

The accessibility to basic education for disabled children in Baglung district, Nepal



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I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely the work of Anita Sofia Oosterlee. Any contributions or sources have been referenced in the prescribed manner or are listed in the acknowledgements together with the nature and the scope of their contribution



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Executive summary

Background

Disabled people form the largest minority group in the world as it is estimated that around ten per cent of the world population is disabled (WHO, 2010). On top of that, it has been estimated that twenty per cent of the world's poorest people, are disabled. Hence, disability is a development issue.

In general, many disabled people are disadvantaged from social services and discriminated in society. In particular disabled children are vulnerable as they cannot stand up for themselves yet in case their rights have been harmed. Disabled children want to be part of a group like all children wish to be included. For them it is essential to grow up in an environment where they can forget their impairments. In addition, school enrolment is important to gain both social experience and knowledge and skills. Furthermore, it is a right for disabled children to attend school. Unfortunately, many disabled children are not sent to school or taken out by their parents. Several issues, such as distance, income and caste are expected to be causal factors. However, limited literature can be found in which research is focused on the relation of access and school attendance of disabled children. Hence, this research sheds light on whether 'myths' on school enrolment of disabled children to basic education can be broken or not. Additionally, this research can be considered as a pioneer study as it leads to new questions and calls for further research.

Objective

The objective of this thesis is formulated in a central question:

What are the opportunities and barriers to access basic education for blind, deaf and intellectually disabled children in Baglung district?

The following research questions are formulated in order to give an answer on the central question:

1. Who are the stakeholders related to disabled children in Baglung district and what are their roles in the disability sector?
2. To what extent does geographical distance play a role on school enrolment?
3. How do household characteristics influence the decision-making process of parents?
4. What are the needs and expectations according to parents to enable school enrolment for disabled children?
5. What are the views of parents towards their disabled child related to education?

Research methods

For this research, a range of methods has been used to gain more insight into the situation of disabled people in Nepal and disabled children in particular, and to be able to answer the research questions.

Initially, literature study has been done to get an impression of disability issues in developing countries and specifically in Nepal. Based on literature, a research proposal and a theoretical framework could be formulated. Secondly, a form of unstructured observation has been used as a

research tool, while visiting households, schools, key informants and while travelling Baglung district. Such observations make it easier to get a better understanding of the current situation. Thirdly, semi-structured interviews with key informants and other professionals have been held in order to get more insight into their roles toward disabled children in Baglung district, and to gain insight in the situation in Nepal in general. Fourthly, questionnaires have been conducted among households with disabled children who are either attending school and out of school, so that data can be compared afterwards. Lastly, focus group discussions have been organised among parents with school-going children, who are deaf, blind or intellectually disabled. This research method gains more insight in collective views on the issue on out-of-school disabled children.

Conclusions

Firstly, the main stakeholders in Baglung district can be divided in four groups: households with disabled children (as a core group), local governmental agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and schools. It has become clear that local governmental bodies mostly give support in a way of funding construction buildings, while NGOs are more focused on inclusion and awareness programs. Nevertheless, in practice shortcomings have been noticed in the implementation phase, which calls for improvement.

Secondly, access to schools differs among disabled children: the availability and accessibility of schools for deaf children is sufficient, while the availability of schools for blind and intellectually disabled children is doubtful. Furthermore, most children with low vision and a hard of hearing impairment have the possibility to attend regular schools in their local villages. Moreover, a school for children with multiple impairments is lacking in Baglung district. Based on quantitative findings, geographical distance between children's home and appropriate schools seems not to play a key role in school attendance. However, when taking qualitative data into account, it can be stated that the geographical situation does affect school enrolment of disabled children negatively.

Moreover, there is an interrelation of accessibility, affordability and availability, because the location of schools, income of parents and existing (special) schools affect each other. However, income as an independent factor does not play a decisive role on school attendance due to free education for disabled children. In addition, the attained educational level of parents and their caste origins are also not direct related to school attendance of disabled children.

Thirdly, the most important need among parents is a *special school nearby* their homes and a good school environment, where children feel welcome and cared for. Another need is money for purchasing school materials and for using transportation services. Furthermore, the need for a hostel plays a decisive role among parents whether to send their disabled children to school or not. Moreover, in regular schools there is a need for trained teachers, who have the right skills to teach children with special educational needs, so that a form of inclusive education can be achieved.

Thereafter, it has appeared that parents pay more value to gaining academic knowledge than social benefits of education: if a child has not achieved a certain literacy level, s/he is taken out of school as it is considered as a waste of time and money.

On the whole, it should be stressed that parents want the best for their child, whether s/he is disabled or not, whether poor or not. It can be boiled down to the fact that parents of out-of-school children have the best interest with their child, but are incapable to do so.

List of Abbreviations

Ba.Na.Pa	Baglung Nagarpalika (= Baglung municipality)
CBR	community-based rehabilitation
C.P.	cerebral palsy
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CWD	children with a disability
DDC	District Development Committee
DEO	District Education Office
DFID	Department For International Development
DPOs	Disabled People's Organizations
ECED	early childhood education and development centre
EFA	Education For All
GDP	gross domestic product
GYC	Gaja Youth Club
HDI	human development index
HRDC	Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
NER	national enrolment rate
NPR	Nepalese rupees ¹
(I)NGOs	(international) non-governmental organisations
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PWD	people with a disability
RBA	rights-based approach
SEN	special educational needs
SIP	school improvement plan
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
UPIAS	Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation
VDCs	village development committees
WDC	Women and Children Development Committee

¹ Currently, 100 NPR = 0.95 Euro and 1.25 US Dollar (*Source: www.xe.com*)

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“When seeing a boy tied up with a rope at the house, it feels like this is an inhuman deed. But after watching closely, you can see that the boy is very aggressive, hits people and spits at them. He is intellectually disabled and difficult to handle. His parents have to work in the field during the day and cannot leave him behind without tying him up; because otherwise he will run away or attack people. So who can blame them for doing the wrong thing, as they are trying to do the right thing: taking care of their children by working hard in the fields so that everyone can eat? There are no appropriate institutions to help such a child and parents do not know how to handle the situation. There is still a lot to improve in this complex circumstances” – personal research diary, April 16, 2011.

Disabled people form the largest minority group in the world as it is estimated that around ten per cent of the world population is disabled (WHO, 2010). On top of that, it has been estimated that twenty per cent of the world’s poorest people, are disabled. Hence, disability is a development issue.

“Disability of a child is not the real barrier, the misconception of people is”²

In general, many disabled people are disadvantaged from social services and discriminated in society. In particular disabled children are vulnerable as they cannot stand up for themselves yet in case their rights have been harmed. Disabled children want to be a part of a group like all children have a need to be included. It is essential for them to grow up in an environment where they can forget their impairments. In addition, school enrolment is important to gain social experience and to gain knowledge and skills. Furthermore, it is a right for disabled children to attend school. Unfortunately, many disabled children are not sent to school or taken out by their parents. Several issues, such as distance and income, are expected to be causal factors. However, limited literature can be found in which research is focused on the relation of access and school attendance of disabled children. Hence, this research shed light on whether myths on school enrolment of disabled children to basic education can be broken or perpetuated. Additionally, this research can be considered as a pioneer study as it leads to new questions and calls for further research.

The first part of this thesis consists of the theoretical framework, regional context and methodology. In the theoretical framework, more insight is given on disability, the situation of disabled people living in developing countries, international human rights, followed by the concept of access. Furthermore, disability is linked to education and its different school systems. Moreover, a conceptual framework is outlined in order to set up a research objective. As the conceptual model is created in a context of national regulations and institutional contexts, the regional context further elaborates on this with a description of Nepal’s education system, research area Baglung district and the host organisation. In the methodology, methods are described, which have been used to implement this research, followed by research limitations, which could be perceived during and after the implementation of the research.

The second part of this thesis comprises two chapters with empirical findings. Main stakeholders related to disabled children in Baglung are described with a special focus on their programs for

² director of CBR in Bhakatpur

disabled people and children in particular. Furthermore, the geographical situation and its influence on school attendance of disabled children in Baglung district are further examined. Subsequently, households of both school-going and out-of-school children are analysed based on characteristics, e.g. their income and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, motivations, needs and expectations of parents are studied to get an impression of the 'story behind' dichotomy answers.

On the whole, the last chapter discusses all findings in relation to literature and empirical case studies. This is followed by a final conclusion in which the central question is answered, and recommendations for a follow-up study.

Figure 1.1: A blind girl and her elder brother living in the hills of Hatiya



As described in the introduction, disabled people is a large minority group in the world. But what has been written about this particular group; and what kind of theoretic models have been formulated over the years in order to do research on this group? Furthermore, most disabled people live in developing countries and face a vicious cycle of poverty. Yet, being disabled or not, people have got a right to live, wherever they are born. Hence, this chapter elaborates on international human rights, the rights of people with disabilities and of the child in particular. In line with this research, the approach of Education for All and inclusive education are explained to build an inclusive society and to improve and enhance access to education for all. Additionally, the concept of access is further explained on the basis of five dimensions.

Based on the theoretical framework a conceptual model is created to get more insight in the different components of the research. Furthermore, a number of research questions are stated in order to answer a central research question; the aim of this study.

2.1 Disability and theoretic models

We all have a specific idea of what the term ‘disability’ involves, but does that correspond to the definition used in academic research and reports? When taking its definition into account of an ordinary dictionary, the following can be found:

- a) “a physical or mental condition that limits a person’s movements, senses, or activities”; or
- b) “a disadvantage or handicap, especially imposed or recognized by the law” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2012).

Here, disability means that a certain condition of an individual causes limitations or even disadvantages in his activities. Generally, people who are only vaguely familiar with the term ‘disability’ assume this definition is correct. However, the definition given above is mainly considered incomplete according to most academics as it is only involving someone’s health diagnosis and not a person’s environment, let alone social behaviour.

Essentially, over the years three main theoretical models of disability have been adopted and sharply criticised by researchers. Each model includes different perspectives of the term ‘disability’, where a zeitgeist can be clearly noticed; from religious angle to a social approach.

Firstly, the moral and religious model of disability is nowadays regarded as a more infamous clarification of disability. It contains the belief that having a disability or better *impairment*, is caused by inexplicable reasons. In Christianity, an impairment has been regarded as God’s will, the result of a committed sin, or as ‘unclean’. In Hinduism, a person with a disability is someone who needs to pay off a past sin, which means that disability is seen as something bad. Similarly, Buddhism considers an impairment as an ‘educational rebirth’ for mistakes in past incarnations (Hammell and Livingston, 2006). Over centuries, such beliefs have led to a certain image of people with disabilities; people feel pity, guilt and shame (*ibid.*). Subsequently, people with disabilities have often been hidden by their families due to prejudices of other people – often in alarming circumstances – with a belief to punish them for the ‘crime’ of impairment (*ibid.*).

Secondly, during the Enlightenment in the late 17th and 18th centuries the individual and medical model of disability has arisen with a belief that science is the solution to anything. The model is mainly focused on the impairment itself, which causes restrictions; any constraint of activity (including social limitations) is a consequence of this impairment (Hammell and Livingston, 2006: 58). When considering this theory, it simply states that in case a person is confronted with such disadvantages but cannot be cured or healed from his impairment(s), he has to deal with social exclusion. Furthermore, it can be boiled down to a society who does not share a responsibility to adaptation to disabled people. On the contrary, disabled people are the ones who need to adapt themselves to the majority. Moreover, many researchers and others have used the terms 'disability' and 'illness' interchangeably, while disability is not a matter of health, according to critics (Hammell and Livingston, 2006:60). Due to the equal use of the words, a myth has arisen that the constraints of disabled people are caused by their impairment, which stirs up pity while preserving social exclusion. Kasnitz and Shuttleworth have stated that *"disability exists when people experience discrimination on the basis of perceived functional limitations"* (In: Hammell and Livingston, 2006:60).

Thirdly, the social and political model of disability was introduced in the 1970s when the British Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) declared that *"society is the one which disables physically impaired people"* (Shakespeare and Watson, 2002; Albert, 2005). There are at least nine versions of the social model; all determining that disability is created by society (Mitra, 2006). Disability is regarded as *"the isolation and exclusion from full participation in society"* on top of the impairment itself. Hence, disability is a certain form of 'social oppression' (Hammell, and Livingston, 2006: 60). This theory contradicts the previous model as it states that among disability something is wrong with society instead of the individual. Among this model there is a clear distinction between:

- 1) 'impairment': *"lacking all or part a limb, or having a defective limb, organism or mechanism of the body"*; and
- 2) 'disability': *"the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary organisation which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities"* (Oliver, 1996: 22).

On the whole, according to Michael Oliver the term disability includes everything that forms any restriction for disabled people: *"ranging from individual prejudice to institutional discrimination, from inaccessible public buildings to unusable transport systems, and from segregated education to excluding work arrangements, etcetera"* (Oliver, 1996: 33).

Nevertheless, to come to a more balanced approach of the medical and social model, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) has been developed by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2011). As it attempts to integrate biological, individual and social perspectives it is also called *biopsychosocial* model of disability (Mitra, 2006). However, critics have stated that the model mainly represents the medical model disguised as the social model of disability due to its individualistic character instead of the environmental focus (Albert, 2005: 135). The ICF determines that disability is a broad term covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Here, an impairment refers to *'problems in body functioning or alterations in body structure'*, such as deafness (WHO, 2011). Activity limitations are *'the difficulties in executing activities'*, such as walking, while participation restrictions refer to the environment when disabled

people have ‘*problems with involvement in any area of life*’, for instance discrimination (WHO, 2011). Furthermore, the ICF does not make any difference between physical or mental health, while they do distinguish ‘health conditions’ from ‘impairments’: the first includes diseases, injuries and disorders, while the latter points to a specific decrement in body functions and structures, which could be symptoms of health conditions (WHO, 2011: 5).

After summarising different perspectives towards disability and its changing definition through the years, it seems easy to have a personal preference, which can be used in further research. However, it is more complicated than simply adopting a theoretical model, because perspectives ‘in the field’ should be taken into account as well. Based on Nepal’s strong Hindu culture, social exclusion or discrimination against disabled people would be of no exception. Furthermore, it is possible that the views of the medical model occur in Nepal due to Nepal’s rank as a low human development country (Human Development Report Team, 2011), in which it is not rare that disabled people should adapt themselves to society in case they want to join. Thirdly, the social model and the ICF are also very likely to occur in Nepal due to the presence of international development organisations, who nowadays mainly favour the human-rights based approach which is based on the social model of disability (Albert, 2005). Overall, in this research all three models are considered as existing perspectives in Nepal.

Moreover, ‘children with a disability’ are mentioned frequently in this research. Although the explanation lies close to the medical model, it should be stressed that this is done without the intention to state that disabled people are the ones to adapt themselves to society; there is no preference of the mentioned theories described above. The social model seems most suitable to the subject, but this would have been the case if research was merely focused on the supply side of educational services for disabled children (i.e. what can ‘institutions’ do to adapt themselves to disabled children?). However, in this research the accessibility to basic education plays a central role and is examined from a household perspective. Hence, this research does not adopt any complex meanings of ‘disability’ in order to formulate a clear report without any confusion.

2.2 Disability and poverty

It is estimated that around 10 per cent of the world’s population have some form of disability, which equals to around 650 million people (United Nations Enable, 2006). Among them, around 80 per cent live in developing countries (*ibid.*). In Figure 2.1 more estimations can be found on disabled people living in the South. Unfortunately, it is no coincidence that this large majority live in developing countries; poverty and disability are closely interlinked, which will be further explained in this paragraph.

Figure 2.1: Estimations of disabled people throughout the world

- ❖ The World Bank has estimated that 20 per cent of the world’s poorest people are disabled, and tend to be regarded in their communities as the most disadvantaged;
- ❖ Practice has indicated that particularly disabled women and girls are vulnerable to abuse;
- ❖ According to UNICEF 30 per cent of street youths are disabled;

- ❖ It has appeared that only in 45 countries there are specific anti-discrimination and other disability-specific laws;
- ❖ According to UNESCO around 90 per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school.

Source: *United Nations Enable, 2006*

2.2.1 Disability in developing countries

There is a relation between disability and poverty; disability may enlarge the risk of becoming poor and poverty itself raises the risk of becoming disabled (World Health Organization, 2011: 10). Hence, disability can be regarded as a development issue. As already shown in Figure 2.1, it is less likely that disabled children – especially in developing countries – follow any form of education, which results into limited job opportunities in future due to the lack of skills and knowledge.

Furthermore, it is generally known that environmental and social circumstances of a person determine to a certain extent the resources this person possesses; after all, growing up in poverty does not directly bring the brightest future perspectives. People have different opportunities to ‘convert’ their income or primary goods into different aspects they need or value for a good living (Sen, 2009: 254). According to Amartya Sen, there are a range of types of contingencies, i.e. the possible future events that could happen, but not predicted with certainty. One of these contingencies is the physical characteristic of a person, such as gender, age or having a poor health. For example, a disabled person faces extra costs in his life, because he needs medical care, assistance or specific devices in order to do the same basic things in life compared with an able-bodied person. Due to these necessary expenses he needs more money, while he earns less compared with able-bodied people (World Health Organization, 2011). Hence, Amartya Sen introduces this issue as a *conversion handicap*: “Not being able to lead as good a life as able-bodied people can with exactly the same income” (Kuklys, 2005). Research has proven that in case this conversion handicap is taken into account – and subtracted from the total income of families with a disabled member– the poverty rate will be much higher in developing countries (Kuklys, 2005).

Practice has proven that international agencies fail in mainstreaming disability into their development policies even though they initially included this in their guidelines with the best intentions (Albert, 2005: 140). Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) do not have a special focus on the inclusion of disabled people at all (Yeo and Moore, 2003). Disability matters remain a “special-needs” case, in which the needs of equality, social inclusion and poverty alleviation are not (enough) aimed for in practice. Furthermore, in case there is a particular focus on disability within field projects of NGOs, they are merely focused on health or special education (Albert, 2005); important, but the environment of disabled people is often forgotten in which discrimination could be prevented and the unemployment among disabled people could be reduced.

Another issue that frequently occurs is that persons with disabilities are often mentioned together with other vulnerable or minority groups; as if they form one group. For instance, in an initial report of Nepal they are brought together with orphans, helpless women, senior citizens and other ‘incapacitated’ persons (Bruce et al. 2002: 115). From their perspective a certain image is created as if they are helpless and need charity instead of feeling empowered or treated with any justice (*ibid.*). Moreover, besides the other vulnerable groups the term ‘disabled children’ is often

easily taken as one homogenous group (Miles and Singal, 2010), while among them a large range of different impairments is recognizable from lightly to severely disabled.

2.2.2 Vicious cycle

It has appeared that the chance of facing poverty is relatively high among disabled people due to **institutional, environmental and attitudinal discrimination** (Yeo and Moore, 2003). Firstly, institutional discrimination occurs when disabled people are systematically treated as insignificant, which becomes visible by established laws, customs or practices (Yeo and Moore, 2003). The physical environment is related to physical access, e.g. buildings with special wheelchair pathways, but also the providing of 'accessible' information in Braille or with sign-language interpreters. Attitudinal discrimination comprises beliefs and attitudes of society along with low expectations people might have, because they consider disabled persons as deficient.

It has appeared that among families with limited financial resources a disabled child is often not treated equally as he or she is regarded as a person who cannot contribute anything in return in future. Hence, among poor families it is more likely that disabled children do not get any treatments at all; they are not worth an 'investment'. Additionally, they often get last access to food and other necessities (Yeo and Moore, 2003: 573).

Furthermore, disabled children are regularly not attending school, because siblings get more priority or due to embarrassment of the family, which could work out negatively in future for both parents, siblings and disabled children themselves (Yeo and Moore, 2003). Research in different countries has shown that the amount of disabled boys enrolling school was twice as much compared with disabled girls. Moreover, disabled girls from marginalised groups or from lower castes are facing even more discrimination due to these factors (UNICEF, 2003). In addition, literate parents have relatively more literate and healthy children compared with illiterate parents (UN Country Team, 2007: 31), which indicates that literacy is an essential aspect contributing to people's socio-economic situation and future, especially in developing countries.

Moreover, in case disabled children do attend regular schools there is often inappropriate transport, limited materials and a lack of adequate teachers who are able to meet the needs of disabled children (Arbeiter and Hartley, 2002). Furthermore, disabled children are often treated as less or excluded while social interaction is a fundamental lesson taught during childhood; it is likely that their confidence will remain low for the rest of their lives.

Once becoming an adult, disabled people face difficulties finding a job due to the lack of education, employment prospects, work experience and self-belief (Venter et al. 2002), which leads to further economic difficulties. Especially among those who face discrimination based on multiple characteristics (e.g. gender, caste and ethnicity) together with their impairment, might never break out of poverty. Disabled people often have direct and indirect costs due to the need for treatments and assistive devices, which are relatively high-priced in developing countries. The lack or limited access to rehabilitation services and mobility result into the exacerbation of the poverty situation of disabled people (Venter et al. 2002).

Overall, it seems that disabled people and their families are further pulled into a deep poverty circle; once heavy debts have been made it becomes more likely that a long-term and *intergenerational* poverty maintains among a family and/or household. Hence, it is stressed that

inclusion of disabled people will contribute to poverty alleviation within households and entire communities (Yeo and Moore, 2003: 575).

When taking poverty as a 'starting point', the chance to get an impairment is higher than being out of poverty: the access to primary resources is very limited, e.g. to food, health care, shelter, but also education and employment. Yeo and Moore (2003) note that:

“living in such an unsafe environment with bad circumstances increase the risk of illness, injury and impairment, which subsequently lead to exclusion and marginalization, that results in disability, more exclusion and loss of income; a cycle that should be broken”.

2.3 Disabled people: a right to life!

The issue of human rights has become an official concern since the agreement of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (Sen, 2009:357). But what exactly is a human right? According to Amartya Sen human rights are:

*“strong ethical pronouncements as to what **should** be done. (..) They are not already established legal rights, neither enshrined through legislation or common law”* (2009: 357-358).

