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**Teachers: Having a Voice and Being Heard?
Evidence from Two Private Schools in Nepal**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
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Abstract

Profit-oriented private schools in Nepal are usually owned and managed by those people who put money into schools. In such private schools, owners are usually the principals, and schools' administration is run according to the decisions of owners instead the kinds of rules and regulations applicable to state schools. These private schools exclude most of the stakeholders (parents, teachers and other non-owner staff) from the decision making process. However, with political changes in the country overthrowing an absolute monarchy for a constitutional monarchy in 1990, and then to a republic in 2008, scenarios within these schools seem to have changed.

This research is an attempt to explore the realities of private school life from the viewpoint of teachers, administrators (middle level managers) and principals in the changed political context of Nepal. It has used semi-structured interviews from two schools selected as the prime source of data for the case study. In addition to semi-structured interviews, field notes and documentary sources form supplementary sources of data. This study suggests that the non-separation of management and ownership in both private schools created a concentration of power in the schools' owners. However, with the political change in the country and subsequent unionisation of private schoolteachers and other non-owner staff, they have now started perceiving themselves as having a voice, even when their voice is not being heard. School owners have developed different strategies to deal with the changing context within and outside the schools, in order to maintain power, control and profits.

The schools' owners, operating a hierarchy of power similar to monarchs, exercised power over the non-owner staff, including teachers working in different levels of the school, to extract their time and labour. However, since the advent of the republic and subsequent unionisation of private schoolteachers, power relations within schools began to shift. Non-owner staff (including teachers) of the two private schools in my study, by deriving power through networks and alliances, started collective bargaining on their rights and privileges. This brought about a scenario of continuous tension between the schools' owners and non-owner staff. Arising from the study, I detected differences in the modes of power relations existing between primary level teachers and schools' owners, and secondary level teachers and schools' owners. One of the reasons behind such differences is linked

to the market orientation of private schools. It is apparent that such schools focus on their students' performance in the standardised national level tests, the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination, using these results to compete with other schools. Since the secondary level students are the ones sitting in the SLC examination, school owner attitudes towards secondary level teachers was found to be quite different from their attitudes to primary level teachers.

This study adds to the sparse literature on the perceptions and experiences of teachers, administrators and owner/principals of private schools in Nepal in the altered political context of the country, even though the sample size is small. It also has enhanced our understanding of school organisations within the private school contexts and teachers' professionalism in the changed political context. It furthers our understanding of how the wider political environment of the country is reflected within these schools' organisation and distribution of power. Finally, I am expecting that my study will support academic debates about teachers' professionalism in private schools of Nepal.

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Abbreviations

ACEL	Australian Council of Education Leaders
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANTU	All Nepal Teachers' Union
ANNISU(R)	All Nepal National Independent Students' Union (Revolutionary)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CA	Constituent Assembly
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CJ	Chief Justice
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPN (M)	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
CPN (UML)	Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DEO	District Education Office
DoE	Department of Education
EFA	Education for All
ERA	Education Reform Act
EU	European Union
f/n	field notes
FNT	Federation of Nepali Teachers
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HMG	His Majesty Government of Nepal
HOD	Head of Department
HS	Higher Secondary
HSE	Higher Secondary Education
HSEB	Higher Secondary Education Board
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IMF	International Monetary Fund
I.Sc.	Intermediate of Science
ICFI	International Committee of the Fourth International
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency

KUSOED	Kathmandu University, School of Education
LKG	Lower Kindergarten
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
M.Phil.	Master of Philosophy
n. d.	No Date
NC	Nepali Congress
NEB	National Education Board
NEPC	National Educational Planning Commission
NESP	National Education System Plan
Nepal-ISTU	Nepal Institutional Teachers' Union
N. PABSON	National Private and Boarding Schools' Organisation of Nepal
NNEPC	Nepal National Education Planning Commission
NPM	New Public Management
NSW	New South Wales
NTTF	Non Tenure Track Faculty
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFSTED	Office for Standard in Education
PABSON	Private and Boarding Schools' Organisation, Nepal
PESA	Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PR	Proportional Representation
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis
SC	Supreme Court
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMEs	Small and Medium-size Enterprises
SPA	Seven Party Alliance
SSR	School Sector Reform
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
TU	Tribhuvan University

UCPN (M)	Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
UK	United Kingdom
UKG	Upper Kindergarten
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United National International Children Emergency Fund
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USOM	United States Overseas Mission
VSO	Volunteer Services Overseas
WB	World Bank

Publications from this Thesis

1. Sharma Poudyal, C. (2015). Neo-liberal educational reform and the role of teachers' unions in the context of private schools in Nepal: Possibility or paralysis? *Policy Futures in Education*, 13(4), 546-558.
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3. Sharma Poudyal, C. (2013). Private schooling and Fayol's principles of management: A case from Nepal. *Journal of Education and Research*, 3(1), 6–23.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

This chapter introduces the context of the study. It begins with an introduction, where I present my own professional background and how my professional background as a teacher and an administrator of private schools has enhanced my interest in this topic. This is followed by the background of the study, where I outline some existing research on private schooling in developing countries, including Nepal, and highlight the subsequent gap that provides significance for my study. After that, I present the research questions which guided this study. I then outline my involvement in the study and the subsequent issues that might arise. I finally end the chapter with the overall structure of the thesis.

Introduction

I started my career as a teacher in a private school of Nepal. This was in the 1990s, when the wider political climate of Nepal had recently changed from an absolute monarchy to a multi-party democracy with a constitutional monarchy¹. I started my employment contract in this particular school through a verbal agreement with the school's owner, who was also working as a principal (Khaniya, 2007; Sigdel, 2008). Due to the dual nature of his job, I shall henceforth refer to him and others with related roles as owner/principal. As per the agreement, I was employed as a full time teacher working from 9 am till 4 pm, five days a week and with a teaching load of seven periods a day, out of a total of eight periods. In return for work, I was given a monthly salary. There were no other facilities, such as provident fund, insurance and medical allowances.

In the beginning of my career, I enjoyed my position because it was new and challenging. Gradually, I started to get frustrated with my first job. It was due to the nature of relationship with the owner/principal of the school. In the school where I started my career, there were staff meetings whenever the owner/principal wanted them or felt them necessary. In these meetings, there was one-way communication. The owner/principal would transmit information while we, the staff, had to listen to whatever he said. During one meeting, I interrupted and put

¹ I give a snapshot of the political context of Nepal on pages 11 and 12 followed by a detailed description in the next chapter of the political and education context of Nepal.

forward my views against what the principal was conveying. Everyone present in the meeting looked at me as if I were a person from some other planet. I was surprised at this situation and it got me wondering about the politics of schooling, especially in relation to the staff relationship and power differential.

The first school where I started my career was run on the ‘will’ of the owner/principal. From what I could see, the school’s management seemed to be based on the directives of the owner/principal instead of rules and regulations from the state. The owner/principal had discretionary power with regards to hiring and firing of teachers and other staff (Sigdel, 2008) without reference to any regulation that might have protected teachers from his potential whim. I felt insecure in my job and started thinking that it does not make sense to work as a full time teacher in one school without job security. This encouraged me to look for jobs in other schools. As I was a science graduate teaching science in the secondary level, I could easily find some ‘part-time’ teaching jobs. Consequently, I started working as a part-time secondary level science teacher in three schools (School A, School B and School C) teaching two/three periods in each school. This way I felt more secure in my job, because I thought that if I lost one job, I still have others. However, this did not work for long. I had to leave my job in School A because of my relationship with the owner/principal.

An incident in School B completely changed my desire towards teaching in the private schools. I had started my employment contract in School B through a verbal agreement with the owner/principal. My job in School B was to teach science to the secondary level students and prepare them for their School Leaving Certificate (SLC)² examination. Students’ achievement in the SLC exams was used as criteria for evaluation of the teachers, being similar to what Blackmore (1988) had highlighted in the context of Australia. When the SLC result was published I felt relieved, because all of my students who appeared in the SLC examination did well in science (the subject I was teaching). I thought my job was secure for at least a year. In spite of this, things did not go as I thought. When I went to the school the next day, I was shocked to find someone teaching my class. I went to the owner/principal to discuss this. In the first instance he was not willing to talk to me,

² A standardised national level examination taken at the end of school (Grade 10). More detail is provided in the findings chapter under the theme, ‘Professional Development.’

but later on he agreed. When I asked him the reason for firing me without any notice, he just told me that his daughter (who was a student of Grade 9) did not like my teaching approach. Instead of rules and regulation as the basis of the terms and conditions of my employment, a personal opinion from a family member was used. Moreover, there was no right of reply or due process. I felt humiliated and paralysed by this incident and started thinking of giving up the idea of teaching completely. There was no teachers' union in private schools during that time and I had no formal written agreement about my job. I could do nothing other than just leave this job with the previous month's monthly salary. After this incident, I made up mind to change my profession. Consequently, I joined Master of Business Administration (MBA) with a hope of getting some management related jobs in private or government organisations.

My previous experiences and networking in the field of teaching ultimately led me to start teaching management papers to undergraduate and graduate students of Tribhuvan University, where I taught management papers to university students in the morning. Once again I started working as a part-time secondary level science teacher in the afternoon in a local private school. Again, my employment contract in the school was based on a verbal agreement with the owner/principal. By this time, the wider political environment of the country had changed from a multi-party democracy to a republic (see Chapter 2 for details). Teachers working in private schools subsequently established a teachers' union, the Nepal Institutional Schools Teachers' Union (Nepal-ISTU). This unionisation led to constant strikes for better staff protection. For example, one day, all the teachers were outside instead of teaching inside their respective classes. The schools in the Kathmandu Valley³ were closed due to strikes ordered by teachers' union. This particular strike was due to an incident in one school in Kathmandu, where some teachers had been fired by the owner/principal. These teachers put their formal complaint to the teachers' union and the teachers' union had asked all the teachers from other private schools to join them, go to that particular school and pressurise the school's owners. As all the teachers in my school went to the school concerned, I joined them. We found the school surrounded by police and we were told that some representatives of the

³ It includes three districts/cities: Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal and two of its neighbouring cities/districts: that is, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur.

teachers' union were negotiating inside the school with the school's owner and all of us had to stay outside the school. This incident provided me with an opportunity to experience first-hand the activities of the teachers' union and the changing scenario of negotiation and power relations within private schools.

After teaching management papers to graduate and undergraduate students for about eight years, I started feeling that I needed to update my knowledge. The teaching jobs, especially in the university, were becoming more attractive and competitive at the same time. I consequently undertook a Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Educational Leadership in Kathmandu University, School of Education (KUSOED), at my own expense. On completing an M.Phil. in Educational Leadership, I started teaching strategic management to the masters' students majoring in educational management. A number of my students were principals working in private schools. During our interactions, these school principals used to express their frustration about the working environment within their schools, and within the wider political climate of the country. Consequently, I was offered a job of administrator (vice principal) in a private school. I accepted the offer and began my administrator role in this private school. My job was related to maintaining relationships with teachers and other staff, as well as dealing with parents and other outsiders. I worked in that particular school only for a short period (less than a year), but during this short time I had experienced first-hand the management side of a private school. For example, in a staff meeting, I was given the responsibility of conducting the meeting even though the owner/principal was present. I adopted a facilitative approach, starting the meeting by asking each teacher present to express his/her view about the agenda. I was surprised to find teachers dominating the meeting until the owner/principal finally stopped them (teachers). This and other recent incidents within the school left me wondering if the teachers and other non-owner staff of private schools really have a voice. If they really do have a voice, is this being heard?

This study therefore explores the experiences and perceptions of teachers, administrators and owner/principals of two private schools of Nepal, thereby allowing me to determine the extent to which their experiences resonated with my own. I needed to understand more about how the power dynamics worked in such institutions in a wider much-changed political climate.

In order to set the scene for the study, I briefly present the background of this study in the next sub-section. This consists of outlining the different research so far on private schooling in the context of developing countries including Nepal and thereby highlighting the significance of my study in this context.

Background

There is a growing trend of private school involvement in school education in developing countries, especially in the South Asian and Sub-Saharan African region. This has brought increased attention in the national and international policy debates about the role of private schools (Rose, 2009). Drawing evidence from their large scale international research project that examine private schools for the poor in Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria in Africa, as well as India (Hyderabad & Mahbubnagar) in Asia, Tooley and Dixon (2006, 2007) indicated that educational responsibility has been transferred to private schools because of rapid growth of private sectors. Adding further to this line of argument, they expressed that such types of private schools (arising out of rapid growth) have been playing an important role in meeting the educational needs of the poor in these regions. Supporting this claim more recently, Dixon (2012) argues that low fee private schools are contributing significantly in providing education and also reducing poverty in developing countries of Asia and Africa.

However, these studies were mostly confined to unregistered and unrecognised private schools located in the low income regions of India, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria. This creates debate about their (private schools) role in overall education of the countries concerned, which have not recognised them as schools. Moreover, Härmä (2009) found that low fee private schools are unaffordable to most of the poor families in the rural Uttar Pradesh, India. As Tooley and Dixon's research project was conducted by Western scholars with United Kingdom funding, there is the possible influence of the global dispersion of the neoliberal agenda⁴. In contrast to the very rural nature of private schools in India, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria, private schools in Nepal (my study context) are mostly confined to the

⁴ I outline global dispersion of neoliberal agenda in the literature review (Chapter 3), under the heading, 'neoliberalism and privatisation.'

main urban centres such as Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur. Moreover, only registered private schools are allowed to operate in Nepal (Kitaev, 2007).

The popularity of private schools in the developing countries of Asia and Africa has been attributed to the failure of the state/government school systems in these regions. For example, using the case of Malawi, Rose (2003) noted that private schools are growing in the region because of poor quality government schools. This low quality of government schools in Malawi, for example, is attributed to the government's inability to provide enough facilities to such schools as a result of its low gross domestic product (GDP). On the advice of the World Bank, fees for primary level in government schools were increased in the 1980s. However, following the decrease in enrolment, the government completely abolished fees in the primary level in 1994. As a result, there was a massive increase in enrolment in primary level schools, resulting in reduced government expenditure per pupil and a degrading of the quality of government schools, suggesting the infrastructure problems were possibly exacerbated by the World Bank's focus on neo-liberal policies. Similarly, from a 13-village survey of 250 households and 26 private schools and government schools in the rural Uttar Pradesh, India, Härmä (2009) found that parents opt to send their children to private schools because they (parents) perceive that government schools are not performing as per their expectation. Parents expect their children (especially in the primary level) to be able to read and write. Because of a lack of a regular teaching and learning environment and English medium instruction in government schools (while these are present in private schools), parents perceived that government schools are not performing as per their expectation. More recently, Härmä (2013) found the same evidence in Lagos, Nigeria, using 2010-2011 school censuses.

Lewin (2007) expressed similar views, claiming that the growth of non-government private schools in sub-Saharan African countries is mainly due to the inability of the state to provide sufficient access to schooling with the introduction of Educational for All (EFA) programmes. Education for All (EFA) is a global commitment from the 1990 Jomtien and 2000 Dakar World Conference to provide quality education to all children as articulated by the Millennium Development Goal (MGD) of achieving universal primary education by 2015 (Rose, 2003; Rose & Adelabu, 2007). Lewin (2007) noted that as a result of EFA, the governments of sub-Saharan African countries were unable to provide increased access to schooling.

This resulted in the growth of private schools by default. However, some scholars question the effectiveness of private schools comparing them (private schools) to those of state schools. For example, from a survey of students in 150 private and state schools in Tanzania, Lassibille and Tan (2001) argue that students from state schools perform better than those of the private schools. The students' performance was measured on the basis of achievement model in the form of test scores in three different subjects including maths, English and Kiswahili (African language) after controlling the sampling bias. As Caddell (2007b) noted, this was just a relative quality comparison of private/government schools on the basis of test scores in specific subjects.

Not everyone agrees with the view that private schools in developing countries are contributing to the educational needs of poor people and helping these countries towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and, consequently, EFA targets. Lewin (2007) presents a less optimistic view about the possibility of private schools contributing in the achievement of EFA on the basis of data from sub-Saharan African countries. In line with this proposition, Lewin (2007) added that because of a concentration of non-government private schools in the urban regions and their accessibility to those who could afford to pay, such schools only have smaller overall effect in helping the poor of the developing countries. Similarly, Mehrotra and Panchamukhi (2006), based on a sample survey of schools from eight Indian states, noted that lack of training and motivation of private school teachers combined with lack of proper regulation, contradicts the claim of the overall quality of private school teaching. Because of this, they argue, any evidence that private schools are an alternative to poor quality state schools is questionable. Because private schools are held in relative low esteem and seen as being lesser importance by many scholars working in this field in developing countries, very little research has been carried out to date. Ashley (2013, p. 207) outlined following two reasons for such a scenario:

- i. lack of interest in researching private schools in the recent past;
- ii. perceived threat that private education poses to the traditional role of the state in education.

As noted in the above quote, the traditional role of state in education is related to the notion of considering school education as the responsibility of the state and as

a public good instead of the neoliberal ideology of education as a private good. For example, in the context of Nepal, after the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) became the dominant political force in the country, they openly debated the continued existence of the private sector in school education. These ideas inform my thesis, which involves exploring the context of privatisation within changing political regimes. I further discuss the role of the state in education in more detail in Chapter 2, which centres on the political and education context of Nepal.

Similar to other developing countries in Asia and Africa, private schooling in Nepal is still an under-researched area. Different researchers have made some attempts to explore a variety of issues in the private schooling context. For example, in a recent book chapter, *Dimensions and Implications of Privatisation of Education in Nepal: The Case of Primary and Secondary Schools*, Subedi, Shrestha and Suvedi (2014) analysed the nature and size of private education together with parents' perception of private education using both cross-sectional and exploratory data. Similarly, in an article entitled, *Private Schools as a Battlefield: Contested Vision of Learning and Livelihood in Nepal*, Caddell (2006) highlighted how the policy and programme on the role of private schooling in the educational reform and the achievement of Educational for All present a somewhat narrow arena of debate. One of the reasons behind this, Caddell argues, is because private schools became key sites of struggle between the Maoist insurgents and the state before their eventual success in establishing a Maoist republic. Caddell (2007b) also devoted a book chapter entitled, *Private Schooling and Political Conflict in Nepal*, discussing different issues of private schooling during the period of armed conflict in the country. She highlighted how private schooling in Nepal had become one of the focuses of violent conflict. Khaniya (2007) included two chapters (*Privatization of Education in Nepal* and *New Horizons in Privatization of Education in Nepal*) in his book entitled, *New Horizon in Education in Nepal* discussing issues of privatisation of education in Nepal, providing a range of suggestions and recommendations. However, both chapters seem to be based on the personal opinion of the author with some supporting document sources, rather than first-hand research experience. Therefore, the study lacks objective insight into how things actually work within private schools and how the staff (both owners and non-owners) perceive and experience their professional lives.

Similarly, Educational Journalists' Groups, with the support of Action Aid, Nepal, presented issues of private schooling in Nepal from the perspectives of different journalists involved in educational sectors, in an edited book entitled, *Assessing Private Schools* (Subedi, 2008). This book discusses a range of private schooling issues in different chapters. These include: *Liberalisation in Education and Influence of World Trade Organization* (Lamichane, 2008); *Private Schools and the Question of Equity in Education in Nepal* (Gautam, 2008); *Private Schools and Role of the Stakeholders* (Kulung, 2008); *Private Schools and Political Parties* (Poudel & Chhetri, 2008); *Quality Education: Different Understandings* (Dhungel, 2008); *Private Management* (Sigdel, 2008); *Situations of Private Schools Pass Out Students* (Silwal, 2008) and *Innovation in Nepali Private Schools* (Adhikari, 2008). Each of these chapters discusses different aspects of privatisation of education in Nepal. For example, Laminchane's chapter outlines the role of the neoliberal state in the growth of the private education sector in Nepal, explaining the global dispersion of the neoliberal agenda through world trade organisations. Similarly, Poudel & Chhetri's chapter discusses the influence and role of different political parties dominating the political scene of Nepal at different points in history. This includes the role of political parties (for example, the Nepali Congress) that adopted the neoliberal role in privatising education. They also refer to Maoists, who provided a state-oriented defence of public education. Although the book provides a good picture of the private schooling context of Nepal, the situations depicted in the book seem to be based on the perceptions of the authors instead of the teachers, administrators and owner/principals working in the private schools. Thus, this book also lacks understanding of how things actually work within private schools from the perspectives of teachers, administrators and owner/principals of private schools.

Except for Subedi et al. (2014) and Caddell's work (2007b), all of the mentioned studies on private schooling in Nepal were based on secondary sources for they do not explore how people working within the private school context perceive and experience their professional lives. In addition to these works, other research (Bhatta, 2009; Bhatta, 2014; Bhatta & Budathoki, 2013; Caddell, 2005, 2007a; Joshi, 2014; Pherali, 2011, 2013; Rajbhandari & Wilmot, 2000; Shrestha, 2008; Standing & Parker, 2011; Thapa, 2011; Van Wessel & Van Hirtum, 2013; Vaux, Smith, & Subba, 2006) gives partial space to private schooling in Nepal, based more on the overall schooling context of Nepal. Moreover, almost all the

studies on private schooling so far have been undertaken from outsider perspectives. Although there is a good deal of debate on outsider and insider perspectives in qualitative research, which will be outlined in the methodology chapter, the sources cited here appear to be conducted by people who have never personally experienced what goes on within private schools of Nepal. More recently, Kafle (2013) explored the lived experience of middle school managers (administrators) of private schools of Nepal, using phenomenology as the research strategy, with in-depth interview and protocol writing as the key means of data generation. This article provides one example of an insiders' perspective. The dearth of literature on private schooling in Nepal in general, and how things actually work within private schools in the changed political context of Nepal in particular, has encouraged me to conduct this study with the following research questions.

Research Questions

As indicated in the introduction, my professional experience as a teacher and an administrator in a range of private schools in Nepal has spanned different political climates of the country. This has developed a keen interest in me to further explore the experiences and perceptions of other teachers and administrators working in different Nepali private schools of Nepal leading me to select this study with the following research questions:

1. How do teachers, administrators⁵ and principals of two private schools perceive and experience their professional lives after the wider political climate of Nepal changed from a monarchy to a republic?
2. To what extent, if any, are the changes in the wider political climate of the country mirrored within the private school context?

I am exploring perceptions and experiences of both employees and employers in two private schools in Nepal. Teachers and administrators in my study comprise non-owner staff and represent employees' voices, while the principals, also owners of their schools, represent employers' voices in these two schools. Although my main focus is exploring teachers' voice, as the thesis title suggests, I needed to

⁵ Administrators in this study refers to the positions of middle level management such as primary and secondary in-charge, primary coordinator, head of department and vice principals.

understand the other side of the coin, as represented by the owner/principals of my study. That is why I included owners/principals of both schools as research participants. Administrators in my study are middle level managers who appear to be bridges between the teachers and school principals. These administrators have certain lower level managerial positions such as coordinator, head of department and vice principals. Because of the nature of the role of administrators, it is important to explore their experiences and perceptions also.

My present study is conducted in the context of the changing political climate of Nepal in order to explore issues of teachers' voices. These teachers are members of two private schools run under the ownership of an individual or group of individuals who also work as principals of their schools. My interest is in exploring whether the working environment within the schools (especially in relations to power differentials) has changed after the overall political context of Nepal changed from a monarchy to a republic. My second research question explores this aspect of my research.

My Involvement and the Subsequent Issues

As indicated in the introduction, my interest in this study is an outcome of my professional background. This involves working as a non-owner staff member, as a teacher as well as an administrator. This is important to outline, because I may be biased in my interpretation of the data from owner/principal's perceptions and experiences, given my own professional experiences working for such people.

My experience of power relational issues within the private secondary school context took place in a political environment dominated by the Monarchists (the King and his supporters/followers), the democratic socialists (the Nepali Congress, NC), liberal leftists (the Communist Party of Nepal, Unified Marxists-Leninist, CPN UML) and the radical left (Communist Party of Nepal, Maoists) in succession. Thus, there has been the influence of both right wing and left wing politics in the country's political history. Although I do not have an affiliation with any of the political parties of the country, I could not remain aloof from their ideologies. During the 1990s, when the country's political scenarios changed from an absolute monarchy to a multiparty democracy, the political party dominating the political scenarios was the Nepali Congress (NC). The working strategies of NC indicated that it was just trying to maintain the existing hierarchical structure. This

encouraged people like me to seek change, even after the declaration of a multiparty democracy in the country. When the CPN (UML) formed a minority government in 1994, after the collapse of NC majority government because of inter-party conflict, it [CPN (UML)] adopted several reforms to bring change in the country. As a result CPN (UML) became popular among the general public especially the youth of the country. However, the popularity of this party was short-lived. Soon after it was removed from the government, CPN (UML) could not maintain its stance on different issues. Because of this, people consequently lost faith in the party.

When the Maoists started to dominate the political scenario of Nepal in the late 1990s, I found their core agenda of liberating people from the existing hierarchical social structure to be noteworthy. The majority of Nepali people supported the Maoists, although many people died during the ten years of armed conflict. This core agenda of liberating people from the existing hierarchical social structure, may be one of the several reasons why the Maoists became the dominant political force after the first constituent assembly election. However, once Maoists came to power, more power struggles emerged, this time from within the party. This encouraged them to work with other political parties and develop different strategies of forming the government instead of liberating the people. Thus, as Stake (2010) indicated, my interpretation in this study (similar to a majority of qualitative researchers) is more aligned towards left wing politics than right wing politics. In this study, I am using Foucault's notion of power in the context discussed above. Power for Foucault is not a thing owned by someone but something that circulates depending on how "different groups, institutions and discourses negotiate, relate to and compete with one another" (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000, p. 80). This is also another aspect which I need to consider in this study and is discussed later in the insider and outsider perspectives (Chapter 5).

Thesis Overview

This thesis consists of nine chapters, organised as follows.

Chapter 1 introduces the context of this study, where I have highlighted how my professional background has enhanced my interest in this topic for research. In Chapter 2, I present the political and educational context of Nepal. Here I outline how a change in the political climate of Nepal has introduced different approaches

to privatisation in education. In Chapter 3, I outline and critique literature related to school organisation, school governance and management, along with the micro-politics of schools. Chapter 4 outlines the theoretical approach in this study. It introduces how I link a Marxist theory of power with Foucault's notion of power in my theoretical framework. Chapter 5 outlines the methodological approach used in the study and introduces Foucault's notion of power within a postmodernist paradigm. It also highlights qualitative case study research, my role as a researcher, relevant ethical considerations in this research, along with a critical reflection on my positionality as a researcher. In Chapter 6, I outline the research methods, processes and analysis I adopted in the study. In Chapter 7, I examine the research findings with three broader themes- *management and ownership, teachers: having a voice and being heard* and *the issue of regulation and deregulation of private schools*. In order to supplement the findings from interviews, I also outline findings from field notes in this chapter. Chapter 8 discusses the findings from Chapter 7 in light of the literature. Finally, Chapter 9 concludes with some limitations, implications and recommendations for future research.

Summary

This chapter has highlighted how my professional background as a teacher and an administrator in the different private schools of Nepal, in different political environments, has led to my interest in this study. It has also highlighted recent research on the private schooling context of developing countries, including Nepal, and an existing gap in the literature on the private schooling context of Nepal. This means recognising that most of the current research on private schooling is based on outsider perspectives, with the researcher discussing the issue without involving teachers, administrators and owner/principals working in private schools, which has become my key research focus.

This introduction and background chapter has outlined the background of the study. It has introduced how different changes in the wider political climate of the country have brought changes within the working environment of the school on the basis of my personal experiences. In the next chapter, I outline political history of Nepal and discuss how a change in the political history of the country has brought different issues related to privatisation of schools in Nepal.

Chapter 2: Political and Educational Context of Nepal⁶

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I outlined how my professional background as a teacher and an administrator working in different political climates has led to my interest in the topic of my study. In this chapter, I give a brief description of the political history of Nepal and how these changes in political regimes have influenced the privatisation of education in Nepal. A brief background of the country's context is first provided, followed by a political history of Nepal, from the time it was united as a country up to the present day as a republic. This chapter ends with the educational context of Nepal, especially in relation to private schools and policy adopted by various governments during different points in the country's history.

First, I discuss the education context of Nepal during the earlier autocratic *Rana* regime, when there was limited educational opportunity for most citizens, followed by the government adopting a liberal approach to education and common people started establishing schools for their children on their own initiative. I also present the nationalisation of education period, then discuss what led to the rapid growth of the private educational sector in Nepal along its categorisation. Finally, I highlight the issues of privatisation in Nepal, within the changing political scenario in the country.

Locating Nepal

Nepal is a landlocked country located in the Himalayan region, sandwiched between two Asian giants - India and China - with an area of 1,47,181 square kilometres (Bhattarai, 2001; Ministry of Education, 2004) and a population of over 26 million as of September 2011. Nepal has diverse topographical settings, ranging from lowland areas of 60 metres above sea level to the Himalayan Mountains (more than 8800 metres above sea level). Within this elevation lie three ecological regions: the mountains, the hills and the lowland areas also called *terrai* (Bhattarai, 2003; Bhattarai, 2001). As in many countries, there is an increase in urban population (17

⁶ As indicated under publications, an earlier version of this chapter has been published as a book chapter (Sharma Poudyal, 2013a), *Neoliberalism, privatization and education in the republic of Nepal* in an edited book, *Re-examining creative university for the 21st century*.

percent) in Nepal, compared with 14 percent 10 years ago. Kathmandu, the capital city, is the largest urban area, with a population of over 1 million.

The people of Nepal (*Nepali* people) belong to more than 100 castes/ethnic groups, having different languages, cultures and celebrate different festivals, are scattered around the country (Parajulee, 2010). Most Nepali people are believed to have migrated to Nepal from different parts of the world around 2-3 thousand years ago, such as mass immigrants from Tibet as a result of suppression from the Chinese Communist authority in 1959, numerous settlers from India with the opening of Nepal's terai (plains). Lastly, Indian *Brahmins*⁷ were frequently invited by the Hindu Kings of Nepal (Joshi & Rose, 1966). The constitution recognises Nepal as a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic state with a provision for people's cultural rights. The state policy also encourages national unity, by promoting harmony and good social relations among different language and ethnic groups (Bhattarai, 2001).

Nepal has experienced a great deal of political change in its history. With changes in the political regime, changes in the educational system have been followed (Caddell, 2007a). Thus, the political ideology of the ruling authority heavily influences the educational policy of the country. For example, while education was limited to elite families during the *Rana* Regime, all schools were nationalised during the *Panchayat* era. Later, a liberal education policy was adopted after the declaration of multi-party democracy (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, 2009). In the next section, I present a brief political history of Nepal, followed by a look at the privatisation of education in Nepal. In the final section, I discuss the issue of regulation of private schools in Nepal.

Political Context of Nepal

Nepal's modern political history began with the unification of the country in the latter half of the 18th century by the King of Gurkha⁸, Prithivi Narayan Shah. Traditional Hindu Monarchs ruled Nepal for a period of about 240 years, even though there have been threats to the absolute power of the monarchy from time to time in Nepal's history (BBC News South Asia, 2012).

⁷ A member of highest caste Hindu, representing priesthood.

⁸ A tiny mountainous area in the Western Nepal: one of the districts of present Nepal, and a powerful Kingdom of ancient Nepal

Rana Regime (1846-1950)

After the death of King Prithivi Narayan Shah, there were increasing power struggles within the kingdom. Such a situation, coupled with the absence of strong leadership, created political instability in the country. This led to the ultimate rise of Janga Bahadur Rana (one of the members of the noble elites) to power. During this period in history, India was under British colonial rule under the East India Company. After the rise of Janga Bahadur Rana, the East India Company started extending its influence in Nepali politics (Parajulee, 2000). The Rana regime maintained friendly relations with the British Government in India (Gupta, 1964; Joshi & Rose, 1966; Parajulee, 2000). The British Government in India established British residents in Kathmandu after signing the *Sugauli Treaty* in 1816 (Parajulee, 2000). The Rana regime also sent Nepali soldiers (popularly known as the *Gurkhas*) to fight on behalf of British Empire in the two World Wars. These war veterans brought the ideas of popular support on returning home (Ganguly & Shoup, 2005; Joshi & Rose, 1966).

In the early Rana period, ordinary people were not allowed education within the country. Because of this, many people went to India in search of educational opportunities. These groups of Nepali people later on started organising anti-Ranas activities in India (Brown, 1996). Exposure to the Indian Nationalist Movement and Western style education made educated Nepali aware that once the British hegemony was ousted from India, it would become easier to remove the autocratic Rana regime from Nepal. With such expectations, some educated Nepali people took part in the Indian Nationalist Movement (Joshi & Rose, 1966). Consequently (with the relaxed political environment in India after its independence from British rule), Nepali living in India started organising themselves into different political groups. Groups of Nepali youth, closely associated with the Indian Nationalist Movement, established the Nepali National Congress in 1947 based on the model of the Indian National Congress. Influenced by the success of the Indian Nationalist Movement and the Chinese Communist revolution of 1949, the Nepal Communist Party was formed in Calcutta in 1949 (Baral, 1977; Bhattaria, 1990; Khadka, 1995).

During the Rana regime, the Shah Kings were confined to the palace, strictly supervised by the Ranas. They were treated as an incarnation of the Hindu God, *Vishnu* and kept as a spiritual figurehead (Brown, 1996). In spite of the tight security of the Rana regime, the then King Tribhuvan and his family managed to escape

from the palace and took refuge in the Indian Embassy at Kathmandu, in November 1950. Three days later, they were flown to New Delhi, India (Brown, 1996; Gupta, 1964). On learning that King Tribhuvan had flown to New Delhi, the Nepali Congress started armed revolution in Nepal against the Rana regime in early November, 1950. The armed struggle between Nepali Congress forces and the Rana continued throughout December (Joshi & Rose, 1966). This incident exerted enough pressure on the Rana regime to cause them to withdraw their power (Parajulee, 2000). Finally, in 15 February 1951, an agreement was signed between the Ranas, the King and the Nepali Congress in New Delhi, to facilitate a peaceful transfer of power (Parajulee, 2000). This agreement, popularly known as the 'Delhi Compromise,' proposed a three party power sharing coalition government, consisting of the Ranas, the Nepali Congress and the King. Although the agreement brought a power sharing government, this agreement provided better advantage to the King because of the inexperienced nature of Nepali Congress and the already damaged reputation of the Ranas (Brown, 1996). This agreement also portrayed the imperial role of India in the internal affairs of Nepal.

Panchayat Era and Power Struggle (1950-1990)

A series of events took place in Nepali politics that enabled the King to accumulate a greater degree of control over the political life of Nepal. The controversy among the political parties increased and as a result none of the governments formed during this period lasted long (Brown, 1996; Parajulee, 2000). Even though king Tribhuvan promised a constituent assembly to draft a democratic constitution, this had never happened (Brown, 1996). When king Tribhuvan died in 1955, his son Mahendra ascended the throne and soon returned the country politics to an autocratic monarchy (Davis, 2009). The period of 1955-1958 was marked by the struggle between the monarch and the popular forces led by the Nepali Congress (NC). The monarch wanted to accumulate power and strengthen his position, while the popular forces led by NC wanted to reduce the power of the king with a hope of establishing constituent monarchy in the country (Brown, 1996).

King Mahendra continually postponed the election promised by his father. While the monarchy was accumulating power in the country, a number of political parties including the Nepali Congress were gaining maturity. In a conference in January, 1956, the Nepali Congress adopted the ideology of democratic socialism

(Brown, 1996; Joshi & Rose, 1966). Amidst all these controversies, the first ever general election was held in Nepal under the new constitutions in 1959 (Bhattarai, 2001). Three parties emerged as a result of this election. The Nepali Congress became the largest party securing a two-third majority in the lower house of parliament (74 of the 109 seats), followed by the *Gorkha Parishad*, a party associated with the Ranas, securing 19 seats, while the Nepal Communist Party securing only 4 seats (Brown, 1996).

The election of 1959 provided Nepali Congress an opportunity to rule the country with the principles of democratic socialism. Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala (commonly known as B. P. Koirala), being the leader of the political party (Nepali Congress) with two third majorities, became the first elected prime minister of Nepal (Baral, 1994; Ganguly & Shoup, 2005). This marked the real shift of power from the hereditary institution of monarchy to a democratically elected political party (Bhattarai, 2001). B. P. Koirala adopted several strategies to bring reform in the country's political system. The newly elected government, under the leadership of B. P. Koirala, was able to achieve major tasks such as bringing administrative reform, removing corruption and maintaining active foreign policy (Parajulee, 2000). The ministers were made responsible to the parliament and electorate. This enabled the ministers to spend more time working instead of favouring the king. Thus, the Congress government took important steps that were consistent with its socialist principles (Brown, 1996). However, the socio-economic reforms initiated by the NC government were not taken positively by elite groups enjoying the privileges from the state. The opposition parties including the *Gorkha Parishad* and Nepal Communist Party also started to criticise the government and its policies (Parajulee, 2000). This provided an opportunity for the then king, Mahendra, to take power in his hands and establish a political system with the king as the ultimate power centre. This system was called *Panchayat*, which lasted for about 30 years. The Panchayat government nationalised all existing schools, thereby limiting the scope of operation of private schools in Nepal.

End of Monarchy (1990-to date)

Nepal could not remain aloof from the global wave of democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This external global environment, along with internal pressure, finally led the existing Nepali monarch, King Birendra, to give up direct rule and

introduce a multi-party system with a constitutional monarchy in the 1990s (Hachhethu, 1990). However, even after the declaration of democracy in the country, common people were still subject to a centralised power structure in the country. The power struggle among and between the political parties and monarchy continued throughout the 1990s, as they all attempted to become a powerful political force (Baral, 1994; Brown, 1996). Consequently, one of the political parties, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), began armed conflict in the country during 1996. The main objective was removing the monarchy and declaring a republic (Hutt, 2004). During the ten years (1996-2006) of this armed conflict, around 13,000 people, including schoolteachers, principals and children, died. Finally, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the existing government of Nepal and the Maoists. This was followed by the election of the Constituent Assembly (CA) and declaration of a republic, removing 240 years of monarchy. The constituent assembly election turned Maoists into the dominant political force, as they become the largest political party in the assembly (Srivastava & Sharma, 2010).

Although the Maoist party was the largest political party in the constituent assembly [as per the election mandate of the first CA], they were expected to work in collaboration with other political parties including the Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist and Leninist). However, this did not happen and the CA was not successful in its mission of promulgating a new constitution. Instead of moving towards the main objective of the CA (framing a constitution within two years) the main political parties (Maoists, UML and NC) gave priority to power politics and treated the CA as a platform for forming government (Dahal, 2013). This led to the extension of the CA for four terms. Finally, lack of consensus among the political parties led to the ultimate dissolution of the CA on May 27, 2012, after the Supreme Court refused to grant another extension (Brown & Felbab-Brown, 2012; Chapagain & Yardley, 2012). As a result of this, an interim government led by a former Chief Justice was formed for the purpose of conducting another CA election within a year (Bhattarai & Kharel, 2013). The election for second CA was finally held on November 19, 2013 and the election results of the second CA [as the first one] came with a surprise. The Nepali Congress became the largest party in the second CA followed by CPN (UML) and the Maoists became only the third party. This shows that even after the removal of

monarchy in the country and subsequent declaration of a republic, there is ongoing tension between and within the political parties. The general public is left in confusion about which political party they should believe. Because of this situation, the political party dominating the political scenario of the country keeps on changing. This has an impact on the operation of private schools from within as well as from outside. In the next section, I discuss the education context of Nepal in the different periods of political regimes with special focus on private schools.

Education Context of Nepal

The education system of a country is governed by the policy adopted by the government of the country. The educational policy reflects the values and beliefs of the people, communities and politicians involved in the decision making process. Therefore, the education policy at a particular point in the history reflects the ideology of the politicians during that period (Brown, Sumsion, & Press, 2009; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997). This is also seen in Nepal's political history. The autocratic Rana regimes limited education to elite family members for the fear of the populace becoming critical of the regime, while common people started schools for their children on their own initiative during the short democratic experiment period succeeding the Rana regimes. I discuss this in detail in the upcoming sections.

There is widespread debate on the role of government in education. This has resulted in the ideologies of liberalism and neoliberalism. Liberalism, as an ideology, gives preference to the free individual choice for his/her material or ideal interest in an institutional framework. It is seen as "spontaneous philosophy within capitalist societies" (Jessop, 2002, p. 455). Classical liberalism considers that the individual needs to be made free from state power, and it (classical liberalism) is a good example of a negative connotation of state power. Neoliberalism, on the other hand, claims that the role of the state is to create proper market conditions with necessary regulation. Thus, neoliberalism, a positive connotation of state power, is an attempt to create an enterprising and competitive individual (Peters, 2011, 2012).

Liberalism sees the market as a natural order, whereas neoliberalism sees market as a mechanism engineered through state power (Harris, 2007). Neoliberalism undermines collective cultures and those that thrive on community-oriented practices. Neoliberals' goal is to free individual from the dependence on

state welfare; that is, a shift from “welfare to workfare” (Peters, 2012, p. 34). The role of the neoliberal state is to create and preserve an institutional framework with legal structures and functions that guarantee secured private property. The neoliberal state also creates an institutional framework that guarantees proper functioning of the market. Neoliberal states stress the privatisation of state owned sectors with the provision of deregulation thereby making them free from state interference (Harvey, 2005). The neoliberal state therefore creates an educational market. Such educational markets involve a direct relationship between schools (teachers and other academics) and their clients (students and parents). Under the neoliberal state, the education market is controlled from the background by the government, with students and parents as consumers, teachers and other academics as producers and administrators (principals and head teachers) as managers and entrepreneurs (Harris, 2007). Neoliberals suggest that education needs to be privatised, because they (neoliberals) argue that privatisation will make teachers more responsive to parents as they (teachers) will work within “a performance-related working regime” (Bangay, 2007, p. 116). I further extend the discussion on neoliberalism and its effects on teachers’ work and professionalism in the literature review chapter (Chapter 3).

In many countries, the political ideology of a governing authority has always influenced the education policy; Nepal is no different (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, 2009). Each regime attempted to enforce its vision and ideology, resulting in multiple revisions of the education system with each shift in the regime (Caddell, 2007a). For example, the autocratic Rana regime limited education to the few elite family members, while the panchayat government (absolute monarchy) nationalised all existing schools closing down private schools in Nepal. Similarly, the incoming democratic government of the Nepali Congress adopted a liberal approach allowing the operation of private schools, while the republican government led by Maoists attempted to properly regulate and monitor private schools. In addition to this, the educational policy of Nepal is also heavily influenced by the external vision and wider development aid agenda of donor agencies, such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), The World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) (Caddell,

2005). For example, in the fiscal year 2009-2010, foreign aid comprised of about 19 percent of total government expenditure and 55 of percent development expenditure, thereby suggesting that government policies in Nepal are heavily influenced by donor agency priority (Adhikari, 2014). The following sub-sections provide further examples on the relationship between shifts in the political regime and changes in the educational policy.

Period of Limited Access

The education history of Nepal began with private schools. The Rana Prime Minister, Janga Bahadur Rana, recognised the need for education, after his visit to England in 1850 (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, 2009; Kulung, 2008). This encouraged him to establish Nepal's first school (Durbar High School), an English medium school, meant only for the children of the Rana family (Khaniya, 2007). The rulers feared that educational opportunity would lead to the common people becoming more critical, encouraging the populace to think for themselves and resist the power of the rulers (Andersson & Lindkvist, 2000). Due to such thinking, access to education was limited to small numbers of children from elite families. These families were more likely to reproduce the status quo of power relations. Thus, the schools which were established before 1950 were small in number and limited in access, yet after the political change of 1950, education access shifted from a few elite groups to the common people. This was made possible by both the initiatives of the common people and incoming government policy.

Liberal Government Policy in Education

After the political changes of 1950, schools for ordinary people began to establish in Nepal. Instead of waiting for the government to establish schools, people started establishing schools on their own initiative. Such schools were called *non-governmental schools* (Kulung, 2008). The government also adopted a liberal policy to expand educational access and establish proper systems of education during 1951 to 1960. Government efforts during this period included establishing the Ministry of Education, along with appointment of the Secretary of Education and Chief Inspector of Schools (Eagle, 2000). All major policy documents developed during this period were prepared through the financial and technical

assistance of the United States Overseas Mission, USOM, (later renamed as United States Agency for International Development, USAID) (Caddell, 2007a). The United States (US) appears to be using USAID as a means to exert US influence into Nepal's political and social practices through education. The conditions attached to the foreign assistance from the USAID seem to be embedded in the structural adjustment programmes imposed on Nepal. During this period, when two neighbouring countries, India and China, started providing foreign aid for their own geo-political interest, the US assistance was a means to stop the spread of communism (Caddell, 2007a). Thus, there was evidence of a neo-liberal agenda in action and the wielding of power in domestic politics from the donor agency, that was anything but altruistic.

The development of the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC) in 1954 was one of the major steps taken by the government to increase access to education (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, 2009). The United States provided technical advice to the government of Nepal in the field of education. Dr Hugh B. Wood, US Fulbright Scholar and educationist, was introduced as an education advisor to Nepal. The Ministry of Education constituted the NNEPC, popularly known as the 'Wood Commission,' with Dr Wood in an education advisor capacity. The Wood Commission was the first commission to be formed in Nepal. The commission acknowledged the importance of universal primary education and also of the improvement of educational service delivery across Nepal. Even though the Commission played an important role in the expansion of mass education in Nepal, it introduced "the reduction of multilingualism" in education (Awasthi, 2008, p. 23). The Wood Commission is said to have discouraged the spread of different languages in the country by restricting the medium of instruction to Nepali language (Chene, 1996). Nepal is a multi-ethnic state and different ethnic groups speak their own languages, although Nepali is the official language. On the advice of the Wood Commission, the government adopted Nepali as the medium of instruction in schools (Eagle, 2000). The effect of this was to disenfranchise speakers of other languages in Nepal, and undermine their cultural practices.

Nationalisation of Education

On the recommendation of NNEPC, His Majesty's Government of Nepal⁹ adopted the National Primary School Curriculum in 1959, as a result of which "teaching of Nepali language became compulsory for all classes and all schools of Nepal" (Onta, 1996, p. 218). The Nepali Congress government of 1959 tried to promote democratic ideals in education and adopted a policy of expanding primary education in Nepal. However, after the dismissal of the democratic government by King Mahendra in 1960, the upcoming *Panchayat* government adopted only a few policies developed by the former government (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, 2009).

The Panchayat government put further emphasis on the use of Nepali language as the medium of instruction in schools. In order to develop educational materials in Nepali language, the Education Materials Organisation, later renamed as *Janak* Education Material Centre, was established in 1960. This enabled the Panchayat government to bring uniformity in schools' curricula and textbooks by the end of 1960. In 1961, the All Round National Education Committee was established (Onta, 1996). By 1969, the Panchayat government set up the National Education System Plan (NESP) and consequently nationalised all the existing schools in 1971 (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, 2009; Kulung, 2008). NESP was introduced to produce citizens loyal to the country and the Crown so that they (citizens) conduct in accordance with the existing Panchayat System (Ministry of Education, 1971; Onta, 1996). Thus, the main focus of this (NESP) plan was to "re-legitimate the Panchayat regime" (Caddell, 2007a, p. 15). Education was standardised, and a national curriculum as well as Nepali language textbooks were developed. Nepali¹⁰ was adopted as a compulsory medium of instruction in all schools in Nepal (Eagle, 2000). All private schools were taken over by the government and the growth of the private education sector was thus hindered after

⁹ During monarchy, the Government of Nepal was referred to as His Majesty's Government of Nepal

¹⁰ As a noun, Nepali refer to the national language spoken by people of Nepal, while as an adjective, Nepali is referred to the people of Nepal; that is, Nepali people (Nepalese people as used by most Western Scholars).

the introduction of the Education Act 2028¹¹ (1971), developed on the basis of NESP 1971 (Khaniya, 2007).

Rapid Growth of Private Schools

All schools in Nepal were nationalised after the introduction of the Education Act 2028 (1971). However, it was soon realised that the government could not provide education to all children. As a result, the government amended the Educational Act 2028 (1971) in 1980 and made provision for private sector investment in education. Although it was claimed that the re-introduction of the private sector in education was a move towards increasing access, there seems to be reasons beyond access (Khaniya, 2007). The autocratic monarchy during this period was facing challenges both internally and internationally, influenced by waves of democracy all over the world. Moreover, because of the financial support from international donor agencies such as UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP and the World Bank (WB), the government was trying to link its educational reform with the interests of the international donor community, which tended towards a neoliberal agenda. This link to donors might have encouraged the government to adopt such a liberal approach, even though this was contradictory to the approach of the existing government to get support from international donor agencies, and also to maintain power (Caddell, 2007a). As Klees (1999) argues, privatisation of education in Nepal, to some extent, seems to be related to the global hegemony of the World Bank and other international agencies.

People once again started establishing schools based on individual or group investment. This resulted in two education systems in the country: the private sector operating under private investment, and the public sector under government investment (Kulung, 2008). Thus, the private sector entered the education system of the county basically to serve the excess demand for education (Khaniya, 2007). However, there has been rapid growth of private sector education in Nepal since the mid-1980s (Save the Children, UK, South and Central Asia, 2002). This resulted in the mushrooming of private schools, especially in the urban centres of the country.

¹¹ The official calendar of Nepal is called *Bikram Sambat*. It is the lunar calendar based on ancient Hindu tradition. It is 56.7 years ahead of the Western calendar. 2028 in Nepali calendar is roughly equivalent to 1971.

For example, the share of private sectors in school education is highest in the Kathmandu valley (the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu and its two neighbouring cities, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur). This indicates that private schools in Nepal are mainly concentrated in the main urban centres (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, 2011). The table below provides details on the distribution of private and state/public schools in different regions of Nepal and their overall share in the total enrolment.

Table 1: Distribution of private and public schools in different regions of Nepal

Development Region	School type	Level			Percentage share in enrolment		
		Primary (P) (1-5)	Lower Secondary (LS) (6-8)	Secondary (S) (9-10)	P	LS	S
Eastern	Public	27,848	8,861	4,960	92.5	92.9	91.5
	Private	923	484	353	7.5	7.1	8.5
Central	Public	6,133	1,934	1,074	83.9	76.7	72.4
	Private	2,095	1,534	1,237	16.1	23.3	27.6
Kathmandu Valley	Public	633	352	229	31.5	34.6	34.9
	Private	1,443	1,155	941	68.5	65.4	65.1
Western	Public	6,294	1,878	1,166	82.2	83.2	82.0
	Private	1,072	683	476	17.8	16.8	18.0
Mid-Western	Public	4,642	1,429	712	93.2	94.0	92.3
	Private	425	233	155	6.8	6.0	7.7
Far Western	Public	3,396	1,286	665	94.8	96.1	94.3
	Private	321	144	85	5.2	3.9	5.7

Source: Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education (2011)

As indicated in the above table, public schools constitute about 80 percent of the total schools in Nepal, while private schools are only 20 percent of total schools (Thapa, 2011). Although the number of private schools is comparatively lower overall, private schools outnumbered public schools in the main urban centre, Kathmandu Valley, which is the context of my study. Different types of private schools are in operation in Nepal. The two common types of private schools are for-profit private schools and not-for-profit private schools, which will be discussed further in the next sub-section, *categorisation of private schools*. The most common types of for-profit private schools, based on their ownership, are (i) those owned and managed by only one person, and (ii) those owned and managed by a group of people, usually in the form of multiple ownership and management. The first types of schools, because of involving single investment, are usually smaller in size with few students, while the second types of schools are usually larger in size because

of larger potential investment from many people. The contribution of private schools in the total enrolment in the study regions is higher than those of public schools, as indicated by the highlighted bold portion in the Table 1 above. This suggests that private schools in Nepal are mainly urban centred, and mostly concentrated in the capital city and its surrounding areas. I, therefore, have chosen Nepal's capital city, Kathmandu and its surrounding areas (Kathmandu Valley), to explore the issues of private schooling in the changing political context of Nepal.

The political change of 1990 (from an absolute monarchy to a multiparty democracy) further facilitated the process of privatisation of education in Nepal. The new government adopted a liberal approach to private education (Khaniya, 2007). On one hand, the new government seems to be re-articulating the relationship between the state and the people by reinforcing its vision of nation state encouraging increased participation of community and civil society (Caddell, 2005). On the other hand, the government policy also seems to be highly influenced by the expectation of external development partners' organisations. Many international donor agencies, including the World Bank, have been promoting private schools as a means of increasing enrolment in the context of limited budgetary resources justifying higher quality of private schools in terms of SLC pass out rate (Shields & Rapple, 2008). This presents a good example of "the global dispersal of neoliberal policies" (Hursh, 2007, p. 20). The new political regime seems to be showcasing outsiders in an attempt to distinguish itself from the previous government. Thus, educational reform of the 1990s was more related to the neoliberal ideals of the multiparty system (Caddell, 2007a). An example of this was the introduction of a higher secondary education system in 1992 as an extension of school education up to Grade 12. Although higher secondary education was initially brought out as an upward extension of the existing school system to meet the international standard, it was not integrated into the school system.

The Higher Secondary Education (HSE) Act made provision for individuals to establish Higher Secondary (HS) schools under individual ownership. Moreover, the government made no commitment to provide financial support to the HS schools. As a result, initially people involved in the education sector established higher secondary schools under private initiatives. Consequently, seeing such schools make money, several businessmen started to get involved in higher secondary schools, operating them as a business house. This further increased the

commercialisation of education (Khaniya, 2007). In order to deal with these and other issues, the government introduced the School Sector Reform (SSR 2009-2015) plan and intended to restructure the existing school system (Grade 1 to Grade 10) with an integrated and coherent school structures with Grade 1-12. This has proposed a new structure, with Grade 1-8 as basic education and Grade 9-12 as secondary education (Education Financing Reference Group, n. d.; Ministry of Education, 2009). However, this proposed plan has not been successfully implemented because of the current political transition. Thus, the school education structure scenario in Nepal as shown in Table 2 below is still in practice.

Table 2: Existing and proposed school education structure in Nepal

Age	Grade	Existing	School Sector Reform(SSR) Proposed
3	Pre-primary education/Early Childhood Development		
4			
5	1	Primary Education (Grades 1-5)	Basic Education (Grades 1-8)
6	2		
7	3		
8	4		
9	5		
10	6	Lower Secondary (Grades 6-8)	
11	7		
12	8		
13	9	Secondary (Grades 9-10)	Secondary Education (Grades 9-12)
14	10	Higher Secondary (Grades 11-12)	
15	11		
16	12		

Source: Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education (2012)

The Department of Education (DoE) has started disaggregating data, based on the proposed system of school education with basic education (1-8) and secondary education (9-12) (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, 2014), indicating that there are currently 35,223 schools (Grades 1-12) in Nepal, out of which 29, 630 are government schools and remaining 5,593 are private schools. However, this proposed school structure has not been fully implemented in practice. Therefore, in my study, I have concentrated on two integrated secondary schools (Grade 1 to Grade 10) and the exam regime of my study is related to the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination conducted at the end of Grade 10. In order to

implement the structure proposed by SSR, there needs to be an amendment of the existing Education Act, which is under consideration in the parliament. With the endorsement of the Education Act in the parliament, there will be a National Examination Board (NEB) to conduct school end examination in Grade 12 instead of existing Grade 10. With this, Grade 10 examinations will be conducted by the Regional Education Directorate.

