

Stakeholders' Conception on The Inclusive Participation and Teachers' Pedagogical Innovation towards IT's Promotion

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Abstract

This paper informs about the stakeholders' conception on the inclusive participation and teachers' pedagogical innovations towards its promotion. Analysis of the data from different stake holders of secondary education demonstrated two conceptions (norms adopted by schools towards inclusive participation and initiatives deliberated by schools towards creating enabling environment) with three indicators (innovative pedagogy, celebrating individual differences and school safety, security, freedom and community participation) of inclusive participation. The study has also revealed some innovative pedagogy (group discussion, use of language supportive pedagogy, team-based project, composition of group with different abilities and the like) adopted by teachers in promoting inclusive participation. Thus, as a matter of broad strategy, the government needs to focus on the inclusive participation in education by using all stakeholders point of view including student perspectives as they are the true beneficiary of it. Additionally, authorities and leaders of education especially of secondary education have to ensure the capacity-building opportunities to improve teachers' skills on the implementation of inclusive participation.

Keywords: Inclusive Participation, Pedagogical Innovation and Secondary Education.

Introduction

The demand of secondary education received attention during 11th plan period but got its momentum in 12th five year plan when tremendous success of universalisation of elementary education raise demand for secondary education which gradually led to implement Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). However, till date evidence based data on the effective utilization of resources under the RMSA and especially in quality aspects of participation is little known, the supply side of secondary education provision is given more focus and demand side particularly conceptual analysis of inclusive participation or omission and teachers' pedagogical innovation towards its promotion of RMSA program is seemed to be given less importance. Thus, this backdrop motivated the researcher to plan and execute the research to fill the gaps stated. Therefore, the state of Odisha and especially its tribe dominated districts drew the attention of the researcher and Malkangiri district which is primarily dominated by Scheduled tribe and scheduled castes- a special preferential group as per policy documents, was taken for this study in general and its govt. secondary schools in particular.

The literature review shows that low percentage of enrolment particularly ST children, low retention rate and distance between home and school pose a serious challenge for accessibility and equity of quality schooling and achieving retention of 100 per cent (Statistics on Secondary Education in India, 2009-10, DISE, 2012-13 & 2017-18).

In Malkangiri district of Odisha, gradual decreasing trend of enrolment of SC and ST students in secondary schools is a matter of concern (District statistical handbook, 2006-07). District statistical handbook (2018) and Web Page of District Portal (2021) shows the total enrolled children in secondary school in terms of gender, teacher pupil ratio, types of schools but it does not reflect other details about secondary schools like number of drop outs, number of teachers and the like.



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It is further claimed that there are many initiatives have been introduced to increase the enrolment, attendance, and retention of students at secondary level of education but not more stress on participation and categorically, inclusive participation of students in a classroom and how does teacher promote inclusive participation and how community plays its role in ensuring this is apparent to be less focused and addressed by the researchers and right degree of attention is still insufficient to promote inclusive participation in education. The policy makers, researchers, teachers and other stakeholders are less likely to be aware of these issues. Hence, this gap created the avenues to plan and execute the study on the Stakeholders' Conception on Inclusive Participation and Teachers' Pedagogical Innovations towards it's Promotion.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the stakeholders' conception on the meaning of inclusive participation and its key indicators;
2. To examine the teachers' pedagogical innovations in promoting inclusive participation at secondary level of education.

