

GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND
PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

Shanta Laxmi Shrestha

A Dissertation

Submitted to

School of Education

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Philosophy in Education

Kathmandu University

Dhulikhel, Nepal

December, 2012

© Copyright by Shanta Laxmi Shrestha

2012

All Rights Reserved

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree.

.....

9 December 2012

Shanta Laxmi Shrestha

Degree Candidate

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my teachers for their esteem guidance, support and inspiration. More particularly, it is dedicated to the teachers of Srihandapur Primary School, Srihandapur Higher Secondary School and Siddhartha Golden Academy for their candid responses to my research questions and also to my family members who have supported me in completing this valuable study.

Master of Philosophy in Education dissertation of *Shanta Laxmi Shrestha* presented on December 9, 2012.

Title: *Gender Equality in Education: Teachers' perceptions and practices in schools*

APPROVED



9 December 2012

Assoc. Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD
Dissertation Supervisor

.....
Lekh Nath Poudel, PhD
External Examiner

9 December 2012

.....
Prof. Mana Prasad Wagley, PhD
Member, Research Committee

9 December 2012

.....
Prof. Mahesh Nath Parajuli, PhD
Member, Research Committee

9 December 2012

.....
Prof. Tanka Nath Sharma, PhD
Dean, School of Education

9 December 2012

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Kathmandu University library. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

.....
Shanta Laxmi Shrestha
Degree Candidate

9 December 2012

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Shanta Laxmi Shrestha for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in Education* presented on 9 December 2012.

Title: *Gender Equality in Education: Teachers' perceptions and practices in schools*

Abstract Approved:  _____

Assoc. Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD

Dissertation Supervisor

Achieving gender equality in education has been one of the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action, Education for All, and of the Millennium Development Goals. Teachers and their pedagogy are instrumental in achieving this goal. The purpose of this research was to seek teachers' understanding on the concept of gender equality and explore their perceptions and practices in schools. Review of related literature and documents, in-depth interviews and observation using qualitative methods constituted the main research approach. Equal number of male and female teachers from three schools located within Srikhandapur ancient town were interviewed and observed in and out of the classroom for collecting the data. A content analysis of the data was carried out. The lenses for this study were feminist theory in general and post- structural feminist theory in particular. Pierre Bourdieu's theory on cultural reproduction was also used to understand the teachers' role in promoting gender equality.

The research revealed the state of teachers' understanding and perceptions of the concepts of gender, gender equality and gender equality in education. The term gender (*laingik*) was known to all teachers. However, the majority of them

understood it as the same as sex (*linga*) in binary (male & female) category. Teachers were also familiar with the term gender equality (*Laingic Samanata*), but they perceived the concept of ‘equality’ in the form of a formal equality approach that treats men and women alike without differentiating. However, the approach adopted in the CEDAW for gender equality was the substantive equality approach - equality of outcomes. Similarly, with regard to teachers’ understanding of the concept of gender equality in education, their understandings were marked by equal treatment (*saman bebahar*) to both boys and girls, and equal opportunity (*saman awasar*) in and out of classrooms to both boys and girls, while the gender equality framework of UNESCO consists of four dimensions: equality of access; equality in the learning process; equality of educational outcomes; and equality of external results. With regard to practice, all teachers valued gender equality and they claimed that they practice equality, but perpetuate inequality inadvertently by concentrating their attentions more on boys, not addressing gender stereotypes embedded in textbooks, by arranging sex-segregating seating, using gender exclusive and non-honorific language, excluding girls in many sports and games, and imposing a sex-segregated dress code. Teachers have not got opportunities to build their understanding and perceptions in line with the contemporary concept of gender upon which this dissertation is based.

The research concluded that teachers needed sound contemporary conceptual clarity on gender, gender equality and gender equality in education to enable them to deconstruct hierarchical and binary gender constructs that are essential to reconstruct gender concepts for addressing causes of gender inequality as advocated by the post-structural feminism. In doing so, there is a need of context specific local knowledge based ‘Gender Equality Education’ (GEE) and training on Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) to equip teachers with contemporary knowledge and pedagogical

skills so as to enable them further to contribute in achieving substantive equality in education in a sustained way beyond parity.

Keyword(s): *Gender, gender equality, gender equality education, gender responsive pedagogy, substantive equality*

.....
Shanta Laxmi Shrestha, Degree Candidate

December, 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my dissertation supervisor Assoc. Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD, for his professional and expert advice rendered to me throughout this study period. His inspiration and continuous guidance have enabled me to complete this study.

I am very thankful to Prof. Tank Nath Sharma, PhD, Dean, Kathmandu University School of Education; Prof. Mana Prasad Wagley, PhD, and Prof. Mahesh Nath Parajuli, PhD, for their continuous encouragement and support.

I am indebted to my peer examiners Meena Poudel, PhD, for making various literatures available to me and for her valuable suggestions, especially in the feminist perspectives. I am also indebted to Ram Bahadur Rana, PhD, for his support extended to complete this study.

I am very thankful to Mr. Prakash C. Bhattarai and, Mr. Prem Raj Adhikari for their continuous encouragement and support in shaping this dissertation in APA format to bring to the present form.

I am indebted to Ms. Anne Laesecke and Rebat Kumar Dhakal for editing this dissertation; head teachers of Srikhandapur Primary School, Srikhandapur Higher Secondary Schools, Golden Siddhartha Academy for granting me permission to collect data in their schools and the staff who participated in the in-depth interviews and observations; and Mr. Purna Bahadur Karmacharya, and Mr. HIRAKAJI SHRESTHA for providing me information about Srikhandapur.

Last but not least, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to my spouse, and grandchild for their patience and support by living without my needed attention.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
LIST OF TABLES	XI
LIST OF FIGURES	XII
ABBREVIATIONS	XIII
CHAPTER I.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter Overview	1
Statement of My Research Problem.....	8
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions	9
Rationale of My Study	10
Structure of the Study.....	11
Definition of the Operational Terms	12
Summary of the Chapter	13
CHAPTER II.....	14
LITERATURE REVIEW	14
Chapter Overview	14
Theories to Understand Gender Inequality	14
The Concept of Gender Inequality ‘Laingic Asamanata’	14
Functionalist Theory	16
Conflict Theories	17

Feminist Theory	18
Post-structural Feminist Theory	23
Approaches to Gender and Development in Education	26
Bourdieu’s Theory on Cultural Reproduction.....	29
Understanding Gender Equality ‘Laingic Samanta’ in Education.....	33
Status of Gender Equality in Education in Nepal	42
Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Education in Nepal	46
Gender Equality in Education in 2012	48
Literatures on Teachers’ Perceptions and Practices on Gender Equality	50
Conceptual Framework	56
Summary of the Chapter	56
CHAPTER III	59
RESEARCH METHODS	59
Chapter Overview	59
Research Design.....	59
Philosophical and Procedural Research Design.....	60
Research Approach	62
The Method of Inquiry	63
Study Site and Participants of the Study	67
Data Collection Procedures.....	68
Data Analysis and Interpretation.....	71
Quality Standards	75
Ethical Principles	78
Summary of the Chapter	79
CHAPTER IV	80

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION	80
Chapter Overview	80
Teachers' Understanding: Concept of 'Sex' (Linga) and 'Gender' (Langic)	80
Teachers' Understanding: Gender Equality (Laingik Samanata)	84
Families' Role in Engendering People.....	94
Society and its Roles in the Formation of Gender Concept	98
Role of School in the Formation of Perceptions on Gender Equality.....	100
Summary of the Chapter	104
CHAPTER V	105
TEACHERS' PRACTICES OF GENDER EQUALITY IN SCHOOLS	105
Chapter Overview	105
Teachers' Interaction in the Classroom.....	105
Classroom Sitting Arrangement.....	110
Use of Language in the Classroom	111
Use of Teaching and Learning Materials	113
Representation of Female Teachers in School Management	114
Summary of the Chapter	118
CHAPTER VI.....	119
CHALLENGES AND POSITIVE PRACTICES IN GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION	119
Chapter Overview	119
Challenges in Practicing Gender Equality in Education.....	119
Traditional Norms and Values	120
Insufficient Gender Awareness in Families and Teachers	121
Low Level of Education	122

Lack of Females in Decision Making	124
Gender Unresponsive School Uniform	125
Parents' Discrimination against Public School	127
Prevailing Positive Practices in Promoting Gender Equality.....	128
Culture of Morning Assembly.....	128
Equal Interaction with Girls and Boys	130
Gender Equality Contents in the School Textbooks	131
Female Participation in SMCs and PTAs.....	132
Unisex Uniform in School.....	133
Scholarship Schemes for Students	134
Mandatory Female Teachers	136
Welcome to School Program.....	138
Summary of the Chapter	140
CHAPTER VII.....	141
STRATEGIES FOR GENDER RESPONSIVE TEACHING PEDAGOGY	141
Chapter Overview	141
Strategies for Addressing Challenges in Practicing Gender Equality in Teaching	141
Developing Gender Awareness	142
Engendering Teacher Education	144
Engendering Education	145
Increasing Female Teachers' Participation in Decision Making	146
Developing Gender Equality Policy in Education	148
Strategies for Reinforcing Positive Practices.....	150
Providing Exposure and Interaction Opportunity	150

Advocacy.....	152
Mainstreaming Gender Equality in School	154
Assigning Gender Focal Persons in School	156
Summary of the Chapter	158
CHAPTER VIII	159
SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS	159
Chapter Overview	159
Summary of Data Collection and Analysis.....	159
Findings and Discussion	160
Teachers are Familiar with Gender Equality Concepts, but Perceptions are Still Conventional	161
Teachers Value ‘Gender Equality’, but Perpetuate Inequality Inadvertently ..	164
Prevailing Practices in Schools Contributing to Gender Equality in Education	166
Teachers Encounter Various Challenges While Practicing Gender Equality ..	167
Strategies to Address Challenges and Promote Gender Equality Practices	168
Conclusion	170
Implications.....	173
REFERENCES	176
APPENDIX A	189
FIELD MILIEU	189
Srikhandapur	189
Formal Education in Srikhandapur	190
Srikhandapur Primary School (SPS).....	191
Srikhandapur Higher Secondary School (SHSS).....	191

Golden Siddhartha Academy (GSA)..... 192

APPENDIX B 194

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDELINES 194

APPENDIX C 197

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST..... 197

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The different strands of feminism.....	18
Table 2: Gross enrolment rate, net enrolment rate by gender level.....	49
Table 3: Enrolment in types of schools by gender	50

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig.1. Mapping the conceptual terrain of gender parity and gender equality.....	41
Fig 2: Design developed based on Creswell’s framework for research design.....	60
Fig 3: Data analysis and interpretation process.....	72
Fig. 4: Conceptual framework	58

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERID	Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
DEO	District Education Office
DOE	Department of Education
EFA	Education for All
FAWE	Forum for African women Educations
GAD	Gender and Development
GE	Gender Equality
GEE	Gender Equality Education
GEiE	Gender Equality in Education
GENIA	Gender in Education Network in Asia
GRP	Gender Responsive Pedagogy
GSA	Golden Siddhartha Academy
HAD	Human and Development
HDR	Human Development Report
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
IWY	International Women Year
KWDI	Korean Women's Development Institute
MGD	Millennium Development Goal
MOE	Ministry of Education
NPA	National Plan of Action

PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SIPGEGE	Strategic Implementation Plan for Gender Equality in Girls' Education
SMC	School Management Committee
SPS	Srikhandapur Primary School
SHSS	Srikhandapur Higher Secondary School
SSR	School Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WID	Women in Development
SSR	School Sector Reform

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Overview

“Gender equality must become lived reality” says Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of the UN Women (UN Women, 2011). In this chapter, I introduce my research agenda, “gender equality: teachers’ perceptions and practices” and highlight the importance of its exploration and the purpose of the study. I also present the research questions for which I need to seek answers in contributing to make gender equality a reality in education. I state the rationale and structure of my study. Finally, I wrap up the chapter by defining the terms used in the study.

Nature of the Study

Education is an important freedom as theorized by Amartya Sen (Asia Pacific Human Rights Centre, 2005, p.110). It is an enabling right (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2006, p. 7) to achieve other rights and fight for justice and equality. Within this perspective, the ‘Four Pillars of Education for the 21st century’ has been advanced in order to enable new generations to transform themselves and their realities through the full development of their potentials, which in turn enable them to become transformational force of the world (UNESCO & Ayrton Senna Institute, 2005, p.31). The ‘Four Pillars of Education’ focus not on ‘teaching’ but on ‘learning’: Learning to Be, Learning to Live Together, Learning to do and Learning to Know. These are pedagogical guidelines for the 21st century which are essential to become tools of transformation of oneself and of the world.

It is widely accepted that teachers' perceptions, practices and their pedagogy are instrumental in enabling the new generations for transformation. Teachers are regarded as role models who set good examples through their behavior- the words they speak and the actions they do in and outside school. Students, especially in their behavior formation stages, tend to emulate the behavior and mannerisms of the teachers as they spend most of their school time with teachers. The value system learned in this period play a crucial role in forming in the adult mind (Hussain, 2005, p. 30). The teacher's entire personality is reflected on the minds of the students. If the teacher treats all equally without discriminating against any gender, and leads a professional life with integrity and justice, the children adopt these human virtues as ideal conduct unconsciously, which in turn contributes to creating a just social world for women and all as envisaged by feminism (Ritzer, 2000), because feminism is for everybody (Hooks, 2000, p. viii) and it prevents from endangering human development as the simple but far-reaching message “ human development, if not engendered, is endangered” has already been provided by the Human Development Report 1995 (UNDP, 1995).

“Feminism” emphasises the equality of sexes, and activism to achieve equality for women (Wadhwa, 2000, as cited in Thapa, 2012). The feminist movement emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries against the pervasive inequalities focused on basic legal rights and access to education (McLaughlin, 2003). It has been successful in placing the concept of ‘gender equality’ on the international agenda in the last three decades to address the prevailing inequalities in all sectors, including education. However, despite these successes, women still lag behind in education. “Only one in three countries around the world has achieved parity in both primary and secondary education, though great strides have taken place,” reiterates Faye, the

Executive Director of UNGEI (UNESCO-IIEP, 2011). Even now the concept of ‘gender equality’ appears to be unclear to many people. The terms ‘parity’ and ‘equity’ are used vaguely and used interchangeably to denote ‘equality’. Thus, I believe that to be able to address any issue effectively, it is important to have conceptually sound understanding.

In education, gender equality is generally interpreted as overcoming barriers to equal access and achievement in schooling for girls and boys (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2010; Subrahmanian, 2005). However, discussions have broadened the scope from gender parity to gender equity and equality. In defining equality in education, in line with CEDAW, Subramanian categorizes equality into formal and substantive; the argument being that formal equality is based on access to and participation in education to reduce numerical gaps. Substantive equality, on the other hand, concentrates on mechanisms for ensuring equality of outcome (to achieve de facto equality) by keeping in mind that gender inequality is a result of the unequal power relations between men and women, which is reproduced favouring the dominant group through the use of their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977).

Most feminists also view that education reproduces gender inequality (Lynda, 2012, p. 29) as educational institutions are also the products of the inequalities that exist in larger society. How can teaching-learning processes and interactions, both within the school and outside be transformed so that the school becomes the springboard for eliminating systematic gender biases and prejudices (UNGEI, 2009)? This, indeed, is a challenge.

Global research reveals prevalent gender discrimination in educational settings. Researches and studies have shown that teachers treat boys differently from girls; identifying them more readily and giving them more attention (Mushi, 1996,

Colclough, 2004, Kimbal, 2003, Ifegbesan, 2010, Gunawardena, & Jayaweera, 2008, Sadker, 2008, Terry & Thapa, 2012). As a result, even parity (numerical equality) has not been achieved in education. This is also evidenced by the World Atlas of Gender Equality report in education which states, “Girls being disproportionately excluded from education is higher at the secondary level than in primary education and increases further from the lower to the upper secondary levels (2012, p. 58),” though gender equality is one of the six goals of the global Education for All (EFA) campaign that UNESCO leads and one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (UNESCO, 2012, p.8).

Recent reports on the “Progress of the World’s Women 2011-2012” indicated that all of the goals of Millennium Development – from reducing poverty and hunger, to achieving universal education and stopping the spread of HIV and AIDS –are interdependent. Those which depend on making progress on gender equality and women’s empowerment are holding back progress on others, for instance on maternal health (UN Women, 2012, p.14).

In Nepal, the entrance of the concept of gender equality in the Nepalese education system has been very recent. A review of the development and education plans and policy indicates that consideration of gender equality was first stated in the Fifth Five-year Plan (1975–80) after the UN declared the year 1975 as the International Year of Women (IYW). Since this plan, the gender issue has been taken as an issue in the education sector, and attempts have been made to increase girls’ access to education. Besides, committing to the goal of the EFA , the government of Nepal has formulated and implemented the National Plan of Action (NPA) for EFA (2001-2015), and developed the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (MOES & ADB, 2006) and Strategic Implementation Plan for Gender Equality in Girls’ Education

(MOES/DOE, 2007). To provide equal opportunity, the School Sector Reform (SSR) Plan (2009-2015) committed to continue affirmative action. With these efforts, Nepal has achieved gender parity up to the secondary level (Terry & Thapa, 2012). However, in Nepalese society, women and the third gender still suffer from discrimination and exclusion.

The prevailing patriarchal system and prejudice against the female sex and other sexes other than male is regarded as the underlying cause of discrimination and exclusion resulting in inequality between boys and girls in schools. Educators and theorists of reproduction say that the function of education is to reproduce inequalities through the reproduction of the dominant ideology, ideological hegemony and dominant culture (Giroux, 1983, Bourdieu & Passer, 1990; Bourdieu, 1977a, 1977b, 1990, as stated in Poudyel, 2007). As reproduction theorists, most feminist theories also view education as an integral part of the patriarchal system - a system that systematically puts women at a disadvantage, which not only places women in subordinate positions but indoctrinates the dominant ideologies of femininity and masculinity (Abbott & Wallace, 199, p. 83, as cited in Measor & Sikes, 1992) so that girls learn to be subordinated and boys to subordinate. Teachers play a vital role in this process; Nepal's education system is not an exception to this.

Therefore, no matter how many programs have worked against this discriminatory attitude, the belief and practice remain intact. As a result, women are still viewed as lacking the qualities of leadership (Bista, 2001), are considered the property of others, are a family burden, and investment in girls is thought to be waste without any return (DEO, 2007). However, there are not enough concerted efforts that address prevailing misconceptions and no significant constituencies prepared to promote the view that women are as competent as their male colleagues (Bista, 2001;

Khaniya, 2007). Therefore, gender stereotypes continue to manifest even in curriculum and text books. While teaching, teachers tend to favour boys in their classroom interaction by paying them more attention than girls (Terry & Thapa, 2012).

In this milieu, I feel that the question of how Nepal can achieve substantive equality in education in a sustained way deserves serious attention. It is because achievement of equality in education depends not only on children's access to school, but whether the concept of gender equality is nurtured amongst the children in the truest sense through teaching as well as non-teaching behaviour by teachers. As discussed above, it is recognized that teachers are very central to any transformation in the school system. Teachers are the subject and object of developing Knowledge Attitude and Practice (KAP) in students in varying fields. What perceptions students form about them and of others depends on whether they perpetuate or transform the prevailing discriminatory norms and values that children bring to school from family and society. It is the school and teachers that have the opportunity to challenge and transform rather than transmit negative ideologies that inhibit in developing gender equality perceptions and practices.

In Nepal, though the seed of the concept of gender equality has been dispersed by the UN, especially after International Year of the Woman in 1975, it has yet to reach to the soil. This is visible in the findings of a study conducted in Nepal in relation to gender responsive budgets. The study found that at the District Education Office (DEO) and in schools, gender is understood only as scholarship to girls and funding for girl's toilets (MOE, UNICEF, & UNESCO, 2012, p. 34). This indicates the need of deeper understanding of gender equality throughout Nepal in teachers. This becomes possible only when the teachers who are responsible for educating

young children perceive the idea in its truest sense and practice it in their teaching – learning processes: pedagogy.

To enable teachers to practice gender responsive pedagogy, they should be given knowledge of the issue. Teachers need not only gender sensitive curricula and text books, but also education about it. Allana, Asad, and Sherali (2010) found that more than half of the teachers did not even clearly understand the difference between gender and sex. “The term gender is seen on admission forms and I thought it to be used interchangeably for sex,” shared a teacher in the gender training (pp. 343-348). Hence, it is evident that the teachers who actually nurture the feeling of equality amongst the students do need to understand gender and gender equality in a real sense so as to be able to inculcate non-sexist attitude and behaviour amongst students. It is also necessary to enable students constantly to question behaviours, thinking, and existence that maintain the in-place inequality. This must be done through anti-sexist (Canadian Journal of Education, 1993, pp.199- 201) liberatory pedagogy (Anderson & Damarin, n. d.) so that girls, women and other disadvantaged genders will not be discriminated in achieving education. Achieving this will contribute to achieving gender equality in education in a real sense as envisaged in the UNESCO’s Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education’s (2004) definition of equality, which indicates the imperativeness of the removal of discrimination against men and women through education, not only to prohibit de jure discrimination (for formal equality), but to eliminate de facto discrimination (for substantive equality). This will construct sustained equal conditions, treatment and opportunity for both men and women to realize their full potential, human rights and dignity, as well as opportunities to contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political development (UNGEI, 2012, p. 3). It is widely accepted that education is a key to constructing such

conditions, and teachers are an essential part of this. As different people perceive things differently and assign different meanings, I felt the need of exploring teachers' understanding of the very concept of 'gender equality' and their perceptions towards these concepts in order for developing gender equality concepts and practices in the younger generation of society. In this sense of the term, gender equality in education is a prerequisite for achieving equality in all other aspects. It is an 'enabling right' of the human being, as underscored above.

Statement of My Research Problem

When I reviewed education plans and policy of Nepal, I found that the term 'gender equality' was first stated in the Fifth Five-year Plan (1975–80). Prior to this plan, 'gender' was considered a foreign concept. With the commitment of the government and efforts of national, international and UN organizations, Nepal has achieved gender parity in schools at the basic and secondary levels (Terry & Thapa, 2012); yet in Nepalese society, girls and women suffer from discrimination and exclusion in the family, in society and in schools. The achievement in parity has not been mirrored much in an improvement in gender equality in practice (UNGEI/UNESCO-IIEP, 2011, p. 10). In this context, how could Nepal achieve gender equality substantively at all levels in education in a sustained manner is in question.

Before this, the focus has been mainly on accessing education through equal opportunity to girls (focusing on girls) - in achieving numerical 'parity' without addressing the underlying causes of inequality: the sexism against female (Acharya, 2007). Teachers must facilitate the internalization of gender equality concepts in students, thereby to bring in practice in daily dealings. My argument is that like other people in society, teachers of Nepal, both men and women, are also the product of the

patriarchal culture. They may therefore unknowingly, unconsciously and unintentionally foster and perpetuate gender inequality if they are not awakened to this problem and not equipped with pedagogical skills to address them. Hitherto, in my knowledge no study has been conducted yet to find out the teachers' understanding, perceptions and practices in relation to gender equality. Therefore, there is a dearth of evidence in this field. I, as a student of education and a development professional working in this field, felt the need of knowing the status of teachers' perceptions and practices on gender equality. It is in fact a pre-requisite to achieve substantive gender equality in education in a sustained way, and it is what my dissertation is all about.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to seek teachers' understanding on gender equality, explore their perceptions of the concept of gender equality in education, and to find out how best they practice it in and out of the classroom settings.

Research Questions

With focus on the main purpose of the research, I developed the following four questions:

1. How do teachers perceive the concept of gender equality?
2. How do teachers practice (apply) the concept of gender equality in schools?
3. What are the prevailing challenges and positive practices in practicing gender equality in education in schools?
4. What could be done in teaching gender responsively for achieving gender equality in education?

Rationale of My Study

In Nepal, concerns about increasing the number of girl children and female teachers in schools have been raised, and various attempts have been made to achieve gender parity in education. However, as mentioned earlier there is little inquiry into the perceptions and practices of teachers in relation to gender equality. This is essential, because it is through teachers' knowledge, attitude and practices that these concepts are formally transmitted to a new generation. Achievement of equality in education depends not only on children's access to school, but how and what gender norms are manifested in the classroom and transmitted or transformed while teaching by teachers. In Nepal, teaching is the profession which reaches the most people, as the government has established schools in every nook and cranny in order to ensure the right to education as enshrined in the Interim Constitution of Nepal, to fulfil obligations made nationally and internationally in EFA, and to meet the MDGs related to gender equality in education.

Teachers play an important role in construction and reconstruction of children's attitudes, beliefs and practices through the transmission or transformation of norms and values. The ideology of 'gender equality' which has been accepted internationally has yet to be made known to most people in Nepal. I believe the ideology of gender equality can be made known in a sustained way only through education in general and through teachers in particular. This becomes possible only when the teachers understand the contemporary concept, perceive its thrust, and put it into practice in teaching and their daily dealings. Thus, to me, it is imperative to understand teachers' perceptions to find out whether their perceptions are in line with contemporary concepts of gender so as to enable them to facilitate students in liberating themselves from the conventional concepts that legitimize discrimination

based on biology. This is essential especially because the concept of gender discrimination is embedded in teachers' psyches as they are the product of educational institutions shaped by the societal forces that perpetuate gender-based discrimination (UNGEI, 2012, p. 3). Education systems are both a result of external forces and instrumental in perpetuating or implementing gender equality. However, unless teachers are equipped with contemporary knowledge and skills, they may not be able to nurture gender equality in education in a substantive and sustained way.

Thus, I believe this study can serve two purposes. First, it will help to awaken teachers further to the concepts of gender equality. Second, it can inform planners and policy makers about teachers' perceptions and practices on gender equality to address gender inequality issues in teachers training programs. Besides, due to political change, the possibilities for speedy gender equality are immense. Pervasive and historically rooted patriarchal cultural practices are being critically scrutinized, questioned and debated for transformation, mainly through the initiatives of emerging feminist and human rights activists, intellectuals, academicians and the international community. The pressure to bring about such transformation is intense and immense. As achievement of equality in education is one of the preconditions for realizing equality in other spheres of life, this type of perceptual and practice-related study is imperative for bringing about the perceptual change and change in practices that are required for sustaining change that happened in the people's movement in Nepal.

Last but not least, this study is essential to speeding up the progress towards achieving the MDGs and EFA targets (parity) at all levels of education.

Structure of the Study

This study is structured into eight chapters. The first chapter introduces my study. Chapter two comprises a literature review. Chapter three contains description of

the methodologies. Chapters four, five and six present the empirical findings derived through the analysis and interpretation of data to answer my four research questions. Chapter four depicts the teachers' perceptions on gender equality in education. Similarly, chapter five presents the picture of teachers' practices on gender equality; and chapter six presents an account of challenges teachers face and the positive practices that teachers see helpful in teaching gender responsively. Chapter seven presents strategies for addressing teachers' challenges in practicing gender equality and also the strategy for promoting positive practices in teaching gender responsively. Finally, chapter eight provides summary, findings, conclusion and implications in brief and intensive manner.

Definition of the Operational Terms

The following are the definitions of the terms used in this study.

Gender: In my study I have taken gender as socio-cultural construction of people - men, women and the 'other' (third gender) - an identity-based category for people who do not identify as either male or female. It is not a synonym of the concept 'sex' and of the word 'woman'.

Gender Equality (GE): "Gender equality is the removal of deep-seated barriers to equality of opportunity and outcome, such as discriminatory law, customs, practices and institutional processes" (Aikman, n. d.).

