A Study to Examine Social Exclusion in Public Schools of Yamunamai Rural Municipality and Durgabhagwati Rural Municipality
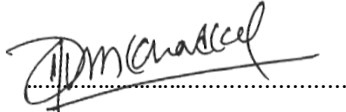
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Approved

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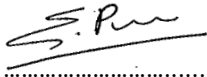
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Declaration

I hereby declare that the report entitled "A Study to Examine Social Exclusion in Public Schools of Yamunamai Rural Municipality and Durgabhagwati Rural Municipality" is my own work and has not been submitted to any academic institution for any other degree.

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Abstract

This research study represents a significant and comprehensive investigation into the presence and implications of social exclusion within public schools in the Rautahat Districts. The study focuses on understanding the multifaceted factors that contribute to experiences of exclusion among students in public schools. Likewise, for the purpose of examining social exclusion, the study adopts a rigorous mixed-methods research design, combining the strength of quantitative data from surveys with the rich insights obtained through focus group discussions and observations.

Covering five schools in Yamunamai Rural Municipality and seven schools in Durgabhagwati Rural Municipality, the research spans a substantial period of five months, ensuring a thorough and in-depth exploration of the subject. The extensive sample size of 600 respondents, comprising an equal representation of girls and boys from grades 3 to 8, contributes to the study's robustness and representativeness. Grounded in the renowned capability approach, conceptualized by eminent scholars like Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, and Mario Biggeri, this research stands on a solid theoretical foundation. By analyzing patterns of exclusion based on various demographics, including age, gender, grade, and ethnicity, the study unravels the intricate web of social exclusion within the education system.

The quantitative data analysis, skillfully executed through tabulation and descriptive techniques, provides a clear and compelling picture of indicators related to social inclusion and exclusion. Examining classroom participation, extracurricular engagement, peer interactions, teacher-student relationships, and access to resources, the findings reveal a comprehensive overview of the educational landscape in the Rautahat district. Complementing the quantitative findings, the qualitative data analysis derived from meticulous field notes adds depth of understanding to the research. The emergence of thematic insights enhances the study's richness, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the experiences and perspectives of students within the school environment.

This research not only expands the existing body of literature on social exclusion in the public education system but also contributes valuable insights to educational policies and practices. By shedding light on the complexities of social exclusion and its nuanced implications for students, this study calls for targeted interventions and inclusive reforms.

Keywords: Social exclusion, Public schools, Rural municipalities

Acknowledgment

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Acronyms

CA	Capability Approach
SE	Social Exclusion
SI	Social Inclusion
ECA	Extracurricular Activities
EFA	Education for All
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

Introduction

1.1 Background

Education is one of the most essential social variables that influence children's growth. Besides, education has tremendous inherent relevance since access to education is a fundamental right (Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)) and education is a necessary and highly useful capability. Furthermore, education is a crucial participatory process for children, and everyone should have equal access to it. It allows for involvement in and respect from society. Education plays an important role in addressing social exclusion and fostering inclusion. "Education is a fundamental human right and is required for the exercise of all other human rights," according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). It encourages individual independence and empowerment while also providing significant development advantages" (UNICEF).

Exclusion in education refers to the marginalization or exclusion of specific categories of people from the educational system. It occurs when individuals or groups of students are denied equitable access to educational opportunities, resources, or assistance based on their social, economic, cultural, or ethnic background. Exclusion in education can have serious effects on both individuals and society as a whole, perpetuating inequality and impeding social mobility.

However, exclusion in the education system is growing day by day, and it has affected a large segment of the population. In any social setting, exclusion from education germinates from various factors such as poverty, language, gender, location, disability, religion, ethnicity, and migration. Recent data from UNESCO shows that nearly 40% of children do not have access to education in a language they understand, and children with disabilities continue to be disproportionately excluded from school (UNESCO, 2023).

In a developing country like Nepal, exclusion can take on various forms, particularly influenced by factors like gender, caste, religion, and class. Certain segments of the population face significant marginalization, with Dalit children being overrepresented among out-of-school children (Chalaune, 2020). Research by Bhatta et al. (2008) highlights the existence of caste-based exclusionary practices at the primary and secondary education levels. Education can serve as a powerful tool in combating social exclusion as it brings together individuals from diverse castes, cultures, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

By ensuring equitable access to education for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances, society can work towards becoming more inclusive. The European Commission emphasizes the value of education and training in fostering social inclusion by equipping individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and

competencies for active participation in both society and the job market (European Commission, 2020). Equal educational opportunities empower people, enabling them to overcome social barriers and contribute positively to society.

The school environment is children's first exposure to the outside world, making it of tremendous significance in shaping their attitudes, perceptions, and experiences. An inclusive learning environment is essential to addressing all forms of social exclusion in education. By embracing diversity, promoting equal opportunities, and respecting the rights and dignity of all students, an inclusive learning environment recognizes the unique perspectives, experiences, and abilities each student brings to the classroom. The benefits of such an environment for students and the broader community are manifold.

Firstly, it fosters a sense of acceptance and belonging, boosting students' motivation, self-worth, and overall well-being. When students feel appreciated and engaged, they actively participate in learning and develop a passion for education. Moreover, an inclusive learning environment encourages interactions with classmates from diverse backgrounds, challenges conceptions, and encourages communication, which is cross-cultural understanding. These interactions nurture crucial social skills like collaboration, teamwork, and communication, which are vital for success in today's interconnected world. Additionally, it supports the development of a community that values tolerance, equality, and social cohesion.

Having an inclusive education system benefits not only children but society as a whole. Hence, the primary focus of this study is to identify and gain a comprehensive understanding of the key dimensions of social exclusion in rural schools and the diverse factors contributing to their exclusion. By shedding light on these aspects, the research seeks to pave the way for creating more inclusive educational environments that empower and uplift all students, regardless of their backgrounds, promoting a more equitable and harmonious society.

1.2   Problem Statement

Education, as a fundamental human right and a strong tool for encouraging sustainable development, is a critical component in realizing the vision of a more inclusive and equitable world envisioned by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agenda's emphasis on social inclusion and equal access to education for all citizens reflects a recognition that education is important not just for individual development but also for society's improvement and progress. However, the increased frequency of social exclusion within the public school system poses a serious threat to community well-being and growth.

Despite global recognition of education as a fundamental human right and a critical tool for individual development and social inclusion, exclusionary practices continue to marginalize vulnerable groups (UNESCO, 2023; UNICEF). Shockingly, one in five children, adolescents, and youth worldwide remains entirely excluded from education (UNICEF). The ramifications of such exclusionary practices go beyond personal advancement; they hinder societal progress and cohesion. Social exclusion poses a grave threat to the transformative power of education, preventing personal empowerment and social cohesion. The perpetuation of exclusionary practices contributes to existing imbalances by impeding societal progress and stifling the potential of a significant segment of the global population (World Bank, 2019; UNESCO,

2020). This exclusionary impact extends far beyond individual experiences, rumbling through communities, restricting access to opportunities, and eroding the overall quality of life.

Access to high-quality education is vital for personal empowerment, economic growth, and social integration. However, exclusionary practices limit access to essential information, skill development, and meaningful participation in social and economic life (UNESCO, 2020). As a result, those denied education face limited opportunities for upward social mobility, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality (Gazeley, 2011). Additionally, the exclusion of marginalized groups, including girls, children from vulnerable areas, and people with disabilities, exacerbates existing imbalances and hampers efforts to achieve inclusive development.

To realize the transformative power of education and combat social exclusion, transformative policies and practices are imperative. Adequate investment in education infrastructure, teacher training, and targeted support for marginalized groups are crucial steps toward dismantling barriers to learning. Additionally, challenging societal norms that perpetuate exclusion and fostering community engagement can create a more enabling and supportive environment for all learners (UNESCO, 2020).

Consequently, social exclusion within the public education system is both a hindrance to sustainable development and a violation of the fundamental right to education. To leverage the empowering nature of inclusive education and build cohesive societies, policymakers and stakeholders must collaborate to dismantle exclusionary practices and foster an education system that is all-encompassing. By harnessing education's transformative potential, a future is envisioned where every individual accesses quality education and contributes to building a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous world (World Bank, 2019).

Amid the challenges of social exclusion in Nepal's public education system, this study comprehensively explores student experiences in relation to them. Focusing on rural community schools, it investigates underlying factors using literature, empirical data, and observations. The research uncovers gaps perpetuating social exclusion within the education system, highlighting reasons hindering equitable access irrespective of socio-economic or cultural contexts. Additionally, it offers actionable insights and evidence-based recommendations to bridge these gaps. Envisioning a transformed future, the research aims for Nepal's education to be a catalyst for positive societal change, ensuring every student's involvement and maximizing education's potential.

1.3   Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To identify and understand the key dimension of social exclusion experienced by students in rural community schools.

- To understand the factors that contribute to social exclusion in the context of rural community schools.

1.4   Research question

The research questions for this study are as follows:

- What are the key dimensions of social exclusion experienced by students in rural community schools?

- What are the main factors contributing to social exclusion in the context of rural community schools?

1.5   Significance of the Study

Despite efforts to promote inclusive education, social exclusion remains a prevalent problem in public schools. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the dynamics of social exclusion within educational settings. By identifying the determinants of social exclusion and examining the experiences of students, this study aims to shed light on the challenges faced by marginalized individuals and promote an inclusive and supportive educational environment. The findings of this research hold significant implications for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in the education sector. By understanding the determinants of social exclusion, stakeholders can develop evidence-based policies and interventions to address the issue effectively, creating more inclusive and equitable learning environments.

The findings of this research will be of great value to NGOs and organizations working towards inclusion in education. By providing insights into the specific needs and experiences of students, NGOs can tailor their programs and initiatives to address the unique challenges faced by children in public schools. Also, the insights gained from this study will serve as a valuable guide for the implementation of intervention strategies to combat social exclusion in public schools. This may include teacher training on inclusive teaching practices, targeted support for marginalized students, and the development of anti-discrimination policies within schools.

1.6   Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations that were acknowledged while conducting this study. Some of the limitations are listed below:

Language and Communication Barriers: Language barriers might have limited the participation of some students or stakeholders, especially if the questionnaire or discussions were not available in their preferred language.

Limited Perspective: While the study focuses on students' experiences, other stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and administrators may also play significant roles in perpetuating or addressing social exclusion.

Limited Perspective of Social Exclusion: The study's focus on a specific set of domains and indicators may not sufficiently capture the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion experienced by students in the education system. Other important dimensions or factors could have been overlooked.

Literature Review

This chapter delves into the multifaceted nature of "social exclusion and inclusion" by exploring various definitions, conceptualizations, and understandings of the concept. It acknowledges that social exclusion can manifest differently in different contexts and highlights the detrimental effects of education deprivation as a significant contributing factor to social exclusion. The chapter emphasizes that social exclusion encompasses not only the denial of basic resources and opportunities but also the limitation of individuals' capabilities to participate fully in society.

Drawing upon the capability perspective developed by Amartya Sen, the chapter specifically examines how social exclusion is intricately intertwined with capability deprivation. The chapter also explores the link between education and the capability approach. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the importance of inclusive education policies at both the global and national levels. Inclusive education policies at the global level seek to promote inclusive practices across nations, while national-level policies address the specific contexts and challenges of individual countries.

2.1   Understanding Social Exclusion and Inclusion

This section delves into an extensive review of existing literature on the topics of social exclusion and social inclusion. It aims to explore and analyze the diverse scholarly works and research studies that shed light on these crucial concepts.

2.1.1   Social exclusion

Exclusion happens as a result of "social closure," which is "the process by which social collectivities seek to achieve maximum rewards by restricting access to a limited number of eligible" [Parkin, 1979]. Social exclusion encompasses various definitions, as there is no universally accepted definition. Sen (2000) defines social exclusion as "the deprivation of fundamental capabilities and freedoms that hinder individuals from fully participating in the economic, social, and political aspects of society. Sen's definition holds true when considering the context of public schools. When students lack social relationships, which are essential capabilities, they experience deprivation in terms of support and opportunities, leading directly to social exclusion. Social exclusion involves denying certain individuals the chance to live a minimally decent life due to a lack of basic resources like food, shelter, healthcare, political influence, employment prospects, or education (Nussbaum, 2011). Every individual has the right to fundamental necessities such as food, shelter, education, and healthcare. When individuals are deprived of these rights, it can result in exclusion.

In her book "Women and Human Development," Nussbaum posits that social exclusion can manifest in various forms, including poverty, illiteracy, unequal healthcare access, and prejudice based on aspects of identity such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, or disability. She argues that social exclusion can have detrimental effects, such as diminished self-esteem, depression, social isolation, and limited opportunities for social and economic growth (Nussbaum, 2000). Both Sen and Nussbaum contend that social exclusion not only violates individual rights and freedoms but also poses a threat to the overall social and economic well-being of society. They advocate for policies and practices that foster social inclusion. However, their approach has been criticized for being individualistic and potentially overlooking the role of social structures and institutions in perpetuating social exclusion, such as unequal resource allocation and limited access to opportunities.

Social exclusion arises from a combination of political, cultural, and economic factors.

Among these, economic factors, such as unemployment and poverty, serve as the primary drivers of social exclusion. When individuals are unemployed, their access to essential needs like food, shelter, clothing, and education may be constrained, rendering them more vulnerable and susceptible to exclusion. Cultural factors, including stigma and discrimination, also contribute to social exclusion. Individuals who are deemed outcasts due to their caste, race, religion, or gender may face societal barriers and be excluded from social relationships, leading to social isolation. Finally, political factors such as discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion from decision-making processes can further perpetuate social exclusion. For example, ethnic and racial minorities may encounter discrimination in accessing healthcare and education, which hampers their full participation in society.

Social exclusion can manifest in diverse ways, and it is crucial to acknowledge the appropriate application of the concept. Given the broad nature of the term "exclusion," there may be a tendency to define any form of deprivation as an instance of social exclusion. However, it is important to exercise caution in such categorizations. For instance, while smartphones can enhance one's quality of life, their absence does not necessarily lead to exclusion from society. Similarly, the lack of basic educational infrastructure in a remote area may indicate deprivation, but it does not automatically imply social exclusion if the students in that area still have access to and participation in schools. Many challenges faced by individuals may act as barriers in their lives, but they may not directly result from social exclusion. The wide range of issues encompassed under the concept of social exclusion has sparked intense debate and criticism (Sen, 2000). It is essential to carefully delineate and define the boundaries of social exclusion to ensure that they are appropriately applied and to avoid diluting their significance.

Social exclusion refers to the process by which individuals or groups are either completely or partially excluded from fully participating in the society in which they reside (European Foundation, 1995). It involves the denial of social, political, and civil rights to citizens or the inability of certain groups to engage in crucial aspects of societal functioning, including political, economic, and social activities (Silver, 1994; de Haan, 1998). The concept of social exclusion encompasses multiple dimensions associated with "full citizenship," such as access to paid work and income, education, housing, healthcare, legal assistance, and public resources (Silver, 1994).

The significance of social exclusion lies in its focus on the relational aspects of deprivation (Sen, 2000). It highlights how individuals and groups can be disconnected

from vital social networks and relationships, which can have detrimental effects on their well-being. Social exclusion draws attention to the challenges individuals may encounter in their relationships, including limited access to education, employment opportunities, and public participation, ultimately leading to experiences of deprivation. Social exclusion can influence policies and activities to encourage greater social inclusion and minimize disparities in society by pointing out the underlying causes of disparities. For instance, policies designed to lessen social exclusion in education may emphasize inclusive education, enhancing equal access to education, parental involvement, teacher training, and social integration, and encouraging excluded groups to participate more actively in social and political life.

2.1.2   Social Inclusion

The concept of social inclusion has its roots in the ideas of nineteenth-century sociologist Joseph Weber, who emphasized the importance of social cohesion. In contemporary literature, social inclusion is often defined in relation to social exclusion rather than being defined independently. Aasland and Flotten (2000) note that the concept of social inclusion gained prominence in European policy discussions as it replaced the concept of poverty and encompassed a broader range of dimensions in people's lives. Some analysts argue that inclusion and exclusion are two interrelated aspects of the same phenomenon. Social inclusion is commonly defined in negative terms, referring to what is not socially excluded. For instance, not having access to basic education is considered exclusion, while having access to basic education is seen as inclusion.

In the majority of the exclusion literature, the nature and meaning of social inclusion are merely implied or asserted (Cameron, 2006). The idea of social inclusion is complex and multidimensional, and it can be challenging to express in precise words. It includes a variety of elements, such as having access to resources, taking part in social and economic life, and being able to feel a part of and identify with a community. Social inclusion is often not defined separately because it is often seen as the 'solution' or 'opposite' to social exclusion. However, some authors have defined social inclusion. The concept of "social inclusion" refers to the process of ensuring that individuals or groups have access to the resources and opportunities that are accessible to others and may participate fully in the economic, social, and political life of a society (European Commission, 2004). Social inclusion ensures that individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances, have equal access to the resources and opportunities that they need to maintain their well-being.

In the context of education, social inclusion means that all students, regardless of their caste, class, or background, have equal access to education and resources. This includes access to quality education, qualified teachers, curricula, and resources such as textbooks, computers, etc. For example, a socially inclusive educational system would guarantee that students with special needs have access to resources that allow them to fully engage in the learning process. This may involve using assistive technology, receiving specialist training, or using accessible course materials. Fostering diversity, equity, and respect may also entail building an environment that is inclusive and friendly to all students, regardless of their differences. Inclusive education also ensures access to the same educational opportunities for students from low-income families by providing financial assistance. It helps to create an

environment where all students are respected, valued, and supported and have an equal chance to succeed in life.

