

Equality in Public Education: A Study of Public Schools at Yamunamai Rural Municipality

Manish Pyakurel

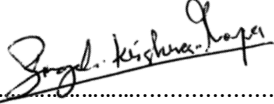


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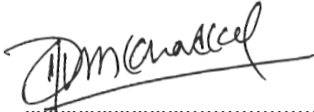
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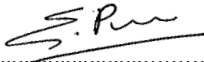
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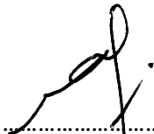


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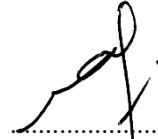


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DECLARATION

By signing, I certify that the paper titled “Equality in Public Education: A Study of Public Schools at Yamunamai Rural Municipality” is entirely original with no previous submissions to academic institutions for different degrees.



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ABSTRACT

Equality in public education can be addressed by knowing the availability of resources among the students, and how it contributes to minimizing inequality. Previously, various researches have been conducted to examine and explore the equality of available resources in public schools. These researches were focused upon teachers to acquire data to analyze various gaps to address the real issue of students. This study, conducted in 8 different public schools of Yamuna Mai Rural Municipality, Rautahat using both qualitative and quantitative research methodology helps to identify equality among students from the lens of distributive, condition and capability approaches. In this study, Biggeri's capability indicators have been used to explore the situation of equality in public schools. According to the findings of this research, the process of distribution of resources is not enough to ensure equality. Agenda of condition and capability should be taken hand in hand with distribution, which can help ensure equality among all students.

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ACRONYMS

NYCI	National Youth Council of Ireland
KUSOA	Kathmandu University School of Arts
NIRT	National Institute for Research and Training
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
UN	United Nations
BPEP II	Nepal – Second Basic and Primary Education Project
ECA	Extra Curricular Activities
CCA	Co-curricular Activities
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The concept of equality has existed for a very long time. In ancient times, hierarchy divided every entity of society. The social world was stratified in such a way that it divided people based on their abilities which led to create differences in function and the corresponding difference in status (Nicholos, 2021). Further, the ancient world held to the notion of collective good, which even reflected a fulfillment of a common goal. Today the notion of equality has changed in the global world. Equality is not just a concept of treating everyone equally or achieving a common goal but it is more about tackling the differences to acquire equal opportunities for different groups of people (NYCI, 2022). For example, a person belonging to a minority community might understand this concept as getting an equal opportunity to participate in active community work like others and being valued by every individual by valuing differences. The concept of equality recognizes certain groups of people with protected characteristics have experienced discrimination. And it believes that no individual should be left behind due to his or her, class, caste, gender, sexual orientation, or ability.

Equality is observed as a problem in the public education sector of Nepal. The agenda of public education is directed towards equitable and accessible education despite individual or communal differences (NIRT, 2016). Most public school-going children face issues in getting equal opportunities. These issues relate to limited access to education for various reasons such as geographic constraints, poor infrastructure, social and cultural norms, and a lack of well-trained teachers (Oxfam International, 2019). Equality not just focuses on what an individual doesn't have but on something that an individual should have. Equitable and accessible education is directed towards the education that addresses a system every individual can fit in. To do so each individual also requires resources.

According to the concept of equality, equal availability of resources can potentially determine equality (textbooks, proper classrooms, toilets, and qualified teachers, health care). This argument is supported by the capability approach of Sen, who talks about a set of opportunities (books, school) to achieve proper functioning (to be educated, to be employed). On a similar note, Unterhalter (2007) has used 3 different approaches to equality in education. These approaches help understand how more equitable and accessible education could be provided to every child going to school.

Further, this study employs Sen's Capability Approach in general and Unterhalter's approaches to examine equality in particular. In doing so, equality in distribution of resources, conditions and capability as three major dimensions that are taken into consideration. These three dimensions help shed light to examine and understand a) resource availability for students, b) availability of fair condition within school premises, and c) the capability possessed by individual students. Biggeri (2004) considers these dimensions with additional indicators that help understand whether the availability of resources helps to attain educational equality for children.

1.2. Problem Statement

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of

their lives and talents (EHRC, 2018). The notion of equality believes that no individual should be discriminated against based on his or her caste, race, sex, gender, ability, or religion. United Nations also states in their rule of law to respect the equal rights of all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion (UN, 2019). The Equality Act 2010 prohibits all employers, service providers, and providers of education, from discriminating against, harassing, or victimizing individuals with protected characteristics (EHRC, 2018). A child being denied admission to a school as a student due to their race is an example of unlawful discrimination (EHRC, 2018).

Equality is one of the pertinent issues in Nepal. Nepal is a country of diversity, having people of different geographical, socio-cultural, economic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. Different cases of inequality are seen in most of the rural parts of Nepal. Caste culture, income status, geography, ability, sex, and gender are the general cause of inequality here in Nepal. This problem even rises in the education system of Nepal. Most likely, the case of inequality is seen in the field of public education.

The public schools are catchment areas for delivering public education in Nepal, these areas are mostly heterogeneously focusing on diverse populations, and inequality is seen throughout those schools. Inequality does not always have to be between the students in a school. Inequality is also a result of students being unable to obtain basic facilities as promised by national plans and laws. There are a lot of plans and policies made by the government to improve the status of the education sector. There are different achievements in increasing the number of school-going students. But the number just remains in the enrollment. Retaining several students in education has been a very difficult task here in Nepal. Most of the poor, remote, low-caste families and disadvantaged ethnicities are still affected by the access gap (NIRT, 2016). The slowness of policy implementation has been barriers to achieve set goals and benefit the target groups. The lack of implementing actors also widens the gap between education and the receiver.

This research explores equality in public education from the point of view of the availability of resources, followed by exploring the importance, availability, and satisfaction of the availability of the resources that connect student's well being during schooling. In doing so, the study delves into understanding whether the availability of resources leads to equality in education. The information generated is solely from the survey tool administered to each student respondent. Likewise, this study attempts to understand equality from different aspects as mentioned above; the distribution aspect, condition aspects and capability aspect where each of these aspects has its related indicators.

Here, the first aspect is related to the distribution aspect. It tries to find out about the distribution of midday meals, textbooks, dress, and stationeries, which fall under the basic needs that promote and encourage students to engage in school. The second, the condition approach encourages finding about the fair condition in the school environment for every individual student. The condition aspect investigates the participation of students in basic classroom activities, equal attention given to students in every activity they perform as well as their curiosity, and comfort in the class. Finally, the capability approach evaluates social policy that focuses on the aggregate benefits of every student. It focuses on the provision of a set of opportunities that helps to achieve the desired functioning. The focus here is on the provision of physical resources and medical resources that helps students to reach the desired outcome of being well educated.

1.3. Objective

- To examine equality/inequality on the availability of resources among the students
- To understand whether the availability of resources contributes to minimizing inequality

1.4. Research Questions

- What are indicators that represent equality and inequality in resource distribution, condition, and capability among students in school?
- How can equality/inequality be maximized/minimized in relation to resource distribution, conditions and capabilities?

1.5. Scope of the study

There has been a lot of research done in the field of educational equality in Nepal. Many researches have found the need of resources among students to fulfill the need of equality. Many projects have provided resources to cater the needs. But it has been found that not much research has been conducted to examine whether availability of resources brings any change in equality/ inequality among the students. This research aim is to address these issues. By studying about distribution, conditions and capabilities of resources among students of different schools of Rural Municipality of Rautahat, it summarizes, what factors and issues should be addressed in future works. The research is centered on Yamuna Mai Rural Municipality's 8 public schools students, with diverse religion, status and age group. The research has a significance value in sector of equality in education as both qualitative as well as quantitative data from primary and lower secondary level students has been collected, which helps to know the core of equality, as in what and where the issues lies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Concept of Equality

From defining equality as a concept of fundamental values dividing the labor party from the conservative party in the 50s, which had a major focus in the postwar labor history to now, equality is not just a concept of treating everyone the same but tackling the differences to acquire equal opportunities for different groups of people, the concept has come a very long way (NYCI, 2022). But understanding equal opportunity is a different thing. There is no society where every member is treated equally or kept under the same condition. Every individual is assigned different roles and functioning that are important for their wellbeing. But here the opportunity indicates some other things, like a person from a minority background being given equal opportunity as others to raise a voice in society. Each individual has been entitled to the same rights and opportunities to develop their skills and talents and to pursue their ambitions (NYCI, 2022).

In another way, it is not the inequality of status that is important here but the inequalities in people's basic access to education, health care, and a just society. Even though barriers to equality is talked about, different groups of people and similar experiences of discrimination and exclusion is seen throughout various class, caste, age, gender, and so on. There remain different reasons why an individual is treated unequally in society. For examples:

- Prejudiced due to being a member of a defined class, caste, religion, ability, and so on
- Lack of power to access the defined service
- Limited access to the information system

There is different concepts developed defining equality. No individual is different from others and has the right to get an equal share of utility. The utilitarian concept of equality also talks about the pure distribution problem (Sen, 1979). This concept tells that there is always a scene of oneness (Bentham, n.d.). Every individual is equal in the eyes of equality and everyone should be distributed with an equal share of goods and services to increase utility. The utilitarian equality objective is to maximize the total utility irrespective of the distribution. But to do so requires the equality of marginal utility. From this perspective, we can see that it is not very practical to get equality for everyone, as there is no ideal state of utility in society.

Some people are poor, some are rich, some are discriminated against and some are not. Each individual in a society has a different set of interests. Equal treatment should focus on fair allocation rather than equal distribution. Due to this reason, the concept still lacks to counter the actual need.

There are theories developed to address the marginal utility and total utility of a person. These theories limit themselves to the equal distribution of basic goods and services. Equalizing people on the same ground by focusing on utility is not enough. Surely, the distribution of basics can help people to achieve a degree of well-being. But according to Sen, the concept of need, which has to be a primary focus, has not got adequate coverage through the information on primary goods and utility. Giving a prime focus to a marginalized person, he/she might have accepted their condition as a fact and no other notion of equality focusing on total utility will do much for him. But the person might have needs as a marginalized that should be catered to, which neither rests in high marginal utility, in low total utility, nor deprivation in terms of primary

goods (Sen, 1979). According to Sen, the concept of basic capability equality tells that all the theories primarily lack the notion of "basic capabilities" that a person is able to do certain things. This concept proposes orienting distribution around capabilities to achieve functioning (Sen, 1992).

Moreover, providing a set of opportunities to achieve aspects of functioning is a notion of the capability approach. For example, there are different sets of opportunities for a school-going child such as schools, books, supportive parents, and so on. These set of opportunities are provided to achieve aspects of functioning such as being employed, being educated, being healthy, and so on. The concept of capabilities does not focus on the distribution of resources to increase or decrease marginal utility. Rather it focuses on the equality of capabilities human beings enjoy leading their life (Sen, 1992).

2.2. Equality in Education

For centuries, human beings all over the world had three basic needs, food, shelter, and cloth. With the growing demand of the modern world, education has been a need to survive in this world. Jobs throughout modern times require either a skillful person or a highly educated person. To fulfill the requirement, people have started to enroll themselves in various educational institutions. But the situation is not the same for all. There are many people still around the world who are deprived of basic education due to various reasons of inequality based on race, caste, culture, religion, gender, sex, and ability. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) proclaims that everyone has the right to education, that education shall be free, at least in the elementary or fundamental stages, and that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality. Even after the declaration, there were a lot of people deprived of this facility. Even due to language and poverty people find it difficult to have access to the facilities that others have enrolled into.

Before 1900, education in Nepal was centered on only the Rana and the royal family. Citizens were not given the facility of education until 1901 when Nepali-medium schools were established. Still, there was no equality in education until the 50's as not many people were aware of the need for education. Gradually, many schools and colleges were established catering to the needs of citizens. Report of the National Education Commission, 1992, claims that after the political change of 1990 there has been a change in the structure of education. Three modes of imparting knowledge and skill: formal, non-formal, and vocational focused on literacy drive, functional adult education, and women's programs.

Similarly, the Basic and Primary Education Master Plan for 1997- 2002, focused on bringing reform in primary education where it targeted to increase the participation of girls in disadvantaged groups. The World Bank also supported the government's compulsory education policies to ensure all children complete five years of primary education. DANIDA (2004), where the BPEP II focused on improving basic education and also increasing enrollment of students by providing systematic incentives to over-report attendance, which was particularly for girls. It encourages and makes an effort to provide access to marginalized groups, such as girls, disabled children, and disadvantaged ethnic, caste, and socio-economic groups. The Education for All Program (EFA) was designed as a five-year strategic program from 2004-2009 within the fifteen year National Plan of Action (NPA) to which the Government of Nepal was committed. This program focused on ensuring accessible education for all children, reducing adult illiteracy, eliminating gender disparity, and so on. Its major agenda was to focus on equal and accessible education for all to encounter the growing demand of Nepali society. The 2015-2021 program developed as Nepal Education Sector Analysis focused to enhance access to equality in education, where the government offers 16 different types of scholarships including conflict-affected

students, individuals and disabilities, girls, Dalits, the poor, and the talented.

