

# Gender (in)equality in Education: A Study of Rural Community Schools at Rautahat District

Regina Rajbanshi

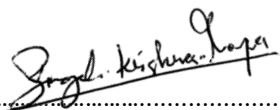


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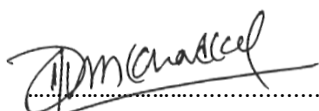
This dissertation of Bachelor in Community Development, School of Arts, Kathmandu University has been presented by Regina Rajbanshi to the Faculty Advisory Committee in 2022 and has been approved.



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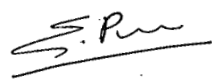


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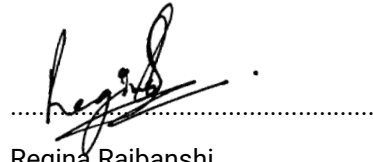
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## Declaration

By signing, I certify that the paper titled "Gender (in)equality in Education: A study of rural community schools at Rautahat" is entirely original with no previous submissions to academic institutions for different degrees.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Regina', is written over a horizontal dotted line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

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# Abstract

Gender inequality in education prevents girls and boys from ensuring the basic human right to education. Gender inequality in education is a serious problem locally, nationally and internationally. Education plays an important role in many aspects of human life for both male and females all around the world and more importantly education is imperative to gender equality. In each country, the government is responsible to ensure equal opportunity for both male and females in all educational settings. The educational setting i.e schools are a learning institution which must have a safe environment where all children - girls and boys, should have equal access to opportunities and exercise their fundamental rights without any biases and discrimination based on their gender.

This study is carried out with a major objective to analyze the present status of rural community schools of Yamunamai rural municipality in Rautahat district of Nepal with respect to gender (in)equality within the school premises. The main objective of this study is to identify the determinants of gender in/equality in rural community schools of Yamunamai rural municipality. The study focuses only on basic education in public schools which is up to grade 8. The study is carried out using a mixed method and the respondents are both boys and girls from grade 3-8. A total of 230 respondents were interviewed, out of which 116 were girls and 114 were boys. This study has put together the findings of the field study that highlights whether the rural community schools of Yamunamai rural municipality practice gender equality or inequality within the school premise.

**Keywords:** *Gender, Equality/Inequality, Education, Community school*

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## Acronyms

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>UNESCO</b> | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| <b>UNICEF</b> | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund           |
| <b>LGBTIQ</b> | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer             |
| <b>NFEC</b>   | Non-Formal Education Center                                      |
| <b>MOE</b>    | Ministry of Education  |
| <b>I/NGOs</b> | International non-governmental organizations                     |
| <b>SDRC</b>   | Social Development and Research Center                           |
| <b>SSDP</b>   | School Sector Development Plan                                   |
| <b>GPE</b>    | General Purpose Event  |
| <b>YRM</b>    | Yamunamai Rural Municipality                                     |
| <b>ICRW</b>   | International Center for Research on Women                       |
| <b>SRGBV</b>  | School Related Gender Based Violence                             |

# Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Gender inequality in education prevents girls and boys from acquiring their fundamental human right to education. Gender inequality in education is a serious problem locally, nationally and internationally. It has been a major challenge over the past years and the struggle to achieve gender equality in education continues. Moreover, gender equality is a goal that each and every social policy has been aspiring to achieve for decades all around the globe. Education plays an important role in different aspects of human life and the access to education is imperative to achieving gender equality. However, unequal educational access based on gender discrimination remains a major problem, especially in developing countries. The latest UNESCO data shows that 132 million girls worldwide do not have access to schools (UNESCO, 2021). The major causes include cultural norms and practices, school-related gender-based violence or even home to school distance.

Similarly, UNICEF data shows, 129 million girls are out of school around the world, including 32 million of primary school age, 30 million of lower-secondary school age, and 67 million of upper-secondary school age (UNICEF). However, only 49 percent of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education. At the secondary level, the gap widens: 42 per cent of countries have achieved gender parity in lower secondary education, and 24 per cent in upper secondary education (UNICEF). In each country, the government is responsible to ensure equal opportunity to both male and females in all educational settings. According to Tomasevskki (as cited in Wilson, 2004) all the analytical process of the government based on the equal availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability of education to male and female is developed by the government, reported by the United Nations' Special Rapporteur. Besides, the schools are a learning institution that needs to provide a safe environment where all children - girls and boys have equal access to education as fundamental rights without any biases and discrimination based on their gender.

More importantly, girls and boys must feel safe and secure in a learning environment. Schools are in charge of combating school-related violence and delivering thorough health education. Regarding suitable disciplinary procedures, teachers should adhere to professional standards and offer unbiased instruction. It should be such that both girls and boys should receive quality education so that later on they can use it in their life not only for the purpose of employment but also for keeping themselves healthy, wealthy or to enhance their capabilities. Similarly, girls and boys should be equally empowered to participate in classroom activities, should have equal access to school

resources, should not be subjected to school-based violence or should be treated with respect irrespective of their gender. Therefore, this study is carried out with a major objective to analyze the present status of rural community schools of Yamunamai rural municipality in Rautahat district of Nepal with respect to gender (in) equality within the school premises. The main objective of this study is to identify the determinants of gender in/equality in rural community schools of Yamunamai rural municipality.

This research focuses basically on four components such as voice, bodily integrity, resources and respect to measure gender (in) equality within the school environment. The study only focuses on basic education in public schools which is up to grade 8. The study is carried out using a mixed method and the respondents are both boys and girls from grade 3-8. The total of 230 respondents were interviewed, out of which 116 were girls and 114 were boys. The result shows that though gender inequality exists in society, schools are a safer place where girls and boys are treated equally. Both boys and girls were safe in school premises and no cases of school-based violence were recorded. Girls and boys were not discriminated against in terms of access to resources, participation or voicing their opinions and they were respected by teachers on an equal basis within school premises.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Gender equality refers to equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for men, women and LGBTIQ+ girls and boys. Gender equity is the means through which gender equality is ultimately aimed to achieve. It refers to the fair treatment of women, girls, boys, and men according to their respective needs and perspectives. However, there can be a gap in achieving gender equality in education in Nepal. The literacy rate of males is at 75.1 percent while it is 57.4 percent for women. Similarly, the highest literacy rate is in Kathmandu with 86.3 percent and lowest in Rautahat with 41.7 percent (Dhakal, 2018). Male-female gender gap is still noticeable and prevails across almost all the caste and ethnic groups, rural and urban settings, or private and public schools in Nepal. Besides, a huge gaps exist in educational access in terms of gender.

According to the NLSS 2010/11, almost 39.1% people in the age group of 6 years and above and 43.5% people in the age group 15 years and above are still deprived of the opportunity to be literate. Nearly 55.5 percent females compared to 28.4 percent males lack knowledge and skills to read and write a simple sentence. The existence of over 27 percent gap between male-female literacy in spite of manifold efforts of NFEC/MOE and I/NGOs to address the issue of female illiteracy indicates the inadequacy of targeted and focused interventions (UNESCO). In the context of Nepal, there exists a patriarchal system which gives more power to male to control over women. In Nepal, yet the girls start primary school in greater numbers, the rate at which they leave school is also very high (Lewin and Sabates, 2011).

Nepal is still lacking behind in attending the goals of sustainable development as education. The rural community schools lack the implementation of mechanisms which are gender neutral. Some public schools fail to maintain their toilet hygiene or

build separate toilets for girls and boys. In the Terai region, Nepal experiences extreme hot temperatures and the school buildings are made up of tin roofs. The students face challenges due to unbearable heat caused by tin roofs. The heat results in lack of concentration for the students. Girls are still discriminated against in terms of various aspects as compared to their male friends. Girls are provided with fewer opportunities as compared with their male counterparts hence, it leads to prevalence of gender inequality. The problem of gender inequality in education has been severe in rural community schools as compared to urban communities. Usually in rural communities, there has been a prevalence of viewpoint among individuals that girls are meant for carrying out household chores and education is not meant for them.

Similarly, girls in school are reluctant to participate in sports like football, cricket, and badminton and are encouraged to play games such as aantrashi, rumal lukai or stay inside classrooms. There are various gender stereotypes in schools relating to skills, career choices, and academic potential. These stereotypes can have an influence on how girls and boys feel or doubt their own abilities. Therefore, in order to promote gender equality in education, all the students need to be given equal attention and teachers don't overlook capable but quiet students. Monitoring classroom dynamics to ensure that discussion does not become dominated by verbally active students is very important. Hence, revising curricula to include female experiences and to include beyond stereotypical ways is another way of promoting gender equality in education.