2.2   Stages of Inclusion

There are four stages or phases of inclusion that a community or society may go through as it strives to become more inclusive of all individuals, regardless of differences or background. Firstly, exclusion is the stage at which some individuals or groups are deliberately excluded from participation in various aspects of society, such as education, employment, or social gatherings, due to their origins or differences. The exclusion can be intentional or unintentional. For example, children not having access to school or students not having access to resources in school The second stage is segregation, where individuals who are excluded from some areas of society may be offered separate services or accommodations. For example, children with disabilities may be educated in special classrooms or separate schools rather than being included in mainstream schools. Thirdly, integration is the process of including people who are different or disabled in contemporary social structures and processes. This necessitates making the appropriate adjustments or changes to these institutions to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate.

Moreover, these modifications and adjustments are put in place to ensure that all individuals may participate equitably and inclusively. For example, include people with disabilities in mainstream classrooms instead of segregating them by providing assistive technology, ramps, accessible restrooms, etc. Lastly, inclusion is where every person in society is respected, embraced, and completely integrated. Inclusive practices are efficiently incorporated into all aspects of society, including education, employment, healthcare, and community participation, which means that every individual has equal access to opportunities and is able to participate fully in society without discrimination or barriers.

2.3   Capability Approach

The capability approach is a paradigm for assessing social and economic development that emphasizes the value of individual skills and freedoms (Sen, 1999). The capability approach contends that development should focus on increasing the chances for people to have meaningful lives rather than just increasing material prosperity or economic growth.

According to Sen, the capability approach "is an intellectual discipline that gives a central role to the evaluation of a person's achievements and freedoms in terms of his or her actual ability to do the different things a person has reason to value doing or being" (Sen, 2009). Sen defines a capability as "a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being; it represents the alternative combinations of things a person is able to do or be" (Sen 1993, p. 30). Hence, capabilities are the opportunity or ability to achieve the things that are considered valuable. Value and reasons for value are central to capability.

The two important concepts of the capability approach are functioning and capabilities. Functioning is the state of 'being, and functioning is the state of both "being and doing" (Sen, 2000). Examples of being educated, being illiterate, being part

of social networks, and being alone Examples of activities include traveling, dancing, and reading. Capabilities are real freedoms and opportunities to achieve this functioning (Terzi, 2005, p. 449). For example, going to school is functioning, while real freedom and the opportunity to get an education are capabilities.

Capabilities are also being explained as "actions one values doing or approaches to living one's values" (Unterhalter 2003, p. 666). The distinction between capability and functioning is very difficult, as it is difficult to distinguish what capability actually is. Capability is often confused with functioning, due to which there is always an issue when measuring the capability of a person. The third important concept that is central to the capability approach is freedom and agency. An agent is 'someone who acts and brings about change' (Sen, 1999). According to the capability approach, people should be actively involved in shaping their own future rather than being dependent on others. For example, being a student is the agent of our own learning.

The capability approach looks at capabilities rather than needs within the context of evaluating well-being (Norwich, 2014). The statement above is completely right when linking it with education. The capability approach argues that rather than only imparting basic knowledge and abilities to students, education should put more emphasis on fostering their full capabilities. For students to reach their full potential and realize their dreams, educational programs should be created to give them the opportunity and resources they require. For instance, a public school using the capability approach would give students access to extracurricular activities, mentoring programs, and other resources to support the development of their skills and interests. Also, to address social exclusion, the capability approach argues that policies and interventions should aim to enhance people's capabilities and freedom rather than just fulfill basic needs.

The capability approach is concerned with a variety of aspects of people's lives, including their social support system, health, and access to education. It is focused on what people are capable of doing, such as working and raising a family. It is concerned about the true freedom and well-being that individuals would experience as a result of being given options to choose from (Robeyns, 2017). For instance, while determining a household's poverty level using the capability approach, it is important to consider essential indicators and functions like health, education, and child nutrition. The focus on income level in a household to determine whether the members of that household are poor may be an unreliable indicator of the prevalence of poverty. The capability approach is an alternative to not only the income-based approach but also the happiness approach or resource-based theories. It is a multidimensional approach, as it is used not only to identify the poor but also in fields such as public health, development ethics, education, etc.

The capability approach is generally conceived as a flexible and multipurpose framework rather than a precise theory (Sen 1992a, 48; Alkire 2005; Robeyns 2005, 2016; Qizilbash 2012; Hick and Burchardt 2016, 78). The flexibility of the core concept of the capability approach, which is capability and functioning, can be applied in various ways within different capability analyses, as there is no rule that governs how to select capabilities. The capabilities approach does not provide a single set of ideas or solutions for assessing well-being or dealing with social problems. Instead, it offers a flexible and adaptable framework that may be utilized to address a variety of social problems in a variety of circumstances. For example, the capability approach focuses on an individual's capabilities and freedoms to assess well-being across a variety of areas, such as health, education, or work. This means going beyond meeting basic

needs and determining how much freedom and opportunity an individual has to do and be what they value. Instead of only concentrating on test results or achievement in school, the capability approach can be utilized in the context of education to evaluate the quality of education based on the skills it fosters, such as critical thinking, creativity, and social engagement.

Martha Nussbaum has significantly improved and expanded the concept of capability from the concept given by Sen, which has made a substantial contribution. Human capabilities are "what people are actually able to do and be (Nussbaum, 2000). The goal of Nussbaum's capabilities approach is to define capabilities as the core constitutional rights that should be granted to every individual worldwide and are, thus, unassailable (Nussbaum, 2000). Nussbaum's capability approach is particularly relevant when it comes to social exclusion, which refers to the systematic exclusion of specific groups of people from fully participating in society (Nussbaum, 2000). According to Nussbaum, social exclusion can be seen as the denial of certain capabilities required for human flourishing. All individuals must possess a certain set of capabilities in order to live a fulfilling life (Nussbaum, 2000). These capabilities include life, bodily health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, other species, play, and control over one's environment. According to Nussbaum, these capabilities ought to constitute the cornerstone of a fair society and ought to be supported and safeguarded by institutions and governing bodies.

2.4   Education Link with the Capability Approach

The capability approach emphasizes the role of education in promoting individuals' capabilities to achieve their goals and lead fulfilling lives. Education plays a central role in the capability approach (Sen, 1992). The sentence above states that education is one of the most important capabilities for human well-being. Nussbaum (1997, 2002, 2004, 2006), in her work on higher education in the United States and India and on schooling in India, has discussed the importance of education for women's empowerment and the importance of public education as crucial to democratic societies. When women have access to education, they can have more control over their lives and can participate fully in society, which makes them more likely to have better career prospects and healthier lives. This, in turn, can lead to inclusive societies. Education is a fundamental right that should be accessible to all individuals in society, irrespective of their social and economic status. Public education is necessary for building a democratic society, as it helps to promote social cohesion and increase inclusion by providing a common educational experience for all members of society.

Education should not only focus on acquiring knowledge; it should also focus on developing capabilities that will help individuals pursue their goals. The capability approach highlights the importance of equity and inclusion in education. This means that education should be accessible to all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic or cultural background. It should also be designed to address social and economic inequalities and provide opportunities for marginalized groups to overcome their disadvantages (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011; Alkire, 2002). Education is fundamental and foundational to the capabilities necessary to lead a good life. Since education in itself is a capability, it plays a substantial role in the expansion of other capabilities. The capability approach contends that education has to be planned to encourage the development of a variety of capabilities, including cognitive, social,

emotional, and practical abilities. These abilities should be developed in a way that is specific to each person's circumstances and setting, taking into account things like gender, socioeconomic status, culture, and other aspects of identity.

Instead of concentrating simply on academic or technical talents that may be valuable in the job market, education as a capability emphasizes the necessity of developing a broad variety of skills and abilities. This involves fostering social and emotional intelligence, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. People are better able to live satisfying lives, make wise decisions, and actively engage in their communities when they gain a variety of skills.

2.5   Educational Exclusion

Educational exclusion is the deliberate and long-term denial of educational opportunities and access to certain groups of people, such as girls, children from low-income families, people of color, and children with disabilities (UNESCO). This exclusion may take many different forms, such as lack of access to educational facilities or resources, prejudice, obstacles related to one's economic situation, and insufficient guidance. Exclusion from education is against human rights and can have a detrimental impact on both the individual and society as a whole.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has the right to education and that "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Education is one of the most important components of personal and societal development, as it provides individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead the world around them. It is one of the most powerful tools for the development of a nation. Having said that, education is one of the most important components, and many people around the world are facing educational exclusion. For instance, children who live in remote or underdeveloped areas might not have access to schools, textbooks, or teachers who are skilled. People are excluded on the basis of race, gender, religion, and disability from assessing quality education.

Children have been excluded from school in Nepal owing to stereotypes. In many rural communities, girl children are still out of school due to the notion that girls should stay at home and take care of household duties. Another factor contributing to exclusion in education is disability. Accessibility is one of the barriers that prevent children with disabilities from attending school. Exclusion from education has potentially harmful repercussions. Some of the detrimental effects that might result from educational exclusion include restricted economic prospects, less social mobility, and a greater risk of poverty and social exclusion. Furthermore, marginalized people might become even more marginalized as a result of educational exclusion.

2.6   Social exclusion and the capability approach

Social exclusion is a broad term that incorporates many aspects of disadvantage and marginalization. It refers to the process by which particular persons or groups are denied full participation in social, economic, and political life, thereby depriving them of essential capabilities. Capabilities relate to an individual's potential or opportunity

to achieve their objectives and live a fulfilled life (Robeyns, 2005). According to the capability approach, individuals have the right to various fundamental capabilities that allow them to live their lives to the fullest, such as education, health, and political participation. When people are restricted from using these capabilities, it leads to capability deprivation and, in extreme cases, social exclusion.

Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum's capability approach provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing social exclusion and fostering greater inclusiveness.

The capability approach is important in understanding social exclusion as it emphasizes the significance of individuals having the resources and freedom to pursue their goals and live the life that they value. However, social exclusion limits the freedom and resources of individuals and groups, which limits their full participation and potential in society. The capability approach focuses on enhancing individual capabilities. But in contrast to that, social exclusion often results when individuals are deprived of those capabilities. Social exclusion is linked to capacity deprivation.

There are two ways in which social exclusion can lead to capability deprivation: First is constitutive relevance, which refers to the idea that social exclusion can directly affect an individual's capabilities and functioning by limiting their access to resources and opportunities. Being excluded from these resources and opportunities can itself be a deprivation. An example could be the exclusion of specific groups of students from engaging in extracurricular activities, which can lead to the deprivation of capabilities such as the ability to develop physical skills. Next is instrumental importance, which refers to relational deprivation that is not bad in itself but can lead to terrible results. For example, not having accessible infrastructure doesn't create problems for people without disabilities, but for disabled people, it is one of the barriers that leads to deprivation.

Second, a distinction between active and passive exclusion is also necessary to understand deprivation. Active exclusion occurs when individuals are purposefully excluded from opportunities due to discrimination, stereotypes, or an uneven power relationship. For example, girls in certain communities are actively excluded from school due to patriarchal norms and values that favor boys' education. This kind of active exclusion can result in capability deprivation as girls are deprived of their freedom and opportunity. Furthermore, passive exclusion occurs when individuals are excluded from social, economic, and political opportunities without any intentional action against them. For example, children from low-income households may be excluded from educational opportunities because they do not have access to learning resources such as books or the Internet. This passive exclusion might result in capability deprivation since children are unable to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to fully participate in society.

2.7   Paradigm of Exclusion

There is no simple definition of social exclusion. To get broad knowledge about exclusion, Silver (1994) distinguished between the three paradigms of exclusion: solidarity, specialization, and monopoly. The solidarity paradigm links exclusion to social bonds. It considers exclusion as a break in social solidarity between individuals and groups. It places a strong emphasis on the value of collaboration, cooperation, and group efforts in accomplishing social and political goals. This paradigm is based on the concept that group work is more effective than individual interest. This paradigm

focuses on social solidarity, which has been identified by Amartya Sen as the core capability that individuals need in order to live fulfilling lives. For instance, when there is no social solidarity in the schools, students are less likely to work in groups to achieve common goals and to support each other in learning and personal development, which can further contribute to the negative school environment and, in the end, lead to exclusion from opportunities and resources.

The specialization paradigm states that exclusion is the outcome of discrimination. Societies are composed of individuals who have diverse interests and capabilities, which give rise to specialization in the market and social group. According to this paradigm, exclusion is a sort of discrimination that takes place when people are prohibited from moving freely between different spheres and when there are policies in place that prevent this. When rules that are imposed are not suited for a certain setting, they may limit social interaction, which can further lead to exclusion. The monopoly paradigm views exclusion as a result of the development of group monopolies, with resources being under the control of hierarchical groups. This paradigm claims that exclusion results from the interaction of class, status, and political power and the support of the interests of the included while simultaneously making the excluded feel subordinate.

2.8   Policies for inclusive education

2.8.1   Global Context

There are various inclusion policies at the global level that have been developed to promote greater inclusion and equity for marginalized individuals and groups. The policies of inclusive education help to promote equal access to education regardless of background, class, caste, religion, or physical condition. It fosters the importance of promoting an inclusive atmosphere in schools and classrooms by prioritizing learners with special needs. Some of the policies for inclusive education at the global level are described below:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD): The CRPD is a global policy that affirms the right of people with disabilities to the same education as others. Article 24 of the convention particularly seeks inclusive education, which is described as a system that allows all learners, including those with disabilities, to fully participate in the educational process. The convention outlines a thorough framework for the protection and advancement of the rights of people with disabilities and contains detailed provisions on a number of different issues such as accessibility, education, employment, and social protection.

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is an international treaty approved by the UN General Assembly in 1989. It outlines children's civil, political, social, and cultural rights. The Convention offers a comprehensive set of rights for children, including education, health, protection from abuse and exploitation, participation in cultural and social activities, and access to justice. Some of the articles in the CRC that relate to inclusive education are:

Article 23 of the CRC focuses on the right of impaired children to particular care and support; it also emphasizes the need to ensure their effective access to education,

training, and social integration. It aims to provide equal educational opportunities for all children, including those with disabilities.

Article 28 affirms that every child has a right to an education. It highlights the value of accessible secondary education as well as free and compulsory primary education. It advocates for an accessible and inclusive learning environment that serves the diverse needs of all children.

Article 29 emphasizes the objectives of education, including the growth of a child's personality, talents, and intellectual and physical capacities. It encourages an inclusive and equitable education system that eradicates discrimination and fosters respect for human rights.

Education for All (EFA) is a global initiative to ensure that every child, youth, and adult has access to basic education. The initiative was broadened in 2000 to include an emphasis on high-quality education. Furthermore, in 2006, it included the new aim of supporting inclusive education for all learners, particularly those who are disadvantaged or excluded. There are six goals of EFA, which include: early childhood care and education (ECCE); free and compulsory basic education (UPE); learning opportunities for young and adult learners; a 50% improvement in the literacy rate; the elimination of gender disparities; and quality education.

Sustainable development goals (SDGs): Sustainable Development Goal 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". This goal emphasizes inclusive education and demands the elimination of disparities and barriers in access to education for marginalized and vulnerable groups and for all, regardless of gender, disability, and socioeconomic status. The SDGs involve implementing strategies and approaches to make the education system more inclusive and equitable by addressing physical, social, and cultural barriers that often hinder access to education for marginalized groups. It also focuses on teachers training in inclusive teaching practices and adapting curriculum to accommodate various abilities and backgrounds. It fosters an inclusive and safe learning environment that respects all individuals, where students can feel accepted and valued no matter their differences.

2.8.2 National context

In Nepal, various policies and programs have been implemented with the goal of encouraging inclusive education for all, including those who are marginalized or excluded. The following are some of the key policies related to inclusive education in Nepal:

Constitution of Nepal: According to the 2015 Nepali Constitution, Nepal is envisioned as an inclusive state, and everyone is guaranteed the right to equality, social justice, and freedom from discrimination. The constitution of Nepal represents a key milestone for the advancement of GESI to provide equal rights for women, the poor, people with disabilities, and members of other excluded or vulnerable groups. Article 31 of the Constitution guarantees all citizens, including children and people with disabilities, access to obligatory and free education. Individuals with special needs, such as hearing and vision impairments, will have access to education through sign language and Braille writing.

Inclusive Education Policy (2005): In Nepal, inclusive education was established with the help of the Inclusive Education Policy of 2005. It highlighted the need to provide every learner with a fair opportunity to receive an education, regardless of their origins or skills. The goal of the policy was to develop a welcoming educational environment that caters to the needs of all students.

National Policy on Disability (2015): The National Policy on Disability supports the integration of people with disabilities in all facets of society, including education, and acknowledges their legal rights. The strategy places a strong emphasis on providing children with disabilities with an accessible and high-quality education, with an emphasis on inclusive education in normal schools.

Education for All National Plan of Action (2016–2023): The Nepal government's Education for All National Plan of Action lays out goals and measures for ensuring inclusive education for all children. It puts an emphasis on expanding access to high-quality education, minimizing inequality, and attending to the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, including children with disabilities.

Inclusive Education Strategic Plan (2018-2022): The Inclusive Education Strategic Plan serves as an action plan for putting inclusive education policies in place in Nepal. It focuses on developing collaboration with stakeholders and increasing the ability of teachers, school administrators, and education professionals to offer inclusive education.

