the study is carried out varies. However, there are certain standards and rules that guide a researcher's actions and beliefs. Such standards or principles referred to as a paradigm (Creswell, 2012). I believe paradigms are traditions that dominate (research) practices. For example, positivists (quantitative) dominated social science research for a considerably long time, post positivists emerged later to complement weaknesses of positivists. A different paradigm - interpretivists (qualitative) – evolved dominating social science research in late 60s and early 70s. Amidst these, dominating paradigms then emerged the third wave – a mixed design – that tried to blend the two. More recently, scholars have started using critical social science approach, which is different from interpretivist/ism.

Creswell (2012) asserts that qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. I am borrowing the definition of Denzin and Lincoln (2011) in my child clubs in schools study that qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Within the interpretive approach, I am exploring the issues, understanding the child club phenomenon and answering the research questions.

To gain a better understanding of why and how I chose the methodological approach, an initial discussion includes about the qualitative research paradigm that

best fits the focus of this study. This follows with a discussion on my research design and methodology including data collection and analysis tools and methods.

The research method I applied as an attempt to understand the child club phenomenon under investigation is also discussed broadly. In order to describe the variety of research activities undertaken during this study, the data collection activities and associated analysis methods is systematically discussed under four phases. Finally, this chapter also highlights the quality standards and ethical issues I observed during data collection as well as the potential limitations posed by the methodological approaches I have chosen for my study.

Situating My Study: Participation as a Basis of Learning and Growth

Children's participation in research contexts, particularly in qualitative research that invites children to dialogue, is crucial in that it allows the views and experiences of children to be considered in policy debates, and thus to potentially influence policy outcomes. An important implication of all of the influences noted above is that research is done with children rather than on or about them and, in the process, to give their views legitimacy (O'Kane, 2011).

In considering the participation of children in my research, it is also important to take into account the body of research examining the relationship between misrecognition and its implications for children's sense of identity and well-being (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2009). According to Lister (2008), there is evidence to support the case for acknowledgment of the psychological dimensions of misrecognition of the identity of individuals. Viewed from the standpoint of recognition, children's participation is not just about a process of listening to children, hearing their voices or accessing their views, experiences, fears, desires and uncertainties: it holds out possibilities for children to discover and negotiate the essence of who they are and their

place in the world. In the same way, when we invite children to participate in research we also gain insight into their experiences of being marginalized, misrecognized or unheard - experiences which are central to the development and implementation of well-targeted policy or practices of educational responses that might more effectively support their learning, personality development, social and emotional well-being.

I purposefully included children and child club leaders as my research participants as they compose the majority of school population and almost half share of people in the country. I strongly believe that children have a voice and the child club is an agency to make their collective voice to adults and institutions including schools. Engaging children in research plays a critically important role in elevating children's voices into the spheres of public policy and practice, where planning and decisions concerning their lives are largely determined.

My reason for undertaking this study was a desire to understand how child participation has evolved and contributed for their learning and in school governance as no other study, I believe, has looked specifically at this area. It was clear from the outset that the primary goal of this research study was to map the evolution of child club in schools, to construct a descriptive account of the contribution and future perspectives of child club to improve their learning and school governance. From the literature and empirical review, I found that qualitative research is particularly valuable in providing rich descriptions of complex phenomenon like child club in schools.

While constructing this descriptive account of the child club evolution, I anticipated that each stakeholder of child clubs including boys and girls would bring to the study their own experiences and contributions in schools and communities. Some of these experiences might be recognizable to other stakeholders including education and child rights authorities and to me the practitioner-researcher as coming from a shared

culture; or shared only by voices of marginalized people coming from the same discipline (rights based approach to development); or they might be experiences that were unique to that particular child club. All of these experiences, shared or unique, would be shaped by the particular social, cultural and economic context of the person's or child club's particular situation.

Qualitative Research: My Study Paradigm

According to Taylor, Kermode, and Roberts (2007), a paradigm is "*a broad view or perspective of something (p. 5)*". Additionally, Weaver and Olson's (2006) definition of paradigm reveals how research could be affected and guided by a certain paradigm by stating, "paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished" (p. 460). Maxwell (2005) further defines the term paradigm from the work of Thomas Kuhn, a historian of science, refers to:

> A set of very general philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world (ontology) and how we can understand it (epistemology)….Paradigms also typically include specific methodological strategies linked to these assumptions and identify particular studies that are seen as exemplifying these assumptions and methods. (p. 36)

Similarly, Patton (2002) asserted that: 'a paradigm is a world view, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world'. As such, 'paradigms are deeply embedded in the socialization of adherents and practitioners' (p. 69). Scotland (2012) reiterates that a paradigm consists of the ontology, epistemology, methodology, and, methods. Ontology is the study of being (Crotty, 1998). Ontological assumptions are concerned with what constitutes reality, in other words, what is reality? Researchers need to take a position regarding their perceptions of how things really are

and how things really work. Epistemology is concerned with the nature and forms of knowledge (Cohen et al, 2007). Epistemological assumptions are concerned with how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated, in other words, what it means to know. Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain that epistemology asks the question, what is the nature of the relationship between what would be knower and what can be known?

Research paradigms are based on respective ontological and epistemological assumptions. Different paradigms inherently contain differing ontological and epistemological views; therefore, they have differing assumptions of reality and knowledge, which underpin their particular research approach. This is reflected in their methodology and methods. Therefore, to clarify my structure of inquiry and methodological choices, I discussed an exploration of the paradigm adopted for this study prior to any discussion about the specific methodologies utilized in this study.

Grix (2004) explains that interpretivism is an umbrella term that covers a very wide range of perspectives in the human sciences. Thus, is concerned with subjectivity and understanding of individual persons or groups. Since the interpretive paradigm emphasizes understanding social phenomena from within (Cohen et al., 1994; Grix, 2004). Beck (2005) suggests that the purpose of social science is to understand social reality as different people see it and to demonstrate how their views shape the action, which they take within that reality. As I am focusing to understand the interests, meanings, perspectives and contributions of child clubs in a natural setting of schools as perceived by multiple stakeholders including children themselves that a qualitative research approach and interpretative paradigm are the best options for my study.

Multiple Truths: My Values and Beliefs on the Study

My life has been shaped and reshaped through ample multiplicity of cultural background, values and belief systems that I went through, and still carry on. My

childhood was spent in a cozy village of rural Ramechhap, a hilly district of Eastern
Nepal. Living in an intergenerational community with multicultural settings in between
Magar and *Newar* communities, a small hut, a cowshed in a farmland (*Beshi*) with my
eldest brother and neighboring older people of the *Newar* community has influenced a
lot in my life's becomings. After managing fodder or digging the agricultural land early
in the morning, I used to go to school walking two hours a day along the *Likhu*
riverbank. After the school, again my day used to end by handling household chores
with cattle (milking and feeding fodders). We two siblings used to cook food ourselves
including washing pots and fetching water from the river. Just after completion of my
SLC, I started working as a schoolteacher at the age of 17 and immediately got married
and became a matured adult. My early career started working with children as a
teacher, which continues. However, I have been working as a development worker
since 1992 dealing with children and marginalized people. My later career has evolved
as an educationist working with children and adult institutions, particularly with the
policy makers and donors.

My experience as a teacher, as a child rights activist, as an educationist, and
also as a development professional, mostly interacting with children, parents, and the
policy and decision makers, underpins my ontological position of accepting multiple
realities. Chenail (1997) observes that there is a distinction between when a
practitioner-researcher undertakes a piece of qualitative research in the social
development field and when the counterpart a new researcher to the field, undertakes
the same type of study. For the researcher this will probably be the first experience of
the field, so that the methodological choices s/he makes will most likely reflect his/her
desire to discover the unknown. For the practitioner-researcher like me his/her task
centers round "sense making from experience" (*to confront a priori knowledge*), "sense

making challenged" (to deconstruct previously known constructs) and "sense making remade" to move towards reconstructing new knowledge (Chenail, 1997).

My Research Methodologies: Qualitative in Nature

Methodology is the strategy or plan of action, which lies behind the choice, and use of particular methods (Crotty, 1998). Thus, methodology is concerned with why, what, from where, when and how data is collected and analyzed. Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain that methodology asks the question: how can the inquirer go about finding out whatever they believe can be known. Merriam (2002) also emphasizes this claim by stipulating that in a qualitative study the researcher seeks to "discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved, or a combination of these. (p. 6). Carvalho and White (1997) characterize that the qualitative approach … typically uses purposive sampling and semi-structured or interactive interviews to collect the data - mainly, data relating to people's judgment, preferences, priorities, and/or perceptions about a subject - and analyzes it usually through sociological or anthropological research techniques. (p. 1)

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, 2007) emphasize that the purposes of the research determine the methodology and design of the research. Methodology focuses on the process and method. Methods are tools or instruments for collecting data. The term 'method' in educational research refers to the approaches/techniques used to generate data needed as a basis for inferences and interpretation (Cohen et al. 2007). They explain that methods refer to techniques and procedures used in the process of data gathering. Clough and Nutbrown (2002) suggest that the choice of method depends on decision-making processes about the nature of knowledge itself. The choice of methods also depends on the nature of the study and its purpose. Different methods suit different purposes of inquiry.

Study on child participation in school: role and contribution of child club in their learning and school governance is of qualitative nature. The qualitative methodology shares its philosophical foundation with the interpretive paradigm, which supports the worldview of multiple truths and multiple realities. This type of paradigm focuses the holistic perspective of the person and environment, which is more congruent with the social science discipline (Weaver & Olson, 2006) like child clubs. Additionally, the interpretive paradigm is associated more with methodological approaches that provide an opportunity for the voice, concerns and practices of research participants to be heard (Cole, 2006; Fielding & Bragg, 2003). As a qualitative researcher, I am more concerned about uncovering knowledge about how people feel and think in the circumstances of child clubs in which they find themselves, than making judgments about whether those thoughts and feelings are valid (Cole, 2006).

Thus, qualitative research is for deeper understanding of a phenomenon like evolution and contribution of child club from an individual's perspective, investigating interaction among individuals as well as the historical and cultural contexts, which people inhabit through (Creswell, 2009). Examples of methodology include case studies (in-depth study of events or processes over a prolonged period), phenomenology (the study of direct experience without allowing the interference of existing preconceptions), hermeneutics (deriving hidden meaning from language), and ethnography (the study of cultural groups over a prolonged period). I also employed interview, focus group discussion and case study as tools in my research.

Interpretativism: My Research Methods

As I have indicated earlier, I have chosen the interpretive paradigm by using multiple methods combining case study, focus group discussion, interactive interview and document analysis. Study of child club and its contribution to children, school and

society is a complex issue. According to Bassey (1999), case studies recognize the complexity of the case and embeddedness of social truths. Furthermore, Stake (1995, 1998) defines "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p. xi). I chose my research areas and participants purposively in my interest as Merriam (2002) asserted that the selection of the case to be studied is not done randomly but purposefully to a particular person, site, program, process, community, or other bounded system.

The issue that my study investigates is the child participation in schools and its contribution to students, teachers, schools and society. Interpretive theory is usually grounded (inductive), being generated from the data, not preceding it (Cohen et al, 2007). Thus, my research questions are broad. Cohen et al. (2007) identify that an approach characterized by its emphasis on an individual case, in which a relativistic social world is embedded, is idiographic. Interpretive paradigm yields insight and understandings of behavior, explain actions from the participants' perspective, and do not dominate the participants. For example- open-ended interviews, focus groups, open-ended questionnaires, open-ended observations, think aloud protocol and role-playing. These methods usually generate qualitative data. Analysis is the researchers' interpretations; consequently, researchers need to make their agenda and value- system explicit from the outset. I am fully with this as a child rights advocate for more than a decade and as a teacher for more than two decade.

Proximity: Basis of My Study Sites and Samples

The idea of qualitative research is to select research participants, documents, or visual materials purposefully that will best answer the research questions (Patton, 2002). Thus, qualitative inquiry typically focuses on relatively small samples, even single case, selected purposefully. In consultation with my professors and child rights

experts and my prior knowledge, familiarity and proximity to research participants, I purposively selected the child club in Lalitpur that claims as the first club in Nepal formed before 1990s to test, pilot, and refine my research methods and tools. Then I looked at the child club data and found that Sindhupalchok in the Central Development Region has the highest number of child clubs (263 clubs in 2012). The quality of my study does not only depend on the appropriateness of the methodology and instrumentation, but also the suitability of the sampling strategy chosen as suggested by Cohen et al (2007). Thus, Sindhupalchok was appropriate for my purpose.

As thick description is desirable in qualitative research in order to see underlying meaning and understanding (Lichtman, 2006), I used a purposive sampling in this study as I have already indicated in Chapter 1. I am quite familiar with Sindhupalchok since my early age as it is on the way to my home district, Ramechhap. The schools/clubs that I chose are also known to me from earlier job in SC where a NGO called Tuki is a key partner supporting the clubs. This makes me ease to get rich, thick, in-depth qualitative data from research area, participants and institutions without any communication barriers and gaps (Creswell, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This is one of the beauties of qualitative research as mine employing interpretive paradigm as Mertens (2005) asserts that researchers typically select samples with a goal of identifying information rich cases that will allow them to study a case in-depth.

Similarly, Patton (2002) claimed that one prominent feature differentiating qualitative from quantitative research is the logic that under grid sampling approaches and asserts that: "Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even a single case, selected purposefully. Quantitative methods typically depend on larger samples selected randomly" (p. 230).

According to Cohen et al. (2007) in purposive sampling the researcher chooses a sample for a specific purpose or that is satisfactory to his/her specific needs. As I was conducting an academic study, I chose a small sample of three child clubs where multiple participants are ready to interact with me as a known person on research questions. This selection validates with argument of Merriam (2002, 2009). Merriam (2002, 2009) claims, "The size of the sample does not matter, what matters are adequate number of participants to answer the questions posed" (p. 64). In consultation with supervisors and expert group, I carried out my field research from January to September 2012 with the following participants selected purposively:

Table 5

Research Participants and Methods

Respondents	Total Persons	FGD	In-depth interview	Case study	Observation
Children/Students	30	2	2		
Child Club Leaders	32	2	2	3	3 schools/clubs
Teachers/Head Teacher	20	1	2		
Parents/SMC/PTA	22	1	2		
Child Rights Officers	19	0	1		
Education Officers	16	0	1		
NGO Activists	16	2	2		
CR Expert Group	05	0	3		
Total	**160**	**8**	**15**	**3**	**3**

Familiarity: Way of Selecting Schools/Clubs

As I am doing the qualitative research, I gave emphasis for comprehensive and in-depth study of limited to three schools rather than more number of sample schools (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In consultation with DCWB and a child rights NGO in Sindhupalchok, I chose three child clubs/schools purposively to cover and get diverse nature within the same periphery. The first one was a Tamang community (Sanimai School) with a few students from non-Janjati, second one was with a few Janjati students (Setimai School with majority of Chhetri and Bahun) and the third one was

with mixed ethnic group students (Thulimai School) to have multiple perspectives. I have given the pseudo name to respective child club and school even though they had given consent to use the real names.

Purposive Selection of Diverse Research Participants

As mentioned earlier, I regularly attended weekly meeting of Haratimai child club (out of 13, eight members were the regular attendee) in Lalitpur to test my research tools and guidelines for FGD and interactive interview for a month. Based on usefulness of tools and guidelines, I finalized them in consultation with expert group members and research supervisors. With the help of concerned school administration and NGO, I selected the participants for my study as follows:

Child club leaders. I joined a regular meeting of district child club in Sindhupalchok at DCWB with its six members (out of 11), carried out the FGD with them, and interview for my purpose the next day. With the support of Head Teacher, I had meeting with child club leaders in all three schools. One school had five members, the second had seven members and the third school had six members attended the day that I had interacted. With eight members of Haratimai, total club leaders were 32.

Students/child clubs members. I had firstly a meeting with head teacher and child club chairperson of each school to ask for selecting students from each grade for my research. They suggested having two students (one boy and a girl) from each grade from six to 10. Then, students of each grade selected their two representatives making all together 30 students from three schools.

Parents/SMCs/PTAs. With my request, the head teacher of each school invited the parents of child club leaders as research participants to get their personal views, feelings and experiences. In total, 22 parents appeared for the meeting (out of 33). The first school had eight parents, the second and third had seven each. With a coincidence,

eight of them were member of School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in their school and 10 of them were female.

Teachers/head teachers. The three schools had 32 teachers (8 female) in total. Only 20 teachers showed their interest to interact with me. Interestingly all female teachers were positive towards child clubs but half of male teachers dropped from the process, as a male teacher in Sanimai commented, "*Issue of children is more closely linked with female*". Two head teachers (Chakra and Rina) agreed for interview.

Child rights/NGO activists. The NGOs in Sindhupalchok who had 10 social mobilizers working with child clubs and another one in Lalitpur had six staff who shared and interacted their views with me.

Education officers. I used the opportunity of attending a two-day workshop organized for planning officers (19) of all district education offices of the central region. Three participants declined to interact with researcher saying they do not have working experiences with child clubs.

Child rights officers. I used another opportunity to interact with all 19 CROs of central region in a full day session on child rights and child participation issues in a workshop organized by CCWB in Kavre. Similarly, I shared my preliminary findings of Sindhupalchok with all 75 CROs in a workshop organized by CCWB on 18 June 2013 and got their views, opinions and confirmation on research outcomes from their experiences and respective district perspectives.

Characteristics of Research Participants: Unity in Diversity

Under my interpretative research paradigm, I purposively chose the multiple stakeholders of child clubs as research participants to study the evolution, perceptions and contributions of child clubs in schools. In addition to a five-member child rights expert group, my research participants include students, child club leaders, teachers,

parents and NGOs activists from Sindhupalchok whereas child rights officers and education officers were from central development region. The following section briefly presents the characteristics of research participants namely gender, ethnicity, caste, academic qualification and age.

Category of Respondents: Multiple Actors

There were seven categories of respondents selected purposively from three schools and five child clubs in total. One community based child club was for tools testing, other three school based clubs, and one district network of Sindhupalchok were my research samples. Out of 160 participants, there were 16 education authorities (10.0%), 21 CR/NGO activists (13.1%), 30 children (18.8%), 20 teachers/HTs (12.5%), 22 parents/SMCs/PTAs (13.8%), 19 child rights officers (11.9%) and 32 child club leaders (20.0%). Out of them, 42.5% were female and 57.5% male. Participation of female in each category of respondents was more than 40% with an exception of education authorities who were all male.

Ethnic Representation of Respondents

All ethnic groups were represented in this study. There were 24.4% Brahmin (39 with 10 female), 27.5% Chhetri (44 with 21 female), 13.8% Newars (22 with 10 female), 24.4% Ethnic group (39 with 20 female) and 10% Dalit (16 with 7 female). It was interesting that there was no representation of Newars among education officers and no Dalits among child rights officers. In total, Brahmin, Chhetri and Newars over represented in this sample resulting less representation of Ethnic Groups and Dalits as compare to their national population share. Lowest female representation was with Brahmin (25.6%) whereas highest was with Janjati (51.3%).

Table 6

Ethnicity of Respondents

Category of Respondents	Ethnicity of Respondents					Total
	Brahmin	**Chhetri**	**Newar**	**Janajati**	**Dalit**	
Education Officers	7	6	0	2	1	**16**
CR/NGO Activists	6	1	7	4	3	**21**
Children/Students	3	12	3	9	3	**30**
Teachers/HTs	5	8	1	3	3	**20**
Parents/SMCs/PTAs	5	5	5	4	3	**22**
Child Rights Officers	6	3	2	8	0	**19**
Child Club Leaders	7	9	4	9	3	**32**
Total	**39**	**44**	**22**	**39**	**16**	**160**
Female	**10**	**21**	**10**	**20**	**7**	**68**

Academic Qualification of Respondents

Almost 38.7% respondents were child club members and leaders. About 55% of the respondents had qualification equivalent to grade 12 or less. All child club members were of students up to grade 10 whereas child club leaders were up to grade 12. Among respondents, 31.8% had qualification below SLC, 10% had equivalent to SLC, 12.9% had grade 12, 20% had Bachelor degree and remaining 25 % had Master degree. All education officers except one had Master degree of academic qualification. Parents were of diverse academic qualification. More than half of female respondents had up to 12 grades or below whereas more than 53% male respondents had Bachelor degree.

Table 7

Academic Qualification of Respondents

Category of Respondents	Academic Qualification					Total
	Below SLC	**SLC**	**Grade 12**	**Bachelor**	**Master/+**	
Education Officers	0	0	0	1	15	**16**
CR/NGO Activists	0	0	5	7	9	**21**
Children/Students	30	0	0	0	0	**30**
Teachers/HTs	0	2	3	10	5	**20**
Parents/SMCs/PTAs	7	3	6	4	2	**22**
Child Rights Officers	0	0	0	10	9	**19**
Child Club Leaders	14	11	7	0	0	**32**
Total	**51**	**16**	**21**	**32**	**40**	**160**
Female	**26**	**8**	**11**	**13**	**10**	**68**

Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

Respondents on this study were from 11 years of age to 54 years. All child club

members and leaders (except one) were below 18 years of age. In total 37.4% of

respondents were 18 years or below, 33.7% were between 26-40 years of age, 15.3%

were 40 years and above where as 13.5% were between 19-25 years of age.

Table 8

Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

Category	Age Category				Total
	Below 18	19-25	26-40	40 over	
Education Officers	0	0	4	12	16
CR/NGO Activists	0	8	10	3	21
Children/Students	30	0	0	0	30
Teachers/HTs	0	4	12	4	20
Parents/SMCs/PTAs	0	4	14	4	22
Child Rights Officers	0	3	14	2	19
Child Club Leaders	31	1	0	0	32
Total	61	20	54	25	160
Percent	37.4	13.5	33.7	15.3	100

My Approach on Data Collection Tools and Techniques

Qualitative methods are most appropriate for situations requiring depth, detail,

and meaning, and for answering 'how' and 'why' questions (Marshall and Rossman,

2010) like my study on child participation in school. First of all, I used a perception

survey using likert scale to all research participants to get their views on child rights

and child participation in schools with 40 general statements, which they strongly

disagree or strongly agree rating from one to five. This helped me to generate themes

and general overview of my study phenomenon and to develop/refine appropriate

research tools and guidelines.

Qualitative researchers like me typically rely on four methods for gathering

information: i) Participating in the setting; ii) observing directly; iii) interviewing in

depth; and, iv) analyzing documents and material culture (Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

Following this, I used case study, interactive interviews, focus group discussions,

observations and document analysis for my research.

Interactive Interviews: Generating Hidden Data

I found face-to-face interactive interviews appropriate for my study as they

enabled me to explore the lived experience of my respondents in a dialogical manner.

My approach to interview was, not only a way of interviewing, but paying an effort to

make a two-way conversation. Denzin (2001) defines it as reflexive interview. In my

research, I used the term interactive interview where information was generated based

on interaction between research participants and myself. This is a joint endeavor where

both parties are searching for true understanding and knowledge (Kvale, 2005). Taylor

and Bogdan (1998) explained that:

> Interview is for learning about events and activities that cannot be observed
>
> directly… the people being interviewed are informants in the truest sense of the
>
> word. They act as eyes and ears in the field for the researcher. (p. 89)

I chose interview guideline with open-ended questions in order to give room for

subsequent questions that may arise as a result of something mentioned by the

interviewee during the discussion. Hence, as the interactive interviews were

exploratory, probing played a vital role in soliciting more information and clarifying

issues during the interview process. Before the interviews I made sure that, my

respondents were at ease and comfortable by making it clearer to them that what we

were going to engage in was not an interrogation of some kind but rather an ordinary

conversation about child club phenomenon. The main purpose of interactive interviews

is to obtain and derive hidden information and make a meaning from respondents

(Chambers, 1994), which did not come from FGDs and case study.

I interviewed 15 participants representing at least one person from each category of respondents in all four-research questions of my study. Each interview was noted and also tape-recorded not to miss out any relevant data. Participants had opportunity to write their opinions on open-ended questions at end of each interview. I verified interview notes and transcribed from tape-recorder in order to gather picture that each participant has painted regarding the child rights/participation in schools and its contribution to children's learning and school governance. I compared my field note with written responses of participants and made follow up telephonic interview if needed which I did with two head teachers.

Focus Group Discussions: Finding Commonalities and Contrasts

At the simplest level, a focus group is a collective conversation informally among a group (*six to 10 persons*) of selected individuals about a particular topic (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2008; Wilkinson, 2004). A focus group, as a research method, 'involved more than one participant per data collection session as a collective activity' (Kitzinger, 2005; Wilkinson, 2004). The primary aim of a focus group is to describe and understand meanings and interpretations of a select group of people to gain an understanding of a specific issue from the perspective of the participants of the group (Liamputtong, 2009, 2011) who are directly affected by the issue.

Methodologically, focus group interviews involve a group of 6–8 people who come from similar social and cultural backgrounds or who have similar experiences or concerns. Focus groups 'encourage a range of responses, which provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, behavior, opinions or perceptions of participants on the research issues' (Hennink, 2007, p. 6). A successful focus group discussion relies heavily on 'the development of a permissive, non-threatening environment within the group' where the participants can feel comfortable to discuss their opinions and

experiences without fear that they will be judged or ridiculed by others in the group (Hennink, 2007). Focus group discussions are more akin to natural social interaction among participants. Thus, the environment of focus groups may be more comfortable and enjoyable for the research participants (Jowett & O'Toole, 2006; Liamputtong, 2011). The main argument for using them in this context is their collective nature. This may suit people who cannot articulate their thoughts easily and provide collective power to marginalized people like children.

The aim of focus groups in social science research is to understand the participants' meanings and interpretations. Morgan (2005) argues that, depending on the research topic and theoretical approach, both approaches can be adopted within the social sciences. I carried out eight focus group discussions around all four-research questions. I had two focus group discussions each with children, child club leaders and NGOs activists and one FGD each with teachers and parents separately.

Observations: My Way of Interpreting Social Interactions

Observation was my other primary data-generating instrument used to collect data. Observation offers possibility of learning about the situation, events and interactions on how things occur (Lichtman, 2006, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Kumar (2005) explained observation as "a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place" (p. 105). Observation in qualitative research usually consists of detailed notation of behavior, events and the contexts surrounding the events (Morrison, 1998; Morrow, 2008, 2011). Kidder (as cited in Merriam, 2002) asserted that observation is a research tool when it complies with the following criteria: i) Serves a formulated research purpose, ii) is planned deliberately, iii) is recorded systematically, and iv) is subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability.

Merriam (2009) added that observations are used in conjunction with interviews, FGD and document analysis to triangulate emerging findings. As I was also a child rights activist and an educator, I mingled with teachers, parents and students especially child club leaders and members and had regular conversations with them; hence, I was an observer for two days in each school and its activities at the end of my field study. Similarly, I strived to the best of my ability not to show any sign to the child clubs leaders and their interaction with schools that I was observing them as I thought awareness of this could cause a behavioral change in them. Merriam (2002) described the role of a participant observer as follows:

> The participant observer sees things firsthand and uses his or her own knowledge and expertise in interpreting what is observed rather than relying upon once-removed accounts from interviews. Observation makes it possible to record behavior as it is happening. (p. 96)

While my concentration in the site was not long enough to warrant a claim for participant observation, I did make field notes describing the behavior of the child clubs and its stakeholders in terms of how I perceived it to contribute to the success of the child clubs. I also jotted down in my field notes: direct quotations of the child club leaders as well as the reactions of teachers and parents to the child clubs' activities and its members' behavior. These write-ups in my field notes became the raw data that constituted my observation journal and hence contributed significantly to the study's findings. I observed school assembly, Tiffin time functions including sports, teacher-student interaction, staff and club meeting in all three child clubs and school activities for two full days each in all three schools at the end of my field stay/study.

Document Analysis – Complementarily to Primary data

I used document analysis as a secondary data-generating instrument that includes data sources such as articles, journals, magazines, books and periodicals to obtain historical and other type of information (Kumar, 2005). Documents are available materials or data, which means anything in existence prior to the research at hand (Merriam, 2009). I reviewed and analyzed the documents at two levels from the very beginning of my research until the last day of thesis submission in December 2013. At central level, I reviewed the relevant policy documents whereas at field level, I reviewed the available documents at schools/clubs, DEO/DCWB.

Before starting field research, I reviewed relevant materials that depicted the vision and mission statement of the school from SIP, DEP, SSRP, the child club studies (Consortium, 2012; Rajbhandary et al, 2002), child participation studies (O'Kane, 2006) and UNCRC periodic reports of Nepal to the Committee (MoFA, 1995; MoWCSW, 2004, 2013) as well as school rules and code of conduct.

I went through school rules posted in the staffroom as well as on the notice boards in the schoolyard. Merriam (2002, 2009) argues that the strength of documents as a data source lies with the fact that they already exist in the situation; they do not intrude upon or alter the setting in ways that the presence of the investigator might.

Summary of My Research Design

The table in next page summarizes the overall design of this study, the research methods, data collection tools, respondents and relevant theories for each research question and their analysis approaches.

Table 9

Summary of Research Design

SN	Research Questions	Tools	Respondents	Analysis/Theories
1	How child clubs have emerged, evolved and managed in schools?	• Case study • FGD • Interview • Document review	• School/club • Children, teachers & NGOs • 4 children, 2 teachers, 2 parents, 2 NGOs & 3 experts	Process write up and descriptive analysis of turning points/milestones, using: • Empowerment paradigm • Child rights perspective
2	What are the perceptions of stakeholders on child clubs and its contribution?	• FGD • Interview • Document review	• children, parents, teachers & NGOs • 4 children, 2 teachers, 2 parents, 2 NGOs, 3 experts	Comparative analysis of perceptions of different stakeholders using: • Socio-culture theory • Sociological theory • Child rights perspective
3	What are the roles and implication of child clubs on children's learning and school governance?	• FGD • Case study • Observation • Interview • Documents review	• Children, teachers & NGOs members • 4 children, 2 teachers, 2 parents, 2 NGOs, 3 experts	Explorative analysis of change in student's learning and school governance using: • Socialization theory • Child rights perspective
4	How child rights and participation policies and practices evolved and institutionalized in Nepal?	• Interview • Document review	• 3 experts, 2 NGOs, 2 teachers/HT & CRO/DEO	Critical and comparative analysis of international covenants and national policies & practices using: • Child rights perspective

My Way of Converting Data into Information

For me, data analysis is a process that involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data or in other words, making sense of the data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation (Cohen et al, 2007). While transforming data into findings that involves reducing the amount of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (Patton, 2002). I used data analysis as an ongoing process concurrently starting from data collection (Flick, 2009). Coffey

and Atkinson (as cited in Maxwell, 2005) claims that we should never collect data without substantial analysis going on simultaneously.

Being a qualitative researcher, I am adopting Thorne's (2004) idea as he advocates for a flexible approach of data analysis in the naturalistic interpretive paradigm. He suggests that the researcher avoids excessively detailed (line-by-line) coding of the transcripts and instead uses intellectual inquiry, asking questions such as; "why is this here?" "What does this mean?" (Thorne et al., 2004). Thus, the data generated from FGDs, interviews, document review and case studies were analyzed adopting a standard set of analytic activities arranged in a general order of sequence.

My approach of converting data into information consists of six interrelated steps (Creswell, 2012) to prepare and organize data for analysis and interpretation. Firstly, I collated and compiled for storing and transcribing data (data into text) adding my thoughts, views and experiences (field notes). Secondly, I read data, identified text segments with central theme, codes were developed, regrouped and transformed into themes. Thirdly, materials categorized and sorted out to find concepts, commonalities or disparities. Fourthly, patterns and processes identified, analyzed and represented data and themes into findings through tables, figures and a detailed discussions. Fifthly, I discussed and interpreted these information and analysis into to findings and conclusions comparing with existing literatures and theories. Finally, I shared and reviewed my research findings with peers, expert checking, triangulation to ensure quality standards and trustworthiness.

During my fieldwork, an interview, or a FGD, I transcribed the data and coded it in each day, so that if any clarification is needed especially in the case of interview, I could quickly do that next day with the informant and tie up the loose ends. Transcribing the interviews and typing the handwritten field notes enabled me to

immerse myself with the data. Patton (2002) contends that the transition between fieldwork and full analysis gives 'a chance to get a feel for the cumulative data as a whole' (p. 441). The analysis of data enabled me to recognize things, which emerge from the findings (Stake, 1995).

While analyzing the data collected from the FGDs, I prepared an analytical statement thoroughly grounded in the data (Creswell, 2009, Strauss & Corbin, 1998). At the first step, I made verbatim transcription of each question and all probes I asked for the group with each individual answer given by the participants. Then, I began with examining the text for the similarity of words, themes or answers to the questions considering the emphasis and intensity of respondent's comments. Further, I considered the consistency of comments and responses to probes both within a given focus group and across a series of the groups (Berg, 2007). Furthermore, I have provided quotations to support my assessment on the trends and patterns of discussions.

Triangulation in qualitative research refers to the collection and analysis of raw data using a variety of sources, participants and methods (Fielding & Fielding, 2004; Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011) not for checking its validity and reliability. To enrich my findings with thick and in-depth description I used triangulation to synthesize the three sources of data: multiple sources of information, multiple data collection tools (FGD, Interview, and Case study), and multiple respondents (children, parents, teacher, and authorities). I continuously shared my preliminary findings with supervisors and reference group member individually and with all CROs collectively in a workshop setting for its credibility (Field Note, 18 June 2013).

In analyzing the data, concept of child rights and child participation including child clubs and sociological, socio-cultural theories were used. It has helped to explore the role of structure and agency to understand the rights, responsibilities, rules and roles

of child clubs and its stakeholders and its application while interpreting and

communicating the policy and practices of child clubs in schools.

My Approaches to Quality Standards

The quality of qualitative research has been a hotly debated topic (Sandelowski,

2010). The complexity of the debate lies in the lack of consensus about the quality

markers of qualitative research (Morrow, 2005; Rolfe, 2006). One of the most recent

and arguably widely used approaches to establish credibility in qualitative research has

been the development of Lincoln and Guba's (1985, 2005) notion of '*Trustworthiness*'

as an alternative to the reliability and validity in empirical research (Denzin & Lincoln,

2011). Lincoln and Guba (2000, 2005) and Sandelowski et al. (2007) offer helpful

procedures to guide me through the process. I am transparent to give a full account of

the research process (Greene & Harris, 2011) and methodologies of my research and

power dynamics of the schools from my emic position to make this study trustworthy.

As a qualitative researcher under interpretivism, I followed the Lincoln and

Guba (1985, 2005) four primary criteria for establishing 'trustworthiness'. The first is

'credibility', ensuring that the subject of the enquiry is accurately identified and

described (Robson, 2002). This is achieved in my study by allowing the 'social world'

to have access to the research through techniques such as 'member checking', a

collaborative approach where the researcher feeds back to his/her participants their

interview transcripts so that they can comment on how they have been represented in

the research (Bryman, 2008).

In this study, credibility was achieved in three ways (Bryman 2008; Creswell,

2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), *firstly* checking transcripts of each focus group

discussion at end of each session by proving and getting all participants' inputs and

comments. This ensured that during the study there was an ongoing dialogue between

the participants and myself. *Secondly*, visit and observations of child clubs and schools settings provided me with an important opportunity to see the interaction between different stakeholders over the time. *Thirdly*, involvement in the child clubs dialogue with other stakeholders outside the research area. I had done one study on impact of child participation in school setting with one NGO working in Kathmandu valley and Kavre district and two presentations was made with other child rights organizations including taking part in the child clubs review process in Nepal. All of these provided me important feedback opportunities to sharpen my knowledge and revisit the study.

The second of Lincoln and Guba's (1985, 2005) criteria is 'transferability". Transferability asks how transferable the research study is to other projects. This is often a complex question in qualitative research where the emphasis is on small-scale research. Bryman (2008) observes that qualitative researchers are encouraged to write thick descriptions in other words detailed descriptions of the findings that are transferable to other settings. This study contains thick descriptions of the child participation practice from multiple stakeholders' views. Another way that transferability was achieved was through an increase in participant numbers and categories. I started my research with perception survey will diverse stakeholders of child clubs (160 persons). Then, I carried out case study of three-child club/school, later added eight-focused group discussions and 15 in-depth interviews. The increase in participant numbers and categories created, I believe, a good representation of the whole population as sample and population became almost one.