### 1.3 Objective of the Study

Mainly, the objective of my study is to analyze the present status of rural community schools of Yamunamai rural municipality with respect to gender (in) equality within their school premises. Followed by the objective to identify the determinants of gender in (equality) in rural community schools of Yamunamai rural municipality.

### 1.4 Research Questions

The key research questions of this study are-

- What is the present status of rural community schools of Yamunamai rural municipality with respect to gender (in) equality within their school premises?
- What are the determinants of gender in/equality in rural community schools of Yamunamai rural municipality?

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

The developing countries are working towards achieving gender equality in education. However, the rural community schools of Nepal still lack to achieve gender equality in education. Therefore, this study contributes to understanding gender equality in education by identifying the determinants of gender inequality in schools. In addition, this study contributes to harnessing knowledge on the experiences of girls and boys in relation to the gender differentials present as practices and lived experiences while

being educated in schools. The results of this research are highly beneficial for the researchers who would like to explore how girls and boys are treated or whether they enjoy equality in school settings. The data presented can be useful for the NGOs working in the field of gender equality to implement programs and funds as per the need.

The study is also helpful for the schools of Yamunamai rural municipality as they can now understand about the issue of gender (in)equality through the eyes of their students. The schools can change their attitude towards students as per the findings and discussions of the study. Rautahat is a place which has a long way to go in the field of achieving quality education. There has been no proper data recorded related to the importance or availability of school resources and the student's satisfaction of school's resources or gender (in)equality in public schools. Therefore, this study can be a source of evidence to identify the experiences of boy's and girl's, gender differences in schools, and the determinants of gender inequality. It can also be helpful for those stakeholders who are reluctant to know whether gender (in)equality exists in public schools of Yamunamai rural municipality of Rautahat. This research has personally helped me understand the school environment of Yamunamai rural municipality. It has made me aware how both the genders are treated in their school premises. I also got the chance to understand how girls and boys of this research site perceive gender equality according to them. This study in overall will redound to the benefit of the society considering that gender equality in school premises plays an important role in the overall development of the students.

## 1.6 Limitations of the study

While carrying out this study different limitations have been acknowledged and listed below:

- **Excluding LGBTIQ+ group**

It has included only male and female and neglected the third gender i.e LGBTIQ+ while analyzing the determinants of gender (in) equality and gender dynamics presented in the rural community schools. The study was undertaken in a short time period which was a major barrier for looking from the third gender dimension.

- **Language barrier**

While interacting with the respondents it was difficult to communicate because not all the respondents could understand Nepali language clearly. The enumerators had difficulty understanding their local languages such as Bajika and Bhojpuri. Measures such as repeating the questions till the respondents understand were taken so that respondent understands the question asked to them. For the respondents who didn't understand Nepali, Hindi language was used as an alternative language as a mode of communication.

- **No fixed time schedule of schools**

The schools had no fixed time schedule as some schools operated in the morning shift and some in the day shift. We had to reach the site early in the morning which was 1 hour travel distance from Chandranigapur. Even when we reached the schools on time, the students would already leave the school as they enjoyed their autonomy. We had to visit the same school twice to reach out to the respondents.

- **Manipulation of response**

Some of the school's teachers manipulated the student's response by standing right next to them while interviewing. The students would not provide the correct answer regarding school's resources, discrimination on the basis of gender in school, corporal punishment by teachers or teacher's attitude towards them.



## Literature Review

Gender refers to socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. Gender roles vary from society to society and it can be changed. Gender roles in some societies are more rigid than the others. Gender inequality simply refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals/society based on their gender. It arises from differences in socially constructed gender roles. Gender inequality is a complex phenomenon and in societies like Nepal, the data of such inequalities are not recorded properly. Gender inequality stems from distinctions, whether empirically grounded or socially constructed (Bagale & Devkota, 2015). Men and women are not equal and that gender affects an individual's living experience. For example, women from Nepal may experience gender differently from women who are living in America. These differences in gender arise from distinctions in biology, psychology, and cultural norms. Some of these types of distinctions are empirically grounded while others appear to be socially constructed. There has been persistent inequality among male and females since history. Males are supposed to provide financial support to the family whereas females are the backbone or the caretaker of the family. This ill tradition has strengthened the inequality among the people.

Females are treated as a thing and as a means rather than a person in Nepalese society because; gender inequality starts here in the womb and remains up to the tomb (Adhikary, 2013). Ansari, a member of national women commission Nepal, noted that if a girl goes out for an hour, she should inform her guardians or parents and take permission to go out, but a boy should not ask for permission. They are free as well as safer than girls to go out of home (Adhikary, 2013). This evidently reflects the situation of females in Nepal. Gender discrimination starts from birth as in certain culture giving birth to a girl child is considered sin and birth of a boy child is considered a bon of a God. There is prevalence of traditional practices of dowry, preference of son, social acceptance of domestic violence against women, early marriage, polygamy etc. in rural settings of Nepal. It is a challenging situation for women to improve their condition in a male dominated society.

Similarly, they face discrimination regarding the fundamental rights, such as in educational institutions. For many students, school is a place that brings back great memories for igniting their passion or introducing them to a favorite mentor; but, for others, school is a place where discrimination made it more difficult to achieve their aspirations.

Both boys and girls are under surveillance of teachers at school, but particularly girl's behavior and appearance are judged (Patel, 2019). This reflects with my experience as my friends and I were frequently judged by teachers for wearing school paints, or laughing loudly. These kinds of attitudes of teachers or practices affect a girl's zest of learning. As a result of these

attitudes towards girls, they are forced to behave and act in accordance with the prevailing gender norms and remain deeply rooted in them.

In a learning setting, educational resources are employed to support and aid in people's growth and learning. They are intended to support learning and, in certain situations, provide opportunities for knowledge testing (Barile, n.d.). Few people consider toilets when we discuss ways to ensure that more students can attend school. However, the presence of separate toilets for girls and boys can motivate students, particularly females, to enroll in and continue attending school (GPE Secretariat, 2018). Millions of students in developing countries are at danger of missing school owing to illness brought on by poor hygiene because there aren't enough restroom facilities in their schools. For girls, the hazards are significantly greater. The presence of girls is impacted when schools cannot give them the resources they need to comfortably manage their monthly period. This may be a result of a lack of facilities that separate men and women or privacy, poor water quality, or a lack of locations where sanitary products can be safely disposed of (UNICEF).

A 2018 report by Patan Academy of Health Science surveyed in Bhaktapur found out that about one fifth (16.7%) of adolescent girls missed at least one day of school during menstruation. The major reasons behind girls missing out school are due to fear of leakage or staining (37.5%), lack of continuous water supply (18.5%), lack of private space in the school (8.9%), lack of separate bathroom for girls (7.1%) and non-availability of pads at school (4.8%). During menstruation, a proper toilet facility and access to clean water in toilets is very essential for girls to hygienically and confidently take care of themselves. However, many public and community schools all over the country lack proper sanitation facilities, which results in girls not attending school at the time of menstruation (Shrestha, 2019). Similarly, a UNICEF report of 2016 states that only 25% of community schools all over the country have fully functional water and sanitation facilities at toilets. There are legal policies and frameworks to address menstrual hygiene in schools. Menstruation is recognized as a natural process that requires proper water sanitation and hygiene services by the SSDP (2016-2023).

Moreover, the plan states that in order to maintain menstrual hygiene, toilets should have running water, along with a bucket with a cover inside the toilet itself or an incinerator attached outside the toilet, and students must have access to sanitary pads. The presumption that girls are not good at math or comments that 'he is not interested unlike regular boys', or reinforcement of gender norms that 'girls don't laugh so hard' and 'boys don't cry', perpetuates the practices of gender inequality in schools. Similarly, the setting arrangements of girls and boys differently in classrooms also show gender inequality in schools. Girls and women are discriminated against during schooling in terms of access, permanence, completion, treatment, learning outcomes and career choices, which results in disadvantages that go beyond schooling and the school environment (Munhoz, 2018).