2.9 Conceptual Framework for Social Exclusion/Inclusion

This framework is rooted in the capability list provided by Mario Biggeri. In this study has focused on three core capabilities, namely social relations, shelter and environment, and participation, which constitute the primary domains of our research. Various indicators have been identified to assess social exclusion within the public education system. These indicators have been analyzed across four factors, including age, gender, grade, and ethnicity.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework
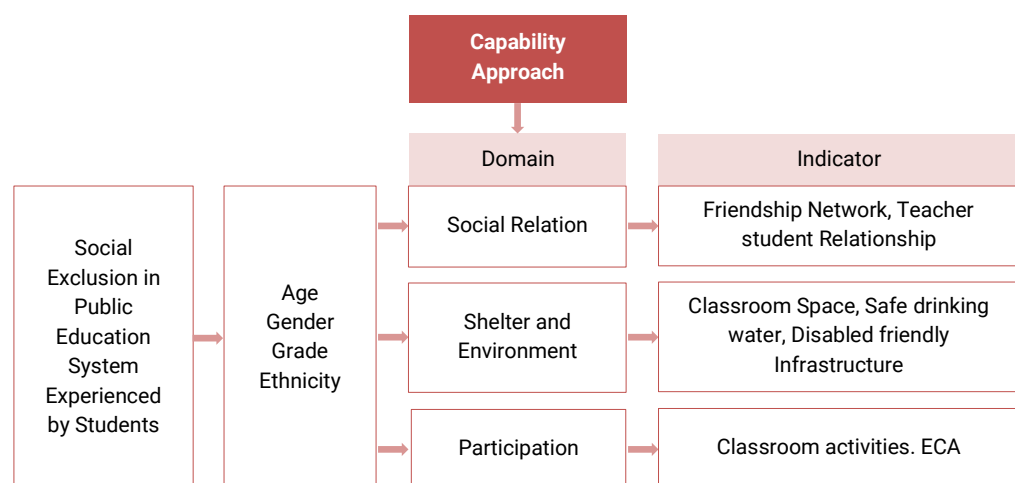
2.9.1 Domains and Indicators

2.9.1.1 Social Relation

Social relations, also referred to as affiliation, are one of the capabilities purposed by Mario Biggeri. In the context of schools, social relations hold significant importance alongside education as they greatly influence students' overall well-being and academic experiences. The absence of social relationships among students can lead to a lack of support and opportunities, resulting in capability deprivation and social exclusion. Based on our field visit and subsequent focus group discussions, it became evident that a considerable number of students actively expressed the importance of social relationships. They shared their experiences with various relationships with peers, teachers, and other groups. Consequently, I have chosen social relations as a central domain to effectively measure its impact. To assess the influence of social relations, two key indicators have been identified: the quality of teacher-student relationships and the structure of students' friendship networks.

The behavior of teachers plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of inclusion among students. A welcoming and respectful attitude from teachers significantly impacts students' comfort and engagement in school. Therefore, this study examines whether teachers treat students with kindness and whether students feel comfortable sharing their problems with their teachers. Additionally, the indicator of friendship networks is essential as it directly affects students' enjoyment of coming to school. The focus group discussions revealed that many students attend school daily because they have a higher number of friends there. Hence, to understand their friendship networks, this study focuses on the number of friends students have in school, the support they receive from their friends, and whether they experience exclusion or feel left out within their friend groups. These indicators will enable us to evaluate the level of connection and inclusion students experience within the school environment, providing valuable insights into their social integration and overall well-being.

2.9.1.2 Shelter and Environment

Shelter and the environment hold a central position in Biggeri et al.'s capability approach. The school environment, where students spend a significant amount of their time, has a profound impact on their overall well-being and academic performance. Thus, it is crucial to assess the availability of various resources within the school environment. Indicators within this domain include ensuring access to safe drinking water, adequate classroom space, and creating infrastructure that is accessible and inclusive for individuals with disabilities.

School facilities such as clean drinking water, classrooms, and disabled-friendly infrastructure have a significant impact on children's overall wellbeing. Access to safe and comfortable shelter, clean surroundings, and appropriate infrastructure creates a conducive learning environment. In contrast, inadequate or substandard shelter and an unhealthy environment can negatively affect students' physical and mental well-being, leading to exclusion and disengagement from the school community. For example, the availability of safe drinking water and disabled-friendly infrastructure ensures that no student is excluded based on their physical abilities or needs. These indicators are essential for creating a supportive and inclusive school environment that promotes well-being and equal opportunities for all students. Failure to meet these basic needs

can result in deprivation of necessary resources, exacerbating social exclusion among students.

2.9.1.3 Participation

Participation is a crucial aspect of social inclusion and is defined as the active and meaningful engagement of individuals in social, political, and economic spheres. It encompasses having a voice, expressing opinions, making choices, and being involved in decision-making processes that affect one's life and community (Biggeri, 2004). In the context of this study on measuring social exclusion in public schools, participation is identified as a key domain. In the school environment, student participation is essential to ensuring inclusivity and a sense of belonging. To measure participation, two indicators have been selected: participation in school activities and participation in extracurricular activities. Classroom participation allows students to have their voices heard and play an active role in their learning process. It is important for students to feel engaged and involved in classroom activities.

Additionally, the government of Nepal encourages schools to provide a diverse range of extracurricular activities that promote students' overall development, enhance their skills, and foster creativity, teamwork, and leadership. The importance of extracurricular activities is evident from the fact that students are highly present and engaged on the days when these activities take place. To assess students' participation in extracurricular activities, this study focuses on the availability of opportunities for students to engage in such activities and their satisfaction with the opportunities provided. By examining participation in school activities and extracurricular activities, this study aims to gain insights into the level of student engagement and involvement within the school environment.

Methodology

The methods and approaches used to complete the thesis have been explored in detail in this chapter. The research design describes the general concept and structure of the study, as well as the procedures used to collect data and achieve the research objectives. A mixed-methods technique was adopted for this study, which involves combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to create a thorough grasp of the research issue. The research method section provides a clear description of the specific procedures and strategies employed to collect data. This includes detailing the selection of study sites, which refers to the specific locations or settings where the research was conducted. Furthermore, the chapter delves into the tools and techniques employed for data collection. Data analysis is another crucial component discussed in this chapter. It outlines the procedures used to analyze and interpret the collected data. Lastly, ethical considerations are paramount throughout the research process. This includes ensuring informed consent from participants, protecting their privacy and confidentiality, and adhering to ethical guidelines and regulations. Overall, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the tools and techniques employed in the thesis, outlining the research design, methods, study sites, research participants, data collection tools and techniques, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1   Research design

For this study, a mixed-methods research design has been selected with the view of providing a better understanding of research problems that would otherwise not have been justified by either approach alone (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Mixed methods research is a research approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods in a way that balances their respective strengths and weaknesses, with the aim of addressing research questions that cannot be fully answered using either approach alone" (Brman, 2017). Questionnaires with qualitative, unstructured (open-ended), and quantitative (close-ended) questions were prepared before the field visit.

3.2   Description of Field Site

The study was carried out in Yamunamai rural municipality and Durgabhagwati rural municipality of Rautahat district. It is located in the southern part of the country, surrounded by Sarlahi district in the east, Bara district in the west, Chitwan district in the north, and the Indian state of Bihar to the south. It is part of Madhesh province, which is one of the seventy-seven districts of Nepal. The district headquarter is in Gaur, which covers an area of 1,126 km2. According to the 2021 census, Rautahat district

has a total population of 813,573, consisting of 408,403 males and 405,170 females. Rautahat has the largest percentage of Muslims in Nepal. There are a total of 370 schools in Rautahat district. There are 42,240 children in Rautahat who are still out of school. This district has a total of 2 rural municipalities and 16 municipalities. Among these two rural municipalities: Durgabhagwati rural municipality and Yamunamai rural municipality; and one municipality: It is the district with the lowest literacy rate (42% in the country); only half of men and a third of women are literate in Rautahat (Nepal Times, 2019). There are 42,240 children in Rautahat who are still out of school. Due to the above reasons, this district was selected as the study site.

Figure 3.1: Rautahat District
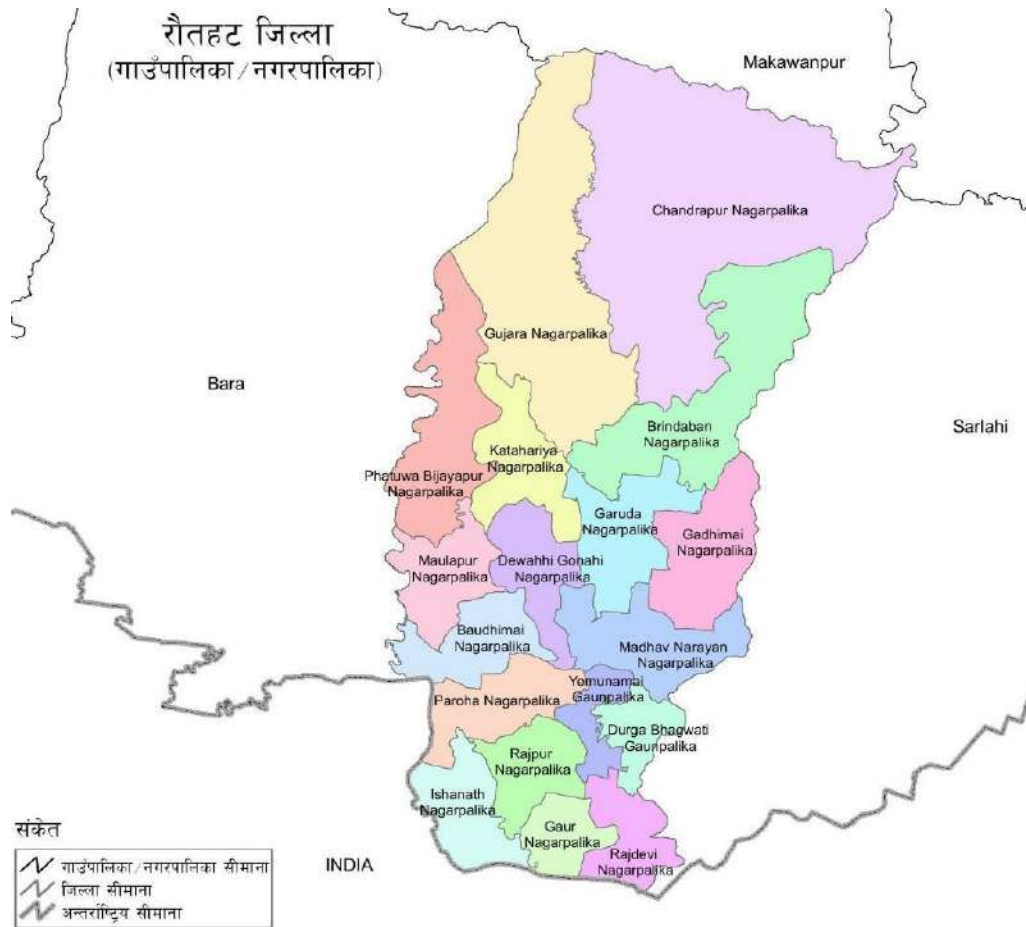
Durgabhagwati rural municipality was formed in 2016 occupying the current 5 wards namely Gangapipara, Bhalohiya, Matsari, Pachrukhi, and Badharwa. It occupies an area of 19.80kmsq with a total population of 22,599. There are two secondary schools, 12 primary schools, and 1 Madarasha in this rural municipality.

Figure 3.2: Durgabhagwati Rural Municipality
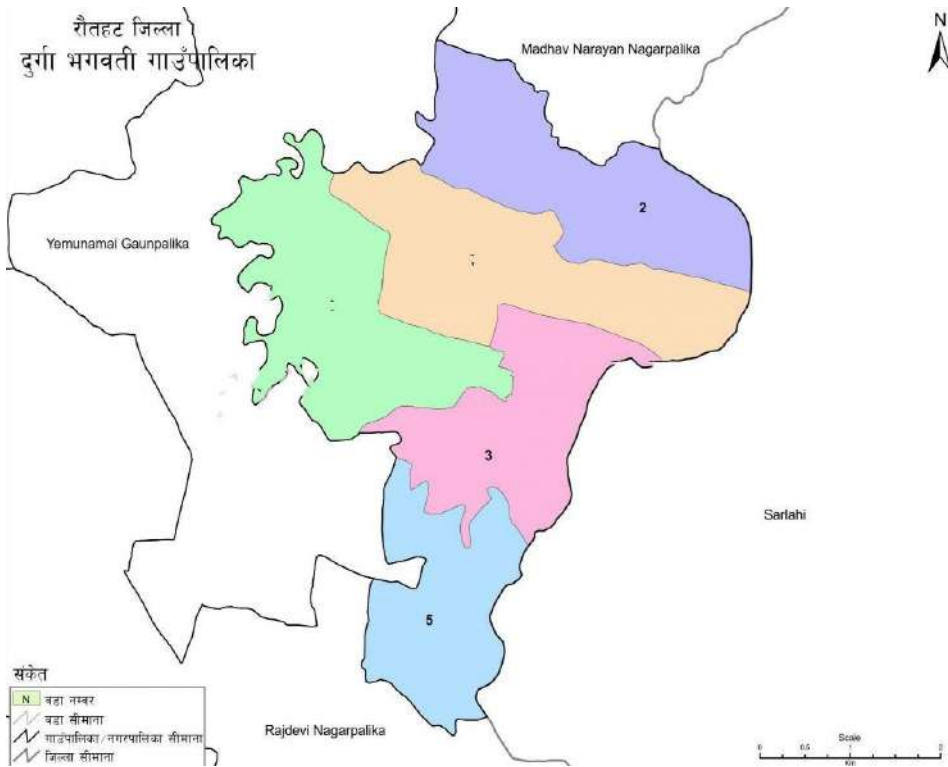
Yamunamai rural municipality was also formed in 2016 occupying 5 wards. It occupies an area of 16.70kmsq and a total population of 23,884. According to Nepal government records as of 2017, there were 19 schools.

Figure 3.3: Yamunamai Rural Municipality
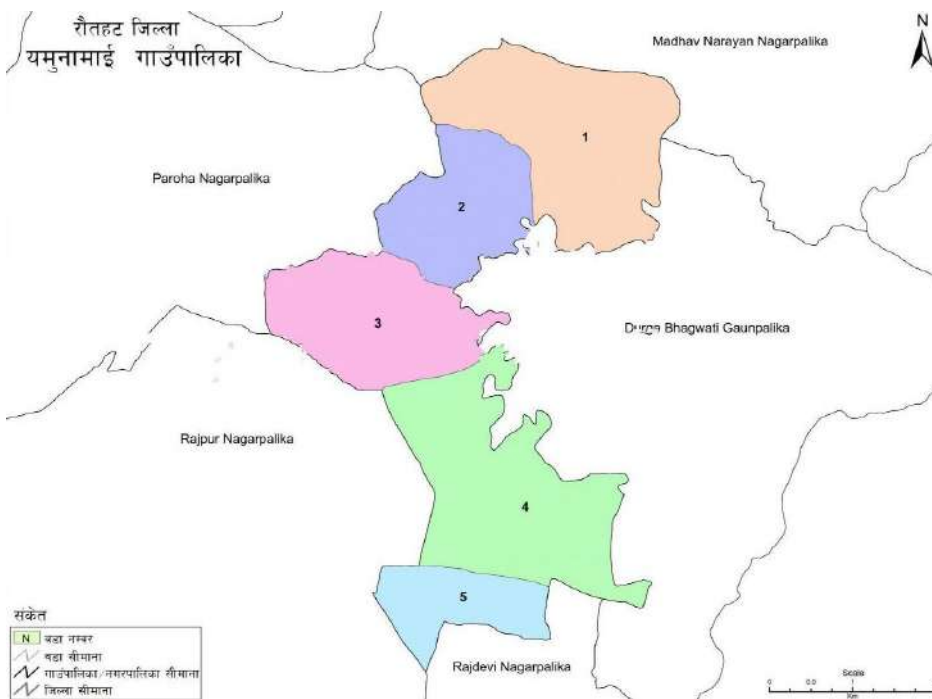
3.3 Duration of the study

The study was conducted over a defined period of 5 months, spanning from March to July. It involved two field visits to the study site. The first field visit took place from 8th May to 22nd May, and the field visit occurred from 16th June to 28th June. These field visits were essential for gathering data and conducting observations in the study area.

3.4 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of individuals or units from a larger population in order to gather data and draw conclusions about the population as a whole (Babbie, 2016). The goal of sampling is to obtain a representative sample that accurately reflects the characteristics of the population being studied. In the first field visit, nine schools, involving a total of 192 students from three Municipalities if Rautahat was done for focus group discussion. Later, the study was done in 5 schools of Yamunamai Rural Municipality and 7 schools of Durgabhagwati Rural Municipality. For this study, sampling was done by dividing a class of students on the basis of gender. Then the respondents were selected randomly. From each school, 10 students from each grade of 3-8 were taken. A total of 600 respondents were interviewed. Among 600 respondents, there were 300 respondents from Durgabhagwati rural municipality, of which 150 were girls and 150 were boy of class 3-8. There were 300 respondents from Yamunamai rural municipality, of which 150 were girls and 150 were boys.

