Final Report
A Study on Educational Needs of the *Freed Haliya* Children in 12 Districts

Submitted To:
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report is an outcome of the collective efforts of the study team and many individuals and institutions. First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Department of Education for entrusting my team to carry out this study. My deep appreciation and profound gratitude goes to Mr. Khaga Raj Baral, Director General, Department of Education, Ministry of Education, for his intelligent guidance, constructive criticism and wise advice throughout this research. My sincere appreciation goes to Ms. Dev Kumari Guragai, Director, Department of Education, for her support throughout this project. I would also like to express thankfulnessto Mr. Kebali Ram Adhikari, Deputy Director, Research Section, Department of Education, for his cooperation during the research work.

Hearty thanks goes to Ms.Bhima Devi Koirala, Section Officer, Research Section for her constant cooperation during the study. Without their warm support, the whole study could not have been completed in the stipulated time. In the same way, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to senior researcher and researchers for their hard work during the conduction of the study.

I am particularly indebted to Vertex Consult Pvt. Ltd. family, especially Ms. Kripa Shrestha, Administrative officer and Mr.Sugan Shrestha, Account Officer, for their cooperation during the study.

Last but not the least, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all the students, teachers, SMC members and parents, representatives of NGO/INGOs for their active participation in the interviews and discussions. The DEO officials extended their cooperation during the whole project and therefore their support is sincerely acknowledged.

Prof. Dr. Basu Dev Kafle
Team Leader
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education enables an individual to comprehend, communicate and blend comfortably into the world. It helps people acquire different life skills, enables them to exercise their rights and freedoms, participate effectively in a liberal society and promote mutual understanding, friendship and tolerance. So, the right to education at least up to the basic level is clearly justified in Nepal as a signatory country in different conventions. Despite the announcement of government to provide free basic education, children from indigenous and disadvantaged groups are still lagging behind. Freed Haliya children are one of such disadvantaged groups that this study intends to address.

Objectives of the study:
The main objective of the study is to identify the educational needs of the Freed Haliya children in 12 districts of the country. Specifically, the study is expected:

- To explore the current status of educational enrolment, retention, promotion, achievement, absenteeism, dropout, out of school situation of Freed Haliya children
- To identify the hindering and promoting factors in terms of their enrolment and retention in schools
- To recommend strategic measures and action steps to ensure equitable access, enrolment, success, and to reduce absenteeism and dropout of Freed Haliya children

Methodology

The research was started by doing literature review before the commencement of field research work. Descriptive cum exploratory type of study design along with combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed in this study. As the target population of this study was the children of Freed Haliya, the students, headteachers, teachers, SMC members, parents of the community schools, representatives of NGOs/INGOs, DEO officials were treated as the respondents in this study. Two districts Kanchanpur and Dadeldhura were selected as sample from 12 districts of Nepal for the study. These districts were selected considering the concentration of population of Freed Haliya. The sample size was 140 in which 70 respondents from each of two districts were selected purposively considering the objectives of the study. Twenty students, 20 parents and 10 school teachers, 2 headteachers, 4 SMC/PTA members, 2 DEO officials, 6 other stakeholders such as representative of local NGOs, INGOs, local leader from each district were included in the study as sample. The required data for the study were collected from the respondents and documents using interview, group discussion, observation and document review techniques.
Key findings

1. The current status of educational enrolment, retention, promotion, achievement, absenteeism, dropout, out of school situation of Freed Haliya children

- Most of the Freed Haliya children went to school. Only few children who lived very far from the school were not enrolled. Disability and poor physical development among the children was another cause of their non enrolment. Lack of awareness and lack of information were the other causes to keep the children away from school.

- Disability, household chores, rearing practice of children, parental ignorance were also the other causes that kept children out of school.

- In school “A”, 100 % students were from Freed Haliya community followed by School “B” (28 %), “C” (87%) and School “D”, (62 %). The average age of enrollment was 5.83 years.

- In school “A” there was no one to repeat the class. In school”B”, the retention rate was 1.5 % within class (1-5) whereas it was 2.24 % within class (6-9). In school “C”, the retention rate was 2.17%. In school “D”, the retention rate was 1.65 % within class (1-5) whereas it was 4.1 % within class (6-9). Some students repeated the class due to request of teachers and parents. In class (6-9), many students did not pass but retention was 3.16 % only in total.

- Because of liberal promotion policy of the government, the number of students repeating the class was negligible. Almost of them passed. Due to request of teachers and parents some had repeated the class. The promotion rate of class (1-5) is 97.8 percent among the Freed Haliya students. The total promotion rate of class (6-9) is 68.94.

- The achievement of students in schools of the core area can not be said to be satisfactory. But the achievement of students in schools of non core area was vulnerable. Just only one student stood in top five position in School B in first position. But it is not a great achievement for their community as she came to this school at class 4 from boarding school of Pokhara. In School D, 2 students stood in top five ranking. So the achievement was not that satisfactory.

- The average attendance rate is 70.03 % based on the attendance of Baishakh and Jestha. It is seen that school “C” situated in Core area of Freed Haliya community had significantly low attendance rate compared to the other three schools. One of the headteachers said that the attendance was real as most of Freed Haliya students left the school for their home after the first period. The reason behind were their empty stomach and household works in their home- main reason being rearing of their siblings.

- School “A” has no dropout students. But in school “B”, 31.03 percent students dropped out in class (6-10). In school “ C”, only one student had dropped out from the school. In school “D”, 23.48 percent students had dropped out from class (6-10). The case of drop out was severe in higher grades.
Hindering and promoting factors for enrolment and retention in schools

Hindering Factors

- Enrollment is not a big issue compared to regularity.
- Economic condition of Freed Haliya people is the most hindering factor.
- Very few Haliya people owe small portion of land which was not enough to feed their family for two months.
- Poverty and family size had reciprocal relation as increase in family size contributed to an increase in poverty.
- Though verification of Freed Haliya people was in the process, the verified ones were not satisfied with the support government had provided to them.
- Most of the Free Haliya males did semi-skilled work such as masonry, carpentry or labour work in near market which earned them little money to support their education.
- As most of the female were busy in household chores with some income generation from fetching the wood from the jungle, agriculture work, regular income was not ensured from such work.
- The school going children had to rear their 2-3 year old siblings. They were busy in households chores as cooking, washing dishes, clothes and cleaning which left little time for their education.
- Freed Haliya children had to come to school either taking stale food or in their empty stomach. Most of their parents were out in the field early in the morning.
- Most of the houses of Freed Haliya people had only one room in where they had to manage kitchen, bedroom, all in one which left no space for study in separate environment at home. Continuing education in such situation was difficult.
- Despite government’s free education policy for all, the children had to pay examination fee even in the schools of Freed Haliya core area.
- In two of the schools, the children had to pay for extra books as well. All the poor children had to manage their own dress by themselves.
- Beside some irregular support of NGOs/INGOs for stationeries, scholarships, no any direct regular support to the students in all schools was noticed.
- The most vulnerable Freed Haliya were non-dalit children from educational point of view as they did not get any support that the government gives to dalit people.

Promoting Factors

- Make an attempt to tie the scope of education with its importance to the Haliya students in order to help them uplift their status in society.
- As most of the Dalit students are Freed Haliya, they get scholarships they are entitled to which contributes to their continuity in school.
• Though the scholarships are found inadequate, they have acted as promotional factors for continued learning.

• Schools’ liberal attitude to allow the students to go home early from the school due to the household situation has motivated them to come to school.

• Social situation and fear of being alone in community during the school time has also contributed to their schooling habit.

• Meeting with friends and playing with them is another opportunity to motivate them toward school.

• There was no practice of child marriage which was one of the causes of dropout in other communities. So, the campaign against such ill tradition should be continued at the community level.

• The practice of discrimination in schools is dying out though it is not completely eliminated from the community.

• Cultural barriers and ill-practices were little noticeable which would go a long term to stop.

• Language barriers did not exist for promoting teaching-learning process

• Geographical barrier to access to the school was non-existent. Students of schools of core area had a tendency to drop out more from the schools while changing school for further study due to the distance of high school and existence of migrant community.

Conclusion

After analyzing and interpreting the field data, the study had drawn following conclusions:

• The Freed Haliya people were aware about schooling of their children in terms of its future benefit. Consequently, most of them sent their children to school. The enrollment was not so much a problem as compared to their absenteeism, achievement, and dropout. They could not support and motivate their children for study.

• Poverty is the main culprit for having such situation as the parents could not take care and make follow up of their children education because of their engagement in livelihood earning.

• Managing meals for two times a day for most of them due to no land of their own for cultivation weighed heavily over the priority of their children’s education.

• The schools’ reduced choice to allow the students to go home early due to students’ empty stomach or for their obligation for rearing the siblings has challenged the education system.
• Economic condition of parents, schools fees, opportunity cost, school environment were some hindering factors to enrolment and retention of Freed Haliya children

• Scholarships and supports of NGOs, INGOs were some promoting factors for educating the Freed Haliya children.

• Geographical barriers, language barrier, discrimination, lack of teacher from the same community were not seen as challenges.

The research site visited was relatively more developed as compared to other places of Freed Haliya. The situation may be more vulnerable in other rural places of Freed Haliya. So, it may be more difficult to address such challenges, without which the dream of accessing all Freed Haliya children to school, will remain a far fetched goal.

3. Recommendations

Strategic measures and action steps to ensure equitable access

• First of all, a data base of the Freed Haliya needs to be created in 12 districts with verification of Freed Haliya families.

• Integrated holistic data management process should be initiated to map out an overall picture of the Freed Haliya including their problems.

• The data base will provide an evidence based formulation of policy, plans and programs for ensuring equitable access to opportunities including education for the Freed Haliya communities.

• Freed Haliya people are in more vulnerable situation than other disadvantaged people. So they are in need of targeted support( intervention) for defined period of time.

• Strengthening of the economic condition and enhancing the livelihood pattern of Freed Haliya people should be a high priority of the intended developmental intervention.

• The Freed Haliya people should be provided with necessary skills through skill-based training for creating marketable opportunity.

• Their training and skills should be linked with the job market such as government’s construction works and other private enterprises using various channels, sometimes making their recruitment obligatory.

Strategic measures and action steps to ensure enrolment

• The school should take necessary initiative to make parents and students aware of the benefit of education with support from the government at the local level.

• The school should focus more on “Welcome to school” program by speeding up the process of visiting all the households.

• In the same way, the school should conduct needs assessment of both the parents and their children for motivating and preparing the children to go to the schools.
• The government should manage hostel facilities targeting the non enrolled children so as to attract them toward the school, this is especially true for the students from the far-off areas.

• The school management should work intensively in order to make the school environment as child friendly as possible by inviting their participation in all school activities, preferably more in co-curricular to extra-curricular activities.

**Strategic measures and action steps to reduce absenteeism**

• Ensure regular supply of Day meals for the students under the FFE program and extend motivational support for regular attendance such as provision of prize, recognition, grade etc.

• Equip the schools environment with playground, attractive sports materials and interesting support materials such as TV, cassette players, picture books and large print books

• The government should extend support to the extremely poor households through the provision of materials such as edible oil, sugar, rice etc.

• The district education office together with the school should motivate and mobilize the NGOs/CBOs to arrange supports to these children in terms of dress, books, bags and other forms of stationery support.

**Strategic measures and action steps to reduce dropout**

• As continuity of education is directly related with the scale of poverty, empowering and equipping the Freed Haliya with saleable skills and provision of seed money to start small enterprises is deemed necessary. The government should come forward to this effect.

• The school should regularly run parental awareness program in order to motivate and convince both students and their parents to internalize importance of education after class 10 for a promising future.

• As opportunity cost was a catalytic agent for causing dropout in upper classes, government should manage to scale up scholarships and other supports to students to retain them in upper grades.

• Pre-technical and vocational education should start from grade 8 to provide them with an orientation to the futuristic skills they can use even if they are forced to leave the school early.

Finally, Freed Haliya’s were in very backward situation in compare to other people of Nepal. This research has paced one step of efforts to find out the situation, problems and necessity on access to the education for Freed Haliya people. This research is done with few limited time and resources. So, the research cannot be embraced all the factors related with Freed Haliya. So, other intensive research needed to find out the subject and problems related with Freed Haliya in near future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>Continuous Assessment System</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDO</td>
<td>Chief District Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CERID</td>
<td>Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDC</td>
<td>District Development Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEO</td>
<td>District Education Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>FFE</td>
<td>Food for Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>GoN</td>
<td>Government of Nepal</td>
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<td>HH</td>
<td>Household</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIEP</td>
<td>International Institution for Educational Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non Government Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LWF</td>
<td>Lutheran World Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOLRM</td>
<td>Ministry of Land Reform and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NER</td>
<td>Net Enrollment Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>NNDSWO</td>
<td>Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Government Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>National Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PILDAT</td>
<td>Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDN</td>
<td>Rastriya Dalit Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>RHMSF</td>
<td>Rastriya Mukta <em>Haliya</em> Samaj Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIP</td>
<td>School Improvement Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLC</td>
<td>School Leaving Certificate</td>
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<td>SMC</td>
<td>School Management Committee</td>
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<td>SSDP</td>
<td>School Sector Development Plan</td>
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<td>SSRP</td>
<td>School Sector Reform Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>ToR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>VDC</td>
<td>Village Development Committee</td>
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Chapter One
Introduction

This chapter consists the background of the study, objectives, limitation and delimitation of the study.

1.1 Background

The term Freed Haliya in the Nepalese society refers to the landless people who work in the field of the rich for their survival as the bonded labourers. In the Freed Haliya Pratha, the rich landlord provides the landless poor with some loan to meet their needs of daily survival. The poor on the other hand work in the field of their landlords (the rich from whom they receive loan) until they pay back the loan. The poor are thus bound to pay their time and labor to their landlords because their landlords provides them loan for their survival. When they finish their term of work as a ploughman in the field of their landlords as a part of repaying their loan, they happen to get loan again to meet their further living costs and, thus, they have to be ploughman for their landlords again. In this way, they fall in the vicious circle of being bonded labor for their landlords for their life time. The quality of living of the bonded labourers is quite miserable particularly in terms of their food, clothes, shelter, health and education.

With the purpose of bringing change in their quality living and to get rid of the viciousness of being bonded labor, Freed Haliya pratha was abolished by the Government of Nepal in 2008. Although they are no more bonded labour by law, they are still leading their life miserably with little means of survival. To help them, Ministry of Land Reform and Management (MoLRM) is acting as a focal ministry to verify the registration of Freed Haliya. As per the source of MoLRM, the Freed Haliya people are more than 19000 in number mostly located in 12 districts of Nepal (Darchula, Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Kanchanpur, Bajhang, Bajura, Doti, Achham, Kailali, Humla, Jajarkot, Surkhet). The ministry provides identity cards to them to entitle them to some defined facilities.