Hence, the Declaration of 1948 has been made with certain optimism that human rights would be included in new laws in order to legalise these human rights across the world (Sen, 2009: 359). Furthermore, human rights can be regarded as a universal moral code that pursues equity and justice (Albert and Hurst, 2006). It is no surprise, then, that disability is a human rights issue due to the incidents of social exclusion, discrimination and other disadvantages among disabled people.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) got adopted by international institutions in 2006 (World Health Organization, 2011). The CRPD can be regarded as an instrument to pursue human rights among disabled people. Therefore, it is particularly focused on social inclusion of disabled people in health, education and employment. In short, its main aim is:

“to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by people with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity” (United Nations, 2007).

In line with the aim of the CRPD, basic principles comprise respect for disabled people and their dignity, non-discrimination, full participation and accessibility and gender equality. It also contains two separate articles aimed at equal enjoyment of rights by disabled women and children, who often face multiple discrimination (United Nations, 2007). Overall, the CRPD has been signed by 153 states and ratified by 110 states. Furthermore, the Optional Protocol of the Convention (concerning jurisdiction of the state's provisions of the Convention) has been signed by 90 states and ratified by

110 states (United Nations Enable, 2011). Nepal has both signed and ratified the Convention, which means that the CRPD is officially valid in Nepal.

Moreover, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has been adopted as an instrument in the international law³ since 1989. The Convention contains 42 articles, which ranges from the right to basic needs to the right to have an own identity in all kind of ways to the protection from any harm (Kilkelly, 2002). In line with the research subject, two articles should be mentioned. Firstly, Article 2 makes clear that this Convention is valid for all children – regardless their language, culture, religion, sex, disability or economic situation. Secondly, it should be underlined that Article 23 is dedicated to disabled children (both mentally and physically), stating that they have a right to special education and health care in order to live a “full life” (Meerilinga, 2008). Among all conditions of the CRC the following five provisions are of particular importance for disabled children:

a) the right not to be separated from one’s family; b) the right to protection from abuse; c) the right to an adequate standard of living; d) the right to health care; and e) the right to education.

It should be added, that many articles, including Article 23, state that rights are ‘recognized’, which is clearly not the same as the guarantee of these rights (Kilkelly, 2002); it leaves certain openness for governments, which could lead to passive attitudes in offering the *right* protection to disabled children. Nevertheless, this Convention can be regarded as one of the most significant international agreements due to its special focus on the rights of disabled children; a vulnerable group, which is often missed out on the (inter) national agenda (Lansdown, 1998).

2.3.1 Rights-based approach

Despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it was only since the 1990s that the rights-based approach (RBA) got embraced by international development actors (Albert and Hurst, 2006). In this approach the aid recipient is more involved in the decision-making process about how aid should be used, and the forms in which it is provided (Riddell, 2007). Furthermore, the traditional focus on civil and political rights (e.g. the right to life, liberty and security and the right to vote or freedom of speech, respectively) has expanded by including the economic, social and cultural rights (Nelson, 2007; Elliot, 2008). The latter three types of rights can be an adequate standard of living, the right to education and employment, and the right of minority groups to preserve their culture, religion and language (Elliot, 2008). Overall, the RBA can be described as the following:

The approach seeks to ensure that each person is seen as having an equal right to freedom, dignity, non-discrimination and protection from the state against abuse of these rights. The main principles are participation in the decision-making process, inclusion and the fulfilment of obligations by duty bearers (Albert and Hurst, 2006).

³ The CRC has been ratified by 191 states, with an exception of Somalia and the United States of America (Kilkelly, 2002).

2.4 A right to education

One of the most fundamental and undeniable rights of the Universal Declaration of 1948 is the right to an education (Carmen, 2008). However, the high numbers of illiteracy remained stable over the last decades regardless the many formal intentions to overcome this problem. In the year 2000 the United Nation set up eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in order to alleviate poverty throughout the world, which should be achieved in 2015. Among these goals, the second goal aims: “to ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling” (United Nations, 2010). Almost 190 countries have agreed to attempt to meet the MDGs and it should be emphasized that disabled children are also falling within the scope of this goal.

However, it is already announced that when enhancing the current pace of progress combined with exclusion of disabled children from education, the target will not be met in time (United Nations, 2010; Miles and Singal, 2010). Furthermore, critics have argued that the indicators to measure this specific goal are merely of quantitative nature (e.g. enrolment ratios and literacy rates). For example, in Nepal there have been large investments in extra schools so that every student is able to attend school within a distance of thirty minutes walk from his or her home (United Nations, 2010). Yet, the expansion of schools does not say anything about the education’s quality. Nevertheless, the quantitative measures do give a reflection of the unequal socio-economic power relations: lower enrolment rates and participation are clearly noticeable among minority groups or those with special needs, such as disabled children (Dyer, 2008). Hence, it is stated that the focus on such social aspects related to universal (primary) education are more important for the longer term in order to achieve social equity (Dyer, 2008).

2.4.1 Education for All

Based on the human rights approach, two world conferences took place in both Jomtien and Dakar with a focus on Education For All (EFA). The first symposium in Jomtien in 1990 was highly important, because it emphasized that vulnerable and minority groups should be included within the education system, adding that basic literacy skills is part of “*life long learning*” (Miles and Singal, 2010). Furthermore, in 2000 the conference in Dakar stressed the need of implementation of the Education For All programme by both national governments and (international) donor agencies (Miles and Singal, 2010).

Nevertheless, due to the international focus on achieving the second Millennium Development Goal the word ‘all’ has been reduced to only primary school-aged boys and girls, while originally the programme was aiming literally ‘all’ people; both younger children and adults (Dyer, 2008; Miles and Singal, 2010). This can be considered as a major concern as it is not sufficient to achieve the original six EFA goals:

- to expand early childhood care and education;
- provide free and compulsory primary education for all;
- promote learning and life skills for young people and adults;
- increase adult literacy by 50%;
- achieve gender equality by 2015;
- improve the quality of education.

Moreover, the aim of the EFA programme has been adopted by many countries combined with the Millennium Development Goals. However, it is doubtful whether all EFA goals will be implemented and achieved due to international priorities related to the MDGs. Hence, inclusiveness of disabled children in the education system depends on the extent governmental bodies and (I) NGOs include them in their policies and projects. The fact that it is not even certain of being included in national policies already shows that it is a highly disturbing situation.

2.4.2 Inclusive education

Beside the various world symposia on education for all, another world conference was organised in Salamanca in 1994 with a focus on Special Needs Education supporting inclusive education in regular schools (Ainscow and Miles, 2008). The Salamanca Statement declares that:

“Inclusive education is the most effective means to reduce discriminative behaviour, to build an inclusive society and to achieve education for all. Those with special educational needs should have access to regular schools, which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy in order to meet their needs. Furthermore, it is proclaimed that through inclusive education efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the entire education system will be improved (UNESCO, 1994).

Among critics, the Salamanca Statement is regarded as the most important and influential document as it has a particular focus on the inclusion of disabled children. However, after more than a decade the concept of inclusive education has taken on different meanings, which leads to confusion among those who aim to implement it (Miles and Singal, 2010). Five different perspectives can be distinguished towards inclusion. In short, they can be summarised (Ainscow and Miles, 2008) as:

- 1) inclusion focused on disability and special educational needs;
- 2) inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusions;
- 3) inclusion focused on all groups vulnerable to exclusion;
- 4) inclusion as the promotion of a school for all;
- 5) inclusion as Education for All.

Yet, the various concepts look quite similar, slight differences could have major effects on **not** including specific groups in education. It is obvious that the original focus on children with special educational needs (SEN) and particularly disabled children has slightly vanished among several concepts. This is a concerning situation, because such diversity could lead to different approaches to set up an inclusive system within schools in which disabled children might be forgotten after all.

According to UNESCO, inclusive education can be regarded as an approach that tries to stress the learning needs of all children, youth and adults who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion (2003). Nowadays, UNESCO has maintained its description of inclusiveness, which is the following:

*“schools should accommodate **all children** regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups” (2003).*

The education system can be divided into three types of systems: special or segregated, integrated and inclusive schools, which are further described in Figure 2.2.

Schools should function as a place where children gain social experiences, in which they meet people who are culturally, economically and socially different from themselves in order to discover how to communicate with them as equals (Garcia-Huidobro and Corvalán, 2009). However, according to critics, the special education system creates a gap between children with special educational needs and society, because they often grow up in a zone with ‘similar’ children with the same needs, e.g. only with deaf children. Hence, after graduating school it might be difficult for them to *re-adapt* themselves to communities their families live in (Save the Children, 2002). However, beside the point of social experience, individual development of disabled children may not be forgotten. Research has proven that access to education has created opportunities to discover talents and to strengthen a child’s confidence and self-respect (UNICEF, 2003: 26). Therefore, it is essential to outweigh what is more important: either to develop self-assurance and special skills (to learn Braille or sign language) in special education and (the possibility) of facing social difficulties in ‘society’ later; or to be raised in an environment with all kinds of children to gain social experience, but having a chance to fall in a gap of their special educational needs, which can only be met by trained and skilled teachers.

Figure 2.2: Three types of education

In **special or segregated education** children follow a separate education system, where they are not included in the ‘mainstream’ system. It is assumed that children with special educational needs (SEN) have particular needs that cannot be met in regular schools. Different types of schools fall in the scope of special education, such as: day schools, boarding schools, but also small units attached to regular schools.

In **integrated education** children with SEN attend regular schools. The main focus here is the attendance ratio instead of the quality of education for these children; they need to adapt themselves to be able to participate and to fit in. It is a system in which the child is expected to come along within the same level and pace as ‘mainstream’ children with a possibility of repeating class or even dropping out in case of low grades.

Inclusive education aims to meet the needs of all individual students. However, it acknowledges that students are not similar; children learn in different paces on different levels. Inclusive education can be regarded as a dynamic **process** of increasing the participation of everyone in schools due to its constant requisite for improvement and change. Hence, various cultures, policies and practices should correspond in order to create such a school, in which age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, HIV and TB status are respected. Furthermore, it is part of a strategy to promulgate an inclusive society.

Source: Save the Children, 2002

In line with making a choice between special and inclusive schools, a model of Jonsson and Wiman (2001) shows that in the 1990s all disabled children went to a special school, while this approach has shifted towards inclusiveness in the early 2000s. Nevertheless, a distinction is made between severe, moderate and mild 'cases', of which the latter two form around 80-90 percent averagely of all disabled people (Jonsson and Wiman, 2001). A small group of severely disabled people is often around 5 percent of the total disabled group of people, of which it is recommended to send them to a special school. The model can be found in Appendix 1.

Other mentioned disadvantages are the often high costs of special schools and the fact that the school is often not located in the child's direct environment. However, the expertise and skills of teachers and the extra attention due to low teacher-student ratios are advantages when attending special education (Save the Children, 2002).

Interestingly, the integrated education system is the opposite of the inclusive system, which can be compared with the medical and social model, respectively. In an integrated school the child needs to adapt himself to a regular school and its standardised learning methods, while in the inclusive system it is the school that needs to become a suitable place for the child (Save the Children, 2002).

However, such an inclusive approach cannot be simply implemented in one day: therefore it is described as a process. A study of Timmons and Alur (2004) describes that disabled children in India are mainly constrained from education due to high poverty ratios, costs of materials and transportation, but also the negative perception of parents toward their child. Hence, a National Resource Centre for Inclusion in India has been established in 1999 pursuing an inclusive community, with a particular focus on the inclusion of disabled children, girls and those who are socially deprived (Timmons and Alur, 2004). In order to demonstrate advantages of inclusive education, workshops have been organised, in which parents, teachers, social workers and psychologists have participated together. In this training, disability, human rights policies and social justice formed key points, so that (especially) parents and teachers become aware of the importance of education for all. Furthermore, a shift from the individual to the situation of a disabled child takes place, which is similar to the shift in mind-set from medical to social model. Overall, collaboration between all participants is regarded as a key instrument to inclusiveness.

2.5 Concept of access – without barriers

Besides policies and international agreements on disabled children and their (human) rights related to welfare and education, light should also be shed on a more practical issue: the accessibility to education. This subject does not only involve stakeholders such as governments, NGOs or schools, but also – and least as important – the disabled children and their families themselves. Yet, their specific needs and resources might differ per household; these aspects are an essential part of the concept of access.

Many articles and reports related to disability discuss people's disadvantages and their limited accessibility to services. In general, access could mean the physical entrance of a building or the availability to public services. When examining the term 'access' it appears that it consists of a variety of dimensions. Hence, Penchansky and Thomas (1981) have summarised a set of such dimensions: availability, accessibility, accommodation, affordability and acceptability, which represents a certain standard between clients and the (health care) system (1981: 128).

Based on this concept of access, Brigit Obrist et al. (2007) have used similar dimensions –she changed accommodation into adequacy– in researching a health care situation in Tanzania. This model can also be used for this research, because the core idea of accessibility plays a central role in this matter. When converting the five concepts into the access to education it can be described as the following:

- ❖ **Availability:** the relationship between existing schools, educational services and its provided goods to the needs of disabled children and their families. This is mainly concerning the types of schools and services, whether personnel is sufficiently skilled. In general, this part is asking whether the needs correspond with the offered services and facilities, and whether this is sufficient to cover the demand.
- ❖ **Accessibility:** the relationship between the location of the provided services and the location of where disabled children live. This dimension involves distance (in both space and travel time), transport possibilities and costs.
- ❖ **Affordability:** the relationship between the costs to be able to attend school and the family's income and ability to pay. This is not only focused on direct costs (tuition fees, purchase of books, uniforms etcetera), but also on indirect costs, such as transportation costs, lost time and income, and other 'unofficial' charges.
- ❖ **Adequacy:** the relation between the school's organisational set-up and the ability of disabled children and their families to adapt themselves to this set-up. This could involve opening and working hours, specially adapted facilities for disabled people, but also the expectation of a certain quality level.
- ❖ **Acceptability:** the relation between the characteristics of providers and those of the disabled children and their families. This part involves socio-cultural aspects, such as: whether services take social values and beliefs into account and whether disabled children feel welcome and cared for at school. Furthermore, acceptability is focused on the question whether children with a disability and their families have trust in the competence and identity of the educational institution.

When looking at a situation analysis and several case studies related to either education or/and disabled children, a number of matters are noticeable and could be linked to the concept of access.

Firstly, in a situation analysis of UNICEF, it is stated that main barriers such as poverty and false prejudices toward disabled people restrain disabled children from attending school (affordability and acceptability issues, respectively) (2003: 13). Furthermore, many children need to stay in hostels due to the schools' location, which is too far from their homes (accessibility). Additionally, it has appeared that teachers do not have the knowledge and skills to manage and teach disabled children in accordance with the inclusive education system (availability). However, in this analysis of UNICEF it is remarkable that disabled children are almost always mentioned as one group combined with a strong emphasis on physical accessibility for children with wheelchairs. Here, the focus on availability related to skilled personnel for the inclusion of blind and deaf children is not discussed, let alone for intellectually disabled children. Furthermore, it is obvious that the 5 different examples of practices for inclusive education are located in urban areas, whereby the situation of disabled children in rural-remote areas, is passed over.

Secondly, in an empirical study focused on implications of children from rural areas and both distance and route to school, it has appeared that Nepal is an example where mobility and lack of transportation lead to a *spatial poverty trap* (Lind and Agergaard, 2010). According to Bird et al. a spatial poverty trap may be either a *“geographical remote, a less favoured a weakly integrated or a low potential marginalised area”* (Bird et al. 2010) and causes to a certain extent the state of poverty local people find themselves in. Furthermore, factors as ‘agro-ecology’, ‘political and governance failures’, ‘stigma and exclusion’, and ‘physical isolation and inadequate infrastructure’ can be regarded as causes of spatial poverty traps (Bird et al. 2010). It becomes clear that limited access to mobility itself is a possible threat of exclusion from access to important services, such as health posts and schools (Lind and Agergaard, 2010). Overall, in this empirical study it is stressed that distance between home and school in rural Nepal brings various disadvantages for children as it could be dangerous, creates unequal relations in class and could have a negative impact on children’s performance and so their future opportunities (Lind and Agergaard, 2010). On top of long walking distances, children need to assist within the household while being at home, which has a negative effect on children’s time to spend on homework. In short, this study illustrates the importance of the location of a school, i.e. the accessibility.

Thirdly, an empirical study on the perceptions of parents of so-called ‘typical children’ (i.e. with physical disabilities, mild and moderate intellectual impairments, learning disabilities, Down’s syndrome and children with behaviour problems) and teachers towards the inclusive education in India has a strong link to the acceptability aspect due to its focus on social values and perceptions of parents (Narumanchi and Bhargava, 2011). In general, a majority of parents had positive attitudes towards inclusion, because it leads to personal development and awareness of other children’s needs. Those who were not in favour of inclusion were concerned of the acceptance of the child and the extra ‘burden’ for teachers. Nevertheless, parents have suggested that children should be separated in academic classes (mathematics etc.) and included in activity courses (music and sports), while teachers suggested that parents need to be trained, so that children experience uniform inputs at home and school. Moreover, experts have emphasized that *“education is one of the basic needs for the child with special educational needs to become independent”*.

Lastly, a study on the practical implications of including disabled children in regular schools in Uganda describes the teachers’ experiences (Arbeiter and Hartley, 2002). It has appeared that teachers have material, financial and training needs due to large class sizes and lack of knowledge and resources. In general, teachers stated that their own attitude had changed since disabled children participated in their classes. However, in this study it was most likely that ‘desirable’ answers were given as most teachers came up with a variety of coping strategies, while this has not been observed in class. Nevertheless, parents who considered their children as ‘useless’, changed this opinion as they noticed improvement in behaviour of their children. Overall, it has been stated that the school’s and teachers’ attitudes might have a stronger effect on the response of disabled children in class, than the availability of technical knowledge (e.g. sign language) by teachers.

2.6 Conceptual framework

Based on the theoretical and thematic context of disabled children related to education a conceptual model is created (see Figure 2.3) in order to get a better understanding of the different components of this research. Additionally, research questions are formulated within the scope of the research.

2.6.1 Conceptual model

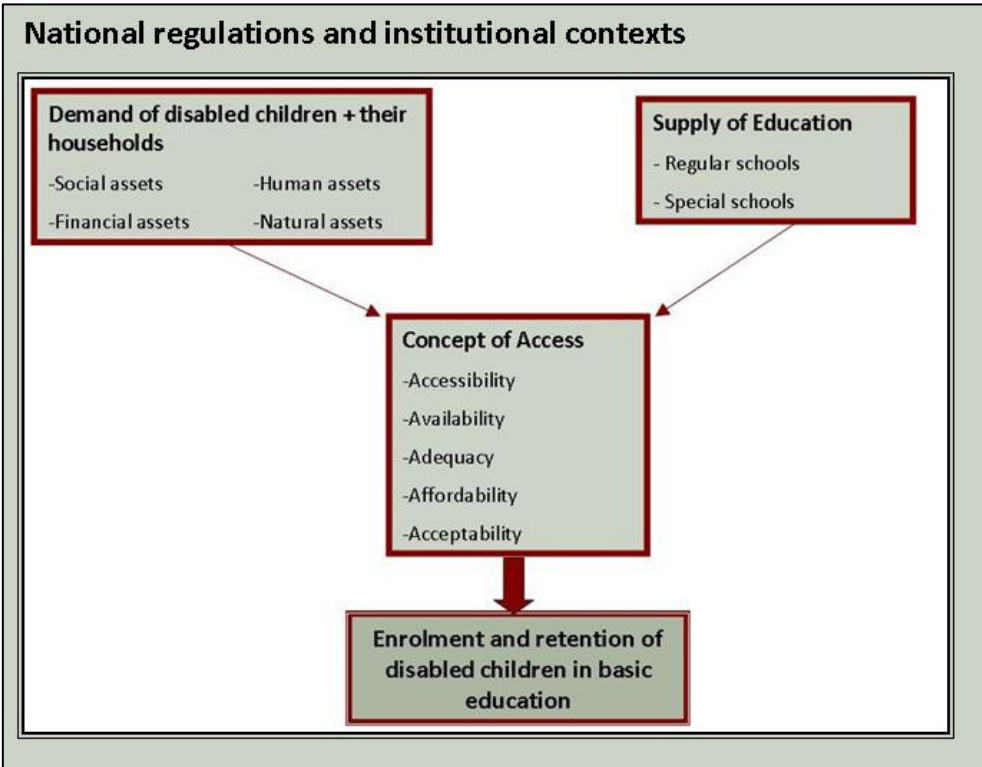
The conceptual model has been prepared within a setting of national regulations and the institutional contexts, which are major determinants of the current circumstances related to the subject. For instance, household characteristics of a blind girl in rural Yemen could be relatively similar to the features of a blind girl and her household in urban France, but national policies and institutional provisions related to education for all (i.e. particularly on gender and disabled children) contribute to the possibility and chance this blind girl attends school – not saying that such policies play a decisive role.

Firstly, there is a demand side in which the characteristics of disabled children and their households are identified. Such characteristics consist of social, human, financial and natural assets. These are factors that play a role to determine the extent they have certain needs and expectations in the concept of access as described in the previous paragraph.

Secondly, the supply side of educational services is examined, which consists of regular and special schools in this research. Here, it is essential to check whether the schools meet the needs and expectations of the disabled children and their households in order to determine the extent of accessibility to such schools.

The linkage between both segments (demand and supply) on the concept of access can be considered as significant due to their influence on the enrolment and retention of disabled children in basic education.

Figure 2.3: Conceptual model



2.6.2 Research questions

Main goal of this research is to answer the following central question:

What are the opportunities and barriers to access basic education for blind, deaf and intellectually disabled children in Baglung district?

By using research questions more insight will be gained into the subject of this thesis with the main purpose to answer the central research question. The research questions are:

1. Who are the stakeholders related to disabled children in Baglung district and what are their roles in the disability sector?
2. To what extent does geographical distance play a role on school enrolment?
3. How do household characteristics influence the decision-making process of parents?
4. What are the needs and expectations according to parents to enable school enrolment for disabled children?
5. What are the views of parents towards their disabled child related to education?

2.7 Conclusion

The term disability knows different meanings and is often interchangeably used with impairment. According to the medical model, disabled people should adapt themselves to their environment, while in the social model it is society that should adapt itself in order to stimulate inclusiveness. In this research there is no preference of the models of disability.