Review of Literature

The discourse of inclusive participation as unitary concept and that to in secondary education has received very less attention. However, some of the important studies highlighted here that focused on the concept of inclusive schooling and recommended participation of both disabled and non-disabled together (Turnbull and Turnbull, 2001), create an environment to include all children irrespective of their background (Villa and Thousand, 2000). The role of teachers in advancing inclusive education has been duly and repeatedly emphasized by scholars. Scholars (Ainscow et al., 2007) have opined that the nature of relations of the teachers with students, parents, other fellow teachers and school management fosters equality in learning for all students. Further, inclusive education is also promoted within a school by way of the teacher's leadership capabilities (Marshall & Oliva, 2006) and strategies of teaching incorporated by the teacher (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 1997; Allen, 1999). Rahman (2014) emphasizes classroom participation by students which 'includes class discussions, cooperative learning, debates, role-playing; problem-based learning, asking questions, responding to the questions, and case studies. Inclusiveness in education is difficult to measure though classroom participation is manifested through the degree of student engagement in daily functioning of the class; 'regularity, timely submission of homework and following teacher's instruction in class' (Aziz et al., 2018). Classroom participation is highly significant (Petress, 2006; Weaver & Qi, 2005) and according to Howard & Henney (1998), classroom discussions are integral to it. He elaborates that for effective class participation a 'forethought, planning and structure' is needed. Hence the role of school leaders especially head of the schools, teachers and education officials of the district is felt importance and without involving

community and parents specifically cannot serve the purpose of inclusive participation.

Research Questions of the Study

Research Questions against Objective 1

1. How do different stakeholders (School heads, teachers, education officials) define the term inclusive participation? ii. What are the key indicators of inclusive participation prevailing in the secondary school? iii. What are the bases of inclusive participation indicators?

Research Questions against Objective 2

1. How do teachers promote inclusive participation through their innovative pedagogies?
2. Do teachers follow the same practice always for maximising participation?

Methodology

The current study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore the meaning of inclusive participation from the perspectives of different stakeholders and how do teachers adopt different pedagogies to promote the inclusive participation in education. Thus, employing qualitative research approach implies inclusion of strategies (interviews, and observation as data collection methods) for data gathering and descriptive survey as research methods.

Sample and Sampling Procedures of the Study

A multi staged sampling procedure was employed in this study. Out of the seven blocks in Malkangiri district, four blocks were selected by using purposive sampling after performing a documentary review analysis about the blocks and interaction with the education officials of district and state. Out of four blocks, 10 Govt. secondary schools (more than 10 %) were selected purposively by keeping the characteristics of inclusive participation (presence of a proportionate number of General, SC and ST students, teachers in the schools) in view. Besides, 10 Head teachers / head teacher in-charge in case of absence of regular Head teachers, and 20 teachers (two teachers from each school) for interview, 10 parents from each school, 10 students from each school for Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and 3 Education Officials were involved for interview as well. By way, the sample size was fixed on the basis of data saturation at this phase.

Data Collection Methods and Research Instruments

Mainly, four data collection methods (documents review, interview, focused group discussion and observation) were used to obtain in-depth qualitative information on inclusive participation in secondary schools. On the other hand, four data collection instruments viz., document review guide, semi-structured interview guide, focus group discussion guide, and observation checklist were designed, developed and employed.

Data Analysis Procedure

At the outset the management of qualitative data was initiated in the field itself. The interviews were recorded with the help of Tape recorder, besides taking the field notes by the researcher. Secondly, data were transcribed and then initial codes were generated and validated. Finally, data were translated from Odia to English by the researcher; however, they

were back translated later by the language experts as well. Categorically, thematic analysis with inductive (bottom-up) approach was used. In this venture, researcher has bracketed her pre-dispositions and knowledge during analysis and interpretation of the data and has used only the informants' experiences and perceived conceptions gained from the real context.

