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Inclusive Policy in Tribhuvan University: A Case of Its Pre and Post Implementation

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Abstract

Tribhuvan University (TU), a leading institution of higher education in Nepal covers 83 percent educational enrolment for higher-level education. It has been implementing inclusive policy since 2009 in order to mitigate inequality in composition of higher education governance. The main assumption of the policy action of inclusion is to increase the participation of excluded groups to maintain proportional equilibrium to privileged groups. Is the policy practice working as its assumption? This study has explored the answer of this question. The result shows that the increasing participation status of women, Indigenous Nationalities and *Dalit*. It has justified the relevancy of continuity of inclusive policy practice. However, the participation of two privileged groups i) *Bahun* and *Chhetri* and ii) *Newar* is not found remarkable decreased. To present the concluding result the article has contained about higher education governance and TU's inclusive policy legal provision in introduction. After that, it has included the result, discussion and conclusion interpreting comparative data presentation of policy parget groups' pre and post policy practice participation status.

Keywords: inclusive policy, higher education governance, participation, marginalized group, privileged group

Introduction

Nepal government has implemented inclusive policy in education. It has been practiced in Nepal as a universally accepted education movement of the 21st century (UNESCO, 2017a) for the reformation of education to ensure equity, accessible education and management system to end the exclusion. The inclusive policy is the way to practice it. It has a strong assumption of increasing participation and access of excluded groups in higher educational governance to construct the just educational system suitable to gender, socio-cultural and regional diversity of Nepal.

It is an important issue in the higher educational system; because, the higher education system is established to produce capable and competent human resource to be equipped within modern knowledge, skill, art, science and technology to compete in the speed of international development through relevant research and knowledge enrichment for overall development of the state (MOEST, 2015). In Nepal, TU,

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established in 1959 is a leading higher educational institution having oldest history among the Universities of Nepal and the largest coverage of students 83 percent (ADB, 2015) in higher education governance in state.

Therefore, as a proper representation of higher education institution in Nepal, I have presented this article capturing the foundational data of inclusive policy implementation result obtained in TU. For this, before to enter the core data description I want to present the concept and value of higher educational governance and background of beginning of inclusive policy in TU.

Higher Education Governance and Inclusion

Higher education comprises, “[a]ll types of studies, training or training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent State authorities” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 1). The administrative process in higher educational sector is known as higher education governance that;

... is the means by which order is created in the academy to achieve the goals of educating, researching and providing service to multiple publics. Governance is essential to the functioning of higher education at all levels, from the basic academic unit of the department (micro level) to the level of organization (mesolevel) and at the level of the higher education system (macro level) (Austin & Jones, 2016, p. 1).

The higher education governance is an important element in a society in order to lead the human being in advance way that mostly indicates to the university level governance to produce the most competent and game changing human resource in modern socio-political realm. Therefore, the higher education governance is defined within the sphere of the university education as a high-level knowledge producer, controller, disseminator and contributor.

Inclusion is a broader term. Nowadays, inclusion has become an essential element of the concept of human development (UNDP, 2007). It was not mandatory in the early stages when only empowerment, economic development and domestic growth were included within the concept of human development. Nowadays it is not so. It has become a mandatory component. Mainly the historical experiences of exclusion in many countries have compelled to implement the inclusion in many sectors of state including education system.

The understanding of inclusion and practice of it is not similar in different countries. It cannot be termed and understood similarly in different places. Similarly, the practice of inclusionary provisions are found in different forms in different part of the world. Although, the cause of implementation of inclusive policy is found practical

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in different countries generally same; that are either suppression or oppression or inequality (Redemarkers, 2016). The term of the inclusionary provisions is also diverse in different places. The inclusive policy instrument is termed as reservation in India (Chatarjee, 2020), affirmative action in Malaysia and South Africa (Rademakers, 2016) and inclusive as well as reservation in universities of Nepal (NSU, 2013, MOEST, 2015 & TU, 2016).

Entrance of Inclusive Policy in TU Governance

The contemporary higher educational governance's worldwide trend focuses to inclusive governance. Nepal is also responsible on it. The international commitment on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and different movements of marginalized groups (Indigenous Nationalities, women, *Dalit*, *Madhesi* etc.) have compelled Nepal to follow inclusive principle in all types of state governance including educational governance.