Although Freed Haliya system was abolished, many consequences of it are still in effect. Particularly, many children of Freed Haliya family are far from the reach of school and those who are enrolled in school are facing challenges of dropout, class repetition, and absenteeism.

The government of Nepal has made concerted efforts to promote equitable access to educational facility for all children which obviously include children from Freed Haliya family also. Free education up to higher education, scholarship and free textbooks are such efforts made by the government. In this context, it is necessary to examine the extent of need of Freed Haliya children to education. This study is all more important at a time when the government is in the process of implementing School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) to meet the goals of Education 2030.

The constitution of Nepal (2015) has clearly spelt out education as one of the fundamental rights of the citizens and consequently, Basic Primary Education has been declared free and compulsory by the government. This is quite an important achievement in terms of ensuring equitable access to primary education for all. How far is this initiative successful in case of the
children from Freed Haliya family? It is necessary to examine the context with Freed Haliya children in this respect in order to identify their educational needs. Considering all these aspects, this study aims to examine educational needs of children from Freed Haliya family by also identifying critical interventions for promoting their enrolment, retention and success.

The Freed Haliya pratha (system/Mal Practice) is an agrarian bonded labor of people who take loan from landlords (money lenders) at exorbitant interest rates to meet their daily expenses for food and other necessities. While they must pay back the principal, they and their family are required to pay in labor and services against the interests of the principal money borrowed. They remain ploughmen and their family bonded laborer until the loan is repaid, which is as difficult as coming out of a deadly swamp. This kind of mal practice is often found in 9 districts of far western region and 3 districts of mid western region of Nepal. Especially 97% bonded laborers (Freed Haliyas) are from Dalit community according to the record of different surveys; the community suffering from caste based discrimination. From the human rights prospective, it is regarded as social injustice. Statistics on Freed Haliya are not exact and are also very much debated. Based on sample studies by RDN Nepal in 800 HHs of Bajhang, Baitadi, Darchula and Doti, it was estimated about 60,000 Freed Haliya reside in Far Western Region of Nepal. The study has found out three kinds of Freed Haliyas that are due to loan, land and tradition (cultures and norms) respectively. The study undertaken by NNDWSWO and LWF (2004) has projected about 5% of Dalit population (equal to 15000) to be in Far Western Region of Nepal. Latest government statistics based on study undertaken by Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction reported about 19205 in 11 districts of Far Western Region (9) and Mid Western Region (2) of Nepal. A study made by RDN Nepal in 2010 estimated about there were 9.6 % (37,954) Freed Haliya, and 13.4 % (52844) of them being Dalit population in Far Western Region. Similar to Freed Haliya Pratha, Pulo Pratha, 0.9 % (3,549) was also found in this region with main concentration only in Bajhang (5.4%). Among Freed Haliya, 36.7 %, 17.0% and 45.5 % became due to loan, so land and tradition (cultures and norms) respectively. Furthermore, about one-fifth (19.0%) households have built their houses in others’s land i.e master’s land. It was found that 96 percent of the respondents (Freed Haliya) were feeling caste discrimination in their locality in this far western region. Almost 70 percent people had land to support their livelihood only for three months. Only five percent people had food sufficiency up to 10 to 12 months. Bajura was found very weak in food sufficiency with 98 percent food sufficiency for less than three months.

1.2 Objectives

The main objective of the study is to identify the educational needs of the Freed Haliya children in 12 districts. Specifically, the study is expected:

a) To explore the current status of educational enrolment, retention, promotion, achievement, absenteeism, dropout, out of school situation of Freed Haliya children

b) To identify the hindering and promoting factors in terms of their enrolment and retention in schools

c) To recommend strategic measures and action steps to ensure equitable access, enrolment, success, and to reduce absenteeism and dropout of Freed Haliya children
1.3 Limitation and Delimitation of the Study

Limitation

• The study was conducted in two districts only due to resources and time constraints. So, generalization of the findings is restricted.

Delimitation

• The study did not focus much on comparability of the core and non core community of the Freed Haliya children.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Different thoughts, programmes, and theories govern people. So, identification of *Haliya* and their educational needs cannot be thought about in isolation. In this context, the study had reviewed the literatures on introduction of *Haliya*, history of *Freed Haliya* movement, right based approach to education and poverty theory to understand educational needs of *Freed Haliya*. Detailed reference of this situation follows:

2.1 Introduction of *Haliya*

The term *Haliya* comes from the word ‘Halo’ and it refers to someone who plough landlord’s field. *Haliya* is a modern form of agrarian slavery practiced throughout Nepal, but *Haliya* system is found particularly in the Far and Mid-Western Regions. This practice has existed in Nepal for many centuries and it has not been fully abandoned yet. Traditionally, the entire family of debtor who is unable to repay a loan borrowed from a landlord would be kept as *Haliya*. In Nepal, mostly *Haliyas* are kept because of conditions and situations mentioned below; i.e. Out of a total of 20,058 identified *Freed Haliya* in Nepal, 17,122 (85%) live in the Far West. As per a survey carried out by LWF Nepal, 94% are dalit, 5% are Janajati and one percent are Chhetri/Brahmin. The average family size is 6.38 and 79% are illiterate. Nearly 98% face food insecurity - 80% of households face food shortages for more than six months of the year and only two percent are food sufficient year round. Of the total *Freed Haliya*, 48% have access to piped water, 19% have toilet facilities and only 10% have access to electricity. Nearly 54% of *Freed Haliya* do not have citizenship certificates. Their access to VDC services and resources as community forests is only 12% and 19% respectively. Moreover, only 0.35% are involved in VDC resource allocation and 0.45 in community forest management processes. *Haliya* pratha is an exploitative system of agrarian bonded labour practiced in the Far and Mid Western Regions of Nepal in particular. *Freed Haliya* are those who served as agriculture bonded labourers for the landlords to till the land and undertake heavy manual labour.

There are three broad categories of *Freed Haliya*: those who worked as ploughman for landlords and were bonded in lieu of interest on debts owed; those obliged to work in lieu of interest on both debt and for land provided by landlords and; traditional or hereditary *Haliya* who worked in lieu of interest on debt and/or land received by their forefathers.

The practice has existed for many centuries. However, the *Freed Haliya* movement to be liberated was intensified only as of 2002 when these people began to organize at district level. In 2008, the Federation of National *Freed Haliya* Liberation Societies (RHMSF) in Kathmandu presented 11 demands to the Government of Nepal (GoN). It was on 5 September 2008, the GoN signed a five point agreement with the RHMSF that liberated the *Haliya*, outlawing the *Haliya* pratha practice. It also erased debts held by *Freed Haliya*, committed
the GoN to forming a task force to assess their situation and demands, and to implement the taskforce’s recommendations, as well as to provide security to Freed Haliya given the possible tension that might be a result of the Freed Haliya liberation announcement.

**Movement on Freed Haliya**

The issues of Haliya rose through series of meetings, discussions, and movements at Dadeldhura district few decades ago when Haliyas in the community level were convinced to unite. Haliya did it simply because these were the only way to eliminate the caste-based discrimination empowering bonded labors for establishing the equitable society and social dignity through mass awareness aimed against the landlord for the freedom and sensitization of the Government of Nepal towards this urgent plea.

RMHSF came into existence when it was registered on 25th September 2007 at District Administrative Office, Dadeldhura which was later registered under Social Welfare Council as a non-government organization. The organization has a struggling history for freeing Haliyas ever since its establishment. In this way, RMHSF presented 11 points demand before the political party’s leaders on 19th June 2008. When these demands were not addressed, movement was initiated in Kathmandu despite being limited to far-west of Nepal on 11th July 2008.

On 5th September 2008, a team formed by Government of Nepal invited RMHSF for discussion and came up with 5 point agreement which was passed by the ministry of cabinet by declaring all Haliyas as freed. Since then, RMHSF has been working to check and monitor whether GoN has been working to free the Haliyas in true sense of the term.

Now, things have changed from being free to rehabilitation and RMHSF has been advocating and lobbying with government, concerned stakeholders and different agencies for justified rehabilitation of all Haliyas living in far and mid west regions of Nepal.

There is no alternative to securing the livelihood of Haliya people and even though it is said that their loans have been exempted this is not practically accepted. Needless to say even the local bodies are ignoring the issue, and using excuses like, “no specific direction has come from upper bodies”.

“Our grandfathers are said to have taken some amount of loan from the landlords,” says Krishna BK of Pachnaalika of Doti district.

"As the loans got heavier on our grandfathers they were bound to work in their fields for their whole life, as they were not in the condition of paying back their debts to landlords. In that way my father worked as Haliya and now I’m working as one."

The landlords are claiming their so-called loans back now when the Haliyas have become free, and they often criticize Haliyas like Krishna asking why they want everything from the landlords, when the government and the NGOs are supporting the Haliyas.

But after being betrayed by both the landlords and the government, Krishna is left with only one question, “Now what should we do?”
However, this is not just Krishna’s problem, but also the problem of the majority of Haliyas who have been freed from working on the land of landlords. While the Haliya Freedom movement was taking place, the 2058 Act to free the Kamaiya bonded labourers was documented - through the same act, 450 Haliyas were made free from District Administration Office of Far Western Zone. The bonded labourer would get double of what he is paid from the landlord on an everyday basis.

To support the governmental declaration of Haliya Freedom, the Haliya Freedom Society Federation with the support from donor agencies will be conducting “Empowerment of Free Haliya Programme” in some of the districts of Far Western Zone of the country. Through this programme of the federation has announced that the exact facts of Haliyas will be collected, the governmental declaration of Haliya Freedom will be promoted, be also creating social awareness, promoting the traditional skills of Haliyas and helping them with legal advice.

**Government initiatives and concerns among Freed Haliya**

In line with the 2008 agreement, a task force comprising nine members was formed to address the 11 demands of the Haliyas. It submitted its report to the GoN on 26 September 2008 with recommendations.

In 2010, the Ministry of Land Reform and Management (MoLRM) organised a consultative meeting with stakeholders and put forward a draft ‘Freed Haliya System (Prohibition) Bill’. The draft bill sets out the rights of Freed Haliya, establishes a rehabilitation fund, a case litigation and appeal process as well as provisions for punishment. The draft bill also provisioned for central and district committees headed by the Secretary of the MoLRM and CDOs respectively (or by an officer appointed by them). The main roles and responsibilities of the district committee included keeping up to date information on the Freed Haliya, implementation of Freed Haliya rehabilitation programmes and a coordination role in regards to agencies which implement education and income generation programmes.

Although the RHMSF supports a ‘Freed Haliya System (Prohibition) Bill’, they assert that the proposed draft is inadequate and has therefore raised various objections. They argue that some landlords have disguised debts as new loans and have issued IOUs (written acknowledgements of debt) which have rendered many Freed Haliya bonded. They call for the bill to include provisions specifically prohibiting these types of loans. In addition, they consider some words in the draft bill as discriminatory and have called for a caste and gender sensitive language.

In May 2011, the GoN issued ‘Freed Haliya Rehabilitation and Monitoring Guidelines’ and established a taskforce to look into rehabilitation modalities and review the draft ‘Freed Haliya System (Prohibition) Bill.’ The guidelines envisage temporary (six months) district level taskforces to update information on Freed Haliya and to distribute identity cards to them. However, the RHMSF has noted that government support to rehabilitate Freed Haliya has thus far been very limited and they have therefore demanded that the rehabilitation of Freed Haliya be accelerated.
An ILO survey published in 2010 noted that nearly 62% of Freed Haliya are landless or nearly landless whilst 38% own one ropani (5,476 square feet) or more of land. A similar survey in 2009 focusing on the nine Far Western Districts found that 57% of Freed Haliya are landless, while the remaining 43% had only 1.8 ropani in their hold. In Bahlang district, nearly 90% are landless whereas in Dadeldhura 95% of Freed Haliya own land, although the average size is as low as only 1.01 ropani per household.

The draft “Freed Haliya System (Prohibition) Bill” states that the former landlords should compensate the Freed Haliya by providing land. However, Freed Haliya and Freed Haliya organizations have raised objections to this provision as they fear it will not be implemented and if it is, that it will create conflict within the communities. The RHMSF has therefore requested the GoN to provide 10 kattha of government land in the Tarai or 10 ropanis in the hills to each household as an interim measure until the land reform called for under the CPA is implemented. In addition, activists note that some Freed Haliyas have inhabited houses and land for many years and are thus demanding that their situation be legalized.

The Freed Haliya have called for members to be categorized according to the amount of land they own. The three categories suggested are:

- Category A- landless and those with up to three kattha land in the Tarai or three ropanis in the hills
- Category B- those with up to seven kattha land in the Tarai or seven ropanis in the hills
- Category C- those with up to 10 kattha land in the Tarai or three ropanis in the hills

They have requested that identity cards be issued noting these categories so that benefits targeted to Freed Haliya are not diverted to other groups. In addition, freed Freed Haliya request that services, subsidies, facilities and even land be provided based on these categories.

Livelihoods and coping strategies of Freed Haliya

Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for a majority of people in Nepal. However, only 46% of Freed Haliyas are involved in this sector as the majority of them are landless. Those with limited land face challenges due to the small size of their landholdings, lack of irrigation and limited access to fertilizer and high quality seeds. Many others have shifted to seasonal agricultural wage labour but there wages are too low and not uniform across the region, which affects the Freed Haliya in particular. Some are involved in agriculture based on share-cropping under which landlords provide land for crop cultivation and the products are shared equally between landlord and Freed Haliya. However, even after three years of liberation, some Freed Haliya in remote parts of the Far West continue to be indebted to and work for landlords on what is an essentially bonded basis due to limited alternative options. There are no exact statistics to support this claim.

Around 14% of Freed Haliya earn their living as daily wage labours and six percent by making traditional products made of copper, iron and bamboo. Similarly, four percent work as carpenters and masons, 27% of all Freed Haliya are said to be engaged in wage labour in
cities across India.