The democratic government of 1990 was committed to bringing reform in primary education in particular and education in general for the social and economic development of the country (Khaniya, 2007). The constitution of 1990 guaranteed the fundamental right of every child to receive primary education in his/her mother tongue. Although the constitution of Nepal 1990 approved mother tongue instruction at the primary level, Nepali is still the dominant language of instruction in the state/public schools of Nepal (Caddell, 2005). Instead of preferring first language instruction in the primary level, a large number of parents are interested in English medium instruction for their children. As a result, there is an increase in primary enrolment in private schools, and private schools are increasingly popular among middleclass parents (Save the Children, UK, South and Central Asia, 2002), where English as the medium of instruction is a key draw-card.

Categorisation of Private Schools

The Seventh Amendment of the Education Act 2028 (1971), passed in 2002, made provision for registering private schools either as a private limited company or as a trust (Gautam, 2008; Khaniya, 2007; Kulung, 2008). Thus, the private schools in Nepal are now run either under trust or the Company Act (Dhungel, 2008). The schools run under a trust are seen as a service organisation, while those run under the Company Act are seen as a business organisation. Although schools run under a trust get all the physical facilities, buildings and land from private investors, the investors (being trustees) cannot make a profit from the schools, and when trustees decide to close down the schools, the land and buildings need to be handed over to the government. However, schools registered under the Company Act get all physical facilities, buildings and land from private investors and all of these (physical facilities, building and land) remain the property of the investors. These schools need to be registered as a private company and pay tax to the Ministry of Finance, in addition to other legal formalities from the Ministry of Education

(Caddell, 2009). Although the government has provision for the existing private schools to register either as a trust or company, the Ministry of Education has not yet released data differentiating private schools registered as companies and those registered as trusts. As most of the private schools are registered as companies, it is likely that there might be more than 80 percent private schools registered as companies and less than 20 percent registered as trusts. Thus, the trust-registered private schools in Nepal are in the minority (Pal & Saha, 2014).

In the past, Nepali people perceived private schools as not-for-profit or service organisations. With the registration of private schools as a private limited company or a trust, private schools in Nepal are seen either as for-profit schools or not-for-profit schools. Profit-making schools are registered as a private limited company under individual or group ownership and control. Similarly, not-for-profit private schools are under the control of non-profit organisations, such as churches, trusts and communities (Khaniya, 2007; Sigdel, 2008). With the registration of private schools as private limited companies, several issues of privatisation began to appear in the public education debate.

Issues of Privatisation

The actual development of a private education sector in Nepal started with the return of party politics in the 1990s. However, the ruling political parties, after the 1990s, adopted a different policy towards the private education sector. The key players in the politics of the country after 1990s were the three main political parties: Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal [Unified Marxist-Leninist, CPN (UML)], and Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists)¹². Each of these political parties adopted a different approach towards privatisation of education in Nepal, and as a result several issues related to privatisation of education in Nepal emerge with the change in the ruling party.

Nepali Congress was the political party that dominated the political scene after the people's movement of the 1990s. The general election held in 1991 provided a clear majority (113 of 205 seats) to the Nepali Congress, with CPN (UML) as a strong opposition with 69 seats out of 205 (Baral, 1994). The Nepali

¹² Maoists split into two separate factions: Unified Communist Party of Nepal, UCPN (Maoist), and Communist Party of Nepal, CPN (Maoist), on June 2012 (Bhattarai, 2012). Maoist here refers to the Maoist political party before splitting.

Congress government adopted liberal education policy, consistent with its ideology that private sector involvement is needed for quality education (Poudel & Chhetri, 2008). Due to such policy, there was rapid growth of private education in Nepal during the period from 1990 to 1996. Another political party that was the key player in the country's politics was the Communist Party of Nepal, CPN (UML). CPN (UML) policy towards education was that the part of education in which government cannot contribute should be left to the private sector. They believe that education in the country needs to be run under the concept of private-public partnership (Poudel & Chhetri, 2008). Due to such policy, the concept of private-public partnership is becoming an issue of debate in the country these days (Khaniya, 2007).

However, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) has a different ideology related to the privatisation of education. This party assumes that education is the fundamental right of every citizen and should be provided free up to the higher secondary level. Maoists argue that schooling should be the responsibility of the state and the commercialisation of education, as a result of involvement of private sector, should be stopped (Caddell, 2007a; Poudel & Chhetri, 2008). During the ten years of armed conflict, the Maoist insurgents mostly targeted the education sector, particularly private schools (Caddell, 2006). Arguing that private schools in the country represent the abuse of power by a neoliberal oppressor, the student wing of the Maoist party constantly demanded the closure of all private schools in the country (Caddell, 2009; Pherali, 2011). Once the Maoists came into the mainstream politics of the country after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the government in November 2006, they started openly debating the existence of the private education sector in Nepal. Maoists claim that private education in Nepal is working towards the commercialisation of education, turning education into a capitalist commodity. They (Maoists) argue that private schools should be closed down unless they can reduce their fees by 50 percent, to make such schools accessible to the wider population (Pherali, 2013). While the political debate about commercialising private schools is increasing, the private schools' umbrella organisations (Private and Boarding Schools' Organisation of Nepal, PABSON¹³

¹³ PABSON was the only umbrella organisation representing private schools in the beginning. N.PABSON is a splinter organisation formed after splitting from PABSON.

and National Private and Boarding Schools' Organisation of Nepal, N. PABSON) are asking for a separate law regulating private schools in Nepal (Pvt schools: Call for regulatory mechanism, 2011).

The teachers' union and students' union affiliated to the Maoists are frequently organising strikes, thereby affecting the operation of private schools. The Maoists teachers' and students' union claim that the private sector are exploiting parents by charging excess fees and exploiting teachers by not providing facilities as per the public schools system. However, the private school umbrella organisations (PABSON and N. PABSON) argue that they need to hike the fees to increase teachers' salaries, allowances and incentives. This has created a situation of conflict among the different stakeholders of these private schools, hindering their operation. For example, in 2010, private schools in Kathmandu Valley hiked their fees by 25.22 percent, claiming that they needed to increase salaries, allowances and other incentives of their staff. Over this issue, the Maoist affiliated students' union and teachers' union shut down all schools in Kathmandu Valley for about a month (Ghimire, 2011).

The Nepali students' and teachers' unions argued that private schools needed to be properly regulated. The debate about private schools is a common occurrence frequently visible through mass media and reports. For example, speaking at an interaction programme in January, 2011, different stakeholders of private schools argued the necessity of an effective policy and strong regulatory mechanism for private schools. The chairpersons of the Maoist affiliated students' union and teachers' union argue that the private education sector has emerged as business enterprises instead of being service organisations. Similarly, the chairperson of the Nepal Guardian Association stressed the need for a central fee determining committee for private schools. In response to this, the government formed a task force for a central fee determining and monitoring committee, led by the director of the Department of Education with representatives from the district education office, private school organisations and the parents association ("Govt. Panel to Fix Pvt Schools Fees", 2011). However, private schools have been continuously ignoring the recommendations from such task forces and forcing the Supreme Court of the country to come to the scene. An example of this is an order issued by the Supreme Court to the Department of Education to immediately stop private schools from charging tuition fees, ignoring the government

recommendations. Following the Supreme Court verdict, the Department of Education issued 'Private and Boarding Schools Directive 2013,' which prevents schools from raising their tuitions fee for three years and charging admission fees every year. Although the directive was prepared from nine member committees with representatives from private school organisations, the government, journalists and the parents association, private schools have been ignoring it (the directive). An example of this is the recent decision by the private school umbrella organisation, PABSON, to hike schools fees, thus going against the verdict of the Supreme Court and the directive ("PABSON Decides to Hike Fees", 2014).

The private education sector in Nepal has been used by different groups for their benefit. For example, the teachers' unions are working towards regulating private schools with a hope of increasing their protection, while the organisation representing the schools' owners is lobbying the government for more deregulation of the private schools. The schools' owners seem to be maintaining good relationships with the government and its authorities with a hope of reducing what they see as unnecessary government regulation (Caddell, 2007a). Different political parties have used the private education sector as a means of increasing their influence. For example, the dramatic increase in the number of private schools during the 1990s was because of the liberal approach adopted by the then ruling party, the Nepali Congress. However, with the Maoists becoming the dominant political party, there has been constant pressure on the private education sector. Sometimes the Maoists are threatening to close down private schools, sometimes demanding their nationalisation and sometimes asking them to pay tax (Pherali, 2013). Such a macro political scenario is influencing the micro politics going on inside the schools. Thus, a "core component of education such as parental participation, teachers' motivation, commitment and self-esteem and school's learning culture" has been overshadowed by external influences in education (Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001, pp. 39–40).

Summary

This chapter highlights the context of this study. It has depicted how changes in the political regimes of the country led to subsequent changes in the educational policy especially related to the private sector (see Appendix I for further illustration). I outlined the political history of Nepal from the time it was united as a country up

to the present day and of Nepal becoming a republic. I then discussed the education context of Nepal starting with the earlier autocratic *Rana* regime, when there was limited educational opportunity for ordinary people. I also presented education situation of Nepal when the political regime adopted a liberal approach with ordinary people establishing schools for their children and subsequently extended discussion on education context during another political regime when all the existing schools were nationalised. Finally, I highlighted the issues of privatisation in Nepal with the changing political scenario in the country.

In this chapter, I discuss the educational context of Nepal with special focus on private schooling. This chapter has enabled me to conceptualise the contextual basis of this study. However, I further need to examine the overall literature to develop a fuller understanding of the conditions behind this study. In the next chapter, I further explore the literature relevant to this study.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

In the previous chapter, I highlighted some of the literature related to the context of my study. In order to conceptualise the study, this chapter extends the review of literature to inform the focus of my study, exploring private schools' teachers, administrators and principals' professional lives within the transformed political context of Nepal. I begin this chapter by reviewing literature on school organisations and extend it to school governance and management along with the subsequent issues, such as the effects of neoliberalism and privatisation on teachers' work and professionalism. To also understand what goes on within the schools, I need to understand different day-to-day activities going on within schools. This means reviewing literature on the politics within schools, particularly, in terms of the micro-politics of schools.

This review, therefore, crosses a number of areas including the organisational and management aspects of schools together with government policy about the privatisation of education. I also review literature on power and its related concepts, which ultimately leads me to propose a theoretical framework for this study sitting within Foucauldian/Marxists traditions of power which, I call a 'Foucault plus' approach to power.

Literature on schools as organisations suggests they can be described as various systems: open system, anarchic organisation, or loose coupling system. Such descriptions of schools indicate that a school is a complex organisation. This raises several issues regarding school governance and management, including those related to neoliberalism and privatisation. This leads to exploring literature on the effects of neoliberalism and privatisation on teachers' work and professionalism. Finally, I discuss literature on the micro-politics of schools. This consists of different themes on micro-politics of schools, related to power, conflict, empowerment, powerlessness, gender and motivation.

This literature review chapter is organised into two main sections. The first section centres on literature about the organisational aspects of schools, including the experiences of teachers' professional lives and the organisational context of these workplaces. This includes literature on both formal and informal aspects of school organisation, including the 3 systems mentioned earlier as well as literature on school governance and management. The final portion of this section consists of

literature on government policy on the privatisation of education and how this affects teachers as professionals.

The second part of the literature review chapter consists of literature on what actually goes on within the schools in spite of its formal structure. The politics within the schools is often different from what is expected from the formal role structure, authority and responsibility for teachers, administrators and principals. Micro-politics is a frame that includes themes such as conflict, power, empowerment, powerlessness, gender and motivation.

Schools as organisations

Schools as organisations have been defined in different ways by different experts. Schools are sometimes referred to as complex organisations and sometimes as social systems or social institutions (Hoyle, 1973). Schools have been compared to other social organisations, such as hospitals and government agencies, as they mix professional and bureaucratic forms of organisation (Tyler, 1988). According to Ball (1987, p. 16), schools as organisations represent “the views, experiences, meaning and interpretation” of teachers, administrators, students, parents and other people involved in it. Blase (1991, p. 1) noted that schools are “complex and unpredictable social organisations exposed to powerful internal and external forces.” Different groups of people, such as teachers, students, administrators and parents, are involved either directly or indirectly. These groups have a wide range of demands and expectations. They perceive different goals or give different meaning to the same goal. This adds ambiguity to a school’s educational goals, thereby diverting educational goals from being the focus of school life (Bell, 1980). Supporting this exposition, more recently Hoyle and Wallace (2007) introduced ‘irony’ into the organising concept and argued that ambiguity is common in educational organisations such as schools, because of their diffuse and diverse goals. These Western views of organisation resonate with my study context (Nepali private schools), as the teachers, school owners and parents appear to have different expectations, if my own experiences are similar to others. In Nepali private schools, parents want their children to perform well in the SLC examination and speak fluent English while teachers want their jobs to be secure, and school owners expect to earn profit from the school’s operation.

Schools are complex organisations and can be difficult to understand because of this (Bascia, 2005). As complex organisations, schools consist of both formal and informal organisational systems. Grey (2005) argues that formal and informal aspects of an organisation are interrelated and interdependent, thus it is not possible to have a complete understanding of any organisation, including schools, without considering both these formal and informal aspects. This is because different political activities, such as conflict, sectional interests, lobbying, bargaining and power dynamics, represent working and decision-making process within schools (Bush, 2011a). This led Bush (2011c) to introduce alternative models to explain schools' structures such as collegial, political, subjective, ambiguous, and cultural models. Because of the complexity of school as organisations, they have been variously described as open systems, anarchic organisations and as loosely coupled systems. These go some way to making sense of how they operate. These 3 systems are described next.

Schools as Open Systems

Since the 1950s, there has been widespread use of social system theory for understanding schools as organisations (Hoyle, 1973; Katz & Kahn, 1966). Increasingly, different school stakeholders form pressure groups, thereby forcing schools to consider these groups' expectations (Hoyle, 1986). For example, in Nepal, the teachers' unions constantly pressurise the government and school owners to provide additional benefits to teachers and other staff working in the private schools (Ghimire, 2011; Shrestha, 2008), while students' unions are constantly applying pressure to government and school owners to stop the commercialisation of private schools (Don't commercialise education, 2010). Thus, a school has dynamic and complex relationships with the wider political, social and economic environment (Caffyn, 2010). Because of such dynamics and complex relationships, Cohen and March (1986) used the term *organised anarchy* to refer to educational institutions, including schools.

Schools as Organised Anarchy

The organised anarchy metaphor was originally developed by Cohen and March (1986, p. 33) during the 1970s in their study of American College Presidents. They described organised anarchy in the university as:

Each individual in the university is seen to make autonomous decisions. Teachers decide if, when and what to teach. Students decide if, when and what to learn. Legislators and donors decide if, when and what to support. Neither coordination nor control is practiced.

An anarchic organisation is believed to have its own structure, which is partially determined by external pressure and partly by its own nature. Such an organisation does not follow the traditions of clear relationships between goals, members and technology, as suggested by traditional organisation theory (Bell, 1980). Cohen, March and Olsen (1972, p. 1) define anarchic organisations as organisations with “problematic preferences, unclear technology and fluid participation.” Schools resemble organised anarchy when administrators, teachers, parents and students each have competing and/or intersecting interests, needs, demands and expectations (Eisold, 2009). This creates difficulties in obtaining consensus on the real organisational goals (Bell, 1980), especially when, as in my experiences in Nepali private schools, these organisational goals were poorly articulated and seemed to change on the whim of the owner. Hoyle (1986, p. 66) argues that “the problematic nature of organisational goals and individual preferences, the lack of clarity about how the organisation works and fluidity of participation” has led scholars to use a *garbage can model* of organisation to interpret decision making processes in schools. Elaborating on the garbage can model, Cohen et al. (1972, p. 2) write:

One can view a choice opportunity as a garbage can into which various kinds of problems and solutions are dumped by participants as they are generated. The mix of garbage in a single can depends on the mix of cans available, on the labels attached to the alternative can, on what garbage is currently being produced, and on the speed with which garbage is collected and removed from the scene.

This garbage can model appears to assume that a decision comes out of chaos, instead of following a rational decision making process (Hoyle, 1986). This resonates with my experiences because even though private schools in Nepal are managed and operated within the general regulatory framework of the government, the school owners/investors have full authority in decision making processes. Due to this, school management committees, which are believed to have been created to fulfil government legal formalities, play an advisory role which may not alter much of the owners’ grip on power and decision making (Bhatta, 2014; Sharma, 2008). Because of such situations, the private education sector in Nepal is often criticised

for not having a “genuine school management committee” (Khaniya, 2007, p. 234) and running schools under the will of the owners/investors. This means most private schools in the country are operating as a “family business” (Shrestha, 2008, p. 45). Such a scenario indicates the likelihood of a garbage can model of decision making also being noticeable in my study, for it may be that owners make ad hoc decision that may seem to be capricious or contradictory by others.

Schools operate on the basis of different inconsistent preferences. Such preferences are described “as a loose collection of ideas rather than a coherent structure” (Cohen et al., 1972, p. 1). Although the principal of a school has positional legal authority, teachers have a high degree of classroom autonomy (Hoyle, 1986). Thus, schools have structural looseness along with loosely coupled linked with the environment (Weick, 1976).

Schools as Loosely Coupled Systems

Schools can also be seen as loosely coupled systems. The principal of a school (as a chief executive) may be in a position to implement some decisions but there are still many decisions, commonly related to classroom activities, over which the principal has little or almost no control. Thus, schools can neither be completely coordinated through bureaucracy, nor can they be properly integrated through the human relations approach (Hoyle, 1986). This indicates structural looseness of schools as organisations. Weick (1976) in describing the structural looseness of schools compared them to an “unconventional soccer match with principal as referee, teachers as coaches, students as players and parents as spectators (p. 1).”

Eisold (2009) argues that schools are actually composed of loosely assembled parts. Sometimes one part may not know what is going on in another part. However, central coordination for the equally important and influential supportive tasks—the management of teaching and learning—are the responsibility of principals of schools, thus underscoring the significance of their inputs (Hoyle, 1986). Meyer (2002) noted that the loose coupling metaphor assumes that certain organisational forms, including schools, divert from the traditional notion of a scientifically managed and controlled hierarchy. Such organisations are held together by “shared belief, norms and institutionalized expectation” (Meyer, 2002, pp. 535-536) rather than top down control.

In summary, schools have been metaphorically described as open system, anarchic organisation and loosely coupled systems. In spite of the differences in these terms, the main concern of all these studies was to actually understand schools as organisations (Hoyle, 1973). According to Datnow (2000), a school consists of powerful central management with balancing components such as departments, classes and other units having high degree of autonomy. What happens in a school is not only limited to the activities within it but also on a whole range of external factors, as indicated earlier under *schools as open systems*. For example, the external political, economic and social environments in any country result in legislative initiatives commonly referred to as governance and ownership. In turn they affect internal school governance in the form of organisation and management (Rentoul & Rosanowski, 2000). Thus, important aspects of schools are their governance and management, a topic of discussion in the following section.

School Governance and Management

The term ‘governance,’ popular in the world of politics, is commonly used in the context of education to refer to the accountability and authority structures including norms of legitimacy (Gedajlovic, Lubatkin, & Schulze, 2004; Harris, 2007). Hudson (2009, p. 25) posits, “Governance is the provision of oversight and accountability of an organisation’s work. It embraces the structures and processes of the governing body and its committees and the function that the chief executives and managers perform to support governance.” Rentould and Rosanowski (2000, p. 4) refer to school governance in the New Zealand context, for example, as:

The arrangement by which decisions, rules and policies are made. This includes models where decision rights rest with governing bodies representing the state in some form, the community, professional boards, school management and teaching professionals or a combination of these stakeholders.

Thus, school governance is often understood as the responsibility of the board of trustees or management committees. The intention is that schools are well managed and are accountable through such processes (Hudson, 2009). Private schools in Nepal, for example, are operated under the regulatory framework of the government of Nepal. Such schools must define the structure of their governance in their bylaws submitted to the government in the process of their establishment. Management committees, formed as a provision to fulfil government regulations, only play an

advisory role because the school owners/founders have complete authority and discretionary power (Sharma, 2008) and so governance via a separate body appears to be illusion in these schools. School owners/founders have the freedom to share or not share their authority with others (Gedajlovic et al., 2004). In Caldwell and Spinks' term (1998), such schools can be labelled as 'self-governing schools,' but not in the way state schools operate in places like New Zealand.

School management usually deals with the 'how' of school administration, while governance is more concerned with the 'who' (McLaughlin, 2004). Governance in New Zealand schools is usually undertaken by a Board of Trustees with elected parents representatives, the principal as chief executive officer, elected staff representatives and others as per requirement (Court & O'Neil, 2011; Macpherson & McKillop, 2002). Such Management involves maximising available resources for achieving desired results or goals (Boston, Martin, Pallot, & Walsh, 1996). Management and governance have separate but overlapping functions in New Zealand schools (Hudson, 2009). From a study of principals of self-managing schools in Australia, Caldwell (1992) argues that the principal of a self-managing school develops and implement "a cyclical managerial process of goal setting, need identification, priority setting, policy making, planning, budgeting and evaluating" (pp. 16-17). Similarly, Dressler (2001) studied charter school leadership in the USA and found that the role of a school principal is clearly focused on the responsibilities of the managers. Fitzgerald (2009), from a study of three New Zealand secondary schools, found that the task and activities of management still dominate teachers' work with little or no time for real leadership. Owings and Kaplan (2012, p. 8) argue that "school leaders must perform many management functions." These suggest management functions over-ride leadership functions.

Educational management, which is concerned with a systematic operation of educational institutions including schools, has initially drawn its principles from general management (Bush, 2008, 2011c). Bell (1991, p. 136) noted that educational management has borrowed ideas, concepts and "even theories from the world of industry and commerce." The most influential management theory is Taylor's (1911) theory of 'scientific management.' Taylor's (1911, p. 140) principles of scientific management may be summarised as:

Science, not the rule of thumb.
Harmony, not discord.
Cooperation, not individualism.
Maximum output, in place of restricted output.
The development of each man [sic] to his greatest efficiency and prosperity.

Taylor's use of gendered language in his principles of management privileges a male point of view. His gendered language speaks of a different time. Given the prominence of women (at least early on in the Maoist rule in Nepal), this is something to examine, to establish whether this 'genderedness' is still felt in private schools I intend investigating.

In his principles of scientific management, Taylor also argued that managers need to actually know about the work before asking workers to undertake it (*science, not rule of thumb*); proper selection, training and development of employees (*development of each man to his greatest efficiency and prosperity*); workers should be paid as per their production capacity (*differential payment/ piece rate system; maximum output, in place of restricted output*); the principal objective of management is maximum prosperity of both management and workers (*cooperation, not individualism*) and both management and workers need to change attitudes towards each other (*harmony, not discord*) (Nyland, 1996; Taneja, Pryor, & Tooms, 2011; Taylor, 1911). Taylor's scientific management theory commonly known as 'Taylorism,' assumes that human beings become efficient and effective in their workplace only when they are managed, supervised and controlled effectively (Levačić, Glover, Bennett, & Crawford, 1999). Taylorism proposed an active role for managers, making them responsible for analysing, planning and controlling work in organisations, while workers passively follow their managers' instructions (Robertson, 2000). This is a highly hierarchical model.

Taylorism was widely applied to schools in the USA during the 1920s and 1930s (Callahan, 1962; Hoyle & Wallace, 2005). Callahan (1962), in his famous book, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency*, which Kridel (2000) described as one of the books of the century, examined school administration in American public schools from 1900s to the 1930s. Callahan (1962) noted that incorporating business-like organisation and operation of schools during this period "consisted of making unfavourable comparisons between schools and business enterprise, of applying business-industrial criteria to education, and of suggesting that business

and industrial practices be adopted by educators (p. 6).” Because of the similarity to conditions in my study, where there is already a noted clash of interest between private and public education values, it is highly likely that these factors raised by Callahan (1962) will be of value in analysing my case study, and at the very least provide a tool for understanding my data more comprehensively.

Taylor’s notion of scientific management also became popular, as these ideas were believed to increase efficiency and effectiveness in teaching and learning in the American schools (Robertson, 2000). School leaders saw themselves as managers instead of educators, thereby focusing on management tasks and keeping themselves away from teaching and classrooms. School leaders’ views of others in the school setting were also relevant to the notion of scientific management. They believed that teachers as workers needed to follow their (school leaders) instruction (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). Such ideas of managing schools were introduced in New Zealand during the 1980s, “as a way to enhance teachers’ professionalism” (Court & O’Neill, 2011, p.127). The idea was that improving schools’ management via the application of business principles enhance the teaching and learning environment. However, in reality this only functioned as a way of achieving political accountability via compliance. Reflecting on the application of the industrial model to schooling in the New Zealand context, Fitzgerald (2009) argues that “despite almost two decades of change, the organisation and hierarchy of schools replicate industrial models of working that differentiates people and activities according to position (pp. 63–64).”

The workings of private schools in Nepal also reflect Taylorism. These private schools, registered as private limited companies, are under the ownership of individuals or group of people who invest in them. In such private schools, owners are usually the principals. School administration is run on the decisions of owners instead of rules, regulations and governance principles (Sigdel, 2008). These schools exclude most of the stakeholders (parents, teachers and other non-owner staff) from the decision-making process (Carney, 2003).

Classical management theories as discussed above, when applied to educational settings, need careful consideration. Some fit well in educational settings while others fail to do so (Baldrige, Curtis, Riley, & Ecker, 1978). For example, when the purpose of education and its management are not clearly linked, there is a danger of overreliance on the procedures of management at the expense

of educational purpose, thus giving rise to ‘managerialism’ (Bush, 2011c). Managerialism places an emphasis on results, performance and outcomes related to the management of people, resources and programs (Aucoin, 1988). Clarke, Gewirtz and McLaughlin (2000) define managerialism as “a set of beliefs, values and expectations about what counts as knowledge, who knows it, and who is empowered to act in what ways” (p. 9). Bush (2011c, p. 61) defines managerialism as a “focus on management processes at the expense of educational purpose and value.” Managerialism assumes that ambiguities in schools can be reduced by means of accountability and national standards. However, in reality, managerialism as practised in schools has diverted teachers’ and principals’ attention from their core task of promoting an effective teaching and learning environment into expanding managerial roles (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005).

Parents, teachers and other staff working in Nepali private schools often complain that these schools are not transparent in either financial matters or other school activities implying that managerial and business concerns over-ride educational interest. They blame the schools’ owners for running the schools as a monopoly (Khaniya, 2007). Simkins (2005, pp. 13–14) describes managerialism in the form of the following managerialistic agenda, which may describe Nepali private school management:

- i. Replacement of public sector values by private sector and market.
- ii. Imposition of model of leadership and management that emphasises individual accountability, rigid planning and target setting as a prime means of organisational control.
- iii. Redistribution of power with authority and autonomy of professionals, being replaced by the power of managers, to establish agenda and model of work.

As indicated in the above quote, managerialism, aligned with Taylor’s notion of scientific management, proposed an active role of principals in analysing, planning and controlling, limiting teachers’ work to the execution of teaching and learning activities as per their principals’ instructions (Robertson, 2000). Managerialism as an ideology assumes that efficient management can (a) solve any type of problem in an organisation, and (b) that the practices of private sector organisation are applicable to the public sector (Rees, 1995). New public management principles have infiltrated schools. Central government educational reform policies have

exerted the influence “that private sector practices are equally applicable to education” (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005, p. 69). For example, Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001, pp. 39–40) describe new managerialism in the United Kingdom (UK) education:

The concept of [principal/management] effectiveness ... has most often become associated with the government led agenda of raising the standard of students’ achievement through a persistent focus upon the quality of teaching in the classroom. Less recognition has been given to principals’ contributions in promoting teacher motivation; commitment and self-esteem, school learning cultures and parental participation—arguably core components of quality education.

This description exemplifies new managerialism as a means of executing neoliberal government policy against leadership theories that assume successful principals to be both a contextual and relational construct (Day et al., 2001). This neoliberal agenda of governments has enhanced privatisation and the commercialisation of education.

In the following section, I discuss differential effects of privatisation on teachers’ work and professionalism in the context of different countries, including the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, compared with Nepal as an educational context in political flux. Before discussing the effects of privatisation on teachers’ work and professionalism, I discuss the issues of neoliberalism and privatisation in education.

Neoliberalism and Privatisation

Margaret Thatcher, after becoming prime minister of Britain in 1979, and Ronald Reagan, on becoming president of the United States in 1980, adopted policies related to privatisation, deregulation and withdrawal of the state from the industry, resources and agriculture. Such policies incorporating a shift from the public sector to the private sectors was introduced to reduce the power of labour unions, claiming that this would revitalise the country’s economy. This strategy of increasing the role of the private sector in the economy soon spread all over the world, resulting in the formation of neoliberal states. A neoliberal state adopts policies that reflect the interest of private property owners, businesses and multinational corporations rather than policies that reflect social and communal benefits to society as a whole (Harvey, 2005). The neoliberal state provides a context in which private companies

can more easily exploit the general public for private wealth. In a neoliberal state, the economic and social policy of a country is therefore based on the interests of a minority of wealthy investors and large corporations. Therefore, it better suits the ability of a few wealthy people to curb the rights and powers of the masses by concentrating power (economic and political) in the hands of the few (Ross & Gibson, 2007). These kinds of activities involved, define neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is therefore about corporate domination of society. It emphasises an unregulated market, which makes it easier for these few to oppress non-market forces. In neoliberalism, the 'free market' infiltrates the educational reform to better control the wider society by the profit orientation of a few people (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2002).

Neoliberalism involves selling state owned enterprises to the private sector, reducing public expenditure for social services such as health and education, reducing government regulation for improving profitability, and replacing public goods or community with private goods or individual responsibility even when public money has created these resources and services (Martinez & Garcia, 2000). Elaborating on neoliberalism and extending its concept beyond the boundary of a country, Jessop (2002, p. 454) writes:

As a new economic project oriented to new conditions, neoliberalism calls for: the liberalization and deregulation of economic transactions, not only within national borders but also—and more importantly—across these borders; the privatization of state-owned enterprises and state provided services; the use of market proxies in the residual public sector; and the treatment of public welfare spending as a cost of international production, rather than as a source of domestic demand.

Supporting the above claim on the relaxation of government policies in economic activities and the spread of neoliberalism, Hursh (2007) argues that such spreading of neoliberalism is related to the adoption of neoliberal policies by powerful countries and the role of the US dominated World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Neoliberalism is closely linked with a free market economy and capitalism. Harris (2007) posits that under neoliberal states, the public sector is seen as inefficient and ineffective, while the private sector is regarded as a more responsive and productive enterprise, a view which better aligns with a neoliberal orientation.

Thus, neoliberals stress the efficiency of ‘the market’ as a better mechanism for the distribution of scarce public resources. They also claim the market to be “a morally superior form of political economy” (Peters, 2012, p. 136). Neoliberalism stresses the expansion of the market with the notion of freeing it up by means of various deregulation measures. Neoliberalism hopes governments embark on economic policies that privatise the state enterprise to better concentrate profit in the hands of owners (Connell, 2013). Robertson and Dale (2013) argue that privatisation and globalisation agenda in education is related to neoliberalism.

Neoliberal education reforms involve opening the education service market to for-profit organisation (Ross & Gibson, 2007). During the 1990s, public education systems of countries such as the UK, the USA, Australia and New Zealand adopted forms and practices of the private sector, replacing traditional forms of educational governance (Meyer, 2002). This, according to Blackmore (2004, p. 440), is the shift from “government to governance as the state sought to steer from a distance rather than administer on a daily basis.” The traditional forms of educational governance based on social democracy that incorporates the principles of justice and equality of opportunity has been replaced by neo-liberal governance focussing on the increasing role of business and private sectors (Ranson, 2008). During this period, the governments of most Western countries tried to relate education more closely to work, industry and the state (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007). For example, the educational sector reforms of the 1990s in New Zealand promoted marketisation in education, with local governance and self-management of schools in line with strong central control and accountability (Codd, 2005). These reforms were based on the dominant paradigm that saw education as a commodity (a private good instead of a public good) with students and parents as ‘consumers,’ teachers as ‘producers’ and educational administrators as ‘managers’ and ‘entrepreneurs’ (Harris, 2007). Such positioning of education as a private good involves reducing the curriculum to measurable outcomes and linking educational leadership to the management of a business enterprise (Giles & Morrison, 2010). These contestable principles of effectiveness and efficiency (that promote economy) are often referred to as ‘New Public Management’ (Sachs, 2003). These ‘neo-liberal principles of effectiveness and efficiency’ may feature in the data from my case studies given that the focus is 2 private schools. If so, the contexts in which such data arise and

what it is applied to, may help understand how these schools operate and under what conditions.

Neoliberalism and New Public Management

Neoliberalism and new public management (NPM) both place emphasis on the involvement of the private sectors. Although neoliberalism and NPM are connected, they are not the same. Neoliberalism as an economic policy stresses the importance of private sectors in the economy of the country, while new public management focuses on improving the public sector by introducing structures prevalent in the private sector. Since the 1980s, a number of OECD countries including New Zealand, introduced such a strategy to reform their public sectors by adopting private sector principles via NPM (Whitfield, 2001). New public management assumes that the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector can be enhanced by the transfer of private sector management techniques to it (Fitzgerald & Rainnie, 2012). The main assumption of NPM is that the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation can be improved by applying “scientifically tested principles” (Codd, 1999, p. 47). Codd posits that such scientifically tested principles, inspired from Taylor’s (1911) notion of ‘one best way of doing work,’ has been incorporated into educational institutions in the form of key performance indicators as a measure of quality. Potentially, however, this ‘one best way’ may ignore the complex nature of schooling contexts.

New public management has been interpreted in different ways by different scholars (Hood, 1995). For example, Pollitt (1990) describes NPM mainly as an Anglo-American phenomenon of the Reagan/Thatcher era. Pollitt’s interpretation of NPM is confined to only the UK and the USA in a certain period, neglecting the popularity of NPM in countries such as New Zealand (Boston et al., 1996), Australia (Blackmore, Bigum, Hodgins, & Laskey, 1996; Sachs, 2003), Canada (Aucoin, 1988) and other parts of the world. Perhaps because of the very early period in which Pollitt wrote, the effects of NPM were not necessarily obvious in places like New Zealand, for some time after.

It is possible NPM could be detected in Nepal’s education context, given the far-reaching influence of its ideas over time. Boston et al. (1996, p. 26) outline a range of features of NPM, including:

- i. A belief that the differences between the public and private sectors are not generally significant from the standpoint of management;
- ii. A shift in emphasis from process accountability to accountability of results;
- iii. An emphasis on management rather than policy;
- iv. A preference for private ownership, contestable provision, and the contracting out of most publicly funded services;
- v. A shift from long-term and generally poorly specified contract to shorter-term and much more tightly specified contracts;
- vi. Imitation of certain private sector management practices such as the use of short-term labour contracts, development of strategic plans, corporate plans, performance agreement and mission statements, introduction of performance-linked remuneration systems, development of new management information systems and a greater concern for corporate image;
- vii. A preference for monetary incentives rather than non-monetary incentives;
- viii. A stress on cost-cutting, efficiency and cutback management.

I am conducting my study in two private schools of Nepal, which are profit-oriented. So the concept of private ownership, short-term labour contracts, performance-linked remuneration systems and preference for monetary incentives with stress on efficiency and cutback management may be features in my case study schools.

The NPM reforms are based on the assumption that applying market theory and private sector management principles in education will improve quality of service provided by teachers. However, the Marxists provide a state-oriented defence of public education. Marxists oppose neoliberal strategies of privatisation, arguing that under market-oriented education systems, students and teachers become exchangeable commodities, resulting in the formation of a society less responsible for individual and collective welfare (Hursh, 2007). This situation is highlighted in the argument Marx and Engels (1967b, p. 87) put forward in the *Communist Manifesto*:

...proletariat, the modern working class ... who live so long as they find work, and who must sell themselves piece-meal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Marxists argue that neoliberal societies develop competitive and instrumentally rational individuals whose decisions may undermine the social needs of a community as a whole (Peters & Marshall, 1996). This has a social justice implication. Basic education, being the fundamental right of every citizen, according to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, needs to be accessible to everyone, which is part of social justice argument. This is in contradiction with the neoliberal policies to private education (Robertson & Dale, 2013). For example, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), which claims to adopt the ideological and political line based on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism¹⁴ (Bhattarai, 2011), has been arguing that commercialising education in Nepal as a result of private sector involvement needs to be stopped. They argue that school education is the responsibility of the state and as such there is no place for the private sector in it. I will further discuss this contradiction between the Marxist agenda and privatisation of education in the theoretical framework (Chapter 4), under the heading ‘Power: A Marxist approach.’

Given such opposing viewpoints on the privatisation of education, the intended consequences of public sector reform on teachers’ professionalism are debated (Sachs, 2003). In the following section, I discuss the effects of privatisation on teachers’ work and professionalism.

Effects of Privatisation on Teachers’ Work and Professionalism

Professionalism is concerned with teachers’ rights and responsibility to use and control their knowledge (Helsby & McCulloch, 1996). Different scholars working in the field of education have compared and contrasted teachers’ professionalism and their professionalisation. For example, Hargreaves (2000) announced that teachers’ professionalism involves activities related to improving the quality and standard of teaching and learning practice, while teachers’ professionalisation involves improving teachers’ status and standing. Adding further to this line of argument, Hargreaves noted that teachers’ professionalism and professionalisation can be complementary but contradictory, because stronger professionalisation does not always guarantee better professionalism. Hargreaves and Goodman (1996)

¹⁴ A detailed description of this is outlined in the upcoming theoretical framework chapter (Chapter 4) under the heading, ‘Growth of Maoism/Marxism in Nepal.’

argue that teachers' professionalism includes the ethics and purpose guiding teachers' actions, while teachers' professionalisation involves developing a knowledge base on teaching. Similarly, Helsby and McCulloch (1996) noted that teachers' professionalisation is concerned with teachers' attempts to be recognised as professionals, which may involve establishing their associations and unions and includes qualification, registrations and certification process and standards. On the other hand, teachers' professionalism is related to the way teachers develop, negotiate, use and control their own knowledge. Thus, teachers' professionalisation is often associated with teachers' unionisation, because teachers' unionisation is assumed to improve teachers' status and standing in terms of proper salaries, benefits, working conditions and protection of their (teachers') basic rights (Sykes, 1999).

Teaching is a complex profession in which teachers regularly face dilemmas and issues with multiple and conflicting demands (Butler, 2014). Teachers' professionalism is marked by struggles to redefine the work of teaching coming from government, administrators, businesses and teachers themselves (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996). Teachers' professionalism depends on a number of factors, such as external pressure, public debate and the development of the teaching field (Sachs, 2003). For example, the idea of teachers' professionalism in the context of England has been closely associated with teachers' diminishing autonomy over the curriculum: that is, what teachers teach and how they teach (McCulloch, Helsby, & Knight, 2000). McCulloch et al. (2000, p. 64) noted that curriculum, in the context of teachers' autonomy or professionalism can be categorised as:

- a. Curriculum content (what is to be taught) ... generally expressed as subject titles and associated bodies of knowledge;
- b. Curriculum method (ways in which the content is taught or pedagogy);
- c. Curriculum form (timetabled organisation of teaching);
- d. Curriculum assessment (or what aspects of learning are formally tested and valued).

The Education Reform Act (ERA) change in the 1980s to 1988, introduced by the British conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, adopted a national curriculum and standard of attainment for all pupils. This made the curriculum content and curriculum assessment more prescriptive, reducing teachers' autonomy,

even though they (teachers) had some degree of flexibility over curriculum method and form (McCulloch et al., 2000). In the context of Nepal, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), a government body, determines the curriculum content and the textbooks used by public schools. Private schools also needed to follow the government-prescribed curriculum and also textbooks prescribed by the Curriculum Development Centre (Carney, 2003; Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, 2009). At the end of formal schooling (Grade 10), both public and private school students sit a national level examination, the School Leaving Certificate (SLC). Most private schools in Nepal market themselves in terms of their academic performance in this national SLC examination and the English-speaking environment (Caddell, 2007a; Carney, 2003; Pherali, 2011). Thus, the notions of ‘assessment-led curriculum and teaching to the test’ (McCulloch et al., 2000) are significant in my study context. McCulloch et al. (2000) posit that state intervention in the curriculum and the increasing importance of external examinations degrades notions of teachers’ professionalism.

Since neoliberals see professionals as a self-interested group principally interested in their personal economic gain, professionalism and neoliberalism appear to be at odds with each other (Olssen & Peters, 2005), for professionals especially teachers, tend to view their labour as for a common good. With the influence of neoliberal ideologies and market notions of choice and competition, teachers’ work has changed significantly (Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall, & Cribb, 2009). Teachers these days need to concentrate their efforts on making their students capable of passing standardised national level examinations prescribed by the state. Key concerns for teachers seem to be about focussing on pursuing academic excellence as required by parents and the educational goals of the state (Wong, 2008). For example, some of the teachers from my study have to work towards enabling their students to perform better in the standardised national level SLC examination, because parents want their children to perform well in this examination, and the state evaluates schools and teachers’ performance on the basis of their student performance in this test. Because of such a culture, teachers are developing a sense of ‘managerial professionalism’ (Sachs, 2003), increasingly concerned about achieving educational goals set by the state. Adding further to how neo-liberals ideology has changed the nature of teachers’ work in the context of US education system, Lipman (2009, p. 68) writes:

Centralized accountability and marketization of schools and education services in the US have produced deep changes in teachers' work, including increased regulation and surveillance of teaching, narrowed curricula, competition through differentiated pay scales and reward/punishments for test results, and the emergence of a new teacher subject-teacher as entrepreneur.

Teachers' work, under a neo-liberal discourse, is externally regulated by the state and driven by notions of the market and competition (Day & Sachs, 2004). Neoliberal actions intensify the work of teachers and deprive them of the decision-making processes (Ross & Gibson, 2007). Thus, neo-liberal educational reform has changed the nature of teachers' work, and more precisely, how teachers think and do their work (Robertson, 2007).

More recently, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) introduced the 'business capital' notion of teachers' professionalism. This involves organising education as business organisations for achieving quick returns. This often prefers young, flexible, temporary and inexpensive teachers who are unlikely to argue ideas because their work is temporary. The business capital notion of teachers' professionalism is aligned to Hanlon's (1998) notion of 'commercialised professionalism,' which stresses the need to have managerial and entrepreneurial skills. Such professionalism, Hanlon believes, is driven by the profit motive instead of the service motive. This is particularly relevant to private schools, which are profit-oriented (the context of my study). Business capital takes education as an instrument for preparing people for the job market (Codd, 2005). This is also aligned to Hargreaves' (1994) views of 'old professionalism,' which involves the idea that the managers or principals manage and the teachers teach, with a clear cut distinction between senior management (school owners in the context of my study) and the rest of the staff (non-owner staff) working in schools. This business capital notion of professionalism is popular in countries such as the US and the UK and belies the complex nature of schools.

An alternative notion of teachers' professionalism, suggested by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), is 'professional capital,' popular in the highest performing educational systems of the world, including Finland, Singapore, Canada and South Korea. This notion of teachers' professionalism is based on the argument that teachers and teaching can be improved by improving the teaching and learning environment (including working environment) within a school. Professional capital

recognises education as a long-term investment for developing human capital from childhood to adult life and suggests a more socially conscious frame. For example, the top performing nations according to Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures such as Finland, South Korea and Singapore, draw their teachers from the top 30 percent of secondary graduates and support teachers throughout their life, thereby valuing teaching as a profession (Collins, 2011).

Hargreaves (2000) argues that teachers' professionalism has entered a postmodern age characterised by struggles between groups and forces interested in de-professionalising teachers and teaching, and other groups and forces interested in re-defining teachers' professionalism. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996, p. 20) suggested a term 'postmodern professionalism' for characterising teachers' professionalism with following characteristics:

- a. Increased opportunity and responsibility to exercise discretionary judgment over the issues of teaching, curriculum and other related issues;
- b. Opportunities and expectations to engage with the moral and social purposes and value of what teachers teach;
- c. Commitment to working with colleagues in collaborative cultures;
- d. Occupational heteronomy of teachers working openly and collaboratively with other partners in the wider community;
- e. A self-directed search and struggle for continuous learning related to one's own expertise and standards of practice;
- f. The creation and recognition of high task complexity, with levels of status and reward appropriate to such complexity;
- g. A commitment to active care for students.

These features of postmodern professionalism seem to be in contradiction with the context of my study. Teachers of Nepali private schools follow a prescribed national curriculum and use textbooks selected by schools' owners, thereby reducing their discretionary judgment over issues of teaching, curriculum and other related issues. The notion of postmodern professionalism highlighted above also contradicts the framework of standards, such as teachers' certification and teachers' license regulations common in countries such as the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand (Sachs, 2003). When such standardisation is not supplemented with parallel investment in reward and incentives in teaching, it does raise the question of quality in the teaching profession (Sykes, 1999). For example, in the context of

Nepal, the Seventh Amendment of Education Act 2028 (1971) states that without obtaining a teaching licence from the Teacher Service Commission (TSC), a teacher is not eligible to teach either in public or private schools. However, there are still many teachers (especially in private schools) without a teaching licence (Bista, 2006; Kharel, 2003a, 2003b).

When words and actions have multiple interpretations, ambiguity in schools is likely to be common (Hoyle & Wallace, 2007). Schools have different stakeholders including teachers, principals, administrators, parents, state and others, directly or indirectly related to individual schools. These stakeholders' different preferences result in various political activities in schools. Such political activities inside a school in terms of resources and power (the access to books and other materials for teaching and learning) or sectors (primary/secondary) or status (principal/teacher/administrator) or gender (male/female) are termed *micro-politics of schools* (Kelchtermans, 2007). Thus, standard management theories that prefer formal authority structure are replaced by micro-political factors that operate as informal negotiation, bargaining and self-interest among different people working in schools (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). In the following section, I discuss literature on micro-politics of schools.

Micro-politics in Schools

The micro-political perspective came into existence initially as an alternative to rational or formal models of organisation (Kelchtermans, 2007). It challenges the formal/consensus model of organisations and provides valuable insight into the complexity of everyday life in schools as experienced by the teachers, administrators and principals (Achinstein, 2002; Blase, 1987, 1997, 2005). Micro-politics are an “alternative way of seeing, interpreting and explaining what goes on in the school” (Willower, 1991, p. 442). It not only helps us to understand what is actually happening in schools but also how and why it is happening (West, 1999).

Micro-political perspectives were first applied to education by Iannaccone in California schools in the early 1970s (Mawhinney, 1999). According to Iannaccone (1991, p. 466), micro-politics in education is “concerned with the interaction and political ideologies of school systems of teachers, administrators and pupils within school building.” Although the micro-political concept was first applied to educational institutions during the 1970s, seminal studies on micro-

politics of schools began in the UK and the USA in the mid-1980s (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1987, 1988; Hoyle, 1982). Ball's (1987) concept of micro-politics of schools was developed from the study of British schools, and concentrated on the conflict of interest among the stakeholders of a school:

I take schools, in common with virtually all other social organisations, to be an arena of struggle; to be riven with actual or potential conflict with members; to be poorly coordinated and to be ideologically diverse. (Ball, 1987, p. 19)

Ball indicated the conflictual basis of schools as organisations and also argued that control of a school's organisation is based on the positions occupied by the members of that organisation. He further added that the role of head teacher/principal is primarily based on domination/control. Thus, Ball's definition of micro-politics of schools features conflict and domination/control, which, he believes, are the two basic components of organisational life. These ideas can be applied in the private schools of Nepal, for the owners are usually the principals of the schools, concentrating management and ownership in one place, thereby providing the means for the owner/principal to exert domination and control (Khaniya, 2007; Sigdel, 2008). The Nepali government has legally authorised such schools to select and recruit their staff, provided they follow government direction in providing salary and other benefits. However, such government direction is rarely followed by Nepali private schools (Shrestha, 2008). Blase (1987, 1988, 1989), who based his work on the micro-politics of schools on a large-scale exploratory study of American school teachers' perceptions, discovered micro-politics to be conflictive and cooperative processes. Later, Blase (1991, p. 11) developed a comprehensive definition of micro-politics as played out in schools, including conflictive and cooperative processes. He argues that:

Micro-politics refers to the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals in organisations.... Both cooperative and conflictive actions and processes are part of the realm of micro politics.

Blase includes both conflictive and cooperative relationships in schools in his definition of the micro-politics of schools, arguing most definitions of micro-politics see it as conflict *within* schools. This sees micro-politics as an obstacle to the day-to-day operation of schools. This rather narrow view neglects what might be the positive and cooperative aspects of micro-politics. The conflictive approach

focuses on the domination/control by the school's principal, while the cooperative approach deals with how school principals work to empower teachers and other staff through different strategies, such as negotiation, compromise and mutual accommodation (Blase & Blase, 1997).

Hoyle (1986) argues that the loosely coupled structure of schools invites micro-political activities. Even though schools have fixed rules and regulations, there is high degree of autonomy among teachers, departments and other units. The alternative professional and democratic forms appropriate for schools often contradict the formal authority of the head teacher/principal, thus making space for micro-politics to take place. Some micro-political strategies commonly employed by school principals include:

- i. Dividing and ruling.
- ii. Involvement of those who support the principal/head teacher.
- iii. Displacement—real issues being displaced with the debate centring on a proxy issue.
- iv. Controlling information.
- v. Controlling meetings (Hoyle, 1986, pp. 140–143).

Micro-politics focuses on understanding how the relationship structures and power differentials really work in schools compared with the organisational chart or the school principal's plan (Flessa, 2009). Such perspectives acknowledge that teachers do not simply follow the direction of a principal, but respond in a variety of ways (Datnow, 2000).

Teachers are probably influenced in their thinking by the ideological currents of society, as schools always form networks and work within state requirements and work with professional agencies (Chessum, 1980). Teachers working in Nepali private schools established a teachers' union, the Nepal Institutional Schools Teachers' Union (Nepal-ISTU), in 2004 (Nepal Institutional Schools Teachers' Union [Nepal-ISTU], n. d.). This was established during a wave of Maoist led republican politics. This may be the reason why most Nepali people saw Nepal-ISTU as a Maoist affiliated teachers' union. However, members of this union argue that it is purely a private school teachers' union working for the rights of private school teachers (Personal Communication, Member, Nepal-ISTU, 2011).

Defining Micro-politics in Education

A wide range of scholars (Achinstein, 2002; Anderson, 1991; Bacharach & Mundell, 1993; Caffyn, 2010; Corbett, 1991; Hoyle, 1999; Kelchtermans, 2007; Malen, 1994; Shipp & Kafka, 2009; Tshabangu, 2008) argue that micro-politics in schools cannot be totally understood without considering the environment in which schools operate. For example, Reay (1998) explored the micro-politics of four London schools in the UK in an attempt to understand ways in which macro phenomena were introduced in day-to-day micro interactions. She concluded that the ways micro-politics operate not only depend on the power and control dynamics within schools, but also on power and control from a number of external sources. Incorporating environmental components, Hoyle (1999) categorised micro-politics of schools as 'management micro-politics' and 'policy micro-politics.' He termed management micro-politics as the management of schools in which teachers and school leaders use different strategies to pursue their interests. Similarly, policy micro-politics, according to Hoyle, is concerned with the relationships between the micro-politics of schools and the wider political context. Johnson (2003) defines micro-politics as the study of politics within school contexts and macro-politics as politics of the district, state and federal levels. Similarly, Scribner, Aleman and Maxcy (2003) define micro-politics as the politics of education and macro-politics as politics in education. Thus, the micro-politics of schools depends on the macro-political environment in which they operate.

Achinstein (2002) argues that ideologies found in the larger environment (macro) frequently interact with the micro (ideology within the schools). In this vein, Blackmore (2004, p. 439) argues that, "school leaders are expected, on a daily basis, to balance micro-political tensions in schools resulting from macro-political, cultural and structural changes." For example, Tshabangu's (2008) study of the experience of violence in Zimbabwean secondary schools, focusing on 8 purposefully selected secondary schools and 1 teacher training centre as the study group, found that there were interrelationships and similarities between the micro-politics of schools and the macro-politics of the country. Hatcher's (2005) view is similar stating that the power of a school's principal cannot be completely understood if we limit our analysis to the school only, saying that the source of such power lies "outside the school: it is delegated by the state" (pp. 256-257).

Micro-politics is mainly concerned with how different strategies such as power, coercion, cooperation and influence are used by different people in school settings to achieve their desired goals (Blase & Anderson, 1995). The main assumption in the theory of micro-politics of schools is that the behaviours of members of schools are largely driven by self-interest (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991). This focus on school members' interest therefore encourages them to make use of power, influence, negotiation/bargaining, control/domination and conflict/cooperation. Thus, both micro and macro-politics of education are based on concepts of power, influence, individual differences, goal diversity, control/domination, conflict/cooperation, strategies, bargaining/negotiation, exchange, values and ideologies (Blase & Blase, 2002; Bush, 2011b; Hoyle, 1982; Morley, 2000). This suggests that micro politics is a frame that includes conflict, power, empowerment, powerlessness, gender and motivation. Next, I outline literature on micro-politics in terms of conflict, power, empowerment, powerlessness, gender and motivation.

Conflict

Gronn (1986, p. 45) suggested that “scarce resources, conflicting ideologies, clashing interests and personality differences” are four factors producing politics in school contexts. When the members of organisations, including schools, have differences in their perceived interests, values and needs, conflict becomes common (Joel, 2008). Conflict may arise when we try to persuade others to accept our preferences (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). A conflict of interest can be understood as arising from preferences and the beliefs embedded in such preferences (Pfeffer, 1981). Conflict of interest (between school leaders and the teachers) is usually the focus of micro-politics when applied to schools (Hoyle, 1999).

Ryan (1989) argues that political behaviour in organisations, including schools, is largely influenced by the self-interest of the members. Such self-interest includes the acquisition of resources and a sense of achievement. In this vein, Morgan (2006, p. 157) analyses interests of organisational members in terms of three interconnected domains related to task, career and personal life:

Task interests are connected with the work one has to perform ... work life always involves more than just doing one's job. Employees bring to the workplace aspirations and visions as to what their future may hold, providing the basis for career interests that may be independent of the job being performed. They also bring their personalities, private attitudes, values, preferences, and beliefs and sets of commitments from outside work, allowing these extramural interests to shape the way they act in relation to job and career.