As the result of national and international pressure and People's Movement II, *Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007*, Article 4, adopted inclusion defining Nepal as an inclusive, secular and federal democratic republican which has been continued in *Constitution of Nepal 2015* as well (NLC, 2007b & CAS, 2015). After the constitutional adoption, the inclusive principle was practiced in Nepali public administration through the Civil Service Act 1993's second amendment (Chapter 3, (7) in August 8, 2007 for marginalized groups: Indigenous Nationalities, women, *Dalit*, *Madhesi*, differently able and backward area (NLC, 2007a).

Gradually, the trend of inclusion extended in different governance sector like education, security, corporation and private employments. In this process, the oldest higher education institution TU adopted this provision after two years of Civil Service Act through the amendment of TU Staff Service Regulation 1990 in December 7, 2009 (NLC, 2007c). It has been started to implement since the Fiscal Year 2009/10 calling inclusive advertisement for administrative staff and faculty members. Thus, TU started the inclusive policy and has completed a decade by 2020.

Literature review

Anne Brown and Alex Freitas Gusmao (2009) present the value of inclusion or inclusive participation in constructing the shared sense of ownership of all group of people in terms of generating sense of history, identity, feelings and emotion in a particular phenomenon. It comprises three key components: participation, power sharing and sense of ownership. History of discrimination produces the need of inclusion. Either East Asian country Malaysia or a developed country of America USA or African country South Africa all have practiced the inclusive policy due to the problem emerged from history of discrimination justifying it as a compensation of

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discriminated people. Jaimy Rademakers (2016) mentions the similar historical background of South Africa and Malaysia which let them to adopt inclusiveness. By citing Hwok-Bunm Lee in he further writes, "...cause to adopt the affirmative action was disadvantaged position of majority people, final aim was to achieve substantive equality for ... groups who were suppressed and oppressed" (p. 63).

UNDP (2007) stressed, "... access to education and health care ... respect for diversity ... as essential dimensions of human development and well-being" (p. 1). The goal no 4 of SDGs has focused necessity of inclusiveness in education, "[e]nsure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (SESRIC, 2016, p. 39). These internationally agreed commitments for education rationalize the inclusiveness in educational governance. While, the importance of inclusiveness in higher education is connected with the concept of shared leadership development, "... inclusiveness for the development of successful shared leadership in higher education" (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017, p. 16), because, higher education and its institutions have valued role for shaping knowledge, power as well as human and state development.

As Ian Austin and Glen Alan Jones (2016), "[h]igher education institutions are most significant agents of the society. They educate the professionals that provide our health care, teach our children, strive for justice in our legal system, and design our buildings, bridges and technologies" (p. 1). If so, how to run the higher-level education governance in 21st Century? Answering this question the global education agenda 2030 has declared, "[e]nsure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UNESCO, 2017b, p. 6).

Why to make higher education governance inclusive? Because, it produces key agents to lead the whole society for imparting knowledge for change, challenging courage and expansion of thoughts. Since, higher education institutions are knowledge creation centers, "...to the social and economic development of our society through new concepts, ideas, applications, and inventions. They play a key role as a safe home for social criticism by identifying key problems and contributions to informed public debates" (Austin & Jones, 2016, p. 1).

Realizing this value, the education policy vision of Nepal 2019 has prioritized policy of inclusiveness in technical, professional, training, curriculum, reading materials, teaching and evaluation process for prosperity and social justice (MOEST, 2019). To meet this vision, the national education policy has designed the strategy to provide supporting programs like scholarship, low interest loan and study by self-earning for backward area, Indigenous Nationalities, women, *Dalit*, *Madhesi*, differently able, poor community and class people (MOEST, 2015).

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MOEST (2019) has claimed 17.1 percent increase in current total enrolment rate in higher education of Nepal. In terms of quantity the numbers of the campus or higher education institutions are found increased, although, there is problem of inequality in equal accesses and opportunity sharing in higher education. Why such inequality and disparity is still in higher education of Nepal? It is a question; the study begins from this question.