3.4.1 Characteristics of the respondents

The table below presents the demographics characteristics of the respondents who were involved in this study:

Table 3.1: Age of the respondents

Age	Percent
6-8	14.8%
9-11	45%
12-14	35.3%
15-17	4.8%
Total	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3.2: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Percent
Male	100%
Female	100%
Total	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3.3: Grade of the respondents

Grade	Percent
3	19.80%
4	19.80%
5	19.80%
6	13.50%
7	13.50%
8	13.50%
Total	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3.4: Ethnicity of the respondents

Ethnicity	Percent
Brahmin	6.3%
Chhetri	1.3%
Dalit	20.5%
Kanu	1.5%
Mahato	7.7%
Muslim	10.8%
Yadav	15.5%
Others	36.3%
Total	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

3.5 Data generation tools and techniques

For the collection of the data, both primary and secondary data collection methods were used.

3.5.1 Primary Data Collection

For the primary data collection, there are various tools and techniques that I have used to gather data. Some of the common data generation tools and techniques that are used in this study are as follows:

3.5.1.1 Survey

A well-structured questionnaire will be developed to gather data from the sample respondents. The questionnaire will consist of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions will allow participants to provide detailed, qualitative responses, while closed-ended questions will yield quantitative data. Yes/No questions, availability, satisfaction, and multiple option questions were prepared revolving around the availability and satisfaction of the resources in schools, social relations, and participation in the various activities. The questions and the corresponding responses from the research participants were entered in an online survey tool called Kobo Toolbox on a tablet.

3.5.1.2 Focus Group Discussion

Before the preparation of the questionnaire, a two-week field visit was conducted at the field site to conduct focus group discussions (FGDs). The focus group discussions were based on the capability approach, where students from public schools were asked about their understanding of various capabilities. These capabilities were presented in picture form, making it easier for participants to comprehend and respond.

During the FGDs, 19 capabilities were explored and discussed with the students. The aim of these discussions was to gain insights into how students perceive and interpret these capabilities and how they relate to their own experiences within the education system. After analyzing the data gathered from the focus group discussions, we were able to identify specific domains or capabilities that stood out as significant and relevant in the context of our study.

3.5.1.3 Observation

Observation is a research method that involves systematically watching and recording events, behaviors, or phenomena in their natural settings without directly interfering with or influencing them (Dudovskiv). It is a valuable technique for gathering firsthand information and understanding real-life behaviors, interactions, and contexts. During the field visit to various public schools in the Rautahat district, I had the opportunity to conduct observations. Through observation, I closely examined the teaching methods employed by teachers in the classroom, their interactions with students, and the overall dynamics of the learning environment. Furthermore, during the observation period, I also paid attention to the surrounding community of each public school. This allowed me to gain insights into the broader social context in which the schools operated and how it might impact students educational experiences.

3.5.1.4 Secondary data collection

A review of the secondary data was done prior to the field visits. I was provided with the relevant literature on the topic of capability approaches, social exclusion, and social inclusion. The literature and papers provided vast information and insights on capability approaches, social exclusion and inclusion, and the link between these topics and education. I also reviewed various policies related to inclusive education, both in a national and global context.

3.6   Data analysis and interpretation

During my field visit, I took field notes, photographs, observations, and participated in group discussion. Based on my field notes, reflection domains were generated for the analysis. From the responses recorded through the survey, descriptive statistical techniques were employed to compare and summarize the data. For analyzing quantitative data, tabulation of the data and descriptive analysis through graphs and figures were done. The survey responses entered in the KOBO toolbox were extracted in Excel, STATA, and SPSS. Then, presentation of survey data was done by coding each response in Excel, STATA, and SPSS, extracting necessary information, and creating tables, graphs, and figures for description.

3.7   Ethical Considerations

To ensure consent, each respondent was individually contacted and provided with a clear explanation of the study's purpose, objectives, and significance of their participation. They were informed about the voluntary nature of their involvement and were assured that their decision to participate or withdraw would have no negative consequences. The questionnaire used in the study was carefully designed to collect data solely for academic purposes. It was structured in a way that respected the respondents' privacy and confidentiality. The personal experiences shared by the participants during the in-depth interviews were treated with the utmost sensitivity and kept strictly confidential.

Result and Discussion

This chapter presents the results and discussions on various domains used to identify the dynamics of social exclusion or inclusion within the public education system. In this study, I have focused on three key domains: social relations, shelter and environment, and participation. The research sheds light on the dynamics of friendship networks and teacher-student relationships. Additionally, it explores the availability and satisfaction of various resources, such as classroom space, safe drinking water, and disabled-friendly infrastructure. Furthermore, the study delves into student engagement across different aspects of the educational experience, encompassing classroom discussions and extracurricular activities. The findings presented in this section have been carefully analyzed based on indicators related to age, gender, grade, and ethnicity. By examining these domains, the research aims to uncover insights that can contribute to promoting inclusivity and addressing social exclusion within the public education system.

4.1 Social Relation

Under this domain two indicator has been used to explore the social relation of students studying in public schools of Rautahat. The two indicator are friendship network and teacher to student relationship.

4.1.1 Friendship Network

Table below presents the data on the ethnicity of the friends in the school. Among 600 respondents, (13.0%) have Dalit friends, and (38.7%) have Non-Dalit friends. It appears that there is a relatively diverse mix of castes among the respondents' friends. A majority of respondents (48.3%) reported having friends from both Dalit and non-Dalit castes, indicating a level of caste diversity within their social circles. This could be seen as a positive sign of social integration and inclusivity among the respondents.

Table 4.1: Ethnicity of Friends

Ethnicity of friends	Percent
Dalit	13.0
Non-Dalit	38.7
Both	48.3
Total	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Perceived Friends Support in School

From table below, it is evident that the majority of the respondent (98.5%) feel like they have friends who support in school. Only a small number, (1.5%), responded that they do not feel supported by their friends in school. This data suggests that a high percentage of students in the given sample perceive having supportive friends in school. It implies a positive social environment where students feel they have a network of friends who provide them support.

Table 4.2: Perceived Friend Support in School

Value	Percent
Yes	98.5
No	1.5
Total	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data presented in Table below demonstrates that the majority of respondents in all age groups feel supported by their friends in school, indicating a high level of perceived support and a positive environment of inclusion. Having friends who provide support contributes to a sense of belonging, acceptance and inclusion within school community. The overall percentage of "Yes" response is 98.5%, signifying that a significant majority of respondent feel supported by their friends. However, as the age group increases, there is a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents who feel supported by their friends. The "Yes" response gradually decline from 100% in the 6-8 age group to 96.6% in the 15-17 age group.

Conversely, there is a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who do not feel supported by their friends as they get older. The "No" response range from 0% in the 6-8 age group to 3.4% in the 15-17 age group. This data suggests that students from small age feel supported by their friends as compared to the students from higher age group. While the majority of the students across all age groups feel supported by their friends in school, there is small proportion who may experience a sense of exclusion due to lack of support from their friends

Table 4.3: Perceived Friend Support in School by Age Group.

Age	Yes	No	Total
6-8	100%	0%	100%
9-11	98.9%	1.1%	100%
12-14	97.6%	2.4%	100%
15-17	96.6%	3.4%	100%

Source: Field Survey,2023

The table below presents the data on perceived friend support in school across genders. The table below shows that both male and female respondents report high levels of perceived friend support in school. The majority of males (99%) and females (98%) feel supported by their friends. The percentage of respondents who feel supported by their friends is slightly higher among males (99%) compared to females

(98%). The data below suggests that a significant majority of both males and females feel supported by their friends in school. When students were asked about their friends, they responded by saying that whenever they are in need, their friends are the ones who support them no matter what.

Table 4.4: Perceived Friend Support in School by Gender

Gender	Yes	No	Total
Male	99%	1%	100%
Female	98%	2%	100%
Gender	Yes	No	Total

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From Table below, we can analyze the perceived friend support in school by grade. It was found that across all the grade levels; the majority of respondents feel supported by their friends in school. The overall percentage of "Yes" responses is 98.5% indicating a high level of perceived friend support. The percentage of respondents who feel supported by their friends is consistently high across the different grade levels, ranging from 97.5% to 99.2%. The percentage of respondents who do not feel supported by their friends is relatively low across all grades, ranging from 0.8% to 2.5%. This indicates that only a small percentage of students reported not having friends who support them in school. It is worth noting that while the majority of students reported having supportive friendships, there is a small percentage who do not feel supported by their friends. This emphasizes the need to address any potential social isolation or exclusion that some students may experience. Overall, the data suggests that a significant majority of students in each grade feel supported by their friends in school.

Table 4.5: Perceived Friend Support in School by Grade

Gender	Yes	No	Total
3	99.20%	0.80%	100%
4	99.20%	0.80%	100%
5	98.30%	1.70%	100%
6	98.80%	1.20%	100%
7	97.50%	2.50%	100%
8	97.50%	2.50%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table below presents data on the perceived friend support in school based on different ethnicities. It was found that among Brahmin students, 100% of the respondents perceive that they have friend support in school. For Chhetri students, 87.5% feel supported by their friends while 12.5% do not. Among Dalit students, the majority (98.4%) report having friends who supports them, with only 1.6% indicating no support. Kanu students and Muslim students both report having 100% support from their friends. Similarly, Yadav students and students from other ethnic background have a high percentage (100% and 99.5% respectively) friend support in school, with very few reporting no support.

The data below suggest that students from various ethnicities generally feel supported by their friends in school. This perception of friend support is high across most ethnic groups, indicating a positive social environment in the school setting.

Table 4.6: Perceived Friend Support in School by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Yes	No	Total
Brahmin	100%		100%
Chhetri	87.5%	12.5%	100%
Dalit	98.4%	1.6%	100%
Kanu	100%		100%
Mahato	89.1%	10.9%	100%
Muslim	100%		100%
Yadav	100%		100%
Others	99.5%	0.5%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Exclusion by friends or classmates

From the graph presented below, it can be understood that a small percentage of respondents (3.2%) feel excluded or left out by their friends or classmates most of the time. 2.7% of respondents feel excluded about half the time. A significant portion of respondents (18%) reported experiencing feelings of exclusion or being left out some of the time. This suggests that they have experienced occasional instances where they felt excluded by their friends or classmates. The majority of respondents (76.2%) indicated that they have never felt excluded or left out by their friends or classmates. Overall, the data suggest that a relatively small percentage of respondents have experienced frequent or occasional feelings of exclusion or being left out by their friends or classmates. However, the majority of respondents have not experienced such feelings and feel included by their friends or classmates.

Table 4.7: Frequency of feeling excluded or left out by friends or classmates
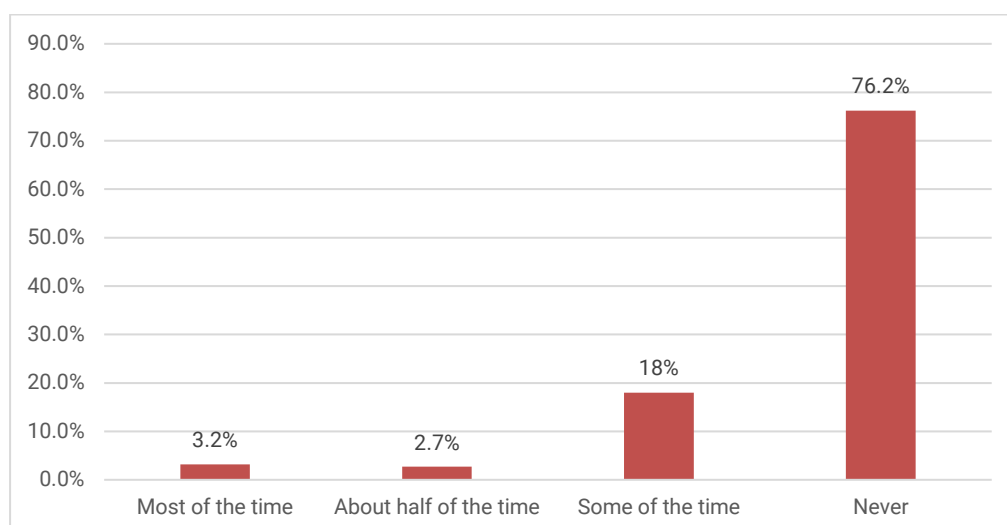
Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table presented below provides insights into the frequency of feeling excluded or left out by friends or classmates across different age groups. The percentage of respondents who reported feeling excluded "Most of the time" or "About half of the time" is relatively low across all age groups, ranging from 0% to 13.8%. The highest percentage is observed in the 15-17 age group where 13.8% reported feeling excluded most of the time. The percentage of respondents who reported feeling excluded "Some of the time" is higher, ranging from 10.1% to 34.5%. The 15-17 age group has the highest percentage of respondents (34.5%) who experienced occasional exclusion.

Most respondents across all age groups reported "Never" feeling excluded or left out by friends or classmates, ranging from 51.7% to 86.5%. The 15-17 age group stands out with higher percentages of feeling excluded most of the time and experiencing occasional exclusion compared to other age groups. The younger age groups (6-8, 9-11, and 12-14) generally have lower percentages of feeling excluded compared to the 15-17 age group.

Table 4.8: Frequency of Feeling Excluded or Left Out by Friends or Classmates by Age group

Age	Most of the time	About half of the time	Some of the time	Never	Total
6-8	1.10%	2.20%	10.10%	86.50%	100%
9-11	3%	2.20%	17.80%	77%	100%
12-14	2.80%	3.80%	19.30%	74.10%	100%
15-17	13.80%	0	34.50%	51.70%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table below presents the data between the frequency of feeling excluded or left out by friends or classmates and the gender of the respondents. It can be seen that both males and females reported varying levels of feeling excluded or left out by friends or classmates. The percentage of males who reported feeling excluded "most of the time" or "about half of the time" is relatively low, ranging from 2.3% to 3%. Similarly, the percentage of females who reported feeling excluded "most of the time" or "about half of the time" is also relatively low, ranging from 4.0% to 2.3%. The percentage of both males and females who reported feeling excluded "some of the time" is higher, with males at 21.0% and females at 15.0%. The majority of both males and females reported "never" feeling excluded or left out by friends or classmates, with males at 73.7% and females at 78.7%. The data indicate that females reported slightly higher percentages of feeling excluded most of the time and experiencing occasional exclusion compared to males. Males reported a higher percentage of never feeling excluded compared to females.

Table 4.9: Frequency of Feeling Excluded or Left Out by Friends or Classmates by Gender

Gender	Most of the time	About half of the time	Some of the time	Never	Total
Male	2.30%	3%	21%	73.7%	100%
Female	4%	2.3%	15%	78.7%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table below presents the data of feeling excluded or left out by friends or classmates by Grade. The percentages of feeling excluded "Most of the time" or "About half of the time" are generally low across all grade levels. The highest percentages of feeling excluded most of the time are seen in grade 8 (7.4%) and grade 5 (4.1%). The percentages of feeling excluded "Some of the time" are higher, ranging from 14.3% to 23.1% across different grade levels. The majority of respondents in all grade levels reported "Never" feeling excluded or left out by friends or classmates.

It was found that Grade 6 has the highest percentage of respondents who reported feeling excluded "About half of the time" (6.2%) compared to other grades. Grades 5, 7, and 8 have relatively higher percentages of feeling excluded "Some of the time" compared to the other grades. Grades 4 and 3 have the highest percentages of respondents who reported not feeling excluded "Most of the time" (0.8% and 1.7%, respectively) compared to other grades. The lower the class students feel included by friends may be due to the reason that students in the lower grade do not have understanding about the friend's support or the exclusion and the students in the higher grade may have developed the understanding of exclusion due to which some of the students in higher grade feel that they are excluded or left out by their friends or classmates.

Table 4.10: Frequency of Feeling Excluded or Left Out by Friends or Classmates by Grade

Gender	Most of the time	About half of the time	Some of the time	Never	Total
3	1.70%	2.50%	14.30%	81.50%	100%
4	0.80%	1.70%	14.30%	83.20%	100%
5	4.10%	0.80%	23.10%	71.90%	100%
6	2.50%	6.20%	22.20%	69.10%	100%
7	3.80%	1.30%	20.30%	74.70%	100%
8	7.40%	4.90%	14.80%	72.80%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table below presents data on the respondents feeling excluded by friends or classmates and ethnicity. The percentage of feeling excluded "Most of the time" or "About half of the time" varies among different ethnicities. Some ethnicities, such as Chhetri and Mahato, reported a lower percentage or even zero in feeling excluded most or half of the time. Other ethnicities, including Dalit, Muslim, Others, and Yadav, reported varying percentages of feeling excluded at different levels. The percentage of respondents who reported "Never" feeling excluded varies across different ethnicities. Brahmin, Kanu, Mahato, and Yadav ethnicities reported relatively higher percentages of never feeling excluded (ranging from 72% to 88.9%). Other ethnicities, such as Chhetri, Dalit, Muslim, and Others, also reported a significant percentage of never feeling excluded (ranging from 73.4% to 81.3%).

The data suggest that different ethnicities may experience different levels of exclusion. For example, the Brahmin and Yadav ethnicities reported relatively low percentages of feeling excluded "Most of the time." The Chhetri ethnicity reported a higher percentage of feeling excluded "Most of the time." The Dalit ethnicity reported a higher percentage of feeling excluded "About half of the time" and "Some of the time."

Table 4.11: Frequency of Feeling Excluded or Left Out by Friends or Classmates by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Most of the time	About half of the time	Some of the time	Never	Total
Brahmin	7.90%	0	18.40%	73.70%	100%
Chhetri	25%	0	0	75%	100%
Dalit	2.40%	4.90%	11.40%	81.30%	100%
Kanu	0	0	11.10%	88.90%	100%
Mahato	0	2.20%	10.90%	87%	100%
Muslim	3.10%	3.10%	20%	73.80%	100%
Yadav	2.20%	3.20%	22.60%	72%	100%
Others	3.20%	1.80%	21.60%	73.40%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

4.1.2 Teacher-student relationship

The data presented in the graph below indicates the responses of students regarding how their teacher treats them. It was found that 589 students (98.2%) responded that their teachers treat them nicely, and the remaining 11 students (1.8%) reported that their teacher does not treat them nicely. From the data, we can observe that the majority of students perceive that their teacher treats them nicely. However, it is important to note that even though the majority of students perceive positive treatment, a small percentage feel otherwise. Addressing the concerns of these students is crucial to ensuring an inclusive and respectful learning environment.