Transferability was also achieved in that not only child rights experts and practitioners were included in the study but also district level government officials (education office and district child welfare board). This has helped to make the study transferable to other cultures and contexts. Transferability was also achieved through

triangulation. The employment of different methods in the study helped the child club phenomena to be viewed from different angles.

The third of Lincoln and Guba's (1985, 2005) criteria is 'dependability'. It is concerned with the transparency of the research. What steps has the researcher taken to audit the study from both inside and outside the research domain? It has been achieved through detailed discussion of research methodology. As part of auditing the study, child rights expert team and my supervisors were involved in each step of the research process. I spent time independently checking a selection of the interview transcripts to see if there was some initial agreement as to the emerging themes. The focus group discussion participants were also given an opportunity to check and comment on their interview transcripts.

Before doing this, consideration was given to the concerns expressed by Morse (1991) that the researcher can become trapped in an appeasing relationship with the participants whereby findings are restrained in order to meet the personal concerns of each individual participant. In this study, child club stakeholders were very willing to share details about their work on child participation and its contribution, as I was familiar with their institutions since one decade. At no stage did I feel I was engaged in a hostile relationship with research participants.

The fourth of Lincoln and Guba's (1985, 2005) criteria is 'confirmability'. It is concerned with the researcher, asking has s/he 'acted in good faith' and not allowed personal beliefs or values to overshadow the research (Bryman, 2008). Robson (2002) suggests that confirmability is about telling enough about the study, not only to judge the adequacy of the process, but also to assess whether the findings flow from the data.

In addition to writing, reading, rewriting and analyzing myself in consultation with supervisors and expert group, my research participants scrutinized extensively the

outcomes of my study and gave their additional perspectives and meanings. The nature

of this study is an emerging issue. It needs multiple perspectives from multiple

contexts. I shared my preliminary findings with all 75 CROs in a workshop setting on

18 June 2013 and received their feedbacks and opinions. I interacted with more than 20

child clubs in the different districts in my official work on child rights issues, especially

on child friendly local governance and child friendly schools to get their additional

opinions and perspectives on my findings (Dahal, 2010b, 2012a, 2013b).

My Ethical Considerations: Freedom of Participants

Ethical frameworks in qualitative research are typically concerned with duty,

rights, harm and benefit (Alderson & Morrow, 2004). Ethical issue is about accuracy,

confidentiality, and breadth of consultation, rights of access and continuity of purpose

(Burgess, 2005). I sincerely applied: i) Right to information about the aims and

objectives; ii) informed consent of participants; iii) freedom not to take part or

withdraw at any stage; iv) confidentiality and anonymity of research

participants/institutions; and v) do not harm principles in the entire study .

 I took necessary consent and permission as suggested by Cohen et al. (2000,

2007) to have access to the institution or organization for the research. University letter

stating my purpose and topic of the study was shared with NGOs, DCWB and

researched schools/child clubs. I also briefed my aims and methodologies of the study

to each participation/group before taking any data. My open-ended questionnaire also

gives the short briefing of the study and its confidentially. All participants signed a

research protocol form/informed consent and I also ensured that before an interview

with each participant, I informed the purpose of the research and that their involvement

in the study is voluntary, in that, they have the right to withdraw at any given time if

they so wish. Cohen (2000) defined informed consent as the procedures in which

individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions.

In order to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality of interviewees I used pseudonyms and their positions instead of their names. I used pseudonyms of school, child club and institutions even though I had permission to use their names.

Concluding the Chapter

Child participation is a new and emerging phenomenon in Nepal, which may not only be studied effectively using quantitative methods. Thus, I have chosen interpretative research paradigm with multiple research tools under qualitative methods to study the child participation in schools with an emphasis on roles and contribution of child clubs. I have employed multiple qualitative research tools for data collection including case study, FGD and interactive interview with multiple research participants from children, parents, and teachers, NGO activists to education and child rights officials in addition to observation and document review.

Following a descriptive and analytical research approach in data analysis, I employed socialization, sociological, and rights based theories. As I was cautious in paying enough attentions to quality standards in my research including for credibility, transferability, confirmability, dependability, I am also aware on ethical consideration for accuracy, confidentiality, and breadth of consultation, rights of access and continuity principles in every moment during the study.

CHAPTER IV

REVIEWING NATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES ON CHILD RIGHTS

The Government of Nepal has introduced policies and programmes for the overall development of Nepalese children in the second half of this century (MoFA, 1995). Donor agencies, International Non-government Agencies such as Save the Children, Plan International and UN agencies like UNICEF and UNESCO as collaborators of the GoN are subscribing and supporting the implementation of these policies and programmes since early 1970s. Nepalese policies on child rights intermittently participation follow the prescription and guidelines from the international human rights instruments of United Nations like UNCRC. Because of the globalized nature, these policies are becoming rhetoric rather than reality. Each country's periodic report including that of Nepal highlights this rhetoric-reality paradox (CRC, 1996, 2005). The CRC Committee, Geneva also issued a separate general comment to all countries and child rights organizations giving an overview of understanding and implementation modalities of the Article 12 of the UNCRC (CRC, 2009).

This chapter discusses the evolvement and devolvement of policy and practices on child rights/participation in Nepal in responding to my fourth research question. This includes two sections. The first section deals with national legislation, national policy and periodic plans as well as sectoral policies and plans of education and local government sectors. The second section forecasts the future directions of child club based on the findings and discussions from the first section of this chapter, and policy and practices related child clubs' issues discussed in chapter five and six.

Existing Policies and Practices on Child Rights

This section reviews and presents the existing national policies and their practices on child rights and child participation. The study includes national legislation and policies, provisions in periodic plans, and sectoral policies of education and local governance sectors on children and their well-being.

National Legislation & Policies: Aligning to International Provisions

Prior to become a party of the UNCRC, Nepal had no specific laws relating to the rights of children; although there were, some provisions in various statutes to protect the child's interest (MoFA, 1995). Following the ratification of UNCRC in 1990, Government of Nepal (GoN) made efforts to form and reform necessary laws and bylaws related to children and their welfare (Refer appendix 2b for list of such acts and rules). This includes the Constitution of 1990, Children's Act of 1992, Interim Constituion of 2007 and Children's Policy of 2012. The Act establishes Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB) and the District Child Welfare Boards (DCWB) in all 75 districts to protect, promote and fulfill children's interest and rights.

Owing to the same spirit GoN prolonged Labor Act of 1992, the Social Welfare Act of 1992, Children's Rules of 1995, Local Self-governance Act of 1999 and Child Labor (prohibition and regulation) Act of 1998 (MoWCSW, 2002). These Acts have legal provisions to safeguard the rights of children and their protection. Annex 6 presents the chronological list of national and international legal instruments on child rights and child participation. Despite these legal provisions, these acts did not mention explicitly the children's rights to participation at various levels. This shows how Nepal responded to the international forces by bring legislative reform but made a distance dream of their implementation for the wellbeing and rights of children.

Though aligned with CRC provisions, the committee regularly raises questions to Nepal on its poor efforts in implementing the national policies and programmes during periodic report hearing process (CRC, 1996, 2005). Nepal is comparatively weak in implementation of general principles of the UNCRC: article 2 (non-discrimination), article 3 (the best interests of the child), article 6 (right to life, survival and development) and article 12 (respect for the views of the child) in all sectors of children both at local and national levels.

In response to international concerns, Nepal initiated to amend Children's Act in 1998 that continues until today. The 12th draft bill to amend the Act is an example, which is pending in the dissolved legislature-parliament for its discussion and approval (MoWCSW, 2013). This again invites international pressure and deadline periodically to align and make progress on children's policies in par with international instruments. In this backdrop, I have discussed the key national policies and practices concerning implementation of Article 12, i.e. hearing children and respecting their views systematically on the decisions that affect their lives in the following section.

National Policies on Children: Rhetoric to Reality

Child participation in farming and family issues is an old phenomenon in Nepal. Sports clubs, student councils and student unions had emerged during *Panchayat* era i.e. 1961 to 1990. Children's clubs, child rights forums, and child rights awareness groups' approach to child participation is the continuation of the old form with the application of human rights framework and instruments. This newly emerged child rights content and the context demand the involvement of children in decision-making process of local institutions like school. This process get momentum since 1994 in collaboration with children's organizations including child clubs (MoFA, 1995). The children's involvement process at the local to the international levels has been

encouraged due to UNCRC and hearing process. At the local level, children participate in SMC and PTA meetings; at the national level, they share their views to the policy makers through children' parliament; and at the international level they participated as official team for inception report hearing process in Geneva in 1996 which was commended by the Committee (CRC, 1996). However, there is an absence of specific legal and institutional mechanism that ensure participation of children in decision-making bodies both at local and national levels on the issues that affect their lives.

In order to give impetus to legalize and institutionalize children's participation in decision making process, children's organization was established, and later on, it was registered as the first children's club in February 1996 (MoFA, 1995; MoWCSW, 2002) as an NGO. Following the concluding observations in 1996, many child rights organizations with the leadership of Save the Children Organizations started to support establishment and strengthening of CCWB and DCWBs including children's organizations like club in both schools and communities (O'Kane, 2006; Rajbhandary et al., 1999). Because of these efforts, children filed a case against the GoN for its denial of renewing the child club in July 1998 (earlier registered in Nawalparasi in 1996); the Supreme Court gave a verdict in August 2002 to register children's clubs (MoWCSW, 2002). This was a historic decision to make GoN accountable and responsive towards children and their clubs for their decisive roles.

Following this favorable legal ground, number of child clubs mushroomed throughout the country within a decade to exercise their rights that they obtained with article 12 of the Convention (CRC, 2005). The Committee asked GoN to amend legislation so that the rights of the child to be heard including in schools on the issues affecting children are ensured. As a response, GoN made some policy decisions to guarantee child rights through: i) The Interim Constitution of 2007; ii) child

participation guideline of 2007; ii) child friendly school national framework for quality education of 2010; iii) child friendly local governance national strategy of 2011; and, iv) national children's policy of 2012. However, there occurred three problems viz., difference in understanding and application of these policies, in the accessibility and availability of child rights implementing agencies; and in achieving required budget allocation that restricted the implementation of these policies in a satisfactory level. My experience as Child Club promoter in Save the Children is a testimony of it.

For the first time in Nepal, child clubs experienced their official representation in adult institutions like village child protection committees (VCPC) under DCWB from 25 districts in 2004 (Dahal, Dhital & Sapkota, 2005) as a pilot. As a sequel to it, child representatives are formally engaged in DCWBs, Municipalities and DDCs. Similarly, children's clubs are playing active roles in WCF, VDC and VCPC meetings officially. The number of such clubs members was about 1,500 in 20 districts until 2005 (MoWCSW, 2005). This number is swallowing up to 17, 864 in all 75 districts, now in 2012 (CCWB, 2013). Because of this provision, children have an opportunity to express their views on matters concerning themselves, their family, community institutions, and schools in all forums right from the local to district and national levels (MoWCSW, 2013). The following table presents the comparative scenario of children's participation at different layers and levels of decision-making process as a trend:

Table 10

Children's Association and Representation

SN	Institutions/committees/year	2000	2005	2012
1	Formation of Child Clubs			
	• Child Clubs/Members	100/3500	1,500/50,000	17,864/403,553
	• VDC level Networks	0	250	1,277
	• Municipal Network	0	5	17
	• Ilaka level Network	0	50	153
	• District level Network	0	10	61
	• Districts having Child Clubs	10	20	75

SN	Institutions/committees/year	2000	2005	2012
2	Affiliation of Child Clubs			
	• DCWB	0	0	10,925
	• VDC	0	0	108
	• Municipality	0	0	45
	• DAO	1	4	4
3	Child Friendly Institutions			
	• Schools		500	3,500
	• VDCs		0	400
	• Municipalities		0	15
	• DDCs		0	39
4	Children in Adult Institutions			
	• SMC		150	598
	• PTA/Social Audit		550	15,650
	• VCPC		250	1,798
	• DCPC		20	59
	• DCWB		5	60
	• WCF		0	40,000
	• IPFC		0	3,970
	• VDC CFLG committee		0	400
	• Municipal CFLG		0	15
	• DDC CFLG		0	39
	• VDC/Municipality Councils		0	985
	• DDC Councils		0	43

Source: (Annual Report of SCN 2006, 2012), (Annual Report of UNICEF 2006, 2012), (LGCDP-II ProDoc of MoFALD, 2013), (CRC Periodic Report MoWSCW 2004, 2013), (Flash Report of DoE 2006, 2011, 2012), (State of Children CCWB 2006, 2011, 2012, 2013), (Child Club Review Report of Consortium, 2012).

This table shows that child-led organizations are visible at schools and community to district level, but not at national level. They are also representing in both formal and informal adult institutions and agencies, which demonstrates that children are getting recognition as human beings and hence welcomed for their collective voice. In addition, child club leaders have been actively participating to air their voices in the electronic and printed media and in radio and television including local FMs and wall magazine (Consortium, 2012; Hatemalo, 2004). Because of these efforts child clubs are emerging as formal institutions throughout the country. This shows that child club and child participation has not much been a rhetoric in Nepalese society and institutions where as it is moving towards a reality as rights of children.

Children as an Emerging Agenda in Periodic Plans

It was after 1950s, that periodic planning started in Nepal. Now, we have the 13th periodic plan (2013-2015) in our hand. The analysis of these periodic plans shows that children were not recognized as a target group of development plans and interventions until the seventh periodic plan (1987-1992). For the first time, the 8th periodic plan (1992-1997) recognized children as a target group, that put its commitment to fulfill children's survival, protection, development and participation needs as a response to the agenda of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Children's Conference (1986), the SAARC Year of the Girl Child (1990), the World Conference on Education for All (1990), the World Summit for Children (1990), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) and Millennium Development Goals (2000).

The 9th periodic plan (1997-2002) as its initial initiative made an inclusion of child development policies in line with the UNCRC and MDGs. From adult perspective, it captured child survival, protection and development needs quite strongly but children's right to participation was limited to making child friendly IEC materials, radio and TV programmes (NPC, 1998). This implies that GoN gave consultative status to the children and their views up to its 10th periodic plan (2002-2007). In a separate chapter, GoN aimed to mainstream child rights in all sectors; to eliminate worst form of child labor; and to increase public awareness on child rights promotion. CWIN's (2002, 2007) claim is a testimony, which shows that GoN did consultation with more than 30,000 children for their views from national, regional, and district consultation processes, however, the plan is silent on promoting and institutionalizing participation rights of children. CWIN started child rights forums in schools as a child participation tools from 1997 (CWIN, 2007).

Nepal witnessed a decade long armed conflict (1996-2006) between the CPN (Maoist) and the government (UNDP, 2009), surely an unfortunate event. Among others, children were suffered the most and had little progress on child rights and child development against targets set on the Plan during the period. Even in this adverse situation, DCWBs tried to address child protection issues like children as zones of peace with an introduction of multi-sectoral child protection committees at VDC and district level (Dahal, Dhital & Sapkota, 2005). The most significant achievement of this period was the incorporation of children's rights (Article 22) in the Interim Constitution as the fundamental right (GoN, 2007).

Children and youth were actively engaged who were used actively in the second peoples' movement in 2006, which saw a success by ending the violent armed conflict. This movement became successful to over through two and half century long kingship in Nepal and establish peoples' republic (UNDP, 2009). It obviously created hopes among the movement participating children to assure child rights of the 48% of population of the country. The 11th periodic plan (2007-2010) continued the priorities and strategies of earlier plans and provisioned for child friendly environment at school and adult's workplace (NPC, 2008). It also planned to capacitate children's network and thereby promote children's participation in decision-making process. This Plan also envisaged for child participation guideline, a guideline for better coordination and collaboration among district level actors especially with DCWB, DDC and WCDO with recruitment of child rights officer from development agencies to work under DCWB in a pilot basis.

From the child rights perspectives, the 12th periodic plan (2010-2013) was consultative and participatory because it created enough opportunities to listen and to hear children's views in setting policies and priorities (UNICEF, 2012). The plan aimed

to protect and promote fundamental rights of children by creating conducive and child friendly environment for their holistic development (NPC, 2010). During this period, GoN brought policies and procedures to make school and local government more children friendly. The plan devised programmes to hear children's voice in delivering quality services and facilities including education. It also gave priority to child participation and mobilization of child club in each school and ward/community and child club network at VDC and district level. The same plan developed policy to make Local Bodies (LBs) responsible to allocate at least 10% of the capital budget to children and their agenda (MoFALD, 2013). However, both these policies do not target the children below the age of 12 as child club is only for 12-18 years of children.

The 13th periodic plan (2013-2016) is based on a 10-year-National Plan of Action (2004-2015) which aims to prioritize and implement children's welfare and rights especially survival, protection, development and meaningful participation (NPC, 2013). This is the first time, the plan had clearly spelled out to support VCPCs and child clubs among children and adolescent girls to express their views and make their voice heard in all matters that affect their lives. The plan encouraged self-initiated group to policy level people including NPC and MoWCSW to bring appropriate policies and plans for children and mobilization of child clubs as an obligation of the state party of the UNCRC.

While reviewing the periodic plans from child rights perspective, I conclude that child rights/participation initiated by I/NGOs since 1990 was informally entered into government system, structure, mechanism, and plans. This has also been mainstreamed in social development sectors. At this context, I have discussed how child rights/participation has been prioritized and mainstreamed into education system through various educational plans.

Children as Stakeholders: New Entry into Nepalese Education System

Nepalese education system follows the political ups and down of the country. With the dawn of democracy in Nepal in 1950, there came an awakening of the need for education for mass literacy and the spread of education all over the country, from the Mechi to the Mahakali and the Himalayas to the Terai (MoE, 1956). Since mid-1950s, education has been taken as a force to address the issues of poverty through human development measures by enhancing capacity of the people in terms of appropriate life skills, knowledge and experimental wisdom to acquire economic and social prosperity (MoE, 2003). After each political change except in 2006, education commissions are formed to study the aspirations and needs of the people and to review the educational processes and discourses. However, very few of them are put into implementation in materializing the people's expectations and desired results.

The first National Education Commission Report of 1956 (known as Wood Commission) aimed for 'nation building' by establishing and expanding an education system that is 'universal' and 'uniform' for all throughout the country. It acknowledged the role of education for social transformation and decentralization, democracy and leadership in all walks of life. However, this report did not prioritize diversity of the people and also ignored children and their participation in education.

Following the political changes in 1960, the All-round National Education Committee (ARNEC) gave a report to make all education institutions under government control and make education useful and relevant to individual, society and the nation by introducing free and compulsory primary education, vocational training and Nepali as the medium of instruction (MoE, 1992). As directed by then King, a five year the National Education System Plan (1971-76) was introduced in promoting popular faith in the *Panchayat* system of government and reconstruction of the

nationality in a planned manner. Schools run by the communities came under the direct management and ownership of the Government (MoE, 1992). Due to restriction on political parties, students and teachers evolved as the ears and eyes of the people and democratic movement. They were active for political purpose and hence their educational rights and participation was shadowed.

After restoration of democracy in 1990, it was realized by all that education has a special place to play a catalytic role for social change and national reconstruction (MoE, 1992). The 1992 National Education Commission Report responded the emerging needs of the people including inclusivity and democratization in education sector by emphasizing on: i) Decentralization of higher education through multi university concept; ii) involvement of private sectors in education; iii) restructuring of school system (Grade 1-5 primary, 6-10 secondary and 11-12 higher secondary;) iv) inclusion of local curriculum and environmental study to preserve the nature and cultural heritage, and viii) special provision for the education of indigenous group, women, orphan, poor and handicaps (MoE, 1992). However, like previous reports, this commission was silent in recognizing children/students as a competent actor and stakeholders of education system.

The High-level National Education Commission (1999) aimed to restructure the schooling with an introduction of one year pre-primary education, grade one to five as primary school, grade 6 to 8 as lower secondary, grade 9 to 10 as secondary, and grade 11 and 12 as higher secondary (MoE, 1999) levels. This report was instrumental to address access, equity and quality of education with decentralized management of teachers and school education from rights perspectives.

Within the broad recommendations of these commissions, learning and experiences gained from various education plans in line with the follow up to the World

Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 1990, the country undertook planned

interventions in the education sector introducing the Basic and Primary Education

Programmes I (1992-1999) and II (1999-2004) (UNESCO, 2011) in collaboration with

development partners. Furthermore, in line with the Education for ALL (EFA) Dakar

Framework for Action adopted in 2000 and global commitment towards MDGs, the

country came up with National Plan of Action (NPA) for EFA (2001-2015).

The 15-year NPA draws the goals of the Dakar Framework of Action with six

programme components (MoE, 2003). They include: i) Expanding and improving early

childhood development; ii) ensuring access to education for all children; iii) meeting

the learning needs of all children including indigenous peoples and linguistic

minorities; iv) reducing adult illiteracy; v) eliminating gender disparity; and vi)

improving all aspects of quality education. Since the start of the plan, it has defined a

clear resulting vision of the child, the teacher, the classroom, the school and the

community by 2015. I understood this as the acceptance of rights based approach in

education and empowerment paradigm in education. However, with my engagement in

education sector for more than a decade and also in my research schools and district, I

do not find any of this vision reflected into annual plans and budgets of school, VDC

and DDC like in SIP, VEP and DEP respectively for its implementation.

Within the overall goals and objectives of NPA, the EFA Program (2004-2009),

and the Secondary Education Support Program (2003-2009) were designed and

implemented (UNESCO, 2011). Child rights flavor was brought in EFA with a global

debate of education as a right of citizen and obligation of the state. International

concern on education also encouraged I/NGOs to form child club in education

institutions to make it more effective, relevant and practical for children as rights

holders. Similarly, a national curriculum framework for school education internalized

child rights and child development (MoE, 2007). This resulted inclusion of human rights education including the rights of children into school curriculum, textbooks, and teachers guide up to higher secondary levels of education. Since academic year 2004, child clubs were recognized as an actor for lunching school enrolment campaign and making school more child friendly. They are visible also in bringing out of school children back to school and in improving learning environment in school (Dahal, 2011).

National education policies did not explicitly spell out anything about the interaction between teachers and students until 2006, even though teachers value active engagement of children in school as a motivating factor (VSO, 2005). After this, public discourse mounted in advocating access to a quality and inclusive public education as an entitlement for all children (Dahal, 2006). As a result, Interim Constitution of Nepal of 2007 guaranteed the rights of children to education (article 17), and also made a provision that each community shall have the right to get a basic education in its mother tongue, and that every citizen shall have the right to free education up to the secondary level (MoLJCAPA, 2009). To materialize the peoples' aspirations and constitutional provisions, since the academic year 2010, the GoN has been implementing a seven year School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) 2009/10-2016/17 to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to become functionally literate, numerate and develop the basic life skills and knowledge required to enjoy a productive life (MoE, 2012). The SSRP under Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) of aid modalities aims to (i) Expand access and equity, (ii) improve quality and relevance, and (iii) strengthen the institutional capacity of the entire school education system in collaboration with nine development partners (MoE, 2009).

Because of the decades long national and international efforts, children are now recognized as an actor in school education system and their learning achievement as

well as management and operation of school (MoE, 2008). The SSRP also aimed to contribute that a child/student is fully engaged as a competent human being for her learning with high self-esteems and team spirit in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-ethnic context of school. This document envisaged that a child is expected in using information, communication and technological (ICT) skills maximally to live an independent life in the competitive, contemporary global society that challenges political, economic and social inequality, and firmly stands in support of democracy and human rights (MoE, 2008). The SSRP takes into consideration the sociological theory of children and childhood while developing education interventions and its targets. There is also a mandatory provision to form child club in each school and engage children in school management and classroom interventions (MoE, 2010).

Growing concerns of parents and families in the community for quality education has also demanded students' increased participation in classroom and school activities. This encouraged stakeholders to form child club among students and mobilize them to enhance their learning achievements. Children (child clubs) representatives are official members in various school level committees (Consortium, 2012) such as: i) School midday meal management committee (2 out of 11 members); ii) social audit committee in each school (2 out of 7 members); iii) school level child protection committee (2 out of 7 members); iv) school library management committee (2 out of 7 members). This shows that child rights and participation is a new entry in our education system through EFA initiatives and advocacy of I/NGOs.

I now briefly discuss on how child rights and child participation was evolved in local bodies in Nepal both at VDC and district levels.

Child Rights/Participation: An Emerging Business of Local Bodies

Local initiative to contribute to community development is a traditional practice in Nepal. Community heads usually take interest in local development. However, the government initiative to local development per se was begun only after the over-throw of the Rana Oligarchy in 1951. During party-less *Panchayat* System (1960-1990), a number of efforts were made to develop a self-sustained local level planned development process by strengthening and integrating the local administration and local political organizations (Paudyal, 1994). Following the enactment of Decentralization Act in 1982 and its Rules in 1984 and a limited budget provision, all 75 districts were asked to formulate an integrated District Development Plan incorporating the bottom up plans from village level to *Ilaka* level, and then to district level for all sectoral services. The compiled plan and budget approved by District Assembly was supposed for inclusion in the program and budget of the following year from the concerned line ministries and NPC (Paudyal, 1994). With the unitary system of centralized budget allocation and administrative control mechanism, the decentralization process neither gave any space for local people nor brought any fruit to general public including children (Paudyal, 1994). The rights of children and their participation in the planning process was never thought and realized.

The planning documents of this period show that this regime considered children and childhood as incompetent, docile and object of parents as defined by pre-sociological theories, not the actor of local development. There was no plan and policies directly targeting to children and their concerns. Changes and innovations even for adults were allowed only to the extent that did not alter the existing power structure (Paudyal, 1994). When ideally decentralized local government system enjoys devolution of functions and power close to people and their participation, it promotes

and strengthens local democracy as it provides the local people an opportunity to participate in decision-making process affecting their life. The reason is that it has a political, social, developmental, administrative and judiciary roles determined by the people (Shrestha, 1996). This idea came into existence in a massive way only after the restoration of democracy in 1990. The then constitution of 1990 paid attention to local values, norms, principles and methodologies as a part of local government system and decentralization. However, implementation of those approaches took place only after enactment of local self-governance act (LSGA) and its rules in 1999 (Dahal, 1999). This rule helped to democratize local government by providing autonomy, public accountability, transparent management system, people's participation, representation of backward and marginalized segment of society like children, public (central and local government), private and people partnership spirit and humanization of local governance institutions with local people.

The LSGA is another move to reach people at close. It has made provisions for local bodies to prioritize plans and projects that provide direct benefits to children and their welfare (clause 43, 111 & 201). Furthermore, the LSGA clearly states that activities related to children should be carried out in the best interest of children and hearing their voices. In addition, GoN has defined with strong commitment for implementation of Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) - as a system that best institutionalizes the responsibility of the State concerning child rights issues, particularly the right to survival, development, and protection, and the right to meaningful participation in policy, planning, and in decision making bodies at the local level (MoFALD, 2011).

As a local body of the State party to the UNCRC, it is imperative to promote CFLG for child survival, child protection, child development and child participation in

all its interventions. The 39 minimum indicators for CFLG to comply by all local bodies (LBs) include six indicators related to child participation (MoFALD, 2011). They are: i) A mechanism for institutional participation of children aged between 12 to 18 years in the decision making process of LB is developed and practiced; ii) plans and programmes related to children are incorporated into the implementation plan of LBs; iii) a mechanism is setup to ensure institutional voices of children are heard on the school management committees; iv) regular child club representation in the local health management committees; v) child clubs and child club networks are functioning in each VDC and municipal ward; and vi) district and municipal level child networks are formed and functioning. These indicators are comprehensive in nature and useful to promote better learning environment for children and their socialization.

The provisions discussed here clearly indicate child clubs as a social organ of local governments. Realizing children as a stakeholder, their participation at VDC and DDC levels planning and implementation is mandatory (MoFALD, 2011). Two representatives of child clubs should be included as the member of each ward citizen forum (WCF). Representatives of child club networks are also made official members at VDC, municipality and DDC level CFLG committee. Furthermore, a representative of concerned child club network is official member of the VDC/Municipality/DDC level social mobilization committee. Thus, child rights/participation has been an emerging and a mandatory pact for each LB.

I have however found a paradox on child participation practices among actors and institutions. For example, we focus on empowering children to learn and exercise their rights and responsibilities, but we miss to do much to change the attitudes of parents, teachers, communities and institutions. Thus, the environment at home and in school was seldom conducive for children's active and meaningful participation in

social development and in their learning. As a result, development agencies unduly capacitated and treated children in the name of participation in development initiatives as "mini adults" by the development agencies (Field Note, 6 January 2012). On the other hand, the bureaucratic and hierarchical mindset of the school, ward, VDC to DDC level authorities gave little room for children to be children. This shows a tendency of adult manipulation of children and child participation (Hart, 1992) focusing a leader of child club rather focusing all children of the constituency.

Future of Child Clubs – Legal Requirements and Inclusivity

An inspirational description of what an institution would like to achieve or accomplish in the midterm or long-term future is a vision and mission of any institution (UNDP, 2002). It intends to serve as a clear guide for choosing current and future course of action and can serve as a powerful motivator for those around us and ourselves. The vision and mission of any agency should indicate its future actions and interventions to have common understanding among members as core principles or code of conducts (JIE, 2001). They include: i) Trustworthiness: honesty, candor, non-deception, promise keeping, loyalty; ii) fairness: openness, impartiality, equity, due process, consistency; iii) respect: privacy, autonomy, dignity, courtesy, tolerance, acceptance; iv) caring: kindness, compassion, unselfishness, charity; v) responsibility: accountability, self-restraint, quality; and vi) citizenship: law-abiding, doing one's share, community service. These codes or principles are also relevant to school and child club as an institution to get success in their mission and strategies.

Child participation guideline (CCWB, 2006) incorporates all these elements including human rights principles in it. The above principles are well rooted in the school sector reform programme (SSRP) of Nepal. SSRP envisages a school as a center of knowledge and a forum for student interaction and learning in an inclusive,

transparent, participatory and child friendly manner (MoE, 2008). Respecting children's rights to education, school aims to ensure basic education services to all children such as teacher, textbook, classroom and learning environment where head-teacher and teachers are accountable and responsive to children's learning. Parents, teachers and students jointly develop and implement classroom rules and school code of conduct to work together in good faith.

The national framework of child friendly school for quality education aims to materialize this vision into reality (MoE, 2010). Formation and mobilization of child club in each school in this direction is the starting point for future course of actions. The relationships and interactions among students, between students and teachers, and school and education system raise students' learning and also overall educational quality and equity in school education (OECD, 2011). MoE respects and recognizes student a rights-holder and state mechanism including school as a duty bearer for education services in line with the UNCRC (MoE, 2009). This respects the agency, belonging and competence of children (Mitra, 2004) as a citizen. The following section deals with the future of child clubs and child participation in Nepal based on the review of policies and practices and stakeholders' expectations and predictions:

More Inclusive and Institutionalized Child Clubs

Child clubs, established in schools and communities, have created a constructive environment that ensures children's rights to participation (MoWCSW, 2013). In regard to expanding and strengthening child clubs, Children want (FGD with child clubs members, 6 June 2012) to : i) Include all age and category of children, ii) orient all stakeholders on child rights and adults duties, iii) divide work among child club members according to their age and interest, and iv) mobilize all children not only executive committee members. They further claim that there is still a need to make a

clear policy, mechanism and procedures for formulation and management of child clubs, train all teachers including HT on child friendly school, and make school and local VDC responsible for formation and mobilization of child clubs.

Muna, a child club leader said, "*child club leaders should be on rotational basis in executive committee to make it more inclusive. If boy is a chairperson this year, girl should be next year or vice versa*". Rina, an HT of Sanimai further supports on this saying, "*child club should represent each grade and each section of students, not only boys and girls, but also on the basis of student population composition*". It clearly shows a demand of inclusivity in child clubs in both membership and executive positions. They also expect leadership, communication and interpersonal skill trainings, frequent interactions between child clubs, school and VDC, and have minimum resources in each child club from regular budget of school and VDC.

Respect and Promote Child Agency and Autonomy

Children would like to see further improvements of child clubs in school leadership with respect and recognition (FGD with children, 6 June 2012). The improvements include to: i) Regularize weekly extra-curricular activities through child club, ii) invite child clubs in different meetings and interaction of school to prioritize children's issues in decisions, iii) engage in making code of conduct for teachers, students and parents and classroom rules, and iv) introduce child centric teaching methods like peer learning, group assignment and project work.

With new policy reformed, school and local VDCs are initiating to work with child clubs informally. Children like to have a formal relationship with local institutions and to organize interaction between students, teachers and parents, include child club activities in school improvement plan and yearly calendar, and provide coaching and counseling to children. This clearly shows a demand for children's

agency and autonomy (Cook-Sather, 2006; Fielding, 2006) but also school leadership in forming and mobilizing child clubs.

Expand Opportunities and Representation to all Children

Children are disappointed for not having equal opportunities from child clubs and child rights agencies as discussed in the fifth chapter. They also indicated for not having membership of child clubs, as well as not being included in the executive committee. They expect to expand opportunities to all children and their voices are heard in school (FGD with children, 6 January 2013). The suggestions include: i) Orient both rights and duties of students, ii) organize extracurricular and learning related activities appropriate for each grade students, iii)) monitor and support to run classes regularly, iv) monitor regularity and drop out of students, v) run extra classes for weak students, and vi) regularly interact with each grade students and bring issues to head teachers and SMCs for decisions.

A student asserts, "*We all students are equal so we need to have training and exposures from child clubs*". A 7th grade girl goes, "*Child clubs should bring play and sport materials to girls as well*". A fourth grade student from Sanimai club confirms, "*Child clubs should plan separate activities for primary grade children not the same ECA for all students*". From this, I found children of primary grades are outspoken who also know their needs. They put demands to child clubs and to school administration as well. Rina, the HT of same school further reveals, "*We have formed a five member group in each class to run classroom based activities. They also visit me and share their needs*". This way, I found this school inculcates and practices democracy with children, when she also suggested child rights agencies to deal with needs and participation of all grade children while facilitating child clubs.

Out of Child Clubs – A Lost Opportunity in Life

Children claimed that they would miss many opportunities if they were not in child clubs (Field Note, 6 January 2012). These include equipping children with better skills and confidence in expressing their views with critical analysis of the issues and problems. A HT said, "*Children become friendly, cooperative, hardworking, responsible and interactive while engage in child club*". They also actively engage in extra-curricular activities and develop more learning aptitude for new things. Children tend to take leadership in social work and group assignment. A former child club says, "*Children of child clubs are more creative and confident with new knowledge and managerial skills*. A teacher agreed with him saying, "*Children engage in child club learn how to work in a team and also mingle with other people with both children and adults in their society*". This makes children more responsive and active citizen of the society ultimately in enhancing their morale and confidence.

Children in these three schools made a long list of things that they miss if they do not have child clubs in their schools. The list of things that children not engaged in child clubs are missing include (FGD with children, 6 January 2012): i) Opportunity to interaction and network with people in power and position; ii) engage in social and community work; iii) gain new knowledge, skills and team spirit; iv) leadership, power, managerial skills and creativity; and v) peer learning and socialization. The further said they lose a forum for sharing views, expressing opinions and raising voices and information on rights and duties and access to government entitlements. A child in Setimai asserts, "*We lose opportunities to meet and have dialogue with child rights activists like you*". He further claims, *"You met with us because we are in child club not with all students"*. This clearly indicates children in child clubs have access to gain useful assets of agency, belonging and competency (Mitra, 2004).

School Reforms with Children

Children and teachers hold the similar opinions that child clubs have brought the changes and reforms in school management and governance. School transforms as a social organization of students and parents when children are engaged in school interventions. They highlight the key reason for becoming school reforms successful is to work and collaborate with children. The other reasons include (Field Note, 4 June 2012): i) Increased flow of information and decisions to other students and parents; ii) interactions with children on school reforms continuously and share with SMCs; iii) monitoring the attendance of teachers and students in classes; iv) being more transparent in financial system of schools; and v) a push for applying child friendly and child centric teaching and learning methodologies. From this, I argue SSRP can not be succeed without active engagement and ownership of children and teachers in Nepal.

