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ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF CHILD CLUBS IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHILDREN'S

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Abstract

This research work focuses on the important role and functions of the child clubs based in Nepal. Children have various social and personal developmental needs which should be fulfilled. Child clubs are recognized as effective forums for defending and promoting the rights of children. They raise awareness about children's rights, and create a platform for children to voice their opinions and concerns on issues that affect their lives. This increases children's agency and participation in both family and community decision-making. Through participation in club activities—such as workshops, extracurricular programs, and community projects—children develop real-world skills like leadership, communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, empathy, and teamwork. These experiences encourage confidence-building and emotional intelligence, which are not always fostered in traditional schooling. Child club as children's own organizations is a potentially powerful institutional instrument for the development of children. This research explore the social and personal development functions that are associated with the membership of child clubs and identifies the social, personal and membership characteristics that can be attributed to those effects.

Keywords: Child Rights Conventions, Children's Clubs, Nepal Children's Organization

Introduction

Child clubs have played very significance function to promote the children personal and social development as well as to shape their behavior and overall activities. Children have different development needs, most important of them being their social and personal development (Hurlock, 1978). Social development needs include a number of requirements like leadership, interpersonal competency, interactive ability, social relationships, participation ability awareness of social issues and rights, cooperative and collaborative actions, teamwork skills and orientation. Similarly, personal development implies that children have such personal qualities as confidence, assertiveness, constructive and positive thinking, action orientation and personal motivation. The children are integrated part of society and precious treasure of the world. We cannot even imagine the existence of society if there were no children around us. They are our source of hope, joy, and inspiration. Children are regarded as the future of the world, leader to the nation for development and future star of nation but no child can grow sufficiently without proper love, care and understanding. In each stage of childhood, a child, who is innocent, vulnerable depend, voiceless and needs the proper support of adult care otherwise, there is chance for every child to be in danger, if they are not taken care of properly and adequately will be hampered and their future will leads towards uncertainty (Save the Children Norway, 2002).

Children constitute the potential human resources of the nation; they represent its development and future. The present status of children in any society is an indication of its direction and destination. If children have given a full opportunity for learning, growth and development of their personality and potential in all children dimensions, the will definitely advance into a higher stage of development. The important function of children development and develop their potential dimensions. Without developmental conditions, their social and psychological growth will be seriously constrained, and it eventually results in the retardation of the growth of the society as a whole. This is why, the civilized and progressive societies give care and importance to creating conditions for children to conditions for children to grow and develop as responsible and capable citizens. However, this is not happening universally (UNICEF, 1996).



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Children comprise the largest segment of the population in Nepal. A child club ording to the population statistics, about 46 percent of the total population is under age 19 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). In absolute number, there were 11.34 million children in 2001. Despite the growing numerical strength, children in Nepal face a situation that is not conducive for their development. Their problems have several dimensions health hazards, lack of educational opportunities, physical violence, social insecurity, economic exploitation, sexual abuses, psychological torture and refusal of their fundamental rights. These negative conditions have created a situation in which children have difficulty enjoying their rights and developing themselves to their fullest potential (NASC, 1999). This is the serious social and development problem of the society that needs to be addressed with all the seriousness it deserves.

Against the background of this rather gloomy situtaion, His Majesty's Government of Nepal initiated policies and programmes for the development of childrn from the mid-1980's (National Plannig, 1998).Until the late-1990's, the programmes focused more n health, nutrition and educational activities. The Ninth Plan (1997/98-2001/02), has expanded its coverage to include other critical issues facing children such as their protection, rehabilitation, child labour, [artoco[atopm, and development. Besides a number of initiatives from the non-governmental sector have also fovused on issues facing children. At the beginning of the Ninth Plan period, there were 182 non-governmental organizations, including some international non-governmental organizations, working for the improvement in the situation of childrne in the country with a number of child-focused programmes.

A closer anlysis of these programmes, however, reveals that social development of childrne focusing on their personality and potential as well as social and personal quality and ability has not recived much priority. These are important dimensions of personal, social and professional effectiveness of individuals that enabel them to make greater contribution to the societyt. Obviously they should be the focus of supports provided to childrn. The society needs to invest in creating institutional structures and social and psychhological conditions for the development of these qualities in children. Very few institutions working for children in Nepal have been involved in creating institutional structures for the social development of children. One of such institutions that have been created in the recent years is Children's clubs.