Morgan's (2006) above analysis of interests indicates that people working in organisations, including schools, have diverse interests, which may be compatible or conflictual depending on the situations and shows how external influence are present in the daily workings of schools. Ball (1987) suggested that teachers working in schools have *vested interests* (reward from work, working conditions, career and promotion), *ideological interests* and *self-interest*. Similarly, Hoyle (1982) categorised the interests of members of schools as *personal, professional and political*. Personal interests include autonomy, status, territory and reward. A professional interest involves commitment to particular forms of practice: curriculum, pedagogy, organisation and so on. Political interest, according to Hoyle, is related to the level of commitment of members to certain macro or party politics.

Different mixes of interests such as individual, professional, managerial, policy and political in school contexts give rise to different micro-political activities, including conflict (Hoyle, 1999). Explaining how interests lead to conflict in an organisation, Morgan (2006, p. 157) writes:

We live in our interests, often see others as "encroaching" on them, and readily engage in defences or attacks designed to sustain or improve our position.

As indicated in the above quote, people are always concerned about their interests, and this may lead to conflict with others. In schools, whenever the interest of one group of people (such as school leaders) collides with the interest of another (such as teachers), interest conflicts arises (Morgan, 2006). For example, some of the vested interests of teachers such as job security, higher wages, fringe benefits, pension plans and others, may often conflict with the interests of children, the school and the general public (Moe, 2005). Altrichter and Salzbeber (2000, p. 100) however noted that interest conflicts in schools is normal, writing that:

Different stakeholders—teachers, head teacher, pupils and parents—pursue their own interests, which are not necessarily identical with the goals which have been formulated in the mission statement of the school. Coalitions are formed, meetings are boycotted ... very often in this process formal structures are ignored.

This suggests that the diversity of interests among different people working in schools may not be compatible with a school's goal, giving rise to conflict. Marshall (1991) argues that "the status and authority of the school principal and their emphasis on impersonal and bureaucratic standardised procedures produce conflict between teachers and principals" (p. 42). Those believing in democratic education are sometimes in conflict with those who benefit from inequalities and hierarchical power relations in a school (Apple & Beane, 2007). Thus, conflict in schools is not only related to the interests of its members but also their ideologies and beliefs. Blase (1991) noted that "schools these days exists in a vortex of conflicting ideologies associated with school administrators, teachers, students and parents" (p. 1).

Conflict is often linked with power. Morgan (2006) posits that "power is the medium by which conflict in the organisation is ultimately resolved" (p. 166). Elaborating on the relationships between conflict and power, Morgan writes:

Organisational politics arise when people think differently and want to act differently. This diversity creates a tension that must be resolved through political means ... , there are many ways in which this can be done: autocratically ("We'll do it this way"); bureaucratically ("We're supposed to do it this way"); technocratically ("It's the best to do it this way") or democratically ("How shall we do it?"). In each case the choice between alternative paths of action usually hinges on the power relations between the actors involved (Morgan, 2006, p.156).

Thus, power and conflict are two interrelated components of the micro-politics of schools. The following section discusses the related concept of power.

Power

Haugaard (2002b) suggests that the meaning of power changes with contexts and there is no single definition. In the context of organisation, the most common concept of power is hierarchical: that is, the power of superiors over subordinates or bosses over employees. Although this is the most common dimension of power, there are still other dimensions of power (Pfeffer, 1981). Power in an organisation

may exist as a result of individual positions. Organisation structures do not always provide equal power to every positions and individuals in the institutions. Some individuals and positions may have more power while others may have less or no power (Haugaard, 2002a). Power can also exist due to the personal qualities of individuals (Hollander & Offermann, 1990). Because of their personal qualities, some people may be more powerful than others. French and Raven (2001, p. 65) identified four bases of power:

- i. Reward power (ability of A to mediate reward for B).
- ii. Coercive power (ability of A to mediate punishment on B).
- iii. Legitimate power (perception of A that B has a legitimate right to prescribe behaviour of B).
- iv. Referent power based on personal identification.
- v. Expert power based on special knowledge.

In the context of my study, school owners are the principals of the schools. This makes them (owner/principals) more powerful, with planning, programming and decision-making resting on their will (Sigdel, 2008). As a result of this, the bases of power in the schools I intend to study seem to be more aligned towards reward, legitimate and coercive power and less towards referent and expert power. Aligning with the kind of power based on resources, positions, identification and knowledge as outlined above, Bacharach and Lawler (1980, p. 36) suggested the following four bases of power:

- i. Coercive: ability to apply the threat of physical sanctions.
- ii. Remunerative: control of material resources and favours.
- iii. Normative: control of symbolic rewards.
- iv. Knowledge: access to information.

In contrast with a formal organisational analysis where authority and hierarchy are taken as the basis of power, a micro-political analysis suggests that power depends on an individual's ability to mobilise resources and influence decision (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). In addition to bases of power, some scholars have explained power in terms of its sources. For example, Bacharach and Lawler (1980) identified four sources of power which are related to formal position, personal characteristics, expertise and opportunity in the informal organisational structure.

Patriarchal political systems (such as monarchies and feudal societies) are an idealised type of legitimate power. Power also remains tied to the individual status of the leader as the office of the leader is established and legitimated (Taylor,

Grugulis, Bell, Storey, & Taylor, 2010). Power may also be obtained from sources such as money, influence and control over resources (Corwin, 1965). Morgan (2006) argued for different sources of power, such as: control of resources (human, financial, technological and informational); formal authority; organisational structures, rules and regulations; interpersonal alliances and networks; gender and management of gender relations and the power one already has.

Authority and Influence

The bases or sources of power for one type of organisation may not be relevant to other types of organisations. Bush (2011c) noted that positional power, expert power, personal characteristic-related power, coercive power and power from the control of resources and rewards are relevant to schools. Although authority and hierarchy are the bases of power in most formal organisations, the situation is quite different when we consider micro-politics and schools. In the context of micro-politics, power is more concerned with the personal ability to influence and affect decision making (Hoyle, 1982; Kirst & Wirt, 2009).

Hoyle (1982) posits that the micro-politics of schools is more concerned with influence than authority and thus a distinction between the two is essential. Bacharach and Lawler (1980, p. 44) noted the following differences between authority and influence:

- i. Authority is the static, structural aspects of power in an organisation; influence is the dynamic, tactical element.
- ii. Authority refers to the formally sanctioned right to make a final decision; influence is not sanctioned by the organisation.
- iii. Authority implies involuntary submission by subordinates; influence implies voluntary submission.
- iv. Authority is the formal aspect of power; influence is the informal aspect.
- v. Authority flows downward, and it is unidirectional; influence is multidirectional and can flow upward, downward and horizontally.
- vi. The source of authority is solely structural; the source of influence may be personal characteristics, expertise or opportunity.
- vii. Authority is circumscribed; that is, the domain, scope and legitimacy of the power are specifically and clearly delimited; influence is uncircumscribed; that is, domain, scope and legitimacy are typically ambiguous.

The contexts of my study are profit-oriented private schools working within the Maoist-dominated politics of Nepal. Authority and influence are likely to be multi-layered. Such multi-layered possibilities of authority and influence can be elucidated by a pluralist notion of power as introduced by American political scientist, Robert Dahl (Dahl, 1957). Dahl (1957) argues that power exists in a range of human relations such as influence, authority, persuasion, coercion, compulsion and so on, and may be either concentrated or diffused.

Focusing on the behavioural aspects of power, Dahl (1957, pp. 202-203) noted that “A has power over B to the extent he [A] can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.” Dahl’s conception of power consists of the utilisation of resources to affect the behaviour of another person. This view is related to participation in decision making processes (Dahl, 2002). As a critique to a pluralist’s notion of power as suggested by Dahl, Bachrach and Baratz (1962) introduced ‘two faces of power’ concentrating on differences between power and power-related concepts such as authority, influence and coercion, with special attention on decision and non-decision analysis. Bachrach and Baratz (1963, p. 632) noted that “non-decision is the practice of limiting the scope of actual decision-making to safe issues by manipulating the dominant community values, myths and political institutions and procedures.” Adding further to this line of argument, Bachrach and Baratz (2002) acknowledged that power is not just about participation in the decision-making process, but also about the exclusion of some participation and issues altogether. These ideas suggest to me that power relations in my study schools might be more complex than just teachers and other staff seeking participation in the school’s decision-making processes.

Luke (1974) introduces a ‘three dimensional view’ of power in which he calls Dahl’s conception of power the first dimension, Bachrach and Baratz’s the second dimension and his own as the third dimension. He further emphasised that the third dimensional view of power provided a more in-depth and satisfactory analysis of power compared to the first and second dimension of power. Critiquing the first dimensional view of power introduced by Dahl, Luke argues that such a conception only places stress on concrete observable behaviours with a central focus on decision-making processes. While the two dimensional view of power, is a qualified critique of the behavioural focus and represents a major advance over the one-dimensional view, it is not adequate. This view associates power with the

actual observable conflict instead of 'latent conflict.' Latent conflict, according to Luke, consists of contradictions between the interest of those exercising power and the interests of those they exclude. Incorporating his third dimensional view of power, Luke (1974) defines the underlying concept of power as, "A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests" (p. 27).

In spite of the differences between the first (Dahl), second (Bachrach & Baratz) and the third dimensional view of power (Luke), all of these concepts focus on the behavioural approach of power, limiting power to the causal concept of regular behaviour (Issac, 1984). Although the pluralist's approach to power and its subsequent development appears to be working in my study context, it is not adequate to explain the complexity of power relations between the employees (teachers and other non-owner staff) and the employers (owner/principal and other owners). Teachers and other non-owner staff in my study, with support from a teachers' union, appear to be advocating for the distribution of power while owner/principals appear to be working on a neoliberal agenda of concentrating power in the wealthy few. Given such a scenario, I see the likelihood of both the Marxist and Foucauldian notions of power relations at work. I introduce these notions of power in the upcoming chapter, *theoretical framework*.

Weber (1964, p. 152) defines, "power as the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance regardless of the basis on which this probability rests." Weber discussed power as the probability/chance of one actor (for example, owner/principals of my study) within social relations carrying out his/her own will despite resistance (from teachers and other non-owner staff of my study). This indicates the possibility of power concentration in schools' owners in spite of resistance from staff. Weber's definition of power focuses on individual actors without any consideration of the resources actors might need (Allen, 2004). In Weber's concept, power in an organisation is related to "the hierarchical structure of the offices and their relations to each other" (Clegg, 1989, p. 189).

Weber classified authority into rational legal, traditional and charismatic authority (Parson, 1964). According to Weber (1968), rational legal authority is related to the formal authority someone possesses because of their formal position. Weber thought that power in an organisation is strictly organised in the form of different positions. Positions in organisations are organised hierarchically, with

higher-level positions supervising and controlling lower level positions (Parsons, 1964). Similarly, in traditional authority, obedience is based on personal loyalty to the person possessing authority via tradition, while authority in charismatic authority is because of a person's heroism and/or exemplary qualities (Weber, 1964, 1968). Thus, as Allen (2004) writes in his critical introduction to Weber's ideas, obedience of the subordinates towards their superiors in traditional authority is based on traditions (what people have always done). In charismatic authority, subordinates obey their superior in the belief that their superiors can change their (subordinates') lives. In rational legal authority, subordinates obey their superiors because they assume the superiors to be legally appointed.

For example, different positions such as principals, vice-principals, secondary in-charge, head of department, primary in-charge and co-ordinator are allocated to different people working in both schools of my study. Moreover, these positions appear to be organised hierarchically. Because owners are also the principals, there is also the possibility of traditional and charismatic authority as suggested by Weber. These concepts may help me understand power dynamics in these study schools.

Weber (1946) expresses the view that hierarchical authority in an organisation is based on rules and regulations with a fixed system of superiors and subordinates, whereby superiors supervise and control the activities of their subordinates. Such authority, Weber argues, is impersonal and remains with the individuals as long as they occupy their roles under the rules and regulations of organisation. Weber (1964, pp. 333-334) added that only heads of organisations can occupy their positions by virtue of appropriation or succession, while the remaining individuals are appointed and work according to the following criteria:

- i. They [employees] are personally free and subject to authority only with respect to their impersonal official obligations.
- ii. They are organised in a clearly defined hierarchy of offices.
- iii. Each office has a clearly defined sphere of competence in the legal sense.
- iv. The office is filled by a free contractual relationships indicating there is free selection in principle.
- v. Candidates are selected on the basis of technical qualification ... they are appointed, not elected.

- vi. Employees are remunerated by fixed salaries in money, for most part with the right to pensions. Only under certain circumstances does the employing authority, especially in private organisations, have the right to terminate the appointment, but an official is always free to resign.
- vii. He/she [employee] is subject to strict and systematic discipline and control in the conduct of the office.

Similar to Weber's (1964) suggestions, the owner/principals and other owners occupying different managerial positions in my case study schools, occupy their positions by virtue of appropriation, or from succession because of their ownership. Teachers working in different levels of their schools are appointed on the basis of their technical qualifications, such as higher secondary/intermediate level for primary, and bachelor/masters degrees for the secondary level. These positions are filled on a contractual basis with fixed monthly salaries in the form of lump sum money. Teachers and other staff as employees, appear to be subjected to strict and systematic discipline in the conduct of their office. As Weber suggested, being private organisations, the owners as employing authorities seem to have the right to terminate appointments.

Authority and *responsibility* are the two sides of the same coin, power. *Authority* is the power of the superiors/managers to give orders, make decisions and enforce rules, while *responsibility* is the obligation of subordinates/employees to perform their duties to the best of their abilities (Corwin, 1965). Responsibility without authority, however, is meaningless. Only when there is proper delegation can subordinates discharge their duties effectively and efficiently (Ramasamy, 2010). From his classic study on American schoolteachers, Lortie (1975) argues that teachers who occupy intermediate responsibility (similar to the administrators in my study) are likely to complain when their obligations (responsibilities) exceeds their authority. Since administrators of my study are non-owners staff occupying different middle level managerial positions, it is worth investigating whether their responsibility exceeds their authority.

Stogdill (1959) suggests a relationship between authority with both responsibility and accountability, asserting that superiors do not give up their accountability after assigning a specific responsibility to their subordinates. He added that there is no use in assigning responsibility unless it is balanced with sufficient authority. Figlio and Loeb (2011) argue that accountability in education

covers a broad concept that involves using political processes for assuring democratic accountability to introducing market-based reforms or peer based accountability systems for increasing teachers' professional accountability. For example, private schools in Nepal attract parents and students on the basis of their performance in the national standardised SLC examination (Dhungel, 2008). This accountability suggests that monitoring students' performance is the basis for evaluating teachers, schools and the education system and includes the potential for schools to treat students as exam machines rather than citizens. With such practices there are always questions about empowerment and powerlessness, which are the topics of discussion in the following sections.

Empowerment

Empowerment recognises power and the capacity of individuals working in an organisation (Fitzsimons & Fuller, 2002). Short (1994) defines empowerment as “a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems” (p. 488). Similarly, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO (2009, p. 24) defines empowerment as being:

about people, both women and men, taking control over their lives:
setting their own agendas, developing skills (including life skills),
building self-confidence, solving problems and developing self-reliance.

Chandler (1999) noted that “true empowerment derives from shared governance and share respect” (p. 117). Empowerment in schools is often associated with the autonomy of teachers (Blase & Blase, 1997, 2001, 2001; Blase, 1993; Hoyle, 1999; Rist, 1990; Short, 1994; White, 1992). Blase and Blase (2001) define autonomy as the degree of freedom teachers have in determining their work process, with the following characteristics:

- i. Teachers are largely in control of instructional areas of classroom life.
- ii. Teachers generally control non-instructional areas of classroom life, such as disciplinary matters.
- iii. Teachers determine needs for and access to additional but necessary supplies and materials (pp. 88–89).

Empowerment, as indicated above, is concerned with “feelings of control and involvement in areas of importance to individuals” (Shellman, 2014, p. 21).

Teachers feel empowered when principals acknowledge their capabilities and competence and provide them opportunities to take part in the important decision-making processes related to students, classrooms and schools (Blase, 1993; Rist, 1990). Thus, such participation involves both the structure and process of power sharing. It is, according to Ryan (2000), the most important aspect of teacher empowerment. Blase and Blase (2001) argue that teachers can experience empowerment through being involved in governance, being shown respect by colleagues and the principal or being rewarded by new increase in autonomy and professionalism. On the other hand, teachers can also revolt in order to gain control of their profession if circumstances are difficult. In all of this, Blase and Blase (2001) argue that principals have a key role in helping teachers feel valued and responsible, but empowerment is not confined to principals' actions.

As Menon (2001) notes, empowerment can be both an act of empowering others (for example, school principals empowering teachers) and the internal processes of individuals being empowered. The latter form can be derived from the work of the teachers themselves. In this vein, Short (1994) suggested six empirically derived dimensions of teacher empowerment, which are about impact, decision making, status, autonomy, professional development and self-efficacy. The decision making dimension involves teachers participating in school's activities that affect their work (Blase, 1993; Rist, 1990). Empowered teachers have the ability to decide what to teach, how to teach and also how to assess their students' performance (Stone, 1995). The impact dimension is related to the belief of teachers about their influence on the activities of schools. Status as a dimension of empowerment is about teacher perception and feeling that their knowledge and expertise is valuable to others (Short, 1994). For example, low teacher status may be due to the declining public faith in education in general and teacher competence in particular (Ashton & Webb, 1986). When teachers believe that they can control certain aspects of school life, such as curriculum, textbooks and instructional planning, they have autonomy. This encourages teachers to set their own goals and action plans (Stone, 1995). Similarly, when teachers perceived that their working place (schools) is continuously providing opportunity for their professional growth and learning, they feel empowered (Short, 1994).

Teacher empowerment is often linked with principal leadership. Using an open ended inductive format, Blase and Blase (1997) investigated teachers' perception of the characteristics of school principals that influence their sense of empowerment and the meaning of empowerment for teachers. They came up with the following list of principals' strategies and personal characteristics that influence teachers' sense of empowerment:

- i. Demonstrating trust in teachers;
 - ii. Developing shared governance structures;
 - iii. Encouraging/listening to individual input;
 - iv. Encouraging individual teacher autonomy;
 - v. Encouraging innovation, creativity, risk taking;
 - vi. Giving rewards;
 - vii. Providing support;
 - viii. Caring, enthusiasm, optimism, honesty and friendliness.
- (Blase & Blase, 1997, p. 148)

Teacher empowerment is often linked with the activity of principals and/or school leaders. For example, private schools in Nepal are frequently accused of a lack of transparency in financial and personal activities, such as hiring and firing teachers, providing teachers and other staff incentives with a regular salary, a provident fund, medical benefits and insurance (Khaniya, 2007). This contrasts with ethical leadership that features characteristics such as trust, shared governance or promoting teacher autonomy. Blase and Blase (1997) also reported the following three dimensions of empowerment: *affective* (satisfaction, motivation, esteem, confidence, security and inclusion); *whole school* (expression, ownership, commitment, sense of team and efficacy); and *classroom-based* (autonomy, reflection, professional growth and efficacy). These three dimensions are similar to Shellman's (2014) views that "empowerment entails a sense of personal control or agency, including the belief that one's action results in a desired outcome" (p. 21). Teacher empowerment is also sometimes associated with teacher unionism.

Scholars such as Kirst and Wirt (2009) and Moe (2005) agree that teacher unionisation can transform the balance of power in schools. Teachers' unions enable teachers to get better wages and assurances of fair treatment, thus reducing some injustices (Johnson & Kardos, 2000; Toch, 2010). With the help of collective bargaining techniques, a teachers' union supports more equitable benefits for individual teachers (Cooper & Sureau, 2008). However, Hess and West (2006, p. 2), commenting on American public school contexts, criticise the collective

bargaining techniques of teachers' unions on the three grounds. They argue that collective bargaining restricts efforts to use compensation as a tool to recruit, reward and retain teachers and impede attempts to remove teachers deemed unsuitable or under-performing. Lastly, they argue that collective contracts over-regulate school life with work rules that stifle creative problems solving without demonstrably improving teachers' ability to serve students. On the other hand, collective bargaining provides teachers with some professional leverage. Highlighting the context of the US educational system, Johnson and Kardos (2000) and subsequently, Moe (2005) argue that although collective bargaining helps teachers to gain control of their workplace, it fails to change schooling for students. In Nepali context, the Nepal Institutional Teachers' Union has called for strikes on demands for employment contracts for teachers, the provision of salaries and benefits on par with government schools as well as provident fund and insurance plans for private school teachers. Although these activities are justified for teachers in such schools run under the whim of school owners (Ghimire, 2011), such activities have shadowed the 'professional model' of the school system, which Johnson and Kardos (2009) refer to the US context as an approach that:

Recognises that schools must be responsive to their students and communities.... Rather than functioning like factory labourers whose work can be pre-planned by managerial experts, teachers in schools that promote professional model are encouraged to regularly assess their teaching and make professional decisions based on the needs of their students or their schools (p. 9).

Moe (2005) argues that the rise of teachers' union has resulted in concentration of power in teachers. Teachers make use of their union to fulfil their vested interests, such as job security, higher wages and fringe benefits, combat costly pensions and mitigate restrictive job rules, which may conflict with the interest of children, school and parents. For example, on the basis of an analysis of labour agreements collected from 50 largest school districts of the USA based on student population, Hess and Loup (2008) argue that public schools in the US operate on a factory model that value teachers less for specialised knowledge and skills and more for their faithfulness towards accepting a top-down hierarchical structure. This view is aligned with Cooper and Sureau's (2008) notion of the 'politics of fear' in union-management relations. In such relations, they argue, school management worry that teachers may organise themselves for collective voices through strikes that disrupt

school activities, while teachers fear that management might fire them. These issues highlight micro-political and macro-political tensions in schools.

Although teachers still believe that a teachers' union enables them to get better wages, fair treatment and defines the boundary of their school responsibility, they are recognising that realities of school life are quite different from those of the factory or industry (Johnson & Kardos, 2000). Highlighting the context of school-sector restructuring in the United Kingdom, Stevenson (2007) draws attention to teachers' union bargaining constructively for government policy change and teachers' conditions of service. Similarly, Poole (2000) examines the role of the teachers' unions in education reform in Canada, using a case study of a teachers' union and found that the teachers' union leaders focus on the dual relationship between their members' economic welfare and professional development, which leads to educational quality. Bascia (2005) describes in detail the involvement of teachers' organisations from Canada and the US in a variety of educational reforms related to improvement of teaching and learning activities. She further added that although teachers' organisations are involved in educational reform, most of the research overshadows these issues with traditional notions of collective agreement and bargaining processes. This is because this research was undertaken by researchers with close association with policy makers and school administrators.

Ballou (2001), Hess and West (2006) and Moe (2001, 2005, 2006) criticise teachers' unions for pursuing narrow self-interest, such as generous salaries and benefits, proper working conditions and job security. Other scholars (Bascia, 2005; Poole, 2000, 2007a; Rottmann, 2010, 2011) present alternative perspectives on teachers' unionism, arguing that teacher' unions not only work towards protecting their members but also improving schools. Peterson and Carney (1999), for example, suggested that 'social justice unionism,' has a number of characteristics such as continuing to defend and demand improved teaching and working conditions; taking responsibilities for the quality of teachers; building strategic alliances with parents and wider communities to advocate for learners. Social justice unionism emphasises that teachers' unions need to pursue a range of issues from traditional ones (proper wage and salary, including other incentives, proper working conditions and job security) to professional and social justice issues (Poole, 2007b).

Sprague (1992) noted that because of the feminisation, intensification and privatisation of teachers' work, there are many cases of disempowerment (powerlessness) in the field of teaching. So empowering teachers has to start with the identifying reasons for powerlessness among teachers. Thus, empowerment and powerlessness exist side by side in any organisation, including schools. In the following sub-section, I discuss literature on powerlessness.

Powerlessness

Powerlessness has been conceptualised in a variety of ways. For example, Ashforth (1989) defines it as a lack of participation and autonomy. Aston and Webb (1986, p. 50) define powerlessness as “a state of affairs and a description of an existential reality.” Similarly, Tew (2006, p. 42) compared powerlessness with humans' feelings, such as being “stuck, helpless, victimised and hopeless.” In schools it is often related to the experiences of teachers as a result of the exercise of power over them. Tew (2006, pp. 41–42) writes:

Those in power may use their positions to enforce their agenda on those who may be vulnerable... further undermine the abilities of those who already find it hard to mobilise power on their own behalf and thereby serve to perpetuate... their experience of powerlessness.

When teachers are powerless to challenge the official authority of the principal/head teachers, they can feel demoralised (Rees & Rodley, 1995). So demoralisation or negative motivation is often related to feelings of powerlessness. When teachers experience powerlessness, they feel unable to contribute to important decisions of schools. This develops feelings of frustration and humiliation (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Therefore, as Schmidt (2000) argues, negative emotions are associated with powerlessness. Kemper (1993, p. 42) posits, “a large number of human emotions can be understood as responses to the power and/or status meanings and implications of the situations.” When individuals' power is reduced, they may feel fear and anxiety, for those in power can compel them to do things they do not want to do. On the other hand, individuals may feel more secure and protected when their senses of power increases. Similarly, a decrease in status may lead to negative feelings such as anger, shame and depression, while an increase may lead to positive feelings such as satisfaction, happiness, contentment and gratitude. Describing the relationship between status and feelings of powerlessness in the US schools, Ashton and Webb (1986, p. 39, 49) write:

Teachers complained that neither the public, the press ... their own school administrators adequately recognised their efforts and accomplishments. Teachers in most schools reported that the administration treated them disrespectfully. They considered themselves as professionals and were offended when they were treated like bureaucratic functionaries or naughty children.

This underpins how emotional well-being is linked to professional self-worth. Powerlessness appears to involve teachers' emotions and self-worth as well as their gender. The powerlessness of teachers depends on a range of factors including the quality of their working relationship with the school principals. It also involves their sense of professional agency. This is aligned to Boler's (1999) approach in understanding emotions in schools in terms of power relations. Elaborating this further, Hargreaves (2001) argues that emotions in teaching are closely connected to teachers' experiences of power and powerlessness.

Power Relations and Emotions in Schools

Zembylas (2005) posits that there has been increasing trend in the number of studies exploring the role of emotion in teaching in the last two decades. He further added that the first wave of studies during the 1980s and early 1990s were confined to establishing awareness on the role of emotion in teaching. For example, Nias (1989) presented an account of primary teaching as work, mainly using interviews from primary teachers in England. Nias' account was related to understanding a reality of teaching as an occupation, focusing on the importance of emotions in teaching and learning.

However, more recent studies, according to Zembylas, focus on the social relationship aspects of emotion in teaching. For example, Blase and Anderson's (1995) research indicated that the political practices of school principals develop negative feelings (such as anger, depression, confusion, disorientation, uncertainty, fear and passive acceptance) with minimal positive feelings of satisfaction among teachers and other staff. Drawing on the experiences of a group of women in leadership positions in primary and secondary schools in Australia, Blackmore and Sachs (1998) found both positive and negative emotions such as satisfaction, frustration, disappointment, loneliness, isolation, juggling with time and feeling awful. They further added that the emotions of the women working in the leadership positions are regulated by the emotional rules of the organisations that "privilege

headwork over heart work” (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998, p. 270). Schmidt (2000) studied the emotions of 29 Canadian secondary school department heads and found that they experience loneliness, emotional misunderstanding and resentment, with feelings of powerlessness, because of the tensions between teaching and leading. Similarly, drawing on an interview-based study of 53 elementary and secondary teachers in Canada, Hargreaves (2001) argues that teachers experienced negative emotions when parents questioned their expertise, pedagogical knowledge and judgements, while they experienced positive emotions when parents appreciate, support, and agree with them. Studies on principals and administrators’ emotions were related to their professional identity (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998; Schmidt, 2000) and teachers’ emotions to their relationship with principals (Blase & Anderson, 1995) and parents (Hargreaves, 2001). My study is concerned with understanding the professional lives of teachers, administrators and principals of Nepali private schools in a Marxist political context. Thus, in addition to teachers, administrators and principals’ emotions in relation to different political activities within the school contexts, there is also the likelihood of emotional response to educational reform.

Gender

Several studies on teachers’ emotions in relations to educational reform have also been carried in a range of countries, including the UK, Australia, Canada, the USA and Belgium. Jeffrey and Woods (1996) found that the inspection from Office for Standard in Education (OFSTED) in the UK resulted in deprofessionalisation of teachers working in primary schools. This involves development of professional uncertainty with emotional feelings of confusion, anxiety and anomie among teachers. Elaborating this further, Jeffrey (2002) argues that the relations between teachers, colleagues and local inspectors became less humanistic because of the performativity culture. Drawing from a case study of educational restructuring in Victoria, Australia, Blackmore (2004) argues that government reforms based on market and managerial principles brought different emotional responses such as anger, fear, frustration, demoralisation and grief among educational leaders and teachers working in Australian schools. Hargreaves (2005) examines emotional aspects of teaching and educational change in Grade 7 and 8 teachers in Canada. He found that teachers’ emotional responses to the structures, policies, traditions

and routines of their working lives are affected by the way such changes are filtered through teachers' feelings about their students. Based on biographic-narrative work with primary schoolteachers in Belgium, Kelchtermans (2005) declares that the policy measures and imposed educational reforms resulted in the experience of vulnerability among teachers, because they (teachers) felt that they are not in control of their valued working conditions. Similarly, Valli and Buese's (2007) research, in the context of the US, revealed that the educational reform involving high-stake accountability had resulted in the increased stress, demoralisation and powerlessness among teachers.

Teachers and administrators' emotions are affected by their identity and their relationships with others (Hargreaves, 1998). Schools as social institutions tend to be based on a dominant male culture that perpetuates gender inequalities through power relations within schools (United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, 2012). Rich (2001) argues that the professional identity of the teacher is closely tied to views of masculinity, because of the neo-liberal discourse of a modern teacher as an instrumental and emotionally detached individual. Dillabough (1999) supported this view, indicating the socially constructed nature of women's subordination because of the two critical but opposing views of a modern teacher: that is, the teacher as an instrumental and unmediated form of masculinity, and the teacher as mother. This challenges the taken-for-granted discourse of the school's management as a gender-neutral activity. Thus, the reality of schools as a workplace, as Hall (1999) suggests, needs to be considered from the social construction of men and women's roles and their impact on management practices. Hall (1999) uses the word 'gender' to describe such perspectives of management. In my study, I am drawing on the experiences and perceptions of teachers, administrators and principals of two schools to discuss the issues of privatisation in the transformed political context of Nepal. This means I need to consider the context of power relations operating within these schools from the perspectives of both male and female research participants, thereby indicating the likelihood of gender issues.

UNESCO (2009, p. 23) defines gender as "a social and cultural construct, which distinguishes differences in the attributes of men and women, and accordingly refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women." Similarly, Rothchild (2006, p. 4) asserts gender as "a socially constructed identity and role, reinforced by processes and institutions that maintain similar attitudes and

distinction about gender,” while Acker (2006) posits that gender is a socially constructed difference between men and women supported by the beliefs and identities that produce such differences. As a result of gender, inequality in organisations becomes common.

Debates on gender issues are becoming common in the shifting Nepali societies. Although women constitute more than half (51.44 percent) of the total population of Nepal, they are still discriminated against, exploited and subordinated to their male counterparts, because of the “strong traditional value in favour of males” (Thapaliya, 2000, p. 20). Nepali society is dominated by a patriarchal value system that originated from Hindu religious practices (Pradhan, 2004). Although there are Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and people of other religions in Nepal, about 81 percent of total population are Hindus (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Because of such dominance of Hindus, Nepali society is influenced by the ‘Hindu way of life.’ The values and belief systems of Nepali society are rooted in Hinduism and determine what is good and bad, or right and wrong. Even though Hindu religion (from its origin) provided respectable positions to women, this was distorted and manipulated by succeeding male elites, thereby creating a dogmatic form of Hinduism, positioning women in the lower strata of the social order than men (Dhungana, 2014). Although the notion of male supremacy embedded in the traditional Nepali culture is supported through different social, cultural, economic and political institutions in Nepal, this has been challenged from time to time in history (Pokheral & Misra, 2001). There has been a dramatic increase in women’s political participation in Nepal, since the inception of democracy.

Access to political power involving positions in the top decision making authority are indicators about the overall status of women (Shrestha, 2001). Women actively participated in the 1990’s people’s movement for democracy. Accordingly, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990, includes provisions (under article 114) stating that at least 5 percent of total candidates from each political party contesting the election need to be women (Government of Nepal, Nepal Law Commission, 1990). Although this is not a significant policy initiative towards gender equity, given that over 50 percent of total population are women, this was considered as a step towards redressing the power imbalances that exist politically and socially. Despite such policy provisions, women’s participation in political power is restricted because of the male dominated culture existing in the various

political parties (Pradhan, 2004). However, after the decade-long armed conflict and subsequent declaration of a republic (see Chapter 2), women's participation in political activities has increased. The Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2063 (2007) included provisions for 33 percent representation of women in the legislative parliament (Government of Nepal, Nepal Law Commission, 2007). As a result, in the 2008 election for members of constituent assembly (CA), women were more visible in parliament (Delaney, 2011). This improvement is attributed to the ideology of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) which had 40 percent female representation (Khakurel, 2011). However, the number of women representation in the second CA election of 2013 dropped drastically from 33 percent to 4.1 percent (Dhungana, 2014). Despite the policy initiation, the progress of women in Nepal is hindered through the persistent patriarchal culture (Delaney, 2011).

Gender division of labour is significant in Nepal. Gendered division of labour is about "the system through which work is divided between men and women" (Simon, De Silva, Clement, Maskey-Amatya, Ramesh, Philip & Bharati, 2014, p. 7). Although the number of women entering the labour force is increasing, most of these women work in the low skill/unskilled jobs in the lower end of the organisational hierarchies (Asian Development Bank, 2010; Shakya, 2014). Acharya (2001) argues that this situation relates not only to the lack of education and training of these women, but also to the employers' bias towards women, subsequently limiting their work opportunities.

This gendered division of labour is reflected in the Nepali educational system where most women teachers are concentrated in the primary level, while most male teachers are found in the secondary level of schools which are perceived to be of higher status than primary schools (Bista, 2006; Shields & Rappleye, 2008). This demarcation is significant in private schools because private schools can achieve their primary goal of increasing profit by employing female teachers for lower wages (Bista, 2006). As the majority of the participants in my study are female teachers, I expect their responses on issues of discrimination and power imbalance to shed light on the genderedness of relations within these private schools.

Gender power imbalances in schools play an important role in the micro-politics of schooling (Morley, 2000). Gender and the management of gender relations is one of the important sources of power in an organisation (Morgan, 2006).

Morgan (2006, pp. 185–186) argues that many organisations are “dominated by gender-related values.” For example, when women want to take on more powerful positions in a school, they have to face greater hurdles from others (such as being exceptional, having to prove their worth, being perceived as less desirable as supervisors and so on). Such expectations tend to be absent for men (Schmuck, 1986).

Although women dominate teaching in almost all parts of the Western world, they are still underrepresented in positions of management leadership and administration. Such underrepresentation is a major concern for feminist scholars (Coleman, 2001; Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Schmuck, 1986). Highlighting the problems of future principal succession in New Zealand primary schools, Brooking (2008) claims that Boards of Trustee preferences for male principals discriminate against women applicants. She further added that if this trend continues, there will be problems with leadership in the future.

Dillabough (1999), nearly a decade earlier, argues that one of the concerns related to gender is the relationship between male power and constructions of the ‘rational’ teacher. This notion of the rational and instrumental teacher neglects the professional status of women teachers, for women are closely associated with domestic work in the private sphere. Robbins and Judge (2014) claim that career development options for women are limited to some extent because of their preference for jobs that provide work-life balance. For example, a study from the Educational Journalist Group and Action Aid, Nepal (Sigdel, 2008) suggests that teachers working in the same private school are getting different salaries and conditions because they do not have appointment letters. The owners also have discretionary power to hire and fire teachers whenever they want. In such contexts, this makes inequalities based on gender easier to hide (United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative, 2012).

There are different sets of beliefs about men and women’s temperament. This is an entrenched stereotypical world view which impacts on how women are seen and treated in the system. Women are believed to be more agreeable (rarely going against authority), while men are believed to be more aggressive (often going against the authority) (Robbins & Judge, 2014). Although Robbins and Judge write about the US contexts, their findings are likely to be echoed in Nepal’s views of women and men. Because of such beliefs, women’s pedagogical practice is

perceived to be more emotional and value-laden (Conway, 2005). Hargreaves (2005) describes this as an 'emotional labour' of teaching. Detailing the emotional labour, Hochschild (2012) writes:

This labor requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others.... This kind of labor calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality. (p. 7)

Such a view of women's labour positions women as caregivers and more fitted to primary level positions, while men assumed the prestigious position of teaching older students and are more fitted to secondary level positions. Because of the over-representation of women teachers in primary sectors of schooling, women are now blamed for the feminisation of primary teaching, yet this sector is usually perceived to be an appropriate occupation for a woman's profession (Skelton, 2002). Charbonnier and Albiser (2013), referring to OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries, assert that teachers of higher levels of education (secondary level) usually earn more compared to teachers at lower levels (primary level). Evidence from most OECD countries shows a direct correlation between teaching level and teachers' salary. For example, in Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland, teachers working in the upper secondary level get 25 percent more salary than those in the primary level with the same experience. This might, however, be related to the higher qualifications necessary for teachers in the upper secondary level. However, such differences in teacher's salary are only 5 percent in New Zealand, Australia, Japan, South Korea, England and the USA (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2009).

A range of factors including teachers' salary, working environment, decision making authority, and career development opportunities can affect teachers' motivation (Inayatullay & Jehangir, 2013). Although Nepali private schools are supposed to follow government regulations and pay their teachers as per their government counterparts, this is usually not the case (Shrestha, 2005). Due to this, private school teachers are seen from time to time demanding salary and other incentives, such as medical allowances, provident funds and insurance as per their government counterparts, through taking strikes action causing disturbance in normal school operation (Ghimire, 2011). One way of understanding this is to see

it as micro political activities in action based on teachers' selfish motivation. The private schools owners appear not to see that they are the one breaking the rules. Private schools in Nepal lack clear and transparent policies in regards to the terms and conditions of teachers' service, such as financial and other incentives and conditions under which they are hired (Shrestha, 2005). As private schools are market-oriented, teachers' salaries are based on the perceived importance of the teacher to the schools. This marketisation of teachers' labour is usually based on their students' performance in the national standardised test, the SLC examination which excludes primary school teachers. The secondary level students at Grade 10 are the ones sitting in the SLC examination. Secondary level teachers are perceived to be more important than the primary level teachers as a result of this imbalance (Dhungel, 2008; Shields & Rapple, 2008; Vaux et al., 2006).

Lack of transparency with regards to teachers' terms and conditions in the private schools raises questions of teachers' motivation towards their work. Rees and Rodley (1995), for example, suggest that when teachers do not have power to challenge the authority of school principals, they may be demoralised. In the next section, I discuss the literature related to motivation with focus on teachers' motivation.

Motivation

The word motivation is derived from Latin word *movere*, which means to move. This indicates that motivation is "something that gets up going, keeps us working and helps us complete task" (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008, p. 4). Owings and Kaplan (2012) define motivation as the degree of willingness of an individual to make an effort towards organisational goals. However, motivation cannot be confined only to an effort towards the organisational goals. People have desire to work or not to work. As a result of such desire, they develop either positive attitudes or negative attitudes towards work. Positive attitudes towards work can be seen as 'job satisfaction,' while a negative attitude is related to 'job dissatisfaction' (Vroom, 1995). Vroom (1964) noted that people work for the following reasons:

- i. Financial remuneration.
- ii. Expenditure of energy.
- iii. Production of goods and services.
- iv. Social interaction.
- v. Social status of the workers.

Vroom was not talking about educational context. Motivation in education is very complex, relating to student learning as well as personal financial reward. In the context of education, there may be other reasons for work, such as identity, self-worth, ambition and self-satisfaction, in addition to these lists suggested by Vroom. For example, a study of teachers from a county school district in the state of Colorado revealed that although teachers are motivated to work with a desire to earn money and also to help students, the public service desire (helping students) of work appears to be stronger than economic motives (Glass, 2011). People work for different reasons, which range from earning money to improving social status. People have different ambitions and these ambitions encourage them to work. Work can be a medium for people to fulfil their ambitions. Sometimes people like to work because they get the opportunity to interact with people, and sometimes they feel that it is their responsibility to make a contribution to society through services from work. I am exploring the professional lives of teachers, administrators and principals of Nepali private schools and some of the reasons for work listed above may come up from my study.

The seminal study of human motivation began with *Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation* (Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow (1943), human needs are classified into five groups: physiological needs, safety needs, need for love and affection, esteem needs and self-actualisation needs. These needs are arranged in a hierarchy in order of their importance. Only when the lower order needs are satisfied do the higher order needs emerge. For example, when needs for food, shelter and safety/security are satisfied, needs for love and affection will emerge. Maslow viewed motivation as the process of fulfilling these complex hierarchical human needs. A study from Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO), on teachers' motivation in Nepal, shows that teachers working at different levels are affected by different factors. For example, primary level teachers are positively influenced by teaching materials, training facilities, support from peers and active participation of students, while secondary level teachers are mainly influenced by salary, followed by teaching materials, training programs, physical facilities and their students' performance in the SLC examination (Shrestha, 2005). The participants of my study include both primary and secondary teachers of two private schools in Nepal; different factors related to salary, exam performance, peer

influence and other facilities may be reasons for motivation for my research participants.

Extending Maslow's work, Herzberg and his colleague developed a two factor *Motivation-Hygiene theory* (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). After a series of pilot studies, Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) conducted a study on 200 male engineers and accountants, in which the participants were asked to talk about the time they felt exceptionally good (satisfied with job) or exceptionally bad (dissatisfied with job). From this study, they found that five factors (achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility and advancement) play an important role in increasing job satisfaction in those workplaces. Factors such as salary/pay, working conditions, company policy and administration and quality of supervision are related to job dissatisfaction. The factors (achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility and advancement) that lead to job satisfaction are motivators. On the other hand, factors (salary/pay, working conditions, company policy and administration and quality of supervision) whose absence leads to job dissatisfaction are 'hygiene' related issues (Kelly, 2002). Herzberg uses the term 'hygiene' to describe the factors that cause dissatisfaction in the workplace and are related to compensation, job security, politics within organisations, quality of supervisions and so on. This study has some limitations with regards to the sample used as only male engineers and accountants were involved, while my study involves both male and female teachers, administrators and principals. Friedlander and Walton (1964) conducted a study with 82 participants, consisting of scientists and engineers, using motivation-hygiene theory as a guiding theoretical framework. They indicated that the factors that keep the employees at work are related to job satisfaction and are rightly called 'positive motivation.' Similarly, the factors which force the employees to leave the present work are related to job dissatisfaction and are called 'negative motivation.' The study found that positive motivation of the engineers and scientists was related to the work process instead of any attractive environmental factors. Similarly, negative motivation is related to the environmental factors such as working conditions, company policy and supervision. The factors described above are related to scientists and engineers while my study involves teachers, administrators and principals of two private schools. So these factors may not apply to the participants of my case study schools. For example, research conducted by a non-governmental organisation, VSO, on teachers'

motivation found that constant strikes, political interference in schools, frequent change in education policy, irrelevant curriculum, impractical rules, large classroom size and disciplinary problems in urban areas, and gender discrimination for female teachers were the main factors that cause demotivation among Nepali teachers working in both private and public school systems (Shrestha, 2005).

Motivation-hygiene theory has been widely applied to the educational setting by a number of scholars. For example, Sergoivanni (1967) replicated Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) study with teachers in Monroe County, New York. The result of this study indicated that achievement, recognition and responsibility contributed to teachers' job satisfaction, while interpersonal relations, supervision, school policy and administration, personal life and fairness-unfairness were the factors that contributed to teachers' job dissatisfaction. Similarly, Waltman, Bergom, Hollenshead, Miller and August (2012) conducted a comprehensive qualitative study on full and part-time Non Tenure Track Faculty (NTTF) at 12 universities across the US during 2008-2009. Using motivation-hygiene theory, they noted that teaching and working with students and job flexibility relating to family responsibility and child rearing acted as a source of job satisfaction. Similarly, employment terms (lack of job security and lack of opportunity for advancement) and lack of respect and inclusion act as a source of job dissatisfaction.

In addition to Maslow's theory of human motivation and Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, goal theories have been widely used in the educational settings. Two common types of goal theories popular in the field of education are goal-orientation theory and goal-setting theory. Goal-orientation theory has been used in the field of education especially to explore children's learning and performance in the school settings (Dörnyei, 2001). They were basically developed to explain children's learning and development in academic tasks within the school settings (Schunk et al., 2008). For example, Covington (2000), with the help of an extensive review of literature, concluded that the quality of student learning depends on the interaction between the academic and social goals students bring to their classroom. My study being primarily focused on power relational issues between the teachers and school owners in two private schools in Nepal, my interest is in the literature on teachers' motivation within the school settings. Recently, Butler (2014) made an attempt to link student achievement to teachers' motivation

based on her research in Israel and Germany. She argues that teachers adopt effective approaches to teaching when they are interested in learning and developing their professional competence.

Goal-setting theory assumes that human actions depend on conscious goals and intention, although all human actions cannot be fully controlled in a conscious way (Locke & Latham, 1981). People's goals influence the task they do and how they do their tasks. This means there are certain factors that affect goals and their (goals) relationship with task performance. Some people are motivated to perform better than others because of differences in the performance goals (Latham & Locke, 1991). Suggesting the relationship between goal and task performance, goal theory asserts that there is a direct relationship between the degree of goal difficulty and the task performance (Locke & Shaw, 1981). Several efforts have been made to apply goal-setting theory in the educational context. For example, Schunk (1991) found that goal setting affects the motivation of students. Schunk illustrated this idea stating that those students with clear goals are more likely to experience the feeling that they can perform their task. Such task-specific self-confidence is often referred to as 'self-efficacy' (Bandura, 1977; Latham & Locke, 1991). Self-efficacy and motivation are applicable to both students and teachers (Schunk, 1991). Ashton and Webb (1986) found that teachers with higher self-efficacy are more likely to have a positive classroom environment compared to teachers with low self-efficacy.

Summary

The review of literature on schools as organisations has enhanced my understanding of schools as organisations. Most studies of schools as organisations indicate that schools are complex organisations. A range of metaphors such as open system, loosely coupled system and anarchy organisation describes schools as organisations.

Literature on school governance and management highlighted different aspects of school governance and management including managerialism, neoliberalism, new public management and teachers' professionalism. This section highlighted how different educational reforms across a range of countries have raised the issues of teachers' professionalism in these countries.

The complexities of school organisations have been described as micro-politics. This is often linked with the macro-politics of the country. This aspect of

school organisations and its related issues was presented in the second section of this chapter. The micro-politics of schooling section included discussion of themes such as: power, conflict, empowerment, powerlessness, gender and motivation.

In this chapter, I discussed literature relevant to my study about schools as organisations including school leadership and governance as well as literature on neoliberalism and privatisation including the effects of privatisation on teachers' professionalism status and salaries. Finally, I reviewed literature on what actually goes on in schools, which is often referred to as micro-politics of schools. This section included several themes such as conflict, power, empowerment, gender and motivation. In the next chapter, I outline the theoretical framework of this study.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

In the previous chapter, I reviewed literature relevant to my study. This chapter consists of the theoretical aspects of my study. After reviewing literature on conceptualisation of power from a Marxist, Weberian and Foucauldian approach, I propose the *Foucault plus* concept of power that links a Marxist /Foucauldian conceptualisation of power.

This study is my attempt to better understand the professional lives of teachers, administrators and principals who work in two private schools in the main city of Kathmandu, Nepal. As I will discuss in detail in the *methodological framework* chapter, my research approach is qualitative. Although it appears that there is little agreement about the role of theory in qualitative research (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, 2015; Green, 2014), qualitative scholars expressed different views on the role of theory in qualitative research. While some might find this lack of certainty unsettling, it indicates the robustness of debate in this kind of research. In this debate, three understandings about the role of theory in qualitative research are common. These include: (1) theory as having almost no role in qualitative research; (2) theory being more or less similar to the methodology used in the research, and (3) theory as having wider role in qualitative research (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, 2015).

The first group of scholars, which include Bryant and Charmaz (2010), Charmaz (2006), Corbin and Strauss (2008), and Glaser (2007) are mostly associated with grounded theory. These scholars believe that theory evolves from qualitative research instead of theory being used as a lens to understand the research. According to Sandelowski (1993), theory is produced from inside the research in grounded theory research. Similarly, the second group of researchers (such as Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, 2005a; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Yin, 1994, 2003) equates theory with the methodology used and the epistemologies underlying this methodology. The third group of researchers (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, 2015; Henstrand, 2006; Lugg, 2006; Schram, 2003; Sharan, 2003) argue that even though theory influences the methodology and underlying epistemologies of the study, the role of theory in qualitative research is much broader than suggested by the first two perspectives. Elaborating this proposition further, Kelly (2010) argues that theory not only influences research design underpinning methodology but also has implications for the means used to analyse and interpret data. The role of theory is

to illuminate research findings linking either a central concept with the existing theory or linking several concepts with the existing theoretical perspectives (Schwartz-Barcot, Patterson, Lusardi, & Farmer, 2002).

In the *methodological framework* chapter, my philosophical underpinning of postmodernism as a critique to modernism is influenced by my critical theoretical perspectives of marrying a Marxist theory of power with Foucauldian notions of power, thus influencing my study design. In my study, theory informs both my research design and my analysis of the data (Kelly, 2010). Moreover, the theoretical perspectives I adopted provide me with a complex and comprehensive understanding of how teachers and other staff of two private schools experience their professional lives within the changing political context of Nepal (Reeves, Albert, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008). Since my study involves understanding teachers' voice within two private schools (micro) and how this is influenced by the changing political context of Nepal (macro), I anticipate Foucault's notion of power will help me in understanding the microphysics of power within the two case study schools. This notion of microphysics of power is quite similar to the micro-politics (discussed earlier), as it involves use of both formal and informal power by individuals and groups within institutions. The Marxist theory of power will help me uncover the macro level perspectives of my study context (Reeves et al., 2008). Thus, I use the role of theory more broadly in my study. As indicated in Figure 1 below, my theoretical perspectives comprise of both Marxist theory of power and Foucault's notion of power. As my study is situated in the changing political context of Nepal, the overall political history of Nepal together with the neoliberal influence also comprise a part of my theoretical framework. Aligning with Schram's (2003) suggestion, the conceptual context of my study also forms a part of my theoretical perspectives. This theoretical framework allows me to understand the teachers' voice within two private schools comprising my case study. This theoretical framework, therefore, will help me to understand who gains and holds power in the social and political interaction within the schools of my study and how this (gaining and holding power) is being used to the advantage of one group and disadvantage of the other group (Mutch, 2006).

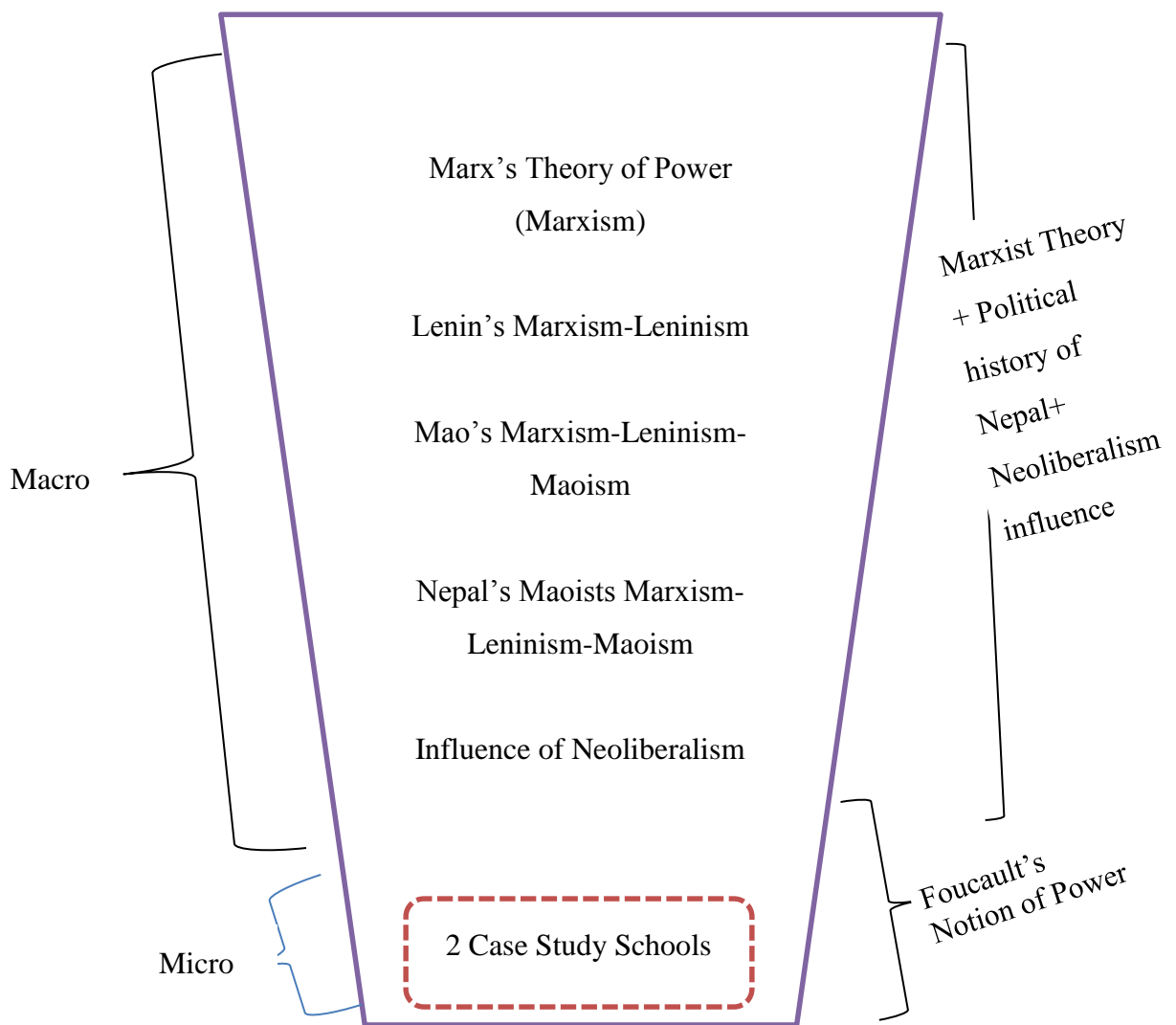


Figure 1: Theoretical model of the study

In the following sections, I discuss Marxist theory of power and Foucault's notion of power, justifying how each version of the concept of power helps me understand power relations at work in my case study schools. This is followed by a discussion of Marx-Foucault relations and how I use this to create a broader understanding of the professional lives of staff in two private schools in Nepal in a changing political climate.