Sanimai School is a good testimony in school reform as this school continues to run during strikes or bandhs as it was jointly declared an understanding by all political parties as a zone of peace and no-smoking area in 2008, which still properly functions. All three schools have their own SIP and yearly academic calendar jointly developed and being implemented by parents, teachers and students. I saw that all these schools have introduced English medium of instruction for quality education in early grades and child friendly methodologies in all grades.

These schools have availability of key policy documents and minimum enabling conditions for quality learning including classrooms, teachers, textbooks, separate toilets for boys and girls and also a small library and a computer lab (MoE, 2013). During class observation, I also realized that learning takes place based on curriculum and continuous assessment system rather than textbook teaching.

Concluding the Chapter

I reviewed and analyzed the policies and practices on child rights/participation in Nepal compared with the national policies and legislation within the international human rights instruments/frameworks. I also reflected on the policies and practices of child rights/participation of periodic plans, in education and local government sectors. Further, it reveals that UNCRC is the most powerful force to keep children's agenda in national legislation and policies for their rights and participation. This has been shifting from rhetoric to reality into the legal system where children can claim their rights to participation in local institutions including in schools. GoN and its local institutions are obligatory to work with children and child clubs for realizing their rights at all levels.

Since the Ninth Plan, child rights/participation has been an integral part of the periodic plans as an emerging priority agenda in the social development sectors. After the State's commitment on EFA in 1990 and MDGs in 2000, child rights/participation has already entered into Education System including in the recent SSRP. After enactment of LSGA in1999 and adoption of the CFLG in 2011, child rights and child participation has been an emerging business of local bodies as an obligation of the State party to UNCRC. Because of these efforts and positive results of child clubs, child participation has been a concern in planning and implementation structures and processes of schools and local bodies.

Children are displeased for not being invited and engaged in child clubs that they narrate it as a lost opportunity in life. There is a growing demand to make child clubs more inclusive and institutionalize with local institutions especially with schools and VDCs. Child rights agencies should invest and work to expand opportunities and representation to all children in club activities beyond a project mind and agenda for a more inclusive and non-discriminatory fashion.

CHAPTER V

INQUIRING EVOLUTION AND MANAGMEENT OF CHILD CLUBS

After analysis and discussion of the policies and practices on child rights and child participation in the earlier chapter, and with the background of having in-depth review on it, this chapter presents my findings and analysis in responding to my first research question, "how have child clubs emerged, evolved and managed in schools?" This chapter consists of four sections, namely dealing on emergence, evolution, formation and management, and problems and challenges of child clubs in schools of Nepal. My findings and discussions rely with the data from multiple tools and sources like case study, interactive interview and FGD and document analysis on these themes.

Emergence of Child Clubs

Assembling children together for their rights seems an alien culture to Nepal. NGOs affiliated with Social Welfare Council (1992) after Nepal ratified the UNCRC in 1990 started establishing child clubs with the support from INGOs. Formation and mobilization of marginalized groups as target beneficiaries became culture after the restoration of democracy in 1990. Many groups and clubs mushroomed in both ways as an indigenous and induced phenomenon of the civil society movement, much with external funding. I have given detailed information of my research schools and child clubs in annex 4. All schools and clubs receive both financial and technical support from NGOs for their operation and activities. The following section discusses about reasons of forming child clubs and its characteristics, early year interventions and support they received from initiators or promoters of child clubs in my research area.

Initiator of Child Clubs – NGOs-led Phenomenon

'An institution' 'an organization', 'a forum', 'a place', 'a network', 'a platform', 'a collective voice', 'a club', 'an agency' and 'a group' of children for a cause are the common terms existing in the societies and literatures to define child club (Hart, 1992; Lansdown, 2010; Mitra, 2007; O'Kane, 2006). Child clubs are primarily established as a place for children to meet, share, and discuss the issues, and take some social actions and activities including sports in schools and communities.

I found the child clubs that existed in my research area was because of the initiatives of NGOs with a support from concerned school and its administration in line with the global discourses on child participation (Khatiwada, 2011). The following table summarizes the perceptions and understandings of my research participants about who had formed the child club in their schools (Field Note, 25 February 2012).

Table 11

Initiator of Child Clubs in Sindhupalchok

Respondents	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Students	School forms club	School forms club	Formed by Tuki
Child club leaders	Formed by Tuki	Formed by CWIN	Formed by Tuki
Teachers	Initiated by NGOs	Inspired by NGOs	Facilitated by NGOs
Parents/SMC/PTA	Tuki/SC	CWIN & Tuki	Tuki/SC
NGOs	Invited by HT	Asked by school	Invited by a student

From the table, I draw a meaning that child club is the baby of I/NGOs. This is also a common response from child club leaders, teachers and parents. Students understand that teachers gather students and (re) form child club. NGOs tend to give credit to children and teachers saying they responded the local request to form child club. Chakra, HT of Thulimai School said, "*Child club in my school was formed with the initiative of CWIN which is beneficial for children as well as us*". He further said, "*Our teachers are getting training on child friendly approaches and also school*

building support." Lalit and Hari unanimously said (Field Note, 15 January 2012) that "*child clubs are babies of I/NGOs which are yet to own and institutionalize by our system*". This validates the argument of Cantwell (1992, 2009) that child rights and child participation was a NGO business from the inception phase of the UNCRC.

Reasons for Initiating –CRCRreporting Process

Formation of child clubs takes place in various schools and communities with a cause and a stimulus. Some clubs are formed with a mandatory provision of partnership between NGOs and INGOs including fulfilling the targets and expected results of a specific project. Out of my three child clubs, two were formed during the CRC periodic reporting process in 2002 where as the third one as a project intervention in 2004. The following table shows this difference of a stimulus and cause of child club formation (Field Note, 25 February 2012).

Table 12

Reasons of Forming Child Clubs

Subjects	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Establishment	2004	2002	2002
Occasion	New project	CRC reporting	CRC reporting
Stimulus	Funding	Funding	Funding
	Training	Material support	Books/materials
Cause	Project requirement	Selection of children for	CRC consultation
Starting point	Contact with HT	Contact with HT	Contact with SMC
Guidelines/norms	As told by NGO, no written guidelines available		
Process	Picked up two students from grade 4 to 8 and a chair	Picked up two students from grade 6 to 10 and a chair	Selected one child each from G 4 & 5, two students from grade 6 to 9 and a chair

The reasons for forming child clubs are project interventions and funding opportunities. Two schools formed child clubs to send children representatives to a district level CRC periodic report consultation in 2002. The Sanimai school formed a club with a mandatory provision of partnership between NGO and INGO. In all schools, HT of the respective school took lead role in picking up students from

different grades as told by NGO facilitator with gender balance. All child clubs had 11-member committee with five girls in each at the initial years. Girls were treasurer in all clubs. Facilitator of the same NGO did not have a common framework for child club formation picking up children from different grades like Sanimai and Setimai had children from grade 4 to 9 where as Thulimai had from grade 6 to ten.

Rina, HT of Sanimai School recalled, "A *social mobilizer came and said to form a child club in school to get support, then, we form it next day*". Setimai SMC chairperson shared that, "*we formed child club to get support in school from nearby NGO which also benefits children and their participation"*. These two statements give me a meaning that school formed child club to get support, not to promote child rights in school. This is a manipulative form of child participation as per Hart (1992) and a means of getting access to information/resources for empowerment (WB, 2002).

Early-years Interventions –Engaging Children in ECAs

Child clubs as an agency of children has multiple interventions. However, there is a general trend engaging children on extra-curricular activities (ECA) in school which are not as a part of school improvement plan. The following table presents the early years' interventions in child clubs from NGOs as child clubs did not have their own plan and priorities (Field Note, 25 February 2012).

Table 13

Early-years Interventions of Child Clubs

Respondents	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Students	Supply of child rights booklets	ECA	Child rights orientation
Child club leaders	Orientation on child club and child rights	Child rights orientation	ECA
Teachers	Committee formation and child rights training	Child rights training	Meetings & discussion on child rights
Parents/SMC/PTA	Door to door visit for student enrolment	School enrollment campaign	Removing stick from school
NGOs	CR situation analysis	CR orientation	CR issue collection

The table shows that early year intervention of child clubs are around ongoing educational and development issues of NGOs (Fletcher, 2004, 2005; Hart, 2004) not of the local issues and priorities of children. Child rights awareness and supply of reading materials are the common interventions in all clubs. Chakra, the HT of Thulimai assesses, "*we had hopes of getting infrastructure support in schools but they simply supplied for ECAs.*" Mira, the district club leader further asserts, "*we had shortages of teachers and textbooks in schools but they just provided prizes and materials for child rights related ECAs*".

Tara, an NGO leader responds, "*we are not government to get big fund from revenues and provide funds to schools and clubs, we do social awareness with small support for attitudinal change of adults towards children.*" Schools and NGOs selected child rights topics for each ECA such as quiz contest on child rights, rallies and street drama on student enrollment (SCN, 2005). There is neither focus on personality and leadership development nor on building social skills among children (Fielding, 2001).

Initial Support from NGOs –Materials for ECAs

As most of the child clubs in Nepal are formed and facilitated by I/NGOs, they also continued to support them, both technically and financially. The initial support was of event based, which was not of the regular nature in a planned manner. Stakeholders viewed that NGOs support in early years of child club establishment were as follows (Field Note, 25 February 2012):

Table 14
Initial Support of NGOs

Respondents	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Students	Prizes/sport materials	Books and prizes	Friday program
Child club leaders	Training on club management	Support to write plans and minutes	Materials and coaching
Teachers	Guidelines Supply of materials Training of CR	CR books and materials Training on CR	CR books and guidelines Training of CR
Parents/SMC/PTA	Play materials & ECA	Education materials	Sports & play materials

The table indicates that NGOs initial support was to empower children as social actors as defined by sociological theories (James & Prout, 1998). However, they were just giving educational materials and increasing access of children and school to information and government services. Child club leaders have received coaching and mentoring support for their personality and leadership development from NGOs which is in line with Mitra's (2004) prescription of three assets 'agency' 'belonging' and 'competency' that children get from child clubs even though the competence building of children and child club was of nominal focus. Support to learning improvement and school governance through child clubs were not in the agenda of I/NGOs until 2010.

Inclusivity in Child Clubs

I am exploring the inclusivity of child clubs at the initial stages until now. I have taken age, gender, class, caste, and special needs in the following discussion for children not being the members of child clubs as exclusion factors.

Gender in Child Clubs - Girls are Grooming

Gender dichotomy is the most contentious and criticized in Nepalese societies. Conventionally every society is gendered society that roles of both boys and girls differ and accordingly they are taught both at home and in schools including in society in order to fit them in existing social norms, values, structures and systems. The boys are supposed to handle the out of home affairs and labor work while girls are assigned the affairs inside the home and household chores. This traditional notion of gender is still more dominant in rural areas than in urban cities (Acharya, 2007). The socio-cultural values and norms that play a crucial role in the constructions of gender adversely affect the roles of both boys and girls in the societies. The following table shows the girls participation in school and child club in my study areas (Field Note, 3 June 2012):

Table 15

Share of Girls in Schools and Child Clubs

Particulars	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Students (G 6 to 10)	170 (88G)	150 (82 G)	118 (74 G)
CC Members	40 (20 G)	20 (10 G)	30 (15 G)
Girls in CC	15 (6G)	13 (6 G)	11 (5 G)
Girls in Executive	5 (2)	5 (2)	5 (1)

I find a paradox in child club evolution in terms of gender equality. All three schools have more girls than boys, but have equal number in club membership as an instruction from NGO. However, it has fewer girls in executive committee in all three clubs and low representation in five official positions. This is an indication of preference of boys not only in family but also in institutions like in schools and clubs. The school does not have its own policy nor does it follow the child participation guidelines (CCWB, 2007) while doing membership drive and selection of executive committee of the club. This finding validates the earlier finding of Ratna, Shrestha and Maharjan (2012).

Box 1
Girls Changing Adults' Attitude
Ram, a teacher in Setimai School, is happy with a daughter only. He says, "My daughter is leading social activities both in school and community as the chair of club". He further said, "I was fed up with villagers telling me to go for a son, now they appreciate me in my decision". He continues, "I firmly believe that daughter can excel son if they get equal opportunity in education and work". He is very proud that DEO named him citing his daughter's inputs in DCWB plan on how education empowers and protects girls from abuse and harm.

All 63 children and child club leaders that I interacted and discussed said that "*In the beginning of child club establishment there were more boys and fewer girls in our clubs, but now more girls and fewer boys*". Even the HT of Thulimai School claims, *"our child club is more active than in the past due to leadership changed to a girl as the chair."* Prem, a child club member of the same school said, *"more students are engaged in child club as our chair is so polite and social with all children including younger ones."* Furthermore, parents group claimed that girls are more safe and confidence after engaging in child

clubs. It was a change in traditional view among parents that girls are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in public space (Valentine, 2011). Sita, district club member shared her happiness, "*my parents allow me to go out with confidence in different meetings when I became chair of my child club and attending SMC meeting in school*". Story does not stop here. HT of Setimai said, "*Girls are more active and disciplined in schools than boys*". I observed that in addition to recognition, agency and position that girls get in child clubs, it also empowers them and gives safety, security and confidence to go out of home when girls known as child club leaders.

I agree that more and more participation from women in social activities have increased in the last decade due to social transformation agenda of Maoist (Yami, 2006). Nepal Police and Nepal Army initiated recruitment of female cadres in its forces with a pressure from high number of women cadres in Maoist army. Similarly, the traditional belief that women should be limited within domestic periphery is changing with one-third representation of the women in the dissolved Constituent Assembly.

Contrary to this, there is slightly more participation of boys than girls in club meeting and activities. In the leading positions of the clubs, fewer than 2% of the total numbers of girls served as chairpersons, while the percentage for boys is 5% (Rajbhandary et al., 1999). With few exceptions like in one my study club, girls are represented in the post of treasurer only. This is also the impact of gendered culture in society. 'Boys stress the position and hierarchy, whereas girls emphasize intimacy and connection' (James et al., 1998, p. 85). When I asked why girl is treasurer in most of the clubs, children replied, "*girls are more trustworthy than boys with money*". There was the same conclusion drawn in 1999 (Rajbhandary et al).

Gita, a girl child in district network who was earlier Treasurer in a club said, "*I was reluctant and shy to make my name first as the chair I only raised hand later on*".

Sanimai child club treasurer had the same feeling, she adds, "*I wanted to be the chair but the boy raised the hand first and became the chair*". Rita (a child club leader) opinioned that *"Being a girl we have a lot of problems… we cannot go out whenever we want like boys without parents' permission and a friend accompanying".* Thus, in my opinion, the traditional social construct that boys are better than girls is still influencing the leading positions in the clubs. Like women play 'silent' supportive role to their male counterparts at home, not the leading one. In a majority of social events and community meetings including in schools and child clubs, the numbers and voices of male participants are still dominant.

Even in present context, the socio-cultural norms, values and beliefs on girls and women are still acting as a discouraging factor in taking leadership positions by girls. Only the extrovert and smart people get chances in the leading positions than those who are not so as those who spokes will get the position. Being introvert as mentioned above in two clubs girls wanted to be chairperson but landed to the treasurer position. This does not promote equal participation of all children in leading positions and only the children who are smart and outspoken are taking these positions.

Age and Maturity in Child clubs- Rules are Ignored

Age is a social construction (James & Prout, 1998) and every society has a defined age for its groups of people. It disappears as an individual grows up but childhood remains a permanent social category since one has to pass through it once in life (Qvortup, 2002). From sociology of childhood perspectives children are competent social actors in their own terms and rights (Alanen, 2004; Corsaro, 2005; James & Prout, 1998; Mayall, 2002, 2007) and age does not limit one's potentiality to show up if provided an opportunity and congenial environment. However, the adult's views,

interest and interpretation results in lesser participation of younger children in social activities than the older ones in child clubs.

All three clubs have the children with a maximum age limit of 16 years. Two clubs have set a norm of 12 years as the minimum age to enter into child clubs. This is against the spirit and principles of UNCRC (Article 2 non-discrimination). All persons below 18 years are eligible to be in child club (UNCRC, 1989). In addition to age, student grade also counts as a criteria being in child club. Sanimai club allows children from four to nine grades but other two clubs allow only from grade six onwards. Rina, HT of Sanimai School said, "*Children up to grade 3 are very small and they are only in play groups, not in clubs*". All schools exclude grade 10 students in child club with an internal priority to focus on their SLC exam. I made a meaning here that schools do not see engagement in child clubs will enhance students learning.

A district club leader in Sindhupalchok remarks, *"generally, after SLC, children of 16 to 18 years age form and engage in community based child clubs and also in the VDC and DDC level networks"*. Child rights officer further support this view and asserts, *"we are focusing to form child clubs only in lower secondary and secondary school not in primary and higher secondary levels"*. Sanju, a former child club leader says, *"There are mainly plus two and high school children in community based child clubs, not very younger children"*. Thus, I conclude from the data that only the older children get involved in community-based child clubs, while younger ones are limited in school clubs and very young children remain nowhere in social networking.

There is confusion among local bodies which child clubs to take into account whiling forming local level committees such as WCFs, CACs, IFPCs and VDC and district level CFLG and Social Mobilization Committee. These clubs exclude children below SLC and 16 years of age. They are mainly focusing on community development

and social mobilization work in line with local governance programme, rather than school governance and learning. These clubs do not promote agency, belonging and competency of members (Mitra, 2004) but engagement on democratic practices and empowerment of youths are their prime focus.

According to CCWB (2011), the high number of children involved in the clubs is of 12 to 15 years of age and fewer of 15 to 18 years of age. The recommended age range, as MoFALD (2011) describe, for child club membership is from 12 to 18 in local bodies supported clubs, but in some clubs have fixed the minimum age for memberships is 8 years. Age is a determining factor for children's involvement in the clubs against the CRC principles (Lee, 2009). However, none of the clubs in my study areas follows rules. They have their own norms which changes every year with an interpretation of schools and NGOs. I see a need of practical and contextual guidelines.

Caste and Class in Child Clubs – Domination of Ethnic Groups

Caste and class are interrelated in terms of children's participation in social activities in Nepal, though they are two distinct categories**.** Even when people from upper caste are privileged in involving in social forums and community activities, people from so-called lower caste are marginalized and restricted from taking part in such activities, reports show that children from upper castes and rich class do not seem to be actively involved in the clubs (CCWB, 2011). It further mentions that there are more children from working and middle class group of all castes in the child clubs across the country.

When I was a child, I wanted to go to *Haat Bazaar*, the weekly market place, and attend periodic social gatherings called *Jatra* in my village organized by ethnic communities like *Magars* and *Newars*. However, parents did not allow me to leave home during those off hours saying a Brahmin-man should not attend such *Jatra* or

mela as we were much compelled towards hard labor in study and a more disciplined lifestyle. Thus, the socio-cultural values and norms of our society would not encourage the people of upper caste letting their children move freely wherever they wanted to. Moreover, the reverse was the usual practice in case of people from lower caste, and ethnic communities.

There is a great variation in terms of ethnicity or caste in club memberships. However, this variation appears due to location and family backgrounds, not by socio-cultural practices in the clubs. In Haratimai child club, Rita, (a 17 year old girl) shares, "*our club has members are from different schools with diverse castes, ethnicities and religions, but not from private schools where rich children study*". The caste and ethnicity of my research participants is also diverse. The following table summarizes the caste and ethnicity of child club members (Field Note, 3 June 2012).

Table 16

Caste and Ethnicity of Club Members

Categories	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Chairperson	High caste, Brahmin	Cheetri, High Caste	Chhetri, high caste
Secretary	Ethnic group, Tamang,	Lama, Ethnic Group,	Dalit, low caste
Treasurer	Tamang, Ethnic group,	Dalit, low caste	Chhetri, high caste
Majority members	Mostly Tamang	Mostly Ethnic group	Mostly Brahmin and Chhetri
Majority of students	Mostly Tamang	Mixed Ethnic group	Mostly Khas

Majority of members in Sanimai child club are Tamangs and Lamas as of the population in the village but chairperson was a Brahmin. While asking in a FGD with children, all children said that they elected him because of his attentiveness, strength, and friendly social behaviors. Keshav, from Setimai club remarks, *"Our club has members from all catchment areas of school and also from each grade from 6 to 10"*. The chair of this club (15 years girl) claims, *"There is no exclusion based on gender*

and ethnicity in our club memberships. I have visited many clubs in the district and found children from all communities around the periphery of the clubs, but it depends upon the location of the club, if the club is in Tamang community there can be majority of Tamang children". I have, however, different opinions and observations on it.

Although there are general members from all castes, ethnicities and religions in child club according to population of children in schools, but executive committee members generally are from students selected by teachers or social mobilizers of the NGOs. For instance, I have witnessed that one of Dalit NGOs working in Bardiya was choosing child club members mostly from Dalit communities. Similar was the case in Lalitpur when social mobilizer was from Newar community she was trying to get chairperson and majority members in executive committee from Newar community speaking in Newari during selection process.

There is a majority of children in clubs from ethnic communities and Dalit but less from Madeshi and Muslim communities (CCWB, 2011). Share of Brahmin and Chettri children (22.7%) in clubs was less than their share of population (31%). The public spaces for children from Dalit community are not restricted and their involvement with the children from other higher castes is entertained in schools but not yet in most of the rural communities. Education has been instrumental in fighting discrimination based on gender and castes to build human capabilities and to promote freedom of choices as advocated by Sen (UNDP, 1990). A district club member from Dalit community said, "*I am respected and welcomed in different meetings and social gatherings even if I am Dalit it is because of my education and leadership*". The Head Teacher of Setimai School claims, "*Children from ethnic groups and Dalit communities are forward and active in schools when they reach lower secondary level*". In my opinion, children from ethnic group and Dalit are facing problems to complete primary

education due to language and fearful learning environment in schools. When they enter into lower secondary level, they know the rules of the games in schools and become active in various activities of schools including child clubs (White, 2002).

Focus group discussions with NGO activists revealed, "*children from ethnic communities get easy approval from their parents to go out for child club functions*". Similarly, a parent from Tamang community in Sanimai says, "o*ur children are not shy from early age and they enjoy Jatra and mela, so they like child club as a social gathering*". In my opinion, children from working class are supposed to take the responsibilities as early as they can and so their participation in the clubs is higher because they want to learn some life skill education to cope with their everyday lives. As discussed in the earlier section, rich people are sending their kids to private schools mostly boys in Kathmandu and urban areas, thus leaving middle class and ethnic children and girls into community schools in rural areas, and in child clubs. With family restriction on Brahmin and Chetri children to enroll in child clubs leaves ethnic and middle class children more active in child clubs due to their liberal family cultures.

Children with Special Needs: still Invisible or Non-existent

During my interactions in schools and clubs, I did not see any disabled children as club members. I was wondering why it happened as there mentions the census data about 5% children in general are with disability in Nepal (MoWCSW, 2002). Manju, (a 14 years old girl) says, *"There is not a single disabled child in my community then how can they be in school".* Sanju, a former club leader accepts that they were not able to make the disabled children participate in clubs because of their invisibility in the society. She further adds, *"Now I know there are 5% differently able children and some of them are in schools, but in my time they were hidden by their parents at home."* A child club leader claims, *"we have inclusion policy but as schools do not have disable*

students, how can we get in clubs". I look this as an ignorance of reality and invisibility of differently able children among peers from an outset.

Contrarily, all child participants claimed that the clubs are not disable-friendly, and have not taken the issues seriously during school enrolment campaigns as well. It implies that other children are ready to include the disabled ones in the clubs if they found them around their localities. And, so far this issue has not been the focus. It was similar situation in a1999 child club study by Save the Children-Norway that did not find any child with disabilities (Rajbhandary et al., 2002). However, CCWB (2011) discloses that there are about 2,400 children with disability within the network of 7150 child clubs affiliated with DCWBs in 52 districts.

Participants of my research, both children and adults argued that, *"there is no facility for children with disabilities in schools and clubs".* It was reported that a very few schools are making their rooms and toilets disabled friendly, recently. There are thousands of schools and social institutions, which run without special facilities for people with disabilities. In here, the child club members are helping children with disabilities for their schooling. A district leader of a child club network shares, *"In Sangachok, children of child club are carrying a disabled child to school and back home turn by turn".* Child clubs, therefore, is a new phenomenon in Nepal. The existing infrastructures and social services are the key challenges to make participation of children with disabilities in schools and clubs. In absence of these facilities, differently able children remain neglected and muted groups whose voices and views are not heard yet in schools and social institutions.

The Article 23 of the UNCRC guaranteed the participation and protection of children with disabilities in social institutions including in schools. However, Children's Act of 1992 in Nepal does not clearly stipulate the rights and participation of

children with disability. However, the Disabled Persons Protection and Welfare Act of 1982 provide protection to children with disability from more charity approach.

Exclusion in Membership –Ignorance not a Choice of Children

I found majority of schoolchildren not being included in the membership of child clubs. This was one of the burning issues for me to get view of students in these three schools. A ninth grade girl from Setimai said, "*Many parents do not know the values and benefits of child clubs as they are not informed and consulted*". Keshav, a student in FGD also revealed the same opinion; he said, "*We were not invited for child clubs formation. Neither there was a notice from school*". Lokendra, a former child club says, "*Children are not informed for membership as Head Teacher or NGO facilitator chooses limited members for child clubs*". From these statements, it seems there is no openness and transparent way of informing and forming child clubs in schools. Children become members of clubs by chances not by their choices as adults pick up names among students on this subjective judgment. Here, I conclude that a communication gap has not only existed between children and parents, but also among children and child clubs.

This reason originates with a number of the other reasons, including the demands of work, schooling, and lack of understanding on the purposes of the clubs (Field Note, 17 April 2012). A ninth grader boy in Thulimai said, "*I wanted to joint clubs but parents did not allow me saying it hampers my study*." There was a similar view among parents, a female SMC member in Thulimai shares her concern saying, "*our children need to work at home after school. If they engage in child clubs after school we cannot feed them*". The other reason commonly given was the financial difficulties of families (Ratna, Maharjan & Shrestha, 2012). This has lead to exclusion

of few children, as parent's needs for their children to work and also the modest fee that clubs charge for membership.

In order to avoid these barriers of sustained exclusion of children in child clubs, it demands a policy with minimum framework for club formation and facilitation where it stresses the importance of informing all children to join child clubs if they wish. This is the fundamental value of the UNCRC principle of non-discrimination. Some parents felt that the clubs are more engaged in dancing and playing when they feel child clubs should engage more in learning, socialization and social work, which are helpful for their family (FGD with parents in Sindhupalchok). Rina, HT of Sanimai claims, "*we need to make a balance between extracurricular activities, socialization and learning skills and social welfare activities in the annual plan of child clubs*".

There was a common feeling among respondents that the clubs should continue to strengthen its social work and personality development interventions in presence of parents and local institutions if the parents are to allow children to attend clubs. Here, if the clubs transformed into play and recreational centers, they would probably not survive in a long run. Thus, more communication with parents is an urgent need.

Evolution of Child Clubs

The following section presents and discusses my findings on evolution of child clubs in Nepal including its mission, coverage and roles of adult facilitators.

Mission of Child Clubs – A flying Aeroplane in the Foggy Sky

The second CRC periodic reporting cycle in 2002 was more participatory and consultative at both district and regional level (CRC, 2005). This consultation led to formation of child clubs in a spontaneous manner, even though it lacked a clear mission, direction and strategy for future interventions (UNICEF-Nepal, 2003). There were two studies carried out during that period (1998 to 2002) about

feasibility and democratic practices in various forms of child clubs (UNICEF-Nepal, 2010). Here is the understanding of my research participants on mission and future direction of child club (Field Note, 6 March 2012):

Table 17

Mission and Strategies of Child Clubs

Respondents	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Students	For ECA	Play and fun	Wall magazine
Child club leaders	Aware on rights of children	Child rights promotion	Make school friendly for children
Teachers	Get support and training from NGOs	Make ECA more effective	Opportunities for children/school
Parents/SMC/PTA	Listen to children	More materials for children & school	Improve school and education
NGOs	Promotion of CR in school/communities	CR education to children & teachers	Fulfillment of CR in school

The table highlights that the mission and strategy of forming child club was limited to expectations of support. There lacked a common understanding and follow up strategies among actors. Children are concerned with ECA including publication of wall magazines on educational and children's issues. Gita, a club leader says, "*Child club is for children's rights*". Lalit, child rights officer says, "*Aim of forming child club is to listen children's issues and priorities in school*".

Child club leaders have the rhetoric of child rights promotion (Koirala, 2010; Sharma, 2008). Kriti, a teacher from Setimai says, "*We have ambition to improve school and quality of education*". However, she does not know how. Teachers are looking for more support and opportunities to school and children. Lokendra, a former child club leader says, "*Child clubs are functioning without knowing their future*". He further remarks, "*Balclub kuirako kag bhayko chha, NGO le je bhanchha tehi garchha [child clubs have been like a crow in a foggy sky, it does what NGO tells]*". This shows a lack of understanding about child clubs' mission, objectives, and expected outcomes among actors. NGOs are preaching about fulfillment of child rights in schools but their

support does not substantiate their argument. I understood that child club stakeholders at the initial days took child participation as a means of manipulation and tokenism aspect of Hart's ladder (1992). However, there is a growing demand to make child clubs run by children themselves.

Dismantle of Indigenous *Sadans* with Chairperson Centric Club

Each school used to have at least four groups (*sadan*) among students of each grade to conduct various extracurricular activities each Friday in the academic year (FGD with teachers, Sindhupalchok, 2012) before the recent types of child clubs were formed in schools. All three HTs of Sindhupalchok district said that they lost the positive outcomes and social interventions of *sadans* in schools. Teachers used to own and manage these *sadans* as a part of school curriculum. I still remembered my student days where I had enjoyed and learnt social skills from these *sadans* in 1980s.This indigenous way of promoting child participation in school was dismantle with the emergence of child clubs induced by NGOs since 2000s. Here I see NGOs unknowingly killing sadans, indigenous form of child participation in school in the name of child clubs whereas local schools are integrating and federating them into child clubs.

Keshav, a nine grader in Sanimai School shared his disappointment, "*we are consulted once a year while forming the club. But no one asks us about our views and performance of clubs afterwards*". Tara, an NGO activist agrees with this view. She adds, "*we were just focusing on executive committee of child club not on children's participation in classroom and school*". Students and child club members are less aware and engaged in school and club activities due to its limited scopes.

By this realization, Rina, the HT of Sanimai affirms, "*we are now promoting both child club and sadan into one by making two members of each sadan in child*

club executive committee". From my own observation and above statements, it seems integration of *sadans* into child club with separate existence and operation makes more opportunities for children and their participation. In the name of child right, we are making child club exclusionary and less consultative ignoring the diversity of children in school of all grades, gender and ethnicity.

Constituency Limited to Handpicked Children

Every organization has won its own constituency of membership and target areas, so have the child clubs. Hence, different child clubs have their own membership and intervention criteria, process, values, norms, beliefs and structures. In principle, all children of a school are the owners and eligible members of respective clubs. I explored the membership and committee formation process of my research clubs. The following table shows key constituencies of child clubs (Field Note, 25 February 2012):

Table 18

Constituency of Child Clubs

Criteria	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Students	270 (143G)	250 (135G)	230 (123G)
Members	40 (20G)	20 (10G)	30 (15G)
Age	10-16 yrs	12-16 yrs	12-16 yrs
Committee	15 members (6G)	13 members (6G)	11 members (5G)
Membership	Grade 4-10	Grade 6-10	Grade 6-9
Membership fee	Rs 20	Rs 10	Rs 5
Representation	PTA & CC network	WCF	CC network

The table here shows that only 12% children (90/750) are members of child clubs with 50% girl even though girls' share is 53% of students (401/750). The share of girls in executive position is less than 44% (17/39). Representation, participation and inclusiveness are the beauty of democracy (Crane, Matten & Moon, 2004). However, this is not the case with these three child clubs. For instance, Kamal, expert group member says, "*With the proliferation of child clubs, meaningful participation of children has limited only with 11 members of executive committee*". Furthermore,

this is also not the reality. Mita from Sanimai comments, "*we are just in the committee, only chairperson is invited in different meetings and training*".

This way, I have reflected children's experiences on inclusiveness of the child clubs based on my own empirical data as mentioned in the above table and previous studies in order to have a bird's eye point of views on everyday lives of children in schools and communities. I observed that child club in principle promotes democratic norms, values and beliefs in club interventions and decisions but adults mostly do selection of children in clubs and training opportunities without clear criteria and consultation with its members/children.

Child Club - A Community School Phenomenon

With escalation of armed conflict after 2000, and supply of humanitarian aid to remote districts like Sindhupalchok, the formation of child clubs took place with support from various child rights organizations as a protective measure. Binadi claims (2011) that armed groups and armed forces recruited and used fewer children engaged in child clubs during conflict time. The campaigns run by NGOs since 2004 on 'children as zones of peace' and 'school as a zone of peace' were effective to raise voices of children through expansion of child clubs in Nepal (Dahal, 2013d).

Very lately from 2005 teachers who were trained on child friendly schooling approach and methodologies by NGOs and Teachers Union of Nepal (TUN) started forming child clubs in schools as a means to promote child friendly methodologies and also to protect school from armed conflict (SC, 2006). This was further spearheaded after child friendly schooling directives from MoE in 2010 and child friendly local governance national strategies in 2011 came into operation (MoWCSW, 2013).The posting of child rights officers in all 75 districts by 2012 has contributed positively to make child clubs as a nationwide phenomenon in all development sectors.

Schools and local bodies are responsible for forming child clubs and hear their institutional views in the decision-making processes (MoFALD, 2011). A CRO claims, "*children engaged in child clubs were aware about their rights and able to negotiation with armed groups for not to using schools for political propaganda*". The declaration of Sanimai School as Zone of Peace in consultation with all stakeholders including local politicians in 2007 is still respected and practiced until today.

Interacting with respondents, I found that child clubs have not been the agenda of private schools and priorities for schools in district headquarters. None of the members of Haratimai child club is from Private Schools. One child club member claims, "*We are more social than private school students*". Tara, NGO activist agrees, "*private schools do not allow us to talk about child rights and child friendly environment*". Chandani, an expert further says, "*no one will fund for child clubs in private schools as this is defined as a business*". However, Hari, education officer highlights the need of NGOs work in private schools saying, "*more child rights violation is taking place in private schools including rampant corporal punishment*".

While asking this question to the club members, they replied that club is only for students of community schools. The reasons include private schools have more resources and materials for students but community schools have less resources and opportunities to students for plays and extracurricular activities. All child rights officers agreed that they need to work with private schools for promotion of child rights and child friendly environment. However, they were reluctant that there is no directive from central level to work with private schools on child rights promotion.

Thus, I can conclude that child club so far is the agenda of community schools and of the NGOs. Child clubs have emerged as a social institution not only in schools but also in local bodies at a principle level. However, practices of child club formation

and mobilization is limited when there are some stimuli for both children and schools from different agencies. The value of children's citizenship is yet to recognize and institutionalize at local and national levels. For easy progress reporting, child participation was evolved as formation and mobilization of children's clubs (FGD with NGO activists, Field Note, 5 June 2012).

Most of the child club leaders commented that child clubs should be only for similar age of children. A district club leader claims, *"Younger children like moving and playing much rather than sitting and discussing an issue inside a room of the clubs with us"*. They suggested that there should be three types of clubs as per their ages and interests. One is for below 10 years just for fun and play, another one for 10-15 years for learning, socialization, and another one for 16 to 18 years for representation and social work in adult institutions like SMC and VDC (FGD with district club leaders). I like their ideas also based on my own experiences as child right activist. Hart (2004) reports that "o*ne club (a child-to-child group) has divided into two clubs, one a junior club for those under 12 and the older a senior club for those 12 and above (p. 23)*".

I have observed that many children enjoy and learn from child clubs only when they find other children of their own age group. The older children tend to be more issue focused rather than the motivating the younger children in the clubs where as younger children might feel a burden to older children since they need to take care of younger ones. Ratna et al. (2012) argue that older sisters or brothers are barriers to younger children's participation since they think the club is only the place for their peers and having their siblings do not let them escape from responsibility.