The GoN freed the Haliyas in September 2008, marking an important step in ending this longstanding and exploitative system. However, more is needed in order to ensure that the practice is fully and effectively eradicated and the needs within the community are met. The recommendations of the taskforce that came out from Freed Haliya survey in 2009 are key steps in this regard. However, most are yet to be implemented. While the GoN has allocated a budget to address the needs of Freed Haliya, programmes targeting them are considered ineffective by Freed Haliya themselves. Although local authorities are generally aware of the GoN’s Freed Haliya emancipation initiative, they are not clear about how to implement the rehabilitation process. The creation of a second taskforce to review modalities for rehabilitation, and their outreach to the community to seek their input, is positive. However, this must be followed by concrete assistance framework. The situation of Freed Haliyas is still vulnerable given that very few have viable, alternative means of income. Reports that The draft “Freed Haliya System (Prohibition) Bill” can also serve as an important step to this effect, if the concerns of the community are reflected and the bill is brought in line with international standards. Progress in serving the needs of the Freed Haliya will also depend on Nepal’s broader efforts to address long term social inclusion and economic growth.

**Right Based Approach to Education**

Right based approach to education is based on the principle of equity and universality. Its concept and framework are considered very relevant and appropriate to attain education for all (UNICEF, 2007). Although it seems perfect in principle, it is far more difficult in practice. Millions of children around the world are deprived of the right to education.

Right-based approach to education includes three interlinked and interdependent dimensions; the right of access to education, the right of quality education, and the right to respect within learning environment (UNICEF, 2007). In order to ensure right to education, there should be a supportive political and economic environment, a robust legislative framework and rights-based education policies. Not only these, parents, communities, teachers, civil organizations, and even the international community should accept their roles and responsibilities and act accordingly to ensure the right to education.

Thus, this approach states that all children have the rights to good quality education. They should be encouraged to go to schools and pursue their education to the highest level possible. The education should help to make growth of their talents and abilities, teach them to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people (Sandkull, 2005).

UNESCO, (2004) has defined human rights as two sides of a coin: one side refers to what entitlements one can expect to enjoy, in this case the right to access and pursue quality education and in another side, the duties and obligations that are expected in both of the individuals as well as governments, which include providing and supporting educational services.
It has developed a framework with different dimensions of the right to education. It describes governmental human rights obligations to make education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable.

- Availability refers to three different kinds of governmental obligation such as education as a civil and political right, education as a social and economic right, education as a cultural right.
- Accessibility means governments should eliminate gender and racial discrimination and ensure the equal enjoyment of all human rights, and must not be satisfied with merely formally prohibiting discrimination.
- Acceptability refers that minimum guarantees are required regarding the quality of education in terms of health and safety or professional requirements for teachers.
- Adaptability refers that the school should address needs of each individual child, the schools should not expect the children to adapt to whatever form of education, they provide.

Likewise, UNESCO (2002) stated that governments have a duty and responsibility to provide free and compulsory primary education for all as the rights. It also defined target group as the unreached children belonging to cultural and linguistic minorities, children from socially and economically marginalized groups, children in geographically remote areas (such as nomadic children) and in particular, children from poor households, who are deprived of any means to bear the cost of primary education. The following table presents with series of steps involved in the way towards “Right to Education”.

Table 1: International Framework for Children's Right to Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convention/Declarations</th>
<th>Areas Relevant to Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Declaration of Human Rights, 1948</td>
<td>Education is a right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Right Convention, 1989</td>
<td>Legal provision to protect children and their right to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jomtien Declaration, 1990</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombo Convention, 1992</td>
<td>Gender equality in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salamanca World Conference, 1994</td>
<td>Focus on children of disadvantaged communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakar World Education Forum, 2000</td>
<td>Ensuring access to and complete free and compulsory primary education by 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Disability Convention, 2006</td>
<td>Promote the rights of disabled persons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNESCO, 2005
Poverty

Education is closely related to extreme poverty. Lack of income plays an important role in causing illiteracy, low enrolment rates and drop-outs. The right to education, drive to enjoy other rights and it is very helpful to fight against poverty (Melchiorre, 2010). After understanding the relationship between poverty and education, the study examines the theories that interpret the life of poor people like Freed Haliya.

The Encarta Dictionary defines poverty as a state of being poor. That is, a state of not having enough money to take care of basic needs such as food, clothing, and housing, and also poverty is a deficiency or lack of something.

As mentioned in the Nepal Human Development Report 2001, poverty entails lack of empowerment, lack of knowledge, and lack of opportunity as well as lack of income and capability. This shows that poverty is much more complex than simply income deprivation. Thus, poverty as mentioned by Sen (2002), includes both income poverty and capability poverty. Capability depends on level of human capital, which in turn depends on education and health.

Caillods and Hallak (2004) also showed the relation between education and poverty by arguing that most of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers established negative correlation between education and poverty. They further stated that the poor children are less likely to have access to education, more likely to start school late and to drop out. Thus, poverty is major factor which prevents poor children from having access to school and completing the schools. Children who have access to education are more likely to escape poverty.

Sen (1999) has further defined poverty as the lack of necessities such as basic food, cloth and shelter, medical care, and safety. Corbett (2007) defines poverty as a “condition of having insufficient resources or income. In its most extreme form, poverty is a lack of basic human needs, such as adequate and nutritious food, clothing, housing, clean water and health services.” He distinguished between extreme poverty from relative poverty. He defined extreme poverty as threatening people’s health or life which is also known as absolute poverty. Relative poverty is defined as the “condition of having fewer resources or less income than others within a society or country, or compared to worldwide averages”.

Since poverty is a relative term and it is hard to find a universal definition, several efforts have been made to produce a more comprehensive and agreeable definition. In such effort, Rowntree (1901) divided absolute poverty into two sub-divisions: primary and secondary. Primary poverty represents inability to secure even the basic needs. The income is too low to even afford the absolute essentials of food, clothing, and shelter. Likewise, secondary poverty is a household’s failure to purchase the minimum subsistence needs because of inappropriate use of income. Similarly, Booth (1903) also tried to differentiate the concepts of poor from very poor. Both of them (Rowntree & Booth) tried to conceptualize poverty from the consumption or survival perspective. Poverty has a very wide territory and it adversely affects every aspect of life including education, which also needs financial support (IIEP, 2004). Poverty also has its roots entwined into social norms and political beliefs. There still
exists an old social thought among people, especially among the so called high caste people, that education among lower caste people and the marginalized community is a threat for them for their high position in the social hierarchy system. Thus, they oppose the idea of education for all and try to keep these group of people uneducated and deprived of economic opportunities (Bajracharya, 2003). Thus the poor people in rural areas don’t earn much and they have no money to spend on education. So, they are bound in a vicious circle, which keep them uneducated and poor. Especially, the poor females are hit the most, as they are the first ones having to drop out of school. One major component of this vicious circle is having to pay for education. Unless and until education is made free, this vicious circle would never be broken (UNICEF, 1999).

Kamrani stated that poverty is one of the biggest barriers for achieving education. Mostly children from the poorest households have no access to school at all. Many education systems impose school fees even in the government schools, which are a further barrier to education for the poorest. And, many children have to work to increase the incomes of their families.

Kamrani has also stated that education and poverty are related inversely. Poverty is the biggest barrier against education. To improve educational opportunities for the poor, it is needed to reduce the direct and indirect cost of education. It should enhance the income levels of parents so that they don’t have to depend on their children’s earning.

Poverty, marginalization and traditional livelihoods have huge impact on Nepalese children whose main challenge and priority still remain to ensure enough food for their family. Education and health, which are considered key elements of modern life, lie way below in their priority list. The age old social hierarchy system and conventional thoughts have marginalized and socially excluded a huge number of people and in doing so, they have ripped the children off of their numerous rights and opportunities.

In addition to the social disadvantages, these groups of children also suffer because of the traditional parenting cultures. It has been found that poor parents have very little idea of proper parenting (Elder, 1974; Elder, Liker & Cross, 1984; Elder, Nguyen, & Caspi, 1985). They are often harsh and chose to punish children if they don’t follow their orders. Often they neglect children’s needs and at times, they fail to fulfill them even when they realize those needs because of their poverty (Conger, Ge, Elder, Lorenz & Simons, 1994; Dodge, pettit & Bates, 1994; McLoyd, Jayaratne, Caballo, & Borques, 1994). On the other hand, parents in poverty are less likely to exhibit parenting behaviours such as responsiveness, warmth, and supervision (McLoD et al, 1994; Sampson & Laub, 1994; Bornstein & Bradley, 2003).

No one can underestimate the amount of effect home environment has on a child’s growth. Children often grow up looking up to someone as an example, usually, it’s the parents. So, for children growing up in poor and uneducated families, they have no one but poor and uneducated parents to look up to (Bauer and Growick, 2001). They grow up living in poor conditions, compromising on every aspect of life, facing scarcity and constraints in every aspect like choice of food, medical care, and clothing. Thus, a child growing in such environment becomes weak both mentally and physically, and he grows to become an adult who is also poor with limited vision. He could never stand up and look beyond his personal
problems of scarcity, poverty and constraints. As it is often said, as you sow, so you reap, a child growing among constraints and limitations fails to grow up to his full potential and ends up poor and socially inept with even various psychological consequences like shyness, depression, anxiety etc. (Kessler, 1987) Betson & Michael, (Partridge et al 1994), (Mcloyd & Shanahan, 1993).

UNESCO (2004) also depicted close correlation between poverty and low levels of education among children. Financial factors stand as the most crucial obstacles to universal primary education. Poverty restricts the implementation of free and compulsory primary education and that it is severe in countries with a high population of young children.

**Direct, Indirect and Opportunity Cost**

International laws and policies appreciate the fact that education cannot be compulsory unless it is free. Education requires direct and indirect expenses, if someone cannot afford these expenses, it is completely pointless to make education compulsory. Making education compulsory becomes successful only when there are no financial obstacles. So, the whole point of making education free and compulsory is to bypass such obstacles so that everyone, irrespective of their economic status, could get education (UNESCO, 2004).

Various conventions have asserted that primary education should be free and compulsory. However, the law cannot force either parents or students to make it compulsory unless it is free. Poor parents cannot send their children to attend school if they cannot afford the cost of schooling. Thus, the policy of compulsory education can stand only on the ground of free education. Therefore even in the drafting of the foundation for all human rights treaties, or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there was never a question about education being made compulsory without being free (UNESCO, 2001).

UNESCO (2008) has defined direct costs as school fees and indirect costs as expenses for school books, uniforms, dress and other stationeries. In terms of the cost relevant to education, UNESCO (2001) has stated that although parents do not have to bear the direct costs as fees, parents have to bear the indirect cost such as support books, school meals, uniforms, pens and pencils, or sports equipment. To make education free, the government should eliminate all forms of financial obstacles to accommodate all the children no matter how poor. UNESCO (2008) has therefore stated that only exemption of fees is not enough to ensure free education as there are many other indirect costs and loss of opportunity costs associated. Government needs to mitigate indirect costs by providing free textbooks, scholarships and other subsidies for economically weak children UNESCO (2008). If uniform will be made compulsory in school, the government should provide it. It also stated that in order to reduce indirect cost, the free day meal should be provided to the poor students. IMF (2004) states that school fee decides the parents’ decision about sending children to schools. It further states that poor families, first of all, have to manage the basic needs prior to other expenses for tuition, books, school dresses, bags etc. Most of the poor families cannot afford those expenses. So they cannot send their children to school.
Kamrani has further stated that school fees prevent the children from getting education, closing all the pathways out of poverty. School fees work against the children's right to education. In the eyes of IMF (2004), school fees are a heavy burden for some parents to bear. Primary education should be financed publicly and all children should have access to school regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to pay. As basic education will benefit the society and the nation, the state should bear all the cost especially for poor children. IMF (2004) points out that because of the opportunity costs, even free schooling can not attract all the children. Parents may prefer that their children work to supplement household income, do household work. To UNESCO (2006), to avoid the opportunity cost, scholarships and other incentives should be given to the students.

**Scholarships**

To increase enrollment and retention and to improve the quality of education, the Government of Nepal has also introduced several policy options targeting girls, Dalits and disabled in primary education. Of these, one of the visible measures is scholarships to girls, Dalits and disabled because policy makers and planners believe that scholarships boost up enrolment, retention and learning achievement (CERID,2005;DOE,2006) . The governments need to announce certain incentives, monetary or in kind, to attract children towards school particularly girls, from disadvantaged groups or from underdeveloped areas. These incentives may include (dry) food ration, mid-day meals, free uniform, and stipend (PILDAT, 2011). Children of *Freed Haliya* had got the scholarships in Dalit categories, not under *Freed Haliya* Quota. The Assistant District Education Officer said that no scholarships are allocated for *Freed Haliya* children in the school. Most of the *Freed Haliya* children were placed in Dalit categories and they were getting the scholarship under the name of Dalit scholarship. From this, it can be concluded that *Freed Haliya* children from other caste were not eligible to get the scholarship from the government.

| Table 2: Scholarships and Others Supports in National Plans |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| • Free textbooks for all students of I-III grades | • Scholarship programme for girl students |
| • Free textbooks for all students of IV-V grades in 18 remote districts | • Availability of scholarships in 65 districts on quota basis |
| • Free textbooks for girl students of IV-V grades in 57 districts of the country. | • Lower caste student scholarship programme Rs.25 up to 10 months scholarship |
| • Continuation of scholarships and school uniforms | • Primary school nutrition programme in 12 districts |
| • Compulsory appointment at least one of female teacher | |

24
Discrimination and Education

Convention against discrimination in education, Article 1 (a) has stated that discrimination deprive any person or group of persons from accessing the education. Discrimination in society prevents free and compulsory education from its making.

According to Clark et al, discrimination is a set of “beliefs, attitudes, institutional arrangements, and acts that tend to denigrate individuals or groups because of phenotypic characteristics or ethnic group affiliation” (Clark, Anderson, Clark & Williams, 1999). This term also means being socially undesirable (Crosby, 1984) and being unpleasant (Feagin & Sikes, 1994). This is supposed to have negative impact on personality and identity development (Kardinar & Ovesey, 1951). Thus it is important to analyze the situation of discrimination by taking into account various theoretical grounds because it has potential to cause harm to both physical and psychological well being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; DeLongis, Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Anderson, McNeilly, & Myers 1991). At this point, the study therefore discusses some of the common forms of discrimination that people are facing in all regions of Nepal.

Interim constitution of Nepal (2008) has ensured the right to equality in13(2) stating that no discrimination shall be made against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe, origin, language or ideological conviction or any of these. But ethnic based discrimination can be observed in almost every part of Nepal. It is the main issue of social identity as well as sharing of power and rights. The state has determined and recognized different ethnic groups but it has not defined and accepted their culture, custom, language, and has not accepted their identities in a legally accepted way. As people from various ethnic groups have their own mother language, customs, distinct cultural identity, and social structure with written or oral history, these people claim that state has to recognize them as well. Instead of recognizing the individual ethnic groups’ values and cultures, the state has imposed Hindu values, way of life and cultures as well as Nepali language upon all people within the state structure irrespective of the ethnic background an individual is from (Gaige,1976). For these people, the ethnic equity claim is not only limited to their identity but
also extends to the issues of power sharing. According to them, the state owned power, resources, and development opportunities are not distributed in a shared manner.