Power: A Marxist Approach

Karl Marx (a German philosopher, economist and revolutionary socialist) is the founder of Marxist theory. Although Marx was born in Germany, his revolutionary activities soon made him stateless, after which he spent much of his life in London

in the United Kingdom. Marx's work is influenced by German philosophy, French revolutionary politics and English economics. Marxist theory, also known as 'Marxism,' represents a system of views and teaching of Karl Marx about society, economy and politics (Lenin, 1933b). Marxist theory provides an essential framework for understanding class relations and distribution of power in such class relations. This theory accepts that class relations of modern society are the relations of domination and subordination because of unequal distribution of power (Isaac, 1984). Since my study involves understanding and exploring the distribution of power in two private schools within the altered political scenario of Nepal as discussed earlier, I see the Marxist theory of power as a framework for understanding power relations. Marxist theory will help me understand the antagonist relationships between private school owners and non-owner staff (Hill, Sanders, & Hankin, 2002). Marx, working together with his friend, Friedrich Engels, combined their ideas into *The Communist Manifesto*, which Marx mainly wrote (Marx & Engels, 1967a). Clarifying this in the preface to the English edition of 1888 of the manifesto, Engels (1967, p. 62) writes:

The manifesto being our joint production, I consider myself bound to state that the fundamental proposition, which forms its nucleus, belongs to Marx. That proposition is: that in every historical epoch [period], the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange... has been a history of class struggle, a contest between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes.

This communist manifesto comprises the essential doctrine of Marxism via their analysis of class struggle and issues of capitalism and capitalist modes of production (Taylor, 1967). Since capitalism and the capitalist mode of production represent economic exploitation and the ownership of private property (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2002), Marxists analyse class struggle in capitalist societies. Commenting on the communist manifesto, Lenin (1933) noted that the communist manifesto facilitated the spread of the theory of class struggle and the revolutionary role of the working class. Marx and Engels (1964) argue that the history of all existing society is the history of class struggle. Such class struggle, according to Marx and Engels, represents a conflict between the ownership class, 'the bourgeoisie' and the working class, 'the proletariat.' According to Marxist scholars, the bourgeoisie represents the social classes owning the means of production, while the proletariat represents the classes of society living entirely from the sale of labour

(Engels, 1967). Marxists posit that the nature of the relationship between the working classes and the ownership classes is always hostile (Robertson, 2000). Marxists therefore, link power with class structure (Vaara, Tienari, Piekkari, & Sääntti, 2005). For example, teachers' unions of private schools in Nepal (Nepal-ISTU) and the Maoist affiliated teachers' union have been organising strikes in favour of teachers' labour and their agency and highlights this class struggle. When we consider teachers and other non-owner staff of private schools as workers and school owners as managers, the schools of my study can be seen as political, in a Marxist sense. Organisational politics within these schools can be seen as a result of historical and societal power struggles, with schools becoming areas of struggle (Bacharach & Mundell, 1993). This also supports Rikowski's (2002) suggestion about the relevance of Marxist analyses for education. Rikowski goes on to argue that marketisation, privatisation and the opening of educational institutions to capitalists, together with "heavy managerialism, bureaucratization and regulation of education" from the capitalist state establish the relevance of Marxist theory in educational context (p. 19).

Marx (1955) argues that workers in capitalist societies do not own the means of production. These means of production such as machines, raw materials, factories and so on are owned by capitalists to whom the workers sell their labour in return for wages. This positioning of the working class within a capitalist society creates a situation referred to as 'alienation.' Ollman (2004, para. 9) suggests two key ideas that are the core of Marx's theory of alienation:

- i. Workers play no part in deciding what to do and how to do it thereby alienating them from their productive activities.
- ii. Workers have no control over what happens to the product they produce, as a result of which they [workers] are also alienated from the products.

In capitalist systems, workers produce goods from which owners profit. This alienates workers who do not profit from their work except through wages (Thompson, 2008). Workers exchange their labour with the owners in return of money in the form of wages. Instead of workers sharing in the commodity they produce, wages are the already existing commodity of the owners who buy productive labour of the workers (Marx, 1955). Capitalist owners prefer to pay workers the least possible in order to maximise personal profit. This results in the

exploitation of the workers by the capitalist owners. Staff working in two Nepali private schools of my study could potentially suffer from exploitation similar to this, because these schools are profit-oriented and school owners want maximum personal return on their investment.

State is the political expression of society. Marxists analyse state as a form of struggle, repression and exploitation between the working and ownership class (Clegg, 1989; Taylor, 1967). For example, Marx and Engels (1964) argue that capitalist societies that developed in European countries such as Germany, Italy and France during the nineteenth century from the ruins of feudal societies introduced class struggle. Marx and Engels (1964, p. 104) further argue, "... that the first step in revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy." Marxists assume that as the bourgeoisie successfully established supremacy from the conflict with the feudal aristocracy, the proletariat would ultimately establish their supremacy from the struggle with the bourgeoisie class. Describing Marx's notion of state in his book, *State and Revolution*, Lenin (1933a, p. 9) noted:

The state is an organ of class domination, an organ of oppression of one class by another; its aim is the creation of "order" which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the collisions between the classes.

Aligning with the above ideas from Lenin, Marx and Engels (1967a) argue that political power is the organised power of one class to oppress another class in a society. For example, the communist party of Nepal (Maoists) declared a people's war in the late 1990s, arguing real state power was still vested in the traditional monarchy, with overall sovereignty and control over the state army confined to the monarchs even though there was now a parliamentary system within this constitutional monarchy (Bhattaria, 2005). The Maoist party believed that this system created a bourgeoisie dictatorship. Their ultimate aim was to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat instead. Rejecting the idea that demise of communist regimes in the Eastern European countries represented a moral victory of liberal democracy over communism, Maoist Chairperson, Pushpa Kamal Dahal commonly known as *Prachanda*, stated that communist regimes in Europe were unsuccessful because they had abandoned core communist beliefs such as class struggle and the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat (Adhikari, 2014). Maoists therefore,

started the people's war aimed at establishing proletarian supremacy through institutionalising a democratic republic by a freely elected constituent assembly, believing that this would encourage the development of a genuine Marxist movement.

Making parallels with Hegel's dialectic, Marx attempted to explain his claim about the ultimate supremacy of the working class. Hegel's dialectic deals with how change occurs in society (Ollman, 2004). Hegel's dialectic assumes that when main ideas (thesis) are challenged by the opposite (antithesis), it results in the conflict of ideas. Such conflicts ultimately lead to the synthesis and resolution of conflict. Marx uses Hegel's dialectic in terms of historical materialism, arguing that the way people think depends on their way of living, indicating that economic change is the driving force of history (Sweezy & Huberman, 1964). Marx argues that social conflict between the working and ownership classes ultimately lead to a synthesis, and resolution of conflict. Such synthesis was referred to as socialism and Marx posited that socialism was possible from the socialist movement of the working class (Taylor, 1967).

Marx and Engels predicted that the socialist movement would start and spread from the most advanced capitalist countries of Western and Central Europe. However, the socialist movement did not come to these advanced countries of Europe as predicted. Instead, the socialist movement was successfully completed in Russia in the early 20th Century (Sweezy & Huberman, 1964). In spite of the relative backwardness on the whole, Russia became the first country to implement the socialist movement. Sweezy and Hubermann (1964, p. 104) forwarded the following explanation for this.

- i. Capitalism was rapidly developed in Russia between 1880 and the First World War.
- ii. Although Russia was, on the whole, a relatively backward country in 1917, she had some of the largest factories in Europe with relatively higher number of working class.
- iii. Capitalism was certainly more highly developed in Russia in 1917 than it had been in German in 1848.

Lenin (1933a) argued that Russian socialist movement was successful because the Russia proletariat united with the peasantry to oust capitalists who had enjoyed the bureaucratic and military state machinery. Lenin founded the Russian Communist Party and subsequently led a successful socialist movement in November 1917. As

a result, Lenin became the first leader of Union of Soviet Republic of Russia, USSR (BBC History, 2014). Lenin developed and applied Marxism in an era of war and revolution in Russia. Lenin's interpretation of Marxist teaching and adoption of Marxism as per the socio-political condition of agrarian Russia during this time (early 20th century) came to be known as 'Marxism-Leninism.' With successful advancement of Lenin's legacy by his supporters including Joseph Stalin, this soon became the ideological foundation of the world communist movement, centred on the Soviet Union (New World Encyclopedia, 2014). Lenin (1902) suggested that the revolutionary proletarian class would not emerge automatically but needed to be pushed by a 'professional vanguard party.' In the pamphlet, *What is to be Done?*, Lenin (1902) suggested that a vanguard political party is led by revolutionary socialist intellectuals with the support from the working class. Such a party, according to Lenin, provided political consciousness and revolutionary leadership to oust capitalism in the era of 'imperialism.' Lenin felt that a centralised socialist party operating under the principles of Marxism was necessary to provide political consciousness and revolutionary enthusiasm to the working class (Smart, 1983).

Lenin (1933c) provided a comprehensive analysis of the world economic development in his pamphlet, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Lenin suggested that capitalism would consequently become a global financial system, whereby developed countries would exploit the natural resources and labour of developing countries through transferring huge financial capital. Developing countries would then become the frontline of socialist movements in the struggle against imperialism. Dabhade and Pant (2004) posit that Nepal's landlocked position between two Asian giants—India and China—has always been of interest for imperial forces (including the USA, China and India). Because of the geo-strategic position of Nepal in the South Asian region, the United States and other Western countries of Europe have maintained a strong diplomatic and aid presence in Nepal. Nepal's attractive position for imperialists also provided fertile ground for the application of Marxism in the 21st century. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) declared the people's war in 1996 with a peasant uprising (Vanaik, 2015). Nepal's Maoist insurgency drew the attention of major international forces including the USA, the European Union (EU), India and China. This was reflected in activities such as the first-ever visit from the US Secretary of State, Collin Powell, followed by the British foreign secretary and increasing concerns shown by two

neighbours, India and China, during the period of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal (Bhattarai, 2005).

Lenin learnt from the experiences of advanced European countries that advanced industrialised economies and large numbers of working class people do not necessarily result in socialist movement. Similarly, Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung), a Chinese political leader, later learnt from the Soviet experience that state ownership of the means of production and industrialisation do not automatically lead to communist societies either (Meisner, 1971). Mao adapted Marxism-Leninism to Chinese conditions, extending Marxism-Leninism to become 'Marxism-Leninism-Maoism,' also known as 'Maoism.' The "manner in which Mao addressed the problem of integrating the universal theory of Marxism with the concrete practice of Chinese society and the Chinese revolution is described by Mao in the late 1930s as the *Sinification of Marxism*" (Knight, 1983, p. 18). Mao's Sinification of Marxism was an attempt to establish a way in which a universal theory such as Marxism can be used in a particular national and cultural context, maintaining the universality of the theory.

Maoism is the political theory that evolved from the teachings of Mao Tse-tung, who saw Marxism-Leninism and the Russian revolution as an inspiration to the Chinese revolution (Kang, 2015). Maoism soon became the official state ideology of the People Republic of China (New World Encyclopedia, 2014). Although Mao's thoughts were inspired by Marxism-Leninism, his way of thinking was deeply influenced by Chinese thought and culture. Distinguishing himself from the orthodox Marxists that favoured urban-centred working class movement, Mao stressed the importance of a rural peasant mass in the Chinese revolution (Jian, 2005). In contrast with Western Marxists' urban-centred pattern of working class revolution, Mao's theory of revolution was based on rural guerrilla warfare, believing that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" (Tse-tung, 1938. p. 272). Mao further argues that those who have guns have power. Those who have more guns, have more power. Mao stresses the importance of revolutionary struggle of the vast majority of people against the exploiting classes representing the state. Such a strategy, suggested by Mao, is referred to as 'people's war.' Mao's strategy of a people's war involves making use of a larger portion of rural population in guerrilla warfare and consequently surrounding cities from the countryside (Kang, 2015).

Mao's ideas of rural guerrilla warfare and mass mobilisation soon spread to the developing countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, demonstrating the global significance of Mao's legacy (Kang, 2015). The core of Maoism represents a belief that Marxism and Leninism can be adjusted to suit the needs of developing countries in their struggle against capitalism and imperialism (International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, 2008). In the developing countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa, Maoism brought the issues of indigenous traditions, religions and social hierarchy together with external forces of colonisation and imperialism (Kang, 2015). Nepal is one of the few developing countries where Maoism had experienced an influence since the late 1990s. I outline the growth of Maoism/Marxism in Nepal next.

Growth of Maoism/Marxism in Nepal

In 1996, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) declared its intention to snatch state power through a people's war following Mao's template for revolution (Bohara, Mitchell, & Nepal, 2006; Vanaik, 2015). Maoists started rural guerrilla warfare with the hope of restructuring the state and society by completely removing the monarchy (Bhattarai, 2005). Maoists justified the need for such revolution, arguing that in semi-colonial and semi-feudal Nepal, constitutional monarchy was acting as an obstacle to democracy. The Maoists started their revolutions against the state that had recently changed from a monarchy to a parliamentary democracy (outlined in Chapter 2 under the heading, 'End of Monarchy'), claiming that Nepal was internally under feudal oppression and externally under the imperialists' oppression.

Nepal's political and economic life has been dominated by the Hindu upper caste (*Bahun*s, *Chhettri* and *Thakuri*s) men from the hilly region of Nepal. These small groups of dominant ruling class elites represent the remnant of feudalism, monopolising the armed forces and government bureaucracy, making Nepal a semi-feudal state. The marginalised people of Nepal are represented by the indigenous/ethnic communities of the hilly and mountainous regions (*Janajati*) who speak Tibeto-Burman languages, the people of the terai region (also called *Madhesi*) speaking Maithali, Hindi or Bhojpuri, and the lower class (*Dalit*) spread throughout the country. These groups of people, together with women of all classes, represent the oppressed class of Nepali society (Parajulee, 2010). In discussing

gender earlier, I suggested that Nepal was a patriarchal society. Women form an exploited and oppressed class of society. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) made identity issues of these deprived/marginalised groups a central part of their programme and started peasant uprisings, supported by women and other from rural areas of Nepal (Bohara et al., 2006; Cailmail, 2008). A large number of Nepali youth and women joined the Maoists, forming the People Liberation Army (PLA) to fight guerrilla warfare (Bhattarai, 2005). Maoists expanded their stronghold in the remote areas of Nepal through different means including political training of the cadres, guerrilla raids on police stations, looting banks, raiding government offices and burning documents of landowners and moneylenders (Vanaik, 2015). Similar to the cultural revolution in China, Nepali Maoists introduced awareness and political consciousness programmes through songs and theatrical plays, formal reading and discussion plus banning socially harmful activities such as caste-based discrimination, consumption of alcohol, and gambling (playing cards) (Adhikari, 2006, 2014; Vanaik, 2015).

Before Maoists declared a people's war in 1996, they put forward a 40-point demand to the then Prime Minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, threatening a people's war if they were not met. These demands include (but were not limited to) the complete removal of monarchical roots from the country, restructuring of the state via drafting a new constitution by elected representatives of the constituent assembly, provision of universal and mother tongue education, the closure of all private schools, confiscation of land from feudal landowners and distribution to the landless, and an end to Indian dominancy over Nepal by renewal of all discriminatory treaties between India and Nepal (Adhikari, 2014; Basnett, 2009; Jha, 2014; Shields & Rappleye, 2008). Closely aligning with their ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and drawing inspiration from Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, these Maoists were "ready to challenge the system [constitutional monarchy] five years after communism had been declared dead in the rest of the world" (Jha, 2014, p. 19). Advocating the necessity of a constituent assembly in an institutionalised democratic republic, the Maoists leader and spokesperson, Baburam Bhattarai (2005, p. 10), noted.

It has been proved time and again that the so called ‘constitutional monarchy’ seen in operation in some of the highly developed capitalist countries cannot be replicated in a semi-feudal & semi-colonial society. Hence any attempt on the part of the parliamentary political parties and the international forces to preserve the thoroughly rotten and discredited institution of monarchy, in this or that pretext, does not correspond with the historical necessity and ground reality of balance of forces in the country, and the agenda of ‘democratic republic’ has entered the Nepalese politics.

The Maoists made the identity of the ethnic/indigenous community of the hilly and mountainous regions, madhesi of the plains, the lower caste Dalit, religious minorities¹⁵ and women their core agenda, thereby marrying identity of these marginalised groups with their ideology (Bohara et al., 2006). The majority of women joined the Maoists with a hope of breaking the patriarchal traditions in Nepali society (Adhikari, 2014). The majority of women (estimates suggest about 40 to 50 percent of the Maoist military force were women) supported the Maoist movement, because the Maoists prioritised women’s issues such as stopping patriarchal exploitation and discrimination against women (Adhikari, 2006). For example, a study based on interviews with women involved in Maoist activities, suggests that women joined the Maoist movement for reasons, which include domestic violence and alcohol abuse from male members of family, state violence against women in the rural areas, hope of being liberated from oppression, murder of family members from state forces, and Maoists terrorisation in the rural areas (Sharma & Prasain, 2004). This suggests that although most women voluntarily joined the Maoists with the hope of liberation, there were still some women who were forced to join the Maoists.

Maoists prioritised identity issues of the marginalised people of Nepal, including women and created awareness among this group. As a result, the Maoists were able to get enough support to launch a people’s war (Cailmail, 2008). Adopting Marx’s notion of class struggle, Maoists analyse the Nepali state as a form of class struggle between upper class elites and the marginalised class people of Nepali society. Adding further to this line of argument, the Maoists’ leader and spokesperson, Baburam Bhattarai (2011, para. 5) explained that:

¹⁵ More than 80% of Nepali people are Hindus and so people adopting other religions in Nepal form a religious minority.

The rapid success of the 'People's War' was mainly attributed to the raising of the democratic agenda against feudal autocracy. Also the class question was very judiciously fused with national, regional, gender and caste questions. As the traditional parliamentary democratic forces could not mount a decisive struggle against feudal autocracy due to their vacillating and compromising character, the Maoists could effectively champion the cause of democracy and lead millions of people, emerging as the largest political formation in the country.

As stated above, the Maoists argued that the parliamentary system of the 1990s in Nepal was characterised by a combined dictatorship of the feudal and the bourgeoisie, as a result of which no change was seen in the social and economic lives of common people (Adhikari, 2014). Maoists advocated that the struggle in Nepal represents a struggle against the reformists, feudalists and imperialists because of the unique features of Nepali society. Two years after the declaration of the People's war, the Maoist leader and spokesperson, Baburam Bhattarai (1998) wrote an article, 'Politico-Economic Rationale of People's War in Nepal' in the party's journal, *The Worker*, justifying the need for the people's war in Nepal. In this article, Bhattarai indicated the existence of huge gaps between haves and have-nots, rich and poor people with "highly unequal land distribution and precarious living conditions of the poor in the Nepali countryside" (Adhikari, 2014, p. 17). This article also highlighted the discriminatory and expansionist role of Nepal's immediate neighbour, India. Bhattarai, in this article, noted that the main aim of the people's war under the leadership of Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) was to bring an end to the existing socio-economic structure and establish New People's Democracy (Jha, 2014). The Maoists of Nepal started armed conflict initially directed towards the parliamentary parties, including Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal (UML) as the internal reactionary forces and the external reactionary forces of imperialism represented by India and the US (Adhikari, 2014; Chamlagai, 2006; Jha, 2014). During the initial years of the people's war, the Maoists concentrated on assaulting the police and avoided engagement with the army, indicating that their principal enemy was the parliamentary forces not the monarchy (Adhikari, 2014). Presenting a Marxist analysis of Nepali society in his PhD thesis, Bhattarai (2003) highlighted the unique features of Nepali society. Bhattarai discoursed that there is an overlapping of

national, regional, gender and caste issues with class issues. These two texts formed the ideological basis of the Nepali Maoist movement.

Cailmail (2008) noted that Maoists were able to exert enough influence on the marginalised ethnic and religious minority groups. Together with these marginalised groups of people, youth and women from all facets of Nepali society joined the Maoists in guerrilla warfare with a hope of breaking the discriminatory traditions of society (Vanaik, 2015). Such a scenario enabled Maoists to get enough support for the people's war. Strongly aligning with Mao's template that "political power grows through the barrel of guns" (Tse-tung, 1938. p. 272), Maoists initiated rural guerrilla warfare in the remote areas of Nepal. The Maoists rural guerrilla warfare also confirmed Mao's (Tse-tung, 1938) strategy of encircling the cities from the countryside. Finally, in April 11, 2008, after a decade of armed conflict, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) became the first democratically elected Maoist Party in the world (Cailmail, 2008). Although the Maoists were successful in rural guerrilla warfare, their political journey was not smooth because of the influence of neoliberalism and the imperial forces sketched out in the following section.

Influence of Neoliberalism

There is widespread belief that India is actively involved in the cycle of forming and causing to fail, governments in Nepal (Adhikari, 2014; Bhattaria, 2005). China, on the other hand, seems to prefer a politically stable Nepal. This was seen in the Chinese government's neutral stance during the period of Maoists' people war in Nepal. Although Maoists expected support from the Chinese government because of their closely aligned Marxist ideology with the ruling party of China, this never happened. Conversely, Indian influence on the internal affairs of Nepal always exceeds that of China. From time to time in the history of Nepal, various governments had attempted to play the Chinese card to counterbalance active role of India in Nepal's internal politics (Adhikari, 2014; Cailmail, 2008). Most of the Western countries, including the US, the UK and the countries of EU, appear to be using foreign aid as a means to secure their interests in Nepal (Bhatta, 2013; Bhattaria, 2005). Nepal's heavy dependency on foreign aid has weakened its autonomy as an independent state. Data from the fiscal year 2009-10 suggests that about 20 percent of the total Nepali government's expenditure and 60 percent of

development expenditure comes from foreign aid. Donor priorities can therefore influence government policy (Adhikari, 2014). These Western countries' main interest in Nepal appears to be preventing the spread of communism through its immediate neighbour, China. In addition to securing their interests through foreign aid, these Western countries led by the US sometimes appear to be involved in the internal affairs of Nepal. This was seen during the initial phase of the people's war in Nepal, when the US provided financial support of \$38 million to the visiting Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, to fight the insurgency. Similarly, in May 2002, President Bush, expressing support toward Nepal's government policy, listed Maoists on the US Department of State Terrorist Watch List (Bohara et al., 2006).

While the country was engulfed in the Maoist people's war, another tragedy struck Nepal in the year 2001 when King Birendra and all the members of his family were massacred (Baral, 2002; Bohara et al., 2006; Baral & Heinen, 2006; Chamlagai, 2006). Although the official investigation indicated the involvement of the Crown Prince Dipendra in the massacre of his family, fingers were pointed at King Birendra's brother, Gyanendra, who inherited the throne (Baral, 2002; Bhattarai, 2005; Chamlagai, 2006; Jha, 2014; Vanaik, 2015). King Gyanendra soon began direct rule, sacking the elected Prime Minister (Adhikari, 2004; Bohara et al., 2006; Jha, 2014). This regression generated worldwide reactions from the US, the UK, the EU, India and others publicly opposing the move. A few, including China, Russia and Pakistan, commented that the event was an internal affair of Nepal. In opposition to the royal regression, India and the UK suspended military aid and a number of EU countries also suspended development aid to Nepal (Bhattaria, 2005) and a number of countries sought to use their ambassadors to open dialogue about these political moves. The royal government led by King Gyanendra, then accused the ambassadors of the United Kingdom, the United States and India of being involved in undiplomatic activities (Bohara et al., 2006).

Once the king took over power and became active in the politics, the Maoists shifted their focus onto the king and the army stating that their principal enemy was the reactionary ruler (Chamlagai, 2006; Jha, 2014). Seeing a favourable situation, the existing political parties formed an alliance, the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and joined hands with the Maoists to launch a popular movement to restore democracy in the country (Cailmail, 2008; Jha, 2014; Parajulee, 2010). After playing a decisive role in the movement, the Maoists were successful in the election that followed and

subsequently the Maoists became the largest political party in the newly formed Constituent Assembly (CA) (Vanaik, 2015). Maoists joined the government, thereby dominating public debate with their political agenda (Adhikari, 2014). Parallel with Marx and Engels' (1964, p. 61) assertion in the *German Ideology*, "the ideas of ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas," Maoists ideas soon became ruling ideas in Nepal. Because of such a changing scenario in the overall political climate of the country, teachers working in private schools of Nepal established their own teachers' union, Nepal-ISTU, and started to place collective pressure on the school owners. There were similar types of pressure from the teachers' unions affiliated with the Maoists although these Maoist teachers' unions appeared to be popularising the ideology of the political party they were affiliated to.

The Maoists in Nepal have been successful in instilling the oppressed class with revolutionary consciousness to rise up and smash the parliamentary system. However, their dream of changing Nepali society from feudalism to socialism and ultimately communism appear to be utopian (Jha, 2014). Although the Maoists launched the people's war with the aim of gaining total state control rejecting the parliamentary system and Nepal's heavy dependency on Indian expansionist and US imperialist power, they finally had to compromise under the multiparty system (Adhikari, 2014). This was indicated for the first time in the year 2005 in their party assembly. In this assembly, held during final year of armed conflict, Maoists changed their party line and stated that their main objective was to achieve a democratic republic (instead of their initial people's republic) signposting a move to embrace multiparty competition (Jha, 2014). The Maoists adopted a democratic road to socialism instead of their initial claim of a dictatorship of the proletariat. This was also reflected in the message delivered by the Maoist chairperson, Pushpa Kamal Dahal and vice chairperson, Baburam Bhattarai, after forming the Maoist government. These leaders assured businesses and foreign governments that the Maoist-led government would welcome private property and foreign investment, indicating that they were ready to embrace market capitalism (Sunil, 2008). This led to the modification of the initial ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism with New People's Democracy to 'Democracy in the 21st Century' or a democratic republic including elements of multiparty competition (Hachhethu, 2009). Maoist leadership justified the necessity of changing the party line arguing that multiparty competition was necessary in the 21st century to avoid

turning into an oppressive dictatorship similar to the communist regimes of the twentieth century (Adhikari, 2014). Such a change in the party line also enabled Nepali Maoists to collaborate with the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) to finally oust the monarchical system that had existed in Nepal for 240 years.

Once Maoists entered the parliamentary politics in Nepal, several issues raised during their decade-long insurgency became obstacles. Chief among them were Nepal's relations with India and changing Nepal from a Hindu state into a federal secular republic state. During the period of armed conflict, Maoists continuously stressed the importance of having equidistant relations between India and China. However, they could not do anything other than their Prime Minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, on his first visit to China violating the long tradition of Nepali prime ministers visiting India before visiting any other countries. Moreover, Maoists could do nothing to change Nepal's unequal treaties with India, although this was the highlight of their armed struggle (Adhikari, 2014). Together with this, a rift caused by inter and intra-party differences on the form of government and integration of the Maoists' People Liberation Army (PLA) with the Nepali Army emerged. These issues finally forced the Maoist prime minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, to resign (Srivastava & Sharma, 2010).

Although the Maoist trio Baburam Bhattarai, Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Mohan Baidya provided successful intellectual leadership during the insurgency, they could not work together in parliamentary politics. This conflict within Maoists leadership finally led Baidya to break away from the party (Bhattarai, 2012). This split in the Maoist party is often ascribed to the alienation of the radical and dogmatic Baidya because of other two's (Bhattarai and Dahal) compromises on the key ideological principles (Jha, 2014). Together with these issues, Maoists failed to deliver a new constitution that had promised to make Nepal a secular state and federal republic. As a result, the former rebels were defeated in the ballot box by traditional political parties including the Nepali Congress in the second election of the constituent assembly.

In spite of all these unsuccessful parliamentary practices, no one can deny the fact that the Maoist movement was one of the most important sources of pressure for the democratic transformation of Nepal (Vanaik, 2015). This democratisation of Nepali society was reflected in the representation of marginalised people in the first constituent assembly. Members now included about

8 percent Dalit, 33 percent women, 34 percent ethnic and indigenous people and about 34 percent madhesi. Thus, the Maoist movement provided the oppressed and marginalised people in Nepal spaces for articulation of their grievances (Adhikari, 2014; Jha, 2014; Sunam & Gautam, 2013). As Adhikari (2014, p. 244) further elaborated, “the Maoists had taught large sections of the population to organize and agitate in the face of injustice, instead of quietly accepting their positions in the social hierarchy.” Class struggle began appearing frequently in the public and mass media as a consequence. Struggles between exploited teachers working in Nepali private schools and the neoliberal schools owners is one such activity which I attempt to explore in my study, especially because of the activities of the private schools teachers’ union, Nepal Institutional Schools Teachers’ Union, Nepal-ISTU. Similarly, teachers’ unions affiliated to Maoists, All Nepal Teachers’ Union, ANTU and the students’ wing of the Maoists’, All Nepal National Independent Students’ Union (Revolutionary), ANNISU(R) have been organising strikes and disrupting the smooth operation of private schools. I present a brief account of these organisations next, beginning with Nepal-ISTU.

Nepal Institutional Schools Teachers’ Union (Nepal-ISTU)

Nepal-ISTU, established on January 15, 2004, is a teachers’ union that focuses on teachers’ collective bargaining in Nepali private schools. Since its establishment, this teachers’ union (Nepal-ISTU) claims to have been involved in the protection of professional rights of private school teachers (Sharma Poudyal, 2015). However, this claim is questionable because of the gender biased nature of central committee membership. More than 90 percent members, including the positions of chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary, are being occupied by male teachers working in different private schools, leaving general membership of the female candidates occupying less than 10 percent (Nepal-ISTU, 2009). Aligned with its objective of maintaining quality education and protecting private schoolteachers and other employees’ professional autonomy, Nepal-ISTU has been actively involved in discussions, interactions, and strikes on the issues related to private schools in general and professional autonomy of the private school employees in particular (Nepal-ISTU, n. d.). Nepal-ISTU has been organising strikes and from time to time, disrupting the operation of private schools (Sigdel, 2008).

Different private school stakeholders including parents and school owners, often accuse the Nepal-ISTU of being involved in political activities. However, Nepal-ISTU always presents itself as a non-political trade union representing teachers and other non-owner staff working in Nepali private schools. Although private school stakeholders see the Nepal-ISTU as a political organisation aligned with Marx's (1967) notion of trade unions, the Nepal-ISTU presents itself as a purely professional organisation. Parallel with Lenin's (1903) ideas of trade union struggle, the strikes organised by the Nepal-ISTU operate as a struggle between non-owner staff and school owners of these private schools. For example, the Nepal-ISTU raised different issues faced by teachers and other staff working in private schools, through strikes and other means. The demands put forward during such strikes includes pay and perks of private schoolteachers on par with public schools teachers, job security, insurance and provident funds provision, appointment letters stating terms and conditions of work, teachers' representation in school management committees, and transparency in school's records (Ghimere, 2011; Subedi et al., 2014).

All Nepal Teachers' Union (ANTU)

The phenomenon of teachers' politicisation became common in Nepal after political changes in the 1990s. Because teachers were the most influential members of Nepali society, each political party made use of teachers and formed party-based teachers' unions. These party-based teachers' unions advocated in line with the party's political agenda rather than teachers' professional autonomy. Several teachers' unions aligned to different political parties started playing key roles in political mobilisation of their party (Caddell, 2007; Khaniya, 2007). This phenomenon continued during the period of armed conflict (1996-2006), and the Maoist affiliated teachers' union, All Nepal Teachers' Union (ANTU), played an active role in promoting the party's ideology. ANTU is a Maoist affiliated teachers' union with members mostly represented by teachers working in different public schools in Nepal.

Once Maoists began dominating the overall political scenario, ANTU, initiated open debates on the existence of the private education sector in Nepal, pressuring the government to monitor and regulate private schools. They argued that the private education sector had commercialised educational (Ghimire, 2013).

ANTU claimed they would disrupt the process of establishing new private schools if the government was unable to strictly monitor and regulate existing private schools. Although this disruption has never happened, ANTU continuously lobbies the government to monitor and regulate private schools, expecting leaders of their mother party to withdraw their children from private schools. Instead of being a professional organisation representing teachers working in private schools, ANTU operates as a branch of their mother party (Van Wessel & Van Hirtum, 2013).

Together with ANTU, there are about 20 teachers' unions consisting mostly of public schoolteachers (except Nepal-ISTU, whose members work in private schools) affiliated with different political parties. These teachers' union members finally felt that such party-based teachers' unions could not do justice to the collective bargaining power of teachers as a whole. Moreover, operating a number of teachers' unions based on political parties contravenes the spirit of the Education Act 1971, which has provision for only one teachers' union. More recently, under the leadership of ANTU's current president, teachers' unions merged to form a single body, the Federation of Nepali Teachers (FNT) to collectively advocate for the professional rights of teachers (Ghimire, 2015). The teachers forming this umbrella body claimed that the forming of FNT will jointly enable the promotion of teachers' professional autonomy and also decrease direct party politics in public schools.

All Nepal National Independent Students' Union (Revolutionary)

All Nepal National Independent Students' Union (Revolutionary), ANNISU(R) is a student wing of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) actively involved in promoting its ideology. During 1996-2006 armed conflict ANNISU(R) continuously threatened private school operators, sometimes asking them for donations and sometimes organising strikes to close them. They demanded the closure of private schools, claiming them to be "merely commercial ventures" instead of serving the educational needs of the common people (Pherali, 2011, p. 137). For example, in December 2002, ANNISU(R) called a strike closing down all educational institutions including private schools nationwide for several weeks (Caddell, 2007a). Once the Maoists started open politics after the declaration of republic in Nepal, ANNISU(R) joined hands with ANTU in an open debate about the existence of private schools in Nepal and have organised several strikes,

disrupting normal operations of private schools. These strikes are mostly against the commercialisation of private schools. This student wing of Maoists has been demanding either to close down private schools or to reduce their fees by 50 percent to make them accessible to the common Nepali people (Pherali, 2013).

The teachers' union of Nepali private schools (Nepal-ISTU) has been representing striking teachers' voices, especially over control and management versus professional agency. Similarly, the Maoists affiliated teachers' union (ANTU) and students' union [ANNISU(R)] have been presenting a state-oriented defence of education, stating that school level education is the responsibility of the state with no role for the private sector in school education. These Maoist sister organisations assessed private schools as commercialising education, demonstrating Western influence in Nepali educational system. Nepal-ISTU, ANTU and ANNISU(R) demonstrate Marxist views in their analysis.

The demands put forward during their (Nepal-ISTU, ANTU and ANNISU(R)) strikes are usually related to breaking up the domination of owner/principals over school matters. These include teachers' perks and incentives as per government counterparts, and teachers' autonomy over the teaching and learning activities including curriculum and assessment. Although the activities of teachers' unions can be interpreted as a Marxist account of revolution to disrupt the existing social and political structures within private school contexts, it does not provide a full account of how these power differentials operates within these school contexts. Moreover, the strikes by Nepal-ISTU, are not intended to oust the schools' owners but to reach an agreement with them regarding the terms and conditions of teachers' work (Taylor, 1967). Instead of a Marxist hegemony that considers all forms of oppressions and resistance as rooted in exploitation of labour, I see power as potentially having numerous sources and strategies at work in the everyday lives of teachers, administrators and principals of my study (Best & Kellner, 1997). In order to get a comprehensive understanding of the power differentials operating within the school contexts and their relationship with the wider political climate, I have opted to use Foucault's notion of power relations in addition to Marxist theory of power.

Power: A Foucauldian Approach

During the early 1970s, Foucault concentrated his work on the disciplinary power that operates within institutions such as schools, prisons, hospitals and asylums. An example of this was his ground-breaking work in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977, 1995). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault proposed a new way of analysing power that involves forms and means of power, with a focus on individuals, with details of their behaviour and conduct (Gordon, 2001). Disciplinary power, as Foucault sees it, involves techniques of power centred on the human body (Ville, 2011). Foucault (1995) argues that discipline is a specific technique of power, which takes the individual as an object and instrument of power and produces subjected bodies. It involves the use of surveillance, a system to observe and monitor individuals without letting the person being observed know that they are being observed. In an organisation, surveillance is believed to work as a network, from the top to the bottom of the hierarchy. Those in the position of power, such as the owners/principals of my study, or the monarchs, are able to turn those without power into a subject/object or an instrument of power. Foucault (1980) terms such a process as the *subjection of power*. Foucault asserts that during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, rather than imposing power from above, people made themselves comfortable in the existing conditions (Danaher et al., 2000). This resulted in the notion of “descending individualism” as suggested by Foucault (1977, p. 193). Descending individualism means people are closely monitored and individualised lower in the hierarchy. This contrasts with *ascending individualism* that existed in the feudal and monarchical rule, where the more powerful were those most noticed and watched (Danaher et al., 2000). As my research is centred on teachers’ voice, my focus is on people lower down the hierarchy (teachers and other non-owner staff).

Foucault (1977) argues that power is exercised rather than possessed by individuals in positions. This means power is the overall effect of the strategic positions of individual in organisations. According to Foucault, institutions used a range of technologies of power such as gaze, surveillance, examination, and observation, to maintain discipline (Oliver, 2010). Foucault proposed a political analysis of power in institutions like schools, prisons, hospitals and asylums, which he calls the *microphysics of power* (Gordon, 2001). This involves studying the

forms and means of power focussing on individuals within institutions. Instead of the popular notion that power comes from above, Foucault was interested in power that comes from the bottom up. According to him, power is not simply restricted in the hierarchical structure of an organisation such as schools, but power relations work both upwards and downwards relationally through the hierarchy (Oliver, 2010). With changing circumstances and alliances, Foucault argues that power can quickly flow from one point to another (Danaher et al., 2000). I will use Foucault's notion of power to understand how the changing political context of Nepal, from monarchy to a republic (changing circumstances) and the subsequent unionisation (alliances) of private school teachers has changed in the power relations operating within two case study schools.

Foucault suggested to 'cut off the king's head' because power is not the property of mighty people such as kings, but is a force influencing people in their day-to-day lives (Danaher et al., 2000). Foucault (1995) was against concentrating power in an individual. He calls such power (that exists in the form of personal power of the sovereign, for example) *monarchical superpower*. He argues that such concentrations of power in a sovereign lead to dysfunctions of power. Foucault asserts as examples from the eighteenth century that there was a crisis in the field of legal order, resulting in the legal order being dominated by illegality (Dumm, 1996). This means, according to Foucault (1977, p. 178), "non-observance, that which does not measure up to the rule" but departs from the rule, calling such activity 'tolerated illegality' suggesting that the non-application of rules and regulations was taken as normal for the economic and social functioning of society during this period. Foucault further noted that illegality was so deep rooted in societies that illegality became a necessary part of people's life. Detailing the existence of such a scenario in Western society during the eighteenth century, Foucault (1977, pp. 87-88) writes:

In short, penal reform was born at the point of junction between the struggle against the super-power of the sovereign and that against the infra-power of acquired and tolerated illegalities. And if penal reform was anything more than the temporary result of a purely circumstantial encounter, it was because, between this super-power and infra-power, a whole network of relations was being formed. By placing on the side of the sovereign the additional burden of a spectacular, unlimited, personal, irregular and discontinuous power, the form of monarchical sovereignty left the subjects free to practice a constant illegality; this illegality was like the correlative of this type of power. So much so that in attacking the various prerogatives of the sovereign one was also attacking the functioning of the illegalities.

Foucault formulates that the situation of tolerated illegality was the consequence of dysfunctional monarchical power during the eighteenth-century Europe and the general public during this period appears to be aware of the degree and levels of toleration acceptable to the society (Dumm, 1996). In my study, I am analysing power relations within two private schools of Nepal, and this involves exploring their micro-politics. These schools are owned and managed by owners, whom I call owner/principals. My interest is in exploring to what extent this ownership and management concentration aligns with Foucault's idea of dysfunction of power.

Foucault (1982) suggested a 'new economy of power relations,' which consists of taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point in the analysis of power. This idea consists of analysing power relations through 'antagonist strategies.' Such antagonist strategies involve analysing oppositions of power of men over women, administrators over staff, and principals over staff. This involves different types of struggles, which may be either against different forms of domination and exploitation or against subjection. Foucault (1982, p. 780) writes, "in order to understand what power relations are about, perhaps we should investigate the forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations." He suggested two schemes for the analysis of power: *contract-oppression*, which involves legitimate and illegitimate (judicial) power, and *domination-repression or war-repression*, which involves struggle and submission (Foucault, 1980). Foucault assumes that the contract-oppression model of power is based on the classical philosophy of the seventeenth century: that is, a single power centre and he developed an alternative domination-repression model

(Neal, 2004). Foucault (2003) suggested that power relations are anchored in a relationship of force, arguing:

First, moving outside the institution, moving off-centre in relation to the problematic of the institution or what could be called the 'institutional centric' approach.... This kind of method entails going behind the institution and trying to discover in a wider and more overall perspective what we can broadly call a technology of power. (Foucault, 2007, pp.116-117)

Here he was trying to convince people that power relations within institutions such as schools are not confined to the activities within it but also affected by what is going on within the wider environment. The private school teachers union, Nepal-ISTU, formed with the inception of the republic in Nepal, started to place pressure on school owners in terms of conditions of service for private school teachers, while Maoist affiliated teachers' unions put pressure on the government to properly regulate and monitor private schools. This indicates that the wider political climate of Nepal had affected the activities within private schools.

Connecting Marx and Foucault

Foucault (1980) noted that although Marxists see power as a form of class domination, they do not analyse the mechanisms of power causing such class domination. While I see power as a form of domination that school owners might wield over the non-owner staff, but I still need to analyse the mechanism of power that produces such domination. This has encouraged me to marry Marx's concept of power with Foucault's notion of power. Foucault's critique of Marxists' conception of power seems to be based on the lack of detailed analysis of the mechanism of power operating within the domination-subordination relationship. Critiquing Marxists' conception of power, Foucault (1980, pp. 115-116) argues that:

On the Marxist side, it [power] was posed only in terms of the state apparatus. The way power was exercised-concretely and in detail-with its specificity, its techniques and tactics, was something that no one attempted to ascertain; they contended themselves with denouncing it in a polemical and global fashion as it existed among the 'others', in the adversary camp.

Foucault suggested that instead of generalising power as a phenomenon of domination of one class (bourgeoisie) over another class (proletariat), we need to analyse how the mechanisms of power are operating within this domination (Olssen,

2006). Foucault pointed out that Marxists were preoccupied in defining class instead of understanding the nature of struggle (Marsden, 1999). Foucault (1982) identifies three forms of struggle: struggle against social and religious domination, struggle against exploitation and struggle against forms of subjectivity and submission. Critiquing Marx's macro level analysis of power, Foucault suggested a micro level analysis of power that includes exploring the techniques and strategies involved in the exercise of power. However, to me, such micro level analysis of power is incomplete without considering the macro view of power suggested by Marx. For example, although Foucault's microphysics of power illustrates how docile bodies are produced, he put less emphasis on explaining why such docile bodies are produced (Armstrong, 1994). This shows why marrying Foucault's disciplinary power with Marx's theory of power will be helpful to my study. Foucault's influence on Marx and his work can be witnessed in Foucault's (1980, p. 53) acknowledgment on the significance of Marx's work in the historical analysis:

It is impossible at the present time to write history without using a whole range of concepts directly or indirectly linked to Marx's thought and situating oneself within a horizon of thought which has been defined and described by Marx.

There appears to be some degree of congruence between Marx and Foucault's work. However, this relationship between Marx and Foucault is quite complicated. In spite of being critical of Marx and his doctrine of Marxism, much of Foucault's writing appears to have developed as a result of his response to Marxism (Olssen, 2006). This was also indicated by Balibar (1992) when he wrote, "the whole of Foucault's work can be seen in terms of a genuine struggle with Marx and...this can be viewed as one of the driving forces of his productiveness" (p. 39). Moreover, as Smart (1983) has indicated, Foucault's works have a strong sense of critique, instead of being "an alternative theory and practice" (p. 74). Foucault's connection to Marx can also be seen in Duccio Trombadori's (Italian Communist Party Newspaper Journalist) interview with Foucault. In this interview, although Foucault (1991) refuses to comment on his links to Marx's thought, he admitted to his brief involvement with the French Communist Party. Foucault (1991, p. 105) goes on to argue that Marxism was "a political ideology that was born in the nineteenth century but had its greatest effects in the twentieth century."

There are similarities between Marx's approach to power and Foucault's notion of power in terms of method, historical focus and their analysis of social structure (Olssen, 2004). Both Marx and Foucault concentrate on the analysis of human history. Marxists' historical materialism involves studying human society and its development over time. Marsden (1999, p.178) declares, "the essence of Marx's conception of history is that the mode of organizing production and the tension between productive relations and forces determines the character of society." Marxists focus on analysing a macro view of socio-historical change, arguing that the socio-cultural superstructure has an economic basis (Peters, 2001). Marx views human society on the basis of two basic concepts: base (foundation) and superstructure. Base in the Marxist sense consists of forces and relations of production, including working conditions, division of labour and property relations. Superstructure includes institutions, culture, political power structure and state which are determined by the base. Such a 'base/superstructure' model places economy as the foundation of society, while considering political, cultural and legal forms of life as a superstructure that reproduces the foundation (Kellner, 2005).

In contrast with Marx's historical materialism, Foucault's historical analysis is based on two approaches: *Archaeology* and *genealogy*. Clarifying Foucault's archaeology and genealogy, Olssen (2006, p. 9) admits that genealogy is "concerned with tracing the historical processes of descent and emergence by which a given system of thought comes into being," while archaeology is "concerned with describing the historical presuppositions of a given system of thought." Foucault's archaeological analysis, therefore, attempts to explain how discourses and discursive systems are formed. Similarly, a genealogical analysis uncovers relationships between power and knowledge, thereby explaining the changes in the formation of discourses. As discourses involve word usage to express ideas and thought, discourses specify who can speak with what authority (Ball, 1990). Thus, Foucault links discourses with the operation of social power within an institution (Gordon, 1980). Instead of analysing history as a "grand explanatory system and linear process," Foucault analyses history as "the singularity of events" (Smart 1983, p. 75). For Foucault, history consists of the events that are "characterised by incompleteness, indeterminacy, complexity and chance" (Olssen, 2006, p. 68). While Marxists suggest comprehensive understanding of history, Foucault suggested exploring contemporary events and institutions. In contrast with

humanist Marxists' emphasis on individual or collective agency, Foucault suggested moving beyond human agency (Peters, 2001). Unlike Marx's revolutionary strategies necessary for transforming society, Foucault stresses the necessity of localised resistance and advocacy for transforming society (Olssen, 2004).

Marsden (1999) explains that Marx ponders the 'why' of power, analysing power in terms of class structure and hostile relations of society, while Foucault elucidates the 'how' of power, analysing power in terms of the micro physics of power within institutions such as schools, prisons and hospitals. To marry Marx's why of power with Foucault's how of power, it is necessary to analyse and develop the 'what' of power in detail. For Marxists (Marx & Engels, 1967b), power represents resources/commodities owned by the ruling class and the state. Unequal distribution of resources results in the formation of class or social hierarchy. Power in the Marxist sense is negative, as the ruling class with power [resources] oppresses the powerless working class or proletariat, while for Foucault (1977) power represents a relation rather than a resource. Power, according to Foucault, is not held or owned but strategically exercised by dominant groups. Power for Foucault can be positive, as it enables the development of societies.

Marsden (1999) suggests that Marx and Foucault explore a common problem through different approaches. Olssen (2004) views both Marx and Foucault as linking social practices and knowledge with social relations and power. Foucault himself has indicated that there is a close relationship between Marxist capitalism and his notion of disciplinary power:

The growth of a capitalist economy gave rise to the specific modality of disciplinary power, whose general formulas, techniques of submitting forces and bodies, in short, 'political anatomy', could be operated in the most diverse political regimes, apparatus or institutions. (Foucault, 1977, p. 221)

Jan Mohamed (1995) argues that Foucault's writing is strongly influenced by Marx and suggests that Marx's analysis of capitalist political economy is similar to Foucault's disciplinary power. As indicated in the above quote, Foucault sees disciplinary power as developed by capitalist organisation as a strategy of dominating the workers. Foucault suggested that disciplinary power evolved as a capitalists need to control working classes within institutions. In order to turn labour

power into productive power and accumulate capital, human bodies are made docile, indicating that industrial disciplines arose from prison discipline (Marsden, 1999; O'Neill, 1986). While discussing disciplinary practices necessary for the development of factory workers, Foucault appears to have drawn heavily from Marx's work (Sherman, 2014), indicating that Marxists' macro level analysis involving the 'why' of power informed Foucault's micro level analysis of the 'how' of power relations.

In my study, I am analysing power relations within two private schools in a changing political context. The schools may have elements of capitalist political economy as Marx suggested. In my research, I will explore how the capitalist private school owners make use of power to dominate and exploit teachers and other staff. A Marxist theory of power might help me uncover a domination-subordination power relationship. Different mechanisms of power may operate within these schools. I also see the likelihood of Foucault's micro physics of power helping me explore the reality of professional lives of teachers, administrators and principals in these two schools.

Jan Mohamed (1995) outlines a close relationship between Foucault's notion of power and Marx's notion of value [Marx's labour theory of value] saying:

The commodity is for Marx a form that is determined precisely by the market processes of exchange and circulation. Just as Foucault arrives at the definition of power by investigating mundane discursive practices, so Marx arrives at his definition of value (and his labour theory of value) by scrutinizing mundane economic practices involved in production and exchange (p. 48).

Similar to Foucault's suggestion that power needs to be analysed as something that circulates not as something that is localised, Marx analysed commodity as something that is determined by the processes of exchange and circulation. For example, using Foucault's notion of power, I anticipate exploring how teachers and other staff members within the schools are organised to maintain dominancy of schools' owners, while Marxist theory of power might help me understand why teachers and other staff are organised into a productive labour force in the interest of capitalist's school owners (Marsden, 1999).

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the theoretical framework I adopted for my study. I introduced a Marxist conception of power, highlighting how a Marxist notion of power linked with class structure enabled me to have an understanding of the macro context of my study. In the Marxist notions of power, I outlined the development of Marxism in Nepal and also the influence of neo-liberalism, indicating how these form a part of my theoretical framework. I then highlighted how Foucault's notion of power, introduced in different stages of his life, will enable me to understand teachers' voice in the context of two private schools of Nepal in relation to the wider political climate. As Foucault asserts that power moves quickly from one point to another point with changing circumstances and alliances, I see these ideas helping me divulge the power relations within the two schools of my study within the changing political climate of Nepal. Instead of power being the property of the powerful school owners of my study, I see power operating in the daily lives of teachers, administrators and principals of my studied schools.

In this chapter, I outlined the theoretical framework of my study, sitting within Marxist-Foucauldian traditions. In the upcoming chapter, I outline the methodological framework of my study. This involves unpacking of the assumptions, beliefs and values that influence my own perceptions of reality in the context of my study.

Chapter 5: Methodological Framework

In the previous chapter (Theoretical Framework), I propose a theoretical framework for the study. This chapter is an overview of the research framework guiding my study, where I briefly outline my thinking about the ways of understanding teachers' voices. In the next chapter of research methods, I present the procedures and techniques I adopted while gathering data and analysing the collected data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Research methodology centres on discussing my assumptions underpinning my choices of different methods for conducting my research. Research methods, which I outline in the following chapter, are techniques and procedures I adopt to conduct the research. Methodology specifies principles for the use of the tools and techniques of research, while methods are the actual tools and techniques used in research (Barbour, 2008; McGregor & Murnane, 2010). Thus, as Kelly (2010) declares, methods are technical tools, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups used to conduct research, while methodology represents theory underpinning research design. As Crotty (1998, p. 7) posits, research methodology is “the research design that shapes our choice and use of particular methods.”

Research methodology is the framework guiding the research. It involves acknowledging and understanding world views and premises underpinning the research. This act of acknowledging and understanding the world views and premises of the research is also referred to as research paradigm (William & Morrow, 2009; Schram, 2003). A research paradigm is seen as an umbrella term specifying “researcher’s view of the nature of reality, the relationship between researcher and participants and the researcher’s stance on subjectivity or objectivity” (William & Morrow, 2009, p. 577). Thus, a research paradigm is “a set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitute a way of viewing reality” (McGregor & Murnane, 2010, p. 419). Such assumptions are vital in understanding the overall perspectives of study/research design (Krauss, 2005). For the purposes of my research, I must unpack the assumptions, concepts, practices and values that have influenced my own perception of the reality of teachers, administrators and principals in Nepali private schools since the political landscape has changed. This unpacking will help me understand the thinking and perceptions, values and assumptions that drive the professional lives of my participants.

The main purpose of this study, which is the exploration of individual teachers, administrators and principals' perceptions and experiences of their professional lives, emphasises multiple situations instead of a universal theory (Lyotard, 1984). As Richardson (2001) suggests, a knowledge claim is based on context and is historically situated, just as my study is. My philosophical underpinning is aligned towards postmodernism, which I discuss next. I then give a short account of the qualitative research methods I adopted as well accounting for case study as a research strategy, and also outlining my role as a researcher. This chapter then discusses ethical consideration of the research and how I enacted the ethical principles while generating and analysing data for the writing phase. Finally, I provide a critical reflection on my position as a researcher, which I hope enables readers to further understand my involvement in this research.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is basically concerned with deconstructing *grand narratives* or the universal system of knowledge (Luitel & Taylor, 2013). My study not only focuses on representing what participants say about their professional lives in their schools, but also represents my own professional knowledge and experience of working in similar private schools. It is aligned with Berger and Luckmann's (1966) ideas that the reality of everyday life is socially constructed. This means, akin to Burr's (1995) suggestion, I must take a critical stance on understanding the world including myself, and how I understand the culturally and historically specific world I live in. This is a part of postmodernism, which prefers 'pluralism' and thereby rejects the idea that we can understand the world through 'metanarratives' or 'grand theories' (Burr, 2003). Pluralism accepts and recognises diversity and multiplicity instead of universal theory. This means postmodernism emphasises the existence of multiple and variety of situations in life (pluralism), instead of one overarching systems of knowledge (metanarratives or grand theories).

Postmodernism, as an intellectual movement, started from art and architecture, literature, and cultural studies (Burr, 2003). Lyotard's (1984) work, translated from the French written a decade before, influenced social science thought to the extent that postmodernism became popular as a means of describing the plurality of human experience. Sim (2001a, p. 339) defines postmodernism as "a wide ranging cultural movement which adopts a sceptical attitude to many of the

principles and assumptions that have underpinned Western thought and social life for the last few centuries.” Postmodernism as a philosophy represents a form of scepticism about authority, received wisdom, and cultural and political norms of Western societies (Sim, 2001b). Postmodernists reject the modernist assumption that there is “reality out there” (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 118). Instead of searching for reality outside human life, postmodernist scholars focus on the reality “within and from the proximity of human lives” (Luitel & Taylor, 2013, p. 24). Reality outside human life, also called objective reality, is seen as an independent reality which does not change on the basis of the person experiencing it, while the reality of human lives, which postmodernists see, is reality relative to a particular experience at a particular point of time. Postmodernism is often taken as a rejection of ultimate truth (Burr, 2003), representing reality through the eyes of participants (multiple realities), and realising the importance of experience and behaviour in context (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993).