Some forms of children's orgnaizations, most notably the Nepal Scouts, have existed in Nepal and served the children in a number of ways since 1952(Rajbhandari, 1999). There was a national level organation called the Nepal Children's Organazation before 1990. Nepal Children's Organazation had a decentralixed structure that extended down to the local level. But it operated more with a political motivation than with the mission of offering an institutional structure for children to develop their personality and potential. The Scouts offered a better opportunity for the development of children but then children had little opportunity and responsibility for managing these institutions themselves, the elders managed these institutions for children.

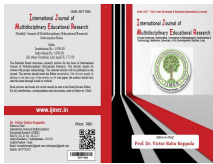
Social and personal development of children is the critical investment for the future of the nation, but it has not received much priority in the policies and programs focused on children. The priority is on their health, education, and protection. While these are undoubtedly critical aspects of a child's life, they are not sufficient for the overall development of children in the society. Their leadership quality, social, competency and personal confidence should also be develop, for which it is important to provide them institutional structures within which they can learn these important qualities. This study addressed itself to explore some aspects of the development function of child clubs on the children and their causes. The basic problem toward which this study was directed research questions.

Objectives

The objectives of this research, to assess composition, motivation and individual development of child club's membership in terms of public and individual, nature and characteristics.

Research Methodology

This study is directed focuses on the exploration of the social and personal development of children associated with the membership of child clubs and the identification of the factors that can be attribute to those functions. The nature of the



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issues lent itself to the use of the descriptive and exploratory research design. The exploratory research design is useful in identifying a general relationship between two or more sets of variables representing a social phenomenon about which there is not much enquiry into the social and personal development functions of the membership of child clubs and into the factors contributing to those functions, the exploratory research design was adopted to plan and carry out this study. Within the overall framework of the exploratory research design, this study used the questionnaire to collect and analyze data to enquire into the research problem. The study thus focused on one child club and its members.

The research method is based on descriptive and exploratory. It is based on detailed investigation of child clubs on social and personal development of children in Belauri Municipality ward no. 7 Kanchanpur. It was exploratory in the sense that analysis is focused on exploring whether Children actual situation will be known or not through this process.

Tools and Techniques

The study was used questionnaire, interview and observation methods. Primary information is acquired through filling questionnaire. Interview to key informants was another method for conduction of study. Secondary data are acquired from different reports, documents and websites.

The primary data is collected from questionnaire survey. Focus Group Discussion (FGD), interview, observation, interview with key informants was the method of data collection based on questionnaire. To verify the primary data secondary data was also be studied and can be acquired from different reports published and unpublished documents, presentation from individuals, experts and organization related to environment and related websites.

Analysis and Interpretation

The collected first-hand information was the main source of analysis of this research report. Data analysis took process of gathering, modeling and transforming data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making. Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under variety of names in different business, science and social science domains. It includes result and discussion of obtained data and finding. The collected data were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted descriptively.

Social and Personal Characteristics of Child Clubs Network Members

A Child Club ordering to the recent origin, Child Clubs network have developed into a social organization of children that is potentially a very powerful instrument for their development. For this reason, they have been expanding rapidly in the various parts of Nepal. A child club ordering to one estimate, there are over 1800 Child Clubs in the country and 100 over Kanchanpur district and the membership base of child clubs is wider in terms of age, gender, ethnic, groups and social and economic positions of children. The findings of this study of Belauri municipality ward no. 7 child club a one ward level child club based in the Kanchanpur district also indicate the wider base of Child Club Membership.

Age Groups of Child Clubs Network Members

Even after crossing the 18 years of age they were continuing their association with the club, and mostly performed advisory and supporting functions. This shows the affiliation of the members with the club. Findings suggest that children below 13 years of age are proportionately much less involved in the club. There seems to be greater attraction of the teenage group to the club.

Gender Composition of Child Clubs Network Members

It gives message for the active participation of boys and girls in the child club. There may be two explanations of the proportionately equal participation of boys and girls. Sense Belauri municipality ward no. 7 is in rural based child club, girls are very such club successful for child club, to participation in social activities as in the rural areas. It may also be possible



that boys in the urban areas have wider opportunities to use their time as compared to girls. Hence, there is equal involvement of boys and girls in the child club.

Educational Status of Child Clubs Network Members

Education plays very important function of the clubs members' performances. Findings suggest that secondary school children have a higher probability of joining the child club with the joiner level school goes having less probability to take part in the club. Lower secondary level students were involved in much greater proportion than children studying in others grades were. Literacy seems to be a major factor for the membership of the child club with illiterate children having no opportunity motivation to join it.

