Navigating exclusionary-inclusion:
school experience of Dalit EFL learners in rural Nepal

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Abstract: Modern schooling is often expressed as one of the key social dynamics of development and modernisation in Nepal. Ideally, school policies and pedagogies are said to embrace inclusion, socialisation and democratisation of young children irrespective of their class, caste, gender and ethnicity. The state's signatory promises in national/international conventions and platforms often mention social inclusion as the most important expected goal of formal schooling. However, such an understanding is often undermined by persistent educational inequalities and differences which, in turn, underline emergent social, cultural and economic forces that exacerbate social exclusion of many schoolchildren. English Language Teaching (ELT), one of the modern education specificities in the national educultural space, is intricately connected to such inequalities, and is the de facto cause of the enforcing social exclusion of socially, culturally and economically marginalised Dalit children, despite the fact that they attend schools and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms as the "principled inclusion" advocates. Amid this paradox, the main purpose of this paper is to examine exclusionary-inclusion in relation to modern schooling and English learning in rural settings. Employing critical ethnography, this paper examines how modern schooling, particularly in relation to English teaching/learning including English-as-a-medium-of-instruction (EMI), perpetuates social exclusion of the Dalit schoolchildren. The analysis of the data derived from qualitative interviewing, participant observation and learner diaries, suggests to us that policy-practice ambiguities and complicated intersection of existing caste-class-gender disparities with English Learning Opportunities (ELOs) are the principal domains areas that enforce "exclusionary-inclusion" among the marginalised Dalit children in community, school and EFL classroom spaces in rural Nepal.

Keywords: Schooling, exclusionary-inclusion, Dalit, identity, ELOs.

1. Introduction

> The magnitude of the problems of illiteracy, non-enrolment and school dropout varies by gender, region and different social groups. There are variegated gaps between rural and urban, males and females as well as ethnic and social groups. People (6-24 years) living in remote rural areas, females, ethnic minorities, Dalits (so called untouchable castes according to the old tradition) and the poor are extremely disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment (National Review Report for EFA 2000/2015: 6).

Modern schooling in Nepal is often expressed as one of the key social dynamics of "development" and "modernisation" of the nation (Pigg 1992; Liechty 2003; Bista 1991). Ideally, modern school policies and pedagogies in the state are said to embrace inclusion, socialisation, democratisation and the overall development of schoolchildren irrespective of their caste, class, gender and ethnicity. The state's signatory commitments in diverse national-international conventions and platforms, including "Education for All" (EFA 2000-2015), often signal its motivation to employ educational agendas and policies to inculcate its young citizens with quality, and often free and compulsory, secondary education. However, the actual realities seriously contrast with the paper declarations carried out so far. Besides some noticeable improvements in school enrolment and literacy rates, hopefully from all sections of its citizens, schooling in the state is still entrenched with a vast range of social inequalities and disparities that underline social class, caste, gender, ethnicity, mother tongue and regional background (Mathema 2007; Graner 2006). Such inequalities and disparities are often challenging for the state in terms of attaining the expected

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educational goals, such as, "inclusive education", "child friendly school environment", "equality-equity to Dalit, women and the disadvantaged", and "equal access to those with special needs and the populations facing multiple exclusions" (MOE 2009/2015), outlined on the basis of EFA Goals recorded in the Dakar Framework of Action (DFA), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well.

Critical ethnographies on schooling here, on the one hand, argue that inequalities and disparities as stated are the consequences of very socio-historical and socio-cultural constructions of formal schooling as well as its privileges to selective social groups in this manifold hierarchical society, and, on the other, the very intervention of neoliberal, meritocratic, and Western *bikasi* [development/developmentalist] ideologies in the development of school policies and pedagogies (Carney & Madsen 2009; Valentin 2011; Shrestha 1995). English education, especially English Language Teaching (ELT) including English-as-a-medium-of-instruction (EMI), is one of the modern educational dimensions that influences not only the school policies and pedagogies but also the social constructions that reproduce social inequalities and exclusion of the schoolchildren from marginalised communities. In this particular context, this paper explores how ELT including EMI enforces exclusionary-inclusion of Dalit children in school, community and (EFL) classroom spaces in rural Nepal.

1.1 Situating the research problem
The present study more specifically concentrates on modern schooling in relation to ELT including EMI for its role in reproducing social exclusion of the schoolchildren from the marginalised Dalit social groups. The Dalits are the subcastes, such as *Sarki* (tanners/shoemakers), *Kami* (blacksmiths*), Damai* (tailors), *Gaine* (minstrels) *Badi* (musicians) and many other hereditary groups, especially belonging to the earlier *Sudras*, the bottommost of the four hierarchical *vernas* viz. *Brahmin*, *Chhetri*, *Vaisya* and *Sudra*, in the Classical Hindu Caste religiosity (Dumont 1980; Bista 1991; Cox 1994). As ordained with the Hindu scriptures, such as *Rig-Veda[1]* and *Manusmriti[2]*, these four *vernas* and their corresponding subcastes are supposed to sustain, firstly, "separation" in matters such as marriage, contact and food; secondly, "division of labor" that the successive generations of each of the hereditary groups has to pursue; and finally, "hierarchy" that ranks the groups as relatively superior or inferior to one another (Bougle 1908 cited in Dumont 1980: 43). Considering the caste system as a collective whole rather than an individual phenomenon, Dumont (1980) concentrates on "(religious) hierarchy", which reduces all defining principles, pure-impure, separation and division of labour, into a single principle. As such, the superiority of the pure over the impure inevitably reinforces the separation between the pure and the impure, and, accordingly, the division of labour/occupations between the pure and impure because the pure and impure must be kept separate (Dumont 1980: 43). Such a deep-seated opposition between the pure and the impure strongly institutionalised Brahmins at the top, then Chhetri, and finally Vaishya as the pure castes, and Sudras/Untouchables as the impure one positioned at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. Furthermore, such hiarchicalisation legitimised the hegemony and dominance of the former over the latter for centuries in diverse Hindu societies.

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[1] Rig Veda, one of the four Vedas of Hindu, is the collection of Vadic Sanskrit hymns (1028 hymns and 10600 verses) into ten books called Mandalas. Each of these Mandalas consists of Suktas, well-recited eulogies. One of the Suktas mentioned in the tenth Mandala is Purusa Sukta that recounts how the four vernas Brahmin, Kshetri, Vaisya and Sudra were born from Purusa's (the Cosmic being) mouth, arms, thighs and feet, respectively. A verse in this Sukta also mentions that the Brahmin is the priest, the Kshetri is the member of the class of the kings, the Vaisya is the farmer, and the Sudra is the unfree servant (Dumont 1980).