All these policies, plans, and actions in education are required for a reason that is reason to ensure equality for all despite their caste, race, religion, sex, gender, ability, language, or poverty. According to equality, every student, regardless of where they come from, should have equal access to a high-quality education. With favorable educational outcomes, students will have a similar opportunity. Those opportunities will surely be needed to grasp the well-being in their required society. Equality in education is required for various reasons. Such as:

- It is necessary to create an inclusive society
- Education equality enables the rapid development of the country
- Education equality is important for advancing social justice
- The search for talent among all of a nation's residents will expand as a result of equal educational possibilities
- A prerequisite for economic mobility is educational fairness. Without it, there will be a gap in social group success that will harm the economy
- Equality in the distribution of education is essential for equal opportunities in the employment market

Thus, equality in education is a very important matter for the overall development of the society and every individual. Education is a key to enhancing the capabilities of individuals. Differences that remain in society that arise from social differences can only be eradicated by equalizing education.

2.3. Equality, Community, and Public Education

In a community, people living of different castes, cultures, incomes, abilities, and language or prior educational backgrounds. Similarly, every individual has different needs and resources, whether it is physical, social, or economic. The concept of equality in education focuses on the fact that every individual has an equal right to access quality education no matter where they come from. It is understood that regardless of any children's abilities or circumstances, they should get access to the same standard education. In the context of public education, it is seen that the quality of education is degraded in most places. Public education is widespread throughout the nation but is not given priority as much as private education. Though the agenda of public education is to provide equitable education despite their differences, it is seen that most of them create a condition of difference.

Moreover, it has been observed that the environment of public education regarding children differs as per their caste, religion, class, gender, and ability. The biased environment in and out of the school has created vast inequality not just among the students but also between the teacher, students, and parents. They have been set to determine equal opportunity among students in the education sector. They might face inequality in getting basic resources like textbooks, qualified teachers, proper classrooms, and particularly inequalities tied to social class. Equal access to resources such as classrooms, playgrounds, computer labs, washrooms, ECA, and CCA programs also determines equality. Differences have been created within the school by creating a biased culture of separating students based on their hierarchy in society.

Due to the risk of getting less or no opportunity, people of lower class, caste, or ability are hesitant to send their children to school. Instead of sending children to school, they are kept as a worker in their houses. People having multiple children have an agenda of acquiring more assets with the help of their children. As per the standard set by public education in most places, people think education is a waste of their time and money. People do not understand the importance of education, as they are never even made aware of it. To address this issue it is the prime duty of

the education sector to ensure equal distribution of opportunities and goods among all children. Midday meal has been one of the prominent ways to ensure equality of distribution in public education among all children. There are other things like textbooks, scholarships, and school fees that come under the part of the distribution.

However, it is just not enough to distribute items to promote educational equality in public schools. But providing equal conditions is a necessity. Providing fair conditions to use the item ensures conditions. What if a student has been given washrooms but the condition is not equal for a girl? It is quite obvious that girls are not going to school, as the environment is not enabling. So, it is not just about focusing on providing resources but about providing a proper condition to utilize the resources. People having low-income status are always aware of the fact that their children working in a field from a very early age is necessary to fulfill their economic needs. It is far more important for them to earn than to study. Besides, education should provide a condition for every child to see a better future. Providing this opportunity can lead parents and children to invest time in the school. As said before a child has got different abilities but might be good at a specific task or ability. Providing equality of capability helps every individual to choose their capabilities as per their capacity. This intellectual development of a child is possible through practical education. Promoting public education by ensuring these ideas will help enhance equality status in public education.

2.4. Unterhalter's Conceptual Framework for measuring equality in education

Elaine Unterhalter has viewed equality in education from three different dimensions: distributive equality, equality of condition, and equality of capability. The distribution approach looks forward to the distribution of goods and services that ensure equality in education. The concept of distribution is derived from egalitarian literature. Resources distribution is the prime objective of this concept. The second approach to the condition is derived from the work of Lynch and Baker (2005), which draws attention to how equality in education is associated with the fair condition and enabling environment for every individual. The third and final approach of Amartya Sen, equality of capabilities looks upon evaluating social policy, including education, without ignoring individual aspirations or dictating social benchmarks.

2.4.1. Distributive Equality

The concept of distribution is focused on providing an equal amount of basic resources to every individual. Being a concept of individual welfare, it is concerned with equalizing the incomes or resources of individuals by distributing materials. There always remains the situation of inequality in a society. People are distributed among different hierarchies based on their caste, culture, race, ethnicity, level of income, and many more. The distribution approach to equality in education focuses on providing children with resources inside the schools that might help to bridge the gap between the hierarchies in society. The provision of midday meals to the students in public schools of Nepal is a prime example of equality of distribution. It is seen that most of the public school-going children of Nepal are facing the problem of food. Due to the lack of adequate food in their house, they are sent to work rather than waste time in school without earning. The Government of Nepal started effective provision of midday meals in 2015 AD as the pandemic hit the lower income group of people hard. This provision started and expanded throughout Nepal with an agenda of distribution of midday meals to the public school-going children without any biases. This distribution made a lot of changes in the growing number of students in most parts of Nepal. But still, there are places where the provision failed to bring equality.

As the major agenda of this approach is the distribution of resources equally to every individual,

it failed to reach the needs of people. There are many people having difficulty earning a fixed amount of money to run their household. Their need to run the household might be to feed other members of the family too. There might also be other conditions that the egalitarian ideology does not fulfill. Many critics indicate that distributive equality is focused upon an individualistic approach whereas; the concept of equality lies in a group. The egalitarian concept tries to eradicate individual equality by providing a little more to someone having a little less to form equality. But the critique also argues that to bring improvement in the conditions of the least advantaged some inequalities are necessary. This concept looks at individual or household level income inequality, which reveals quite less about equality in education. So, it is understood that the distributive equality approach is not enough to understand and work to eradicate inequality.

2.4.2. Equality of Condition

Lynch and Baker (2005), point out that there is a thick notion of inequality in education where economically generated inequalities derive from social class inequalities. Different educational institutions have made these notions their approaches for admission of children, group children based on their perception, assessment in favor of language skills, and the systems of curriculum design. The equality of conditions suggests equality in education that develops respect and recognition for diverse children, respect for even narrow forms of academic achievements, and the need for valuing care and equalizing power for democratic planning and discussion.

The major agenda of this approach is to focus on enabling the environment and empowering children to promote equality in the education system. Rather than focusing on outcomes or achievements this concept focuses on the condition in school. Whether a school has adequate space for classrooms or not to suffice the total number of students, an adequate number of desks and benches for students, comfortable toilet facilities, proper attention, and so on can be catered to under the condition of an equality approach. Providing fair conditions to all the students is a prime objective of this approach. This approach values the difference and seeks to address inequalities of power, as developed by Eisenberg (2006). The major problem in this approach is that it is difficult to solve all the issues at once and for all as it gets too overwhelming for all the acting bodies like education institutions, government, and development partners to effect. Every school requires a maximum number of resources to fulfill and improve its condition. Enabling education in practice requires support from parents, children, communities, and staff to act in the enabling environment.

2.4.3 Equality of Capability

The third dimension in the framework is the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen is related to equality of capability. According to Sen, this approach evaluates social policy that focuses on the aggregate benefits an initiative has for the whole society or the upcoming generation. It is not focused on the welfare of an individual. According to capability, investment in education for any marginalized people is not justified by the benefits for them but by the benefits of the societies they live in. For example, there is a community where either a girl or a boy is deprived of education. This approach here is not concerned with individual-level equality or gender equality in education. It seeks something more, like evaluating the social policy that hinders equality in education to a larger community.

Moreover, every individual aspires to become something or someone. The approach developed by Sen is concerned with evaluating the social policy, including education, without ignoring individual aspirations or affecting social benchmarks. The capability approach is concerned with ensuring people achieve actual functioning, and they achieve something out of the opportunity

they have (Sen, 1992). Opportunities set in public education can be a toilet, cemented floors, electricity, and drinking water. The capability approach to equality concerns whether the community or the school gets all these resources to the students so that they can achieve their functioning such as being educated, earning, doing greater good for society, and so on. The equal availability of opportunity set will ensure equality in education for all the students whether of any ethnicity, sex, race, caste, ability, or level of income. Sen further argues that the approaches to welfare lack an understanding of how individuals valued education or schooling. Other approaches focused on providing resources and conditions to use it, but did not focus on the actual need. It did not analyze whether people valued education just for the sake of societal values. For example, resources like books and scholarships might be available as they have been distributed and have a fair condition of usability in school, but the real deal to value lies in the needs of the students.

Moreover, equality of capability here helps students to attain functioning from their choice to study. For example, a person with a disability might have an interest to attain school, and he is distributed with a wheelchair. Without his choice to study even if he is given the resource, it is of no worth. But the choice makes a difference whether to achieve a preferred functioning or not. Being in a wheelchair is his problem. But the capability approach to equality focuses on making the road for wheelchair users a collective issue. The major focus of capability, i.e. doing is done by the society, which is providing equality to a group and the individual urge to be educated by choice is the being of a student. So, according to Sen (2000), the equality of capability approach focuses on the freedom of choice that every individual values to attain equality is more important to be valued rather than other narrower notions of equality.

Given the above discussion, this study draws upon a conceptual framework, which blends all the three major approaches available. The section below offers the conceptual framework that guides the conceptualization and operationalization employed for frame arguments, analysis and discussion offered in the later chapters.

2.5. Conceptual Framework to Study Equality

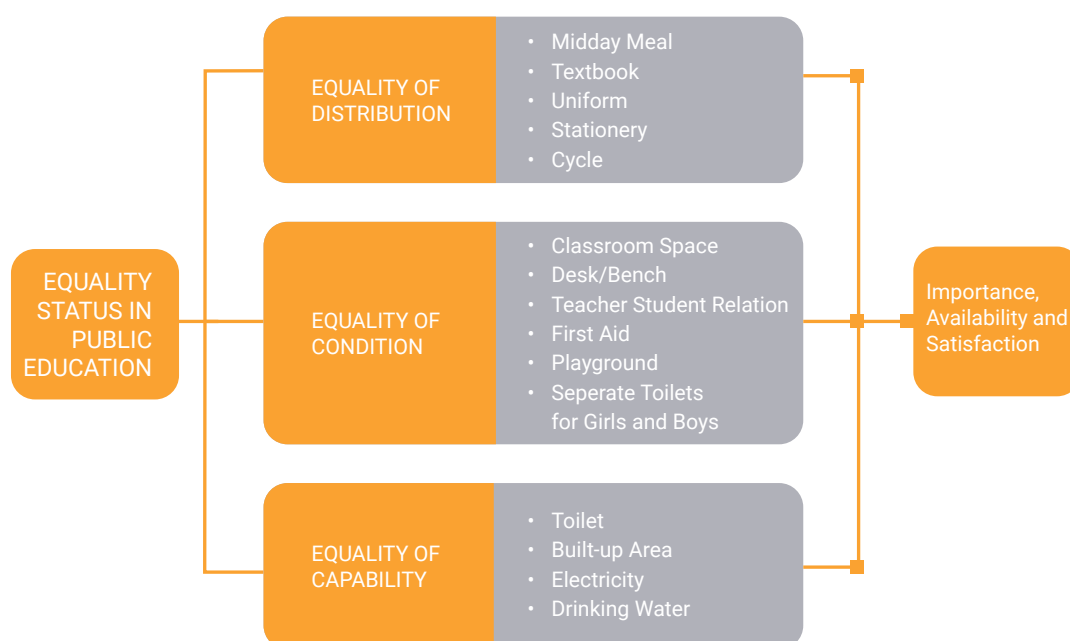


Figure 2.1, Conceptual Framework

There remains a question of whether public education has been equal to all or not. The development of public education in the early 1900 has played a major role in the shift in the educational dimension of Nepal. Many plans made throughout the century have tried to solve the problem of inequality in public education. With every plan, the status of equality has changed somehow. This framework tries to analyze the status of equality in public education through the lens of the capability approach. Here different lenses of equality such as distribution, condition, and capability, help to analyze the status of equality in public education. Different indicators are developed referring to the preliminary list of capabilities based on elaboration of Biggeri (2004). The framework helps to analyze equality status by knowing the importance and satisfaction of students with all the indicators mentioned above.

2.5.1. Equality of distribution

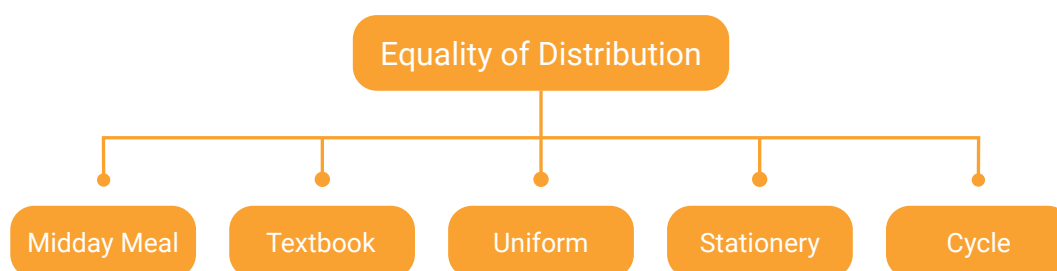


Figure 2.2, Equality of Distribution

The distribution approach focuses on providing different materials and services to the school-going-age students. The main agenda of equality of distribution is just to provide items that encourage and motivate a child to the educational institution. Some of the major indicators to ensure equality of distribution are midday meal, textbook, dress, and stationeries. Being based on an egalitarian view of equality, it focuses on individual-level distribution. It looks upon the difficulties that an individual or a household has to attain education. This approach will help us to look upon individual-level distribution and compare it with the distribution among all individuals to analyze in/equality.