Results

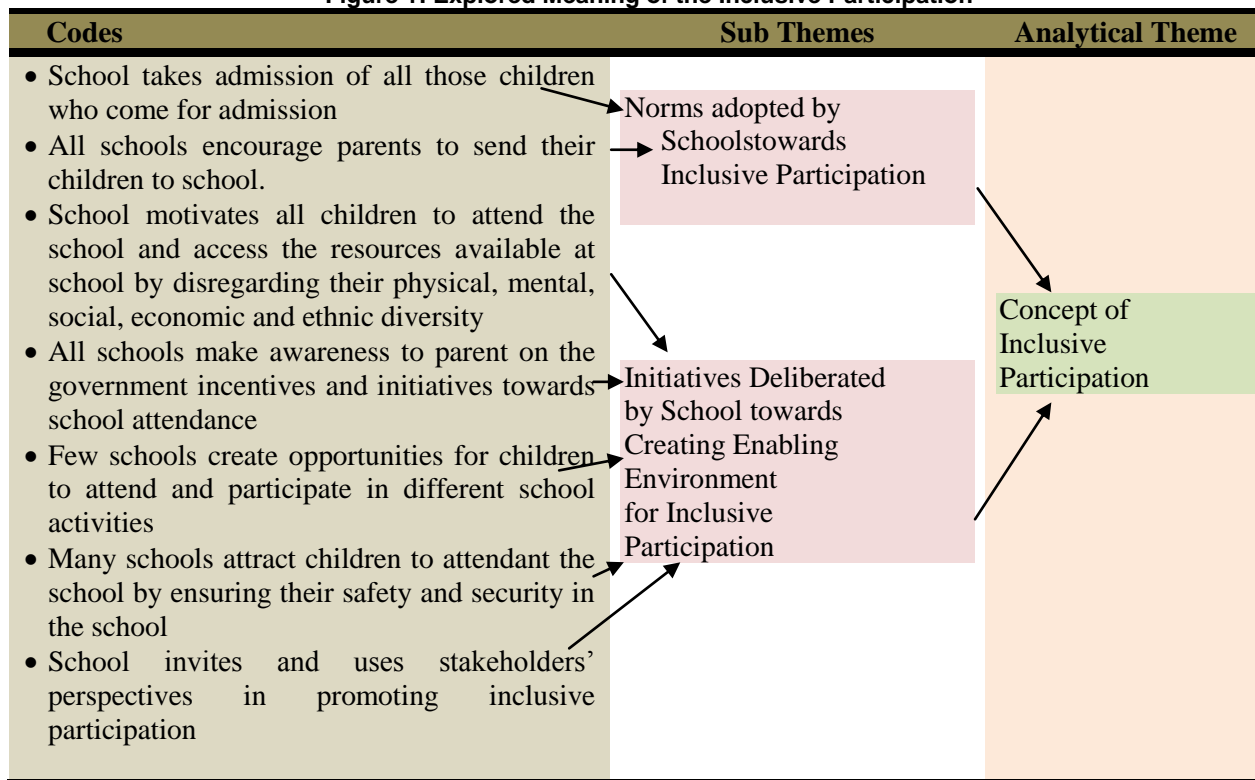
The results are reported according to the objectives stated in this study. The analysis of the

data and its presentation are given in terms of the meaning of inclusive participation followed by its key indicators and then teachers' pedagogical innovation towards the promotion of the inclusive participation is also presented sequentially.

Stakeholders' Conception on the Inclusive Participation

This part explains the results relating the stakeholders' conception on the meaning of the inclusive participation. There are two conceptions for inclusive participation are depicted in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Explored Meaning of the Inclusive Participation



Source: Field Data 2019

Norms adopted by schools towards inclusive participation: Figure 1 above shows that most of the informants (school heads, teachers, and education officials) delineated their perspectives collectively on the essence of inclusive participation. With regards to this, they came up with a first concern which underscores the school norms of admitting students by disregarding all kinds of diversity. Under this concern, it was described that school has to receive joyfully all those children who come for admission and all schools must encourage parents to send their children to school without any hesitation. With respect to this, one of the school heads had the following to say:

We give admission to all those children who come to our school. We don't deny anyone and strongly believe it is the right of a child to be educated. It is the teacher who can only lead them to achieve this goal, because these children are the future of the nation and are being shaped in the classroom (Semi structured interview - February, 2019).

In conformity with the school heads' views, all teachers collectively articulated that and one teacher further said:

We are clearly instructed by our school heads and education officers to take admission of all those students who come for admission and help them to continue their study in any adverse situation. We become lenient to our students as we all are very well aware of the background of our students and how most of the students try to continue their studies (Semi structured interview - February, 2019).

Parents' views were found further to be congruent with the school heads and teachers claim. It was validated when one of the parents described:

During parents meeting or when teachers visit our village under "Mo School" Abhiyan or whenever we come to school for any other reason; always teachers ask us about our work and our students. They praise the effort I am doing and also insist to send child to school regularly. Also ask me to tell other

three parents whose children are friends of my child to send their children regularly because sometimes they together remained absent from the school (Focus group discussion – February, 2019).