Adult Facilitators as Guardians of Clubs

One of the controllers of membership in child club is the local facilitator(s) either teacher or a social mobilizer of NGO (Fletcher, 2004, 2005; Hart, 1992;

Lansdown, 2001). Theoretically, I take scaffolding roles of adults' interactions and relationships with children as defined by Vygotsky (Berk, 1996, 1999). The initial gathering of children to discuss the possibility of a child club, while meant to be inclusive of all children in the community, is sometimes limited to those children who are within the network or knowledge of the facilitator. Child participation guideline of CCWB and child club facilitator's guideline of Consortium are out of reach for majority of child clubs.

When I enquired with child clubs participants in Sindhupalchok along with other district network members who did not have access to this guideline and training opportunities, they all recognized a need of support from adult facilitators- either teachers or NGO staff for the following purpose (Field Note, 25 February 2012):

Table 19

Roles of Adult Facilitators

Categories	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Children	• As a guardian and facilitator • Sources of information • Contact with NGOs	• Coach and guide • Judge and Manager • Bridge with NGOs • Trust of our parents	• Source of materials and new information • Bring NGOs support • Guiding clubs
Teachers	• Mentor and coach • Scaffolders for children • Sources of inspiration	• Team mobilizers • Conflict manager • Communicator • Supervisor	• Fund Manager • Role model of children • Counselor of club
NGOs	• Source of information • Contact point/bridge with schools and clubs • Facilitator/mobilizers of children • Child rights promoters		

The table shows that children take adult facilitators as their guardians, source of information and contact point with NGOs. Teachers also assume that roles of adult facilitator are like of a guide or coach, and of mentoring and conflict managing. For NGOs, facilitators are source of information and contact point between schools and clubs. This shows a diverse role of facilitator as scaffolders (Berk, 1996).

Rina, the HT of Sanimai School shared her experience that "*child club facilitator should be a role model for children and their socialization*". NGO activists prioritize need of child club facilitator, Tara, NGO activist opinions '*facilitator is a guardian and counselor of the child club and all children of schools*". All child club leaders made an opinion that two teachers of each school (at least one female) should get training on child club facilitation. They further said "*NGOs should not deal with child club directly as there are cases of tension between schools and child clubs*". There have been cases where a child has been forced to join a different club from the one his friends are in.

Thus, there is a clear need of a practical but common guideline as well as capacity enhancement of child club facilitator on appropriate tools and procedures for children's engagement (Consortium, 2012). I agree with participants that child club facilitators are role models for children and should be among teachers, mostly female. There is also a need that schools and VDCs should take ownership of child clubs with a technical support from national and international organizations (Haug & Regmi, 2012).

Formation and Management of Child Clubs

After discussing on the emergent and evolution of child clubs in Nepal, the following section deals with formation and management of child clubs including its rules, structures, meeting arrangement, training, annual plans and monitoring mechanism. As discussed earlier, there are many types of clubs (Ratna et al., 2012). They include: community-based clubs; school-based clubs; eco-clubs; adolescent clubs; sports clubs; clubs with early childhood development centers; clubs for Dalits or oppressed children; clubs run by NGOs and INGOs; clubs for Kamlari children; children's saving clubs; ward based clubs; child self-help groups; Red Cross clubs; nature clubs; child forums; issue based clubs; and science clubs.

CCWB (2011) reports that there are 13,291 child clubs in total (7,237 community based and 5,544 school based). Notable data items include one school with 10 child clubs and another with over 1000 members (Ratna et al., 2012). Thus, in the following section, I will explore and elaborate process and modalities of child club formation and management as well as challenges and difficulties encountered.

Child Club Formation – Diverse Rules and Practices

One approach to the advocacy and materialization of child rights in Nepal among child rights agencies both national and international is to form and mobilize child clubs (Poudyal, 2003). Child clubs have been synonymous to child participation. The promotion of child rights and child participation through school, community, municipality and district child clubs has netted many positive outcomes to children and society (CCWB, 2013). These include better access to information about child rights, and better access to support organizations and local government.

Children and teachers had little idea of the process of club membership and building a club without information from NGOs (FGD with child club leaders). Most of the children in the child-to-child classes chose to continue into the clubs but initially they were literally grouped together and organized by the facilitators (SCN, 1995). A CRO says, "*It was only after 2007 when I was appointed in DCWB formation and mobilization of clubs came into our hands*". One Member of expert group further clarifies "*I/NGOs had their one rules process of forming and mobilizing child clubs which made me to bring child participation guideline in 2007 from CCWB*". In my opinion, none of the child clubs in Nepal was formed by children with a clearer idea from the beginning that they were to have their own child-lead organization.

In addition, many child clubs are addressing a range of difficult issues related to the well-being of children in their local communities (Consortium, 2012). In some

cases, child clubs have federated at village or at district level, and there is clear evidence that these networks have been able to gain access to decision-making structures at local bodies including in at District Development Committee (MoFALD, 2012). In many instances, adults brought children together to form clubs with very little involvement of children in the idea (Dahal, 2004). Children who had been in child-to-child groups were initially told that they could continue being in 'the group' with only a vague idea of the things they would do, such as social works in their communities and learn about child rights (Poudyal, 2003). Thus, child clubs do not follow any specific rules and guidelines prescribed by the central agencies but use their own needs.

Membership Criteria – Fee and Residence

Entrance fee and resident of students within school catchment areas are the basis for being in child club (FGD with children) in addition to the age and grade of students as mentioned in table 17 to be eligible for memberships of a club. In another words, girls and boys can be a member of clubs if they study in the same school. There was no fixed personal quality for membership but there is a tendency of selecting members by teachers and NGOs among the students who are more social, friendly and regular in school. The following table shows membership criteria and competency needed for child club executive in my research area (Field Note, 20 May 2012).

Table 20

Membership Criteria of Child Club

Criteria	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Institution		Enrolled in the school	
Residence		Catchment areas of school	
Entrance fee	Rs. 20	Rs. 10	Rs. 5
Personal quality	Not violent	Friendly to all	Regular in school
	Good in learning	Public speaking	Good in learning
	Soft spoken	Engaged in ECA	Has networks

From the table, I conclude that there is no gender, caste, religion, language and ethnic barriers to be member of any child club. The above criteria do not match with the guidelines of CCWB (2007) and, also of MoFALD (MoFALD, 2011). Muna, a child club leader said, "*anyone can be the member of our child club when they are in grade 4 to 10*". In Haratimai child club, president said, "*a child can be a member of our club from the age of ten and continue up to s/he is 18 years*". Originally, this club used to make members from eight to 18 years of age children (Hatemalo, 2004)

Generally, 10 to 18 year age group of children are eligible for child club membership in Sindhupalchok. Each child has to pay Rs.5 to 20 as a membership fee to join clubs during enrollment time annually (Sanimai Rs 20, Thulimai Rs 10 and Setimai Rs. 10). This membership fee is the replication of adult institutions. FGD with child club reveals that Sanimai club also collects levy from each committee member like in political parties in each month.

Club Structure and Mechanism – Mirror of Adult Institutions

The child clubs formed in schools and different wards of the VDCs follow different modalities and membership patterns. The children of the respective ward or school come together in forming a child clubs. The child clubs subsist at three levels such as individual clubs at ward/village/school level, and VDC level network and Ilaka or district level network of child clubs (SCN, 2008). I found a practice that there are from 25 general members to all students of a school. Participants commented that all child clubs copy the norms of adult institutions particularly NGOs structures and positions with 7 to 13 members (FGD with district child club members).

There are a few clubs where the organizational structure of the club differs from the conventional structure found in NGOs like Hatemalo, which has 25 members. Although no organizational policy forces the children to follow this structure, it is

presented as an ideal structure, or one that a good organization should have (CCWB, 2007). Authoritarian adult facilitators who dictate structure and sometimes positions often disturb the participation of children in developing their own ideas.

There is hardly a uniformity found on tenure of executive committee of child clubs. All three clubs expressed their views for 2 years tenure of the executive members (FGD with child clubs in Sindhupalchok). Secretary of Setimai says, "*When we know and be familiar with process and functions of the child clubs, and stakeholders, time comes to leave the clubs for new committee*". There is a practice that, the members who are studying in grade nine and are in the position of the executives should resign from the post when they reach in grade ten for considering his/her School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination. In Sanimai Club, the chairperson was from junior classes such as studying in grade 7/8 by which s/he can be in executive committee for a longer period. The research reveals that there was no problem of handing over the tenure from one committee to another committee in all clubs. I found that there is a tendency to select chairperson among the officials of last executive committee.

Rules and Procedures – Controls Behaviors but Dictated by Adults/NGOs

Few clubs have declared rules, and some have circulated them intending to all members on the school wall. As a child club itself is an induced phenomenon, each agency that is facilitating formation of child club has their own rules. Within the broader guideline of CCWB, DCWBs are making their own guideline for child club formation and facilitation (FGD with CROs). Local bodies under UNICEF supported child friendly local governance programme have their own child club guidelines approved by the council (BM, 2010). The children feel little need for rules and so most of the rules are meaningless. Dipa, Sanimai club member says, "*rules are said to us at the time of formation but we decide based on our need and group discussion*".

There seem to be three types of common rules or code of conduct for child clubs (FGD with CROs 18 June 2013); these are similar to what identified by Rajbhandary et al in 1999. First are the very formal ones, often provided by NGO facilitators who helped in setting up the club. With exception of the fee and attendance of meeting rules, these rules are not familiar with members. The second common types of rules are to control behaviors of members. These rules include 'no speaking while others are speaking in the meetings', 'no eating in the meetings', 'no pushing others' and so on. Some of the behavior control rules pertain to the community or social lifestyles. The third common rule is about regularity in schools and school code of conducts. This vaguely relates to children's learning and school governance.

One notable rule Sanimai Club has is that it does not allow a member to get married until the age of 18. Many clubs even have rules such as not smoking, chewing and gambling (SCN, 2005). Most clubs have these rules written in their register or posted on the wall. Few clubs have a reliable place or space to hang up any rules like Haratimai club hangs them in meeting room. Finally, there are of course many other rules to promote sharing cultures among members, which are informal and just understood by everyone, which are set each year. For instance, any member of Sanimai club who goes for training should brief other members in the next meeting.

The major problem with club rules seems to be that the founding agencies commonly establish regulations that the children do not then feel are theirs to challenge. For instance, Thulimai child club has a rule of paying fine of Rs 5 for not attending a meeting which was set by facilitator. There are many of these rules, processes and regulations that govern the club membership and management (a teacher in Sindhupalchok), but the children do not see these as rules because they were handed

to them as norms in a page. These include fixing membership age, numbers and tenure of executive committee.

Chandani, an expert says, '*there needs to be an honest self critique and clarification by the agencies about the distinction between rules which can be modified by members and those regulations of the club which they would like the club to recognize as part of their agreement with the club*'. However, there are not any written agreement between clubs and facilitating agencies. Tara, the NGO activist says, *"We have limited flexibility and rooms for innovation after appointment of child rights officer in each district as they dictate child club through VCPC in each VDC"*. Lokendra, a former child club leader says, "*Child clubs are made as mini-adult NGOs in term of formation, management, funding and monitoring/reporting*".

There are a very few clear rules, process and mechanism to form child club network at VDC and DDC levels. Most of the networks at VDC, Ilaka and DDC levels know their functions, roles and linkages with VDC and DDC (Field Note, 20 May 2012). I found that the VDC level networks involved in sending notice, assisting and facilitating the child clubs of that area, and building linkages with VDC. The CRO in Sindhupalchok claims, "*district network is quite active and functional as they are facilitated by DCWB and has good linkages with DDC, but we do not have follow up mechanism at VDC level*". In my opinion, school or community based clubs and district level network are active and effective having clear link with concerned institutions but VDC level network is passive due to non-operation of VDC and lack of elected government. Neither NGOs nor schools make efforts to link clubs with WCFs/IPFC.

Annual Plans and Activities – Agenda of NGOs Around ECAs

Before my field visit, I was thinking that children in child clubs sit, discuss and take decisions about what activities to do. However, these ideas often stem from ideas

they have accumulated during the months of interactions, training (e.g. child rights) and
activities they see adult organizations conducting. Chairperson of Thulimai club said,
"*We make our annual plan together with NGOs who are our funder*". It was obvious
that child club prioritizes activities that have funding possibilities from NGOs.

Therefore, while children plan activities largely on their own, they have not
been encouraged to think originally about what they would like to do (Dahal, 2010c).
Nevertheless, there are other activities the child clubs are involved, in which the
children do plan on their own. The table in next page shows a comparative picture of
annual plan of three clubs (Field Note, 28 May 2012):

Table 21

Annual Plan of Child Clubs for 2013

Months	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
April	School enrollment campaign and membership drive		
May	Reformation of club Farewell of Grade 10 students	Annual plan Sport week for each level	Annual Meeting Welcome new students
June	Approval of annual plan	Reformation of club	New committee formation
July	Health and sanitation campaign	Health education Street drama	First aid training Street drama
August	ECA: quiz contest	ECA: oratory contest	Drawing and Poem
September	Dashain greetings	Study tour and Dashain greetings	Handwriting exercise for early grades
October	Deusibhailo	Fund raising deusi	Deusibhailo
November	Cultural programme	Sports week	Sadanwise song contest
December		Winter vacation	
January	Sports week	Cultural program	Saraswoti puja
February	Sadanwise ECA	Level wise ECA	Child rights debate
March		Examination	

The table indicates that all child clubs are focusing their activities mostly on
ECA and sports. Only Setimai child club has a plan to have child rights debate in
school. They have few common programmes like student enrollment, annual meeting,
and formation of new committee. Deusibhailo is a common fundraising programme for

child club. Muna, a club leader says, "*Deusi gives a earning for a year to run our programme as NGOs only provides prizes for ECA*". Chakra, HT says, "*We use child club deusibhailo as a strategy to collect fund for school and club to buy ECA and sports materials*". None of the club's annual plan includes intervention for improving their teaching learning processes, quality improvement and school governance. They also provide scholarship and first aid support to needy children but that has not been included in annual plan. This gives an impression that child club annual plan is for NGO support not for their regular activities.

In all clubs comprised in my study, they run activities such as organizing different competitions like street drama, quiz contest, song, essay writing, debate, poem, football and volleyball. The winners of the competition are awarded for which most of the clubs manage the fund with the support from NGO/schools/ and VDCs (Sanimai club). Last year, these clubs conducted awareness raising programme on various issues such as enrollment campaigns, rights of the children with disability, and activities to stop alcohol and playing cards, improve sanitation, as well as promoting the rights of the children in the community through interactions, rally and street drama through NGO support (FGD with children). However, these interventions were not included in their annual plans.

Club members are found actively involved in planning and effectively implementing extracurricular activities in the schools. Rina, the Head Teacher of Sanimai School proudly shares, "*All extracurricular activities in my school are run by child clubs*". There is recognition of clubs and their capacities in making school better as all three SMCs and PTAs invite club representatives in their meetings. A teacher from Thulimai highlights, "c*hild club was able to negotiate with SMC for giving child*

friendly training to all teachers in school and to stop corporal punishment". He further

shares, "*club members are more disciplined and socially active than non- members*".

In the areas of child protection, some of the child clubs are involved in raising

issues of child marriage and child labor in their communities. A parent from Thulimai

School claims, "*Marriage of a 16-year out of school girl was stopped by VCPC with a*

campaign from child club". Children are also concerned with climate change and

environment protection. Sanimai HT adds, "*our child club is working with community*

forestry group to do plantation in school compound". Children shared that they are

successful in planting and protecting tress to grow in schools but it is extremely

difficult in the community.

Club members support school going young children to complete their home

works by conducting child-to-child morning classes known as remedial class. The out

of schoolchildren also do attend these morning classes. The higher graded students who

facilitate these classes shared that they are facing problems of time management and

getting material support from NGOs for their own education (FGD with child club

leaders). A girl facilitator of Thulimai club shared, "*parents send their small children in*

the morning class but they are reluctant to send their grownups to help younger

children and to work as facilitators saying it disturb their studies".

I was surprised to notice that none of the child club's annual plan is included in

school improvement plan and annual school calendar in Sindhupalchok. Except to

advocate for child friendly teachers training and removing sticks from schools, these

clubs are not working with schools to improve their learning achievement and life skill

education. The remedial classes were not coordinated with schools. While asking about

child club roles in school management and classroom pedagogies, neither teachers nor

students had any agenda or idea to work together. Even though child clubs received

training from NGOs, there is a strong need of joint planning and cooperation between schools, child clubs and facilitating NGOs to build learning competencies of students in each grade and level.

Management of Meetings – Endorsement of Adults' Agenda

While observing two clubs meeting, I found that children run their club meetings entirely by themselves, especially the chairperson or secretary leads the meeting. The club decides meeting schedules and times at the beginning of a club's formation by the NGO facilitators (FGD with children). Adults, mainly facilitators not the schoolteachers, are commonly present to bring agenda and issues. In most cases, the adult is a male and boys ask him for advice. Their inputs are usually limited to advice on organizational issues, new information and way to run programmes. Contrarily to this, I saw in Setimai Club where authoritarian adult facilitator dominates the club meetings with his agenda and children are passive listeners shaking their heads for agreement. This facilitation does not bring innovation and confidents among children.

The meeting process generally follows the sequence of recording the attendance in minute book, reviewing the agenda and then group discussion for final decision. The facilitator and teacher talk each other and suggest in the meeting, which are mostly accepted by club members without any questions. Here I see the power relationship and hierarchy of adults regulate clubs' functions. Child clubs in Sindhupalchok are yet to reach in a stage to manage and lead its activities by children themselves. HT of Setimai says, "*Child club needs guidance during meeting to set agenda, follow meeting process and finalize minutes*". Rina from Sanimai argues, "*Child club can conduct their own meetings for ECA but teacher should guide them on issues related to school*". A child club leader said, "*If teacher does not present in the meeting, we will stuck on decisions as so many issues are of classroom and school administration*".

Roles of facilitator are more directive rather enabling children to bring out issues, discuss among themselves and take appropriate decision and actions. Hence, my conclusion is similar to the findings of midterm review of child clubs (SCN, 2005) that adult facilitators guide child clubs in a directive mode. The roles and functions of Consortium to build competencies of club facilitators through trainings and publication do not exist in the clubs I studied for this purpose of research. The roles of adult facilitators as scaffolders are yet to introduce and practice in most of the clubs.

Management of Clubs - Monopoly of Committee Members

There is a tendency for the repeated small group of elected child leaders of the club to run club programmes, other members are just passive observers or participants. A child club leader said, "*We divide roles among committee members to conduct programmes in our school*". However, in some social events such as weekly clean-ups, the cleaning of taps, rallies, street drama and games are run for children of each grade generally from grade 4 onwards. Community level activities of special days such as school enrollment week, polio immunization day or children's day are sometimes self-initiated and sometimes suggested or managed by adults (Field Note, 12 June 2012).

As the clubs evolve, it seems that the degree of self-initiation of activities increases. Secretary of Sanimai club said, "*We allocate tasks in each event from grade 4 and above*". The clubs commonly have system for checking members' interests and sometimes a rotation for sharing responsibilities among members. Chairperson of Thulimai club claims, "w*e rotate roles in each grade for organizing event*". They cited an example of organizing extracurricular activities once a month turn by turn from grade six to ten. In Sindhupalchok, the children from different clubs within a Village Development Committee (VDC) share their plans with VDC level child-club network and finally submit their plans to VDC for funding.

In my opinion, there is a domination of child club leaders in leading the schoolchild club activities. The role of teacher or NGO facilitator is crucial to make inclusive and participatory plans and implementation mechanism of child clubs like in the Thulimai. There is a danger that talent members (students) actively participate in different competitions like quiz contest, poem competition, debate and essay writing but those who are weak in their study step down in participating such competitions. I was disappointed analyzing the child club plans and activities conduction in Setimai child club, where there are no plans for early grade children. Children of ECD to grade three go home a little earlier when there is child club programmes in schools are still running as there are no activities remain for these early grade children.

Training Opportunities – Adults' Biased Selection

There is great interest in the special training workshops offered to the children. However, with an exception at Haratimai club, in all other clubs a teacher or the NGO staff selects child club representatives for training and workshops where child clubs rarely decide on it. When only a few and selected ones can attend them because they are held outside of their community (FGD with child club members), a child club leader in Sindhupalchok reaffirms, "*always chairperson is selected for trainings, workshops and meetings*". In line with it, a student in Sindhupalchok commented, "*teachers always choose talented students in any opportunities*". A girl from Setimai stressed on the gender equality saying "*as much as possible to send both a boy and a girl when two children are invited from a club*". A member of an NGO said, "*We need to rely on judgment of teachers*". Other members in FGD agreed to make more inclusive and participatory selection process in future with follow up and sharing mechanism in school.

In my opinion, all children would like to get opportunity attending training and workshops where they get practical knowledge and skills. There is a notable tradition with Sanimai child club where the Head Teacher says, "a *child club member after returning from training or workshop will speak key points in the morning assembly and share among club members in the next meeting including materials provided in the training*". I too agree with HT of Sanimai School to do a sharing culture and mechanism with all students when a club member represents school in any event outside school. This is the way to socialize children in democratic system and norms and to increase responsiveness of child club leaders towards their members.

A Child Rights Officer in Sindhupalchok demands, "*we need child rights orientation to all children and parents but NGOs provide opportunity to only for one to two children from a club*". Education officer adds, "*children need communication, negotiation and social skills but these are not in the priority of development agencies*". Here, I rather see a mismatch between local training needs for child club members and training delivered to them. It was surprising to note that child rights officer complained, "*DCWBs do not have resources to work on their mandates*". This is an evidence of low political will and commitment from policy makers and the State on child rights issues.

The training and workshops to child clubs are organized on the issues and topics particularly on whatever social mobilizers have learnt and or trained with (SCS, 2005). Child clubs raised their training needs like analyzing children's issues at local level, social and communication skills, power relationship and sharing skills between children and adults, rights and responsibility of children, alternative ways of solving the problems, decision making, in-depth life skill issues and negotiation skills (FGD with child club members). These are not still on the agenda and priority of NGOs as they focus on their own agenda rather than children's agenda and priorities.

Monitoring of Child Clubs – None Seemed to Respond

At the present time, monitoring of child club is carried out by adults from the development agencies, and reported to their superiors (SCN, 2006). This is entirely inadequate and inappropriate to the participatory spirit of the children's clubs. Social mobilizer or facilitators hired by NGOs are authorized to facilitate day to day functions of child clubs, organize trainings, support in child clubs' meeting where children plan activities and supervise and follow up implementation and monitoring (FGD with NGO activists). CCWB (2007) guideline suggests that child clubs as self-managing institutions and need to be self-monitoring ones.

There is a provision of having monthly meeting and sharing the decision to all members. The guideline also makes a provision of keeping record of income and expenses of club and report back its overall progress against annual plan to annual general meeting once a year. Chairperson of Haratimai club surprised with me when asking their reports and meeting minutes and said "*no one monitor our works and files except NGO staff*". A teacher of Sanimai School affirms '*we all are with child clubs, so, what to monitor from us*". The concept of self-monitoring does not exist even in such schools. When the child rights officer said "*children are children we cannot make them accountable*", it contradicts with a notion of generational change through child clubs (SCN, 1995) and democratization of the schools and society (Dewey, 1916). To answer this concern, an Education officer comments saying, "*SMC and HT should monitor the child clubs activities*" where as the education act does not give this mandates, and this remains a big gap. Education rules of 2002 clearly asserts that club activities related to quality improvement in school falls under the jurisdiction of PTAs.

With these analysis and statements, I interpret that child clubs' activities are monitored neither by club members, schools nor from higher authorities. This leaves a

danger of making children being arrogant and irresponsible as their accountability is not taught and socialized in their own clubs.

Problems and Challenges of Child Clubs

Child clubs as children's agency have also faced many challenges and problems on its formation, management, and operation. There were many fears amongst the NGO staff like, 'the children stay until late at night for club activities', or 'the club takes too much of the children's time'. A mother in Setimai comments, "*Child clubs put children away from study time in school and even it took so much time from their work at home*". In addition, when children attend workshops or training away from their community, particularly at district headquarters and in Kathmandu centers, they would miss a few days of school. Older siblings and mothers who sometimes have to do a little extra work do not seem to have resulted in any resentment whenever the children are busy with school and club work. Now, I will present and discuss the challenges and problems of child clubs perceived and expressed by my research participants:

Non-inclusive Membership and Biased Selection in Executive Committee

Respondents reported few problems relating to formation and management of child clubs. NGOs and HTs claim that those who are interested to be in child clubs are welcome both in membership and executive committees. However, a girl studying in 9th grade, who represents Dalit origin said, "*They excluded me to be the secretary as they do not pay attention to involve children from each caste, religion, ethnicity and language group*". Muna, a club leader, further claims, "*facilitators' do not inspire girls to take key positions as they are shy in taking roles and responsibilities, but boys are more vocal putting their claim for positions*". Due to lack of child club guideline from the Ministry of Education, engagement of all/different age group of children including inclusion of children with disability and minority groups in child club does not exist.

This has also created confusions on roles and structures of child clubs including its membership and selection of executive members.

NGOs' Unhealthy Competition and Lack of Resources

There is an unfavorable competition among child rights agencies to form and name child clubs like Thulimai School had two child clubs for the first three years. Similarly, the Head Teacher of Sanimai said, "*We were also approached by two NGOs to form child club in our school but we accepted the proposal from local NGO*". She further says, "*Kathmandu based NGO did follow up with few books to form another club, but we denied saying one is enough*". In absence of clear policy and resources from government side, there is a poor understanding and communication among stakeholders about the roles and functions of child clubs.

Lokendra, a former child club leader says, "*School and VDC should allocate budget for establishment and reformation of child club and its activities to avoid duplication or resource constraints*". A teacher from Setimai said, "*There is a fashion among actors to form child club without proper plan and follow up action to enable them as an active partner of school*". Due to donors dependency and projectized approached of child clubs; there is an unhealthy competition among NGOs in claiming the number of their child clubs without having a long-term support strategies and plans.

Projectization of Child Clubs

Problems are not only formation of child clubs, but also its facilitation and mobilization. Children and teachers are frustrated with NGOs. A club leader of Setimai shared his frustration saying, "*NGO reduced support to our club saying this VDC is phased out from their donor project.*" Kabita, a student of grade four in Sanimai says, "*NGOs gives support only for ECA demanded by higher grade students not for early grade children like us*". Tara, an NGO activist agreed that child clubs are suffering

from project syndrome. She further says, "*We are guided by project money. If we do not have projects we cannot support clubs*". A teacher in Sanimai comments, "*NGOs support for child club is like a flood in rainy seasons when there is project, they it becomes dry*". Other teachers in the FGD suggested that government should support for formation and institutional of clubs not just from NGOs. There is a tendency to have child club meeting when NGO facilitator comes. Keshav, a student confirms, "*NGO staff comes to run our meeting based on their programmes*". Furthermore, Rina, HT of Sanimai reconfirms, "*we are not trained on child club management and facilitation so we depend on NGO staff*".

With these statements, I conclude that many child clubs do not meet regularly; club activities do not target and engage to all grade students, NGOs and their budget dictate the selection of club activities and girls are less regular in meeting. Students do have little voice on selection of teacher for the club facilitation except in Sanimai club where students select a teacher on annual basis. Sanimai club keeps financial record on their own as it used to be done by teacher before 2009, but still other two clubs are dependent to teachers. I too observed that a teacher or the chairperson of the club sets agenda and makes decisions.

Mis-communication within Clubs, and between Clubs and Schools

A school does not easily provide separate rooms or cupboard for keeping child clubs information and materials (Field Note, 6 April 2012). Bookkeeping and accounting of club's income and expenditures are still not transparent. Students complain for not having regular interactions with child club leaders and school management on their issues and needs of students.

I noted poor communication and coordination exist in all clubs between working committee and general members. The domination of boys and higher-grade

students on agenda setting is common in club's annual plan/budget. Girls show their concerns that most of the clubs' interventions are boys centric like volleyball, football and cricket. A ninth grader girl said, "*We are just observers for clapping boys but not participating in sports*".

Children raised few issues on club functioning. They include (Field Note, 3 June 2012) over-activeness of older age and upper grade children, lack of orientation and coaching for new committee formed each year, not having regular budget from schools, limited engagement of SMC and PTA on clubs activities. Furthermore, HT/SMC/PTA ignores children's views in decision-making process. Students complain for not getting equal opportunities for training and exposure as teachers select students on their own without consulting child club. I observe that there is no formal linkages and communication between children and child clubs, club and school administration, and with local government. Club depends to NGOs for stationery and logistic arrangement including for keeping records of plans, budgets and reports.

Priority of NGOs' Agenda in Child Clubs and in Schools

Child club needs a continuous support from NGOs to build capacities of members, and to facilitate their activities. Rina, the HT of Sanimai commented, "*NGOs support us on their agenda not on our priority.*" Similarly, Chakra, the HT of Thulimai says, "*NGOs ask children to demand and raise issues in school which we cannot provide*". He shared one case where students demanded introduction of English medium of teaching from grade one to five immediately without any support for teacher preparation and English textbooks. Later on school in consultation with NGOs and RP, started English medium from grade one.

A teacher comments, "*NGOs directly deal with children whom we do not know*". A head teacher shared his frustration that NGOs are not transparent with child

clubs and with us in school. He further said, "*We do not know how much money they spend in the name of our child club but they ask us to make school financial report public*". Hari, DEO said, "*inclusion of child club representatives in social audit committee has made school administration alert and transparent*". A SMC chair said, "*We receive more support from parents when children know the school improvement plans and transparent system of making income and expenditure of school*".

In my view, schools having child clubs are more transparent, participatory and collaborative (Fletcher, 2005). This ultimately leads to good governance in schools with engagement of children (Fielding, 2006). For this to happen, students and teachers demand NGOs as a facilitator to be more open, transparent, participatory and responsible with schools. It is vital that children take part in decision-making body at local levels as it provides new kinds of political agencies, social relations and even societal change (O'Kane, 2007). Previous research (Chawla, 1999, 2002; Driskell, 2002) has indicated that child participation seldom emerges on its own. On the contrary, it needs systematic support, continuity and persistent application of dynamic enabling techniques. To happen this, club requires emotional and intellectual resources, as well as social structures that allow young people to navigate in the adult world.

Concluding the Chapter

The evolution of child club was slow during the first few years but it gained considerable momentum during the latter half of the decade in 1990s. While the child clubs emerged as an INGO phenomenon, it was quickly picked up by the government and communities as a shield to protect children's' right to education against growing conflict in the country that had almost paralyzed operation of schools.

Children and child clubs got recognition as a social actor and their views are heard in principle. As a result, children are gradually raising their voices and concerns

through a formal channel in schools and local bodies. This was possible only with some policy reforms such as child friendly school guidelines in 2010, child friendly local governance national strategy in 2011 and national children's policy in 2012. However, there are still no standard structures, procedures, rules and management mechanisms established for running a child club in schools and communities.

Documentation of evolutionary processes of child clubs in Nepal and the analysis of perceptions of stakeholders reveal very important outcomes. Child clubs are active in promoting child rights and participation of children in social and cultural activities in the society. For example, club is instrumental in building confidence among children to raise their voice to safeguard their rightful space in the society; and stopping socio-cultural malpractices such as child marriages, gender violence, open defecation, and abusive practices such as child labor, sexual abuse and exploitation.

There are many examples where clubs have evolved as full-fledged NGO over the years. This trend suggests that the clubs in several communities have empowered children to develop some entrepreneurial skills as well. When it comes to their educational objectives, there is still more work to do although there are only few key challenges and problems in child clubs, and about child participation. They include non-inclusive and closed membership distribution processes, adults' biased selection in membership, key positions and participation in training and workshop. Furthermore, lack of clarity among actors, unavailability of resources, projectized approach of child clubs, poor capacity among NGOs facilitator to facilitate child club and weak communication among child clubs, school and parents are hindering the meaningful participation of children in schools.

CHAPTER VI

DISCOVERING ROLES AND CONTRIBUTION OF CHILD CLUBS

This chapter addresses my two research questions (RQ 2 and RQ 3). The RQ 2 deals with perceptions and understandings of stakeholders on child clubs and the RQ 3 is about roles and values of child clubs and its contribution on children's learning and school governance. I have divided this chapter into three sections. First section presents the findings and discussions on perceptions and understanding of stakeholders on child clubs. The second section deals on roles and values of child clubs. The third section consists of three sub-sections dealing with overall contributions of child clubs; children's learning and socialization; and school governance. Moreover, I have analyzed the empirical data with relevant theories and policy frameworks.

Perceptions and Understanding of Child clubs

Various child rights stakeholders perceive and understand child clubs in a different way based on their understanding, interactions, exposures and experiences with child clubs and their activities. The UNCRC underlines that children have civil and political rights including rights to assembly, to freedom of thought and to information (UNICEF, 2002a). SC (2012) advocates that child participation enables children as rights holders to claim their rights and hold government accountable to their actions. This is about building partnership between children and state structures by recognizing children as agents of change. The following section presents and discusses the perceptions and understandings of multiple stakeholders on child clubs:

Perceptions of Child Clubs

Stakeholders perceive child clubs in their own way based on the understanding and exposure to its activities in their surroundings. Research participants viewed that

child club as such is an induced phenomenon in Nepal by development agencies. The child clubs formed by NGOs are now gradually moving towards DCWBs after 2005 with a process of affiliation (CCWB, 2006). It was interesting that Thulimai School had two child clubs formed by two different NGOs in two different times within the same school was merged in 2007 after the CCWB brought a child participation policy.

The following table summarizes the perceptions of children, parents, teachers, NGOs and authorities on child clubs in Sindhupalchok (Field Note, 6 June 2012).

Table 22

Stakeholders' Perceptions on Child Clubs

Stakeholders	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Children	• Our own group to learn new things, skills and knowledge • An agency that gives recognition and respect from adult and their institutions • An organizer of extra-curricular activities	• A forum to raise common voices or concerns • A friend for guidance to children and also helping each other's in need • A learning place for social skills and leadership	• A safeguard from abuse, exploitation and violence in school and communities • A forum to build confidence and to flourish potentialities (hidden treasure)
Teachers/HT	• A helping hand in classroom and schools • Initiator of child friendly teaching • A fund raiser for school • An avenue for teachers and students to get exposure and new knowledge • A tool to socialization	• A forum for self-discipline among students • A bridge between administration and students • A platform to build child capabilities • A media to circulate different news and information	• An agency of children for their collective voices • An environment creator for learning and socialization • A guide for younger children • A promoter of rights and duties
Parents SMC/PTA	• A facilitator of extra-curricular activities in their school and community • A helping hand in making school clean and maintaining school disciplines • An informant for new knowledge/news • A source of info in taking better decisions	• A mirror of school democracy • A watch dog of school activities and teachers' duties • A helping hand to reduce drop out of students and improve school environment • A collective demand of children	• An active member of the school management • A forum for listening collective voices of children and their concerns • A means to aware parents on their rights and duties

Stakeholders	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
NGOs	• A monitor for child rights violation and teachers regularities • An advocate of rights for marginalized children • A negotiator and relationship builder in dealing with conflict • An organization of children making them responsible and disciplined • A place for networking with child rights organizations • An organizer of social events for/by children		
Authorities	• A group of children for learning new things and skills • A forum for learning democratic norms and disciplines and team spirit • A place and forum to enhance children's talents through ECA • A representative of children to school management • A source of information about child rights violation		

The table presents a diverse picture of stakeholders' perceptions on child clubs. This includes a learning forum for children to watch dog of school for NGOs. Many stakeholders define and perceive child club linking with their duties and responsibility. Mostly these perceptions revolve around agency, belonging, competency, democracy and empowerment of children through child clubs. Furthermore, they have taken child club as a source of information and bridge between schools and communities.

Children take child clubs as an agency to safeguard their rights. Child club leaders have strongly perceived child clubs that bring a collective voice to claim their rights from adults and institutions including in schools. Teachers take child clubs as their helping hand in school activities and a source of funding for school and exposures to children's overall development. SMCs/PTAs take child club as a school actor and their source of information to make informed and better decisions. NGOs take child club as a forum to discuss rights of children and duties of adults. It further promotes child clubs to make a collective voice on their issues with SMC and local bodies.