Before this study, there was not a basic data for doing a preliminary discourse about participation status of inclusive policy target groups and privileged groups in higher education. Gobinda Neupane (2005) has presented the data of unequal distribution of overall state governance status, but, it was the information of only pre inclusive position. According to him, there was 67 percent participation of *Bahun* and *Chhetri* having 32 percent population and 15 percent of *Newar* having only 6 percent total population. On the other hand, excluded groups had a poor participation position, such as 7 percent participation of Indigenous Nationalities having 22 percent total population, 11 percent participation of *Madhesi* having 30 percent population and *Dalit* had only 0.3 percent having 9 percent total population before the implementation of inclusive policy in Nepal.

UNDP 2007 had claimed, “[m]any groups today still find themselves excluded – socially, politically and economically – and marginalized from national development and governance processes, with few opportunities for redress” (p. 1). Beyond this Nepal has one extra realm of more exclusion that is exclusion in education, further more exclusion in higher-level education. The government of Nepal tried to understand this problem and enacted the law for compulsory education (NLC, 2018). However, it was closed within the level of secondary education, and not felt necessary education for all in higher-level education.

On the other hand, the universities of Nepal have been implanting inclusive policy in their governance but the policy’s effectiveness study could not take place yet. A Nepal Social Inclusion Survey (NSIS) 2012 conducted by Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology in 2012 published a report in 2014. It has shown the excluded group’s increased participation in public governance after the inclusive policy practice in Nepal.

The NSIS 2012 was held claiming the problem of prevailing national surveys, “... problems for the study of social inclusive and exclusion ...” (Gurung et al., 2014). It was true because the national surveys had not collected data on cultural and political aspects of inclusion which had wider coverage in national policy issues. Still, the problem is same. The NSIS 2012 has given the data of inclusiveness in different state mechanism doing sample based household survey. The data presentation of survey is based on socio-cultural caste/ethnic, lingual and gender based with sub-categorization

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communities, such as hill *Bahun and Chhetri*, *Madhesi* high cast, hill Indigenous Nationalities, *Madhesi* Indigenous Nationalities, hill *Dalit* and *Madhesi Dalit*. However, it has also left the survey of inclusiveness in higher education governance. Almost studies conducted on inclusive policy are found focused to bureaucratic and political mechanisms.

Thus, the obtained literatures show the gap over the study of practice of inclusive policy in higher education management in Nepal. Therefore, the article has presented some explorations based on the study of inclusive policy implementation and its contribution in TU educational governance in Nepal. For this purpose, the article focuses on the interpretation of inclusive policy provision, its execution and participation status to calculate the progress status of policy-targeted groups between pre and post inclusive policy practice in TU and deals with on the relevancy of inclusive policy in higher educational governance of Nepal in the background of study result.

Study Methodology

The research method is historical as well as ex-post facto in exploratory nature which has drawn some findings from the comparative analysis between the data of pre and post inclusive policy implementation in TU. The data of the study is Tribhuvan University Service Commission (TUSC)'s record of recommendation for appointment in different faculties and administrative posts published in-between 2003/04 to 2016/17.

For the study, I have taken the recruitment data of the faculty members from different faculties: Humanities, Education, Management, Science and Institutions of Medical and Engineering. The total number of collected data combining both administrative staff and faculties was 2,186. I have collected those records and calculated 2003/04 to 2008/09 in one separate block and 2009/10 to 2016/17 in another block for comparative analysis in percentage and used accordingly.

The comparisons are in two way one is pre and post policy implementation date and another is participation status comparison between privileged and policy marginalized group as well as male and female. In addition, I have presented the claim of relevancy inclusive policy through the description of interrelationship between policy implementation and participation growth or decrease to embed study's relation with assumption of inclusive policy. Finally, I have concluded the writing presenting the explored fact situation of inclusive policy implementation result in TU governance so far.

An important part of study, conceptual clarification for justification to the study problem is based on reviews of literatures related to inclusion, exclusion, participation,

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higher education and justice. Besides this, the research has used the review of issue related international agency reports, Nepal government's documents, newspaper, constitution, laws, research and survey reports, journals, news, articles, opinions and information as secondary data sources.

In the analysis of study, I have skipped two officially identified marginalized groups: differently able and backward area people, since, the cause of marginalization to those groups are not historical rather biological problem for differently able and geographical difficulty for backward area people.