It can be concluded from the aforementioned experiences and views that accepting diversities and admitting students in the schools irrespective of caste, creed, colour, ethnicity and disability along with encouraging parents to send their children to schools by disregarding all kinds of odds is a leading principle that features the meaning of inclusive participation in schools.

Initiatives deliberated by schools towards creating enabling environment for inclusive participation:In the further exploration of the meaning of inclusive participation in education; all most all stated that school has to create enabling environment for inclusive participation by taking various initiatives – making awareness to parent on the government incentives and initiatives towards school attendance, creating opportunities for children to participate in different school activities and so on. Hence, perhaps, a majority of school heads, teachers and education officers stressed upon no discrimination policy and provision of safety environment especially for girls. Parents too echoed the same with similar gravity. It was believed as true and sensitive issue when one education officer expressed his views on establishing residential complex where both school staff and students will stay together. Reacting further on this, one of the education officers articulated that:

School suffers a lot as most of the teachers prefer to stay in the district headquarter. Teachers come from a long distance and also returned back on time. If a child wants to ask or discuss . . . but he/she cannot. Because teachers were in hurry to leave school after the school time was over. Similarly, students also come from far off places where communication is a big hurdle. In this circumstance, most of the parents prefer residential school but here number of residential schools is less (Semi structured interview - February, 2019).

Arguing on the way some girl students involved in this study noted that school enabling environment helps us to focus on our study but we often miss this in our school. They further added that:

Unlike other schools, our school is good, our teachers are friendly, and they help us in our study. Our teachers motivate all children by disregarding the diversity to attend the school and access the resources available at school.

The infrastructure facilities are good but the problem is in the availability of water. We face difficulties in getting drinking water. More importantly, in toilets there is hardly water which compels us to take off from school during periods. We have complained several times to our head of the school but no solution (Focus group discussion - February, 2019).

Conversely, one of the teachers from another school claimed that ensuring safety and providing basic facilities for the students especially for girls is given first priority in her school. These claims somehow were supported by the observation made by the researcher in a school. It was unveiled from this observation that most of the school has ramp facilities for special needs children. In the observed school, only two special needs students were enrolled, though these two students were absent most of the time because they need assistance of their parents to come to school as one of the two was partially blind and the other one was physically challenged. There was no proper communication facility which may prevent them to attend the school regularly. Teachers of the same school reported further that parent of these special need children work as laborers, when they bring them to school, they come and otherwise. To stay away from this circumstance, school had not any remedial provision to bring them to school every day; though the provision of giving free bicycle to girls in 10th class was put into service. Thus, ensuring enabling environment in school is one of the cardinal principles that undermine the meaning inclusive participation as well.

Conclusively, the term 'inclusive participation' can be understood as the collection of two words namely, 'inclusiveness' and 'participation'. It has been conceived as an outcome of different norms and initiatives of schools towards creating enabling environment for enhancing students' attendance, maximizing students' accessibility and active involvement in both scholastic and non-scholastic activities by accommodating all students irrespective of all kinds of diversity and inviting, motivating and using parents and community members point of view to revise and execute the school-based activities and programs in enhancing quality of schooling. Hence, it can be insisted to education authorities to carry out some alternative measures to bring these students to school so that they can enjoy their right to education through active participation and invite and use different stake holders' point of view to further the inclusive participation.

Exploration of the Inclusive Participation Indicators: participation.