Midday Meal: *A majority of the population of Nepal cannot still feed two meals a day. People are stuck in the vicious cycle of poverty and illiteracy. With the rising cost of everyday life, people are stuck with this problem. Children who are the future of the nation have been revolving around this cycle and are excluded from every other opportunity. When a major agenda is about food, education is something that most of them don't even dream about. The provision of midday meals in school is to end the same vicious cycle of those people. The idea of midday is to provide nutritious food to the children at school despite their inability to afford it.*

As this idea revolves around distribution, it is formulated at an individual level. The provision of midday meals does not just focus on nutrition value but also provides educational opportunities to individuals by retaining them in educational institutions. When a school provides food to students, the problem of hunger in their family decreases and this support also helps the student to focus on education rather than earning for the family. In this research, we will also be analyzing the importance and satisfaction level of midday meals along with their provision.

Textbook: Affordability of textbooks is a serious issue for people with poverty. It is seen that most of the children attaining public education belong to poor families. Due to poverty, the purchasing power of people is not as much as to afford textbooks every year. This has been an issue for students to face inequality in school. In a class, some students own a book and some don't. The provision of free textbooks ensures a level of equality at an individual level. As a provision of free textbooks, the retention level of students in long-term education is insured. This framework helps us to analyze the need for the distribution of textbooks among every student to ensure equality. It also helps to ensure the importance and satisfaction level of the distributed well to retain equality.

Uniform: Most schools here maintain a proper dress code in Nepal. Every school-going child is concerned about its uniform considering it to be a basic necessity. Distribution of proper school dress surely ensures the increment of school-going children. Through the lens of distribution, we have tried to evaluate what differences are seen in children having a dress or school uniforms. In our study, the distribution of dress can help us to know about the importance of it for children and whether they are satisfied with it or not.

Stationery: Stationeries include things that every student requires in their day-to-day life such as pencils, erasers, sharpeners, pens, notebooks, paper, and so on. In our study area, some families are not able to fulfill even these requirements. But having said that there is no such provision of providing such stationeries by the government or the schools. Different other organizations fulfill these basic requirements in these areas. Similarly, in this study, we have tried to know the importance of the distribution of stationeries and whether or not it contributes to increasing or decreasing/equality among students.

Cycle: Today, the cycle has been a basic necessity for the female students of the Terai region to go to school. The government of Nepal has started distributing the cycle as an agenda of 'Beti Padhau, Beti Bachau' to female students passing grade 8 in public school. This provision has made students come to school by hook or crook and increased the number of female students in public schools. This is the reason this indicator has been included in this framework under distribution.

2.5.2. Equality of Condition

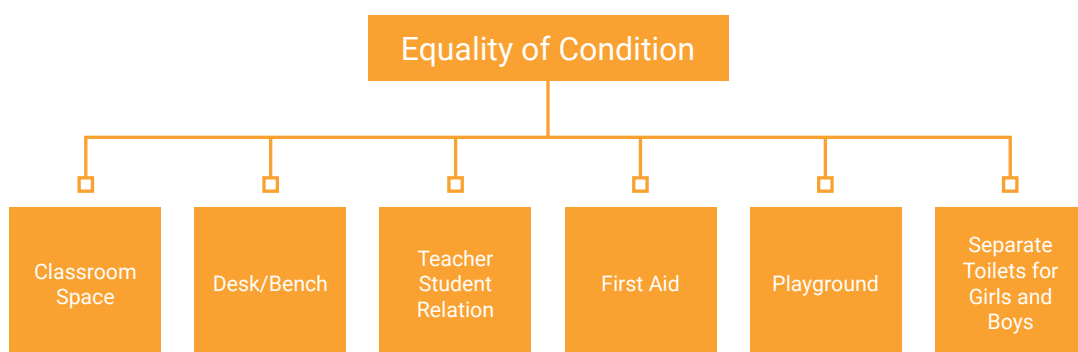


Figure 2.3, Equality of Condition

The concept of the condition suggests that to have equality in education there should be respect and recognition for diverse children, irrespective of their race, religion, caste, or ability. In the approach of condition, its analysis is not about outcomes or achievements that are equalized but about conditions in school (Unterhalter, 2007). It mentions the fair conditions that are provided in school. Developing other forms of enabling environment and empowering all children is a prime focus of equality of condition. This approach to equality will help this study to focus on the condition that the students of different public schools in Yamuna Mai Rural Municipality have achieved to ensure/equality.

Classroom Space: *This indicator views whether a student gets the condition of proper classroom space or not. Enabling the environment should be a prime objective to make a student come regularly to school. To make that happen proper classroom space is necessary.*

Desk/Bench: *In most public schools, there is no proper place to sit in the classroom. Many students are found sitting on floors, which by default creates an excluding environment for the students. As an indicator of condition, a desk/bench would be best to find out the fair and enabling environment in the school.*

Teacher-Student Relation: *A teacher's behavior is something that attracts students to the school. If the relationship has a strong foundation, the student's number would increase by default. Hence, this study looks at whether a teacher treats students fairly/humanely or not, whether a student is comfortable sharing his/her problem with the teacher or not, and whether or not students can make eye contact while talking to the teacher. These things are important to know whether all students are comfortable doing so or not. This will show whether or not there is equality in the condition of relations in school.*

First aid: *This factor will enable this study to explore the condition of the health-related issue. This indicator will show the equality in conditions for the basic treatment of students. It is a prime duty of schools to have the basic facility of provision of first aid.*

Playground: *Having an area for entertainment in schools is important. This helps students to cope in the school environment as they indulge themselves in different physical and mental activities. As a basic need for entertainment, this indicator will help us to know the fair condition and enabling environment inside a school.*

Separate toilets for girls and boys: *It is a prime reason for a girl to go to school in many areas. Due to the lack of separate toilets, girls hesitate to join schools. This indicator will help us to know whether there is equality between both boys and girls in this condition and also to know whether or not there is the presence of an enabling environment in schools.*

2.5.3. Equality of Capability

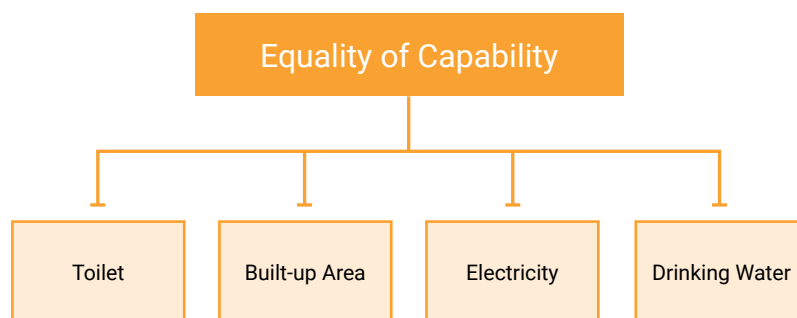


Figure 2.4, Equality of Capability

With these dimensions as conceptual framework, this study explores whether students are provided with sets of opportunities such as toilets, built-up areas, electricity, and drinking water is provided or not. These opportunities set here, as indicators will help us know the functioning of students. Proper availability of these sets of basic resources will help the student to focus on their capabilities to achieve their educational well-being.

METHODOLOGY

This study has adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods. This study includes methods like questionnaires and surveys, observation, case studies, and secondary data to collect major information. Secondary data such as different articles, books, and journals have been reviewed to collect information on equality, capability approach, and different frameworks of various scholars. With the help of secondary data, identification of various issues and gaps in the public school education system in Rautahat has been explored. Secondary data analysis has enabled this study to further explore the core issue of equality in education. In this study, the conceptual framework has been designed as per the need of the research topic by reviewing Sen's capability approach, Elaine Unterhalter's conceptual framework on equality, and Bigger's (2004) list of capabilities. The research questions have been developed according to the designed framework. Questionnaires were developed to dig into the perception and understanding of students on a fair basis to acquire firsthand information.

Moreover, in this study no data had been collected without the consent of the respondents. Respondents were first made clear very briefly about the objective of the study. Then, they were asked whether they wished to take part in the interview or not. As the respondents were primary and lower-secondary level students, they were asked simple questions to make them feel comfortable. They were assured that the information provided from them would be kept confidential.

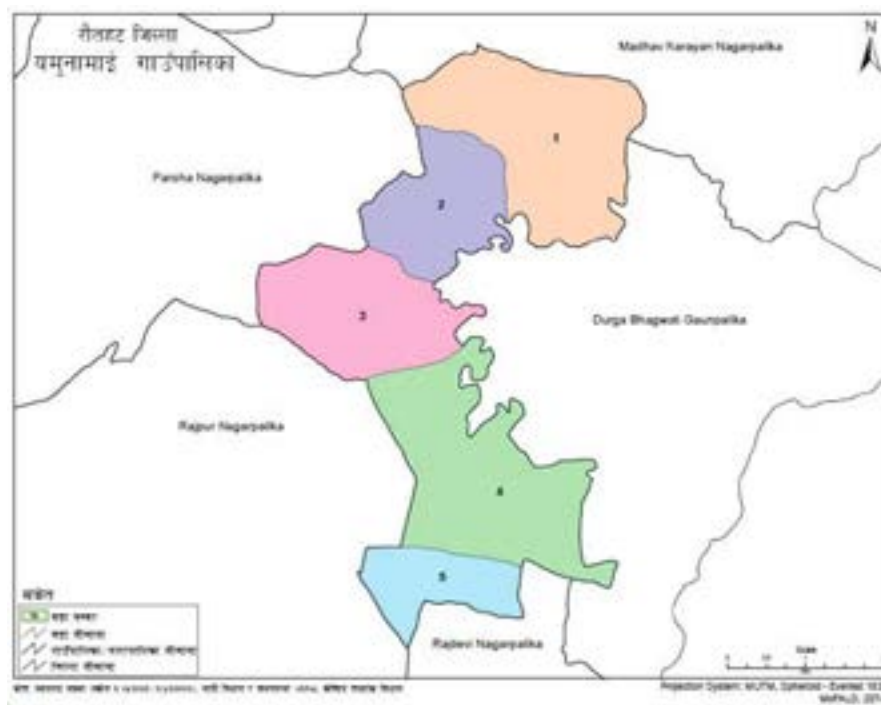
3.1. Selection of the study site

The selected study site was Yamuna Mai Rural Municipality located in the Rautahat district, a part of Madhesh Province (No. 2) of Nepal. It occupies 16.7 sq. km of the area consisting of 5 wards with a total population of 28,607 (Yamunamai Gaupalika, 2022). 65% of the total population of the rural municipality belongs to the Hindu community, and 35% belongs to the Muslim community. This area is the most suitable site for this study as Rautahat is listed as having the lowest literacy rate (42%) of all districts in Nepal. Here a third of the girls are uneducated whereas, half of boys and men over four years old are illiterate (UNHRC, 2013).

Source: MoFALD, 2074



Figure 3.1, Rautahat District in Map of Nepal



Source: MoFALD,
2074

Figure 3.2, Map of Yamunamai Rural Municipality

3.2. Duration of the study

The research was conducted for a period of 5 months from May to September. The duration of the field visit was set for 15 days from the 3rd of September to the 16th of September.

3.3. Methods of data collection

Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used to collect data in this study. The survey questionnaire was designed according to the requirement of the study. Those questions were asked to the key respondent. Likert scale was used to rate the importance (extremely important, very important, important, slightly important, and not at all important), availability (highly available, positively available, available, negatively available, and highly unavailable), and satisfaction (highly satisfied, positively satisfied, satisfied, negatively satisfied and highly unsatisfied) level on the scale on 1 to 5, respectively to make the student better understand the idea. Likewise, open-ended questions have enabled this study to get a deeper and more detailed idea and perception of students, which later was used for case studies.

3.4. Selection of respondents

The study was done in 8 public schools of Yamuna Mai Rural Municipality. We used stratified random sampling to select respondents. Stratified random sampling starts by dividing a class of students into two groups i.e. girls and boys. Then a random sample is taken from each group (PHAST, 2017). After all, the random sampling method reduces the time to select respondents and also there is a better chance to get accurate and more intensive data (PHAST, 2017). A total of 230 students were interviewed. Among the interviewed, there were 116 girls and 114 boys. All the respondents were between the age of 6-14 and from grades 3 to 8. None of the respondents were selected considering their class, caste, ability, or religion. All the respondents were interviewed with the same questionnaire prepared for this study.

FINDINGS

This chapter illustrates the level of importance and satisfaction indicated by the students towards the availability of different resources at their respective public schools of Yamuna Mai Rural Municipality. Different indicators of the proposed theme are used to know the resources in the schools. Data has been collected from the response of 230 respondents from various schools. The evidence derived from the responses spell out conditions of equality through the check in the availability of resources and explain the need to minimize/maximize inequality/equality in public school. Indicators such as importance, availability, and satisfaction of textbooks, stationery, uniform, classroom space, desk bench, playground, toilet, drinking water, and electricity has been analyzed in this study and the ratings are based upon a Likert scale, which is in order of high to low where high represents 1 and low represents 5. The findings are offered as per the above-mentioned framework.