Understanding of Child Clubs- Vague Meaning among Stakeholders

Child clubs are primarily a common place for children to meet, share and discuss their issues, and take some social actions and activities including sports. However, as children started taking part in different social activities and programmes in school and communities, many terms and understandings have emerged to refer to a

child club. Muna, the club leader refers, *"child club is an institution of children where we plan, discuss and work for common goal to achieve our rights"*. Shiva, chair of Thulimai club adds, *"club is a forum for children coming together that discusses children's rights and issues at local and national levels like child labor, child marriage and child care/health, share experience and learn from each other and enjoy free times by playing games, writing poems, social activities, and so on"*. Gita, a 17-year Dalit girl and a member of district club network claims, "a *club is our common forum to learn and to collect our issues and concerns so that we can make collective voices in adult institutions like school for our rights"*. These statements from child club leaders remind me that child club has been a collective voice of children as an agency, belonging and competency building (Mitra, 2004). Child club also has been a source of information and socialization about their rights and responsibilities.

Sanju, a former child club leader and researcher says, *"child club is a group of children coming together and playing, sharing their concerns, sorrows and happiness, discussing and working for a common cause"*. Hari, an education official calls it as, *"an organization of children for their learning and development"*. A parent in Sindhupalchok says, "*A meeting point for children to play and enjoy*". A teacher in Sanimai said, "*Child club is a right of children to associate for making voices in society collectively"*. View of child rights officer in Sindhupalchok matches with the view of the teacher, he says, "*child club is a tool for child participation as a right"*. This is the common view of stakeholders on child clubs.

> Box 2
> **Child Club- A Platform of Children**
> *Narendra, an NGO activist said that in his context, child club was a platform of students and children to talk about their issues in schools and societies, to discuss and get solution from their levels and to get engaged in their own social and extracurricular activities that they enjoyed and thought are beneficial to them. "I am able to take this leadership position because of my learning and experiences on social and life skill education in the club," he further narrates.*

These statements show that people have different definitions and understandings of child clubs. Children and child clubs leaders have also used the same terms commonly found in documents and adults' discourses related to children and child clubs. They define child club as a common platform of children coming together to share, discuss and act on common issues and concerns (Hart, 1992; Lansdown, 2001; Mitra, 2008) and also have a fun.

During the interview, teacher and CRO regarded child club as a forum, which seriously deals with children's right issues and other social problems with adults that directly influence children. Chandani, an expert said, "*child club is a tool for child rights agencies in promoting child participation*". Whatever terms are being used to refer to a child club, all respondents both children and adults took the club as a means of getting awareness on rights and change in their lives, a means of learning new knowledge and social skills through group discussions and participation in various activities and programmes.

In addition to this, these children viewed, "the clubs have been a good place for meeting with new friends, sharing experiences, having fun and enjoyment through a number of games, learning a number of social issues related to children, enriching their potentialities and also building self-confidence and leadership skills". All child rights officers and education officials of central region said that child clubs are particularly important to promote children's rights and child friendly learning environment in schools (Field Note, 6 April 2012) but not on school governance and socialization.

Narendra, who joined a child club in 1997 as a member, now leads a child rights NGO. He proudly shares, "*I became social leader due to my engagement in child clubs where I knew about my rights and competencies*". Kamal, a child rights expert claims as "*Nepal has, I believe, the best models of child clubs across the world working for*

promoting children's rights, particularly the right to participate, and other social issues by making adults and institutions accountable and responsive". This way, the meaning of the clubs in Nepalese context is similar to other countries of South Asia where existence of child clubs is equivalent to child participation (O'Kane, 2006).

Child Club Means Child Participation

The roles of child clubs are diverse as shown in the table 22. However, it has not been capitalized in all child clubs. A teacher in Sindhupalchok said, "c*hild club is for child participation and child rights orientation*" where a parent further supports this view saying, "*child participation is gathering of children to discuss about their rights*". Hence, there is a long way to go educating children and their parents on values of child rights and child participation.

GoN has made few policies including CFS in 2010 and CFLG in 2011 stating the criteria and procedures to form and mobilize child clubs in schools and local government structures as a means for their participation. However, I found that these polices have not reached to the stakeholders. Even my research participants and schools including the Haratimai child club, which is within 5 km from Singhadurbar – Nepal's central governing headquarters, have not received such policy benefits. There was also a similar finding about limited access and availability of education policies among education stakeholders like schools, resource centers and district education offices (Parajuli, Thapa, Dangal, Dahal, Bhattarai & Jha, 2012). There is a long way to materialize the vision of UNCRC for making collective voices of children in decision-making process on the matters that affects their life (Article 12).

It was revealed that child rights institutions are not proactive to promote and materialize rights of children especially their rights to participation. A CRO says, "*we do not have resources and people to go to different schools and VDCs to form and*

mobilize child clubs". An education officer adds, "*we are still not able to train all teachers, how can we prioritize child clubs*". I interpret that child clubs were the priority of the State neither in the past nor at present in Nepal, which leaves them still as the babies of I/NGOs. Despites some policy changes, the mentality of government officials still prevail and treat children as innocent, incomplete and dependent 'human becoming' towards a mature stage (Lee, 2001) not as 'human beings'.

There seemed a significant shift in formation and mobilization of child clubs in schools and communities. One decade ago, child clubs were in schools of urban areas and in communities of rural areas (Rajbhandary et al., 1999). This is not the scenario at present as child clubs are both in schools and communities of rural and urban areas but depending on the access and efforts of development agencies mostly I/NGOs (Poudyal, 2003). However, I found that child clubs are instrumental to increase awareness on child rights among children, and parents (FGD with district child club network members). I assume stakeholders developed child clubs as an effective means for child participation. There is still a myth among actors that child participation is child club.

Latest Entry into State Structures

There lacks a formal legal provision that allows children to have a proper voice in state mechanism and adults are responsible for that. Nevertheless, as I have also described in chapter four, child participation has already entered into the formal structures of schools, local bodies and child rights agencies. There are more than 80,000 children already represented in more 40,000 ward citizen forums (MoFALD, 2012), 1277 VDCs, 17 Municipalities and 45 DCWBs (CCWB, 2011). A child right expert says, "*Government welcomes child participation in policy formulation but does not accept in State structure formally for its effective implementation of basic service delivery like education*". He further says that line ministries have seen value of

children's views but legal authorities are always rigid with citizenship age for representation, not for their maturity and competencies.

It was surprising to know that all three-child clubs' representatives under my study in Sindhupalchok are invited in SMC/PTA meetings. Furthermore, 20 VDCs invite VDC level child club network's representatives in VDC council and district network is invited in DCWB meeting and DDC council (DCWB Sindhupalchok, 2013). One education officer informs, "*representatives of students are formally invited as member of PTA to improve transparency in schools and quality of education*".

Rina, HT Sanimai School opinions, "*SMC started discussing quality education and children's issues in the SMC meeting when child club representatives are invited*". The chairperson of Setimai club (16 years girl) appreciates, "*I am together with a boy from nearby child club invited in the meeting of ward citizen forum twice a year*'. A district child club network member confirms, "*I am invited in VDC council and our VDC allocates 10% of its budget to our plans as per local government policy which was not the case last year*". With all these practices, I conclude that child participation has entered into state structures and mechanism including in schools as a norm.

Recognition as Children's Agency

Agency is the ability to initiate action of choice, reflected as creative production where people's activity can be a source of change (Prout & James, 1997). Recognizing children's agency means children as a capable of independent interpretation and action (Lee, 2001). Wyness (2005) further stresses that agency does not simply liberate children but also opens up possibilities for hearing children, consulting and working with them and creating new spaces for their contributions. Agency in a child development context indicates the ability to exert influence and power in a given situation. It connotes a sense of confidence, a sense of self-worth, and the belief that

one can do something, whether contributing to society with large or to a specific situation (Hammarberg, 2009).

Within this theoretical framework, my research participants in the focus group discussions share their views about understanding and recognition of child clubs in Sindhupalchok. Muna, a child club leader said: "*An agency that gives recognition and respect from adult and their institutions*". Sanju, a former child club leader says, "*An agency of children for their collective voices*". A teacher viewed, "*A body to help school administration and build child capabilities*". A head teacher said, "*An active member of the school management*". A SMC member understands, "*A forum for listening collective voices of children and their concerns*". A PTA member recalls, "*An advocate of child rights and child protection*". A CRO says, "*A representative of children to raise their voices collectively with adult institutions*". An Education officer views, "*A forum for practicing democratic norms and disciplines*".

The above statements further highlight circumstances that children's agency come into play in social actions. This includes understanding of childhood, the daily lived experiences of children in child clubs, their experiences and understandings, their interactions with each other and with adults in various kinds, their strategies and tactics of actions (James & James, 1998). Children are also important part of society and they can contribute to social development if adults listen to their voices. Voice is an expression of agency and voice and agency serve complementary to each other (Pufall & Unsworth, 2004) since giving more and more chance to children to raise their voice to make decision on their behalf is to enrich their agency, which in turn ensures their voices in decision-making process of schools. Child clubs seem to have empowered children to make their voices in decision-making process of schools and local bodies (FGD with children). They organize extracurricular activities of schools/clubs on their

own. They also decide on, and go to the adult institutions in order to ensure their voices properly heard in making decisions like in WCFs.

Representation of child clubs in SMCs, WCFs and VDC meeting signify that children will have all three conditions (agency, belonging and competency) for a collective voice in adult institutions that affected the life of children in schools and communities. According to Mitra (2009), an increase in agency among club members also leads to efficacy. In my view, club members are able to define new roles for themselves as well as they push the school to redefine and to make school more child friendly in respecting their agency, democratic roles and claiming their rights.

Making Children Disciplined and Responsive

School discipline is the system of rules, punishments, and behavioral strategies appropriate to the regulation of students and teachers and maintenance of order in schools (Seligman & Reichenberg, 2010). Its aim is to control the school stakeholders mostly students' actions and behavior both negatively and positively. A CRO views, "*child club uses positive approach and builds good relationships between teachers and students*". Teacher as a facilitator of child club can instill in students a sense of responsibility (O'Kane, 2006) by using partnerships with students to develop, share and monitor the classroom rules and school code of conducts (Fletcher, 2005).

There was strong argument of my research participants that children associated with child clubs are more disciplined and confident (FGD with child club leaders). The head teacher of Sanimai says "*children are more responsible and disciplined when they are in child clubs*". Similarly, a parent adds, "*I am surprised to see my son supporting in household chores when he became a member of school child club*". A child club member claims, "*I used to be afraid of speaking in front of a teacher, but now I can put my views respectfully with anyone if I get a chance*". These views are similar with the

findings of Fielding (2006), Fletcher (2005), Lansdown (2010) and Mitra (2004)). In addition to Mitra's argument about strengthening the assets of agency, belonging and competency among students through participation, I argue that it makes students and children more democratic to be disciplined and responsive. It empowers children to claim their rights and make local institutions responsible to deliver service in child friendly manner. Here I conclude that when children are associated with any groups or clubs, they are more responsible, self-disciplined, confident and empowered.

Roles and Values of Child Clubs –Diverse Understanding

Mitra (2007) argued that child clubs are instrumental to avoid interpretation of meaning from adults' perspective. When adults analyzed the data, they translated 'student speak' into adult words that did not always have the same meaning. A former child club member claims, "*I became chairperson of a national youth organization due to my exposure, learning, socialization and leadership opportunity that I gained in child club*". After the ratification of 1989 UNCRC, across nations schools are promoting transparent, engaging relationships between adults and students in schools by engaging young people in designing, implementing, assessing, advocating, and making decisions about schools and their learning (Fletcher, 2005). All members of the community value child clubs with its multiple roles to children, parents and schools. The following are the elaboration of major findings on multiple roles played by child clubs and its values/benefits to stakeholders:

Source of Information to Parents/SMC

Child club contributes to a shift in thinking about how child participation can contribute, not only to improving the situation of children, but also to a more healthy, just and democratic world for all. This also brings child club as a good communicator between schools and parents. Because of child club activities, parents visit respective

schools more frequently as a parent in Setimai adds, "*we are more interested visiting schools as our own children invite us to attend the child club activities*". The HT in Thulimai affirms, "*parents were afraid of coming to school when invited by schools but are happy with children's invitation*". Children are bridging schools and parents.

I too found that children associated with child club have developed interpersonal communication skills, which ease them to communicate to their parents and teachers. A SMC member of Setimai in FGD shares, "*child club has been a bridge and a communicator between schools and parents to circulate different school news and information*". Another SMC member appreciates "*most parents of this village came to school for voter registration when information about voter registration and its value was discussed with children*". A mother from Dalit community acknowledges, "*my son told me the value of voting in upcoming election for a new constitution so I came to register my name*". An NGO activist asserts, "c*hild club has been a tool for educating parents about their rights and duties*". A PTA member highlights, "*my daughter asked me to attend mothers' group meeting to claim budget for women from VDC when she knew it from child club*".

While holding the FGD with child club leaders in Sindhupalchok (Field Note, 12 June 2012), they made a long list of new knowledge and information they shared with their parents. These include: i) Rights of children and duties of parents; ii) SMCs/PTA meeting dates and agenda; iii) dates and times of various mobile camps in villages including health camp, voter registration, citizenship distribution, immunization; iv) various workshops and trainings like women rights, reproductive health, organic farming, offseason vegetable farming; v) dates and times of various meetings like WCFs, consumer committees; vi) personal safety and hygiene including hand washing, first aid and earthquake safety; and, vii) criteria for various benefits and

entitlements. Parents also highlight the values and benefits of interactions with their children and child clubs. A parent claims, "*sometime we know from them about the schedules, criteria and processes of getting various benefits and entitlements from the State*". He further shared that recently he was able to make senior citizen ID card with the support of his grandson and became eligible receiving allowance from next year.

Because of having networks, exposures, trainings and interfaces with different organizations, child clubs and children are becoming source of information for parents about various events, activities and social works. In my view, child clubs are being recognized by parents as change agent and source of new information in the society.

Learning Team Work and Socialization

Mitra (2004) argues that belonging is one of the three assets of student participation. It promotes team spirit and teamwork. Teamwork is defined as those behaviors that facilitate effective team member interactions. Furthermore, team is defined as a group of two or more individuals who perform some work related task, interact with one another dynamically, have a shared past, have a foreseeable-shared future, and share a common fate. A child club leader says, "*Child club promotes teamwork and enhances team performance*". FGD with children concludes that it is useful for improving cognitive outcomes, affective outcomes, teamwork processes, and performance outcomes, which are similar with the findings of Fielding (2007), Fletcher (2005), and Mitra (2006).

A member of district club network says, "*Children like to play together in a team and learn from each other*". Child club organizes both social and learning activities. Sita, a child club member claimed that her child club runs social activities include play, sports and cultural activities. These activities are essential to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional wellbeing of children (MoE, 2009). Child

club organizes various activities that provide opportunities to children for physical (running, jumping, climbing), intellectual (social skills, community norms, ethics and general knowledge) and emotional development (empathy, compassion, and friendships) (FGD with District child club members).

Extracurricular activities encourage and develop creativity, imagination, leadership and group skills (CDC, 2007). Playing and interacting with other children, as well as some adults, provides opportunities for friendships, social interactions, conflicts and resolutions, which are essential social skills for children to be an active citizen. The following statements that I collected during interview are worth mentioning here about children and child club in students' learning and school governance:

- Setimai club: *a forum to build our social and leadership skills, confidence and to flourish our potentialities*

- Sanimai child club: *a friend in providing guidance to children and also helping each other's in need as a team member*

- A teacher in Setimai: *child club is an environment creator for learning and socialization of children in a team*

- Rina, head teacher, Sanimai: *a negotiator and relationship builder for resolving conflict among children and also with schools*

- A SMC member in Thulimai: *a helping hand in making school clean and maintaining school disciplines collectively*

- A district club leader: *A common learning and socialization place for children from each other*

- A CRO: *A common place and forum to enhance children's talents and team spirit for common cause*

From the above statements of both adults and children revealed that children and their club as a competent social actor teaches children a practical knowledge and skills for teamwork, team building and socializing with adults. Through teamwork and extracurricular activities in schools and communities, children are learning more social and soft skills for their learning and interactions with society. This makes changes in children's lives and lives of people in their societies through a continuous dialogue and belongingness to each other.

Empowering Children to Claim Rights

In common language, empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational, gender, or economic strength of individuals and communities. Empowerment is also defined as a process of obtaining basic opportunities for

marginalized people, either directly by those people, or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to these opportunities (Blanchard, Carlos & Randolph, 1996). Empowerment also includes encouraging, and developing the skills for, self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the

> Box 3
> **Children as Change Agents**
> *Samjhana, a former child club leader, now works as a social mobilizor shared a story of her school life this way:*
> *In 2006, Maoist cadres after entering into school ordered all grade nine students to tear the first two pages of books containing picture of the then King and Queen but they became speechless when child club chair stood up and asked them to show the money from their wallet. When they showed the Notes of NR 100 containing king's picture on the front and, then, he asked them to tear and throw the Notes first. This event in Sindhupalchok made rebellion not to continue the same in other schools.*

individuals of the group. Steward (1994) and Williams (2004) argues that each agency like child club can use to open the knowledge, experience, and motivation power that people already have by sharing information with everyone, creating autonomy through boundaries and replacing the old hierarchy with self-managed teams.

While asking this question to child clubs, they replied, "*empowerment is to speak out our concerns and claiming rights from adults and institutions*". A teacher claims, "*saying no for corporal punishment by students to a teacher in school is empowerment*". A CRO says, "*being familiar about rights and able to claim it from authority is empowerment*". With these statements, we can draw a conclusion that empowerment is a process which enables individuals/groups like children and child clubs to fully access personal/collective power, authority and influence, and to employ that strength when engaging with other people, institutions or society.

World Bank (2002) rightly summarizes empowerment as an interacting process of marginalized people like children getting access to: i) Information; ii) opportunities and entitlements; iii) representation and participation; and, and, iv) collective voice in social and state structures. Within these four dimensions of empowerment, I found that child club empowers children in various ways (Field Note, 6 January 2012). They include developing habits among children to stay in groups for a collective voices and concerns in decision making process; exploring opportunities to take part and developing ideas on solving problems; initiating and strengthening participation of children in local institutions; bringing awareness on child rights and their entitlements; and facilitating to develop and share common agenda of children with adults.

Child club also advocates for child friendly homes and schools. They share information about the rights of children and duties of adults to increase access of more children to education, health and other services. They create safe, supportive and protective environment for children in family, schools and communities and fight against harms, exploitation and abuse of children. Not all three schools of Sindhupalchok use corporal punishment as they have jointly made a code of conduct against it with an issue raised by child club to promote child friendly schools.

Setimai club chairperson said, "*We monitor use of corporal punishment in classroom, distribution of textbooks and scholarship to all students*". The head teacher of Sanimai said, "*we include child club into textbook distribution committee in school*". Member of Sanimai club said, "*we organize child rights orientation to all students in each class*". A female SMC member in Setimai School said, "*we invite child club in our SMC meeting to table their issues and concerns*". A teacher of Thulimai shared his frustration "*child club monitor our attendance in school and report to SMC which I do not like*". He further suggests, "*it is not their roles, they should focus on study*". These statements clearly revealed that child clubs are addressing all four dimensions of empowerment as defined by WB (2002) in their own schools.

In my opinion, child clubs have emerged as a social institution in empowering children in different sectors and levels including in schools. *Firstly*, they educate children and parents about rights of children and duties of parents (information dimension). *Secondly*, they increase access of children to education and health services including immunization, textbooks, scholarship and other facilities (service and entitlement dimension). *Thirdly*, child club represents children and their concerns with adult institutions to make their decision more children friendly and child sensitive. *Fourthly,* children unit and gather them into child club to make their collective voices to SMCs on the issues that affect their lives and learning in schools.

Opportunities for Personality and Leadership Development

Leadership is a matter of intelligence, trustworthiness, humaneness, courage, and discipline (Senge, 2006, 1990). Leadership has been described as a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task (Richards & Engle, 1986). A district club leader said, "*Leadership is organizing a group of people to achieve a common goal*". There

are many theories on leadership including traits, behavioral, functional and situational, which define different features of leadership including interaction, function, behavior, power, vision and values.

According to Scouller (2011), leadership is a process that involves: i) Setting a purpose and direction which inspires people to combine and work towards willingly; ii) paying attention to the means, pace and quality of progress towards the aim; and, iii) upholding group unity, and attending to individual effectiveness throughout. Child clubs are instrumental in building personality and leadership among students by addressing in all four dimensions of building leadership (Field Note, 6 January 2012). They are: i) A shared, motivating group purpose; ii) action, progress and results; iii) collective unity or team spirit; and, iv) individual selection and motivation. All child clubs that I studied had these four dimensions in practices. They had their annual plan and periodic review of the progress. There is an increasing trend of membership in child clubs, not only at national level but also at local levels (CCWB, 2012).

Child club provides students a learning opportunity to be a good leader. Some of them have proved being a leader not only in the club but also in the SMC, VDC and DCWB. The club leaders are confident in different sectors such as expression, negotiation, raising issues, concern with social and public issues, planning and implementation, etc. than non-club- members (FGD with child club members).

Girls are Better Leaders in Clubs

Clubs have generally accepted and respected the leadership (quality) of girls. This significantly contributes to change perception (of adults) towards girls in the community. A parent in Sindhupalchok said, "*Girls are smart nowadays as a girl is leading our school child club with no complain from boys*". A Head Teacher said, '*girls in child club are better in communicating and coordinating with all students in*

school". Analyzing these statements and my observation in club meeting, I claim that girls are equally capable and competent to lead the groups and clubs if opportunities are provided and equally treated.

In few cases, children from disadvantaged (especially Dalit) groups/ families are also in the leadership positions. However, certain groups of children are enjoying more opportunities in leadership positions in the club comparing with children from poor and marginalized communities. I found, in a mixed community group, generally, the children from socially well off ethnic group held the leadership positions..

The children of the clubs receive training in different field such as facilitation, street drama, wall magazine, life skill, child right, child club management, HIV/AIDS, social communication etc. (FGD with child club leaders). However, the executive members receive most of the trainings. A club member in Haratimai shared his frustration "*I do not know why chair, secretary and treasurer are getting training opportunities repeatedly*". The process of dissemination of the training knowledge is in slow pace. Similarly, the training models for children follow trickle down approach. A child club member in Setimai said "*we just listen the good things from our chairperson when she comes back attending various trainings*".

In my opinion, there is a strong need for balancing training opportunities among child club members not only with executives but also to general members. The center of attraction to be child club chairperson and secretary is to have many opportunities for personality and leadership development including representations in various adult institutions like SMCs and WCFs. Binita, a former child club member working in media claims, "*I become a media person with my engagement and networking in child club where I learnt to be social, confident and practical leader working in a team*"

Social Activism among Children

In all places, the community was not positive at the beginning of the child club formation. The community became impressed when they could see children doing some constructive work for the benefit of children and community as a whole. A parent of Setimai proudly shares, *"Before formation of child clubs children used to spend their time going to markets and swimming in the river, catching fish and climbing the trees. Now they are involved in social activities in schools and communities including street drama to raise awareness about child rights issues."* Observing child clubs' work in community development work like maintenance and cleaning of school grounds, village track and trail, street drama and student enrolment campaign of children impress many parents positively.

A teacher claims, *"Children are more active at home with siblings when they engage in child clubs with all grade of students".* A SMC member asserts, *"Child club was active to make all our village defecation free by installing family toilet in each household"*. A child club leader adds, *"Our members started supporting a poor Dalit family for digging a pit, the neighbors started doing themselves for their own toilets"*. NGO activists and teachers argued that children mingle and mix up each other and work in a team when they engage in child clubs and learn team culture. I can conclude from this that child club is a stimulus to work in a team for a common cause in society.

A child club leader claims, *"Our child club is a well-functioning team of children where respect each other and speak turn by turn in a meeting"*. He further says, *"We have a common goal, priorities, division of roles, clear action plan, decision-making process, reporting mechanism and supporting system for each other"*. A female teacher of Thulimai shares, *"Child club meeting in my school starts with sharing the progress from each member and also their plans for coming month"*. I observed

happening this in Sanimai School where students who are not in the executive committee appreciate this approach. A grade 7 student says, "*We get everything from our child club except the opportunity to go out for training*".

In my view, child clubs are emerging as a participatory and well-functioning team of children for a social cause (Lansdown, 2010; O'Kane, 2011). This is a good start of democratizing our society (OECD, 2011) through transformation of a generation (SCS, 2005) through children and child clubs for an inclusive, just and participatory society. Each child club brings some social activism and innovation in serving its members and stakeholders based on local contexts and needs.

Contributions of Child Clubs

As discussed, child club is a tool for meaningful participation of students in school and community activities. Fletcher (2005) argues that meaningful student involvement demands more than time from educators, more than money from administrators, and more than instant results from students. Instead, students' meaningful involvement calls for efforts to improve the organization of schooling and the effectiveness of instruction to actively engage and authorize students to transform their learning to communities.

The fundamental to have meaningful participation of children is to have the positive attitudes and collaboration among students, educators, parents and community members (Fielding, 2006; Fletcher, 2005; Mitra, 2008). Children are learning new skills and gaining knowledge, which they cannot learn in other institutions like school or home. The most commonly heard answer among parents, teachers and NGOs staff regarding the benefits of the club is that the children are outspoken, self-confidence, social, more disciplined, and they also have increased -learning attitude and interested in school issues. Children see the opportunity to do things together as a distinctive

quality of the clubs. Furthermore, children are change agents for bring children into schools and retaining them. They are also supporting SMC/PTA for making child friendly and child centric education in schools. They also organize social campaigns against malpractices like child marriage and alcoholism. The empirical data in the following table summarizes the opportunities offered and contribution made by child clubs to children's learning and personality development as perceived by stakeholders (Field Note, 6 April 2012).

Table 23

Contribution of Child Clubs to Children

Stakeholders	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Children	• Awareness raising on children's rights to life, development, protection and participation • More opportunities for ECA • Aware on different social and health issues • Able to speak/talk with adults	• Making aware on topics like child protection, • Becoming confident to express their views • Got recognition and respect • More books and materials in school • Got more training and workshop	• Raising child related issues instantly • Help friends on their issues • Better protection of children • No corporal punishment • Increase confidence
Teachers/HTs	• Opportunities for personality development • Ability to explore solution of their personal and family problems	• Reenrollment of dropped out children in schools • More skills on interpersonal relationship & communication	• Helps to show their talents • Get learning, searching and speaking habits in children
Parents SMC/PTA	• Aware on rights and duties • Sensitizing parents and adults on child rights	• Development of leadership and communication skills • Learn secretarial skills • Management of club	• Knew importance of learning and attending schools
NGOs	• Helping household chores and agriculture work • More support in school activities • More responsible and disciplined		
Authorities	• Antismoking and anti-child marriage campaign • Conscious about rights and duties • Management and more participation in extra-curricular activities		

From this tabular presentation, I understood that children are getting real experiences in how to make decisions together, to manage their own organization and to learn how other organizations functions. More generally, they are gaining the habit of designing and managing their relationships in democratic ways from an early age. Some clubs are becoming aware of rights and dealing the violations of rights in the most effective way. For instance, they stopped collectively a child marriage of an out of children from Tamang community in Sanimai School catchment area by interacting with the girl's parents and with the VDC secretary.

The contributions of child clubs to stakeholders are of various natures as mentioned earlier. I have divided them into three categories, namely, i) General contribution to children, schools and society; ii) specific contribution to children's learning; and iii) contribution on school democracy and governance. Now, I will elaborate and discuss on each area separately:

Overall Contribution of Child Clubs

The research revealed that there are multiple contributions of child clubs to children's overall development and school governance, leading to social transformation. These contributions including more knowledge among children and parents about their rights and entitlements, more support and scrutiny in schools, expanding social interactions and networks, demands of transparency and accountability and so on . The following section deals with these contributions:

Children Know their Rights and Entitlements

During the FGDs, both girls and boys involved in child clubs claimed that clubs as the best place for getting an opportunity to do work, learning to work with others, getting an opportunity to decide what to do and how to do it, getting to speak publicly with confidence and learning about child rights and to be a good person. However,

none of the participants in FGDs mentioned that child club as the means to enhance their learning and school governance. Still children believed that girls learn from the family and boys from the school on how to be a good citizen in the society. From this, I understood that child club is not able to internalize the citizenship rights phenomenon among its members, both boys and girls.

Child club members are still with the attitude of traditional labor divisions that girls are for household chores and boys for the outside world. Despite a few attitudinal issues about traditional gender roles, all children and child club leaders have happy memoirs of their days in the child club, and are able to articulate a number of personal gains that has resulted from their membership. These included access to information, access to life opportunities, opportunity to have a say, capacity development, and personal development.

A district club leader (18 years boy) said, "*The child club made me the person I am today as a known journalist and also a district leader of children. I am happy with this recognition and identity.*" A VDC level child club network leader (a girl of 17 years) said, "*I have established my identity in the community and receive respect and support. People often seek my help and I try to link them to institutions and authorities they need*". Chair of Setimai Child club (a 15 girl) said, "*The child club has established us as individuals. People know me by name – I am Mira, not Krishna's daughter.*" A child club leader from Dalit community said, "*I can now make my voice heard in school and community. People respect what I say a huge achievement for me in my community. People like me usually do not share ideas or opinions.*" A student said, "*The club coaches us to look at life as a challenge and an opportunity that we must face and take over in a harmony.*"

The above statements and reflections from children and child club leaders demonstrate that childhood is a social construct changes over time (James & Prout, 1998) and Nepalese society is gradually accepting children as a human being and change agent in the society (Archard, 1993; Fielding, 2004; Fletcher, 2005; Lee, 2001; Mitra, 2004). From a child rights perspective, child club gives children access to information, skills, opportunities and a forum to make their collective voices (O'Kane, 2006). In my opinion, child club has helped children to develop a wide range of skills including leadership skills, public speaking skills, creative and critical thinking skills, and networking skills. Child clubs also gave them access to information about child rights and children's issues.

It reveals that child clubs have empowered children in all four dimensions as defined by World Bank (2002). They are: i) Access to information; ii) access to government services, benefits and entitlements; iii) access to participation and representation in adult institutions; and, iv) a forum for a collective voice on common issues and concerns. Haratimai child club chair claims, "*child club has not only empowered us with information, forums and opportunities but also sensitized our parents, adults and institutions on child rights and their duties*".

Children are Disciplined and Responsive

There was a strong argument that children associated with child clubs are confident, social, responsive, and disciplined (Field Note, 6 January 2013). A head teacher said "*children are more responsible and disciplined when they are in child clubs*". A mother said, "*I am surprised to see my son supporting in household chores when he became a member of school child club*". A child club member said, "*I used to be shy and afraid of speaking in front of a teacher, but now I can put my views respectfully with anyone if I get a chance*". These views are similar with the findings of

Fielding (2006), Fletcher (2005), Lansdown (2010) and Mitra (2004). In addition to Mitra's argument about strengthening the assets of agency, belonging and competency among students through participation, I argue that it makes students and children more disciplined and responsible that leads to school democracy.

School discipline is the system of rules, punishments, and behavioral strategies appropriate to the regulation of students and teachers and maintenance of order in schools (Seligman & Reichenberg, 2010). Its aim is to control the school stakeholders mostly students' actions and behavior both negatively and positively. It was also surprising to hear that children who are in child clubs have more knowledge, developed new skills with positive attitude and social skills. Sita, child club leader said, "*I became confident, vocal and self-disciplined due to my engagement in club*". Ram, from Setimai club said, "*I learn how to talk with seniors and also take leadership position in social work.*" A CRO said, "*Child club uses positive approach and builds good relationships between teachers and students*". Teacher as a facilitator of child club can instill in students a sense of responsibility (O'Kane, 2002) in partnerships with students to develop, share and monitor the classroom rules and school code of conducts.

Parents Aware on Rights and Entitlements

Child club also brings benefits to parents and other family members. Kalpana, a parent said, "*My daughter together with her club members convinces my neighbors to send their children to school regularly by providing stationery*". Another parent said, "*My children are supporting to keep our family safe and healthy by keeping house and surroundings clean*". A child club leader said, "*We run a campaign to make a toilet in each family for better health, hygiene and sanitation*". Because of having knowledge on rights and duties of children and adults, more politeness and friendly behaviors prevail among family members, both by adults and children. A teacher said, "*Parents are more*

aware about their rights and roles in communities through interactions with their children". A SMC said, "*Child clubs bring more parents in annual meetings and raise issues of their children*". A VDC secretary said, "*There are more demands and proposal from child clubs to allocate 10% budget to children and another 10% to women*". This indicates children are valuable for the family and the children contribute positively to claim their rights from local government.

Further, it was revealed that children who are associated with child clubs are helping their parents on household chores and agriculture work as a common benefit to family members. Parents feel comfortable when children are engaged in child clubs due to their positive attitude and responsive behaviors at home. A parent said, "*My son goes to fetch water when his mother is busy at home in other work. This was not the case before he joined the club*". A mother said*, "My daughter taught me how to operate a mobile. Now I can receive call and talk with my husband myself who is in abroad*".

In my opinion, child participation at homes and schools can increase adults' awareness of children's needs, opinions and wishes. Adults learn how to share power with children, how to get in touch with children's views and realize the great potential of the young generation. They discover how sophisticated, sensible and thoughtful children's views are, and how much knowledge and skills they have on different topics and new technology. The participation of adults in child clubs' activities also leads to more collaboration, better relationship and understanding, tolerance and respect towards children (Committee, 2009; Fletcher, 2005; Mitra, 2009, O'Kane, 2006).

Exposure to Social Interactions and Networks

Adults like teachers and parents are also favor child clubs, and children's social interactions. A parent said, "*We missed opportunity to learn our rights when we were child. They are very useful to shape our future and interactions with other agencies*". A

mother said, "*Not only my son, I myself benefitted to have single women ID card due to information received from child club*". I found that adults perceive children benefiting from child clubs in multiple ways (Field Note, 28 May 2011). They include: a) Flow of latest news and information on rights, entitlements and government policies; b) awareness on child rights and children's issues; c) promotion of children friendly behaviors in schools; d) extra-curricular activities as per interests and needs of different castes, religions, ethnicity and language groups of children; and e) training opportunities for personality and leadership development.

Children get institutional space to express their views and voices to schools/VDCs/districts. This leads to improvement in quality of basic services to children especially child friendly teaching and a more safe, supportive and protective environment for their wellbeing. The parents and teachers I interviewed who had interfaced with child clubs consistently described the positive impact of the clubs on their children's studies, self-development, increased confidence particularly in speaking and their learning about environmental conservation (Field Note, 3 June 2012).

Some teachers spoke of the benefits of the clubs for children to be able to play and to obtain stationary supplies from NGOs. Prem, club leader said, "*children are getting soft skills and practical knowledge which they do not get from textbooks and teachers*". Rina, Head Teacher of Sanimai says, "*Child club has more network and linkage than us which is helpful for children's leadership and personality development*". In my view, child clubs organize more interactions and make social networks with rights organizations that gradually fuel and transform society to be more democratic and responsive. This is beneficial for both adults and children to work together for a common cause but it hits adult dominated power structures at all levels.

More Support to School but High Scrutiny

School leaders have to take into account many powerful factors in their operational and strategic work: legislation, curriculum, local authorities, parents, students, financial resources, socio-economic environment, competition etc. (Backman & Trafford, 2006). Many of these factors are constantly changing and beyond the school leaders' control. Hopkins (2001) argues that 95% of the population of a school is children why we do not want to run school as per children's interest and opinions. Schools are increasingly engaging children in management of extra-curricular activities and making school environment friendly. Chakra, head teacher of Thulimai said, "*It was impossible to make our school child friendly if we did not have child club and its cooperation with NGOs*". Furthermore, a teacher said, "*We have classroom rules for students and teachers and code of conduct for all actors including parents. We review them once a year jointly by students, teachers and students*".