[2] Manusmriti, the laws of Manu, the progenitor of humanity, recounts the creation of the world, sources of Dharma (action conforming to), the dharma of the four social classes/vernas/castes, and the laws of karma (deed/act), rebirth and final liberation.

Nepali society is one of such societies in which caste is still a dominant social agent in shaping the life, livelihood and identities of the citizens (Bista 1991; Cameron 2005; Gellner & Quigley 1999). Historically, the Nepali caste system underlined the influence of both the Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman caste cultures (Bista 1991). It specified three caste categories - *Tagadhari* (Twice-born, which includes Brahman, Chhetri and Thakuri), *Matwali* (liquor drinking, which includes Vaishyas) and *pani nachanlne* (untouchables) (Cox 1994: 90). The earlier caste practice in the state was not so stern and prejudicial among the diverse Tibeto-Burman communities. However, due to a series of political-ideological interventions by the then Lichchhivi and Malla rulers under the influence of the Southern plains, the Hindu hierarchical caste tradition was extended and intensified among the Newars in Kathmandu Valley (Gellner & Quigley 1999). The then Malla King, Jayasthiti Malla's (1382-1395) social division of Kathmandu Newars in terms of occupations, housing styles, food habits and language uses not only reinforced discriminatory caste hierarchy, but also fostered Hinduisation and Sanskritisation in the caste culture and everyday life of the people in Kathmandu Valley and outside. This continued for centuries (Bista 1991). Later, the succession of Rana rulers between 1846 and 1951, and their dogmatic imposition of the Hindu caste system promulgating *The Muluki Ain* (The Law Code - 1854), intensified the discriminations and exploitations of the low caste people throughout the nation. However, the establishment of democracy abolishing the Rana oligarchy in 1951 outlawed the social discriminations on grounds of caste to some extent. The legislations written during the Panchayat reign (the period between 1962 and 1990 during which the Monarch was the official ruler of Nepal) also provided some space to the lower caste people and untouchables to participate in education, mainstream politics and development. However, since the ruling block itself granted the patronage of the Hindu ideology and caste religiosity, the laws framed against caste discrimination could not bring substantial change in the state.

The restoration of multi-party democracy in the state in the 1990s and the successive political transformations during the last decade have strongly advocated against any sort of social discrimination on grounds of caste, ethnicity, gender and religion. The state has categorised the earlier Sudras and Untouchables as "the Dalits", and has also pronounced some government incentives for empowering the Dalits with regard to their practical inclusion in education, politics and development. The current socio-political discourses of the state define the Dalits as socially, culturally, politically and economically suppressed and marginalised, so as to bring them into mainstream politics and development (The Constitution of Nepal 2015). The political protests of the Dalits themselves by instutionalising diverse Dalit organisations have encouraged them to participate in the mainstream development. Against this very backdrop, some significant changes can be observed in their participation in diverse social dimensions including formal schooling. The statistics demonstrates some considerable growth in school enrolment and literacy of the Dalits throughout the state. However, as for the focus of the current ethnography, the Dalit children are still subjected to diverse forms of social exclusion and inequalities in school, classroom and community spaces due to their socio-historical positioning, low profile in terms of social, cultural and economic capital, and burdened household liabilities that cause them to be less prepared for school engagement. Thus, although they enrol in schools and attend and try to engage themselves in the classroom as the "principled inclusion" advocates, yet most of these children still feel humiliated, prejudiced and excluded. State educational policies and pedagogies often stress, both in national and international contexts, the importance of addressing these challenges and ensuring the true sense of social inclusion in schooling. However, several factors that stimulate uneven policies and pedagogies on grounds of caste, gender, economic and regional disparities are at work in the national educultural space.

One such factor that challenges the practical social inclusion of the marginalised Dalit children is ELT including EMI practice in schools and (EFL) classrooms. From the very instigation

of modern schooling, English language has been specified as the cultural capital among the Nepalis (Liechty 2003: 212-216). English-prioritised school access for the children is often perceived as the symbol of a better future, better social status and economic soundness of the household. However, its uneven and unequal distribution among the Nepalis, via uneven school policies and practices, is often instrumental in reproducing even further the existing social inequalities and class divisions (Giri 2010: 93). Although quality maintenance is still a debatable issue in school education, EMI, and its role in differentiating English-rich-schools and English-poor-schools, has a great social impact on the schoolchildren from the marginalised communities, in this case the Dalits. As they attend poorly managed schools and classrooms, they are not often exposed to very much English. In EFL classrooms, they experience multifarious social discrimination because of their caste, gender and economic positions. Thus, even if modern school policy discourses highlight school enrolment and (EFL) classroom attendance as social inclusion, the critical school ethnography in rural Nepal traverses a number of exclusionary practices, such as caste discrimination, gender bias and othering in school, (EFL) classroom and community spaces. In this very context, the main purpose of this paper is to establish the role of English and ELT including EMI in perpetuating social exclusion of the Dalit schoolchildren in a rural setting.

1.2 Globalisation, schooling and ELT
Globalisation has a strong impact on the diverse fields of social sciences including education (Zajda 2011; Spring 2008). During the last few decades, the social, cultural, political and economic transformations have advanced on grounds of unprecedented and often disjunctive flows of people, capital, technologies, images, and ideas, and ideologies have attributed to a new form of social-cultural dimension in the global cultural economy (Appadurai 1996: 32). Consequently, these transformations have also, in different ways, affected the current developments in school policies and pedagogies around the world (Zajda 2011; Rizvi & Lingard 2000). As these transformations themselves constitute and/or are constituted of manifold tensions and debates amid "global and local", "homogeneity and heterogeneity", "sameness and difference" (Appadurai 1996), these tensions have also been reflected in the school policies and practices in any developing society. However, since the influence of Western neoliberal ideologies, which underline market-based human capital production, standardization of curricula, and academic standards-driven educational reforms, is still dominant in modern school policy discourse, people from peripheral and marginalized sections in terms of gender, caste, class, ethnicity, social status and region, and those with different abilities (traditionally, disables) are undeniably experiencing a growing sense of uncertainty, alienation and exclusion (Zajda 2011; Spring 2008). The ideals that concern human rights, social justice, equality-equity, democratic understanding, etc. are often superseded by neoliberal, meritocratic, and Western-hegemonic discourses of schooling. These discourses are persuasive in shaping modern school policies and pedagogies in Nepal as well (Carney & Madsen 2009; Shrestha 1995).