Table 1
Distribution of Educational Status of Child Clubs Network Members

Educational Status	No. of Children	Percent
Primary	2	5.56
Lower Secondary	12	33.33
Secondary	22	61.11
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Educational status of the club members is shown in table 1. As can be seen none of the club member was illiterate. A majority of them were in the secondary levels. About 5.5 percent were studying in the primary levels and 33.33 percent studying in lower secondary levels.

Caste/Ethnic Composition of Child Clubs Network Member

Children from four major caste groups in the Kanchanpur district were dominantly represented. Findings indicate that Chhetri, Dalit and Janajati children are more likely to join the child club as these caste groups were in clear majority, the largest number of Child Club members coming from the Chhetri family followed by Dalit and Janjati children. It is interesting to note that children from various ethnic and minority communities Tharu are high represented in the club. This indicates in balanced social representation in the club membership in favor of majority and dominant caste groups.

Parental Child Club caption of Children

The pattern of parental child club caption of the child club members is shown in table 2. Most of the children came from families from with agriculture backgrounds.

Table 2
Distribution of Parental Child Club caption of Children

Child Club caption	No of Children	Percent
Governmental Service	4	11.11
Agriculture	30	83.33
Business	2	5.56
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Family income of the child clubs members was operationally defined as the principal source of the income. The distributions are agriculture, governmental service, and business. It was reported that large numbers (83.33 percent) of respondents child clubs members' parents were found major family income source was agriculture followed by a governmental service (11.11



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percent). Similarly, some others were involved at business (5.56 percent) as sources of income. This may have been affected by the rural location of the child under study.

Information about the Child Club Network Memberships

How do children come to be associated with the child club, how long their association s and how do they participate in the club activities, could have a major influence on the types of development effects they experience. Finding of the study suggest some typical patterns of the information about the child club membership.

Duration of Membership of Child Clubs Network Members

The found program allows your house of worship to effectively using age level groups. This time-tested format consists of small groups of children of similar ages leaders per group.

Table 3

Distribution Duration of Membership of Child Clubs Network Members

Duration of Membership	No of Children	Percent
1-2 yrs	25	69.45
3-4 yrs	8	22.22
5+ yrs	3	8.33
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The duration of membership of the child club widely varied as table 3 shows; majority of the members had been with the club for one-two years. The 69.45 percent of the members were with the club for one-two years. However, 22.22 percent of the members were with the club for 3-4 years or more some of them were associated with the club even for as long as five years.

Source of Information about Child Clubs Network

This study reported that they came to know about the club for the first time from the number of sources, but the primary source of information was from different organizations.

Table 4

Distribution Source of Information about Child Clubs Network

Sources of information	No of Children	Percent
Friends	2	5.56
Family	12	33.33
School	7	19.44
Different Organization	15	41.67
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As table 4 shows 41.67 percent of the Child Clubs network members got the information about the club for the first time from different organizations. The other sources of information were in order of importance their family, school and friends to communicate each other friends. However, they are not the major sources of information.

Objectives of Motivation for Joining Child Club

An almost similar pattern was observed in case of the sources of motivation for joining the child clubs network.

Table 5



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Distribution Objectives of Motivation for Joining Child Club

Sources of Motivation	No of Children	Percent
Friends	12	33.33
Family	2	5.56
Different organizations	22	61.11
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As table 5 suggests, a large majority (61.11 percent) of the club members were motivation by from different organizations to join the club. The other minor sources of motivation were their friends and family.

Fulfillment of Objectives

From the findings, it looks the most of the club members are satisfied with their association with the club as they feel that their objectives have been fulfilled to large extent.

Table 6

Fulfillment of Objectives

Fulfillment of objectives	No of children	Percent
Fully	3	8.33
Fairly	18	50.00
Partly	15	41.67
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As table 6 suggests, about two third of the members said that their objectives were fulfilled satisfactorily. However, 41 percent felt that their objectives were fulfilled only partly.

Growth Function of Child Clubs Network on Members

Some earlier studies have shown that child clubs have number of positive benefits to the member children and to the communities where they function. The benefits to the children include gaining of new knowledge, confidence building, decision making skills, and community awareness. This study specifically looked into the development functions of child clubs on children in terms of the changes that took place in their awareness, skills, personal attributes, and behavior as a result of their joining the club. This section first presents the social and personal changes experienced by the club members as a whole and then associates the changes with key personal, social and membership characteristics as indicated by the data.