Figure 4.1: Student's perception of teacher treatment
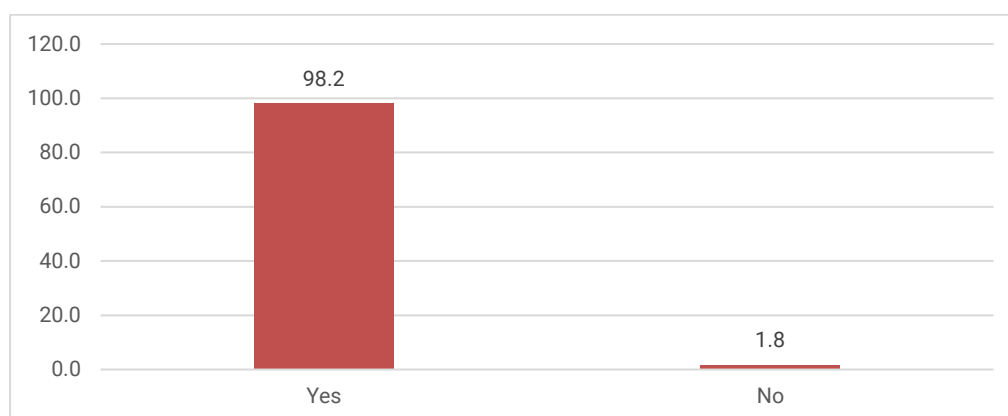
Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table below presents the data of the student's perception of teacher treatment across various age group. It was found that 95.5% of students from the age group 6-8 responded that their teacher treats them nicely while 4.5% of students reported that their teacher does not treat them nicely. 98.9% of students from the age group 9-11 reported that their teachers treat them nicely, while 1.1% of students reported that their teacher does not treat them nicely. From the age group 12-14, 98.6% of students reported that their teacher treats them nicely and 1.4% of students reported that their

teacher doesn't treat them nicely. Age group 15-17 responded that 96.6% of students reported that their teacher treats them nicely and 3.4% of students reported that their teacher does not treat them nicely.

Across all age groups, the majority of students reported that their teacher treats them nicely. The percentage of "Yes" responses indicating positive teacher treatment range from 95.5% to 98.9% among the different age groups. The percentage of "No" responses indicating negative teacher treatment is relatively low for all age groups, ranging from 1.1% to 4.5%. The age group 6-8 has the highest percentage (4.5%) of students reporting a negative perception of teacher treatment. From the data we can analyze that students from the lower age group feel that their teacher does not treat them nicely as compared to the students from slightly higher age group.

Overall, the data shows that a significant majority of students across all age groups perceive that their teacher treats them nicely. The relatively low percentage of negative responses indicates that the perception of positive teacher treatment is generally consistent among students, with only a small proportion reporting negative perception.

Table 4.12: Student's perception of Teacher Treatment across various Age group

Age	Yes	No	Total
6-8	95.5%	4.5%	100%
9-11	98.9%	1.1%	100%
12-14	98.6%	1.4%	100%
15-17	96.6%	3.4%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the table presented below, it was found that 97.7% of male students reported that their teacher treats them nicely and 2.3% of male students reported that their teacher does not treat them nicely. Likewise, 98.7% of female students responded that their teacher treats them nicely while 1.3% of female students reported that their teacher does not treat them nicely. From the data presented below, we can observe that both male and female students reported a high percentage of perceiving that their teachers treat them nicely. The percentage of "Yes" responses indicating positive teacher treatment is relatively high for both males (97.7%) and females (98.7%). The percentage of "No" responses indicating negative teacher treatment is relatively low for both males (2.3%) and females (1.3%). Overall, the data suggests that slightly more percentage of male students feel that their teacher does not treat them nicely. However, majority of both male and female students feel that their teacher treats them nicely.

Table 4.13: Student's perception of Teacher Treatment across Gender

Gender	Yes	NO	Total
Male	97.7%	2.3%	100%
Female	98.7%	1.3%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data presented in table below shows the student's perception of teacher treatment across various grade levels. The findings indicate that in grade 8, 96.3% of students reported that their teacher treats them nicely, while 3.7% of students reported that their teacher does not treat them nicely. In grade 7, all respondents (100%) reported that their teacher treats them nicely. For grade 6, 98.8% of students reported positive treatment from their teacher, while 1.2% reported negative treatment. Similarly, in grade 5, 99.2% of students reported positive treatment, while 0.8% reported negative treatment. In grade 4, 98.3% of students felt their teacher treats them nicely, compared to 1.7% who reported negative treatment. In grade 3, 96.6% of respondents reported positive treatment, while 3.4% reported negative treatment.

Across most grade levels, the majority of students reported positive treatment from their teachers. The percentages of "Yes" responses indicating positive teacher treatment ranged from 96.3% to 100% among the different grades. The percentages of "No" responses indicating negative teacher treatment were relatively low, ranging from 0.8% to 3.7%. Notably, grade 7 stood out with 100% of students reporting positive treatment and no students reporting negative treatment. Overall, the data suggests that the majority of students across most grade levels perceive their teachers to treat them nicely. The relatively low percentages of negative responses indicate that the perception of positive teacher treatment is generally consistent among students, with only a small proportion reporting negative treatment.

Table 4.14: Student's perception of Teacher Treatment across various Grade levels

Grade	Yes	No	Total
3	96.6%	3.4%	100%
4	98.3%	1.7%	100%
5	99.2%	8%	100%
6	98.8%	1.2%	100%
7	100%	0%	100%
8	96.3%	3.7%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table below presents the data on the perception of students on teacher treatment across various ethnicity. It was found that majority of students from all ethnicities, including Brahmin, Chhetri, Dalit and Kanu reported a positive perception of teacher treatment, with 100% of students from there group answering "Yes." The data for Mahato ethnicity indicates that 95.7% of Mahato students have a positive perception of teacher treatment. However, there is also a significant 4.3% of Mahato students who reported a negative perception. This suggests that a minority of students from the Mahato ethnicity feel dissatisfied with their teacher treatment. 96.9% of Muslim students have a positive perception of teacher treatment, while 3.1% reported a negative perception. A small proportion of Muslim students expressed dissatisfaction with teacher treatment. For Yadav ethnicity, the data reveals that 97.8% of students have a positive perception of teacher treatment, and a minor 2.2% reported a negative perception. Lastly, for the respondents from "Others" ethnicity category, 97.7% of students have a positive perception of teacher treatment, while 2.3% reported a negative perception.

The data suggest that the majority of the ethnicity from most of the ethnicity have a positive perception of teacher treatment. However, in the Mahato, Muslim, Yadav and other ethnicities, there are small percentage of students who reported that their teacher does not treat them nicely.

Table 4.15: Student's perception of Teacher Treatment across various Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Yes	No	Total
Brahmin	100.0%		100.0%
Chhetri	100.0%		100.0%
Dalit	100.0%		100.0%
Kanu	100.0%		100.0%
Mahato	95.7%	4.3%	100.0%
Muslim	96.9%	3.1%	100.0%
Yadav	97.8%	2.2%	100.0%
Others	97.7%	2.3%%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

4.2   Shelter and Environment

Under the domain of shelter and environment, availability and satisfaction with various resources such as classroom space, safe and clean drinking water, and disabled-friendly infrastructure have been analyzed.

4.2.1   Classroom Space

The graph presented below represents the availability of adequate classroom space as perceived by the respondents. It shows that out of 600 respondents, 34.8% reported that space for the classroom is available, 57.2% reported that space for the classroom is highly available, and 8% reported that space for the classroom is unavailable. From the data presented below, we can observe that the majority of respondents (92.0%) reported either available or highly available classroom space. This suggests that a significant proportion of respondents perceive that there is sufficient space in the classrooms. A small proportion of respondents (8.0%) reported that adequate space for classrooms is unavailable. This indicates that there is a minority of respondents who perceive a lack of sufficient space in the classrooms. It was found that one of the schools in Durgabhagwati rural municipality did not have enough classrooms for each class, due to which they combined classes for various grades. The availability of adequate space for classrooms can have an impact on students' experiences and sense of inclusion in the school environment. Insufficient classroom space may limit students' opportunities for engagement, collaboration, and participation, which could lead to a sense of exclusion. Conversely, having available and highly available classroom space allows for a more inclusive and conducive learning environment, fostering positive social interactions and participation among students.

Figure 4.2: Availability of classroom space
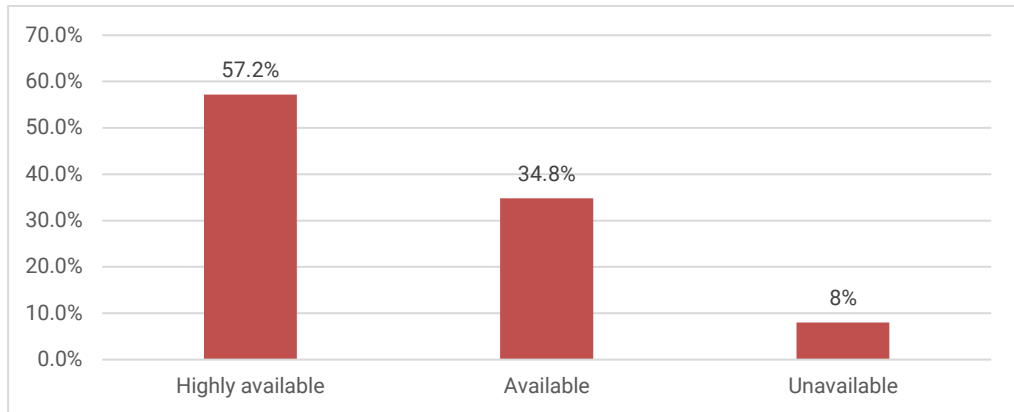
The table presents data on the availability of the classroom space across various age groups. It was found that, among students aged 6 to 8, approximately 49.4% of respondents perceive classroom space as highly available, suggesting a relatively positive perception among younger students regarding adequacy of classroom space. However, 37.1% of students in this age group find classroom space to be available but not as plentiful or easily accessible. Additionally, 13.5% of students aged 6 to 8 report classroom space as entirely unavailable, indicating that there are some students from this age group who perceives inadequate space in their classroom space. In the 9-11 age group, a majority of 58.5% perceive classroom space as highly available, 33.7% of students perceive classroom space as available, showing a moderate percentage of students who believe that there is sufficient space in their classroom. Only 7.8% of students reported classroom space as unavailable, indicating a relatively low percentage of students who perceive inadequate space in their classroom. Among students aged 12 to 14, approximately 34.9% perceive classroom space to be available, indicating that a notable portion of students in this age group believe that there is sufficient space in their classrooms.

A majority of 58.5% perceive classroom space as highly available, reflecting a positive perception among older students regarding the adequacy of classroom space. Only 6.6% of students aged 12 to 14 report classroom space as unavailable, suggesting that a small minority perceives inadequate space in their classrooms. In the 15 to 17 age group, approximately 37.9% of students perceive classroom space as available, showing a moderate percentage of students who believe there is sufficient space in their classrooms. A significant majority of 58.6% perceive classroom space as highly available, indicating a consistently positive perception among older students regarding the adequacy of classroom space. Only 3.4% of students aged 15 to 17 report classroom space as unavailable, suggesting a relatively low percentage of students who perceive inadequate space in their classrooms.

Overall, the data below suggest a positive trend in the perception of classroom space availability among older students (aged 12-17). These students generally perceive more classroom space as highly available and fewer as entirely unavailable compared to younger students (aged 6-11).

Table 4.16: Availability of classroom space by Age

Age	Highly Available	Available	Unavailable	Total
6-8	49.4%	37.1%	13.5%	100%
9-11	58.5%	33.7%	7.8%	100%
12-14	58.5%	34.9%	6.6%	100%
15-17	58.6%	37.9%	3.4%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table presents data on the availability of classroom space across gender. From the table below, it was found that, among male students, approximately 60.30% perceive classroom space as highly available, indicating that a significant majority of male students believe there is ample space in their classrooms. Additionally, 31% of male students perceive classroom space as available but not highly abundant, suggesting that a considerable portion of male students believe there is enough space but not in excess. Only 8.70% of male student's report classroom space as unavailable, indicating a relatively small percentage of male students who perceive inadequate space in their classrooms. Among female students, approximately 54% perceive classroom space as highly available, reflecting a majority of female students who believe there is sufficient space in their classrooms. Additionally, 38.70% of female students perceive classroom space as available but not highly abundant, suggesting that a significant portion of female students believe there is enough space but not in excess. Only 7.30% of female student's report classroom space as unavailable, indicating a relatively low percentage of female students who perceive inadequate space in their classrooms.

Overall, the data suggests that both male and female students generally perceive classroom space as available, with a majority perceiving it as highly available. However, there are slight differences in perception between genders, with male students having a slightly higher percentage perceiving classroom space as highly available compared to female students. Conversely, female students have a slightly higher percentage perceiving classroom space as available but not highly abundant compared to male students.

Table 4.17: Availability of classroom space by Gender

Gender	Highly Available	Available	Unavailable	Total
Male	60.30%	31%	8.70%	100%
Female	54%	38.70%	7.30%	100%

Field Survey: 2023

The table below presents the data on the availability of adequate space for classroom across grade. Across different grades, we observe varying percentages of availability and high availability, as well as unavailability of classroom space. Starting with grade 3, 37.8% of students reported that classroom space is available, while 47.9% reported highly available space. A smaller percentage of 14.3% mentioned that classroom space is unavailable. Moving to grade 4, 32.8% of students reported available space, with a substantial majority of 60.5% reporting highly available space. Only a minor proportion of 6.7% indicated unavailability of classroom space. In grade 5, 28.1% of students reported available space, while a significant majority of 63.6% reported highly

available space. A small proportion of 8.3% reported classroom space as unavailable. Grade 6 showed 40.7% availability, with 56.8% reporting highly available space, and a very small percentage of 2.5% reporting unavailability. Similarly, in grade 7, 43.0% reported available space, 54.4% reported highly available space, and 2.5% reported unavailability. Lastly, grade 8 had 29.6% reporting available space, 59.3% reporting highly available space, and a relatively higher percentage of 11.1% reporting unavailability.

These findings suggest that the perceived availability and high availability of classroom space vary across different grade levels. Some grades demonstrate a higher percentage of available and highly available classroom space, while others show a relatively higher percentage of unavailability. This may be because in some of the school there was no enough classroom for all the grade. Those school where there was no enough classroom, the classes were conducted in open space. From the data, below we can analyze that in some school, student studying in some grade were excluded from classroom.

Table 4.18: Availability of classroom space by Grade

Grade	Highly available	Available	Unavailable	Total
3	47.9%	37.8%	14.3%	100%
4	60.5%	32.8%	6.7%	100%
5	63.6%	28.1%	8.3%	100%
6	56.8%	40.7%	2.5%	100%
7	54.4%	43%	2.5%	100%
8	59.3%	29.6%	11.1%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data presented in the table, shows the availability of classroom space based on various ethnicities from which, we can observe that: 39.5% of Brahmin student reported that classroom space is highly available, 50% reported available, and 10.5% reported it as unavailable. Likewise, 50% of Chhetri respondents reported both highly available and available classroom space while none reported it as unavailable. From the Dalit respondent, 60.2% reported that classroom space is highly available, 33.3% reported as available and 6.5% reported it as unavailable. Among the Kanu respondent 55.6% reported it as highly available, 44.4% reported available and none reported it as unavailable. 45.7% of Mahato respondents reported available space, 45.7% reported highly available space, and 8.7% reported it as unavailable. Likewise, 61.5% of Muslim reported highly available space, 33.8% reported available and 4.6% reported unavailable. Likewise, 58% of Yadav respondent reported classroom space as highly available, 31.2% reported available and 10.8% reported unavailable. While ethnicities from the other background reported that 59.60% think that classroom space is highly available, 31.70% reported available, while 8.70 reported unavailable.

From the data presented below we can analyze that the Dalit, Muslim, Yadav, and Others ethnic groups also reported higher percentages of highly available and available classroom space, ranging from 58.0% to 61.5%. This may be due to the reason that most of the respondent did belong from these ethnicities and the respondent from the ethnicities Brahmin, Kanu and Chhetri were relatively low.

Table 4.19: Availability of classroom space across various Ethnicities

Ethnicity	Highly available	Available	Unavailable	Total
Brahmin	39.5%	50.0%	10.5%	100%
Chhetri	50.0%	50.0%		100%
Dalit	60.2%	33.3%	6.5%	100%
Kanu	55.6%	44.4%		100%
Mahato	45.7%	45.7%	8.7%	100%
Muslim	61.5%	33.8%	4.6%	100%
Yadav	58.0%	31.2%	10.8%	100%
Others	59.60%	31.70%	8.70%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The graph presented below is on the satisfaction level regarding adequate space for classrooms, where it was found that the majority of respondents, accounting for 57.3%, reported being highly satisfied with the available space for classrooms. This indicates a positive perception of and contentment with the classroom environment. 32.7% of respondents reported being satisfied with the classroom space. whereas 10% of students reported feeling unsatisfied with the classroom space. This indicates that a smaller number of students have concerns or dissatisfaction regarding available space. From the data given below, we can understand the general sentiment among students regarding the adequacy of classroom space. The majority of the students expressed satisfaction or were highly satisfied. However, it is essential to consider the experiences and opinions of the students who reported being unsatisfied, as their concerns may reflect potential limitations or challenges in the learning environment.