Figure 2 indicates three indicators of inclusive

Figure 2: Indicators of Inclusive Participation

Codes	Theme Description	Analytical Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher / school creates equal opportunities for all students to participate in school activities Teacher selects pedagogy that promotes interaction among them Teacher plans and organizes co-curricular activities whereby all children get opportunity to participate Teacher develops peer groups to promote peer learning Teacher assigns group-based assignment to promote participation Teacher compose learners' group by combining differently abled students 	Accommodated pedagogy of teaching for maximizing students' learning involvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School accommodates all the students School and teachers respect equally to the ability of all students Teacher makes classroom seating arrangement as per students need Teacher attends individual students' learning need in the leisure period Many students are allowed to learn at their pace Teacher encourages students to ask to clarify if they have any doubts Teachers recognise the individual students' talent Teacher resolves students' conflict amicably 	School appreciates individual differences and ensures participation	Indicators of Inclusive Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students feel safe and secure in school Students feel free to ask question to teachers Students are encouraged to learn from their own classmates or from senior friends Teacher provides continuous feedback to both children and parents Community participates through Mo school Abhiyan 	School ensures safety, security, and freedom and encourage community participation	

Source: Field Data 2019

Accommodated Pedagogy of Teaching for Maximizing Students' Learning Involvement

Most of the informants (Head of the schools, teachers and students) articulated that only teacher can play pivotal role in accommodating pedagogy of teaching as per the learning need of each student embedded in each critical aspects of learning by shaping congenial inclusive environment. Expounding further, together, all heads of the school acknowledged they often supervise the teachers' pedagogical practices, class room activities, and students' discipline and their attentiveness towards the lesson.

Reacting on this, one head of the school involved in this study noted:

In our school I stress upon the understanding of the identified each critical aspects of learning by the students, because the background from where our students come. It brings a serious challenge for our teachers to keep them motivated towards their study and its successful completion, as most of them has been promoted to 9th class instead of achieving the minimum level of learning. However, our teachers keep on extending constant cooperation after class hours and splurge strenuous efforts by adopting innovative pedagogy (peer learning by composing groups

of learners with differently abled students, providing group-based assignment) whereby each student got participated (Semi structured interview - February, 2019).

In continuation, most of the teachers were found to be expressed about the school facilities vis-a-vis students' participation maximization. One of the teachers added further that:

I want to provide all the facilities to my students but sometime the systemic constraints pose hurdle and I have to work with limited resources. However, I try my best to plan and manage with the available resources so that all the students can be participated and benefitted (Semi structured interview - February, 2019).

It was also revealed from the most of students that they participate in different school activities conducted and mostly in annual sports meet and science exhibition. One student had the following to say:

She along with her four friends has participated in science exhibition conducted at Malkangiri district, where we have taken our model of generating electricity through turbine and appreciated (Focus group discussion - February 2019).

In nutshell, despite the fact that there was shortage / unavailability of resources in the schools, but the school tries best to plan and manage to conduct the different activities by using available resources and creates opportunities for and ensures all students to participate in all activities. It was also noted that teachers were more concerned about how simplified modalities of teaching could be adopted by engaging maximum students. This attitude of a teacher indicates to the innovativeness of pedagogy of teaching towards maximization of students learning involvement as an indicator of the inclusive participation.

School Appreciates Individual Differences and Ensures Participation

Most of the informants firmly believed that each child is unique in their own way and our schools welcome all of them without any discrimination and nurture their talents by keeping in minds their individual needs. One of the HoS stated that:

Denying the rights of education to any child is a social prejudice, while accepting unconditionally to any child for education is a social justice as enshrined in our education policy. We cannot undermine the policy sensitivity. Our teachers try their best to materialize it in the fullest (Semi structured interview - February, 2019).

Likewise, teachers of a school collectively expressed:

There are students and therefore we are valued. If we don't care for them and discriminate instead . . . we will not only do injustice to them but also to our profession. Therefore, in our school we respect our students, appreciate their abilities to perform . . . and accept unconditionally with their background. We give them freedom as well to ask their doubts in leisure period or whenever they like in the school or can call after school hour (Semi structured interview - February, 2019).

Similarly, majority of the students expounded further that most of the times they are encouraged to participate in different curricular and co-curricular activities organized in the school. However, this claim was contradicted by some students in the following manner:

Some students get preference by our teacher who communicates well or plays well but some students do not get . . . But this circumstance makes them to be remained silent, because if they will ask or complain, their friend will be unhappy (Focus group discussion – February, 2019).