Scholars often argue that ELT is deeply embedded in the current globalisation processes (Spring 2008; Tsui & Tollefson 2007; Phillipson 1992). Tsui and Tollefson (2007: 1) argue that "globalisation is effected by two inseparable mediational tools, technology and English; proficiencies in these tools have been referred to as global literacy skills". There is no doubt that English is widely used in science and technology, media and consumption, business transactions and intercultural communication. It has hegemonic presence in modern school pedagogy in society as well. Globalisation that manifests in rapid social, cultural, political and economic transformations in either field has also enforced English communication skills as the dire need for individuals to enact as the citizens of the global village in the 21st century (e.g. Crystal 2003). However, any critical examination on the current spread of English and ELT around the world undoubtedly raises some serious issues. These issues primarily concern the social inequalities and

differences that ELT in general and English-as-medium-of-instruction (EMI) in particular generate in diverse non-native societies and/or non-native individuals in English-speaking societies. These inequalities and differences have been legitimised through modern schooling via its crucial role in distributing unequal English knowledge and skills, and intensifying the social division between "English language-rich" and "English language-poor" schoolchildren (Meganathan 2011: 60). This is due to the fact that in many non-native societies, the acquisition of English knowledge and skills has been an index to cultural/symbolic capital for the elite and middle-class children, yet a matter of social exclusion for many other children struggling on the peripheries (Park & Wee 2012; Tsui & Tollefson 2007; Phillipson 1992).

1.3 Schooling & inclusion-exclusion dialectics

Modern schooling, historically called *angreji schooling* [English schooling], in Nepal was formally instigated in the mid-nineteenth century under the colonial influence of the then British-India as well as the choice of the aristocratic Rana rulers between 1847 and 1951; on the one hand, to show themselves as distinct from the common mass, and, on the other hand, to connect themselves with the then British ruling bloc so as to continue their own sovereignty in the state. In its early history, it was merely used as a necessity for the elite and middle-class children from the ruling block, because the Rana rulers mostly denied the public access to mass education. However, it became an issue of mass interest after the establishment of democracy in the 1950s. Supported by Western development ideologies, these newly emerged *angreji* schools superseded conventional *aadhar schools*[3] [middle schools] as well as *pathshalas*[4], and *gumpas,* both the religious schools in Sanskrit and Buddhist traditions, respectively, were in practice, serving mostly the higher caste people with some skills in literacy, numeracy and religious preaching. Thus, the access to *angreji* education along with English exposure then was often highlighted as the icon of *bikasi* [developed], *aadhunik* [modern] and *sabhya* [civilized] among Nepali people (Shrestha 1995: 268). Such legacy continued even after the Panchayat political transformation in the state, and stimulated further social stratification between "educated persons" and "uneducated persons" among the citizens (Skinner & Holland 1996: 281). In this very context, a large section of people comprising of women, Dalit, and all those struggling from the margins was denied access to schooling for a long time. Principally, modern schooling was highlighted as the panacea for underdevelopment, social disparities and discrimination. As such, free primary education, equality-equity in the schooling of girls, Dalits and others who are socially, culturally and economically disadvantaged and marginalized, etc. were but a few on the list among several discourses attributed to modern schooling in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the social selection and prejudices deeply ingrained in the existing socio-cultural hierarchies, as well as the growing privatization of English-sloganeering schools in urban and semi-urban centres under the influence of neoliberalism, meritocracy and global capitalism has always challenged the very equality-equity discourses and practices of modern schooling in the state.

2. Theoretical motivation

The critical school of thought that examines schooling/education in general (Bourdieu 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Willis 1977), and language education in particular (Phillipson 1992; Pennycook 1994; Tollefson 1995; Canagarajah 1999) provides us with some conceptual tools for

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[3]   *Aadhar* schools were supposed to equip the pupils with basic literacy skills in Sanskrit and Nepali languages, basic numeracy skills and some vocational training.

[4]   *Pathshala* comprised of *bhasa pathshalas* (language schools) and Sanskrit *pathshalas* which were conducted in order to equip higher caste pupils with Sanskrit and Nepali literacy skills and priest-works to accomplish Vedic rites, rituals and performances.

analysing and understanding how modern schooling in relation to ELT including EMI acts as a key agent of social inequalities and exclusion. Equally, the critical examination of modernity through "a set of global cultural flows" (Appadurai 1996: 33) provides a powerful tool to see how the global flows of policies and pedagogies, and ideas and ideologies of English language education shape the identities of the modern school subjects, where English is often taught unevenly and ambivalently. However, before highlighting the theoretical as well as empirical insights, I conduct a short discussion on how and why I conceptualised "exclusionary-inclusion" in this ethnography.

Recent literature on critical school ethnography often retains high currency to the twin sociological constructs "social exclusion" and "social inclusion" (Lareau & Horvat 1999; Kane 2011; Tamim & Tariq 2015). Lareau and Horvat's exploration of social inclusion and exclusion with reference to race, class, cultural capital and family-school relationships between white and black parents in the US context; Tamim and Tariq's observation of the intersection between caste, social exclusion and educational opportunity in rural Pakistan; and Kane's investigation of school exclusion with reference to social class and gender in the context of the UK are just a few examples from the long list of school ethnographies that explored how social inclusion and exclusion are practised in schools and (language) classrooms. However, the fundamental question I raise here with reference to these studies is the very epistemological understanding of the notions – "social exclusion" and "social inclusion". These twin terms are often interpreted as having extremely opposite values in a continuum where "exclusion" stands for the social situation in which an individual or a social group is often marked with the ideological, political and/or structural segregation from the mainstream; whereas "inclusion" maintains participation and involvement of an individual or a social group in policy and legal framework in order to ensure one's integration into the mainstream. Thus, these epistemologies that swerve in the opposite end of the inclusion-exclusion continuum hardly account for the space in-between where "social inclusion" is often maintained in policies and legal framework, so that participation and engagement of an individual or a group in the mainstream polities to some extent takes place, yet the participant(s) often feel(s) alienated, excluded and marginalized due to the prevalent social inequalities and disparities. In this sense, the social exclusion is apparent; nevertheless, the policy and legal documents speak of social inclusion. I specify such a situation as "exclusionary-inclusion". The present ethnography examines a situation where policy and legal documents of modern schooling and ELT speak of social inclusion of all schoolchildren in mainstream schooling. However, schoolchildren of the Dalit social group very often experience social exclusion on grounds of apparent social hierarchies as well as emergent global cultural complexities. To grasp such a complexity, I am better informed with the theoretical perspectives I discuss below.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1986; 1991) scholarly contributions, especially on "cultural capital" and "symbolic domination", provide some useful insights for exploring social exclusion of schoolchildren from the marginalized social category in schools and classrooms. Bourdieu often maintains that schools perform the work of reproducing social inequalities and disparities by distributing and legitimizing the cultural capital that favours the social-cultural practices and tastes of the middle class. The students entertaining the dispositions with more valuable social and cultural capital perform better in schools and classrooms than their otherwise-comparable peers who embody less valuable social and cultural capital. As such, the schoolchildren from low and marginalized social standing predominantly experience symbolic domination and submit themselves to the social exclusion and alienation in a school and classroom environment. As Bourdieu argues, cultural capital that exists in any of these forms: "embodied" (long-lasting dispositions of mind and body), "objectified" (cultural goods including books, dictionaries, etc.), and "institutionalised" (objectification in educational qualifications and standards) can be exchanged with other capital, and also deserves more symbolic values in the field of interaction or