A SMC member in FGD revealed, "*Children are becoming owners of school as they engage in school calendar, improvement plan and quarterly interaction between parents, students and teachers to improve school environment and quality of education*". A student said, "*Teachers are more friendly and participatory with us and also make classroom discussion more interactive*".

These statements reveal that child club builds good understanding and better relationship between children and adults leading to make their school child friendly and classroom activities more child centric. Children and parents are more interested with school and its management including planning, implementation and review of school improvement plan (Fielding, 2007; Fletcher, 2005; O'Kane, 2007). A SMC member said, "*Forming a child club in our school is to make it more democratic, participatory and relevant to children*". A teacher commented, "*Active engagement of students and*

parents in school attract more resources, materials and support from various agencies". Children are more responsible and disciplined with active participation in different school activities. Students feel school ownership and respect school rules jointly development with teachers and SMC.

Some teachers in my research area argued that students are becoming vigilant in monitoring the teachers' activities. A teacher said, "*We need to be careful as they raise issues for and against us in SMC meeting*". A SMC member argued, "*Teachers are more regular not only in school but also in classroom teaching*". In my opinion, formation of child club in school has been a power-sharing tool in accepting students as an actor of school democracy (Rehfeld, 2011). This has also indirectly challenged the time and task of teachers in school, which is fundamental in promoting school democracy. I conclude agreeing with Hopkins (1997, 2001) that only powerful students can make the school powerful.

Improved Democratic Norms and System in Society

Many of the activities run by clubs provide direct benefits to community. These involve such issues as reforestation, health and sanitation, beautifying community areas with flower gardens and cleaning water tanks and trails. The clubs also act as awareness raising groups on children's rights and pressure groups on community and environmental issues (Field Note, 5 February 2012). During my study, I observed that when children engage in some social actions, which in turn leads adults to act, is much safer for the future of children's clubs than rallies where children carry out awareness-raising agenda designed by one group of adults for another. For example, in one of the child clubs under my study, a teacher was spitting in class. The next period, children discussed this in their club and decided to talk to the Head Teacher so that he would stop what they considered disgusting behavior. This may seem like a small issue but it

is truly in the spirit intended by the drafters of the CRC when they wrote about children having a voice in matters that concern them (UNICEF, 2002b).

Among child rights advocates, the Save the Children promotes democratic practices through children. For this, clubs are fostering ways of thinking and working together, which is continuing after children leave the clubs (O'Kane, 2006). One cannot help but feel that the clubs bring such changes in children's social relationships and opportunities to act and reflect that they will have far-reaching consequences. Engagement of children in agriculture is highly valued as a remarkable competency by their families and communities. Families will no doubt gradually come to recognize children as capable of being more fully participating members of their communities (FGD with parents).

In addition to informing and making decisions, I observed that child clubs generate an increased awareness of children's rights within the community, and can strengthen community relations through intergenerational dialogue and shared experiences. A parent said, *"We learnt more about the conditions of children and their issues while interacting with them in clubs but also at home".* A Teacher said, *"Child clubs made us to be more democratic and to behave and respect them as rights holder as children know their rights and our duties to them".* I found that child clubs raise awareness of children's views and needs on the policy-making level. Girls and boys who are empowered to form and defend their own opinions in clubs are competent and responsible in community development work of the society as argued in sociological theories (James & Prout, 1998).

Eyes and Ears of SMCs/PTAs but Doubts with Teachers

My findings reveals that SMCs and HTs value child clubs more in promoting child friendly environment in schools and in classroom pedagogies. Students claim,

child club improves their capabilities and confidence (Sen, 1999) as well as better utilization of resources and property and effectiveness of extra-curricular activities. Parents get more frequent information and progress of school through child club leaders that make SMC more responsible and transparent in school decisions. This strengthens school ownership among parents and students when they have full information about their school status and resources.

Child clubs are source of information about classroom activities and school management to SMCs. The SMC chairperson from Setimai School said, "*child club is our ears and eyes in classroom activities and teachers' performance to have better decisions in the meeting*". Muna, the child club leader said, "*I feel respected and honored as SMC chair comes to me before the meeting and takes issues from us*". Chakra, HT from Thulimai School said, "*our teachers are more alert on their duties as child club may directly report to SMC if there are any lapses*". The HT of Sanimai had the similar opinion. She claims, "*Teachers are more accountable and responsive towards children and their learning.*" SMC chair of Setimai further stressed that child clubs are source of information and resources for us. He shares, "*our school received training and materias from NGOs through child club to make school child friendly.*"

Some drawbacks of child clubs I found during the study were reported by adults, mostly teachers and parents. A teacher in Setimai says, "*Children cannot keep secrecy and leak out confidential decisions*". This reminds me that mentality and attitude of teachers of 1970s that define children as incompetent and immature (Archard, 1993; James et al, 1998). Another teacher commented, "*Engagement of children in child clubs and SMC meeting hamper their studies*". This shows the information processing and behaviorist thinking of teachers where role of children is to receive knowledge from teachers and memorize for marks (CDC, 2007). Teachers

restrain from empowering children as one-teacher comments, "*children engaged in child club will not respect teachers and will have over confidence*". Another SMC member says, "c*hildren may develop feeling of revenge when they hear disagreements and conflicting views in the SMC meeting*". This is an area of sharing status and power between teachers and students in schools.

Children as Mini-Adults on NGOs Agenda

There are some controversies on gain or loss from child clubs. Some argue that children associated in child club miss their childhood where as some argue they will be better citizen. One of the expert group said, "*We are making children as mini-adults imposing our ideas and issues*". A CRO said, "*All development agencies have their own agenda to child clubs as they support them based on their priorities not on children's local issues and concerns*". Muna, child club leader says, "*We are overloaded with different activities in schools and communities, but has less time and resources for us to have fun and enjoy ourselves*".

There was a similar opinion of Sanju, a former child club leader. She says, "*We are using children for adult work and agenda like open defecation campaign, student enrollment, fund raising to school, and celebration of HIV/AIDS day*". She further comments, "*Adults are projectizing child clubs and children without focusing on their learning and peer education*". A VDC secretary of Thulopkhar adds, "*NGOs are misusing children to get fund from VDC on different child rights projects. How can we make them accountable on financial mismanagement and reporting?*" He shared his frustration that child clubs are like mini-NGOs for students in making their pocket money. Similarly, a child club leader confirms, "*sometimes I lost schools attending different meetings and trainings both at local and national levels including in Kathmandu*". A teacher criticizes, "*leaders of child clubs are like politicians. They are*

good in talking but not doing well in school". Tara, an NGO activist also agrees with this and says, "*we are reviewing our approach to work with children of child clubs for not making them mini-adults or mini-NGOs but an organ of local institutions/bodies*".

With these statements and discussions, I conclude that NGOs are mostly dominant on setting agenda and priorities of children in child clubs. Child clubs are portrayed as mini-NGOs to fulfill their missions and project objectives. There is a strong need to review the NGOs working modalities with child clubs. NGOs are expanding child clubs and their networks at various levels without having a formal linkage with local institutions like VDC (Haug & Regmi, 2012). There are still challenges among adults and institutions on how to work with child clubs for their meaningful participation (Hart, 1992; Mitra & Gross, 2009). Teachers and parents are demanding more engagement of child clubs on children's learning and local social issues rather than national and international issues of I/NGOs.

Contributions to Children's Learning

Learning is a social construct that happens in an interaction between teachers and students about the society as subject matters. Learning in the classroom is complemented by practical experience, where the teacher can assist the learner in interpreting an experience, and in choosing or creating subsequent experiences (Hopkins, 1997, 2001). A key challenge for education reform remains how to make nurturing and supportive schools that engage students and enable them to thrive cognitively, socially, civically and emotionally (Joselowsky, 2007). Thus, my argument is that the formation and mobilization of child club is not just promoting children's agency but most importantly contribute for quality education with safe, supportive and enabling environment. I have analyzed children's learning from rights perspectives not from an evaluative perspective measuring learning achievements of children in schools.

I have reviewed and considered the recently approved national framework of child friendly school for quality education by MoE (2010) in this study. The framework has nine elements to make a school child friendly such as school effectiveness; inclusion; gender perspective in education; participation of children, families and communities in school; health, security and protection of each child; availability of minimum physical conditions in school; child centric teaching and learning process; mother tongue teaching and learning in early grades; and participatory school management. These elements consist of 150 minimum and expected indicators in total that a school should aim to achieve and deliver (MoE, 2010). The framework defines a child friendly school that provides a learning environment suitable and conducive to children for learning and develops their inherent potentials. Out of these nine elements, I am focusing on creating safe, supportive and protective learning environment with active participation of children and parents in learning and school governance.

The following section discusses the findings of empirical data with related literatures and theories about children's learning within the broader framework of child friendly school and with the Delor's (1996) four pillars of education in 21st century.

Bringing New Knowledge and Social Skills

Dewey (1916) combined the action and reflection process with thinking, and identifies that learning is occurring when the student connects them and it becomes an ongoing process of dialogue. Further, Dewey (1934) advocated learning that was active, student-centered, and involved shared inquiry. A student in Sindhupalchok said, "*We learn when we are asked and have opportunity to ask*". Learning requires the active, constructive involvement of the students/learners (Vosniadou, 2001). It demands more interactions and exposures of children among peers and between students and teachers and a friendly environment.

In addition to extracurricular activities, children see child club activities beneficial to them and their learning. Child club has been a means to achieve new knowledge and social skills. A child said, "*I have confidence and leadership skills from child club activities which are instrumental to resolve family and communities issues peacefully*". A district club leader said, "*I am getting new information, knowledge and interpersonal skills which are useful in my personal and professional lif*e". A teacher said, "*Sometime we get new knowledge and social skills from children who are trained by child rights NGOs*". A student from Sanimai club said, "*I learnt where and how to report for any abuse, exploitation and discrimination from child club*". These statements are in line with Hart (1992) that child club better socializes children with new knowledge and skills. Furthermore, I argue with my own experiences that child club brings new knowledge and social skills to students but also transforms teachers and schools to work together with children (Lansdown, 2011).

Sanju, a former child club leader said, "*I improved my learning when I engaged in child club and got practical knowledge and more information."* Muna from Haratimai says, "*I am getting better marks in social studies, environment education and health as the information and knowledge we get from child club are relevant to our curriculum*". A HT said, "*Child friendly concept in our school was introduced by child club and NGOs"*. Shiva, district network leader in Sindhupalchok said, "*I learnt how to work in a team and interact with adults in child club which was beneficial to me to work as a journalist now*". The social transformation that a student undergoes between their academic careers, first entry into their professional life is arguably one of the most significant, and difficult transitions that an individual must make.

A head teacher in Sindhupalchok said, "*After introduction of child friendly teaching and establishment of child club, our children are learning better and*

becoming more social". Vosniadou (2001) argues that learning at school requires students to pay attention, to observe, to memorize, to understand, to set goals and to assume responsibility for their own learning like in child club. These cognitive activities are not possible without the active involvement and engagement of the children in school and classroom activities.

A child club leader said, "*We receive new information, practical knowledge, skills and orientation from different activities of child club rather than text book*". A student of grade eight in Sindhupalchok argued that because of engaging in child club, he has more better and in-depth knowledge than from the social study textbook. This is in line with what Kurt Levin, education philosopher, defines 'field theory' around the interaction of the person and the learning environment (Miettinen, 2000; Sansone, 2003). Lewin discussed adolescence as the process of moving from an individual child to become part of a larger group. Children's engagement in child club during this transition is important for a child's development as they experiment and learn from their interaction and experiences (Lewin, 1984).

Similarly, Piaget (1972) who suggested intelligence is largely a result of the interaction of the individual with the environment (Atkinson & Murrell, 1988). Piaget believed that as a child grows, they are able to learn based on their age, maturity and ability to build upon prior experiences, known as social constructivism (Illeris, 2007). These theories provide the foundation for understanding and promoting the interactive learning process in child clubs to improve students' learning.

An education officer claimed that the MoE recognized value of children's engagement and participation in classroom and school interventions for better learning and brought a national framework of child friendly school for quality education in 2010 (Field Note, 6 April 2012). This framework accepts that teachers must help students to

become active and goal oriented by building on their natural desire to explore, to understand new things and to master them.

Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget's theories focused on the developing student undergoing an experience for the first time. Kolb (2008) takes it to the next level by applying it to the older student who is moving into adulthood. As a person transitions from a child to young adult, they undergo a transformation where they begin to use prior experience as a basis to make decisions on present experiences. Children today are fundamentally different in the way they think and learn; the way they access, absorb, interpret, process and use of information; and in way they view, interact and communicate in the modern world and these difference are due to large part to their exposure and experiences with adults' institutions and digital technologies (Jukes, McCain & Crockett, 2010).

Furthermore, learning is primarily a social activity and participation in the social life of school is central for learning to occur. The establishment of a fruitful collaborative and co-operative atmosphere between parents, students and teachers is an essential part of quality education and student learning (MoE, 2010). In my observations and experiences as a teacher for more than 15 years, child participation in classroom pedagogy and school environment is preconditions for learning. I do not believe that changing curricula and instruction only will enhance learning until we make an attempt to make school more student-centered than teacher-centered, to connect the school to real-life situations, and to focus on understanding and thinking rather than on memorization, drill and practice.

Socialization of Children –for Active Citizenship

Schools are a primary site for socialization for children and adolescents in particular, for whom relationships with individuals outside of the home gain increasing

importance (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Although schooling structures without child club can be sites, in which adolescents are socialized to reproduce existing social class hierarchies (Bourdieu, 2000; Willis, 1977). In particular, school social contexts have been found to be critically important sites for socialization towards schooling and career, with consequences for students' educational outcomes (Hallinan, 2006; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000).

Holistic child development is about spiritual, socio-emotional, cognitive, and physical development to promote children's developmental potential so that they may be capable of transforming their life and the world (Tude & Hogan, 2005). Spiritual development includes changes in one's awareness of and relationship with friends, family, society and ultimately to the God Physical development includes changes in body size and proportion, brain development, perceptual and motor capacities, and physical health (Berk, 1999) including muscular and neural coordination, which are necessary for performing day-to-day tasks and job-related skills. Socio-emotional processes involve changes in an individual's relationships with other people and institutions like school, changes in emotions, and changes in personality (Santrock, 1996). In the study of children and child clubs, it is difficult to separate the emotional domain from the social one as children grow through relationships with others in order to fulfill emotional needs and that socialization is accomplished through the communication of messages, both verbal and nonverbal, that are loaded with emotion.

Similarly, cognitive development skills are necessary for children's life and livelihood, i.e. to be an effective worker, businessperson or entrepreneur with changes in individual thinking, intelligence and language. The child needs to be able to think, to communicate effectively, and to get opportunities for learning problem-solving skills, training in job-related skills, and the acquisition and application of basic knowledge to

make good choices and encouraging them to use their giftedness to meet their economic needs (Sandrock, 1996).

Child clubs socialize children to cope better with the school environment and to enable interaction with the society. Socialization of children in child clubs happening in three phases of time (FGD with teachers). Firstly on the past: molding the young image of the older generation by transmitting the cultural heritage and be reinforcing traditional behaviors like respecting elders and caring younger even in child clubs and school premises. Secondly on the present: orienting the child towards the standards of membership and role performance in social institutions, such as the family, classroom and child clubs by making them aware about their rights and responsibilities. Thirdly on the future: preparing the child in child clubs for the anticipated requirements of future roles, groups, and transitions including confidence building, leadership skills and personality development.

Socialization is most commonly viewed as a one-way process, which stresses the effect of the social agent on the child. Children tend to sort themselves out of three status dimensions by being engaged in child clubs: i) Liking or social acceptance; ii) the ability to influence other students; and iii) competence in learning and school/social work. The status of these three dimensions among children in the classroom and school are similar between these status dimensions and those in the larger society such as prestige, power and property of accomplishment (Webber, 1990).

During my field study, teachers, parents and children had a strong belief and argument that child club is providing opportunities for a holistic development of children, not only learning. My research participants mentioned that child club supports for holistic development of children by providing more knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, roles and responsibilities in schools and communities. The following

table summarizes the responses of participants on roles of child clubs in children's

socialization (Field Note, 12 June 2012).

Table 24

Socialization of Children in Child Clubs

Areas	• Key competencies from socialization
More knowledge	• Awareness on Nepalese and international child rights instruments • Development of learning and paying attention in classroom activities • Care for health, cleanliness increase • Capability to conduct extra-curricular activities • More confident to express their feelings, views, opinions • Searching and speaking habits in children • More responsible with knowledge of rights and duties • Group management, leadership development
Personality & leadership development	• Being engage in group formation, decision making process, feeling of need of group • Enable to differentiate between good and bad • Gain social respect from community with engagement and participation in social activities • Develop the skill of writing and habit of searching new things. • Development of feeling for leadership • Present views and thoughts openly even in formal program • Development of mass speaking, leadership development
Better social and life skill education	• Able to conduct different programmes • Development of oratory skills • Able to express views openly, leadership development • Increase in their capabilities • Conducting programmes to writing decisions, • Discussion among friends, improve in reading-writing • Participation in decision making & addressing problems • Decision writing, writing articles, reading • Making rules and norms for group and social work • Familiar with rules, norms and values of society and institutions
Better life and livelihood	• Consuming good food and maintaining good health • Better sanitation and hygienic environment in schools/communities • Vocation/social skills make livelihood easier. • More physical excise/training and cultural programme • More extra-activities on speaking and listening • Peaceful resolution of conflict and problems • Collective decisions and actions • Helping each other in need • Development of management skills • Making classroom learning more practical and relevant

From this analysis and responses from research participants, I argue that child

club socializes children for their holistic development through a synergistic relationship

between different developmental areas: health status, nutritional status, growth, spiritual development and psychosocial well-being of children all work together to enhance the effectiveness of each category and their learning. Myers (1998) also advocates that social interactions of children in family, school and society and synergetic support of different development interventions in schools and communities socialize children holistically.

Thus, socialization happens during interactions between young people and their environments (Handel, Cahill, & Elkin, 2007; Strayer & Santos, 1996). According to Bronfenbrenners (1979, 1993), society influences the child through the most immediate contexts in which the child is present (*microsystem*) – the family, siblings, peer groups, and classrooms; the contexts in which the Microsystems meet (*mesosystem*) – parent-teacher relationships, parents' work environments, and extended family networks; the community context (*exosystem*) –schools, neighborhoods, local media, local government; and the broader socio-cultural context (*macrosystem*). The coverage and voices of child club is from microsystems to macrosystem levels. Young people who actively engage in child club activities in schools may have more positive adjustment than those who focus their energies on acceptance by the group (Stephens, 1995).

Child Clubs Create Learning Aptitude and Assimilation

Societies are shared communities with complex codes and organizational structures. Socialization is the process by which individuals adapt to and internalize the norms, values, customs, and behaviors of a shared social group (Lutfey & Mortimer, 2003; Parsons, 1951). The degree to which children learn how to participate and be accepted by society has important consequences for their development and future lives. Theories of socialization have alternately framed children as being passive recipients of socializing messages or active agents engaged in the process of adapting to society

(Corsaro, 2000, 2005). In Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979), individuals develop through the process of accommodation to their environmental contexts, specifically concentric rings of influence, from family to neighborhoods and schools to cultural forces in society.

My findings revealed that children who are engaged in child clubs activities have better learning environment and attitudes that lead to better results due to: i) More exposures and opportunities to new knowledge and skills through trainings and interactions and orientation; ii) understanding on rights and duties make them more responsible and discipline; iii) eagerness to get more information and interaction with peers and teachers; iv) increase capabilities as they participate in more activities; v) ability to work in a team and peer learning; vi) more access to social and communication skills; vii) interaction and dialogue with higher people including political leaders; and, viii) more access to reference and practical reading materials. This makes children aware about their rights and duties as active citizens.

Similarly, Bourdieu (1980) presents individual socialization as a process by which individuals are influenced by the class-specific cultural milieu in which he or she is being reared: the tastes and ways of speaking and acting that represent their *habitus*. In Bourdieu's model, these class-specific preferences and behaviors signify social class to others and in turn serve as a mechanism for reinforcing rigidly stratified social status categories in certain societies, a phenomenon known as social reproduction (Bourdieu, 2000; Chin & Phillips, 2004). In that vein, Foucault (1972) typically depicts socialization as a disciplining process originating from a seemingly invisible power structure transmitting norm-enforcing pressures, which appear to permeate society and restrict individuals' agency. Even Foucault (1980) acknowledges that individuals are

not mere objects shaped by society however, but rather can enact their own subjectivities with their interactions with societies.

Beginning of Child Friendliness in School

The starting point of child friendly school is to form and engage child club to have their collective views in preparing school improvement plan, annual education calendar, school self-assessment, social audit and so on. The following statements of education stakeholders of schools also argue that formation of child club departures from teacher-centric teaching methodologies to student centric classroom practices:

A SMC chair said, "*child club is our source of information to make school more student friendly*". This view accepts that children are actor of school. Furthermore, child club has been source of making schoolchild friendly with support from I/NGOs. "*When we formed child club in our school, NGOs started to come with training and support system for child friendly classroom and teaching methodologies*", a teacher in Sindhupalchok claimed. Parents have seen the value of child club making school attractive for students. A mother said, "*Younger children happily go to school when stick was removed*". Teachers also feel that child clubs are means of getting professional development support with periodic feedback on their teaching and school management. A head teacher questioned, "*How can we know children's views and interests for school improvement without having a collective voice of children from child club?*" Children are more motivated and interested to learning and school activities with their engagement in child club.

> Box 4
> **Children Stop Corporal Punishment**
> *Ms. Rita, chair of Hatemalo expressed her understanding about joining the child club saying, "club is a common place and a fourm of community school where we get organized ourselves to get more information, skills and exposure on our rights and also to develop our hidden talents and potentialities to be a good citizen with support from adult facilitator". She further adds, "I was shy and used to keep silent even if teachers without any rasosn beat me before joining the club. Now I am able to discuss and negotiate with teachers and SMC to stop corporal punishment in school for all students".*

A former child club member in Sindhupalchok claimed, "*After formation of child club, HT and SMC started to listen us what we like and not in school*". A child club member argued, "*After engagement in child club, we realize school is for us and our development*". With all these statements and analyzing the minimum indicators of child friendly school national framework in my three schools, I am with a opinion that formation and listening child club on school plan and interventions is the starting point for making school child friendly (Field Note, 6 April 2012).

All three schools have achieved minimum indicators as defined in the framework and have plan to achieve more with additional provisions for minimum enabling conditions, supply of textbooks and education materials, application of continuous assessment system, child centric methodologies, engagement of parents and students, mother tongue instruction in early grades. Bhuvaneshwori (2005) also makes the same conclusion that listening children and respecting their views is the foundation for child friendly school.

The following table summarizes the opinions of research participants who claim that many community schools after having child clubs are changing their rules, structures, mechanisms, and functions to meet the needs, voices, interests and choices of children, who are the rights holders of school education (Field Note, 12 June 2012).

Table 25

Comparison of Treats of Traditional and Child Friendly Schools

Tradition schools without child clubs	Child friendly schools with child clubs
• School as a place to maintain social structure, order/rules and hierarchy	• School as a place to support each child's capacity and strengths with respect
• Children are expected to conform rules and behave properly	• Children are taking part in setting school norms, rules, code of conduct and behaviors
• Children should respect, obey and follow teachers and their instructions	• SMC, PTA and Child clubs share power and collaborate together to make school friendly
• HT takes responsibility of keeping disciplines and there is no room for children's voices and grievances	• Children and child club can put complains and issues against HT/teachers in the suggestion box and also in the SMC meeting
• Teacher is central in the classroom and child's roles is to read/memorize	• Children and teachers together are teaching and learning from each others

Tradition schools without child clubs	Child friendly schools with child clubs
• Teacher is responsible for completing textbook but not for students' learning	• Teachers and students are responsible for their class and learning achievements
• Teaching ignores children's language, ability, context and reality	• Children are dealt as a diverse group respecting their strengths and differences
• Teachers have authority on children and their learning and freedom of teachers' actions	• Children and teachers both have authority and freedoms as a social actor
• Teachers are authentic and source of knowledge and information	• Teachers and students together co-construct knowledge and information
• School is rigid with rules and structures and does not accept club as an agency	• School structures and rules accept child club as a collaborator and agency of school

The table presents a paradigm shift of school characteristics when child clubs are formed and child friendly methodologies are introduced. The characteristics of schools having child clubs show an egalitarian or a utopian picture of school providing everything for a child. This is not a true reality of the field. I observed community schools are getting continuous pressure for a change towards quality dimensions of students and their learning achievement from child rights agencies, private educating providers and government authorities. Parents are also putting pressure to make education relevant and practical.

I am afraid child friendly environment is not a solution, but it is a process for inculcating children for learning to learn while I agree that child friendly schooling is a starting point to make school an effective learning place and to make teachers accountable to students learning. When school moves from teaching to creating environment for learning with active engagement of parents and students participation, school would succeed in its endeavor.

To address the learners' pace, experience and competency based teaching and learning in school, children should be a part of classroom and school management planning, implementation and evaluation (Bhuvaneshwori, 2005). A school that provides a learning environment where each child can learn happily, interestingly and with fun at his or her own pace and level is called child-friendly school (UNICEF,

2002a). In such schools, environment for children is conducive to learning and their inherent potentials are developed (MoE, 2010).

Better Relationships between Teachers and Students

The relationships children form through school and child clubs have been theorized to be instrumental in their access to resources and supports that transmitted through these relationships, can foster the realization of academic and career goals. A child member said, "*We no more afraid with teachers, we respect them as our guide. There is no corporal punishment in our school*". I observed that children engaged in child clubs have better relationship with teachers and other stakeholders. The quality of these relationships has proven to be an important factor in children's academic achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Crosnoe, Johnson, & Elder, 2004).

An HT said, "*We do not use stick in our school even though we do not have problems of school disciplines as children are more attentive, social and friendly*". A SMC member said, "*Children themselves monitor violent behaviors of students and classroom noise*". A teacher commented, "*Child club members take classes on child rights and social issues when a teacher is absent*". A Dalit member of district child club network said, "*We get respect and recognition in any agency whenever we go with child club's identity*". In my view child club improves its member's relationship with teachers and school authorities and the school environment. My findings are similar with of Coleman (1988) that students and teachers exchange *social capital* – primarily school norms, expectations, and sanctions – to improve students' educational outcomes from enabling environment of schools.

Contributes in all Four Pillars of Education

Jaques Delores (1996) while presenting his report titled "Learning: the Treasure Within" to UNESCO in which he puts a strong need to prioritize the four pillars for 21st

century education. They are: i) learning to know (knowledge); ii) learning to do (skill); iii) learning to be (personality); and iv) learning to live together (values, beliefs and attitudes). *Learning to know* implies learning how to learn by developing one's concentration, memory skills and ability to think. Every individual has hidden talents such as memory, reasoning, imagination, physical ability, aesthetic sense and aptitude to communicate with their peers and adults.

Learning to do some substantial work is closely associated with the issue of occupational training: how do we adapt education so that it can equip people to do the types of work needed in the future? Learning must transform certified skills into personal competence. It reveals that a mix of skills and talents, social behavior, leadership skills, social responsibility, personal initiative, a willingness to work and to take risk, communication, teambuilding and problem solving that are of high value.

Learning to be is to provide self-analytical and social skills to enable individuals to develop to their fullest potential psycho-socially, affectively as well as physically, for an all-round 'complete person. *Learning to live together* is about inculcating a spirit of empathy in students so that it can have a positive effect on their social behavior throughout their lives. This is about to expose individuals to the values implicit within human rights, democratic principles, intercultural understanding and respect and peace at all levels of society and human relationships to enable individuals and societies to live in peace and harmony.

Mitra (2004) advocates that child participation in schools enhances developmental assets like agency, belonging and competence among children. They correspond with learning to be, learning to live together and learning to do. Furthermore, children from child club also gain discipline and empowerment, which are critical for democratic society. Other researchers like Fielding (2006), Fletcher (2005), Lansdown (2010), O'Kane (2006)

and Poudyal (2003) argue that children engage in child clubs will have better

understanding, knowledge, skills, aptitudes and morale than others.

The following table summarizes the contribution of child clubs in these four

areas of learning to children as perceived by stakeholders (Field Note, 6 June 2012):

Table 26

Child Clubs in Four-Pillar of Education

Learning to know	Learning to do	Learning to be	Learning to live
• Aware on child rights • Know our responsibility • Duty towards community • Familiar with national act and rules on children • More information on child protection, HIV, child labor, quality education • New knowledge/ information • More knowledge on values, norms and belief • Aware schools rules and regulation • Familiar with CR agencies	• Communication skills • Attending meetings & speaking in turns • Creative skill- poem/ story/ street drama • Speaking and writing skills • Orientation/ presentation skills • Problem solving/ motivating skills • Organizing and leading clubs and groups • Run social campaigns • Make plans and budgets	• Leadership development • Positive thinking/ personality • Raise voices against violence • Listening to others and respect them • Self-discipline • Being SMART • More responsible • Analyzing issues and challenges • Lead social events	• Team work in child clubs • Respecting diversity • More sharing, caring, respecting others • Being socialized, bringing together • Feeling of helping others • Cooperative with elders and younger • Friendly with family and teachers

The table shows that child clubs directly contribute in all four pillars of education as

defined by UNESCO to make education more relevant, practical and useful in their life and

livelihood. Children in child club know better their rights, responsibilities, child protection

issues, health hazards, exploitation, abuse and government rules and regulations of schools.

Soft skills are getting priorities in school reforms globally in recent times. AFT (2012)

advocates to have a world-class education system in Mexico by enabling students on how

to learn to i) Work collaboratively; ii) think creatively; iii) incorporate higher-order

thinking skills; iv) solve complex problems collectively; v) apply and analyze all forms of

information, including current media and technology; vi) be skilled in listening and

communicating across cultures; and vii) be aware of and able to evaluate the significance

of world events and global dynamic. These seven features are also similar with vision of students set in SSRP by 2015 (MoE, 2009).

I too believe that child clubs in schools contribute for child friendly and inculcate the above skills to our students on their learning and development. I found child clubs inspire children with a motivation and provide opportunities for learning to learn different social skills and knowledge. Learning to learn explores and ensures students' levels of engagement in learning activities and attitudes towards reading and learning (OECD, 2011).

Contribution to School Governance

SSRP recognizes education as both a basic human rights and a development tool that magnifies the roles of local community in governance, management, resourcing, and quality assurance in school education in their community (MoE, 2008). To make school education effective, inclusive, equitable, pro-poor, and rights based, school system's structural and functional transformation are a priority. Following the spirit of the LSGA of 1999, the 7th amendment of Education Act of 1971 in 2002 made a historic shift that community people are responsible by giving authority in the education act and regulations to an inclusive School Management Committee (SMC) elected by parents of students to govern local school. Similarly, provision of PTA to improve quality of education and school governance was also introduced in schools.

This also has made SMC/PTA to prepare and implement school improvement plan (SIP) with active involvement of local stakeholders that foster local control in the schools. However, children are not yet a part of SMC/PTA. This provision forces SMC to engage in all aspects of quality education and makes SMC, teachers, parents, and local body accountable for student learning.

Professionalism and Better Decisions in Schools

School governance is to provide parents, students, school staff, and community members with a leadership role in the management of the school. The emphasis is placed on school-based management accountable to parents and children. Under the school-based management, SMC reports to the parents and students for school performance and to the local government for compliance with regulatory requirements (MoE, 2009). Similarly, PTA in school also carries out social audit of school in which children are active to make discussion around improving classroom practices and school governance.

My research findings revealed that besides preparing children as a confident social change agent, child clubs also help teachers in making them more professional, inform SMCs for better decisions, and bring classroom issues in PTA meetings. The following table presents the key findings of the three schools on contribution of child clubs to school especially to teachers, SMC and PTA.

Table 27

Contribution of Child Clubs to School Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
Teachers & HTs	• Getting more knowledge and skills on child rights and child centric teaching learning methods • Classroom rules and school code of conduct make student more democratic and disciplined • Students are more social, active, responsive and disciplined	• Getting more training and exposures on child rights issues • Students and class are more interactive and friendly • Upper grade students also take classes in lower grades in case of teachers' absenteeism • More networks with CR organizations • More support on ECA & CFS	• Classes are more regular as child clubs monitor regularity of children and their homework • Better relation with students as they jointly organize extra-curricular activities • Good communication between parents & students • Less conflict and violence in school
SMC	• Easy flow of information, division of works • Effective	• Easy in identifying problems and bringing solutions in schools • Demand of transparency	• More ownership of decision and better implementation among students and

Stakeholders	Sanimai	Thulimai	Setimai
	implementation of school improvement plan and better results • Informed and better decisions on school activities	and participatory process in school decision Safe, clean and healthy school environment	parents; • Gradual improvement of quality of education • Better discipline in classes and schools
PTA	• Better monitoring of school opening days and teachers attendance • Bridging information between parents and schools • Better identification and implementation learning related extra-curricular activities	• More classroom issues in meetings • Better communication with students/parents, • More support for quality education • More commitment of teachers in schools • More collaboration with child clubs	• Make school activities more transparent and economic • Direct voices of children on their needs and demands for quality education in schools • Better relationship with teachers/HT

From the above table, it was found that child clubs are playing active roles in improving professionalism among teachers, more informed decisions in SMCs and more classrooms and quality of education related issues in PTA meeting. In addition to the above-mentioned summary of research participants understanding about benefits of child clubs to teachers, SMC and community, there are other direct benefits to children and their development. To be heard, and taken children's issues seriously by adults and institutions is a very positive experience (Fielding, 2007; Lansdown, 2010; Mitra, 2006 Theis & O'Kane, 2006).

Demands for School Transparency and Accountability

School accountability, a process of evaluating school performance based on student performance measures, is increasingly prevalent around the world (SC, 2010) including in Nepal. Very recently, MoE has introduced measuring performance of teachers based on the student's achievements on their taught subjects (DoE, 2012). This is a starting point for making teachers accountable to students' learning. School improvement requires a professional commitment to problem solving, innovation, critical reflection and continuous professional learning (Davey, Burke & Shaw, 2010).

Children benefit from opportunities to participate actively in adults' institutions. A girl from Setimai School said, "*I have learnt that even children have rights in school and not only teachers. I did not know that before joining child club*". A child said, "*At our child club I could do what I want to do for the first time in my life together with other children. I was very surprised that the head teacher asked me about my interests and needs in school*". Participation in school decisions gives children a sense of ownership and builds their self-confidence (Chawla, 2002; Fielding, 2001; Hart, 2004).

School improvement is reliant on school leadership that engages people at all levels of the organization including children in the learning process by creating a culture of inquiry which develops new capabilities and revolutionizes teaching and learning (Fletcher, 2005). Researchers (Lansdown, 2010; Mitra, 2007; O'Kane, 2007; Theis, 2007) claimed that school accountability and performance improves when children engage in school improvement plan and its implementation together with teachers and SMC.

A 13-year girl from Sanimai said, "*Since we have a newly constructed school toilet separately for boys and girls based on our demand, girls are using it without any fear and we ourselves clean it properly*". Children learn from each other in many cases higher grade children serve as role models for younger ones (peer education). A girl of 12 years claimed, *"I have learned a lot from my seniors in child club. For instance, how to give introduction and behave in the group, to say 'namaskar' to all senior or junior when entering the club and appreciate other colleagues for their support and views*". Children learn to work as part of a team, which strengthens solidarity and team spirit, and may help to establish new friendships. Children have the opportunity to learn personal and social skills (for example organizing meeting, writing letters and minutes, dividing roles, taking decisions etc.).

A 14-year- boy in Haratimai said, "*We have learned to take responsibilities in schools and to work in a team with adults*". I do agree with Chakra, HT of Thulimai on value of child club. He says, "*Teachers are becoming more responsible in their subjects and classes and SMCs also hear the views of child club in our school decision*". Engagements of child club in school management bring a paradigm shift in school governance and accountability issues. Informed child club brings more children into school and claims textbooks and scholarship as entitlements. Child club empowers children in all four dimensions of empowerment as defined by WB (2002).