Additionally, some other students had the following to say:

Every now and then, some petty conflicts came into sight among us and it goes up to the head Sir or class teacher. If it goes to our class teacher, then it will be resolved amicably and gets friendship once again. Unlike other teachers, our class teacher's has special acumen to understand us better and tries not to take any such issue to the head Sir. He prefers

to teach us in a group especially by complying with the law of individual space of learning and by composing small diverse learning community in the class (Focus group discussion – February, 2019).

At last, it was reasonable to believe that school appreciates individual differences of and encourages participation in is one of the key indicators of inclusive participation and thus the authority of education needs to chalk out a broad strategy for teachers' awareness on this aspect.

School Ensures Safety, Security, Freedom And Community participation

In continuation of exploring indicators of inclusive participation, school safety, security, freedom and community participation was emerged as another key indicator of inclusive participation. To describe it further, most of the informants delineated that the school environment must be set up in such a way, wherein, all students' feelings, emotions, and needs has to be recognized at first and then school has to act accordingly so as to student will feel safe and secure because emotions may regulate the intelligence. Besides, freedom of students was found further as the core aspect that must be felt in general with the school environment and particular in the classroom environment. Specifically, parental involvement in the school was found to be made by collecting donations through programmes like "Mo School Abhiyan". While discussing on this further with one of the education officers, he came up with a view is as follows.

Students try to beat every odd and commute through empty roads to school. We as officials tries to provide them a safety environment in the school where they can express themselves, share their worries, and discuss their doubts with teachers. We emphasize more on girls' education as their number is less. However, very few of them complete secondary education. Recently "Mo School Abhiyan" – a scheme by Govt. of Odisha has been started to collect voluntary community donation and Govt. also contributing with equal proportionate for the development of the school. (Semi structured interview - February, 2019).

It was also found to be noted from the most of the teachers and this information was aligned when one of the head teachers expressed:

More often than not, I personally address the students and advice teachers during classroom supervision that every child should be encouraged to ask questions and their doubts should be clarified. I encourage students to ask their doubts without any hesitation. If students still find it difficult at first trial, they can request by writing to the concerned teachers for further clarification. After trying so, if their doubts are yet not cleared, they can come and ask me as well (Semi structured interview - February, 2019).

With regards to this, another teacher had the following to say:

We in our school have given complete freedom to our students to ask whenever and whatever they like to be guided by us and even their parents can come without any hesitation and discuss any matter about their children's study. We often visit their home to meet students' parents and ask them how they want us to help their children in completing their studies (Semi structured interview - February, 2019).

Similarly, most of the students revealed that they are happy in their school and feel free to ask questions. However, some contradictory views were felt when some students had the following to say:

We don't like our maths teachers at all because of their style of teaching and uses abusive language (kangali, mausa, bhikari etc.) to us while teaching when we fail to answer his

question in the class. Most of the time our doubts are not cleared even we are not asked whether we all have understood the concept or not. More often we want to complaint but remained silent, because it is, he who looks after many issues in the school and very close to head sir (Focus group discussion – February, 2019).

Eventually, it was reasonable to consider that school safety, security, freedom and community participation is one among the essential indicators of inclusive participation which cannot be overlooked.

Teachers' Pedagogical Innovation towards Inclusive Participation

Teachers' pedagogical innovation in promoting inclusive participation is portrayed below in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Pedagogical Innovation towards Promoting Inclusive Participation

Codes	Theme Description	Analytical Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers shares Vision / expectation with the students • Teacher plans the lesson so as to increase the students' classroom involvement • Students get involved while teacher improvise and use the TLMS • Teacher makes involvement of students when she/he uses ICTs and Labs • Teacher uses Maths Kit while teaching in order to give hands on practice to students • Teacher gives tasks to be completed in the group at class and by referring library • Teacher tries to identify and clarify the hard spots of learning in the class • Teacher makes lesson plan according to the critical aspects identified under each object of learning • Teacher makes use of Individual Education Plan whenever necessary to sustain students' participation in the learning process • Teacher gives adequate time to think, discuss in group and answer the questions • Teacher pairs up peers to promote interaction among students by giving team-based project • Teachers use lesson specific language chart to supplement the language supportive pedagogy • Teacher adapt voice modulation which meets the students demand 	<p>Pedagogical modalities used in promoting inclusive participation</p>	<p>Pedagogical Innovation towards Inclusive Participation</p>