market (Bourdieu 1986: 84). Bourdieu's reproduction-production thesis based on cultural capital and symbolic domination has been a strong reference for a large number of critical ethnographies on schooling/education (Dimaggio 1982; Willis 1977; Mills 2008; Skinner & Holland 1996). Although, these ethnographies diverge on a number of theoretical and empirical premises for their field of investigation, the role of human agency and the nature of argumentation that they attempt to hold, they do have consensus on the role of schooling/education for reproducing social inequalities and disparities.

Such an argument with reference to cultural capital and symbolic domination has also become a strong reference to the studies in English as Second/Foreign language (ESL/EFL) education (Park & Wee 2012; Malik & Mohamed 2014; Tollefson 1995). Park and Wee (2012), examining the role of English language in the current world of 'flows' and 'interconnections', critically argue that English is often perceived as "a capital with global convertibility…in the global (linguistic) market" (165). It is so since the English knowledge and communication skills are often indexical and convertible into other forms of capital, for example, Nepali people having some command of the English language are found to have enjoyed more opportunities in the job market compared to those who are 'English-illiterate'. However, since it manifests itself in diverse non-native society unevenly and irregularly, "English has become a key example of the problems and dilemmas that globalisation engenders and exacerbates" (Park & Wee 2012: 3). The opportunity of learning quality English is very often associated with those who can afford it. The ones struggling at the peripheries of any society are always disconnected from the access of quality English language education. Such an argument often echoes in Malik and Mohamad (2014), who explored how "English as a cultural capital" has become an agent for reproducing social inequalities and existing socio-economic class structure in a non-native society (165-166).

Some scholars in language education, remarkably Phillipson (1992), Tollefson (1995) Pennycook (1994) and Canagarajah (1999), have widely discussed how English language education has performed the role of reproducing social inequalities and exclusions that mostly underpin socio-economic constraints and linguistic minorities. They often criticise how the current globalisation processes have caused an unprecedented flow of English, and how such a flow, connecting intricately with the emergent social, cultural, political, and economic flows, perpetuates social inequalities in diverse non-native societies such as Asia and Africa. They do not deny that English has acted as the cultural/symbolic capital for many elites and middle class people to attain social prestige, global connection and economic enhancement in these societies. However, for them, such a role of English is very serious and often exclusionary in nature since a large number of people, mainly in the developing societies, have been forced to experience social inequalities and exclusion in their social, cultural and educational repertoires because of the prejudices constructed through and around English and ELT. These theoretical arguments are found imperative to understanding the spread of English and its manifestations in modern schooling in a multilingual, multiethnic and socially stratified society (Phyak 2013). And particularly, as the major focus of this ethnography is on Dalit children, these insights are more imperative to exploring how English and its unequal manifestation through modern schooling, whether that be ELT or EMI, enforce exclusionary-inclusion among these children because of their lower caste inheritance, gendered self and socio-economic constraints in a highly stratified community context in Nepal. Thus, in the section below, I explore research context, ethnographic methods employed for collecting data, and the analytical optics framed for situating the research argument.

3. Context

This study, a part of my broader PhD research, took place at Ranidanda Dalit Community (RDC)[5] and the schools located nearby in Western Nepal. RDC is located adjacent to a small historical town of the district. The town itself is found to be interacting with the transition between the feudal tradition of the past, primarily reflecting Hindu religious practices, social hierarchy and earlier histories of the Shah dynasty, and the (so-called) modern practices of schooling/education, fashioning, advertising, marketing, travelling, communicating outside, etc. that, however, befit what Liechty (2003) calls "Nepali modernity" on its own (210). It accommodates the administrative offices of the whole district, that of the municipality, hospitals, modern schools both public and private, a museum portraying how the past king fought to unify small principalities, and a few modern hotels for tourists from home and abroad. Consisting of forty thousand people in the main town and nearby village settlements that elevate from a low-level riverbank to the top of the 1100ft. hill, this town connects itself with the rest of the country via a 24 km concrete road from the south, and the villages of the uplands with a number of rough gravelled roads that depart from the heart of this town. Nonetheless, for centuries, the centre of the town was mostly occupied by Newars and Brahmin-Chhetris, both the higher caste social groups, and the emergent flow of migration increasing during the last few decades has transformed the town into a site of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversities. Yet, the influence of classical caste-culture based on the Hindu religion is still a residual apparatus of the feudal past in shaping the life trajectories of the people of the town, and so are the Dalits who have been living in the adjacent settlements for centuries.