Who are Inclusive Policy Target Groups?

The literatures have broadly categorized five major socio-cultural clusters of Nepali social composition. They are: i) *Bahun* and *Chhetri* (belongs to hill community including *Thakuri*, *Sanyasi*, *Dasnami*, *Giri* and *Puri*) ii) *Madhesi* (including *Muslim*, *Madwari*, *Jain*, *Panjabi/Sikh* as well), iii) Indigenous Nationalities iv) *Dalit* (both Hill and *Madhesi Dalit*) (LSC, 2002). Among them Indigenous Nationalities, *Madhesi* and *Dalit* are legally identified marginalized socio-cultural groups. Besides these socio-cultural clusters female is also a marginalized group based on gender. Female as a major marginalized group occupies 51.50 percent which is larger than 48.50 percent male population in Nepal (Nepal, 2013). For this study, the identified policy target groups are Indigenous Nationalities, *Madhesi*, *Dalit* and women who need increase in participation through policy execution while *Newar* and *Bahun and Chhetri* are identified privileged groups for comparative analysis.

The above-mentioned five categorized major clusters' population distribution percentages are as below:

Table 1

Population Distribution Status of Major Socio-Cultural Clusters of Nepal

Social Groups	Population	Remarks
<i>Bahun & Chhetri</i>	30.5 %	<i>Bahun</i> (12.7 %) and <i>Chhetri</i> (17.8 %).
<i>Madhesi</i>	21.1 %	<i>Madhesi Bahun</i> (0.5%), <i>Madhesi</i> other Caste (15.4%), <i>Muslim</i> (4.3%) & <i>Marwadi</i> , <i>Jain</i> , <i>Bangali</i> , <i>Punjabi/Sikh</i> (1%).
Indigenous Nationalities	28.9 %	Hill Indigenous Nationalities (21.8%) and Tarai Indigenous Nationalities (7.1%) excluding <i>Newar</i>
<i>Dalit</i>	13.3 %	Hill <i>Dalit</i> (8.7%) and <i>Madhesi Dalit</i> (4.6%).
<i>Newar</i>	6.2 %	A privileged group

Note. Gurung 1998; Acharya and Subba 2008; CBS 2011; Pandey, et al. 2013, as Cited in (Gurung et al., 2014).

Results

The vision of inclusive policy in TU educational governance is to produce the result of increasing participation of policy-targeted marginalized groups. The implementation of policy had expected to construct the just inclusion in management for proportional participation according to the socio-cultural clusters and gender (TU, 2016). The measurement of participation level and management can be possible through the comparison of present participation status of marginalized groups with the participation level before inclusive policy.

How much improvement has been possible in this target in TU governance? The response of this question is possible through the discussion of the existing data resulted after enforcement of inclusive policy based on the major socio-cultural clusters as well gender. It can be observed and analyzed in different governance bodies including decision making level.

Inclusive Policy in TU Governance

The observation of policy influence result can be started from the study of legal provision of TU for inclusion in governance. It is the provision of 45 percent inclusion in administration and faculty members. TU has allocated 45 percent inclusive seat out of the total vacancy. Assuming 45 percent allocated inclusive seats as 100 percent, it is re-allocated sharing 33 percent for women, 27 percent for Indigenous Nationalities, 22 percent for *Madhesi*, 9 percent for *Dalit*, 5 percent for the differently able and 4 percent for backward areas (TU, 2016). What is the result status of policy implementation? To explore the position, the study has calculated the participation level of pre and post inclusive policy implementation of different groups comparatively. Let us observe them based on socio-cultural group and gender.

Major Community Cluster's Participation before and after Inclusive Policy

Among the major community clusters, the *Bahun* and *Chhetri* has strong dominance in participation in TU governance staff and faculty member appointment in both before and after of inclusiveness. As per the data shown in table 2, they had 61.8 percent representation before inclusive policy and they have 60.4 percent after inclusive policy. *Newar* had 14.9 percent, *Madhesi* 19.3 percent, Indigenous Nationalities excluding *Newar* 3.8 percent and *Dalit* had 0.2 percent before inclusiveness and they have currently 16.5 percent, 12.1 percent, 9.4 percent and 1.1 percent participation after inclusiveness respectively.