It has been found that ethnic minorities remain underrepresented among the very wealthy and powerful social, educational and political positions in Nepal (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1998). Because of these discriminatory practices, ethnic minorities have been continuing to struggle for equal representation in areas such as politics, business and education (Owens, 2003; Bista, 2004).

**Child Labour**

Child labor makes negative consequences on human capital such as education which ultimately indulges the people in poverty. Child labor must be addressed first to secure the rights to education (World Bank, 2004).

There are several theoretical perspectives with regard to child labour e.g. the protectionist (abolitionist) perspective, human capital perspective, social responsibility perspective, and child centred perspective. The protectionist perspective argues that a child needs to be protected from labor because childhood is a work-free period of life and thus is a period of protection (Myers, 2001). It is also a period of happiness and dependency. This concept is based on the assumption that children are vulnerable, innocent, and ignorant of the world and need to be protected by adults (Myers, 2001).

On the other hand, the human capital theory states that all children under any circumstances should receive education (Myers, 2001). Education eventually increases productivity, labor quality and income at both individual and national levels (Schultz, 1964). Educating children therefore can be stated as human capital accumulation for the future because they can develop various skills from education, which would help them to earn a living (Myers, 2001).

Likewise, social responsibility perspective argues that the issue of child labor is the product of social inequality rather than economic underdevelopment. Thus, merely the reduction of poverty or elimination of child employment is not enough to solve the issue of child labor. Rather it requires a change in the social and cultural values in the whole society (Ibid). CERID (2004) has also revealed that majority of Janajatis and child workers had no access to school.

**Child Marriage**

Bayisenge (as quoted in UNFPA 2006) has mentioned that early marriage is defined as any marriage done below the age of 18 years. It is also known as child marriage. Choe et al (2004), quoted in the article, said that early marriage is persisting among women in Nepal and other South Asian countries (Singh & Samara, 1996; Singh, 1998). It remains quite common in Nepal, especially in rural areas. (Thapa et al., 1997). Because of this early marriage, violation of children's basic rights can occur especially in education, good health (Lewis, 2009). Early marriage can, therefore, be a significant barrier for communities seeking to raise education levels and break the cycle of poverty.
Bayisenge further states that married girls who would like to continue schooling simply seems to be impractical. Lewis (2009) has also stated that most of the students dropout the school after marriage. In Nepal, not only girls, but boys also marry in their early age because of family and economic pressures. Some continue the study but there are also a number of boys who dropout school because they go for earning to compensate the wedding cost and to support the family.

According to Bayisenge (2006), educating girls is not considered as investment in poor family. They perceive that married women only help their husbands’ house. Some parents think that girls do not need education as their role is mother and wife after they get married. In many households, husband wishes that his wife indulge in household work so they did not want to send their wife to school after marriage.
Chapter Three
Methodology

3.1 Sampling of the Study

As indicated in ToR, the two districts Dadeldhura from hill area and Kanchanpur from Tarai area were chosen as the sample districts. The estimated sample size of respondents was 140. Following table shows the estimated sample size of the respondents in given area:

Table 3: The sample districts and their ecological zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Ecological zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dadheldhura</td>
<td>Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kanchanpur</td>
<td>Tarai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: The distribution of samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Types of Respondents</th>
<th>No. of Sample districts (a)</th>
<th>No. of schools in each district (b)</th>
<th>No. of respondent in each school (c)</th>
<th>Total No. of respondents in each district (d=b*c)</th>
<th>Total No. of respondents in the whole study (e=a*d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Out of school children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Headteacher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SMC members</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DEO Officials</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other stakeholders</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( NGO/INGO representatives )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Process adopted for the study

The team led by Team leader, senior researcher and researchers worked together during the whole study. The following steps were adopted for the study. The team prepared the questionnaire for interview, check list for FGD, checklist for observation as specified by the objectives of the study. The team also formatted, translated, and printed the study instruments in adequate numbers as specified by ToR. Similarly, the study team also conducted the pre-test in Panchkhal VDC of Kavrepalanchowk district in coordination and consultation with the Department of Education (DoE).

A detailed interview was administered to the students, out of school children, their parents, teachers, headteachers, members of SMC, DEO officials and other stakeholders such as local leader and representatives of local NGOs. The Focus group Discussion was conducted with the students and parents. The Interview and FGD was more focused on the exploration of the current status of educational enrolment, retention, promotion, achievement, absenteeism, dropout, out of school situation of Freed Haliya children. Observation checklist was prepared for recording the educational environment of the sample schools.

3.3 Staff Selection and Training

Selection of Senior Researcher and Field Researchers

There was one senior researcher and two researchers each for two districts. One data analyst was recruited. Senior researcher was recruited on the basis of qualification (M.Phil) and experience (at least 5 years). Field researchers were recruited with Master level education and related research experience. Priority was thus given to those with field experiences and with higher educational qualification. The data analyst was recruited on the basis of the study of statistics at the Master’s level. They were invited to express their interest and availability to work for the current assignment. A short interview was taken to ensure that they are appropriate for the intended work.

Training of Senior Researcher and Researchers

Intensive training was given to the senior researcher and researchers for one day before the start of the field visit. Training included an introduction to study, its objectives and methodology. The training was given on the basis of the set of tools to be used for the study. Moreover, the training also included theoretical knowledge of the research. The training Senior Researcher and Researchers focused on conducting the interview, FGD and observation. During training, mock interview was also taken for several times among the trainees exchanging their roles as interviewers and respondents. As the study had to show concern over gender and social inclusion issues, the researchers were also provided training on the sensitiveness of the issues. The team leader provided backstopping support to the senior researcher and researchers during their field visit.
Field Work

Following the training to the study team, field work was started with main focus on quantitative and qualitative procedures. The study had covered two schools each from Dadeldhura and Kanchanpur district. To meet the respective sample size, one researcher each with the team was deployed for each district to conduct the field study according to the schedule.

3.4 Tools used in the Study

In order to achieve the stated objectives of the study, review of the policy provisions, findings of related studies and the networking of efforts as well as initiatives taken by the related organizations with respect to this subject was made. The School improvement plan (SIP), attendance, drop out list, evaluation list were studied during the field visit in addition to the use of other tools stated above.

Interview is one of the methods used to collect the data in the field as prescribed by the ToR. It included a set of questionnaires which was conducted with the students, out of the school children, teachers, headteachers, parents, SMC members, DEO officials, representatives of NGOs and local political parties during the study. A focus group discussion is a process in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards the subject matters. It was done with groups of students and parents. The tools and their respondents are listed as follows:

Table 5: Tools and their respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>Per school</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Headteachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>SMC/PTA members</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>DEO Officials (Including RPs)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Other stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(List of other stakeholders could include local NGO representatives, local leader, VDC personnel)
### 3.5 Methods of Quality Control

Quality assurance was given special consideration as such plan was made to assure the quality of the research at different levels.

First level of quality assurance started with the training to researchers so that they understood the tools and all other field requirements including the procedure to administer the tools in the field. Possible ethical standard to be adopted for the field study was closely observed and monitored by the team leader.

Second level of quality assurance was done by the team leader regularly checking regularly the work of researchers in the field. The team leader checked the tools filled by the researchers by also providing guidelines and support as required. The senior researcher kept moving from one field to another to ensure the selection of schools, students and other samples as per the sampling scheme. He also visited the field to ensure the quality performance of the researchers in the field. To maintain consistency and uniformity in the field work, completed questionnaire were randomly checked also for their completeness.

Another level of quality assurance was ensured by designing the data entry scheme. Data entry scheme was designed to control the range and skip patterns of the data.

### 3.6 Data Analysis Process

**Entering data in pre-specified data entry layout**

The data entry format was framed in accordance with DoE specifications. The data were analysed using MS EXCEL program. Proper IDs (e.g. school, teacher, headteacher, SMC members and students) were used to ensure the confidentiality. Necessary consistency and error checks was made clean and well documented report was submitted to DoE.
Data analysis and submission of preliminary data tables

After the data entry, necessary tables, charts, graphs were generated as required and submitted to the DoE as preliminary data tables in English version. The qualitative data were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive method.

3.7 Submission of Draft Report

Draft report was prepared based on reporting format and shared to the DoE team. Following the process, the research team incorporated feedback and comments from the DoE and submitted the final report with complete data tables to the DoE.

3.8 Process flow of the study

The process flow is presented in flow chart form below:
Chapter Four
Data Analysis and Presentation

This chapter presents data of Freed Haliya family in 12 districts with a focus on the current status of educational enrolment, retention, promotion, achievement, absenteeism, dropout, out of school of Freed Haliya children. It also presents the hindering and promoting factors to enrolment and retention in schools. Some strategic measures and action steps are suggested to ensure equitable access, enrolment, success, and to reduce absenteeism and dropout of Freed Haliya children.

The Nepal government has unofficially declared the exemption of loans that have been taken by generations of Haliyas (bonded labourers) in the far-western region of the country. But due to the lack of proper laws, Haliya rehabilitation has become a challenging issue. The umbrella organization National Haliya Freedom Society Federation, Dadeldhura says there are 150,000 Haliyas and even though the government has announced Haliya freedom, rehabilitation is happening at snail’s pace.

After the government’s announcement of loan exemption of Haliyas, the landlords have put pressure on Haliyas to pay back their loans. Haliyas have been badly affected both socially and morally being physically abused and even barred from farming the land they were tilling. The Haliyas freed from the landlords are at risk of not obtaining even the basic facilities like food and shelter from their previous landlords. According to Chakra BK, Programme Coordinator of National Haliya Freedom Society Federation the agreement made between Haliyas and the government has not been put into practice yet. Till Jestha 2071, 10622 families had been verified. The following table 6 shows classified numbers (Ka, Kha, Ga and Gha) of Freed Haliyas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Verified No. till date</th>
<th>No. Identity Card Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Ka&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Darchula</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Baitadi</td>
<td>1438</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dadeldhura</td>
<td>1512</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kanchanpur</td>
<td>1338</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bajhang</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bajura</td>
<td>1429</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Doti</td>
<td>1011</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Achham</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kailali</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Humla</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jajarkot</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Surkhet</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: No. of Verified Freed Haliyas and their Classification
The abovementioned table and chart show the progress status of verified numbers of Freed Haliya people with identity card distribution. The verification work seems to be progressing fast in districts such as Darchula, Bajura, Doti, Kailali etc. Very little numbers were verified in Jajarkot, Surkhet. Distribution of identity cards was progressing fast in Darchula, Doti, Kailali but this work was not effectively progressing in Bhajhang, Surkhet, Humla.

4.1 Educational Status of Freed Haliya Children

4.1.1 Schooling status of Freed Haliya Children in Sample schools

Different conventions have made obligation to the government to provide education for all children and Nepal is also in the path of educating all the children at least up to the primary level. Because of government effort, the NER at primary has reached 96.1 percent (DOE, 2014). It means that 3.9 percent children are still out of school. Different studies claimed that these out of school children are from Dalit and disadvantaged communities.
Table 7: The Sample schools with No. of Freed Haliya students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Type of Area</th>
<th>Name of the Schools</th>
<th>Free Haliya Students</th>
<th>Total students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kanchanpur</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Core Area</td>
<td>Bishnu Mandir Primary School, Tilkeni-10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Higher Secondary</td>
<td>Non Core Area</td>
<td>Siddha Baijanath Higher Secondary School, Banshaha</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dadeldhura</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Core Area</td>
<td>Adarsha Manilek Primary School, Latasera</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Higher Secondary</td>
<td>Non Core Area</td>
<td>Bhageshwor Higher Secondary School, tantar Amargadhi Municipality-8</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In school“A”, more than 86 percent students were from Freed Haliya communities whereas in school “B”, more than 11 percent were from Freed Haliya communities. In school “C”, there was more than 68 percent students from Freed Haliya communities but in school “D”, more than 36 percent students came from Freed Haliya communities.

4.1.2 Non Enrollment Status of Freed Haliya Children

The main factors which keep children out of school are poverty, gender, huge family size, necessity to work at home. According to parents, teachers, representatives of Haliya Federation, there were no any Freed Haliya children who had not been enrolled in the school. But their problems more related with irregularity, class bunk, dropout. Also few disabled children were not going to school.

While asked about the situation of non enrolling student, the headteacher of the school “A” said that there are no any children who are out of school in this catchment area. All of them
are enrolled in the school. They had conducted “Welcome to School Programme” to attract them to school. In this programme, they had visited every house within the catchment area of the school. So, he think no children are left out for enrolling in the school.

Likewise SMC chairman of one of the schools said that no any children were left behind the the school as they had visited all households in the catchment area.

While asked about the situation of non-enrolling students, one of the teachers of school “B” said that there may be 15-20 children who did not come to school and 3-4 children were suffering from disability. They had also visited all the houses in the school catchment area. Beside this, some parents did not send their children to school because they had to engage their children in the household works such as rearning their children.

The headteacher of this school supported the teacher’s view. He further said that parents had ignored the education of their children. They had convinced them many more times. But it was meaningless. They are also trying their best to enrol them, the headteacher said.

Table 8: Reasons for non schooling of Freed Haliya children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catchment Area</th>
<th>No of out. of school children</th>
<th>Reasons (Out of school children, parents, Teachers Views)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School “A”</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School “B”</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>Disability, household chores, rearing the children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School “C”</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Parent’s ignorance, household chores, rearing the children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School “D”</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>Household chores, rearing the children, disability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In school “C”, the headteacher had recalled the name of the non enrolled children from the school catchment area. He further said that he had tried very much to enrol them but not succeeded. Now they have reached the age of 8-9 years and they also did not want to come to school as their friends were already in class 3-4. Their parents also ignored the request when they request them to send their children to school, the headteacher said. Through the parents were convinced now, the children themselves did not want to come to school.

In school “D”, according to the headteacher said that the main reasons for non-enrolling the children in school were their household works and rearing their brother/sister. He said that when there was time to enrol with school, the children had to look toward the siblings of their parents. This prevented them from going to school.

In the school of Freed Haliya core community, the cases of non enrolment were low as its catchment area was small. The SMC members and teachers were more active in these communities. The Rastriya Mukta Haliya Samaj Federation was playing key role in
upgrading the livelihood of the *Freed Haliya* people. This federation was also supporting the school which located in core area of *Haliya* community.