Source: Field Data 2019

Pedagogical Modalities In Promoting Inclusive Participation

With respect to the pedagogical innovation in promoting inclusive participation teachers were found to be prepared self and adaptive to promote inclusive participation. It was further observed that school teachers delivered lesson with the help of TLMs relating to a specific subject of learning, shared vision and their expectation from the students, dividing students into small groups, gave them freedom and encouraged to ask questions during instructional process and promoted peer learning. Majority of teachers also created opportunities for active involvement while using science or information technology laboratory which promote the inclusive participation, endeavoured to clarify the hard spots of

learning. Highlighting this, one of the teachers asserted that:

. . . prefers to use question answer followed by group discussion technique more often than not to clarify the concept as this approach is anticipated for greater students involvement in the learning process (Semi structured interview-Feb, 2019).

This was again verified by the researcher during classroom observation of teaching of English. Likewise, the majority of students articulated that they like their teachers but there are very few whom they like most and the reason can be realized firmly from the following excerpt of a student.

When science teacher come to the class, we feel free and happy. Though he is strict but he tried to

give demo of most of the lessons he taught and later ask us to repeat the demo and make class to understand what we personally understand. He took us to the lab also to show the experiment of chemical reactions, sound and motion, and showed the chart of atom and molecules, periodic table etc. He always talked about his expectation from us and so also what our school expects (Focus group discussion – February, 2019).

However, during classroom observation, the researcher unveiled that majority of participants rarely practice whatever they were reported during the interview. It can be exemplified in the following:

. . . during natural calamities when more devastation is made to the life and nature; we as individuals cannot do anything meaningfully then we should send our “Sakas” to these affected people by seating in our home (Class room observation – February, 2019).

With regards to the practices accommodated for promoting inclusive participation; the majority of teachers were found to be viewed that they work constantly in coordination with non-teaching staff and usually involve students as well. They also invite retired or in-service personnel in the subject concerned from the local community to classroom and encourage students to access the library, Science Lab and Mathematics Kit available. In connection to this, one of the teachers claimed that:

We conduct a programme called ‘Parimarjan’. . . in which we encourage 10th class students to practice in both subjective and objective questions. This is way to help students for better memorization and broad understanding of the critical aspects subject content. Likewise, we suggest and develop the same habits among our 9th class student and corollary of this, the better result can be expected (Semi structured interview–February, 2019).

Similarly, many of the teachers pointed out that they interact regularly with the parents to create conducive environment in home for their children which the parents further echoed the tune and expected the teachers to continue special attention throughout the year instead of examination which further verified from a student’s view:

Before examination, we are taught usually in different groups, our teachers took extra classes and whoever missed these classes, it was a great loss to them. But our family financial backgrounds often compel some of us to be remained absent. Moreover, many of our teachers teach with the help of text books only and very few of them rarely use TLMs or make us to solve problems in groups. Our class walls speak the truth how often our teachers use TLMs (Focus group discussion – February, 2019).

Conclusion and Way Forward

The study clearly offers the meaning of inclusive participation in the secondary education despite misconception of inclusive participation which was articulated earlier is exclusively limited to have opportunity to all students for getting participated in

school and classroom learning activities by celebrating their difference only. This research claims that, the meaning of inclusive participation in education is not an end per se by creating opportunities for all students to get participated with equality and equity in different school and classroom activities irrespective of their differences, rather it is a process of inviting and using perspectives of all stakeholders including community members and leaders by the education authority to review and execute the educational plan, policy, and programs to wards holistic development of the learners. Thus, as a matter of broad strategy, the government policies on inclusive participation in education need to be revised by focusing all stakeholders’ point of view including learners as the true beneficiary of it. Besides, authorities and leaders of education ensure the capacity-building opportunities to improve teachers’ skills on the implementation of inclusive participation as well.

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