Age of Children and Development Functions

The clubs have been essential in nurturing children so that they have the best chance of developing their life skills. Clubs not only offer new learning opportunities, but also provide an environment where children may take strengths to new heights. Children have been publishing magazines, making improvements to their school environment, conducting various competitions of their own and performing community dramas and rallies for child rights awareness. Succubus lies in the freedom given to the youth to join together their society.



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Caste/Ethnicity and Development Functions

The club members from the dominant caste groups such as Tharu, Brahmin, Dalit and Chhetri reported of significant improvement in all development dimensions of their development functions. However, children of Janajati ethnic groups were not much benefited. It appears that the general social disadvantage to the people from Janajati is also equally applicable to the child clubs.

Duration of Membership and Development Functions

The duration of membership was a major factor for the degree of development. The members with short duration reported of considerable improvements. The development function was perceived highest by the club members who were associated with the club for more than 3-4 years group. It can conclude that the benefits to children progressively increase with the duration of the child club membership.

Average Time Spent in Club and Development Functions

Findings suggest that like the duration of club membership the average time spent in the club is progressively related to the development functions. As can be seen those club members who spent an average of four and above five hours a week reported of the highest level of development functions. This is followed by the members who spent 1-2 hours and 3 hours on average every week. Contrary to expectation, the members who spent an average of above five hours in the club every week did not experience as much improvement. It shows that long hours of association with the club do not necessarily result in more benefits to the club members in terms of their social and personal development.

This study was designed to explore the social and personal and membership characteristics of the child clubs members, to identify the functions of child club membership on the social and personal development of the members and to examine the nature of relationship between the above two sets factors. In order to make the conceptual framework for its design, the study reviewed theoretical literature related to influences on social and personal development of children. The present study was carried out as a study of large child clubs network in Shreepur child clubs, network, located in Kanchanpur district Belauri municipality ward no. 7. A sample of 36 club members was group discussion and personally interview schedule to collect information on the social and personal characteristics of the members of the club and the nature of their club membership. A questionnaire was used to collect information on the perceived functions of the club on them.

There was improvement across all four dimensions of their personal and social development, awareness, social and personal skills, critical personal attributes, and social and personal behaviours. The degrees of change, though, varied. More change that is significant took place in critical personal attributes as well as awareness of social issues. The most important significant functions on the child clubs network members had been on their participation in protecting child rights. Likewise they significantly developed their positive and constructive thinking, knowledge of environment protection, gender equity, ability to express ideas and leadership to the group. Less improvement was reported in self-confidence, advocacy and child rights, ability to work in a team, ability to maintain interpersonal relations and knowledge of child rights. Those aspects of social and personal development recorded significant improvements which were less developed at the time of joining the club indicating significant potential of child clubs network to help children develop their under developed knowledge, skills, social and personal skills.

The club network members from the dominant caste groups such as Brahmin, Dalit and Chhetri reported of significant improvement in all development dimensions of their development functions. However, children of Janajati ethnic groups were not much benefited from their membership of the club network. The general social disadvantage to the people from Janajati is also equally applicable to the child clubs network.



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Conclusion

Very important conclusions can be drawn about the development functions of child clubs network on their members from the findings of the study. This study has firmly demonstrated that child clubs network can be an effective institutional instrument for the social and personal development of children. In particular child clubs can enhance children's critical personal attributes. They can also develop awareness of social issues of children. The present range and level of child club network activities seem to have contributed to the development of children's critical personal attributes moderately. Their function on children is a personal and social behaviors and development of personal and social skills is less.

The personal and social skills of the club network membership point to certain imbalances. Children from ethnic groups and senior levels of schooling have very limited participation in the child clubs network. It seems that child clubs network may not have yet created a space for full social equity in terms of membership composition. However, the gender balance of the membership is very good.

Certain social and personal membership characteristics of the club members such as age, gender, educational level, caste structure and length of club network membership determine the extent and nature of development benefits for children. Age, educational level and length of membership progressively relate to the development benefits; lower their property greater the probability for getting more benefits. Gender and caste structure display the general pattern as is visible in the society. Girls are experiencing more development functions as are the children from the dominant caste groups. In this sense the child clubs network are yet to adopt a more balanced approach to create a fully equitable opportunity for children to gain development benefits from child clubs network membership.

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