Poverty and disability are interlinked with each other, which makes 'disability' a development issue. However, disabled people seem one of the largest minority groups who are excluded from society and forgotten in development programmes. Although international symposia have called for action on human rights and the right to education for disabled people, the admired Millennium Development Goals got most priority in which especially gender equality and enrolment in primary education are promoted, after which disabled children have subsequently vanished to the background of subject matter. This is a concerning situation as the main goal of alleviating poverty cannot be achieved when disabled children maintain excluded from development programmes.

Another concern is the different concepts of inclusive education, which leads to confusion among those who aim to implement it. In line with the social model inclusive education pursues inclusiveness within schools, in which all different kinds of needs of students should be met.

Based on the theoretical framework a conceptual model has been drawn, which consists of the characteristics of disabled children and their households versus the regular and special schools in Baglung district. Both segments have their influence -to a certain extent- on the access to education, i.e. the enrolment and retention of disabled children in basic education in Baglung district. Research questions have been formulated in order to examine the opportunities and barriers to access basic education for blind, deaf and intellectually disabled children in Baglung district, Nepal.

As this conceptual model is set in a context of national regulations combined with institutional circumstances, the next chapter is further examining the regional context of disability, education and the relevant policies in Nepal, and particularly in Baglung district.

In this chapter the regional context of education and disability in Nepal and the research area are further elaborated. After a short description of Nepal, more light will be shed on its education system and the position of disabled children related to education in Nepal. Additionally, research area Baglung district is illustrated with general characteristics and its current situation concerning the number children with disabilities and schools. Lastly, the host organisation Plan Nepal is further discussed with its current projects on inclusive education with a particular focus on disabled children.

3.1 Nepal: in brief

Nepal is a landlocked country in Southern Asia, located between China and India as illustrated in Figure 3.1. In 2009, Nepal's population was estimated on more than 29.3 million inhabitants of whom almost 1 million people lived in the capital city Kathmandu (UN Statistics Division, 2012). Nepal's Human Development Index (HDI) is ranked on 157 out of 187 countries, based on various indicators as life expectancy, educational attainment and income (UNDP, 2012). Based on this low position it becomes obvious that Nepal is in a state of poverty as one of the least developed countries. In 2011, the gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated on \$37.7 billion, where almost 31 percent lived below the poverty line. Furthermore, the estimated unemployment rate was 46 percent in 2008 (CIA, 2012). The total expenditure on education and health was 4 percent and 5.8 percent of total GDP, respectively in 2009 (WHO, 2012).

Figure 3.1: Map of Nepal



Source: *Himalayan Rejoice Travel, 2008*

Over the period of 2010-2015, life-expectancy is estimated on 69 years among women and 67.2 years among men (United Nations Statistics Division, 2012). Besides a variety of castes and ethnic minorities, the most practiced religion in Nepal is Hinduism (81 percent), followed by Buddhism (11 percent) and Islam (4 percent) (CBS Nepal, 2009). Nepal is vulnerable for natural hazards, such as

floods, landslides and in several regions droughts with a risk of harming people's health and infrastructure. Furthermore, Kathmandu Valley is prone to earthquakes (WHO, 2010).

Nepal has become a Federal Democratic Republic in 2006. A Constituent Assembly was elected in the year 2008 in order to formulate and proclaim a new constitution. Nevertheless, this has still not been realised yet, with postponing four deadlines to May 2012 (Ministry of Education, 2010; CIA, 2012). The country is administratively divided into 5 development regions, 14 zones and 75 districts, of which the latter consist of village development committees (VDCs) and municipalities. Such VDCs and municipalities can be considered as the local level government (Ministry of Education, 2010).

3.1.1 Disability in Nepal

Within the government of Nepal, several central governmental organisations are focused on disability. Firstly, the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare is a central division focused on disabled people and all the related affairs to disability. However, particular disability issues are also taken into account among other ministries (UNICEF, 2003), e.g. education for disabled children, which is a subject for the Ministry and Department of Education, or the accessibility for disabled people in public transport services, which is covered by the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management. Other governmental organisations that are focused on people with disabilities are the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Local Development, the Social Welfare Council and the National Planning Commission Secretariat (UNICEF, 2003). The latter division has its own education department that focuses on special education. Both District Development Committees (DDCs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs) have been given the authority to protect their communities with an eye on disabled people (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2002). Thereafter, VDCs are responsible for preserving documentation of disabled people living in their communities (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2002). Besides national and local governmental institutions, mainly charity agencies and NGOs are essential in supporting the rights and needs of disabled people.

In an empirical case study on physical disabled children in Nepal, respondents determine factors as 'poor medical facilities', 'carelessness', 'poverty', and 'lack of education' as general causes of disability (Boyce et al. 2000). Subsequently, only 39.2% of all respondents believe that 'bad karma' of the Hindu religion is a causal factor of disability, which is a much lower compared with Northern India. Furthermore, it has been perceived that parental attitudes show acceptance of their disabled children instead of superstition and other created myths (Boyce et al. 2000). Another typical aspect is that somehow Nepalese children contribute to the main income, especially by doing agricultural chores in rural villages. This is not only done for gaining financial resources, but also to learn traditional skills within a community: not participating in such activities might even lead to social deprivation (Boyce et al. 2000).

3.2 Education system

Since the last decade, policies have become more decentralised combined with an increase of community participation. Hence, programmes were organised with a special focus on Education for All (EFA), teachers' skills, school and community support and other progressive projects in order to

improve school systems and its results. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has made a 'core document', called 'School Sector Reform Plan' (SSRP). In this document, a long-term plan from 2009-2015 has been formulated, including strategies, interventions and policy directions are described to improve efficiency and quality for all students (Ministry of Education, 2009). The SSRP can be regarded as an extension on the ongoing projects, e.g. EFA and Teacher Education Project. Plans are focused on all education levels: from early childhood education, basic and secondary education to literacy among youths and adults (Ministry of Education, 2010). Among the national objectives of education, two goals call for particular attention to disability:

1. *to develop a strong sense of **non-discrimination** towards others despite their caste, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, class, and disability;*
2. *Develop attitudes to respect individual differences in terms of gender, disabilities, social, economic, geographical, ethnic and cultural variations and be active in building inclusive society by being aware of social evils like racial untouchability (Ministry of Education, 2010).*

The former school education system in Nepal comprised Primary (grade 1-5), Lower Secondary (grade 6-8), Secondary (grade 9-10) and Higher Secondary (grade 11-12) Education. Basic education comprise grade 1-8 with an age group of 6-13 years (Ministry of Education, 2010). However, recently it has been decided to slightly change this system, whereby grade 9-12 stands for Secondary education as a whole (Ministry of Education, 2011). Still, it is important to mention the previous system, because these definitions can be found in older data and many schools are carrying names such as "primary" or "higher secondary".

It has been reported that over the year 2009-2010 in total more than 7.5 million children are attending school, of which 49.7 percent girls and 50.3 percent boys. Relatively it could be stated that in total 83.2 percent and 23.9 percent of all children have enrolled basic and secondary education, respectively (Ministry of Education, 2010). Among these children, around 16.7 percent Dalits (lower caste), 38.7 percent *Janajatis* (ethnic group) and 1 percent children with disabilities have attended school (Ministry of Education, 2010). In general, there is a lack of a national system to identify children with a disability (CWDs) and insufficient efforts have been made to facilitate the inclusion of them into the educational system and into society. The government is unable to provide sufficient specially trained teachers, physical access to adapted classrooms, or special materials such as adequate Braille books, copies, and sign language books. Nevertheless, resource centres have been established in every district, where teachers are able to share expertise, give trainings and where research is done: all related to education (Vaux et al. 2006).

According to the UN Country Team of Nepal, total school enrolment in primary education has increased from 2.8 million to 4.5 million children over 1990-2005 (2007). However, many girls, Dalits, Janajatis, Muslim children, children with disabilities, street children and children from poor families do not attend school. Child labour plays a frequent role in Nepal, particularly jobs that require children to work long hours, which further affects school attendance of school-aged children. In rural and remote areas the long distance from home to school often leads to lower attendance in school followed by the low standard of facilities, and because parents often need their children to work to contribute to their families' livelihoods (UN Country Team, 2007: 30). Besides low quality or lack of

facilities, particularly in rural and remote areas there is a shortage of qualified teachers for children with disabilities. It is no exception that there are only one or two teachers who teach children of different grades in one classroom.

The Curriculum Development Center has produced a curriculum and text books in eleven local languages. However, it has appeared that the government has problems in delivering these materials to schools and in providing training to teachers on how to use them. In addition, only a few teachers have the right skills to assist a student's transition from their mother tongue to the dominant Nepali language of instruction (UN Country Team, 2007: 32).

Table 3.1: Students by level and type of disability in Nepal

Types of disabilities	Primary level		Lower secondary		Secondary level	
	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total
% of CWD in total enrolment	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Physical	8,399	18,339	3,019	6,487	1,336	2,938
Mental	7,654	16,004	1,244	2,594	339	715
Deaf	3,902	8,343	981	2,174	331	734
Blind	2,002	4,262	860	1,741	402	819
Deaf & Blind	974	2,038	341	746	134	294
Vocal & Speech	2,006	4,695	344	883	105	288

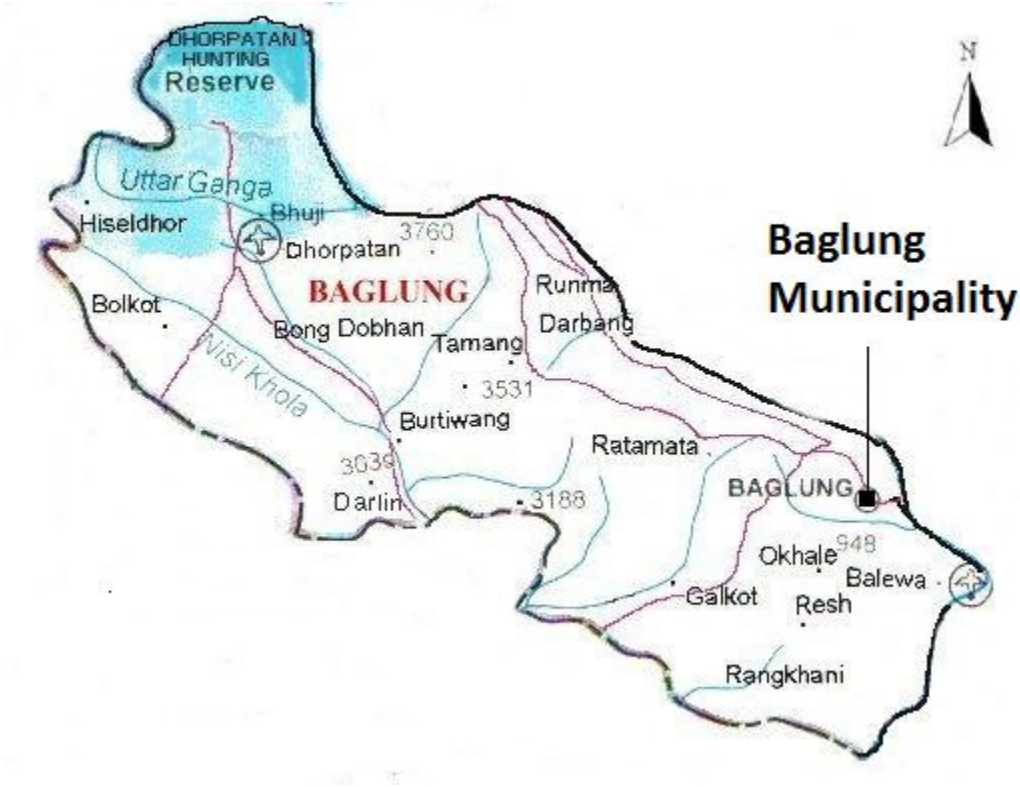
Source: Ministry of Education, 2010a

In general, main causes that disadvantage a large group of Nepali children from completing basic education are the government's lack of capacity and resources; socio-cultural issues concerning gender roles; systematic hierarchical disparities between class, castes and ethnic groups; and language differences (UN Country Team, 2007: 32). These factors mainly affect people living in poor, rural and remote areas and in families where children are needed to contribute to their livelihoods. Eventually, this might lead to a vicious cycle of poverty, lack of education and limited employment when disadvantaged groups, such as disabled people, are kept away from public services.

3.3 Baglung district and disability

Baglung district is located in the Dhaulagiri Zone in the 'Western Region', on which this research will be focused. Baglung district has 59 Village Development Committees and 1 municipality: Baglung Bazar (later referred as Baglung). In total almost 270,000 people live in this district. Baglung is often called 'little Nepal' due to its shape (see Figure 3.2) and diversity in religion, culture, ethnicity, altitude and temperature. The majority of the people are Hindu or Buddhist. Furthermore, Magar, Chhetri, Brahman, Newar, Gurung and Chhantyal are the main castes and ethnic groups living in this district. Baglung mainly consist of mountainous and hilly areas with altitudes ranging from 650 meters at Kharbang to approximately 4,300 meters in Dhorpatan. Furthermore, the main occupation is farming; crops as rice, corn, millet, wheat and potatoes are mostly cultivated.

Figure 3.2: Map of Baglung district



Source: Nepalese Homepage, 2011

In total, 4,124 people with a disability have been identified, among whom 2,016 are disabled children (Plan Nepal, 2011). The largest group are physically disabled, followed by deaf, blind and mentally retarded people (later referred as intellectually disabled).

3.3.1 Education in Baglung district

Table 3.2 shows the amount of regular schools in basic education, which has been increased from 601 to almost 700 schools from 1999-2008 in Baglung district (CBS Nepal, 2009).

Table 3.2: Number of schools in basic education in Baglung district

year/level	Grade 1-5 (Primary)	Grade 6-8 (Lower Secondary)	Total schools in basic education
1999	481	120	601
2000	513	120	633
2001	480	115	595
2002	493	117	610
2003	494	123	617
2004	482	125	607
2005	485	121	606
2006	501	134	635
2007	514	144	658
2008	543	155	698

Source: CBS Nepal, Number of Primary Schools by District (2009)

Relevant for this research is that there are five special schools for disabled children in Baglung district. Firstly, there is one blind support school called Janatadhan Higher Secondary School, where 22 blind students have been studying over 2010-2011. Similarly there are two special education schools: Baglung special child class and Kalika Kanya Higher Secondary School, where 46 and 10 intellectual disabled children are studying respectively. Furthermore, there are another two deaf schools: Dhaulagiri Deaf primary school and Galkot Higher Secondary School, where 72 and 16 deaf children are studying respectively (Plan Nepal, 2010). Table 3.3 illustrates the amount of children with disabilities attaining education in Baglung district. It should be stressed that these numbers include children from other districts as well due to the limited supply of special education, such as Janatadhan School for blind children.

Table 3.3: CWD enrolment into schools in Baglung district over 2008-2009

Level	Physical	ID	Deaf	Blind	Deaf + Blind	Vocal + Speech	Total
Primary	198	217	115	65	18	42	655
Lower Secondary	89	23	7	24	15	16	174
Secondary	34	3	8	10	4	4	63
Total	321	243	130	99	37	62	892

Source: DOE, 2009

3.4 Host organisation: Plan Nepal

In line with the Rights-based approach described in the theoretical framework, Plan Nepal has adopted a child-centred approach in which the rights of children play a central role. The voice of children relating to their rights, needs and concerns play a key role in this approach. In order to achieve the most effective and sustainable change, Plan Nepal works together with families, communities, local governments and other organisations.

Plan Nepal has a project office in Baglung municipality, which is focused on Baglung and its neighbouring districts: Parbat and Myagdi. This project started in July 2010 and lasts until June 2015 and is concentrating on inclusiveness of girls, Dalits, disabled children and other marginalized groups. The main objectives of the programme of Plan Nepal are:

- To ensure that girls, children with disabilities, Dalit children and children from the most marginalised groups have access to and complete their basic education.
- To ensure all children complete and transition through basic education by strengthening the capacity of schools and systems to develop relevant, inclusive curriculum through rights-based teaching in child-friendly learning and living environment.

- To improve educational governance by ensuring that the most marginalised children, parents and communities participate meaningfully in decision-making and advocating for the effective implementation of free and compulsory basic education.

In the year 2010, a base line survey has been carried out focused on children with a disability in Baglung, Parbat and Myagdi district. The survey has been completed with the partnership of local government bodies – District Development Committee (DDC), Women and Children Development Office, District Education Office– and local NGOs: Gaja Youth Club, ENPRED Nepal and Disabled Association (Plan Nepal, 2011). The results are shown in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4: Mapping of CWD in three districts in 2010

Districts	Identified people with disabilities	Illiterate	Identified children with disabilities	Out of school children
Baglung	4,124	2,523	2,016	534
Parbat	1,931	1,261	774	216
Myagdi	2,320	1,908	581	218
Total	8,375	5,721	3,371	968

Source: Plan Nepal, 2011

This table clearly indicates that around 28 percent children with disabilities are still out of school, or in absolute numbers: 968 out of 3,371 disabled children. Relatively, 26.5 percent of all CWDs are out of school in Baglung district. This is a big challenge for the government and non-government organizations working in the education and disabilities sector. Hence, Plan Nepal organises meetings, dialogues and interaction with local governmental bodies in order to prepare an inclusive education plan at the district and village level. This should result in the mainstreaming of ‘out of school’ children into the government education system through its resource schools (Plan Nepal, 2011).

3.5 Conclusion

In this regional chapter it has become clear that despite Nepal’s low development index, the government has formulated policies and projects to include disabled children in education. Nevertheless, numbers of out-of-school children and drop-out ratios among disabled children are extremely high, which shows a large gap between policy and practice.

There are approximately 2,000 disabled children living in the research area Baglung district, of which physical disabled form the largest group. Of almost 550 primary and 150 lower secondary schools, there are five special schools: two for deaf children, two for intellectually disabled children and one for blind children. The host organisation Plan Nepal implements a project in Baglung, Myagdi and Parbat district in order to achieve inclusiveness of girls, Dalits, disabled children and other marginalised groups to basic education.

In the next chapter, research methods are described, which have been used before and during the field work in Baglung district. Furthermore, in the empirical chapters it will be examined what the reasons are of this particular gap between policy and practice, in which possible reasons are found why disabled children are currently not attending basic education.

Based on the research questions different methods are used in order to give an answer on the central question. This research has an explanatory nature due to the question what the opportunities and barriers are for the target group in Baglung district. In line with this the research has a qualitative nature as it tries draft a situation analysis of disabled children in Baglung district, including the most important stakeholders, and to collect parents' views, motivations, needs and expectations concerning their disabled children and education. Moreover, quantitative methods are used, so that factors could be compared between parents with school-going children and out-of-school children. This chapter describes the used research methods, why they have been used, and the operationalisation of concepts and the limitations of this research.

4.1 Methods

4.1.1 Literature study

As a preparation for the research, literature has been studied to get familiar with the issue of disability in Nepal and the subject of disabled children related to education. It appeared that academic literature on this exact topic was quite limited. Hence, a broad range of articles, reports and empirical case studies have been used to get an impression of the situation of disabled children in developing countries. Additionally, a couple of documents of the host organisation Plan Nepal have been useful to gain insight in Nepal's current situation on people with disabilities. Based on literature, a research proposal followed by a theoretical framework could be formulated.

4.1.2 Observation

A form of unstructured observation has been used, while visiting households, schools, key informants and while travelling Baglung district. Such observations are useful, because it contributes to forming a complete picture of the current situation. In addition, it has been very helpful to write down observations while interviewing parents as it is easy to recall their children, livelihood and attitudes while analysing data afterwards. Furthermore, impressions of people, such as key informants, and the way other people behave towards such persons, says much about his or her status and role within the organisation. Moreover, the experience of travelling on rough roads by bus and walking to villages on foot has been an eye-opener in the sense that Baglung is an extremely mountainous area with steep trails and rough roads. Such impressions make it easier to identify yourself with the difficulties of travelling for disabled children and the concerns of parents.

4.1.3 Interviews

One of the research methods is the use of semi-structured interviews, which have been held for both orientation and to be able to answer research questions. A semi-structured interview is based on a before enlisted topic list, but questions are not set yet as it depends on the respondent's answers what to ask next. This will mainly be used when visiting educational institutions and key informant persons in order to keep some topics as a baseline combined with the possibility that respondents start their own topic as well in order to avoid exclusion of any kind of answers. Before departing to Nepal, two persons of a Dutch NGO Dark & Light have shared their experience with projects focused

on disabled people in developing countries, including Nepal. Furthermore, several interviews have been held with contact persons of institutions related to disabled people in Nepal. These interviews were mainly meant to learn more about the current situation and to get an impression of projects due to limited data and information found during the literature study to get a good impression.

In Baglung municipality, semi-structured interviews have been held with key informants. In total, 7 semi-structured interviews will be held to gain more insight into the situation of offered services for disabled people and their families.

- Local Development Officer – main local governmental body;
- District Education Officer – main government body for education at district level;
- Women Development Officer – women and gender development at district level;
- Project manager of Plan Nepal – NGO;
- Chair person of Gaja Youth Club Baglung – NGO;
- Chair person of School Committee Dhaulagiri Deaf Resource School Baglung;
- Chair person of School Committee Intellectually Disabled Resource School Baglung.

4.1.4 Questionnaire

Questionnaires with both qualitative and quantitative questions have been conducted among households with disabled children with the intention to answer the research questions related to geographical distance, household characteristics, parents' motivations, needs and expectations. Households have been chosen of both school-going and out-of-school children, which make it possible to compare data. Before visiting households, the questionnaire has been piloted with a family, who did not fall in the target group.

Based on a baseline survey, provided by Gaja Youth Club, disabled children are categorised on age, type of disability, VDC and whether they attend or not. It was not possible to interview randomly due to the scattered and remote locations of households living in Baglung district. Hence, based on this list it has been attempted to visit households from rural-remote, peri-urban and urban areas.

In total, 51 households have been visited, which comprised 27 households with out-of-school children and 24 households with school-going children. Furthermore, in 5 households two children were disabled, which means that a total of 56 children have been examined. Within the group of 30 households a division is made per disability – 10 blind, 10 deaf and 10 intellectually disabled children. Families of school-going children have been included in the research as a control group in order to compare data with data of households with out of school children. This is essential, because drawing conclusions only based on the first group might lead to a misconception. An example of the used questionnaire can be found in Appendix II.

On the whole, there were more girls compared with boys among the disabled children: 31 and 25, respectively. Although beforehand it was preferred to have an equal division, it became quite impracticable due to the timeframe of this research combined with the geographical situation of Baglung district. Nevertheless, the small difference between the two groups does not have any negative impacts on this research, because of its qualitative nature.