4.1. Equality of Distribution

In this section, tables depict the importance, availability, and satisfaction of textbooks, stationery, and uniform. The table 4.1 presented below shows the importance of textbooks to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	136	59.13
Very Important	89	38.7
Moderately Important	5	2.17

Table 4.1, Importance of Textbook

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the table indicates of a total of 230 respondents surveyed, 59.13% of them think that textbooks are extremely important, followed by 38.7% rating very important and 2.17% rating moderately important. The below-mentioned table 4.2 shows the availability of textbooks to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Available	107	46.52
Available (+)	92	40
Available	22	22
Available (-)	7	3.04
Highly Unavailable	2	0.87

Table 4.2, Availability of Textbook

Source: Field Work, 2022

The Table above shows that out of 230 respondents, 46.52% of them rate textbooks to be highly available, 40% of them rate them positively available, followed by 9.57% who responded as available. However, 3.04% respondents rate it to be negatively available and 0.87% respondents rate it to be highly unavailable.

The below-mentioned table 4.3 shows the satisfaction of students towards textbooks available in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	109	47.39
Satisfied (+)	84	36.52
Satisfied	24	10.43
Satisfied (-)	11	4.78
Highly Unsatisfied	2	0.87

Table 4.3, Satisfaction of Textbook

Source: Field Work, 2022

The Table shows that out of 230 respondents, 47.39% of them rate textbooks as highly satisfied, followed by 36.52% rating positively satisfied and 10.43% rating satisfied. Likewise, 4.78% rating textbooks as negatively satisfied, and 0.87% rated highly unsatisfied.

The table 4.4 presented below shows the importance of stationery to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	115	50
Very Important	101	43.91
Moderately Important	11	4.78
Slightly Important	3	1.3

Table 4.4, Importance of Stationery

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the table indicates among the total 230 respondents surveyed, 50% of them think that stationery is very important, followed by 43.91% rating extremely important. Likewise, 4.78% respondents rate moderately important and 1.3% respondents rate slightly important.

The below-mentioned table 4.5 shows the availability of stationery to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Available	67	29.13
Available (+)	47	20.43
Available	44	19.13
Available (-)	38	16.52
Highly Unavailable	34	14.78

Table 4.5, Availability of Stationery

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table above indicates that among 230 respondents, 29.13% of them rated stationery to be positively available, 20.43% of them rated it highly available, followed by 19.13% responding it as highly unavailable. However, 16.52% respondents rate it to be available and 14.78% respondents rate it to be negatively available.

The below-mentioned table 4.6 shows the satisfaction of stationery of the students of public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	60	26.09
Satisfied (+)	53	23.04
Satisfied	42	18.26
Satisfied (-)	38	16.52
Highly Unsatisfied	37	16.09

Table 4.6, Satisfaction of Stationery

Source: Field Work, 2022

The above Table shows that out of 230 respondents, 26.09% of them rate stationery as positively satisfied, followed by 23.04% rating highly satisfied and 18.26% rating negatively satisfied. Likewise, 16.52% rated stationery as satisfied, and 16.09% rated highly unsatisfied.

The table 4.7 presented below shows the importance of uniforms to the students of public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	113	49.13
Very Important	97	42.17
Moderately Important	18	7.83
Not at All Important	2	0.87

Table 4.7, Importance of Uniform

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the Table above shows among the total of 230 respondents surveyed, 49.13% of them think that uniform is very important, followed by 42.17% rating extremely important. However, 7.83% of the respondents have rated moderately important, and 0.87% of the respondents rated not at all important.

The below-mentioned table 4.8 shows the availability of uniforms to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Available	86	37.39
Available (+)	58	25.22
Available	34	14.78
Available (-)	26	11.3
Highly Unavailable	26	11.3

Table 4.8, Availability of Uniform

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table above indicates that among 230 respondents, 37.39% of them rate uniform to be highly unavailable, 25.22% of them rate it negatively available, followed by 14.78% responding it as positively available. However, 11.3% respondents rate it to be highly available and 11.3% respondents rate it to be available.

The below-mentioned table 4.9 shows the satisfaction of uniforms to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	78	33.91
Satisfied (+)	53	23.04
Satisfied	37	16.09
Satisfied (-)	35	15.22
Highly Unsatisfied	27	11.74

Table 4.9, Satisfaction of Uniform

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the above Table shows out of 230 respondents, 33.91% of them rate uniform as highly unsatisfied, followed by 23.04% rating negatively satisfied and 16.09% rating positively satisfied. Likewise, 15.22% rating uniform as satisfied, and 11.74% rated highly satisfied.

4.2 Equality of Condition

In order to examine the condition within the public school in relation to the equality of conditions available to the school going children, this section looks at the importance, availability, and satisfaction of classroom space, desk bench, playground, separate toilets for boys and girls, and student / teacher relations.

The table 4.10 presented below shows the importance of classroom space to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	129	56.09
Very Important	89	38.7
Moderately Important	11	4.78
Slightly Important	1	0.43

Table 4.10, Importance of Classroom Space

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the table above indicates, among 230 respondents surveyed, 56.09% of them think that classroom space is extremely important, followed by 38.7% rating it very important. However, 4.78% respondents rate moderately important, and 0.43% respondent rated slightly important.

The below-mentioned table 4.11 shows the availability of classroom space to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Available	88	38.26
Available (+)	75	32.61
Available	47	20.43
Available (-)	17	7.39
Highly Unavailable	3	1.3

Table 4.11, Availability of Classroom Space

Source: Field Work, 2022

Table above shows that out of 230 respondents, 38.26% of them rate classroom space as highly available, 32.61% of them rate it positively available, followed by 20.43 % who responded it as available. However, 7.39% respondents rate it to be negatively available and 1.3% respondents rate it to be highly unavailable.

The below-mentioned table 4.12 shows the satisfaction of classroom space of the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	84	36.52
Satisfied (+)	83	36.09
Satisfied	38	16.52
Satisfied (-)	25	10.87

Table 4.12, Satisfaction of Classroom Space

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table above shows that out of 230 respondents, 36.52% of them rate classroom space as positively satisfied, followed by 36.09% rating highly satisfied and 10.43% rating satisfied. Likewise, 10.87% rate classroom space as negatively satisfied.

The table 4.13 presented below shows the importance of desks and benches to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	129	56.09
Very Important	92	40
Moderately Important	7	3.04
Slightly Important	2	0.87

Table 4.13, Importance of Desk and Bench

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the above table indicates, of the total 230 respondents surveyed, 56.09% of them think that desks and bench are extremely important, followed by 40% rating them very important. However, 3.04% respondents rate moderately important and 0.87% respondents rate slightly important.

The below-mentioned table 4.14 shows the availability of desk and bench to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Available	86	37.39
Available (+)	68	29.57
Available	46	20
Available (-)	16	6.96
Highly Unavailable	14	6.09

Table 4.14, Availability of Desk and Bench

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table shows that out of 230 respondents, 37.39% of them rate desk and bench to be highly unavailable, 29.57% of them rate it positively available, followed by 20% responding to this item as available. However, 6.96% respondents rate it to be negatively available and 6.09% respondents rate it to be highly unavailable.

The below-mentioned table 4.15 shows the satisfaction of the desk and bench of the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	79	34.35
Satisfied (+)	76	33.04
Satisfied	40	17.39
Satisfied (-)	22	9.57
Highly Unsatisfied	13	5.65

Table 4.15, Satisfaction of Desk and Bench

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table above shows that out of 230 respondents, 34.35% of them are highly satisfied with the desk and bench, followed by 33.04% rating positively satisfied and 17.39% rating satisfied. Likewise, 9.57% are not satisfied with the desk and bench and 5.65% rated their quality as highly unsatisfied. The above-mentioned table of satisfaction of desk and bench is presented in the form of the chart below.

The table 4.16 presented below shows the importance of playgrounds to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	112	48.7
Very Important	104	45.22
Moderately Important	13	5.65
Slightly Important	1	0.43

Table 4.16, Importance of Playground

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the table indicates of the total 230 respondents surveyed, 48.7% of them think that the playground is extremely important, followed by 45.22% rating it very important. However, 5.65% respondents rate the importance of the playground as moderately important, and 0.43% respondent rated it slightly important.

The below-mentioned table 4.17 shows the availability of a playground to the students of public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Available	83	36.09
Available (+)	71	30.87
Available	43	18.7
Available (-)	21	9.13
Highly Unavailable	12	5.22

Table 4.17, Availability of Playground

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table above shows that out of 230 respondents, 36.09% of them rate playground to be highly unavailable, 30.87% of them rate this item as positively available, followed by 18.7% who responded it as available. However, 9.13% respondents rate it to be negatively available and 5.22% respondents rate it to be highly unavailable.

The below-mentioned table 4.18 shows the satisfaction of the playground of the students of public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	75	32.61
Satisfied (+)	69	30
Satisfied	43	18.7
Satisfied (-)	32	13.91
Highly Unsatisfied	11	4.78

Table 4.18, Satisfaction of Playground

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table above shows that out of 230 respondents, 32.61% of them are highly satisfied with the playground at their school, followed by 30% rating positively satisfied and 18.7% rating satisfied. Likewise, 13.91% of them are negatively satisfied with the playground.

The table 4.19 presented below shows the importance of separate toilets to the students of public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	100	43.48
Very Important	118	51.3
Moderately Important	8	3.48
Slightly Important	2	0.87
Not at All Important	2	0.87

Table 4.19, Importance of Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the table indicates among 230 respondents surveyed, 51.3% of them think that separate toilets for girls and boys are very important, followed by 43.48% rating this facility as extremely important. However, 3.48% respondents rate moderately important, and 0.87% respondents rate not at all important. Likewise, 0.87% respondents rate this facility as slightly important.

The below-mentioned table 4.20 shows the availability of separate toilets to students of public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Available	86	37.39
Available (+)	52	22.61
Available	43	18.7
Available (-)	30	13.04
Highly Unavailable	19	8.26

Table 4.20, Availability of Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table shows that out of 230 respondents, 37.39% of them rate separate toilets for girls and boys as positively available, 22.61% of them rate this indicator as highly available, followed by 18.7% who responded it as available. However, 13.04% respondents rate it to be highly unavailable and 8.26% respondents rate this indicator as negatively available.

The below-mentioned table 4.21 shows the satisfaction of separate toilets of the students of public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	77	33.48
Satisfied (+)	44	19.13
Satisfied	44	19.13
Satisfied (-)	37	16.09
Highly Unsatisfied	28	12.17

Table 4.21, Satisfaction Regarding Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table shows that out of 230 respondents, 33.48% of them are positively satisfied with separate toilets for girls and boys, followed by 19.13% rating satisfied and 19.13% rating satisfied. Likewise, 16.09% rating separate toilets for girls and boys as negatively satisfied, and 12.17% rated highly unsatisfied.

The below-mentioned table 4.22 shows the level of comfort a student is to share problems with the teacher in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Very Comfortable	37	16.09
Comfortable	118	51.3
Moderate	43	18.7
Not Comfortable	16	6.96
Not at All	16	6.96

Table 4.22, Comfort Level of Student Problem with Teacher

Source: Field Work, 2022

Above table indicates that among 230 total respondents, 51.3% respondents' rate comfortable, 18.7% rate moderate, and 16.09% very comfortable. Whereas 6.69% respondents rate not comfortable and 6.69% respondents rate not at all comfortable when it comes to sharing problems with their teachers.

The below-mentioned table 4.23 shows whether a teacher treats students nicely or not in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	224	97.39
No	6	2.61

Table 4.23, Teachers Treat Nicely

Source: Field Work, 2022

In this case, it has been observed that among 230 respondents, 97.39% responded yes and 2.61% responded no.

The below table 4.24 tabulates whether students can make eye contact with teachers while talking or not in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Always	75	32.61
Never	73	31.74
Usually	45	19.57
About Half of the Time	23	10
Seldom	14	6.09

Table 4.24, Eye Contact with Teachers While Talking

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the table indicates among 230 respondents, 32.61% respondents rank always, 31.74% never when it comes to making eye contact. Whereas, 19.57% usually and 10% about half of the time. Likewise, 6.09% respondents rank seldom.

4.3. Equality of Capability

This section offers the importance, availability, and satisfaction regarding availability of drinking water, electricity, and built-up area.

The table 4.25 presented below shows the importance of the built-up area to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	139	60.43
Very Important	84	36.52
Moderately Important	6	2.61
Slightly Important	1	0.43

Table 4.25, Importance of Built-up Area

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the table shows of the 230 respondents surveyed, 60.43% of them think that the built-up area is extremely important, followed by 36.52% rating it very important. However, 2.61% respondents rated moderately important and 0.43% respondents rated it slightly important.

The below-mentioned table 4.26 shows the availability of the built-up area to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Available	108	46.96
Available (+)	55	23.91
Available	53	23.04
Available (-)	8	3.48
Highly Unavailable	6	2.61

Table 4.26, Availability of Built-up Area

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the table indicates, out of 230 respondents, 46.96% of them rate the built-up area as highly available, 23.91% of them rate it positively available, followed by 23.04% responding it as available. However, 3.48% respondent rate as negatively available and 2.61% respondents rate it to be highly unavailable.