Figure 4.3: Satisfaction on classroom space
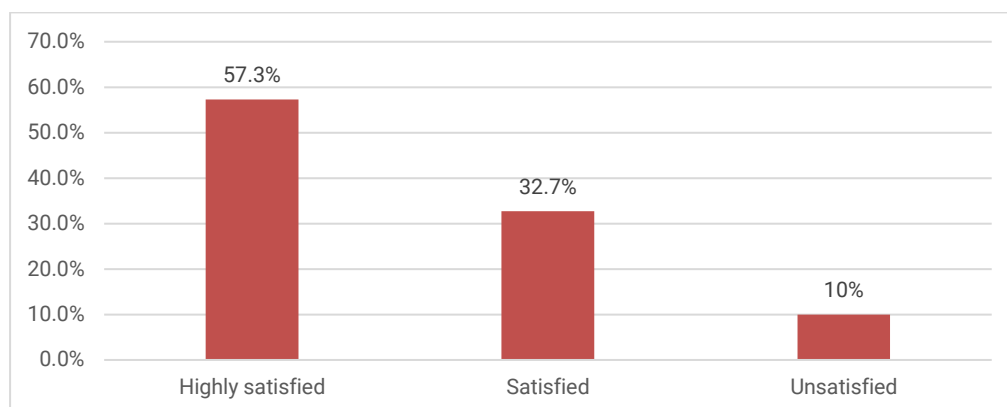
Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 23 presents a comprehensive analysis of students' satisfaction levels associated with classroom space categorized by different age groups. It was found that among students aged 6 to 8, a considerable majority (55.1%) reported being highly satisfied with their classroom space, indicating a positive perception among younger learners about their learning environment. However, it is essential to note that a significant proportion (13.5%) of younger students expressed dissatisfaction with their

classroom space, suggesting the need for improvement and addressing their concerns to enhance their overall learning experience.

For students aged 9 to 11, the data shows a similar trend of high satisfaction (58.1%) with their classroom space. This age group also demonstrates a relatively lower percentage (8.9%) of students reporting dissatisfaction. These findings suggest that students in the early stages of their primary education generally perceive their classroom space positively, but there is still room for improvement to cater to the needs and preferences of a minority who feel unsatisfied.

As students' progress to the 12 to 14 age group, the data indicates a slightly lower percentage of highly satisfied students (56.6%) compared to the previous age groups. The satisfaction level remains considerable, but the percentage of students expressing dissatisfaction increases to 9.4%. These findings imply that as students reach adolescence, their expectations and perceptions of their learning environment may become more diverse, necessitating a deeper understanding of their concerns to foster an inclusive and supportive educational setting. Interestingly, the oldest age group (15 to 17) has the highest percentage of highly satisfied students (62.1%), reflecting a positive perception of the classroom space. However, it also has the highest proportion (13.8%) of students reporting dissatisfaction, indicating that as students approach the final stages of their secondary education, their expectations and needs may evolve, warranting continuous efforts to maintain a supportive and conducive learning environment.

Overall, the data underscores the importance of considering age-specific preferences and concerns when designing and improving classroom spaces. While a majority of students express satisfaction with their learning environment across all age groups, addressing the needs and perceptions of those who feel unsatisfied will be vital in creating a more inclusive and rewarding educational experience for all students.

Table 4.20: Satisfaction of classroom space by Age

Age	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Total
6-8	55.1%	31.5%	13.5%	100%
9-11	58.1%	33%	8.9%	100%
12-14	56.6%	34%	9.4%	100%
15-17	62.1%	24.1%	13.8%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table below presents the data on satisfaction levels of students with classroom space, categorized by gender. From the table, it was found that Male students demonstrate a higher percentage of highly satisfied responses (61.0%) compared to their female counterparts (53.7%). This suggests that a significant majority of male students have a positive perception of their classroom space, indicating a higher level of contentment with their learning environment. Additionally, a smaller percentage of male student's report feeling unsatisfied (10.7%) with the classroom space, indicating that a relatively small minority experiences dissatisfaction. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that a considerable proportion of male students (28.3%) falls under the "satisfied" category, which implies that while they are content with their learning environment, there may still be room for improvement to cater to their needs and preferences.

On the other hand, female students exhibit a slightly lower percentage of highly satisfied responses (53.7%) but a higher percentage of students reporting satisfaction (37.0%) with the classroom space. This indicates that a substantial majority of female students have a positive perception of their learning environment, but a larger proportion feels content rather than highly satisfied. Similar to male students, a smaller percentage of female students (9.3%) express feelings of unsatisfaction with the classroom space. The data suggests that while female students generally have a positive perception of their learning environment, addressing the concerns of those who feel unsatisfied could contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive educational setting.

In conclusion, the data from Table 24 highlights gender-based differences in students' satisfaction with classroom space in the Rautahat Districts. While both male and female students generally perceive their learning environment positively, males tend to express higher levels of satisfaction, whereas females show a larger proportion of contentment.

Table 4.21: Satisfaction of classroom space by Gender

Gender	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Total
Male	61.0%	28.3%	10.7%	100.%
Female	53.7%	37.0%	9.3%	100.%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table presented below provides the data on the satisfaction levels of students regarding the adequacy of classroom space, by grade levels. It was found that among students in grade 3, 35.3% reported being satisfied with the classroom space, while a majority of 48.7% expressed high satisfaction. A smaller proportion of 16.0% reported feeling unsatisfied. In grade 4, 31.1% of students reported satisfaction, while a significant majority of 62.2% expressed high satisfaction. Only a small percentage of 6.7% reported being unsatisfied. For students in grade 5, 28.9% reported satisfaction, while a substantial 62.8% reported high satisfaction. A minor proportion of 8.3% expressed feeling unsatisfied. Among students in grade 6, 38.3% reported satisfaction, with 56.8% expressing high satisfaction. A small percentage of 4.9% reported feeling unsatisfied. In grade 7, 36.7% of students reported satisfaction, while 53.2% expressed high satisfaction. A slightly higher percentage of 10.1% reported being unsatisfied. Lastly, among students in grade 8, 27.2% reported satisfaction, while a significant majority of 59.3% expressed high satisfaction. A relatively higher percentage of 13.6% reported feeling unsatisfied.

Based on the findings, it is evident that satisfaction levels regarding classroom space vary among different grade levels. Overall, a majority of students in each grade level reported either satisfaction or high satisfaction, indicating a generally positive perception of the adequacy of classroom space. However, it is important to note that there were some students in each grade level who expressed dissatisfaction with the available space. In particular, higher percentages of students in grades 3, 7, and 8 reported being unsatisfied. This may be attributed to certain schools where there is a limited number of classrooms, resulting in students having to share classes with different grade levels. This arrangement could potentially impact students' learning environment and their overall satisfaction with the classroom space.

Table 4.22: Satisfaction of classroom space by Grade

Grade	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Total
3	48.7%	35.3%	16%	100%
4	62.2%	31.1%	6.7%	100%
5	62.8%	28.9%	8.3%	100%
6	56.8%	38.3%	4.9%	100%
7	53.2%	36.7%	10.1%	100%
8	59.3%	27.2%	13.6%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the table below, it is evident that satisfaction levels regarding classroom space vary across different ethnicities. It was found that Brahmin students reported a relatively balanced distribution of satisfaction, with 39.5% highly satisfied, 47.4% satisfied, and 13.2% expressing dissatisfaction. Chhetri students had a higher percentage of highly satisfied responses at 75.0%, indicating a strong level of satisfaction. On the other hand, Dalit students reported a majority of highly satisfied responses at 61.0%, with 28.5% expressing satisfaction and 10.6% indicating dissatisfaction. Kanu and Mahato students had similar patterns, with a higher percentage of highly satisfied responses at 55.6% and 47.8%, respectively. The remaining students expressed a varying degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Muslim students reported a high percentage of highly satisfied responses at 63.1%, with 30.8% expressing satisfaction and only 6.2% indicating dissatisfaction. Yadav and Others students had similar patterns, with a majority of highly satisfied responses at 58.1% and 57.8%, respectively. The remaining students expressed varying levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Overall, the data suggests that satisfaction levels regarding classroom space vary among different ethnicities. Some ethnic groups, such as Chhetri, Dalit, and Muslim, reported higher percentages of highly satisfied responses, indicating a strong level of satisfaction. However, it is important to note that across all ethnicities, there were students who expressed varying levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Table 4.23: Satisfaction of classroom space across various Ethnicities

| Ethnicity	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied
Brahmin	39.5%	47.4%	13.2%
Chhetri	75.0%	25.0%	
Dalit	61.0%	28.5%	10.6%
Kanu	55.6%	44.4%	
Mahato	47.8%	41.3%	10.9%
Muslim	63.1%	30.8%	6.2%
Yadav	58.1%	30.1%	11.8%
Others	57.8%	32.1%	10.1%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

4.2.2 Safe and clean drinking water

The data presented in the graph provides information about the availability of safe drinking water. It was found that 39.5% of respondents reported that safe and clean

drinking water is available in schools. This indicates that a significant proportion of students have access to water that meets the necessary health and safety standards. Furthermore, a majority of students, accounting for 52.3%, reported that safe and clean drinking water is highly available. This implies that most students enjoy easy and abundant access to drinking water within their school environment, contributing to their overall well-being. However, it is concerning to note that 8.2% of students reported the unavailability of safe and clean drinking water. This suggests that a small yet significant portion of students do not have access to this basic necessity, which can have adverse effects on their health and overall school experience. It is apparent that efforts have been made to provide access to safe and clean drinking water in the majority of the schools.

However, in some schools, there was no access to clean drinking water. When we asked them about it in a one-on-one discussion, they responded that due to the unavailability of clean drinking water, some students are compelled to drink unhygienic water, and some students don't drink water till they return home". Clean drinking water is one of the basic human rights, and when clean drinking water is not available in the school environment, students are excluded from enjoying this basic human right.

Figure 4.4: Availability of safe and clean drinking water
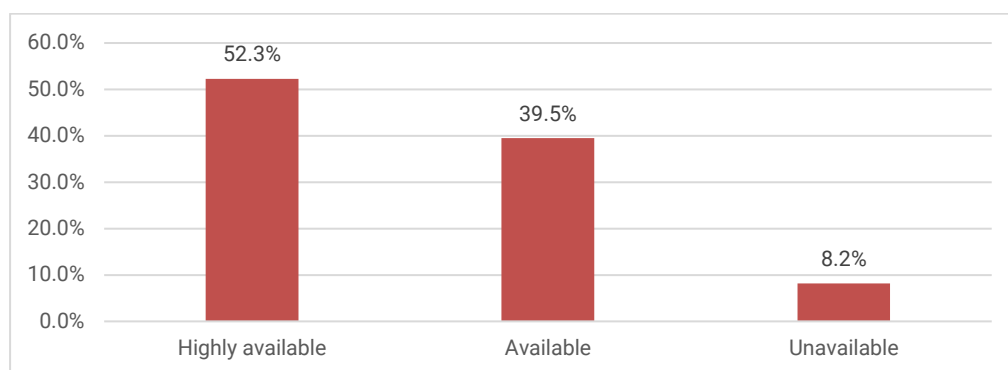
Source: Field Survey, 2023

The presented data provides valuable insights into the perceptions of students in different age groups regarding the availability of safe and clean drinking water. Among students aged 6 to 8, a significant proportion (43.80%) perceives safe and clean drinking water as highly available, indicating that a considerable number of younger students believe they have easy access to clean water in their schools. However, a majority of students in this age group (52.80%) perceive water as available but not highly abundant, suggesting that while access to water exists, it may not be as plentiful as desired. Nonetheless, the percentage of students (3.40%) who report water as unavailable is relatively small, indicating that most younger students do not face significant challenges in accessing clean water.

In contrast, older students demonstrate a more positive perception of water availability. Among students aged 15 to 17, a substantial majority (58.60%) perceive safe and clean drinking water as highly available, showing that a significant number of older students believe they have ample access to clean water in their schools. However, a notable percentage (24.10%) of students in this age group reports water as unavailable, indicating that a significant minority of older students perceive challenges

in accessing clean water at their schools. Additionally, among students aged 12 to 14, the data shows that while a majority perceives water as highly available (52.40%), a significant proportion (12.30%) still reports water as unavailable.

This finding highlights the need for further attention to ensure equitable access to safe and clean drinking water for all students, regardless of their age, in the public schools of the Rautahat Districts. Overall, the data suggests that while the perception of water availability is generally positive, there are variations among age groups, emphasizing the importance of continuous efforts to address water accessibility and promote equitable conditions for all students in the educational setting.

Table 4.24: Availability of safe and clean drinking water by Age

Age	Highly Available	Available	Unavailable	Total
6-8	43.80%	52.80%	3.40%	100%
9-11	54.40%	40.70%	4.80%	100%
12-14	52.40%	35.40%	12.30%	100%
15-17	58.60%	17.20%	24.10%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data on the of safe and clean drinking water availability by gender reveals interesting insights about the perceptions of male and female students in the public schools of the Rautahat Districts. Male students exhibit a slightly higher perception of highly available water (55.30%) compared to female students (49.30%). This difference might indicate variations in water accessibility experiences between genders or differences in how students perceive the water situation in their schools. Both male and female students generally view water as available, with 38% and 41% respectively perceiving it as available but not highly abundant. This suggests that a substantial proportion of students from both genders believes they have access to clean water, but there might be room for improvement in the abundance or availability of water resources in schools. Interestingly, a small percentage of both male (6.70%) and female students (9.70%) perceive water as unavailable. These findings highlight the importance of addressing any existing disparities in access to safe drinking water in schools to ensure all students, regardless of their gender, have equal and sufficient access to this fundamental resource.

In conclusion, the data underscores the significance of promoting equitable access to safe and clean drinking water for all students, emphasizing the need for continuous efforts to improve water availability in public schools in the Rautahat Districts, and fostering an inclusive educational environment for all.

Table 4.25: Availability of safe and clean drinking water by Gender

Gender	Highly Available	Available	Unavailable	Total
Male	55.30%	38%	6.70%	100%
Female	49.30%	41%	9.70%	100%

Source: Filed Survey, 2023

The table presented below provides the data on the safe and clean drinking water availability with across various grade levels. It was found that in grade 3, nearly half of

students, 47.9%, reported that safe and clean drinking water was available. Additionally, 47.1% of students reported highly available water, indicating a favorable situation. However, a small percentage of 5.0% mentioned that safe and clean drinking water is unavailable. Moving to grade 4, we see a similar trend, with 43.7% of students reporting available water and 51.3% reporting highly available water. The percentage of students reporting unavailability remains the same at 5.0%. Grade 5 continues to show positive results, with 42.1% of students reporting available water and a significant majority of 54.5% reporting highly available water. The percentage of students reporting unavailability remains relatively low at 3.3%. As we progress to grade 6, the availability of safe and clean drinking water remains reasonably stable. Around 37.0% of students reported available water, and 55.6% reported highly available water. The percentage of students reporting unavailability is slightly higher at 7.4%. In grade 7, the trend continues, with 34.2% of students reporting available water and 57.0% reporting highly available water. The percentage of students reporting unavailability remains relatively higher at 8.9%. Lastly, in grade 8, we observe a notable difference. Only 24.7% of students reported available water, while 50.6% reported highly available water. Surprisingly, the same percentage of 24.7% reported unavailability of safe and clean drinking water, indicating a significant challenge in this grade level.

From this data, we can analyze that most of the grade levels show positive trends, grade 8 stands out with lower availability and a higher percentage of students reporting unavailability. While collecting further information, it was found that in some school drinking water was unavailable for students above grade 8.

Table 4.26: Availability of safe and clean drinking water by Grade

Grade	Highly available	Available	Unavailable	Total
3	47.10%	47.90%	5%	100%
4	51.30%	43.70%	5%	100%
5	54.50%	42.10%	3.30%	100%
6	55.60%	37%	7.40%	100%
7	57%	34.20%	8.90%	100%
8	50.60%	24.70%	24.70%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table below presents the availability of safe and clean drinking water in public school which is categorized by different ethnicities. It was found that among the Brahmin students, approximately 44.7% report highly available safe and clean drinking water, while 42.1% perceive it as available but not highly abundant. A notable percentage (13.2%) of Brahmin students reports water as unavailable, indicating challenges in accessing clean water in some instances. The Chhetri ethnic group stands out with the highest percentage of highly available clean water (87.5%), suggesting a significant majority of Chhetri students enjoy easy access to safe drinking water. Only 12.5% of Chhetri students perceive water as available but not highly abundant, and none report it as unavailable, indicating a positive water situation within this group.

Dalit students also show a considerable proportion of highly available clean water (53.7%), but a larger percentage (43.9%) perceives water as available without being

highly abundant. Only a small fraction (2.4%) reports water as unavailable, implying a relatively good overall water situation for Dalit students in the public schools.