The first (so-called) modern school was founded in this town along with the mass-school movement right after the establishment of democracy in the 1950s in the state. The school was established on the basis of a conventional Sanskrit *Pathshala* and a skill-based *aadhar* school (middle school). Although the school was said to be open to the masses since its instigation, the Dalit people of RDC remained unaffected by it for many decades. Since the caste and gender discrimination continued to be reinforced on grounds of classical Hindu religious practices and feudal rule, the Dalits and women were hardly given any access to mass schooling. The public fallacies such as *sana jat le padnu hudaina* [the small castes should not read and write], *chhorilai padaera ke kaam* [What is educating daughters worth?] worked to maintain the subordination of Dalits and women in this hierarchical society. Although, many schools in their vicinity mushroomed in the 1970s and 1980s, parental illiteracy, social prejudices for Dalit castes and fragile livelihood remained challenging for the Dalits with respect to school attendance. Only after the 1990s, along with the influence of political transformations in the state, Dalit parents became slightly aware of formal schooling for their children. The school records show that the enrolment among the RDC people increased considerably only during the last decade. Yet, their school engagement is not as satisfactory as the modern school ideals in the state expect. Rather, I found these schoolchildren seriously entrenched with the social inequalities constituted around public-private schooling in their educultural repertoires. The social prejudices rooted in their low caste inheritance, gendered self and economic fragility are crucial in shaping their social identities. Still, one more social agent that I found crucially confounding among these Dalit children, and also their parents, is schooling in relation to ELT including EMI in their social life. Educational circumstances that concern English and ELT including EMI enforce exclusionary-inclusion of these children, although they attend schools and (EFL) classrooms as the "principled inclusion" advocates.

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[5]   RDC and participants are given pseudonyms here.

4. Methods and data

Ethnographic methods, particularly qualitative interviewing of the Dalit schoolchildren, parents and both Dalits and non-Dalit schoolteachers, Focus-Group Discussion (FGD) with schoolchildren and English subject teachers, and multisite observation in schools, EFL classrooms and community settings, were employed as the principal methods of data collection in this research. Qualitative interviewing of twelve Dalit schoolchildren, four times each, provided me with knowledge of how these children understood and responded to schooling and English learning in relation to their life, livelihood, social positioning and future aspirations. The FGD carried out once with both the public school and private school Dalit student groups informed me of how they experienced schooling and English learning. I ran the FGD with public school students and private school students separately. Also, the FGD with the English subject teachers of the participant schools informed me of how they [teachers] experienced the school/classroom engagement and behaviour of the students of different social groups, especially focusing on Dalit children. The use of multisite participant observation in community, school and EFL classroom spaces gave me knowledge of how Dalit schoolchildren engage and act in diverse social sites. For the qualitative interviewing, I prepared interview guidelines focusing particularly on children's engagement, imagination and aspiration to English learning. The interviews with students, their parents, teachers and principals were all conducted in semi- or unstructured settings. Since the participant children preferred Nepali to English to express themselves, we conversed in Nepali language while interviewing and conducting FGDs. For participant observation, I also prepared guidelines, and engaged myself fully in EFL classrooms, community activities and feasts, and festivals taking place at RDC. I always took field notes when I participated in schools, classrooms, home visits and work sites (e.g. construction sites, wage labour in farming, household chores, etc.) in which students were engaged. Along with these methods, I also requested that all participant Dalit children and a few of their non-Dalit friends write daily diaries. These diaries remained imperative to exploring how these children engaged themselves at home, work, construction sites, wage labour, TV watching, peer engagements and school reflection. Furthermore, these diaries shed light on how the Dalit children enacted multiple and often simultaneous identities, including "schooled identity" (Levinson 1996: 211) and English Language Learner (ELL) in their home, at school and in the community space.

5. Analytical procedure

Gupta and Ferguson (1997) argue that ethnography always contains at least some recognition that knowledge is inevitably both "about somewhere" and "from somewhere," and that the knower's location and life experience are somewhat central to the kind of knowledge produced (35). As such, the argument built up around the present research issue here reflects some manifold interactions between my real life experience as an ethnographer, and the field confronted; between my own experience as an English language educator at a university college in that locality, and the theoretical insights drawn from my reading of critical ethnography on modern schooling in general, and that of second/foreign language education in particular. Particularly, in this paper, the data concerning the policies and practices of ELT including EMI at schools, on the one hand; and the children's life stories, experience and engagement in modern schooling and English learning, on the other hand, were analysed tracking "thematic analysis" (Boyatzis 1998; Baraun & Clarke 2012). As such, I transcribed the raw data from all sources (interview, observation, field notes and diaries) into Nepali, and translated it myself into English. Coding and categorizing took place focusing especially on ELT cum EMI policies, their practices at schools and in EFL classrooms, and Dalit children's interaction with such policies and practices at school and in EFL classrooms. Here, interaction meant their understanding, experience, engagement and behaviour in the community, at school and in classroom spaces in relation to English and English learning

opportunities. Codes and categories were invented in the data transcripts, and I tried to establish if there were any patterns. I then developed "narratives and stories" of each of the participant schoolchildren (Silverman 2013), which I incorporated into in the analytical procedures. The analysis of policy-practice at schools and schoolchildren's narratives informed a number of domains of social exclusion. Here, in particular, I highlight policy-practice ambiguities for English and ELT including EMI and caste-class-gender intersections with English Learning Opportunities (ELOs) in schools and EFL classrooms.

6. Domains of exclusionary-inclusion
6.1 Policy-practice ambiguities
School pedagogies in Nepal often highlight English knowledge and communication skills as a dire need for the young citizens in order for them to connect themselves with the outside world in their future. English and English education have been perceived as "modern" and *bikasi* [developed] in the state since the very start of formal schooling, and such notion in regard to English learning is still dominant in society (Shrestha 1995: 268). English as cultural/symbolic capital is deeply rooted for Nepalese pertaining to the elites and middle-class since it indexes higher social status, social mobility, linguistic superiority and educational and economic benefits (Giri 2010: 93). Also, the masses have shown an increased interest in possessing English knowledge and communication skills with a view to attaining such middle class indexes. However, far from these indexes, the analysis of the data here suggests that English is intricately connected to favouritisms and social prejudices among the school subjects at RDC. Policy-practice ambiguity apparently realized in ELT including EMI in school pedagogies, in this particular context, institutionalises exclusionary-inclusion among the schoolchildren. As I observed, the schools involved in this study adopted diverse and often ambiguous ELT and EMI policies locally. These schools are locally identified as English-medium-schools and Nepali-medium-schools, and they differ in regard to the total teaching hours allocated to English Subjects per week, type of English textbooks pupils are prescribed to read, and the Medium-of-Instruction (MI) adopted for instructing other subjects including Mathematics and Science. The schools that allocated more teaching hours for English and EMI are, from a social perspective, perceived as *ra:mro siksha* [better education], whereas the ones that lacked such emphasis are undermined for their service. Educational actors (schools, principals, teachers, students and parents) are confused by such locally instituted policies that underline some powerful ideoscapes of English, ELT and EMI. Such policies, constituting "English-rich" vs. "English-poor" school types through uneven pedagogical practices, confront us with the question of whether English should be seen as *samayako ma:g* [demand of time] or "a special problem" that institutionalises power and privileges to some learners; and symbolic violence and subordination to others - mostly those belonging to Dalits and economically disadvantaged social groups (Ramanathan 1999: 212). Such confrontation can be seen in the responses by school actors, here by principals of two different EMI schools for example, when I asked how they perceived a higher emphasis on English in their respective schools. Principal 1 replied,