The below-mentioned table 4.27 shows the satisfaction of the built-up area of the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	84	36.52
Satisfied (+)	72	31.3
Satisfied	50	21.74
Satisfied (-)	20	8.7
Highly Unsatisfied	4	1.74

Table 4.27, Satisfaction of Built-up Area

Source: Field Work, 2022

As the table indicates among 230 respondents, 36.52% of them are highly satisfied with built-up areas, followed by 31.3% rating positively satisfied and 21.74% rating satisfied. Likewise, 8.7% rated are negatively satisfied and 1.74% rated it highly unsatisfied with built-up areas in their school.

The table 4.28 presented below shows the importance of drinking water to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	118	51.3
Very Important	105	45.65
Moderately Important	3	1.3
Slightly Important	2	0.87
Not at All Important	2	0.87

Table 4.28, Importance of Drinking Water

Source: Field Work, 2022

As indicated among 230 respondents surveyed, 51.3% consider availability of drinking water as extremely important, followed by 45.65% rating this item as very important. However, 1.3% respondents rate the importance of drinking water as available in school premises as moderately important and 0.87% respondent rate slightly important. Likewise, 0.87% respondents rate not at all important.

The below-mentioned table 4.29 shows the availability of drinking water to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Available	84	36.52
Available (+)	75	32.61
Available	48	20.87
Available (-)	14	6.09
Highly Unavailable	9	3.91

Table 4.29, Availability of Drinking Water

Source: Field Work, 2022

Above table indicates that among 230 respondents, 36.52% of them rate drinking water to be highly available, 32.61% of them rate it positively available, followed by 20.87% responding as available. However, 6.09% respondents rate it to be negatively available and 3.91% respondents rate it to be highly unavailable.

The below-mentioned table 4.30 shows the satisfaction level of students towards drinking water in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	80	34.78
Satisfied (+)	72	31.3
Satisfied	48	20.87
Satisfied (-)	21	9.13
Highly Unsatisfied	9	3.91

Table 4.30, Satisfaction of Drinking Water

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table above shows that out of 230 respondents, 34.78% of them are positively satisfied with drinking water availability, followed by 31.3% rating highly satisfied and 20.87% rating satisfied. Likewise, 9.13% rating availability of drinking water as negatively satisfied, and 3.91% rated it highly unsatisfied.

The table 4.31 below shows the importance of electricity to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Important	106	46.09
Very Important	114	49.57
Moderately Important	10	4.35

Table 4.31, Importance of Electricity

Source: Field Work, 2022

Of the total 230 respondents surveyed, 49.57% of them think that electricity is very important, followed by 46.09% rating very important and 4.35% respondent rate moderately important.

The below-mentioned table 4.32 shows the availability of electricity to the students in public schools.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Available	72	31.3
Available (+)	50	21.74
Available	38	16.52
Available (-)	38	16.52
Highly Unavailable	32	13.91

Table 4.32, Availability of Electricity

Source: Field Work, 2022

The above table indicates that out of 230 respondents, 31.3% of them rate electricity as highly unavailable, 21.74% of them rate it as positively available, followed by 16.52% who responded it as highly available. However, 16.52% respondents rate it to be negatively available and 13.91% respondents rate it to be available.

The below-mentioned table 4.33 shows the level of satisfaction students in public schools regarding electricity services.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	66	28.7
Satisfied (+)	46	20
Satisfied	42	18.26
Satisfied (-)	40	17.39
Highly Unsatisfied	36	15.65

Table 4.33, Satisfaction of Electricity

Source: Field Work, 2022

The table above indicates that out of 230 respondents, 28.7% of them rate electricity services as highly unsatisfied, followed by 20% rating positively satisfied and 18.26% rating negatively satisfied. Likewise, 17.39% have rated electricity as highly satisfied, and 15.65% are unsatisfied with electricity service.

ANALYSIS

The process of data analysis started after the total data was collected from the field. Data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to collected data (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). It helps to give a defined structure to the findings. Different themes were developed for data analysis and questionnaires were made to address equality. The collected data are analyzed to help the study to give a just view of equality in public education.

5.1. Equality of Distribution

The following graph and table represent the cross-tabulation of sex, grade and midday meal, religion and scholarship, and income and stationary of Yamunamai Rural Municipality:

5.1.1. Sex and Midday Meal

The respondents were asked to rate to what extent they feel that a midday meal is important to them. The cross tabulation regarding the influence of gender and importance of midday meal is presented in figure below.

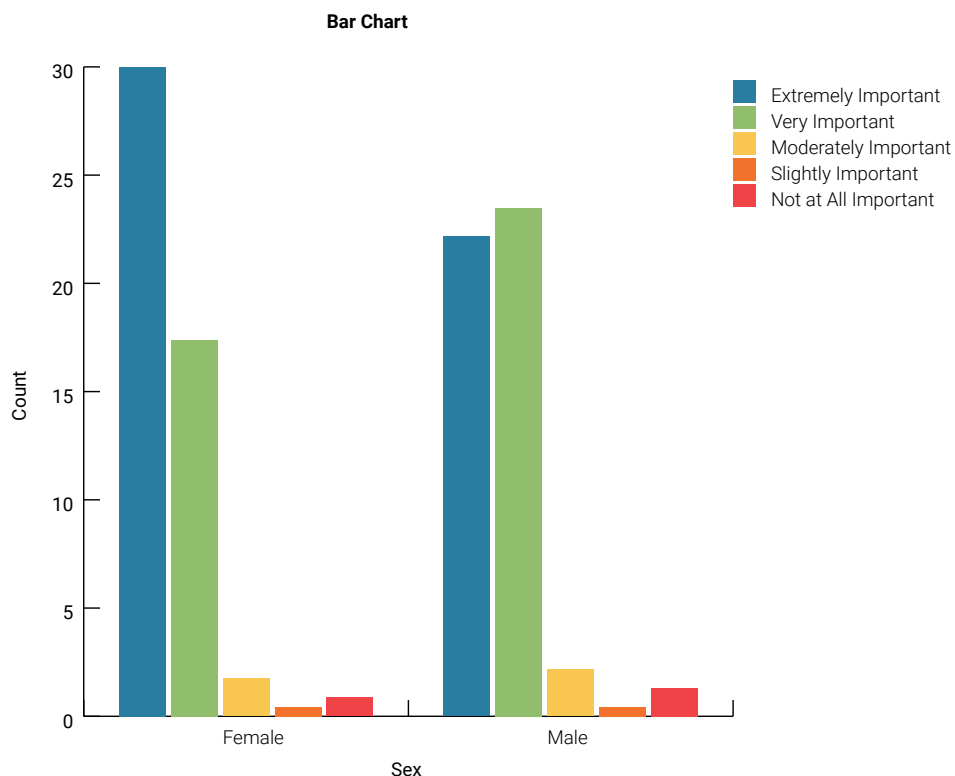


Figure 5.1, Sex and Importance of Midday Meal

Source: Field Work, 2022

According to the crosstab analysis, it is seen that 30% of girls find it extremely important compared to 22.17% of boys. Similarly, 17.39% of females find it very important compared to 23.48% of boys. Here, this study observes that there is not much difference in the way both girls and boys think about the importance of a midday meal. As the Government of Nepal made the midday meal compulsory in public schools, its importance among students has risen.

Similarly, the respondents were asked to rate to what extent they have the availability of midday meals. The cross tabulation of sex and availability of midday meal is presented in figure below.

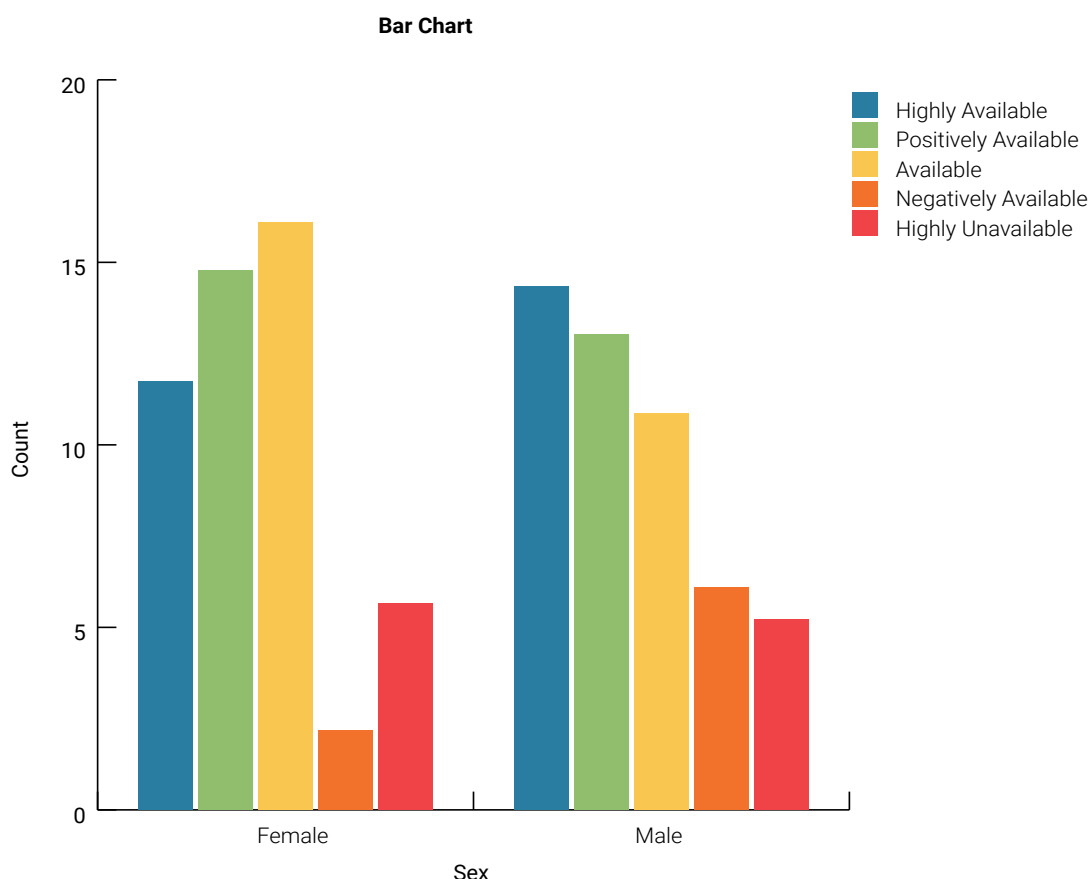


Figure 5.2, Sex and Availability of Midday Meal

Source: Field Work, 2022

From the above graph, it is seen that there is good availability of mid-day meals for girls and boys. However, this study observes that 6.09% of boys and 2.17% of girls have rated it to be negatively available followed by 5.22% of boys and 5.65% of girls have said it to be highly unavailable. These numbers seem to be less compared to the availability, but it remains here because of some reasons. Besides, there are particularly some schools that were unable to provide a proper midday meal. As some schools get fewer budgets to fulfill the needs of the school, the midday meal gets affected. Hence, the respondents were asked to rate the level of satisfaction of midday meal. The cross tabulation of sex and satisfaction of midday meal is presented in figure below.