Similarly, Raynor (2007), carried out research on "Education and Capabilities in Bangladesh" suggests that due to fear of being abused, raped harassed, or even killed one girl refused to go school. Similarly, the author finds out that the most schools in Bangladesh offer "co-curricular" activity with gendered differences. Boys always had the chance to play games such as cricket, football, volleyball during the break time at school, while the girls stayed inside. Even if they were given the opportunity to play it would be limited to indoor games such as ludo. Violence at schools is a major problem in some nations. Bullying, corporal punishment, verbal and emotional abuse, intimidation, sexual harassment and assault, gang

activity, and the presence of weapons among students are all forms of violence that can be physical, psychological, or sexual, occur on school property, in a vehicle, or online. It is frequently committed as a result of gender preconceptions and norms as well as by unequal power dynamics.

Globally, it was estimated that approximately 246 million girls and boys experienced some form of school-related violence in 2014 (UNGEI, 2017). Similarly, a study conducted by Plan International and ICRW discovered evidence of gender stereotyping in the educational setting, which fuels SRGBV by upholding gender-discriminatory social norms. The highest levels of SRGBV in school were reported by boys and girls in Indonesia (84%), whilst the lowest levels were reported by boys and girls in Pakistan (43%). As indicated in social media about various cases of ill-treatments towards women in our daily life with examples like a female getting killed for not bringing dowry or a girl student getting raped by teacher at school. These cases reveal that women and girls are discriminated against, oppressed, and are subjected to violence.

Another study conducted by Devkota and Bagale (2015), on Social Inequality in Nepal and Right of Education. In their study they demonstrate that both male and female should have equal opportunity in all aspects of social life including education to achieve the goal of social development. The major issues and challenges they found in their study was lower enrollment rate of girls, low percentage of female teachers, difference in the nature of the ratio of the existence of male and female teachers, attitude of underestimating the capacity of women working in education, less participation of girls in technical subjects like mathematics and science, elevated dropout rate of girls and so on (SDRC, 2007).

Mahat (2003) in her paper on Women's Development in Nepal: The Myth of Empowerment writes that there is prevalence of this strong bias which favors sons in the country. The daughters are discriminated against from birth and do not have equal opportunities to achieve development. The situation for women is characterized by low levels of access to education, healthcare, and economic, social, and political opportunities. She also states that in poor households, parents prefer to pay for their sons' education and keep their daughters at home to help their overburdened mothers. Labor and physical exploitation of young girls is widespread.

Countries like Latin America face barriers and challenges in order to guarantee gender equality in education (Munhoz, 2018). Girls and women are discriminated against during education in terms of access, permanence, completion, treatment, learning outcomes and career choices, resulting in disadvantages that go beyond schooling and the school environment. The presence of gender stereotypes in curricula, textbooks and teaching processes; the violence they face in and out of school as well as male dominance in certain academic and professional fields are factors that prevent girls and women from claiming and exercising their human right to education on an equal footing (Global Campaign for Education).

Likewise, Levin (2006) carried out research in Kathmandu valley of Nepal to find out the determinants of girl's school attendance. Her findings indicate that gender, caste, poverty, cultural prejudice, and rural residence were the major reasons which prevented a majority from going to school. Of those who went, most, regardless of academic talent, were pulled out in order to work at home, as wage laborers and domestic servants, or to enter arranged

marriages. Similarly, women do not always feel safe or have the opportunity to share their experiences (Vesconte, 2019).

Tinwala (2015), says that teachers' unconscious gender-stereotyped attitudes and biases can affect classroom practices, and result in differential treatment towards both boys and girls. In her study, one of the teachers acknowledges that they prefer boys for certain activities such as sports and would not give that much of an opportunity to the girl students. She also addresses that major change must be brought about in the content being taught in schools is the visuals used in textbooks. In school text books we often see the boys playing outside or most of the successful people presented in books are males while girls playing with dolls or helping their mother with household chores. These visual representations affect children's assumption of gender.

## 2.1 The Capability Approach

Amartya Sen's Capability Approach is a guide or support to build the theoretical framework applied for this study. Sen describes a capability as "a person's capacity to carry out good deeds or achieve valuable mental and emotional states; it shows various fusions of what a person is capable of doing or being (Sen, 1992, p.30). Therefore, opportunities or freedoms to accomplish what a person reflects on as worthwhile are capacities. There is a contrast between capabilities and functioning (Sen 1980). Functioning are the results of actions. Functioning include reading, conversing with children, participating in community life by attending a meeting regarding a school, and remaining calm. Being able to read, having access to books or newspapers, living in a society where adults of your class, gender, or color are allowed to interact with children and attend meetings at a school are just a few examples of the potential to reach certain functioning that are known as capabilities (not too long a working day or too many anxieties).

According to Nussbaum, the capacity approach is well suited to concentrating on gender issues and aids in the construction of a normative conception of social justice. However, she asserts that the simplest way to achieve this is to describe a specific set of skills, stressing those we believe should be protected the most (2003). To this end, she has developed a list of capabilities which are as follows:

### **Life**

Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.

### **Bodily Health**

Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to give adequate shelter

### **Practical Reason**

Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience and religious observance.)

### **Bodily Health**

Being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assaults, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.

### **Senses, Imagination, and Thought**

Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and to reason and to do things in a "truly human way"

### **Emotions**

Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who live and care for us, and also to grieve at their absence, in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger (Harvard Human Rights Journal, p.24)

Among these 10 lists of capabilities, I have used *Bodily Integrity or Physical Body* as one of my components to analyze gender equality in schools.

This study also includes Walker's list of capabilities as a reference to develop the theoretical framework which highlights *voice* and *respect*. In addition to this, *resources* as another component are considered to examine whether girls and boys can use the school resources promoting gender equality. If the school environment is gender-friendly, a school where everyone is respected treated equally, resources are distributed to all, where girls can voice their opinions, and it can develop the capabilities of the students to achieve positive outcomes.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework contains four components that help understand and examine the present status of gender (in) equality in rural community school of YRM. The elaboration of the components is as follows:

### **Voice**

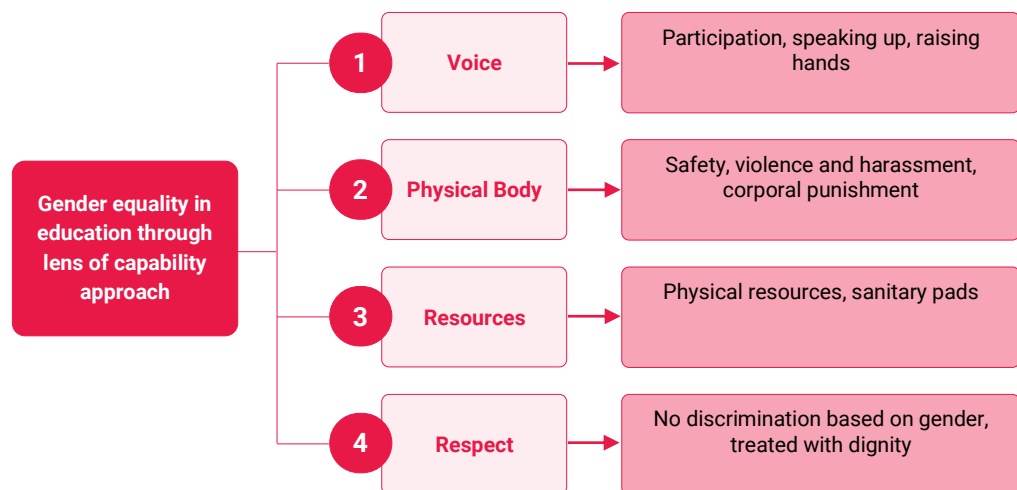
The framework aims to include Voice in achieving gender equality in schools. Voice, for participation in learning activities, for speaking out their ideas, opinions, or in cases where their rights are violated, not being silenced through pedagogy or power

relations or harassment, or excluded from curriculum, being active in the acquisition of knowledge (Walker, 2007). In order to measure the voices of girls and boys in public school, participation in question-and-answer sessions, raising hands, making eye contact with teachers while speaking and inclusion in school activities are made an indicator. Eye contact is an important nonverbal social cue because it projects confidence, self-esteem and assertiveness. "When someone is talking to you, make sure you look them in the eye," says career coach Becky Berry. She adds that looking down or looking around makes you look nervous.