### 4.1.3 Enrollment status of *Freed Haliya* students in the schools

The admission record of the schools substantiated that the average school enrollment age was nearly six years. The following table shows the number of *Freed Haliya* students along with other students enrolled in class one.

**Table 9: Enrolment status in class one**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>No. of <em>Freed Haliya</em> Students</th>
<th>No. of other students</th>
<th>Total No. of Students</th>
<th>Average age at Enrollment (In Years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School “A”</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School “B”</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School “C”</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School “D”</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In school “A”, 100% students were from *Freed Haliya* community. In School “B”, it was 28% students followed by School “C” (87%) students and school “D” (62%) students from *Freed Haliya* community. The average age of enrollment was 5.83 years.

During the “Welcome to school” campaign, the teachers visited all the households and asked them to visit the school with their children. The teachers counseled the parents about the need of education, its cost to them and scholarships which their children would benefit from. Only after such efforts, the parents came to school and enrolled their children. The headteacher of primary school of Dadeldhura said that they had visited all households to send their children to school. Most of the parents were illiterate but they were aware of the importance of education. He further said that they did not have to make big efforts to enrol them in the school.

In the *Haliya* community, many six to seven years old children who were not enrolled in schools were noticed. One of the teacher said that the children from around 15-20 minutes walking distance to school were little early in their age to get admitted to school. One of the headteachers said that there are no any children who are out of school in catchment area. All of them have registered their name in the school. But there are still some children who discontinue to come to school after the first month. They come to school only during the scholarship distribution day to receive the scholarship. But they do not consider them as students.
One of the teachers in FGD said that basically in developed area, education is demand oriented. But in *Freed Haliya* community, education is supply oriented. The government, schools, teachers had to look out for the school age children. The parents had to be convinced for sending their children to school. So, awareness programme to the parents about the benefit of education for them, society and the country is needed.

### 4.1.4 Repetition status of *Freed Haliya* students in the schools

In grade repetition, some teachers believes that it would benefit a student to keep them in the same grade for two consecutive years. Retaining a student is not an easy task and therefore should not be taken lightly. The following table shows the retention rate of the *Freed Haliya* Children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Total students (1-5)</th>
<th>Total students (6-9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School “A”</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>School “B”</td>
<td>1 1 135 5 2 1 2</td>
<td>267</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School “C”</td>
<td>1 1 96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>School “D”</td>
<td>1 1 121 6 3 1 1</td>
<td>270</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1 3 2 389 11 5 2 3</td>
<td>537</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In school “A” there was no one to repeat the class. In school”B”, the repetition rate is 1.5 % within class (1-5) whereas it is 3.74 % within class (6-9). In school “C”, the retention rate is 2.1% . In school “D” , the retention rate is 1.65 % within class (1-5) whereas it is 4.1 % within class (6-9). Because of liberal promotion policy of the governmentet, there was very little number of students who repeated the class. Some students repeated the class due to the request of teachers and parents.

It is interesting to know that the repetition rate was very low in all of the school. As government has adopted the liberal promotion policy, repetition rate had been very low. The schools followed the policy by considering the attendance and continuous assessment system (CAS) and examination result. So most of the students passed the primary level education. Some students whose attendance was very low and could not perform satisfactorily in CAS and examination, had to repeat the class. Beside such case, some students had to pass the grades because of parent’s request. Indicating one of the parents, one of the teachers said that
parents visited the school once in a year for putting pressure on school teacher to pass their children. They had little concern about the study of their children. But when their children failed, they would come to school to request the administration to pass their children. During their visit they said that they would do their best for their children. But situation did not change throughout the whole year despite their promise. The same situation was repeated another year with no kept promises.

Analyzing the above data, it becomes clear that the students had repeated the class due to their less attendance, low performance in examination and CAS.

### 4.1.5 Promotion status of Freed Haliya students in different schools

Table 11: Promotion status of Freed Haliya students in different schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Total students in 2072</th>
<th>Haliya (1-4)</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>Total Haliya students (5-9) in 2072</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School “A”</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>School “B”</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School “C”</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>School “D”</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because of liberal promotion policy of the government, the number of students repeating the class was negligible. Most of them passed the grades they were enrolled in. Due to request of teachers and parents some had repeated the class. The promotion rate of class (1-5) was 97.8 percent among the Freed Haliya students. The total promotion rate of class (6-9) was 68.94.

### 4.1.6 Dropout status of Freed Haliya students in the schools

The dropout cases were prevalent in two secondary schools. Two schools, one in Kanchanpur and the other one in Dadeldhura where most of the students are from Freed Haliya community, the number of Freed Haliya students was decreasing with the increase of the class. In class five, where they reached the age of 13-14, most of them seemed to dropout from the school. When asked about the reason for this, one teacher expressed that it is very clear why the students leave school in class 6-7: at the age of 13-14 in class 6-7, at that age, they are able to do work and earn money. This factor had played the major role for their dropout from the schools. The following table shows the number of dropout students, classwise in the schools of Freed Haliya communites.

Table 12: The number of dropout students in the schools of Freed Haliya communities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Total Haliya students (1-4) in 2072</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>Total Haliya students (5-9) in 2072</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School “A”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>School “B”</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School “C”</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>School “D”</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School “A” has no dropout students. But in school “B”, 31.03 percent students dropped out in class (6-10). In school “C”, only one student had dropped out from the school. In school “D”, 23.48 percent students had dropped out from class (6-10). The case of drop out was severe in higher grades with the increase in grades.

The perspective of parents showed that major cause of dropout of Freed Haliya children was the economic condition of the family. One of the headteachers of secondary school in Kanchanpur strongly supported this. The family had to bear the burden of generating income seeking assistance from their children, 13-14 years, to support them. Most of them were male students compared to the dropout number of female students. Most of the male students who dropped out the school were gone to India for labour work. He also said that leaving the country, Nepal, for labour work in India was like a culture in this area.

### 4.1.7 Attendance status of Freed Haliya students in schools

It was clearly seen that all the two schools which were situated in core Freed Haliya community had less school attendance as compared to the schools situated at non core community. Girls’ attendance was also less than that of boys in all of the schools in both core Freed Haliya and non core Freed Haliya community. The situation was worse with the core Freed Haliya community than the non core community. The data showed that most of the Haliya students are not regular in schools.

The economic condition of Freed Haliya was very vulnerable. Very few people had their own land and that was not enough to feed the family for even 2-3 months. The huge family size with an average of 4-5 children of Freed Haliya people, had rendered their economic situation more vulnerable. As the parents had to go out for works to earn, their children could not come to school taking lunch. After one two periods of classes, these students asked to teacher for going back home for taking lunch. In that situation no one could stop them from going back home. As they went back to home, very few of them only returned back to school.
In the same way, they had to look after their siblings of the parents as they were away from home for work. No one was at home to look after the small children. There were some children who were admitted to the school, but never showed up, not even once. One of the teachers remarked that the children liked playing instead of spending hours in the class being bound to a chair. They found it very hard to stay in the class room for longtime. Obviously, studying is not as fun as playing. Many students are also scared of the disciplining environment at school. That’s why the students preferred to remain absent and flee away during school time. The teacher also added that the parents also did not compel them to go to school. Teachers’ effort only was not enough to retain the students in the school.

In the FGD, one of the parents said that he was totally aware of the fact that his son did not go to school regularly. But he was helpless. He added that he could not follow his son through to school every day. He instead blamed that it is the school’s responsibility to make sure the students attend their classes regularly. The data of Table 13 was based on the two month’s school days (Baishakh-Jestha) for the attendance.

Table 13: The attendance of students in percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Average attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School “A”</td>
<td></td>
<td>56.82</td>
<td>77.76</td>
<td>70.58</td>
<td>77.78</td>
<td>76.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>School “B”</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.30</td>
<td>69.07</td>
<td>65.79</td>
<td>63.81</td>
<td>65.78</td>
<td>68.42</td>
<td>92.63</td>
<td>92.10</td>
<td>80.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School “C”</td>
<td></td>
<td>47.30</td>
<td>64.05</td>
<td>74.81</td>
<td>73.21</td>
<td>64.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>School “D”</td>
<td></td>
<td>76.30</td>
<td>73.81</td>
<td>74.32</td>
<td>66.85</td>
<td>72.14</td>
<td>70.12</td>
<td>67.51</td>
<td>68.81</td>
<td>74.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average attendance rate was 70.03 % based on the attendance of two months: Baishakh and Jestha. It is seen that school “C” situated in Core area of Freed Haliya community had significantly low attendance rate compared to the other three schools. One of the headteachers said that the attendance was real as most of Freed Haliya students left the school for their home after the first period. The reason behind was their empty stomach and they had more household works in their home-the main being rearing of their siblings.

One of the parents said that he could not send his children to school every day because he needed them to help him in the household works. They had a lot of work pending at home. In addition, they (both the husband and wife) also had to go out for work to earn money to
support the family. As they alone could not do all the household works, they needed the children to look after home. He further said that the children also had some responsibility toward home.

One of the teachers blamed the parents for the children’s absence at school. He explained that many times, parents lured their children to work with them to earn money. He shared one such experience about a student who told him that he could not come to school because his parents forced him to go to work. On further inquiry, he found out that the parents had told their son that he would get some amount of the money he would earn for his expenses. It was tempting enough for the young child to leave the school. However, some parents would want their children to get education. He recalled the saying of one parent that definitely they let their children to go to school every day. Why would they mess with their study? Why would they stop them when they are going to do good things? But the real problem is that children themselves are not interested in going to school. There lies the problem.

One of the parent said that his son would never say no to school. But he doubted that his son attended all the classes. He used to return from school whenever he wished. Sometimes, he returned back after first period, sometimes after second period and sometimes, he would leave for school but not attend a single class at all.

To teachers, the students are very irregular in school. When they complain to their parents, they ignore them and instead claim that their children were regular to school. In reality, they found that the students would leave for school in time, but instead of coming to school, they would go somewhere else to play with their friends. Even if they come to school, except for a few, many donot stay whole day at school.

### 4.1.8 Performance of Freed Haliya students

The study found that in two primary schools of core area where most of the students were from Freed Haliya communities, there are notable number of students in top five ranking. In the secondary schools in non core area, only three students were in top five position in learning performance.

The achievement of students in schools of core area, on an average, can not be said to be satisfactory because majority of them are from Haliya community. The achievement of students in schools from the non core area also was not satisfactory. Just only one student stood in top five positions in School “B” in the first position. It cannot be considered a great achievement for their community as this top student came to this school to join class 4 from a boarding school of Pokhara. In school “D”, two students stood in top five ranking meaning that performancewise, the achievement of Haliya students was not satisfactory.

Table 14: Achievement status of Freed Haliya students
One of the teachers of the schools of core area said that as most of the students were *Freed Haliya* children, obviously, they secured top five rankings. This ranking can not be measured as being good performance of the *Freed Haliya* children as the competition was with their follow beings only. The comparative performance of *Haliya* students with other students of non core area shows a wide differences.

In the schools of non core area, few students were good in terms of their performance as among the three, the student (*Haliya*) who topped class seven had come from another school in class five. One of the teachers said that the topper of class seven came from the school of Pokhara, a boarding school. When she came here, she showed better performance as compared to others schools based on her boarding school background. Beside this, none of the *Haliya* students had topped the class.

The performance of average *Haliya* students was not satisfactory. The teacher were given pressure by the parents whose children were even unable to write even a single letter. Paradoxically, there was risk of drop out as they felt embarrassed to repeat in the same class if they did not pass the class. Moreover, the government had taken liberal policy to pass the students who regularly attended the class. The schools, however, were in pressure to pass even the students who did not attend the class regularly.

One of the teachers said that *Freed Haliya* students were not weak in study by their potential but the environment had made them weak. If they were provided with stimulating and supportive environment, they would definitely produce good result. As they did not get the needed environment both in school and home, educational materials such as copy, pencil as required in time, they could not perform satisfactorily.
4.2 Hindering and promoting factors to enrolment and retention in schools

Hindering factors to enrolment and retention in schools

4.2.1 Economic situation of Freed Haliya people

Economic condition is one of the major factor that affected the education of Freed Haliya children. Their weak economical status never allowed them to think about education. As most of their lifetime was spent on earning a livelihood, they were unable to establish a school near by their village.

One of the major causes of poor economic condition of the Freed Haliya people was their large family size with average 4-5 children in every Freed Haliya family. However, the situation was changing with increasing family planning awareness in the new generation of the Freed Haliya people. One of the headteachers said that the average number of children in Freed Haliya family was 4-5 and this huge number of children increased the demand for food for the family. As they did not have any reliable source of receiving foods, they had to depend on the food which their landlord gave them. The inadequate amount of food for children affected their health leading them to suffer from malnutrition.

Similarly, the other headteacher said that she had even seen a family with nine children. The parents could not take care of all children and most of the children were physically weak and malnourished. The headteacher was thus not surprised to find the low priority given to education by Freed Haliya people.

Another headteacher also supported this statement with saying that Freed Haliya parents experience a lot of difficulties at home because of large family size. They too know it’s very difficult to raise many children. But they are unaware of family planning measures. However, now, on a bright side, family planning campaigns have been organized and people are getting aware of the use of family planning measures.

Freed Haliya families mostly depended upon unskilled labour works. Very few of them had taken the skills given by the government and non- government organizations. One of the parents said that during last 3-4 years, many organizations had given different types of training but only people with masonry training got the job in the market. The other trainings were not sufficient and effective to support them for earning a living.

Most of the women members of Freed Haliyas family enter into the jungle area to collect the firewood and sell it in the market. One of the parents said that he only had a small piece of land which does not sustain the livelihood for 7 member family for more than 1-2 months. Thus, he had to look for work to earn daily wages. His wife also had to look for the same purpose work. His wife went to jungle daily for collecting the wood and selling them in the local market.

Another parent said that he was building his house now and the money provided by the government was very insufficient by the value of current time. What can be done from this 2 lakh grant against very expensive construction materials? The parent thus had problem to finish the construction work at a time when they were struggling to manage their daily life.
with their very few income from daily wages. According to this parent, most of the Freed Haliya families were confronted with such economic hardship.