Postmodernism is concerned with the political action taking place within an organisation. Instead of grounding assumptions and beliefs on grand narratives, postmodern politics is concerned with day-to-day activities (Ward, 1997). Postmodern politics that associates itself with the micro-politics of institutions challenges institutional forms of power (Best & Kellner, 1991). Because my study occurs after considerable economic and political upheaval, it is concerned with postmodern politics. Foucault wrote a series of case studies about prisons, hospitals and asylums, focusing on ways dominant groups of society impose their will on others, who become even further excluded from access to political power (Foucault, 1980, 1982, 1995; Sim, 2001b). This view will help me ‘see’ what is going on in my case study schools.

Foucault (1980, 1982, 2001 and 2003) suggested a rethink of our understanding of the nature of power as non-totalising and non-representational. He critiques all modern theories of power that align power with the ruling classes. Foucault interpreted power as dispersed. As a dispersed notion, Foucault sees power as circulating throughout the networks of an institution. This involves examining how power operates in the day-to-day interactions between people and institutions. For Foucault, power is more a strategy of the powerful to dominate the powerless, rather than a possession of the powerful (Sergiu, 2010). This notion of power aligns with postmodern perspectives which assume that power no longer works through a

single power centre of the state, but is exerted through the networks of everyday life (Best & Kellner, 1997).

Foucault's postmodernist notion of power represents a critique to the modernist notions of power as suggested by Marx and Weber. Lyotard (1984) argues that postmodernism is not an end of modernism but a relation to modernism. Best and Kellner (1997) suggested that the word 'post' in postmodernism represents continuity with modernism or one that follows modernism. Theorists including Marx and Weber, pointed out that individuals who own factories or organisations concentrate power in themselves, while postmodernists such as Foucault argue that power is much more dispersed with complicated networks of communication representing technologies of power (Oliver, 2010). Foucault (1980) suggested that we need to free ourselves from the kind of economic analysis of power Marxists proposed. In doing so he suggested two hypotheses of power: (a) that the mechanism of power repression, and (b) that the basis of power relations lies in the hostile engagement of forces. In order to analyse power relations in the form of both repression and hostile engagement, I need to explore the subjective experiences and perceptions of both the owners and non-owner participants of the schools. This encourages me to adopt the qualitative research method in this project.

Qualitative Research

Although the quantitative approach has the capacity to generalise findings (Nguyen, 2011), such approaches are unable to explain how the macro phenomena, such as the political climate of a country, are translated into the micro phenomena of "every day practices, understanding and interactions guiding individual behaviour" within social institutions such as schools (Barbour, 2008, p. 11). My study demands a qualitative inquiry that has the capacity to provide layered descriptions of specific contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b). Qualitative inquiry with the capacity of providing layered description of a study context is aligned with the postmodern view of multiple perspectives. Stake (2010) listed 12 special characteristics of qualitative study, and some of these are closely related to my study:

- a. a focus on meaning of human affairs from various perspectives;
- b. a detailed description of context;
- c. a researcher usually leading the research as a key instrument;

- d. emphasis on observation by participants, what they experience more than what they feel;
- e. an acknowledgement that findings and reports are a researcher-participant interaction.

A qualitative study therefore aims at explaining, describing and understanding context-specific beliefs, behaviours and meanings of research participants in specific contexts (Wu & Volker, 2009). I am attempting to understand the human affairs (professional lives) of teachers, administrators and owner/principals and to make a snapshot of the macro political context influences on the school's staff and how they perceive their roles. The introduction and background chapter outline these contexts. As I am personally involved in the data generation process, I am a major instrument of the research, exploring how the macro phenomenon, that is, political change in the country translates into the micro phenomenon (that is, everyday practices involving interactions that guides the behaviours of both owners and non-owner staff of my research schools). Thus, my study involves "rich description of the complex environment [the political climate of Nepal] and the personal action" (of teachers, administrators and principals) (Stake, 2010, p. 31).

Among the many reasons for doing qualitative research, an important one is the desire to "enter into the world of participants and see the world from their perspectives" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 16). Qualitative research studies are suitable for understanding the "actual and ongoing ways" in which things happen (Stake, 2010, p. 2). Researchers working within qualitative parameters are interested in representing the world from the viewpoint of interacting individuals, including the researcher (Wright, 2002). For example, Janesick (2011, pp. 10-11) listed 12 special characteristics of qualitative research. Among these characteristics, the following are closely related to my study:

- (i) It attempts to understand the whole picture of the social context under study.
- (ii) It is related to personal and face-to-face interaction in a given setting.
- (iii) It focuses on understanding the social setting instead of controlling and predicting.
- (iv) It incorporates complete description of the role of researcher, including the biases, beliefs and values of the researcher.
- (v) It relies on the researcher as the research instrument.
- (vi) It demands equal time in the field and in analysis

The characteristics of Janesick's qualitative research most appropriate to my study are noted next. First of all, understanding the social context is important—in my case, the political change in Nepal has an effect on understanding how teachers and other staff experience agency in their professional life, as does the organisation of the school. Secondly, the face-to-face interaction opportunities that interviews provide are valuable, because it enables me to understand real life situations from the perspectives of research participants.

Next, qualitative research seeks to understand rather than control a social setting, just as I am trying to explore teachers' and other staff members' experiences and perceptions. Therefore, this too has relevance. And since qualitative research identifies a researcher's position, this helps me show how my biases and predispositions are likely to influence how others' experiences are interpreted. Importantly, my role and interests must be explained clearly to outline potential biases, as I am the main research instrument who must spend equal time in the field and on analysing data.

Marshall and Rossman (1995, p. 39) for example, argued that qualitative research's "unique strength is exploratory or descriptive, [assuming] the value of context and setting and searches for deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon." Qualitative research processes allow us to explore how changes affect day-to-day interactions (Barbour, 2008) and to understand the "lived experience of the research participants" (Denzin & Giardina, 2006, p. 11). Denzin and Lincoln (2005b, p. 3), for example, emphasise the subjective nature of qualitative research which:

Consists of sets of interpretive material practices that turn the world into a series of representation in the form of field notes, interviews, conversations, memos of self etc. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings and try to make sense of or interpret the phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

Qualitative research emphasises on the study contexts, assuming that research participants' experiences, ideas and perceptions are specific to context (Gonzalez y Gonzalez & Lincoln, 2006). In the following section, I discuss case study as an approach with reference to my study.

Case Study Approach

There is no single accepted way of doing qualitative research (Snape & Spencer, 2003). One way is case study (Stake, 1995). This research approach is widely used in social science research in areas such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, management, law and education (Yin, 1994). And while case study is popular as a teaching device in the field of law, management, medicine or public policy, it should not be confused with case study as a research strategy. As a teaching device, the purpose of case study is to establish a framework for discussion and debate among learners. On the other hand, case study as a research strategy is concerned with the rigorous and fair presentation of empirical data (Yin, 1994).

There are, however, several issues related to case study as a research method. Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 221) outlines five common misunderstandings about the nature of case study research:

- i. General or theoretical knowledge is more important than practical or context knowledge.
- ii. One cannot generalise on the basis of individual case and therefore the case study cannot contribute to scientific knowledge.
- iii. The case study is more suitable for generating a hypothesis, whereas other methods are suitable for testing a hypothesis.
- iv. The case study contains bias towards verification.
- v. It is difficult to summarise and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies.

These identify distinctions between a quantitative view and a qualitative view of evidence arising from a case study project. These points appear to view case study as deficient compared with quantitative research suggesting that case study is of less value than a quantitative study in general. General issues related to case study research usually fall into three categories including its definition, its purposes and the question of generalising. Therefore, I will address issues related to definitions of case study, the purposes of case study and generalisation with reference to the present study.

Case study is a systematic inquiry into a phenomenon within a real life situation. Case study is an empirical inquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context” (Yin, 2003, p. 33). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 253), case study provides a “unique example of real people in real situations.” Similarly, Swanborn (2010) suggests that case study, as

a social phenomenon research approach, has a number of features. Firstly, it is usually bounded in a social system (such as a group of people, an organisation or a community). These are what is called a “natural context” (Swanborn, 2010, p. 10). Researchers examining a case study focus on describing and exploring social process, values, expectations, perceptions, behaviours and so on. And by research being open to unexpected findings, they may discover unexpected things as they seek to answer their research questions by analysing data from a range of sources, such as documents, interviews or observations.

Actual qualitative case study is a rigorous process of exploring a given phenomenon such as a private schooling context using variety of data sources. This makes it easier for researchers to understand multiple facets of the phenomenon under investigation (Baxter & Jack, 2008). There can be gaps between an ideal case study and the actual case study. Keeping this in mind, I designed my case study approach in relation to the contextual, situational and cultural nuances operating in Nepal. These included things like face to face contact with interviewee which are elaborated on in the description of how I undertook my field work (see chapter 6). Most of the theoretical views on how case study actually works that originated in developed Western countries may not work in developing countries like Nepal.

To understand the professional lives of teachers, administrators and principals working in Nepali private schools, means exploring multiple perspectives. These multiple perspectives have to be understood within a political landscape that has changed significantly. To explore such perspectives, the experiences, views and opinions of those working within the schools and elsewhere (such as teacher unions, principal organisations and regional education official from Ministry of Education). In Nepal, this must occur face to face. It is a cultural expectation that is explained more later in the thesis (see chapter 6). Because of this expectation, canvassing views of those representing teacher unions, private schools organisations and education official from Ministry of Education was not possible in the time I had to complete my data collection. Instead, I had to rely on some documentary evidence collected from sources such as newspapers articles, policy documents about private schooling and publicly available documents from teachers’ unions and principals organisations.

This need for face to face contact raised a number of issues for me, such as how many people I could talk with in the time available, what issues with transport

I needed to overcome and how to communicate with people in the first place to get their consent for interviews. The weather was also an issue. When I undertook my field work, it was monsoon season and Kathmandu could be cut off by flooding of transport routes from other places. The political instability was also a factor. One effect was how safe people felt about talking to me, especially if they were members of union or ministry officials. This meant restricting my case study schools to those I could most easily get to work with. (See Chapter 6, under the heading Case Study Schools for more on this).

Case study also involves studying both inside and outside the boundaries of social systems. In my research the wider political context influences the operations and behaviours and thinking of those within the 2 case study schools for my research is guided by an initial broad research question related to the experiences and perception of Nepali private school staff about their professional lives in a changed political context. To undertake this research, I am using interviews, informal observation and different documents, such as documents from teachers' and private schools' associations, official documents from the Ministry of Education and newspaper articles related to education in general and private schools in particular, as sources of data. The diagram below illustrates my case study research and its components.

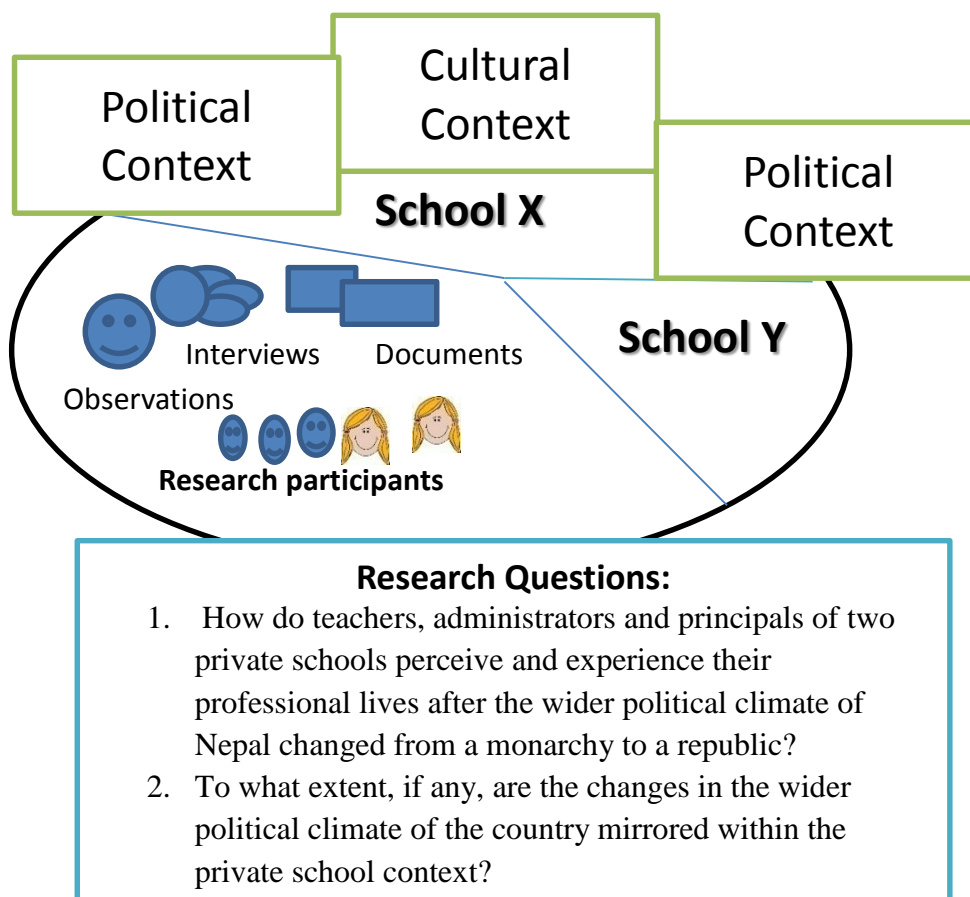


Figure 2: An illustration of my case study

[Multiple case study, Stake, R.E. ©2006. Copyright Guilford Press. Reprinted with permission of The Guilford Press (see Appendix J for further details)]

This research is about two cases. As illustrated in the above figure (Figure 2), the cases for the study are school X and school Y. The data is mainly generated using semi-structured interviews with research participants, supported by supplementary sources that include documents and field notes during interviews. As with other qualitative case studies, this study also involves learning about teachers, administrators and owner/principals' experiences and perceptions, with the wider socio-political context in mind (Stake, 2006).

Stake (2005) classifies case study into three categories: *intrinsic case study*, *instrumental case study* and *multiple or collective case study*. *Intrinsic case study* is related to a case study undertaken to better understand individual cases, not as representative of other cases. Similarly, *instrumental case study* is related to studies that provide insight into a particular issue. Finally, *multiple or collective case study* involves studying a number of cases to understand phenomena. In my project, I

have used two private schools as the case to know more about the politics that might be involved in private schools of Nepal in relation to the wider political climate. So this study involves both instrumental and intrinsic case study.

In general, case studies are preferred when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed and allow an investigator to retain the holistic meaning of lived experiences. Case study is an appropriate research strategy for understanding complex social phenomena (Yin, 1994). Instead of concentrating on developing general principles, case study concentrates on extensive study of a particular institution, practice or individual actors (Marshall, 2007). Because I want to better understand the experiences and perceptions of the professional lives of 2 private school teachers, owners and administrators at a particular point of time, a case study approach is best suited to this goal.

The particular point in time of my study is a decade after the overturn of monarchical and hierarchical structures. My study involves accepting the existence of multiple realities and respecting the differences and contrasting views of participants (Swanborn, 2010) if I wish to understand how teachers and administrators in these schools now experience their professional lives. It also means collecting a variety of evidence (documents, interviews, observations).

According to Stake (1995), the real business of case study is not generalisation; it is more concerned with particularisation because the emphasis of case study research is on the uniqueness and in-depth understanding of the case. Similarly, Yin (1994) posits that the role of statistical or scientific generalisation in case study is replaced by what he calls *analytical generalisation*. According to this view, cases are taken as units of research and each case is treated as a new experiment. Case studies, like experiments, are generalised to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universe. In analytical generalisation, the already developed theory is used as a template to compare the empirical results of the case study (Yin, 2003). In terms of the current study involving how teachers, administrators and principals of two private schools perceive and experience power relational phenomena within their school context, it is more concerned with in-depth understanding within the two case study schools. At the same time, I am using two already established theories—Foucault’s notion of power and Marxist theory of power—as a lens to understand staff experiences of their professional lives in the

altered wider political climate. Thus, through my study, I am seeking themes and commonalities as well as differences.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research uses terms such as rigor, authenticity, transferability, creditworthiness and trustworthiness as alternative processes for reliability and validity, terms used in quantitative research (Bryman, 2008; Seale, 2003). In this respect, Meyrick (2006) stated that good qualitative research needs to have sufficient details about data collection, including description of the study context. Qualitative research also needs to establish rigor in each stage using varieties of means. Details about how data will be collected are provided in the next chapter, research methods, processes and analysis. I also intend to use interviews, documentations, observations and field notes in my study. Williams and Morrow (2009) also suggested that good qualitative research needs to have integrity of data, balance between reflexivity and subjectivity and clear communication of the findings. Qualitative researchers are often described as *interpretive bricoleur*. This means qualitative researchers understand research as an interactive process, interacting with the “personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity” of the researcher and those in the research setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a, p. 6).

Similar to most qualitative researchers, I understand my research as an interactive process between my personal history, biography and gender and those of my research participants. Thus, as a qualitative researcher, it becomes necessary for me to acknowledge my “participatory connectedness with research participants” (Bishop & Glynn, 1999, p. 103). This means qualitative researchers need to address issues of participation and power sharing with their research participants. In the following section, I discuss my role as a researcher, with a focus on insider-outsider perspectives. Similarly, at the end of this chapter, I provide a reflection drawing on how my past experiences have influenced my understanding of teachers having a voice and consequently the approach taken for this research.

Locating Self: Insiders and Outsiders

A key quality of qualitative research is the acknowledgement of the researchers' individual attitudes and perspectives and how these might influence how data are understood (Barbour, 2008). Qualitative research involves studying things in their natural settings and getting closer to participants' perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). In qualitative research, the researcher acts as an instrument of the research (Janesick, 2000; Winter, 2000). This involves 'reflexive validity,' which refers to the effects the researchers may have on the focus and direction of data collection (Waterman, 1998). This starkly contrasts with quantitative research where a researcher mainly focuses on remaining completely outside of the research process to avoid any influence or 'contamination' of data.

Richardson (2001, p. 34) argues that "people who write are always writing about their lives." So the relationship between researchers and their research participants is important in qualitative research (Wright, 2002), which leads to the concept of insider and outsider research. Merton (1972) introduced this concept arguing that an insider researcher has a prior intimate knowledge of a particular research community and its members. Similarly, Griffith (1998, p. 361) asserts that an insider researcher is "someone whose biography (gender, race, class, sexual orientation and so on) gives her lived familiarity with the group being researched," while an outsider researcher is "a researcher who does not have an intimate knowledge of the group being researched prior to their entry into the group." Arguing in a similar vein, Hellowell (2006) defined an insider researcher as one who has a priori familiarity with the setting and people s/he is researching while an outsider researcher does not have familiarity with the setting and people before starting the research. All of these authors point to clear distinctions between insiders and outsiders. Since a number of the characteristics of insider researcher apply to me, it is now time to explain why.

One of the case study schools is one I have worked in. The research participants were familiar to me. There was a greater degree of existing comfort, because a relationship between my research participants and me had already been established. However, it does not necessarily mean that they were ready to disclose information freely. On the other hand, I did not have any prior knowledge and understanding about other case study school even though I had worked in private

schools before. The research participants of this school came to know me only after I started the research process. In this respect, I am outsider researcher. Gonzalez y Gonzalez and Lincoln (2006, pp. 200-201) write about the advantage of being both an insider and outsider:

Due to his/her education or living away from the context for many years, the researcher may be considered as outsider, but he/she still remains an insider knowing the language and carrying culture similarities with the research participants. This enables the researcher to make sense of language, culture and relationships of the context.

As a researcher, I shared a similar socio-cultural background with my research participants, and so in a broader perspective I am both an insider and outsider researcher. So as Gonzalez y Gonzalez and Lincoln (2006) argue above, I share language and cultural similarities with participants. In this sense, my role is insider to both contexts, even if both school contexts are not necessarily familiar. Mercer (2007, p. 1) argues that *insiderness* and *outsiderness* need to be understood in terms of continuity, instead of a separation:

The insider/outsider dichotomy is actually a continuum with multiple dimensions, and that all researchers constantly move back and forth along a number of axes, depending upon time, location, participants and topic.

Boundary lines between the insider and outsider positions are therefore not crystal clear (Merriam et al., 2001). There can be some elements of insiderness on some levels of our research and some elements of outsiderness on the other levels (Hellowell, 2006). For example, I spent most of my career in Nepali private schools, sometimes working as a teacher and sometimes as an administrator. In this respect, I am an insider to specific research participant roles. As a male researcher, I am insider to the male participants while an outsider to the female participants on gender level. Similarly, I am an insider to the secondary level staff while an outsider to primary level staff of both schools, as I have spent most of my career working at the secondary level. A brief description of my insiderness/outsiderness to my research participants and the case study schools is highlighted in table 3 below:

Table 3: My insider/outsider status

Contexts	School	School	Reasons for being insider/outsider
Teaching	Insider	Outsider	Taught at one school but not the other
Gender + Sector	Outsider	Outsider	Being male outsider for women teachers, outsider to primary teachers as I spent most teaching career at secondary level
Gender + Sector	Insider	Insider	Insider to male teachers and secondary level teachers for being male and teaching at the secondary level
Macro Context	Insider	Insider	Being Nepali; lived through the changes in government and political upheaval familiar with the education system
Position in school	Insider	Insider	Being a teacher and administrator of private schools
Position as researcher	Outsider	Outsider	Taking on role external to both schools

As Mercer (2007) indicated, there can be both advantages and disadvantages of being an insider or an outsider researcher. Merriam et al. (2001) pointed out that an insider researcher has easy access to the research settings and can ask more meaningful questions. Innes (2009, p. 440) presents perspectives of insiders:

The critics of insider research have asserted that insiders' closeness to their research community clouds their views and leads to biased research findings. Insiders counter that their positioning provides a contextual understanding of the community that outsiders do not possess.

The insider researcher must adopt an adequately reflexive approach to make sure that the potential advantages of being an insider are not affected. Thus, insider researchers have to clarify "their position and the ways it may have affected their research" (Hodkinson, 2005, pp. 146–147). Increasing numbers of qualitative researchers are realising that qualitative interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering, but involve active interaction with others that lead to negotiated and contextually based results. Since neutrality is not possible in the interview process,

it becomes necessary for a researcher to take a stance about their roles (Fontana & Frey, 2005). *Reflexivity* is the process of “critically reflecting self as a researcher—a conscious experiencing of self as both inquirer and research participant” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 210). Reflexivity acknowledges how our own backgrounds, values and beliefs may create bias in the research practice (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Thus, reflexivity places emphasis on “self-awareness, political/cultural consciousness, and ownership of one’s perspective” (Patton, 2002, p. 299). This involves a shift in our understanding from “what I know and how I know it” to recognising how we actively construct our understanding (Finlay, 2002, p. 532). Although many qualitative researchers claim to ‘bracket’ their belief and perspectives while analysing data, it is not completely possible. To bracket means to minimise the effects of pre-conceived beliefs and opinions about the phenomenon under study (Bradbury-Jones, Taylor, & Herber, 2014; Tufford & Newman, 2012). To put it another way, it is very difficult to maintain a dispassionate and disinterested state of mind, or to fully put aside one’s biases and pre-conceptions.

Therefore, as qualitative researchers, we need to acknowledge our biases and experiences so that we could consciously use them to enhance the analytic process. As researchers, we often have life experiences similar to our research participants, and reflexivity involves drawing our experiences to obtain insight into what the participants are describing (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). My interest in this study is the outcome of my experience of working as a teacher and an administrator of private schools. I am involved in this study as both insider and outsider of the private schools in Nepal, as discussed earlier.

Ethical Considerations of the Research

Ethical issues for researchers arise during the whole process of research. Ethical issues are important to acknowledge from the beginning. Researchers have to “protect their research participants, develop trust with them, and promote integrity of research and guard against misconduct” (Creswell, 2009, p. 87). To conduct this study, I gained ethics approval from the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee which upholds the principles of the University of Waikato Human

Research Ethics Regulation, 2008¹⁶. The following sections outline the specific research ethics strategies I adopted.

Participation

Participation in this study was voluntary. In order to recruit participants, I first of all sought permission from the owner/principals of each school. This permitted me entrance to the school and to address a staff meeting. In the meeting to address staff, I outlined my study to recruit volunteers. I then provided an information sheet to all potential participants. This information sheet contains details about the research and the rights of participants (Appendix A). I initiated the research process only after the informed consent form (Appendix B) was signed by each participant. We then negotiated the research times and places convenient to the research participants so that I could begin my research. As most of my research participants were busy in their work of teaching and managing, I conducted interview during the break times and took place in a space of their choosing. I let them select the place where they were comfortable. For example, most of the interviews in school X¹⁷ took place in the computer laboratory room, except for the owner/principal's interview in his office. However, for school Y, as per the agreement and availability of room, interviews took place in different rooms, sometimes in board meeting rooms and other times in an empty classroom to suit participants. Thus, every effort was made to ensure voluntary participation in this study.

Protection

Another ethical issue for this study was related to protection of the research participants. Protection is about efforts to avoid disclosing any information about participants to anyone expect my thesis supervisors and to do no harm to participants in any way. Participants knew they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time they felt uncomfortable during the research process or up until one month after an interview. All the information collected during the research process was kept secure in my office, and it was only accessible by me and my two

¹⁶ <http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/assessment/ethicalConduct.html>.

¹⁷ In this study, I have used two schools for the case study. The first one is referred to as school X and the second as school Y. A detailed account of my case study schools is provided in Chapter 6 under the topic "Case Study Schools."

thesis supervisors. The data on the computer was protected by a password, which was known to me only. The names of participants were removed from the data collection to protect their privacy and only pseudonyms were used in the thesis. While writing the final thesis, I developed the pseudonyms by combining the school the participants belong to, the level they were teaching and their positions instead of names. For example, if the research participant was from school X, was female and was teaching in the secondary level, I used secondary female teacher from school X. Doing this, I believe, has protected the participants from being known even to the school's authorities.

Critical Reflection on My Positionality

As a postmodern researcher, I believe that I am inextricably at the centre of this study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). It is now time to reflect on my own experiences and perceptions of having a voice in general and having a voice as a private schoolteacher/staff member in particular. I believe that the events I present here have had a powerful influence on my belief in teachers' voice and the lens I used to view teachers' voice in the context of this study. Each story depicted in the events provides an element of reflexivity and my own understanding of teachers having a voice and draws attention on how my past experiences have influenced my approach to this research. This highlights my 'insiderness.'

I divide this reflection section into two sub-sections: schooling and family (mid-1970s to late 1980s) and professional life as a teacher (1990s to 2010). In the first section, I present a reflection on my childhood and school days along with some incidents which shaped the way I view the concept of having a voice. This is followed by my professional life as a teacher in different private schools of Nepal, where I present some incidents/events which shaped the way I view the professional lives of private schools' teachers. I then outline my professional life as an administrator and management lecturer and reflect how these experiences have enhanced my interest about linking management theories with my experiences on the issues of private school management.

Schooling and Family (Mid-1970s till Late-1980s)

Being the eldest son of a middle class family from the western part of Nepal, I was educated in an English medium police school in Nagaland, a state in the north-

eastern part of India. My father temporarily migrated to Nagaland for the purpose of employment. Because of my father's employment in the police force, I studied in a police school. My father was a staff member of the police work environment and so I grew up in a similar environment at home. Being a police school during the mid-1970s, the environment within the school was strict. The life of a child in the school was similar to the school environment Foucault (1995, p. 166) describes in *Discipline and Punish*:

The training of school children ... few words, no explanation, a total silence interrupted only by signals, bells and clapping of hands, gestures, a mere glance from the teacher ... use of signal is to attract at once the attention of all the pupils to the teacher and to make them attentive to what he wishes to impart on them.

These observations resonate with my school experience. Most teachers were very strict, and as students, we were not allowed to question the authority of the teachers and principals (who were called headmaster). Such an environment is quite similar to what Lortie (1975) describes in his classic schoolteacher study in the American schools where there was a strict authority relationship between the teachers and the students, and teachers used physical force to control their students. Every student was expected to listen to teachers in complete silence. Those breaking this tradition were in trouble. A strict uniform and policing of our appearance kept us compliant. Every day our class teacher used to check us for our uniform and appearance in the school assembly. Students found without proper uniform or long hair, nails and so on, were subjected to disciplinary action, which was mostly corporal punishment. The school headmaster was very strict and frequently moves around the classes with a stick in his hand. Whenever he found any student not within the school's disciplinary rules, he used to beat the student with the stick. We used to take him as someone from another planet. Few teachers were friendly with us, but such teachers were those who were popular among the students, but this did not stop them from getting us into trouble.

Professional Life as a Teacher (1990s till 2010)

I began teaching in a private school of Nepal during the 1990s. Teaching was the best job option available for me. I was in an advantageous position for getting a job teaching in a private school because of my good knowledge of English language. It enabled me to get a job soon after completing an Intermediate in Science (I. Sc.)

degree (similar to higher secondary level). During the 1990s, when private schools in Nepal grew rapidly, schools' owners sought teachers educated in English medium schools. Perhaps they have thought that this would help them attract students and compete with the public schools. Therefore, as Lortie (1975) suggested, my personal circumstances played an important role in my occupational fate. Although I got my first job with ease, I did not have good experiences. Because of 'one-man management' and his strategy of 'divide and rule,' teachers' voices were suppressed during that time. I frequently used to think about raising my voice but without any success. Because of this, I used to get frustrated with the working environment within the school and thought about encouraging other non-owner staff about the professional importance of having a voice. An example of this is suggested by the following lines, which I wrote during the early part of my teaching career.

Life is full of many ups and downs,
We have to face it with leaps and bounds,
We should struggle and fight,
To make our future interesting and bright.

These lines show my long-term interest in revolt against the autocratic management of the owner/principal even though I did not act on this. Fear of losing my jobs and not getting support from my colleagues from work kept me from speaking out. As indicated by the lines, "we should struggle and fight to make our future interesting and bright" my thinking during that period was about teachers controlling different aspects of their professional lives (Blase & Blase, 2001). This was because during the earlier and middle part of my teaching career, I experienced teachers not having any control of their professional lives. As outlined earlier in the background of the study, the terms and conditions of our work was based on 'word of mouth' agreement with the school's owner. The wider political environment of a constitutional monarchy was also not favourable for raising voices. Teachers working in private schools were not unionised. Thus, the environments were only favourable for school owners. All these situations forced me to remain silent but also write the above lines.

My thinking changed after I started working as part-time secondary level science teacher in more than one school. The notion of 'don't put all your eggs in

one basket' seemed to be working during that period. My thinking was, "if I lose one job, I still have another." Such thinking gave me more confidence to speak up. However, whenever I spoke up, I could not get support from other teachers, because they were afraid of being fired from their jobs. The divide and rule policy worked. This suggests power over others, with the power concentrated in school's owners, which Foucault (1977) would call dysfunction of power in the form of central access. Moreover, working as a part-time teacher was challenging in other aspects. I found my job was dependent on the performance of the students in the SLC examination in the subject I used to teach. When, students performed well in the examinations, the usual view was that students were good and so they did well. But when students failed or did poorly in the subjects I was teaching, it was seen as my fault. This was common for teachers, leading to high stress and demoralisation. I was no exception. My professional life was difficult. I started thinking that my childhood days were better, leading me to write the following lines:

O God! Make me a child once again,
So that I could play in the rain,
To relieve from all the pain,
I want to be a child once again.
Childhood is the day,
When everything seems to be gay,
A child thinks the world is his,
With everyone giving him a sweet kiss.
I wish I were a child once again,
And play in the rain,
To relieve from all the pain,
I want to be a child once again.

The environment existing within the school made me frustrated with my job. I therefore thought about shifting to another profession, but this was not as successful as I had hoped.

After studying again and graduating with an MBA, I taught management to undergraduate and graduate students from different colleges affiliated to the Tribhuvan University (TU) and Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB). This provided me opportunities to familiarise myself with a range of management

theories. A myth which is popular among the educated people of Nepal indicates how students and teachers are viewed. A translated version of this myth is given below:

A boy from rural areas of Nepal came to the capital city for further education. He used to write letter to his parents while he was a student. In the letter he used to inform his parents that his teacher was studying hard and he was studying Ok but not as hard as his teacher. After the student graduated from the university, he started teaching in a school in Kathmandu. The parents were surprised to see a completely different letter from their son after he started work. In the letter, he wrote, "I am now studying hard and my students are enjoying their classes".

This indicates how students position teachers: teachers should work harder than students and students can expect to have an easy ride as learners. This also points to the direction of the historical dominance of teacher-centric learning in Nepal. The teacher is seen as the expert who tells learners what they need to know. This is about what Shulman (2004, p. 235) describes as "we expect teachers to understand what they teach and, when possible, to understand it in several ways." I was also immersed more in the culture of learning about management after I started working as a management lecturer, making an effort to learn what Ball (2000) referred to as 'subject matter knowledge,' as I was trying to understand what I had to teach my students.

Having already worked in some private schools, I had experiences I could reflect on as examples of using different management theories, such as Taylor's Principles of Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911) and Henry Fayol's principles of Administrative Management (Fayol, 1949). Taylor's (1911) principles of scientific management helped me in this reflection. I realised that owner/principals of private schools in which I worked managed their schools using the rule of thumb without understanding what they expected their teachers to do. Teachers were not provided with professional development opportunities and there was a lack of cooperation within these schools. To change that, a dispositional change in all staff including a school's owners was needed, but was unlikely to happen because power was concentrated with the owners.

Fayol's (1949) 14 principles of management also helped me in this reflection. Reflecting on my past experiences of working as a private school teacher with Fayol's 14 principles of management, I used to wonder why the teachers and

other non-owner staff were given only responsibility/workload without proper authority. The schools' owners might not have known that responsibility without proper authority will make their staff ineffective in their work, as Fayol (1949) suggested. Because of my interest in this issue, I decided to test any data I collected against Fayol's principles of management. This was published as, *Private schooling and Fayol's principles of management: A case from Nepal* (Sharma Poudyal, 2013b), interpreting and discussing the issue of management and ownership arising from the two case studies schools.

To better understand these management theories in relation to my teaching experiences, I undertook a research degree, Master of Philosophy in Educational Leadership at the Kathmandu University, School of Education (KUSOED). After graduating from Kathmandu University, School of Education, I was offered a job as visiting faculty for teaching strategic management for the Masters' of Educational Management. Since this course was offered in the evening and was more practice-oriented, most of my students were principals from private schools. Some were administrators from the Ministry of Education. I was therefore interacting with people involved in the management of private schools and also those involved in designing policy for such schools. This led to me working as an administrator of a private school. Although I worked for less than a year in this role, I gained valuable insight into the professional life of an administrator of a private school. At the same time, I wondered how an administrator, as a middle level manager of a school, balanced the expectations of parents, teachers, other outsiders and the school's owners. The school itself was dominated by political interference from the students' and teachers' union affiliated with Maoists. This added complexity to the job of administrators as middle level manager. All these incidents further enhanced my interest in exploring management issues of Nepali private schools. This interest ultimately led me to join the University of Waikato as a doctoral student.

Summary

This chapter has provided a brief description of the research paradigm that underpins the study. I briefly described how this chapter enabled me to conceptualise my thinking about the study. This involves a description of postmodernism and how my study fits within this paradigm. Within postmodernism, I discussed Foucault's notions of power and outlined how this fits within postmodernism and I presented a critique of modernist theory from Marx and Weber. This chapter also has highlighted why I chose qualitative research methods along with the techniques I adopted to ensure rigor and trustworthiness in the study. Similarly, the chapter outlined issues related to the case study approach I adopted in my study. The chapter also has provided a brief description of the ethical processes and what I did to adhere to the principles of ethical guidelines and regulations. This was followed by a discussion on my role as a researcher with insider-outsider perspectives. To clarify this further, I finally outlined a critical reflection on my position as a researcher.

This chapter has provided overall framework that guided the study. In the next chapter, I present the key methods and processes involved in data generation process and subsequent analysis of the generated data.

Chapter 6: Research Methods, Processes and Analysis

In the previous chapter (methodological framework), I discussed the guiding research framework of the study. This chapter describes the key methods and processes involved. It includes the techniques and procedures I have used for gathering (semi-structured interview, documentation and direct observation) and analysing the generated data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I then discuss the different research processes, including how I selected staff participants from all those willing to take part. It also includes a brief description of my initial plan and what alternations I needed to make once I started the process.

Before providing detailed descriptions of the research methods, processes and analysis, I present a brief description of the case study schools followed by the case study group.

Case Study Schools

As indicated in Chapter 2, about the political and education context of Nepal, most private schools in Nepal are concentrated in the main urban centre, Kathmandu Valley, and so this is where my study took place. There are also private schools in other urban regions of country with few in the rural areas. However, I could not extend my study beyond Kathmandu Valley because of challenges of the transport and communication networks in Nepal. Being a mountainous country with lack of proper infrastructure development, only about 43 percent of total population of Nepal have access to transport in all weather (The World Bank: South Asia, 2015). Although different modes of transportation including roadways, railway and airways are available in Nepal, roadways is the main transportation modes for Nepali people. This is because of the limited railway (only one connecting Nepal with its neighbour, India) and few air services especially for the purpose of tourism. Most of the roads in Nepal become affected by landslide during the monsoon season (rainy season) which usually falls between the months of June to September. As I started my study in the month of May 2011, when the monsoon in Nepal was approaching, I thought it would be next to impossible to conduct my study to the whole of Nepal in the limited period of three to six months available for data collection.

Moreover, conducting survey/interviews via telephone or internet was also challenging because of the lack of proper communication networks and also the cultural context of conducting face to face interview in Nepal. Unlike people living in countries such as New Zealand, Australia, the UK and the USA, Nepali people have not yet got used to telephone or internet communication means. There is a very strong cultural preference for face to face meetings. Nepali people are less likely to respond to the telephone interview unless they know the person to whom they are speaking to. All of these factors restricted me to conduct my study within the Kathmandu Valley.

My study was conducted in May till July 2011 when there was political instability in Nepal (see Chapter 2 on political and education context of Nepal for more details). At the same time, there was excessive external interference to private schools in the form of teachers' and students' union affiliated to Maoists. Also teachers and other staff working in private schools with the help of their teachers' union, Nepal-ISTU, were demanding their conditions of service similar to the public schools via strikes and frequent closing down of schools. This unstable political situation coupled with transport and communication problems, made it difficult to locate my study anywhere other than in Kathmandu itself. Although I approached many schools in the course of my study, I was not successful in gaining consent. Many private schools in Nepal do not welcome people from outside the school and so gaining schools' consent for this research was difficult. A more detailed description of this is provided in the sub-section, *beginning the research*. Ultimately, this study was conducted in two integrated private secondary schools located in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. These schools are referred to as School X and School Y in this study. An integrated secondary school runs classes from Grade 1 to Grade 10. In such schools, there are primary levels (Grade 1 to 5), lower secondary levels (Grade 6 to 8) and secondary levels (Grade 9 and 10). These types of schools are common in Nepal instead of separate primary, intermediate and secondary schools.

The Schools

School X

School X is a private school run under individual ownership and management. It is registered as a private limited company and run as a family business. At the time of this study, the owner of the school was also working as a principal, because of which I refer to him as owner/principal throughout the thesis. This particular school was established during the late 1980s and runs classes from primary to secondary level. There were two separate blocks in two separate locations: that is, a primary block for primary level and secondary block for secondary level. The primary block runs classes from nursery to Grade 5. Although primary level of schools usually involves Grade 1 to Grade 5, this school has also included a pre-primary level running nursery, lower kindergarten (LKG) and upper kindergarten (UKG) classes together with the primary level. In order to run day-to-day school activities, the primary block was headed by the vice-principal and supported by other middle level management positions such as primary co-ordinator and primary in-charge. Except for the male primary co-ordinator, all the staff of the primary block, including the vice-principal were female. The secondary block runs classes from Grade 6 to Grade 10. The block was headed by the owner/principal himself. In order to assist the principal, there was one middle level managerial position, being secondary in-charge. The classes for the secondary block run on the first level of the building, while the office of the principal was located in the ground floor of the building. Except for the female supporting staff, all the staff of the secondary level were male. This school was a small school catering for the needs of children from middle class families, with a total of about 300 students and about 20 staff.

School Y

School Y is also an integrated private secondary school registered as private limited company. The school was established during the period of rapid growth of private schools in Nepal, that is, in the early 1990s. The school is run under the umbrella name of a corporation that operates other businesses including its vertical downward and upward extension such as pre-primary level and higher secondary level. At the time of the study, this school was run by a group of people who were working in different higher level managerial positions, including the chairman, director and principal. These people were also the primary owners of the school.

This school caters to the needs of about 400 students from pre-primary to the secondary levels. The students studying in this school were generally from middle class families. There were about 50 teaching and non-teaching staff in the school. More than 80 percent of the teaching staff at the secondary level were male, while in the primary level most teaching staff were female. In addition to the primary owners, the school also has secondary owners. As per the information provided during the interview, the secondary owners of the school were mainly teaching staff having partial stakes in the school. When the school was planning to expand its operation, all the existing academic staff were asked to be involved as partners. This might have been a strategy of the existing owners to bring loyalty among the staff by providing them a stake in the school, but only a few of them opted to be involved as secondary owners. Some of these secondary owners were occupying middle level managerial positions such as head of department, vice-principal and so on.

Case Study Group

The case study group is composed of the schools' owners from two private schools working as principals (owner/principal), two secondary teachers from school Y teaching two different subjects and working as department heads of their respective subjects (one male and another female), a vice principal of school Y and co-ordinator from school X representing middle level management, one female lower secondary/primary level teacher from school Y and two female primary teachers from school X. I tried to include variety in the research participants in terms of: gender; nature of work, whether as principals, teachers and administrators; representing voice as employees and employers; and level of teaching (primary or secondary level). However, this was not always possible because the participants were volunteers. A brief description of the research participants of this study is found in Appendices G and H respectively. With these two schools' participants, I generated data and subsequently analysed the generated data. The following sections describe the research methods and processes involved, along with the data analysis process.

Research Methods

Research methods are the specific practical tools and measures used for generating data, through different forms of interaction, in qualitative research (Barbour, 2008). This study was designed to explore teachers, administrators and owners/principals' perceptions and experiences of their professional lives within the changed political context of Nepal. Case study research was the research strategy/approach adopted in this study. According to Yin (1994, 2003), the most commonly used sources of data in the case study research include interviews documents, archival records, direct observation, participants' observations and physical artefacts. In order to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers, administrators and owners/principals on the power relational aspects of their day-to-day lives, I adopted semi-structured interviews as the technique for generating information. In addition to semi-structured interview, this study also uses documentation and informal observation notes as sources of data.

Semi-Structured Interview

Interviewing includes a wide variety of forms and multiplicity of uses. On the basis of their structure, interviews can be categorised into *structured*, *semi-structured* and *unstructured interviews* (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

In *structured interviewing*, the interviewer asks "all the respondents the same series of pre-established questions with a limited set of response categories," providing "little room for variation" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 702). The researcher defines the problem before the interview (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A second type of interviewing is the *unstructured interview*, which is sometimes referred to as open ended or in-depth interview. In this interview, the interviewee has considerable control over the process of the interview (Corbin & Morse, 2003). This type of interview combines structure with flexibility (Legard & Ward, 2003). In this study, I have used interview guides to ensure proper use of limited time and to make the interview process more systematic and comprehensive (Hoepfl, 1997). Thus, this study utilises neither structured interview nor unstructured interview.

I have used a *semi-structured interview* approach because my interviews contain open-ended questions. According to Kvale (1996, pp. 5–6), "a semi-structured interview is an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions on the life world of the research participants with respect to interpreting the meaning

of the described phenomena.” Semi-structured interviews explore the perspectives (Barbour, 2008) via an interview guide (a list of questions) ensuring proper use of limited time (Hoepfl, 1997). Semi-structured interviews promote free interaction and also create opportunities to clarify misunderstandings and enable discussion through the use of open-ended questions (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Bryman (2008) describes the basic feature of semi-structured interviews as having a list of open-ended questions on the topics of interest to the researcher. This gives the participant freedom to talk to these questions in any order. It also gives a researcher more opportunity to probe ideas.

I prepared the interview guides (Appendix E) in advance and gave them to the participants along with the information sheet about my research (Appendix A). Interviews were conducted only after participants signed the informed consent (Appendix B). Each interview was digitally recorded and I also wrote field notes. Each interview lasted between thirty to sixty minutes. I began each interview with more general questions like, “How do you feel working as a teacher/administrator/principal of a private school in Nepal in the present context?” to enable the free flow of conversation during the interview. I ended each interview with the question, “Do you have anything to say that I missed out?” I present a brief description of the power relational issues that arose during interviews. The question of reciprocity is also addressed next.

Power Relational Issues

Power relations are an important factor in my data generation process. This links to my relationship with research participants and its influence (Skene, 2007). This is because the research participants provide information to the researcher on the basis of a personal relationship of trust and rapport (Booth & Booth, 1994; Oakley, 1981; Skene, 2007). Because I could develop a climate of trust during the research process, we tended to work within a positive relationship for the study (Legard & Ward, 2003).

Qualitative researchers attempt to reduce barriers between themselves and interviewees (Fontana & Frey, 2005). When relationships between researchers and participants are non-hierarchical, it is possible to find more about the participants’ views of the topic through the interview process (Oakley, 1981). This is one of the difficult issues in the actual interviewing, as the power and control over the research

issues, such as initiation, legitimating, accountability and representation, usually depends on the imposition of the researcher's agenda, interest and concern in the research process (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). In a semi-structured interview, researchers usually determine the structure and agenda of the interview, while the participants control the amount of information provided in response (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

I initiated this research project. It was my interest in exploring the experiences and perceptions of private school staff that initiated this study. As a researcher, I had the power and control over the research design, research questions, approaches for conducting semi-structured interviews, benefits from this study as well as the way research findings would be presented (Ho, 2009; Kvale, 1996). At the same time, the participants' voices were not neglected in this study. Corbin and Morse (2003) argued that the research participants want something in return for volunteering, either consciously or unconsciously. This enables participants to get considerable control over the process of the interview. By ensuring they know about consent and withdrawal, participants can control what they reveal. During interviews, participants had the option of not responding to questions and so could regulate what they choose to reveal.

Even though I studied two schools as the cases, I had approached several schools and sought permission from their owner/principals. I therefore was restricted to those who agreed. Those who took part in this study seemed interested to express their feelings, views, emotions and experiences to me. For example, the owner/principals of both the schools told me about their contributions to education, and even asked me to include this in my thesis. Most of the participant teachers were interested to tell me about problems they were facing. A feeling of openness encouraged participants to share their experiences freely with me (Clarke, 2006; Corbin & Morse, 2003).

Reciprocity

Reciprocity involves researchers giving back something to the interviewee by sharing their own views or experiences (Legard & Ward, 2003). When the interviewee/participants feel that they are not respectfully treated by the interviewer, they may not share the necessary information with the interviewer. However, it is necessary to be aware of the issues of reciprocity as a researcher (Legard & Ward,

2003). One of the essential criteria of successful interviewing is “being friendly but not too friendly” (Oakley, 1981, p. 33). Researchers need to maintain a proper balance between “getting into the hearts and minds of respondents” and keeping enough distance so that they could think clearly about “what is being said or done” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 80–81).

The researcher in qualitative interviewing plays the role of a facilitator and asks initial questions in such a way that it encourages the interviewee to express their views, feelings, experiences, and perceptions freely without any hesitation (Legard & Ward, 2003). In this study, I started the interview with a more open question to initiate the process and relax the participants. This is because I wanted participants to express their feelings, opinions, views, experiences and perceptions freely.

Documentation

In addition to interviews, documentation forms an important data source for qualitative case study (Swanborn, 2010; Yin, 2003). Documents in a qualitative case study constitute “a very heterogeneous set of sources of data” (Bryman, 2008, p. 53) that include personal documents, official documents from both public and private sources and the mass media. Personal documents may include diaries and letters in written forms and also photographs in visual forms. Similarly, official documents from public sources are documents from the state, such as government policy and other related documents. Official documents from private sources are the documents produced by organisations and companies, while mass media output may include newspaper and magazine articles (Bryman, 2004, 2008; Yin, 2003).

I included official documents from the private schools associations (e.g., private and boarding school organisations of Nepal, PABSON and Nepal institutional teachers’ unions, Nepal-ISTU). Similarly, I also have used official documents from public sources (policy documents from the government of Nepal) and mass media (such as newspaper articles about education in Nepal). Yin (2003, p. 86) has listed the following advantages of documentation as used in case study research:

- i. Stable –can be reviewed repeatedly.
- ii. Unobtrusive–not created as a result of the case study.

- iii. Exact– contains exact names, references, and details of an event.
- iv. Broad coverage–long span of time, many events and many settings.

Government documents have been helpful in examining the changes to the Nepali education landscape from the time of absolute monarchy to the constitutional monarchy, and finally to the republic. These helped me understand how private education sectors have been viewed by these different political regimes. Similarly, documents are likely to be stable as they contain written information. In spite of such strength of documentary sources, Yin (2003) points out that documents are written for some specific purpose and specific audience other than the case study purpose. Documentary sources have thus to be treated as supplementary evidence, to support other sources. Supporting this view, Atkinson and Coffey (2011, p. 79) posit that social science researchers can only understand aspects of an organisation and its operation when documentary sources are used with other sources, such as interviews and observation:

Documents are “social facts,” in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organized ways. They are not, however, transparent representation of organisational routines, decision making process or professional practices ... we cannot, for instance, learn through written records alone how an organisation actually operates day by day.

For this reason, the documents I collected from both public and private sources operated as supplements to the interview data.

Direct Observation

In direct observation, researchers observe and record what they see during field visits. Yin (2003) suggested that qualitative researchers have opportunities for direct observation while making field visits to case study sites during the interview. Adding further, Yin (2003) noted that qualitative researchers (being an instrument of research) will experience some relevant behaviour or environmental conditions that encourage them to observe. Bryman (2008) suggested that observational research can take a number of forms. These are as a structured/systematic observation or it could be participant or non-participant observation. It can also be unstructured.

Structured/systematic observation is a technique a researcher uses to formulate rules for observation and recording behaviour. These rules clarify what is being observed and how it is recorded. In contrast, *unstructured observation* uses no observation schedule for recording behaviours. *Participant observation* involves a prolonged immersion in a social setting where researchers observe research participants, while in *non-participant observation*, the researcher do not participate in the social setting being observed.

My study involves a combination of unstructured and non-participant observation. I used a notebook to note my impressions of participants and my reactions during the interview (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In addition, I also noted the position and place of the school's buildings and the location of the interview along with the furnishing of the room. For example, in case study school X, the owner/principal's office was located on the ground floor of the secondary block, while classes for the secondary level were run on the first floor of the same building. In case study school Y, classes were run on the first, second and third floor of the same building, and the offices of each of the owners occupying different managerial positions were located on each floor. This field-note formed my noticing part of data analysis, which is discussed later in the data analysis.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) say that when a qualitative interview is combined with observation, researchers get a comprehensive overview of everyday activities of the research participants. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that detailed interviewing and observation allow qualitative researcher to get closer to the research participants' perspectives. As Yin (2003) suggests, I used observational evidence as additional information about the issues that emerge from the semi-structured interview. Such additional information from observations was recorded through field notes.

Field Notes

Field notes form one of the important modes of the data generation process in the study. It enabled me to record ideas during the interview process. Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 139) define field notes used in qualitative research as "detailed non-judgemental concrete description" while things are happening. Mulhall (2003) argues that the way in which researchers collect data, write field notes and analyse data depends on what they are trying to uncover. A researcher's professional and

personal worldview is likely to determine what they view as important to add to field notes. Elaborating on this view further, Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011, p. 9) argue that, "...differences between field notes descriptions result not simply from different ways of filtering or selecting different events; different field notes accounts...rely on different lenses to interpret, frame and represent these matters." As Mulhall (2003) noted field notes can consist of aspects such as: what actual buildings look like and how they are used, how people behave, interact, dress and move, daily routines and activities, special events, conversations, lists of events occurring in chronically both in the field and before entering the field, and a personal/reflective diary.

I had my own way of writing field notes. Some researchers might write field notes after leaving the field, relying on memory. Others might write field notes while in the field such as during the interviews (Emerson et al., 2011). I used field notes to record the condition of buildings, their location, furnishing rooms, and how participants behave during interviews. I used these notes to reflect on the activities that took place during interviews. These notes helped me to understand something of power differentials in schools while field notes I took during and after interviews enabled me to engage in reflexivity (Finlay, 2002).

Researchers have different perspectives regarding the importance of the field notes as used in qualitative research. Some consider field notes as a necessary part of qualitative data generation process, while others consider field notes as secondary sources necessary to record specific events and behaviours (Mulhall, 2003). In my study, field notes acted as supplementary sources of data, helping me notice and think about further data collection and what to check in future interviews (Seidel, 1998).

Beginning the Research

Here I describe the steps and issues in my research. Semi-structured interviews with observation and documentation generated my data. What follows is a brief description of how I recruited research participants and the accompanying research processes involved.

Gaining Consent

In order to seek volunteers from schools, I needed the principal's permission. This was not successful at the first school I approached, so I approached another. This gatekeeping role of the owner/principal demonstrated the power of the position. The owner/principal from second school I approached, for example, rejected my proposal, stating that there were no political activities going on in her school and it would be of no use conducting a study there. The owner/principals of the first 2 schools approached exercised their gatekeeping power. I then approached the third school.

In the third school, the owner/principal also indirectly rejected my offer, stating that the teachers were busy and cannot give one-to-one interviews. Instead, he suggested that I develop a questionnaire and give it to teachers to fill in. Since this was not my research approach I did not pursue this. I then approached a fourth school, discussing my study with the owner/principal. This was a school I had worked in once and was familiar with the owner/principal and some staff. This owner/principal agreed and I was invited to talk to staff once the owner/principal had viewed the information sheet (Appendix A) in which I provided information about the purpose of the study, participants' rights and confidentiality issues. Most of the teachers and one administrator were willing to volunteer. Because so many teachers volunteered, I had to apply certain criteria to select the staff participants from this group. These included:

- (a) length of service in this school;
- (b) nature of their work as administrators, teachers and owner/principals;
- (c) their gender;
- (d) balance of primary/secondary sector.

This process led me to choose 1 male teacher teaching at secondary level out of 5 volunteers, 2 female teachers teaching at primary level out of 7 volunteers, 1 administrator and the owner/principal as the participants of my study from school X. I selected only 3 teachers out of the 12 teachers who volunteered to participate. Some of the other teachers who had volunteered were too new to the school. This meant that they did not meet my length of service criterion. This was important, for I needed to talk to those who had been in the school for some time and taught through at least one of the significant Nepali political changes. The new teachers' short length of service would not have been helpful.

I approach several schools while I was generating data from school X but I started my data generation process in the next school only after I completed my data collection in school X. As indicated in the figure 3, I had to adapt my initial plan before approaching other schools, as discussed next.