Substantive Equality (SE): Substantive equality refers to equality of "outcomes" or results in reality (de facto equality) which necessarily requires the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (UNIFEM & PLD, 2004, p. 26) and redress existing inequalities.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter began with an introduction, where I justified the importance of the study. I stated the problem, purpose of my study, and research questions. I presented my rationale, the organization of the study and finally definition of the terms. The next chapter accounts the selected literature review related with gender, gender equality, gender equality in education and studies related with teachers' perceptions on gender.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Overview

This chapter attempts to give an exposition of the theories of gender inequalities to understand different ways in which gender and gender inequality were conceptualized and attempted to bring equality. Since gender equality is being investigated within education, it also discusses Bourdieu's theory of cultural of reproduction to understand teachers' role in transforming or perpetuating inequalities, thereby it discusses the concepts to understand gender equality 'Laingic Samanta' in education. The later part of this chapter gives an exposition of gender equality in education and its status in Nepal followed by the findings of the studies conducted in relation to teachers' perceptions and practices on gender equality. It also gives a glimpse of FAWE and KWDI's 'teachers training on gender.

Theories to Understand Gender Inequality

Theories provide an important base for understanding, collecting, analysing and interpreting the realities and drawing findings of the research. They provide a lens to guide study and to draw conclusion to advocate (Creswell, 2003, pp.131, 134). I used poststructural feminism as a lens to study and to advocate for gender equality education and gender responsive pedagogy. For doing so I reviewed gender inequality concept and its various theories.

The Concept of Gender Inequality 'Laingic Asamanata'

Gender equality 'laingic samanata' in education is the central theme of my study. Aikiman and Unterhalter (2005) confirmed that different meanings and

understandings have been ascribed to the concept of 'gender', resulting in different interpretations and actions related to gender work. However, having common understanding about the concepts of gender equality is regarded as a prerequisite for taking gender equality forward in education in reality. Here, I begin with developing a conceptual understanding of the notion 'gender', which, as it seems to me, is a complex and elusive concept. Many authors acknowledge the verity and multiplicity of understanding that exist within gender theory (Alsop *et al.*, 2002. as cited in Mwaka, 2010). Conceptualizations of gender can be viewed along a spectrum, ranging from a view of gender as an essence based on biological difference between men and women, to those in-between men and women (Lober, 2006), to social constructionist perspectives that view gender as a socially constructed concept, to fluid conceptions of gender as multiple identities (Grebowicz, 2007, as cited in Mwaka, 2010). There are biological, social and psychoanalytic theories to explain the process of constructing gender (Measor & Sikes, 1992).

Biological determinism of essentialism theorists do not differentiate the term 'gender' with the term 'sex' (*linga*) and claim that gender difference between male and female attitudes, aptitudes and temperaments are primarily the result of biological factors such as hormones, chromosomes and are the underlying causes of other differences between women and men, therefore these differences cannot and should not be tampered with (Gray, 1981; Gold berg, 1974, as cited in Measor & Sikes, 1992). In contrast, socialization theorists differentiate the term gender with the term sex as biological make-up (male and female) and claim that gender (socio-cultural make-up) differences between male and female are due to socialization rather than biological inheritance. The psychoanalytic theorists stress the emotional aspects of a child's life. They underline the fact that feelings are involved in the process of

socialization as well as learning and thinking aspects of the child, which also determine the 'gender'. Arguing against the Freud's 'deficit' model (lack of male genital) on women, newer psychoanalytic theorists suggest that masculinity is essentially more precarious than femininity (Measor & Sikes, 1992, p.12).

The term 'gender' is not a synonym of the word 'woman'. Although we speak of gender inequality 'laingic asamanata', it is usually women who are less advantaged relative to similarly situated men. Thus, when we speak of gender inequality 'laingic asamanata', we dwell on discrimination against women, which is considered as the reason of gender inequality. Though feminist men and women have challenged the view that see gender differences (attitudes, aptitudes and temperaments) and also inequalities based on biological differences are unchangeable part of a 'natural order' (Measor & Sikes, 1992), sexual differences continue to serve as the basis for inequalities in societies even today. There are various sociological theoretical approaches to explaining gender inequality (Giddens, 2010). I discuss some of the major theories below.

Functionalist Theory

It was the dominant paradigm in sociology and the sociology of education until the 1960s. However, its view, 'inequalities is inevitable and is natural on the ground of sex for maintaining social order' is still pervasive in societies.

Talcot Parson, one of the functionalists stressed on the importance of clear-cut division of labour based on biology (sex) of the person and said that women are suited in expressive roles, providing care and security to children and offering them emotional support because they give birth and are thus "naturally" suited to look after children (Giddens, 2010). Men, on the other hand, should perform instrumental roles – namely, being the breadwinner in the family. Parson believed

that education is a vital part of a modern society that differed considerably from all previous societies, thus need to play important role in maintaining social order. Likewise, John Bowlby, a functionalist and psychologist of 1950's argued that women's role is to be a mother and should stay with young children. Other functionalists such as Davis and Moore (1945) argued that inequality was functional and necessary in all societies, as it ensured that the most talented individuals would fill the functionally most important positions (Learning, 2001, p. 17). All functionalists legitimize discrimination on the ground of sex for the smooth running and integration of the society. In the world, functionalism has been used as a justification for male dominance and gender discrimination.

Conflict Theories

Unlike functionalists, conflict theorists view inequalities as the result of exploitation and oppression of subordinate groups by dominants and it is not natural. They see society as a site where one social class holds over another through the exercise of power. The dominant class (bourgeoisie) maintains its position of power over the subordinate class (proletariat) by extracting as much profit as possible from their work as in Capitalism.

Friedrich Engels, a conflict theorist, views that woman's subordination results not from her biology, which is presumably immutable, but from social relations that have a clear and traceable history and that can presumably be changed. In his book 'the Origins of the Family, private property, and the State', he calls that the replacement of hunting and gathering by herding and farming economic is "the world historic defeat of the female sex" in which men's resources of strength, mobility and a technology derived from their hunting roles gave them a systematic advantage over women. This led to the invention of the concept of property. In Engles and Mark's

view, women attain freedom of social, political, economic and personal action with the destruction of property rights through class revolution (Ritzer, 2000, p. 466).

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is critical and activist on behalf of women, seeking to produce a better world for women, and thus it argues for human kind. Feminist sociologist work with double agenda: to broaden and deepen their discipline of origin by reworking disciplinary knowledge discovered by scholars and to develop a critical understanding of society in order to change the world in directions deemed more just and humane (Ritzer, 2000). The contemporary feminist theory begins with a question: “And what about women?” followed by basic questions: Why is women’s situation as it is? How can we change and improve the social world so as to make it a more just place for women and for all people? And what about the differences among women? Answers to these questions evolved the varieties of feminist theories (Ritzer, 2000, pp.488) in different times.

Lober (2010) has categorized feminisms according to their theory or theories of gender inequality into three: reformist, resistance, and revolutionary feminist theories of inequality (p. 9). The different strands of feminism within these three perspectives are shown in Table 1 and discussed below briefly.

Table 1

The different strands of feminism

Gender-reformist feminisms (1960s and 1970s)	Gender –resistant feminisms (1970s)	Gender –revolution feminisms (1980s and 1990s)
Liberal feminisms Socialist feminisms Development feminisms	Radical feminisms Lesbian feminisms Psychoanalytical feminisms standpoint feminisms	Multi-ethnic feminisms Men’s feminisms Social construction feminisms Poststructural or postmodern feminisms Queer studies

The gender reformist feminist theories locate gender inequality in the structure of the gendered social order- unequal gendered division of labor in the home and in the workplace and uneven presence of women in the main institutions of society, especially politics and the law. Thus, they fight for equal legal status and political representation for women and men, and for autonomy for women in making procreative, sexual, and marital choices. Their politics of gender balance and gender mainstreaming are advanced to redress gender inequality.

Liberal feminism sees unequal location of women resulted in inequalities. It aims to achieve full equal opportunities in all spheres of life without radically transforming the present socio-political system by achieving equal legal rights for women as men and the same educational and work opportunities. It claims the same rights for women as men and the same educational and work opportunities. The concept of WID originated in development due to the growth of liberal feminist theories. While liberal have contributed greatly to the advancement of women, critics charge that they are unsuccessful in dealing with the root causes of gender inequality and do not acknowledge the systemic nature of women's oppression in society.

Socialist feminism (includes materialist and Marxist feminisms) views patriarchy, capitalism and racism are the causes of inequality. It aims to achieve gender equality by defeating patriarchy and capitalism through socialist revolution by men and women together. Socialist feminism does not view gender as an essential entity, but as socially produced and historically changing, thus call for the restructuring of the family, the end of 'domestic slavery' and the introduction of some collective means of carrying out childrearing, caring and household maintenance as they see family as a source of women's oppression and exploitation. Socialist feminism was able to bring some reforms but not change.

Development feminism claims that exclusion of women in development has created inequalities further. Thus, aims at equating women's status with control of economic resources (Lober, 1997) by addressing gendered division of labour through gendered economic analyses – analysis of access to and control over resources and benefits- and political issue of women's rights versus national and cultural traditions. As a result, the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, echoed the slogan "human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights" and the Platform for Action (PfA) condemned particular cultural practices that are oppressive to women. Gender and Development approach (GAD) and gender mainstreaming (GM) strategy are credited to this strand. These approaches will be discussed later.

The resistant feminist theory sees patriarchal system as the cause of inequality and stresses the importance of countering it by raising women's voices and perspectives by valorising their nurturance, emotional supportiveness, and mothering capacities, by encouraging pride in women's bodies, and by teaching women how to protect themselves.

Radical feminists believe that the root of inequality is patriarchy, which is dividing rights, privileges and power primarily by gender, and as a result oppressing women and privileging men. Thus, they believe that women can free themselves only when they have done away with it. They have defined patriarchy as a social system that oppresses subordinates and exploits women in both private and public sphere (Bhasin & Khan, 1986).

Lesbian feminism's main battle is with patriarchy and its heterosexuality. Stop sleeping with the "enemy," and turn to other women for sexual love as well as for intellectual companionship and emotional support is its ethos.

Psychoanalytic feminism believes that gender inequality originates in early childhood experiences, leading men to believe themselves to be masculine and women to believe themselves feminine (Alsop *et al.*, 2002) through psychological gendering of children since early age.

Standpoint feminism's main stand is that women's "voices" are different from men's, and thus they must be central to knowledge, culture, and politics to challenge hegemonic values, because they argue that "whoever sets the agenda for scientific research, whoever shapes the content of education, whoever chooses the symbols that permeate cultural productions has hegemonic power".

The revolutionary feminist theory of gender inequalities sees domination as the cause of inequality and focuses on multiple sources of inequality (matrix of domination-race, ethnicity, and social class) but the target is the binary gendered social order. They argue that gendered binary categories, norms and expectations give the men of their social group continued patriarchal privileges. Thus, the goal of this theory is to dismantle binaries' gender categories and matrix of domination through degendering movement that would overturn the gendered social order and ultimately create a non-gendered social order.

Multi-ethnic feminism claims that there are other inequalities apart from gender such as race, ethnicity, religion and social class, thus, there are multiple strands of oppression and exploitation that are intertwined in structural relationship of gender. This strand of feminism is credited in bringing other inequalities along with gender inequalities in development discourse.

Men's feminism is a burgeoning field of study. It treats men as well as women as a gender and to scrutinize masculinity as carefully as femininity. It believes that genders - men's and women's are relational and embedded in the structure of the

social order. The whole question of gender inequality involves a relationship between men and women, haves and have-nots, of dominance and subordination, of advantage and disadvantage. Neither men nor woman can be studied separately. The object of study is thus not masculinity or femininity but their oppositional relationship to transform them for justice and harmony.

Social construction feminism believes gendered social order as the sources of inequalities. It argues that inequality is the product of gendering and is so pervasive that leads so many people to believe that it is biological, and therefore "natural". Social constructionist feminists have been credited for the sex –gender system theory. In other words, they were credited with 'denaturalizing' gender and demonstrated that masculinity and femininity are unstable categories that vary across cultural and historical periods.

Post-structural or postmodern feminism believes that fixed binary gender categories brought inequalities. For them gender is not an essential feature of human personhood but is instead a fluid and processual enactment within specific or contextualized interactions (Butler, 1990). They challenge binary gender categories as dual, oppositional, and fixed, arguing instead that sexuality and gender are shifting, fluid, and multiple categories. They say that equality will come when there are so many recognized sexes, sexualities, and genders that one can't be played against the other. They say as gender, sex and sexualities are not binary or fixed, there are at least six sexualities -- heterosexual woman, heterosexual man, lesbian, gay man, bisexual man, and bisexual woman. Similarly, biological sex is also not binary- male and female. One can add hermaphrodite and transsexual too. Their perspective is consistent with social constructionists, for whom gender is a verb; and is about doing. As there has always been difficulty in drawing a clear line between poststructuralism

and post modern theory (Ritzer, 2000, p. 602), Lober (2010) seems to share the views that post –structuralism is subsumed under postmodernism. However, I would like to discuss it here as a strand in itself separately as it is considered one of the approaches in gender and development in education (UNGEI, 2012) and I use it as the major lens in this study.

Post-structural Feminist Theory

Post-structural feminism is a branch of feminism that uses insights from post-structuralism, which has its philosophical position based on social constructionist assumptions. It raised critical questions about identity. It views gender as a malleable form of identification rather than a fixed definition present in conventional development discourse. It uses obligatory and most rigorous challenge of deconstruction -one of the most powerful poststructural analyses – the charge “persistently to critique a structure that one cannot not (wish to) inhabit ” (Spivak, 1993, p. 284, as cited in Pierre, 2000) by using post-structural concepts such as language, subjectivity, power/ institution and pedagogy to understand the social world of women and men and to transform it.

Language is the key to poststructuralists. They believe that "Language enables people to think, speak, and give meaning to the world around them" (Weedon, 1987). They argue that language limits women by framing and inscribing their lives. Linking to gender, they argue that gender is socially constructed through language and gender differences dwell in language. Language works to both constrain and open up. Secondly, they challenge gender categories as dual, oppositional and fixed, arguing instead that gender comprises shifting, fluid, multiple categories. In this way, they challenge stable definitions of gender (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005).

Foucault's (1970) archaeology of the human sciences traces the history of how language has been used to construct binaries, hierarchies, categories, and complex classification schemes that are said to reflect an innate, intrinsic order in the world. Post structuralist feminists have troubled these constructs since women are usually on the wrong side of binaries and at the bottom of hierarchies. For instance, the first term in binaries such as culture/nature, mind/body, and rational /irrational, subject/object" is male and privileged and the second term is female and disadvantaged. They critiqued these language structures using Derrida's deconstruction tool.

Deconstruction is a critical practice that aims to “ ‘dismantle’ [deconstruire] the metaphysical and rhetorical structures which are at work, not in order to reject or discard them, but to reinscribe them in another way’ ” (Spivak, 1974, as cited in Pierre, 2000). Thus, it is about rebuilding; it is about looking at how a structure has been constructed, what holds it together, and what it produces. It is not a destructive, negative, or nihilistic practice, but an affirmative one (Pierre, 2000).

Post structuralist feminists say that ‘deconstruction’ foregrounds the idea that language does not simply point to pre-existing things and ideas but rather helps to construct them, which makes clear that the world is constructed through language and cultural practice, thus, can also deconstruct and reconstruct it. Butler (1995) says, “The foundations are contingent, not necessary, not absolute, and therefore open to change.”

For post -structural feminists, subjectivity is central. For them the "subjectivity" refers to "conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual" (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). They say that subjectivity is the product of the society, culture and historical contexts. Thus, they recognize subjectivity in the

constitution (structure/formation) of gender, and emphasize that gender is a concept that is constantly being reproduced, contested and negotiated and that might yield quite unexpected and contradictory effects such as resistance, indifference or acceptance (Kabeer, 1994).

Post-structural feminists are concerned with power and institution. They seek to reveal "how gender power relations are constituted, reproduced, and contested" (Weedon, 1987, p. vii). They challenge dominant masculinist patriarchal views of knowledge by using strategies of opposition, resistance, and deconstruction. For this, Judith Butler, a major post- structuralist thinker calls for 'troubling the gender categories' that support gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality. She also calls for resisting 'performativity' - culturally sustained socially coerced gender performances. She proposed parodic practices as performative subversions to trouble the gender to denaturalize and resignify bodily categories beyond the binary frame (Butler, 1990, p. xxi).

Judith Butler explored the persistence of biological sex in feminist theory as the source and cause of the unequal social treatment and status of women in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. She argued that sex was an effect rather than the cause of social gender difference, and that the fiction of a stable core gender identity was maintained through socially coerced performances of gender.

Pedagogy is a central concern for post-structural feminists in education. They say that it's where theory and practice meet. They believe that pedagogy has a great effect on how gendered knowledge and experience are produced (Gore, 1993, p. 26). They advocate pedagogical styles –dialogue, in which they view teachers/educators as facilitators who consider how to provide situations and spaces in which teachers and

students can participate in reciprocal exchange, where teachers are no longer the disseminators of knowledge, instead, teachers facilitate learning experiences to empower marginalized people by generating emancipatory knowledge - new ways of understanding the world -by both conversation (consciousness raising) and personal and political action to understand and to uproot the causes of powerlessness, systems of oppression, and women's complicity in them (Andersan, *et al.*, 2001).

They see schooling is, in part, a process that should serve to acknowledge and critique set notions of identity, including gender and marginalized identities (UNGEI, 2012, p. 4). However, in reality patriarchy has turned it into a machinery of social and cultural regulation (Gore, 1993) and helped to construct gender, race, and class differences. Moreover, it's functioning as a post-colonialist institution that disrupts and weakens the power of local or indigenous knowledge (UNGEI, 2012).

From the above discussion on post- structural feminist perspective, it is clear that gender is a malleable form of identification rather than a fixed identity with its key political and theoretical objectives (UNGEI, 2012, p. 4). A ubiquitous division of people into two unequally valued categories - the gendered social order girds gender inequality. Thus, degendering movement to deconstruct binary opposition (Lober, 2006), and for deconstruction of gender is required. This could be done by resisting 'performativity' - culturally sustained socially coerced gender performances (Butler, 1990), for challenging the relations of dominance through discourses/practices (Lather, 1991).

Approaches to Gender and Development in Education

Like in other development sectors, in a bid to address inequalities in education different approaches have evolved (Maseno & Kilonzo, 2011) since 1970's. Prior to these initiatives, gender discrimination against women was not often perceived as

discrimination (Tomasevsku, 1993, p. 44) as they were so firmly imbedded in the history of humanity. For the purpose of understanding various approaches, the categorization- the Women in Development (WID), the Gender and Development (GAD), the Human Development Approach (HAD) and the Post Structural Approach (PSA) outlined by Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) is used.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the WID approach became popular in the development field as a result of the concern that women were being left out of economic development processes. The approach focused on the inclusion of women in development as a tool to increase the economic and social efficiency of development processes (DFID, 2002, as cited in UNGEI, 2012, p. 4).

In education, according to Aikman and Unterhalter, bringing girls and women into school is the central focus of WID framework as it understood 'education' as schooling, gender as women and girls and equality in terms of equal numbers of resources. The WID approach is prominently featured in the concept of gender parity, the notion that an equal proportion of girls and boys should be enrolled in and complete schooling (Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), 2003 as cited in UNGEI, 2012, p. 4). Policies associated with the WID approach have concentrated on improving access for girls, through giving them scholarship, providing food in return for attendance at school, developing the infrastructure of training or accommodation to ensure that more women teachers are employed, digging latrines, and providing water. These are often seen as ends in themselves (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005, pp.17-18). However, the questions of exploitation, subordination, and social division are generally not considered in this approach. Mary Ann Maslak found EFA documents influenced much by the WID framework in her analysis (CERID, 2005, pp.105-108).

The GAD approach emerged as an alternative to WID, which does not concern with women per se but the social structure of gender. It focuses on unequal gender relations at all levels in society. By the late 1980s, the GAD approach came to the forefront. This approach sought to challenge root causes of gender inequality and increase women's access to resources and decision-making (DFID, 2002). Its theorists argued that inequality needed to be challenged politically and could not merely be ameliorated by a process of inclusion, by the provision of welfare support, or by a belief in the greater efficiency of projects of WID (Moser, 1993). It also does not consider women as a uniform group. Harmonization of social life without domesticating, marginalizing either gender is the mission of this approach (Shrestha, 1994, pp. 31-32). It has developed tools such as gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting as an attempt to make gender central in addressing and redressing inequalities systematically rather than seeing it as a quick solution to a range of social problems (Jahan 1995; Kabeer, 2002; Budlender & Hewitt, 2002, as cited in Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005).

The HDA emerged in 1990s which has been applied in producing yearly Human Development Reports (HDR) under the auspice of the UNDP. The work of Amartya Sen provided the conceptual foundation for broader human development approach defined as a process of enlarging people's choices and enhancing human capabilities and freedoms. Various measurement tools such as Human Development Index (HDI), Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM), and Gender Equality Index (GEI) were developed and extensively employed in HDR. The 1995 HDR specifically recognized the injustice of gender inequality and warned the world with the message "Human development, if not engendered, is endangered" (UNDP, 1995, p. 1).

The PSA emerged to critique to a number of development practices and methodologies, particularly the power relations structure perpetuated by concepts such as ‘development’, ‘development assistance’ and ‘women’ in the developing world (UNGEI, 2012, p. 4). It raised critical questions about gender identity and the binary construct through languages as discussed above (see Post-structural Feminist Theory).

Bourdieu’s Theory on Cultural Reproduction

Culture of reproduction means the generational transmission of cultural values, norms, and experience and the mechanisms and processes (Giddens, 2010, p. 846). Education and school play a vital role in these transmissions. Different critical educators consider the main functions of schools as the reproduction of the dominant ideology, forms of knowledge, and the distribution of skills needed to reproduce the social division of labor (Giroux, 1983, as stated in Poudyel, 2007). Pierre Bourdieu, who is the theorist of culture of reproduction, agrees that schooling reproduces inequalities by favouring the dominant group through the use of their cultural capital such as language, ideas, and knowledge of music, art, and literature in school's curriculum that put dominant group in advantaged position. According to him, school is a place for the reproduction of culture. It is regarded as a place for reproducing social and cultural inequalities from one generation to another. Bourdieu explained how schooling contributes to reproduction of the dominant cultures, which includes patriarchal culture too.

Bourdieu has used different concepts such as habitus, field, capital, symbolic violence, and practice. Habitus are the “mental or cognitive structures” through which people deal with the social world. People are endowed with a series of internalized schemes through which they perceive, understand, appreciate, and

evaluate the social world. It is through such schemes that people both produce their practices and perceive and evaluate them (Ritzer, 2000, p. 534.).

Habitus is also described as the learned dispositions/traits such as bodily comportment, ways of speaking or ways of thinking and acting which are adopted by people in relation to social conditions in which they exist and move through (Giddens, 2010, p. 846). Bourdieu thinks habitus as “internalized, embodied ‘social structures’”. The habitus both produces and is produced by the social world. On the other hand, it is “structured structure”; which means it is a structure structured by the social world (Bourdieu, 1989, as cited in Ritzer, 2000, p. 534).

The field is a network of relations within objective positions within it. It is a type of competitive market place, in which various kinds of capitals (economic, cultural, social, and symbolic) are employed and deployed (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 97 as cited in Ritzer, 2000, p. 535). Fields are also considered the base-ground for a continuous struggle for positions where various forces interact with habitus in order to produce, preserve, change and improve a sense of legitimate value. The struggles for positions are determined by differential access to power and sources of capital or resources.

Capitals are of four types: social capital (various kinds of valued relations with significant others), cultural capital (primarily legitimate knowledge of one kind or another) symbolic capital (prestige and social honour) and economic capital. Among these capitals, the school is responsible for reproduction of cultural capital. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital can exist in three forms - an embodied state (as for example our ways of thinking, speaking and bodily movement), objectified state (for example in the possession of works of art, books or clothes) and institutional state - such as educational qualification (Giddens, 2010, p. 847). School reproduces cultural

capital by following the cultural capital of the privileged, by putting the privileged ones in more privileged positions for success. This theory of reproduction applies not only in reproduction of dominant class culture but in gender too as it reproduces patriarchal culture, which is considered the underlying cause of gender inequality as claimed by feminist theories.

Educational institutions transmit dominating patriarchal values and norms through curriculum content and teaching practices. In many instances both the formal and the informal curriculum reinforce traditional gender stereotypes and perpetuate the gender division of labour. Just as girls are socialized into viewing their own subordination as doxa in the family sphere, so do they - in the school system - become socialized into perceiving as natural the conventional female roles and the lower values attributed to these roles? The reproduction of gender inequality occurs at all levels in the educational system.

As poststructuralist feminists think, Bourdieu too thinks that the social basis of male domination is often concealed through powerful ideological mechanisms, such as the naturalization of gender inequality, so that women experience their subordination and men experience their domination as inevitable and natural. Human beings are bound to perceive the world from the perspective of some fundamental dualistic concepts, like public/private, active/passive, strong/weak, male/female/, masculine / feminine etc. which structure people's patterns of thinking, action, behaviour and organisation of life, work and activities. According to these first term in binaries is male and privileged and the second term is female and disadvantaged. Women and men are thus attributed different roles, activities and tasks which legitimise the segregation between the sexes and the subordination of women.

The socially constructed segregation between men and women is perceived as natural because the organisation of the social world is structured according to these dualistic gender principles which, through socialisation, are incorporated into bodily behaviour and into what Bourdieu calls habitus that is in the cultural schemes for perception, thinking, classification, and action. As habitus 'functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions' (Bourdieu, P .1977), the male domination is thereby naturalized in social world and is incorporated into the habitus of the individuals. Thus, the dominated women use the same dualistic categories as the dominating men. That means that the women themselves view women as inferior. In this way, they contribute to their own subordination and reproduce the unequal gender relations. This form of dominance is what Bourdieu calls symbolic violence, which is not based on physical force or coercion, but is an invisible form of power where the dominated women are socialised into doxa, which means taking things for granted (Bourdieu, 1999, as cited in Ankerbo & Hoyda, 2003).

I have utilized the culture of reproduction theory to understand and analyze how teachers' perceptions on gender equality were formed and how they practiced in the field (School/class room) and to examine whether teachers were reproducing the culture of inequality or promoting culture of equality. The theory was also used to draw recommendation for achieving gender equality in education. In my research, teachers' perception in education was considered habitus and their practice in and out of classroom was considered the field. These perceptions and practices produced by the then patriarchal education system are perpetuating/reproducing inequalities in societies. This is my argument since education has not addressed underlying cause of inequality and not promoted 'equal valuing women, men and all genders' in education.

Understanding Gender Equality ‘Laingic Samanta’ in Education

Gender equality is an often-used but infrequently defined term. Therefore, I have explored its definition as translating the concept of gender equality in reality necessitates conceptually sound understanding of the concept ‘gender’, ‘equality’ and ‘gender equality’. The concepts of gender and gender inequalities are already described at length above. Here I describe meaning of the terms ‘equality’, and ‘gender equality’.

Equality is a normative concept. The overarching human right document the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations in 1948, recognizes and enforces rights to equality of human being by stating that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. It further states “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms.... without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex,” (Tomasevski, 1993, p. 45). Traditionally, the concept of ‘equality’ is understood to mean ‘treating likes alike’. Its principal aim is to avoid differential treatment of similarly situated persons. On the basis of this traditional understanding of equality two approaches are most commonly used for gender equality- the formal and protectionist (UNIFEM & PLD, 2004, p. 24).

The formal approach, which is also called ‘sameness approach’, ignores biological and the gender differences between men and women. It treats women the same as men by developing gender neutral single male standard rules and regulations as its principal aim is to achieve ‘equal treatment’. By doing so, it promotes ‘gender blindness’ and disadvantages women and increases inequality in its desire to treat men and women equally.