## Bodily Integrity

The potential loss of affiliation on an equal status with others, the ability to appear in public without embarrassment, and a lack of appropriate resources, particularly for adolescent girls, is all connected to bodily integrity, which discussions indicate is a strong feature in girls' educational experiences (Raynor). The research conducted by Raynor on the topic "Education and Capabilities in Bangladesh" he found out that in schools where there is no women teacher to talk to about menstruation, girls may be forced to lie. In his process of data collection, he hears that if there are no female teachers to ask permission to go home to change her clothes, she would tell the male teacher that she had a headache. The girls are also seen being subjected to various forms of violence at schools. Thus, in order to analyze if any kinds of harassment or violence are experienced by girls at public schools which hinder their development I, designed the indicators such as safety within school premises and corporal punishment.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



## **Resources**

Resources at school play a vital role in encouraging students to attend school. School with proper resources such as WASH facilities, appropriate built-up area, playground, separated toilets for girls and boys, physical resources (desk, bench, blackboard etc), is necessary for enhancement of student's learning. The resources available at school must be accessible to everyone without any discrimination. In research sites, there is a prevalence of lower rates of availability of resources for students such as proper classroom setting, WASH facilities, appropriate desks and benches etc. The central agenda is to analyze whether the rural community schools of Rautahat are able to provide the available resources equally to all students irrespective of their gender. However, my studies will mainly focus on availability of separate toilets for girls and boys, facilities inside toilets and provision of sanitary pads.

## **Respect**

Respect is another aspect of my framework which is integral for analyzing gender (in)equality in schools. Every student should be respected, treated with dignity; not being diminished or devalued because of one's gender (Walker, 2007)

## Methodology

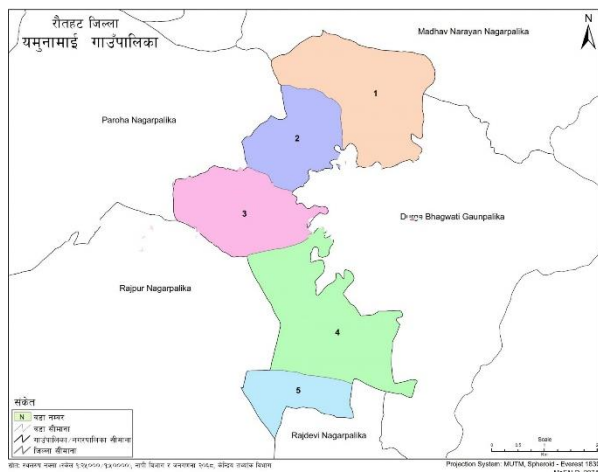
The methodology for this study included a review of documentation and primary data collection focusing mostly on one on one, face to face interviews. Following the review of secondary documentation, identified key issues and information gaps have been explored further in the primary data collection. The total of 230 respondents was interviewed across the 8 schools of Yamunamai Gaupalika of Rautahat.

All due ethical procedures were followed throughout the process of collecting data. Prior to conducting the interviews, verbal consent was secured from all the respondents. The purpose and objective of the study was briefly outlined. The respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

### 3.1 Selection of the study site

The study was carried out in Yamunamai rural municipality at Rautahat. Yamunamai is a rural municipality in Rautahat district, a part of Province no.2 in Nepal. It occupies an area of 16.70 km<sup>2</sup> with a total population of 23,884. This site was selected because Rautahat has the lowest literacy rate of all the districts, 22% women can read and write and 10% complete basic education, 90% women married as adolescents. Rautahat has been recognized as a district where women and girls are marginalized socially and economically.

Figure 2: Map of Study Area



Source: Nepal Census 2011

### 3.2 Duration of the study

The study was conducted within a limited time frame of 5 months from May to September. The field visit started from 4th of September to 15th September.



### 3.3 Methods of Data Collection

The study has used both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Qualitative is truly a strong method to produce vivid and rich accounts of human experience that emphasizes depth of understanding, attempts to subjectively tap the deeper meaning of human experience and intends to generate theoretically rich observations (Babbie et al., 1993). A survey questionnaire was distributed among the respondents. The questionnaire was designed in a way where the participants had to rate ranging from (strongly agree) to (strongly disagree). The research wanted to investigate the respondents' own points of view on their experiences of gender (in) equality at school which is only possible by qualitative method.

Similarly, open-ended questions were also designed in order to get more detailed answers from the respondents. These detailed answers help in case studies. Quantitative methods place an emphasis on precise measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data gathered through surveys, polls, questionnaires, as well as the manipulation of statistical data that has already been obtained using computing methods (Bobbie et al., 1993). Quantitative research focuses on collecting numerical data and using it to understand a specific event or generalize it across groups of individuals. Similarly, in this study

### 3.4 Selection of Respondents

The term sampling is the selection of units for example people or organizations from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they were chosen (William M.K.). Hence, it is a key in research which helps to save time, labor, reduce expenditure and lead the measurement of greater scope to produce greater precision and accuracy, yet there might exist the possibility of an error in the outcome of the sample to the entire population (Adhockery, 2013). Similarly, my study followed the process of sampling. A Total of 230 respondents was interviewed in this study. Out of which 116 were girls and 114 were boys. The respondents were from grade 3 to 8. 6 girls and 6 boys were interviewed from each class.

Table 1: Number of girls' and boys' respondents

| Sex   | Frequency | Percent | Cum.   |
|-------|-----------|---------|--------|
| Girls | 116       | 50.43   | 50.43  |
| Boys  | 114       | 49.57   | 100.00 |
| Total | 230       | 100.00  |        |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

When interviewing with the respondents their appearance, facial expression, gesture and posture with the purpose of understanding their feelings and perception about practices of gender (in) equality in their school were also thoroughly noticed, which has also contributed to the data analysis of this study. All the respondents of this

study were interviewed applying the prepared questionnaire guide with both qualitative (open ended questions) and quantitative questions.

The participants for the study were from Shree Ma Vi School, Bedhiyahi, Shree Rajpur Tulshi, Shree Ma Vi, Jethariya, Shree Yamunamai, Jhunkunwa, Shree Jagdamba Adharbhut, Shree Janta Ma Vi, Shree MahadevPra Vi, Shree Brahma Pra Vi. All the mentioned schools are public schools of Yamunamai rural municipality.

### 3.5 Process of Data Collection

First of all, an intensive detailed review of secondary documentation and collection of knowledge and information about gender, gender inequality and study area including the study design, methodology and field were carried out. Then, the questionnaire with qualitative unstructured (open ended) and quantitative (close-ended) questions were prepared and this process was followed by a field visit to Yamunamai rural municipality.

### 3.6 One-on-one Interview

This research is based on a semi-structured questionnaire and conducted a one-on-one interview. The one-on-one interview method is the commonly used method of collecting data in social science. It is a valuable method of gaining insight into people's perception, understandings and experiences of a given phenomenon and can contribute to in-depth data collection (Ryan, 2013). One-on-one interviews have benefits over other methods of data collection. For instance, a focus group can be difficult to organize due to the group of people involved. They are not appropriate to discuss sensitive issues because of the limits to confidentiality.

### 3.7 Observation

As the name suggests, observation is a method of gathering facts by watching. This type of data collection is categorized as a participatory study since the researcher must spend time with her/his respondents in their environment while taking notes and/or recording. A variety of techniques, including listening, reading, touching, and recording behavior and phenomenon features, can be used to acquire data through observation (Dudovskiy. n.d.). Both structured and unstructured observation can be used to collect data. Data collection is carried out using particular variables and in accordance with a predetermined timetable in structured or systematic observation. On the other hand, unstructured observation is carried out in a transparent and unrestricted way because there aren't any predetermined variables or goals.

### 3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis gives the overview of the study analysis and the interpretation of the findings. It is a process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of

collected data (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Data analysis involves the process of organizing what the researcher observes, hears, and analyzes the data collected in the field. In my study, the data was collected through questionnaires are entered in the Microsoft Excel. They were then subjected to STATA analysis to compute the average. With the help of statistical analysis and narrative answers the data were analyzed. The information collected from the respondents on their experience over gender inequality in school were read, re-read and compared to create familiarity and contradictory information.

## Findings and Discussions

### 4.1 Voices of Girls and Boys

#### 4.1.1 Participation

The first indicator in order to analyze the voices of girls and boys in school was participation.