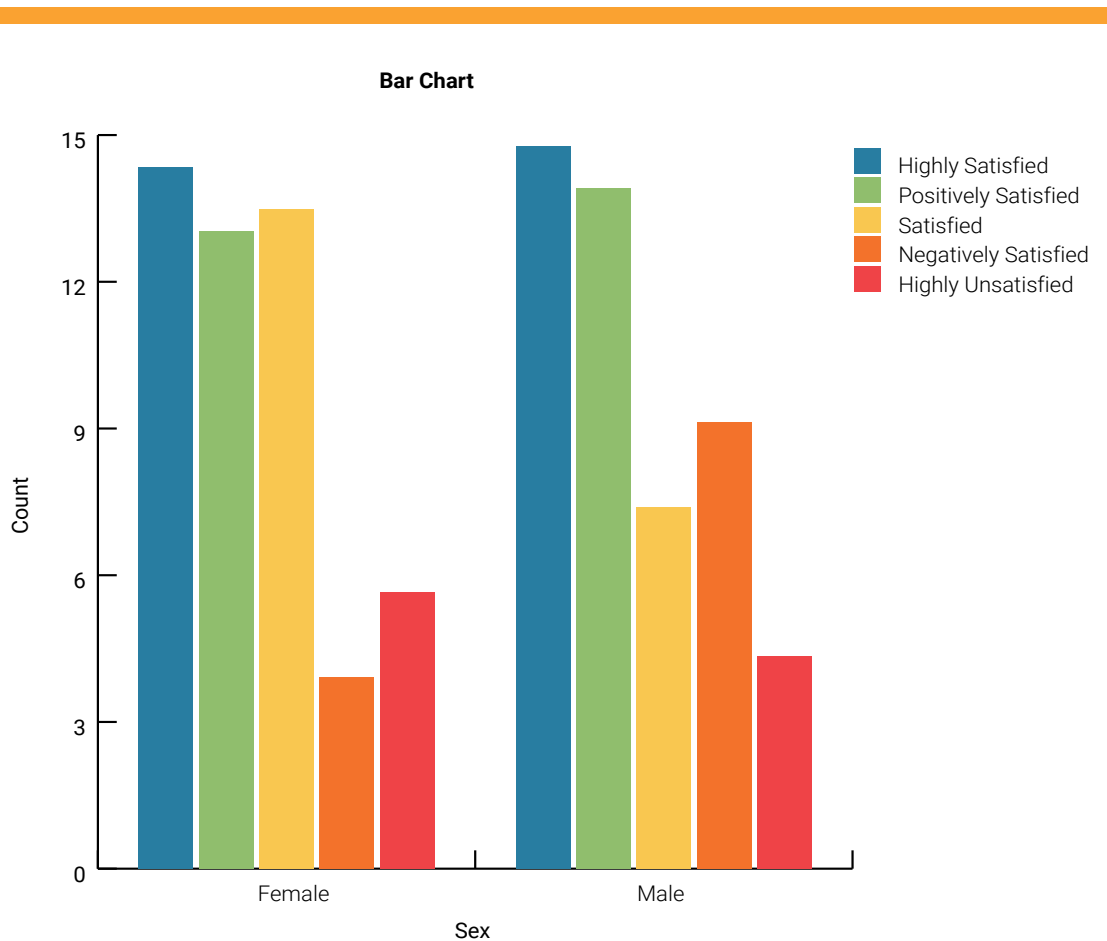


Figure 5.3 Sex and Satisfaction of Midday Meal

Source: Field Work, 2022

From the above table, it is seen that 14.35% boys and 14.78% girls are almost equally highly satisfied with the midday provided in the school. The level of negatively satisfied is seen to differ in 9.13% of boys and 3.91% of girls. The study indicates that the quality of food in most of the schools is quite bad. According to the students, they get a repetitive menu most of the days and the quality of the food is up to the standard. After viewing these three crosstabs, it is clear that midday is distributed somehow equally to both boys and girls in public schools. As the government also makes the midday meal a pulling agent for students to be at school, equality in distribution is seen. But due to various reasons like low human resources, low economic resources, and even negligence towards quality food, the satisfaction of students with midday meals is fluctuating.

5.1.2. Grade and Midday Meal

The respondents from different grades were asked to rate to what extent they feel the importance of midday meal. The cross tabulation of grade and importance of midday meal is presented in figure below.

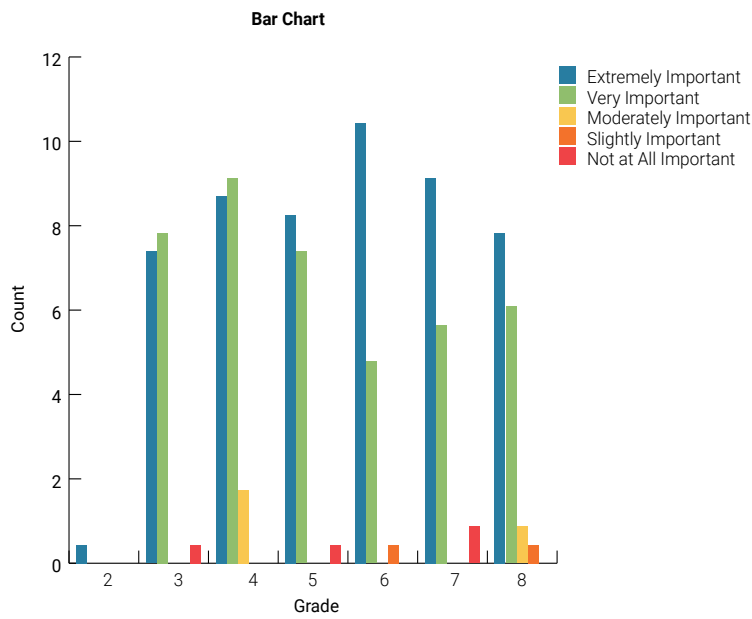


Figure 5.4, Grade and Importance of Midday Meal

Source: Field Work, 2022

From the given crosstab it is seen that every student sees the midday meal as an important aspect of his or her school. The graph shows that the importance of midday slightly gets lesser as they are graded to higher levels from 10.43% grade 6 to 9.13% grade 7 and 7.83% grade 8. This tendency remains as a student of higher grades is not provided midday, which decreases its importance. Similarly, the respondents from different grades were asked to rate to what extent they have the availability of midday meals. The cross tabulation of grade and availability of midday meal is presented in figure below.

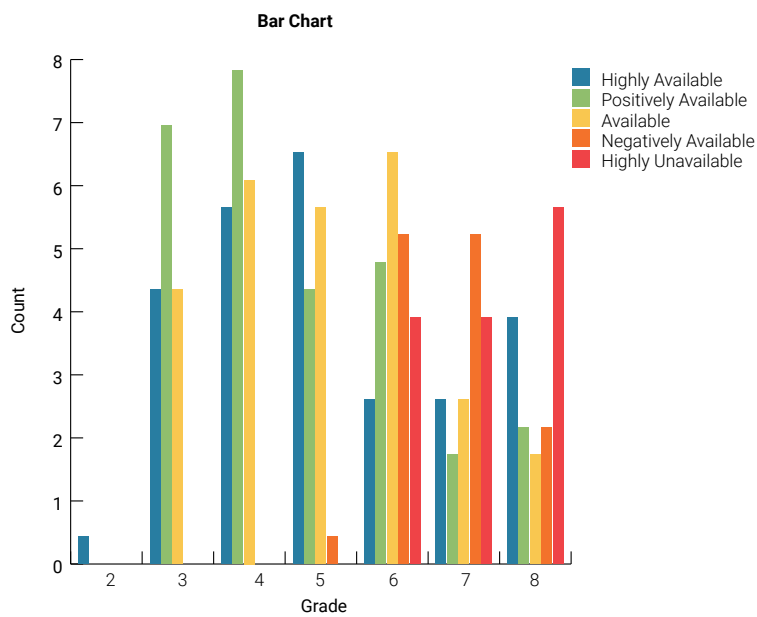


Figure 5.5, Grades and Availability of Midday Meal



Source: Field Work, 2022

According to the above crosstab, it is seen that even if students from different grades acknowledge the importance of a midday meal, it is not available equally to all. The level of availability of midday meals decreases from grade 7 and its high unavailability increases. This study observes that midday meals are highly available to 6.52% of grade 6 students, but it gradually decreases to 2.61% in grade 7 and 1.74% in grade 8. The highly unavailable remains 1.30% in grade 6, which increases to 3.91% in grade 7 and 5.65% in grade 8.

According to the current policy of the government, the provision of midday meals is only made up to grade 6. Some schools have somehow made the provision of providing meals to relatively poor and lower caste people of a higher grade. Due to these reasons, equality in distribution is not seen in higher grades.

Again, the respondents from different grades were asked to rate the level of satisfaction of midday meal. The cross tabulation of grade and satisfaction of midday meal is presented in figure below.

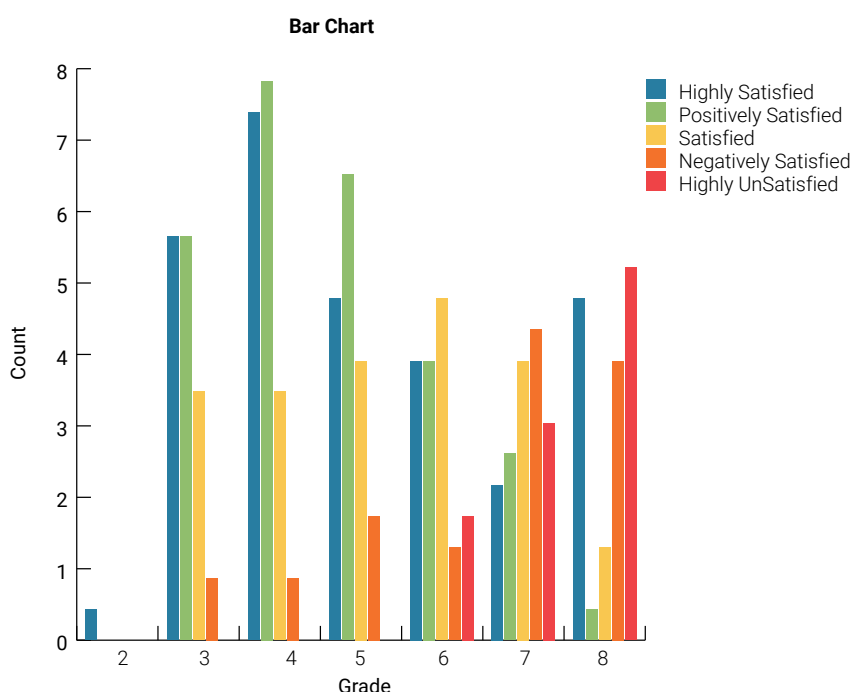


Figure 5.6, Grade and Satisfaction of Midday Meal

Source: Field Work, 2022

According to the crosstab, it is seen that up to grade 5 students are positively satisfied with the distribution of midday meals with an average of 6%. This study also observes that grade 6 satisfaction of midday is at a good level. But the level of highly unsatisfied increases in 3.04% grade 7 and 5.22% grade 8.

According to the students, till grade 6 they are not much concerned about the taste and preference of food in school. But as they get to a higher grade, they do not get a midday meal and even those who get are not satisfied with the taste and quality. Higher-grade students, as they do not get midday meals are unsatisfied with the inequality faced in the distribution.

5.1.3. Religion and Scholarship

The respondents were asked to rate to what extent they feel the importance of scholarship. The cross tabulation of religion and importance of scholarship is presented in figure below.

			Extremely Important	Very Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not at All Important	Total
Religion	Hindu	Count % Within Religion	91 48.1%	71 37.6%	13 6.9%	7 3.7%	7 3.7%	189 100.0%
	Muslim	Count % Within Religion	14 34.1%	20 48.8%	6 14.6%	0 0.0%	1 2.4%	41 100.0%
Total		Count % Within Religion	105 45.7%	91 39.6%	19 8.3%	7 3.0%	8 3.5%	230 100.0%

Table 5.1, Religion and Importance of Scholarship

Source: Field Work, 2022

According to the above crosstab, it is seen that the level of importance of scholarship to both Hindus and Muslims is equal to an extent. 48.1% Hindus and 34.1% Muslim takes a scholarship to be extremely important. As most of the people there have a similar economic background, the importance of scholarship seems to be at a similar level.

The respondents were asked to rate to what extent they have the availability of scholarship. The cross tabulation of religion and availability of scholarship is presented in figure below.

			Highly Available	Available	Highly Unavailable	Positively Available	Negatively Available	Total
Religion	Hindu	Count % Within Religion	37 19.6%	46 24.3%	41 21.7%	31 16.4%	34 18.0%	189 100.0%
	Muslim	Count % Within Religion	14 34.1%	10 24.4%	5 12.2%	7 17.1%	5 12.2%	41 100.0%
Total		Count % Within Religion	51 22.2%	56 24.3%	46 20.0%	38 16.5%	39 17.0%	230 100.0%

Table 5.2, Religion and Availability of Scholarship

Source: Field Work, 2022

According to the crosstab, it is seen that 34.1% of Muslim students have a little higher availability of scholarships as compared to 19.6% of Hindus. 21.7% Hindu students have rated scholarships as highly unavailable as the 12.2% of Muslim students. But if we look at the average comparison of the table, there is not much difference in the level of scholarship distribution to students belonging to different religions. As most of the students of both religions of these public schools fall from lower economic backgrounds, they are provided with similar scholarship schemes. Some Muslim students are addressed

with different scholarship schemes, as some of them were comparatively poorer.

Likewise, The respondents were asked to rate the level of satisfaction of scholarship. The cross tabulation of religion and satisfaction of scholarship is presented in figure below.

			Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Highly Unsatisfied	Positively Satisfied	Negatively Satisfied	Total
Religion	Hindu	Count % Within Religion	35 18.5%	41 21.7%	49 25.9%	25 13.2%	39 20.6%	189
	Muslim	Count % Within Religion	8 19.5%	7 17.1%	7 17.1%	11 26.8%	8 19.5%	41
Total		Count % Within Religion	43 18.7%	48 20.9%	56 24.3%	36 15.7%	47 20.4%	230

Table 5.3, Religion and Satisfaction of Scholarship

Source: Field Work, 2022

The above crosstab shows, both 18.5% of Hindus and 19.5% of Muslims are highly satisfied at a similar level. As observed, the level of dissatisfaction is higher in 25.9% of Hindus compared to 17.1% of Muslims. The level of unsatisfied Hindus is high as lesser Hindus get scholarships compared to the Muslims. As already discussed, due to the lower level of income in Muslim households compared to the Hindu, scholarships are provided on this basis.

5.1.4. Income and Stationery

The respondents were asked to rate to what extent they have the availability of stationery in relation to higher or lower household income. The cross tabulation of income and availability of stationery is presented in figure below.