The protectionist approach, which is also called ‘difference’ model of equality sees men and women as differently ‘situated’ and therefore not needing the same

treatment. This model of equality recognizes biological differences and social assumptions and expectations. This approach recognizes women as a group needing different treatment because they are weak, subordinate to men and need protection, instead of addressing systemic causes of women's subordination. This approach endorses essentialist and binary categories of male and female. In the guise of protecting women, it seeks to curtail or curb women's activities or freedoms.

The CEDAW adopted substantive equality, which necessarily requires the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (Facio & Morgan, 2009, p. 22). To achieve substantive equality in all spheres CEDAW requires two types of actions by the State: (1) actions to achieve equality of opportunity between men and women, and (2) actions to correct the inequalities of power between men and women (p.14). The objective of this approach of equality is to deliver outcomes that ensure equality of opportunity (law, policy, programs); equality of access and equality of benefit (UNIFEM & PLD, 2004, p. 26). To achieve these require the differences and inequalities between men and women be taken into account (CEDAW), because there are real biological differences between men and women obviously. But according to human rights theory and the principle of equality, these differences do not have to cause inequality; rather, such inequality is prohibited.

Substantive, which is also called corrective approach to equality focuses on equality of “outcomes”. It seeks to eliminate existing discrimination faced by disadvantaged groups at individual, institutional and systemic levels through corrective and positive measures (UNIFEM & PLD, 2004, p. 26). It considers sex or biological and gender or socially-created differences resulting in norms and assumptions about women and men’s roles in society and their capability and need. It

stresses that for equality of results to occur, women and men may need to be treated differently but without perpetuating gender discrimination.

Like gender, gender equality is also a new concept in development and has been defined differently by different organizations. UNESCO (2004) defines gender equality as the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in their home, their community and their society. Gender equality underpins equal opportunity, equal treatment, equal support and cooperation and equal investment and equal achievement for the equal development of men and women - all sorts of discriminations against women are removed.

The search for what equality actually means for women and men will never stop. Over the past six decades (since the establishment of the United Nations) different layers of meaning surrounding an idea of gender equality, a value endorsed in the UN Charter, have been uncovered. A new constituency in United Nations politics called “women” was created, as was the entry of a powerfully endowed idea called “women” in UN thought (Jain, 2006). The UN Women was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 2 July 2010 which became operational since January 2011. “Gender equality must become lived reality” says Bachelet, the first Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women (UN Women, 2011).

Gender equality in education as critical for elimination of other forms of gender inequalities was acknowledged internationally. However, most feminists view education as an integral part of the patriarchal system within which women take a subordinate position. They argue that girls are not only disadvantaged in educational system, but that it is there that they learn to be subordinated and to accept dominant ideologies of femininity and masculinity (Abbott & Wallace, 199, p. 83, as cited in

Measor & Sikes, 1992) as educational institutions are the products of the inequalities that exist in larger society.

As discussed earlier on the post-structural feminist view, schooling (education added) is, in part, a process that should serve to acknowledge and critique set notions of identity, including gender and marginalized identities (UNGEI, 2012, p. 4), UNGEI (2012) sees educational institutions as essential tools to effect great change throughout a community or social context. For UNGEI, education systems are both a result of external forces and instrumental to perpetuating or alleviating gender disparity around the world. The need to address gender inequality permeates MDGs, EFA goals, and development -agency policy and practices (p. 3).

Though increasing attention has been given to the importance of achieving gender equality in education internationally, to date, most efforts have focused on addressing gender parity – an equal number or proportion of girls and boys accessing educational opportunities, while gender equality encompasses a wider concept, which requires to ensure the same levels of experience of quality and outcomes of education to girls and boys (UNGEI, 2012, p. 3.).

In education sector, gender was not addressed initially. Economic growth for national development was the main driver for the expansion of education systems from the 1950s through to the late 1980s. The International Women's Year 1975 and United Nations Women Decade 1975- 1985 contributed in raising the level of social awareness and contributed to bringing women (as a category of gender) on the forefront of development agenda including in education (Acharya, 2007). The realization of essentialness of gender equity/parity as a strategy has come gradually in education that has resulted in concerted efforts at international level to come up with targets for achieving gender equality in education (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005).

Consequently, a common gender and education agenda has been forged around the globe as countries strive to achieve these targets. These targets are found in several international declarations, the Beijing Platform of Action (BPFA), Education for All (EFA), and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To-date, both the Dakar EFA (2000) and the MDGs (2000) represent the most important international documents that address gender equality in education guided by the BPFA. Each of these is discussed briefly below.

The BPFA was declared by the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. It called upon governments, the international community and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector to implement gender mainstreaming in all critical areas of concern. Education is one of the critical areas (United Nations, 1995). The BPFA states that education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. It outlined six strategic objectives. Its strategic objective B1 refers to eliminating gender disparities in access to all levels of education including tertiary education by ensuring women equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and by adopting positive action when appropriate. Similarly, its strategic objective B4 calls for developing non-discriminatory education by developing curricula, textbooks and teaching aids free of gender-based stereotypes for all levels of education including teacher training. It argues that non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys, which ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men.

Shortly after the conference, UNESCO adopted the three pronged strategy and the UNESCO agenda for gender equality. They are: mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policy-planning, programming, implementation and evaluation

activities; promoting the participation of women at all levels and fields of activity, giving particular attention to women's own priorities and perspectives in redefining both the goals and means of development; and developing specific programmes and activities for the benefit of girls and women, particularly those that promote equality, endogenous capacity-building and full citizenship.

Acknowledging the need of special mechanism and initiative for addressing the gender gap persisted in education; United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) was launched at the opening of the World Education Forum, 2000 and expressed the strong commitment throughout the UN system to this cause. The conference also adopted Gender Responsive EFA plan (UNESCO, 2002) when the governments were confronted with the reality revealed by the EFA assessment that the gender gap in education has not been achieved. Another guideline was produced for implementing, monitoring, evaluating gender responsive EFA Plans (UNESCO, 2004). The guideline was built on experience of the Gender in Education Network in Asia (GENIA).

GENIA has produced a tool kit for promoting gender equality in education that contains several tools including 'Gender –responsive classrooms' to eliminate gender bias (GENIA, UNESCO, 2004). Like in Asia, in Africa the Forum for African women Educations (FAWE) has developed *Teacher's Handbook on Gender Responsive Pedagogy* following the UNESCO guidelines.

The MDGs were set in the summit held in September, 2000. Though goal 2 'achieve universal primary education' also relates to education, there is only one goal focusing on the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women that is to eliminate gender disparity in primary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. MDG, GMR 2011 indicates that developing

countries will likely achieve the MDGs for gender parity in primary and secondary education. However, the 2012 MDG Report reports “gender parity in primary schooling worldwide has officially been achieved. At the regional and national levels, however, gender disparities persist. Higher obstacles for girls arise at the secondary school level, where the Gender Parity Index is lower than both in primary and tertiary education” (United Nations, 2012). Thus, the UN Task Team responsible for post-2015 development goals proposals to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has proposed ‘gender equality enabling men and women to participate and benefit equally in society’ as a goal 6 by stating that:

Discrimination against women and girls impairs progress in all other areas of development. The global development agenda should seek not only to address and monitor the elimination of specific gender gaps, but also to transform the structural factors that underpin the widespread persistence of gender inequalities, gender-based violence, discrimination and unequal development progress between women and men, girls and boys. The empowerment of women and girls and the protection of their rights should be centre-pieces of the post-2015 agenda”. (UN, 2012, as cited in Eamer, *et al.*, 2012)

In the case of Nepal, in education, parity has been achieved in basic and secondary level education (Gender audit, 2012). However, in order to ensure universalization of compulsory quality primary education, more concrete and focused interventions are required. In case of goal 3, over the last decade, Nepal has made progress in reducing gender-based discrimination and empowering women through legal reforms (Gender equality bill, 2006, proportional representation (PR) section of the election, a resolution of 33-percent representation, Civil Service Act 2007 ensuring 45 percent candidates from excluded groups), and institutional mechanisms

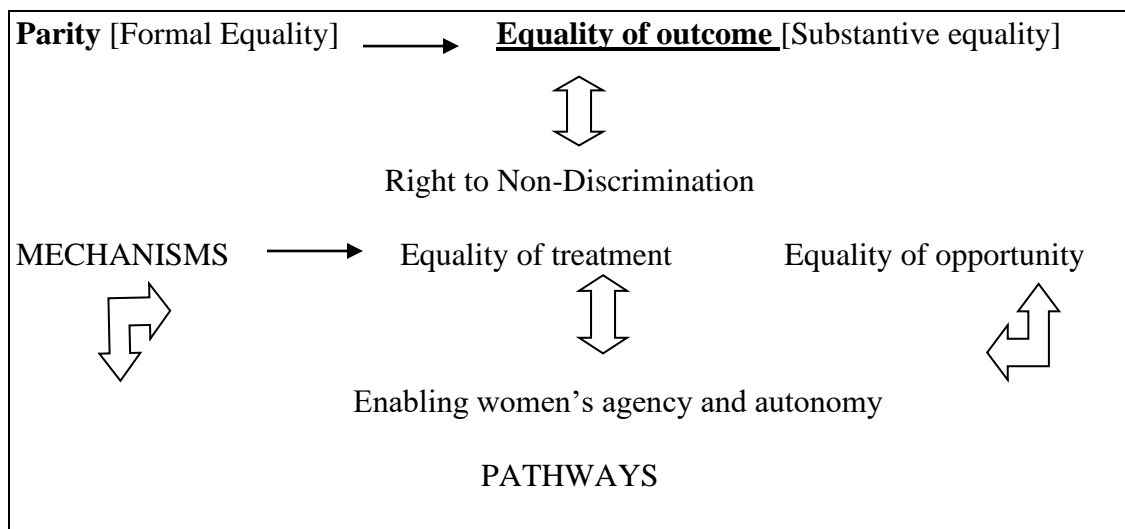
(establishment of the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare, Women Commission) (Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission & United Nations Development Programme, 2011, pp. 29-31). However, reports highlight that eliminating discriminatory social and cultural practices have been the major challenges for ensuring girls' enrolment and retention at all levels of education.

Two goals of EFA are distinguished as gender parity goals [achieving equal participation of girls and boys in all forms of education based on their proportion in the relevant age-groups in the population] and gender equality goals [ensuring educational equality between boys and girls]. In turn, these have been characterized as quantitative/numerical and qualitative goals respectively (Subrahmanian, 2005). She emphasized that gender equality is a stated goal of the EFA agenda for 2015.

While many advocacy slogans about girls' education have been important in terms of reaching out to girls, they only lead as far as making progress towards gender parity. Attention needs to focus on the next goal – gender equality. Making that shift [to gender equality] requires getting a better grasp of what is meant by gender equality ... and how institutions and systems can be strengthened to ensure that they uphold standards of gender equality that facilitate and stimulate social change processes (Subrahmanian, 2006, p. 2). She urges to understand gender equality in education as the right to education [access and participation], as well as rights within education [gender-aware educational environments, processes, and outcomes], and rights through education [meaningful education outcomes that link education equality with wider processes of gender justice]. She recommends following the pathways to equality which is shown below in figure 1. The pathway to equality focuses on agency and autonomy of people in enjoying their freedoms for achieving gender equality in education along with the equality of treatment and equality of opportunity.

Figure 1

Mapping the conceptual terrain of gender parity and gender equality



(Subrahmanian, 2005, p. 398).

She states that for achieving substantive (de facto) equality, mechanisms for ensuring equality of treatment as well as equality of opportunity for men and women are important. Achievements in these equalities in turn rest on a commitment to non-discrimination. Non-discrimination is imperative to ensure the erasure of social norms that construct women and men as unequal in value in terms of their contributions and entitlements, to ensure that all social actors are committed to eliminating stereotypes and attitudes that reinforce and perpetuate inequalities in the distribution of resources between women and men, and to ensure availability of fundamental freedoms and choices equally to women and to men. Achieving gender parity (formal equality) is just one step towards gender equality in and through education. There is a need of addressing the root causes of inequality (UNESCO, 2011). The world atlas of gender equality in education states that achieving parity is not achieving equality; it is only a step (UNESCO, 2012, p.21).

Status of Gender Equality in Education in Nepal

In Nepal, there is no culturally suitable and easily describable Nepali word for 'gender' though the term 'Laingic' has been used to differentiate from the term 'Linga' (sex). Development professionals are still trying to find out a Nepali term that describes best the essence of the concept of 'gender' to wipe out the generations old mal-concept that sees sex and gender as synonyms and or gender is the result of biology of human being (Shrestha, 1994).

The SIPGEGE (2007), which is an overarching document to achieve the EFA goal number five has defined gender equality 'as equal opportunity, equal treatment, equal support and cooperation, equal investment and equal achievement for the equal development of men and women, boys' and girls' (p. 1). It further states that the concept of gender equality in education demonstrates and make thorough analysis of equal opportunity in education without discrimination, equal treatment by teachers in the classroom, equal participation in quality education, equitable learning outcomes, curricula and textbooks are free from gender bias, and all sorts of discriminations against girls are removed, and ensuring equal opportunity and career path for equal work.

A review of the development and education plans and policy indicates that consideration of gender equality was first stated in the Fifth Five-year Plan (1975–80) which promoted appointment of female teachers to increase girls' enrolment. In addition, adult literacy and skill training for women in home science were also included in the plan. The Sixth Plan (1980-1985) came with a separate chapter on women's development. The Seventh Plan (1985- 1990) has made special arrangements such as scholarships and hostel facilities to girls for increasing girls' access to education in remote areas. The Eight Plan (1990-1995) again focused on

increasing female teachers in primary schools and female participation in non-formal education. The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) was the first plan that took gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment and gender equality as its main working policies and touched upon the rights-based approach for the first time in compliance with the Beijing Platform of Action (BPFA). In education sector, it aimed for gender equality by expanding opportunities to women. A gender –focused objective was set in education ‘to expand opportunities for and accessibility of women in education for enhancing gender equity’ (NPC, 1997, p. 614).

The Tenth Plan (2002-2007), which had the overarching national goal of poverty reduction regarded education as one of the major means to achieve this goal. It had set certain gender-related targets and aimed at achieving a Gender and Development Indicator (GDI) value of 0.550; a Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM) value of 0.500 and an increased women's participation in decision-making positions by 20 percent.

The Eleventh Plan (Three Years Interim Plan, 2008- 2010) emphasized social integration and inclusive development as the basis for economic and social transformation of the country. Thus, in education, it aimed to increase women’s participation, expand basic child development education and pre-primary for ensuring gender equity. Provisions such as allocation of separate gender budget, inclusive and equitable education for all, and income generating and life-skill based non-formal education, etc were mentioned (CERID, 2009).

The Twelfth Plan, in other words the second Three Year Plan (2010-2013) has set an objective of providing opportunities for literacy and continuous education to all Nepalese, particularly to women and people from poor communities by linking

literacy with way of life and by establishing inter-linkages between skills and work (NPC, 2011).

After the advent of democracy in 1951 there have been sustained efforts to develop a national system of education for making education available for the masses. The National Education Commission (NEC, 1991), which was the first Education Commission after the political change in 1990 had emphasized the inclusive approach to mainstreaming those who lagged behind (disabled, poor, deprived, geographically disadvantaged including women). The Commission identified caste and gender disparities in education. It had suggested special provisions for women, physically and mentally disabled people and economically and socially disadvantaged communities. The High Level National Education Commission (HLNEC, 1998) also had suggested changes following the line of the 1991 NEC in relation to gender, caste, language, ethnicity and cultural diversity. The report of the High Level National Education Commission (1998) had emphasized more on women's increased access to managerial positions, increased number of female teachers, financial provision at village and municipality level for girls' increased access to education, and other facilities for girls and women at all levels of education including women's hostels.

Based on the reports of the above mentioned commissions, various national plans and projects have been implemented such as the National Education System Plan (1971), Education for Rural Development, the Seti Project (1981-1992), Primary Education Project (1984-1992), Science Education development Project (1983), Basic and Primary Education Project Phase I (1993-1998), Secondary Education Perspective Plan (1997), Basic and Primary Education Project Phase II (1999-2004), Secondary Education Development Project (1993-2000), Secondary Education Development Plan (2001) and the School Sector Reform Plan 2009- 2015.

The SSRP is in full fledge implementation across the country. The program was build on the EFA and SESP achievements, policy directions within the purview of statutory provisions, the EFA National Plan of Action, and Millennium Development Goals. Its purpose is to improve efficiency in education, aiming at EFA and MDG goals to reach parity in gender and inclusion, and ensure equitable access to quality education through a holistic school sector approach (MOE, 2009).

The Interim Constitution (2006) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal acknowledges the role of education in the country's development. A number of free standing rights were enshrined: the right to basic education in one's mother tongue (Article 17 (1)), right to receive free education up to secondary (Article 17 (2)), and right to preserve and promote ones language, script, culture, cultural civilization and heritage (Article 17 (3)). Moreover, it sets forth the right to equality (Article 13), and gender equality (Article 20): no discrimination in any way on the basis of gender. The constitutional provisions and the decision to secure candidates proportionately from social and regional groups for the Constitution Assembly (CA) election in 2008 have greatly increased the participation of women in the political field.

The Education Act eighth amendment bill submitted to the President on August 27, 2012 to promulgate through an ordinance has provisions for a more engendered law securing 33 to 50 per cent seats for women in management committees ranging from school level to policy making (UNGEI, 2012, p. 28). In fact, several provisions of acts and regulations provide for affirmative action in favour of women, e.g., mandatory recruitment of female teachers at the primary level. In order to increase participation of women in education, the seventh amendment of the Education Act (2001) included provisions for representation of women teachers in

District Education Committees, women representatives in Village Education Committees and School Management Committees (SMC) and scholarship provisions.

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Education in Nepal

Gender mainstreaming as the key tool to bring about gender equality was brought into focus in Nepal after the Fourth World Conference of Women in 1995. As with schools in any country, Nepal's schools are gendered institutions that reflect and reproduce gender relations from wider society (Rothchild, 2006, p.15, as cited in Terry & Thapa, 2012). In keeping with the international commitment of EFA, the MOE adopted several measures for gender mainstreaming in the school education since the Ninth Plan.

As the ninth plan adopted gender approach and focused on gender mainstreaming as a policy and strategy to achieve equality, the concept of gender budget was introduced in Nepal. Gender Budget Audit of the MOES was conducted by analysing budget of three years 1988/89 to 2000/01, which has revealed that the investment made in the past in education of women compared to the commitment made in policies has not been compatible (Acharya, 2003). The analysis of the proposed budget for "The EFA National Plan of Action" indicated a very low allocation for 'gender development', which reflects that the prioritization and budgeting process of MOES did not adequately use a specific 'equity lens' and there were no clear mechanisms for prioritizing one activity over another (Acharya, 2003).

Attempt has been made to mainstream gender in budgeting by introducing Gender Responsive Budgeting from the fiscal year 2007/08. The main aim of GRB is to support the gender mainstreaming from the planning process, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation with five precise indicators such as participation, capacity building, benefit sharing, and increasing access to employment

and earning (MOF, 2007, as cited in MOE, UNESCO & UNICEF, 2010, p. 21). SSRP gender audit 2012 recommended to fully integrating GRB in the MOE's planning and budget processes.

Two major gender audits were conducted in education. The first one was for the Basic and Primary Education program-II (DEO/MOES, 2002) and the second one for the Mid-term evaluation of the SSRP (DFID Human Development Resource Centre, 2012), which will be dwelled under the heading SSRP MTR. The gender audit (2002) asserted candidly that even after several years of EFA implementation, attitude towards girls of the society, parents and girls themselves have not changed. The audit recommended for developing Gender Mainstreaming Strategy. Following the recommendations of the audit, and the gender responsive EFA plans (2002) the then MOES and ADB developed a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (2006). Based on gender mainstreaming strategy, the DOE has developed a Strategic Implementation Plan for Gender Equality in Girls' Education (SIPGEGE) covering the period 2005-2015 (MOES/DOE, 2007). The plan envisioned achieving gender equality in education by 2015 by providing quality education. However, the recent gender audit of SSRP indicated that there are no provision for monitoring progress against SIPGEGE as its monitoring and evaluation does not fall within the area of responsibility of monitoring and evaluation units of MOE and DOE. The audit considered it a major institutional weakness with regard to gender equality efforts (2012, p. 12). As recommended by the audit, the DOE has established a Gender Equity Development Section (GEDS) to facilitative gender mainstreaming in the school education system (Ministry of Education, UNESCO & UNICEF, 2010, p. 5).

As per the recommendation of Gender Audit 2002, MOE's CDC had commissioned to analyze school curricula from gender perspective and had given

recommendations. However, gender audit team (2012) found stereotypical presentations of men and women's roles in text books.

For promoting gender equality in Nepal's schools, NCED had trained women from disadvantaged groups, and coached them for Teacher Commission examination under teacher's training project. But only few of such trainees have got jobs as there is no statutory provision to make schools hire them, though there is a mandatory requirement of female teachers at the primary and secondary levels. According to the Flash Report 2011-2012, in community schools, women comprise 37.5% of teachers at primary level, 20.1% at lower secondary level and 13.9% at secondary level. Moreover, there are still thousands of community schools without a single female teacher (2012, p. 26), while EFA National Plan of Action 2001-2015's target was to reach 50 percent by 2009.

While the BPEP Gender Audit 2002, (DEO/MOES, p. 53) has recommended increasing from one woman to two in the first instance and to one third of total members within five years, but only at least one woman member in SMC is made mandatory. Lack of women in these school governance bodies is considered a serious gender issue in view of SMCs' planning and implementation responsibilities.

Besides, the SSRP, which is in full fledged implementation across the country has adopted some key policies from the perspective of gender and inclusion (MoE, UNESCO, UNICEF, 2010).

Gender Equality in Education in 2012

As attempts to mainstream gender into national plans began since the Ninth five years plan, girls' enrolment has increased, and gender parity has been achieved at all levels of schooling except in higher secondary level. The below table indicates the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in NER as 0.99 for all levels except higher secondary

(1.03). A very narrow gender gap (1.03) still persists between girls and boys at higher secondary level with respect to NER. However, discrimination against girls still persists which is evidenced by parents sending girls to community schools (Public) and boys to institutional (Private) schools (Table 3).

Table 2

Gross enrolment rate, net enrolment rate by gender level

Level	GER			NER			GPI
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	
Primary (1-5)	141.2	131	135.9	94.5	95.6	95.1	0.99
Lower Secondary (6-8)	104.1	96	100	69.5	70.5	70.0	0.99
Basic (1-8)	128.6	119.1	123.7	86.1	87.0	86.6	0.99
Secondary(9-10)	71.9	68.4	70.1	51.4	52.7	52.1	0.99
Higher secondary (11-12)	30.2	27.6	28.9	9.7	9.1	9.4	1.03
Secondary (9-12)	50.8	48.0	49.4	30.3	30.9	30.6	0.99

Source: (SSRP, 2012)

The data presented in table 3 shows that across all levels girls are sent more to community schools and boys to institutional schools due to strong cultural norm of ‘son preference for better education and the parents notion that the institutional schools provide better education than the community schools, which is substantiated by the result of the School Leaving Certificate (SLC). The pass percentage from the institutional school in 2010 SLC was 86 while only 46 from community schools. In this year, 59.12 percent boys and 51.44 percent girls passed the SLC, which indicates gender gap in the pass rate almost 7 percent in favor of boys (Terry & Thapa, 2012, p.18).

Table 3

Enrolment in types of schools by gender

Level of Education	All types of Community			Institutional		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Primary (1-5)	87.9	84.0	86.0	12.1	16.0	14.0
Lower Secondary (6-8)	87.4	83.2	85.3	12.6	16.8	14.7
Basic (1-8)	87.7	83.8	85.8	12.3	16.2	14.2
Secondary(9-10)	85.3	81.7	83.5	14.7	18.3	16.5
Higher secondary(11-12)	89.4	86.6	88.0	10.6	13.4	12.0
Secondary(9-12)	86.5	83.1	84.8	13.5	16.9	15.2

Source: (GOV, MOE, DOE, Flash 1 Report, 2011-012)

All the above presented facts and figures reveal that gender parity in education has been achieved in school education, but not equality. Because, hitherto, the government's focus has been mainly on accessing education through equal opportunity - in achieving numerical 'parity' without addressing the ideology of inequality – equality of women and men and attempts to achieve equality in outcome called 'substantive equality'.

Literatures on Teachers' Perceptions and Practices on Gender Equality

Despite my sincere effort in finding out literatures on teachers' perceptions and practices on gender equality I could not find. There is a dearth of literature in this field. A few, which I found, are reviewed as follows:

The Faculty of Education, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania has conducted a research to know the Tanzania Secondary School Science Teacher's Perception of Gender. The study revealed that more than 75% of all female and male science teachers involved in this study believed in gender difference in performance

in science. They misconceived boys as being better than girls in almost everything. Majority believed further that such differences were biological and not nurtured. Teachers perceive that girls have a slower speed in the learning of science than boys or girls learn science differently from boys because they are different from boys. The study claims that even the suggestions given were gender stereotyping.

The study has raised a great concern as they found gender discriminations are practised by almost everyone in the society, including the educated professionals and non-professionals, the lumpen, the old and the young and in the eyes of mothers and fathers. One major remedy to the misconceptions on gender differences between girls and boys or men and women, the study proposed was:

... educating the entire Tanzanian public on the current people's perception on gender and their damaging effect on girls and women in general. The effects should however not be treated in a unidirectional way. This is because gender perceptions have greatly influenced the public especially boys or men's behaviour towards girls or women which has penetrated in many places in Tanzania, i.e., the learning institutions, religion institutions, work places, learning materials, radio programmes, daily language, and even the "thinking" in almost everybody "men" and "women." (Mushi, 1995, p. 127)

The study states that 'gender' is everybody's task and everyone else needs gender conscientization looking at the way gender-stereotyped behaviour has spread across text books, radio programs, newspapers, and book publishers, and the journalists. Should they become "gender-conscious" before they communicate anything to the public? "How do we do it?" was the question raised and the answer stated was that the teachers should be our central focus (Mushi, 1996 P. 128).

Another study conducted to explore the social studies teachers' understandings of teaching for gender equality and their practices in teaching for gender equality revealed that teachers lack a clearer understanding of what teaching for gender equality means and continue to unintentionally reinforce and perpetuate gender stereotypes (Mhlauli, 2011). Another finding of the study was that male teachers saw gender equality as a threat to male hegemony and supremacy as dictated by their culture and tradition. They covertly reinforced the gender stereotypes and biases prevalent in their society (p.139). The researcher concluded that gender equality remains an illusion rather than a reality in primary schools in Botswana.

In Nepal, I have not found any study carried out in relation to teachers' perceptions and practices on gender equality. However, there were various studies/researches carried out in Nepal in education since 1990, following the Jomtien Conference. The major areas of the studies were (a) barriers to girls' schooling; (b) the role of women teachers; (c) scholarship and incentive programs; (d) gender disparity in education. Seven studies focus on the status of girls' education in Nepal. Bista (2004) also stated, "Nepal has not looked into male and female teachers' expectations of both boy and girl students" (p. 16).

The research organization 'CERID' has carried out researches on gender equality. It has carried out research in *Gender Equality and Gender Friendly Environment in Schools* (2006), to find out the various determinants which make girls and female teachers friendly environment in schools. Similarly, Social Development and Research Centre has carried out a study on the Status of Gender Equality in School (2007). In 2009, CERID has carried out a study on gender issues in school education. The study looked at the gender friendliness in schools, roles and responsibilities of female teachers; and the status, role and leadership of female head

teachers, the policy options for ensuring the participation of female teachers in the position of head teachers.