Table 2: Participation in question and answer session

|       | About half of the time | Most of the time | Never | Seldom | Some of the time |
|-------|------------------------|------------------|-------|--------|------------------|
| Girls | 12%                    | 14%              | 3%    | 2%     | 20%              |
| Boys  | 10%                    | 16%              | 2%    | 2%     | 19%              |
| Total | 100%                   |                  |       |        |                  |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

The Table 2. shows the level of participation in question and answer sessions in the classroom. It was mesmerizing to know that both girls and boys equally and actively participate in question and answer sessions in the classroom. 14 percent of the girls and 16 percent boys participated most of the time whereas 12 percent girls and 10 percent boys participated about half of the time. In addition, 20 percent girls followed by 19 percent boys participated some of the time. A very less percentage of girls and boys i.e. 3 percent girls and 2 percent boys never participated in question and answer session. According to the respondents, the teachers allowed both boys and girls to equally participate without discrimination. Participation in Q&A session was in overall seen high.

In this regard, Panila Yadav, research participant says, "Once in a week our teacher asks questions and we are supposed to answer him. Both boys and girls speak up their concerns and answers to the teacher". The 5 percent who never participated in question and answer sessions said they are scared to talk to teachers. They also said that they feel shy to talk in front of groups. Some of them were uncomfortable talking in front of teachers and friends. A student further added that if their answer is wrong, they get bitten up by their teacher. Kabir Mansuri says, "due to fear of getting scolded by teachers if my answer gets wrong, I prefer to keep quiet in the classroom". The teacher's discriminatory behavior such as interrupting when students' answer or not letting girls to answer or only prioritizing the topper of class can lead to gender inequality in schools.

### 4.1.2 Raising Hands

To understand the participation or voicing up the student’s opinion, raising hands was made as an indicator.

Table 3: Number of respondents raising hands in classroom

|       | About half of the time | Most of the time | Never | Seldom | Some of the time |
|-------|------------------------|------------------|-------|--------|------------------|
| Girls | 6%                     | 3%               | 29%   | 5%     | 8%               |
| Boys  | 4%                     | 1%               | 33%   | 3%     | 8%               |
| Total | 100%                   |                  |       |        |                  |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

The Table 3. presents the data of if the respondents felt shy to raise their hands and speak up in the classroom. It shows 29 percent of the girls followed by 33 percent of the boys never felt shy to raise their hands. Among the respondents, 8 percent girls and 8 percent boys said that they raised their hands some of the time. Comparatively, boys felt less shy than girls to raise their hands. 5 percent girls and 3 percent boys seldom felt shy to raise their hands whereas 3 percent girls and 1 percent boys felt shy to raise their hands most of the time.

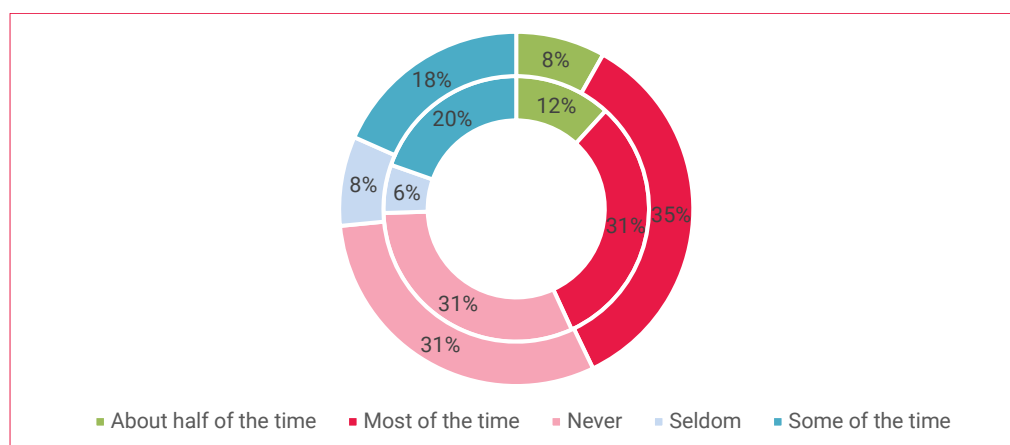
The data indicates, most of the students are outspoken, frequently raising their hands in class and not shy to share their opinions to teachers. In this regard, Karina expresses, “Whenever I don’t understand any topics I raise my hand to ask the teacher to explain it again. Continuing, she says, “it is not a new thing to raise your hand in class, I am confident enough to raise my hand and I have been doing that since a long period of time”.

### 4.1.3 Making eye contact with teachers while speaking

Table 4: Respondents making eye contact with teachers

|       | About half of the time | Most of the time | Never | Seldom | Some of the time |
|-------|------------------------|------------------|-------|--------|------------------|
| Girls | 6%                     | 16%              | 16%   | 3%     | 10%              |
| Boys  | 4%                     | 17%              | 15%   | 4%     | 9%               |
| Total | 100%                   |                  |       |        |                  |

Source: Field Visit, 2022



The above Table 4. shows that 16 percent girls and 17 percent boys, most of the time make eye contact with teachers while speaking whereas other 16 percent girls and 15 percent boys never made eye contact with the teachers. When asked why they did not make eye contact, some of the respondents said that it was disrespectful to make eye contact with elders. The community person where the research was done believes that the younger people must not look into their eyes while talking to elders as it would be a sign of disrespect. This was so deep rooted in the children that one of the respondents said, “We don’t look into the eyes of elders because we respect them”. While others said, they feel scared or shy to talk making eye contact. It was observed that the respondents who said they never make eye contact also found it difficult to communicate with the enumerators also. They would rather look down, sideways or up while answering. Similarly, 6 percent girls, 4 percent boys made eye contact with teachers only half of the time. The rest 3 percent girls followed by 4 percent boys seldom made eye contact.

#### 4.1.4 Inclusion in school activities

Table 5: Boys and girls being included in school activities in percentage

|       | Included | Highly excluded | Highly included | Moderately included | Not included |
|-------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Girls | 28%      | 1%              | 7%              | 9%                  | 6%           |
| Boys  | 22%      | 1%              | 14%             | 5%                  | 7%           |
| Total | 100%     |                 |                 |                     |              |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

The present status on inclusion in school activities (Table 5) shows that 28 percent of the girls and 22 percent of the boys are included in school activities. Followed by 14 percent boys and 7 percent girls who are highly included. In total 14 percent of girls and boys said they are moderately included. 6 percent girls and 7 percent boys were not included in school activities such as sports and training. Similarly, 1 percent girls and 1 percent boys said that they were highly excluded from sports and training. The reason as per the respondents, for not including them in any of the school activities was some of the schools never conducted extracurricular activities.

In general, it can be analyzed that the schools don’t limit girls from participating in school activities. The schools were welcoming to encourage both girls and boys to participate or include in school activities. There were no cases recorded of not being able to participate in school activities because of their gender.

## 4.2 Bodily Integrity

This section offers the degree of safety students feel in the school premises. It also presents the data of violence students’ face in school and the corporal punishment by teachers.

## 4.2.1 Safe in the school premises

Table 6: Girls and boys feeling safe in school premises

|       | Not at all safe | Neither safe nor unsafe | Fairly safe | Completely safe | Fairly unsafe |
|-------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Girls | 1%              | 2%                      | 10%         | 31%             | 6%            |
| Boys  | 1%              | 4%                      | 7%          | 35%             | 3%            |
| Total | 100%            |                         |             |                 |               |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

The above Table 6 shows that 31 percent of the girls followed by 35 percent of the boys feel completely safe walking in the school premises. Both genders have stated that they feel safe. The other 10 percent girls and 7 percent boys feel fairly safe within school. 6 percent girls and 3 percent boys feel fairly unsafe while, 2 percent girls and 4 percent boys feel neither safe nor unsafe within school premises. 2 percent i.e. 1 percent girls and 1 percent of the boys not at all feel safe in the school premises. A safe school is one where instruction and learning are not disrupted, disturbances are kept to a minimum, violence, drugs, bullying, and fear are not present, students are not subjected to discrimination, expectations for behavior are made clear, and consequences for transgressions are applied consistently and fairly. It has been observed in this study while visiting the schools that teachers didn't want to interrupt the classes to let us provide space for collecting data in the schools where there were no adequate classrooms. The students were not subjected to any form of bullying from friends, they didn't fear going to school, and the girls never noticed or felt uncomfortable gestures from the male teachers or male friends.