One of the teachers of Dadeldhura said that most of the Freed Haliya families do not have sufficient food for the whole year. Very few of them owned some land that can feed them for not more than two months. To pull their life for the whole year, they had to depend on income from the daily wages. In terms of daily wages, skilled persons got Rs. 600-1000 rupees as wages and non skilled person only got Rs. 300-400. Skilled person did not have much problem if they get the work for at least 20 days in a month. But unskilled persons still had to face severe problems to manage the family even if they get the works for the whole month. The teacher further said that the skilled persons were very few in number in case of Dadeldhura even though many NGOs/INGOs, government organization had given them skill based trainings. About this issue, one of the skilled Free Haliya persons said that some organizations had given them training on masonry work but the training could not produce the needed skilled manpower who can sell their skill easily in the market. He further said that he was working as a mason before taking the training and after the training, he developed more confidence to work in the field. He shared his experience that for the new inexperienced people, few months trainings were not sufficient to impart and develop the needed skill. The training he suggested, should be for at least six months to one year. He commented that the 15 day training of masonry work cannot prepare a person for a good masonry work for reliable construction work.

These days, depend once on agriculture and daily wages in local market is decreasing. The Haliya people are not attracted to labour work in the Indian market. One of the parents said that they go to Indian market to work and earn money. They would earn some money from the Indian market which would help them to keep their family alive. Going to India for seasonal work is not economically so beneficial but it has provided them all alternative opportunity, the parent commented. So, the parent demanded that government should take initiation to create the job market at the local level and impart skill-based training to Haliya people for their livelihood, he suggested.

Agro-forest had helped them to earn some money by selling various types woods in the local markets. One female parent said that nowadays it was getting more difficult to fetch wood from community forest as the community forest management committee has banned them to collect wood from the forest. So, it was very difficult to keep their children alive due to the ban on the forest wood which otherwise was used as a source of income for them, she added. Interestingly, one of the teachers commented on the economic condition of Freed Haliyas as not being as it has been portrayed. Although they are poor, some of the parents were spending the huge portion of their earning in unproductive areas such as alchohol, cigarrette and other consumerables. Nowadays, if one active male parent does work genuinely, he can easily support 5-6 member family in the village. Many of them now go for work on constructions and earn reasonable amount of wage to support the family. But some of them need to improve their alchoholic habit which otherwise would be an obstacle to their progress, commented the teacher.
Another teacher said that the opportunity to earn more from labour work is there but Haliyas did not continue to work for the whole year. So, they failed to manage surplus from their earning which is common problem among the Freed Haliyas these days. Likewise, in another teacher’s opinion, there are more opportunities for the Freed Haliyas nowadays than in the past. In their village, they could get work as a coolie, or a waiter in hotel, or a helper to a mason, or a road construction work in the nearer place.

It is quite clear that the economic condition of Freed Haliyas was not sound as food scarcity is still there coupled with big family and insufficient land. But the time has slowly changed as the opportunity to work in nearer market and abroad is increasing. The work in nearer market has not been regularly available through. They want to work regularly but there was no regular work and due to this, they cannot earn sufficient money for the family. One of the parents said that most Haliya people had no proper skill saleable as some of them were semi skilled despite the training. The government therefore needs to build up capacity through appropriate intensive training for Haliya people. Beside this, the government further needs to initiate the opportunity of alternative education effectively for them in order to help them to end the poverty.

4.2.2 Socio-cultural status of Freed Haliya children

To know the exact situation of educational needs of the Freed Haliya children, it is necessary to study socio-cultural status of Freed Haliya people. This helps to observe and judge the socio-cultural effects on their study, their role on education.

It was observed that the girls had to work at home everyday and the boys occasionally. Girls were engaged in varieties of works as compared to boys as part of the household jobs. The boys had to do the work outside the house. The girls had to put more hours to work than the boys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Chores to be done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Helping in outside works, rearing the children,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Go to mill (occasional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Rearing the children, Fetching water, Cooking, washing utensils, Washing cloths, Cleaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about the chores in their household, one of the 14 years old girl students said that she had to wake up early in the morning for fetching water. Her father used to go to work and her mother used to go to forest to collect the woods early in the morning. So, she had to do all of the works including cooking, rearing younger sisters, cleaning. There was not so much time to study at home due to these daily chores. Sometime, she could not go to school due to this heavy workload. Even if she went ot school, she had to leave the school early.
Booth (1903) has stated that children from the poor families have to work for maximum hours at their house. Girls had to help in cooking, cleaning, fetching water and boys had to help for the outside work. So, almost all the respondents such as parents, teachers, students confessed that Freed Haliya children had to work hard at home which left them till time for study at home. One of the parents said that he has never compelled his children to work at home but they don’t study and instead, spend more time on playing, which don’t help their study at all. So, sometimes, he urge them to help him with household works. He has to make huge effort to manage their basic needs. In doing so, if he asks their children to help him instead of playing, is not it justified?

Likewise, one of the headteachers said that Freed Haliya children especially girls had to work a lot at their home. Their parents were too busy to earn and secure food and other basic needs for the family and so they didn’t get time for the household works. Naturally, they got their children to look after their household works such as fetching water, cooking, cleaning and looking after younger siblings.

A teacher of one of the schools affirmed that Freed Haliya children had to work much in their house. Especially, boys had to help their parents in outside household work. Sometime, they went out to work with their father to earn money. Likewise, girls had to work inside the house to help their mother in the household works like bringing water, cooking foods, washing utensils, cloths etc. They had to look after their younger siblings too. One of the parents, however, remarked that he do not compel his children to work. But it is the culture in the community that grown up children have to help their parents as much as possible. So, he need not tell my children to do household works; they themselves feel responsible and learn to help their parents. Supporting this, another parent said that the children did not take it as a burden to do household work. They enjoyed working at home as they took household works as regular tasks. She further said that she do not give physically demanding tasks to them they. She only let them do the simple ones.

One of the headteachers said that the Freed Haliya children had to work at home and it was not their choice but compulsion. Their parents had to work for basic needs and in such situation, if they contributed a little, it should not be taken in another way. The Freed Haliya boys and girls at the age of 12-13 were considered as grown ups expecting from them help to their families.

It was seen during observation that many 9-10 years old children were cleaning the utensils outside their houses, some were caring their siblings and while the girls were helping their mothers in kitchen works. Some parents said their children never study at home. When asked about homework, they said that they were totally unfamiliar with it. The Freed Haliya students also confessed that they did not study at home. During the study, we had visited many houses. None of the children were seen reading at home. Some of them were working at home while others were playing and lingering outside their houses.

The head teacher of one of the schools expressed concern that there was no supportive environment to study at home and the students were also not so interested in their study. One of the parents said that his son was only interested in playing with his friends. After school,
his son would never come straight to home. Instead he would spend a lot of time playing with his friends after school and even before the school time in the morning. He would not study even during the examination time.

To one of the headteachers, the Freed Haliya Parents were not able to support and motivate their children at home. The students stay for 6 hours at the school. But the remaining time they stayed at home. If the parents did not motivate and create supportive environment for study at home, the school alone cannot motivate the student to do well in the school.

Early marriage is one of the factors affecting girls’ education. When girls completed primary level their dropout rate was high, the parents started marrying their daughters from the lower secondary level education onward in some rural area (Koirala, 2003, p.146). But this situation was not observed in all of the sample school communities. Almost all of the parents were aware about the effect of child marriage. One of the teachers said that there was no any case of child marriage in the school’s catchment area. This statement was also supported by one of the parents. He also said that they married their girls at the age not less than 19 years. It seemed that most of the views of parents, headteachers and teachers did not differ much regarding child marriage.

4.2.3 Cost of Education

School fees

The government is obliged to eliminate all school-related fees so as to make education truly free for all children. There is possibility that imposing fees may lead to the exclusion of marginalized children from education (UNESCO, 2008). Commensurate with this statement, the government of Nepal had proclaimed free education up to basic level in its various documents. But this study found a different scenario in the field. The responses from parents, teachers, students was sought to get reliable information. Among four, all of the schools of the study areas had charged some fees to the children. The following table shows the fees that the students had to pay.

Table 16: The fee need to be paid by Freed Haliya students in their school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School “A”</th>
<th>School “B”</th>
<th>School “C”</th>
<th>School “D”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1= Rs. 120</td>
<td>Class(1-5)=Rs. 100-150 (Book)</td>
<td>Class (1-5)=Rs. 80 (Book)</td>
<td>Class(5-10)=Rs. 200-450 (Book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2=Rs. 130</td>
<td>Class(9-10)=Rs. 600-700 (Book)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3=Rs. 140</td>
<td>Class9 = Rs. 300 (Exam Fee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 4=Rs. 150</td>
<td>Class 10=Rs. 500 (Exam Fee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 5= Rs.160 (Exam Fee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 1-3- Optional English Book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class4-5- Optional English Book</td>
<td>Rs. 110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As reference to this issue, one of the headteachers of school “A” said that they have only incurred the examination fees to the children. To impart the quality education to the students, government’s budget is not enough, so we have raised certain amount of fees in the name of examination fees.”

Besides the government proclamation in SSRP that free basic education provisions include cost-free services for admission, textbooks, tuition and examinations, the schools had charged the fees in the name of assurance of quality education. All this means there was no totally free education for all students. Some parents could afford it but it was difficult for other Haliya parents.

The study had found that all four schools had raised some amount of money in the name of extra books from the Haliya students. These schools disobeyed the government’s regulation as all the children should be provided books for free. But in these school, extra books are launched in the name of quality education charging fee for these books from the students. One of the headteachers said the they had put the extra book for English for lower class and English, math and science for upper class. So, with this activities, if they can give the better knowledge, how cannot be it justified?

One of the parents commented that government should monitor such work of the schools. As the Haliya parents found it very difficult to pay such extra amount for extra books, they strongly demanded that government should check such acts and take necessary action to cub the ill-practice.

**4.2.4 Manage of Educational Materials**

UNESCO (2008) has mentioned expenses for schoolbooks, uniforms, bags, dress, tiffin and traveling cost as burdensome act for parents in relation to the schooling of their children. Various reviews have explained that such type of indirect cost should be mitigated as much as possible and eliminated. The government and other stakeholders should compensate for such amount in order to ensure the provision for free education for the disadvantaged and marginalized children. In the study area, the government and some NGOs/INGOs had contributed to minimize the indirect costs to some extent. But it was not enough, still the parents had to bear certain amount of fees to manage the indirect cost. In the study area, the government had provided all the books free of cost to all the children.

*Freed Haliya* children did not have sufficient copies and pencils. Some of them brought only a few copies with them whereas others bring only one copy and pencil in the study time. Other stationery materials were out of their thought. One of the parents said that last year one of the NGOs had distributed such materials. But now he had to buy them. But he could not afford to pay for them.
Less than one fourth of the students carried the bags in the sample school. One of the teachers observed that due to the poor economic condition, most of the parents cannot manage the bags for their children. It will cost Rs. 300 at the minimum. It is a high amount for them. The non-compulsion of bag in all the schools, made the students not to carry the bags.

In four of the school, half of the students from the primary schools did not wear dress in school time. Regarding this, one of the teachers said that they could not replace the school dress and most of them who did not wear school dress, had torn their dress. Their parents showed little consume to replace the torn out dress by the school dress (uniform) or her new dress.

Similar situation was noticed in the case of shoes as well. Very few children wore the school shoes in all of the sample schools. Most of the students used slippers in replace of shoes. The headteacher of one of the schools said that the slippers were easy to use and inexpensive. So, majority students used slippers for shoes. Most of the respondents had similar view as the headteacher.

There is no doubt that all the poor students should be provided with minimum basic accessories such as book, copy, pencil, bags, dress, shoes etc to support their education. In reality, it was found that most of the Freed Haliya students did not have these accessories. All the schools claimed that they had provided all the books to the Freed Haliya students free of cost as per the instruction of the government last year. This year most of the books were distributed. One of the headteachers said that they had received the books lately and no sooner they received the books then they distributed to the students. He also demanded that government should send the books in time. It is very difficult to complete the course in the time if the books are delayed by the government.

Some of the students came to school with only a copy. Thus Freed Haliya children were studying in the schools without all of the basic accessories required for good schooling. Almost all the respondents agreed that Freed Haliya students had not even the facilities to facilitate their speedy learning.

4.2.5 Opportunity Cost

Opportunity cost is defined as the cost of an alternative income that is forgone in order to pursue a certain action. The opportunity cost of going to school is the money one would have earned if one worked instead (Investopedia). Because of poor economic condition of the Freed Haliya people, the children had to work for earning money. Usually, in families where both the parents worked, children did not have to work. But, where the family was too large, the elder children had to work even though both of their parents worked and earned. One of the parent shared his story: He worked hard to support his family as he could barely manage the basic survival needs for seven member family working as semi-skilled mason. He had five children and his earning could not support the expenses of the whole house. His elder son was 15 now. He had dropped the school at class 7 and to work as a helper of him. The father said that his son was also not interested in study and did not go to school, not even for 3 months in the whole year. He was also interested to earn money. The teacher had
complained several times about his absence, but neither the teachers nor the father himself could motivate him to go to school regularly.

One of the headteachers said that more than 50 percent *Freed Haliya* families in the community had at least one child below the age of 16, who was working as a child labor. Most of them had worked as either labor in near market or coolie in Indian market. Going to Indian market to work as a labourer was in increasing trend. Quoting the parent of the child who worked in India, he said that a child worker usually sent Rs.1000 -2000 per month to the family, however, it was not regular. According to one the teachers, some children earn more than Rs. 5000-6000 per month in the local market and earning amount was increasing due to the lack of labour in near market. Thus the increasing opportunity cost had threatened the continuity of the study as a hindering factor for their education.

4.2.6 The provision of Day Meal

The provision of day meal was not practiced in all of the sample schools as one of the schools at Dadeldhura had practiced it till two years before with the help of an INGO. But it was stopped abruptly as they did not continue their support for it. Regarding this, the headteacher said that the provision of Day meals was very effective for his school as there are more *Freed Haliya* students deprived of delicious and nutritious food at their home. So, students did not miss to come to school and their attendance was very high during the day meal time. Students did not bunk the class for getting day meal.

One of the teachers of the same school said that students were more focused on study while their stomach was full. But unfortunately, day meal was discontinued. He also said that for increasing enrolment and retention, the provision of day meals had played the main role. In case of the other three schools, they did not serve the day meal for the last ten years. However, all of them But all of them agreed that day meal would be effective for increment of enrolment, retention and attendance in the school. In the primary school of Kanchanpur where most of the students from *Freed Haliya* communities study, the headteacher and all the teachers said that day meal was very important for their school. Some of the students come to school with empty stomach as their parents are gone out to work early in the morning. They asked for going home after the first and second class in order to take the lunch. They did not return to school after they were gone leading to absence from the school. In such a case, day meal can be a good solution for retaining them whole day in school. The case of two secondary schools was little different as they supported this provision but they seemed to be facing the problem in managing the day meals for such large number of students. One of the teachers said that day meals are effective for lower class students compared higher graders. As this support was effective for enrolling and retaining the *Haliya* students in the school, government should make the provision of day meal at least for students upto class 5.