Similarly, UNESCO Kathmandu office has carried out a study on *Learning Environment in School and at Home* through gender equality perspective. The findings of the study indicated that teachers are one of the agents who construct and reinforce gender from early age, school and households both discriminate against girls, teachers' behavior and attitude towards girls and boys are still guided by conventional beliefs of femininity and masculinity, teachers are not clear in their understanding about gender, and they have misconception about gender, sexuality and gender justice. The study indicated that gender equality in education, which is supposed to be achieved by 2015, is also at risk as completion of good quality education requires not only equal opportunity to attend school but also to ensure active participation in learning (equity in the learning process); equality in learning outcomes and equality in job opportunities and earnings which imply the need of addressing issues of gender based practices in the classroom or at the school level along with issue of gender balance in the provision of teachers, head teachers, and School Management Committee members who are involved and have say in teaching and managing the school (Parajuli & Acharya, 2008, pp. i-iii).

Hitherto, no study in my knowledge has been carried out in Nepal in relation to teachers' perspectives and practices on gender equality, which is imperative for achieving gender equality in truest sense in education. In Nepal, very limited literatures are available both in research in gender and in teacher training on gender. This fact is found by SSRP gender audit. It says that the NCED, a body responsible for training teachers has yet to include gender issues systematically in teachers'

professional development (Terry & Thapa, 2012, p. 57), while the SIPGEGE (2007) contains several detailed commitments relating to gender sensitization to teachers.

To teach gender responsively, teachers need to be taught gender responsively. In doing so, gender mainstreaming in teachers teaching is essential because as said by Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender (2005, p 49) “even in contexts in which there are extensive gender inequities outside school, teachers can make a difference inside school” with the application of gender-responsive pedagogy (Mlama *et al.*, 2005). McElroy *et al.* (n. d.) believe that teacher training is the superhighway to gender equity and urge for providing training to teachers so that teachers do not teach course book to test (teachers depositing to students –‘banking’) in which patriarchal and sexist values are embedded in most of the courses.

Enabling teachers to teach gender responsively is one of the best strategies in achieving gender equality not only in education but in all aspect of life as teachers are the major executors of the teaching and learning processes. It is recognized that teachers are very central to any transformation in the school system. Students spend most of the time with teachers in school. Teachers are the subject and object of developing Knowledge Attitude and Practice (KAP) in students in varying fields. Teacher can contribute to gender equality rather than sustaining inequalities (Subrahmanian, 2005). In doing so, teachers need to be awakened; as they are also the product of the same patriarchal culture likes others.

Research suggests that teachers who receive training on gender issues are better able to address individual needs in the classroom of the female learner as well as promote her achievement in school (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005; 2005; as cited in Mlama *et al.*, 2005). To equip teachers with knowledge, skills and attitudes for gender responsive pedagogy, in Africa, the Forum for African Women

Educationalists (FAWE), working in 33 countries across the continent, has produced a Teacher's a practical guide for making teaching and learning processes gender responsive. It defines gender responsive pedagogy as,

Teaching and learning processes which pay attention to the specific learning needs of girls and boys aim at redressing gender inequality and eliminating all kinds of discrimination against any gender. Gender responsive pedagogy, calls for teachers to embrace an all encompassing gender approach in the processes of lesson planning, teaching, classroom management and performance evaluation (Mluma *et al.*, 2005, p.7).

In the Republic of Korea, too, Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) has developed a 60hrs model gender equality training program (Jung & Chung, 2005) when they found that the teachers who actually required to implement gender equality education do not fully understand the concept (Cho, Chung, & Kim, 2000, as cited in Jung & Chung, 2005). Training for teachers who are the subjects of gender equality education is essential in order to actualize gender equality education more effectively at school sites. A model gender equality training program was developed in order to enable teachers to enhance gender equality consciousness and to implement gender equality education. A 60 hours course includes four subjects: 1) My Gender Equality Consciousness, 2) Gender-Equal Family Culture, 3) Gender Equality Education, and 4) Gender-Sensitive School Institutional Culture. This programme was developed in order to enable teachers to enhance gender equality consciousness and to implement gender equality education.

The training program imparts skills on self reflection and focus on gender equality culture in the family and in school. It emphasizes not only gender responsive

pedagogy but the content of equality at all levels from family to educational institution.

When it comes to Nepal, a very little work has been done in making teacher training courses gender responsive. In this context, how could we expect gender responsive teaching for achieving gender equality in education without equipping teachers with required knowledge, skills and attitude?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of my study is shown in Figure 2. The topic of my study was ‘gender equality in education’. I explored teachers’ perceptions and practices on this subject by conducting qualitative research through the use of three research tools: in-depth interview, observation and documents study. I selected research participant ‘teachers’ for in-depth interview and for observation from the private and public schools situated within the town by sampling them purposively.

I reviewed theories of gender inequalities, (particularly –post structural feminism) and culture of reproduction in order to understand the reasons behind prevailing gender inequality in education; I explored teachers’ understanding on the concepts: Genders, equality, gender equality, gender equality in education along with the factors that they considered affect in forming these concepts. New concepts GEE and GRP emerged as results of the study owing to dwell further for the transformation of present inequalities into the state of gender equality in education. The framework is in page 58.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I began with an attempt to understand the concept of ‘gender’ (langic) in which biological, social and psychoanalytic theories to explain the process of constructing gender and gender inequalities were discussed, and gleaned

knowledge to seek answer to why the concept of gender inequality emerged and continued till today and the role schooling/education plays in this regards. Different approaches to education and equalities, and the role and aspiration of the international commitments of BPFPA, EFA, and MDGs in addressing gender inequality in education were also discussed. After all these conceptual discussions, I then turn to Nepal and depicted the status of gender equality in education in Nepal. A gist of literatures reviewed on teachers' perceptions and practices on gender equality was also presented.

With all these, I am able to get insights to relate these with the ground realities- the responses of my research participants on: how do teachers perceive the concept of 'gender equality'? and, how do they 'practice' in achieving the gender equality in education? It helped to draw conclusion for enhancing teachers' understanding on gender equality in line with contemporary concepts, which demands deconstruction, particularly: 1) binary gender category, 2) Sex-gender system, and in education 3) Parity focused equality in education.

The review of the literatures on status of gender equality in education in Nepal revealed that gender parity in education at basic and secondary has been achieved however, gender equality in qualitative sense has not been achieved as education system has not addressed them in truest sense, because as Bourdieu's theory of culture of reproduction says education system is reproducing inequalities by transmitting patriarchal values and norms through curriculum content and teaching practices.

Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Chapter Overview

Feminist theory aims at establishing a new social order for making the social world more just and humane for all (Ritzer, 2000, p. 444), and by transforming relationships and the larger culture “so that the alienation, competition, and dehumanization that characterizes human interaction can be replaced with feelings of intimacy, mutuality, and camaraderie”, (Foss, *et al.*, 1999). This research was conducted through the lens of ‘feminism for everybody (Hooks, 2000, p. 100), relating with feminist theories in general and poststructuralist feminist theory in particular.

This chapter deals with the research design in which I present my study’s philosophical stance and procedural stance. Under the philosophical stance, I explained ontology, epistemology, research strategy, research method, and research tools. Similarly, under the procedural stance, I explained the method of sampling sites and participants, data collection procedures, data analysis and interpretation, data validation procedures, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

An interpretive, qualitative research paradigm was selected for exploring the teachers’ perspectives and practices on the concept of gender equality in education. Denzin and Lincoln (200) describe qualitative research as a research paradigm that “....involves and interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world, meaning that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense

of, or to interpret phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p.3). Creswell (2003) contends that a qualitative inquiry employs different knowledge claims, strategies of inquiry and methods of data collection and analysis from those used in a quantitative investigation.

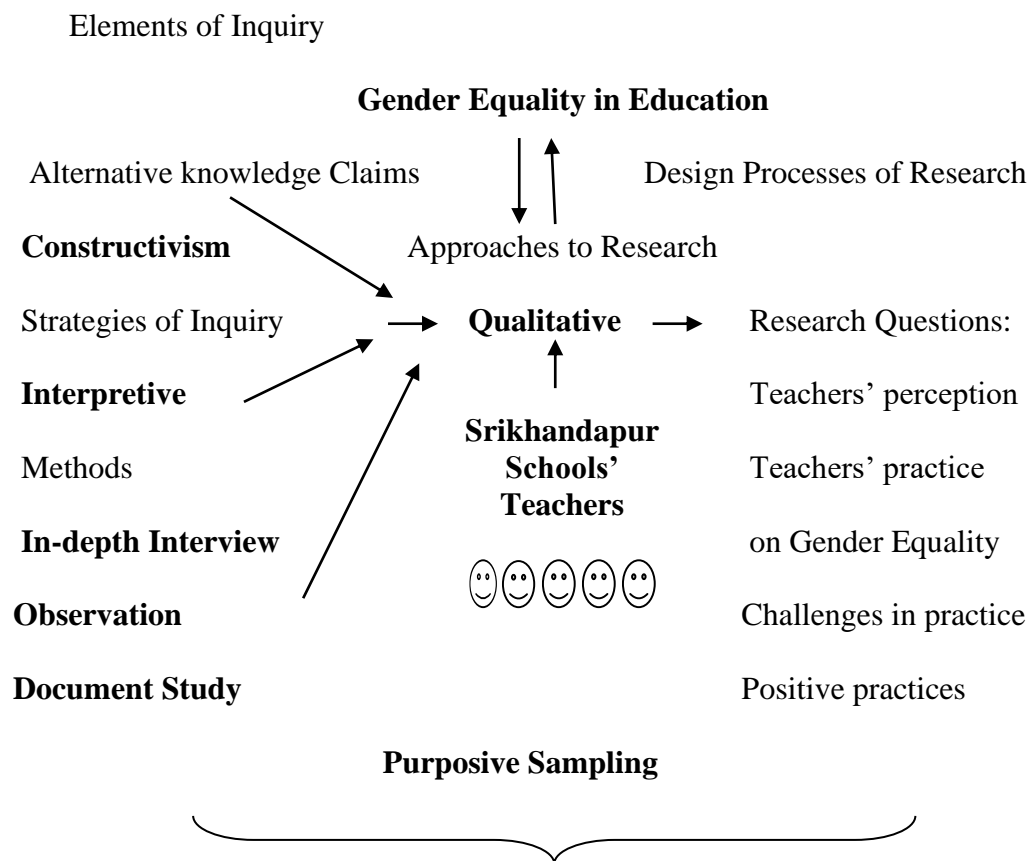
I followed Creswell’s framework of designing research: three elements of inquiry (Creswell, 2003, p. 4.). They are:

1. Alternative knowledge claims: What knowledge claims are made by the researcher? (including a theoretical perspective);
2. Strategy of inquiry: What strategy of inquiry will inform the procedures?
3. Methods: What methods of data collection and analysis will be used?

Philosophical and Procedural Research Design

Figure 2

Design developed based on Creswell’s framework for research design



According to Creswell, knowledge claim is a researcher's assumption on what to learn and how to learn during inquiry, also called paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, Mertens, 1998, as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 6) philosophical assumptions, epistemologies, and ontology (Crotty, 1998); or broadly conceived research methodologies (Neuman, 2000). Before commencing the research, a researcher needs to take a philosophical stance, as it guides the researcher's research journey to search for the answers to the research questions.

As shown in Figure 3, I inquired about gender equality in education as perceived and practiced by the school teachers from social constructivism standpoint. I followed interpretive, qualitative research strategy to inquire about the subject as it assumes that our knowledge of reality is gained through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artefacts" (Klein & Myers, p. 69, as cited in Andrade, 2009). This approach is consistent with the post structural feminism, which also uses concepts such as language, subjectivity, pedagogy to understand social world/ gender and to transform it.

I gained deeper insight into teachers 'perspectives and practices on gender equality through the use of in-depth interview, observation and document study. My philosophical stance along with the procedure of my research is briefed further below.

Guba and Lincoln (2000) talk about the need of researchers to make explicit both their ontological and epistemological assumptions before embarking on any research project. In my research, ontology is multiple realities. And my stand is that social reality is locally and specifically constructed (Guba & Lincoln) "by humans through their action and interaction" (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991, p. 14, as cited in Andrade, 2009). Thus, I worked with the premise that gendered being people having different experiences and understandings of gender and gender equality based on their

construct through formal, informal and non-formal education from family, society and schools. Since, ontology is concerned with the form and nature of reality or society and is concerned with what is there that can be known, how they are and how they work, I probed the realities that constituted perspectives and practice on gender equality.

Epistemology is intimately related to ontology. As ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses how we come to know that reality (Trochim, 2000, as cited in Krauss, 2005). The interpretive researcher recognises that “understanding social reality requires understanding how practices and meanings are formed and informed by the language and tacit norms shared by humans working towards some shared goal” (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991, as cited in Andrade, 2009). Thus, through interactive in-depth interviews, I probed into the subjectivist perspectives to explore how teachers’ perceptions of gender equality were formed and practiced.

Constructivism views that human beings are born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture, which is constructed by human beings in and out of interaction with human community (Crotty, 1998, as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 9). According to constructivism, an individual’s construction, in my case teachers’ perspectives and practices around gender and gender equality, can be elicited, refined, and can regenerate the meaning through interactions with research participants. In doing so, I applied qualitative research approach for my inquiry.

Research Approach

Since the central theme of my inquiry on ‘gender equality’ is socially constructed, I followed qualitative approach. Moreover, like feminism, qualitative research is concerned with issues of social justice, equality, non-violence, peace, and

universal human rights (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005 p. 13) which are very much linked to my topic of inquiry on 'gender equality. It embraces post-structuralism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), which has served as a lens for my inquiry. It attempts to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5), which is one of the tools used in my inquiry.

Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. That is to say, it aims to help us to understand the world in which we live and why things are the way they are. It helped me to understand teachers' current gender equality perspectives and practices, and why teachers are having such perceptions toward the concept of gender equality and why they are practicing in such a way. Qualitative research offers opportunities for conducting exploratory and descriptive research that uses the context and setting to search for a deeper understanding of the person(s) being studied (Best & Khan, 2006). I needed such an opportunity to explore the perceptions of the teachers from different places, backgrounds, in public and private schools, and at different levels, on gender equality. Besides, it allowed me to apply feminist perspectives to excavate causes of inequalities (Andersan, *et al.*, 2001). Thus, for me, qualitative research is a vision in the sense that it contains interpretations that revealed the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It alludes to practices that contribute to changing the world into a better world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) as by feminism, and it depicts people's (in my case teachers') perspectives.

The Method of Inquiry

As I mentioned above, I carried out this study using in-depth interview, and observation tools in a natural setting by visiting schools, observing teachers' interaction and activities keenly all day from the morning assembly to the end of

school hours repeatedly, attending teachers' meetings, discussions, observing classes as they were run. All these actions made it possible for me to reach the depth of reality to glean real, rich, thick and deep data. The collected data were analyzed from a cultural lens, i.e. belief and practice (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, pp. 99-21, and interpreted results from participants' perspectives by using the inductive content analysis method supported by relevant theories and research literatures.

To glean real, rich, thick and deep data from a post-structural feminist perspective, I used in-depth interviews and observation. I held in-depth interviews with all participants to gather the information required for my study. Different people have different views about in-depth interview technique.

According to Mack *et al.* (2005), the in-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic (p. 29). To LeCompte and Schensul (1999), an in-depth interview means exploring a topic in detail to deepen the interviewer's knowledge of the topic. For Patton, the purpose of interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind but to access the perspective of the person being interviewed (Best & Kahn, 2006, p. 255). As stated by Patton, with the use of in-depth open interviews, I was able to bring forth the teachers' perspectives on gender equality. I was also able to bring forth teachers' pasts, which have constructed and shaped their concept and practices of gender equality, and their views on education and pedagogy for gender equality.

Conducting in-depth interviews is technically challenging. Thus, I developed some guiding questions focusing on the subject of inquiry, which helped me to remain focused on the subject of inquiry and to staying on the topic during interview. I conducted a pilot interview with two teachers of Srihandapur Primary Schools before finalizing the interview guidelines (Mack, *et al.*, 2005).

I conducted interviews in a natural setting in teachers' room, in the school ground, and in the library during teachers' free periods. I engaged fully in listening attentively to participants' responses, and asking probing follow-up questions based on responses. I used a mobile phone to record the interviews with some teachers who consented. This helped me in capturing every detail including laughter and nods. The interviews which were not tape-recorded were noted contemporaneously and expanded as necessary on the same day after the interview while the information, images, context were still fresh in my mind. In addition to documenting what research participants said, moods or attitudes; the general environment; and other information that was relevant was also noted. During some of the interview sessions, though not video recorded, some snaps were taken using a digital camera.

Observation is basically gaining firsthand experience, which permits to move beyond the selective perceptions of others (UNESCO, 2005, p. 40) and this is another tool that I used for learning the perspectives and practices of teachers. Observations allow us to recognize "hidden" problems or a discrepancy between what people say and what they say they do and what they actually do. Observations not only give us important information, they also help our informants (such as teachers) to see how their actual behaviors are different from their perceived behaviors. This realization is an important step towards changing their behaviors (UNESCO, 2005, p. 36).

Two common types of observations used in research are participant and non-participant. In the non-participant observation, researcher observes and records behaviours but does not interact or participate in the setting, while in participant observation the researcher is involved in the situation while collecting data. For the purpose of exploring practice, I did non-participatory observation, while for knowing the perspectives I did participatory observation by attending staff meetings, having

khaja together, participating in the morning assembly, interacting with teachers in teachers' room etc. One of the objectives of doing observation was to triangulate teachers' response in relation to their perceptions and practices on gender equality.

What people say they believe and say that they do are often contradicted by their behavior. A large body of scientific literature documents that this disparity exists, and we can all likely summon examples from our own lives. Given the frequency of this very human inconsistency, observation can be a powerful check against what people report about themselves during interviews (2005, p. 13).

In addition, I observed keenly by using gender –responsive classroom checklist developed by GENIA (UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, (2004) as reference. As a gender-sensitive experienced teacher, I was very alert in observing non-occurrences- things that should have happened but did not (Best & Kahn, 2006, p. 255). So far as the process of conducting observation is concerned, Angrosino and De Perez (2000, p. 677) have described three types of processes: descriptive observation (researcher observes anything and everything assuming he/she knows nothing); focused observation (observation is supported by interviews, in which the participant's insight guides the researchers' decision about what to observe); systematic/selective observation guide (researcher focuses on different types of activities in order to delineate differences between those activities) (Acosta,& Tuna, n. d., p. 5).

I followed all the three processes during my inquiry period. At the outset, I did descriptive observation of the ancient town of Srihandapur, and then schools within it. Then I did focused observation, in which period I studied school routines, teachers' profile and their availability, classes' conditions, and teaching subjects. Finally, I observed classroom teaching and school activities.

Document study was also a tool of my study. I reviewed literatures. The literatures consists of review on gender, theories of gender inequality, approaches to equality, gender equality in education and its approaches, education for all, policies and practices for gender equality in education in Nepal. I reviewed journal articles, books, electronic materials, research study reports and various publications by various organizations.

Study Site and Participants of the Study

I selected research site and participants by applying a purposive sampling method to investigate fully on the subject of inquiry and to get information-rich cases that are required for in –depth study (Patton, 1999). According to Crookes and Davis, purposive sampling is defined as “Judgemental sampling that involves the conscious selection by the researcher of certain subjects or elements to include in the study (1998)”. The goal is to add rigour to possible empirical generalisations that are derived from data arising from the fullest range of participants and settings by achievement of heterogeneity, which is also termed maximum variation sampling (Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 1990) and phenomenal variation (Sandelowski, 1995).

The site I selected purposively was Srikhandpur, an ancient town, as it has the required characteristics outlined by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) such as the fullest range of participants from primary level to secondary level teachers, from public and private schools, and heterogeneity in terms of age, caste/ethnicity, gender, and urban/rural. It looks rural though it is surrounded by municipalities- Dhulikhel, Banepa and Panuti in the lap of the Kathmandu University (see Appendix A: Field Milieu).

As mentioned earlier, participants for my study were selected purposively from all the three schools. I identified research participants by studying their profiles, which I collected from schools. “In qualitative research, sample size is not necessarily static or shaped by the original conceptualisations in the research design, but is recurrent and emergent in nature” (Murphy *et al.*, 1998). My approach confirms what Murphy says. I approached both male and female teachers belonging to different age groups and of different ethnic composition, that I believed as more articulating in responding to my queries and to be good sources of information. I followed the recommendation of Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 202, as cited in Patton, 1990, p. 185) and I interviewed until I reached theoretical saturation.

As getting teachers’ free time for in-depth interview without hampering classes during school hours was not possible in all the teachers, I strategically interviewed teachers in their free period and observed their classes with their consent. Of course, I approached the head teacher, ‘gate keeper’ of the school. In total, I interviewed ten male and ten female teachers from three schools of Srihandapur in a natural setting.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures included setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through observation, interview, documents and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information (Creswel, 2003, p. 185).

I collected data from different sources. The primary data from my research participants were collected through in-depth interviews and observation. The secondary data were collected through the study of documents from different sources such as websites, books, journals, and reports. The primary data were collected in

schools of Srikhandapur town by conducting in-depth interviews and observations in a natural setting by visiting schools repeatedly, building rapport with teachers and head teacher/principal, participating in the school activities such as the morning assembly, teachers' meeting, having khaja (snacks) together, having informal conversations and travelling to and fro schools together with teachers. To get a sense of schools' atmospheres, I observed the school setting, customs and procedures repeatedly during school hours by mingling with teachers and students, which helped me to minimize some of the initial change of behaviour that people exhibit when an unfamiliar face enters their environment.

I collected information about the site first from two resource people of Srikhandapur before I started collecting the primary data. The first was Mr. Purna Bahadur Karmacharya, ex –chairman, ward nine, Dhulikhel municipality. Another informant was Mr. Hirakaji Shrestha, social worker and native businessman. He was an inhabitant of ward eight, Dhulikhel municipality.

After I gathered information from these two people about the town and its schools (mentioned above), I paid visit to Srikandapur Primary School with Mr. Hirakaji Shrestha, and met Head Teacher. I introduced myself and shared the purpose of my visit and requested his consent and support for collecting data for my study through interviews and class observations. The head teacher consented right away. I requested him for teachers' information for which I gave the teacher's profile form, which was developed for getting background information about teachers.

On the following day, I got a briefing from the head teacher about the school and had a tour to familiarize myself with the school, students and teachers. This opened the door for rapport building with teachers and students. I thanked him and

confirmed my visit from Sunday, 5th February, 2012 onward for in-depth interviews and some class observations.

I requested to have a quick morning meeting with all to introduce myself and my study purpose and to get informed consent for interviews and class observations. Out of the eight profiles filled out, I selected five as my research participants based on gender, year of service/experience, qualification and caste (a brief profile is annexed). After I collected the data, on my request, the head teacher called a meeting of teachers, where I shared the major findings and asked them to check accuracy of my data and give comments.

I paid a visit to the Srihandapur Higher Secondary School with Mr. Purna Bahadur Karmacharya and met acting head teacher. I introduced myself as a student of KU and shared my subject of study and requested his support and consent for collecting the data. As in Srihandapur Primary School, I requested information about teachers and schools and the consent for interviews and class observations. Once the header teacher introduced me with all the other teachers, I started building rapport with them by eating together in 'khaja guar', teachers' room, and commuting together to school.

Based on the completed teachers' information forms, along with Ms. Jyoti Acharya, KU student, studying Master in Education in Environment Education and Sustainable Development (EESD), I visited the school for an in-depth-interview and class observation from February 1, to 26, 2012 (A brief profile is annexed).

After I completed the data collection in Srihandapur Higher Secondary School, I visited Golden Sidhartha Academy School, met a shareholder cum teacher. After getting brief account of the school, I requested for the permission to have in-depth interviews with teachers from the Director and Principal. From the completed

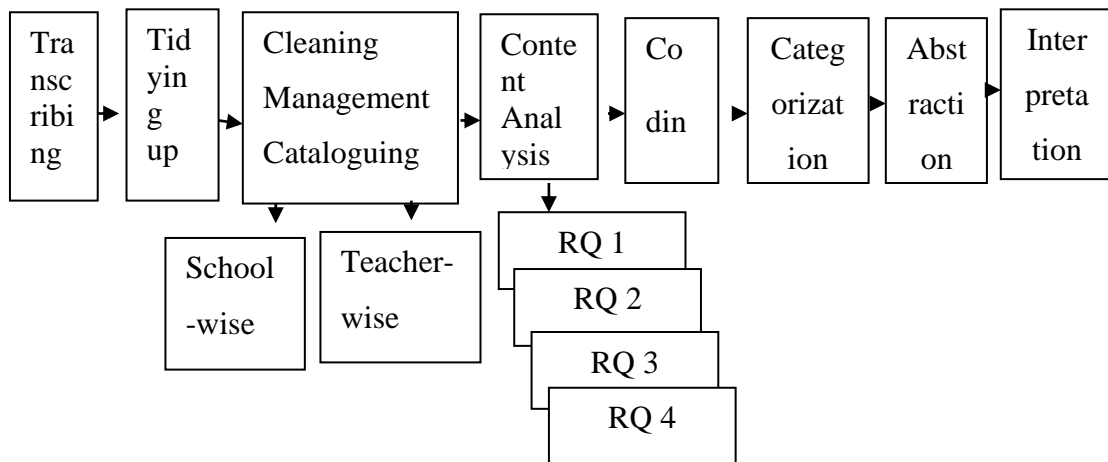
teachers profiles (brief profile is annexed), I had in-depth interview with three teachers. Altogether, I interviewed twenty teaching staff (10 male and 10 female) from these three schools, of them, five taught only at the secondary level.

As I mentioned earlier, I collected secondary data through document study and review of related literatures. The process of review began from the selection of my research topic 'gender equality in education' and continued until the end of thesis writing. The literature also presented in the study at the end to compare and contrast with the results that emerged from the study (Creswell, 2003, pp. 29-32). Cooper (1984) suggests integrative review of literature (as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 32). Thus, I followed Creswell and Cooper and present the review of literature as a separate chapter and also integrated wherever I felt the need. I used the conceptual framework of my research as the guiding map for this study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

As qualitative research by nature follows rigorous process-conceptualization, collection of data, analysis of data and interpretation of findings for knowing the subjective world of the people, qualitative data analysis is crucial in qualitative research. Quality of qualitative research depends on the quality of qualitative data analysis. The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of data (Creswell, 2003, p.190).

Figure 3

Data analysis and interpretation process

“The goal of analysis is to create less data, not more” says Harry Wolcott (1988, as cited in LeCompete & Schensul, 1999). According to LeCompete and Schensul, analysis is a process of turning raw data into “cooked data” or results.” In my case, the data I collected were transformed into transcriptions – any kind of elicitation from an informant: writing down the verbatim responses of informants to interviews, keeping a running record of everything an individual says during a specific period of observation, recording stories, legends, chants, songs etc. and all responses including photographs and non-verbal behaviours and researcher’s own reflection. Transcription involves writing down verbatim, photographing, copying. It is a detailed record of what respondents were observed to say and do in a given situation (Clifford, 1990, as cited in LeCompete & Schensul, 1999). After the transcription of all data, I followed the second stage of analysis which is tidying up. The tidying up process involves ‘data cleaning’, ‘data management’ and ‘cataloguing’. I catalogued the data school-wise and teacher-wise and then I did the data analysis by using an inductive content analysis method.