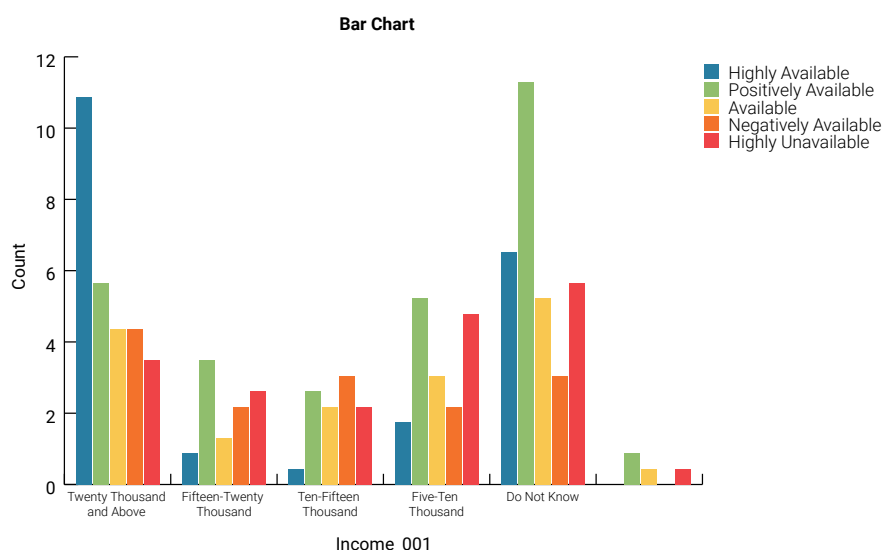


Figure 5.7, Income and Availability of Stationery

Source: Field Work, 2022

The above figure cross-tabulates income and availability of stationery. The figure shows that scholarship is 10.87% highly available to the income level of more than twenty thousand followed by 1.74% five to ten thousand. According to this figure, students whose household income is higher are more aware of the stationery provided than the lower income students. As the government has set a scheme of free textbooks for all public school students, but no such schemes have been developed for stationeries, schools have to manage it as per their capacity. So, there are students who are not much aware of this facility provided by the government, due to which the result in this study has come different than normally expected.

5.2. Equality of Condition

The following graph and table represent the cross-tabulation of sex and separate toilets for girls and boys, classroom space and grade, and playground.

5.2.1. Sex and Separate Toilet for Male and Female

In this study, respondents were asked to rate to what extent they feel that separate toilets for girls and boys is important to them. The cross tabulation of sex and importance of separate toilets for girls and boys is presented in figure below.

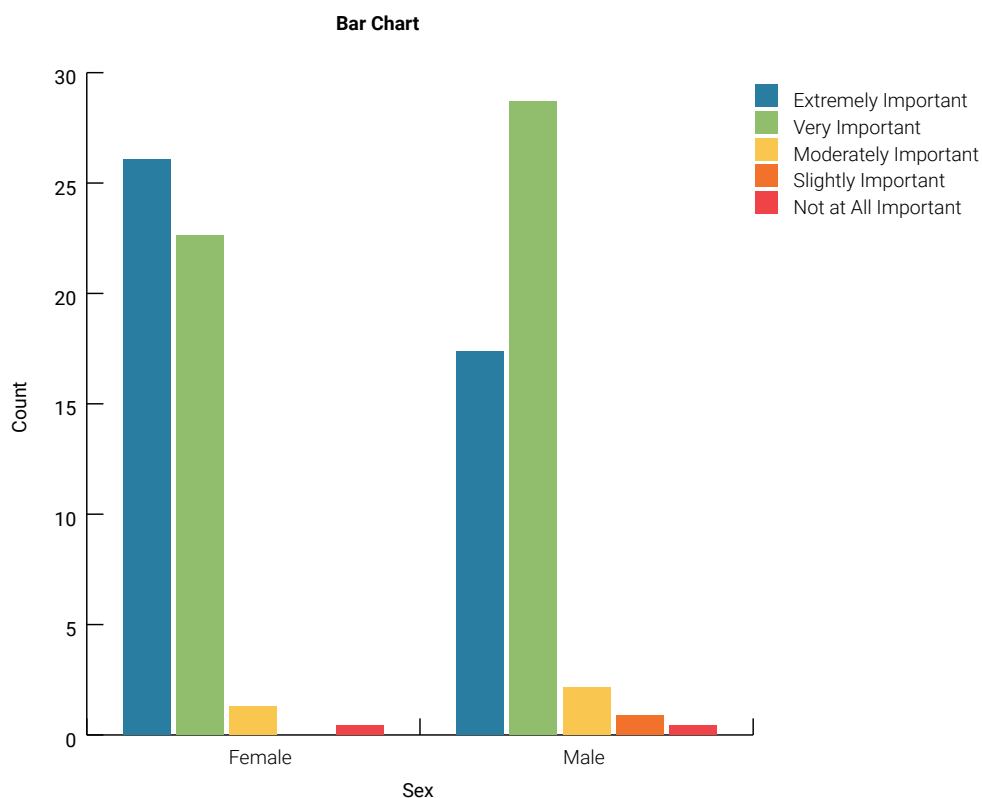


Figure 5.8, Sex and Importance of Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys

Source: Field Work, 2022

The above graph shows that both boys and girls respondents consider separate toilets as important. According to the graph, 26.09% of girls and 17.39% of boys consider it important to have separate toilets for boys and girls. There are very few respondents who do not consider the importance of separate toilets.

According to some students of higher grades, having separate toilets is important as a matter of privacy and hygiene. They consider having the same toilet can affect even the mental condition of students as many cases of sexual assault have come across the country due to this issue.

Similarly, The respondents were asked to rate to what extent the availability of separate toilets for girls and boys. The cross tabulation of sex and availability of separate toilets for girls and boys is presented in figure below.

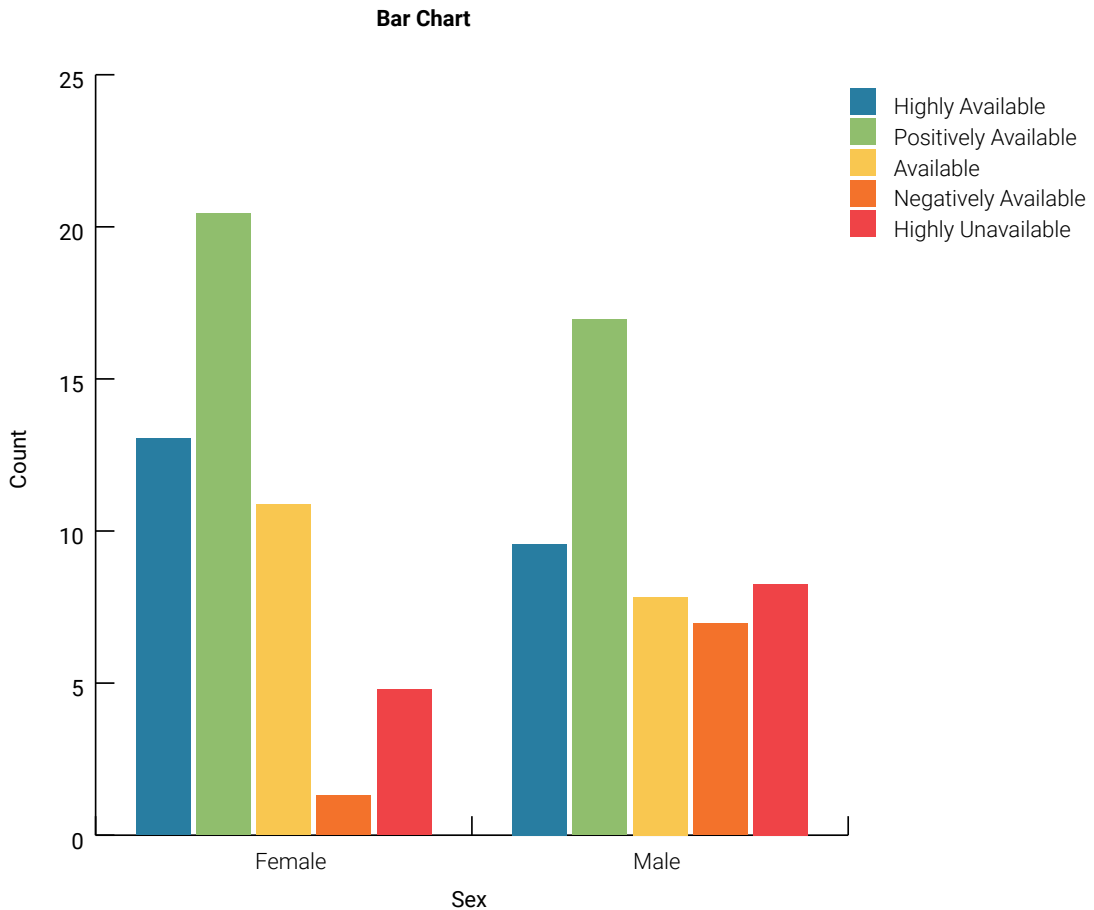


Figure 5.9, Sex and Availability of Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys

Source: Field Work, 2022

The problem of separate toilets in public schools in rural areas is a pretty big deal. Students of Yamunamai consider the positive availability of separate toilets for boys and girls. In contrast, the level of high unavailability is there in most public schools. 8.26% of male students and 4.78% of females consider that there is high unavailability of separate toilets in schools. The graph of the male shows the reality of toilets in those areas, as girls were quite uncomfortable talking about these issues to an external. It is a matter of fact that the condition of the toilet in most of the public schools of Yamunamai is in a vulnerable state.

The respondents were asked to rate the level of satisfaction of separate toilets for girls and boys in their schools. The cross tabulation of sex and satisfaction of separate toilets for girls and boys is presented in figure below.

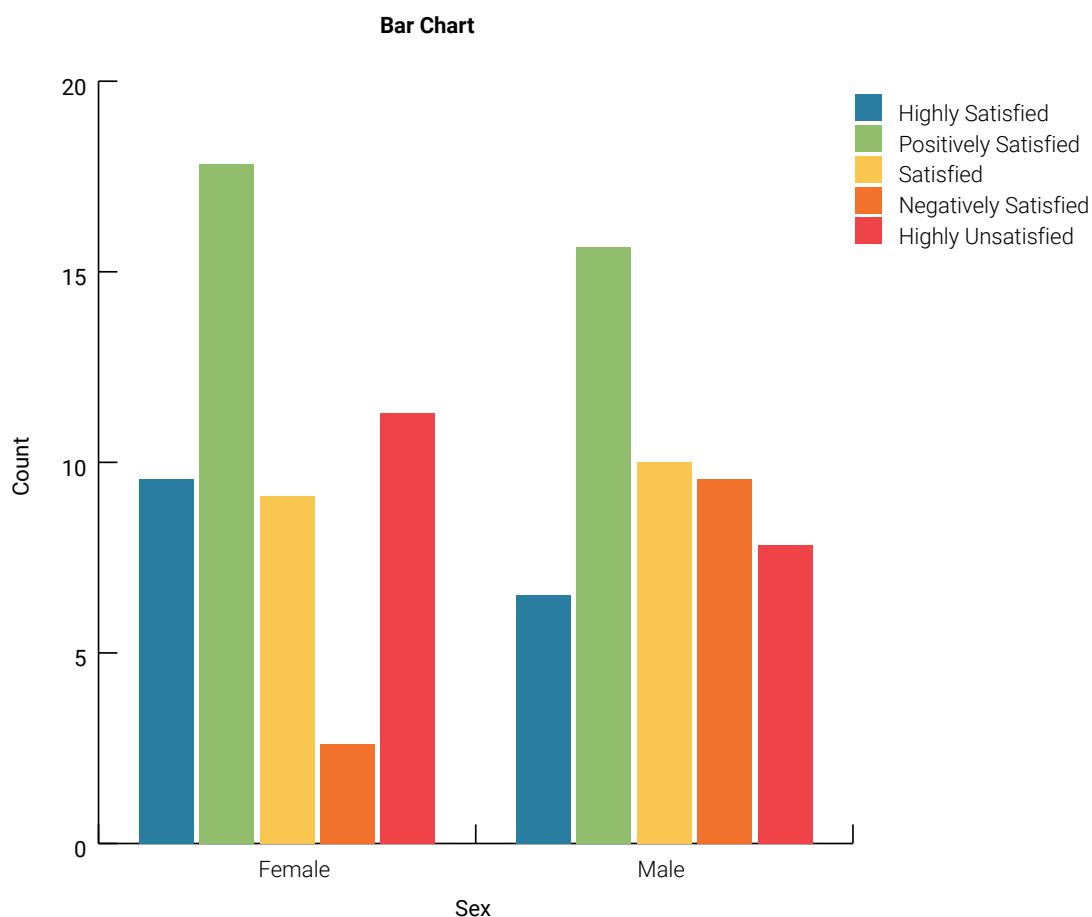


Figure 5.10, Sex and Satisfaction of Separate Toilet for Male and Female

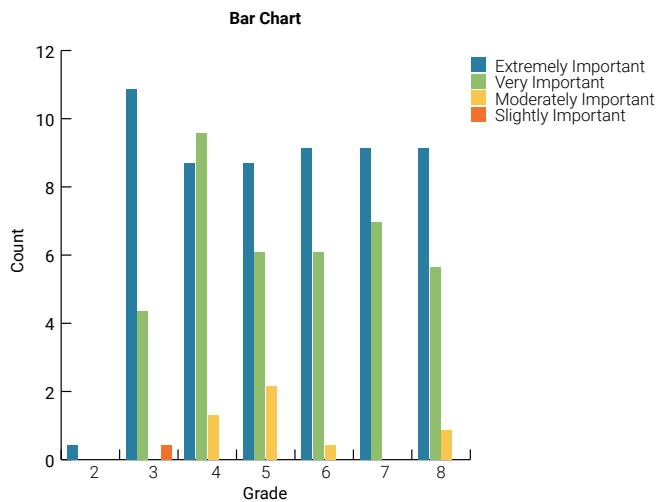
Source: Field Work, 2022

The above-mentioned graph shows that 17.83% of girls and 15.65% of boys are positively satisfied with the toilet they have in their schools. But following that number, 11.30% of girls and 7.83% of boys are highly unsatisfied with the toilet. Having a lack of toilet facilities in rural areas, the students also have been adaptive to the facilities they get at their schools.