4.1.5 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) are group based interviews to gain insight on collective views of social issues among a homogenous group. In this case, the FGDs have been held among parents who send their children to school. The interesting part is that a statement or question is asked, which the group is going to discuss, while the moderator is not intervening. In total, three discussions have been organised with parents of blind, deaf and intellectually disabled children. Main topic was the perception of these parents concerning the issue of out-of-school children in order to find possible reasons why other children -with the same impairment as their own children – were not going to school. This is interesting to find out what these families have that the out-of-school children do not have. The full topic list of the focus group discussions can be found in Appendix 4.

Overall, it has been a useful method to collect group beliefs and opinions to subsequently use for research questions on parents' motivations, needs and expectations, which cannot be found in literature.

4.2 Operationalisation

This term refers to the translation of concepts into measurable variables. This is needed, because research questions and questionnaires include concepts that can be explained or interpreted in different ways. Hence, such concepts should be operationalised in order to prevent confusion and to be able to measure data based on measurable variables.

- ❖ Initially, the term 'disabled children' refers to blind, deaf and intellectually disabled children within an age-group of 5 to 18 years old. Additionally, children with low vision, a hard of hearing and multiple impairments are included in case they are mentioned separately in the findings of the research.
- ❖ A 'household' refers to all occupants living in the same house and who are regarded as one unit. Furthermore, 'household characteristics' comprise caste, income and occupation, family size and the attained level of education.
- ❖ In the second research question the term 'distance' is expressed in time and effort, in which it is possible that some people make use of a vehicle and some people do not (i.e. due to limited financial resources). This is the most realistic way of expressing 'distance', because in a mountainous area such as Baglung district, geographical distance has no meaning.
- ❖ When a child is 'enrolled in school', he or she is registered in a certain school and going regularly (daily) to this school on hours the child is expected to come.
- ❖ Among household characteristics in the third research question 'income' is mentioned in the used questionnaire. It is the approximate income gained from both formal and informal labour, plus remittances in case received. Remittances are defined as a transfer of money by a family member, who works in a foreign country.
- ❖ Another factor is the highest attained 'educational level' of parents in which all levels of education are included: from nursery class to university level. The level is asked of both parents, of which the highest is selected in order to analysis data.

4.3 Research limitations

Language barrier

A translator was constantly needed, because almost all people from Baglung district can only speak Nepali. Hence, the translators have been instructed multiple times about the meaning and intention of questions of interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires. However, the translators did not have any experience in this field, which led to repetition of using the exact same words. Also, it has been frequently asked to translate every sentence literally instead of summarising the answers of interviewees.

Large research area and household visits

Doing research in Baglung district can be regarded as time-consuming, because it is located in a hilly and mountainous area of Nepal. There is always a risk that if you go to a household, someone is not at home, because he or she is out for work. Initially, it was intended to visit 60 households, equally divided in an out-of-school and a school-going group. Within this group of 30 households a division would be made per disability; 10 blind, 10 deaf and 10 intellectually disabled children. However, the list of the baseline survey (on which the household visits was based on), was the only available source, which made it possible to plan household visits. However, this list appeared to have many incorrect and incomplete data. Examples are:

1. Disabled children appeared to have another type of impairment, e.g. a deaf girl 'on the list' was visited, but had an hard of hearing impairment;
2. Children appeared to have no disability at all, while the list stated that they had;
3. In several cases, households could not be found at all;
4. Disabled children have been 'discovered', who were not mentioned on the list.

Furthermore, in line with a lack of enough time – due to Baglung's geographical situation – regular schools have not been visited to observe school attendance of disabled children and / or the attitudes of teachers toward teaching disabled children in a mainstream school. Hence, this is one of the points, which will be mentioned among the recommendations for a follow-up study.

Interpreting response

Due to its qualitative nature, people's responses – especially from open questions during household visits and opinions during focus group discussions – can be interpreted in different ways, because texts might lead to imagination, which is strengthened by own observations. It is necessary to be cautious when analyzing the answers and to keep in mind people's background. Overall, it is challenging to interpret their answers.

School holidays

During the period of doing fieldwork in Baglung district (March-May), most schools were closed due to school holidays of at least three weeks. Therefore, interviews could not be held among teachers of regular schools in local villages. This can be regarded as a missed opportunity as such villages have been visited anyhow because of household visits. This should be taken into account for a follow-up study.

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to answer two research questions related to stakeholders, who are focused on disabled children in Baglung district, and the role of the geographical distance on school enrolment.

The first part of this chapter introduces the reader to the visited households with disabled children in Baglung district. The areas are geographically categorised, which will be relevant in answering the second research question.

Secondly, a research question related to the stakeholders and their roles in Baglung district is answered. This part creates an illustration of the current situation of offered services related to the disability sector. The particular 'situation' is relevant to understand why things are currently arranged in a certain way.

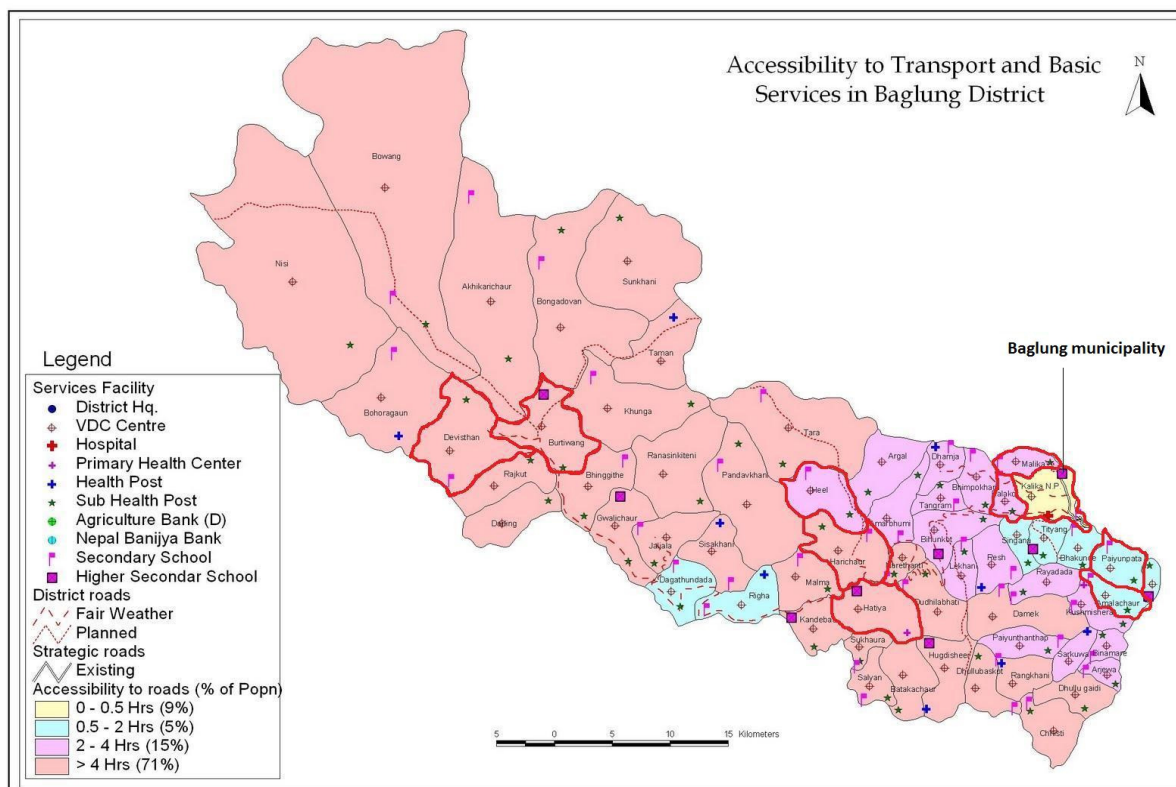
Lastly, the second research question is focused on the geographical situation in the research area related to accessibility and the enrolment of education of disabled children. In a mountainous region as Baglung district it might be possible that the geographical issue forms a barrier for out-of-school children. Hence, its role and influence is studied and compared with school-going children.

5.1 About the research

In total, 51 households have been visited in Baglung district in the following Village Development Committees (VDCs): Pala, Hatiya, Harichaur, Hilla, Burtiwang, Devasthan, Paiyunpata, Amalachaur, Malika and Ba.Na.Pa, Nepalese name for Baglung Municipality. As already described in the regional chapter, Baglung district has mostly mountainous, hilly and rural areas. According to Wiggins and Proctor (Huisman, 2006) there are three typical elements that belong to a 'rural area', namely: the great quantity of land and other natural resources, lower prices of land compared with urban areas, but higher costs to travel to urban areas due to distance, and thirdly in most developing countries rural is equal to poverty. It is obvious that it is difficult to simply label a VDC in either urban or rural. Hence, to make it more specific there are three different types of rural areas: urban, peri-urban and rural-remote areas (Huisman, 2006). Peri-urban areas can be considered as the "*middle countryside*" where daily commuting is prevented by distance and higher transportation costs. The costs are even higher in rural-remote areas because the combination of large distances, the lack of infrastructure and the presence of physical obstacles (Huisman, 2006). These types of rural areas are further used in this research as they are most appropriate for the geographic regions of Baglung district.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the visited VDCs, which are encircled in red. This figure clearly shows the accessibility to roads, which is personally interpreted into three different zones, namely: urban (yellow and blue), peri-urban (purple) and rural-remote (pink) areas based on the accessibility (in hours) to roads. It can be seen that three urban, three peri-urban and four rural-remote areas have been visited. All VDCs have been visited by bus or jeep first, followed by a visit on foot to the surrounding wards where most households with disabled children lived.

Figure 5.1: Visited village development committees in Baglung district



Source: Baglung Bazar, 2009

Table 5.1 shows the total number of children per type of disability and their school attendance. The reason why there are 56 children in total is that some households had two disabled children. Among the category ‘other’ the following cases have been perceived: 1) “cerebral palsy”; 2) “ID + deaf + dumb + unable to walk”; 3) “hard of hearing + unable to walk”; 4) “ID + hard of hearing + dumb + physical difficulties”; 5) “ID + hard of hearing + dumb”; 6) “blind and dumb” (two times); and 7) “ID + unable to walk” (three times).

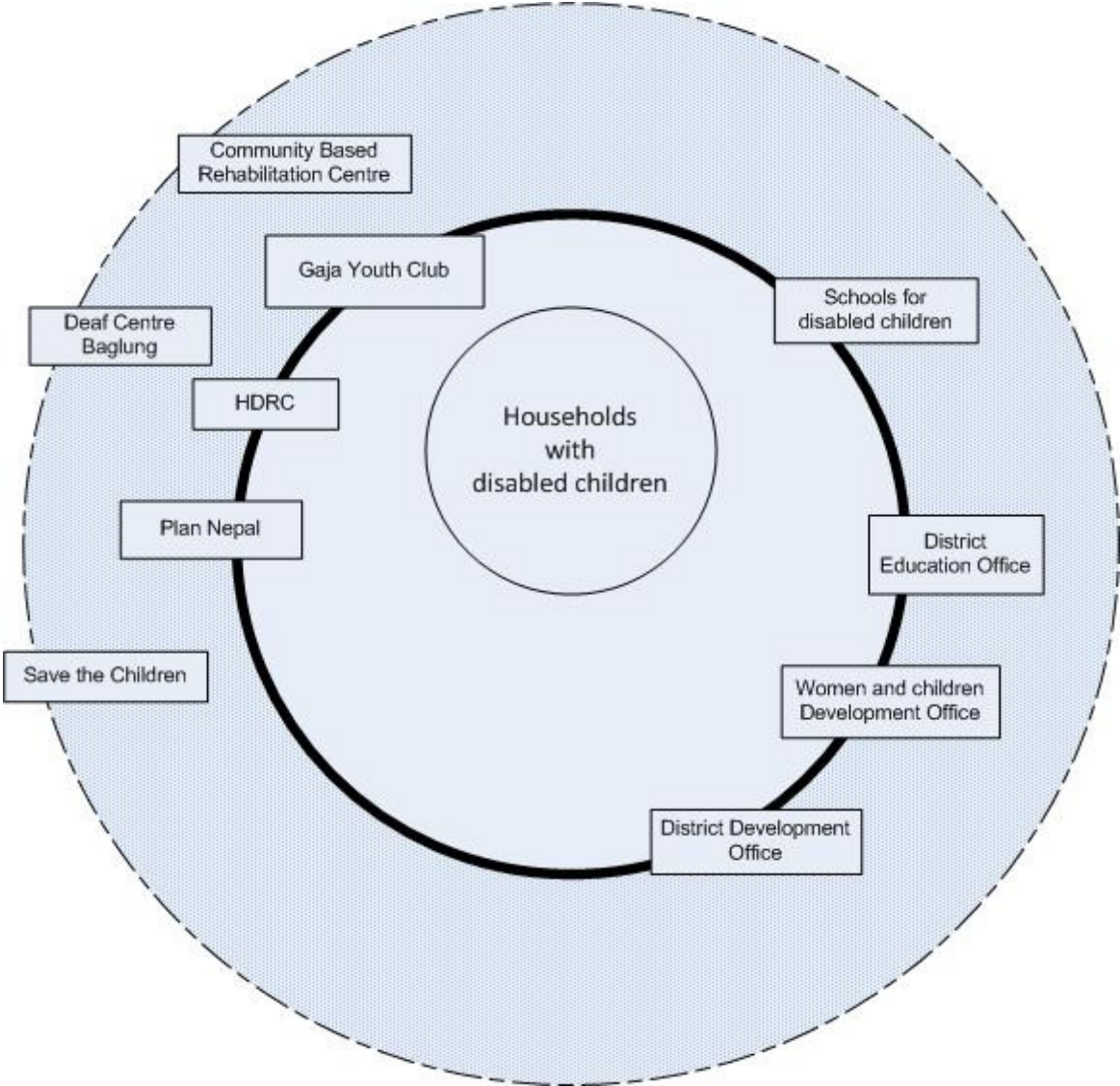
Table 5.1: Number of disabled children divided in disability categories and school attendance

		What kind of disability does he/she have?						Total
		deaf	hard of hearing	blind	low vision	intellectually disabled	other	
Does your CWD attend school at the moment?	No	3	3	2	4	8	10	30
	yes	9	8	0	5	4	0	26
Total		12	11	2	9	12	10	56

5.2 Main stakeholders

In this paragraph, the following sub-question is answered: *Who are the stakeholders related to disabled children and what are their roles?* In Baglung district, the main stakeholders related to disabled children and disabled people in general can be categorised in households, local governments, (I) NGOs and schools. Figure 5.2 gives an image of stakeholders that are related to disabled children in Baglung district. It can be seen that some stakeholders play a more direct role than the other when looking to its distance to the core: households with disabled children. Stakeholders on the black line are described in this chapter. Furthermore, stakeholders that are tagged to the (outer) dotted line are present, but not further described in this study. Hence, their position in this map is based on observation and personal impressions.

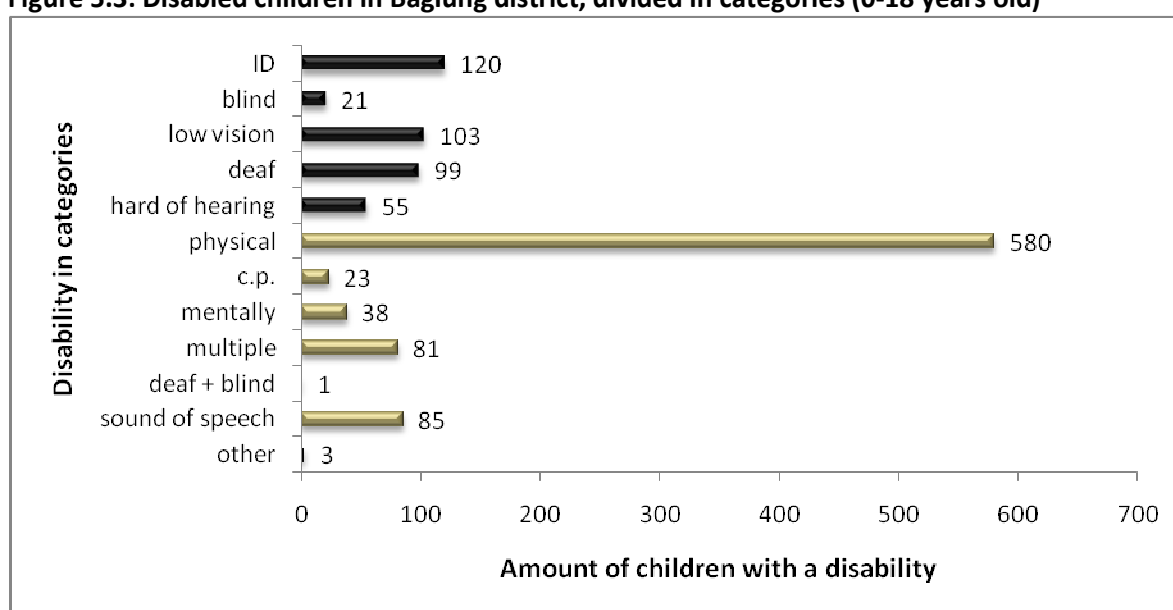
Figure 5.2: Stakeholder map for households with disabled children in Baglung district



5.2.1 Households and disabled children

Baglung district counts almost 270,000 people of whom 1.5 per cent is in some way disabled, which is equal to 4,055 persons (DDC, 2010). Among them, at least 1,209 persons (almost 30 percent) is 18 years or younger. Figure 5.3 gives an overview of the number of registered disabled children per type of disability. The dark bars are the categories that fit in the target group of this research. Besides intellectual disabled children (ID), categories of blind and low vision, deaf and hard of hearing can be clustered. The numbers of children in percentages are respectively: 10%, 10% and 13% out of the total group of children with a disability. However, it is still essential to show this figure with absolute numbers to see the actual differences within a cluster.

Figure 5.3: Disabled children in Baglung district, divided in categories (0-18 years old)



Source: DDC, 2010⁴

5.2.2 Local government in Baglung district

Among this section three relevant government bodies can be distinguished, namely the District Development Committee (DDC), the District Education Office (DEO) and the Women and Children Development Office (WDO) of Baglung municipality.

District Development Committee

The main purpose of a District Development Committee, later referred as DDC, is to coordinate the development programs of the entire district as a district government (Ligal et al. 2006). VDCs and Municipalities are formed by a direct voting system, while DDCs are formed through indirect voting; their electorate comprise all elected representatives of VDCs and Municipalities. Therefore, DDCs are regarded as 'combined' institutions of Village and Municipal governments in district levels (ADDCN, 2011).

The District Development Committee of Baglung receives "little budget" from the central government to spend on minority groups, such as disabled people, women and ethnic groups. There

⁴ This figure includes different numbers compared with Table 3.4 because different sources are used. Due to the small difference, the numbers should be considered as an indication.

are special guidelines focused on these groups made by the National Planning Commission and the Women and Children Ministry, which should be followed by the local governments. It should be noted that women, children, Dalits, Janajatis, disabled people and senior citizens all belong to this one 'disadvantaged' group.

The DDC receives a specific budget, which must be divided among all its VDCs with registered disabled people in order to give them their monthly allowance. There are four categories from A-D, ranging from severely to less-severely disabled. In total 75 persons of category A receive NPR 1,000,-- per month and 526 people of categories B, C and D receive NPR 300,-- per month. This is equal to a total amount of NPR 6,582,000 per year which is spent on disabled people⁵. It should be pointed out that this allowance is given per household in case there are more disabled persons within one household.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the number of people who receive an allowance is relatively low when considering a total number of 4,055 disabled people in Baglung district. Along with the categorisation of people with a disability, they also receive a special ID-card, which they can use for discount purposes. However, there is a problem that not everyone has this card yet, and so they do not get any allowances. In the past, a VDC decided to which category a person belonged, which is currently done by an employee of the Women and Children Development Office (WDO). According to several sources this is a second issue, because there are different criteria for the categorisation process compared with the past. It is even stated that this has led to a cause of poverty within Baglung district, because VDCs previously also gave allowances to poor people besides the disabled.

The DDC supports trainings on income generation and awareness programs concerning disadvantaged groups managed by local NGOs and donor agencies. However, there are doubts whether this is effective, because in practice people do not use the learned skills. Furthermore, according to the Local Development Officer there is no job guarantee after this training, neither a market that is interested in the materials disabled people currently make.

Additionally, it should be stated that the DDC is depending on the allocated budget from above:

"We only support if the central government gives the money to disabled people, then we distribute this money to disabled people", as the Local Development Officer explains. Based on this, a DDC can be regarded as a deconcentrated office of the central government due to its dependent character: in which the DDC has the authority to implement procedures on a local level, while the power of rule-making and regulations is maintained on a national level (Carney et al. 2007).

There is no special plan for disabled children, because the *"DDC does not have an internal resource"*. As a matter of fact, there are no future plans at all concerning the disability sector, because the DDC simply implements the plans of the central government and allocate their annual budget. Women and children receive each 10%. The Janajatis (ethnic groups), Dalits, disabled group and senior citizens together receive 15%, which is equal to NPR 500,000, approximately NPR 165,000 for disabled people. This money is mainly used for construction building with a focus on disabled-friendly infrastructure.

⁵ Local Development Officer of Baglung district, personal communication, March 2011

Box 5.1: Taking a bus as a disabled person

“In Nepal, in general there are no facilities in bus or other vehicles for disabled people. Only for women and people with a disability the government has requested the bus to offer a minimum seat service, which should be given to them. In practice, other people sit in their seat. It is written that a certain seat is reserved for ‘women’ or ‘disabled people’, but most people are not able to read. There are 32 seats in the bus, but you can see that 100 people are standing in the bus, so in practice people are lucky when getting a seat in the bus” – Local Development Officer Baglung.

District Education Office

The District Education Office in Baglung (DEO) is a central governmental body on a local level. Its main responsibility is planning and implementing educational development programs and supervising and monitoring processes of teachers’ learning according to central governments’ policies (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2007: 44). The main vision of a DEO is:

“To extend quality and life skill based education to help establish and develop educated, well-cultured, prosperous and a dynamic society”. The mission of a DEO is: “Providing basic education for all and making accessible to further school level education in order to make education as vehicle of development” (DEO Kaski, 2010).