For analysis, I chose content–texts based on the research questions and the purpose of the study. For doing so, I immersed myself in the data by reading thoroughly transcribed texts several times (Burnard, 1991, Polit & Beck, 2004). I followed the inductive content analysis process: open coding, creating categories and abstraction. While analyzing the data, I analyzed manifested content and the latent content - noticed silence, sighs, laughter, posture, etc. (Catanzaro, 1988; Robson, 1993; Morse 1994; Burns & Grove, 2005, as cited in LeCompete & Schensul, 1999). I added missing points in order to make sense of the collected data. As qualitative data analysis is a process of making sense of what is in the data, I proceeded step-by-step-coding, categorization, abstraction and then interpretation.

Coding is a crucial stage in the process of doing content analysis. In this process, I went through text and wrote headings and notes in the margins to describe all aspects of the content (Burnard, 1991; 1996; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, as cited in Elo & Kynga, 2008). Then I collected headings from the margins on to coding sheets (Cole, 1988, Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, Dey, 1993) and generated categories (Burnard, 1991) according to research questions.

After coding, the lists of categories were grouped under higher order headings (McCain 1988; Burnard, 1991) to reduce the number of categories by collapsing those that are similar. This has helped in reducing the data by avoiding the unnecessary data and to be more precise to the research questions of the study. I used abstraction which means formulating a general description of the research topic through generating categories (Robson, 1993; Burnard, 1996; Polit & Beck, 2004) and thereby name them using content-characteristic words. Sub-categories with similar responses were grouped together as categories and categories were grouped as main categories. It is from these set categories / patterns such as role of family, society and schools,

teachers' understanding on gender and gender equality, teachers' gender equality practices, and in school management, teachers' challenges in practicing gender equality, and teachers/ schools' positive practices, and strategy for reinforcing positive practices and addressing the teachers' challenges were derived and narrations were made in response to research questions based on the results of the data analysis. Results are descriptions of what happened in a study and are critical steps leading to the end product-interpretations and implications for more research, intervention or action.

A final step in data analysis is making an interpretation or meaning of the data, or going beyond results. Interpreting, or giving meaning to, data involves figuring out what the resulted data mean (Creswell, 2003, p.194). In my case, I discovered teachers' understanding of the concept 'gender' and their perceptions and practices on gender equality as expressed and exhibited by teachers themselves through the interpretation of results. I weighted this against UNESCO's definition of gender and gender equality in education and post-structural feminist view. I argued why teachers are having such perceptions toward the concept of gender equality and why are they practicing in such a way. I explained their implications in achieving gender equality in education. By doing so, I confirmed the need for more conceptual clarity amongst the teachers on gender equality so as to achieve gender equality in education. As said by Wolcott (1994, as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 195) as an ethnographic enquirer, I ended asking further questions on how teachers will promote this concept if teachers themselves have no clarity? I drew the conclusion that without GEE and GRP to teachers, teachers will not perceive the contemporary concept of gender equality in its truest sense. Thus, I urged to explore further the contents for GEE and GRP.

Quality Standards

'Trustworthiness' is central to any conception of quality in qualitative research (Ceale, 2002). For the purpose of ensuring trustworthiness, I used Guba's criteria: a) Credibility; b) Transferability; c) Dependability; and d) Confirmability (Shenton, 2004, p. 64).

Credibility refers to establishing that the findings of qualitative research are credible or believable. To address credibility, I followed the prolonged engagement, triangulation, and peer examination.

Prolonged engagement is the investment of sufficient time in the field with research participants to understand the culture and to build trustful relationship with research participants and organizations, which allows the researcher to check perspectives and allows the informants to become accustomed to the researcher (Krefting, 1991). To gain an adequate understanding about the schools and to establish a relationship of trust with head teachers/ principal and research participants I visited schools many times prior to commencement of primary data collection. I met each of my research participants in person and briefed about the purpose of study and requested time for interview and class observation. I spent ample time in each school and collected data until I reached a point of data saturation. I participated in all the activities that ran during school hours.

Triangulation is another strategy that I used in ensuring credibility. A number of types of triangulation exist. The most common is triangulation of data methods, in which data collected by various means are compared. A second type, triangulation of data sources, maximizes the range of data that might contribute to complete understanding of the concept (Krefting, 1991). In this study I used both. I did the triangulation of data collected from in-depth interviews and observations. Similarly, I

triangulated the responses received from both male and female teachers of private and public schools and of teachers from primary to secondary level.

Peer examination is a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer for the purpose of exploring fresh perspective (Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that this is one way of keeping the researcher honest, and the searching questions may contribute to deeper reflexive analysis by the researcher. Peer examination also presents an opportunity for the researcher to present working hypotheses for reaction and to discuss the evolving design of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Krefting, 1991). For this study, I enlisted the help of competent peer examiners Dr. Meena Poudel and Dr. Ram Bahadur Rana. Their help was sought throughout the process to get fresh perspectives.

Transferability answers the question how findings can be applied to other contexts or other respondents. Since the findings of a qualitative research are specific to a small number of particular environments and individuals, it is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations and populations. However, Lincoln and Guba (2002, as cited in Shenton, 2004) suggest that transferability can be achieved by providing 'thick description', by collecting sufficiently detailed descriptions of data in context, and by reporting the data with sufficient detailed precision. Thus, to address transferability, I collected sufficient data from in-depth interviews and observations until the data reached to the level of saturation. The recordings were transcribed and analysed to give thick descriptions of the participants' profile. Findings were drawn with precision. Besides, sufficient contextual information about the study sites, field milieu was provided to enable readers to make such a transfer.

Dependability criterion relates to the consistency of findings (Guba, 1981, as cited in Krefting, 1991). The exact methods of data gathering, analysis, and interpretation in qualitative research must be described. Such dense description of methods provides information as to how repeatable the study might be or how unique the situation (Kielhofner, 1982, as cited in Krefting, 1991) might be. To address dependability, I used three strategies: dense description of research, triangulation, and peer examination. I described the research method in detail, which may enable a future researcher to repeat the work, triangulation and peer examination used for credibility serve the purpose of this criterion too.

‘Confirmability’ is a strategy of neutrality; it means that findings are free from biases. Guba (1981, as cited in Krefting, 1991) viewed neutrality not as researcher objectivity but as data and interpretational confirmability and described the audit trail as the major technique for establishing confirmability. An audit trail describes in detail how data was collected, how categories were derived and how decisions were made throughout the study. To ensure confirmability, I maintained an audit trail by developing and maintaining an efficient filing system of all raw data, analysis printouts and any other materials used for this study so that should the need arise, these could be available for peer examination and for verification.

Apart from the above four criteria for quality research, Guba and Lincoln, (1989) developed an authenticity criteria that stem directly from naturalistic/constructivist assumptions. Guba and Lincoln conceptualized the following five authenticity criteria: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2008). I attempted deliberately to maintain fairness to prevent marginalization, to act affirmatively with respect to inclusion. I interviewed male and female teachers from

all three schools. Similarly for ontological authenticity- criteria for assessing a raised level of awareness among the research participants, debriefing meeting was organized where I shared observations and requested their comments. In the meeting, I shared some books related to gender for their information.

Ethical Principles

Sound research is a moral and ethical endeavour (Halai, 2006, p. 5).

Therefore, first and foremost, the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desire of the informants, though ethnographic research is obtrusive. Its tool 'observation' invades the life of the informants (Spradley, 1980, as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 202). In-depth interviews may reveal sensitive personal information, thus, the ethics of the researcher is to protect the rights of participants by observing the ethical principles. Halai (2005) recommended five key ethical principles: 1) Informed and voluntary consent; 2) Confidentiality of information shared; 3) Anonymity of research participants; 4) Beneficence or no harm to participants; and 5) Reciprocity (p. 5).

I followed all five principles. I explained my research aims and processes and the expected roles of the participants in advance, and then only interviewed the teachers. Interviews were conducted when the teachers were free and while they were ready, as one of the main ethics of my study was not to have an effect on schools' regular schedule of teaching and learning so as to protect the children's rights to learn and teachers' responsibility to teach. I observed their classes only when they consented. I analyzed, interpreted and drew findings from the data derived from in-depth interviews and observations by not revealing identity of the research participants' and institutions. I have maintained anonymity of research participants who participated in in-depth interview so that participants will not be identified in the

data. Except in special cases, names of research participants and schools have been replaced with pseudonyms and transcribed number from 1 to 20. With the approval of the head teachers, I organized teachers' meeting to share the summary of the findings to check accuracy of the data and to get their suggestions. I expressed my deep appreciation for their contribution by organizing teachers' meeting which I hosted to acknowledge their valuable responses for my study.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I began by introducing my research design, in which I presented the philosophical stance such as ontology (multiple realities), epistemology (constructivism), research strategy/ method (qualitative approach), research techniques (in-depth interview, observation and document study), and procedural stance including sampling sites and participants (purposive sampling), data collection procedure, data analysis, interpretation and meaning generation (content analysis), quality standard and how I followed ethical principles to maintain the rigor of my study.

I proceed to the next chapter where I will present teachers' perceptions on gender equality in education which was the product of the methodology described in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

Chapter Overview

This chapter gives an account of teachers' perceptions in response to my research question "how do teachers perceive the concept of gender equality?" by revealing their understanding of key concepts: 'gender', 'equality', and 'gender equality' that are associated with 'gender equality in education' situating the teachers' own perspectives and their sources- family, society and school- contributing to formation of their concepts they shared with me during interviews.

Teachers, both men and women, are a product of the gender construct of any society. In Nepalese societies, teachers, like other people, are socialized in the family and in the society according to a patriarchal system resulting gender inequality perceptions. Most teachers, being product of this society may carry these perceptions if not awakened in this issue. Thus, their perceptions of gender equality were explored through in-depth interview. In the interview process I started by asking "what does the term 'sex' mean to you?" (Tapaiko bujhaima Linga bhaneko ke ho?), then slowly moved to other questions related with gender, gender equality and gender equality in education.

Teachers' Understanding: Concept of 'Sex' (Linga) and 'Gender' (Langic)

When I asked about the term 'Linga' (sex) in their own words, I observed their hesitations to speak about it in all teachers regardless of gender except in one health subject teacher. One of the teachers expressed (in discomfort) "how to say it (kasari Bhane khoi)?" Only after I continuously persisted did he share his understanding

about the term 'linga'. He said, "It is an obvious sign of being a boy or a girl. It is the physical feature of human reproduction which denotes whether a newborn is a son or a daughter. This is the basis of human species. He added further that society prescribes dress, duties and different attributes based on this feature. When I asked about the term 'Laingic' (gender), he simply answered, "The word is different but to me meaning is almost the same".

When asked to describe their understanding about the term sex, all the teachers I interviewed gave similar responses but worded differently. The most repeated expressions noted during interviews in relation to their understanding about the concept of 'sex' are listed below:

1. The term tells about the physical features of women and men (4 teachers).
2. The term indicates bodily features of boys and girls (4 teachers).
3. The term is used to tell the function of reproductive organs (3 teachers).
4. The term symbolizes whether a new born is a baby boy or a baby girl (3 teachers).
5. The term indicates whether a baby is a son or a daughter (6 teachers).

In the course of interview, I sensed their remorse as they started acknowledging the fact that how children are treated in the family, society and in the school is based on 'Linga'. When an infant is born, one of the first things we do is look to see its sex. Then we hear "it's a boy!" or "it's a girl!" This is the most influential statement about one's development as a human being that is announced at birth. Whether male or female, one's gender marks one's entire life from within and without (Weiss, 2001, as cited in Kosmerl, 2003). I found unanimous understanding that women and men are different naturally and they deserve different treatment,

though they all said that students should not be treated differently on account of gender. They said that they treat all equally (barabar).

Once understood the concept of 'sex', I asked them their understanding of the concept 'Laingic'. Of the twenty teachers I interviewed, seventeen responded that the term 'Laingic' denotes the same meaning as sex. They said that though these are two words, they have the same meaning. Both terms denote men and women, boys and girls having differences in physical features. When I asked to elaborate on the differences they said that men were, strong, tall, big, and rough, while women were soft, small, short and smooth. A slightly different understanding was shared by Pitam (7), and Siju (5). To Pritam, "Boys and girls are different physically (Sharirik), that denotes 'sex' (Linga), while boys and girls are made different by a system of work (karya pranali) that is gender." For Siju these two terms are different. She said, "All the differences in boys and girls, and men and women created by society and culture are parts of gender as for example dress-up, make-up and language—different words for men and women—which make one feel great and other just reverse. Sex is created by god for creation'.

Buddha (3) a Nepali subject teacher referred to grammar. He said that there are three types of genders. They are masculine, feminine and neutral (Stri-linga, purlinga and napuansak linga). All these three types include physical features as well as other features. So he thinks both terms denote men and women or boys and girls, old men and old women. In the development field, these terms' meaning may be different, but in grammar their meaning is almost the same. This shows that teachers of this school have yet to be aware that the term 'gender' has now transcended its earlier grammar-based usage of classifying nouns as male, female and neuter. Most people started realizing that the problem of increasing inequality has nothing to do

with the biological state of men and women (sex) but the society-prescribed relationship between and among them. For Dibya (19), words do not matter much (sabdako ke matlab). For her, what matters most is the equal treatment and non-discrimination of men and women. She said, “These words, Linga and Laingic, are not commonly used words. Commonly used words are ‘mahila’ and ‘purush’. They are distinctly different physically in dress-up and behaviour but not different in terms of mental capacity”.

These responses indicate that the majority of teachers perceived the terms ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ (Linga and Laingic) in the same way. They did not make distinctions between these two terms. Teachers like Dibya even did not feel the need to make a distinction between these two terms. I too observed their difficulties in explaining these terms. The reason for this could be their learning and lack of opportunity to re-learn the new meaning of ‘gender’ meant to end inequalities legitimized on the ground of biology. As an equalist, I like to add ‘sex’ onto the quote of our seminal poet, Laxmi Prasad Dekota: “People become superb by their hearts, mind and deeds not by sex and caste” (Manisa Thulo Dil, Dimagle ra karmale hunchha jat ra Lingale hudaina).

Feminists make distinctions between sex and gender to get away from the biological inferences of the word sex and to address the issue of gender equality. The belief that gender divisions are normal and natural is still prevalent, though feminists have claimed that the content and meaning of the divisions and the social structure built on them were not natural but man-made, therefore can be changed. Feminists are not claiming that women and men are same or identical. They do agree that women and men are different but not unequal. They want to abolish hierarchy but not

differences. The starting point for doing so is to make it clear that sex and gender are not synonymous.

Understanding the concept of gender is vital because it facilitates gender analysis, revealing how women's subordination is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed forever (UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, 2003). To understand and challenge the cultural value placed on someone's biological sex and unequal power hierarchies, one needs to understand the new concept of gender.

Translating the concept of gender equality in reality necessitates conceptually sound understanding of equality and its approaches to achieve it. Therefore, I have explored the meaning of gender equality and gender equality in education from the teachers' perspectives.

Teachers' Understanding: Gender Equality (Laingik Samanata)

The term 'Gender Equality' has been defined in a variety of ways by different organizations. But, my quest is to investigate how the concept has been understood and perceived by teachers as it is important to know their understanding for achieving gender equality in education. Thus, after I got the research participants' understanding of the terms sex and gender, I have asked whether they have heard the term 'Laingik Samanata'. Gender Equality being such a universal concept, I had expected that almost all the respondents would answer in the positive line. It turned out true. All said that they have heard the term. Then, teachers were asked to share their understanding about the term gender equality in the context of education in school. Different participants have responded differently, but I found commonality in their understanding. The majority of them said that gender equality means 'treating boys and girls equally' (saman bebahar garnu). When I requested that they elaborate on

‘saman bebahar’, they said that this means not to discriminate (bhedbhav nagarnu).

When I asked for further elaboration about ‘bhedbhav nagarnu’ the examples they gave were:

1. Asking question to boys and girls equally.
2. Giving attention to boys and girls equally.
3. Giving opportunity to question to both boys and girls.
4. Calling both genders to the front of the class and the assembly turn by turn.
5. Giving the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities.
6. Favor both equally (kakha, pakha nagarne).
7. Seeking equal participation in activities.
8. Letting boys and girls stand on equal footing.
9. Having equal number of boys and girls in all activities.
10. Providing education to boys and girls without any discrimination.

A common response I received from teachers when asked about how they practiced gender equality in classrooms was that they treated all their students equally (barabar). An account of teachers’ practice, how equally or differently the teachers treat students in the class-room and outside classroom will be given in next chapter.

In response to my query about their understanding on the concept of gender equality, Bidya (5) says, “men and women are treated differently in the family, society and in the school though they do the same job”. Citing her own example, she shared:

My husband is a primary teacher and I’m also a teacher. However, perception towards me is not the same as to my husband. Society regards and respects him more. This is not fair. Though I do not know much about the term

‘Laingik Samanata,’ to me, it is to respect and treat men and women both equally (barabar), not more not less.

She stated further, “To me, boys and girls who come to school are my students and I treat them as students”. The feeling expressed by Raja was similar. He said, Laingik Samanata’ means giving equal opportunities to boys and girls. In other words, it means treating women (Mahila) and men (Purush) equally (barabar). Not to differentiate anyone whether a person is a boy or a girl and not to belittle either of them (Pharak napanne, Nahepne).

Adding onto what Raja said, Sudhir explained; ‘Laingik Samanata’ is a modern concept demanded by time and brought by time. It is still not understood properly and has not reached the family level, which is the base for developing feelings of equality and getting equal treatment. He further says that

It is taken in words but not in deeds. That is why; we see more girls are sent in community schools. More girls are drop-outs and irregular. For bringing gender equality in practice, there should be law to punish if not treated equally. The law should be enforced at all levels, particularly at the top so that equality in practice trickles down to the family. If we ask people to treat everyone equally without practicing ourselves, people will not follow. It doesn’t matter whether they send their children to community or institutional schools, what matters is that they should send both to the same type of school, be it institutional or community. So, to me gender equality means giving equal opportunity and treating people equally.

My female participant, Bima (6), told me what she thinks about gender equality. She shared her understanding as follows:

I have two daughters. They are grown-ups now and are studying well. Me and my husband both feel it is not necessary to have another child or son. I do feel they are like my sons. In the beginning, my husband's family was not happy with our decision not to try for another child; they insisted that we try for another child to give birth to a son. We resisted. Looking at my children, the way they progress and the things they do to my mother-in-law, now they realize that there is no difference between having a son or a daughter. So, to me gender equality means not only giving opportunity but to give equal rights as well. I do give my students equal rights to come to class in front to lead the class, to question to me, and do activities. I do value both.

During the in-depth interview, Hakim (1) of Golden Siddhartha Academy admitted that he has not given any thought in relation to gender equality. He said, "We have not analyzed (kelayara hereko chhaina) school from the gender perspective. We are concentrated on students' education. Now I realize that even for students' education, we need to think about gender equality".

Sulekha (18) of the same school thinks that gender equality is a new principle and new value (manayta), which means students, boys and girls; need to be treated fairly, not differently, even if they are not good in study. She adds that the teachers need to treat all students so that all students –weak as well as strong—do well in their studies.

Bista (2006), in his study on the 'status of female teachers' found most teachers were familiar with the concepts of 'gender equality.' Some, however, expressed their lack of understanding and some teachers were reluctant to admit that gender discrimination existed in their schools. Others, however, did not share this

view. For the most part, gender inequalities and discrimination were accepted as 'natural' or 'normal' (UNESCO).

These opinions of the participants indicate that most teachers are familiar with the term 'gender equality' (Laingik Samanata). However, they perceived this to mean more the treatment of boys and girls in the same way, without differentiation and discrimination, and providing equal opportunities in class (to interact with teachers and students) and in school (different extra-curricular activities). It also reveals that participants are aware of the patriarchal socio-cultural norms and values that contribute to the perpetuation of unequal social status between boys and girls, women and men. However, they are not aware enough to see the removal of those things as requirements for achieving gender equality.

Like gender, 'gender equality in education' is also a new concept in educational development. In the course of interviews, I asked my research participants to share their understanding and views about 'gender equality in education'.

All the participants, regardless of gender and levels of teachers, said that gender equality in education means giving equal opportunity to daughters and sons to study in schools. All children should be given this opportunity. Sudhir even emphasized that equal education should be given by parents. If a son is sent to an institutional school, a daughter should also be sent to the same school. They should not send daughters to community schools and sons to institutional schools or vice-versa. Parents, who do such discriminations, should be punished by law. For doing so, a non-discriminatory policy must be enforced by the government from top to bottom, because discrimination in education is a worst form of gender discrimination which affects the whole life of men and women. Participants also suggested making education compulsory up to twelfth grade (higher secondary level) for all, regardless

of genders. The reasoning for this was that without having this qualification, these days a door for formal employment in any sector is not open for boys and girls, as even for village level jobs such as social mobilizer, saving and credit promoter, teachers, etc. demand more qualification than just a School Leaving Certificate. Research participants also stressed that education should be given according to boys' and girls' capacity and interest. They urged parents and teachers both not to restrict girls and boys in choosing subjects. They should be given opportunity to choose of their own interest.

When I asked about the contribution of current education in nurturing the concept of equality of human kind in general and gender equality in particular, different teachers shared their views differently. Education could and should play an important role in developing new concepts; however the current system of education has not focused much in this area was one of the views expressed strongly. Along this line, Dibya says,

Currently, education is not playing the role in minimizing inequality; otherwise equality in education would have been achieved already at all levels. There are changes not by school education but by experience (anubhav le paribartan layako), by seeing the example of others (aruko dekhera). It is because 'gender equality education' has not been a subject of study in school.

Another female teacher of the same school who has been a teacher for three years in a different private school also agrees to what Dibya has said about the limited contribution of the current education system in minimizing inequality. But she feels that her education has contributed to become economically self-reliant. She opined,

I learned many things from school and my college education and that's why I am able to become a teacher of this school, for living and for my further

education. But, I did not learn about Laingik Samanata. I know, I feel and I face discrimination but I still take it for granted because there is no equality in society and in the family as I'm a woman. This samanata education is essential not only in school but in society and the family.

She urged for 'Samanata Siksha' to all at a time, massively and intensively.

For school, she recommended starting it from grade five, as she felt that the feeling of gender discrimination begins mostly from that age.

Suku's (7) opinion was that education has helped in being self-reliant economically, though it has not provided 'Laingik Samanata' education. She says:

A sense of discrimination is developed in almost all women whether educated or uneducated. My mother is not educated formally. She never had the opportunity to be educated or even literate, but she shared her sorrow to us (children). Maybe because of that the 'I must study' kind of feeling developed within me and I gave priority for my education rather than for marriage, despite my family's attempt to get me married off as to my sisters. Though, I did not get education directly about 'Laingik Samanata' in school and college, whatever I have learned from different sources has helped me to stick on my stand to be self-reliant economically by seeking employment out of the house.

She suggests that education needs to address discrimination at the house-hold level by integrating 'Laingik Samanata' at all levels of education so that its messages will reach every family member through students of different ages. Since discrimination 'Asamanata' is our tradition, the cycle of gender inequality will not break without deliberate and constant effort.

The need for practical training on teaching gender equality in school was emphasized by Maiju (4) citing an example of a topic 'balbaliko adhikar,' (Children

rights) in Nepali subject of grade four. The story of girl child and boy child related with their rights should have been included in the text book. Duties of the girl and the boy child in and out of the house should have been included in the topic. Bima (8) holds the view that education must bring change in attitude and behaviour towards women and men, “Laingik Samanata ko bhabana and dharana” for bringing equality in education. Although, the current education has brought great change in other aspects such as employment, standard of living, and services, it has not brought about changes in attitude and behavior towards women and men. She suggests:

Laingik Samanata as a chapter that needs to be included beginning from the primary level to the higher secondary level curricula. If there were specific chapters on this subject, then students can have ideas about ‘Laingik Samanata’, which would trigger wider discussion amongst students. Not only students, teachers also need to know this concept. For this, teachers also need training to deliver the message in a meaningful way.

Goma (2) was of the opinion that education should sufficiently address malpractices (kurities), which is not the case presently. She said, “Education is for life, vocation and for bringing change in male-culture. However, current education has not sufficiently challenged malpractices, ‘kurities,’ which is one of the major problems for ‘Laingik Samanata’. She specifically suggested improving the text books of primary grades. She said that it should be written in a simpler manner, like for a literacy class.

Emphasizing the role of educationists, Dipesh urges, Educationists should be able to differentiate maize and insects (makai ra ghun). There are oppressing forces in religions and cultures, no doubt about it. But there are good things too. Instead of neglecting/throwing away totally, one

should analyze and promote the good aspects for changing malpractices that contribute to Laingik ASamanta. For Laingik Samanta, we need a new structure and system in society because the current one is suitable for men but not for working women (mahila laai nemileko, purush laai mileko), thus it is difficult for them. We need an improved society (sudhariyako samaj) with different services /support systems for women so that they can get equal opportunities. In the present context, where the context is not suitable for women, we can expect only twenty-five percent improvement in the field of girls' education as the present context is not suitable for them even if we have equal opportunity policy.

When I asked about what kind of education is required for Laingik samanta, he said, “samaya anukul, hamro samaj ko jag ma adeko, sanskar vitrako sakaratmak kura nikalera samatamulak manabiyatama adharit naitik sichhya baigyanic tarikale dinu parchha” (equality-oriented, humanity-based moral education gleaned from our culture (positive aspects) be given scientifically as per demand of time, but should be built on our own socio-cultural foundation).

He strongly opined that moral education such as not killing, discriminating, stealing etc. must be provided. Present day education is not based on our own foundation, moral values, religion and culture. He sees the contradiction between the education we provide and the social system.

Like other teachers, Sudhir also has the same opinion that education did not affect the existing mal-cultural practices, though it played an important role in producing different types of human resources for the country. Because of this, sadness has prevailed (Khinata chhayeko chha) in the society. He expressed sadness saying

that even in this 21st century, our women and girls are suffering from Chaupadhi, Gumto Pratha, Daijo and Boksi. When will these end?

I was almost speechless, when he questioned me. It is very true: when and how can education address all these malpractices which demean women, humanity?

According to Rajesh, there is a need for training and education of teachers in not only teaching but managing schools in such a way that develops equality 'samanata bhab' in all ways, including scholarship. Rajesh gave his own account as a head teacher:

I am not that aware of teaching classes for 'Laingik Samanta'. I know I should treat boys and girls equally in the class and out of class and help to solve their problems. Education should and could help in reducing discrimination and developing a feeling of equality (samana bhab); for doing so, all children should get equal treatment. Even the government is not treating all equally. They do not give scholarships to all. Being a head teacher, I need to run the school. What answer should I give when a poor boy asks for scholarship?

Raja argues that one cannot expect quality and equality education if the schools and parents stress that student must score high marks in the examinations. Due to tough competition in running the school, we have to focus on subject knowledge of students to score high in examinations. As long as the quality of education of a school is determined by three-hour-long paper and pencil tests, the samanata feeling, which is part of character building, will not be a priority in institutional schools.

During the interviews, participants were asked to put forth their opinion on how education could nurture the 'Laingik samanata' concept in school children.

Common responses were: 1) include the topic in the curriculum of all levels of school

education and in teachers' training, 2) re-train all teachers on how to teach gender responsively, 3) sensitize school management committees and parents-teachers associations, 4) include questions in examination, 5) use this theme for various in-school activities such as competitions in essays, stories, songs, poems, art, etc., and 6) develop and implement a code-of-conduct for school, teachers and students.

During interviews, participants narrated their own stories and the role their families, society and school have played in having their present day perception on 'gender equality'. A brief account of each follows below:

Families' Role in Engendering People

As explained above, I interviewed ten male teachers from three different schools of Srikhandapur. When I asked about their 'self' and how they learned about gender and gender roles, Raja (1) frankly said that he did not know about gender and he still does not know about gender. However, he had observed his mother working day and night and his father giving orders. He stated, "In my house, my mother works and father gives orders. All household chores are performed by female members. I was never asked to do household work, but asked to buy things from Banepa or from elsewhere if not available in this town. My father does the same things." Another teacher, Dipesh (16) has observed almost the same. Petambar (13) gave the reasons of not sending their sisters to school, while all his brothers had the opportunity to go to schools. He states, "Education was perceived for getting jobs, and women were not considered for taking a job outside the homes as they had to be busy in their household work at home".