## 4.2.2 Corporal Punishment

Table 7: Getting corporal punishment

|       | Always | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Very often |
|-------|--------|-------|--------|-----------|------------|
| Girls | 9%     | 13%   | 1%     | 17%       | 11%        |
| Boys  | 13%    | 13%   | 1%     | 12%       | 10%        |
| Total | 100%   |       |        |           |            |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

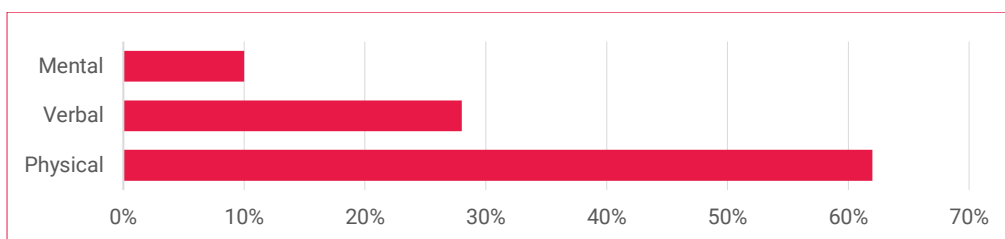
The above findings (Table 7) shows that both girls and boys are equally subjected to corporal punishment by teachers. 17 percent girls and 12 percent boys said that they get corporal punishment sometimes. 13 percent girls followed by equal percentage of boys denied getting any form of corporal punishment in school whereas, 9 percent girls and 13 percent boys said that they are always subjected to corporal punishment.

Similarly, 11 percent girls and 10 percent boys get corporal punishment very often. Only 2 percent girls and boys said that they are rarely subjected to corporal punishment. Though students of the rural community schools of YRM have not experienced bullying or harassment from their friends, corporal punishment by

teachers is highly present in schools. According to Madhu Kumari Ram, “Math teacher always comes into the classroom with a stick on his hand, whenever we don’t do homework or make noise in the classroom we are bitten with the stick in our hands and legs. Girls get corporal punishment as equal as boys”. In the field study, it was observed that the teachers walked around in the school with sticks while visiting the schools. Each year, hundreds of thousands of students are subjected to corporal punishment in public schools (Human Rights, 2010). In addition to the agony that is caused and the physical harm that frequently follows the use of physical punishments, these harsh disciplinary measures have an effect on students' academic performance and long-term well-being. Hitting any students should be an unacceptable practice. A federal prohibition on corporal punishment in public schools is necessary to protect students from the corporal punishment and the academic harms which it brings.

Table 8: Students being subjected to physical punishment

| Physical | Verbal | Mental | Total |
|----------|--------|--------|-------|
| 62%      | 28%    | 10%    | 100%  |



Source: Field Visit, 2022

The above data i.e. Table 8 presents that physical punishment was highly seen in public schools of Yamunamai rural municipality. 62 percent got physical punishment, 28 percent respondents were verbally punished while 10 percent got mentally affected. Although using physical punishment on students doesn't change their bad behavior over time, in Nepali society and schools, this lesson has been treated very lightly. They have the contrary view, that punishment can change a student's bad behavior or help him or her become more cultured. The use of corporal punishment is more prevalent in Nepal's government-supported schools. The majority of school teachers hold the opinion that physical punishment is the only effective way to discipline children and mold their conduct (Shrestha & Thakuri, n.d.). The majority of students experienced negative emotions after being battered by their teachers in school. When they had to confront their friends, they felt embarrassed and uneasy. They became disinterested in their studies and could not focus and concentrate in the classroom.

Additionally, students reported feeling terrified, furious, let down, dejected, and scared.



## 4.3 Availability of resources for students

This section explains about the availability of resources for girls and boys such as separate toilets, facilities inside toilets and provision of sanitary pads.

### 4.3.1 Separate toilets for girls and boys

Table 9 - Availability of separate toilet for boys and girls in percentage

|       | Available | Highly available | Highly unavailable | Negatively available | Positively available |
|-------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Girls | 11%       | 13%              | 5%                 | 1%                   | 20%                  |
| Boys  | 8%        | 10%              | 8%                 | 7%                   | 17%                  |
| Total | 100%      |                  |                    |                      |                      |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

According to the Table 9, 13 percent of the girls and 10 percent of the boys said that the separate toilets were highly available for girls and boys. Similarly, 11 percent girls and 8 percent boys said that there is presence of separate toilets. In addition, 20 percent of the girls and 17 percent of boys said the separate toilets were positively available. The rest 5 percent girls and 8 percent boys were recorded to say that the separate toilets for girls and boys were highly unavailable. The students who answered that separate toilets were highly unavailable belonged to schools with poor infrastructure. Boys and girls used the same toilet. Due to the lack of separate toilets for girls, they had to go through great ordeal especially during menstruation. They often had to rush home in the middle of classes. Sometimes, she even avoided school due to the fear of her stains being exposed. One of the biggest obstacles to girls' education is the absence of separate toilets for girls and boys.

When a girl approaches puberty, having access to a private toilet determines whether she stays in school or dropouts. Girls who are menstruating require access to a water source and a location to dispose of their sanitary pads. Without this infrastructural support, girls can miss up to five days of school every month, or worse, they would stop going to school altogether. Overall, most of the schools of YRM had separate toilets for students and they did not have to fear being embarrassed. They did not fear being caught changing sanitary pads and felt safe going to toilets.

### 4.3.2 Facilities inside toilet

Though most of the public schools of Yamunamai rural municipality had separate toilets for boys and girls, the facilities inside toilets such as water and soap for washing hands, dust bin to dispose sanitary pads were lacking in almost all 8 schools of Yamunamai rural municipality.

Table 10: Availability of facilities inside toilet in percentage

|       | Available | Highly available | Highly unavailable | Negatively available | Positively available |
|-------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Girls | 9%        | 6%               | 19%                | 8%                   | 9%                   |
| Boys  | 8%        | 3%               | 12%                | 14%                  | 12%                  |
| Total | 100%      |                  |                    |                      |                      |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

The above Table 10, presents the availability of facilities inside the toilet. 19 percent of the girl respondents and 12 percent of the boy respondents indicate that the facilities inside toilets were highly unavailable. 8 percent girls and 14 percent boys said it was negatively available. The respondents who said negatively available only had water but no soap to wash their hands after using the toilet. In contrast, 9 percent of the girls followed by 12 percent of the boys said it was positively available. A less number of girls and boys indicated the availability of facilities inside toilet i.e. 9 percent girls and 8 percent boys. There were also the respondents who said that the facilities inside toilets were highly available which is 6 percent girls and 3 percent boys. The percentage of respondents who said that the schools lacked to provide facilities inside toilets was larger than the ones who said they had facilities.

Absence of dust bins in toilets made it difficult for girls to dispose of their used sanitary pads. Maintaining proper hygiene and sanitation is very much important during menstruation. However, the girls were unable to do so due to lack of facilities inside the toilet. When we used the toilets during the field visit, I personally had difficulty maintaining hygiene during menstruation as there was no soap and water in the toilets. The table clearly shows that the facilities inside toilets are highly unavailable due to which students could not maintain hygiene.

Therefore, focus must be made to improve the facilities inside toilets which can encourage girls and boys to maintain their hygiene. Besides, millions of students in developing countries are at danger of missing school owing to illness brought on by poor hygiene because there aren't enough toilet facilities in their schools. For girls, the hazards are significantly greater.

### 4.3.3 Provision of Sanitary pads

Table 11: Availability of Sanitary pads

|       | Available | Highly available | Highly unavailable | Negatively available | Positively available |
|-------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Girls | 14%       | 7%               | 15%                | 9%                   | 5%                   |
| Boys  | 15%       | 3%               | 19%                | 10%                  | 3%                   |
| Total | 100%      |                  |                    |                      |                      |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

The Table 11, shows the availability of sanitary pads. The data shows that 14 percent girls said that sanitary pads are highly available in schools followed by 15 percent boys. Boys of rural community schools were aware about the schools providing sanitary pads to to the menstruating girls. 7 percent girls and 3 percent boys said that the sanitary pads were highly available. 9 percent girls said that the pads were negatively available. It was because the pads provided by schools were not enough for them to last for the week. 15 percent girls said that the sanitary pads were highly unavailable.

On May 28, 2020, the Nepali government announced that more than 1.3 million girls would receive free sanitary pads through their local schools as part of an initiative to improve menstruation health and cleanliness. For approximately 29,000 government-aided schools in Nepal, the government has set aside 1.82 billion rupees (about US\$16 million) in 2020 for the procurement and distribution of free sanitary pads. Girls make up more than half of all students in the nation (OCHA, 2020). The standard set by the government to provide sanitary pads is 16 pieces per month.