4.2.7 Physical Facilities of Schools

Physical facilities are one of the factors that make impact on enrollment, retention and dropout of the students. School physical facilities stimulate the students to come to schools and stay there. Minimum physical facilities should be there such as building and classroom, compound wall, library, desks benches, tables, chairs, educational materials, drinking water,
electricity, toilet for boys and girls in the school. Creating good learning environment and sustaining it in school is important. Playground and availability of sufficient play materials for instance, attract the children and their parents to school. Girls friendly environment of the schools always inspires the students for full participation and regularity in school (EFA, 2001). A child-friendly school attracts and retains children (UNICEF, 2006).

According to the attendance record, Freed Haliya students were not regular in schools. They may have felt that the environment of the school was less friendly than that of their houses. The school’s environment was not so much conducive for the students in all the studied schools. In other words, the school cannot attract the students for retaining them when spacious playground and play materials are not available. The classrooms were spacious in all schools for the number of students but without enough materials.

But the playgrounds were sufficient in two of the schools. But there were lack of sports materials in all of the sampled school. One of the headteachers said that the school does not have enough budget to manage the sports materials for the whole year. In the initial time of the year, they could manage the sports materials but these materials did not last long even for first three months. The schools cannot manage extra sports materials after they are broken or torn out. This is one of the factors that schools could not retain them in the schools from the perspective of extra curricula activities and facilities. The headteachers of schools of Dadeldhura said that their schools situated on hilly area, do not have plain area for making levelled playground. So, the students could not play outside freely and had to depend on indoor games only. Absence or inadequate play kits and materials for indoor game also led them to flee from school. One of the teachers of Dadeldhura said that students were more interested to play outside but the schools donot have fenced surrounding. There was also no boundary wall at two primary sample schools and lack of boundary wall caused the students to be free to go outside the school. Boundary wall was needed at least to retain the students at school for the whole day as most of the students run away from the school before its time. The animals had open access to the school ground without boundary walls. Only one school had separate library room and the other had library facilities looked in the cupboard of the office room. One primary school did not have any provision of library. One of the teachers shared his experience that library could not retain the students whole day as they were not interested to study in library either.

All four schools had the provision of separate toilets for boys and girls though these were not in well managed condition. In primary school of Dadeldhura, the toilet was situated in risky area. Two schools had tin roofs and two had concrete. All the classrooms had access to sunlight and heat during cold season. The environment of all the schools was not so bad in average level, not so good and not so bad compared to their household situation and their lifestyle. From this evidence we can say that there was no any huge reason for the students to dropout from the school due the environment of the school.
Promoting factors to enrolment and retention in schools

4.2.8 Scholarships

Interim plan (2007) made provision of scholarships to the women, Dalits, Aadibasi, Janajatis, Madhesis and children from poor groups. But it did not focus on the marginalized and disadvantaged groups such as Freed Haliya. As most of the Freed Haliya were from Dalit community, so most of them got the scholarship. But it was very unjustified for the Freed Haliya students who were not from Dalit community due to which they, though poor, would not get the scholarship. Though the number was not huge but it was very unjustified that most vulnerable students could not get the scholarship. Scholarship amount was distributed as per the government policy. It was seen that two schools of Kanchanpur had distributed scholarships as per the direction of DEO. For Girls-300, For 1-8 Class Dalit student- Rs.400 and 9-10 Dalit students-Rs.500 was the scholarship amount. It was seen that two of the schools of Dadeldhura had distributed the amount in cash to all Dalit students without considering gender aspect. They distributed scholarship Rs. 175, 350 and 525 as per the direction of the DEO of Dadeldhura. They categorized the scholarship amount by considering attendance, activities and household condition of the students.

One of the teachers of Kanchanpur said that there were few students who were not from Dalit but they were poor Freed Haliya. They did not get any scholarship as they were not Dalit. He therefore demanded that the government should give scholarship by considering the economical vulnerability of the Freed Haliya community. In all the schools, the scholarship was given as cash but some teachers opined that it is better to give dress or other material to student instead of cash for the scholarship. They further commented that if they gave the dresses instead of money to the students, the parents could not misuse it for their use. They had observed the misuse of scholarship money in their neighbourhood.

All of the headteachers, teachers, parents commented that scholarship amount was insufficient given the market inflation of these days. It was not sufficient for managing even one set of dress or a pair of shoes. The scholarship amount is insufficient to buy schools bag, extra books, tiffin and other minimum necessaries. Almost all the respondents had one voice that the scholarship amount should be increased to motivate both parents and students for school education.

4.2.9 Supports Other than Scholarships

Freed Haliya children had got some supports for their education in terms of scholarship, stipend, stationeries, dresses and others. While scholarships were regular which was given by government. Other supports were not regular as they were given by NGOs/INGOs. These supports were distributed occasionally as some NGOs/INGOs would donate the materials and stationeries from time to time but not regularly.

Besides these supports, District Development Committees, Municipalities have been helping the schools in terms of infrastructure, scholarships and other different aids and materials regularly though the support amount was not certain.
Some NGOs/INGOs such as Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Care Nepal, INSEC, USAID, RMHSF etc are working in the field of education in sample school. Among them, the supports of Lutheran World Federation was noticeable. It did not support the school directly but through the RHMSF, Rastriya Haliya Mukta Samaj Federation with focus on all scholarships, infrastructure, educational materials etc.

One of the parents said that his daughter had got copies, pencils, and other stationeries from the NGO last year. However, it did not last for more than six months and for the other half of the year he had to manage those essentials on his own. So, he felt sad and he stated that if such supports are to be provided, they should be made regular. The school had distributed some stationeries last year which was provided by one NGO, but, did not distribute anything this year. One of the teacher said that these kinds of occasional supports ruin the habit of children by making them dependable and expectant of such attractive materials and aids. But when the children did not get them, they felt little upset as their parents could not afford to supply them.

Likewise, another parent said that his daughter had received bags last year, but, it was old and torn. Now she was used to carry bags and was demanding such bag for her which was too expensive to afford. A teacher of the secondary school said that there were no supports of any kind at his school. But some NGOs/INGOs have found to have supported on infrastructure, managing library, water sanitation management and educational materials. The support targeting the Freed Haliya was however not seen in his school.

One of the teachers said that two years before, one of the INGOs had provided educational materials to be distributed to the students, giving priority to Freed Haliya students. But, it was hard to decide and select the most vulnerable ones as all of them were in the same poor condition. Freed Haliya students from other communities had also faced such problem. So, they distributed the limited materials to all Freed Haliya students. The other children did not get any and it upset the students psychologically uncomfortable to those students who did not get any.

The headteacher of a school of Freed Haliya community in Dadeldhura, which provided day meal for students two year before, had a complaint against the INGOs. The children were very excited with the provision of day meal with visible effect on their enrollment, retention and dropout cases. But, unfortunately, this year, the INGO did not come to help them and the children had already been habituated to receive such support. Almost all the stakeholders such as teachers, parents had one voice about the NGOs/INGO’s support. Parents did not get any physical supports like edible oil, suji. Rice as motivational factors for sending their children regularly to the school. However, students were benefiting from some supports for their education and therefore they could be treated as the promoting factors for retaining the students.
4.3 Strategic measures and action steps to ensure equitable access, enrolment, success, and to reduce absenteeism and dropout of Freed Haliya children

4.3.1 Awareness about the importance of education to parents

Most of the Freed Haliya parents were conscious about education and its importance as well as benefits to their children. But they were little aware of the wide range of opportunities they would get from education. They only knew that getting education meant becoming a teacher, social mobilizer, doctor, engineer etc. Similarly, they were also concerned about the loss of opportunity cost from the schooling of their children. Usually, Freed Haliyas employed their children for work, so that they could earn some extra money by not going to school. By sending them to school, they feared of losing that extra income. Thus the parents were, at least, expecting their children to help with their household work.

One of the teachers said that parents have knowledge about the benefit of education. When they went for household visits to counsel the parents, they were much enthused with the prospectuse of education. To the parents, provision of scholarships and other facilities is key to retaining them in the school. One of the headteachers said that the parents wanted their children to help them at their work. They were more interested in immediate benefits and their priority for education did not go down when their children showed little interest in education.

Most of the parents were illiterate, so, they had very little knowledge about the scope of education. Also, there was no one for them to consider a role model. However, they strongly believe that something had changed in their life after sending their children to school. They were simply able to understand and see the effect education could have on them, their society and the nation.

The teachers believed that “Welcome to School” program was very effective to increase school enrollment rate which should prove a milestone in increasing school enrollment of Freed Haliya children as well. One of the teachers of Kanchanpur said that the program had raised awareness towards education and it could also be considered as admission campaign. The headteacher of Dadeldhura also affirmed the importance of “Welcome to School” program. He recalled his experience about two years back when there was a remarkable increase in school enrollment after the “Welcome to School” program. But then, the program was only effective to bring children to school but not to keep them in the school. He experienced that retention was more difficult than just enrolling the students. He further stressed that schools should make such programs which would help to retain and make students regular in the school.

4.3.2 Parental Education

Parental education is one of the important factors which influences the education of their children. Children’s education depends on their parent’s education (Jerrim & Micklewright, 2009). In communities of School “A”, Nine among ten parents had not taken any formal education. One parent had passed class three only. Some of them had attended the literacy class. According to the teachers, all of the parents’ were bonded with landlord as Haliya.
They had to depend on the food given by landlord for working in their paddy field. Their parents had to go to the field whenever they called them to work. In such situation how could they get education. But nowadays, those parents who did not see the school, had sent their children to the school.

In another school of core Freed Haliya communities of Dadeldhura, no single interviewed parent was found to have studied formal education though fifty percent of the interviewed parents had taken the literacy class. Slightly different scenario existed in the schools situated at non core area of Freed Haliya community. One of the teachers said that there were some parents who had passed primary level education. Most of the parents could write their name themselves and as compared to schools in the core area, they were found much aware about education. One of the headteachers said that things have been now changed, there are many Freed Haliya people who are studying bachelor, master level in their community. RHMSF is for instance, operated by well educated young Freed Haliya people. They have now worked as role model to show way for parents who were illiterate through the mobilization of social mobilizers.

UNESCO (2008) has stated that educational outcome depends on parents’ education. If parents are educated, the environment will be conducive for education and the children get motivation for the study. The parents can manage all the requirements and the children get their parents as the role model. This motivation can drive them to study more and more. But unfortunately, majority of the Freed Haliya parents were not literate but interestingly, they did not stop their children from going to school. Scholarships and materials facilities motivated them to send their children to the school.

4.3.3 The provision of Hostels

In the observation, it was seen that the environment to study for Freed Haliya children in their communities is almost absent. To increase enrolment, retention and attendance, the provision of hostel may be a suitable option for the school. The children suffering from disability can be educated at residential facility though it is very costly. One of the headteachers said that the provision of hostel can be a good option for imparting quality education to Freed Haliya children. The children had no conducive environment at home, they return back home as per their wish and the school also cannot bar them from going home due to family condition. So, hostel facility may be a good option and for this, NGO/INGOs can be mobilized to provide residential facility in coordination with the government. One of the teachers of the same school said that good students can be produced from Freed Haliya students if such facility is arranged for them.

4.3.4 Reducing Discrimination

Making education free is not the only way of making it accessible. Non-discrimination is also essential, since it enables those from disadvantaged or vulnerable communities to benefit equally from the right to education (UNESCO, 2004). Convention on the Rights of the Children, article 2 has stated that education must be provided without discrimination on any grounds. In two schools which lie in core area of Freed Haliya, discrimination was not observed as majority of the Freed Haliyas children study there. In the other two school
communities, there was a mix of Tharu, Brahmin, Dalit students. However, discrimination was not observed in these schools either. But in open societies, Freed Haliya people were discriminated by other caste groups. These groups have still put Freed Haliya people as part time household workers.

It is commendable that no discrimination in the school’s dominated by Freed Haliya students was noticed. Only a small number of people were from Tamang and Gurung families with similar economic condition, rituals and culture like that of Haliya community. One of the headteachers also remarked that schools with almost all Freed Haliya children and communities are observed as little discriminatory castewise. However, gender discrimination still existed in these communities, commented the headteacher.

One of the teachers of mixed community said that Freed Haliyas appeared to be weaker in economic condition and education compared to their counterparts- the other caste members. Domination of caste groups was seen in such mixed community. But untouchability was not observed despite the presence of Dalit community. In schools with mixed community students, Freed Haliya students were suppressed by the other caste groups. One of the students said that some of his classmates had called him as “Haliya” in derogatory tone. One of the parents said that the teacher also did not behave well with their children. The teacher had perceived Freed Haliya children as vulnerable, economically backward, illiterate and unsocial people. They also talked rudely and ignored Freed Haliya children in case of participation in various activities, observed the parent.

Gender discrimination existed in Freed Haliya community as boys were enrolled in schools more than girls. Dropout cases were also seen more in girls as compared to boys. The reason was that the daughters got married and went to husband’s house. So, for the parents, there was no meaning in sending their daughter to school as they would go to husband’s home after marriage. After 9-10 years of enrolling them in schools, they had to arrange the marriage of their daughters. So, the parents thought it was better to prepare their daughters to learn to handle the house rather than to learn in the school. Another parent said that there was nothing for their daughter to do with education as in his village, there was only one primary school without lower secondary or secondary school. They had to go to another place for higher level study and it was difficult for the girls to go to another place and continue the study. So, after getting primary education at the maximum, girls had to abandon the study and even there was no meaning of completion of primary education. After all they had to be engage in household work whether they study primary or secondary education.

One of the headteachers said that in terms of enrolment, discrimination was not experienced by him. He said that they requested the Haliya parents to admit all their children and they did so. But girls were irregular in school as compared to boys. He suspected that the girls had to do more household work and they were unable to come to school regularly.

4.3.5 Geographical Challenges

Geographical adversity is also taken as one of the severe challenges that impact the students to reach the schools in hilly areas of Nepal in time or for study. In case of Kanchanpur, which was situated in terai area, the access to school for students was not problematic. One of the
teachers of school “B” said that children who were far from school, used bicycle for coming to school. So, no any geographical problem by distance in accessing the school was noticed. In case of Dadeldhura, a hilly zone, access to school for the children was albeit difficult. Even so, it did not stand as a huge barrier for children from accessing the school. One of the teachers from Dadeldhura school said that no children were left behind because of geographical barrier. Only two-three students of higher classes had to walk nearly one hour to reach the school.

