Use of ICT at Himalaya Milan School, Kaski, Nepal

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- Himalaya Milan Secondary School (HMS), a community-run school in Tangting village, Namarjung Village Development Committee, Kaski district

- 300 students, male and female populations nearly equally divided

- students ethnicity wise: 85 % Gurung, 14 % Dalit, 1 % from the Bahun-Chhetri

- **school records show male students from the Gurung community faring better** in the academics than other students (females from Gurung community as well other students from the Dalit communities)

- general statistics: the average SLC performance of **girls has been historically lower than that of the boys; the academic performance of students from the Dalit community has been lower than that of the students from the Hill Janajatis and the Bahun-Chhetri communities**

Theoretical Framework

Differential Education Attainment
- different groups, for eg., different class, ethnic and gender groups, have different levels of educational attainment

Cultural Capital
- the success of all school education depends fundamentally on the education previously accomplished in the earliest years of life

- educational attainment of social groups is therefore directly related to the amount of 'cultural capital' they possess

Scope of study

1) How this variegated bunch of girls and boys at the community school, belonging to various ethnicities, living in the same village or in the vicinity of it will respond to the introduction of ICT?

2) Will the gaps in the learning curves for boys and girls, Gurungs and Dalits be the same with ICT as with conventional schooling?

3) Will ICT throw up surprises? Will it help to narrow down the gaps?

Research Methodology

1) **Preliminary Survey**
2) **Participant Observation**
3) **In-depth Interview**

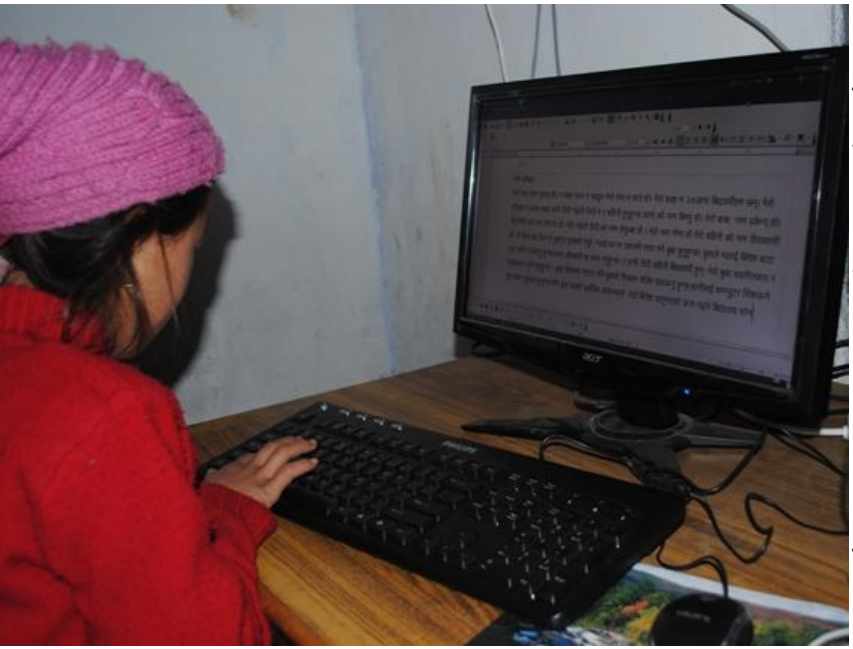
Preliminary Survey

-a survey of 80 students from grade VI to IX was undertaken in which information regarding the gender, ethnic background, occupation of parents, family size, current ranking in the class, their knowledge or exposure to computers, internet, or other ICT tools were noted

-barring very few, most of the students had no previous experience of computer use

Participant Observation

- Participant Observation Method was adopted to gather qualitative data on the students' performance, their inquisitiveness and inhibitions to ask questions to the teachers, to share newly learned computer skills with friends, formation of groups among students when a single computer had to be shared by more than one student among others.



Preliminary Findings

- three different patterns of learning were observed among the students:
- **First Group**: relatively quick to grasp the computer lessons, more interactive in the computer class; those happen to be the good students that also do well in the school exam system

- **Second Group**: average students, less interactive in the class, but they have become more interactive, more open, shown more enthusiasm, and learned faster in the computer class, their performances being better than expected by their teachers

- **Third Group**: several students from the Dalit community, as well as some female students – below average students who do not have good academic records, earlier hardly asked questions or interacted with teachers in the classroom, have displayed enthusiasm for computers, and look forward to learn more

Preliminary Findings

- could be due to the fact that ICT being different from conventional pedagogical practices, students felt less inhibited, the interactive environment made them more open

- students have a perception regarding the importance of ICT in the modern world, and they naturally want to learn more of it

- while ICT may not be a magic pill to cure socio-economic problems, due to the relative freedom and ease, and possible opportunities that the ICT provides, it can contribute in lessening the divide of cultural and social capital among students from different ethnic and class backgrounds

Further research implications

- need to follow up on the current observations of students, their academic performances vis-à-vis their socio-ethnic background on a long-term basis; compare their educational attainment with social and cultural capital

- more research needed to facilitate the smoother adoption of ICT by sorting out language, content, as well as technical issues

- quantitative studies need to be carried out with different samples and locations to gather empiric evidence for or against ICT as an effective tool in bridging gap in educational attainment