No matter what the condition, a human being gets adaptive to it after a long-run use. It is similar in the case of public schools of Yamuna Mai Rural Municipality. There is no such equality of condition of separate toilets for girls and boys in schools. This appears as a major gap present in the condition of public schools.

5.2.2. Grade and Classroom Space

The respondents from different grades were asked to rate to what extent they feel classroom space is important to them. The cross tabulation of grade and importance of classroom space is presented in figure below.

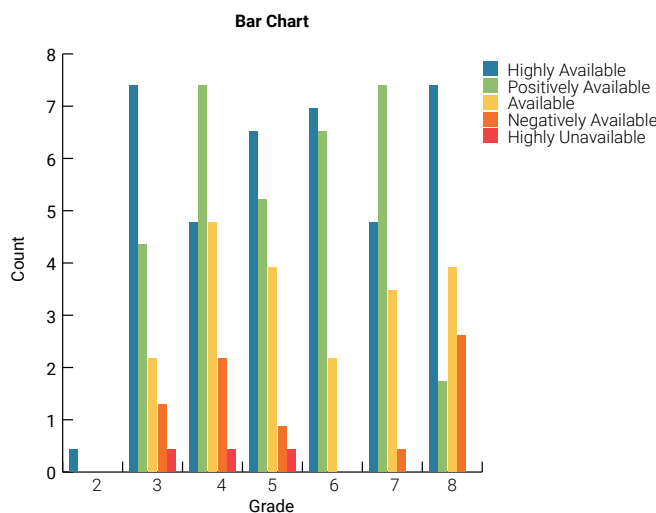


Source: Field Work, 2022

On average, every grade student takes classroom space as 8% extremely important. Very few students from different grades consider it to be less important. As seen in most of the public schools of Yamunamai, there is an issue with proper classroom space. As a classroom is the only place where students get a space to study freely without disturbance, not having that condition in every school, makes it even more important for the students.

Figure 5.11, Grade and Importance of Classroom Space

The respondents from different grades were asked to rate the availability of proper classroom space to them. The cross tabulation of grade and availability of classroom space is presented in figure below.



Source: Field Work, 2022

The above cross-tabulated graph shows that every grade students have high availability of classroom space with an average of 5.5%. But still various grade students' rate classroom space to be negatively available i.e. grade 3 (1.3%), grade 4 (2.17%), grade 5 (0.87%) and grade 8 (2.61%). As there are very few public schools with the proper facility in Yamuna Mai, students belonging to schools with fewer facilities have difficulty getting proper and adequate classroom space. Even though they are provided with a classroom, the condition is not good. Even so, students have adapted to those situations in most of the schools.

Figure 5.12, Grade and Availability of Classroom Space

Similarly, The respondents from different grades were asked to rate the level of satisfaction of classroom space. The cross tabulation of grade and satisfaction of classroom space is presented in figure below.

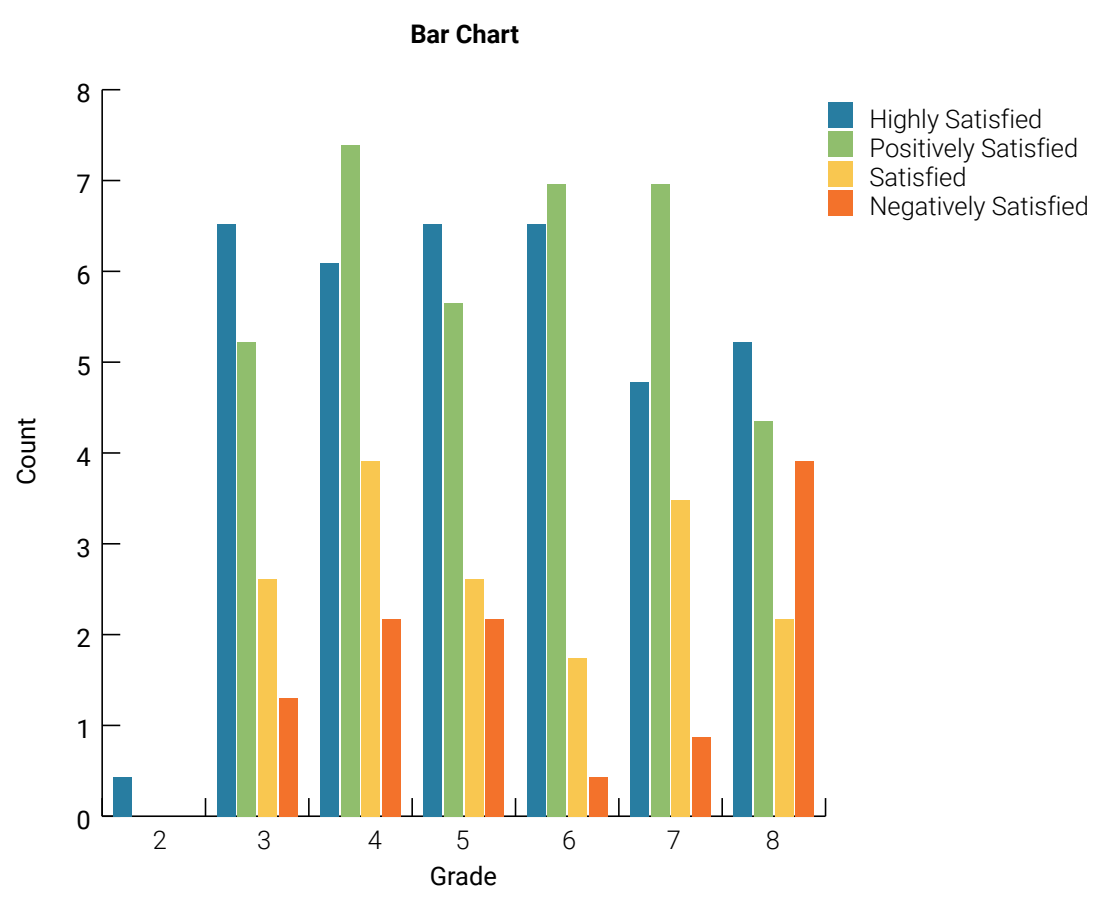


Figure 5.13, Grade and Satisfaction of Classroom Space

Source: Field Work, 2022

As shown in the above graph, most of the students are satisfied with the condition of the classroom, about 1-3% of every grade student are negatively satisfied with their classroom space. As per the view of the students, most schools are not focused on the condition of the classroom space. Their major focus just remains on providing a classroom without focusing on the teaching and learning condition. As the government funds public schools, only some schools that get enough budgets are able to provide adequate classroom space to students. Most of the schools lag in providing these facilities as per the basic need of the students.

5.2.3. Playground

From the above table 4.16, it has been indicated that most schools in rural areas have adequate space for a playground in school. Of every surveyed student, 48.7% rate it to be extremely important, 45.22% rate it to be very important, followed by 5.65% moderately important and 0.43% slightly important. As the playground provides a condition to not only to play for students but also to enjoy their time in school and it contributes to the student's leisure and extra curricular activities. A developing student needs to have an enabling environment in the school and the playground plays an important role in it.

From the above table 4.17, it is seen that 36.09% of the students have availability of a playground in the school, followed by 30.87% positively availability and 5.22% highly unavailable. There are schools without proper space due to which playground is not available in the school. As the equality of conditions focuses on fair conditions within schools, for providing an enabling



environment for students, the availability of a playground is a very important aspect.

Moreover, as above in table 4.18, 32% of students are highly satisfied compared to 13.91% negatively satisfied and 4.78% highly unsatisfied. According to various students, there is the availability of playgrounds in the schools but as schools are not quite focused on their ECA, students are not satisfied with the condition of the playground. Schools that value ECA as much as their academics are making an enabling environment for students to come to school, but schools without playgrounds are having an issue with providing a fair condition. As an integral part of student life, the area to enjoy is a playground, which here does not seem to be an issue for most of the students, but not ignoring the fact that there are students who are unsatisfied with the playground.

5.3. Equality of Capability

The following table represents the importance, availability, and satisfaction of built-up areas and electricity.

5.3.1. Build up Area

From the above table 4.25, it is seen that 60.43% find a proper built-up area to be extremely important in school followed by 36.52% rate this facility as very important. From this, we can say that a properly built-up area is an important part of a school. Having proper-cemented floors, ceilings, areas, and many more. All these aspects of school help students to achieve well-being. Having a proper built-up area can result in students studying well without an issue in school. Their capabilities to concentrate more on the study will surely enhance due to which they find it to be important.

According to table 4.26, 46.96% of students consider the built-up area highly available and 23.91% as positively available. Whereas, just 3.48% consider the built-up area to be negatively available and 2.61% consider it to be highly unavailable. As per the students, there is proper availability of built-up area, which directly reflects in the functioning of the student. Given the proper opportunity and setting a properly built-up area can surely reflect in a student attending class regularly. This reacts to the capability enhancement of children.

From the above table 4.27, 36.52% of students are highly satisfied and 31.3% are positively satisfied with the built-up area. Whereas, 8.7% of students are negatively satisfied and 1.7% are highly unsatisfied. It shows that most of the students have a proper opportunity to make the best functioning out of this equality indicator. Besides, it has also been observed that just a few students still lag to be satisfied with the opportunity set to achieve proper wellbeing. As per the condition of some schools, the process of providing a proper set of opportunities is slow, which has to be looked after.

5.3.2. Electricity

From above table 4.31, it has been observed that students rate availability of electricity services at their school as highly important. However, according to students, some of the classes in school do not have proper electricity facilities that make it difficult for them to study. From above table 4.32, it is seen that 31.3% of students have high unavailability of electricity in their classrooms, followed by 16.52% negatively available. Whereas, 21.74% of students have positive availability and 16.52% have high availability.

As per the given data analysis, it is clear that most of the students do not have proper availability of electricity in their classroom. This issue surely affects the chances of achieving optimal

well-being of students. More than 40% said that they are not provided with an equitable opportunity set, which limits a child's capability. There is still a lack of equality in capabilities among students.

From table 4.33, it is seen that more than 40% of students are unsatisfied with the facility of electricity service that their schools provide. There is a huge gap between satisfied and unsatisfied students as it is partially available. Due to the unavailability of most of the students, there remains a gap in the equality of capabilities. Even though they are provided with a classroom, electricity plays an agent to bridge the opportunity to proper functioning, which is unequal in schools and has to be an area of concern to everyone.

CONCLUSION

This study examines and explores how resources were distributed among all pupils and their function in reducing inequality and equality in schools. The study determines the availability of resources in schools and whether or not students can use them effectively based on qualitative and quantitative analyses. Different approaches, comprising distribution, condition, and capability, were utilized to learn about the relationship between availability and equality. From these factors, it was evident that certain schools had more resources than others owing to the various settings and conditions of the schools. While some schools could not even provide the most basic resources to students, others had access to the greatest facilities available in the entire rural community. In this study, findings were analyzed based on distribution, condition and capability approaches of equality using different scales and parameters. All three approaches used in this research have unearthed different aspects of importance, availability and satisfaction of resources and their excess equality.

From the distribution approach, this study aimed to know about importance, availability and satisfaction using indicators like textbooks, midday meal, scholarship, stationery and uniform. From the study, it was found that as a result of the government's plan to promote education for all, some basic resources were distributed till primary level but were not available for lower secondary level. Midday meal is an aspect that promotes equality from the very basics that is not provided to students of lower secondary. It is clear that public school lacks some aspect of equality from the approach of distribution.

Similarly, from the condition approach this study aimed at exploring availability and satisfaction using classroom space, desk bench, playground, separate toilets for boys and girls, and students/ teacher relations as indicators. This study clearly illustrates that conditions of classroom space, desk bench, and playground were somehow appalling and the provisions of separate toilets were seen to have worse conditions. Likewise, from the capability approach, this study aimed at examining the availability and satisfaction of using indicators like drinking water, electricity and built up areas. Though these indicators were considered to be an important aspect to acquire equality, most of the students from different public schools were found to have no access to these facilities. Lack of these resources as an opportunity has failed to help students in the public schools to acquire their desired functioning.

To conclude, every public school in Yamuna Mai rural municipality has their own set of resource-gaps. However, to promote equality from every aspect, public schools should focus not just on distribution but also the aspects like condition and capability of students. Different schools in Yamuna Mai had their strength and weakness over distribution, condition and capability. So, it is not appropriate to conclude on what specific aspect public schools should focus on. Rather, as shown by the research, it can be concluded that stakeholders should focus on every aspect with respect to the strength and weakness to minimize equality and inequality.

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