Initial Plan and Changing Contexts

My initial plan was to explore power relational issues in private secondary schools within the Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur). As per the plan, I was consequently meeting principals of other private secondary schools in Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur. I was familiar with the owner/principal of one of these schools, so it was not difficult for me to approach him. This principal was once an active member of the Private and Boarding School Organisations of Nepal (PABSON), and I hoped he could tell me about their association and I could also carry out my study there, which he agreed to allow. However, I did not conduct my study in that particular school because of the emerging evidence from the first school I studied.

During my interaction with the teachers and principal in this first school, along with initial analysis of data, several issues emerged. One of the issues was that private schools with single ownership like this school were finding it difficult to survive in a Maoists political context. Due to changed political conditions, teachers in private schools began demanding conditions of service equal to government schoolteachers partly because unionisation provided these teachers with a voice they previously did not have. Small schools with single ownership said that they were unable to provide such facilities. Most of the staff and the principal of this first school told me that schools with many owners and huge investment could provide teachers facilities similar to government schools. I therefore thought I should shift my study to a school with a large number of owners, so that I could find out what was happening in bigger private schools using my existing professional networks.

To do so, I made a list of schools with a large number of owners located within Kathmandu valley, then approached a friend who had studied his masters' degree with me, as he was also running one of these larger schools. I learned that there were about 100 partners in his school. Once I floated the idea of the school being part of my study, I visited his school the next day, briefly meeting all the

owners who worked there in various managerial positions. After providing each with an information sheet (Appendix A), having explained the study's purpose, all of them agreed to allow me to conduct the study. I then sought permission to conduct a brief staff meeting the next day. In the staff meeting, I again explained the purpose of my research and handed out copies of the information sheet (Appendix A). From this, I recruited one male secondary level teacher, one female secondary level teacher, one female lower secondary level teacher, one vice principal (administrator) and the owner/ principal as research participants. The process for undertaking the project is summarised in the following diagram:

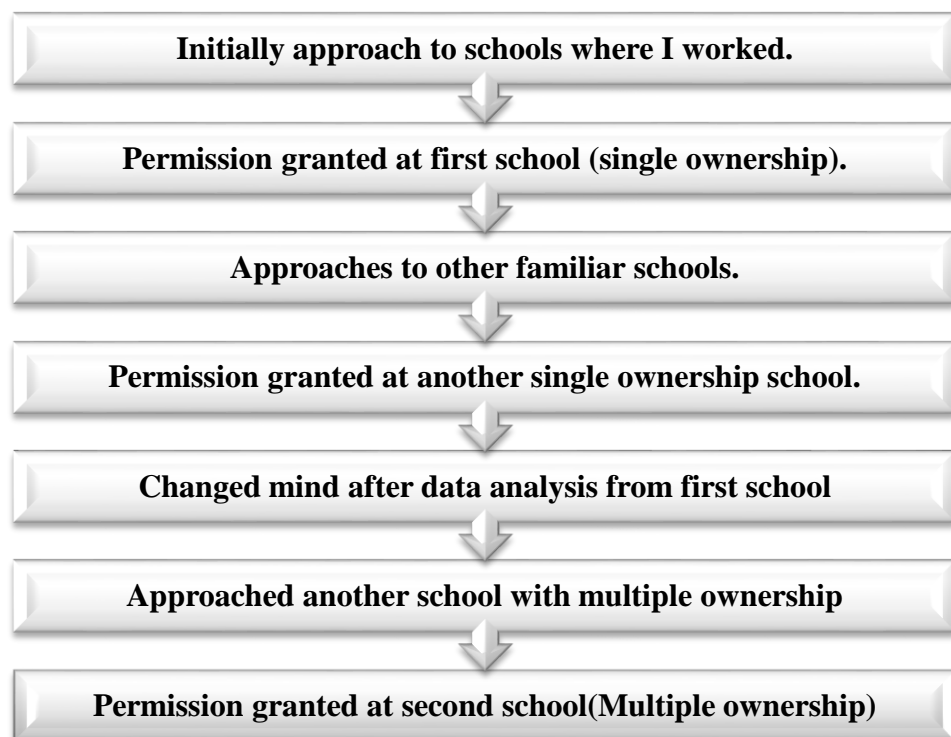


Figure 3: Summary of the research process

So far I have discussed various data generation techniques I adopted for generation of the data from two private secondary schools. I also outlined issues and steps involved in the data generation process. Next, I outline how I analysed the generated data.

Analysis Process

Analysis is examining something in order to know what it is, how it works and using the knowledge to make inference about the studied context (Corbin & Strauss,

2008). It involves making sense of data in terms of the participants' perspectives, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Cohen et al., 2007). In order to make sense of the data, the researchers must understand the world from the participants' perspective. In other words, they need to "chew, digest and feel" the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 140). Thus, qualitative data analysis is often described as a "non-mathematical process of interpretation" that enables researchers to discover concepts and their relationship in the raw data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11). There is no single way to analyse qualitative data, and these approaches or methods depend on the purpose of the research. This study uses a combination of Seidel's (1998) Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) model and grounded theory methodology for data analysis.

According to Seidel (1998), qualitative data analysis consists of the simple process of noticing, collecting and thinking about interesting things. The process of noticing, collecting and thinking does not take place in a sequence. When we are thinking about new things we also start noticing new things and then collect things. Thus, this process is "interactive and progressive, recursive and holographic" (Seidel, 1998, p. 2). This process also occurred during data collection, leading me to change my initial plan as noted earlier.

In my study, I conducted the interviews with teachers, administrators and owner/principals of two schools. The interview was digitally recorded and field notes were also made. After each interview, I came back to my residence and wrote brief notes about the day. These notes were based on my jotted notes during the interview and recollections after the interview. These enabled me to reflect on what the participants said and how they said this. In these notes, I usually noted the feelings, expressions, the flow of the interview, the body language of the interviewee, the place of the interview and the time taken for the interview. I used my field notes to write about the impressions of my participants and my reactions during the interview (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), which has been outlined in the critical reflection on my role as a researcher. In addition to interviews, documents from the teachers and principals' organisations, policy documents from Ministry of Education, newspaper articles related to private schools and research documents were used as supplementary data sources. I focused my attention on repeatedly re-reading the generated and collected data (Seidel, 1998), so that I could enter into the world of the participants and better understand and make sense of their

experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). During this stage, different questions, as suggested by Charmaz (2006), were asked of the data, including:

- What process (es) is at issue here and how can I define it?
- How did it develop?
- How did the research participants act while involved in this process?
- What did the research participants think and feel while involved in this process?
- What are the consequences of the process?
- What happen as a result?
- What do I now understand?

Since all interviews were recorded and transcribed, it increased my exposure to the data, allowing me to repeatedly interrogate the data (Skene, 2007; Sullivan, 1998). In developing the transcript, I listened to the recordings four to five times, taking me about three days for each interview to transcribe. The interview transcript was then given to the participants for member-check along with the letter for the release of their transcript for use (Appendix C). In this letter, participants were given the option of accepting the transcript as raw data without change, accepting it after incorporating the changes they wished to make, or withdraw from the research. Most of the participants agreed to return the transcript along with the letter after two days.

Next, I returned to the schools to meet the participants. None of the participants withdrew from the study after they got the transcript of the interview, which was pleasing. Three from school Y accepted the transcript after suggesting necessary changes, and the remaining two participants from school Y and five participants from school X accepted the transcript as raw data. When they returned the interview transcript along with the letter for the release of use of the transcript, I conducted a follow up interview, as I had already indicated would happen. The follow up interview lasted about twenty to thirty minutes. This interview's purpose was to clarify anything that was confusing for me in the transcript. This interview was also supported by a list of open-ended questions that participants could also refer to.

The issues that emerged from first school data enabled me to change my plan and approach another school. Thus, I was involved in a process of moving back and forth between empirical data and emerging analysis and this was hugely

beneficial to the process of data analysis (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010). This idea aligns with the ‘grounded theory methodology’ of data analysis and resonates with Seidel’s (1998) QDA components and processes.

Grounded theory insists that a theory is generated by back and forth interplay with data (Glaser, 2007). Grounded theory is sometimes referred to as a research process and sometimes as the end product of the research. Grounded theory is theory developed from the use of grounded theory methodology (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010), beginning with data and consisting of systematic and flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing data for generating theory grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005). The process of “constant comparison and theoretical sampling” is considered as the “twin foundation of grounded theory” (Holton, 2010, p. 278). Thus, the grounded theory “mantra is grounded theory emerges from data” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 32). In order to link theory with practice, I used grounded theory methodology, especially coding systems, and develop concepts from experiences and perceptions of schools’ staff on the power relational issues of everyday life of schools.

Coding is the process of assigning labels to segments of data that signify what each is about. Coding enables a researcher to distil data, sort them, and provides an opportunity to compare data (Charmaz, 2006). Coding involves interacting with data using several techniques, such as asking questions about the data, making comparisons between data, deriving concepts related to data and developing those concepts in terms of the properties and dimensions of data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Coding is often referred to as “mining the data, digging beneath the surface to discover the hidden treasures contained within the data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 66). Among the different types of coding, I have concentrated on using both open and focused coding for my data analysis.

Through open coding, researchers give temporary labels, called codes, to a particular phenomenon (Clarke, 2005). Open coding helps the researchers/analysts to remain alert to all the potential and possibilities in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). It can be done through incident by incident coding or line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2006). Line-by-line coding involves “close examination of data,” word by word and even phrase by phrase (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 119). In this study, I have used line-by-line coding as a form of open coding. Line-by-line coding of interview transcripts enabled me to stay focused on what the data says (Holton,

2010). This line-by-line coding helped to generate themes such as differences between working now and 15-20 years ago; the unionisation of teachers; gaining teachers' rights, and so on (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After line-by-line coding of the whole interview transcripts, I undertook focused coding.

Focused coding involves using the most significant and frequent earlier codes developed through line-by-line coding. This requires making a “decision about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely” (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 57–58). Thus, focused coding synthesises and explains larger segments of data. This helped me develop themes such as the changing working environment in private schools, unionisation of teachers and teachers' empowerment through focused coding, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: An example of open and focused coding

Line by line coding (open coding)	Focused coding
Differences between working as private school teachers/staff now and 15-20 years ago; unionisation of teachers now; gaining teachers' rights; facilities for teachers 15-20 years ago determined by individual negotiation but now through group negotiation; during monarchy owner/principal was more autocratic but now more liberal	Changing working environment in private schools; unionisation of teachers; Teachers' empowerment

The focused coding enabled me to synthesise a larger section of the data from line-by-line coding into more cohesive manageable sections, as shown in the Table 4. The initial themes, such as differences working as private school staff now and 15-20 years ago, gaining teachers' rights, the owner/principal being more autocratic during monarchy but now more democratic and so on, were further crystallised and reduced to themes such as changing working environment in private schools, unionisation of teachers, and teachers' empowerment from focussed coding.

After the focused coding, I used diagrams to explore emerging themes. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 217) define diagrams used in qualitative data analysis as “visual tools” used for developing relationship among the concepts. Different types of diagrams, such as charts, maps and figures can be used to develop the relationship between the themes (Charmaz, 2006). An example is shown below.

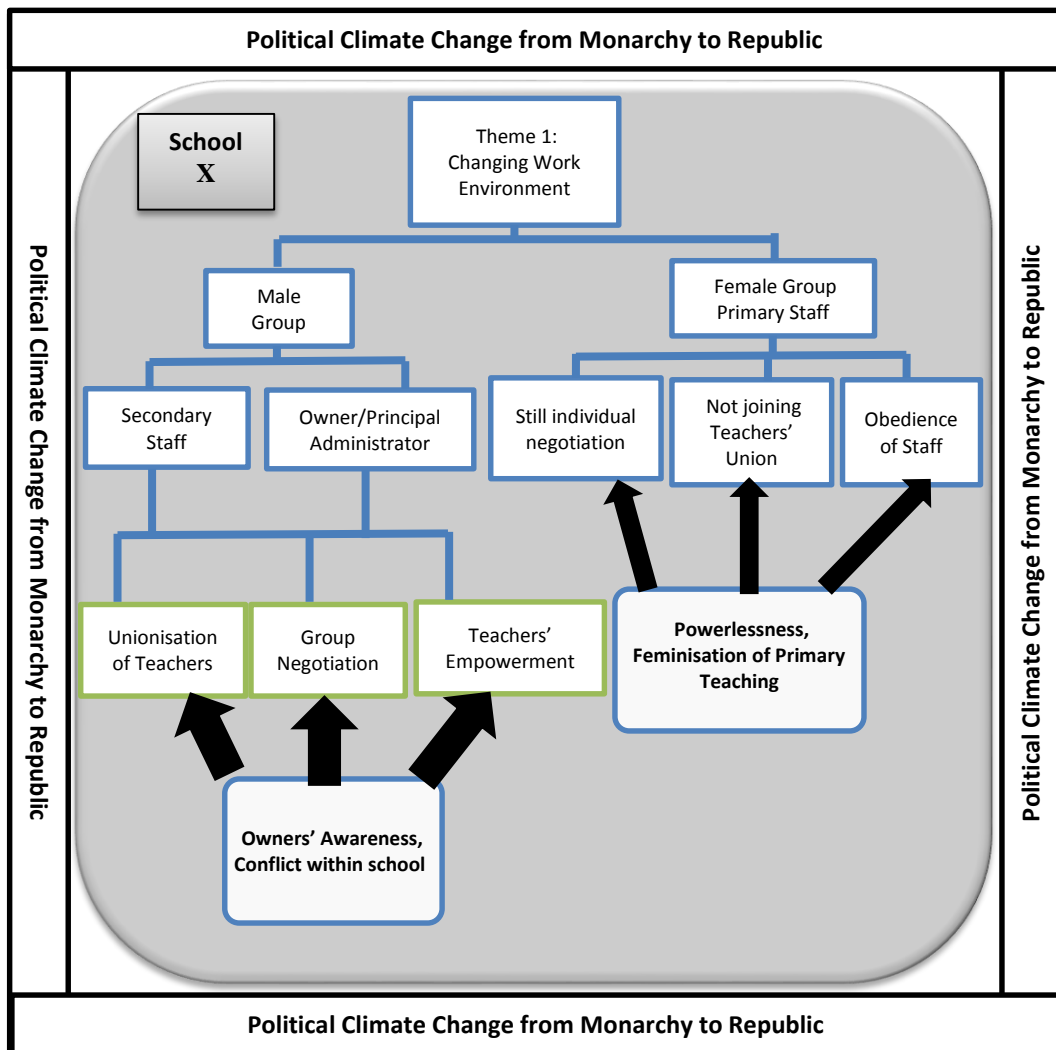


Figure 4: An example of further exploration of emerging themes using diagrams

The diagrammatic representation of the emerging themes enabled me to broaden my thinking about the data. As suggested by Charmaz (2006), diagrams enabled me to get a visual image of categories and their relationships. The themes such as changing working environment, unionisation of teachers and teachers' empowerment, developed through focussed coding, were refined through diagrammatic representation. Diagrams enabled me to broaden my thinking, better understand what the data was meaning. This led me to decide that a key issue was about changing working environment with the change in political climate of the country. Then I categorised this theme into two groups, on the basis of the participants' responses in school X. Those participants who believed that the working environment has changed due to political change were placed under *male group* (that is, male secondary level teacher, male owner/principal and male

administrator). This group stated that there is now unionisation of teachers, a system of group negotiation while determining facilities for staff, and it has enhanced teachers' empowerment. However, there were still some staff members (two women teachers of primary level) who believed that nothing had changed. The reason they had given was non-involvement of teachers in the teachers' union and individual negotiation in the school. This created some gender differences that I may otherwise have missed.

Using these diagrammatic representations, I wrote extended informal analytical notes, called memos (Charmaz, 2006), to further develop my ideas about the data. Corbin and Strauss (2008) define memos as an in-depth thought about data, usually written after leaving the field. Similarly, Holton (2010) defines memos as theoretical notes about the data that provide conceptual connection between the categories. Memos help us to capture our thoughts, make comparisons and connections, crystallising the research questions and providing directions (Charmaz, 2006). Thus, memo writing is often considered as intermediate stage between coding data and writing a thesis (Charmaz, 2011). An example of how I wrote memos to crystallise my thoughts about the research is shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Tabular description of the relationship between themes, sub-themes and memos

Themes/ Categories	Sub-themes/sub- categories	Participants' quotes	Memos
<i>Teachers: having a voice and being heard</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Empowerment and powerlessness ii. Unionisation of teachers iii. Interest conflicts 	<p>“In the past especially during monarchy, private school teachers were not organised, but now we have teachers union and some of our rights are secured” (Male secondary teacher)</p> <p>“Even though there is environment of teacher union, this is not seen in our school. We still based our agreement on individual negotiation; different positions are there only to show the outsider. The school owners still retain all the authority, people occupying different positions do the work of reporting day to day activities to the owner” (Primary level female teacher)</p> <p>“These days, teachers working in private schools have established a teachers’ union; during monarchy private schools were being operated from the mutual understanding of founder principal and staff. But now we need to deal with a third party i.e. teachers union” (Principal)</p>	<p>Almost all the staff of the school X including the owners/ principal expressed that the working environment within the private school has changed due to the political change in the country. They stated that there is unionisation of teachers in the private schools these days. Such unionisation has enhanced teachers’ empowerment (unionisation and empowerment of teachers).</p> <p>During the monarchy, the school was run by negotiation between teachers and the owners, but now the owners need to negotiate with the teachers’ union. Now the private school owners are aware that they need to deal carefully with teachers. The owners/principal stated that the teachers are demanding facilities equal to government school teachers and they are not able to provide them. So there is situation of conflict within the school.</p>

The memos further broadened my thinking about the data. From the diagrams and memo writing, I found that the whole issue was about teachers having a voice and being heard, and this became my main category. Under this category I developed certain sub-categories, such as empowerment and powerlessness, unionisation of teachers, and interest conflicts.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methods and processes involved in data generation along with the methods and processes used in the analysis of the generated data. It began with a brief description of the case study schools, followed by the case study groups and continued with the description of interview, observation and documentation as the research methods used for generation of data. This chapter also discussed different types of interview and highlighted why I chose semi-structured interviews for the generation of the data from the case study schools. This chapter has also provided a description of how I recruited the research participants and the research process involved during this period. This includes the role of school's owners as a gatekeeper and the criteria I used for recruiting the participants from all those who agreed to volunteer. I also highlighted how my initial plan of conducting research in the schools familiar to me did not work and how the context of the study changed after I conducted my study in school X, and accordingly I selected another school (Y) for the study.

The chapter ends with the methods and processes involved in the analysis of the generated data. This part described how a combination of Seidel's (1998) model of data analysis and grounded theory methodology for analysing the data has been used in this study. This involves marrying Seidel's QDA model with grounded theory methodology for analysing the generated data. After analysing the generated data, several themes and sub-themes emerged. In the next chapter, I present the findings of this study on the basis of the themes and sub-themes which emerged from the data analysis process.

Chapter 7: Research Findings

The purpose of my study was to explore the changing perceptions and experiences of teachers, administrators and principals of two Nepali private schools in the changing political context of Nepal. Several themes, such as *management and ownership*, *teachers: having a voice and being heard* and *the issue of regulation and deregulation* emerged as a result of the data analysis process outlined in Chapter 6. In this chapter, I examine the findings on the basis of the emergent themes and include supporting quotes from the research participants.

The findings are focused on three broad themes: (a) management and ownership, (b) teachers: having a voice and being heard and (c) the issues of regulation and deregulation of private schools. The first theme, *management and ownership*, is examined further using several sub-themes such as *power concentration*, *negative motivation* and *interest conflicts*. Similarly, the second broad theme, *teachers: having a voice and being heard* includes several sub-themes such as *unionisation and empowerment*, *powerlessness*, *gender*, *curriculum and assessment*, and *professional development*. Finally, the third broad theme, *the issue of regulation and deregulation* has sub-themes such as *policy confusion*, and *regulation and deregulation of private schools*.

Management and Ownership

A theme emerging from my data was the non-separation of management and ownership. For example, in school X, the top-level positions in the school (the principal and vice principal) were occupied by owners. Middle level managerial positions such as secondary in-charge, primary coordinator and primary in-charge, were occupied by non-owner staff. Similarly, teachers with other supporting administrative staff working in both primary and secondary area of the school were also non-owners. The management structure of case study school X, shown below (Figure 5), demonstrates the non-separation of management and ownership.

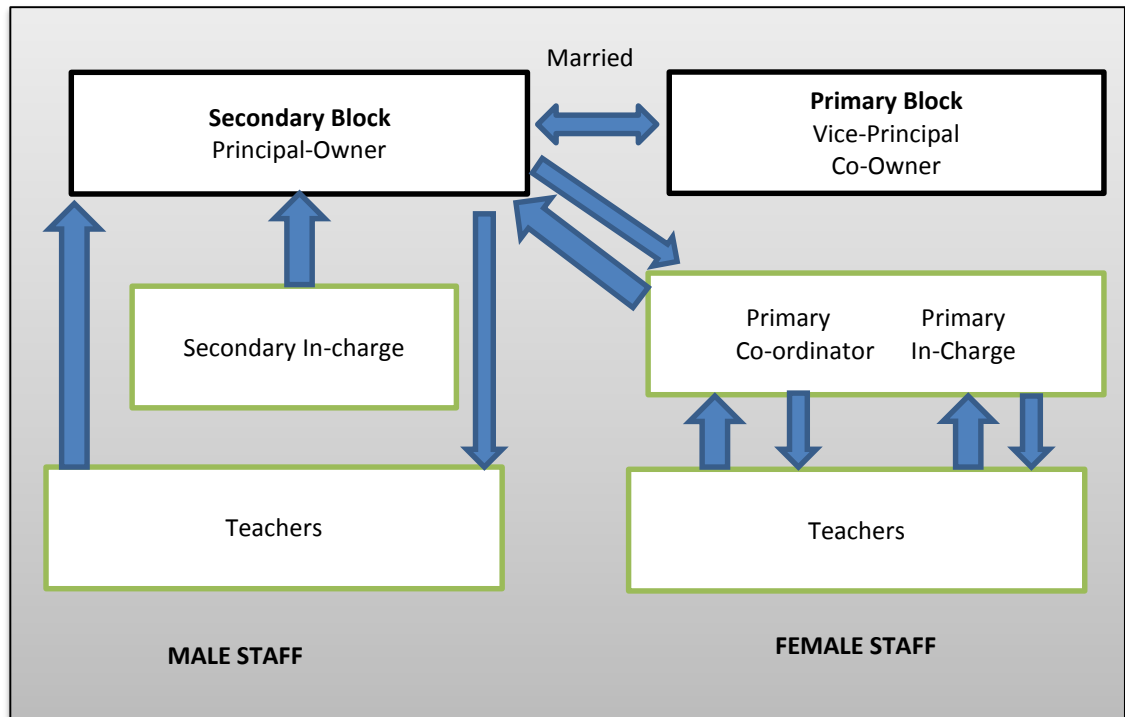


Figure 5: Management structure of school X

As shown above in Figure 5, the case study school X consists of two separate blocks (primary and secondary) for primary and secondary levels. The main person with authority was the owner/principal. His physical office was located in the secondary block. To assist the owner/principal, a secondary in-charge was appointed. Except for the primary coordinator, almost all staff of the primary block were women. In comparison, almost all the staff of secondary block were men, except for supporting administrative staff. The head of the primary block was the vice principal, the wife of owner/principal. The primary coordinator and primary in-charge roles assist the vice principal in the day-to-day activities of that part of the school. The primary coordinator and primary in-charge in the primary block were the middle level managers (administrators) in this study, but the actual working of the school suggests that these roles have different functions. This is illuminated later in this chapter with supporting quotes from people occupying these roles.

The downward pointing solid arrow in Figure 5 indicates the flow of information and orders from top to bottom of the hierarchy, whereas the upward pointing solid arrow indicates the flow of communication in the form of reporting from bottom towards the top. Actual day-to-day working of the school was somewhat different from what was indicated by the management structure of the

school (Figure 5). For example, the teachers of the secondary block directly reported to the owner/principal even though they had a secondary block in-charge. Similarly, instead of reporting to the vice principal, the primary coordinator reported directly to the owner/principal as indicated by the upward pointed diagonal arrow.

Although the structure of case study school Y (Figure 6) was different from school X, similar findings were evident in case study school Y. There were five primary owners in case study school Y. At the time of this study, four occupied managerial positions, such as chairman, finance director, director and principal and had the real authority. However, the authority and responsibility of each of the positions was not clear and some staff indicated that sometimes they got confused about who was responsible for what because of unclear authority and responsibility lines between the four primary owners. For example, a secondary teacher said, *“Sometimes directions/orders from one owner contradict with that of another.”* Another secondary teacher of the same school supported this view and stated that sometimes four owners occupying different managerial positions had provided four types of directions/orders. Staff were left confused about whose directions to follow and whose to ignore. However, the owner/principal in this regard stated that the owner/principal (he) was responsible for all the academic activities of the school, and to assist him in the academic activities there was a vice principal. So there was no problem in coordination even though they had four owners occupying different managerial positions. Middle level managerial positions, such as Head of Department (HOD), vice principal, were occupied by non-owner staff; one exception was the vice principal, who had a partial ownership stake. The solid arrow pointing downwards indicates the flow of communication in the form of directions/orders from top to bottom. Similarly, an upward pointed solid arrow indicates the flow of communication in the form of reporting from the bottom towards the higher level.

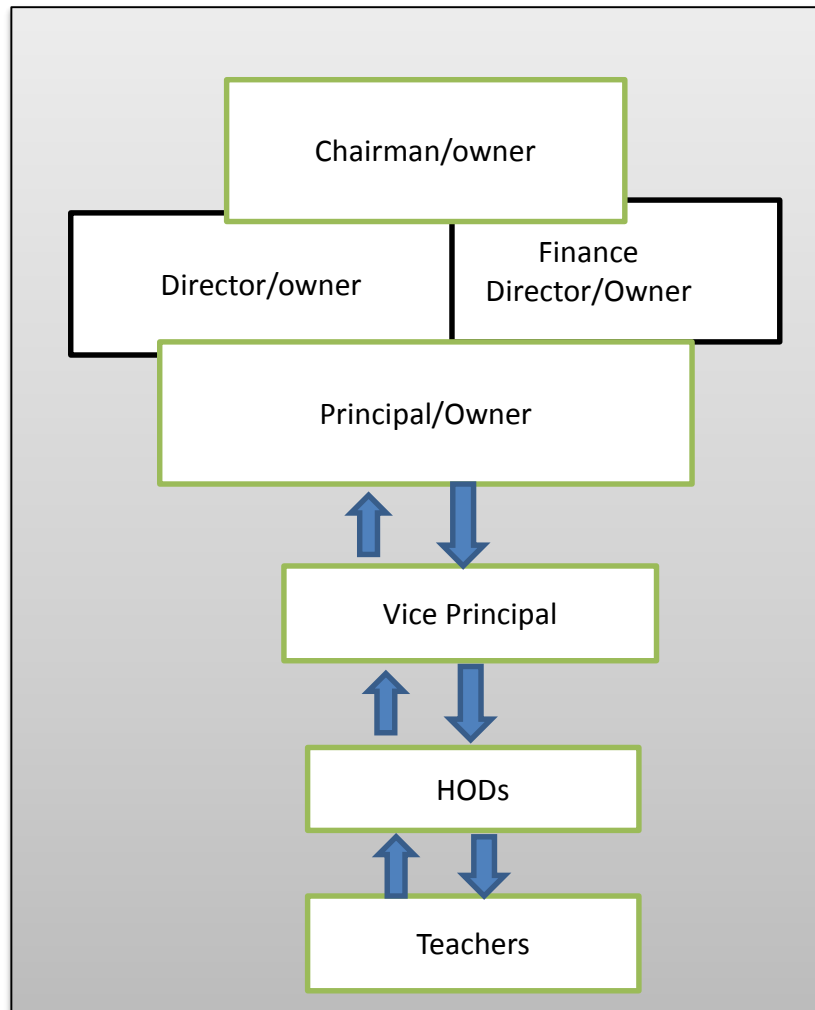


Figure 6: Management structure of school Y

The management structure of school Y also suggests that management and ownership was not separated. The theme, *management and ownership*, is explained on the basis of the following sub-themes, which are supported by participants' quotes.

Power Concentration

The staff participants of both case study schools understood that power was concentrated in the school owners. Although some lower level managerial positions were created and distributed to the non-owner staff, these non-owner staff occupying such positions perceived that they had more workload (responsibility) and less authority (power to make decisions) than those above them. They were required to report the day-to-day activities to the school's owner (owner/principal)

and seek permission for decisions. The owner/principals gave orders and directions to their staff as they have power (authority) to enforce rules and give orders. Other staff, including administrators and teachers, only appear to have an obligation to do the work (responsibility) for which they are held accountable. A secondary teacher at case study school X described the scope and role of the secondary in-charge:

We have a secondary in-charge in our secondary block. But the role/authority and scope of this position is not clear. We see the person in this position just acting as an agent of the owner/principal. The person does the work of reporting day-to-day activities of the secondary block to the owner/principal. The person is acting as a medium for the owner/principal to oversee our activities, instead of owner/ principal directly doing this.

This secondary level teacher provided information about the scope and role of the secondary in-charge. His perception of the authority and responsibility of the middle level manager was that the secondary in-charge had workloads without proper authority. He saw this position of secondary in-charge as a strategy of the owner/principal for operating day-to-day activities of the secondary block. In addition to teaching science to the secondary level students, the secondary in-charge was responsible for reporting day-to-day activities of the secondary block to the owner/principal. This was also indicated by the owner/principal of the school, which is presented later with supporting quotes. This secondary level teacher felt that the person occupying this position cannot make decisions related to class organisation and student discipline of the secondary block and also cannot give orders and instructions to the secondary level staff. For example, whenever student discipline related issues arose in the secondary block, these teachers needed to report to the owner/principal instead of the secondary block in-charge. This suggested that the role of secondary block in-charge was that of surveillance of the secondary level staff. He appears to be acting as a means of transferring information about activities of that part of school. The observational data also points to this.

The office of the owner/principal was located on the ground floor, while classes were run on the first floor of the building; the lack of physical presence of the owner/principal might be the reason for creating this middle level managerial position without clear authority. Middle management appears to function as a conduit of surveillance of teacher practices by the owner/principal. It also highlights the use of space as a manifestation of power relations. The direction of flow of

information was upward to the owner/principal, with surveillance as a practice of control and supervision of the staff. Similarly, the primary coordinator of the same school stated the scope and role of his position, saying that:

As a coordinator, I handle the accounts section, take parents complaints, suggestions and feedback; and arrange parent-teacher meetings. I report all the activities of the primary block to the owner/principal twice a day in person and other times via phone as per the situation.

The primary coordinator perceived that he had an important place in this block's management. His workloads indicated that he coordinates the activities of the primary block as per the role of his positions. However, reporting every activity twice a day to the owner/principal raises different questions about the scope of his role as a coordinator. To make this further clear, I asked him, "How do you feel working as a coordinator of a private school in the present situation?" at which he said:

There are lots of challenges working as a coordinator [administrator] these days. Parents often complain that the school is charging higher fees and teachers, on the other hand, complain that their salary is not increasing as per the increase in students fees. I can do nothing other than listen to these complaints on a daily basis and report it to the owner/principal.

The quotes from the coordinator of the primary block clearly indicate that even though he has been given a middle level management position with different responsibilities of the primary block, there seems to be collusion in his position. Although he pretends to be powerful in his role, he seems powerless to act as indicated by his statement, "*I can do nothing other than listen to ... complaints on a daily basis and reporting to the owner/principal.*" Similar to the secondary block in-charge, it looks like his role is that of surveillance of primary staff. The direction of the flow of information was upwards towards the owner/principal. This also suggests concentration of power with the school's owner/principal. The primary level staff expressed their frustration of such power concentration. One female primary level teacher said:

These days we rarely have staff meeting together with the owner/principal. At least we need to have one meeting with the owner/principals at the end of one session and before the beginning of another session. But we have not had such a meeting for long; may be the owner/principal thinks we will put forward our demands when we have such a meeting and avoids it.

This quote indicates that the primary level staff are being neglected by the school's authority. There is lack of consultation, cooperation and leadership from the owner/principal. The primary co-ordinator of the same school supported this idea by stating that his job as an administrator is becoming more and more challenging, indicating that although he was given the role of middle level management, he does not have real power to make decisions when required. Another female primary teacher from the same school stated:

The owner/principal does not care about our primary block. He says that this block is under the responsibility of the vice principal but I have not seen her being active in school related activities. The coordinator does everything and reports about our activities to the owner/principal.

Maintaining the position of vice-principal, as the head of the primary block, without proper authority and responsibility seems to be sinecure position that effectively concentrates more money in the owners. Although the vice principal was the co-owner of the school, she does not seem to have actual authority. It is interesting to note that even though the vice principal was the head of primary block, the authority was retained by the owner/principal because of which the primary coordinator reports to the owner/principal about the activities of the primary block daily. The primary block head (vice principal) appear to be a figurehead rather than someone with authority to act. In addition to the primary coordinator, there was another middle level management (administrator) position, the primary block in-charge. When I asked the primary block in-charge about the scope and role of her position, she stated, *"In addition to teaching regularly in the primary block, I prepare routines and arrange classes. I also do briefings about how to work to the incoming new teachers."* This suggests that the primary in-charge's workload was confined to the classroom activities and interaction with other teachers. In addition to teaching, she was given workload/responsibility of managing classes. It raises questions about the motive of the school's owner/principal in creating positions in

middle level management without delegating authority. The owner/principal of the same school stated about the overall management of the school that:

The primary coordinator reports to me twice a day about the activities of the primary block. Whenever there is any problem in the primary block, the coordinator reports to me via phone and I give directions to act. Similarly, the secondary block in-charge reports to me twice a day about activities of the block.

The above quote from the owner/principal clearly states that the owner/principal has authority and the primary head, who is the vice principal, has no room to show leadership or take the initiative in matters relating to the school. Although the vice principal was the co-owner of the school, maintaining her position as a figurehead might be related to gender issues, which will be discussed further in the upcoming discussion chapter. Similar situations were noticed among non-owner staff occupying different managerial positions, including the secondary in-charge, the primary in-charge and the primary coordinator. Their main management role appears to be passing information to the owner principal in addition to their normal day-to-day work of teaching and learning.

The quotes from the owner/principal and staff of case study school X indicate that the owner/principal retained all the authority and the non-owner staff have obligation to do work without enough authority to decide when it becomes necessary. The non-owner staff working as middle level managers, such as secondary in-charge and primary coordinator, needed the permission of owner/principal for doing each and every activity. As indicated from the statement of one of the primary women teachers, *“Whenever we have to make any decision in the primary block, the coordinator of this block visits the owner/principal in the secondary block and he returns with a decision which he conveys to us,”* they have responsibility for performing work, but when it comes to decision making they needed to ask the owner/principal. The non-owner staff occupying different managerial positions do the work of reporting every activity to the owner/principal, suggesting that the owner does not delegate any part of the management of the school. The activity of non-owner staff seems to be passively nurtured by the stranglehold of the owner/principal. This could be an illustration of the legacy of the monarchy on how people respond to those in perceived or actual authority. This also indicates the existence of a hierarchal structure with chains of commands from the top level (mostly owner/principal) to the bottom level of schools.

Data from case study school Y reinforced the finding of a concentration of power with the school owners. The perception of non-owner staff that only the owners have power while non-owner staff are powerless in their work was reflected in what the research participants in school Y had to say. Talking about the overall school management, an administrator/ vice principal of the school said:

Every subject has its own department with a department head. The head of department (HOD) of each subject has complete responsibility about his/her department. The head of each department brings different issues about their department and we discuss this and make a final decision.

The quote from this administrator of school Y seems to be at odds with the school X staff member's argument of the decision making process being top down. When we take the information from the administrator at face value, it appears that this school uses collaborative or democratic approaches in making final decisions. However, the question here is whether this relates to the delegation of authority from top-level management to the middle level management. The administrator's quote suggested the HODs were given workloads, which involve looking after teaching and learning activities related to their department. However, it seems that the heads of department do not have authority to make final decisions, as suggested from the statement of the vice principal of the school, "*The heads of department bring different issues about their department to us [owner/principal and vice principal] and we discuss this before making a final decision.*" If heads of departments were given adequate authority, there would be no need to take department issues to the vice principal or the owner/principal. Another example follows. A secondary teacher, working as the head of department, said that the work of HOD was to look after teaching and learning activities in their related subjects, emerging issues and problems, and students' performance in the internal tests. For example, HOD of social studies looks after the teaching and learning activities related to social studies via discussion with other teachers teaching social studies. However, the teacher added that the owners still do not delegate decision making authority to the employed staff:

In the past, one of the school owners used to work as ‘academic director’ and look after all the activities of all subjects. Now we have HOD for each subjects and the person [non-owner staff] occupying the position of HOD are responsible for all the activities of their subjects. He/she has lots of workload as HOD in addition to normal teaching and learning activities, but when it comes to making decisions related to the subject, he/she has to consult the owner/principal.

These comments suggest that the school’s owners changed their management strategy in response to the political change in the country. Although different middle level management positions had been created and distributed to the non-owner staff, people occupying these positions effectively were unable to make decisions on anything substantial. This means that the heads of department were given lots of work but little authority for making decisions when required. For example, although HODs were responsible for overseeing teaching and learning activities, the curriculum/pedagogy decision were made by school’s owners. Such unbalanced authority-responsibility distribution might contribute to the ineffectiveness of the middle level managers. Similarly, another secondary teacher said:

Even though it is theoretically said that employers need to take employees’ suggestion and feedback, in practice the story is different. It depends on national policy, parents’ thinking and employers’ thinking.

These quotes indicated that even after the unionisation of private schoolteachers, owners retained authority while distributing to teachers and other staff, including the middle level managers (represented by HODs), more responsibility/workload but less authority. Non-owner staff felt that they were powerless in their jobs. Even though there were different middle level managerial positions, they appear to exist to undertake managerial work under direction from the top. Final decisions for anything substantial remained with the school owners. Owner/principals seem to be using the positions of administrators, such as head of departments and vice-principals, as a means of observation and surveillance of their schools’ day-to-day activities.

This led to high level of staff dissatisfaction, even as they continued working in their roles. Increasing unemployment, coupled with different hurdles associated with jobs in public school systems, forced these teachers to take jobs in private

schools at any cost. Although there is no exact information about the unemployment rate in Nepal in general, estimates suggest that there are only about 6 million jobs available in Nepal, with a work force of more than 16 million. The unstable political situation since the 1990s has been preventing the government from concentrating its efforts on economic development. Because of such a situation, staff appears to be working with discontent. This dissatisfaction is expressed as negative motivation.

Negative Motivation

The staff participants of this study knew that the school belonged to the owners. Non-separation of management and ownership led to the concentration of power, resources, decision making and communication with the school owners. This situation led to teachers and other staff being negatively motivated about their work. For example, a female primary teacher at case study school X said, *“The salary/remuneration I am getting working here is not enough for my survival. Even though I am working, I need support from my husband. I am doing this job because I am helpless.”* This particular female teacher considers her work of teaching as a low status and low paying job with little security, increased stress and demoralisation. On one hand, she was suggesting lack of co-relation between living standards and earning from work. On the other hand, she was also indicating that personal experience from work was not the only basis of teaching. Another female primary teacher from the same school has a similar story:

The salary/remuneration I get working here is not enough for my survival. I have worked here for fourteen years and the only thing I gained is experience. If I was, at least, given training opportunities, I would have been more efficient. I have gained nothing but still I need to work.

This particular female teacher indicated that she was not satisfied with the working environment of the school. There was lack of professional development opportunities, which, according to her, increases inefficiency in the staff. She further felt that professional development opportunities would have opened more possibilities to her. This quote indicates the overall conditions of many female primary level teachers working in Nepali private schools. Most of these teachers are untrained without a teaching licence, preventing them from moving into the public school systems where training and a teaching licence are the minimum requirements for applying for a job. Moreover, working in the public school system

involves teachers having to go to the different parts of the country they are posted to. This means these teachers cannot balance family and work life, which is a requirement for working women in Nepal. At the same time, they cannot completely leave their jobs and stay at home. Because of the vast gap between earning and expenditure in the urban centres of Nepal, it is now very difficult to run a family with only one person earning. Such a situation is forcing these teachers to take jobs at any cost.

Both the female primary teachers of school X expressed their situation of helplessness of working in this private school. Working, on one hand, is necessary for sustaining life and on the other hand, working in private schools is also necessary for these women teachers because of minimum job availability in other sectors, especially for those with general education degrees instead of vocational or technical degrees. A sense of paralysis was noticed from the comments of teachers working in the primary level of school X. This trend of paralysis can be taken as symptomatic of the concentration of power and authority at the top (school's owners).

These owners exhibit characteristics more closely aligned to a monarchy. For example, treating teachers (especially working in the primary level) as subjects in thrall. Similar stories were told by the staff of school Y. A female teacher at case study school Y said that private schoolteachers do not have job security. The teachers at private schools work harder than teachers in public schools, as this is a minimum requirement of their job security. She added that private schoolteachers and other non-owner staff work hard due to fear of losing their job, indicating that they were negatively motivated towards work. When I probed and asked the same teacher what she meant by job security, she added that teachers would get at least the equivalent of the government salary and be assured that they are secure in their jobs and could not be sacked at the will of the school's owners. Another female teacher from the same school said:

There are lots of challenges working as private school teachers in Nepal. We don't have job security. Now there are many teachers working in the private schools. When we ask for appropriate perks, the owners start arguing that we [teachers/staff] are lucky to get job as they [owners] have established schools.

Instead of appreciating and recognising his staff, the owner/principal (as indicated from the above quote) appears to be discouraging them by the threats of dismissal

implied in “lucky to get a job.” By ‘appropriate perks,’ the teacher means benefits similar to those of the public school system, including transparency in their employment agreement that would clarify salary scales, any fringe benefits and other appropriate employment items. The quote suggests that there was no formal employment agreement between the teacher and the school owners when she says there is no “job security.” When I asked if teachers and other staff were getting conditions equivalent to public schools, as lobbied by the private school teachers’ union (Nepal-ISTU), almost all participants from school Y said that they have not received such conditions. However, the owner/principals claimed that they (owners) provided their staff conditions and benefits similar to the public school system. Owners claiming that they provided the conditions and incentives without actually doing it causes non-owner staff feel exploited and powerless.

Actual working realities within the two study schools suggest differences between what these owners say they are doing and what happens in practice. There is a lack of consistency between what the school owners say and do in this regard. A secondary teacher of the same school said that the school owners’ main motive for creating a school is a business and profit one. While spending money on developing the mechanism for attracting parents and students, owners appeared to do little to support staff with training opportunities and proper employment conditions of service. This same teacher added that because of this, there was lack of motivation among the teachers.

While staff working in the private schools are asking for conditions similar to those in the public school system, school owners appear to be accusing their staff of making unnecessary demands. School owners seem to be arguing against the spirit of the Education Act, which states that the minimum salary of private schoolteachers and other staff is to be equivalent to that of public schools. The owner/principals of both case study schools say this creates internal conflict. The owner/principal of school X, for example says:

Teachers working in private schools these days are demanding perks and incentives such as increases in salary, provident funds and job security equal to the public schools, and small schools like ours have not been able to fulfil their demand. Due to this there is a situation of conflict in the school.

In response to the allegations from teachers and other non-owner staff, the owner/principal of school X accused teachers of ‘unnecessary’ demands. This owner appears to be expressing a demand/supply equation. This perhaps expresses a neoliberal view of what education is, and who employees are and should be treated. Admitting tension within the school, this owner’s statement resonates with other private schools in Nepal post political change in the country. Similarly, the owner/principal at school Y said:

Private school teachers enter the employment after making a formal agreement with the owners and there is no point in asking for perks and incentives equivalent to the public school system afterward.

Here the owner/principal is claiming that every teacher begins work with an agreement reached at the time of employment, although the agreement is based on word of mouth (verbal agreement) instead of a written agreement. A statement by one of the secondary teachers of the same school indicated that teachers had verbal agreements instead of written agreements as the basis of employment contracts. The verbal agreement however, would only be valid while the existing school owners remain in the school. If new owners joined the school, these verbal agreements may not be remembered accurately and misunderstanding is potentially high, making teachers feel vulnerable.

Both schools owners’ perceptions are that their staff are creating lots of challenges for the smooth operation of their schools. They argue that staff should carry out what the owners require of them. These owners call this ‘working in collaboration.’ However, without shared authority and decision-making, this seems difficult to achieve. School owners want their staff to be ‘yes people,’ as most of them used to be in the past when the teachers and other staff of Nepali private schools were not unionised. School owners appear to want their staff to be obedient and docile employees. The owner/principal of school Y stated that there was no point in comparing the perks and incentives of private schools with those of the public school system as private schools are run on their own and the conditions of service such as salaries, provident funds and insurance of private school staff

depend on ‘mutual agreement.’ However, such agreements can hardly be called ‘mutual,’ when the owner/principals do not provide written versions of these agreements. Because of the concentration of resources, control and power with them, the owner/principals have the potential to manipulate these agreements. The owner/principal of school Y further justified his argument by saying:

When we look at the situation of our country now, we [I and everyone] agree that money is one of the most important tools of motivation to work. However, we should not deny the fact that money is not everything. There are other things such as working environment, personal needs and working freedom which act as an important tool of motivation.

This owner/principal statement indicated that there was delegation of authority in the schools, as he signposted the existence of work freedom. He was also suggesting that the school was recognising the contribution of their teachers and other staff. The idea of “working freedom” suggests a democratic and shared working environment at odds with what teachers said. His argument, signposting that his school’s staff were satisfied with the working environment, was quite contradictory considering what the staff had said.

The school owners appear to prefer individual negotiation of the terms and conditions of work as it used to be in the past when teachers and other staff of Nepali private schools were not unionised. However, private school staff are now trying to base their employment contract on the basis of collective bargaining. This (teachers’ collective negotiation desires and owners’ power concentration desire) has created a situation of conflict in the schools. Teachers’ newly discovered collective power has the potential to disrupt the concentration of power.

Interest Conflicts

Different groups of people occupying different roles and positions work in the schools. Being private schools with individual/group ownership, these 2 study schools contained broadly two groups of people: (a) the school’s owners who took on the most senior managerial positions, such as owner/principals, vice principals, director, chairperson, and (b) non-owner staff working as teachers and administrators. The staff participants of this inquiry perceived that the interests of the schools and those of school owners are the same but hold teachers at ransom with a threat of dismissal. Due to this there appears to have been interest conflicts

between the school owners and the staff participants of my study. With regards to this, an administrator at case study school X said:

School owners usually argue that they invested a lot in the school and they are not earning any profit. Now they seem to be ready to close down the school and earn rent from the building. They don't think about our future; we spent almost all of our life in this school.

As per Clause (16), Sub-Clause (3) of the Education Act 2028 (1971), the property of private schools run as a company remains the property of the registered company. Since school X was registered as a company, the school's property belongs to the school's owner, who owns the company. This means in the event of the closing down of school, school owners will have freedom to use the property in any way they choose. With such view in mind, the administrator in the above quote seemed to be blaming school owners for running the school as a business organisation without considering the staff welfare. The quote highlights the macro (neoliberal) view of education as a commodity. The staff participants, as indicated by the administrator, argued that school owners should be accounting for, not dismissing the future of their staff. Thus, staff participants believe that they need job security to work without fear of losing their jobs on an owner's whim. The owner of the same school said, in contrast:

Our school is a small school run under individual investment. We are facing difficulties competing with the larger schools run from investment of a large number of people. At the same time, teachers working in private schools are demanding their conditions of service equivalent to the public school system. Due to this we are now facing difficulties for survival.

Appendix F compares the public and private schools systems, and shows the differences in employment provisions. This owner blamed staff for making unnecessary demands he said the school could not fulfil. Owners argue any perks and incentives for staff depend on the capacity of the school, yet teachers expect conditions of work to be similar to public schools. School owners argue micro perspectives, claiming each school has its own capacity. On this basis school provides its staff with incentives and perks. However, the staff research participants argued macro perspectives. One secondary teacher participant said:

Private school owners now need to think seriously about our demands. If they cannot provide us perks and incentives as per our demand they can either close down the schools or merge it with another school. There is no point in operating the school if they [school owners] cannot fulfil teachers' demands.

This secondary teacher is leveraging the new power of collective bargaining, which, in a union sense, is about protecting the rights and privileges of their members as the first priority. His argument was about collective bargaining industrial role of a teachers' union. I will explore this in the upcoming theme, 'teachers: having a voice and being heard.'

Quotes from both the owner and staff of the school Y also suggest a situation of conflict. One female teacher said that teachers are not happy with their jobs. Whenever they are unable to work, they have no salary for there are no sick leave provisions. She highlighted that the main reasons for this is the verbal employment agreement instead of a written agreement. The verbal agreement meant school owners could manipulate their staff. However, the owner/principal of the same school argued that:

Every private school is run on their own. It is not fair to demand perks equivalent to the public school system. Before entering into employment, each and every teacher agrees on the perks and incentives of the school and it is not fair to ask for public school equivalent perks later on.

As indicated in Appendix F, public schools in Nepal provide a range of conditions of service including a provident fund, retirement benefit, medical insurance and family pension. These are not found in private schools. Private school teachers seek similar conditions. Expressing views similar to the owner/principal of case study school X, the owner/principal of the school Y also defended that conditions for staff depend on the capacity of the school and on the mutual agreement although he was not clear what this mutual agreement meant in practice. One secondary teacher from school Y argued that:

Private schools are converted into lucrative businesses. Due to this, the concept of employee and employer arise. It is common for the employer to give as few privileges/rights as possible to the employee.

Although private school owners claim to be more responsive to parents by providing them choice, staff argue that private schools are doing nothing to improve

the working conditions of staff. As indicated in the above quote, the secondary teacher of school Y criticised private schools for being lucrative businesses, suggesting that school owners, because of concentration of ownership and management, use the school resources at their discretion and for personal profit. This enabled them to concentrate money, providing less to their staff even though the government regulatory mechanism prevents them from doing this. For example, it is clearly stated in the Education Act 2028 (1971) that teachers working in private schools should be paid a salary equivalent to that of the public school systems of the country. Head teachers (principals) as employers in the public education system have to work under government regulatory frameworks in which there are only minimum differences between teachers and other staff (employee) earnings and head teachers' (employers) earnings. This might be the reason that encourages this teacher to believe that private schools in Nepal have converted into lucrative businesses.

Staff participants suggest that they are denied a 'fair wage,' implying that school's owners are concentrating money in their own pocket. By fair wages, the teachers refer to the wages and salaries as prescribed by the government of Nepal. Although the government direction to private schools is to pay teachers as per the pay scale fixed by the government, these private schools do not comply. As per the findings from the documents I collected, government rules suggest that registration of private schools can be cancelled if they are found violating government direction, but this is rarely carried out, even though private schools often violate government regulations. Stating that they are in conflict with both the government and the owners of private schools, the then chairperson of Nepal-ISTU, in an interview with Nepali newspaper, *The Education Forum*, stated:

Private schools need to run under government rules and regulation and provide teachers and other employees facilities as per government counterpart. The government knows to what extent private school teachers are being exploited but still is not doing anything. (Gautam, 2007, p. 46)

The chairperson of Nepal-ISTU highlighted the exploitative behaviour of private school owners and lack of government initiatives in preventing teachers and other staff from such exploitation. As suggested by the above excerpt of the interview, teachers and other staff working in private schools were not getting facilities as per

the government regulations. Because of this, there are frequent strikes by the teachers' union to pressurise the government. The following newspaper extract illustrates this:

All private schools of Nepal remained closed due to the indefinite strike call by Nepal Institutional Schools Teachers' Union [Nepal-ISTU]. According to the Nepal-ISTU vice president, schools were shut to put pressure on the concerned authorities to implement past agreements reached with the union. (Teachers' strike hits private schools, 2011, para. 3)

This highlights the existence of struggle between the ownership class (private school owners) and working class employees, represented by teachers and other staff. The private school teachers' union has exerted constant pressure on school owners and the government expecting the government to enforce the regulations private schools are supposed to follow. These include employment contracts that uphold salary and benefits on par with government scales, establishing insurance and provident funds for all private school staff.

School owners and some school staff feel that the political changes in the country had shifted working environments in private schools. Due to the concentration of resources and decision making with the school owners, non-owners staff working in private schools used to perceive power as the right of the school owners. Before the Maoists came to power, schools' owners (as manager/principals) were solely responsible for determining terms and conditions of service of school staff. There was no one to question these decisions although such decisions were related to the professional lives of staff. However, with the political changes and the subsequent unionisation of private schoolteachers, these teachers and other staff started perceiving themselves as having power through networks or alliances asserting levels of power were possible through the union structure. The owner/principal of school X, for example, stated that the school now has to negotiate with the teachers' union. However, study evidence suggests that teachers' perceptions of having a voice are not always the same as being listened to.

Teachers: Having a Voice and Being Heard

Both case study school participants thought that their working environment had altered somewhat as a result of the Maoist government and because teachers could unionise, but this was uneven. Most believe that this changing scenario has enhanced teachers' empowerment and they now feel that their voices are being heard, at least to some extent. However, there were still some groups of staff who believed that little has changed. To them the conditions of work and the attitudes of school's owners are the same as they used to be. This group of staff say that schools' owners still do not share authority with the non-owner staff and the school operate a feudal system. Members of such a group of staff tend to be those who have not joined the teachers' union, believing that these unions are affiliated to certain political parties and push that agenda rather than protecting teachers' employment conditions. A detailed discussion on this occurs later, in the discussion chapter. This section addresses unionisation and empowerment, powerlessness, gender, curriculum and assessment, and professional development.

Unionisation and Empowerment

A theme that emerged during this study was empowerment through unionisation. Most staff perceived that with the political change in the country and subsequent unionisation of private schoolteachers, teachers were more able to lobby school owners collectively. In this regard, a secondary teacher at school X said:

During the monarchy, private school teachers were not organised but now we have a teachers' union and some of our rights are now secured. Now we can negotiate collectively with the school's owners regarding incentives and other perks.

This secondary teacher believes that this unionisation of teachers has enhanced teachers' empowerment, through introducing collective bargaining techniques. Thus, those staff whose views align about this teacher, feel they now have a voice about a school's employment conditions and policy, as well as policies and practices about teaching and learning activities. However, the school owners see this differently. The owner/ principal of school X said:

These days, teachers working in the private schools have established a teacher union, Nepal-ISTU. During the Monarchy, private schools were run from the mutual understanding of owner/principal and staff but now we need to deal with the third party: that is, the teachers' union.