In contrast, the Kanu, Mahato, Muslim, and Yadav ethnic groups face more challenges in water availability. The Kanu and Mahato ethnicities report relatively lower percentages of highly available clean water (33.3% and 37.0%, respectively). The Yadav group has a higher percentage of highly available water (50.5%), but a significant portion (43%) perceives water as available without being highly abundant. The Muslim ethnicity, while having a reasonable percentage of highly available water (56.9%), also has a notable proportion (29.2%) reporting water as available but not highly abundant. These findings indicate the need for improved water accessibility for students from these ethnicities. The "Others" category demonstrates a relatively positive situation, with 55% reporting highly available water and only 8.3% perceiving it as unavailable. However, a notable percentage (36.7%) also considers water as available but not highly abundant, indicating potential areas for improvement.

Analyzing these findings, it becomes, visible that there is varying perception of safe and clean drinking water availability among different ethnic groups. While some groups, such as Chhetri and Dalit, generally report positive water situations, others, like Kanu, Mahato, Muslim, and Yadav, face challenges in water accessibility. Understanding these disparities is crucial to address the needs of each ethnic group and ensure equitable access to safe drinking water for all students, fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Table 4.27: Availability of safe and clean drinking water by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Highly Available	Available	Unavailable	Total
Brahmin	44.7%	42.1%	13.2%	100.0%
Chhetri	87.5%	12.5%		100.0%
Dalit	53.7%	43.9%	2.4%	100.0%
Kanu	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%	100.0%
Mahato	37.0%	50.0%	13.0%	100.0%
Muslim	56.9%	29.2%	13.8%	100.0%
Yadav	50.5%	43%	6.5%	100.0%
Others	55%	36.7%	8.3%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The graph provides the data on the satisfaction levels regarding the availability of safe and clean drinking water. It was found that out of the total respondents, 50.2% reported being satisfied with the availability of safe and clean drinking water. Additionally, 37.5% reported being highly satisfied, indicating a significant level of contentment. On the other hand, a proportion of 12.3% reported being unsatisfied with the availability of safe and clean drinking water. the data suggests a positive trend in terms of satisfaction with the availability of safe and clean drinking water among the majority of students. However, the presence of unsatisfied students highlights the need for continuous monitoring and improvement efforts to ensure that all students have access to satisfactory drinking water facilities.

Figure 4.5: Satisfaction on safe and clean drinking water
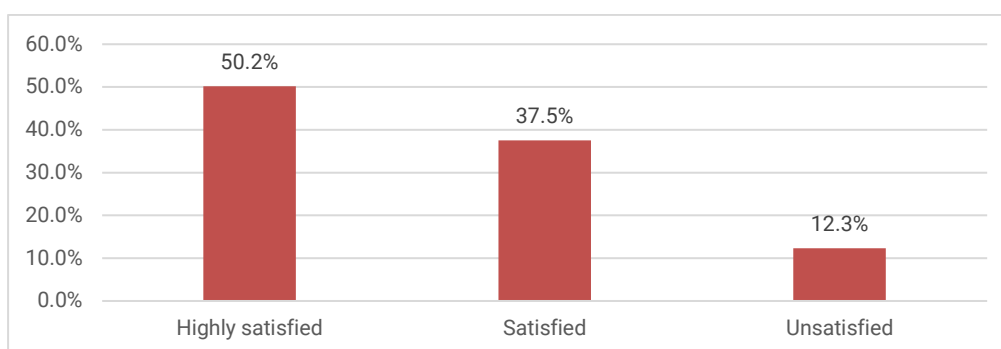
The table below presents the data on the satisfaction on safe and clean drinking water across various age groups. It was found that among students aged 6 to 8, 46.1% express being highly satisfied with the safe and clean drinking water, while 47.2% report being satisfied. This suggests a generally positive perception of water quality among younger students. However, a notable percentage (6.7%) of students in this age group report being unsatisfied, indicating areas where water accessibility and quality may need improvement. For students aged 9 to 11, 53.0% report being highly satisfied with the water quality, while 38.9% are satisfied. A smaller percentage (8.1%) expresses being unsatisfied. These findings indicate a relatively positive perception of water quality among students in this age group. The age group 12 to 14 demonstrates a lower percentage of highly satisfied students (48.1%) compared to the previous age groups.

Here, a considerable proportion (17.5%) expresses being unsatisfied with the water quality. This suggests that students in this age group may have more critical concerns about water accessibility and quality, warranting further attention to address their needs. Surprisingly, among students aged 15 to 17, only 51.7% report being highly satisfied with water quality, while a substantial percentage (31.0%) expresses being unsatisfied. The low satisfaction levels in this age group indicate significant challenges in water accessibility and quality, and addressing these concerns is crucial to ensuring a positive learning environment for older students.

Table 4.28: Satisfaction on safe and clean drinking water by Age

Age	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Total
6-8	46.1%	47.2%	6.7%	100.0%
9-11	53.0%	38.9%	8.1%	100.0%
12-14	48.1%	34.4%	17.5%	100.0%
15-17	51.7%	17.2%	31.0%	100.0%

The table below presents the data on the student's satisfaction levels regarding the availability of safe and clean drinking water across gender. The data reveals interesting differences in how male and female students perceive the quality of water in their learning environments. Among male students, 52.7% express being highly satisfied with the safe and clean drinking water, while 36.3% report being satisfied. A smaller percentage (11.0%) of male student's expresses being unsatisfied. These findings indicate a generally positive perception of water quality among male students, with a significant majority expressing satisfaction. On the other hand, among female

students, 47.7% report being highly satisfied with the water quality, while 38.7% are satisfied. A higher percentage (13.7%) of female student's expresses being unsatisfied. This suggests that female students have a slightly lower level of satisfaction with water quality compared to their male counterparts.

Overall, both male and female students generally express positive perceptions of water quality in their learning environments. However, there are slight differences between the two genders, with male students showing a slightly higher level of satisfaction. Addressing the concerns of both male and female students who feel unsatisfied will be essential to ensure equitable access to safe and clean drinking water for all students and foster a supportive and inclusive educational environment.

Table 4.29: Satisfaction on safe and clean drinking water by Gender

Gender	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Total
Male	52.7%	36.3%	11.0%	100%
Female	47.7%	38.7%	13.7%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data presented below is between the satisfaction levels regarding the availability of safe and clean drinking water across different grade levels. In grade 3, 50.5% reported being highly satisfied with the availability of safe and clean drinking water, while 38.7% expressed satisfaction. A smaller proportion of 10.9% reported being unsatisfied. Among students in grade 4, 49.6% of students reported being highly satisfied and 42.0% expressed satisfaction, while unsatisfied students were relatively lower at 8.4%. For students in grade 5, a majority of 53.7% reported being highly satisfied and 41.3% expressed satisfaction. The percentage of unsatisfied students is notably low at 5.0%, reflecting a positive perception of water availability in this grade level. In grade 6, 54.3% of students reported being highly satisfied, while 37.0% expressed satisfaction. The percentage of unsatisfied students is slightly higher at 8.6%, indicating a need for attention and improvement. Grade 7 shows a different pattern, with 44.3% of students reporting high satisfaction and 40.5% expressing satisfaction. Notably, a higher percentage of 15.2% reported being unsatisfied, indicating a significant level of dissatisfaction compared to other grade levels. Lastly, in grade 8, 46.9% of students reported being highly satisfied, while only 21.0% expressed satisfaction. The percentage of unsatisfied students is notably higher at 32.1%, indicating a considerable challenge in terms of water availability and satisfaction within this grade level.

Analyzing these findings, it becomes apparent that there are variations in the satisfaction levels regarding the availability of safe and clean drinking water across different grade levels. While some grade levels exhibit higher satisfaction rates, others face challenges in meeting student expectations. It can also be analyzed that students from the higher grade seems to have consciousness on safe and clean water due to which they are unsatisfied. On the other hand, students in the lower grade may not have proper knowledge about clean and safe drinking water due to which they seem to be satisfied with the available water at school.

Table 4.30: Satisfaction on safe and clean drinking water by Grade

Grade	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Total
3	50.4%	38.7%	10.9%	100%
4	49.6%	42.0%	8.4%	100%
5	53.7%	41.3%	5%	100%
6	54.3%	37.0%	8.6%	100%
7	44.3%	40.5%	15.2%	100%
8	46.9%	21%	32.1%	100%

The table below presents the data on the student's satisfaction levels regarding safe and clean drinking water where the data is presented across various ethnicities. It was found that among Brahmin students, 50.0% express being highly satisfied with safe and clean drinking water, while 31.6% report being satisfied. However, a relatively high percentage (18.4%) of Brahmin student's expresses being unsatisfied. These findings indicate that while a substantial proportion of Brahmin students are satisfied with water quality, a notable minority has concerns about water accessibility and quality. Chhetri students stand out with the highest percentage of highly satisfied responses (75.0%), suggesting a significant majority of Chhetri students are content with the water quality in their learning environments. Only 25.0% of Chhetri students report being satisfied, and none express being unsatisfied, indicating a generally positive perception of water quality within this group. Dalit students also show a considerable proportion of highly satisfied responses (52.8%), while 43.1% are satisfied. A small fraction (4.1%) of Dalit students expresses being unsatisfied with water quality, implying an overall positive perception of water accessibility and quality among this group.

The Kanu, Mahato, and Muslim ethnic groups demonstrate varying levels of satisfaction. Kanu students have the lowest percentage of highly satisfied responses (33.3%), while 44.4% are satisfied, and 22.2% express being unsatisfied, indicating significant challenges in water accessibility for this group. Mahato students have 39.1% highly satisfied, 32.6% satisfied, and a relatively high percentage (28.3%) of unsatisfied responses, suggesting that water quality is a significant concern among Mahato students. Muslim students exhibit 56.9% highly satisfied, 24.6% satisfied, and 18.5% unsatisfied responses, indicating mixed perceptions of water quality within this group. Yadav students express 51.6% highly satisfied, 39.8% satisfied, and a lower percentage (8.6%) of unsatisfied responses, suggesting a generally positive perception of water quality among Yadav students. The "Others" category demonstrates 48.2% highly satisfied, 39.4% satisfied, and 12.4% unsatisfied responses, highlighting a relatively positive situation but also room for improvement.

Table 4.31: Satisfaction on safe and clean drinking water by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Total
Brahmin	50.0%	31.6%	18.4%	100.0%
Chhetri	75.0%	25.0%		100.0%
Dalit	52.8%	43.1%	4.1%	100.0%
Kanu	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%	100.0%
Mahato	39.1%	32.6%	28.3%	100.0%
Muslim	56.9%	24.6%	18.5%	100.0%
Yadav	51.6%	39.8%	8.6%	100.0%
Others	48.2%	39.4%	12.4%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Overall, there is differing perception of students regarding satisfaction on safe and clean drinking water. Some ethnic groups, such as Chhetri and Dalit, generally report positive perceptions of water quality, others, like Kanu, Mahato, and Muslim, face challenges in water accessibility and quality. Addressing the concerns of students from these ethnic groups will be essential to ensure equitable access to safe and clean drinking water for all students and foster a supportive and inclusive educational environment.
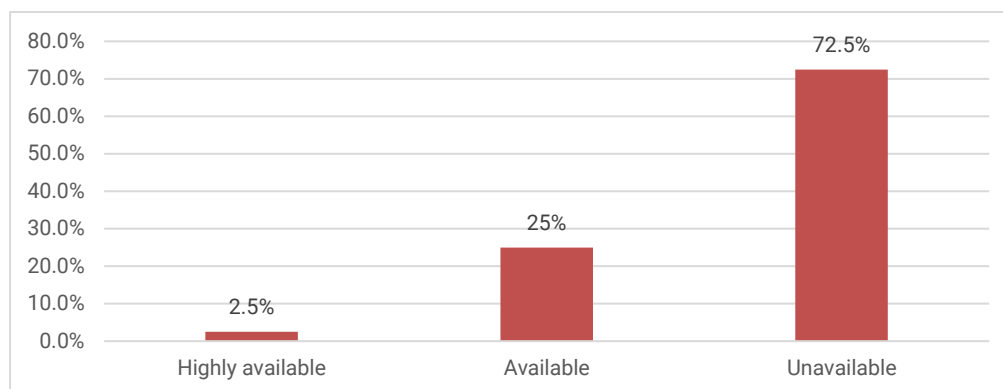
4.2.3   Disabled friendly Infrastructure

The graph below presents data on the availability of disabled-friendly infrastructure in schools. Out of the total respondents, only 25% reported the availability of disabled-friendly infrastructure, indicating a relatively low percentage of schools equipped to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Additionally, a mere 2.5% reported the availability of highly disabled-friendly infrastructure, which clearly indicates that there is a significant gap in providing comprehensive accessibility. The data highlights the crucial importance of disability-friendly infrastructure in schools. Such infrastructure includes ramps, elevators, accessible bathrooms, wide corridors, and other facilities that enable students with disabilities to navigate the school environment comfortably and independently. These modifications and accommodations are essential for ensuring equal access to education and promoting inclusivity for students with disabilities.

The very high number of respondents (72.5%) who reported the unavailability of disabled-friendly infrastructure signifies the urgent need for improvement in this area. Schools should prioritize creating an inclusive and supportive environment that caters to the needs of all students, including those with disabilities. To decrease dropout rates and increase retention rates, schools should be accessible to all individuals. By providing disabled-friendly infrastructure, schools can remove physical barriers and enable students with disabilities to participate fully in academic and social activities. Accessible facilities not only enhance the educational experience for students with disabilities but also foster a sense of belonging, self-confidence, and empowerment. From the observation, it was found that many students didn't know about disabled-friendly infrastructure; those who did only understood it as having ramps. In many schools, there was no accessible environment for disabled people. Overall, the data underscores the pressing need for schools to prioritize the availability of disabled-

friendly infrastructure. By taking concrete steps to provide accessible facilities, educational institutions can promote equal opportunities, empower students with disabilities, and create an inclusive educational environment that values the diversity and unique abilities of all students.

Figure 4.6: Availability of disabled friendly infrastructure

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The graph below presents the data on the satisfaction levels regarding disabled-friendly infrastructure in schools. It was found that out of the total respondents, 2.2%, reported being highly satisfied with the disabled friendly infrastructure. This indicates that only a small number of respondents are highly satisfied with the disabled friendly infrastructure. 26.8% reported being satisfied with the disabled friendly infrastructure in their schools. On the other hand, the majority of students, representing 71%, reported being unsatisfied with the disabled friendly infrastructure. This indicates that a large number of students are dissatisfied with the infrastructure. From this data it is clear that most of the public school of Rautahat district lack disabled friendly infrastructure and which may also be the reason of increase dropout rate in public schools of Rautahat.

Figure 4.7: Satisfaction with disabled friendly Infrastructure
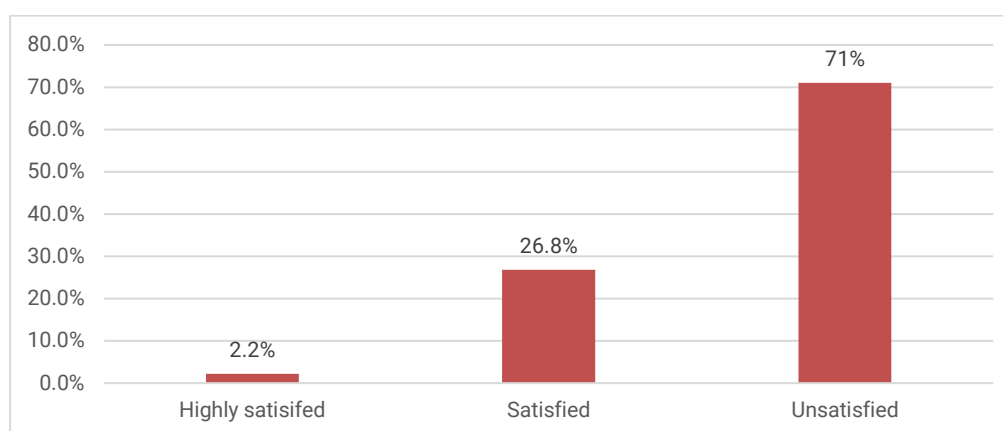
Source: Field Visit, 2023

4.3   Participation

Here, participation is looked in terms of, classroom discussion and extracurricular activities. Students were asked how often they participate in the classroom discussion and whether they get opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities.
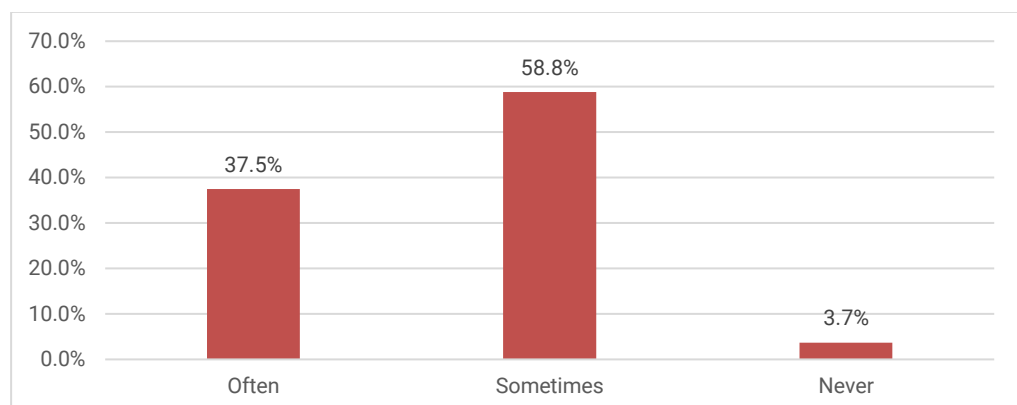
4.3.1   Participation in classroom discussion

The data presented in the graph reveals the varying levels of participation in classroom discussions among students. It indicates that a significant portion of students, approximately 37.5%, actively engage in classroom discussions, demonstrating their willingness to contribute and share their thoughts. Additionally, the majority of students, accounting for 58.8%, reported participating in classroom discussions at times, indicating a generally active and involved student body.