Due to far off school, many children of Nepal could not access to school and some children had to walk for 3-4 hours to reach the schools. Fortunately, the sample schools were accessible to almost all the students from Freed Haliya communities. The school catchment areas were not more than 1 hour’s walk in all the sample schools. So, geographical challenge was not acting as a hindering factor to school education of the Freed Haliya children.

4.3.6 Medium of Instruction

The constitution of Nepal, 2047 B.S. and the Interim constitution(2007) have made the provision of giving primary education to the children in their mother tongue. Also Jomtein convention had stressed that mother tongue should be used as the medium of instruction for teaching the indigenous children. The school in the sample schools, the medium of instruction was not a problem as most students spoke Nepali language with little different accent. Most of the teachers were also from far west region. So, the medium of instruction did not hinder the Freed Haliya students from getting education in the school. In case of Nepal, medium of instruction is considered as important factor however, it nether a promoting factor nor a hindering factor to the education of the Freed Haliya children in the sample area.

4.3.7 Schools Teacher

Activeness, child friendly environment and regularity were some important factors for retaining the students whole day in the school. Well-mannered teachers can motivate the children for staying whole day in the school. So good teachers are a necessity for retaining the Haliya children in the school. In all the sample schools, most teachers were from far western area with similar language and culture of the students. As most of the teachers seemed to be child friendly, their behaviour was one of the promoting factors for the education of the students.

Teacher’s behaviour did not cause students’ absenteeism, dropout but some difficulties were felt by the schools in managing the teachers. One of the primary school teachers of Kanchanpur said that there is no any permanent teacher available in the school. All three teachers were in “Rahat Quota” who were not highly motivated to teach the children. They did not feel secure in the school in terms of their tenure. The SMC chairperson of the school said, “We are having problem regarding the teachers in school. As our village lies in remote area, teachers do not like to come and stay there. He had tried to make a B.Ed passed teacher permanent in school but unfortunately, He couldn’t pass the exam and left the school after 10 years of service in the school.
At the visit in the other three schools, there was no any problems of teacher placement. But most of the respondents such as parents, teachers, headteachers said that the teachers had major roles for retaining students at the school. One of the headteachers of Dadeldhura said that if the teachers showed rude behaviour, the students would not stay in their class. He shared several experiences on this issue and further said that teachers must be child friendly with the students for their retention in the school.

Chapter Five

Major Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter, the study presents major findings in a summarized form. The findings are aligned with research questions.
5.1 Major Findings

Educational enrolment, retention, promotion, achievement, absenteeism, dropout, out of school Freed Haliya children

1. Most of the Freed Haliya children went to school. Only few children who lived very far from the school were not enrolled. Disability and poor physical development was another cause of non enrolment. Lack of awareness and lack of information were the other causes which kept the children away from school.

2. Disability, household chores, rearing practice of children, Parental ignorance stood as the other hindering factors to school education.

3. In school “A”, 100 % students were from Freed Haliya community followed by 28 % students in school “B”, 87 % students in School “C” and 62 % students in School “D”, from Freed Haliya community. The average age of enrollment was 5.83 years.

4. In school “A” there was no one to repeat the class. In school “B”, the repetition rate is 1.5 % within class (1-5) against 2.24 % within class (6-9). In school “C”, the retention rate was 2.17%. In school “D”, the retention rate was 1.65 % within class (1-5) against 4.1 % within class (6-9). Because of liberal promotion policy of the government, the number of students repeating the class was negligible. Some students repeated the class due to request of teachers, parents. In class (6-9), many students did not pass the grade but retention was only 3.16 % in total.

5. Because of liberal promotion policy of the government, the number of students repeating the class was negligible as most of them passed the grades. Due to request of teachers and parents some had repeated the class. The promotion rate of class (1-5) was 97.8 percent among the Freed Haliya students. The total promotion rate of class (6-9) was 68.94 percent. Because of the government’s liberal promotion policy, they were upgraded to the next grade. It was found that very few students had managed to pass the exams to be upgraded to another class on their own.

6. The achievement of students in schools from the core area can not be said to be satisfactory as the achievement of students from schools of non core area was also at critical level. Just only one student stood in top five position in School “B” in first position and this too was made possible as she came to this school at class 4 from a boarding school of Pokhara. In school “D”, 2 students stood in top five ranking indicating that the achievement was not satisfactory.

7. The average attendance rate was 70.03 % based on the attendance of Baishakh and Jestha. It is seen that school “C” situated in Core area of Freed Haliya community had significantly low attendance rate compared to the other three schools. One of the headteachers said that the attendance was low as most of Freed Haliya students left the school for their home after the first period. The reason behind was their empty stomach and they had more household works in their home-the main being rearing of their siblings.
8. School “A” has recorded no dropout students. But in school “B”, 31.03 percent students dropped out in class (6-10). In school “C”, only one student had dropped out from the school. In school “D”, 23.48 percent students had dropped out from class (6-10). The case of drop out was severe in higher grades.

9. *Freed Haliya* students did not study at home. Some students even did not bring books to home. They did not study even in exam times. It was found that they were not serious about their education. In school, But this situation was slightly different in one of the schools located at the periphery of *Freed Haliya* community.

**Hindering factors to enrolment and retention in schools**

10. Economically, *Freed Haliya* are very weak. They had no regular and reliable source of income. Very few of them had owned their land. But due to scarcity of land, most of the men had to go for outside labour work. Likewise, women earned some income from collecting wood from the near jungle and selling them to market. But, now-a-days, things have changed. It is not as easy to collect the wood from community forest as it used to be in the past. So, some females were engaged outside for labour works. However, *Freed Haliya* had huge families and whatever they earn was hardly ever enough to buy sufficient foods for the whole family. So, the *Freed Haliya* children are mostly malnourished.

11. *Freed Haliya* children had to work a lot at their home thus household work was one of the factors affecting the retention and dropout of the students. Especially, boys had to help their parents in farming and heavy outside works. Likewise, girls had to work inside the house such as helping their mother in their household works, bringing water, cooking foods, washing utensils, cloths. They also had to look after their younger siblings.

12. The *Freed Haliya* parents had to pay some amount in the name of examination fees in the school which was also another hindering factor to school education.

13. The *Freed Haliya* students did not get the facilities such as books, copy pencil, school bags, dresses and other educational materials at time. The parents had to bear the indirect cost for items such as educational materials, dresses, shoes, bags etc.

14. Child labour was predominant among the *Freed Haliyas* but, it was their compulsion and not a choice. The main factor fueling child labor was their poor economic status. When children reach 14-15 years old, most of them go out to work as labor, coolie, and servants in nearby city and India. In most of the family, at least one or more members had gone to India for labour. So it is not new thing for them to go to India. These factors had contributed to child labour in the village.

15. There was no any provision for day meals in all the sample schools. The school’s environment was not so conducive for the students either. The classrooms were spacious in the schools but they could not attract and retain the students due to absence of activities and infrastructure.
16. Most of the parents were illiterate but were aware about the scope of education. Almost all the parents want to send their children to school but they were not able to support and motivate their children to study at home for their study.

Promotional factors to enrolment and retention in schools

17. Most of the Freed Haliya students got some financial support in the form of scholarships from the government as they belonged to Dalit community. But non Dalit Freed Haliya students did not get any such scholarships despite their poverty. There was no any provision of scholarship in the name of Freed Haliya. In three of the schools, scholarship was distributed in the form of school dresses not money, while in another one school of Kanchanpur, cash was distributed directly to the parents.

18. Language is not a problem for getting education to Freed Haliya students. The accent of their language is little different from Nepali. It was not so difficult to understand their language as others such as Tamang, Maithali, Awadhi. It was found that the teachers from other parts of Nepal can easily adopt this language as they felt little difficulty in teaching-learning process. So, medium of instruction was not seen as a challenge as most of the teachers were from far western area and they were well familiar with the Haliya’s culture and language.

19. The cases of ethnic discrimination was not seen in all the four schools where Freed Haliya children were studying. But it was noticeable in the community to some extent.

20. Early marriage culture was not practiced in the communities of the sample schools. It did not influence the dropout cases of boys and girls.

21. Geographical barriers were not seen as huge challenge for the student except for some students with disabilities.

5.2 Conclusions

After analyzing and interpreting the field data and information, the study has drawn the following conclusions:

- The Freed Haliya were aware about schooling of their children in terms of its future benefit. Consequently, most of them sent their children to school. The enrollment was not so much a problem as compared to absenteeism, achievement, and dropout. But they could not support and motivate their children for study at home.

- Poverty was the main culprit for having such situation as the parents can not care and follow up their children at home because of their engagement in livelihood earning.

- Managing meals for two times a day for most of them due to no land of their own for cultivation weighed heavily over the priority of education for their children.

- The parents had to pay exam fees to some extent causing them financial difficulty

- The schools’ comfortably bitter choice to allow the students to go home early due to students’ empty stomach or for their obligation for rearing the siblings has challenged the education system.
• Poor economic condition of parents, schools fees, opportunity cost, schools environment were some factors that hindered enrolment and retention of *Freed Haliya* children.

• Scholarships and supports from NGOs, INGOs were some promoting factors for educating the *Freed Haliya* children.

• Geographical barriers, language barrier, ethnic discrimination, lack of teacher from the same community were not seen as the challenges.

The research site was relatively developed as compared to *Freed Haliya* of other places. The situation may be more vulnerable for the *Freed Haliya* of other rural places. Without addressing such challenges, the dream of accessing all *Freed Haliya* children to school, remains a far fetched goal. These challenges are not only complex but also demand concerted efforts from the side of the government and other service providers.

### 5.3. Recommendations

Although Nepal has a target of 100 percent NER for primary level students, it has reached around 96.1 percent now. The residual 3.9 percent children who have not seen school yet, are mostly from very hardcore disadvantaged groups; *Freed Haliya* community is one of them. Identifying the disadvantaged children is one of the most difficult tasks for the government and for that matter, educating all of such children seems to be more challenging. Without data, good planning and coordination, it is very difficult to achieve the target of reaching and realising the potentials of these children including the *Freed Haliya* children.

Being one of most disadvantaged and marginalized groups of people, *Freed Haliya* have hard time managing their basic needs. Education for them is a luxury and a low priority. In such a circumstance, educating all the *Freed Haliya* children is one of the vital but challenging tasks for the government. However, following recommendations are suggested for the government and other stakeholders to alleviate the *Freed Haliya* children from the poverty of no education.

**Strategic measures and action steps to ensure equitable access**

• First of all, the overall data of the *Freed Haliya* need to be collected in 12 districts. Still there are many non verified *Freed Haliya* families due to some circumstances. Some of them are in the process of verification. By capturing all such data, the holistic data management process should be put in place. These data will give an overall picture about various condition of the *Freed Haliya* and their problems. Such disaggregated data can help make appropriate policy, plans and programs for the cause of *Freed Haliya* communities.

• Integrated holistic data management process should be initiated to map out an overall picture of the *Freed Haliya* for the true identification of their problems. Basically, the District Education Office (DEO) had not recorded such data about *Freed Haliya* students. They only had the data of the Dalit students. Most of the *Freed Haliya* students belong to Dalit communities but all Dalit are not *Freed Haliya*. So, no
privileges exist for Haliya children unless they are identified as Dalit students. The economic condition of Freed Haliya is more vulnerable than other Dalits as most of them did not have any kind of arable land. So, DEO needs to identify them and record their data (whole students). As there is also categorization of Freed Haliya family such as Ka, Kha, Ga, Gha groups, the DEO should manage the database considering these groups for providing the needed facilities and services.

• The database will provide an evidence based formulation of policy, plans and programs for ensuring equitable access to educational opportunity to the Freed Haliya communities.

• Freed Haliya people are in more vulnerable situation than other disadvantaged people. So they are in need of targeted support (intervention) for some period of time in order to help uplift their status.

• Strengthening of the economic condition and enhancing the livelihood pattern of Freed Haliya people should be under high priority as a part of developmental intervention by the government.

• The Freed Haliya people should be provided with necessary skills through skill-based training by also helping them to create marketable opportunity in order to sell their skills.

• The training and skills they develop should be linked with the job market such as government’s construction works and other private works using various channels, sometimes making their recruitment obligatory.

Strategic measures and action steps to ensure enrolment

• School along with local government needs to initiate awareness campaign about importance of education in their life for the Haliya communities. Focused programs in the pocket areas of Freed Haliya communities should be launched with household campaigns to raise the awareness level of the Freed Haliya people economically and socially. The campaign should also provide information about the provisions of free schools fees, scholarships, occasionally distributed free materials like dresses, stationeries etc. In addition, it should also share the information on the beneficial future of their children after completing higher education.

• The school should focus more on ‘Welcome to school program’ by speeding up the process of visiting all the households.

• In the same way, the school should conduct needs assessment of both the parents and their children for preparing the children to go to the schools.

• The government should manage hostel facilities targeting the non enrolled children so as to attract them toward the school; this is especially true for the students from the far-off areas.
• The school management should make the school environment as child friendly as possible by inviting their participation in all school activities, preferably more in co-curricular to extra-curricular activities.

**Strategic measures and action steps to reduce absenteeism**

• Regular supply of day meals for the students under the FFE program should be ensured by the Ministry of Education

• Motivational supports for regular attendance such as provision of prize, recognition, grade etc be arranged by the schools to bring and retain them to school.

• Equip the schools environment with playground, attractive sports materials and interesting support materials such as TV, cassette players, picture books and large print books.

• Support for the extremely poor households through the provision of materials such as edible oil, sugar, rice etc. should be extended by the government.

• Motivate and mobilize the NGOs/CBOs to arrange supports to these children in terms of dress, books, bags and other forms of stationery support

**Strategic measures and action steps to reduce dropout**

• As continuity of education is directly related with the scale of poverty, empowering and equipping the Freed Haliya with saleable skills, seed money to start small enterprises is deemed necessary.

• The school should regularly run parental awareness program in order to motivate and convince both students and their parents to foresee the scope of education after class 10 for a promising future.

• As opportunity cost was a catalytic agent for causing dropout in upper classes, government should manage scaled up scholarships and other parental supports to retain their children in upper grades.

• Pre-technical and vocational education should start from grade 8 to provide them an orientation to the futuristic skills that they can use even if they are forced to leave the school early.

Finally, Freed Haliya’s were in very backward situation in compare to other people of Nepal. This research has paced one step of efforts to find out the situation, problems and necessity on access to the education for Freed Haliya people. This research is done with few limited time and resources. So, the research cannot be embraced all the factors related with Freed Haliya. So, other intensive research needed to find out the subject and problems related with Freed Haliya in near future.
References


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