Sitting children, teachers and parents together in SMC meeting accepts human capabilities of children as a citizen (Sen, 1999). A head teacher claims, "*I take inputs and suggestions from children to give feedback to my colleagues for better teaching in classroom*". Hearing children's own words has a powerful impact, as adults learn both through listening and through observation in the meetings (Dalrymple, 2002; Pennell & Burford, 2000). Child club makes a school more accountable to children and learning.

After formation of child clubs in school and inviting their representatives in SMC and PTA meeting, there is a growing demand for transparency and accountability in school. This has further strengthened school as a participative institution and children as the citizen of school. Decisions regarding school curriculum (including local content), performance targets, the school calendar, classroom organization, and instructional methods is made at the school level in consultation with parents and students (MoE, 2008). Head-teacher has greater roles in academic aspects (such as teacher assignment and professional supervision) and administrative aspects (such as maintaining teacher schedules and school records, managing non-teaching staff). The SMC has an important role in making performance contracts even with the school head-teacher for effective implementation of SSRP to improve quality of teaching.

National framework of child friendly school for quality education ensures participation of child club in the SMC (MoE, 2010). I observed that SMC/PTA has been more transparent, participatory and inclusive with the engagement of child club in schools. A CRO highlights, "*child club sometimes complains to us about the performance of SMC and also the Head Teacher which we refer to education officer*". An NGO staff says, "*Schools started organizing social audit publicly after formation of child club*". A district club leader asserts, "*If our voices are not heard by school, we bring those issues at district level*". An education officer claims, "*School having child club regularly organize their SMC and PTA meeting*". In my view, these statements clearly indicate that child club is an instrumental role to improve school governance by making SMC and HT more accountable and responsive to children's issues in schools.

Furthermore, a head teacher adds, "*Child club brings issues of quality education in SMC which in past never used to be in the agenda*". A SMC member claims, "*We are more aware about school issues from children than teachers*". A teacher agrees, "Nowadays, w*e are more accountable and responsive to children and their learning as they directly report to SMC through club*". With the implementation of SSRP and CFS concept, school has recognized students as rights holder and SMC/teachers and parents as duty bearers. Children are engaged in formulating school improvement plan, school calendar and social audit of school.

There is no way making students out of school governance and decision-making process. Child participation in school is now on the children's rights agenda both at local and national level after approval of children's policy in 2012 (MoWCSW, 2012). Educational guidelines recognize and promote children as actor of school governance and their representation ensure in social audit, textbook management and distribution, SMC and PTA meetings (Dahal, 2013b). I conclude that child clubs promote school

transparency and accountability in various ways for: i) Quality learning outcomes for all learners; ii) well-being of staff and learners as co-workers; iii) regularity and active participation of learners and teachers; iv) partnerships bring team culture and a strong sense of belonging; and v) collective leadership for school improvement agenda.

School Child Clubs in Community Structures

Fielding (2006) writes that school leadership must support an inclusive, value-driven approach, provide commitment over time, be willing to transcend traditional hierarchy and demarcations, and intend to create dialogic public spaces with children both on classroom learning and on school management issues. Children engage in classroom pedagogy and school management process does report their appreciation of the skills and self-esteem they gain from their participation (Bryson 2002).

Formation of child clubs in schools, and inviting them in community planning process recognize them as actors of school. A child club leader said, "*Child club is formed in school but we are invited in ward citizen forum's meeting as children's representatives*". Cornwall and Coelho (2007) write of the need to connect child club with wider popular movements and civil associations. Fielding (2006) and Wynes (2005) argue that child participation should not be limited and restricted to decisions on school facilities and environments (e.g. school meals, toilets and after school activities) but also on the core issues of teaching and learning, staff appointments and other strategic activities.

Rights and Ownership of Children in School Governance

My research findings on contribution of child clubs on school governance are similar with the findings of Backman and Trafford (2006). According to them, students involved in school governance can play instrumental roles. They include to : i) Represent views and interests of all students, including marginalized and those with

special needs, in school governance and decision making and in the school committee; ii) develop school plans and monitoring use of funds; iii) communicate information between school/village management; and iv) better utilization and protection of school property and resources.

Because of children's genuine inputs in school improvement plan through child clubs, it improves school governance and its effective implementation. Child club leaders and teachers recognized that (Field Note, 5 June 2012): i) S*tudents have insights*: children in school know what is going on, and can contribute practical ideas for change. For example, they can tell if school resources are well used, which teachers are punctually in the classroom and what can be done to make the school a better place; ii) *students learn by doing*: by participating in decision-making, children learn valuable life skills about how to balance different interests, argue a case, and make a presentation. Students will learn how democracy works, and use these skills at home and in the community; iii) *participation creates ownership*: students who have been involved in creating something are much more likely to understand, value and committed to it. For examples, classroom rules and school code of conduct developed with student participation are more likely to be fair and respected; and, iv) *participation is a right*: students are full human beings and have certain basic rights.

It was revealed from my empirical data that students as the beneficiary of school have a right to participate in making decisions that influence them and those SMCs and teachers need students' input in decision-making. FGD with child club members (Field Note, 6 January 2012) highlighted the multiple reasons for their involvement in school governance they include: i) Improve school governance, ii) gain experience, iii) for social reasons, iv) for better learning and school environment, v) desire to serve other students, and v) influenced by their friends or parents.

Invitation of child club members in SMC will improve school governance with better understanding among children and adults about rights and responsibilities. Child club improves communication, coordination and collaboration among actors in schools and make SMC, HT and PTA more transparent, accountable and responsive. With disciplined and inquisitive students, participation of parents and other stakeholders in the preparation of school improvement plan will improve school credibility and ownership among parents and students.

Strengthening School Democracy

Democracy is for the people, by the people and with the people. School is purely for students to socialize democratic norms, systems, values and beliefs and to learn. An ex-child club member argued, "*you cannot buy personality and confidence without being in child clubs*". A teacher regretted with me for not having child club in his childhood "*I missed social and life skills education needed for a competent, cooperative and creative citizen from child clubs*".

There are some contradictory findings concerning child clubs and study, as some parents seem to say it increases children's interest in learning, while other parents are worried that time spent in child clubs is time taken away from studying. A parent commented, "*children will get more time to study if they are not engaged in child clubs*". However, parents and teachers recognized that child clubs promote school democracy and make children more responsible by educating them both rights and duties as students as well as citizens.

Reasons in sending children to child clubs are to promote democratic process and personality development of children for their self-confidence, self-efficacy and leadership so that it empowers children to be an active citizen. According to Backman and Trafford (2006), school governance is based on human rights values, empowerment

and involvement of students, staff and stakeholders in all-important decisions in the school. There is a universal agreement in theory on democratic values. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights (UN, 1948) and the child who is capable of forming his or her views has the right to express those views and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (UN, 1989).

Every country and each school within her boundary has written policies of this kind to promote democratic values in its daily work and child club is a means towards this end (O'Kane, 2006). Tisdall (2010) argues that theorizations of children and young people's participation in collective decision making as a part of democracy has been largely accepted as inward looking in recent decades. This includes four ingredient of school democracy that needs to listen/hear children of all ages, consider participation as a process not an event, define achievements of participation and weave the involvement of children into the culture of organizations and wider society.

Concluding the Chapter

I have covered a wide range of issues in this chapter on perceptions and contributions of child club to children, family, schools and communities from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders. This chapter covered three sections presenting and discussing the findings of the field data and my interpretations. They included stakeholders' perceptions and understanding on child clubs, overall values and contributions of child clubs to children and their learning and school governance.

About *perception and understanding of child clubs*, children and child clubs are accepted, recognized and promoted as an agency of children for their learning, socialization and school governance. Child clubs meant child participation for stakeholders. This has been a forum of children to work together with adults and their institutions to make them more children friendly and accountable on different

children's issues and concerns at schools and in communities. Government agencies especially local bodies and schools accept and mobilize child club as an actor of society and are engaged in issues that affect their lives. There is an understanding that children engaged in child clubs are responsive, social and disciplined.

Stakeholders value children and child clubs by observing their functions and roles. For SMC/PTA, child clubs are source of information for better decisions. For children, child club is for learning teamwork, personality development and empowering children to claim their rights from schools and institutions. However, teachers are not happy with them as they monitor their presence and work to feed back to SMC/PTA. Girls in leadership positions perform better comparing with boys as children reported that they are social, polite, friendly and caring nature

The findings revealed that child clubs as an agency of children are contributing to children, parents, teachers and school as a whole. Parents and teachers reported that children in child clubs are more knowledgeable on their rights and duties as a result they are more responsive and disciplined. Children and child clubs are their ears and eyes on school management and classroom issues. Parents also get awareness on their rights and entitlements leading to increase access to government service provisions. School get more support from various child rights organizations but also more monitoring and scrutiny of teachers and school systems. However, parents and teachers complain about used and misused of children and child clubs by NGOs making them as mini-adults. Child clubs follow the structures, systems and functions of NGOs in schools and communities.

Concerning children's learning and socialization, child clubs render new knowledge and social skills to children for active citizenships. It improves relationship among students and also between students and teachers. Children engaged in child

clubs are more social, friendly, responsive, and disciplined. This brings learning aptitude and assimilation skills beyond school structures. Child clubs also demand and work for making school and teaching learning methodologies more child-friendly. It also raise voices in school in case there is an abuse, exploitation and corporal punishment to any child which teachers did not like as they think it challenges their power. This has led to reduce the dropout rate of children increasing their learning abilities. Extracurricular activities are concentrating towards children's learning and creating good relationship with teachers and parents. Ultimately, child clubs emphasize learning to learn concept so that child club would be more visible to improve four pillars of education. These pillars include learning to know; learning to do; learning to be; and learning to live together.

The study findings revealed that child clubs contribute to improve school governance, like school social audit, teachers' attendance and punctuality in classrooms as well as transparency and accountability of SMC and PTA in school decisions. This is about practicing school democracy (Dewey, 1916). There are visible changes and results seen in school with active engagement of parents and support from child rights agencies to implement school improvement plans and annual education calendars.

CHAPTER VII

CLAIMING NEW KNOWLEDGE 'ASSETS TO CHILDREN"

Child rights and children's participation, as relatively a new phenomenon in Nepal, and child participation as a process where children influence decisions about their lives, ultimately leads to change in their society. Children's rights and their participation got momentum both at local to district levels with a support from non-governmental organizations. Gradually, GoN is taking initiatives to internalize the child rights and child participation into its policies, plans, systems, mechanisms and structures from district to local levels including in schools, but not at central level.

This chapter presents my overall findings and discussions in responding the four research questions based on perceptions and understandings of multiple stakeholders of child clubs including children, child club leaders, parents, SMC and PTA members, teachers, NGO activists and similar authorities. My four research questions are: 1) How have child clubs evolved and managed in schools; 2) what are the perceptions and understanding of child clubs among stakeholders; 3) how have child clubs contributed for children's learning and school governance; and 4) how child rights policies are internalized and institutionalized in practice. Out of six sections of this chapter, the first to fourth deal with each research question. The last two sections summarize the outcomes of the study.

Evolution and Management of Child Clubs in Schools

The child clubs have been initiated with an aim to materialize the call and spirit of the UNCRC only after 1990s. These clubs have been opened in an active initiation and leadership of children with patronage of parents and other caretakers particularly NGOs. These clubs ensure the children's rights to information, participation and

association as enshrined in the Articles 12, 13, 15, and 17 together with four child rights principles and spirits enshrined in the UNCRC. Both local and international non-governmental organizations are facilitating in the formulation and functioning of child clubs (CCWB, 2011). When the clubs were able to influence both adults and children in community, their number has quickly gone up. Children are the right holders and adults and institutions are duty bearers. Children have right to get information; make opinions on the matters that affect their lives. The kinds of information children get from child clubs are helpful to develop their confidence and consciousness towards rights.

Promotion of child rights and conduction of extra-curricular activities has been the focus of the child clubs. Children and teachers prioritize to get social skills and opportunities for personality and leadership development that does not match with NGOs agenda and resources. Since many parents and teachers believe that childhood is period of learning rather than play, the clubs' focus is on children's other issues and life skill education and development.

Understanding and recognition of child club depends on how each society defines childhood. The term childhood is non-specific and can imply a varying range of years in human development. Developmentally and biologically, it refers to the period between birth and adulthood. In the legal systems of many countries, the childhood age ranges in between 16 to 21 years, with 18 being the most common as outlined by the UNCRC. There are different legal standards in Nepal to define children and childhood from 14 years to 18 years. However, children's act of 1992 defines children legally becomes adults at the age of 16 years. Thus, child club is an agency formed by these children for their rights and development.

Since the mid 1990s, child clubs as a means for promoting child participation has become increasingly popular among child rights and child development agencies

(Theis, 2010). Children are being involved in different projects, research, assessments, monitoring and consultations related to children and their society (O'Kane, 2006). They work as peer educators, child rights campaigners, health promoters, change agents and young journalists (Lansdown, 2010). In many countries, children's clubs, unions, parliaments and youth councils have been formed (Theis, 2010), and in some cases children have been able to influence public decisions and resource allocations like in LGCDP and CFLG in Nepal (Haug & Regmi, 2012). Despite these investments in children's participation, most children still do not participate in important decisions affecting them. Schools and education are rarely participatory, government decisions are made without children's inputs, and the media continue to broadcast images of children as helpless victims or of adolescents as troublemakers, rather than of children as active contributors to the development of their communities (Dahal, 2013c; Fielding, 2006; Fletcher, 2005; Lansdown, 2010; Mitra, 2008).

Children in child clubs have been key players on implementation of various activities related to child rights in schools and communities. My study revealed that child clubs conduct: i) Child rights awareness trainings, discussions, meetings and interactions, ii) street drama and rallies on special days of children, iii) campaigns to eradicate child marriage, iv) social activities at school and also in communities, v) school enrollment campaign and door to door visit to bring out of school children into school, vi) monitoring and recording child rights violation cases, vii) meetings and lobbying with local authorities for child rights implementation, viii) better utilization of school budget and allocation of VDC budget to children, ix) promotion of child friendly environment in school, x) stopping corporal punishment and discrimination in schools, and, xi) timely opening of school and running classes. These activites support for enabling environment for children's learning and better socialization for citizenship.

Stakeholders' Understanding of Child Clubs

Children's agency has been the focus of many scholars recently (Lansdown, 2005). They view children as competent social actors (James & Prout, 1998) and children's social relation is conceptualized in terms of the notion of agency. Certain abilities and competencies are attributed to children in such a way that they are recognized as influential participants within a variety of social contexts (Wyness, 2001). Participation is not only a means by which children can affect change but also provides an opportunity for developing a sense of autonomy, self-efficacy, independence, heightened social competence and resilience (Lansdown, 2005).

Thus, child participation is a key to empower children and enhance their learning in school. Child clubs are becoming synonymous to child participation in Nepal. I found that increased agency of children ensures their increased participation in the matters that are of direct interest to them at all levels from individual to national level both in formal and informal institutions.

Children are no longer innocent, passive and incompetent 'becomings' and they are the beings who determine their lives and the lives of people living around them (James & Prout, 1998) with constant interactions and negotiations with the adult and their structures. Children's participation in social activities through the child clubs have increased, which results in increased capacities of children in dealing with and managing their own issues with direct contact and negotiation with the adult authority.

Form my own observations and interactions with participants; I made some meaning and interpretations about child clubs in Nepal together with my research participants including children and child club leaders. For years children have been oppressed simply being powerless in terms of their age, physical strength and adult-centric notion of competence (Archard, 1993). The powerful have dominated the

powerless. Children as social agents have recently been accepted and entered into discourses of sociology of childhood (James & Prout, 1998). As social beings, children are inherently agentic and they voice their views in order to be heard, to persuade, to move others to action (Pufall & Unsworth, 2004). Child clubs are able to recognize and highlight this fact and promote children's both individual and collective agency in Nepal (Poudyal, 2003).

The more participatory children are, the more they develop their competence and agency, which turns out to be crucial to challenge the asymmetrical power relationships that children have with adults in terms of decision-making. Most established clubs are supposed to self-manage by children themselves (Mitra & Gross, 2009; Hart, 1992), however they are largely influenced by adults and their institutions.

To some extent, children now make decisions and manage their activities. Child club executive members mostly organize and manage clubs' activities in schools ignoring the capacities and competencies of general members. The engagement of children from all ages and all grades in clubs activities is minimal. However, there is a good combination of gender, ethnicity, and religion among executive members based on their membership or school enrollment. The following table summarizes the stakeholders' understandings on child clubs and their functions:

Table 28

Stakeholders' Understanding on Child Clubs

Stakeholders	Understanding of child clubs
Children	• A group/organization of children to learn new things, skills/knowledge • An advocate for their rights and entitlements • A representative to raise common voices/concerns • A safeguard from abuse, exploitation and violence in schools/communities • A forum to build confidence and to flourish their hidden treasure • A friend for guidance and support in need • A facilitator of extra-curricular activities to children • An agency of adults' recognition and respect

Stakeholders	Understanding of child clubs
Teachers/HTs	• A helping hand in classrooms/schools • A forum for self discipline students • A body to help school administration and build child capabilities • A place for learning and socialization • A monitor for child rights violation and teachers regularities • A protector for weak and marginalized children • A collective voice and demand of children • An advocate for child friendly teaching • A mirror of school democracy that promotes rights and duties
SMCs/PTAs	• An active actor of school and also a fund raiser • A bridge between administration and students • An organizer/place of extra-curricular activities for play and fun • A helping hand in making school clean and disciplined • A negotiator or communicator in school conflict • A watch dog in school and teachers' duties • A forum for listening collective voices of children and their concerns • A learning place for children and their socialization • An avenue for teachers and students to get exposure and new knowledge
Communities	• An informant for new knowledge & skills • A media to circulate different news and information • A helping hands to students enrollment and reducing their drop out • A means to aware parents on their rights and duties • A forum/place for fun and play to enhance children's talents • A tool to teach team spirit and team work • A representative of children from their villages A forum for practicing democratic norms and disciplines

The table gives a mixed picture of understanding on child rights. It varies from tokenism approach to meaningful participation (Hart, 1992) of children in schools and communities. All four stakeholders see child club as a common forum of children to learn new things, knowledge, skills and to exercise democratic norms, values and beliefs (Delors, 1996) including raising their collective voices with adults and their institutions. Child club is for promoting rights and duties among children and making them more disciplined and responsible. In addition, guide for younger children and also a promoter and protector of child rights. Children take child club as a safeguard of abuse, exploitation, violence and discrimination at schools and communities.

Interestingly teachers perceive child clubs as a protector for weak and marginalized children. Teachers and SMCs find child clubs as a helping hand in their

work including in classrooms and schools activities and conduction of extracurricular activities. Besides children, all stakeholders appreciate child club roles as a negotiator, fundraiser and communicator between community people and schools.

The analysis of empirical data indicates that students in all child clubs demonstrated a growth of agency in three ways as defined by Fletcher (2005) and Mitra (2004). It includes: i) They articulated their opinions and felt that their views were heard; ii) they constructed new roles as change makers in the school who could 'make a difference'; and iii) they developed leadership. It recognizes children as competent social actors and children's social relation are conceptualized in terms of the notion of agency. Both teachers and parents accepted that children have certain abilities and competencies in such a way that they are recognized as influential participants within a variety of social contexts (Wyness, 2001). Participants strongly viewed that participation is not only a means by which children can affect change but also provides an opportunity for developing a sense of autonomy, independence, heightened social competence and resilience (Lansdown, 2005). Thus, participation is a key to empowering children.

Contribution on Children's Learning and School Governance

Child clubs have been proven as a means in promoting child rights and child protection in schools and communities. There is a general trend of engaging children from 10 to 18 years of age in child clubs. Despite various polices and guidelines issued by government in recent years, children's agency has long gone unnoticed and adults and institutions still seem reluctant to recognize it and empower children. Child clubs have given a platform to children to raise their voices for their rights and 'voice is an expression of agency' (Lansdown, 2010). Thousands of children have been able to raise their voices and influence the authority that has long been making decision on behalf of

children at school and local bodies in Nepal (CCWB, 2011). Child clubs have been providing different trainings and skills to their members depending upon specific socio-cultural situations and plans of concerned NGOs. Children's participation has tremendously increased in social activities through child clubs in Nepalese contexts and which in turn results in increased access to information, and access to information will lead to increased social power (Ebbing, 2010).

The most significant change in recent years is that adult institutions like SMCs and VDCs invite child clubs' representatives in their meetings and programmes to let them have their voices. Lundy (2007) further claims that it is not up to adults to decide at what levels decision making begins to involve children and young people, since the legal requirement of the UNCRC is for involvement at all levels, in a consistent and ongoing manner. This research findings are similar to Lundy (2007), where he asserts three grounding features for child participation beyond merely the facilitation of children's views or 'voice' are namely: i) Space: children must be given the opportunity to express a view; ii) audience: the view must be listened to; and iii) influence: the view must be acted upon, as appropriate. In such context, child clubs are becoming an agency of children to ventilate their voices with space, audience and influence in school decisions.

Students' engagement in schools through child clubs has multiple faces and roles (Lansdown, 2010; Mitra, 2008; O'Kane, 2006; Smith, 2002). These include students as education planners, classroom teachers, school researchers, learning evaluators, education advocates, systemic decision makers, leaders for social change, peer educators, rights protectors and so on. According to CCWB (2011), child clubs are playing instrumental roles in changing attitudes and behaviors of children and their parents in schools and communities through various social and

awareness generation activities. Most importantly, it creates an environment to learn

without fear to all children in all grades (Plan, 2008).

The following points as perceived by various stakeholders including children

about the contribution of child clubs in children's learning and school governance

summarize the key findings so far.

Table 29

Child clubs in Children's Learning and School Governance

Children	Family	Schools	Community
• Awareness rights & duties • Monitoring child abuse and exploitation, • Raising child related issues instantly and help friends on their issues • Opportunities for leadership & personality development, • Sensitizing parents and institutions on their obligations towards children • Helps to show their talents • Learning, searching and speaking habits in children • More skills on interpersonal relationship, communication	• Influence parents and neighbors to send kids to schools regularly • Improving cleanliness of family members • Sensitizing people on child rights • Advocating of toilets for better health, hygiene and sanitation • Helping parents household chores and agriculture work • More politeness and friendly at home • More responsible and active in social work	• More support in school activities • Management of extra-curricular activities • Active engagement in framing school code of conduct and classroom rules • Participation in school management work like SIP, yearly calendar • School cleanliness and use of school property • Children are asked before conducting any activities in the schools • Active participation on different school activities • Follow rules to maintain school disciplines	• Participation in local services and improves mutual relationship • Campaign against smoking, abuse, child marriage, violence and discrimination • Consciousness about rights and duties • Promotion of open defecation free communities • Conscious on ecofriendly environment • Conduct social awareness program. • Exploring to be in decision-making process

The table revealed that child clubs are contributing to children, family, school

and community positively in its understanding and social practices. Most importantly,

school practices have been changed that: i) Teachers are regular in school and also in

classrooms; ii) corporal punishment is highly discouraged; iii) students are more

disciplined and active in school activities, iv) students among themselves have less discrimination, abuse, neglect and exploitation; v) less conflict and quarrels/violence in class rooms and in schools; vi) less political activities and interference; vii) regular interaction among students, teachers and parents; viii) extra-curricular activities are run by student; ix) functional code of conduct for students, parents and teachers in schools; x) SMC meeting discusses children's issues and quality of education regularly; xi) child club takes part in school improvement plan and annual academic calendar; xii) child friendly environment and learning, and xiii) more transparent working culture and application of social audit as a tool for school performance. Ultimately, child clubs have improved learning environment in schools and teaching learning practices in classroom more participatory and child centric.

According to Lovan, Murray and Shaffer (2004), governance, in short, is a process of participation, which depends on networks of engagement, which attempts to embrace diversity in contemporary society, which promotes greater responsiveness to service users and, in so doing, seeks to reshape accountability relationships. Participation will improve both the quality and the legitimacy of government decisions (Barnes, 2007) including in schools. A consensus is growing among academia, Gaventa (2004) write, in both the North and South, that 'a more active and engaged citizenry' is needed *and* a 'more responsive and effective state'.

School represents State at local level with children and their learning. Cornwall and Coelho (2007) set out five requirements for participatory institutions like schools to be inclusive, democratic and effect change. They are: i) Students take part as citizens of schools not just as beneficiaries; ii) mechanisms are in place to make claims; iii) child friendly structures for flexibility and constant negotiation; iv) collaboration and partnership between all stakeholders including children ; and v) participation in

continuous dialogue and reform. National framework of child friendly school for quality education incorporates all of these elements in its indicators in Nepal.

Fitzgerald, Graham, Smith and Taylor (2010) explore children's participation as a *struggle over recognition*, using this as a theoretical tool to foreground the importance of dialogue and reflect 'the complex interplay between agency and power' in schools. Thus, child club and SMC in school both struggle for sharing power between adults and students in school management and governance issues. Researchers like Cockburn (2010), Mannion (2010), Theis (2010), and Tisdall (2010) collectively argue that without engagement of children in school governance, one cannot expect school benefiting children and enhancing their learning.

To be an effective school for children and their learning, school structures, norms, values, systems, staff and environment should be welcoming, safe, supportive and protective to children and their differences. The learning to learn is a recent emphasis of eduction reform for better learning anad socialization (Wirth & Perkins, 2008). The active engagement of children in classroom pedagogies and school management is a pre-condition to make school child friendly. School infrastructures should count children's age, interest and nature. Rules and roles of stakeholders of school are effective and respected if they are made in consultation with all actors of school including children. Children bring knowledge and skills to other children and teachers in school from their interaction with peers, family and society. They are actors of gaining and making knowledge for their life and livelihood.

There are, however, few challenges and problems of child clubs to be addressed in future. They are: i) More engagement of children in classroom and ECAs; ii) practicing of friendly learning environment and child centric methods, promoting team work and democratic norms; iii) crating better learning opportunities: more school

days, more materials, regularity of teachers, less drop out; and, iv) prioritizing learning and socialization as a priority issues by NGOs in clubs to all grade children with new knowledge, social skills and peer support. Thus, there is a strong demand for a more inclusive and institutionalized process of child participation in school from all actors.

Institutionalization of child rights/participation policies and practices

With the support of agencies and non-governmental organizations, child clubs are evolved and mobilized in both schools and communities. District child welfare boards are recently taking ownership of child clubs in limited areas in all 75 districts. NGOs mobilize child clubs for child participation, child rights awareness and other priority issues of their concerns. Child club has been an effective means to promote child participation at various levels but not yet to the central level. There are few policies and procedures to form and mobilize child clubs in schools and communities. However, CCWB and DCWBs are not in a position to follow up and implement them properly due to limited mandates and resource.

Child participation has entered into state institutions and mechanisms at local and district levels. Child club representatives attend in few local institutions officially but their capacity for meaningful participation is not in priority. Child clubs are concentrated in organizing sports and extra-curricular activities. Children associated in child clubs are more disciplined and outspoken. Most of the child clubs are following the rules and structures of adult institutions. There is no proper training and support mechanism from government officials even though child rights officers and DCWBs are set up in all 75 districts.

Due to proliferation of child clubs, indigenous ways and mechanisms of child participation like *sadans* are disappearing from schools. Child clubs are more concentrated in extracurricular activities rather than their learning and personality

development. SMCs and PTAs are yet to recognize and mainstream children and child clubs issues in their plans, polices and meetings. Despites various weaknesses and limitations, child clubs and child participation have been the nationwide phenomenon in schools and local bodies after formulation of child friendly schooling guidelines in 2010, child friendly local governance national strategies in 2011 and national children's policy in 2012.

It was revealed that child club improves school democracy and directly contributes on personality and leadership development among children (Lansdown, 2011). My findings also conclude with the similar action points as reported by other researchers (Fletcher, 2005; Lansdown, 2011; Theis & O'Kane, 2006) to institutionalize the child participation in education sector especially in schools. These actions to realization of article 12 include: involvement of children in individual decisions affecting their education; the introduction of child-centered learning; the establishment of democratic structures within school; opportunities for children to inform the development and implementation of education legislation and policies; and support for student organizations at various levels like child club and their networks.

Institutionalization and evolution of the child clubs in schools contribute to children to learn to help each other; be confident, active, friendly and social in community; enjoy opportunities to express inner talents; attend school regularly in child friendly environment; get personality development and knowledge on hidden treasure and better socialize in schools and with peers. Furthermore, children receive more practical and social knowledge and skills; become aware on their rights and responsibilities; develop network and linkages with high officials and child rights organizations; and practice leadership and managerial skills essential for future career.

Enabling and Disabling Forces on Child Participation in School

My reflection over the findings and discussions has given a conclusive understanding that there are five forces mutually contributing forces to enable or disable children's participation in schools through child clubs. Fletcher (2005) and O'Kane (2006) had discussed about socio-cultural and economic forces that support or hamper child participation in both schools and communities. I understood there are three additional forces namely personal, political, and pedagogical. They include: a) *Socio-cultural: homogeneity to heterogeneity, feudal to open culture, child as an object to subject; b) economic: out of school to in school, rich & poor to middle income, absence or presence of NGOs, funding from local institutions; c) p*ersonal/individual: arrogant, violent, self-fish to friendly and cooperative, weak to good in classroom, being disable, girls to boys; d) political: autocratic to democratic rules/leaders, existence of legislation, centralized to decentralized system, becoming to being; and e) pedagogical: child as a receiver to learner, teaching textbooks to curriculum learning, memorization of 3Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) to socialization on 4Rs (rules and roles, responsibilities, relationships and resources).

Each of these forces shaped the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, values, norms, structures and mechanisms of individual child and school both positively and negatively. Lansdown (2011) clarifies why listening to children is important. Child participation contributes to personal development; leads to better decision-making and outcomes; serves to protect children; contributes to preparation for civil society development, tolerance and respect for others; and strengthens accountability.

Children who engaged in child clubs and take leadership position are gaining leadership development and learning opportunities that add to their growth and better understanding themselves and to an increased capacity to manage and organize their

own lives better. With child clubs, relationship between teachers and students become more respectful and collaborative. The chart below shows these five enabling and disabling forces reinforcing each other to happen progressively or regressively:

Child Participation in School:
Roles and Contribution of child clubs

Contributing/enabling Forces	**Disabling Forces**
Personal -Smiley, caring and cooperative -Friendly and open/soft-spoken -Listening and participatory -Regular in school and good in class -Enthusiastic and learner -Networking/team player	**Personal** -Anger, hate and self-fish -Arrogant, violent and power centric -Talk active and controlling -Less regular in school and poor in class -Bully and complaining -Less transparent/communicative
Socio-cultural -Mixed communities/new settlement -Democratic society, norms & values -Love, care & inspiration -Existence of CSOs/clubs -Ethnic and low caste families --Children as subject	**Socio-cultural** -Homogeneous community -Undemocratic society: feudal cultures -Neglect & discrimination -Non-existence of CSOs -High caste families --Children as an object
Economic -NGOs support -Access to education -Middle income family -Income generation -Economic independency -Strong M & E system	**Economic** -Unsupportive adults/NGOs -Out of school condition -Rich and poor family -Unemployment -Economic dependency -Weak M & E system
Political -Children as human being -Childhood: a social construct - Presence of acts, rules & mechanism -decentralized/democratic system -Child friendly service providers -Decision with children -Bottom-up accountability/reporting	**Political** -Children as human becoming -Childhood as a biological -Absence of acts, rules & mechanism -Unitary/autocratic system -Untrained/rigid service providers - Decisions for children -Top down accountability
Pedagogical -Education in society -Child as a co-creator/learner -Curriculum learning -Child centric methods -Minimum enabling conditions -Formative evaluation -Socialization with 4Rs: responsibility, roles/rules, relationship and resources	**Pedagogical** -Education in school -Child as a receiver -Textbook teaching -Teacher centric methods -Poor enabling conditions -Summative evaluation -Memorization for 3Rs: reading, writing & arithmetic

Figure 5. Enabling and disabling forces for child participation

Apart from these forces, children and their characters enable someone and disable to the others. However, one thing is common to all i.e. societal understanding of children and childhood as a social construct and democratic political system that recognize children as human being are favorable for child clubs and child participation (James & Prout, 1998). Existence of NGOs in the society (Hart, 2004) and introduction of child friendly teaching learning process in school (Bhuvaneshwori, 2005) also positively contribute for it. However, there are some variations based on gender, caste, ethnicity and disabilities. Higher and lower caste children are less active in child clubs; similar was the case with girls. School based child clubs do not include out of schoolchildren even show interest. Children exercise their rights to participation and share power with teachers through child club in school in presence of enabling forces and with the societies.

Child Club as an Asset to Children

Mitra (2004) argues that children gain three assets i.e. agency, belonging and competency "ABC" by being engaged in schools, and adult institutions for their learning and livelihood activities. Development psychologists support that "ABC" are necessary factors for children and young people to remain motivated in school and to achieve academic success (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Goodenow, 1993; Roeser, Midgley & Urdan, 1996). In this empirical research, I found two new factors; '*democracy*' and '*empowerment*' promoted and practiced through child clubs in Nepal. The right to participation in decision-making processes is fundamental to democracy. Similarly, democratic participatory governance based on the will of the people including children best assures social, civil, political, cultural and economic rights of its

people. When there is a democratic system, people including children are empowered to claim their rights collectively and make their government accountable.

I argue that child clubs with an active support and facilitation from NGOs and education actors can inculcate five assets "ABCDE" i.e. 'agency', 'belonging', 'competency', 'democracy' and 'empowerment' to children for their learning, wellbeing and future professions. They are not stand-alone and parallel, but they are mutually reinforcing to each other. The following diagram presents that all these five assets are interacting in a cyclical order and have interfaces to reinforce each other on children and their development. Democracy is the foundation to other four assets on which they stand. The two new assets that I have added '*democracy*' and '*empowerment*' are in italics.

Agency
(Leading collective voices and concerns as a change agent)

Belonging
(Improving relations, interactions and peer support to each other)

Empowerment
(Claiming rights & entitlements and making the state accountable and responsive)

Assets to Children

Competency
(Developing new knowledge, abilities, skills, talents and attitudes)

Democracy
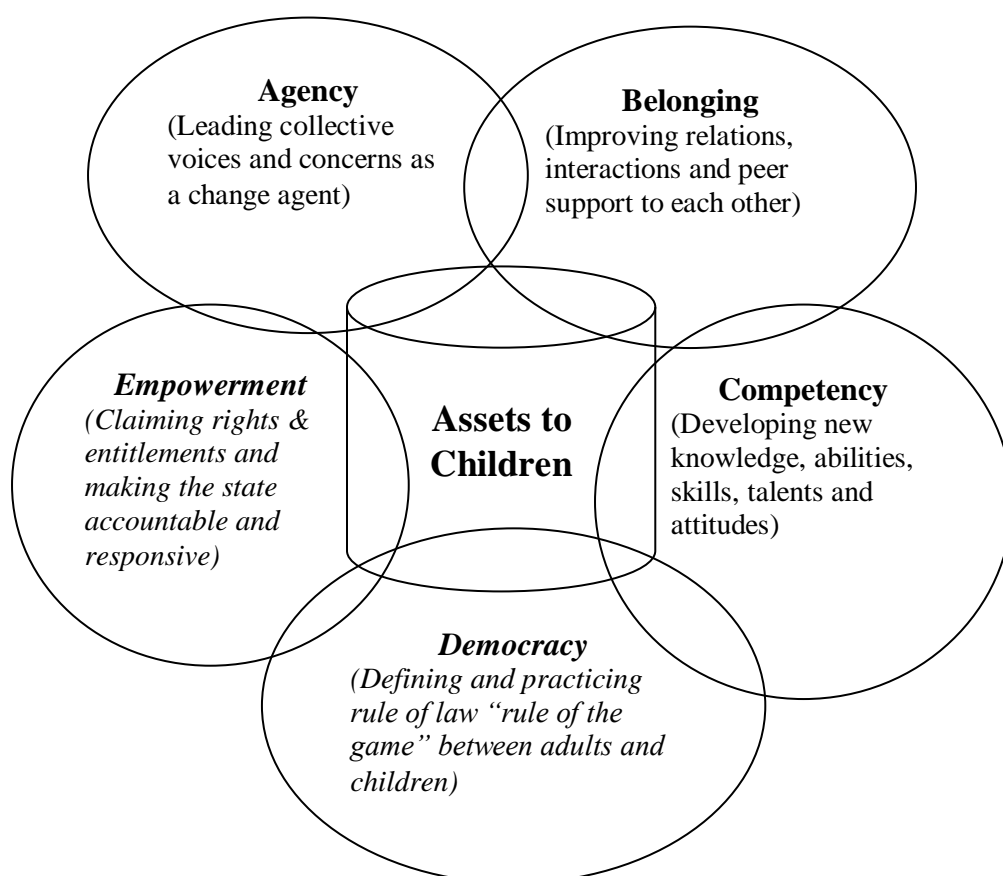*(Defining and practicing rule of law "rule of the game" between adults and children)*

Figure 6. Assets of child club to children

Because of agency, belonging may increase and vice versa. Similarly, increased belonging will improve four pillar of learning competency and confidence of children. With the enhanced competency, children are empowered and will have access to and enjoy democratic norms, values and system. When there is a strong democracy, children are empowered to claim their rights. With an introduction of child friendly local governance and school system, children are formally welcome and recognized as the full member of society, not just human becoming (Bhuvaneshwori, 2005). They are aware and fulfilling their roles & rules, relationship, resources and responsibilities as a citizen in schools and local institutions. They also learn and respect the rights of others including individual difference and diversities in the society and in school. At this point, I conclude that child club promotes and practices plurality, democratic norms, values, structures and principles among themselves and in social interaction with adults/institutions. This is the fourth asset that child participation provides to children.