When I asked the same questions to female teachers, I received similar responses. One of the longest serving school teachers, Goma, recalled the saying "men should not do (matya: in Newari) household work. If they do, their life will be

shorter (yakna si)". She said, "I think we all had taken for granted that household work is the work of women. Even now that is what most family members feel, though they help once in a while." Similar was the expression of Bima. "My father was active in politics in the Nepali Congress Party. So, you can imagine, he did not have much time for family. He did not discriminate in the education of son and daughter; but about housework, that had been the job of my mother and us (sisters). He did help during festivals, especially in chopping meat for cooking." Maiju, who is also from a politically aware family from Sindhuli Madhi, mentioned that she got the opportunity to study along with her brothers, though in those days only a few girls were sent to schools. However, she was not freed from household chores, unlike her brothers.

The fact that although, women may be active economically, the burden of household chores still lies on them, and this issue was brought up by Sulekha. She said that she had to help her mother in household work as the rest of the family members were males. She had to miss school several times while her mother was busy in business at the spice mill (Masala Udhyog).

All the above responses from female teachers indicate that they also had been socialized traditionally like male teachers. All the above living accounts of my research participants show that boys learned not to do housework and girls learned to do household works by observing the roles their fathers and mothers or male and female members played in the families. By doing so, they sense their gender roles even if they were not taught formally. The family as a gendered institution is transmitting such gender roles continuously, even today. This is what was revealed by Goma.

The girl students, even of grade two at seven or eight years of age, come to school after finishing their household chores at home, while it is not the case

for boys. Girls come to school with clean dresses while boys come in dirty dress if mothers or sisters do not clean for them. They do not feel that cleaning is their job and responsibility. I think such attitudes and norms around the roles and responsibilities of boys and girls are learned by children imitating their family members from the very young age.

An unequal gender role in the family is the cause and consequence of girls' drop-out and under-performance in school was the argument of Bima. Along similar lines, Dipesh argues that there will be no improvement in girls' education unless attitude towards girls changes. Citing his friend as an example, he depicts the reality. His friend, who is a teacher in Bhaleswor School in Kabhre, had a daughter who got a scholarship for further study in Australia. His friend arranged marriage for her when she did not agree at all (mandai manena) and didn't want to give up the opportunity. "This sort of attitude has made even capable women lame (kunthit). What to do (Ke garne)," exclaims Dipesh. He further says,

Parents expect too much from girls and a little from boys especially in household work. They give more freedom and choices to boys, while they restrict girls. Because of security reasons, parents want to keep their daughters in front of their eyes (ankha aghadhi rakhana chhanchan). They do not want to send them abroad, even though they are capable. It is due to their biology, because they get pregnant.

The above accounts show that gendering continues even today. However, teachers' perceptions towards families' roles, particularly in educating their children, is changing. Raja feels that daughters should be given more (good) education than boys, as daughters do not get property from their parents. He insists, "Sons can survive by any means, as they are entitled to parental properties and have the liberty

to do any jobs anywhere. For daughters, this is not the case.” Kama (9), who has a son and a daughter, gives her own account of equal treatment. She states, “Both of my children study in the same school. We’ve not differentiated our children in any aspects. In our family we share our work. My husband supports and helps me in several household chores. Seeing his father doing work, my son also does several household chores and helps his sister as well.”

Maiju, who has two daughters, feels that in today’s world there is no difference between boys and girls. She said that she and her husband are happy with two daughters and are not giving them the feeling of the absence of a son, though family and friends insisted them to try for a son. She is quite determined to do her best to inculcate the qualities of thinking independently, creatively, and purposefully and a strong attitude towards gender equality in her children. Similar is the feeling of Bima. She is also determined to bring-up her two daughters as sons. She conveys, “Either a son or a daughter-- both are our children which must be enough for every parent. Both of us are content. We regard two daughters are our sons.”

Giving an account of changes of what teachers have seen over a period of fifteen years, a teacher, and an inhabitant of Srikhandapur, migrated from the plains (Terai) Sudhir says,

In the field of education, we can see lots of changes. One of the changes I saw is that the girls weren’t sent to school at all in the past, but nowadays all send girls to schools. However, there is still discrimination. Boys are sent to the private boarding schools whereas girls are in public schools. Girls do more work at home. No change is seen inside the family.

Most male teachers feel privileged to get education in their times, while feeling awful about the custom and culture which prevented their sisters to get education.

From the above narratives gleaned from my field study, it has confirmed that engendering inequality through unequalled gender role socialization starts at home in the family. Children learn this from every day dealings, especially from what parents do and don't do, in the way adults consult and take decisions, in the way they share all family responsibilities. These role models are imposed consciously or unconsciously by parents in the family. From a very tender age, children are imprinted in so many ways which limit the development of human potential, be it for boys or for girls. Both lose, and society loses.

Society and its Roles in the Formation of Gender Concept

Though human life is unthinkable without society, it is the society which prescribes separate norms and values for women and men that determine their lives and future (Bhasin, 2000). Even today, in our societies, men and women are socialized differently to make them internalize the sense of superior and inferior through cultural practices (Sanskar). Both male and female teachers expressed the feeling that they need to follow practices and social order. Samim (14) agrees and believes that existing discriminatory division of labor is due to social structure of the society. In his words,

Society has made a “format” (structure) and that became a “way”. There was a feeling that the son leads (Ghar Tham Chha) the family and the daughter follows the other family (Biha garera janchhan). The concept of ‘Bansa tham chha’ has been rooted so deep and is still almost the same, though the

realization that the son and daughter should not be discriminated has come to some people, but is still rooted there.

Another teacher, Sulekha adds,

Due to the prevailing concept that ‘son is the sustainer of the society’ as they are the ones who carry and continue the family name and stay with parents while girls are married off and leave parents’ house once they marry’ causes inequality. They are getting preference in everything- love, food, clothing, health, education- (ke ma matra prathamikta payako chhaina ra). Even today some couples feel that they have no children if they have no sons.

While agreeing with Samim, and adding his view on the reasons behind inequality and discriminatory division of labor, Dibya opines that the ‘feeling of inside work is for women and outside work is for men’ is gradually changing. She shares her feeling,

Work at home by women and work outside by men was the saying of the past in this town. It is changing a bit. Now, most families expect women to work outside (as for us –indicating ladies teachers) as well as inside the house, while the same is not the case for men. Because of this, we work at home in the morning and in the evening again. This is our daily life. In my observation, this is also the lives of many girl students too. The difference is in the bulk and type of work. Women fetch water in big pot and girls in small pot. Women wash big clothes and girls the smaller one according to age (thulo bhanda majne ra sano bhada majne – Thulo gagri –sano gagri – thoulo luga –sano luga dhune). As the culture of working out for women has begun, the culture of sharing household work has not begun yet.

Goma, and Bima, and Hakim agree with Dibya's feeling about inside and outside work. All these three teachers said that their spouses do household work as well. However, the difference is that for women it is mandatory, but for men it is showing helpfulness.

Gender theorists stress the need of addressing unequally structured gender order directly through a feminist degendering movement and by undermining the current structure of gender, both politically and institutionally Lober (2000). She urges undercut the first principle of the gendered social order, the division into 'men' and 'women'. Feminists want a social order where gender does not privilege men as a category nor give them power over women as a category to make society a more just place for women and for all people.

These discussions on the role of society, its socio-cultural norms and values and their influence on the division of labor indicate that even today the gender division of labor which is a vivid manifestation of gender inequality is the cause and consequence of forming its concept in teachers.

Role of School in the Formation of Perceptions on Gender Equality

School and the teachers play crucial role in forming any concept. They are an agent of change because of the key role they play in the processes of education. They are major executors of the teaching and learning processes. These views were expressed repeatedly by most teachers in course of in-depth interview. In Dibya's view,

'Children' are like clay (kancha mato) and teachers are molders/ pot makers (kumale), we can make or break rules/culture (banauna/ bhatkauna sakchhau). But we need to know how to make clay pots as per the demand of time (samayako mag anusar banauna jaanu pani ta paryo ni).

Another participant, Rajesh, also recognized the role of teachers in forming not only concepts but behaviors as well. Like Dibya, he feels the need of knowledge and skills in order to be able to contribute in the formation of gender equality concept according to the demand of time. Besides these two research participants, others also acknowledged the role the teacher plays. However, they argued on the bigger role of the society. They were of the opinion that society and socialization play a bigger role than teachers, and schools. Thus, gender equality education should be given to the society and in schools simultaneously. They suggested including ‘equality education’ in the school curriculum as a separate subject to address all kind of inequalities, including caste and ethnicities. Stressing the need for knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) on gender equality education, Sudhir says,

If we want a new Nepal in which girls and boys are treated, and treat each other, with due respect and humanly, and in which girls as well as boys are urged and expected to fulfil their potential without restriction, then we must begin teaching about gender equality in our teacher education programs as a matter of mandatory course—based on research. Talking here and there in informal manners (*halka phulka parole hudaina*) do not bring about change in the mind-set, which has been set from all modes of learning—informal, formal, and non-formal.

What concept students develop about gender depends on the behavior of the teachers and the methodologies they use. “The single most important factor in determining learning is teachers’ behavior. Intentionally or unintentionally, teachers’ verbal and nonverbal behavior influences student behaviors,” (Levin & Nolan, 2007). Teachers exhibit their behavior in various ways. Most teachers say ‘students are students’, they do not take students’ gender into account while teaching. However,

much research shows that teachers do discriminate unconsciously; their beliefs do not match their practice (Ifegbesan, 2010; Mhlauli, 2011).

Indicating gender insensitivity, Bista, (2001) said that the present education system has not prepared teachers to promote the view that women are as competent as their male colleagues are. Unacceptable attitudes and practices of male managers are supported and reinforced. Along this line, Suku, and other female teachers urged male teachers to develop positive attitudes towards female teachers and take extra measures to develop positive attitudes in students towards female teachers. All the female teachers of the higher secondary school felt that higher-grade students did not respect female teachers as much as they did male teachers. There were instances that male students misbehaved with female teachers in both secondary schools. Appreciating an attempt of the school to provide the opportunity for a qualified female teacher to teach in a higher grade, Suku, shared her observation and urged the school to appoint female teacher at the secondary level. She says,

While I came in this school, I sensed the disrespect (na tedney) of higher grade (9 & 10) students towards female teachers, as all the female teachers of this school were primary level teacher. Since I started teaching computer science and math in the secondary level, I felt the changes in their behaviors towards female teacher. Female teachers were fit only for the primary level was the perception amongst the students in the past. This feeling prevailed amongst teaching and non-teaching staff of the school as well.

My research participants from all the three schools agree that gender stereotypes exist in society and in schools. They see a strong tie between school and society reinforcing each other.

Realizing the crucial role of teachers in reaching the goal of equality in education, the World Teachers' Day (WTD) was celebrated on October 5, 2011 at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris, with the theme, "Teachers for Gender Equality" and stressed nothing will ever replace a good teacher. Nothing is more important than supporting them, said Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General.

Achievement of equality in education depends not only on children's access to school, but whether the concept of gender equality is nurtured amongst the children through teaching as well as non-teaching behaviour. What perceptions students form about themselves and of others depends on whether they perpetuate or transform the prevailing discriminatory norms and values that children bring to school from family and society? It is the school and teachers that have to challenge and transform rather than transmit negative ideologies that inhibit in developing potentials of both boys and girls equally in order to achieve equality in education.

In Nepal, though the seed of gender equality has been sown by the UN, especially after the International Year of the Woman 1975, it has yet to reach to the soil. It is to be dispersed throughout Nepal through teachers. This will be possible only when the teachers who are responsible for the formation of concepts perceive the concepts in line with contemporary concepts and put it into practice.

All the above findings and discussions indicated that all teachers perceived gender equality in education means giving equal opportunities to sons and daughters for studying. All have acknowledged the importance of education. Though present education does not sufficiently contribute to developing the 'Laingik Samanata' concept in students, it does help create awareness implicitly to a certain extent. The teachers' major suggestions were that for accelerating its speed in cultivating it in a

practical way, 'Laingik Samanata Sikshya' should be included in the curriculum and text books of all levels of education and in teachers' training.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I have explored the teachers understanding on the key concepts: gender, equality and gender equality, and gender equality in education and gleaned the prevailing perceptions of teachers and their sources such as family, society and schooling. I proceed to the next chapter where I continue the process of analyzing the teachers' practice in and out of the classroom to respond to my study's question 'How do the teachers practice the concept of gender equality while teaching in the classroom?'

CHAPTER V

TEACHERS' PRACTICES OF GENDER EQUALITY IN SCHOOLS

Chapter Overview

In the preceding chapter, I depicted the teachers' perceptions on gender equality in education. In this chapter, I proceed with the process of analyzing the data on teachers' current practices on gender equality. To seek the answer to my research question 'how has gender equality been practiced by teachers in schools?' the data were derived through in-depth interview, and observations. To explore the teachers' practices and to solicit more in- depth ideas on their conceptualizations and practices of teaching for gender equality, interviews were conducted. Likewise, to understand what the teachers really do in practice in and outside the classroom in relation to gender equality, observations were made. From the gathered data three themes: teacher's interaction, use of teaching materials, and school environment were derived to answer my research question. An account of each is given below.

Teachers' Interaction in the Classroom

"Putting gender equality in place in the classroom is a key to connecting schooling with human rights (Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation" [SADE], 2010). Teachers' interaction is a means to materialize gender equality in the classroom. Through interactions, students not only increase knowledge, skills and practice, but develop boys' and girls' sense of equality, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self confidence, and competence. Development of these qualities in boys and girls depends on the quantity and quality of the interactions, and the nature of the interactions teachers have with them.

All my research participants acknowledged the importance of a teacher's interaction in developing these qualities in students. Dibya opined that whether students feel equal or unequal also depends on how the teachers behave with the students. Teachers who are aware of the issue will help in promoting equality, while those who are unaware repeat the same practices which are prevailing in the society. In regard to equal interaction, almost all teachers I interviewed said that they interact with boys and girls equally in the class and they treat them equally. They do not discriminate on the basis of gender. They even said, "Gender is irrelevant while teaching, but we give more opportunity consciously to girls as we know girls lag behind". However, while I observed the teachers in their classrooms, I found teachers' concentration more on boys than on girls, as boys were drawing teachers' attention by showing mischievous (*chakchakey*) behaviors, not showing proper interest, and diverting their attention to something else. Teachers in some classes even scolded them using expressions like *jati bujhayapani nabujne*, slapped them, and handed them books roughly (*la padha*), while girls kept quiet and were engaged in reading and writing as teachers asked. This sort of reduced attention to girls and increased attention to boys and vice-versa cultivates the sense of inequality amongst students which affects their sense of self-esteem and confidence.

Nevertheless, I found teachers made conscious efforts in asking questions turn by turn to both girls and boys while teaching their subjects. Teachers had enough time to ask questions to each student, as the number of students in the classes I observed in all three schools was quite low (6-12 students). However, when I observed the classes from the perspective of forming gender equality concept, I found them perpetuating the stereotypes which are embedded in the textbooks, as they were unaware of gender as a factor in the teaching and learning processes. The subtle gender inequities and

biases imbedded in the textbooks were transmitted by the teachers as well. The following are some examples.

I observed a Nepali subject teacher teaching in grade four. The topic of that day was *children's rights* (balbalikako adhikar). The teacher asked a student to read the book, and then the teacher described rights mostly referring to a 'boy child,' as written in the textbook. The topic begins with a sentence 'I am a boy' (ma balak hun), while the title of the topic is 'children's rights' (balbalikako adhikar). The teacher did not make any attempt to make students understand that the rights mentioned in the textbook are for both boys and girls. A similar observation was made in the English subject teaching in grade three. The teacher taught a rhyme about riding bicycles, 'Ride It Ride It,' excellently, following the English language teaching methodology which employs four skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing. She sought students' participation very well by asking them to chant while acting at the same time. However, in this class also, the teacher did not convey the message that boys and girls both can ride bicycles. In the textbook, pictures show only boys riding cycles.

I also observed Nepali subject teaching in grade five. The teacher taught a lesson entitled 'Mero Sathilaai chithi'. The teacher asked students to read Bhakta Bahadur Pariyar's letter, in which he writes about discrimination against Dalits and how happy he was when he was first in the class. He also writes that when he stood first in the class, attitudes towards him also changed. In this lesson, the teacher followed the proper methodology but missed the gender aspect. As there were boys and girls in the class, he could have discussed gender discrimination within caste discrimination. He could also have asked boys and girls to write a letter to their dear friends in their own words about discrimination they have felt or seen.

One of the other classes I observed was of accounting. The topic was ‘the bank cash book’. The teacher asked one of the boys to come forward and draw the cash book format on the white board. He drew it very well. Then the teacher asked questions and students swiftly answered. The teacher went on recording on the board. He did ask questions to girls and boys both. Boys were faster and louder when answering, and girls were quiet, responding only when asked or when the teacher pointed at them. In this way, out of fifteen questions asked, ten were answered by boys and five by girls.

All four teachers taught their subjects well by following the textbooks, though none were conscious of its impact in forming the concepts of gender in children’s minds. A matter of more concern to me is that the teachers who are using these textbooks are not aware of the flaws in these textbooks. This shows how girls and boys receive biased messages even today. Besides, teachers are also not aware of gender specific needs emerging from family and societal socialization. The brief description given above of the accounting class indicates unawareness of gendered behaviour in the teacher, though he is an excellent instructor in terms of subject matter and pedagogy. The teacher was not aware that girls, socialized not to speak but to be submissive, require teaching methodologies that continuously encourage them to speak up. I did not find such attempts in teachers of either gender. Instead, they stated, “We treat boys and girls equally, we do not discriminate (Barabar garchau, bived gardainau),” when I enquired about girls raising their voices in the class to be audible. I observed that the teachers of Computer Science, Math, and Social Studies have followed the same methodology, unconscious of gender.

Another area of concern to me is that although the teachers said they treat both boys and girls equally, they tended to reinforce the belief that girls are emotional, soft

spoken and peaceful while boys are strong, vocal and assertive. I noticed the reinforcement of such notions during interviews and in class observations. When I asked the teachers to share their understanding about the differences between boys and girls, almost all teachers said that boys are sporty, strong, louder and frank, while girls are diligent, swifter, serious and quiet. One of the teachers even narrated what they tell to their students when they complain:

When girls and boys complain, we do tell them that boy and girl are different and the way they approach things is also different. Boys are boys: they are strong and short-tempered while girls are girls, they are weak and burdened with household work. Boys and girls have to understand that they are different.

In one of the classes I observed, the teacher gave the message that boys are aggressive when a boy asked the reasons for fights while news was shared by a girl in the news sharing session. The news sharing was a practice introduced in Srihandapur Primary School to encourage interaction between students and to build confidence; indeed it was a very good practice. However, due to gender unawareness, I found the teacher perpetuating stereotypes. A brief scenario of what I observed is as follows:

A girl student shared the news “I saw a motor cycle accident on the way to my house. I also saw a crowd and two men fighting (ekle arko laai kuteko). Other people were trying to calm the fight and take apart these two men. I was so scared and I ran away”. The teacher asked the students, “Do you have questions?” A boy student asked, “Why did they fight?” The girl student did not respond. She kept quiet. Then the boy asked the teacher, “Sir, why did they fight?” The teacher responded, “Boys’ nature is aggressive (ketaharuko sobhav jhagadalu hunchha).” No further interaction occurred afterwards. This shows how teachers communicate their preconceived

notions. In this case, the teacher communicated that boys are aggressive by nature to the students.

I found another teacher perpetuating the stereotype of a woman's role of cleaning and caring. Srihandapur Primary School has a good practice of checking students' hands and feet to teach and maintain the health and hygiene of students during assembly. The teacher checked and saw some boys' hands and dresses were dirty. She asked, "Why did you come with dirty dress and dirty hands? Ask your mother and sister to clean and come with clean dress". This also shows how the teacher unintentionally perpetuated gender stereotypes. The teacher could have asked boys to clean up rather than telling the boys to ask their mothers and sisters at home.

Classroom Sitting Arrangement

I observed sex-segregation system in all three schools. When I asked about desegregation for the development of equality, most teachers responded that they have not enforced sitting separately. However, I saw teachers asking students of the same class to stand in two different rows (one of girls and another of boys) during assembly in all three schools.

In the classroom, girls and boys were seated separately on different sides and different rows in all the classes, though variations in the setting (sitting on the floor with a separate table) were found in grades four and five of the Srihandapur Primary School. In my observation, segregated sitting arrangements have not constrained teachers' interactions with students (and vice-versa) for learning, as students are few in all three schools. Teachers could even pay enough individual attention to students if they wish to do so. However, this practice reinforces societal sex segregation, and has consequences on the formation of gender equality concept in young students' minds. This sex segregation system nurtures the existing hierarchy and alienating concept of

‘opposite sex’, rather than equal human being. It also affects the interactions between girls and boys in the classroom. If girls and boys are mixed together in the classroom, there could be more interactions between them (CERID, 2009).

These data show that though teachers are good at teaching their subjects and were making conscious efforts to encourage girls, they still reinforced gender stereotyping and biases prevalent in their society unconsciously by not challenging the embedded status quo in the textbooks, and by giving equal (same) treatment to both boys and girls who are in different social standing. They are not aware of the effect of gender biases and stereotyping. They are also not aware that ‘same’ treatment is not equal treatment, and that does not produce equality. In order to produce equality in results or outcomes (ref. previous chapter), different treatment is required without discriminating as girls and boys are not the same, they are different but not unequal.

Use of Language in the Classroom

During class observations, I paid attention to the use of language in classroom. I did not find teachers using sexist language, language that excludes either men or women when discussing a topic that is applicable to both sexes, except in one class. In one of the classes, I noticed the teacher using sexist language while he wrote a question on the white board. He then asked (facing the students) the students that ‘boys tell its answer (ketaharu la vana yasako jabaf)’. I also noticed the same language (‘boys’) this is all for today (kataharu aja laai yeati nai) while he was leaving the class when the bell rang. This indicates that for him ‘boys’ means students.

Outside the class observation, I paid attention to use of language by teachers as well. I noticed teachers using the honorific term ‘sir’ (indicating teachers) but not

‘madam’ to female teachers. One of the male teachers even failed to use the honorific term to female teachers in the teachers’ meeting, and said, “You (pointing at female teachers) do not speak while you have an opportunity and ‘talk at the back’ (bolna payako belama boldaina ani pachhadi Kura garchha).” To my surprise, the female teachers kept quiet when he said this. The use of female-exclusive terms such as headmaster instead of head teacher, chairman instead of chairperson, sirs (instead of sirs and madams), boys instead of boys and girls, was found to be very common in conversation.

During interviews also, I have noted and noticed the unintentional use of sexist language. I have even found teachers failing to teach honorific words for both genders; rather, they use pejorative language for girls and women (particularly for ‘wife,’ such as the less-formal thou or you (tan, timi). All the male teachers I interviewed, except three, have used non-honorific words to refer to their spouses, while all female teachers used honorific. The three male teachers who spoke about their spouses using honorific are teaching staff too. This gives an impression that the female who works is honoured while others are not honoured linguistically. Language does not merely reflect the way we think: it also shapes our thinking. If words and expressions that imply that women are inferior to men are constantly used, they are implanted in students’ minds. Female teachers who have been socialized to believe in the inferiority of women also reinforce these attitudes in schools just as much as their male colleagues by using sexist language, being unaware of its implications in the formation of gender hierarchy. Post-structural feminists argue that gender differences dwell in language (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005).

Use of sexist language in school perpetuates sexism - discrimination against people on the basis of sex. Discrimination against, and prejudicial stereotyping of

women contributes to inequality in education. Acknowledging the effect of sexist language in achieving the global goal of gender equality, the representatives of Canada and the Nordic countries raised the issue of sexist language for the first time in 1987 in the UNESCO's general conference and a call was made for the avoidance of gender-specific language in UNESCO. Thus, the General Conferences went on to take a firm stance on the issue (UNESCO, 1999) and published "Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language", which is widely used in the UN system. Use of non-sexist and non-pejorative language in teaching and teaching materials is imperative for developing the concept of equality.

Use of Teaching and Learning Materials

In all the three schools I observed, textbooks were the major means of learning for students and the means for teaching. No other teaching materials were used in classes. However, there was a well-equipped library in each school. All children, regardless of class and gender, have access to the library and a period is scheduled for library study every week. Some of the books (stories, poems) in the library also perpetuate gender stereotypes and gender biases as the writers of the books were also the product of the same society and are not gender sensitive enough. The CERID study (2007) had made recommendations for textbooks and materials development to enhance gender equality and mutual understanding between men and women.

Like some of the books in the libraries, textbooks are not free from gender biases and sex stereotyping. There are several examples to cite. The health, population, and environment textbook is an example. The class nine textbook depicts a picture of father teaching and mother giving a bath to a child (p.17). Such a depiction is also found on page 52. Various researches show that the use of gender-equitable materials allows students to have more gender-balanced knowledge, to develop more flexible

attitudes towards gender roles, and to imitate role behaviors contained in the materials. Gender audit (2002) also had recommended the presentation of gender sensitive role-models without gender stereotypes in educational materials.

Representation of Female Teachers in School Management

School is one of the sites where children spend most of their time. It is the place where their gender identities are constructed, reconstructed, negotiated, and officially sanctioned. The overall environment in school offers influential messages about gender. Students also learn about each other's gender formally as well as informally in the school environment. Therefore, I gathered some information about school management.

All the three schools of my study are headed by male teachers. In the primary school, with the exception of the head teacher, all teachers are female. Though there are more female teachers who are more qualified and experienced than the current head teacher, the school is still headed by a male teacher. In the SHSS too, the school is headed by a male teacher. There is no secondary level female teacher. In GSA management, is in the hands of three stakeholders: the principal, director and stakeholders' representative. There is no regular full-time secondary level female teacher. The complete absence of female teacher representation at the secondary level and in management leaves decision-making mostly in the hands of men. This makes the management unable to address gender specific needs of female students. While, on the other hand, girls have not been able to report and discuss their problems openly to the school management (CERID, 2009).

One such case was revealed when, in person and privately, I asked the computer science teacher about female students and teachers' problems in school. She shared that she being the only female teacher teaching in the secondary level

(though she is not a secondary level teacher); many girls come to her when they have problems, especially for asking time-off from the school while they are having their monthly period. Suku said,

I have given off many handkerchiefs as girls came here (separate computer lab) to share their problems when they menstruate. In the beginning, they came and asked that I asked for permission for them to quit classes on their behalf as they were reluctant to go to male teachers. I did it for them. Now I stopped doing it for them as the numbers of girls coming to me is increasing. I told them to ask by themselves.

When I asked how the teachers support girls who miss class every month, she said that there is no specific plan/ activity to address these students. They manage on their own. I asked again whether she thinks about the possibility of having a session or two in imparting skills in managing the menstruation period for those who could not afford to buy sanitary wear. She just nodded. Many girls in Nepal do miss classes due to lack of proper materials (sanitary wear, water and soap), the uncomfortable environment (teasing, harassment after leaks, being looked down on if experiencing cramps or aches) and lack of specific skills to manage menstruation. Adolescent girls' problems are compounded further where there are no female teachers in higher grades teaching. Most often, girls disappear from the classes without notifying teachers and become victims of punishment as they do not have the courage to tell the truth to the male teachers in the class before the boys. This situation inhibits a girl's performance and causes the formation of negative perceptions of self. Not having enough water in the female toilet, lack of space for changing sanitary towel, eve-teasing, and sexual harassment are some of the issues never raised and discussed in the management.