The owners believed that it was easier to run schools during the monarchy, since they could negotiate with staff individually. Now they feel it is quite difficult to run a school because they must negotiate collectively with the teachers and their unions. This view is not consistent with the staff's views. The existence of a verbal agreement suggests that the school owners can still manipulate activities in schools. With the persistence of verbal employment agreement, in contravention of government regulations, private school owners continue to operate as they did before. These verbal agreements centre employment power in the hands of the owner/principals. Moreover, the mutual understanding of the past as stated by this owner/principal is not justifiable because of concentration of power and resources in the schools' owners. This might have been a one-sided agreement by the schools' owners instead of a mutual agreement. The owner quoted above considers the teachers' union as a third party, aligning with the neoliberal view of teachers' union, and believes that it is creating unnecessary challenges in the smooth operation of the school. Teachers continue to feel obliged to obey the school owners, in some cases, even in spite of the shift from individual negotiation of terms of employment towards collective bargaining. One administrator noted the following about this shift:

During the monarchy, the owner/principal used to be more autocratic but now they are more liberal; the working environment in the private school from the staff viewpoint is good now. In the past our voice was neglected but now school owners work for the collective benefits of staff.

This administrator sees the school owner as more liberal in his leadership style, linking the changing leadership style of school owners with the unionisation of teachers. Although this administrator stated that the school owners now work for the collective benefits of the staff, it was not clear what 'collective benefits of staff' really means. Perhaps this administrator has a vested interest in believing that the working environment has changed. In order to better understand this view, I further queried him. He added:

Before he [school's owner] used to think that this is "my school and I can do whatever I like," but now the owner has changed. The owner now thinks that "teachers are the people who can uplift my school and I need to make them [teachers] happy." The owner has now learnt to respect teachers.

This view is at odds with the voices of other staff working, particularly those in the primary area of the same school. For example, two of the women participant primary teachers said that nothing had changed and the owner/principal was only pretending to be liberal. A detailed account of this is outlined under the sub-section, 'powerlessness'.

While there were perceptions among both the staff and owner of school X that conditions of teachers' work had changed, with the changes in the surrounding political environment including establishment of private schoolteachers' union, a culture of fear persists for female teachers. Perhaps this prevents them from joining the teachers' union. Similar stories about teachers' voice were revealed by school Y's participants, such as what the school Y male administrator said:

In the past, school owners used to do whatever they liked. They used to fire teachers whenever they wanted but now such a situation is not there. This situation is good for the teachers and other staff.

Private schools in Nepal are operated as autonomous organisations under the legal provision of the government of Nepal. Through the legislation private schools recruit teachers, provided teachers' salaries are the same as the government regulation lays out. However, this legislation is often ignored. Even though the government has announced the cancellation of the registration of private schools that ignore government regulation, this has hardly happened. With the Maoists as dominant political force, there was an immediate increase in external pressure bearing on the private schools' owners from the students' unions [All Nepal National Independent Revolutionary Students' Union, ANNISU(R)] and teachers' union (All Nepal Teachers' Union, ANTU) affiliated with the Maoists. The quoted administrator believes that due to such external pressures, school owners have changed their strategy of dealing with the staff, seeing them as much more careful in their interaction/negotiations with the teachers. A female secondary teacher from the same school supported this view, saying:

In the past nobody used to know what direction we will get from the top. Now activities within the school are becoming more transparent. The owners give justification even if they cannot provide perks and benefits as per our demand.

This secondary teacher supported teachers having a voice, linking greater transparency in the school. Although this secondary teacher claimed to have experienced transparency, it was at odds with the other staff arguments. They highlighted the lack of written employment contracts and appointment letters. Even though this teacher claimed examples of transparency, she agreed that activities in the school were mostly based on verbal agreement. So I further probed this teacher's understanding of transparency and owners giving justification about decisions, the reply was that whenever teachers and other staff ask for perks and incentives similar to the public school system, the owners say them that once they can enrol more students, they would increase incentives and perks. This seems to me as a tactic of shifting responsibilities from the school owners onto their staff. In effect, this appears to be a delaying tactic to avoid collective demands.

Another teacher from the same school supported the idea of empowerment, saying:

These days teachers can work freely, have secured their rights to some extent and owners are careful while dealing with staff due to unionisation of teachers.

Although this teacher claimed that teachers were able to work freely with secured rights, I needed to probe what 'working freely' referred to. This teacher said that now teachers are able to speak and put forward their demands openly, indicating that staff now have a voice that they did not have before. However, speaking up and putting forward demands do not necessarily mean that their demands are met as indicated earlier by one owner's delaying tactic. This can also be justified from the following quote from the owner/principal of school Y:

When teachers raise some issues individually and collectively, management needs to listen to it. And if management does not listen to it, there will naturally be a problem. Some of the problems seen these days in some private schools are created by management themselves.

This owner/principal argues that management need to work together with the teachers and other staff to resolve issues they raised. He further added that the success of any school is not possible without good teachers, saying that "*Teachers are the backbone of any school. Good management and better infrastructure become useless without better teachers and teaching force.*" However, teachers in the school do not necessarily believe that the actions match this rhetoric, for there

is little evidence of change. Although this owner/principal indicated the importance of teachers, he stated that teachers' union (as a third party) has no role and justification in making demands related to private school teachers:

Private schools are established as per the government regulations and private school teachers' conditions of service are based on agreement between the teachers and the owners. There is no point of the third party, such as teachers union, making such a claim.

This view of the owner/principal appears to align with a neo-liberal view that separates teachers' unions from the teachers and other staff themselves. Almost all school Y staff, including the owner/principal, felt that the working environment within this private school had changed, partly due, it would seem, to the political change in the country. Teachers feel that their unionisation has resulted in greater empowerment. The other reason they stated for the change in working environment was the active involvement of students' unions of different political parties. These students' unions, along with the teachers' union, continue to pressurise school owners to run their schools, according to the regulations.

In spite unionisation, there were still some groups of teachers who perceived that little had changed. So in addition to empowerment, a situation of powerlessness among some of the staff working in the two private schools was noticed.

Powerlessness

In addition to issues of empowerment through unionisation, there were cases of powerlessness among some staff in both case study schools. This was more noticeable among women teachers who mainly work at the primary level. One primary female teacher at school X said:

Because of the political change in the country and external environmental pressure, I feel that now teachers working in private schools are beginning to have a voice. But this is not seen in our school; we still based our agreement on individual negotiations with the school's owner; different lower level management positions are only created to show outsiders; people occupying these positions only do the work of reporting day-to-day activities to the owner/principal. The owner/principal still retains all the authority.

This teacher implies that the school owner is pretending to manage democratically because of the environment outside the school. Different lower level managerial positions, such as primary coordinator, primary in-charge and secondary in-charge,

have been created, and perhaps these are part of the showcasing, given that people in these positions appear to have little authority. The scope and authority of these positions was not clear to either those staff occupying these positions, or other staff. So in reality, the school owner was still behaving autocratically in his leadership. Similarly, another female primary teacher of the same school said:

During the monarchy, private school owners used to be like a monarch and now also I have not experienced any change. We are working on our own; we are not involved in the teachers' union; we feel the same as it used to be 10-20 years ago.

Given that these ideas were mainly expressed by female teachers, perhaps there are gender issues both within the school and the union's organisation. The women said that the teachers' union only had political motives and there was no point in joining. These teachers believe that the teachers' unions are aligned to one or another political party and due to this, teachers' union cannot be neutral.

After the political change of the 1990s from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy/multiparty democracy, different teachers' unions affiliated to different political parties were established. The party government used teachers' unions to further their own political agenda. For example, teacher unions linked with political parties worked as campaigners groups for the party. The private school teachers' union was established during another period of political change—from a multiparty democracy to a republic. This, along with the activities of the teachers' union, made these teachers believe that the unions continue to be affiliated to political parties. Supporting this further, a female secondary teacher from school Y stated, "*We know Nepal-ISTU as an organisation is affiliated to a particular political party [Maoists] and so it cannot be neutral.*" This teacher further added that when teacher unions are not neutral, they cannot work for the protection of all teachers and staff. She believed that the teachers' union works for the benefits of those staff and teachers who believe in the same ideology as theirs, rather than education as the prime focus. She questions the neutrality of Nepal-ISTU as a teachers' union although a document from Nepal-ISTU suggests otherwise:

Nepal-ISTU is a common professional organisation for the employees working in private schools of Nepal. Since its establishment this union has been giving preference towards quality education and working for the professional rights of employees of private schools. (Nepal-ISTU, 2010, para. 1)

This quote suggests that Nepal-ISTU was established to lobby for the private schools' staff conditions of service, while working towards improving teaching and learning environments in private schools. This is at odds with the above quoted woman teacher of school Y, who indicated Nepal-ISTU's lack of neutrality as the reason for her not getting involved in it. On the other hand, a male secondary teacher from the same school expressed somewhat different ideas about the private school teachers not joining the teachers' union:

Private schoolteachers are under the control of the school they are working in. They work as per the school schedule and have no time for joining the teachers' union.

Staff know that school belongs to and is controlled by school owners. Perhaps this indicated that teachers do not have enough courage to go against the owners' decisions. In the Nepali private school context, joining a teachers' union is still seen as going against the schools' owners. A male secondary teacher from case study school X expressed a similar idea but suggested a somewhat different reason for teachers not joining the teachers' union:

Activities such as teachers uniting for their rights are negligible in our school. There are still many people who believe that they can get perks and incentives by pleasing the owners.

This suggests that the divide and rule situation of people competing with each other for owner's favour plays into an owner's hands. By fostering this and making it difficult for staff to unionise, an owner can potentially play people off each other. Unionised teachers would be harder to keep powerless perhaps.

According to the above secondary teacher, this *Das*¹⁸ mentality was common in Nepali culture. The culture of respecting those in power was still seen in most of the teachers and this was providing an advantage for the school owner to divide and rule, and this has strong monarchy/feudal overtones. Given that women in Nepal are culturally less powerful than men, *Das* mentality possibly accounts for part of the powerlessness women teachers feel.

¹⁸ Nepali word indicating submission to authority

Gender

The issue of gender came to the forefront in this study. Most of the women teachers in my case study schools taught in the primary area, while mostly men teachers were found in the secondary levels. In school X, almost all the primary level staff were women except the male coordinator, and the secondary staff were men, with only one female as a supporting staff member. There were few female staff at the secondary level, compared with more than 90 percent of the primary staff in case study school Y. These women teachers felt that they were being discriminated against at work. A female teacher from school Y said:

Teachers working in the secondary level get more perks/benefits and less workload. Those working in the primary level get fewer perks/benefits but more workload.

This quote from the woman teacher highlighted the primary/secondary divide. Private school owners appear to give more importance to the secondary level teachers, neglecting the efforts of teachers working in the primary level. One of the reasons behind this appears to be because of the SLC examination through which private schools market themselves. This suggests that owners focus more attention on levels they perceive will make the school look good and therefore recruit more students.

According to the above quoted woman teacher, the primary level teaching job is perceived to be ordinary work which anyone can do. She further added that such discrimination could be avoided only if the government makes proper rules and regulations regarding private schools. Both the women primary level teachers of the school X echo this view, stating that the remuneration/salary they were earning from their work was not enough for their survival. Although they were working, they were dependent on their husbands. Teachers working in the primary level of this school feels that they are not being recognised for their work compared to the secondary level teachers, who are directly involved in preparing students for the standardised national level school leaving certificate (SLC) examination. While all teachers of private schools seem to be alienated from the profit of their work, the primary level teachers are further alienated from the product of their work, that is, the students ultimately preparing for the national level SLC examination.

However, the male research participants of this study from school X had different views on these gender relations. One male secondary teacher from school

X argued that women teachers at primary level still believe that they can get benefits by pleasing the owner, leading to exploitation rather than benefits. This male secondary teacher further added that the school's owner deals differently with different teachers, indicating discrimination practices. Similarly, a male primary administrator from school X further stated:

Teachers working in the primary level are more supportive and cooperative to work with. It is much easier to work with these women teachers compared to both men and women teachers when the primary and secondary level was not separated.

Until recently the primary and secondary levels were together. Perhaps the separation makes divide and rule based on gender much easier. The administrator also highlighted the cooperative nature of women teachers, suggesting that women teachers more seldom argued against the owner/principal's decision. This male administrator further added that women teachers usually seek flexible working hours compatible with family life and child rearing. In this respect, the administrator stated:

The teachers think that if the school has done something for them, they also need to do something for the school. We usually have women teachers who often have to deal with household issues; we are flexible for those teachers so that they are able to deal with household issues together with their duty.

The above quote from the administrator highlighted that gender division of labour are highly entrenched in Nepali society. Women teachers have two full-time jobs-homemaker and teacher. In addition to working as a primary level teacher, these women teachers are involved in daily household activities that the men rarely do. Because of this, a primary level teaching job makes easier for women to manage family and career. One woman teacher from the same school stated that she could leave the school earlier if she had family to attend to. For example, she said she left the school at the birth of her child and return to work the same school once her child began school. This indicates that women bear most child-rearing responsibilities, having to leave a career behind for some time. This same teacher also highlighted the benefit of operating separate blocks for the women teachers working in the primary level, in the following ways:

In the past when our primary and secondary level was in the same location, I used to get frightened to talk and share experiences with other friends, thinking that the owner/principal may know this, but now the owner/principal's office is located in the secondary block and we can freely share our experiences and interact with other teachers.

This teacher appears to be afraid of the school owners, which might be because of her job insecurity. The above quote suggests that primary level staff have been experiencing distance from the owner and less sense of being spied on because of less proximity.

The women participants' views reflect dependency while the views of men participants suggest that they can themselves secure their own rights. This has to do with the patriarchal values deeply rooted in Nepali culture. Many Nepali families consider sons as assets of the family and daughters as liabilities. Sons usually live with their family after marriage and are taken as a source of earning for the family, while daughters go to live with their husbands' family after marriage. Families do not want to invest money in their daughters. This results in fewer educational opportunities for girls. Before marriage, daughters depend on their fathers, and after marriage they depend on their husbands. This is mirrored in the dependence the women participants from both school experienced in the schools. These gender-related findings of my study also mirror the overall gender situation in the macro political environment after the political change in the country, as indicated in newspaper excerpt below:

In 2008 election to choose a constituent assembly (CA) tasked with drafting a new constitution, women's political participation soared to new heights...despite women occupying 33% of the seats in the CA, their progress in contributing to the constitution-building has been hindered by a culture of patriarchy in which female politicians continue to be marginalised. (Delaney, 2011, para. 1-2)

As the title of newspaper article suggests (*Nepal's Women have a Voice in Politics but No One is Listening*) from which the above excerpt is taken, women representation greatly increased after the reformed political climate. However, Nepali women are still facing obstacles in their journey of being influential because of the deep-rooted patriarchal values in society. The gender relations issue that emerges in this study seems to be because of the patriarchal culture of Nepali society and also because of the differences in the perks and benefits, especially

salary, among primary level teachers and secondary level teachers. And yet, my study suggests that there are no differences in the salary structure between men and women teachers working on the same level. In this regard, a woman secondary level teacher of school Y stated that their salary is determined on the basis of the level of teaching: that is, either secondary or primary level. But there were very few women teachers in the secondary level. For example, from both case study schools, there was only one secondary level woman teacher. Since most men teachers were working in the secondary area while women were in the primary area of the school, the salary structure of men and women teachers were not equitable.

One of the reasons for the secondary level teaching being a higher paying job in Nepali private schools is related to the business orientation of these private schools. Another factor is the assessment system in Nepali schools. These are outlined in the next sub-section.

Curriculum and Assessment

As per the government regulation, every school in Nepal (public and private) needs to follow a national curriculum. The national curriculum for schools is determined by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), a government body responsible for designing the school curriculum and approving the school textbooks in Nepal. Since private schools in Nepal use English as the medium of instruction, they use textbooks produced by private publishers, but approved by CDC. The government also has provision for schools to use additional books or teaching materials as references for teaching and learning activities with the approval of the regional government body, that is, District Education Office (DEO). Several issues related to private schools' curriculum and textbooks emerged from my study. For example, a secondary teacher at school X said:

School's curriculum needs to promote national culture, sovereignty and freedom of a country. The national curriculum of our country is designed with these motives. However, some private school owners are taking advantage of present political instability and using books published abroad for teaching and learning activities in their schools.

Schools owners appears to have discretionary power to select textbooks for the teaching and learning activities within their schools, although the government controls the curriculum content through the national curriculum. This secondary teacher agreed that most private schools in Nepal were still using the textbooks

approved by the CDC and produced by private publishers. He also added that there were still some private schools using textbooks not approved by CDC because of the present government inability to strictly enforce the regulation. This quote from the secondary teacher highlighted that private education in Nepal is seen as being about political enculturation. Supporting this idea, a woman teacher from school Y stated:

Most of the private schools use textbooks produced by private publishers and approved by CDC. However, some schools even use textbooks produced abroad, because they [school's owners] get more commission from such publishers.

This woman teacher highlighted the business rather than educational motive of private school's owners in selecting books from private publishers. This indicates that private schools are using the curriculum as a commercial transaction. However, the school owners argued that there was no harm in using some textbooks produced abroad as reference materials and blamed teachers for not being careful while using such books. The owner/principal of school X stated:

We use books produced by private publishers and approved by CDC. As reference materials, we also use some books published abroad, especially India, and such books may have some issues relating to national animals, national birds, national emblems and so on. Such issues can be resolved by teachers' awareness during teaching and learning.

This owner/principal highlighted the contributions of private schools using additional teaching and learning materials, and providing students with international exposure. The owner/principal further added that they (school's owners) need to submit booklists and fee structures to the different government bodies, such as the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Finance (MOF), one month prior to a new school session¹⁹, indicating that there were fewer chances of using textbooks not approved by CDC. The owner/principal of school Y also supported this view. However, the following newspaper article suggests that private schools still use textbooks not approved by CDC:

¹⁹ A session in Nepali schools is the time when schools begin their classes. It usually starts at the beginning of every Nepali calendar year (usually in the month of April/May of the Western calendar) and ends at the end of the Nepali calendar year.

The Department of Education (DoE) has directed the district education offices across the country to strictly monitor private schools so that they cannot incorporate books not approved by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). The DoE, under the Ministry of Education, issued the directive after a number of private schools were found to have been teaching Indian books not approved by CDC.
(“Check Use of Unauthorised Books”, 2011, para. 1-2)

The quotes from both owners and staff participants, along with this newspaper article, suggest that the government controls the curriculum content of private schools through national curriculum, although schools’ owners have some discretionary power in selecting the textbooks from private publishers. Such top level control of curriculum content seems to have an impact on the pedagogy teachers use in their classroom. As the owner/principal of the school X argues:

Teaching and learning activities going on in our school these days consist of teachers telling and students listening and reproducing. I believe that teaching and learning activities need to be practice-based.

The above quote suggests that this owner/principal was not happy with the content-driven examination oriented teaching and learning environment in his school. This suggests that the owner has noticed the didactic, teacher-centeredness of the learning. However, without providing professional development to support teachers to grow pedagogically this will persist.

Professional Development

Teachers working in two private schools of my study were not growing pedagogically because of lack of professional development opportunity. In this regard, a woman primary teacher of the school X asserted that lack of resources and training were the reasons for teacher-centred teaching and learning activities going on in their schools:

Until now we are giving books related knowledge to our students and they [students] are reproducing what we teach them; we are doing this because of lack of resources and training.

The administrator from the same school also supported the view that the lack of resources and training for teachers is preventing them (teachers) from making teaching and learning activities related to day-to-day life instead of bookish knowledge. However, other staff suggested that the nature of the curriculum and

the assessment system as the main obstacles to making teaching and learning activities practice-based. A woman teacher from school Y stated:

We need to teach based on the textbooks and curriculum; we have a predetermined course and also need to prepare students for certain examination models common among few schools.

This suggests how teaching is seen as a technician activity about delivery instead of professional activity about students' deep learning. This teacher bases her comments on two things: the fixed national curriculum and textbooks selected by school owners, and the examination system. Perhaps this implied sense of no professional agency is a symptom of powerlessness as a female, non-unionised primary teacher.

During secondary school, children sit two regional examinations and one national examination. At the end of primary school (Grade 5), they sit the regional district level examination. Later at the end of their lower secondary level (Grade 8) time, they sit the regional district level examination. Finally, at the end of secondary school (Grade 10), they sit a standardised national level examination, also known as School Leaving Certificate (SLC). Promotion from grade to grade is based on the school's internal examination on an annual basis. Because of the prevailing assessment system and fixed curriculum and textbooks, teachers appear to focus on teaching information for the tests.

Private schools, being market oriented, compete with other private schools on the basis of their students' performance in the SLC examination. This is seen during the time when SLC results are published in the country. The publication of SLC results draws more public and media attention than most events in Nepal. Parents also equate students' performance in the SLC examination with quality education.

When I interviewed the owner/principal of school X in his office, located in the secondary block, I noticed, and noted in the field diary that the wall of his office were covered in pictures of students who appeared in the SLC examination, in chronological order. These pictures contained names of students, the year they appeared in the SLC examination and their overall score. This underscores the value the school places on these results. Participants in interviews supported this orientation. For example, one male secondary teacher observed that:

Parents send their children to private schools with a desire of better education but such desire is only partially fulfilled from the SLC examination performance of private school students. Due to a focus on the SLC examination, private schools are only teaching a limited curriculum to their students and so they are focusing more on examination performance instead of teaching and learning activities.

This teacher identifies limitations in such a focus on exam results, arguing that it is not the only criteria for better education. He further added that private schools' business orientation and this focus on SLC examination performance prevented teachers from teaching much more broadly. This also pointed to the direction of the 'unspoken truth' under which private schools in Nepal have been operating. Children attending private schools are the ones whose parents can afford to pay for their children's education. Because of such well-to-do parents, students in the private schools can take extra tuition and extra classes for better performances in the examination. Private schools can also be choosy about selecting able students, preventing some from sitting the SLC examination if they are unlikely to perform well. This is usually done using a 'send-up' examination, originally designed to control students' access to the SLC examination through a District Office Examination. Although the government has now abolished this system, private schools still use this examination, principally to control their students' access to the SLC examination. This presents a good example of how private schools are manipulating both the management of public perception, and student success rate.

One woman primary level teacher argued that parents expect extra knowledge and extra activities from private schools, but other than better performance in the SLC examination, there is little else they provide. A male administrator of the same school agreed that private school students perform well in the SLC examination, saying:

Parents invest more sending their children in private schools because they [private schools] have a good teaching and learning environment with good English speaking and better performance in the SLC examination.

This administrator suggests that the better performance of private school students in the SLC examination is because of their greater initial social capital in the form of parents' investment. He says that parents believe the private schools do a better job than state schools because (a) they costs more, (b) they teach in English and (c) they published exam results. Although this administrator claimed that private

schools have a good teaching and learning environment, it was not clear what he really meant by this. In probing this, he commented that private school teachers work regularly and complete the course on time. He further added that teaching and learning goes on smoothly without any hindrance. He appears to justify his claim of better teaching and learning activities in terms of contact hours students have with their teachers. Similar stories were related by both owner and staff participants from school Y, and a woman teacher of the school said:

Private schools are focusing on the SLC examination and due to this the teachers directly related to this [secondary teachers] get more facilities while those teachers who are not directly related to SLC examination [primary teachers] are neglected and given more workload and less benefits.

This and earlier quotes point to private schools using their students' performance in the SLC examination as the main basis of marketing and competition. This teacher also added that *rote learning* occurs because of the emphasis on SLC examination performance. Another woman teacher at the secondary level stated that SLC performance and the English-speaking classroom environment is seen as a sign of quality education, although she further agreed that it lacks practical application:

Better performance in the SLC examination provides students better opportunity for further education and English speaking ability help them to adapt with the current globalisation trend.

This suggests that some teachers (mostly secondary level) prefer a teacher-centred teaching and learning environment that enables students to perform better in the SLC examination. This teacher justified her argument by linking SLC performance with further education and the English-speaking environment with globalisation. In the context of Nepal, students' enrolment in the higher secondary level is based on their performance in the SLC examination. Similarly, moving towards an aspect of globalisation, private schools making use of English as a medium of instruction are privileged over the public schools using Nepali as a medium of instruction. This is because it is perceived that knowledge of English language makes it easier for people to move to other parts of the world, either to study further or a job.

The research participants' quotes from both the schools suggest that private schools are using their students' performance in the SLC examination and their English-speaking environment to market themselves and compete with public schools and also other private schools. This is one of the most important reasons

for the primary teaching in private schools being a lower paying job as compared to secondary teaching. Students from the secondary level are the ones sitting in the SLC examination and this links the secondary level teachers directly to the SLC examination, which is nationally prescribed examination. In the next section, I outline issues of government regulation emerging from this study, for the regulatory system has been frequently referred to.

Issue of Regulation and Deregulation

Most staff participants believed that private schools need to be appropriately regulated by the government for the systematic operation of the schools. The staff participants perceive that they are being exploited by the school owners due to lack of proper government regulation. However, school owners argue that government policy about private schools is unclear. Furthermore, they added that because of a lack of clarity, there is unnecessary external pressure on private schools. This section gives an overview of some of the issues of regulation and deregulation of private schools in Nepal from the viewpoint of both the staff and owner participants.

Policy Confusion

The owner participants of this study argue that government policy in relation to private schools is not clear. On one hand, the government allows private schools to register as business organisation as private limited companies. On the other hand, the government pressurises school owners via students' unions and teachers' unions to stop commercialising their private schools. Regarding this situation, the owner/principal of school X said:

There is no separate Act for private schools in Nepal. During the monarchy, we used to run the schools under the supervision of the District Education Office (DEO). Now we are registered as a private limited company and need to report to the Ministry of Education (MOE), and Ministry of Finance (MOF).

The owner/principal believes that there is policy confusion about private schools in Nepal and that the only solution to this confusion is to have a separate Act for the operation of private schools. There are contradictions, however. When schools' owners were given the option either to register their schools as a trust or a business organisation, most of them opted to register their schools as business organisations. However, some schools' owners refused to pay tax levied by the Ministry of

Finance. This was reflected by the above quote from the owner/principal who was happy to register his school as a business organisation, but not happy at paying tax to the Ministry of Finance. Similarly, schools registered as trusts were unwilling to hand over their school buildings, land and other physical facilities to the government. The following quote from the owner/principal of the school X is aligned to the demands of the private schools' umbrella organisation [Private and Boarding Schools' Organisation, Nepal (PABSON) and the National Private and Boarding Schools' Organisation (N. PABSON)]. Speaking at a program in Kathmandu, officials from both of these organisations stated:

The existing Education Act lacks provisions governing the operation of private educational institutions and the government needs to devise a separate education policy to regulate private educational institutions. (Act governing private schools sought, 2010, para. 2)

Most private school stakeholders including the general public, perceived PABSON and N. PABSON to be organisations representing school owners, and this perception is reflected by an earlier quote from an owner/principal and the subsequent quote from the newspaper article. It is also reinforced in the following excerpt from the PABSON preamble:

In order to guide, promote, give permanency and protect the schools established in the private sector by private investors throughout the nation, keeping in view the limitation of the national resources, PABSON has been established to harmonise, coordinate and professionally develop the education system and institutions of the nation while enhancing and safeguarding the professional right of autonomy of the founders, all round development and safety of the professional rights of the principals, teachers staff and students. (Private and Boarding School Organisation, Nepal, n. d, para. 2)

PABSON justifies private schools in Nepal because of the government's inability to meet the demands of the growing population through its limited resources. This excerpt from PABSON represents a neoliberal view of education as a private good instead of a common good and suggests that private schools are good for Nepal. The quote implies that the main objective of PABSON is to protect private schools and their owners while espousing an educational interest. Although the excerpt indicates that PABSON is also committed to the overall development of the education system in Nepal, which includes safeguarding the professional rights of teachers working in private schools, this appears to be a secondary objective. Private school owners (as indicated by the quotes from owner/principal of school

X and the subsequent newspaper article) argue for separate legal provision about private schools. They argue that the present government policy of private schools operating under the same legislation as the public school system does not work. Although others stakeholders of private schools, including parents, also believe that existing government policy regarding private schools is not clear, their ideas differ. For example, the newspaper article below describes the overall view of different stakeholders of private schools:

The stakeholders of private schools have expressed the need for an effective policy and strong regulatory mechanism to regulate private education institutions. Speaking at an interaction..., they [stakeholders] said private education sector requires a strong monitoring mechanism and effective procedures while issuing licence.

(Pvt schools: call for regulatory mechanism, 2011, para. 1-2)

Different stakeholders from private schools, including owners, argue that the government does not have in place proper regulatory mechanisms for the operation of private schools. They perceive that current government policy towards private schools is one of the reasons for constant disruption in the smooth operation of private schools in the country. For example, a secondary teacher of case study school X argues that the registration of private schools under the Company Act encourages private schools to get involved in business activities:

Government is allowing private schools to register under the Company Act as a private limited company. This has encouraged private schools to get involved in business related activities such as selling books, stationery, uniforms and others. Private school owners are taking full advantage of the government policy.

This suggests the highly commercial orientation of private schools which appears to supersede their educational focus except in terms of exam success. The above secondary teacher was also indicating that private schools see education as a private good instead of a common good, which treats students and parents as consumers of this service. The staff participants (as indicated by the secondary teacher of school X) believe that the government policy about private schools encourages owners to exploit different private schools stakeholders, including parents and staff. The staff believed that parents and other stakeholders are being exploited by the business related activities in which private schools are involved. However, the owner/principal of the school Y rejects the commercial view except to say that:

We are operating our school under the Company Act as a private limited company, under the name of a company. Many people are involved and we are having an opportunity to share many ideas and also risks as well as profits.

The owner/principal of school Y believes that there is no harm in operating a private school under the Company Act as a private limited company. He argues that private schools are being operated by parents. They (parents) pay fees as per the service provided to them. This owner/principal appears to express a neo-liberal view of education as a private good rather than a public good. The owner's quote suggests that education needs to be based on a supply and demand basis, with parents paying fees in relation to the services they get from schools. Taking schools as profit-oriented enterprises, the school owner indicated that the primary purpose of education is to serve the market.

However, when we consider staff with private schools as private limited companies the staff may be more vulnerable in their workplace since these schools are not always complying. Salary is an expensive component of a business. School owners therefore appear to prefer a young, inexperienced, inexpensive teaching force that is replaceable whenever needed. As private schools compete with each other through their students' performance in the standardised national level SLC examination as outlined earlier, primary level teachers in particular felt more vulnerable as their work was not directly linked with SLC examination. By the government not enforcing regulations, private schools are able to operate how they choose. This raises the debate of regulation and deregulation addressed next.

Regulation versus Deregulation

Staff participants suggest that proper regulation of private schools is necessary for the systematic operation of the schools. However, owner participants feel that they are being unnecessarily regulated by the government, and would prefer the government to let them work freely. For example, the owner/principal of school X points out that under the new provision where schools are registered as a business organisation, private schools need to submit their booklists to the Ministry of Education (MOE) and fee structure to the Ministry of Finance (MOF) at the beginning of each year which he feels is unnecessary.

Almost all the staff participants of school X, including the administrator argued that the future of the staff working in their school has been very uncertain.

After the political change in the country, the school owners were obliged to deal carefully with their staff due to the external political pressure, but this was short-lived and current regulations tend not to be enforced. Staff believe that properly regulating private schools will prevent the schools' owners from doing whatever they like and put in place better systems for the good of staff and students. School Y staff agreed with this. One woman teacher said:

External pressure is making private school owners aware and preventing them from doing whatever they like. However, it is short-lived and government needs to develop proper rules and regulations for the private schools so that the operation of such schools will become systematic. This will make it easier for us during work and also after retirement.

Staff believe that external pressure in the form of union agitation is making private school owners more careful in dealing with staff. But this may not persist if the agitation wavers. This is why staff want government rules to apply. Similarly, another woman teacher from school Y said:

If the government can create the environment for regulating private schools properly, it will be beneficial to both employees and employers of private schools. However, only making proper rules is not enough; the government needs to work towards proper implementation of the rules.

This quote from a woman teacher from school Y highlighted the aspects of lack of proper implementation of government rules and regulation. Another two teachers (one man and a woman teacher) from the same school agreed. Talking about the government's role in the implementation of rules and regulations, a secondary male teacher from school Y said, "*The present government is doing nothing to bring a system to private education in Nepal. At least it [system with proper regulation] was there during the monarchy.*" However, a secondary teacher from school X has a different idea about the government's lack of commitment towards private schools:

Due to political instability, government administrators [from District Education Office (DEO), Ministry of Education (MOE) and Department of Education (DoE)] are unable to work with motivation for proper implementation of education rules and regulations of private schools. Political influence is one of the main reasons for the lack of proper implementation of education rules.

The staff participants believe that there is a lack of supervision/monitoring from the relevant authority, government, MOE, DEO or DoE. The staff participants believe

that private school owners are doing whatever they like due to such lack of government monitoring on private schools. However, private school owners appear to prefer deregulation. In respect to this, the owner/principal from school X said:

Since the private sector in Nepal is now able to handle the education sector, the government should hand over the education to the private sector and instead invest the money [currently invested in education sector] in other sectors.

This view suggests a neo-liberal view about education as a commodity best served by private interests rather than the state. This view surrounding the public monopoly of education assumes that when education is handed over to the private sector, parents will get the benefits of choice. This may not serve public interests, given the way the private school owners appear to run the two schools in my study. If they are indicative of other private schools, deregulation may be inappropriate and may ultimately only serve the ruling classes rather than the whole population. A private system of education may favour a limited number of parents with better social, political and economic capital, neglecting large groups of people in society. The Maoists, the dominant political force during this time, are against education as private good. Reflecting on the Maoists ideology, the Maoist affiliated teachers' unions have been continuously disrupting the operation of private schools and perhaps this points to their awareness of private school owners' agendas. The following newspaper article excerpt supports this:

The Maoist affiliated All Nepal Teachers' Union (ANTU) has announced to disrupt the establishment of new private schools...ANTU president charged that private sectors have used education as a shortcut to prosperity business and commercialized the entire sector... [President] said his organisation would create moral pressure on the leader of their mother party to withdraw their children from private schools if they have any. (Don't commercialise education, 2010, para. 1-2)

This extract from the newspaper article suggests that the Maoists as a political party are against the neoliberal conceptualisation of education. This signposts the existence of a struggle between the school owners who represents the capitalist class of society, and the Maoists, representing the working class of society.

What I have outlined so far are findings based on in-depth interview with teachers, administrators and principals from my case study schools and also some supplementary documentary sources such as government policies and newspaper

articles. Since the in-depth interviews were supplemented by field notes taken during and after the interview, I outline the findings of this study using field notes next.

Findings from Field Notes

This final section of the chapter consists of my reflection during the data generation fieldwork periods. This part of the chapter mainly consists of my field notes, which I jotted down during the interviews and finally wrote down after returning to the residence using the jotted notes and memory for recollection. This acted as a supplementary source of data, which enable me to further enhance my thinking about the research topic. These notes revealed lots of contradictory evidence, especially when I compared my field notes with interview data. For example, the following field notes describe my reflection on the interview I conducted with the owner/principal of school X:

Today, I interviewed the owner/principal of school X. The interview took place in his office located in the ground floor of the secondary block building. Before starting the actual interview, I looked around the room to find a banner consisting of names of students who appear in the SLC examination last year (2010) with the score they got in the examination. The office wall was also surrounded by pictures of students who appeared in the previous SLC examination, with their scores [field notes (f/n) 19/05/2011].

This particular piece of evidence helped me draw inferences about findings from interview about the emphasis on exam results as I discussed earlier in this chapter. An interruption caused during the interview with this owner/principal enabled me to understand this owner's leadership rhetoric versus his actual practice.

While we (principal and I) were busy in our conversation, I heard someone knocking the door. The principal asked the person to come in and I found that it was one of the parents who came to pay tuition fees of her ward. I stopped the interview and recording system for a while. After the parent left the room, I resumed the interview (f/n, 19/05/2011)

During the interview conversation, this owner/principal told me that he had distributed authority to other staff such as secondary in-charge, vice principal, primary coordinator and primary in-charge. I started wondering why he himself would get involved in collecting fees instead of asking some administrative staff to do that. As was indicated from the interview data from the secondary level teacher,

the role of secondary in-charge seemed to be surveillance of the staff. The location of the owner/principal's office on the ground floor and the classes happening on the first floor might be the reason for creating the position of secondary in-charge and distributing responsibility for it to a teacher who teaches at the secondary level. This illustrates leadership rhetoric versus action/practice in the school.

The role of the secondary in-charge reflected the power and authority structures within the school. The owner/principal also indicated in the interview that the secondary in-charge reported to him twice a day about the activities of the secondary block. Another aspect of the reflection from this field notes is that this owner/principal told me that students' performance in the SLC examination is not the right measure of quality education, but the pictures in front of his office and around the wall indicated that he was still marketing his students' performance in the SLC examination. Such contradictions between the interview data, rhetoric and practice, and field notes led me to think critically and ponder on the interview information instead of taking the information at face value. This is incorporated while presenting the findings in this chapter (Chapter 7) and also during discussion in the discussion chapter (Chapter 8). Similar contradictions were noticed in the case of the owner/principal of school Y, as indicated by the following field note:

Today I interviewed the owner/principal of school Y. The interview took place in the seminar hall. The interview lasted about 50 minutes. There were lots of interruptions during the interview. One among them was from the administrative staff (non-teaching) of the school, who frequently came to the interview room to ask his permission for day-to-day activities (f/n, 23/05/2011).

The interruptions during the interview left me wondering about the distribution of authority among different managerial positions allocated to non-owner staff. If authority was distributed to each of the managerial positions as the owner said they were, then there would be little need for such interruptions. The structure of the school (see Figure 6) suggests that these staff members should have gone to either the vice-principal or the finance director. These field notes enabled me to reflect and think about the actual distribution of authority.

I went to the field with some pre-conceived notions that teachers and other non-owner staff have now been empowered. As a result of this, they were raising their voices and their voices were heard by the schools' owners and the government. Later, I found this notion to be partly true and partly untrue. For example, the

following field notes extracted from the interview with a secondary teacher of school X reveal these tensions:

During the interview, he expressed his view freely, but when I asked him about the present political influence on private schools because of teachers' unionisation, he changed his expression (seems to be excited) and started to speak more loudly. He seemed to be happy at the unionisation of teachers. He also indicated that unionisation of teachers had created confidence among teachers working in private schools (f/n 23/05/2011).

Reflecting on the above experience of interviewing this secondary level teacher, I felt that this teacher working in the secondary level was now more confident on raising his voice about the terms and conditions of his work. Similar incidents were experienced while interviewing secondary level teachers of school Y. The following field notes extracted from the interview with a male secondary level teacher of school Y reveals this:

Today I interviewed a male secondary level teacher of school Y. The interview took place in the management committee meeting room. The interview lasted for about 50 minutes without any interruptions. At the beginning of the interview, he was not expressing his views freely and was a bit reserved, but as the interview went on for about 30 minutes he started speaking openly. We started the interview with an open door, but, when I asked him about the benefit of teachers' union to the teachers and other staff of private schools, he closed the door, stood up and started speaking up loudly (f/n 26/05/2011).

This piece of evidence helps me to draw inferences about findings from interviews about the reasons for private school teachers not joining the teachers' union. Although this teacher appears to be pro-unionist, his activity during the interview suggest that he feels that joining or talking about the teachers' union means going against the school's authority. He does not seem to have enough courage to go against the school's owners, although his interview information did not suggest this. This was quite similar to the experience I had while interviewing male secondary level teacher of school X. These contradictions helped me reflect further on what he said during the interview.

My experiences of interviewing the administrators of the study reveal sharp differences between their positions and what they perceived and experienced about what they have to do. Administrators of my study, being in the position of middle level management, might have thought that they would have both responsibility and

authority of making decision. Although the administrators perceived that they had an important management role, the field notes did not indicate this, such as those interviewing a male administrator of school X:

The interview took place in the computer laboratory of the school. I was planning to conduct the interview in the office room of the administrator, but finding that he shares the room with the vice-principal of the school, I thought it would be a good idea to interview in a separate room. The interview lasted about 40 minutes and went on smoothly without any interruptions. I found the administrator to be at ease during the whole interview as shown by his facial expression. But on a few occasions I found him changing his facial expression. When I ask him about how he feels about working as an administrator of a private school he changed his facial expression indicating that he is facing lots of challenges working as a middleman between parents and teachers, parents and owner/principal and owner/principal and teachers. Similarly, when I finally asked him if he has anything to say that I did not ask him during the interview, he once again changed his facial expression stating that he has worked in the private schools for so many years but when he leaves the school he will not get anything. While stating this he gave examples of several staff of the same school who worked in the school for many years but finally left the school due to some medical and personal reasons and they are left without any help (f/n 20/05/2011).

This field note suggests that the owner/principal is using the position of administrator as a means of observation and surveillance of his school's day-to-day activities. It also highlights the use of space as a manifestation of power relations. This administrator appears to be unhappy with the terms and conditions of his work. This highlights why private schools staff have been agitating for better terms and conditions of service to better protect them. I had a more or less similar experience interviewing the administrator of the school Y:

Today I interviewed the administrator (vice-principal) of school Y. The interview was conducted in the principal's office, as he was sharing room with the principal. My intention was to conduct a one-to-one interview with the concerned participant. As the principal was not in the room I started the interview in the principal's room. There were lots of interruptions during the interview period. The first interruption was from the phone. It was the intercom phone informing about arrival of some parents. Then the second interruption was from the arrival of one of the parents of Grade 10 students. The parents came there to get information about their child studying in Grade 10. Then the third interruption came from the arrival of the principal in his room. After the parents went away the vice-principal himself asked me to go to another separate room. During the whole interview, the vice principal was more reserved. But slowly and gradually he was expressing the information which I was seeking (f/n 31/05/2011).

Similar to the administrator of school X, this administrator shared an office with the owner/principal. Perhaps it is a strategy of keeping close those who relay information to the owner/principal.

I had a somewhat different experience interviewing female teachers from both schools. The extract from the field notes relating to a female secondary teacher of school Y, who wanted to share her desire that private schools are better regulated:

During the interview I found her very much interested in expressing her problems working as a secondary teacher of a private school in Nepal. But when it comes to speaking about the school activities she seemed to be reserved. I found her taking me as a person who came there to solve her problems. The interview took place in the leisure period, which was only forty minutes and the schedule was very tight. At the end of the interview she questions me if I will return back to Nepal and contribute to the proper and systematic working of private schools in Nepal (f/n, 31/05/2011).

As I indicate in the discussion chapter, there is a situation of tolerated illegality in the operation of private schools, which she appears to be referring to. Another woman I interviewed indicated hope in the teachers' union to change private school systems even though she was unwilling to join it herself:

I found her showing positive reaction towards the teachers' union changing the work environment within school but was not willing to join the teachers' union (f/n 1/06/2011).

Talking to the researchers like me seems to be a way of expressing teachers' feeling about the low status of her profession as the field note from a woman teacher of school X suggests:

She expressed her view freely but when I ask about what changes has taken place in the school she changed her expression, she was silent. She was complaining about not getting enough salary as per the status of the teacher (f/n, 23/05/2011).

These notes highlight the powerlessness theme that also seems to align with gender, and teachers in the primary level. Reflecting on the experience of interviewing this primary level female teacher of school X, I found the situation of powerlessness existing in the primary level teachers. I also had similar experience while interviewing another primary level female teacher of the same school:

During the interview I found her silent, expressing her views very quietly. She seems to behave as if she has no freedom to speak in the school. Her body language and expression seem like a frightened person. She expressed her frustration working as a teacher in the school. She seems not happy with her work and at the same time she shows that she could not leave her job (f/n, 22/05/2011).

This field note highlights a feeling of fear, demoralisation and frustration among primary level women teachers. This was quite similar with the negative motivation theme discussed earlier from the interview data. This and other related experiences left me pondering on teachers' professionalism of those teachers teaching in the primary level.

Summary

Private schools operate as business organisations. Management and ownership is not separated. School owners are also the managers/principals of the schools. Even though some lower-level management positions are created for the purpose of work performance, people occupying such positions complained that their obligations exceeded their authority to make decisions on anything substantial. The non-owner staff are given more responsibility and negligible authority. This concentrates power in the schools' owners. The non-owner staff believe that the interest of the school as well as that of owners is to earn more and more profit by exploiting the teachers and other staff. The non-owner staff expressed, in the interviews for this study, negative attitudes towards the school they are working in. They are of the view that in order to bring a proper system to the operation of private schools in Nepal, the government needs to establish proper regulations and also work towards proper implementation of the rules and regulations.

However, the school owners, as indicated by the interview data from the two case study schools, have different ideas about the present situation affecting private schools in Nepal. They believe that the present government attitude towards private schools is quite confusing. The findings from both primary interview data sources and the secondary documentary sources indicated that a situation of continuous conflict exists between the owners and non-owner staff in the private school. Such a situation has led to unnecessary closing down of schools as a result of strikes by the teachers' union and students' union. The frequent closing down of private schools is causing disruptions in the normal school operation and thereby affecting the teaching and learning environment within the school.

The different annotations and reflections I made during my fieldwork indicated that teachers working in the two case study schools were still divided. Although they (teachers and other non-owner staff) had a voice because of the overall change in the political climate of the country and the subsequent unionisation of private schoolteachers, their voice has not been heard by the schools' authorities and also the state. This situation is preventing the teachers working in the two case study schools from being influential in the terms and conditions of their work including teaching and learning activities. Although there was a perception that conditions of teachers' work had changed with changes in the surrounding political context, a culture of fear amongst some teachers (particularly female primary teachers) in terms of actually joining the teachers' union was prevalent.

In this chapter, the findings of the study have been outlined within three broad themes (management and ownership; teachers: having a voice and being heard; and issues of regulation and deregulation of private schools). I also outlined my reflection from the field, which, I believe, will further clarify my interest in exploring teachers' voice in general.

In the next chapter, I discuss the findings of this study in the light of the literature outlined in Chapter 2, the political and educational context of Nepal, and in Chapter 3, the literature review.

Chapter 8: Discussion of Research Findings

In the previous chapter, I outlined the research findings on the basis of three broader themes: management and ownership; teachers: having a voice and being heard; and issues of regulation and deregulation. This chapter draws on the research findings from the previous chapters (Chapter 7) and discusses these findings in the light of the literature via the following themes: school governance and management (power relations, decision making and motivation); teacher professionalism (teachers' autonomy, professionalisation and professionalism, business capital versus professional capital, and postmodern professionalism); and the government's role in the privatisation of education in Nepal. The government's role in privatising education in Nepal is discussed on the basis of the theme, *regulation and deregulation*. The chapter extends this discussion in relation to the toleration of illegality in the operation of Nepali private schools.

Taylor's (1911) ideas are still relevant to my study. For example, Taylor's notion of making payments to employees on the basis of performance, that is, differential payment, arose in my study context. Perhaps, because of the direct association of the examine regime with the marketisation strategy of private schools, secondary level teachers were paid much higher salaries compared to primary level teachers in the same school. This is justified in the eyes of school owners, who claim to have paid their teachers on the basis of their performance. The power relations and decision making processes existing in these schools also suggest the dominance of owners in almost every activity within their schools. Consequently, this affects the motivation of the staff and the finding suggests it leads to interest conflicts.

Both schools studied were profit oriented, managed and owned by small groups. School owners were working towards maximising profits, while non-owner staff were inclined towards the rewards of proper pay and job security. School owners were in favour of employing authority, having freedom to terminate the employment (appointment) whenever necessary, while the staff were not happy at the employer (school owners) having authority to terminate the employment whenever they (school owners) wish to do so. This situation created tension between owners and non-owner staff. This raised the question of professionalism,

so the next section discusses the question of teachers' professionalism. Finally, I discuss the issues of privatisation, focusing on the role of government.

Management and Governance

The organisational context of both schools is found to be complex. For example, different groups of people such as teachers (primary and secondary), administrators and principals working in both schools appear to view the overall objective of schools from their own perspectives, adding ambiguity to the educational goal of their schools. The organisational structures indicated that the nature of organisations aligned towards a bureaucratic model with leaders as the hero figure (Baldrige et al., 1978; Packwood, 1989). For example, in both cases, the owners are also the principals of the schools. Consequently, power, resources and decision making were centralised and confined to the owner/principals. In school X, two staff (owner/principal and vice principal) occupied the status of both owners and staff, while remaining staff were non-owner staff. Similarly, in case study school Y, four primary owners (including the principal) occupied different important positions with actual authority. Some non-owner staff of both schools occupied lower level managerial positions with more workload and less authority. Thus, people and activities of the schools were differentiated using positions (Fitzgerald, 2009).

School management was based on the assumption that staff performed better when they were managed, supervised and controlled effectively (Levačić et al., 1999). The existence of unidirectional vertical communication, coupled with the expectation that teachers and other staff need to implement the decisions made by the school's owners, highlighted the hierarchical nature of the relationship. Such a hierarchy ignores teachers' individual contributions towards teaching and learning activities, thereby discounting their professionalism (Bush, 2011c). This is not an appropriate framework for educational institutions such as schools, which are staffed with well-educated people who are supposed to exert their initiative. In addition to this, the working of both schools does not always follow the structure and positions. For example, in school X, the structure and hierarchy indicates that the vice principal was the head of the primary block. However, the actual work was done by the male primary administrator, and the ultimate authority was retained by the owner/principal. Similarly, in school Y, although the primary owners were

occupying different managerial positions, it was difficult to figure out who was responsible for whom. The organisational charts/structures of both schools explain only their formal organisations, but does not explain their informal organisation (Owens, 1970). Informal organisations are significant, as they describe the actual power relations. In the following sub-sections, I discuss management and governance on the basis of power relations, decision making processes, motivation of the staff and interest conflicts.

Power Relations

The school owners as both owners and managers/principals of the schools continue to believe that power, positions and resources are theirs to wield because they are owners. So they seem to have power to give some type of reward to their staff to influence performance (reward power) and also power from their formal positions (legitimate power) (French Jr. & Raven, 2001). However, when we take into account different sources of power, such as control of resources, formal authority, organisational structures with rules and regulation and interpersonal alliances and network as indicated by Morgan (2006), it seems that power in both schools is much more dispersed than at first glance. Due to teachers' unionisation, power seemed to have spread among the staff through various networks and alliances. However, the distribution of power was not equal, because of non-ownership of most staff. This unequal distribution of power can be interpreted on the basis of the Marx's (1955) theory of alienation which related to employees' alienation from profits of their work. Small groups of school owners wield immense power over other staff (Hill, Sanders, & Hankin, 2002). As Marx suggests, school life was being controlled by monetary motives rather than professional values related to teaching and learning (Thompson, 2008). Although Marx's theory of power explains why teachers and other staff working in these two private schools are dominated by the school owners, this theory provides very little information about how the domination-subordination relationships exist. Foucault's notion of power appears to be more useful.

Foucault (1980) asserts that power is something that circulates in the form of a chain, as a result of which, it is exercised in the form of a net-like organisation. Thus, as Foucault (1980) indicated, power in these Nepali schools is exercised in the form of a network. Power relations in these schools can be discussed on the basis of the two schemes— *contract-repressions*, involving legitimation and

illegitimation, and *domination-repression* or *war-repressions* involving struggle and submission (Foucault 1980). Staff still felt that power was based on a single power centre (school owners). These non-owner staff believe that they are being oppressed or exploited because of the unlimited power of the school owners. They want, therefore to limit power of school owners via legal means (Neal, 2004), which fits in Foucault's contract-repression scheme of power.

Nepal's political system had been dominated by a single power centre, the monarchy, for about 240 years. Such an embedded culture still exerts sway among the people of Nepal, including the participants of this study. For example, instead of raising voices in favour of job security and fair wages, some teachers, particularly women teachers in school X still believed that grace and favour would achieve results by pleasing the school's owners, the power centre. However, with the political change in the country (as indicated in Chapter 2), a domination-repression or war-repression scheme of power is emerging in Nepali private schools. With the advent of the teachers' union, there is continuous tension between these two school owners and their staff, which sometimes causes interruptions to the smooth operation of the school. Foucault (2003) suggested that these power relations can be analysed in terms of conflict, confrontation and war. Teachers and other staff (administrators in this study) struggle against the power domination of the school owners who wield absolute power or wish to. Teachers believe that now their voice is being heard to some extent and school owners are having to be more careful in dealing with their staff. However, there are still many teachers (mostly women teachers working at the primary level) who still believe that they have to please the school owners to get incentives or perks. These groups seemed to be operating in the domination-submission category, submitting to the authority of the owners. This can also be explained in relations to gender.

This feeling of powerlessness among the women teachers is perhaps, linked to patriarchal thinking prevalent in Nepali society (Dillabough, 1999; Rothchild, 2006). In Foucault's terms, this can be understood as the gender dimension of the authority of gaze, in which women teachers are positioned as objects of the gaze (Danaher et al., 2000).

Patriarchal values are deeply rooted in Nepali culture. Women's education and employment is given less importance than men's (Parajuli, 2008) and appears to be played out in these two schools where the women teachers are concentrated

at primary levels and receive subsistence pay, enforcing dependence on male significant others, such as their husbands. This study suggests that even in the Maoist political regime, the role of women is reinforced as subservient to men (Horkheimer, 1980). Thus, this study presents a microcosm of Nepali culture, whereby women's education and employment mirrors their expected roles in society as wives, mothers and daughters (Robinson-Pant, 2009).

Another aspect of powerlessness has to do with the status of these women teachers. As Ashton and Webb (1986) assert, when school principals do not recognise the efforts and accomplishment of their teachers, these staff feel undervalued for this women's work at the primary levels is not valued in the same way as staff teaching in secondary levels which directly contribute to the SLC examination. As Blackmore (1988), writing about an Australian educational context indicated, accountability seems to be linked with monitoring students' performance. This becomes the basis of evaluating teachers' performance.

Given that there is a situation of both struggle and submission in these Nepali private schools, that raises questions of decision making, dealt next.

Decision Making

Different metaphorical terms such as anarchic organisations (Cohen & March, 1986) and loosely coupled systems (Weick, 1976) have been used to describe the decision making processes in educational institutions. This suggests that decision making in schools is not always sequential and rational. Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) elaborated the loosely coupled and anarchic organisation idea, using the 'garbage can model' term to describe decision making that does not follow due process. The reality of decision making in school X, for example, suggested that the head of the primary block was maintained as a figurehead, while the owner/principal made most of the decisions based on the information from two particular people: the coordinator of the primary block and secondary in-charge of secondary block. Similarly, the primary owners of school Y, occupying different important managerial positions, were the ultimate source of authority. The important decisions related to staff's conditions of service were confined to these owners. Thus, decision making was centralised with school owners (Fernández & Nieto, 2006). This vertical relationship indicates a hierarchical structure to the management of the school, with owners/principals at the top (Bush, 2011c).