The DEO of Baglung supports five schools related to disability. Three of these schools receive governmental support to offer residential and hostel facilities in Narayansthan, Galkot and Baglung municipality. Furthermore, the government offers scholarship support programs for those who attend formal education. This program is categorized in an A-D system:

- A = NPR 1,400 for 10 months; for those who cannot stay at home, i.e. when a hostel is needed;
- B = NPR 500 for 10 months; for those who do go to school from their home, but need support, such as transportation;
- C = NPR 3,000 annually; for those who need assistive devices;
- D = NPR 500 annually; for those who require only little support.

Over the school year 2010-2011, 889 disabled students have received one of these scholarships in Baglung district.

The DEO has a partnership with Plan Nepal, because there is still a gap of children who do not get a scholarship. Therefore, Plan Nepal needs to make sure that all children get an ID-card and so: a scholarship as well. The DEO also provides textbooks (including Braille and sign language books) and other materials, which are free for disabled children in grades 1-10. Girls without a disability also receive a scholarship in basic education of NPR 400 per year. Plan Nepal is always involved, who needs to discuss and negotiate its plan with the DEO.

The DEO has received NPR 674,000 for grade 1-8 (basic education), and NPR 68,000 for class 9 and 10. Both amounts are spent on scholarships. The DEO receives a total budget of NPR 70 million, so the percentage is around 1% of the total budget that is spent on scholarships⁶. Around 4 million is

⁶Under-secretary of DEO in Baglung, personal communication, March 2011.

spent on buildings and construction support in the disabled sector in education (5.7% of total budget of DEO). Currently it is a code of conduct in the central department to make a disabled friendly environment in buildings and the DEO is required to follow this up.

At the moment, there are no future plans to establish more special schools for children with a disability: *“There are sufficient schools, and three schools have hostel facilities”*.

A visit to the District Education Officer in (neighbouring) district Myagdi shows a very pro-active person; he seeks in a creative way for alternative financial resources and aims efficiency. He is highly focused on schooling of teachers to become interpreters for the deaf and searches for ways to distribute them all over the district due to Myagdi’s remote areas. Furthermore, he tries not to be dependent on the budget from the central government. Hence, he addresses local funds to raise money for implementing his programs. Overall, other DEOs can take him as an example for his creativity and pro-activity, which lead to faster and constructive development.

Women and Children Development Office

The programmes of the Women and Children Development Office (WDO) are concentrated on five groups: women, children, disabled, senior citizens and Dalits. They advocate the protection of legal rights of their target group. The WDO also provides ID-cards for disabled people, which can be categorized in four types – earlier mentioned among subsection ‘District Development Office’. They collaborate with a local non-governmental organisation Gaja Youth Club, later referred as GYC. There are five sectors, which the WDO gives priority to:

1. Gender equality
2. Reproductive health
3. Institutional development program
4. Income generation program
5. Education in life usefulness

Furthermore, there are three dimensions the WDO tries to realise: gender mainstreaming, inclusion and women empowerment. However, to realise and achieve all these programs the WDO is dependent on the budget from the government. Hence, the WDO lobbies at the District Development Office in order to ensure that at least 15% of the total budget is allocated among the 5 target groups. They also indirectly receive NPR 150,000 from the central government. Besides budgets, the WDO is dependent on the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare when it comes to new plans and programs; the WDO implements what the central ministry instructs them to do. Currently there is no special plan focused on children with a disability; only the integration programs involve this group.

There are many barriers for women and children with disabilities, but the most important ones are: violence against women and children, gender discrimination and poverty. For example, a boy is often sent to boarding school, while girls are often sent to governmental schools. Also, girls have to assist in the household by cleaning and sweeping, while *“boys don’t have to do anything”*⁷. There is no difference between Baglung district and other more remote areas, *“the situation is everywhere the same”*.

⁷ Women Development Officer of Baglung District, personal communication, March 2011

Due to a lack of budget for distributing ID-cards, and a lack of staff for ID-card distribution there are insufficient resources to provide the ID-card in the local village level. The current situation is that people with a disability have to get it in the municipality of Baglung, which involves transportation and accommodation costs, which subsequently restrains people to get an ID-card. Without an ID-card children do not get any scholarships, and in general: disabled people are not able to make use of special services or discounts without their ID-cards, even though they have the right to obtain this.

5.2.3 Non-governmental organisations

There are various NGOs and INGOs active in Baglung district. However, they do not all have a local office in Baglung; some are only supporting or implementing projects in the field in the district, such as VSO and Save the Children. The described NGOs have been personally visited during the research.

Plan Nepal

Plan Nepal has a project office in Baglung municipality, which is focused on Baglung, Parbat and Myagdi district. This project started in July 2010 and lasts until June 2015. It is mainly concentrated on inclusiveness of girls, Dalits, disabled children and other marginalized groups. The main objectives of the programme of Plan Nepal are:

- ❖ To ensure that girls, children with disabilities, Dalit children and children from the most marginalised groups have access to and complete their basic education.
- ❖ To ensure all children complete and transition through basic education by strengthening the capacity of schools and systems to develop relevant, inclusive curriculum through rights-based teaching in child-friendly learning and living environment.
- ❖ To improve educational governance by ensuring that the most marginalised children, parents and communities participate meaningfully in decision-making and advocating for the effective implementation of free and compulsory basic education.

In the year 2010, a base line survey has been carried out focused on children with a disability in Baglung, Parbat and Myagdi district. The survey has been completed with the partnership of local government bodies – District Development Committee (DDC), Women and Children Development Office, District Education Office– and local NGOs: Gaja Youth Club, ENPRED Nepal and Disabled Association (Plan Nepal, 2011).

Overall, the objectives of the program are in line with the government education policies and programme such as the School Sector Reform Plan, EFA National Plan of Action and Constitutional provision of ensuring free and compulsory basic education for all. At district and VDC levels, Plan's programmes will be integrated with the district education plans, village-level education plans and school improvement plans (SIP). Similarly, the basic education country program of Plan will also be integrated with other country programmes such as health, child protection, household economic security and disaster risk management (Plan Nepal, 2010a).

The advocacy works of Plan and its capacity development support to communities, school management committees, District and VDC education committees, and District Education Offices will be coordinated with other supporting organizations such as Save the Children, UNICEF Nepal, and national and local level NGOs. Plan will forge an alliance with like-minded organisations to actively campaign for increasing enrolment of girls, children with disabilities, Dalit children, and children from

the most marginalised groups in early childhood education and development centres (ECED) and pre-primary classes by raising awareness about the value of education and about the fact that basic education is both free and compulsory (*ibid*, 2010a).

Plan's special support to protect the rights of vulnerable women and youth, such as survivors of violence, unemployed youth, landless, single; women, disaster victims will include non-formal and vocational education, beside other rehabilitative supports.

Lastly, Plan Nepal promotes the establishment of monitoring teams at both the national and district levels. It will also facilitate the promotion of a participatory monitoring system at the national, district and village/community levels, focusing on updating the database, in particular working to collect disaggregated data, and on using this education information management system effectively during the planning, implementation and monitoring phases of the programme. At the school and village levels, it will support the establishment of socially inclusive monitoring committees representing: the Ministry of Education, district education office, the Ministry of Local Development, district development committee, Plan Nepal, civil society organisations, the media, community members, parents, youths and children.

Gaja Youth Club

Gaja Youth Club (GYC) is one of the main NGOs focused on ethnic groups, Dalits, disabled people, conflict affected people, and women and children. The organisation has its origins in Lekhani VDC in Baglung district. However, since its foundation in 1994 it has become a bigger organisation so its head office moved to Baglung municipality. Their aim is to improve the economic and social-cultural situation of the target group mentioned above, by awareness raising programs, increasing access to education and through utilization of resources in an optimum way. In order to accomplish this, the following six areas of intervention are identified:

- Income Generation and Entrepreneurship Development
- Education and Health Improvements
- Human Rights and Good Governance
- Infrastructure Development
- Disaster Management
- Peace and Rehabilitation

Furthermore, they support counselling, primary rehabilitation therapy, assistive devices and 'positive thinking' in society. There are four components: economic, educational, political and social empowerment.

GYC works together with international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) like Save the Children, Department For International Development (DFID), Plan Nepal, Room to Reach and Handicap International. They are active in different programs in 47 VDCs. GYC provides material support, but also scholarships for technical and vocational education and organising sign language classes in local and special schools.

All projects include a focus on disabled children and the construction of a disabled-friendly environment, which is seen as a form of educational empowerment. Beside adapted furniture (i.e. arm chairs and wheelchair access in all rooms) teacher's behaviour is also an essential aspect of a disabled-friendly environment. Teachers are expected to be supportive and friendly towards disabled

children, which is currently not the case yet. Based on their partnership with the Ministry of Education and Plan Nepal it is financially possible to invest in this.

Moreover, GYC works together with Women & Children Development Office in order to provide the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program.

Overall, *“teacher and all students’ behaviour must change so that disabled children are able to continue going to school”*⁸.

Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children

The NGO Terres des Hommes founded the program in 1985, which was later called the Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children (HRDC). The program came under control of a Nepalese NGO: Friends of the Disabled, which currently has its location in Kavre district, 25 kilometres east of Kathmandu. The program provides a nationwide network of family based follow-up and aftercare, focused on physically disabled children through the community-based rehabilitation approach (CBR). Their main vision is to create *“a society in which especially children with a disability and their guardians live as equal citizens with an optimum quality of life, independence and participation”* (HRDC, 2009). Although their core goal is focused on comprehensive rehabilitation of physical disabled children, they play a role as an educator, researcher and advocator related to right protection. In this research, physical disabled children are excluded in the target group. However, practice has proven that intellectually disabled children often have a physical impairment as well. Furthermore, they are very active in setting up awareness activities, which involve teachers, students, representatives of community organisations and other stakeholders, such as Plan Nepal. Additionally, there is a regional CBR office in Baglung, which conducts activities to enlarge access of HRDC services for people with disabilities from disadvantaged and marginalised groups. Therefore, this NGO should be mentioned in this subsection as they play an essential role in local people’s perception towards disabled people to pursue social inclusion (HRDC, 2009).

5.2.4 Schools for disabled children

In Baglung district there are 594 schools, which include all grades from primary level to higher secondary level (grade 12). Out of this total amount of schools, 528 are community schools (which is equal to 89%) and 66 are institutional schools (11%) (DoE, 2010). In this case, community schools get in some way support from the government; teachers’ salary, other funds and expenses. Institutional schools are supported by parents and trustees. As mentioned earlier, five special schools get support from the District Education Office, namely:

1. Janatadhan Higher Secondary School for blind in Narayansthan;
2. Galkot Higher Secondary School for deaf children in Hatiya;
3. Kalika Kanya Higher Secondary School for intellectually disabled children;
4. Dhaulagiri Deaf Primary School in Baglung municipality;
5. Baglung Special Child Primary Class Upallachaur for intellectually disabled children.

Among these schools, three have been visited for this research: Dhaulagiri Deaf Primary School, Baglung Special Child Primary Class Upallachaur and Janatadhan Higher Secondary School for Blind. Children from various VDCs within and outside Baglung district are enrolled in these schools. As the

⁸ Project manager of GYC, personal communication, May 2011.

three schools are supported by the government, school enrolment is free – due to the policy ‘Education for All’ mentioned in chapter 3- similar to the uniforms, residential costs and other expenses.

In total, 65 deaf and hard of hearing students and 7 students without any disability attended the Dhaulagiri Deaf Primary School during the course 2010-2011. The school has hostel facilities, which most of the students make use of. The main reason why non-deaf children are enrolled is that their parents feel confident that their children find a job as a translator in future.

The Janatadhan Higher Secondary School had 22 blind students during the course 2010-2011. This school offers accommodation as well. Children get lessons in reading and writing in Braille and those who have low vision are taught to write without the Braille system. Most of the enrolled students come from rural-remote VDCs which are difficult to access due to the geographical situation.

During the same course, Baglung Special Child Primary Class Upallachaur had 46 children who are intellectually disabled. There are two or three classes regardless the variety of types of disability and age among this group which ranges from severe to light cases. As some children have difficulties or are simply unable to come to school, home schooling is offered. Based on personal observation, a number of around 15 children attend class daily. This school does not offer hostel facilities yet, but it is planned to finish this in the year 2011, which will have a capacity of 20 beds. Furthermore, children are mainly taught how to be able to take care of themselves, e.g. how to dress themselves, brushing teeth, going to toilet by their own, etcetera.

The schools can be categorized in special, integrated or inclusive education. The Upallachaur School in Baglung and the Janatadhan Blind School in Narayansthan are both typical examples of special education, because different needs are addressed compared with those in regular schools (the need to take care of yourself and to learn Braille system, respectively). The Dhaulagiri Deaf School seems easy to categorize: the school has all the characteristics of inclusive education system. However, only a small number (7 out of 72) is not disabled, which means the inclusiveness has only a small proportion. Nevertheless, inclusive education is seen as ‘**a process**’, which needs time to develop. Hence, it is a starting point, which can be further extended in future.

5.2.5 “Behind the scenes”: impressions of special schools

To get an impression of the special schools the three visits are described, based on observation. It should be stated that there is no intention to generalize the situation among special schools, but because there is a noticeable difference between the (visited) schools it is interesting to illustrate the current conditions.

Firstly, the Dhaulagiri Deaf Primary School is well located in a calm area in Baglung municipality. The school is relatively big with the possibility to expand with extra floors on top. There is plenty of space in front of the entrance of the school, which is used as a playground. Moreover, outside the walls there is a large soccer field, which is not officially their property, but sometimes they make use of it by organising sports activities. There is also the opportunity to read books in a small library. Children are wearing uniforms and are very active in class. Furthermore, in most class rooms two different groups are having class at the same time, while facing the opposite direction; as they do not hear each other, it is an efficient way of teaching (Figure 6.4). Teacher-to-student-behaviour can be marked as helpful and friendly in a formal way. All present teachers are able to

speak sign language. Student-to-student-behaviour is observed as friendly and a strong physical expression, which undoubtedly is related to their deaf impairment. Children have their own textbooks and copies and are allowed to make use of class rooms when they want to make their homework; there are no desks available in their dormitory (boys and girls separated). A general impression is that the administration of the school is well organised.

Figure 5.4: Deaf children of different groups are having class in the same room



Secondly, the Baglung Special Child Primary Class for intellectually disabled children gives an opposite impression compared with the previous school. Children do not wear any uniforms and the atmosphere seems a bit chaotic. The latter aspect can be related to the children with different types of (intellectually) disabilities sitting in the same classroom; from light to severe cases. The fact that there is no distinction among them is caused by the lack of capacity and available teachers. However, it can work out both positively (the social interaction with each other) and negatively (the level can be too low for children with a light intellectual disability). In line with this, it has appeared that insufficient and broken toys and materials lead to some frustration among a couple of children; there are no challenges for those with a light disability, because the playing materials are appropriate for toddlers. Teachers are trying their best with the resources they have. Nevertheless, there is no control whether children come to school or not; on paper there are 46 children attending this school, but in reality only 15 children have come. Furthermore, in case everybody is attending there are not enough teachers. There is no hostel yet, but the construction of it is in a final phase with a special access for wheelchairs. Children mainly learn how to take care of themselves (eating or going to toilet) and are writing things down in their copies. A library has not been observed. Overall, it is uncertain whether this school is “simply” less popular to receive support of donor agencies – or whether the school head needs to be more active in seeking financial resources.

Thirdly, the Janatadhan Higher Secondary School for blind children has been shortly visited due to a meeting with parents for a focus group discussion. Therefore, there has not been any

possibility to make an observation while children were having class – besides the fact that their holiday just started. The parents were highly satisfied with this school: teachers are taking good care of their children and the hostel and meals are well provided. Furthermore, it is noticeable that the parents were well informed about the working methods and the assistive devices the school is making use of. In cooperation with Plan Nepal, walking sticks have been provided for the children. Moreover, teachers make a good indication whether a child has low vision (the use of assistive devices is needed) or totally blind (the child learns to read and write in Braille).

5.3 Geographical situation in Baglung district

This subsection focuses on the research question: *“to what extent does the geographical distance play a role on school enrolment?”*. Imagine an environment with mountains as far the eye can reach, green or yellow paddy fields, steep trails covered with rocks and tree leaves, the icy cold rivers and sandy roads. It is not easy, then, to wake up in a hard reality of sending your child to school in case he or she is blind, deaf or intellectually disabled. It should be stated that geographical distance plays a huge role, but is it an equal barrier among these three groups? Or is one of them ‘better off’ than the other? And does it play a key role in the decision-making process of parents whether to send their disabled children to school?

As already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, each Village Development Committee (VDC) have been visited by bus or jeep first, which ranged from almost an hour (Pala) to 8.5 hours (Burtiwang). Each VDC comprise nine wards, of which one or two wards can be regarded as the main market (a central point) of the VDC with some shops and health posts. Nevertheless, primary and secondary schools can be found in more wards within the same VDC. As an illustration, it should be pointed out that due to its hilly and mountainous nature, walking from one ward to another in Baglung district can take more than an hour. For example, in Hatiya, wards 3, 5, 8 and 9 have been visited, which took around eleven hours in total – including the household visits and the consumption of some dal baht of course.

Table 5.1 showed that in total 30 children of 51 households are out-of-school children. The main reason parents give for not sending their child to school is the lack of a special school nearby their homes. In this case, ‘special’ means *“education with a special focus on the specific type of disability the child has”*. Furthermore, most of the disabled children – especially blind and intellectually disabled children – are unable to go to school by themselves due to their impairment. Parents point toward the fact that they do not have time to bring their children to school and that someone is needed who can take special care of them by bringing them instead. Moreover, due to the geographical situation in Baglung district, a common respond of parents is the need for a hostel at school. This will be discussed more in depth in the next chapter where a sub-question is answered related to needs and expectations.

Table 5.2: Number of disabled children divided in geographic categories and school attendance

	Geographic situation			Total
	urban area (0 - 2h)	peri-urban area (2 - 4h)	rural - remote area (> 4h)	
No school attendance	11	8	11	30
School attendance	12	4	10	26
Total	23	12	21	56

Table 5.2 shows the number of children with their VDC of origin combined with school enrolment. The VDCs are categorized in three areas, but it should be notified that some parents have been interviewed in Baglung municipality (urban area) at a residential school, while their home is located in a rural-remote area. In this case the rural-remote area has been taken into account.

It is interesting to see that 11 out of 23 children, who live in an urban area, are not going to school. Nine of them were intellectually disabled (ID) of whom three had an additional disability, namely: *“ID + hard of hearing + dumb”* and *“ID + unable to walk”* (twice). The only girl who is going to school has Syndrome of Down of whom the mother is extremely poor. Another boy has been going to school in the past, but dropped out after 7 years, because it appeared that after this time he was still unable to read and write. This obviously had nothing to do with the geographical situation, as the school was located in front of his house. The other three out-of-school children, who live in an urban area, are all intellectual disabled with an additional impairment. Among them, one boy is only four years old, which is too young for basic education. However, his mother is not planning to send him to school in future, because in her opinion her son is unable to learn due to his impairment. Of the two other out-of-school children, only one regards distance as a problem, because the house is located in a ward outside the centre of Baglung. Due to this location combined with the disability (*“ID + hard of hearing + dumb”*) the mother is unable to either send her son to school alone or to guard him every day to and from school. In this case, a hostel is highly needed as well.

A remarkable outcome of this table is that the number of children who do go to school compared with those who do not attend school is practically equal in both urban and rural-remote areas. Apparently, the factor of distance (here: expressed in time and effort) does not play such a key role as expected.

When taking a closer look at the geographic situation of disabled children in Table 5.3 a couple of things become clear. Firstly, there is an obvious majority among deaf children who are attending school in all three geographic areas. A possible reason might be the two present deaf schools and the hostel facilities which are offered in Galkot and Baglung. Secondly, among the school-going children, who live in rural-remote areas, the type of disability is not very surprising; hard of hearing and low vision gives the child a possibility to join regular schools –even though there might be limitations. The school-going intellectually disabled child had light symptoms, but not as severe as others, which made it possible for her to attend a regular school as well. Lastly, it can be stated that most children with a hard of hearing impairment attend school regardless their geographic situation. Details of differences among and between the target groups are further described in the next chapter.

Table 5.3: Relation between type of disability and school attendance categorised in geographic areas

Geographic situation		Type of disability						Total
		deaf	hard of hearing	blind	low vision	ID*	other	
urban area	No school attendance	0	2		0	3	6	11
	School attendance	2	6		1	3	0	12
	Total	2	8		1	6	6	<u>23</u>
peri-urban area	No school attendance	0	1	1	2	2	2	8
	School attendance	2	0	0	2	0	0	4
	Total	2	1	1	4	2	2	<u>12</u>
rural-remote area	No school attendance	3	0	1	2	3	2	11
	School attendance	5	2	0	2	1	0	10
	Total	8	2	1	4	4	2	<u>21</u>

*ID = intellectually disabled

Nevertheless, distance does play indirectly a role when parents indicate that a special school is most needed and not present in their near environment. Many parents are aware of one of the five special schools in Baglung district, but are unable to send their children to these schools due to relatively high transportation costs regardless the fact that education itself is free for disabled children.

Another issue, partly caused by the geographic situation in Baglung district, is that it is extremely difficult to arrange school busses in case transportation itself is a barrier. The reason is that the disabled children of the target group live highly scattered in different VDCs which often cannot be reached by any vehicle. This makes the situation a bit more complex when considering any recommendations in future.

Based on Table 5.2, it can be stated that there is no direct relation between the geographical distance from a disabled child's home to school and the number of out-of-school children. Hence, it has become clear that distance does not necessarily play a central role in the school enrolment of disabled children in Baglung district. However, the factor of distance is not less important in contextualizing the issue of disabled children and the accessibility of education.

Furthermore, it should be stated that this finding is only applicable for the target group used in this research and is not representative for other households in Nepal.

5.4 General conclusion

In this chapter, two research questions have been examined, which are answered in this general conclusion.

The first question is: *“Who are the stakeholders related to disabled children and what are their roles in disability sector?”*. In Baglung district, main stakeholders can be divided into four groups: households with disabled children (as core group), local governmental bodies, NGOs and schools. The largest group of disabled children in Baglung district have a physical impairment. However, they are not included in this research as the main target group comprise blind, deaf and intellectual disabled children and those with low vision and a hard of hearing impairment.