Lack of female teachers in school management not only disables management from addressing gender specific needs of girls and boys, but also impedes timely disciplinary action to provide a safe and secure environment for female students and teachers. One such case was revealed by a female teacher when asked about problems faced by females. One boy student attempted to attack a female teacher on the way to school. The boy student happened to be the son of a School Management Committee member. He also used abusive words towards the female accountant when she asked him to pay his school fees in time. Female teachers said that the management did not take action in a timely manner. Another female teacher told her tale about a recently retired head teacher. She said that the outgoing head teacher's attitude towards female teachers (*mahilaharu dheri bida linchhan*) was very negative and harsh in behaviour. He had negative stereotypes about female teachers, labelling them as gossipers, less competent, and prone to taking more leave than male teachers. That was one of the major reasons for not having female secondary level teachers in the school for so long. Finding such problems, CERID (1997) had made recommendation to identify and remove the barriers to women being trained, recruited, and accepted.

Lack of female teachers' participation in management reinforces sex stereotypes and attitudes in school management and in teachers as well. One of the female teachers in SHSS says, "As we female teachers are of the primary level and we are few in number, we have limited access to information and decision making. We get only what is shared in the staff meetings." One of the teachers sadly shared that the school examination committee had meetings and lunch together, but women were not invited, so they did not know when the results would be out. They had to tell students that they did not know when asked about exam results. This is how even students undermine female teachers. Female teachers are neither considered for

leadership positions nor do they aspire to occupy such positions. Often women deselect themselves from serious consideration for appointments in leadership roles, either by not actively seeking positions or by turning down positions when offered. For the most part, resistance, prejudiced attitudes and/or stereotypical beliefs about women block the consideration of women for such positions (Bista, 2006). The need to changing teachers' mind-sets, attitudes and behaviour was generally seen. Teacher training institutions ought to have an important role to play in educating teachers (Swedish International Development Assistance [SIDA], 2010).

Female teachers want to be accepted as team members. Many also expect to be involved in all aspects of school management. Support for professional growth, equal opportunity for career advancement, frequent communication and interaction, the use of decent language, etc. are also desired by them. Above all, they expect to be treated with respect and dignity by their male colleagues (Bista, 2007). Thus, encouraging and supporting more female teachers to be in management is one way of improving gender equality in schools. Equally important is ensuring that male teachers and pupils behave in non-discriminatory and non-threatening ways. However, the SSRP gender audit found female teachers being excluded from consultations on school improvement planning (SIPs). The male domination of the SMCs plays a part in these forms of discrimination against serving women teachers (Terry & Thapa, 2012).

All the above data reveal that though almost all the teachers do think students should be treated equally without considering their genders, in practice they do treat them unequally and perpetuate gender stereotypes and biases against girls unintentionally and unconsciously. It is because firstly, the school system allows little time for reflection on institutionalized inequalities. Teachers are required to pursue the course book, to teach and to undertake the examination. This is not only

required by school authorities, but also expected by parents and societies and does not predispose teachers to be agents of change: quite simply, gender equality is not part of the school test to which teachers are teaching. Teachers, as they are expected to teach the course book, preserve the gender stereotypes and bias against girls embedded in the curriculum by perpetuating the patriarchal sexist value which are the cultural capital (in Bourdieu's words) of the most teachers. Secondly, teachers were not made aware of and trained to developing a new cultural capital, in this case gender equality culture, through education on gender and pedagogy. Change in practice required a change in habitus of teachers (character, thoughts and activities of individuals) and in the field (schools), because, practice is also the result of interaction between habitus and field. I found in my study sites that neither the teachers' habitus nor the field is free from stereotype and biases as teachers are also the product of this society and are not exposed to new knowledge and skills for transformation.

Summary of the Chapter

In summary, I have expounded on teachers' practices. All teachers do agree that they should treat boys and girls equally and said that they treated them equally. As teachers were not aware of stereotyping and biases, they were perpetuating gender biases unintentionally and covertly. I have linked the findings with Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction. Though teachers know about equality, they reproduced inequalities as gender equality is not part of the school teaching and testing.

I proceed to the next chapter where I continue the process of analysis to show the challenges that hinder practicing gender equality and the positive practices that help in promoting gender equality in education.

CHAPTER VI

CHALLENGES AND POSITIVE PRACTICES IN GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents an account of challenges teachers face in practicing gender equality and the prevailing practices that support the promotion of gender equality in education. The challenges and positive practices were garnered from in-depth interviews with research participants and school observations. During in-depth interviews, all research participants were asked to reflect on what they considered to be key challenges in regards to advancing practices on gender equality in their respective schools. They were also asked to cite examples of prevailing practices that they considered positive in promoting gender equality in education. From the transcribed interviews and analysis of observation notes, the challenges and positive practices are identified and are presented in two parts: challenges in practicing gender equality in education and prevailing positive practices in promoting gender equality.

Challenges in Practicing Gender Equality in Education

I have asked my research participants to reflect on what they considered to be key challenges in practicing gender equality ‘Langik Samanata’ in and outside the classroom in school. The question I asked put most of my participants into deep thought. This is understandable, as the teaching profession is meant mainly to teach a subject, not the skills in forming and reforming concepts and practices that are required for the transformation of society. However, after a pause, teachers responded. Their responses are related to: 1) traditional norms and values; 2)

insufficient gender awareness; 3) low levels of education ; 4) lack of females in decision making 5) gender unresponsive school uniforms; and 6) discrimination against community schools.

Traditional Norms and Values

Univocally, the research participants claimed that stereotypical and sexist traditional norms and values of the family and society are considered a major challenge. In their families and societies, females are considered inferior and secondary to males in all kinds of human relations – as a daughter, sister, mother and wife, as a student or a teacher, as a community member. Teachers said that it is common among men and women to regard women as less able and competent than men, which affects girls and boys in schools. Having such a mindset, parents do not provide encouragement and support required for girls to continue and be successful in education. They do not consider education for girls to be as important as for boys, and some even see it a liability. Cultural tradition and gender role stereotypes are mainly responsible for the continuation of inequalities in education (UNICEF, ROSA, 2009).

Most teachers of SPS and SHSS feel that a family's perspective towards girls, loading girls with household work, and not paying attention to their education and basic needs are the most hindering factors to practicing gender equality in school education. They argued that there is little they can do if parents do not send their daughters to school regularly, if parents do not provide basic support such as pencil and paper, under garments and shoes. We cannot follow them to their houses. At the most, we ask them to come to school and discuss the problem. School can play a very limited role in improving families' discriminatory practices and perceptions. The SMT and PTA members also do not pay attention to gender equality as they are not

aware of it. There is not even an ensuring mechanism to check whether girls get their scholarships.

Golden Siddhartha Academy's teachers also feel that reaching students' families to implement disciplinary action is difficult if the school has to take an action. Parents feel that making students responsible for their own actions is the responsibility of school, but schools cannot take the sole responsibility for the behaviour children learn in their families. Citing a case of a male student's misbehaviour towards a female teacher, Hakim said, "We have warned and sent information to the parents to contact the school; it has already been a week and the parents have not enquired yet. Parents are not conscious enough that they need to follow their children for their betterment". "Unequal division of labour and discrimination saddle girls and women with domestic duties that take away from their class time and impact negatively in their ability to learn," says Dipesh.

Insufficient Gender Awareness in Families and Teachers

In general, insufficient gender awareness in families and in societies was considered one of the main obstacles, and insufficient understanding of the meaning of gender equality and how to address gender inequalities through teaching and non-teaching activities by teachers was another. In fact, teachers urged that they should be given gender training in order to be able to practice gender equality. They said that they know gender equality means treating equally and giving opportunity equally. To increase teachers' understanding beyond these requires training in gender. They also recommended that gender equality be included in the school curriculum at all levels. Raja persisted that massive awareness campaigns for parents, management committees, parent teachers association members, teachers, and students should be done continuously and should include politicians. He said, "There should be more

lessons on gender equality in the textbooks and teacher trainings. Teachers were trained in how to teach subjects, but not how to promote gender and caste equality through teaching. There should be practice teaching in gender equality.” He also stated that the principle of equality should be nurtured practically in action in the school system not just in words or preaching in public.

The NCED is the authorized and responsible body to deliver training to teachers. Its commitment to integrate gender concerns in teacher training programs as outlined in the DOE’s SIPGEGE (2007) is yet to be reflected in the NCED’s plan of action and demand-driven approach in TPD. Recently-conducted SSRP gender audit states that no evidence of systematically integrating gender in teachers’ professional development has been found. A new gender awareness module for teachers’ professional development master trainers is in pilot phase (Terry & Thapa, 2012).

My participants’ profiles and interviews reveal that none of the teachers have received training or orientation on gender, with the exception of a science teacher who had one session on gender whilst he received a ten month long teacher training from NCED.

Low Level of Education

“The government’s focus on girls’ enrolment rather than retaining and learning for higher grades poses a challenge to promote gender equality in education. A low number of girls completing higher secondary education imply a minimal number of female teachers and head teachers even in primary schools” says Bima. Female teachers are needed not only to teach girls and boys, but also to serve as role models in different professions and leadership positions to change perceptions of society. The majority of girls enrolled do not complete even primary grades. They drop school because of various reasons that includes workloads, early marriage, and

lack of perspective for progress. This is evidenced in that the higher the level of education, the fewer the girl students in class. “The girls who dropped out schools after a few years of formal education become semiliterate or illiterate,” says Sudhir. In fact, it is a reality.

Most research participants regardless of gender have appealed for girls’ access to education and retention beyond primary grades up to higher secondary level with vocational training opportunities. Many students, mostly girls, in the general population dropped out before they took the School Leaving Certificate examination. Thus, teachers recommended making education compulsory up to ten grades for all children, as completing primary education does not give the same opportunity for girls to be employed or self-employed as it does for boys. Where education does not, or is not seen to increase opportunities for girls, the rationale for sending girls to school is significantly undermined by parents and the girls themselves. Most of the boy drop-outs from schools get employment as a conductor, a driver, a carpenter, or a mason and even migrate abroad for employment, where as for girls such opportunities are limited. Thus, they get married and become mothers. “Therefore, life skills including vocational and or entrepreneurship are necessary to empower and make girls self-reliant economically,” says Buddha.

With a similar notion, Sulekha argued that when girls have access only to primary education, they remain not only politically disempowered but also without opportunities for economic empowerment, which entails early marriage, unsafe migration, prone to trafficking and various vulnerabilities. To achieve gender equality in education, the focus must shift from enrolment to empowerment, and primary to higher education leading to employment by focusing on learners’ learning skills rather than teachers’ teaching subjects.

Lack of Females in Decision Making

Achieving gender equality requires women's active participation and involvement in decision-making at all levels, starting in the home and extending to the highest levels of government (UN Women, 2011, p. 108). Though government has made female participation mandatory in SMCs and PTAs, my research participants think that they are hardly recognized in the present context by male members in the committees and in society.

Regarding this issue in question, Raja reveals:

The female member of the SMC is not active and does not attend meeting regularly; because of her lack of knowledge, interest, the burden of domestic responsibilities, and a general shyness to speak up in the committee. She has not received any training. However, she is always there to help if I ask, but in the meeting she hardly gives her opinion. Once I asked for her opinion, she was about to say something, and the chairperson, who happened to be the previous head teacher of this school started to raise his concern without letting her speak. After him another member spoke, another member spoke. In such a context, how can she put her view across and what can I expect apart from her presence to get the required quorum?

Female members hardly voice their opinions amidst male members. They are also subject to low recognition of their voices and become unheard and invisible in the crowd of men as they are not empowered through training and exposure. Female teachers are neither considered for leadership positions nor do they aspire to occupy such positions. Often women deselect themselves from serious considerations for appointments in leadership roles either by not actively seeking positions or by turning down positions when offered. For the most part, resistance, prejudiced attitudes and/or

stereotypical beliefs about women block the consideration of women for such positions (UNESCO, 2006, p. xx). Bista (2006) recommends the enforcement of a policy requiring a minimum of two female teachers in his study on the status of female teachers. He states, “A one-female-teacher policy subjects women to the crowd of men”. Being a small minority in the male world, female teachers may feel challenges to be a role model of equal position as male teachers amongst the students and in society. But female teachers of all three schools stated that the government should comply with the resolution of 33 per cent women’s representation in all state structures that was passed by the House of Representatives in 2007. They also believe that if SMCs and PTA give them the opportunity to voice and respect their voice; definitely they will advocate for gender equality.

Gender Unresponsive School Uniform

In Nepal, almost all schools require students to wear uniforms. School uniforms are one of the many symbols of institutionalized gender difference and gender inequality in our society. School uniforms have been largely unresponsive, sexist and stereotypical, limiting girls’ mobility and participation in school activities, especially extra-curricular activities such as games and sports. They help establish and perpetuate clothing-based gender differences since an early age.

In all three schools of Srikhandapur, wearing the school uniform is mandatory for all students. Both Srikhandapur Primary School and Golden Siddhartha Academy have different uniforms for boys and girls. For girls, the uniform is a shirt and a skirt and for boys, a shirt and pants. However, the color is the same for both boys and girls in both schools. Advocating the need of decent but non-segregated uniform, Dibya shared how girls and women are harassed in public transport due to their dress. She explicated,

Women and men, boys and girls dress differently and thus behave differently. Some men behave towards women, mostly to young girls, very differently, sometimes in a very embarrassing manner, which makes us feel bad, inferior, and insecure and discouraged to travel due to the behaviour of some male passengers, and conductors. We are teased (jiskaune), looked upon badly (naramro dristile herne), spoken to with abusive language (naramro namitho sabda), and men even try to lift our skirts (hamro skirt uthauna kojne).

“Consumerism invests heavily in packaging its products and differentiating one from the other, especially feminine from masculine. It is with all this in mind that I accepted the invitation to write this article on the gender effects of school uniforms,” writes Rocco (n. d.), a mother, a teacher and a gender researcher from School of Education, James Cook University, Australia in her article “Gender Affects School Uniform,” deferring to most schools’ sex –stereotype dress, shirt and skirts. She writes, “Making it compulsory for girls to wear dresses to school inhibits their spontaneous participation in a range of health-promoting activities—running, jumping, bending, stretching, climbing and even simply sitting cross-legged on the floor. These activities not only promote physical health but also feelings of competence and confidence”. She states,

It is also the case that routine practices of gender differentiation adversely affect boys. Brought up in this social milieu, boys learn that to be a boy means not being like a girl-not sitting still, not listening, and not having neat hand writing, not liking reading, not caring for others, not doing what adults ask you to do.

Making students in schools wear uniforms is a good system as this will give a distinct identity and enable people to recognize children as school students. In fact, it

helps students to develop a sense of equality and oneness. It also helps children spend their time for study rather than choosing dresses to go to school, leading to unhealthy competition. Uniforms in schools should be comfortable, and practical.

Parents' Discrimination against Public School

All teachers voiced in unison that parents and society discriminate against community schools, which is in a real sense a manifestation of discrimination against girls and disadvantaged groups as community schools are becoming the schools of poor, Dalits, disadvantaged groups and mainly girls.

Theoretically, there are two types of schools in Nepal: community schools and institutional schools. Within these two types of schools, there are several variations on different grounds. Basically, students from poor economic backgrounds go to community school as they get scholarships, though they are usually not sufficient. Even with such support, parents hesitate to send their children to school. They hesitate to spend even a small amount on their children for a pen and pencil. This is revealed in an interview with teachers.

What amazes me is that, they fulfil all requirements without delay/ immediately when private schools ask, but the same parents do not provide even a pencil to their children while they are in our community schools. Why is this? Isn't it an attitude of parents to neglect (hepeko) public school? It is not only the economy of parents but also the hegemony and craze of parents towards private school in the name of quality education in English medium that is leading to such conduct of parents. If private schools prescribe strict rules, nobody complains and even the government does not take action regardless of what they do, i.e., increase fees, stop promoting grades, loading books, and hire unqualified teachers, Sudhir says.

Community school teachers critiqued, Private schools are for profit, thus they take only those children who can pay enough, care enough and are capable. If a kid makes trouble or does not do well in school, they try to prevent this from happening, but ultimately they make the decision to kick the child out. On the other hand, our school has to accept every child, capable, incapable, poor, and rich, the trouble makers and takers. We cannot even stop upgrading the child if he/she is not capable because of age and being afraid that he/she will drop out or discontinue school. Still, the community has a negative attitude towards us (Sudihir, Bima & Raja say).

Mathema (2007) writes, “Any attempt to raise the educational and socio-economic status of youth in Nepal must begin with the ending of the dual system of school education to a few and denies it to the great majority.”

Prevailing Positive Practices in Promoting Gender Equality

Despite all the challenges teachers face in practicing gender equality in school, there are practices/provisions that support promoting gender equality in education. Such practices were identified while in-depth interviews and observations were carried out. Teachers were asked to cite examples of prevailing practices that they considered good in promoting gender equality. Some practices they cited were specific to school and some were general.

Culture of Morning Assembly

Teachers of all three schools stated that the culture of letting boys and girls lead the morning assembly turn by turn could be considered a good practice, as it gives a message of equality between boys and girls. In all the three schools of Srikhandpur, the day begins with a morning assembly in the school grounds before

lessons, where a student leads brief physical training followed by the national anthem keeping the right hand in the left side of the chest above the heart.

I observed the morning assembly, where I found students' lined up by class in a row of boys and a row of girls. A boy or a girl responsible for commanding for the day comes forward starts simple physical training (PT), such as 'attention', 'stand at ease', 'hands up', 'hands side', 'hands down' etc. After a brief PT, the whole group sings the national anthem. Students march into the classes in a disciplined manner row by row. I found the assembly was used also for school announcements and to motivate staff and students to be punctual and regular, a sort of monitoring of students and teachers by the school administration.

In Srihandapur Higher Secondary School, the presence of all teachers of the first period to supervise students and participate in the assembly is mandatory. They attend the assembly; thereby follow the students in the class for attendance and the lesson.

In Srihandapur Primary School, teachers check the cleanliness of uniforms, hands, feet, etc. All grade teachers' presence is mandatory. The school also has introduced news sharing. I found a student was asked to share news from her community. According to the head teacher, this feature was introduced to enhance children's confidence to speak and to make students inquisitive.

In Golden Siddhartha Academy, besides brief physical training and singing the national anthem, the morning assembly is used to praise the commendable achievements of students with claps. All regular teachers' presence is mandatory. After the assembly, children of smaller classes are guided to use the toilets (separate toilets for female and male students). They enter the class in a queue formation.

As claimed by teachers, the culture of letting a boy or girl command the audience turn by turn is a good practice. It gives an opportunity for both genders to lead the whole group, which helps build the confidence of students. It also implicitly conveys the message of 'Langic Samanata'. To make the assembly more exciting, fun-filled and functional from a gender perspective, gender responsive songs or poems should be introduced. Other motivational elements like reciting a short poem, song, showing a talent, introducing a visitor, etc. could be introduced as well.

Equal Interaction with Girls and Boys

All teachers are found to be conscious of the need to interact with boys and girls equally and give opportunities to ask or respond to questions turn by turn. In most of the classes, I observed that the teachers were giving equal opportunity for both boys and girls to answer the questions. It gave me immense pleasure when I saw the active participation of both male and female students. One of the classes I observed was of Suku's.

After observing 15 minutes of her class, I found her gender-bias free. She was giving equal opportunity for both boys and girls to answer questions. Both were eager to answer the questions. Most of the answers which they gave were correct. After the class, when I interviewed her personally, she said that being herself a sufferer of gender inequality; she always tried to treat her male and female students equally by understanding their feelings and valuing them, not as a boy or a girl but as an individual. In the class, after checking the assignment of any student, she used to assign each and every student to check their friend's copy according to their role number, so that all the students who are either boys or girls, either fast learners or slow learners can have the feelings of equality and value each other and their tasks.

She also said that she always tries to give her students the message that boys and girls are different but equal.

I also shared some of the classroom applications for “Gender Equality” so that there will be an exchange of ideas that could be fruitful for both the teachers and students.

Other classes I observed were Math, English, Nepali and Social Studies in SPS. Similarly, I observed the classes of Social Studies, Nepali, Environment, Population and Health, English and Computer Science in SHSS. In GSA, I observed the classes of Accounting and Book Keeping, and English. So far as the interaction with students is concerned, all made conscious efforts to secure the participation of both students by asking them questions turn by turn. It is a very admirable practice.

Gender Equality Contents in the School Textbooks

Most teachers I interviewed believed the incorporation of some topics in school textbooks as a good practice which has helped make certain issues known to teachers and students. For example, the government has incorporated the topic ‘children rights’ in the Nepali subject of grade four, ‘Laingic samanta’ (gender equality) in Environment, Population and Health (EPH) of grade nine. These topics helped create awareness amongst the teachers and students on the rights and the prevailing equalities between women and men. In teachers’ opinion, students who had gone through this new course /curriculum are familiar with the concept of ‘gender equality,’ if not understanding it fully. They urged the government to include such topics in a simpler manner and to train teachers to deliver it critically and practically so that students will be able to internalize it. Recognizing that the content of education is a central determinant of education’s role as a transmitter of discrimination or promoter of the elimination of discrimination, many states have

initiated a review process of curricula and textbooks in order to eradicate manifest and implicit stereotyped views of gender roles.

Female Participation in SMCs and PTAs

The mandatory provision of female representation in SMCs, PTAs and in schools was considered by most research participants a positive practice. One of the teachers cited a saying, [Something is better than nothing] (nahunu mama bhanda Kano mama jati). Raja explained,

The mandatory provision of woman representation in SMCs, PTAs and in school has forced us to find a woman, which is very positive and it helps in increasing gender equality. In this school, we have eight teachers and I am the only male teacher, because the government and non-government organizations have asked to give priority for female whenever there are possibilities.

Therefore, I have accepted all female teachers.

The Education Act (Eighth amendment), 2004, article 12.1 states “At least one out of nine members in Community School Management Committees should be a woman” (The term "Community School" stands for those schools that have obtained approval and receive grants from the Government of Nepal). Both community schools of Srikhandapur have a woman in the SMC. Though it is symbolic, teachers felt that this also has helped in seeking female participation.

“Female teachers and students both feel that they have their representation to speak in case it is necessary,” said Bima, a teacher of SHSS. When asked about turning women’s presence into influence, female teachers argued that participation of women through nomination is not adequate. They also opined that the system of nomination is unlikely to bring appropriate people, because men’s interest or nepotism is likely to be an overriding factor in such nominations. Moreover, they

need support to be able to contribute, achieve and earn the respect of both men and women. Currently, there are no such supports or even training on their roles and responsibilities. Thus, “what more could be expected from a representation of a woman in SMCs and PTAs like a crane in a flock of crows,” said Maij, a teacher at SPS.

As considered by most teachers (mainly female), this mandatory provision of a woman in the SMC does give space and place for women. However, they generally have not got the opportunity to hold positions of influence in the decision making process and thus for now, their influence remains limited. As the teachers suggested, it is essential to enforce the resolution of 33 per cent women’s representation passed by the House of Representatives in 2007. Mandatory provision of female representation is far from enough to secure their voices. A critical minimum of 33 per cent is essential for influence.

Unisex Uniform in School

As mentioned earlier, almost all schools require students to wear uniforms in Nepal. In all three schools of Srikhandapur, wearing school uniform is mandatory for all students. In SHSS, a unisex uniform (shirt and pants) was introduced some years back. Most teachers I interviewed claimed that this unisex uniform is a conscious attempt made by the school to nurture the feeling of gender equality. However, Buddha argued against it. He thinks that the prescription of one pattern to all will help some while others will be disadvantaged. But, other teachers did not agree with him. Other teachers think that having a unisex uniform is a demand of the times and of students, as most private schools do have such uniforms and are liked by both boys and girls.

The government of Nepal has introduced a unisex dress code on July 2011 as a measure to reduce class and gender inequality. I have asked Bima to give her opinion on it. Her response was:

I like the government's decision to introduce a dress code. Moreover, I like the way they have given options for female civil servants. As many people may not like the radical approach of having a suit for women, the ones who are progressive and willing to wear a suit can wear it and be a role model for the coming generation, so that a sari, which is nice but restrictive, especially in mobility, will be replaced slowly. For me, I am planning to wear a suit. We already received an annual uniform allowance, while other temporary teachers have not received this yet, thus, as a gesture of protest; we have not complied yet with the government dress code decision.

The head teacher of Srikhandapur Primary School is also thinking of introducing unisex but comfortable uniforms, like a T-shirt and trouser for both boys and girls instead of a shirt and skirt. The uniform, be in educational institutions or in government offices, helps in mitigating class differences, giving distinct identities and reduces consumerism in a country like Nepal where the majority of people live below poverty line.

Scholarship Schemes for Students

Scholarship is considered the linchpin incentive for girls and the disadvantaged. "Scholarships for girls have motivated parents to send their daughters to school," says Maiju. The majority of teachers I interviewed agreed with her. But, the head teacher of SPS argues, "How can it help gender equality while other students, almost half boys, do not get scholarship?" In his opinion, it rather increases a feeling of discrimination against boys. He suggests giving scholarships to all

students, regardless of gender and caste. Another teacher opined that the way scholarships are provisioned can lead to children being labelled, marking them out as different from their peers. These opinions indicate a lack of understanding about the issue of affirmative action to address prevailing injustices, therefore, exacerbate inequity.

These opinions contradict with the EFA NPA, which states “extremely disadvantaged hard-core groups need special preferential treatment to guarantee their access to education” (MOES, 2002, p. 45). In Kama’s (9) view, scholarships are not that effective. Usually, examination fees are deducted from the scholarship as parents do not come to pay these fees, which leaves a small amount which is not enough even for stationery. Along similar lines, Goma said that despite various attempts, some parents send their children in the beginning of school year to get dresses and books, and then afterwards they drop school or become irregular. This has been a real problem. We cannot stop them going, as that is the only avenue for them to earn cash for their living and pay back debt. With positive notes, Pritam, a teacher at SHSS, shared his view that the government scholarship helps even though it is tiny and not in time. It motivates parents to send girls and Dalit students to schools. Once children develop interest and desire for study, they will insist that their parents send them to schools.

The government has introduced the scholarship scheme to motivate parents to send their children to schools. Besides the government, many schools provide additional supports like a school uniform, bag and stationeries in-kind by mobilizing resources from non-government organizations and individuals. Some schools share scholarship amounts to all as the quotas they get annually are less than the required amount.

Scholarships are central in Nepal's approach to increasing education access for marginalized groups including girls. Various studies (UNESCO, 2004; Acharya & Luitel, 2006 ; 2007; CERID, 2007) indicate that scholarships are effective to a certain extent for increasing girls' and disadvantaged people's access to education, as it helps in increasing educational access for which education costs are prohibitive. In other words, it helps in achieving parity in education, but does not tackle the underlying barriers (beyond poverty), underlying causes of gender inequality and institutional discrimination.

Mandatory Female Teachers

The majority of the teachers I interviewed feel that the proclamation of mandatory female teachers in primary school (MOE, 1998, p. 1) has contributed in gender equality. They viewed the presence of female teacher as a new source of role models for girls and demonstrate another type of employment other than working at home. Moreover, they believed that both parents and girls feel safer in schools when female teachers are present, as chances of sexual abuse and harassments by male teachers decrease under these circumstances. Because of that, girls learn well when they are taught by female teachers. This results in the increase in both participation and performance in education. The CERID study also showed that schools with more female teachers had a higher enrolment of girls (2004). This indicates parents' tendency to send their daughters to schools which have female teachers. However, teaching is still largely a male domain, even at the primary school level (DOE, 2004, p. 35). BPEP Gender Audit (2002) recommended filling vacant general quotas with female teachers only so as to add temporary female teachers (CERID, 2004). Acknowledging the important role of female teachers in increasing girls' access to

school and for gender equality Bista recommended for “two female teachers per school” (2006).