In this regard, in spite of the government's huge investment in distributing free sanitary pads to improve menstruation health and cleanliness the table above shows that only 7 percent of the girl respondents indicate highly unavailable. According to the girls, sanitary pads are given to girls in pieces which finish in one day or two and they are forced to use clothes. Due to the fear of leakage some girls remain absent from school for 3-5 days during this period.

## 4.4 Respect

This chapter contains the findings and discussions of how students view they are treated in school premises. It also shows the teachers attitude towards students. The data shows whether the students' achievements are valued and recognized.

### 4.4.1 Respect, value and appreciation by teachers

Table 12: Respect, value and appreciation by teachers towards students in percentage

|       | Agree moderately | Agree strongly | Disagree a little | Disagree strongly | Neither agree nor disagree |
|-------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Girls | 11%              | 37%            | 1%                | 1%                | 1%                         |
| Boys  | 13%              | 30%            | 3%                | 1%                | 2%                         |
| Total | 100%             |                |                   |                   |                            |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

As per Table 12, it provides the detailed data of girls and boys agreeing, agreeing moderately, disagreeing a little or disagreeing about their teachers respecting, valuing or appreciating them.

The above data shows, 37 percent of the girls and 30 percent of the boys agree strongly about teachers respecting, valuing or appreciating them. Similarly, 11

percent girls and 13 percent boys agree moderately. On the other hand, only 1 percent girls and 1 percent boys disagree strongly on teachers not valuing, respecting or appreciating them. From here we can understand that teachers respect both girls and boys equally. However, there was a respondent who said, “Teachers say that girls are more disciplined than boys, they appreciate if girls do homework while boys are not appreciated.” Therefore, we can analyze that in general, students don't feel disrespected in their school premises.

Respect, value and appreciation by teachers towards students can encourage students to attend classes. If teachers are unwilling to treat their students with respect, how can they expect their students to do the same? Respect must be frequently discussed, but more significantly, teachers must consistently exhibit respect. A teacher's authority is compromised and a natural barrier that impedes student learning is created when they refuse to show respect to their students. In a setting where the teacher exceeds their authority, students won't succeed. Respect for one another is required at all times between all entities. Particularly, it is expected that students and teachers will greet one another with kindness. Conversations between students and teachers should also be cordial, respectful, and in an appropriate tone. Most interactions between students and teachers should be constructive.

#### 4.4.2 Respect irrespective of gender

Table 13: Respect irrespective of gender

|       | Yes  | Prefer not to say | No |
|-------|------|-------------------|----|
| Girls | 48%  | 1%                | 2% |
| Boys  | 44%  | 0                 | 5% |
| Total | 100% |                   |    |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

The Table 13, presents the data of both girls and boys who feel a sense of respect in the school premises. 48 percent girls and 44 percent boys said they are respected in school irrespective of their gender. We can see almost equal percentage of girls and boys who said they are respected irrespective of their gender. In contrast, 2 percent girls and 5 percent boys said their gender were not respected. The remaining 1 percent girls preferred not to say.

In context of respect irrespective of gender in school, some of the boy respondents said that girls get better treatment in school than boys. On the other hand, girls elaborated that the teacher prioritizes only boys while teaching. Few girls feel left out in the classroom. The development of both sexes and gender equality depends on the promotion of gender respect to both teachers and students.

### 4.4.3 Recognition of achievements such as coming first in class or winning competition

Table 14: Recognition of achievement in percentage

|       | Yes  | No |
|-------|------|----|
| Girls | 43%  | 8% |
| Boys  | 40%  | 9% |
| Total | 100% |    |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

The above Table 14, indicate a recognition of achievements such as coming first in class or winning competition in terms of gender. Here, 43 percent of the girls say that their achievements such as coming first in class or winning any competitions are recognized followed by 40 percent of the boys. However, only 8 percent of girls and 9 percent of boys indicate that their achievements are not recognized. A person who is valued will constantly go above and beyond what is required. It's a good idea to recognize and reward effort, especially when it comes to a student's performance. For everyone else, it may be a certificate or an award, but to the people who are recognized, it is an honor. In a student's life, praises and awards are crucial. Recognizing a student's accomplishments is essential, much like disciplining and correcting them for their mistakes. Students are greatly motivated to work even harder and honestly when they receive even a small amount of praise. All schools of YRM must recognize the achievements of students in order to motivate them to perform better.

### 4.4.4 Teachers greeting back to the students

Table 15: Percentage of teachers greeting back to students

|       | All the time | Most of the time | Never | Some of the time |
|-------|--------------|------------------|-------|------------------|
| Girls | 47%          | 2%               | 0     | 1%               |
| Boys  | 41%          | 7%               | 1%    | 1%               |
| Total | 100%         |                  |       |                  |

Source: Field Visit, 2022

The data presented in the above Table 15, shows the percentage of respondents indicating that their teachers greeted them back. It can be seen that teachers greeted 47 percent of the girls followed by 41 percent of the boys. 2 percent girls and 7 percent boys said they greeted most of the time. The rest 2 percent girls and boys said the teacher greeted them some of the time and only 1 percent boys said that the teachers never greeted them. Overall, in the rural community schools of YRM, teachers greet the students back irrespective of their gender. This is a positive scenario for promoting gender equality in schools. When teachers greet the students back, they help create a positive school environment in which students feel a sense of connection and belonging.

## 4.5 Determinants of gender equality in rural community schools of YRM

From the data collected and the observation made, gender inequality in rural community schools of YRM is observed only in limited expressions. While analyzing data, almost all the schools treated boys and girls equally. All the components designed to measure gender (in)equality showed a positive response towards gender equality in rural community schools. Therefore, the determinants of gender equality in rural community schools of YRM are-

- Equal access to school resources irrespective of gender
- Equal participation in school and classroom activities
- Inclusion of boys and girls in activities such as sports and training
- Sense of Safety inside the school premises
- Provision of separate toilets for girls and boys
- Respect, value and appreciation by the teachers, irrespective of gender

## Conclusion

Promoting gender equality is seen as an integral part of the work of schools and other educational bodies. Therefore, this research aimed to understand the present status of rural community schools with respect to gender (in) equality within their school premises and the determinants of gender in/equality in rural community schools of Yamunamai rural municipality. The result showed that though gender inequality exists in society, schools are a safer place where girls and boys are treated equally. Various articles and research all around the world show the prevalence of gender inequality in school settings. Rautahat district is considered as the most child-illiterate district but now people are becoming more aware about the need of education. Boys and girls were seen going to schools. The study also showed both boys and girls were safe in school premises and no cases of school-based violence, bullying or disrespect irrespective of gender were recorded. Girls and boys were not discriminated against in terms of access to resources, participation or voicing up their opinions and they were respected by teachers on an equal basis within school premises. Schools provided an environment free from gender inequality, violence, fear and intimidation. This is a positive change in the field of education for developing countries like Nepal.

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# ANNEX

## Survey Questionnaire

Ward no:

Name of the School:

| S.No. | Basic Information of Respondents |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| 1     | Name                             |
| 2     | Age                              |
| 3     | Sex                              |
| 4     | Grade                            |
| 5.    | Ethnicity/Religion               |
| 6.    | Disability                       |

## Resources

Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 the availability and satisfaction of the following resources:

**Availability** Highly Available (1), Available +ve (2), Available (3), Available -ve (4), Highly Unavailable (5)

**Satisfaction** Highly Satisfied (1), Satisfied +ve (2), Satisfied (3), Satisfied -ve (4), Highly Unsatisfied (5)

**Importance** Extremely important (1), Very Important (2), Moderately Important (3), Slightly Important (4), Not at all Important (5)

| S.No. | Resources                                       | Availability | Satisfaction | Importance |
|-------|---|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 1     | Adequate school built-up area                   |              |              |            |
| 2     | Adequate space for classrooms                   |              |              |            |
| 3     | Adequate number of classrooms                   |              |              |            |
| 4     | Adequate number of desks and bench for students |              |              |            |
| 5     | Adequate number of teachers                     |              |              |            |
| 6     | Library   |              |              |            |
| 7     | Computers                                       |              |              |            |
| 8     | Safe and clean drinking water                   |              |              |            |
| 9     | Separate toilets for girls and boys             |              |              |            |

|    |                                  |  |   |  |
|----|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 10 | Facilities inside the toilet     |  |   |  |
| 11 | Provision for sanitary pads      |  | : |  |
| 13 | Provision of mid-day meal        |  |   |  |
| 14 | White/Blackboard                 |  |   |  |
| 15 | Disabled friendly infrastructure |  |   |  |
| 17 | First aid                        |  |   |  |
| 18 | Playground                       |  |   |  |
| 19 | Textbooks                        |  |   |  |
| 20 | Stationary                       |  |   |  |
| 21 | Uniform                          |  |   |  |
| 22 | Scholarship                      |  |   |  |
| 23 | Cycle (Beti Padhau, Beti Bachau) |  |   |  |
| 24 | Electricity                      |  |   |  |