The most relevant governmental agencies related to disability are the District Development Committee, District Education Office, and the Women and Children Development Office. However, all of them can be regarded as deconcentrated bodies of the central government due to their dependent character. Based on this dependence, local government offices only implement plans, which have been made by central ministries. Furthermore, it is remarkable that most budgets are shared among one ‘disadvantaged group’ of which disabled people are apparently part of.

Yet, the relevant governmental agencies play an essential role in financial support for disabled people within Baglung district. However, it should be emphasised that not all disabled people have been registered yet, and so they lack a special ID-card to receive allowances and discounts. Due to limited staff and budgets, distribution of such cards has stopped, with the negative consequences for unregistered disabled people due to the attendance of children without a disability. In general, the District Education Office mainly provides scholarships among disabled children and financial support for three special schools with residential facilities. The District Development Committee mainly provides financial support for construction work to build a ‘disabled-friendly’ environment.

Several NGOs are running projects focusing on disabled children in Baglung district. When comparing the studied NGOs, it can be stated that Gaja Youth Club has most direct contact with households with disabled children, while Plan Nepal is mainly supporting and cooperating with GYC and the local governmental bodies to provide financial resources and advise relating to planning and implementation. In line with this cooperation, GYC has collected data for a baseline survey on disabled people in Baglung district in order to identify the status of people with a disability and their issues.

Furthermore, in total there are five special schools for deaf, blind and intellectually disabled children, which are supported by the government and NGOs. In three schools, hostel facilities have been provided and in all schools children do not have to pay tuition fees. The Dhaulagiri Deaf Primary School can be regarded as an inclusive school. In the Special Child Primary Class for intellectually disabled children, more children are enlisted to attend school than the number of children showing up in practice. However, home schooling is offered to children who are not able to come due to geographic remoteness. Nevertheless, it is uncertain to what extent these children are visited as this school is dealing with a staff deficit.

Overall, when considering the concept of access, the availability of services for disabled people seem to be present on paper, while in practice shortcomings have been noticed. In particular, the provided services for intellectually disabled children are not sufficient yet. Main reason is the insufficient

number of trained staff, limited capacity of its future hostel and lack of play and learning materials on the Special Child Primary School in Baglung.

Local governmental offices do provide ID-cards, scholarships and financial support for disabled people. However, the ID-cards have not been distributed among all disabled people of Baglung district yet; they need to come and get it in order to get allowances and discounts. Hence, the availability of local governmental services needs to be improved. However, the fact that school enrolment is free for disabled children is a positive step within the affordability aspect so that direct costs for parents are reduced.

Moreover, it seems that the availability of well-trained and skilled teachers is provided in the Dhaulagiri Deaf school and Janathadan school for blind children. However, it has appeared that due to limited financial resources, there are insufficient trained personnel at the Special Child school for intellectually disabled children in Baglung. Additionally, at the latter school the quality of education is doubtful due to mixed classes in which lightly and severe intellectually disabled children are sitting together. At times this could be problematic for those who are lightly disabled, because they do not find any challenges in this low level of education. So in this case, the needs do not correspond with the offered services yet.

The second research question is: *“to what extent does geography play a role on school enrolment?”*. Three urban, three peri-urban and four rural-remote areas have been visited. It has appeared that distance does not play a decisive role in disabled children’s school attendance based on comparison with school-going children in the same areas. The location of appropriate schools for disabled children is often not in the near environment of their homes. This means that there is a weak accessibility, when taking only the special schools into account in Galkot, Baglung municipality and Narayansthan, which provide hostel facilities. However, in all VDCs there are sufficient *regular* schools. Nevertheless, most parents do not have any time to bring their children to school, which makes it difficult for mostly blind and intellectually disabled children due to the geographical distance. Also, the quality of teachers of such regular schools is questionable. Furthermore, present transportation services are only available on main roads, which bring additional costs. Overall, it could be stated that the lack of a special school *nearby* their homes is a main reason among parents for not sending their disabled children to school. Hence, the geographic situation of Baglung district can be regarded as an indirect factor for not attending school as it causes a need for money to be able to pay transportation costs. Here, the relation between accessibility (location), affordability (money) and availability (schools) is very strong.

On the whole, an employee of the District Education Office has stated that five special schools in Baglung district are sufficient; it is questionable whether households with disabled children agree on this. In the next chapter, more research on availability and other dimensions within the concept of access are discussed.

Introduction

This chapter has a special focus on households with disabled children. In light of this focal point, this chapter answers three research questions. Firstly, the households' characteristics are further elaborated on the basis of various elements, such as income and occupation, attained level of education of parents, caste and household size. All these aspects might play a role in the decision-making process of parents to send their disabled children to school, but it is uncertain to what extent they have their influences. Additionally, parents' views on education have been taken into account, because regardless of someone's income or ethnicity, a parent might have strong beliefs in education, or vice versa. Along with parents' perceptions, needs and expectations of education have been examined as well, which gives an indication of the most important requirements for parents to send their disabled child to school.

All three research questions have a core relation with the concept of access. Firstly, the household's characteristics involve different aspects of access: income and occupation are related to affordability and ethnicity to acceptability. The attained education level of parents and household size can be regarded as indirect factors as they might influence parents' view to education or their budget, respectively. Secondly, the question on parent's views on education relates both to acceptability and adequacy. Acceptability includes social values and beliefs, which obviously are taken into account when discussing parents' views and opinions. Less obvious, this aspect is related to adequacy as well, because parents' views are related to their expectations of education, which is the subject matter of adequacy. Thirdly, needs and expectations of disabled children and parents are fully in line with the concept of adequacy for the same reason.

All these aspects together form an essential part of the context of access for the demand side: households with disabled children. Once this picture becomes clearer, it will become more comprehensible why disabled children are still not going to school nowadays. This is the main aim of this chapter and of this research as well. In the general conclusion of this chapter, answers are given on three research questions in the light of access.

6.1 Household characteristics**6.1.1 Income and occupation**

Income is an essential part of a household's financial capital, which could have an influence on the decision to send their disabled child to school. Besides households' income-generation by employment (formal and informal), financial remittances have also been taken into account due to the frequent migration flows from Nepal, which counted for 14.1% of the total GDP in 2006 (IFAD, 2007). In this research, a financial remittance is "*the amount of migrant workers' earnings sent home to their families*" (*ibid.*).

Table 6.1 gives a good image of the financial situation of the households. The total income includes financial remittances if received any. It is obvious that the largest group of 30 respondents is also the poorest. Among them, 25 households have no income at all and do not receive any remittances. Among the majority of these households –17 out of 25– both parents are farmers and self-

dependent concerning food provision. Seven households, who have no income at all, consist of parents who do not have the same activities or occupations. Table 6.2 gives an illustration of the activities of the twenty-five households who do not have any income per month.

Table 6.1: Income per month of households in categories

	Households	In % of total visited households
NPR 0 - 4,999	30	58,8
NPR 5,000 - 9,999	8	15,7
NPR 10,000 - 14,999	7	13,7
NPR 15,000 - 19,999	4	7,8
NPR 20,000 - 24,999	0	0
NPR 25,000 - 29,999	0	0
NPR 30,000 - 34,999	1	2,0
NPR 40,000 and higher	1	2,0
Total	51	100

Table 6.2: Main occupation of parents without income divided in mother and father

	Mother's occupation / main activity	Father's occupation / main activity
Household 1-14	Farmer	Farmer
Household 15-17	Farmer	
Household 18	Housewife	
Household 19	Nothing	Nothing
Household 20	Taking care of the children	A servant for a landlord in another district
Household 21	Taking care of the children	Job in a foreign country
Household 22 + 23	Housewife	Nothing
Household 24	Housewife	Tailoring
Household 25	Farmer	Job in a foreign country

Female headed households

As mentioned before, migration rates are relatively high in Nepal, which subsequently leads to female headed households. This means that the household is only run by the mother, where other mature family members are not regarded as the ‘head’, e.g. a grandmother or an adult son. There are 12 female headed households resulting from migration, where the husband went to a foreign country to find a job. Furthermore, there are another 4 female headed households, because the father has either passed away or abandoned his family. They can also be marked as single mothers, who live in tough circumstances, especially when having a disabled child who has all kinds of special needs. Box 6.1 gives an example of the difficulties one of them faces every day.

In total, there are 16 female headed households, of whom 11 mothers fall in the lowest income category (“NPR 0–4,999”). All 4 single mothers do not have any income at all. Nevertheless, 2 of them send their child to school and 1 attended school in the past. Among the other 12 female headed households, six mothers send their children to school and 1 attended school in the past.

Box 6.1: Single mothers

Working as a single mom is not always possible. For example, in a female headed household, the mother is not able to work due to the amount of care her daughter needs, who has the Down Syndrome. Her story is striking, which unfortunately occurs more often in Nepal. All of her seven children have already died; this daughter is her eighth. Her ex-husband could not handle it anymore and remarried someone else without sending any money. According to the mother, he was lightly intellectually disabled himself. Currently, she lives at a house of another family in Baglung in return for doing some duties as a housewife. It is a circle, which the mother is at this time not able to break out of, because she needs money; a job, which is impossible due to the required care for her daughter. Moreover, she brings her daughter to the Special Child School, which demands physical effort by carrying her child on her arm. In future, she hopes to make use of the hostel that is constructed at the moment, but it is uncertain whether she is allowed to make use of it, because of the relatively short distance to school and the small capacity of only twenty beds.

Table 6.3 is the result when comparing a household’s income with school attendance. It is interesting to see that among those who are attending school the income of households is not higher than those of “out-of-school children”. On the contrary, the majority within the category of “NPR 0-4,999” consists of school-going children. Furthermore, the two households with the highest income do not send their children to school. Both do not gain any income themselves, but get remittances from a son working in Japan.

Table 6.3: Relation between household's income and school attendance of their child with a disability

	Income per month in categories						Total
	NPR 0 - 4,999	NPR 5,000 - 9,999	NPR 10,000 - 14,999	NPR 15,000 - 19,999	NPR 30,000 - 34,999	NPR 40,000 and higher	
No school attendance	15	7	4	2	1	1	30
School attendance	18	2	3	3	0	0	26
Total	33	9	7	5	1	1	56

Firstly, the child of whom the family gets NPR 30,000 a month is intellectually disabled: the girl has Syndrome of Down. However, her father tells that *"if there is a special school nearby we would send her, but there is not"*, as they live in a rural-remote area. On the contrary, the other family lives in an urban area and receives approximately NPR 45,000 per month. The child is also intellectually disabled combined with hard of hearing and dumbness. His mother has tried to send her son to both a local regular and a special school, namely: the Dhaulagiri Deaf School in Baglung. However, he was not accepted in both schools, because he is intellectually disabled. Furthermore, the Baglung Special Child Primary Class Upallachaur has no hostel, so this is a barrier when sending him to school as it is too far to bring and pick him up every day. In short, even though the mother is willing to send her son to school, it is simply not possible due to the geographical distance and lack of accommodation regardless the financial assets people have. In line with this, it should be pointed out that in case parents were aware of for example the Dhaulagiri Deaf School in Baglung or the school for blind in Narayansthan, then often poverty is a main problem after all. Even though education is free in these schools, including the provision of books and other materials, the transportation costs to bring them to these schools a couple of times a year is a barrier for parents.

In total, there are four households instead of five in the category "NPR 15,000-19,999", because it includes two brothers who attend school, of whom the parents are both teachers. The other household, of whom both parents are farmers, receive remittances as well. The two other families, who do not send their children to school, receive money from their husbands who are working in India, while the mothers are taking care of the household.

Overall, due to the relatively large group of "NPR 0-4,999", it is interesting to go into depth how this group is further divided. Table 6.4 indicates that the group without any income is equal with school going and out-of-school children. The remaining five households can be regarded as outliers within this group due to the marginal number. This table functions more or less as a confirmation to show that the number of school-going children –within this large group- is not dependent on income or remittances.

Table 6.4: Relation between income and school attendance within category “NPR 0-4,999”

	Income (including remittances) per month					Total
	0	NPR 400,-	NPR 670,-	NPR 1,000,-	NPR 2,000,-	
No school attendance	14	0	1	0	0	15
School attendance	14	1	0	1	2	18
Total	28	1	1	1	2	33

Overall, based on Table 6.3 and 6.4, it can be determined that in this research there is no direct relation between the amount of income and school attendance. Apparently, income does not play such a decisive role in the choice parents make to send their disabled children to school.

6.1.2 Attained education level

Besides income, the highest attained education level of the parents is taken into account. Main reason for this is that it might affect parents’ views on education and so their decision in sending their disabled child to school.

For this research, both parents have been asked what their highest attained education level is, of which the highest grade got taken into account. This variable combined with ‘school attendance’ is shown in Table 6.5. It is noticeable that the number of parents with “no education” and “primary level” is almost equal between out-of-school and school-going children.

Table 6.5: Relation between highest attained educational level of parents and school attendance of their child with a disability

	Highest attained education level of both parents						Total
	No education	Primary Level*	Lower Secondary*	Secondary*	Higher Secondary*	Bachelor degree	
No school attendance	9	6	4	6	2	0	27
School attendance	8	6	5	3	0	2	24
Total	17	12	9	9	2	2	51

*Primary (grade 1-5), Lower Secondary (grade 6-8), Secondary (grade 9-10) and Higher Secondary (grade 11-12) Education (MoE, 2010: 20).

Furthermore, among the parents who attained Secondary level, the majority is not sending their child to school (6 out of 9). The two highest educated parents do send their children to school, which is a relatively small number out of twenty-four households. When putting higher secondary and bachelor degree together, the numbers are equal, which does not strengthen the relation between the two variables. Based on these results, there is no direct relation between parents’ educational level and school attendance of their disabled children, because the outcomes are not strong enough to draw conclusions.

6.1.3 Caste

Caste system is a cultural phenomenon that exists for centuries in Nepal. The type of caste is based on people's family names, which has been determined afterwards due to the sensitivity of this topic, especially for those who belong to a lower caste. Dalits, also known as 'outcastes', have been included in the group of lower castes. Table 6.6 shows that a majority within the higher caste does **not** send their children to school and a large majority within the lower caste does send their children to school. Secondly, the number of school-going children is almost equally divided between higher and lower caste. It appears in this research that caste is not a key reason why children are or are not attending school.

Table 6.6: Relation between caste and school attendance

	Caste			Total
	higher caste	ethnic minority	lower caste	
No school attendance	15	5	7	27
School attendance	12	1	11	24
Total	27	6	18	51

6.1.4 Family size

In almost all cases parents send their other children, who are not disabled, to school. When asking why he or she is going and the disabled child is not, a main argument is that *"they are normal and good, so they can go"*. Additionally, *"the other children can go by themselves, because they are able to walk"* or *"my child is unable to see, so he cannot go by himself and won't be able to read the blackboard"*. It can be boiled down to the fact that according to some parents it is "simply" the disability itself that constraints the children from going to school.

Table 6.7: Relation between amount of children within a household and school attendance

	Amount of children in household =<18					Total
	1	2	3	4	5 or more	
No school attendance	2	8	10	5	5	30
School attendance	3	4	10	6	3	26
Total	5	12	20	11	8	56

Besides the disability itself, the amount of children within a household could be a reason on itself due to practical reasons, i.e. economic limitations or the need for help in household. When analysing Table 6.7 it is remarkable to see that among the 'smaller' households with one or two children, a majority is not going to school, while the opposite is expected. Furthermore, most children are going to school among households with three or four children. Even though there is a majority of out-of-

school children among the large households with five or more children, there is no clear linear relation between the amount of children and school attendance.

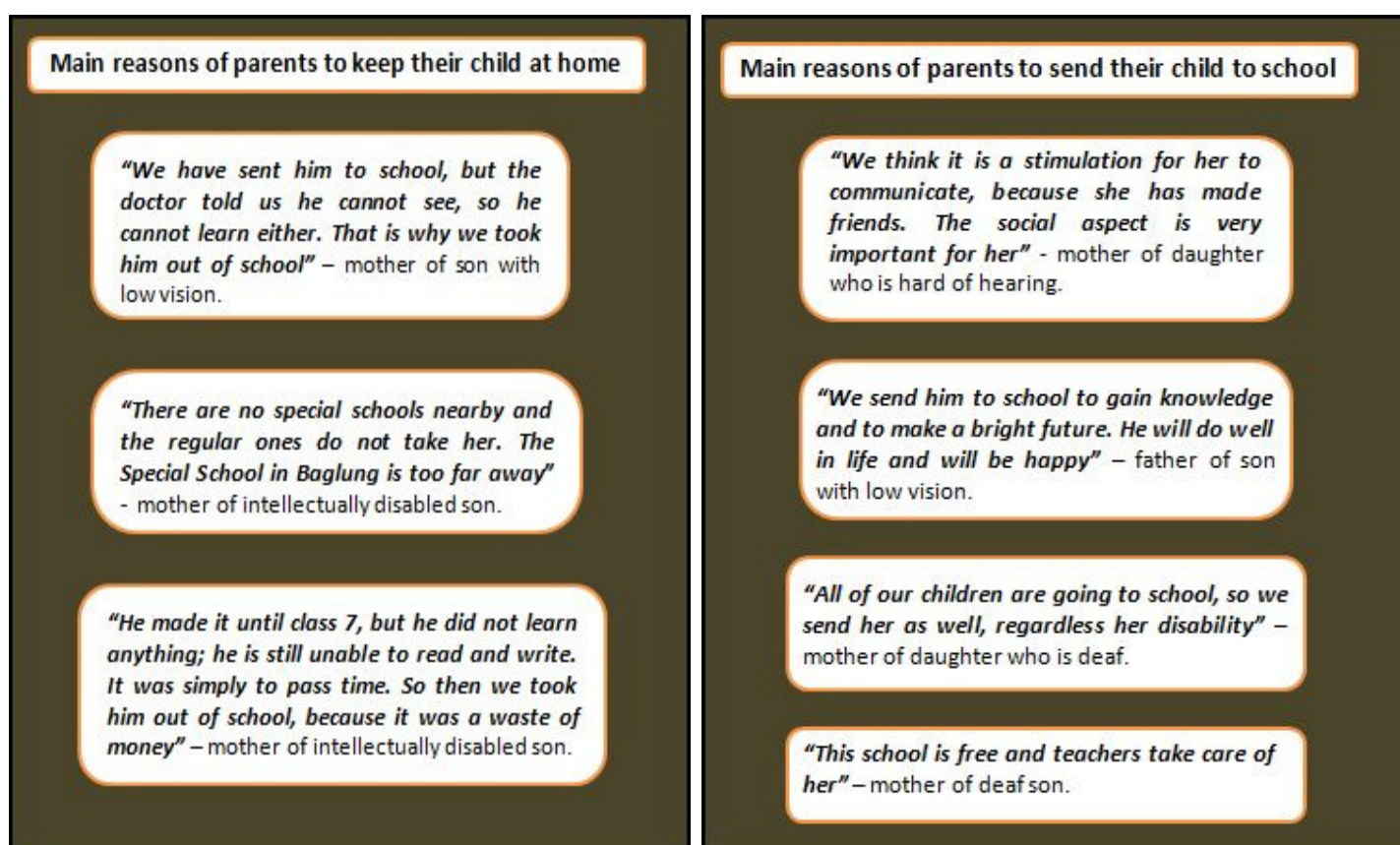
6.2 Motivations, needs and expectations

6.2.1 Main motivations

The reasons behind parents' decision why a child is sent to school or not, show the many different situations people can be in although their lives seem very similar. In fact, their motivations –the story behind a dichotomy answer- are most important to find out what the barriers are in sending their disabled child to school.

Regardless parents' income or educational levels, arguments to either keep their child at home or to send them to school are quite similar, which can be read in Figure 6.1. Among parents of out-of-school children the reasons are mainly the blame of the disability itself, the lack of special schools, and the 'waste of time and money' in case a child has been to school in the past. Additionally, the lack of a 'guiding person' who can bring the child to school is mentioned in cases of blindness.

Figure 6.1: Main reasons of parents to either keep their child at home or to send him/her to school



In cases of school-going children, the argument is predominantly to gain knowledge and to let the child make a bright future. In other cases, parents have difficulties to find time to take care of the child due to work in the field or somewhere else. Therefore, they decide to send their children to

school. Furthermore, the fact that residential schools provide education, accommodation and food for free is for many parents an extra push to bring their child to school.

Table 6.8 shows the type of education system comprising special, inclusive and regular school. It should be notified that parents do not indicate the Dhaulagiri Deaf Primary School as an inclusive school, but as a special school instead. There are 7 out of 56 children who have been going to school in the past. The period of school attendance broadly ranges from five days (1 child), one year (2), three years (3), and seven years (1). There are several reasons why parents have taken their children out of school. Firstly, a common reason is that the child was *“not able to learn anything”*, by which parents mean to read and write. Therefore, parents consider this as a *“waste of money”*, because there are no actual *“results”* by sending their children to school.

Table 6.8: Education system combined with school attendance

	Does your CWD attend school at the moment?		Total
	No, but in past	yes	
special school	2	14	16
inclusive school	0	1	1
regular school	5	11	15
Total	7	26	32

The reason that a child is sent to a regular school in the past, for many years, and passing grade after grade without any results is highly alarming. Several examples can be read in Box 6.2. It is a concerning situation that a child can make it until grade 8, without the abilities he or she should have learned after this period. On the other hand, going to school is more than just learning; the social aspect of making friends and behaviour in groups is important as well (Garcia-Huidobro and Corvalán, 2009). However, for most parents this is of less importance than the progress in reading and writing. All the same, this leads to questioning the quality of education, in which it is apparently possible to shift to a next class, without passing the examination. Currently, this situation is still occurring among school-going children, of whom the parents have been interviewed.

Box 6.2: Passing time in class

A boy attended a regular school for seven years. He is intellectually disabled and had difficulties with reading from white paper as it hurt his eyes, which might indicate he has dyslexia. However, after seven years he was still unable to read and write; he simply went to school to pass time. Although there is a special school in Baglung (the boy’s hometown) the parents do not send him there, because he is *“too clever to go there”*, pointing to the fact that there are also ‘severe’ types of intellectually disabled children, which is not suitable for him. *“The perfect school does not exist”*.