The rights based approach to education and human development aims to empower marginalized groups of society including children through information, networking, linkages, participation and agency (WB, 2002). This enables children to claim their rights and make their state mechanism responsive and accountable as a duty bearer to their entitlements. However, out of school children and children from marginalized communities are missing this opportunities as they do not get priority in child clubs interventions. The UNCRC also lays foundations on children's rights to protection, provisions and participation (Hart, 2004; Mitra, 2006; Theis, 2010).

Children's rights to participation include their rights to get appropriate and relevant information, rights to voice, religion, and association and to be heard in decision-making process. I found that children engaged in child clubs are empowered to claim their rights in schools and local institutions and make the State institutions

including schools more accountable and responsive on their issues, concerns, views and demands. From this, I argue and conclude 'empowerment' is the fifth asset that children will have being engaged in child clubs.

Concluding the Chapter

Children and childhood is a social construct changing over time. It also differs country to country based on local context and cultures, social, economic and political structures and mechanism, availability and quality of basic services. Promotion of child rights/participation entered into Nepalese society through initiatives of I/NGOs since 1990s. Child clubs are emerged and evolved as an agency of children and means of participation both in schools and in communities. Child club stakeholders including children, parents, teachers and authorities understand child club as a collective voice of children about their issues, concerns, challenges and priorities. These stakeholders are gradually recognizing children as competent and capable human being to make their voices in decision-making process on the issues that affect their lives.

Child clubs have positive contribution towards their learning and school governance. Children engaged in child clubs are more confidence, outspoken, self-disciplined and active with other children, adults and social institutions. Schools having child clubs are supportive for child friendly learning environment. Teachers and SMCs are more transparent, responsive and accountable to children and their learning. Children are also working as a bridge between school and community. By recognizing the values, benefits and contributions of child clubs to children, school and society, government of Nepal has brought few legislations, policies, plans and programmes to internalize and institutionalize child rights and child participation in its periodic plan, education and local government sectors. This has led to shifting the mindsets and

hierarchical working cultures and mechanism of school towards more student centric and child friendly environment to grow and develop their hidden treasures as a citizen.

Child clubs are providing leadership and personality development skills including making school education more practical and relevant by providing interpersonal, communication, social and life skill education. Furthermore, children are gaining four pillars of education as defined by UNESCO with an active engagement of child club in school. They include building competencies of children on learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. Because of this, child clubs have been an inevitable phenomenon of the society and local government and an integral organ of school education and children's socialization.

In addition to the values and benefits of child clubs, there is also some dilemma. In the name of child participation, adult institutions including school use children and child club as adult being and a mini-adult institution respectively. Children are getting overburden with adult issues and their priorities. There is also a tendency to focus and build capacity of the chair or secretary of the club. There is a general frustration among club members and students for not treating them equally on ECA, training, workshop, exposure, personality and leadership development opportunities. It was open secret that child rights agencies are handpicking a few children in the name of child club and child participation by depriving the majority of members and students and their interests and priorities in a manipulative way.

Finally, I claim that child club directly contributes to enhance personal, social, political, economic and pedagogical forces that enables or disables children's participation in schools and institutions. If these forces are positive in schools through child clubs that results children's access to agency, belonging, competency, democracy

and empowerment. These five assets "ABCDE" improve children's life and livelihood

as an agent of school and society as active citizen of today and for future.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

This chapter presents the conclusions and implications of my study on "Child Participation in Schools of Nepal: Role and Contribution of Child Clubs". This study focuses on exploration and analysis of the stakeholders' perceptions on child clubs' emergence, evolution, management and contribution on children's learning and school governance following the interpretative paradigm of qualitative research. Not making an evaluation of the student participation in schools and child clubs, this research concludes that children participation has entered into schools as a fundamental right to information, association and freedom of opinion and improves children's learning and school governance. Hence, this chapter includes scopes for further research on the related themes.

Conclusions

Children and childhood is a social construct changing over time. It also differs based on local context and cultures, social, economic and political structures and mechanism, availability and quality of basic services. The meaning and understanding of children, childhood and child participation are highly contested and contextualized phenomenon in different socio-cultural contexts in each society. The new social studies of childhood, socio-cultural theory and the UNCRC have contributed positively to children's participation as a central place in social life and public policy. The concept of children's participation gets influence by broader political processes, which shape the conditions for child participation including support for children's representation in decision-making, and governance processes, and increasing support for children's roles as active citizens. The socio-economic, political and democratic

culture of society shape and influence children and child participation accordingly. It is where the question comes whether we should regard children as active actor of the society or as passive recipient of the adults' offering. Democratization and empowerment paradigm argue in favor of the first option. Nepal's commitment as the State party of the UNCRC also argue for the same concept. The concept of child club also paves the same direction.

There are variety of models of children's citizenship and participation practiced at different levels including child-led organizations. Child Participation has been an emerging phenomenon in both schools and communities. These phenomenoa also went through the process of children and child participation in adult institutions as a tokenism to decision makers (Hart, 1992; Lansdown, 2011; Mitra & Gross, 2009).

There is a gradual shift towards understanding participation. It is a negotiated space that is dialogical rather than mono-logical in nature. In this shift, one can understand that child rights acknowledge that children have a fundamental right to be part of every decision that affects them in all countries without exception, including babies and very young children. This requires adults to learn new ways of listening and hearing children of different ages and a cultural change in all government agencies with the introduction of new legislation, policies, services and programmes. This also demands different ways of working among adults, and bringing children into social, economic, political and cultural debates.

UNCRC is the most powerful force to keep children's agenda in national legislation and policies for their rights and participation. This has been shifting from rhetoric to reality into the legal system where children can claim their rights to participation in local institutions including in schools. GoN and its local institutions are obligatory to work with children and child clubs for realizing their rights at all levels.

Development plans (9th plan onward) also made children's agenda as the integral part of education and social development sectors' programme. This helps understand that importance of 'big push' for the establishment of child rights. With this 'big push' children and young people's safety and protection from abuse, skills, self-esteem and self-efficacy for them as their rights have been a part of learning to them. This learning also include i) A view of children as subjects of rights and responsibilities; ii) a school culture of listening to children; and, iii) an effective participation of children in decision-making processes at various levels of the school hierarchy.

The growing need and aspiration of stakeholders including children and child clubs demand inclusive and institutionalized local institutions, modest invest, expanded work opportunities and representation to all children in club activities is a need of the day. This need also asks for adult support as a guide to them, not a manipulator.

Evolution of child clubs has been a nation wide phenomenon of community schools in Nepal, not in the institutional schools. However, mission of child clubs is still like a flying aeroplane in the foggy sky. In the name of child clubs, child rights agencies unknowingly dismantled the indigenous groups and forums of chidlren including sadans in schools. However, documentation of evolutionary processes of child clubs is to be institutionalized at some points to raise their voice as adults, to safeguard their rightful space in the society; and to stop socio-cultural malpractices such as child marriages, gender violence, open defecation, and abusive practices such as child labor, sexual abuse and discrimination.

Over the years some child clubs have been evolved as full-fledged NGO. This trend suggests that the clubs in several communities have empowered children to develop some entrepreneurial skills as well. When it comes to their educational objectives, there is still more work to do although there are only few key challenges and

problems in child clubs, and about child participation. They include non-inclusive and closed membership distribution processes, adults' biased selection in membership, key positions and participation in training and workshop. Furthermore, lack of clarity among actors, unavailability of resources, projectized approach of child clubs, poor capacity among NGOs facilitator to facilitate child club and weak communication among child clubs, school and parents are hindering the meaningful participation of children in schools.

Studies showed that child clubs have positive contribution towards their learning and school governance. They say that children engaged in child clubs are more confidence, outspoken, self-disciplined and active with other children, adults and social institutions. Schools having child clubs are supportive for child friendly learning environment. Teachers and SMCs are more transparent, responsive and accountable to children and their learning. Children are also working as a bridge between school and community. By recognizing the values, benefits and contributions of child clubs to children, school and society, government of Nepal has brought few legislations, policies, plans and programmes to internalize and institutionalize child rights and child participation in its periodic plan, education and local government sectors. Interestingly this has led to shifting the mindsets and hierarchical working cultures of the school: schools are now being more student centric and child friendly. They are also evolving as a place to grow and develop these hidden treasures of children as a reliable citizen.

Child clubs are providing leadership and personality development skills including making school education more practical and relevant by providing interpersonal, communication, social and life skill education. Furthermore, children are gaining four pillars of education in improved school governance (UNESCO, 2007) with an active engagement of child club in school. They include building competencies of

children on learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. Because of this, child clubs have been an inevitable phenomenon of the society and local government and an integral organ of school education and children's socialization.

In addition to the values and benefits of child clubs, there also lies some dilemma. In the name of child participation, adult institutions including school use children and child club as adult being and a mini-adult institution respectively. Children are getting overburden with adult issues and their priorities. There is also a tendency to focus and build capacity of the chairperson or secretary of the club. There is a general frustration among club members and students for not treating them equally on ECAs, trainings, workshops, exposures, personality and leadership development opportunities. It was shared as an open secret that child rights agencies are handpicking a few children in the name of child club and child participation by depriving the majority of members and students and their interests and priorities in a manipulative way. It was interesting that ethnic and middle class children are active in child club activities and committees due to their liberal family and open cultural environment. The so-called high and low caste children are less active in child clubs where as children of rich families are in private schools, out of child club reach. In other words, children see out of child clubs as a lost opportuniy in student life but there is a demand to expand opportunities and representation in child clubs interventions to all age, sex and grade children.

Inclusivity in child club in terms of gender, caste, ethnicity, religion is an emerging agenda. Membership of girls in child clubs beats the boys but leadership positions are still captured by boys except in treasurer position. Early grades children and 10th grade students are mostly not in child clubs. The same data also shows that there is an active engagement and domination of ethnic group and middle class children

in child clubs and its interventions. Children with special needs are still invisible or non-existent in child club membership and priorities. There are also few complains for making child clubs more chairperson centric and limited its benefits to a few handpicked children in executive committees.

This demands scaffolding of the children of all categories and reorientation of the adults and their institutions. It also requires harmonious relationship between the children's governers, the SMC/PTA, teachers, and parents at various levels. Children engaged in adults' institutions are not only familiar with their rights and entitlements, but are also more responsible and disciplined to claim and have access to their rights by making State institutions more accountable and responsive. Moreover, the UNCRC draws attention to impove enabling environment for children from home to institutions at all levels, there is a need to work with families and communities while promoting child friendliness in institutions like schools in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

From this research, finally, I conclude that personal, socio-cultural, political, economic and pedagogical forces play an important role in schools to promote child participation through child clubs, both positively and negatively. When they play assenting roles, children and adults in schools together create an environment where children are able to question and share power with school authority to improve their learning and school experiences as an actor. This adds democracy and empowerment elements to earlier findings of Mitra (2004) that child participation brings agency, belonging and competency to children as their assets. Here, I argue that children's agency in school improve their agency, belonging, competency, democracy and empowerment in a cyclic manner which are key assets to make school and education more relevant, practical and useful for children's life and livelihood. From this, children enjoy their fundamental rights and act as a responsible citizen.

Revelation from the Study

Understanding of childhood is a social construct globally, and changing over time with an expansion of education and human rights movement. After 1990s, the definition of children and childhood is rapidly changing in Nepal. Most of the Nepalese schools still practice the 'dominant framework' description of Prout and James (1997) that represents the tradition and conservative views of childhood and organizational policies and practices within schools.

My empirical data shows that schools are in general influenced by the dominant framework that the rigorous system of control and regulation in schools by adults limiting the opportunities for children to exercise agency and potentially change these structural practices and relationships with adults. This validates with three propositions of Lukes (2005) that describe how school system used to structure to manipulate the false consciousness of the oppressed and uphold hegemony of adults. The three propositions namely: i) The exclusion of oppressed in decision-making power; ii) the accepted social arrangements that disadvantage the oppressed; and iii) the disregard of the real interests of the oppressed related to the organizational practice in schools.

Children did not have any 'decision-making' power within the existing legal system, as there is no representation of child clubs in SMC and PTA, which presents a limited view of children. Teachers have more power than students in school decision-making; allocation and use of spaces and school resources; making and monitoring classroom rules and school code of conducts; and assessing children is learning achievement. Teachers, by virtue of their adult status, have presumed a position with authority over children.

The needs and preferences of the oppressed like children become a by-product of their participation within the system and may not reflect their real interests in school

decision. A member of child club in FGD commented that children are getting punishment for not following the classroom rules and school code of conduct but who will do it for teachers and SMC. This means within the school system children are expected to 'behave properly' following the school rules and behavioral codes easier for adults and where those who may challenge the system are positioned in the minority, marginalized and receive punitive actions.

The research outcomes also showed that learning designed by the teachers and the school authority largely ignores children's reality and individuality. There was a clear evident that all students of grade 9 in Sanimai School wanted to have computer as an optional subject but it was denied as there was no teacher for that subject. The adult authority over children continues until school is considered to children's future. This legitimizes that future reward of teachers to students is the incentive to explain why subordinates in this case children comply with adult hegemony.

Discussion with child club leaders and participating teachers revealed that children in school do not want to be ruled by fear and rules imposed by teachers, they want responsibility, choice, respect, to negotiate and cooperate with teachers. There is an interactive relationship between structure and agency as a tenet of the new sociology of childhood. This recognizes children's agency as a social actor contributing to change the structure and traditions of school systems and practices. For schools, supporters of child rights and child participation movement argue that adults in schools need to move forward to construct new visions and system of schools that involves and allows children to contribute democratically in school structure with real responsibility to make important decision and co-construct their learning.

The recently introduced four policies namely, child participation guidelines of 2007, child friendly school national framework of 2010, child friendly local governance

strategy of 2011 and national children's policy of 2012 are the fundamental policy shift in Nepal. These policies respect, recognize and promote new relationships of children with adults based on negotiation, shared power, reciprocity and mutual respect that allow spaces for children in adult institutions to be agentic. Children are experiencing empowering relationships with adults based on autonomy, respect where they are given responsibility to create, and learn without fear after formation of child clubs in school with new initiative of child friendly teaching methodologies. There new development and experiences means adults' rightful authority to control and regulated children's learning and behaviors in schools is no longer normal and accepted.

In child friendly schools, children and adults (both teachers and parents) collaboratively develop the structure and organizational practices democratically. Sanimai School is a good example of collecting issues of children from each grade through child club and inviting two members of the child club in each SMC and PTA meeting by putting a separate agenda on children's issues. In this example, relationship between adults and children are based on reciprocity and trust when children can exercise their agency without high degree of adult supervision, control and authority. It promotes peer learning and democratic norms in schools for more school days, more materials, regularity of teachers and less drop out of students because of child clubs interventions in both schools and communities.

Child clubs has established as an agency of children in school but still as an NGO agenda. Child friendly school is an effective measure to ensure better childhood & learning. More than half of 17000 child clubs are in educational settings especially in community schools – are not getting attention and priorities from child rights agencies. It draws attentions to build capacities and competencies of children and child clubs for their meaningful participation in adult institutions and enhance competencies of adult

facilitators. Children and child club stakeholders want to federate and network school and community based child clubs into local government structures and mechanism, this is an area to consider and prioritize by child rights agencies to bring social and institutional transformation and its sustainability.

Children value child clubs for gaining– new knowledge, social skills and peer support. However, learning and socialization is not a priority of NGOs in clubs. New policies and plans are inclusive of children and their rights to participation – but still prevails NGOs domination. Thus, it demands more collaboration between schools, child rights organizations and authorities together with children and child clubs.

Direction for Further Research

With the qualitative approach from interpretative paradigm, this research has focused on children's experiences, and how child clubs have promoted children's participation and agency in community schools. The research discussed and analyzed empirical data on stakeholders' perceptions on child clubs and its contribution to children, family, and schools. Although it was enough for the purpose of this study, the information received, I must admit, were limited on class variation in child club memberships and children's learning achievement. Majority of children in my child clubs were from middle class and a few from rich and deprived classes who are in community schools. Hence, this areas is very interesting and worth researching further on class variation on child clubs memberships and their school status. Questions like why there are a few children from poor and rich classes, what do they think the clubs only for the middle classes and community schoolchildren?, why the discourses on children and children's rights initiated by the international child rights organizations have not influenced those classes and the private schools?, are always pertinent to bring

into academic discussions. Another interesting topic for research is child club's contribution to enhance learning achievement of children.

As the earlier research reports (Consortium, 2012; Hart, 1997; Lansdown, 2011; Rajbhandary et al., 1999, 2002), my research participants also argued that child clubs contribute in children's learning and leadership development. There are enough empirical evidences for personal and leadership development of children through child clubs. However, I did not choose to study correlation between membership in child clubs and their learning achievements in school while child clubs are actively engaged in adult institutions and decision-making processes like in NGOs and local government. In this context, and for the purpose of further researches in similar themes, there could be interesting and valuable inputs to document and assess the contribution and impact of children's representation in adult institutions and their functions.

With such wonders, I always love to see and support a comparative study on advantages and disadvantages, and effectiveness of community and school based child clubs. This will ease and provide empirical evidence for appropriate policy measures on child club formation and mobilization in future.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Guidelines for Data Collection Tools

Appendix 1a: Guideline for FGD with all Stakeholders

विद्यार्थीको सिकाइ र विद्यालय सुशासनमा बालक्लबको भूमिका र योगदान

बालबालिकाको सहभागितासम्बन्धी अधिकार र यसले बालबालिकाको सिकाइ र विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन तथा सुशासनमा पु-याएको योगदानसम्बन्धी काठमाण्डौ विश्वविद्यालयको विद्यावारिधी अध्ययन र अनुसन्धानका लागि यहाँको विचार, अनुभव, सिकाइ र धारणा उपलब्ध गराइदिन हार्दिक अनुरोध छ । यसमा ब्यक्त ब्यक्तिगत तथा सामूहिक राय र ब्यक्तिगत विवरण गोपनीय रहनेछन् । छलफलको क्रममा ब्यक्त विचारमा तपाईको थप विचार वा फरक अभिमत भएमा लिखितरुपमा अनुसन्धानकर्तालाई दिन सकिने छ ।

ब्यक्तिगत विवरणः

तपाईको नामः   उमेरः   लिङ्गः

शैक्षिक योग्यताः   पेशाः   बालअधिकार क्षेत्रमा सम्लग्न वर्षः

तपाईको मुख्य काम तथा जिम्मेवारी (बालअधिकार र बालबालिकाको क्षेत्रमा) :

१.

२.

बिषयगत प्रश्नावली

१. विद्यालय तथा समुदायमा बाल क्लब गठन गर्नु आवश्यक छ कि छैन र किन ?

छ किनकि	
छैन किनकि	

२. तपाईको गाँउ∕नजिकको विद्यालयमा क्रियाशील बालक्लबलाई सरोकारवालाले कसरी लिन्छन्∕चिन्दछन् ?

बालबालिका	
शिक्षक	
विद्यालय	
समुदायः	

३. बालक्लबले बालबालिका र समाजलाई के कस्ता अवसरहरुको सिर्जना गरेका छन् ?

बालबालिकालाई			
समाजलाई			

४. बालक्लबले बालबालिका, अभिभावक, विद्यालय र समाज के प्रभाव पारेका छन् ? के परिवर्तन ल्याएका छन्?

बालबालिका			
अभिभावक			
विद्यालय			
समाज			

५. बालक्लबले विद्यालयको ब्यवस्थापन र सुशासनमा के परिवर्तन वा सुधार गरेका छन् ?

६. बालक्लब गठन तथा परिचालनमा के कस्ता समस्या तथा चुनौतिहरु छन्?

गठनका समस्या			
परिचालनमा समस्या			

७. बालक्लबले विद्यार्थीको सिकाइ र सामाजिकीकरणका निम्न क्षेत्रमा के के फाइदा वा परिवर्तन भएको छ ?

थप ज्ञान∕जानकारी			
ब्यक्तित्व विकास			
सीप∕दक्षता आर्जन			
बाँच्ने∕जीविकोर्जन			

८. बालक्लबमा आवद्ध विद्यार्थीहरुले सिकाइका चारवटा खम्बामा के के कुराहरु प्राप्त गरिरहेका छन् ?

ज्ञान/जानकारी प्राप्तिमा (learning to know)	सीप/दक्षता हासिल गर्नमा (learning to do)	व्यक्तित्व विकासमा (learning to be)	जीविकोपार्जनमा (learning to live)

९. बालक्लबमा आवद्ध भएका र नभएका विद्यार्थीहरुमा के के समानता र असमानता/फरक पाउनु भएको छ ?

समानता			
भिन्नता/फरक			

१०. तपाई आफ्ना भाइबहिनी तथा छोराछोरीलाई बालक्लबमा आवद्ध गराउन हुन्छ वा हुन्न र किन?

चाहन्छु किनकि			
चाहन्न किनकि			

११. बालक्लबका प्रतिनिधिलाई ब्यवस्थापन समितिमा समावेश गर्दा के के फाइदा र बेफाइदाहरु छन् वा हुन्छन् ?

फाइदाहरु			
बेफाइदाहरु			

१२. बालक्लबमा आवद्ध भएपछि विद्यार्थीको पढाइ सप्रिन्छ/सुधिन्छ कि बिग्रन्छ र किन?

सप्रिन्छ किनकि			
बिग्रन्छ किनकि			

१३. विद्यालयमा बालक्लबको स्थापना र सञ्चालन गर्दा शिक्षकहरुलाई हुने फाइदा र बेफाइदा उल्लेख गर्नुहोस् ?

फाइदाहरु			
बेफाइदाहरु			

१४. विद्यालय बालक्लबले ब्यवस्थापन समिति र शिक्षकअभिभावक संघलाई के फाइदा हुन्छ वा सहयोग मिल्छ?

वि.ब्य.स.लाई			
शि.अ.सं.लाई			

१५. बालक्लबको बिस्तार र सुदृढीकरणका लागि के गर्नुपर्ला ?

१६. बालअधिकार कार्यान्वयनमा बालक्लबले के के गरिरहेका छन् ?

१७. बालअधिकार प्रवर्द्धन र कार्यान्वयनमा विद्यालयले के गर्नुपर्छ होला ?

१८. विद्यार्थीको सिकाइ अभिवृद्धि गर्न बालक्लबले के के गर्नुपर्छ होला ?

१९. बालक्लबमा आवद्ध नभएका विद्यार्थीले के के कुराहरु गुमाउँछन् वा पाउँछन् ?

गुमाउने कुराहरु			
पाउने कुराहरु			

Appendix 1b: Guideline for Interactive Interview (Dialogical)

After having a perception survey and focus group discussion, selected participants from each category were interviewed for 40-60 minutes on the following:

1. Will you share me your understanding on child rights? Why do we need it?
2. What is child club? Why do we need it? Who formed a child club in your areas?
3. What does a child club do in your schools and communities?
4. Do we need adult facilitators for child clubs? What are the roles of NGOs on child club and child participation?
5. What are the benefits, values and contributions of child clubs to children, parents, school and society? How it happens?
6. What are the drawbacks of child clubs? Why do they happen?
7. What are the roles and support of government agencies on child clubs?
8. Does child club contribute for children's learning and school governance? If yes how? If not, why?
9. What is child participation? Why do we need it in adult institutions like school?
10. How do child clubs communicate and collaborate with adult institutions and state structures?
11. How do you see child clubs in ten years time?
12. Do you like to make any issues or remarks on child participation in school?

Appendix 1c: Framework for Schools/Child Clubs Observation

A framework for school/club observation: impressions, rituals and relations

1. The feeling of school environment and surroundings
2. Physical infrastructures, equipments and facilities seen around
3. Greetings and gatherings of students and teachers
4. General lay out and impression of teachers room and administrative rooms
5. School assembly and students roles
6. School uniform and school code of conduct
7. General impression of the library and labs
8. Classroom decoration including light, air, noise and book corner
9. Child club rooms and materials
10. Instructional style, methods, materials and classroom rules
11. Head teacher-teacher-student relationship
12. Student-focused curriculum and activities and students engagement
13. Gap period management
14. Dealing with visitors and parents
15. Conflict management procedures
16. Tiffin management and sports arrangement
17. Interactions between teachers and students during Tiffin time
18. Disciplinary issues and classrooms' noise management
19. Management and operation of extra-curricular activities
20. Functions and modalities of child club works
21. Closing of school
22. Sharing news and stories

Appendix 2: Evolution of Children's Rights

Appendix 2a: Evolution of Children's Rights at International Level

SN	Year	Key Dates/Milestones on Child Rights at International Level
1.	1796	Thomas Spence's Rights of Infants -earliest English-language assertions of the rights of children
2.	1919	The League of Nations establishes the Committee for the Protection of Children
3.	1923	Save the Children International Union proposes a five point Declaration on the wellbeing and development of children known as Geneva Declaration
4.	1924	The League of Nations adopts the 5-point Declaration of the Rights of the Child as proposed by Save the Children
5.	1946	The UN General Assembly creates UNICEF for addressing the needs of children affected by World War II
6.	1948	The UN General Assembly adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights including for children
7.	1959	The UN General Assembly unanimously endorses the 10-point Declaration of the Rights of the Child
8.	1966	UN adopts the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of Citizen including of Children
9.	1978	The Polish Government submits the Pre-cursory texts on children's rights to UN for its consideration which becomes the UNCRC in 1989
10.	1979	The UN General Assembly proclaims 1979 as the International Year of the Child. The UN forms a working group to build the child rights treaty based on Poland's text
11.	1983	A NGO Adhoc Committee formed to contribute UN Working Group on the draft of CRC
12.	1983-1989	Governmental representatives and NGOs work together to draft the CRC
13.	1985	United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice ("The Beijing Rules") 1985
14.	1989	The UN General Assembly unanimously adopts the CRC
15.	1990	• The CRC becomes International Law after ratification of the UNCRC by 20 countries, Nepal stands as one of the 25 State Parties • The World Summit for Children in New York discusses how to translate the CRC into action • United Nations issues Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (The Riyadh Guidelines)
16.	1996	ILO Convention No. 138 Concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (14 years of age)
17.	1999	The ILO Convention (No.182) on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor
18.	2000	• The UN General Assembly adopts the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. • The International Summit of 191 Countries adopts a 15 year Declaration on 8-point Millennium Development Goals • Education for All World Declaration (Dakar Declaration)
19.	2001	UNCRC Committee starts issuing General Comment to State Party to explain specific issues/articles on implementation of the CRC for a common meaning, procedures and modalities
20.	2002	GoN signs the regional Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution adopted in the eleventh SAARC Summit in

SN	Year	Key Dates/Milestones on Child Rights at International Level
	2002	Kathmandu in 2001
		• The both Optional Protocols become International Law after ten countries ratify them.
		• SAARC Declaration against Trafficking of Women and Children and Sexual and Economic Exploitation
		• The UN General Assembly Special Session on Children adopts A World Fit for Children
21.	2005	UN Security Council establishes monitoring and reporting mechanism on use of child soldiers unanimously adopting a resolution no. 1612
22.	2007	UN agrees Paris Principles: Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups
23.	2009	20 Years of UNCRC where 193 countries in the World ratify the UNCRC with an exception of the USA and Somalia

Appendix 2b: Evolution of Children's Rights in Nepal

SN	Year	Key Events/Milestones on Child Rights in Nepal
1.	1990	• Nepal ratifies the UNCRC and becomes State Party
		• The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal declares the proper care and development of children including to safeguard the rights and interest of children and gradual arrangements for free education as the responsibility of the State including [Article 26 (8)]
2.	1992	• Parliament enacts Children's Act translating UNCRC into national legislation
		• Parliament adopts the Social Welfare Act that stipulates special programmes for the benefit and welfare of children
		• Parliament enacts Labor Act that prohibits recruiting children below 14 years for employment
3.	1993	Labor Regulation puts labor act into implementation
4.	1995	• Cabinet brings Children's Rules to put children's act into operation
		• GoN submits the inception report to UNCRC Committee Geneva
5.	1996	GoN initiates separate cells for women and children in district police offices to act upon complaints against violations of child rights. These arrangements now exist in 26 districts.
6.	1998	GoN adopts "Minimum Standard Rules" for child welfare homes to ensure the best interests of children that cover provisions for registration, operation, monitoring and supervision.
7.	1999	• The GoN enacts the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regularization) Act that defines hazardous work and prohibits the employment of children under the age of 14.
		• The Parliament approves the Local Self-Governance Act that makes local body responsible for the benefit and welfare of children
8.	2000	• GoN establishes Juvenile Benches in all 75 district courts to deal with cases related to children in conflict with the law.
		• GoN forms central child welfare board at central level and district child welfare board in all 75 districts
		• GoN establishes National Human Rights Commission as per Act of 1998, as a national mechanism in the prevention of human rights violations, including violations of children's rights
9.	2002	GoN appoints the first Executive Director for CCWB. Now the third one works at CCWB as the Secretary/ED
10.	2004	• Cabinet approves the first National Plan of Action on Children, 2004/5 –

SN	Year	Key Events/Milestones on Child Rights in Nepal
		2014/15 and revises in 2012 • Cabinet approves child protection committee guidelines that extends child rights body up to VDC level and formalizes child participation in VCPC and DCPC • GoN approves a comprehensive National Master Plan on Child Labor that aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2010 and all forms of child labor by 2015. • GoN submits its first and second CRC periodic report to the CRC Committee Geneva
11.	2005	• Cabinet approves the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regularization) Regulation, 2062 to implement the Act of 1999. • GoN initiates appointing child rights officer in 25 districts that reaches now in all 75 districts
12.	2006	• Cabinet approves juvenile justice (Procedural) Rules, 2063 that ensures children below 18 years have right to child friendly court • Child Centre Welfare Board publishes child participation guide book that gives framework and modalities of child participation/child clubs
13.	2007	• Interim Parliament promulgates the Interim Constitution of Nepal that incorporates fundamental rights of children (Article 22) • Cabinet approves the National Plan of Action (NPA) for Reintegration of Children Affected by Armed Conflict • Ministry of Education approves Social Audit Guidelines that includes a child representative into school level social audit committee
14.	2008	• Department of Education includes child club as stakeholder to run student enrollment campaign and accepts child club member into school level student enrollment committee • Cabinet adopts Inter-country Child Adoption Terms and Procedures, 2065
15.	2009	• Ministry of Local Development approves social mobilization guidelines that ensures two representatives of children into all Ward Citizen Forums and Citizen Awareness Center • Ministry of Education approves Learning without Fear Guideline that include child club representative into school level committee
16.	2010	• Cabinet approves the Emergency Child Rescue Fund (Operational) Rules, 2067 • Ministry of Education approves national framework of child friendly school for quality education in 2067 that promotes safe, supportive and enabling learning environment in each school with a child club
17.	2011	• Ministry of Education approves school as zones of peace guideline that includes representatives of child club into school level committee • Cabinet approves National Strategy and Operational Guidelines on Child Friendly Local Governance in 2068 that ensures participation of children in local level planning process with 15% budget allocation from local bodies to children and their issues
18.	2012	• Cabinet approves children's policy 2069 that ensures children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation with at least allocation of 10% of fund to children at all levels • Cabinet approves comprehensive standards for Child Care Homes
19.	2013	• GoN submits its combined third, fourth and fifth CRC periodic report to CRC Committee Geneva • Cabinet approves local body resource mobilization and management guidelines that ensure at least 10% budget allocation from all VDCs, municipalities and DDCs to children and their needs

Appendix 3: Models/Typologies of (Children) Participation

Author/s	Year	Models/Typologies of Participation
Roger Hart	1992	Adapted from Arnstein, 1969, it has a progressive hierarchy, reading from bottom rungs equate to Progressive hierarchy, Manipulation, Decoration, Tokenism, Assigned but informed, Consulted and informed, Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children, Child-initiated and directed, Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults
Fajerman & Treseder	1997	Adapted from Hart, 1992, circle of participation with 'degrees' of participation each of which are different but equally valid forms of participation. Different forms of participation equate to Assigned but informed, Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children, Child-initiated and directed, Child initiated, shared decisions with adults, Consulted and informed
Shier	2001	A modification of Hart's ladder, participation denoted along with a pathway with five levels of commitment. Levels equate to Children listened to, Children supported in expressing views, Children's views taken into account, Children involved in decision-making processes, Children share power and responsibility
Francis & Lorenzo	2002	Reviewed three decades of researchers/authors and refer to six realms of participation. They are: i) romantic realm (research dating from 1960s and 1970s in promoting children as able to create their own environments without adults; ii) advocacy realm (projects where needs of children are planned by adults); iii) needs realm (projects by urban planners and research associated with social science of children); iv) rights realm (projects associated with UNCRC or other similar international child rights movements); v) institutional realm (projects involving international child advocate organizations); and, vi) proactive realm (projects which seek to empower children and advocates for child-centered models of participation
Kirby et al	2003	Draws on Hart (1992) and Shier (2001), no participation metaphor but has four-level categorization of participation. Levels are that children/young people's views taken into account by adults, children should be involved in decision making together with adults, children should be able to share power and responsibility for decision making with adults and that children should be able to make autonomous decisions.
Mannion	2003	Described by Hart 2008: 23) as being like "a fountain of participation! Non-participation labeled as manipulation, decoration, tokenism, participation labeled Assigned but informed, adult-initiated, shared decisions, Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults, Children and adults collaborate as team, Child-initiated and directed, Consulted and informed.
Percy-Smith	2006	Adapted from Wildemeersch et al., 1998, no metaphor of participation; instead four axes of social learning in a communicative action space. Four axes of social learning are action, reflection, communication, cooperation
UNDP	2009	Adapted from UNCDF's 1996 model consisting of eight steps which are similar to Hart's ladder: manipulation, information, consultation, consensus building, decision-making, risk sharing, partnership and self-management (full participation). There are further grouped into four: passive participation, increasing involvement, active participation and ownership/empowerment

Author/s	Year	Models/Typologies of Participation
Mitra and Gross	2009	Made Hart's ladder simpler by categorizing pupils' voice into three parts where institutions are being placed in terms of how they work with and use pupils' views. They are children are being heard, collaborating with adults and building capacity for leadership
Lansdown	2011	Merged Hart's eight rung ladders and Sheir's five level of pathways to participation into three broad frameworks. They are: i) consultative participation; ii) collaborative participation; and iii) child-led participation
Norad	2013	Adapted from Pretty's (1995) 7 types of participation (manipulative, passive, consultation, material incentives, functional collaboration, interactive and self-mobilization) and White's (1996) four forms of participation (nominal-inclusion, instrumental-consultation for efficiency, representative-leverage for sustainability and transformative-empowerment as a means and an end) and Cornwall's (2008) framework. This is a five-column matrix in measuring 'who participates', 'motives for participation', 'conditions or mechanisms for effective participation', 'levels of participation' and 'results of participation'. This is for ownership, voice and accountability