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Table 2

Appointment Status in TU Administration and Faculties before and after Inclusive Policy

Community	Population	Before Inclusion *		After Inclusion ♦		Difference in %
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
<i>Bahun and Chhetri</i>	30.5%	311	61.8	1017	60.4	-1.4
<i>Newar</i>	6.2%	75	14.9	277	16.5	+1.6
<i>Madhesi</i>	21.1%	97	19.3	203	12.1	-7.2
Indigenous Nationalities	28.9%	19	3.8	159	9.4	+5.6
<i>Dalit</i>	13.3%	1	0.2	25	1.1	+0.9
Others	0	0	0.0	9	0.5	+0.5
Total		503	100	1683	100	-

Source: *Appointment Recommendation of TU Service Commission 2060/61, 2965/66, 2072/73, 2073/74 and 2074/75 BS and Census 2011*. * Before Inclusion (2060/61 to 2065/66 BS). ♦ After Inclusion (2066/67 to 2073/74 BS).

Gender Based Participation before and after Inclusive Policy

Before the implementation of inclusive policy, similar to the community cluster there was a big difference in gender based participation in TU governance. The participation status of the female marginalized groups of Nepal was poorest where was unexpected over representation of two groups: i) *Bahun and Chhetri*, and ii) *Newar*. Only 13.5 percent women's participation was found in appointment of TU governance whereas a big portion 86.3 percent participation was captured by male. After inclusive policy implementation the women representation is 36.9 percent which is increased representation by 33 percent (Table 3).

Table 3

Male and Female Participation Status before and after Inclusive Policy

Community	Population	Before Inclusion*		After Inclusion♦		Difference in %
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Male	48.5%	435	86.5	1062	63.1	-33.9
Female	51.5%	68	13.5	621	36.9	+33.9
Total	100	503	100	1683	100	-

Source: *Appointment Recommendation of TU Service Commission 2060/61, 2965/66, 2072/73, 2073/74 and 2074/75 BS & Census 2011*. * Before Inclusion (2060/61 to 2065/66 BS). ♦ After Inclusion (2066/67 to 2073/74 BS).

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Socio-cultural Based Distribution Status of Women Participation after Inclusive Policy

The separate calculation of women's representation shows that again the dominance of *Bahun* and *Chhetri* female in highest position 57.5 percent and *Newar* female has 24.2 percent participation. According to this result, *Newar* female's participation is found more imbalanced than *Bahun* and *Chhetri* in comparison their population. Other marginalized group's women participation is poor similar to other data such as Indigenous Nationalities has 8.2 percent, *Madhesi* has 7.9 and *Dalit* has only 1.4 percent participation (Table 4).

Table 4

Socio-cultural based Female Participation Status Inclusive Policy

Community	After Inclusion	
	Number	Percent
<i>Bahun</i> and <i>Chhetri</i>	357	57.5
<i>Newar</i>	150	24.2
Indigenous Nationalities	51	8.2
<i>Madhesi</i>	49	7.9
<i>Dalit</i>	9	1.4
Not Identified	5	0.8
Grand Total	621	100

Source: Appointment Record of TU Service Commission 2060/61, 2965/66, 2072/73, 2073/74 and 2074/75 BS.

Discussion

The above presented result of data has made easier to do a comparative discussion about the participation status in non-inclusionary policy period and after inclusionary policy period in case of TU governance. This discussion analyzes the usefulness or non-usefulness of inclusive policy practice in TU governance based on the evaluation of participation increase and decrease of the policy targeted marginalized groups. That is as following:

Participation Status after Inclusive Policy

As the above dada presented in Table 2 and 3, there was strongest dominance of male and two community groups: i) *Bahun* and *Chhetri*, and ii) *Newar*; where other groups (women, Indigenous Nationalities, *Madhesi* and *Dalit* were marginalized before implementation of inclusive policy in governance of TU. To solve this problem of marginalization the policy was adopted. As the assumption, the policy practice has

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changed the situation to some extent. The marginalized group's participation in personnel administration of TU and faculty members is found to have increased (Table 2 & 3). The progress status in participation of marginalized policy target groups can be discussed in two different angles separately based on gender and socio-cultural cluster in more details as below.