Remarkably, a 16-year old (intellectually disabled) girl has already achieved class 8. But it is necessary to add the response of her mother, who says that she actually *“does not learn much in school and that she is simply passing time there”*.

In line with this, more light should be shed on the 11 children who currently attend a regular school, of whom 7 children are hard of hearing, 2 are intellectually disabled and 2 have low vision. The attended grades range between nursery level and grade 9. Initially, this looks very impressive, but Box 6.2 explains the reality. In multiple cases it appears that children are simply passing time and not learning anything. It is questionable in what way they have passed the examination and how much help they receive from teachers. However, a boy who currently attends class 9 is an exception, because he is hard of hearing on only one ear, which means he is able to understand the teacher with a little more effort than “normal” children.

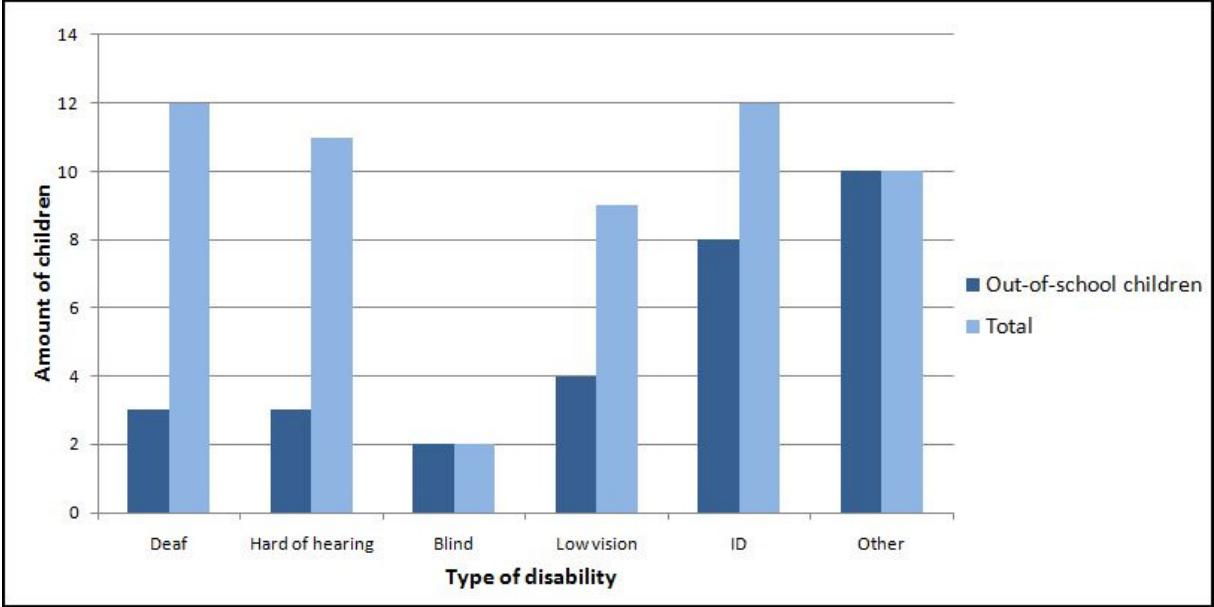
6.2.2 Analysis per disability

The circumstances and type of disability varies enormously among the visited households. Hence, it is interesting to split the target group in order to make an analysis of blind, deaf and intellectually disabled children related to school attendance. This could point out whether there are any differences among and within these three groups; there is a focus on sub-groups as well, such as ‘low vision’ and ‘hard of hearing’. After all, a child with little sight might have less difficulty to walk to school compared with a blind child. Lastly, the group with ‘other’ cases will be analysed who have multiple impairments.

Deafness and hard of hearing

In total, there are 99 deaf children and 55 children with a hard of hearing impairment in Baglung district, of whom 12 and 11 children respectively have been researched. In both cases, more than the majority is going to school (9 and 8, respectively). Figure 6.2 also indicates that among these two types the out-of-school ratio is lowest: 25% and 27%. All 9 deaf students are making use of hostel facilities at a special school. There are no further rarities among this group, except that 6 out of 9 children come from rural-remote areas. There is a clear difference with the group of hard-of-hearing children; among them, 7 children are going to a regular school and 1 to a special school. Another difference is that only 1 child is making use of a hostel. This is probably related to their geographic circumstances, as 6 children (out of 8) live in an urban area.

Figure 6.2: School attendance per type of disability



Blindness and low vision

In Baglung district, there are 21 blind children and 103 children with low vision, of whom 2 and 9 children, respectively have been researched. In this case both blind children are not attending school. They live in a peri-urban and rural-remote area. Both parents indicate the lack of a special school nearby and the impossibility for the child to walk to school by himself. Among the 5 school-going children with low vision 3 attend special school and 2 a regular school. Furthermore, only one child is coming from an urban area, which means that 8 children live in peri-urban and rural-remote areas.

Intellectually disabled

Totally, there are 120 intellectually disabled children in Baglung district of whom 12 children have been researched. Six children live in an urban area, of whom 2 are going to a regular and one to a special school. Another child attends an inclusive school and is lightly⁹ intellectually disabled. The drop-out ratio is highest among intellectually disabled children, because 3 out of 7 children have attended school in the past. The main reason is that *“the child could not learn to read and write”*.

Other disabled children

Figure 6.2 shows that none of the 10 children with another type of disability are going to school. Six of them live in an urban area. Despite this ‘geographic advantage’, 7 children are unable to walk, of whom 5 are intellectually disabled as well: for parents it is impossible to bring their children to school in case there is one. Furthermore, a wheelchair (which no one has yet) is difficult to push on the unpaved roads. Hence, parents point to the lack of a special school, a hostel and a disabled-friendly school environment. In line with this, the lack of a special school for children with multiple disabilities is significant. An example is that some regular schools are constructing a wheelchair friendly school, but this is not a place for intellectually disabled children. The Upallachaur Special Primary Class is integrating a wheelchair-friendly environment in its future hostel, which is remarkable.

6.2.3 Needs and expectations

The parents were openly asked whether they could indicate what needs would be necessary for them that would make it possible to be able to send their disabled children to school. Parents could mention as many needs as they thought were required, but most parents brought up around three aspects. The needs and expectations will be further explained by dividing the group into school-going and out-of-school children.

Needs for school-going children

When asked what the most important needs are, necessary in order to make it possible to send the disabled child to school, all parents at least responded: *“material things, such as books, copies, stationary and school uniforms”*. Besides this, *“money”* is mentioned twelve times. This can be related to school fees in regular schools, but also to transportation costs, which are necessary to be able to bring the child to school. For example, a mother who has brought her two children to the Dhaulagiri Deaf School in Baglung, said: *“Although education is free, including accommodation and*

⁹ it was not noticeable during the visit that the girl had any form of intellectual disability

food, we had to pay for a one-way bus ticket NPR 1,200 on one day for my two daughters and myself with an additional return ticket for myself”.

When comparing this to the household’s income per month (see Table 6.1 and Table 6.3) it is no surprise that families have difficulties to bring their children to a special school even though it provides free education, accommodation and food. Moreover, another mother said that a ‘school vehicle’ is an important need for her as it would function as a relief so she does not have to bring her daughter every day.

Another need and expectation is a ‘good school environment’, which is differently defined according to parents. One parent explains that in this environment teachers should help a disabled child at least a little bit, while the other means that teachers should keep an eye on the students to prevent they leave early. Moreover, some parents state that there is a good school environment in case *“the disabled children do not get bullied at school, because here everyone behaves the same”*. In this case they refer to a special school, because before they got experience that their children got bullied in a regular school.

A father indicates that the use of a Braille system is necessary for his son, which is not offered at any school in the near area of Hatiya VDC. The father says that *“if this is provided or we have money to buy him glasses, he can read”*. Currently he attends a regular school, where there are no special materials available for blind children or those who have low vision – in the boy’s case. In line with this, a mother tells about her daughter’s hearing aid on one ear. This assistive device makes it possible for her to go to a regular school. However, she explains that the wires are of bad quality and very costly to replace: *“it could work for one week or for two months, but a new wire costs around NPR 150,- and they are difficult to get, so we always have to travel to Pokhara”*. It is obvious that this is too costly for most households when transportation costs should be taken into account as well.

In three cases, parents say that a good hostel is needed, of whom two parents state that a hostel made it possible for them to send their children to school. The third parent says that in case a hostel is offered in future, she would make use of it, because the school is too far to walk to every day. Lastly, two parents also point out that a special school nearby is needed. A mother from a mountainous village is saying that *“a special school nearby would be nice, because currently we hardly see our son as he attends the Blind School in Narayansthan, which is far away from us”*.

Needs for out-of-school children

In the majority of cases, needs are independent elements of the problem. Often one need is followed by another, and sometimes they could be interrelated to each other. Nonetheless, they are all of importance, but when one need is gained it does not say that the problem is solved either.

The most mentioned – and probably the most important – need among parents with out-of-school children is a *“special school in the neighbourhood”*. For them, a regular school is not an option, because it is simply not suitable for their children. Parents literally say that *“if there is a disabled school nearby we would send her to that school”*. It should be clear that there is an emphasis on ‘nearby’, which becomes apparent when looking to the need of a hostel, which is mentioned only three times among parents.

Other needs that are mentioned among the majority are **money** and **material things** (i.e. copies, books, stationary, bags, uniforms etc.), which they indicate as necessary in case they do want

to send their children to school. However, it can be determined that the purchase of material items are not the primary reason – or let's say *main barrier* - why parents do not send their children to school; it is more or less a *secondary need*. A parent says that *"if we have money we could buy medicine. The doctor said that an operation can recover this sight problem in four to six months, but we do not have any money"*. In this case, the lack of money is a cause for the parents to keep their daughter at home, which is further related to the issue that she cannot walk to school by herself due to her low vision and the geographical situation. As shortly mentioned in the previous chapter, many parents do not have time to bring their children to school. Due to the geographical situation **guidance** to school is needed. Additionally, some parents need *"a person who can look after our child at school"* as well, because the child is *'unable to eat or go to the toilet by herself'* – in cases of intellectual disability. Others simply state that a (health) care taker is needed, because are worried their children do not get as much attention and care as while they are at home.

Among parents of children with walking impairments, a **wheelchair** is a primary need. A mother explains that besides a wheelchair *"treatment is needed, so that my daughter can stand on her own feet. If she is able to walk and speak well, then we might send her to school"*. It is questionable whether the regular schools already have a disabled-friendly environment, i.e. accessible for people with wheelchairs. Furthermore, due to the geographic context and lack of suitable roads, a hostel is needed as well, because it is almost impossible for parents to bring their child in a wheelchair to school every day.

Moreover, in two cases it turned out that parents did not receive any scholarships in order to get free education for their disabled child. Both children are intellectually disabled. Among one of them, the parent explains that they have tried to ask help from the government, but they do not get it. Due to limited information it is inappropriate to draw conclusions out of this. However, it is useful to emphasize the importance of enhancing the awareness of free education among parents with disabled children, which will be further discussed among parent's views in the next subsection.

Six parents indicated that *"nothing is needed"* due to the disability. Comments were made as: *"she cannot learn anyway"*, *"sight is needed before we send him to school"*, and *"if she was normal we would have sent her"*. From a personal point of view, it is essential that in these cases awareness is raised of the possibilities for their child.

6.3 Parents' views

The quotes obviously show the concern of parents: they want the best for their child like any other parent. Except of a few parents, they all want their children to attend school and have described what their motivations and limitations are to realise this. During three focus group discussions at the Dhaulagiri Deaf Primary School, Janatadhan Higher Secondary School for Blind and Special Child Primary Class Upallachaur, parents of school-going children have been asked what according to them the main barriers are for parents of out-of-school children. Furthermore, improvements, responsibility and children's support have been discussed. The most important quotes that represent the focus group discussions can be read in Box 6.3 to 6.5 related to the main barriers, possible solutions and the responsibility issue.

Box 6.3: Possible main barriers to school attendance according to parents of school-going children

POSSIBLE MAIN BARRIERS

“Due to geographical remoteness transportation is impossible”. “There are no transport facilities, and sometimes not even roads. So children stay at home, such as the children from Chhisti VDC”.

“Difficult for a single mother, because she does not have a proper source of income, it is a long walk to school and not affordable to pay for a jeep or bus”.

“We have heard that the school committee did not take proper care of the intellectually disabled children at a school in Parbat district, which led to unhappy parents, and so they took out their children of school. Other parents also got scared to bring their children to that school”.

“The hostel on this school is doing very well, but there is a lack of awareness about the blind school and people cannot afford to come here”.

“There are no actual times in this school and teachers do not keep a good eye on the children, so that some children leave early and walk around” [at Upallachaur Special Primary Class, Baglung].

“Once you have sent your child to a special school with a hostel, you can only visit him once in a while”.

Box 6.4: Possible solutions according to parents of school-going children

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

“Although there should be provision of discount in transportation it is not implemented in practice, because drivers claim that it [the reduction fee] does not count for rough roads. This must be changed”. “It is also a solution to keep the child in a hostel at school”.

“Publicity and advertisement for blind students is needed to raise awareness”.

“Every person has access to a mobile phone – so a teacher should call if the child leaves school”.

“We should make them [the disabled children] just like us”.

“We can improve the situation if there are more resource centers. There is a need for special institutions so that their condition could improve – then a child could walk better, but her child [pointing to another mother] is not able to walk and unable to talk”.

“We have moved from Kushma to Baglung to shorten this distance”.

“Collaboration between NGOs and the municipality is needed for water supply, and more funds from donors are needed. There should be volunteers connected to the hospital”.

Box 6.5: Responsibility according to parents of school-going children

RESPONSIBILITY

“It is our responsibility, as a parent, to let him (referring to her blind son) join, also in college, not only in basic education. He went to an inclusive school in class 1-3 and in grade 4 he went to a blind school. My husband left Nepal for seeking a job, this is possible because my son can stay in the hostel”.

“First of all, it is the parents duty to solve the problems followed by the government. Maybe teachers should also support this sector”.

“During the meeting with the School Management Committee and the Parent’s Association they should discuss how to improve or solve these problems. The School Committee should exchange ideas at other institutions to share and learn, like an “observation visit”. “At the moment there is not involvement and interaction between this Committee and parents, while they should share ideas”.

“It is our responsibility to support our children to go to school. Advertising is the duty of parents and teachers. The government is responsible for medication and provision of transportation”.

The possible main barriers are similar to those of parents of out-of-school children. Geographical remoteness, limited transport facilities combined with expensive bus tickets are common answers and mentioned earlier as a main motivation for parents to keep their children at home. In line with this, the need for a hostel is proclaimed as well among parents who have faced the same problems. However, a hostel itself is not always regarded as favourable, because subsequently parents do not see their children that often anymore due to distance, lack of time and money. Hence, the most given need among parents is a special school nearby their home. Important to mention is that the Upallachaur Special Primary Class (in Baglung municipality) does not have any fixed times, or better to say: strictness. The intellectual disabled children are able to leave early and wonder around easily; teachers simply let them go. This is not only based on parents’ stories, but personal observation as well. An interesting and creative solution among parents of these children is to set up a telephone system as (almost) everyone has access to a mobile phone. So in case a child leaves school early, the teachers ought to call one of the parents to let him or her know that their child is on its way home.

Another barrier, which has not received much attention yet, is the unawareness among parents in Baglung district of the three schools. Out of the household visits it has also appeared that some parents did not know about the schools, which cannot be blamed on them; regarding their living conditions in hilly and sometimes isolated areas. According to parents, there should be more publicity and advertisement to promote special schools in Baglung district. In general, parents claim that it is their responsibility to support their children to go to school. They even say that it is their duty to advertise together with teachers to ‘spread the word’. It is doubtful whether parents in rural-remote areas are reached in this way. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that it can be a social-desirable answer and timid position as well; it is possible they do not feel comfortable to fully

share their ideas. From a personal point of view, NGOs and local governments should play a key-role as well to raise awareness among parents with disabled children.

Figure 6.3: A focus group discussion with parents of the blind school in Narayansthan



6.4 General conclusion

Availability contains the part whether provided services of existing schools correspond with the needs of disabled children and their parents. The most important need among parents who do not send their disabled children to school is *a special school nearby*. At this, they mean a school with a special focus on deaf, blind or intellectually disabled children by teaching sign language, Braille or “self-help” skills respectively. Currently there are plenty of regular schools, but the question is whether they meet the needs of disabled children. This can be boiled down to a need of trained teachers with such skills in local regular schools, so disabled children get the opportunity to really gain knowledge. Furthermore, due to the geographical situation in Baglung district a hostel at school is also an important need. Moreover, it has appeared that disabled children are not always accepted by local schools due to their impairment; there were no skilled teachers or appropriate materials available.

Adequacy means that the school meets the expectations of disabled children and their parents. In general, parents expect that teachers take good care of the children and consider a school as a safe environment. Mainly, parents have the expectation that their school-going children will have a bright future. Nevertheless, it is a concerning situation for parents that intellectually disabled children leave school early without any guidance.

Acceptability is concentrated on the social values and beliefs within schools. Out of the focus groups and questionnaires, it has appeared that parents do not always have trust in schools. A main reason for this is the lack of care takers for their disabled children. Overall, discrimination based on religion, caste or income has not been perceived in this research. Furthermore, the results show that caste does not play a role in school attendance of disabled children.

Affordability is focused on both direct and indirect costs for families. In the research, it appeared that income does not play a substantial role in the decision-making of parents. However, transportation costs are a serious problem for parents in case their children attend a school outside their VDC. Bringing their children to school is costly and not covered by any fund. Moreover, it should be emphasized that most disabled children do not receive any discount when using transportation, which is a constraining factor as well.

Furthermore, there is no relation between other household characteristics, such as household size and the attained education level of parents, with school attendance. It is unclear to what extent they have influence on parents' perceptions.

Lastly, it can be stated that there is a difference among the target group and school attendance, namely that deaf children and children with hard of hearing or low vision attend school relatively more than blind and intellectually disabled children.

In a poor and low developed country as Nepal and a mountainous rural area such as Baglung district, the expectations of why disabled children are not attending school seemed rather evident before starting this research. However, such expectations were both based on limited literature related to disability in developing countries and prejudices; as everyone has a certain image in mind of a situation. Nevertheless, money and distance would play a large role in school attendance of disabled children, followed by the question whether there are any special schools after all in 'such' a developing country. In addition, cultural and religious factors related to disability have been taken into account, such as the caste system and the beliefs of Hinduism. But did these expectations also count for disabled children and their families in Baglung district or do they face other problems?

In this chapter, findings are discussed per research question, divided in stakeholders, household characteristics, and motivations, needs and expectations. Additionally, results are discussed as far as possible in a context of access, theories and other trends of the development issue of disabled children and education.

7.1 Findings on stakeholders

The first research question is: *Who are the stakeholders related to disabled children in Baglung district and what are their roles in the disability sector?*

The main stakeholders can be divided in four groups: households with disabled children (as a core group), local governmental agencies, non-governmental organisations and schools.

Main findings on stakeholders show that governmental services are to some extent provided for registered disabled people, e.g. provision of monthly allowances and scholarships. The availability and affordability are strengthened as there is free school enrolment for disabled children. However, due to limited financial resources distribution of ID-cards has stopped by the Women and Children Development Office, which is a negative aspect within the availability of government services. Fortunately, Plan Nepal has started to take over this distribution so that all disabled people, and in particular children receive an ID-card.

In line with this, goods and services are supposed to be provided for free or with discounts, i.e. in official planned documents and programmes. Yet, in the implementation phase, limitations could be noticed and the local government of Baglung district has not enough resources to change or improve such barriers due to what they call '*dependency*' on the central government. Another constraint is the small budget allocated to disabled people, which leads to an increase in the *conversion handicap* (Kuklys, 2005) of disabled people, because a person needs to cover his/her necessary expenses first before living a life like able-bodied persons with the same circumstances of income or self-dependency.

It is obvious that local governmental bodies mostly give support in the way of funding construction buildings in order to build a disabled friendly environment, while non-governmental organisations, i.e. GYC and Plan Nepal, are more focused on inclusion and awareness programmes. Although the national government of Nepal has started the Education for All program, it is mainly implemented in cooperation with NGOs. This is not directly a weakness, but more or less a

remarkable occurrence as it shows a form of reliance of the local government – again – while they have been appointed to implement the programmes of the national ministries.

Another essential group of stakeholders are schools in Baglung district, which comprise both regular and special schools. The Dhaulagiri Deaf School can be considered as a starting inclusive school. The accessibility of regular schools is highly positive, because in every VDC primary and secondary schools can be found. However, as Jonsson and Wiman (2001) have stated, disabled children with a severe impairment need special education. This means that children with low vision and a hard of hearing impairment might be able to attend regular schools, while blind, deaf and intellectually disabled children need to have access to a special school. Yet, it should be stressed that only a regular school is not sufficient for children with a mild or moderate disability; quality of education with trained teachers is as least as important. An empirical study (Arbeiter and Hartley, 2002) on regular schools in Uganda shows that teachers face practical implications related to limited knowledge and materials for disabled children. Furthermore, findings of this research show that teachers of regular schools do not have skills to teach children with disabilities. Hence, parents have taken their children out of school as it is mainly considered as a waste of time and money in case children are not able to read and write, regardless the social aspect of school attendance.

The accessibility of such special schools is to some extent limited in Baglung district, while a distinction should be made per type of disability. Two deaf schools are present in two different VDCs, which both provide accommodation facilities for children who come from far. Therefore, the availability and accessibility for deaf children seem to be sufficient.

Furthermore, there are two special schools for intellectually disabled children. The availability for the Baglung Special Child Primary Class Upallachaur does not meet the needs of disabled children based on quality issues and trained teachers. In addition, the schools organisational set-up is concerning due to the lack of control when children are leaving school. Another limitation in its adequacy is the expected quality level of parents toward teachers, which is not achieved for lightly intellectually disabled children.

The accessibility of special schools for blind children is doubtful. On the one hand, there is only one school for blind children, with hostel facilities, located in an urban area. Due to the low number of total blind registered children in Baglung district (21) this one school seems to be enough. However, it is uncertain to what extent the registered children with low vision (103) got impaired: severely, moderate or mild. In case they are not able to attend regular schools and need special education, the carrying capacity of this blind school needs to be expanded. Furthermore, the school is located in Balewa region, which borders to neighbouring district Parbat. Based on this weak accessibility for children from Baglung district, transportation costs are required for those who live far away.