## Participation

- Do you ask questions in class?
  - Yes
  - No
- How often do you participate in the question/answer sessions?
  - Most of the time
  - About half the time
  - Some of the time
  - Seldom
  - Never

If never, please briefly explain why?.....
- How often do you feel shy to raise your hands in class?
  - Most of the time
  - About half the time
  - Some of the time
  - Seldom
  - Never

If answered most of the time, why do you feel shy to raise your hands or talk in class?  
Elaborate.....
- Do you make eye contact with the teachers while talking to them?
  - Always
  - Usually
  - About half the time
  - Seldom
  - Never
- Do you feel like you are included in the school's activities? Rate your answer?
  - Highly included
  - Included
  - Moderately included
  - Not included
  - Highly excluded

6. Have you ever participated in activities such as sports or training?
  - Always
  - Very frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Never
  
7. Do girls and boys play games together?
  - Always
  - Very frequently
  - Occasionally
  - Rarely
  - Never
  
8. Are there any mechanisms to complain about your issues related to violence, harassment, or discrimination?
  - Yes
  - No

If yes, what are those mechanisms?....

If no, would you like there to be any forms of mechanisms for formal complaints?.....
  
9. Do the issues mentioned above get addressed?
  - Always
  - Usually
  - Sometimes
  - Rarely
  - Never

If no, would you like there to be any forms of mechanisms for formal complaints?.....

## Curriculum

1. In what language is the curriculum being taught?
  - Bajika
  - Nepali
  - Urdu
  - Bhojpuri
  - Maithili
  - English
  - Other ..... (Please specify)
  
2. Which language do you prefer being taught?
  - Bajika
  - Nepali
  - Urdu
  - Bhojpuri
  - Maithili
  - English
  - Other ..... (Please specify)
  
3. Is the school's curriculum tailor-made to be inclusive of students with disabilities? For example, braille textbooks for the visually impaired. Rate the level of agreeability:
  - Highly agreeable
  - Positively agreeable
  - Agreeable
  - Negatively agreeable
  - Highly disagreeable

## Bodily integrity and health

1. Do you feel safe at school?
  - Yes
  - Prefer not to say
  - No
  
2. Please indicate how safe you feel walking alone within the school area?
  - Completely safe
  - Very safe
  - Fairly safe
  - Neither safe nor unsafe
  - Fairly unsafe
  - Very unsafe
  - Not at all safe

3. Have you ever been subjected to any form of violence or harassment at school?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Prefer not to say
 If yes, could you please elaborate if you are comfortable.....
4. Have you faced any kind of violence in your home as well as school? (yes/no)
5. If yes, what type of violence do you face?
  - Physical violence
  - Mental violence
  - Sexual violence
  - Emotional violence
6. What kind of discrimination have you faced?
  - Sexual
  - Religious
  - Age
  - Sexual orientation
  - Racial
  - Class
7. How frequently are you subjected to corporal punishment at school?
  - Always
  - Very often
  - Sometimes
  - Rarely
  - Never
8. What kind of punishment do you get?
  - Physical
  - Verbal
  - Mental
9. Have you ever faced bullying from other students?
  - Always
  - Very often
  - Sometimes
  - Rarely
  - Never
10. Has any student or teacher ever hurt you?
  - Physically
  - Mentally
  - Verbally
11. Have you had your periods (menstruation)?
  - Yes
  - No
12. Do you face discrimination during your mensuration at home or in school?
13. Do you attend school during your menstruation cycle?
  - Always
  - Usually
  - About half the time
  - Seldom
  - Never
 If you miss, for how long will you miss your classes during your menstruation? (days)
14. Are you able to talk about the female menstruation cycle?
  - Yes
  - No
15. What do you use during your menstruation cycle? [For girls]
  - Sanitary pad
  - Cloth
  - Others (Specify).....
16. How often do you change your sanitary pad/cloth? [For Girls]
  - Very Often
  - Often
  - Moderate
  - Not do often
  - Not at all

17. Do you share your menstruation or any other problems/ difficulties with your teacher?  
(general problems also related boys)
- Always
  - Very often
  - Sometimes
  - Rarely
  - Never
18. Does your family support you during your menstruation time? [For girls]
- Yes
  - No
19. How do people behave with you during your menstruation cycle? [For Girls]  
Please specify.....
20. Are you assigned work during your menstruation time at your home? [For Girls]
- Always
  - Very often
  - Sometimes
  - Rarely
  - Never
21. Are you comfortable sharing your problem (any type) with your teacher?
- Very comfortable
  - Comfortable
  - Moderate
  - Not comfortable
  - Not at all
22. Who do you usually prefer to share your problems with?
- Male teacher
  - Female teacher
  - Others (specify) .....
23. Do you feel safe around your:
- Male teacher
  - Female teacher
24. Does your teacher treat you nicely? (yes/no)
- Yes
  - No

### Freedom from economic and non-economic exploitation and social relation

1. Do you help in your household chores?
- Yes
  - No
- If yes, what kind of work do you do? (cooking, helping in the field, earning etc.).....
2. How long do you have to do your household chores? (hours).....
3. Do you have any siblings?
- Yes
  - No
4. Do you have any siblings who help with household chores?
- Help from Sister
  - Help from Brother
  - Help from both Brother and Sister
  - Help from no one
5. If you have siblings, in which school do they study?
- Private (Boarding) School
  - Public School
  - Do not study
6. Have you ever faced any kind of discrimination in your home among your siblings?
- Yes
  - No

- If yes, how often do you face discrimination?
- Always
  - Very often
  - Sometimes
  - Rarely
  - Never
7. Do you work to earn money?
- Yes
  - No
- If yes, where do you work?.....
8. How many hours do you have to work? .....
9. Does your work affect your school? (Yes/No)
- Yes
  - No
10. Have you ever not attended school because you have to go to work?
- Very Often
  - Often
  - Moderate
  - Not do often
  - Not at all
11. Have you ever not attended school because you have to do household chores?
- Very Often
  - Often
  - Moderate
  - Not do often
  - Not at all
12. Do you get free time at home?
- Yes
  - No
13. For how long do you get your free time? .....
- If yes, what do you do in your free time?..... (play games, study)
- If No, why is it so?.....
14. Do you have the right to make your own decisions for yourself?
- Yes
  - No
- If not, who would decide for you?.....
15. Do you have the right to decide about your own marriage?
- Yes
  - No
16. Among your siblings and cousins, at what age does he/she get married?.....
17. Are there any external responsibilities that restrict you from attending school regularly?  
Tick the appropriate choices.
- Taking care of younger siblings
  - Taking care of a disabled elderly
  - Having to prioritize work over school
  - Other (Specify)
  - No responsibilities

## Respect

1. Are you respected, valued, and appreciated by your teachers at school?
- Agree strongly
  - Agree moderately
  - Agree a little
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Disagree a little
  - Disagree moderately
  - Disagree strongly

2. Do you feel all students irrespective of their caste, gender, race or ethnicity are respected equally?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Prefer not to sayIf No, could you please explain if you are comfortable.....
3. At school, do you feel humiliated due to your gender?
  - All the time
  - Almost all the time
  - Most of the time
  - Some of the time
  - Rarely
  - Very Rarely
  - Never
4. When you express your point of view in the classroom how does the teacher respond?  
Please specify.....
5. When you greet your teacher do they greet you back?
  - All the time
  - Almost all the time
  - Most of the time
  - Some of the time
  - Rarely
  - Very Rarely
  - Never
6. Are your achievements such as coming first in exams, and winning any competition at school recognized?
  - Yes
  - No

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