Conversely, a small percentage of students, approximately 3.7%, expressed never participating in classroom discussions. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that some students reported that they never participated in the classroom discussion due to various reasons such as shyness or hesitation, they don't like to talk, not interested, fear, and very less classroom discussion. They expressed feeling uncomfortable or lacking confidence when it came to speaking up in class. On the other hand, students who participated sometimes in classroom discussion mentioned that their active involvement is, whenever they knew the answers or felt confident in sharing their opinions.

Encouraging active participation in classroom discussions is crucial for fostering an inclusive and engaging learning environment. It provides students with valuable opportunities to develop their communication skills, express their ideas, and learn from their peers' perspectives. Educators play a pivotal role in creating a supportive atmosphere that encourages all students to participate and ensuring that quieter students feel comfortable contributing.

Figure 4.8: Participation in classroom discussion

Source: Field survey, 2023

The table below presents the data on the participation in classroom discussion among different age groups. It was found that in the age group 6-8, 27% of students reported participating often in classroom discussion, 69.7% reported participating sometimes in classroom discussion, and 3.4% reported that they never participate in classroom discussion. This reflects that the students in age group 6-8 participate sometime in classroom discussion. In the 9-11 age group, 37.4% reported participating often in classroom discussion, while 58.9% participated sometimes, and 3.7% reported that they have never participated in classroom discussion.

In the 12-14 age group, a similar pattern emerges, with 38.2% of students reported participating often in classroom discussion. 58.0% reported participating sometimes in classroom discussion and 3.8% of students reported that they never participate in classroom discussion. Notably, the 15-17 age group stands out with a significantly higher percentage of students, 65.5%, reporting participating often in classroom discussions. Only 31.0% reported participating sometimes, and 3.4% reported never participating. This age group demonstrates the highest level of active participation, indicating a greater willingness to engage in classroom discussions.

Overall, the data indicates that students' frequency of participation in classroom discussions varies across different age groups, with higher age students demonstrating higher levels of active engagement and smaller age students demonstrating lower level of active engagement. This may be due to the reason that students of higher age may have developed confidence to speak up often in class while, students from the small age group lack such confidence.

Table 4.32: Participation in classroom discussion by Age

Age	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
6-8	27.0%	69.7%	3.4%	100.0%
9-11	37.4%	58.9%	3.7%	100.0%
12-14	38.2%	58.0%	3.8%	100.0%
15-17	65.5%	31.0%	3.4%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table below presents data on the frequency of participation in classroom discussion based on gender. From the data below it was found that among male students, 40.3% reported participating often times in classroom discussion, 56% of students participated sometimes in classroom discussion and 3.7% reported that they never participate in classroom discussion. The data indicates that from the male student's higher percentage are actively engaged in classroom discussion. On the other hand, among the female respondents, 34.7% reported participating often in classroom discussion, 61.7% participated sometimes in classroom discussion, and 3.75 reported that they never participate in classroom discussion. The data indicates that slightly lower percentage of female students actively participate in discussion compared to male students.

The data indicates that majority of male and female students participate in classroom discussion, but there is little difference in the frequency of participation. Male students tend to have slightly higher rate of active participation compared to female students.

Table 4.33: Participation in classroom discussion by Gender

Gender	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
Male	40.3%	56.0%	3.7%	100%
Female	34.7%	61.7%	3.7%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table below presents data on the participation of classroom discussion across various grade levels. From the table below, it was found that, in grade 3 23.5% of students participated often in classroom discussion, 74.8% participated sometimes in classroom discussion, while 1.7% of students participated never in classroom discussion. As we move to higher grade levels, we observe an increase in the percentage of students participating often. In grade 4, 35.3% of students reported participating often, indicating a higher level of active engagement compared to grade 3. However, there is still a significant portion (6.7%) of grade 4 students who reported never participating in classroom discussions.

The trend continues in grade 5, with 36.4% of students participating often and 60.3% participating sometimes. Grade 6 shows a further increase in active participation, with 44.4% of students reporting participating often. In grade 7, 39.2% of students participated often in classroom discussion, 54.4% participated sometimes, while it is worth noting that 6.3% of grade 7 students participated never in classroom discussion. The data shows that in grade 8 there are students having highest level of active participation, with 54.3% of students reported that they participated often in classroom discussion, 43.2% of students participated sometimes, while 2.5% of students participated never in classroom discussion.

From the findings we can analyze that students tend to participate often in classroom discussion while students in lower grade seem to be participating less in classroom discussion. It can also be analyzed that in the public schools, students are often included in classroom discussion. They are given opportunity to share their voice and have freedom to speak what they understand or know.

Table 4.34: Participation in classroom discussion by Grade

Gender	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
3	23.5%	74.8%	1.7%	100.0%
4	35.3%	58.0%	6.7%	100.0%
5	36.4%	60.3%	3.3%	100.0%
6	44.4%	54.3%	1.2%	100.0%
7	39.2%	54.4%	6.3%	100.0%
8	54.3%	43.2%	2.5%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table below presents data between participation in classroom discussion with various ethnicities. From the data below it was found that Brahmin students reported participating often in classroom discussions at a rate of 34.2%, with 57.9% participating sometimes and 7.9% reporting never participating. This suggests that a significant percentage of Brahmin students engage in classroom discussions, although there is a small portion who do not participate. Chhetri students have a higher

rate of active participation, with 62.5% reporting participating often and 37.5% participating sometimes. This indicates that Chhetri students are more inclined to actively contribute to classroom discussions compared to other ethnicities in the dataset. Dalit students reported participating often at a rate of 37.4%, with 58.5% participating sometimes and 4.1% reporting never participating. This demonstrates a relatively high level of active engagement among Dalit students.

Kanu students also show a significant level of active participation, with 55.6% reporting participating often and 44.4% participating sometimes. This suggests that Kanu students actively contribute to classroom discussions. Mahato students reported participating often at a rate of 34.8%, with 63.0% participating sometimes and only 2.2% reporting never participating. This indicates a substantial level of active engagement among Mahato students. Muslim students show a similar pattern, with 35.4% reporting participating often and 64.6% participating sometimes. This suggests a consistent level of participation among Muslim students. Yadav students reported participating often at a rate of 40.9%, with 55.9% participating sometimes and 3.2% reporting never participating. This indicates a considerable level of active engagement among Yadav students. Other ethnicities in the dataset also demonstrate a notable level of participation, with 36.2% reporting participating often, 59.2% participating sometimes, and 4.6% reporting never participating.

Overall, the data suggests that students from various ethnicities participate in classroom discussions. Chhetri students stand out with a higher rate of active participation, while other ethnicities, such as Dalit, Kanu, and Yadav, also show significant levels of engagement. It is essential to foster an inclusive and supportive classroom environment that encourages all students, regardless of their ethnicity, to actively participate in discussions.

Table 4.35: Participation in classroom discussion by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
Brahmin	34.2%	57.9%	7.9%	100.0%
Chhetri	62.5%	37.5%		100.0%
Dalit	37.4%	58.5%	4.1%	100.0%
Kanu	55.6%	44.4%		100.0%
Mahato	34.8%	63.0%	2.2%	100.0%
Muslim	35.4%	64.6%		100.0%
Yadav	40.9%	55.9%	3.2%	100.0%
Others	36.2%	59.2%	4.6%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

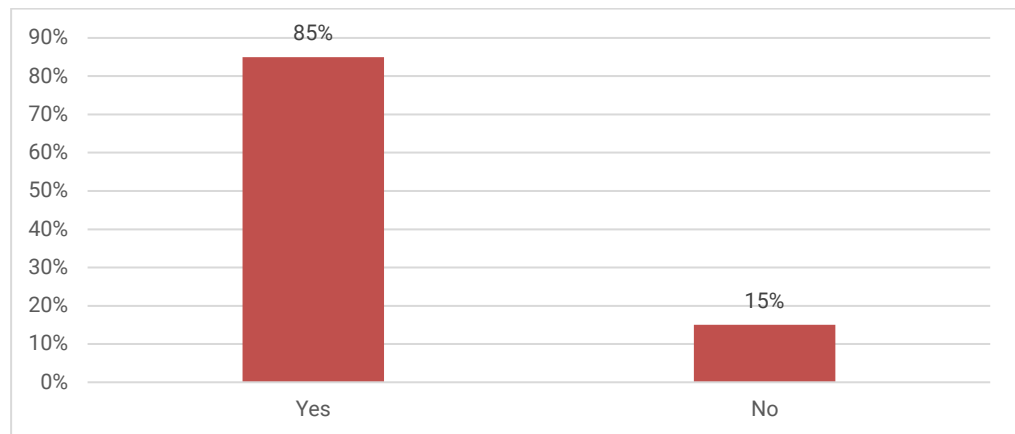### 4.3.2 Opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular activities

The data provided indicates the presence or absence of opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular activities in school. It was found that out of the total respondents, only 155 reported having opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities in their school; this indicates that a relatively small proportion of students have access to extracurricular activities. On the other hand, most of the students, accounting for 85%, reported a lack of opportunities for engaging in extracurricular activities. This indicates that the majority of schools do not provide opportunities for

students to engage in extracurricular activities. In a further investigation with respondents, it was found that students who are provided opportunities to participate in ECA are also not satisfied with it as they are not exposed to various games that they want to play in school.

The absence of opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular activities can have implications for their overall educational experience. Extracurricular activities play a vital role in providing students with a well-rounded education, fostering their personal growth, and developing various skills beyond the academic curriculum.

Moreover, extracurricular activities have been associated with several benefits, such as improved academic performance, increased motivation, enhanced self-esteem, and reduced behavioral issues. By offering these opportunities, schools can create a positive and inclusive environment that supports the holistic growth of their students.

Figure 4.9: Opportunities to engage in Extracurricular activities

The data provided in the table below includes the data on opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities across various age groups of students. As the table indicates 83.1% of students from age group 6-8 feel that they have opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities, while 16.9% of students feel that they do not have opportunities to be engaged in extracurricular activities. Similarly, in the 9-11 age group, 85.9% of students reported having access to extracurricular activities, with 14.1% indicating a lack thereof. In the 12-14 age group, 84.4% of students reported having opportunities for engagement, while 15.6% did not. Lastly, among students aged 15-17, 86.2% reported having access to extracurricular activities, while 13.8% did not.

Thus, the data indicate that across all age groups, a majority of students have opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities in their respective schools. The percentages range from 83.1% to 86.2%, indicating a relatively high availability of extracurricular opportunities for students.

Table 4.36: Opportunities to engage in ECA by Age

Age	Yes	No	Total
6-8	83.1%	16.9%	100.0%
9-11	85.9%	14.1%	100.0%
12-14	84.4%	15.6%	100.0%
15-17	86.2%	13.8%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data presented in table explores the availability of opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular activities in school based on their gender. It was found that among male students, 86.0% reported having opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities, while 14.0% indicated a lack of such opportunities. Similarly, among female students, 84.0% reported having access to extracurricular activities, with 16.0% indicating a lack thereof. Female respondents feel that they have less opportunities to engage in ECA as compared to male respondents.

The data indicates that the majority of respondents irrespective of their gender have opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities. While the majority of both male and female students have opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities, it is essential to continue promoting inclusivity and striving for equal access to these activities for all students.

Table 4.37: Opportunities to engage in ECA by Gender

Gender	Yes	No	Total
Male	86.0%	14.0%	100%
Female	84.0%	16.0%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table below presents the data on the opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular activities across grades. It was found that in grade 3, 75.6% of students reported having opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities, while 24.4% indicated a lack of such opportunities. Moving on to grade 4, a higher percentage of students, 89.1%, reported having opportunities for engagement in extracurricular activities, with only 10.9% indicating a lack thereof. In grade 5, the percentage of students with opportunities for engagement in extracurricular activities further increased to 90.1%, with only 9.9% indicating a lack of such opportunities. Similarly, in grade 6, 87.7% of students reported having opportunities for engagement in extracurricular activities, while 12.3% indicated a lack of opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities.

In grade 7, 82.3% of students reported having opportunities for engagement in extracurricular activities, with 17.7% indicating a lack of opportunities. Lastly, in grade 8, 85.2% of students reported having opportunities for engagement in extracurricular activities, while 14.8% indicated a lack of opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities. Given evidence suggest that a majority of students across various grades have access to extracurricular activities but most of the students are not satisfied with the opportunities that are provided by schools. It was also observed that students in lower grades are provided more opportunities to participate in ECA than students studying in higher grades.

Table 4.38: Opportunities to engage in ECA by Grade

Grade	Yes	No	Total
3	75.6%	24.4%	100.0%
4	89.1%	10.9%	100.0%
5	90.1%	9.9%	100.0%
6	87.7%	12.3%	100.0%
7	82.3%	17.7%	100.0%
8	85.2%	14.8%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table presents the data of opportunities to engage in ECA in school based on various ethnicities. From the table below, it was found that among the students from Brahmin ethnicity, 89.5% reported having opportunities to engage in ECA, while 10.5% indicated a lack of such opportunities. Similarly, among Chhetri students, 87.5% reported having opportunities for ECA, with 12.5% reported not having such opportunities. 91.1% of Dalit students reported having opportunities in ECA, while 8.9% indicates a lack of such opportunities. Among Kanu students, 88.9% reported having opportunities for ECA, while 11.1% indicated a lack thereof. Among Mahato, students, 82.6% reported having opportunities for ECA, with 17.4% indicated lack of such opportunities. Among the Muslim respondents, 78.5% reported having opportunities for ECA while 21.5% reported not having such opportunities. Among the Yadav students, 83.9% reported having opportunities for ECA, while 16.1% reported lack of opportunities. Lastly, among students from other ethnicities, 83.5% reported having opportunities for ECA, while 16.5% indicates lack of opportunity to engage in ECA.

Table 4.39: Opportunities to engage in ECA across various Ethnicities

Ethnicity	Yes	No	Total
Brahmin	89.5%	10.5%	100.0%
Chhetri	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%
Dalit	91.1%	8.9%	100.0%
Kanu	88.9%	11.1%	100.0%
Mahato	82.6%	17.4%	100.0%
Muslim	78.5%	21.5%	100.0%
Yadav	83.9%	16.1%	100.0%
Others	83.5%	16.5%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Overall, the data shows that, regardless of ethnicity, the majority of students have access to extracurricular activities at school. However, the proportion of students who identified a lack of such opportunities within each ethnicity must be addressed. Schools should work to guarantee that children of all ethnic origins have equal access to extracurricular activities, creating inclusion and offering equal opportunity for personal growth and development.

Conclusion

This research represents a pivotal contribution to the critical issue of social exclusion within Rautahat District's public education system. By employing the capability approach, we delved deep into the experiences of students in public schools, unearthing fundamental dimensions of social exclusion. The study precisely focused on three indispensable domains: social relations, shelter and environment, and participation.

The findings concerning social relations unveiled a predominantly positive scenario, with most students reporting supportive interactions with both peers and teachers, fostering an inclusive and nurturing atmosphere. However, it is crucial to confront the reality that a minority of students faced negative treatment from teachers, underscoring the urgency to address such incidents promptly and create an educational environment that embraces every individual's well-being. A supportive and inclusive atmosphere where students feel respected and valued not only fosters a conducive learning environment but also lays the foundation for their emotional well-being and personal growth. Thus, policymakers, educators, and stakeholders alike must prioritize strategies that promote empathy, mutual respect, and zero tolerance for any form of discrimination or bullying within schools.

Within the domain of shelter and environment, most schools were found to provide essential resources like classrooms and clean drinking water, catering to students of diverse backgrounds in terms of age, grade, gender, and ethnicity. Nevertheless, a glaring disparity emerged concerning disability-friendly infrastructure, which was sorely lacking in nearly all schools. Access to quality infrastructure and essential resources is a fundamental right for every student, and no one should be left behind due to physical barriers. To bridge the gap in disabled-friendly infrastructure, it is imperative for governments and educational authorities to invest in building inclusive facilities that cater to the diverse needs of all students. By doing so, we move towards an education system that embraces diversity as a strength and empowers every learner to thrive academically and socially.

The domain of participation unraveled positive outcomes, witnessing active engagement among students across all demographics in classroom discussions and extracurricular activities. This cultivation of a sense of belonging and community within schools enhances the overall learning experience, nurturing well-rounded individuals. Yet, even amidst these encouraging findings, it is imperative to confront the persistent gaps in the education system, particularly the lack of disability-friendly infrastructure. These limitations must be decisively addressed to forge a genuinely inclusive educational environment that leaves no student behind.

Nevertheless, while celebrating the progress made, we must confront the reality that achieving true inclusivity in education requires sustained commitment and collective effort. The gaps identified in this research demand targeted interventions and continuous monitoring to ensure that strides are made towards a genuinely inclusive education system. Collaborative

partnerships between the government, civil society, and local communities can play a pivotal role in advancing this cause, driving policy reforms, and securing resources to create a level playing field for all students.

In conclusion, this groundbreaking research serves as a clarion call for sweeping reforms and immediate actions to eradicate social exclusion in Rautahat's public education system. By comprehensively understanding and addressing the dimensions of exclusion through the capability approach, we can pave the way for a transformative and equitable educational landscape, empowering every student to realize their fullest potential and contribute meaningfully to society. The time for change is now, and our collective commitment to inclusivity will determine the future of education in Rautahat and beyond.

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