Overall, findings have indicated that there are no schools for disabled children with multiple impairments, e.g. intellectually disabled combined with a physical impairment. None of these children are enrolled in school, because they are simply not accepted due to a lack of a 'disabled-friendly environment' and the lack of skilled teachers, who do not know how to take care of such children. It should be stressed that the need for a 'disabled friendly environment' does not only

mean a special wheelchair access, but also the special care of teachers for children with additional needs and the availability of special materials.

7.2 Findings on household characteristics

The second discussed research question is: *To what extent does geographical distance play a role on school enrolment?*

Based on literature (Lind and Agergaard, 2010) it was more or less expected that the larger the geographical distance from a disabled child's home to school, the higher the number of out-of-school children. However, quantitative findings of the research show that among those who do attend school the amount of children living in either an urban or a rural-remote area is equal. This is a surprising outcome and not often confirmed in literature. This result determines that it is not necessarily distance, which plays a central role in school enrolment of disabled children in Baglung district. However, the factor of distance is not less important in contextualizing the issue of disabled children and the accessibility of education. Thereafter, distance plays a larger role for severely disabled children who need special education compared with those who have low vision or a hard of hearing impairment as is pointed out by Jonsson and Wiman (2001). Overall, based on parents' responses, it could be stated that the lack of a special school *nearby* their homes is a weakness of the accessibility. Moreover, findings of this research show a strong relation between accessibility, affordability and availability: the location of schools, income of parents and existing (special) schools are interrelated.

In line with the interconnectedness of the dimensions of access, the third research question is: *How do household characteristics influence the decision-making process of parents?*

Yet, it is not correct to state that distance does not play a role at all: it is an indirect factor among parents who would like to send their children to a special school, but do not have the money for transportation costs. Here, the interrelation between distance and income becomes clear: due to limited accessibility of special schools, a higher affordability is needed for the use of (public) transport to let a disabled child attend a special school. Therefore, income is another researched factor of households with disabled children. Based on literature on disability in developing countries (World Health Organization, 2011) and disabled people's captive position in a vicious cycle (Yeo and Moore, 2003), it was expected that the higher the income of parents, the more likely they send their disabled children to school. However, it has appeared that financial resources do not play a key role based on the result that the largest group attending school are falling in the lowest income category.

Besides income and the geographic situation of households, other characteristics have been researched. Firstly, parents' attained education level have been examined due to the fact that literate parents have relatively more literate children compared with illiterate parents (UN Country Team, 2007). However, this has not been confirmed in this research.

Furthermore, caste of households and children's school attendance have been analysed due to the higher occurrence of discrimination among marginalised groups and people from lower castes (UNICEF, 2003). In contrast to this expectation, there is a majority of out-of-school children from

higher castes. Additionally, among school-going children, the numbers of children from higher and lower castes are equal. However, among children from ethnic groups, almost everyone is not attending school, which is in line with the expectation. This is a rather surprising outcome: there is no difference in school attendance between higher and lower castes, while children from ethnic minorities show a clear out-of-school ratio.

Moreover, in many developing countries, children in Nepal are expected to assist in the household (Lind and Agergaard, 2010; Boyce et al. 2000) and siblings often get more priority than disabled children as they are supposed to make a contribution in return in future (Yeo and Moore, 2003). Hence, the relation between family size and school attendance has been researched based on the expectation that the more children within a household, the smaller the chance that a disabled child is attending school. Most school-going children come from households with three or four children. Even though there is a relative majority of out-of-school children within the group of large households, there is no clear linear relation between the amount of children and school attendance.

7.3 Findings on motivations, needs & expectations

Based on previous findings it seems that neither the geographic situation nor the household characteristics play a decisive role in the decision-making process of parents to send their disabled children to school. Nevertheless, drawing conclusions based on qualitative questions related to parents' motivations, needs and expectations affect these findings. Moreover, differences between children with different disabilities have not been taken into account yet, which is essential before drawing a final conclusion. Due to the qualitative nature of this research, the perceptions of parents of disabled children have been taken into account. Therefore, the fourth research question is: *What are the needs and expectations according to parents to enable school enrolment for disabled children?*

In this research the type of disability plays a role in children's school attendance. However, similar to practical studies (Bruce et al. 2002; Miles and Singal, 2010) disabled people are referred to as one group and mentioned as a 'disadvantaged group' together with other vulnerable and minority groups in governmental programs. This occurrence combined with small budgets allocated to disabled people, confirms their low position within society. Nevertheless, distinction should be made among disabled people. As mentioned earlier on the basis of the model of Jonsson and Wiman (2001), the largest groups attending school are those with low vision or a hard of hearing impairment – as they are able to go to a regular school in their villages- compared with blind, deaf and intellectually disabled children, who need special education. After all, the latter type of education is only supplied in a few places within Baglung district.

Among parents of out-of-school children, the most responded need is a special school nearby home. In case this plays a decisive role for parents, then distance can be regarded as a key factor after all. Furthermore, parents point out that guidance from home to school is needed due to the geographic situation. In line with the empirical study on mobility of Lind and Agergaard (2010) a hostel could bring a solution due to inappropriate transport and the geographical issue. However, remarkably parents have hardly mentioned a need for a hostel, most likely because they do not like the idea of sending their child 'away'.

The most important need among parents of school-going children appeared to be money (for purchasing materials and transportation – in case needed). Another need and expectation is a good school environment, which is in line with the dimension of acceptability; the need of disabled children of feeling welcome and cared for at school. Furthermore, parents expect teachers of regular schools to offer help or assist their children at least a little, so that they are able to come along with other children. Other indicated needs are special materials in regular schools and a good hostel, of which the latter was a decisive factor among several parents to send their children to school.

Furthermore, the last research question is: *What are the views of parents towards their disabled child related to education?*

Essentially, most parents consider education as a tool to gain knowledge, which brings a bright future for a child. There is a certain emphasis on the 'knowledge' aspect, which is regarded more important than the social aspect. Literature shows that children gain social experiences at school, in which children learn to be in an environment with other children, e.g. from other ethnic groups or differently-abled children (Garcia-Huidobro and Corvalán, 2009). However, findings show that parents take out their disabled children after it has appeared that his or her child has not learnt to read and/or write. Subsequently, literature shows that due to economic difficulties and a lack of self-belief it is very difficult to break out of poverty (Venter et al. 2002). Nevertheless, parents seem to regard obtaining 'academic' skills as a more important factor to send their child to school than the development of self-belief among children.

In line with the subject of gaining social benefits at school, the Special Child Primary Class for intellectually disabled children should be further discussed. In this case, intellectually disabled children with different levels of retardation are put together in one class, which is positive for social inclusion and the experience to learn how to behave with other children. However, as there is no distinction between mild, moderate and severe intellectual disability, some children get frustrated due to the lack of challenge. Although Garci-Huidobro and Corvalán (2009) state that schools should function as a place to gain social experiences, education should also be an instrument, in which individual development of a child could further strengthen confidence (UNICEF, 2003). In terms of adequacy, parents have a certain expectation of a quality level, which is not met here among several children.

Group discussions among parents of school-going children have indicated that a hostel is needed, but not favourable due to distance, lack of time and money to frequently visit their children. They want the best for their child like any other parent. This should be emphasised, because in much literature the opposite is stated: parents disadvantage their disabled children compared with other children and regard them as insignificant (Yeo and Moore, 2003). In addition, due to Nepal's Hindu culture, it is often expected that parents do not accept their disabled children, because of the belief in 'bad karma' (Boyce et al. 2000; Timmons and Alur, 2004). Nevertheless, such views have not been shared among parents or appeared in the answers of respondents. It can be boiled down to the fact that parents of out-of-school children have the best interest with their child, but are incapable to send him or her to school.

7.4 Final conclusion: breaking myths

Based on all findings, it could be determined that several myths can be broken, while others cannot.

Firstly, it is a myth to think that school attendance of disabled children in Nepal is merely restrained by lack of financial resources, their low caste origin, or the low attained education level of their parents. On the whole, parents do want the best for their child – whether disabled or not and whether poor or not. Yet, they are often unable and incapable to send their son or daughter to a special school, which is located out of their direct environment. Initially, it seems that the geographical situation does not play a key role in the decision-making process of parents due to quantitative results of school attendance and the geographic situation. However, this certain ‘geographic’ factor does appear to be a cause of several issues, such as the need for money for transportation costs, the need for a school with a hostel, and the disadvantage of not frequently seeing your own child. Therefore, the myth can be enhanced that geographical distance is negatively related to school enrolment of disabled children in Baglung district. However, it should be added that this is valid for particularly deaf, blind and intellectually disabled children, while children with a mild and moderate impairment, i.e. low vision or hard of hearing, are not highly dependent on special schools.

The aim of this research is to answer the following central question:

What are the opportunities and barriers to access basic education for blind, deaf and intellectually disabled children in Baglung district?

It can be determined that various programmes on disabled children set up by the national government and NGOs are indispensable. The fact that such programmes have a focus on inclusion and Education for All is encouraging. However, in practice shortcomings in the implementation have been noticed, which calls for improvement. Nevertheless, it is an opportunity that the issue of disabled children and education has led to an increase of policies and projects. The availability of policies, rights, goods and services needs to be further developed so that disabled children can actually make use of such provisions. Moreover, effective awareness raising programs are needed in order to reach all disabled people in order to inform them about education projects and people’s rights.

The accessibility of schools can be regarded as an opportunity for children with moderate and mild impairments due to the possibility of attending regular schools in their near environment. However, the location of special schools is for most parents regarded as a barrier as it brings several disadvantages. Hence, the availability of hostel facilities is needed to narrow this gap of distance.

The fact that school enrolment is free for disabled children creates a big opportunity for parents to send their children to school. However, in case transportation is needed in order to bring a child to a special school, high costs are involved, which is a barrier for parents. Here, stakeholders should

consider to cover travel expenses in order to boost the number of enrolled disabled children. It can be concluded that the dimension of affordability is sufficient.

Regular schools do not offer inclusive education in the sense that they have trained teachers for children with special educational needs. Hence, the adequacy of schools in Baglung district is insufficient. Furthermore, Baglung Special Child Primary Class Upallachaur for intellectually disabled children have shown a lack of strictness concerning school attendance. Therefore, the future hostel within this school can be considered as an opportunity, because children will not wonder around on the streets anymore.

The acceptability of special schools toward disabled children is highly positive. Research has proven that there is no difference between higher and lower castes in school attendance, which is an opportunity for all disabled children, who think that they are not welcome due to their lower caste origin. Furthermore, families have trust in the competence of special schools, except for the Special Child Class for intellectually disabled children; mothers are concerned about the actual times and lack of control of this school.

7.5 Recommendations

The recommendations can be divided in two types: recommendations for further research and for program interventions. Both will be used and are mainly aimed at Plan Nepal.

For doing **further research** on this topic it is strongly recommended to spend more time in the field. Main reason is the geographical situation of Baglung, so that travelling by both foot and vehicle is very time-consuming. Another reason for spending more time in a follow-up study is that it will lead to a bigger reach of households with the possibility to broaden a focus on other types of disability as well. Lastly, time investment in a well-trained interpreter is highly encouraged as this will have positive results on research data.

Another suggestion for a follow-up study is to focus more on the supply side of the concept of access, namely on schools and other educational institutions. There are still many rumours that scholarships are not spent on the child, but on teachers' salaries. But is this really true? Along with this, the quality within both regular and special schools should be examined. A focus can be teaching methods, school observations concentrated on children's behaviour and teachers' pedagogic skills, but also whether schools are 'ready' to welcome disabled children in the sense of attitudes, facilities and trained personnel. This would be interesting in inclusive schools to find out what the head master and teachers understand among this complex phenomenon and to what extent they succeed in creating inclusiveness. Although this is highly challenging to research, it would be very useful as concrete results lead to a clear indication of what needs to be further developed and improved.

In developing a **program intervention** it is recommended to include the following aspects:

Firstly, it has appeared that guidance to school is needed for mainly blind and intellectually disabled children. Due to the lack of transportation, such as school busses, the disabled child has to walk to school. In most cases they go alone, which leads to unawareness among both parent and teacher where the child is. When guidance is lacking, a certain system should be developed, so that

these children can be found in case they are lost. Furthermore, teachers should become more strict concerning fixed school hours so that parents are sure when their child leaves school and do not need to worry in case children are not home yet.

Secondly, it can be recommended to set up a certain forum, where schools can exchange knowledge. Schools with a special focus on disabled children and schools who want to start inclusive education should be able to communicate and share experiences. Their aim should be more quality-oriented, so that they can offer better quality in education for all children. It is understandable that schools have difficulties in setting up a “school friendly environment” for disabled children, because they do not have any experience and know-how in doing so. Hence, taking such a step might be considered as too big, which leads to no try at all. Overall, inclusive education is encouraged, but more tools and information concerning “how” to implement this, should become available.

Thirdly, it has appeared that disabled children have been able to pass the exam in order to go to a higher class, while he or she was actually not able to read and write. This is a concerning situation regarding quality in education and should be taken highly serious as it is also a reason of drop outs. It is recommended to find out how this can occur and whether it is possible to find ways to minimize such issues.

At last, it is recommended to develop vocational education programmes within schools. Currently, such programmes are mainly available in urban areas, but it is hardly or not offered in Baglung district. Cooperation with other organizations that are fully focused on vocational education is strongly recommended as they know the pitfalls and have expertise in setting-up such a system. They possess so much knowledge concerning this topic and have experience for many years, so why not taking advantage of this?

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¹⁰ The website of DEO Baglung was only written in Nepali, so for general information the website of DEO Kaski has been used.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Shift in the approach toward children with special educational needs

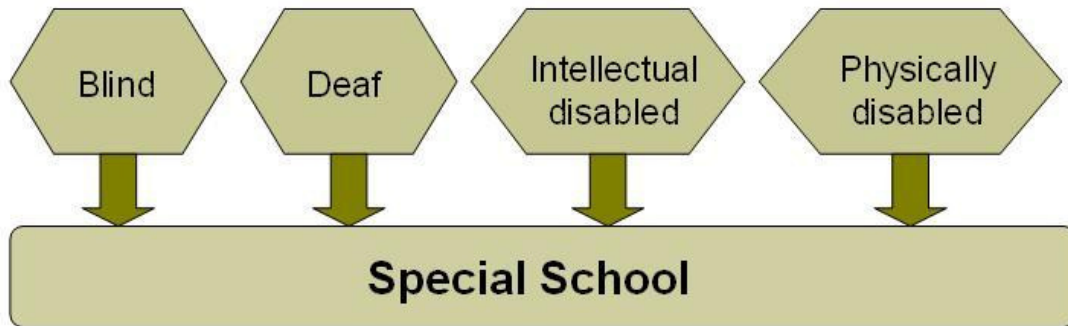
Appendix II: Questionnaire – data of households

Appendix III: Topic list interview key informants

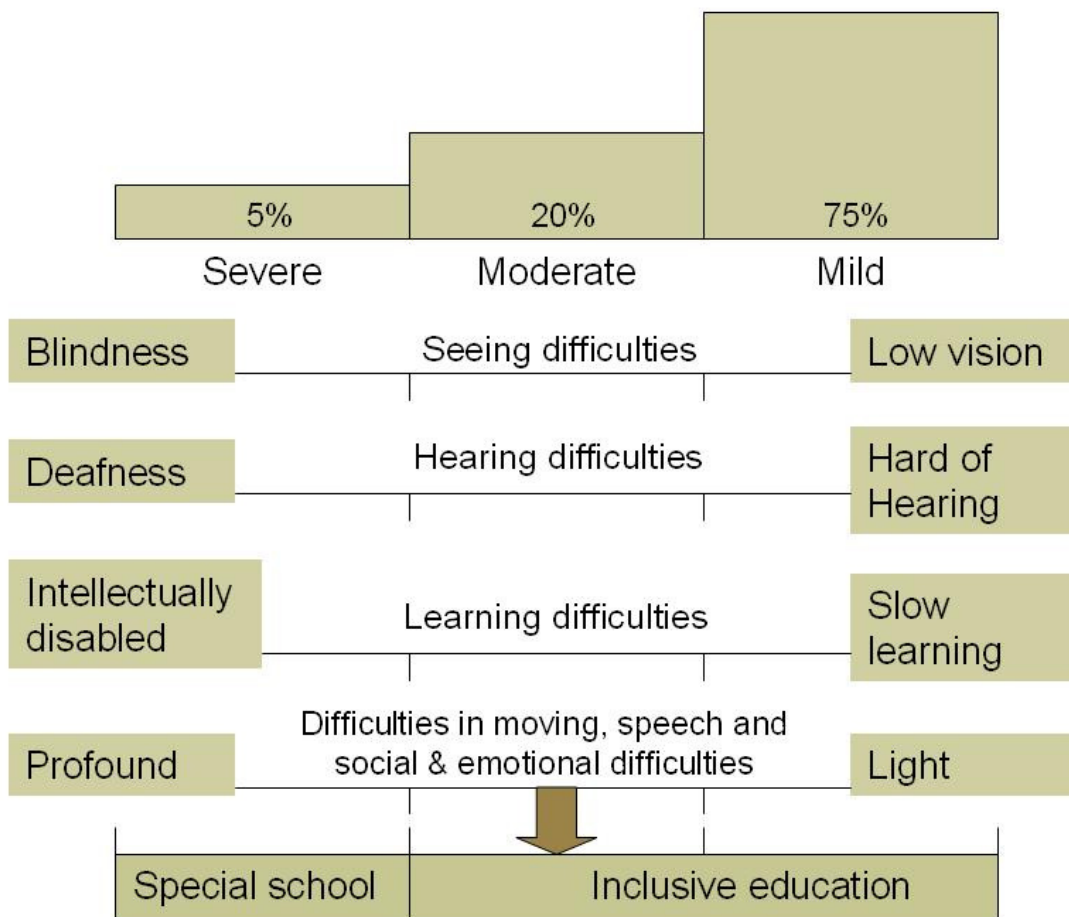
Appendix IV: Topic list focus group discussions

Appendix I: Shift in the approach toward children with special educational needs.

Before:



Now: Children with “Special Educational Needs”



Source: Jonsson and Wiman, 2001

Appendix II: Questionnaire – data of households

1. How large is your household?

First name	Gender	Age	Educational attainment level	Literate R/W/B	Currently enrolled at school y/n	Main activity (occupation)	Income last month

Received remittances ¹¹	
------------------------------------	--

¹¹ A remittance is a transfer of money by a [family member, working in a foreign country](#).

2. Who of your children is disabled?

Name(s):

3. What kind of disability does he/she have?

◇ deaf

◇ blind

◇ intellectually

disabled:.....

◇ other:

4. Was he/she born with this disability?

◇ no

◇ yes – go to question 7

5. How old was [name] when he/she got disabled?

Age:

6. How did he/she get disabled?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Does your disabled child [name] attend school at the moment?

◇ no

◇ yes – go to question 9

8. Has he/she been attending school in the past?

◇ no – go to question 19

◇ yes

9. What is the name and place of the school?

Name child	Name school	VDC

10. What type of school was/is it?
◊ special / resource school
◊ inclusive school
◊ other:

11. In which class did/does [name] participate?
◊ resource or special
class:.....
◊ inclusive
school:.....

12. **If child is going to school:** What is the **most important reason** why you send your child to school?

13. **If child went to school in past:** What is the **most important reason** why taking [name] out of school?

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14. Is/was there any accommodation or hostel offered at the school? If no, go to question 16.
◊ yes
◊ no

15. Did/Does your child make use of this hostel?
◊ yes

◊ no

16. Did/Does the school provide any lunch at school? If no, go to question 18
◊ yes
◊ no

17. Does your child make use of the lunch?
◊ yes
◊ no

18. Is the disabled child currently going to any kind of community club, if yes tick box:
- ◊ no
 - ◊ child club for all children
 - ◊ child club for children with a disability
 - ◊ other kind of club:.....

19. What are the most important needs for your disabled child to be able to go to school?

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In case of school going child – go to question 23

20. What are the most important reasons you **do not** send your child to school?

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21. **In case other children are going to school:** Why are they going to school and disabled child not?

22. **In case nobody is going to school:** Why are all of your children not going to school?

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.....

23. What is your total income per month? [go back to Table]

24. Does one or more of your children contribute to gaining income?
- ◊ no
 - ◊ yes – tick box in table who

25. In case the person does not know the amount of income [in agricultural business]:

Stock – amount of products owned by farmer (for example: cattle, wool, wood, rice, vegetables etc)

Product	Amount

Comments:.....
.....
.....
.....

26. Do you receive any money from a family member living in another country? [go to table]

- ◇ no
- ◇ yes

Appendix III: Topic list interview Key Informants

1. Programs related to disabled people in Baglung district
2. Total budgets
3. Trainings
4. Separate plans or programmes for disabled children
5. Main barriers for women and children with disabilities
6. ID-cards
7. Materials
8. Disabled friendly environment\
9. Inclusive education
10. Future plans

Appendix IV: Topic list Focus Group Discussions

Focus Group discussion – Agenda

1. Introduction of myself and the interpreter
 - From The Netherlands, doing research for Plan Nepal + mentioning research objective
 - Why organizing this focus group//group discussion - gaining insight in community's perceptions on this topic
 - Explaining "rules": taping this – but it is for personal use not for Plan Nepal or anybody else.
 - Explaining "rules": not able to understand Nepali – the interpreter will translate after 2-3 sentences and then you may continue
 - Again: feel free to be able to debate, disagree, add ideas or give critique – there is no right or wrong way of thinking.
2. Asking the members to introduce themselves – where they come from (VDC), what class their children are in;
3. Main questions:
 - What are the specific needs for your intellectually disabled child to send him to school?
 - What are in your point of view the main barriers for parents to send his intellectual disabled//deaf//blind child to school in Baglung?
 - What can be improved to solve this problem?
 - Who's duty is it to solve this problem? (– parents, school, government, other organizations?)
 - As a parent, how can you contribute or support children to have access to school and complete basic education (grade one to eight).
 - Can you contribute to this issue as a member of the parent's association?
 - Do you have anything to add concerning accessibility or completion of basic education for your intellectually disabled // deaf // blind child?
4. Summarize and finalize group discussion + ask if they have any questions for me!
5. Thank you!