> It is because of the time, the demand of time [*samayako mag*]. You know, what parents want from their children today? They want their children to speak English not only in the English classrooms, but also on the way to school and back home in the morning and evening; they don't know English at all but they become happy when their children learn and speak more English. What to do then? If we don't teach them more English, and English Medium Instruction, they leave for other schools…Boarding [schools], for English. [Interview, 10/07/2014]

However, Principal 2 put his words differently,

> I am worried…I know we have to teach English well at our schools, but you see, how is the practice? We have stressed it unnecessarily in some schools, English, English, English,..but not in others, yet we use the same mechanism to evaluate at the final exam, isn't it problematic for those who cannot do well in English or learn more English? [Informal talk, field note, 16/07/2014]

English has constituted a hegemonic space in school policies and pedagogies as a *samayako ma:g* [demand of time]. Equally, it is, allegedly, perceived as "problematic" in school and classroom practices. By stating "*samayako ma:g*" for English learning, Principal 1, in an elegant manner, explained that "the new global condition where our children may not be confined to a single space, they go, contact, and speak to other different people, and learn new things face to face or through media" [Interview]. However, such a situation obviously contrasts with the life, livelihood and school engagement of young Dalit children who find themselves beyond school ideals and expectations. They attend schools, and attempt to act as instructed. Yet, their socio-economic positioning and the linguistic and cultural habitus that they have always embodied are confronted by the school policies and knowledge that they are exposed to. Sajan, a Grade 9 Dalit student at an English Medium private school shared his school experience with me as follows:

> I came to join this school two years back. My parents sent me here as this school is the best among others, but now I feel it is very difficult for me. All teachers and students have been instructed to speak English in the classrooms and school premises,…only English…our class has an English Monitor, he makes lists of the names of those who speak Nepali in the classrooms, and submits the lists to the class teacher for sanctioning. I am still new to this school, and not good at English either. I find it difficult. I am scolded a lot for my poor English in English subject classes. I feel so isolated! I cannot speak English like my friends in a class do. [Interview, 11/08/2014]

Sajan's school, one of the private schools in the town, was established in the early 1990s. As it was founded along with the neoliberal influence in Nepal, the school was "mainly established with a view to meeting the middle-class' demand for English and quality education" [Interview, Founder Principal]. From the very start of its establishment, more exposure to English and EMI has been pronounced as "the key tools to meet the motto of quality education" [Principal, Interview]. A big display board comprising students' creative writings in both English and Nepali at the main entrance; cemented beams all painted with English and Nepali quotes from legends from home and abroad; walls painted with the portraits of great writers, including Western writers, such as Shakespeare, Byron and Shelly; display boards by the door outside each class to project the students' creations in English and Nepali; and the usual morning assembly accompanied by students who take turns speaking in English, quiz round, music round, as well as the usual, provision of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities – all of these illustrate how the school has attempted to maintain a good environment as well as an "English Speaking Environment". Equally, "more periods for English language subjects" as well as "the balance between literature, grammar and conversational courses for each Grade", all indicate how this school has adopted "more English exposure" at the centre of its policies and pedagogies. However, such policies and pedagogies become confusing for young Dalit schoolchildren who often find school pedagogies seriously conflicting with their social standing, economic and cultural constraints and investment. Despite all these efforts of his school, Sanjan's remark "I feel isolated…" challenges the very ideal

of social inclusion in modern schooling and makes us understand how policy-practice ambiguities in schooling in relation to ELT and EMI enforce exclusionary-inclusion among the Dalit children in this particular time and space. In the next section, I will discuss further how such exclusionary-inclusion is situated amid a very complex intersection of caste-class-gender with English Learning Opportunities (ELOs) in the school life of Dalit schoolchildren.

6.2 Caste-class intersection with ELOs
Any critical observation on schooling in Nepal often argues that it, to a large extent, is a matter of economic capital, both in terms of access to school education as well as the expected outcomes (Valentin 2001: 49). As society itself is deeply imbued with social disparities as regards social caste and class, the children from low socio-economic standing, especially Dalits, hardly enjoy better access to education. These children often seek to find their path of school progress somewhere in inexpensive public schools. It does not mean that all public schools function poorly for the schoolchildren, and all Dalit children attend such schools. However, in the face of the lack of proper economic and social capital, these children are often forced to see their "schooled identity" (Levinson 1996) in some poorly managed schools. In this section, the very use of caste-class is to indicate how caste hierarchy is intricately connected to the class hierarchy among the Dalit people. At RDC, I found most of the Dalits to be economically marginalised. The social marginalisation corresponded deeply with economic marginalisation. Also, many young Dalit children were increasingly affected by class disparities compared to caste, nonetheless, the latter was not less abstemious in shaping their social-cultural identities (Liechty 2003).

The caste-class intersection was found to be deep-seated in ELOs at RDC. I found the schoolchildren mostly engaged in tough household labour in order to maintain family livelihood. They hardly have any time for learning English, math and science, which they often considered "difficult subjects and need more time for learning" [Kisan, Interview]. As I analysed the students' daily diaries written during my fieldwork, I discovered how these Dalit children are deeply perpetrated with double roles: the school responsibilities and the family livelihood, involving themselves either in *dhalan* [construction works] or agricultural wage labour, including household chores, at the same time. Kisan, a High School Dalit male student at a local Nepali Medium Public School, said,

> I am interested in reading more; but you know, I have to work a lot at home, or else we do not get to eat [*kaam nagare khana painna*]; I do everything, plowing, working for *dhalan* [building cemented homes]. Only at noon, I go to school, otherwise I work to support my family earning…English, math, science are difficult subjects, need more time to read, sometimes I cannot complete my homework, it is difficult for me. [Kasan, Interview, 27/07/2014]

In a similar vein, Samjhana, another Dalit female student of that school, narrated her household responsibilities and daily obligations as follows,