Authority in both schools was conditioned by ownership and control being in the hands of school owners, rendering authority highly centralised and vested in a person, as indicated by Fernández and Nieto (2006) who discuss similar issues in founder/owner-managed small and medium size firms in Spain. Gedajlovic, Lubatkin and Schulze (2004) also indicated similar issues from the review of literature on founder-managed firms across the globe. While these are business organisations in the contexts of different countries, not private educational organisations in Nepal's political flux, some of the principles resonate. For example, authority in school X was confined to the owner/principal, while in school Y, authority was confined to a group of owners. So the school owners of both schools had discretion either to share or not to share authority with other staff and thus control what happens. Unclear lines of authority, along with improper delegation of authority to the non-owner staff occupying middle-level managerial positions led to confusion. Although the obligation to work or undertake duties was vested in the middle level managers, such as the coordinator, primary in-charge and secondary in-charge of school X, as well as head of department and vice principal of school Y, authority and decision making were not tied to these positions. The authority-responsibility situation in my study was quite similar to the argument Lortie (1975) formulated from his sociological study on American schoolteachers. For example, in both sets of contexts, many teachers and other non-owner staff complained that their responsibility/obligation exceed any authority they feel they had.

The staff and owner participants in both research schools had, however, indicated that the decision making process in their schools has altered somewhat due to the reformed political context. For example, sometimes some decisions related to school operations such as whether school operates during strikes have been made as a result of external pressure. Similarly, staff participants from both schools also indicated that school owners had developed different strategies for dealing with staff in this Maoist republic. For example, school owners created a range of middle level managerial positions, such as head of department, secondary level in-charge, primary level in-charge and primary level coordinator but with less authority and more obligations. This illusion of shared decision-making roles suggests that these 2 schools are responding to this new political environment (Sergiovanni, 1984).

Working in schools can be a source of satisfaction and also a cause of grief for teachers, principals and other staff. Social interactions can sometimes be satisfying for some people while frustrating for others. In the next sub-section, I discuss the management and governance of schools in relation to motivation of the staff.

Negative Motivation

This study found more negative attitudes (dissatisfaction) towards work than positive attitudes (satisfaction) (Vroom, 1995). The findings aligned with Blase and Anderson's (1995) conclusions that the political practices of the school's principal develops negative feelings, such as anger, depression, confusion, disorientation, uncertainty, fear and passive acceptance with minimal positive feelings of satisfaction among staff. This suggests that staff participants were not happy at work.

The most common reasons for this unhappiness was a lack of incentives and benefits similar to the public school system. Among different reasons to work as suggested by Vroom (1964), financial remuneration and status of work were found to be more significant compared to others such as expenditure of energy, social interaction and providing services. By not addressing these, owners precipitated feelings of dissatisfaction in staff. Almost all the non-owner staff in both case study schools argued that they should have conditions and incentives similar to teachers in the public school system such as proper financial remuneration. This suggests that lower order needs, such as physiological and safety needs, were more important for the non-owner staff working in Nepali private schools than the need for esteem and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943) although the two are linked. Perhaps staff feel undervalued by owners as a result of poor conditions of service. This research appears to contradict Glass's (2011) findings, that although the desire to earn money motivates teachers to work, the desire to provide support to the students is stronger than the economic motive. My present research suggests that teachers and other non-owner staff were working towards increasing their perks and incentives. This is because the staff had little job security and poor conditions. This makes it difficult to focus on student needs.

In addition to Maslow's theory of motivation, the motivation-hygiene theory has also been tested in the context of education. This theory suggests that

factors such as achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility and advancement play important roles in increasing job satisfaction, while factors such as salary/pay, working conditions, company policy and administration and quality of supervision are related to job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). When we consider this motivation-hygiene theory, salary/pay, school policies and the owner/principal's managerial roles were key reasons for job dissatisfaction among the school staff. Non-owner staff perceived that their salary or remuneration was not commensurate with the services they were providing to the school. These private school staff believed that they provide a good education in terms of SLC pass rates and English-speaking environment, but were not recognised for their efforts. This was more about their needs in terms of worth and esteems (Maslow, 1943). Non-owner staff believed that school administration and policy was based on the words of the owners not on a negotiated vision and direction for education. Thus, the perception and experience of my staff participants resonate with what Khaniya (2007) indicated about the role of school management committees. This was about the advisory role of school management committees. In both schools of my study, the school management committee was found to be created to fulfil government legal provisions, and such committees were there only to give advice to the school's owners, rather than make decisions and develop policy.

Almost all the non-owner staff in this study stated that they were not satisfied with their work, but continued to work in the school. This may relate to teaching licences. Teaching in the public school system requires teachers to have a teaching licence. Most teachers in these private schools do not have this. Nor did they go through the kind of rigorous recruitment and selection procedures public schools undertake. Because of all of these factors, these staff members find themselves in vulnerable situation. Similar to Rose and Adelabu's (2007) findings about private schools in Nigeria, the motivation of teachers and other non-owner staff in my study was related to the threat of losing their job rather than job satisfaction. As noted by Friedlander and Watson (1964), negative motivation in work environment, and about school policy and supervision were prevalent in both the case study schools. This negative motivation among non-owner staff was producing a situation of interest conflicts between the non-owner staff and school owners, which is the topic of the next section.

Interest Conflicts

As Ball (1987) observes, the control of schools is based on the control of resources and positions. In the case of my 2 schools, these positions are occupied by the school owners who also work as principals. After the unionisation of teachers, the teachers and other non-owner staff started perceiving themselves having a voice and could wield some power. This precipitated conflict between the school's owners and non-owner staff. This is a conflict of interests. These include self-interest or personal interest (autonomy, status and reward) and vested interest such as increase in salary and incentives, job security and other working conditions (Ball, 1987; Hoyle, 1982). Teachers and other non-owner staff were working towards fulfilling their self and vested interest by trying to increase their incentives and perks in line with the public school systems. As Kellner (2005) pointed out, vested self-interest is normal given the competitive and capitalist environment in which teachers and other non-owner staff were working. On the other hand, school owners tried to reduce teachers' perks and incentives as much as they could so that they could create more profit for themselves. This led to ongoing tensions, resulting in strikes and school closure for a week at a time. For example, all private schools in the country were closed due to the strike called by Nepal-ISTU on March 09, 2011 for about a month, called to put pressure on the government and schools' owners to implement past agreements reached with the teachers' union. The agreement includes providing teachers salary on par with government counterparts, issuing appointment letters to the existing teachers and also providing incentives such as insurance and provident funds (Nepal-ISTU, 2010). Perhaps this is an example of existence of class struggle (Marx & Engels, 1964) between the exploited working class represented by non-owner staff (including teachers) and the neoliberal exploiter represented by schools' owners (also working as school principals). As Lenin (1902) argued, these struggles represent an awakening of the working class. The shifting political scenario of Nepal brought about a democratic consciousness among the teachers and non-owner staff of Nepali private schools, an awakening about how they might secure better conditions for themselves in their workplaces.

The struggle within the schools seems to be against domination, forms of exploitation and subjection and submission (Foucault, 1982). Thus, power relations operating within these schools appear anchored in a relationship of force (Foucault, 2003). Teachers and other non-owner staff have learned, as Foucault (1982)

indicated, to criticise those who exercise power over them (schools owners) without expectation of liberation, revolution or end of the struggle. Teachers in these Nepali private schools struggle for recognition of their working conditions and sense of professional expertise. This professionalism (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996) is the next topic.

Teachers' Professionalism

Teachers' professionalism in these two private schools is discussed on the basis of the role of the school's owners as managers/leaders of the schools and also on the role of government. Timperley, Wilson, Barrar and Fung (2007), in highlighting the context of New Zealand, suggested that school leaders have an important role in promoting teachers' professionalism. Similarly, Cobb, McClain, Lamberg and Dean (2003) assert that teaching and learning practices are influenced by the environment within and outside school contexts. In my two case studies, the role of school owners as leaders/managers represents the environment within the schools, and the role of the government represents the environment outside of the school context. Both imply a focus on what it means to be an autonomous professional.

Teachers' Autonomy

Teachers' autonomy has been defined as the degree of freedom teachers have while determining their teaching and learning activities (Blase & Blase, 2001). When we examine teachers' professionalism regarding curriculum (McCulloch et al., 2000), teachers in my research had very little control over what they taught and how they taught. The prevailing system of national curriculum along with national and regional testing at certain grades means teachers focused on preparing their students for the prescribed testing. Schools' owners exercised discretionary power to select textbooks produced by private publishers and approved by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), rather than classroom teachers. This is another example where teachers' autonomy and pedagogical professionalism was undermined (Wong, 2008). This also links to teachers' alienation from their work because they play no part in deciding what they have to teach (Ollman, 2004).

This research supports Day and Sachs' (2004) assertion that teachers' work is both regulated by the state and driven by market competition. Lipman (2009) highlighted similar situations in US schools, where the state control and

marketisation of education have resulted in the development of a new professionalism; that is, teachers as entrepreneurs. Similarly, Sachs (2003) used the term *managerial professionalism* to indicate state intervention in curriculum and charted the increasing importance of the external examination as a measure of value in Australian schools. Lingard (2009) argues that the global rise of neo-liberal politics led to the development of teaching as an occupation in the form of state professionalism. My research shows evidence of existence of such international problems in education, even though the Nepali context was somewhat different from the Western countries. My teacher participants indicated that they need to teach their students using the textbooks the owners selected. They also prepared their students for certain regional and national level examinations, indicating both state and top level management by school owners in teaching and learning activities in these two schools.

In both schools, the majority of teachers at the primary level were women, suggesting gender as a factor. This *feminisation of primary teaching* in my research has highlighted a range of issues for teachers working at the primary level. One of these was statistical in nature, as more women teachers work in the primary level compared to men teachers. Perhaps, this is because of the belief that primary teaching is a profession more suitable to women as prime nurturers (Skelton, 2002). Linked with this issue was the “masculine ideals of professional autonomy and agency” (Dillabough, 1999, p. 379). The unequal situation for women teachers at primary level, compared to men teachers at secondary level, means that the professional status of these women teachers was neglected, with their work being compared with household activities. Two women teachers and the administrator of the school X, saw that teaching at primary level was given status of ordinary work suitable for women teachers because of its compatibility with family life and child rearing. Parallel to Sykes’s (1999) findings in the context of the US schools, this study shows evidence of the cultural status of primary teaching as ordinary work.

The women teachers of my study, especially working in the primary level, repeatedly highlighted the issues of their pay and status. In addition to the cultural status of ordinary work discussed above, this also has to do with the market orientation of these private schools, as they market themselves and compete with other schools based on their students’ performance in the SLC examination. Since teachers at the secondary level were directly related to SLC examination, they were

perceived to be more valuable than the primary level teachers. This has encouraged schools' owners to neglect the female primary teachers. This presents an unfair environment for these women teachers and suggests creation of commercialised professionalism (Hanlon, 1998) in my study schools. The practice of male secondary teachers' status being largely attached to student success at the end of secondary schooling examination signifies market positioning of the schools in response to parental perceptions and demand.

Linking Short's (1994) lists of empowerment, the teachers' status is low due to lack of facilities such as appropriate salary, medical allowances, and insurance plans similar to their government counterparts, and a lack of recognition and professional development opportunity. Similarly, teachers' autonomy, involvement in decision making and teacher impact, teachers feeling and perceptions about others valuing their knowledge, seems to be lacking due to the concentration of ownership and management on school owners.

The teachers from both schools of my inquiry seem to be working towards achieving centrally determined curriculum targets and standards with prescribed testing pressure. On one hand, teachers have to work on the basis of imposed external targets (national curriculum and standardised testing) and on the other hand, my research indicates that the primary level teachers are not paid according to the legislation. Such cases of overwork and underpayment present evidence of a contradiction between teachers' professionalism and professionalisation (Hargreaves, 2000), which is discussed further in the next sub-section.

Professionalism and Professionalisation

As indicated in Chapter 3, different scholars in the field of education present similarities and differences between teachers' professionalism and professionalisation. Hargreaves (2000) claims that teachers' professionalisation is related to improving teachers' status, while teachers' professionalism involves activities related to improving the quality and standard of teaching and learning practice. Hargreaves further noted that teachers' professionalism and professionalisation can be complementary but conflicting. This means strong professionalisation is not always equivalent to better professionalism. Hargreaves and Goodman (1996) define teachers' professionalism as the ethics and purpose guiding teachers' action, while teachers' professionalisation is seen as a knowledge

base about teaching. Similarly, Helsby and McCulloch (1996) noted that teachers' professionalisation is concerned with teachers' attempts to be recognised as professionals, which may relate to establishing associations and unions. Conversely, teachers' professionalism is related to the way teachers develop, negotiate, use and control their own knowledge. Thus, teachers' professionalisation is often associated with teachers' unionisation, because it is assumed to improve teachers' status and standing in terms of proper salaries, benefits, working conditions and protection of their basic rights (Sykes, 1999). After the wider political climate of Nepal changed from a monarchy to a republic, private schoolteachers started organising themselves into teachers' unions, encouraging them to collectively bargain for the terms and conditions of their work.

My study, however, found that most teachers working at the primary level were not involved in teachers' unions, claiming that teachers' unions have political motives. This may be an example of naivety or symptomatic of the gendered cultural moves of Nepal. As I discuss in the upcoming sub-section, postmodern professionalism, although the teachers' union's role has now shifted towards educational reform and social justice, the participant teachers assume that the role of the teachers' union is limited to industrial bargaining. Carney (2003) argues that such limited union representation of teachers seems to weaken professional status.

As Hargreaves (2000) indicates, teachers' professionalism is often associated with the conduct and standards provisions guiding teachers in their work. An example of this are the teachers' certification and licencing regulations that is common in countries such as the USA, the UK, New Zealand and Australia (Sachs, 2003). In Nepal, the Seventh Amendment of Education Act 2028 (1971) has clearly stated that teachers need to obtain a teaching licence from the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in order to teach either in private or public schools. However, there are still many teachers in private schools teaching without a licence (Kharel, 2003a, 2003b). Although I could not explore the reasons behind such non-licence with my research participants, a common reason that Kharel (2003b) cites has to do with achieving gender equity in schools. Women teachers, in order to achieve better balance in teacher numbers, were excused from having this teaching licence. However, the result has been to create a vulnerable workforce. Similarly, teachers already working in both public and private were issued temporary licences. They needed to apply for a permanent licence within five years on the conditions that

their employment would be automatically terminated (in case of public schools) if they did not get this licence. Moreover, permanent teaching licences were issued via a 100 marks pen and paper test. Anyone obtaining over 40 percent was given a permanent teaching licence, without assessing the teaching skills of the candidate (Wagley, 2003). Teachers working in public schools took this seriously and achieved permanent teaching licences because of their job provisions. However, private schoolteachers did not follow this government regulation. Private schools take full advantage of the unclear government policy and lack of enforcement.

As indicated from the detailed descriptions of research participants from both schools (Appendix G and Appendix H), teachers have less pedagogical knowledge than content knowledge (Ball, 2000). Almost all research participants lack teaching-related formal training and also teaching related qualifications (except owner/principal of school Y), indicating a general lack of pedagogical knowledge. Research participants have the minimum qualifications required for teaching the levels (for example, a bachelor's degree for teaching secondary level) and some have more than is required qualification (for example a master's degree in Nepali language for teaching Nepali at the secondary level). Almost all of the research participants have teaching experience of more than 10 years. Given the complexity of the divide between subject matter knowledge and practices of teaching, the *pedagogical content knowledge*, as proposed by Shulman and his colleagues (Shulman, 1986), needs to be considered here. Pedagogical content knowledge is believed to bridge the gap that exists between the knowledge of the subject matter and the practice of teaching (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008). This involves a wide range of aspects of subject matter and pedagogy, and represents a special combination of knowledge linking two (Ball et al., 2008; Ball, 2000). Thus, as Lingard (2009) asserts, teacher identity in my research context seems to be based on the type of school teachers work in, the sector (primary/secondary level) they teach, the subject/disciplines their degrees are in (bachelor/master's degree in Nepali, science, mathematics, and so on), and the subject they teach (Nepali, science, social studies, mathematics and so on). Government policy relating to private schools appears to focus on curriculum and assessment, ignoring pedagogical content knowledge.

Because there is such a paucity of pedagogical content knowledge among teachers, the business/profit motive holds sway. This raises the issue of the business

capital notion of teachers' professionalism as found in the study context with professional capital notion of teachers' professionalism, as most of the recent studies suggest.

Business Capital versus Professional Capital

Two private schools are oriented to a business capital notion of teachers' professionalism, as these private schools seem to be operating for a quick financial return. This neglects the professional capital notion of teachers' professionalism, which involves recognising education as a long-term investment for developing human capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The business capital notion of teachers' professionalism as suggested by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) is also similar to the notion of commercialised professionalism (Hanlon, 1998) that assumes that professionalism is driven by a profit motive rather than a service motive. My research context, being private schools, seems to be driven by the profit motive, an indication of commercialised professionalism. The perceived importance of secondary level teachers because of their direct association with the SLC examination (through which private schools market themselves) is an indication of the existence of the business capital notion of teachers' professionalism. In addition to this, the lower status of primary level women teachers and the research participants' focus on preparation of students for the job market also highlight these aspects of teachers' professionalism. With such a business capital or commercialised notion of teachers' professionalism, teaching and learning environment within the schools seem to be driven by centralised curriculum and a series of standardised tests. These (centralised curriculum and standardised tests) are used as performance indicators for evaluating teachers' performance and students' achievement (Wong, 2008). This is an example of the neoliberal model of marketisation of education and the creation of workers to feed profit. Marxists provide opposing viewpoints against such neoliberal strategies of privatisation, arguing that under market-oriented education systems, students and teachers become exchangeable commodities, thereby resulting in the formation of a society less responsible for individual and group welfare (Hursh, 2007). Such a neoliberal model of marketisation of education prevents teachers from being involved in the needs of their students.

Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) argue that teachers need freedom to make discretionary judgements about teaching and learning activities. This is aligned with the professional model of schools, as Johnson and Kardos (2000) indicated, under which teachers are encouraged to assess their teaching and learning activities and also make decisions considering the needs of their students and schools. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) introduced the term *postmodern professionalism* for the notion of teachers' professionalism, whereby teachers have freedom to make discretionary judgement on their teaching and learning activities. What follows is a brief description of postmodern teachers' professionalism within the context of the study.

Postmodern Professionalism

Postmodern teacher professionalism represents struggle between two groups of educational stakeholders. The first group, closely aligned with neoliberal agenda, stress the de-professionalism of teaching, while the second group place stress on re-defining teachers' professionalism (Hargreaves, 2000). My research seems to contradict the notion of postmodern teachers' professionalism as suggested by Hargreaves (2000), and Hargreaves and Goodson (1996). Hargreaves (2000) noted that postmodern teachers' professionalism represents a struggle between groups moving towards de-professionalisation of teaching and other groups trying to re-define teachers' professionalism. Although my study found the existence of struggle between different groups of stakeholders (that is: school's owners and non-owner staff, schools' owners and the state, and the teachers' union and the state), such struggles seem to be more directed towards achieving individual groups' interests. I call this struggle an interest conflicts.

Schools' owners of my study were trying to concentrate more and more money into private hands from the school's operations, avoiding paying teachers on a par with state school teachers. Even though the working environment and terms and conditions of work represent a part of teachers' professionalism, the teaching and learning environment cannot be neglected when considering teachers' professionalism. This brings me to the role of the teachers' union.

Stevenson (2007), in highlighting the United Kingdom context, argues that teachers' unions need to work constructively for government policy changes and teachers' conditions of service. Although the teachers' union in my study cases was constantly demanding change in both government policy and teachers' conditions

of service, the demand was through strikes and school closures as a result, without achieving much. Similarly, in US and Canadian education, Poole (2000) and Bascia (2005) noted that teachers' unions were working towards educational reform and teachers' professional development to improve teaching and learning activities in schools. This focus is not yet evident in Nepal.

As Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) suggested, teachers' professionalism needs to extend beyond teachers' conditions of services towards teachers' discretionary judgement about the teaching and learning activities. However, this seems quite inconsistent in my inquiry, where teachers feel obliged to deliver content as per the national curriculum and use textbooks selected by schools' owners, and prepare their students for external examinations while working under the whim of the owner/principals of their schools. This limits teachers from having discretionary judgement about what they teach and how they teach.

This research found that teachers' professionalism depends on the school owners' role as leader, and also the leadership shown by the government of Nepal. Government policy towards the private schools however, is not enforced. In the following section, I discuss the issue of privatisation, with reference to the government policy of the country.

Regulation versus Deregulation

As in many countries of the world, private schools in Nepal are not controlled through democratic processes; instead, they are controlled indirectly through the marketplace (Chubb & Moe, 1990). Such marketisation of education involves weakening the state monopoly in education, creating a debatable role for government (Harris, 2007). The owner participants of this study want a liberal government role for private schools in the country in order to excise power as they see fit to, apparently, maximise private profit. Since these are registered as business organisations under the Company Act, owners want to run their school as businesses. That is why they want deregulation. This is an example of a 'negative connotation of state power' or classical liberalism (Peters, 2011, 2012) and want freedom from state interference (Peters, 2009).

These ideas aligned with the neo-liberal principles of efficiency and effectiveness, as proposed by New Public Management (NPM). NPM assumes that efficiency and effectiveness of any organisation including public sector can be

improved from private sector management principles (Fitzgerald & Rainnie, 2012). Schools' owners seem to consider education as a private good instead of a common good. This means they take students and parents as consumers, teachers as producers, and they themselves (owner/principals) as managers and entrepreneurs (Harris, 2007). Their interests are in increasing profit and international competitiveness in education rather than education for the common people (Apple & Whitty, 2002). However, non-owner staff believe that the private schools should be regulated properly to enable systematic operation. Owners and teachers' agendas are starkly different.

In order to bring changes, some efforts are noticeable such as continual pressure from Nepal-ISTU on the government, while school owners lobby the government in order to achieve de-regulation through their organisations [Private and Boarding Schools' Association of Nepal, (PABSON) and the National Private and Boarding Schools' Association of Nepal, (NPABSON)]. This is an indication of shifting trends in the mode of power relations.

The 'how' of power relations within the studied schools during a monarchy was aligned toward the juridical and liberal notion of power (Marshall, 2009). The schools' owners used to perceive power as their right or the commodity. Power in this context was considered as a concrete substance which the schools' owners hold because of their ownership and positions. However, with the change in the political environment of the country and subsequent unionisation of private school teachers, power relations started changing. This shift of power relations towards a military model of war and struggle between schools' owners and non-owner staff, government and school owners, and non-owner staff and the government of Nepal was noticeable (Foucault, 2003).

The government of Nepal also has made efforts to bring the private education sector into a proper regulatory framework. On several occasions, the government constituted task forces and committees for collecting input and information for policy regulating the private sector (Khaniya, 2007). For example, recognising the need for suitable guidelines for the operation of schools in the private sector of the country, the Ministry of Education formed a study group consisting of representatives from educationists, the parents' association, students' association, teachers' association and private school owners (Ministry of Education, His Majesty Government of Nepal, 1998). The study group made recommendations

to the government, but the decisions have hardly been implemented. On several occasions, the government initiated dialogues with private sector owners, teachers' union and students' union to reach agreements on regulation, but the outcomes have not been implemented (Khaniya, 2007). More recently, the Department of Education, under the Ministry of Education, has endorsed 'Private and Boarding Schools Guidelines 2013' for regulating private schools (Department of Education, 2013). Although these guidelines were prepared by a nine-member committee consisting of representatives from private school owners, parents and the Department of Education, private schools generally disregard government regulations, inviting protests from the parents and students' associations. This is aligned with Foucault's (1977, 1995) notion of 'tolerated illegality,' whereby non-compliance of law has become a functioning condition of these private schools and this topic is extended next.

Tolerated Illegality

Foucault (1977, 1995) introduced the notion of tolerated illegality in *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault argued that the non-application of law and non-observance of many ordinances was taken as the normal economic and political condition for the functioning of society during the eighteenth century. This was theorised as relating to the deeply rooted nature of illegality in society. As a result, illegality was a cultural essence of life and necessary for the normal functioning of society.

Such a scenario was also seen in the context of my study. The Government of Nepal has been constantly framing rules and regulations related to the private education sector without any success in implementing them. The private education sector violates the government's policies and regulations, arguing that the government did not involve them in framing the policy and regulations and so they do not have to follow them. However, reality suggests that the government does not have the resources to enforce compliance (Khaniya, 2007; Wagley, 2013). For example, when the Ministry of Education introduced the regulatory framework in May 2002, including provisions for registering the existing schools either as a trust or as a private company, the majority of schools opted to register themselves as private companies. However, these private company schools were not willing to pay taxes levied by the Ministry of Finance. Similarly, schools registered as trusts were not willing to hand over their property to the state (Caddell, 2009). Thus, the

private schools continue to violate the government regulatory framework designed for their operation. The Seventh Amendment of the Educational Act 2028 (1971), made in 2001, states that the concerned authority can cancel the permission or approval of the private school if it is found to act against the provision of Education Act (Ministry of Education, His Majesty Government of Nepal, 1971), yet this has rarely been exercised.

The Supreme Court of Nepal is now featuring. For example, after the Supreme Court directed the government to regulate private and boarding schools of the country, the MOE drafted *The Private and Boarding Schools Guidelines 2013*. As noted earlier, these guidelines have been disregarded by private schools even though their representatives were also involved in framing these guidelines. On several occasions, the Supreme Court has ordered the Department of Education to strictly monitor irregularities in private schools, such as fees hikes, entrance examination charges, selling books and uniforms on the school's premises or using books not approved by the CDC (Ghimire, 2012; Sharma, 2013). The Department of Education was then forced to announce that it would officially cancel the licence for those schools not obeying orders from Supreme Court regarding tuition fees and sale of textbooks and uniforms on the school premises (Ghimire, 2012). However, this has rarely happened as there is no information on any schools' licences being revoked.

Summary

This chapter has discussed findings related to management and governance, teachers' professionalism and the role of the Nepali government towards private schools. This study mainly has outlined the political power within the private schools in relation to the political context of Nepal. The school owners represent the dominant group in the power struggle. The concentration of management and ownership within the school owners enables them to have power in the decision making process. However, with the political change in the country and subsequent unionisation of private schoolteachers, the power dynamics or power relations within the schools seem to be changing. The teachers and other staff of the private schools now have formed alliances and networks. This has increased tension between the school owners and the non-owner staff working in the private schools.

The non-owner staff of Nepali private schools who are working without satisfaction in their work have now started collective bargaining to gain their rights and demands. This is a symptom of a group of people wanting to have more (a) voice; (b) job security; (c) proper governance processes; (d) more clarity about the lines of management, responsibility and accountability; (e) and proper pay and conditions of work. The staff participants of this study want that the government strictly regulate the private schools so that the school owners cannot do whatever they like. However, the owner participants argue that unclear government policy towards the private schools is causing a hindrance in their smooth operation. They further added that the government needs to allow the private schools to operate with a separate Act. As Boston et al. (1996) indicated, different features of NPM, such as private ownership, short-term labour contracts, performance-linked remuneration systems and preference of monetary incentives with stress on efficiency and cutback management, were found in this study.

This chapter has analysed the big ideas of the literature in relation to my findings and vice versa. In the next chapter, I present the conclusion, implications and recommendations of this research.

Chapter 9: Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

This qualitative case study research involved two private schools located at Kathmandu (the capital city of Nepal). Teachers, administrators and owner/principals in these two schools were the research participants. This research was motivated by my own personal experiences as an administrator and a teacher of private schools in Nepal during different periods in Nepal's political history.

This research sought to answer two research questions: (a) How do the teachers, administrators and owner/principals of two Nepali private schools perceive and experience their professional lives after the wider political climate of Nepal changed from a monarchy to a republic? and (b) To what extent, if any, are the changes in the wider political climate of the country mirrored within the private school context? The theoretical perspectives of this study comprise of both Marxist theory of power and Foucault's notion of power. As my study is situated in the changing political context of Nepal, the overall political history of Nepal together with the neoliberal influence also form a part of my theoretical framework. This theoretical framework enabled me to understand the teachers' voice within two private schools comprising my case study.

This research had provided a snapshot of the professional lives of teachers, administrators and principals of Nepali private schools within the Maoist-dominated political, social and economic environment. This study reveals that the situation of having a voice is quite different from the voice actually being heard by the school authorities and the government. While teachers felt that they could safely voice their views socially and politically outside of school, it was not safe to do so within. For example, although teachers of the two private schools had a voice within the wider political change in Nepal, resulting in the Maoist dominancy, their voice was not heard by the school authorities. Although there was a teachers' union related to private schools, teachers saw the union as more politically focused than professionally focused. Because of a lack of unity among teachers and other staff of Nepali private schools, school authorities were manipulating teachers through a divide and rule strategy. For example, linking secondary level teachers directly with the SLC examination, the school owners were paying them much higher salaries in comparison to the primary level teachers. This was encouraging secondary level

teachers to negotiate individually with the school owners in relation to the terms and conditions of work, instead of doing this collectively. Although teachers and other staff were able to put forward their demands, their demands had not been respectfully heard and addressed by the school owners.

I begin this chapter with an overview of my findings, focusing on the two research questions, which is followed by consideration of some limitations of this study. I also emphasise the contribution this study has made, with its implications and make some recommendations. I finally synthesise the bigger ideas and draw inferences presenting a conclusion, which highlights the essence of my research.

An Overview of Findings

The findings of this study have highlighted clear relationships between macro and micro political changes through examining the degree to which staff in the two private schools operated, and how they were expected to be treated. The concentration of power, resources and decision making in the hands of owner/principals led to dysfunction in terms of power, with personal power vested in owner/principals. Instead of delegating authority to the middle level managerial position-holders, school owners used these positions as surveillance tools to monitor teachers' practices; examinations were also used in this way. School governance was based on command and control from the top, with unidirectional vertical communication in the form of orders/directions. Instead of being facilitative and collaborative, the decision-making process is confined to a few people at the top. Owner/principals manage their staff by making use of their legitimate/positional authority rather than leading them through positive modelling of educational leadership. Such a hierarchical structure appears to ignore teachers' contribution towards the teaching and learning environment and discounts their professionalism, leading to teachers experiencing a lack of agency in their professional practices. Instead of command and control, teachers as professionals need to initiate their work in a positive way.

Moreover, in this Maoist dominated wider political context, this power concentration runs counter to espoused political ideologies. This was because of the development of revolutionary consciousness among the teachers and non-owner staff working in Nepali private schools. With the unionisation of private schoolteachers and other non-owner staff, they were in a position to collectively

argue for their rights and privileges. Unionisation should have created spaces for all teachers to feel empowered to act professionally. Through exercising this collective union power, some teachers experienced agency and school owners, who used to exercise sovereign power, started perceiving that power within the school was gradually changing into a network, although it had not been equally distributed. As school management and governance were still based on command, control and domination, school owners developed different strategies to deal with such situations. One such strategy was the avoidance strategy, as seen in the primary block of school X. Another strategy was assigning middle level managerial positions to non-owner staff, although such positions seem to involve more obligation and less authority to actually make decisions. Still another strategy was dividing and ruling, with the school owners giving more importance to the secondary level, staffed mostly by male teachers, while neglecting the primary level staffed mostly by female teachers, indicating a gender divide as well as a power divide.

The findings suggest the significance of gendered division of labour inside the schools linked to patriarchy in Nepal. Women were clustered in the low paying primary level positions and men in the comparatively high paying secondary level positions. The differentials of gender are strongly linked to the wider societal views of roles, status and power. For example, women remained in nurturing, low-status, and low-agency roles, while men were in high-status and high-agency roles. The study found differences in perceptions and experiences among teachers working in the different levels (primary and secondary) of the same school. The women teachers working in the primary level of the schools perceived and experienced that they were being neglected by the schools' authorities. The reason they cited was their indirect association with the SLC examination through which most private schools in Nepal compete. This highlighted market orientation of private schools.

My research illustrated that teachers' professional status was weaker in the situation of limited union representation. Although there were perceptions that the conditions of teachers' work had changed with changes in the surrounding political context and subsequent unionisation of private schoolteachers, the culture of fear was seen especially among primary-level teachers in terms of their actual involvement/engagement in teachers' unions. Many teachers and other staff working in both studied schools were still divided and were not interested in being

involved in the teachers' union. This helped owner/principals to successfully manage their staff through a divide and rule strategy. Although the wider political climate had enabled teachers and other staff to have a voice on the terms and conditions of their work, their voice was not being heard by the school authorities and the government because of a lack of unity. In addition to teachers' voices with regards to the terms and conditions of their work, their (teachers') voices were also silenced in the teaching and learning activities. Even though there existed a national curriculum along with regional and a national testing systems, school owners still had complete discretionary power for selecting books to be used by the teachers, and as teachers were teaching as per the textbooks and preparing students for the regional and national level examinations, teachers had no control over what they taught and very little control over how they taught. The focus on preparing students for the SLC examination, with the limited use of national curriculum, also highlighted aspects of teaching to the test and curriculum-led instruction going on in these two private schools.

Findings showed that the government regulation re private schools' accountability was weak, for there were few penalties for non-compliance. Both the schools' owners and non-owner staff of two private schools raised their voices against the discrepancy between the current government's regulatory framework and practices, for owners continued to avoid compliance regulations. Instead, they preferred deregulation of private schools so they could, apparently, continue to operate however they choose. They want the government to operate private schools under a separate regulatory framework, instead of the same legal provisions as the public school system, because they do not want, it would seem, to pay teachers the same through employing properly certified teachers. Non-owner staff, however, perceived that because of a lack of implementation of a government regulatory framework, private school owners were running their school at will, or as Foucault (1995) called it, via *tolerated illegality*.

Limitations of the Study

This study explored the realities of professional lives of two Nepali private schools' teachers, administrators and principals, contributing to understanding how the macro changes in Nepali society and politics have contributed to some teachers' altered sense of professionalism. However, there are several limitations associated with this research.

One limitation of this study is related to my role as a researcher and how my personal biases may have influenced how I analysed my data. This study is a qualitative case study in two schools. I already worked in one of the two schools and the research participants were already familiar to me. This familiarity might have made them self-conscious while being interviewed, although this familiarity also enabled me to quickly establish rapport. In addition to this, the familiarity might have tempted me to take some things for granted. The research participants from the other school were not familiar to me prior to the research and so it took time to win participants' trust at the beginning. At the initial stage of the data generation process, the research participants were unwilling to open up during interviews. Perhaps they saw me as a threat and might have thought providing information to me meant risking their jobs. I therefore had to use several strategies to develop rapport with them. For example, sharing my own experiences working as a teacher in private schools.

Another limitation of this study is related to the issue of generalisation. The main purpose of my case study research is to provide layered description rather than generalisation. I have attempted to bring out the issues of individual teachers, administrators and owner/principals. The study involves ten research participants from two private schools of Nepal. Focusing on these small groups of participants enabled me to explore the issue in detail with layered description. Therefore, this study provides rich description of teachers, administrators and owner/principals' individual beliefs and perceptions, which might not have been possible had I taken a large sample.

Private schools in Nepal are mainly concentrated in the urban centres of the country, with only a few private schools in some rural areas. Such rural areas are not represented in this study, which is another limitation. Perhaps further research centred on such rural schools may identify different issues.

Although there are both private and public school systems in Nepal, the study did not address public schools in any way. This may be a limitation, as private schools form only about 20 percent of the total schools in Nepal. However, it provides scope for further research in state schools to explore the professional lives of teachers and other staff working in these public schools. Such scope for further research brings out some implications of this study, addressed next.

Implications of the Study

Having a Maoist government has opened up possibilities for workers in private schools to have a voice and be heard. Teachers, through collective voices, are demanding equitable status with public schools of the country. However, this has yet to be achieved because (a) most teachers do not have written employment contracts, (b) their conditions of work do not appear to be safe as a result, for they have no insurance plan, provident funds and so on, (c) they have little decision-making power, and (d) there is top-down surveillance. This study has also identified a link between the microphysics of power within private schools and macrophysics of power operating in the political climate of the country. An example of this is the changing nature of power relations within the private schools in Nepal with the political change in the country and subsequent unionisation of private schoolteachers.

The school owners' management approach seems to be based on a profit orientation, instead of the educational welfare of their staff and students. This means the workings of these two private schools are somewhat different from what an educational institution is expected to be doing and appears to be at odds with the overall educational goal of Nepal, "To prepare manpower for national development and maintain good conduct and morality of people in accordance with the multi-party democracy system," as stated in the Education Act 2028 (1971) (Ministry of Education, His Majesty Government of Nepal, 1971, p. 1). The notion of teaching to the test and curriculum-led instruction highlighted that teachers' professional practice was based on expectation of the schools' owners and their students' performance in the standardised test.

There are also implications regarding policy development. I found that the policy related to private schools has been changing as the government changes. For example, private schools were not allowed to operate during the Panchayat era,

when the educational system was nationalised, while the subsequent democratic government of the Nepali Congress adopted a liberal approach towards privatising education. However, once the Maoists came into power to formulate government policy after the declaration of a republic, they pressured private schools to operate as per government regulations. Such fluid policy has enabled the private school owners to exploit teachers and other staff through a divide and rule strategy. This also seems to have caused several disturbances in the operation of private schools. This demands stable government policy and enforcement around private schools.

Recommendations

This study brings several challenges to various stakeholders of these two Nepali private schools, through a series of recommendations:

Recommendation for the Schools

The recommendation for these schools is that there needs to be equitable conditions of service and staff professional development opportunity.

Rationale

This is intended to develop a climate of trust and cooperation within the schools and prevent school activities from being excessively influenced by outside forces. Most teacher participants, including the administrators of this study, wanted improved rights and privileges, so that their conditions became equivalent with the public school system. There was less concern about the teaching and learning activities going on within the schools. The aspect of teachers' professionalism was given lower priority, both from school owners and teacher participants. The teachers' focus was on the industrial, employment conditions more than on the professional aspect of their work. Although, as Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) indicated, proper working conditions and incentives represent an aspect of teachers' professionalism, it needs to be properly supplemented with an appropriate teaching and learning environment within the school. Therefore, teachers working in these private schools in Nepal need to extend their demands for teaching and learning activities, instead of limiting them to conditions of service. Staff working in these schools should undertake professional development in pedagogy so that they could improve their teaching and learning activities. This is possible through transparent decision-making processes.

Recommendation for the Teachers and Staff

The recommendations for teachers and other staff working in these private schools is that they become involved in their unions in order to have a voice and to foster teacher co-operation.

Rationale

This study found that teachers and other non-owner staff working in the two private schools now have a voice, but their voice is not always heard by school authorities and the government. One reason is the lack of unity among teachers working in a particular school. These teachers were unwilling to join the teachers' union; perhaps this links to a lack of cooperation and collaboration among teachers and other non-owner staff working in private schools, even though cooperation and collaboration was strong among schools' owners. For example, although private school umbrella organisations representing school owners had split into two different fractions (PABSON and N. PABSON), they were united when raising concerns related to private schools.

Because of their direct association with the standardised national level SLC examination, the voices of secondary-level teachers were stronger compared to primary-level teachers. This seems to have encouraged teachers working at the secondary level to negotiate individually with the schools' owners. Instead of raising their voices collectively, the study found that teachers and other staff were still interested in individual negotiations of the terms and conditions of their work. Due to this, school owners were using a divide and rule strategy, and the teachers working in the primary level appear to be powerless in their work.

Recommendation for Government/Policy Maker

The research findings in respect of these two schools indicate potential issues with government policy and practice. Therefore, the recommendation is to firstly undertake some research to establish the conditions of service across private schools as a baseline for policy to see if the evidence from my study of two schools is more widespread. Teachers conditions of service can be better supported by having a regulation framework, with proper compliance mechanisms from the state, if owners will not do it voluntarily.

Rationale

The Educational Act 2028 (1971) is still used as the main policy framework for the operation of private schools in Nepal. This policy, developed during the time of an absolute monarchy, is outdated in the present context of political transformation. With each political change in the country, the policy has been amended as per the ideology of the incoming party, but the overall framework remains the same. This is encouraging stakeholders of private schools to violate government policy, thereby giving rise to the situation of tolerated illegality. Due to the existing scenario of tolerated illegality in the operation of private schools, there were large-scale external influences in the form of student unions and teacher unions striking, the Supreme Court's direction and the Department of Education's announcements. This situation is hindering the operation of the private schools. This means the regulatory framework related to private schools has not been properly implemented. The government blamed the private school owners for not following government rules and regulations, while the school owners blamed the government for developing the regulatory framework without consulting them. As indicated by Caddell (2009), the inability of the government to keep the private schools under a regulatory framework seems to be inviting bitterness between the government and private schools. The government needs to develop an *agreed framework* (Khaniya, 2007), by involving all the stakeholders of private schools, including the schools' owners, teachers, parents and the state representatives. When private schools are being regulated via such an agreed framework, proper management of private schools may become possible.

Conclusion

This study depicts that the power relations in the study's two private schools mirror something of the power relations within the wider context of Nepal. During monarchy, power in the wider political climate was linked with the ability of the monarchs to control the lives of ordinary people. Similar situations existed within the private schools, where power was perceived as the ability of the owner/principals to control the professional lives of their staff. With the changing political climate from monarchy to a republic, power dynamics began changing in all facets of Nepali society and was reflected in private school contexts. Teachers and other staff started organising themselves into a union and began collective

bargaining. Through the modelling of collective power from the Maoists, teachers' unions began exerting their voices to challenge the school owners' hegemony. As the wider political climate changed through a series of revolts, to challenge those in power, the teachers' union in private schools also challenged school owners' hegemony in an attempt to redistribute power in these schools. This led to constant disruption in the operation of private schools, similar to the political instability existing within the wider climate after the declaration of a republic. The teachers' focus was more on industrial and employment conditions more than on professional aspects of their work, justified by poor working conditions, with no formal contracts, no pension schemes, no insurance plans and so forth, in contrast with the employment conditions of teachers in government schools.

As this research project evolved, the title for the thesis that came to mind was 'teachers having a voice.' With the Maoists becoming the dominant political force and their students' union (ANNISU(R)) and teachers' union (ANTU) continuously pressuring school owners and the government for the proper monitoring and regulation of private schools, I thought that teachers and other non-owner staff working in private schools would now also have this voice and be heard.

However, at the completion of this project, I found that things had not changed as I expected. This encouraged me to come up with the present thesis title, 'Teachers: Having a voice and being heard?' Even though some teachers have a voice, there is still a question mark over the extent that they are being heard by the school's authorities, including the government. Although there is now a teachers' union in private schools (Nepal-ISTU), which claims to be involved in defending the professional autonomy of teachers and other private school staff, this teachers' union lacked appropriate support from many teachers—especially women, who continue to be the most vulnerable teachers. The main reason for this is the history of teachers' unions in Nepal being linked with different political groups. This resulted in the existence of about 20 teachers' unions in Nepal, with each union being affiliated with one political party. With the recent merging of all teachers' unions into one single umbrella organisation, the Federation of Nepali Teachers (FNT), it may be possible to address this via a common cause, rather than it being factional. Because of such an emerging scenario and my limited investigation on the teachers' union role, I see scope for further research on the role of teachers' unions.

This inquiry highlighted some potential implications about government policy regarding private schools. A stable and agreed policy framework for operating private schools in Nepal appears to be necessary in the context of growing popularity of private schools in the country. There needs to be transparent decision making, clarifying the degree of agency and responsibility of teachers and other staff. This research also points towards the necessity for establishing a system that protects teachers and other staff from the vagaries and whims of school owners. This would link to better outcomes for both teachers and learners. A final recommendation for everyone in these schools is to undertake professional development in pedagogical content knowledge which might help develop a professional community of practice among staff.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Information Sheet

University of Waikato
Faculty of Education
Hamilton, New Zealand

Date:.....

Dear.....

.....

.....

Background Information:

I am a doctoral student of the University of Waikato, Faculty of Education, Hamilton, New Zealand. I would like to invite you to be part of the doctoral research study I am conducting. The focus of this study is related to the life of teachers in the private schools of Nepal in the context of the political changes in the country.

This letter gives you general information about the study and what you may need to consider before you make any decisions about your participation as a volunteer in the research.

About the Study:

This study aims to explore how the changes in the country's politics influence teachers' experiences in schools. It includes how teachers and other staff perceived changes in their interaction, dialogue and other activities within the schools.

I will interview around five people in each school. Each interview will be digitally recorded, transcribed and return for comments and editing. To protect your privacy, all information will be kept securely so that no one has access to it.

Everyone involved in this research and their schools will have pseudonyms. This will help to protect your confidentiality and reduces the potential harm to you and other staffs in your school. You can withdraw from the study without any reasons within one months of the return of your transcript. In this situation all of your records will be destroyed.

Your involvement

Your ideas and experiences are of value to this research, which is why I would like you to participate in the individual interview. The interview will be digitally recorded in order to have accurate record of our conversation. The recorded interview will be transcribed and sent to you to confirm the accuracy of the information. Please note that participation in this research is voluntary.

What are your rights as participants?

Once you choose to participate in my research, you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question(s).
- Withdraw from the research up to a month after the return of your transcript.
- Request that any information be removed from the transcript.
- Ask questions about the research at any time during your participation.
- Contact me or any of my supervisors in the address given below if you have any query about the research at any time

Confidentiality

All the information you provide in course of this research will remain private and confidential. It will not be shared with anyone other than the supervisors.

The results

The result of my research will be used as a part of my doctoral thesis. It will also be used in presentation within the University of Waikato and seminars and publication of journal articles. In case you are interested in knowing the final results of this study, you will be provided an electronic copy of a summarised report.

What next?

If you would like to be a part of my research study, I will contact you the next week so that we can organise a time to meet. If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact me or my supervisors.

Contact Details

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Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

I have read the information sheet and understand that:

- I can refuse to answer any question, terminate the interview and withdraw from research up to a month after the return of my transcript.
- All the information will remain confidential.
- My identity will remain anonymous and be protected by a pseudonym.
- All information collected will remain secure in a locked cupboard or on a computer protected by password.
- Information will be used for a Doctoral thesis, presentation and journal articles.
- Conversation will be digitally recorded.

I agree to give interview in ²⁰Nepali/English (Please tick one) language.

I agree to participate in this research and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form and the research project information sheet along with the interview schedule.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Full Name: _____

School: _____

Address:

Email: _____

Phone : _____ (home)

_____ (school)

Preferred method of contact: Phone/email/fax/letter (tick the preferred mode)

²⁰ If the interview conversation takes place in English, the transcribe in English will be given to you or if it takes place in Nepali language you will be given transcribe in Nepali language.

Appendix C: Letter to Accompany Transcript

Dear _____

Enclosed herewith is the transcript of the interview conducted on _____. Since I transcribed the data no one has seen this transcript. The text is on my computer protected by a password. The audio tape from which this transcript was developed is securely locked away.

I would appreciate you reading this transcript and making necessary changes if needed. Please add, delete or alter any parts in the transcripts itself and return to me by mail along with the accompanying form releasing the transcripts for use.

If you have no alternation to make please keep the transcript and return the enclosed form. If you would like to discuss the transcription before returning to me, please feel free to contact me.

I look forward to receiving your response and accompanying form. If I have not received this after three weeks, I will telephone you.

Regards,

Chandra L. Sharma Poudyal

Appendix D: Release of Transcript for Use

Name of the Participant: _____

Pseudonym: _____

I have received the transcript of the interview and read it. The following applies:

The transcript is accepted as a raw data provided the condition agreed on the consent form are met. I have kept the transcript because I have made no alternations.

I have made necessary changes in the transcript. Once changes are incorporated, the text is OK as raw data provided that the conditions agreed on the consent form are met.

I want to withdraw from the project. So please destroy any data you have collected from me.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: Semi-Structure Interview Schedule

This semi-structure interview schedule outlines some of the topics that I would like to discuss during the interview.

For Teachers

1. How do you feel like working as teachers of private schools these days? Is it different from what it used to be before the political changes in the country?

Prompts: dealing with parents, others teachers, students, external influences, empowerment, teachers' union, students' union, frequent closing down of schools, negotiation with owners/principal etc

2. Tell me about what you believe the type of education private schools in Nepal should give. Has it changed from ten years ago? How and in what way?

Prompts: good performance in national level examination, good citizen, good knowledge of English language etc

3. How do you think the students should learn to get success in their schooling?

Prompts: memorise the lessons, give readymade response to questions asked by their teachers, explore things by themselves etc

3. How do you get along with the parents of your students these days?

Prompts: Expectation, suggestions, comments, feedback, behaviour, interest towards their wards progress, poor performance and good performance, parents supportive/unsupportive etc

-Has it changed? If so how? Give some examples, incidents you remember

4. How do principal handle the day to day activities related to the staff and students?

Prompts: Feedbacks, suggestions, meeting, decision making process, dealing with you and other staff, use of power to influence, power differential between you and the principal, dealing with problematic students, students' performance feedback, handling parents complaints about you etc

-Is it different from ten years ago? If so how? Give some examples, incident you remember

5. Do you think it's difficult to deal with the students these days? Why and how? Give some examples, incidents you remember etc.

Prompts: how they accepts/rejects your comments, suggestions, way of dealing with you, respect, closeness, friendliness, their devotion towards studies, schools activities, discipline related etc

6. Tell me about your relationship and interaction with other teachers. Is it different from 10 years ago? If so, How? Please give some examples, incident etc to clarify it.

For Principals

7. How do you feel like working as a principal of private schools these days? Has it changed from what it used to be before the political change in the country?

Prompts: political influences, blaming private schools as exploiting parents, government policy towards private schools, teachers' empowerment, teachers union, students' union influences, interaction within the school between teachers and you, staff and you etc

9. What type of education do you think the private schools in Nepal need to provide to the students? What should be the main goal of private schools in Nepal?

Prompts: good performance in national level examination, work related skill, good citizen behaviour, good English speaking ability etc

8. Do you think that the way of dealing with the teachers and other staff of your school has changed?

Prompts: loyalty towards jobs, punctuality, negotiations, bargaining, handling disputes, acceptance of your feedback, suggestions, acceptance of parents comments and suggestions, handling students complaints, day to day interaction etc

9. Are there any differences in the way of dealing with parents now? Why and how? Give some examples of the incident you remember, recollect etc.

Prompts: Expectation, comments, feedback, suggestions, behaviour, interest towards their ward performance, role of school, etc

Appendix F: Comparing Public and Private Schools of Nepal

Basis of Comparison	Public Schools	Private Schools
1. Teachers' Licence	Teacher' licencing or teachers' education compulsory with some exception	Provision of teachers' licencing or teachers' education but not strictly followed
2. Qualification	Qualification as per level taught e.g. SLC for primary, intermediate for lower secondary and bachelor for secondary	Qualification as per the level taught
3. Basis of Employment	Need to pass teachers service commission examination to become permanent teacher	No exam; employment based on "mutual agreement" between school's owners and to be staff/teacher
4. Conditions of service	Provident fund, retirement benefit, medical insurance and family pension	No provident fund, retirement benefit, medical facilities or family benefit
5. Job Security	Job security as without legal formalities teachers and other staff cannot be fired from job	Hire and fire of teachers and other staff at the discretion of the school's owners
6. Status	Higher status because of attractive facilities	Lower status due to lack of essential facilities
7. Experience	Temporary teaching licence to working teachers but such teachers need to obtain permanent teaching licence within five years of obtaining temporary licence	Same provision but obtaining permanent licence not made compulsory
8. Termination	Automatic termination of those failing to obtain teaching licence within five years	No such provision.
9. Examination	School Leaving Certificate at the end of secondary education (Grade 10)	School Leaving Certificate at the end of secondary education (Grade 10)
10. Curriculum	National Curriculum	National Curriculum
11. Textbooks	Nepali Textbooks published by <i>Janak Education Materials Corporation</i> with the approval of the Curriculum Development Centre with some exceptions	English medium textbooks published by private publishers and approved by CDC with some reference books published abroad and approved by District Education Office

Appendix G: Research Participants from School X

Research Participants	Representing voice	Qualification and Experience	Responsibility
1. Male Owner/principal	Employer/men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social science graduate • 20 years working experience as principal • No formal teaching and management related training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Overall management of school ✓ Sometimes teaches in secondary level as a reliever teacher
2. Male Administrator	Employer and employee/men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social science graduate • 15 years of working experience as administrator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Handles account section ✓ Takes parents complaints and suggestions ✓ Arrange parents-teachers meeting ✓ Report day to day activities of primary block to the principal twice a day
3. Male Secondary level Teacher	Employee/men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social science graduate • 15years teaching experience • No formal teaching training and qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teaches Nepali language to secondary and lower secondary students ✓ Overall responsibility of Nepali subjects in secondary level
4. Female primary teacher	Employee/women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher secondary level • 13 years of teaching experience • No formal teaching related training and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teaches different subjects in the primary level ✓ Works as primary in-charge ✓ Arrange classes; class routine and share experience with new incoming teachers
5. Female primary teacher	Employee/women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social science graduate • 10 years teaching experience • No formal teaching related training or qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teaches different subjects in the primary level\ ✓ Overall responsibility of subject taught

Appendix H: Research Participants from School Y

Research Participants	Representing voice	Qualifications and Experiences	Responsibilities
Male Owner/ principal	Employer/men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Degree in Education • 20 years working experience as principal • Formal teaching qualification and working school management qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Overall management of school ✓ Regularly teaches a subject in the secondary level
Male Administrator/ vice principal	Employer and employee/men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master degree in natural science • 13 years of teaching experience and 12 years administration experience • No formal teaching or administration related qualification or training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assist principal in school administration ✓ Regularly teaches science in the secondary level
Male Secondary level Teacher	Employee/men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in social science • 15years teaching experience • No formal teaching training and qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teaches two different subjects in the secondary level ✓ Overall responsibility of subjects taught
Female secondary level teacher	Employee/women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Degree in humanities • 14 years of teaching experience • No formal teaching related training and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teaches Nepali language to the secondary level ✓ Works as head of department (HOD) for Nepali subject ✓ Overall responsibility of subject taught and also for the department
Female primary/lower secondary teacher	Employee/women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social science graduate • 12 years teaching experience • No formal teaching related qualification and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teaches Nepali language to lower secondary level ✓ Overall responsibility of subject taught

Appendix I: Timeline of Nepali Political History Showing Educational Development

Timeline	Period	Educational Development
1846-1950	Rana Regime (King as figurehead)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established first school • Education limited to elite family • Common people educated through exile in India
1950-1960	Democratic Experiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-governmental schools established by common people for their children • First Five Year Plan (1956-1961) sought to universalise free and compulsory education
1960-1990	Party less Panchayat System (Absolute Monarchy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of National Educational System Plan 1971 and Educational Act 1970 • Nationalisation of all schools • Permission to run private schools in 1980 with amendment of Educational Act • Two types of schools: private and public schools
1990-1996	Constitutional Monarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberal approach to privatisation and mushrooming of private schools • Adopted Jomtiem Declaration Education for All 1990 • Introduction of higher secondary education system (1992)
1996-2006	Armed Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted Education for All Dakar Declaration 2000 • Education for All National Plan 2001 with equality of access to primary education • Educational sector affected by armed conflict
2006-till date	Republic/Political Instability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim Constitution 2007 with free provision of primary and secondary education to all children • School Sector Reform (2009-2015) • EFA with improved access, equality, quality and efficiency

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