Socio-Cultural Cluster Participation Status in TU Administration after Inclusive Policy

The pre and post inclusive policy data calculation in the policy implemented area in TU administrative staff and faculties found progressive result to minimize the big gap in recruitment distribution between the privileged groups and marginalized groups after inclusive policy implementation. It shows that the policy is working positively. However, the privileged group's dominance is not decreasing remarkably.

In the recruitment of teachers and personnel in different posts of TU administration after the provision of inclusion, a privileged group *Bahun and Chhetri* have able to occupy 60.4 percent. It is 1.4 percent decrease from the previous 61.8 percent before inclusion. Another privileged group *Newar's* participation in post-inclusive policy is 16.5 percent. This is not decreased data from previous because this group's pre policy practice participation was 14.9 which has been increased by 1.6 percent (Table 2). Why did this happen?

A cause of it is practice of inclusion without clear cluster categorization within women inclusiveness which has again privileged women from the socio-cultural group of *Bahun and Chhetri*, and same as to *Newar*. So the women of these two groups have occupied larger portion of women protected seats which has supported to increase the total representation of privileged groups. Therefore, the participation status of *Newar* found still not decreased and *Bahun and Chhetri* not significantly decreased.

After the policy practice, better progress is found in participation of Indigenous Nationalities, this group had only 3.8 percent participation before inclusion, which has been increased up to 9.4 percent after policy implementation (Table 2). Another marginalized policy target group *Dalit* has also gained progress but it is not so noteworthy. *Dalit* had weaker participation status 0.2 percent before inclusion that has been increased up to 1.1 percent.

According to the result, the participation sharing of a policy target group *Madhesi* has not positive progress because this group had 19.3 percent participation in pre inclusionary practice, which has been decreased, and currently 12.1 percent. This result is against the assumption of the inclusive policy principle and new issue to study again.

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Gender Based Inclusion Progress in Faculty Members

After the inclusive policy, the women participation is 36.9 percent. It is an increased participation status than the position of pre policy implementation or 13.5 percent (Table 3). It is the largest progressive result found after the practice of inclusive policy in TU governance where the progress of growth in participation has reached more and two times.

From the quantitative evaluation perspective, it is really a remarkable result for building gender balanced institution in future TU governance. But, again, there is the continuity of dominance of privileged group *Bahun* and *Chhetri* as well as *Newar* (Table 4) because there is not provision of sub-categorization within the women based on the socio-cultural composition. It has verified an error in policy implementation that is not categorization of women cluster based on socio-cultural groups. The result of this research including other literatures suggest that the inclusive policy implementation within women must be implemented through the principle of proportional representation according to the population of socio-cultural group (Srees Magar & Khewa Subba, 2070).

Conclusion

The principle of the inclusive policy is to increase participation of groups who have under representation. This is in order to reduce unequal distribution of participation and access in policy applied area of TU. Result has shown progress in increasing participation of three policy target groups: women, Indigenous Nationalities and *Dalit*. According to result, women's participation has the strongest progress by increasing 33.9 percent. Besides women, other two groups Indigenous Nationalities and *Dalit* have too increased participation by 5.6 and 0.9 percent respectively. This result of increasing participation, at least, in three marginalized groups is a noteworthy evidence to support the relevance of inclusive policy in Nepal.

Similarly, the policy has been able to decrease male over representation by - 33.9 percent during the 10 years, which is a notable improvement for gender equality. It is positive result of policy. It has further supported to justify the implementation of policy. Such an increasing participation status of almost policy targeted groups is not only playing the role of cumulating numbers but also contributing to strengthening the moral and psychological confidence of marginalized groups together with economic and knowledge capacity enhancement for all round empowerment.

However, the study result has shown; still, not remarkably decreased participation position of two privileged socio-cultural groups. Because, participation of a privileged group *Bahun* and *Chhetri* has again increased by 2.6 percent and another

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Newar by 2.2 percent during ten year's inclusive policy practice. One marginalized group *Madhesi* has decreased position in participation after inclusive policy implementation too. It has 6.9 percent decrease during ten years. How is this? This is unanswered. Similarly, only +0.9 percent increased participation of *Dalit* is also not satisfactory because it is a thin progress. Why is this? It seeks another study.

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