> You know, I have to work a lot, collecting fodders, preparing meals, taking care of junior siblings, and supporting parents in farm works during holidays…When to read? I hardly have any time to read books. English is difficult compared to other subjects for me. I need more time, as it is not our language. But I don't have the time. I was good at English in my lower Grades but now I am getting weaker and weaker. During the exams, I have a hard time. I feel hopeless, if I can do my SLC! [Informal Talk: Field note, 20/08/2014]

Mark Liechty (2003: 213) often argued that formal schooling, particularly in relation to private schooling, has enforced schoolchildren and their parents "to imagine themselves in terms of economic class" in Kathmandu. Such a role of schooling closely resonates in the case of RDC schoolchildren and their parents as well. The fact that English Medium private schools are mushrooming in the yard of RDC and local town reinforces the existing social disparities. Also, the complex juxtaposition of existing social disparities, and the emergent social, cultural, political and economic flows that these Dalits are increasingly interacting with through migration in the labour markets and media consumption, has promoted the social inequalities at RDC. In this very situation, schoolchildren (and parents as well), on the one hand, encounter the flows of images, ideas and ideologies that highlight the dire need for English knowledge in the present society, and on the other, they found themselves positioned and identified as "English-Poor" because of their engagement at poorly managed public schools. Many Dalit children often shared with me how they are experiencing less ELOs in their school life. Kabir, a Dalit male at Nepali Medium Public school, explains,

> I am not good at English. I didn't go to the Boarding School because I knew my parents could not afford it. I see a lot of differences between ours and theirs. I have some friends there from this *Tole* [hamlet]. They have all their subjects conducted in English Medium so they can speak English well. Surely, they get better jobs because people prefer English-speaking applicants everywhere. [Field note, 20/08/2014]

Many other students narrated similar stories to me. The analysis of these stories inform us that modern schooling in relation to its ambivalent manifestation through ELT and EMI policies has perpetuated social inequalities and exclusion among these Dalit children at RDC. Many children were found to have the same playground to enjoy in the mornings and evenings, but different schools to enforce identities of difference, especially between *angreji-janne* [English-knowing] and *angreji najanne* [English-not-knowing], which is socially implied *hune khane* [better-off] and *huda khane* [down-trodden] in this particular community. Furthermore, the analysis also informs us that the gendered self, constituted around Dalit livelihood and school engagement, is even more convolutedly intersected with ELOs. This is elaborated on with ethnographic insights below.

6.3 Gender-caste intersection with ELOs
Inequalities in gender arguably originate in a widespread and systematic marginalisation of women and girls throughout Nepal (Shields & Rappleye 2008: 266). The social-cultural practices reinforced on grounds of Hindu religion as well as the hierarchical social system reinforced by caste-class-gender disparities for centuries always challenge the very equality-equity of in their social, cultural, political, economic and educational repertoires. The gender roles constituted amid such conventional practices push women so they experience an extra burden in their family life. The situation is even more serious to those from the marginalized communities. This is apparent in RDC where I found women forced to experience tripartite social domination viz. patriarchy, caste hierarchy, and gender hierarchy, simultaneously. Compared to men, the opportunities of modern schooling remained poor for these Dalit women for decades, even after the establishment of schools in their community yard. As I conducted a number of informal talks with *aama samuha*[6]

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[6]   *Amaa samuha* [Mothers' Community] is a social group that women of RDC initiated with the help from a local NGO. The group conduct different activities, e.g. "running a small fund collection for the children's school fees and other domestic affairs," "regulating adult literacy class," "ensuring joint participation in development work in their community," and "raising a voice against different sorts of inequalities" [extracted from informal talk with the Vice Chair of one aama samuha, field note].

[mothers' community] at RDC, I found them subjected to not only the patriarchally-loaded misbeliefs, such as *chhorile padera ke hunchha ra?* [What is it worth to educate daughters?] *saano jat tyai pani chhori, padera ke kaam?* [What is it worth by educating a daughter, even of low caste?] [August 2014], but also culturally-loaded unequal family roles and responsibilities, such as cooking, nursing kids, and other household errands. In addition, the lack of necessary family capital (economic as well as social-cultural) remained decisive for their exclusion from educational opportunities for a long time. Besides a very few SLC Graduates, many adult women stated their position as *ma aafno naam matra lekhna-padna sakshu* [I can read and write only my name] [field note] and also gave credit to the adult literacy class that ran in the late 90s with technical support by a local Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). RDC people mainly started to enrol their daughters in schools during the last decade. Many adult women (men as well) expressed their miseries and destitutions of life which they commonly call *dukha* [hardship of life] as "not being literate", which encouraged them to make their daughters attain "at least school level education". [Field note, 2014]. Such an understanding echoed in the stories of female schoolchildren at RDC. Rama, a High School female student at a Nepali Medium Public school, said,

> Earlier, there was no tradition of educating daughters. As they said, my mother didn't go to school, father went just for a few years for lower Grades. Now they are suffering. They tell me to "read, or else you have to suffer like we do, we are kaano [blind]." [Interview, 07/08/2014]

Illiteracy is often expressed as *kaano* [blind] in everyday speech at RDC. Formal schooling is perceived as the only way to get rid of *kaano*, and also to attain a kind of symbolic capital that helps them fight poverty, social marginality and caste-gender discrimination. However, such ideals of schooling become infeasible for these young school girls as they themselves are confused with the current disparities in education and ELT practices. The gender disparities in household activities, very poor family conditions, choice of mostly inexpensive public schools for the girls, and the lack of a child-friendly school environment at schools often push these girls so that they feel alienated, insecure and excluded, albeit they enrol and attend the schools and classrooms. Rama shared her English Language Learning (ELL) experience with me as I interviewed her after school hours,

> KAM: Did you enjoy your English class today?
> RAMA: Ummm…as usual,…I got scolded a lot?
> KAM: Why?
> RAMA: Last evening, I could not do homework at home. I could not answer the teacher. You know, teachers also do not understand our problems!
> KAM: What problems do you mean?
> RAMA: I have to do a lot of work at home. Sometimes I even go to *dhalan* [construction site] with my mother to earn some wage. It is really difficult!
> KAM: Difficult for what?
> RAMA: Doing homework, coming to school every day, and learning English like sir asks.
> [Field note, 24/08/2014]

In one way, Rama's attempts at schooling and English learning could be interpreted as a way of liberating herself from the adversities that her family was experiencing due to its low economic capital. Ideally, schooling and English learning are supposed to encourage her to imagine future progress and life-improvement. However, such imaginaries remain far since she is inextricably

bound up with very complex life trajectories, whether at school, EFL classrooms or in the home environment. In this situation, her interaction with ELOs in EFL classrooms (as one could observe in our conversation above) proves "really difficult!" Like Rama did, many Dalit girls narrated similar stories to me that concerned their engagement and experience in schooling in general and English learning in particular. These stories, nonetheless woven with individual specificities and engagements, very often informed us that schools and classrooms have provided these young marginalised girls with at least some space for interacting and negotiating with newer identities, such as "school girl", "English learner", and so on. Yet, the very condition of social prejudice, educational disparities exerted in schools and EFL classrooms in terms of EMI and English exposure, socially constructed meanings such as "English-rich" vs. "English-poor" at the schools they enrol in, and multiple hegemonies, including teacher hegemony that they experience in EFL classrooms, often force them to experience exclusionary-inclusion in the current educultural space.

7. Discussion

Currently, globalisation has become so pervasive and intense that anybody located anywhere is deeply affected by its influence in one way or another. The proliferation of "flows", whatever that be - people, money, technologies, images, ideas and ideologies of schooling (education), language teaching/learning, etc. - are all found to be dominant in the shaping of modern individuals, not only in urban and semi-urban social spaces but also in rural settings. However, the effect of globalisation is not as unproblematic for the people living in the peripheries of any society as one might think. Uneven and disjunctive manifestation of global-cultural flows is inextricably concomitant of the "greater social stratification and more inequality in society" (Rizvi & Lingard 2000: 419). Modern schooling/education is not far from such effects of globalisation. Rather, it is now confronted with a number of criticisms of its role of reproducing social inequalities and exerting social exclusion in relation to its multifaceted, and often ambivalent, interaction with current globalisation flows. Especially, its manifestation in relation to ELT including EMI and ELOs in developing non-native societies, such as Nepal, is found even more serious. In such societies, English is often attributed with cultural or symbolic capital, and said to be easily convertible into social status, economic benefits, and a salient token for approaching the Western World (Park & Wee 2012; Giri 2010; Liechty 2003). However, due to uneven and unequal distributions through its ambiguous policies and manifestations, ELT has become no more than an agent of social reproduction and exclusion. A society, where caste, class, gender, regional, and linguistic disparities are already profound in shaping the life-trajectories of many schoolchildren, the intervention of English, aligned with global capitalism, neoliberalism and resultant privatisation in schooling/education, wields no more than insecurity, alienation and exclusion of many young schoolchildren from the marginalised society. Thus, at this very moment, "English as a capital" itself becomes a key mechanism of exercising symbolic domination on these children since their family capital (here, cultural, social, economic, habitus) hardly befits the expectations of modern school policies and pedagogies.

The very discussion in this paper as such is not to overlook the role of modern schooling in terms of bringing these socially marginalised Dalit children into the school and classroom arenas, and providing them with at least some space for negotiating newer roles and "schooled identities" (Levinson 1996). Furthermore, it does not ignore the role of modern schooling as regards enhancing their enrolment as speculated in widely known inclusive education framed under the late modern education project "Education for All". Equally, it is not focused on labelling some superfluous criticisms against English and ELT in school education. However, the very discussion in this ethnography is to point out some serious nuances that strongly interrogate modern schools' promise of social inclusion of all children irrespective of their caste, class, gender, linguistic and regional backgrounds. As highlighted in the previous section, the schoolchildren from the

marginalised Dalit community, RDC, are not free from the social prejudices concerning their caste inheritance, gender role, and socio-economic positioning. Formal schooling is expected to be the ideal space for mitigating such prejudices for these young children as the "principled inclusion" advocates. However, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and many other scholars of the critical school of thought put forth, modern schooling legitimised the social inequalities by distributing capital (English as cultural/symbolic capital here) unequally and unevenly. It has done so through its ambiguous and ambivalent manifestation in relation to ELT policy-practice breach including EMI.

Finally, such unequal exposure of English and ELOs has certainly reinforced unequal competencies among the school goers where English knowledge and communication skills are the most expected norms in the diverse social milieus including the job market. An even more serious issue worth mentioning here is the fact that schooling has steered a new form of social discrimination; the form of social discrimination that enforces these Dalit children and their parents to locate themselves and their social positioning in terms of social, cultural and economic resources, which they invest or can invest in their children's schooling and English learning. As I highlighted referencing the individual cases of a few of the participating Dalit schoolchildren, ELT including EMI in Nepal is intersecting unevenly and ambiguously with primordial social disparities, and institutionalising the domains of exclusionary-inclusion among the schoolchildren from the marginalised Dalit community. Nonetheless, there could also be more factors for situating such domains; the crucial role of ELT and emergent English-sloganeering EMI schools cannot be ignored for their role of reproducing such social divisions among the citizens in this rural setting (Sonntag 2007; Tsui & Tollefson 2007). In the case narratives above, Sajan's experience "I feel isolated" constituted around policy-practice ambiguities in schooling in relation to English and ELOs, Kisan and Samjhana's experience of burdened household chores and their implications in their classroom engagement and power relations with the teachers and fellow students especially exerted on grounds of complex class-caste inter-sectionalities, and Rama's experience of gendered self, constituted on grounds of gender-caste-class inter-sectionalities at home, school and in EFL classroom all illustrate how modern schooling in relation to English and ELT/ELL enforces exclusionary-inclusion among the children from marginalised Dalit community.

8. Conclusion

Modern schooling in Nepal is often defined as the key agent of socialisation, democratisation and the overall development of the children irrespective of their caste, class, gender, linguistic background, ethnicity, and regional background. School objects, policies and pedagogies are ideally defined as inclusive so as to maintain equity-equality in access and participation of all schoolchildren in the state. However, this ethnography problematized such ideals on grounds of the schools' role in reproducing social inequalities by legitimising, and even promoting, the unequal manifestation of ELT including EMI and ELOs. It also problematized the conventional understanding of social exclusion and inclusion as mutually exclusive notions and, instead, conceptualised "exclusionary-inclusion" to designate some blurred space in-between by navigating a number of serious exclusionary practices in schools and EFL classrooms, where students are defined within an inclusive pedagogical policy framework. The policy-practice ambiguities and caste-class-gender intersections with ELOs are some domains that challenge the very ideal of social inclusion of Dalit children in schools and EFL classrooms. These domains should be addressed in policy formation, and school and (EFL) classroom practices to ensure the true inclusion of these socially, culturally and economically marginalised Dalit children in rural Nepal.

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