In all three schools of Srikhandapur, there are more than two female teachers in the primary level. However, there are none in the secondary level. When I asked about the reasons for not having female teachers in the secondary level in SHSS, one of the female teachers said the former head teacher had very negative attitude towards female teachers. He characterized female teachers as ‘lazy,’ talkative,’ ‘more concerned with household work,’ and ‘less regular and punctual in classes.’ He never accepted female teachers. This female teacher explained that she had to fight hard even to receive her monthly salary.

The absence of female teachers in the secondary level in both schools demonstrates the negative attitudes of males toward females. Women are perceived as ‘less competent,’ ‘more appropriate for junior grades as teachers,’ ‘less sincere and hardworking,’ ‘less prepared to take on difficult assignments,’ ‘less able to work as strong administrators,’ and ‘less competent to teach Science and Math’ in comparison to men (Bista, 2006). These perceptions have not been challenged and changed even though there are enough qualified graduate women available in the schools’ vicinity, such as in Dhulikhel, Banepa and Panuti municipalities. Nevertheless, the CERID study indicated the scarcity of female teachers at lower secondary and secondary levels (2009). There are female teachers in both schools qualified for higher levels, but they were appointed for lower levels of teaching. This was because the advertisement for the post of higher level teachers was not made for many years in case of community schools.

From the above views of teachers and of researchers, it is revealed that mandatory female teacher provision has helped in promoting gender equality in

education. However, achieving gender balance in teaching staff still has a long way to go, as the study revealed there is an absence of female teachers even in the secondary schools, which are located within the vicinity of Kathmandu University and close to the capital of Nepal. How can we expect there to be female teachers in remote areas where it is difficult to even find SLC graduate women? Thus, execution of the resolution of 33 per cent women's representation of the House of Representatives (2007) in the education sector for staffing the schools strategically is imperative.

Welcome to School Program

Most teachers also consider the government's Welcome to School (WTS) program to be a positive practice for the promotion of gender equality. The program helped to bring children to school through the door-to-door campaign, but it is difficult to convince parents from disadvantaged communities to send their children to school because of their economic condition and attitude towards girls says the headmaster of SPS. The campaign has been very effective in reducing out-of school children (UNGEI, 2012).

The purpose of the campaign was to get out-of-school children in school, especially girls and those from disadvantaged community like Dalits or ethnic Janajatis. The purpose was also to improve teaching and learning environments so that children would remain in and complete primary school. The scheme has been rolled out in all 75 districts and targeted the disadvantaged communities to increase enrolment of children, provide quality education and create awareness among family members about the need for education.

"Nowadays, it is a ritual for the schools to launch WTS without focusing on disadvantaged families and communities to reach to the hard core unreached children", says Goma, a teacher of SPS. Bima, a teacher of SHSS also expressed her

disappointment in the way WTS is launched nowadays. She said that a school administration thinks that enrolling children in primary schools is the responsibility of primary level teachers instead of the school itself. In her observation,

Still parents from disadvantaged communities are interested in incentive rather than education for their daughters' development. They do not see the scope of breaking the vicious circle of poverty. Parents expect support for their living, which we do not have. Achhami (Dalit) tole of this area is an example. Their children do not come to school. We have not reached to them either.

WTS has played a positive role in bringing disadvantaged children to school, which helped in achieving parity in education. However, it does not address underlying causes of gender equality in education in a sustainable way. The scheme has to be more strategic in bringing the hard to reach children in school.

These good practices may bring some improvement in achieving parity and increasing girls and boys performances in education, but for creating the ability to achieve gender equality requires the transformation of deep-seated relations between women and men, and their practices within social institutions such as families, societies and schools. Without such changes, there is a danger that reforms aimed at achieving gender equality in education will become insignificant (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005). But Subramanian has a different view. She opines that gender inequality in society is a huge issue that cannot be tackled by education alone. However, education systems and schools can contribute to gender equality rather than sustaining inequalities (2005). My argument here is, if teachers do not teach gender responsively, rather teach the course book to the test for passing examination (teachers depositing to students –‘banking’) in which patriarchal and sexist values are embedded, how can education and school system contribute to

gender equality? It rather contributes to sustaining inequalities as per Bourdieu's cultural of reproduction theory. Therefore, training to teachers is imperative to develop a new cultural capital and their habitus.

Summary of the Chapter

In summary, I have presented the challenges teachers faced while practicing gender equality. I also presented prevailing practices that contributed in promoting gender equality. Findings from both transcribed interviews and school observation notes indicated that these challenges need to be addressed in increasing gender equality in a real sense in education beyond access. Similarly, the practices which are in place to promote gender equality need to be strengthened and expanded in order to speed up the process of gender equality in education both quantitatively and qualitatively.

I proceed to the next chapter where I continue the process of analysis to glean the ways and strategies to address challenges and strengthen positive factors.

CHAPTER VII

STRATEGIES FOR GENDER RESPONSIVE TEACHING PEDAGOGY

Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I have analyzed the responses to the question of how teachers minimize challenges they face in practicing gender equality and how to promote the practices which they regard positive for promoting gender equality in order to answer my research question of what could be done in teaching gender responsively to achieve gender equality in education. The responses from in-depth interviews with research participants, information derived from school observations and thoughts extracted from the review of related documents were amalgamated in the form of strategy and are presented under the two major headings: Strategy for Addressing Challenges, and Strategy for Promoting Positive Practices in Teaching Gender Responsively for achieving gender equality in education.

Strategies for Addressing Challenges in Practicing Gender Equality in Teaching

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, my research participants have considered the traditional norms and values, low level of gender awareness, low priority for higher education of girls, lack of females in decision making, school uniforms and prevailing negative perspectives towards public school as the challenges affecting their teaching gender responsively. Teachers were asked about ways to minimize and/or address these challenges. The strategies gleaned from the analysis of their responses are discussed below.

Developing Gender Awareness

Education is not only knowledge acquisition; it is crucial in the socialization process and in the transformation of norms and values, such as the development of the notion of gender inequality. Gender education should be included as a part of basic education for all members of the society. In doing so, all my participants urged for the launch of a mass gender awareness (sabai laai chetana jagaunu parcha) campaign in society by incorporating gender awareness in the curriculum of formal and non-formal education, and in training and sensitization activities to reach every member of every family. They see gender inequalities at the household level in the family, and thus there are major problems in achieving gender equality in education. They feel that they have been treating girls and boys equally and have been giving them equal opportunity; therefore, the problems lie not in school but in the family and society, as gender inequalities are institutionalized in the norms and practices of families and society, but not much in school. In the opinion of Goma, a teacher at SPS, teachers' frustration with the teaching profession is due to parents' lack of awareness.

What can we do if a family does not send their girls on time despite our many requests? What can we do if a family does not provide the environment for girls to study and just ask her to work? What can we do if boys are sent to schools in dirty clothes despite our requests? What can we do if they think that our school is a public school so there is no need to be punctual and attend regularly, as there is no fine? This is the understanding of many families of children studying here. The concept of sharing of work by both boys and girls has to be nurtured by parents at home, not by teachers in schools. Family members are the ones who follow the traditional gender division of labour which puts pressure on girls. At school, we ask both.

The teachers insisted that discrimination against and exploitation of girls and sometimes against boys also happens in the family and in societies that deprive them of education, negatively impacting their whole lives. Therefore, if gender inequalities and other inequalities are to be rectified, society as a whole has to be aware of them. “Gender inequality is a social disease. Awareness is a vital treatment,” says Buddha, a teacher of SHSS. Emphasizing that the father’s awareness is imperative, Dipesh from the same school opined that since men are the decision-makers in most families, they will not allow a woman to be aware of gender inequalities unless he is self aware. Gender problems can be resolved by creating awareness in every family, but the father should be the first person to be sensitized. Gender equality cannot be achieved without improved, civilized and progressive families. The father as the head of the family must be sensitized first, either by the school or by other institutions such as VDCs and MDCs. Concurring with the idea of father first sensitization, Kama shared that her children imitate their father, so both her son and daughter do household chores. She praised her spouse for sharing household work at home.

The need for massive awareness campaigns was expressed strongly by the SPS head teacher. He said that achieving gender equality is a herculean task, and requires a movement more like a revolution (kranti) for political change. It should be a continuous campaign like the Welcome to School (WTS) program. Another teacher, Bima, recommended incorporating gender equality as an agenda in every parent’s meeting and SMC meeting. Sulekha and Hakim of GSA also think that gender equality related issues such as the behaviour of students to students and to teachers needs to be a regular agenda of the meetings to prevent discipline problems and misbehaviour towards female teachers and female students.

Gender awareness does not mean awareness only about discrimination against women and girls. It is about both. “Boys are stereotyped earlier and harsher than girls, and their stereotypes have tight boundaries. Careers from teaching to social work, from dance to nursing are routinely denied to countless boys. It is time we understood that the gender bias and stereotypes are persistent problems for both males and females. It is not the one or the other gender problem; gender bias is the problem, state Sadker and Zittleman (2009). They further write that those who do not believe gender bias is a problem believe males and females are wired differently, have different brains and that this is all part of nature’s plan. This is a challenging mentality to change. Gender equality is neither a competition nor is it only about females. This has to be internalized by all so that resistance to gender awareness campaigns will be reduced.

Engendering Teacher Education

As mentioned earlier, teachers, both men and women, are also the products of the gender construct of any society. In order to be awakened, gender training is imperative. Though none of the teachers from public schools say they do not know about gender, all teachers demanded gender training for quality education. Quality education is crucial for gender equality. I argue that ‘gender equality education’ is a prerequisite for quality education. Maintaining gender discrimination by increasing access to such education is just a reproduction of patriarchal culture, as Pierre Bourdieu has proved in his theory of cultural reproduction. I argue that such education that perpetuates the concept of inequalities, discrimination and sexism cannot be called quality education. Therefore, teachers as the key actors of social transformation need to become more aware of gender issues – existing inequalities, sexism, stereotyping that are embedded in education. By providing gender training in teacher

education and making it mandatory, it will become the norm for every teacher to learn about this issue rather than supplying based on demand. SPS teachers felt that a school-based training tailored to the local context would be better for developing common understanding and skills rather than providing training in isolation (in training centre). The teachers' role should be extended to teach/counsel parents so that schools get support in bringing about a change in society. Schools should act as a change agent. For this, training to teachers is a prerequisite but not a sufficient condition. Thus, engendering teacher training is essential.

Engendering Education

As mentioned earlier, one of the goals of EFA is to attain gender equality in education. However, research on gender and education carried out indicates that gender inequalities are manifested in the education sector and perpetuated through educational structures and processes. As a result, what is reproduced in school is a gendered society (Commonwealth Secretariat, June, 1999). The research (CERID, 2004, 2006, 2009; SDRC, 2007; UNICEF & UNGEI, 2006; UNICEF, ROSA, 2007, 2009; UNESCO & UNICEF, 2010) findings indicate that the perpetuation of gender inequalities and discrimination continue.

As mentioned in the earlier chapters, primary school and lower secondary school curricula and textbooks, such as the Nepali textbook of grade four and English textbook of grade three, perpetuate inequalities despite 2002 gender audit's recommendation that curriculum be made gender sensitive. To address this situation a shift is necessary. It is not enough to ensure that everyone has access to education for achieving parity in education but deliberately all curricular and extracurricular activities of all levels need to be based on the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination .

Increasing Female Teachers' Participation in Decision Making

In all the three schools, female teachers' participation in decision making was found limited. In the public schools of Srikhandpur, general staff meetings are the only mechanism in place for female participation. The majority of female teachers expressed their limited access to decision making even in the school where a majority of teachers are female. Some female teachers who are in temporary positions (relief and NGO's quota) do not even feel like raising their voices for participation in decision making as they are afraid of losing their jobs. Worst is the situation in private schools, where there are hardly any regular teachers at the secondary level. Almost all teachers at the secondary level, apart from major shareholders, are on a period-based contract. In fact, they all are mobile teachers.

All my research participants feel the need for active female participation in school management. Their representation in school management committees and other decision making positions must be made mandatory. Female teachers want their representation in the committees. One of the female teachers opined that there should be separate management within SHSS at the primary level for the good of teachers, students and the school. Having only one management committee overlooks primary level as they focus on the secondary level, especially on School Leaving Certificate course and exam. This excludes female teachers, but is considered natural as there is no secondary level female teacher in SHSS or in GSA. The importance of having female teachers as role models for female students is just as relevant at the secondary as at the primary level. Female teachers can also make classrooms seem like safer and more inviting places for girls and young women and, in the process, encourage them to continue their education (UNESCO, 2012, p, 99).

Female teachers of all three schools and some male teachers voiced the opinion that the government should comply with the resolution of thirty three per cent women's representation in secondary school and its management as well. This idea is valid for bringing visible changes to the education sector, as institutional and/or legislative frameworks play an important role. For example, the Community Forestry Regulation mandated at least 30 per cent women representation by women in Forest Users' Groups (FUG). Now change is more visible, and women are empowered to influence decisions by voicing their concerns. In contrast, the Education Regulation only mandates SMCs include one woman (Acharya, 2007), which makes her invisible in a crowd of men. Thus, I urge that teachers demand the implementation of the thirty-three per cent resolution. In addition, I urge that barriers to creating conducive environments for female teachers be addressed by recognizing the contribution they play in promoting a positive image of women, as recommended by the CERID (1997).

School Management Committees (SMCs) play a critical role in school governance. The body is entrusted with 33 roles and responsibilities including planning, policy making and appointing staff. In such an important body, women are only token members, with little or no voice in decision-making (GSEAU, 2010, as cited in Terry & Thapa, 2012, p. 54). In the school management committee, there is no female teacher representation though the Education Act (Eighth amendment), 2004, article 12.1 has made a female member from parents mandatory in all types of school.

Female teachers emphasized that although a quota for women is key to securing the presence of women in decision making bodies, quotas alone are not enough to turn women's presence into influence. They argued that female

participation through nomination is not adequate for representing more than half the population; and that representation by nomination is unlikely to bring the appropriate representative as men's interest or nepotism is likely to be an overriding factor.

Female teachers urged for equal representation of men and women as is done in the Forest Users' Committee. The Community Forestry Development Program (2008) guideline reserved 50% of seats for women in User Committees. The guideline also states that a woman should be either Chairperson or Secretary of the User Committee. They also suggested formulating the rules so as to ensure that a minimum number of women must be present at a meeting before a decision can be made (United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator's Office, 2012).

Developing Gender Equality Policy in Education

Emphasizing the need of gender equality policy in education, Sudhir, a teacher at SHSS said,

The culture of equality should be nurtured by reward and punishment for all. As caste discrimination was made illegal, gender discrimination must also be made illegal. The parents who discriminate against their children by sending girls to public/community schools and sons to private/institutional schools and vice-versa should be punished by law. Similarly, parents who make only girls work and allow boys to be free from household chores should also be penalized. Girls needing to take household responsibility from a young age, lack of encouragement and learning environment at home are major reasons for girls' low participation and performance in education. Thus, gender equality in education policy should be enforced and implemented from the top. There should not be a liberal policy in this regard.

Need for gender equality policy in education was recommended by various studies done in different times by different organizations (SDRC, 2007; Acharya, 2007; UNGEI, 2008; UNICEF, ROSA, 2009; Terry & Thapa, 2012). Though there are no explicit comprehensive gender equality policies, MOES published a gender mainstreaming strategy in 2006 and subsequently produced the Strategic Implementation Plan for Gender Equality in Girls' Education (SIPGEGE) in 2007. In developed countries, like the USA, UK and Taiwan there are acts to ensure non-discrimination. In the United States, the Equal Opportunity in Education Act was introduced on October 9, 2002 by amending the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Taiwan has passed and implemented the Gender Equity Education Act in 2004. In the United Kingdom, the Equality Act was enacted in 2010 by replacing all previous equality legislations, which prevents discrimination in schools against pupils because of their sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability etc.

In Nepal, though the House of Representatives passed the Gender Equality bill on September 28, 2006, discrimination embedded in the education system has not been eliminated. We cannot expect people with non-discriminatory attitudes and practices while education provides explicitly and implicitly discriminatory education; therefore, only non-discriminatory equality education can cultivate the feeling and practice of equality. In doing so, there is a need for comprehensive gender equality education policy for gender proofing. Gender proofing is defined as: a check carried out on any policy proposal to ensure that any potential gender discrimination arising from that policy has been avoided and that gender equality is promoted (Area Development Management Limited [ADM], 2000, p. 52).

Strategies for Reinforcing Positive Practices

I was thrilled to find some of the conscious practices contributing to gender equality, for instance unisex comfortable uniform in SHSS, daily news sharing SPS, forming a mixed volley ball team in GSA. Besides, conscious efforts of teachers in interacting with boys and girls equally in class and seeking participation of boys and girls in school activities are the positive practices found in schools which need to be re-enforced further. On the other hand, scholarships, incorporation of gender equality and children rights texts in school curriculum, mandatory provision of female teachers, welcome to school programs, mandatory provision of female's participation in school governance such as SMC and PTA, which are initiatives from the government are also considered positive practices by teachers to be strengthened further with necessary improvements. In this milieu, participants were asked to give their opinions on the ways of promoting these positive practices further. Major ways of doing this were providing exposure and interaction opportunity; lobbying advocacy; mainstreaming gender in school; and assigning gender focal persons in school. These all are discussed below:

Providing Exposure and Interaction Opportunity

When asked how teachers /schools can maximize the positive practices that they are already doing, some of the teachers, namely Shamim, Maju, Pritam, and Goma of SPS, and Sulekha of GSA expressed that exposure visits and interaction between schools at the individual and school-level helps to learn positive practices of other schools. They even mentioned the names of Rato Bangala assisted schools in Kabhre. Concurring with teachers, the head teacher of SPS acknowledged that he has learned the concept of 'news sharing' and mixed floor sitting arrangement from other

schools. He also said he will introduce practical unisex uniforms in consultation with the PTA and SMC in the upcoming school session.

Shamim, also recommended exposure as a strategy not only for teachers but also for the community so that they will learn by seeing and sharing. There are families and communities with better practices who should be identified and exposed, for instance the child friendly village initiative of Tharu communities in Kailali and Kanchanpur. Similarly, Hakim has expressed that the idea of a mixed volleyball team germinated from brain-storming within the school after they received an invitation to participate in the Teacher's Volleyball Tournament, organized in 2066 by the Emmanuel English Boarding School. The organizer and participating schools all appreciated and acknowledged that the GSA team consisted of both genders as unique team. When asked the reasons for including female teachers in the team, Hakim said:

We decide to include three female teachers who know how to play to get nine-medals and to provide the opportunity to play in cases of need. Other teams could have done the same, but they didn't. We did and we are very happy and female teachers are happy and the organizer of the tournament was also happy. Talking to you, I have realized that the step we took was good even for bringing gender equality.

He further said,

We will continue this practice as we do have female teachers who can play and are willing to play. In schools too, we have games for extra-curricular activities. Students play games in mixed teams. But for the tournament/competitions we do that in single –sex with the view that both genders will get opportunity to win medals, as we do feel that if competition is

made between male and female students, female students may not win as male students are relatively better in games because of their bodies.

The above discussion reveals that exposure and interaction amongst the teachers helps in further expanding positive practices. Even the three schools situated within Srikhandapur do not have interaction between and among schools. To expand positive practices they initiated, they need to share with each other. For doing so, an interaction and exposure visit to each school is recommended.

Advocacy

Advocacy as a strategy was mentioned in the Education for All National Plan of Action (EFA NPA 2001-2015) for achieving gender parity and social equality. It calls for mass awareness in favour of child rights and fulfilment of the obligations and eradication patriarchal ways of behaviour, false attitudes, caste and ethnicity ridden fallacies, and litigation at the local level through advocacy programs and improved communication technologies. However, activities of the MOE seem to be focused on increasing enrolment by addressing practical needs such as monetary support, scholarships, female toilets, feeder schools, etc. rather than advocacy to address strategic needs. The need for thirty three per cent women's representation at all levels of teaching and school governance was stressed by all female teachers and some male teachers. They said that there is a need for lobbying and pressuring teachers' unions, thereby the government, to effectively implement it, so that their participation will be visible and will contribute to quality education. In connection with this, Aikman and Unterhalter said "Quality education cannot be achieved without gender equality and equity" (2005).

While the country is on the verge of promulgating a new constitution for Nepal, strategic interests, such as advocacy for ensuring at least thirty three per cent

women's representation at all level in every decision making mechanism in every school, should be the focus of the gender section of the Department of Education. A current trend of merely making a female teacher mandatory at the primary level, and making a woman representative compulsory in SMCs and PTAs (as a symbol/token) will promote a negative image to the masses, including girls, if women are not able to influence decisions and play active roles in the midst of men. Women often get lost in the crowd of men, as precisely said by Bista (2006). Application of the resolution in reality brings gender parity to the teaching profession. It communicates a positive message of 'equality' to boys and girls. This also contributes to developing positive perceptions towards female teachers, which in turn contributes highly to achieving gender parity in education.

Another advocacy issue mentioned by all teachers is making education accessible and affordable to girls and the disadvantaged beyond primary grades to a minimum of higher secondary level, as employment is hardly available for non-higher secondary school graduates. Successful implementation of mandatory female teachers in primary school also necessitates higher secondary school graduates. Without employability, their economic status in society remains inferior and perceptions towards women and girls remain traditional. This was the view of almost all teachers.

Adequacy and proper use of scholarship was another issue raised by almost all teachers, though offering scholarships is a positive practice. Teachers were concerned that scholarships must reach the most needy, and the current situation in which those who may not need monetary support and those who need such support are not getting adequate amounts should be ended (UNICEF ROSA, 2007). Education should be totally free, thereafter much support should be given to the few neediest to bring them to school, retain them, and support their success in school. The current trend of

distributing to all from the amount given should be stopped. One who could afford sending their children to school do not deserve scholarships which detract from the portion of poor or girls students. As Acharya (2007) wrote, “The amount requires revisiting because as of now the scholarship amount is not adequate even to meet direct costs”. Secondly, the intent and thrust of scholarship also needs to be made clear to the management and community; that it is a temporary special measure to correct the past and is not against the thrust of gender equality, as stated in the CEDAW. “Temporary special measures’, such as quotas, shall not be considered a form of discrimination, because their ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (article 4).”

As urged by my research participants, a comprehensive study on the effectiveness of scholarships for girls and others should be carried out to determine whether they help or hinder in internalizing the concept of gender equality. While doing this, alternative ways of supporting the neediest without promoting the feeling of disempowerment or inequalities should be identified to get away from the present concept of scholarship as money for girls simply for being female, and money for boys and girls being Dalit or disadvantaged. Feelings of inferiority should not be nurtured in the name of support through scholarship, though it is considered the linchpin incentive for girls and the disadvantaged for enrolling in schools.

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in School

Ensuring that textbooks enhance ‘gender equality’ and mutual understanding between men and women is the bottom line for mainstreaming gender equality. “We cannot leave this issue to the self decision (swabibek) of teachers, it should be in the textbooks in the curriculum and in teaching methods” says, Pitambar, a teacher of SHSS. Inclusion of gender equality and children’s rights content in textbooks is a

positive practice, which makes teachers learn before they teach students said, Puru, a teacher of SHSS. While talking to Sulekha, and other primary teachers who were with her during in-depth interview and who had studied Health, Population and Environment Education (HPEE) nodded in agreement. Chitrakar says, “Just as the teacher training curriculum has remained gender blind, primary education curriculum too does not bring the explicit message of practicing gender responsive pedagogy into the school and classroom. Most schools simply impart subject knowledge to students which they will have to reproduce in examination papers to demonstrate their proficiency (UNICEF ROSA, 2009, p. 80). The context has not changed much even after this study recommended to the Ministry of Education.

As Chitrakar recommended for transformative change from below, gender equality needs to be mainstreamed at the school level. For doing so, a gender analysis of school contexts is a necessary step for preparing a gender responsive School Improvement Plan (SIP). Preparation of gender responsive SIP is essential, as it should ideally lay the foundation for the more macro-level ASIP of the DOE. In doing so, there is an urgent need to sensitize Village/Municipality Education Committee (V/MEC), SMC and school administrations on gender equality as the gender blind context is so pervasive at the community and school level. It is not realistic to expect gender responsive SIP, and the ASIP of the DOE without awakening the stakeholders responsible for producing them. Besides, there is a need for gender equality mainstreaming across the Ministry. As Chitrakar recommended rightly, the need for an explicit harmony between gender policies and program implementations, such as the teacher training initiatives of NCED, the curriculum revision processes of the CDC, and the literacy and non-formal education programs of

the NFEC all of which by and large do not address gender issues (UNICEF ROSA, 2009, p. 90).

A globally accepted strategy ‘gender mainstreaming’ needs to be followed so that gender perspective will be applied at all stages from the school to ministry level. Clarifying the wider sense of gender mainstreaming, Caber and Subrahmanian wrote:

In the education sector, this would include not only the activities of governments, but also those of schools, colleges, education institutions and, where appropriate, of NGOs and the private sectors as well rather than adding on a women's component to existing policies, plans, programs and projects, a gender perspective informs these at all stages, and in every aspect of the decision-making process. Gender mainstreaming may thus entail a fundamental transformation of the underlying paradigms that inform education. (2008, p. 2)

Assigning Gender Focal Persons in School

Suku has to be the mouth piece of girls in school and to support the girls as they hesitate to tell their problems to male class teachers. In order to address gender specific issues and to mainstream gender equality in schools, a gender focal point (GFP) is necessary in the school as in the DEO, DOE and MOE. It will avoid the common trend of “everybody being responsible, but nobody acting.” Assigning teachers (male and female) to act as gender focal points helps in advancing gender equality agenda in school such as creating encouraging atmosphere of learning during menstruation, assisting them to cover lessons if in case they miss. By doing so, it helps to create awareness amongst teachers, students and parents about the taboos and myths of menstruation. It also helps in exploring positive practices, building context-based new practices like sharing stories of success, quotes, sayings and words of

wisdom related with gender. All these can be done appropriating the morning assembly mechanism.

The system of assigning a gender focal person in every ministry and ministry's division was introduced as a mechanism to mainstream gender after the Beijing Conference in 1995. As all ministries required a gender focal person, the MOES assigned gender focal persons in all the divisions (i.e. CDC, NCED, Teacher Service Commission, HSEB and OCE) in 2006 as part of the Ministry's initiative to facilitate its gender mainstreaming policy. These focal persons were provided with gender-related training by UNESCO Kathmandu. Though they are not empowered enough to influence their institutions due to their positioning in the lower stratum of bureaucracy, they became aware of issues as they got the opportunity to learn and share from the monthly meeting of gender focal persons coordinated by the MOWCSW. At the DOE, the former women education unit was upgraded into the Gender Equality Development section following the gender audit (2002) recommendation, and it acts as gender focal point at the central level.

At the district level, the District Women and Child Development Office (DWCO) as a line agency at the district level of the MOWCSW, organizes gender focal persons meetings to influence mainstreaming gender in district-level plans. Therefore, it can be said that a system of assigning gender focal points has not reached to the school level, where the need is graver to make the school gender responsive and through schools to make the families and societies responsive to the gender issues. It is a step and mechanism to make gender equality an issue in school; hitherto it was not seen as an issue beyond enrolment.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter I have discussed the strategies to address the challenges teachers faced in schools with regards to practicing gender equality. I also discussed the ways and means of strengthening current practices that are not only school-specific, but the practices that are initiated by the government which teachers regard as positive.

In a situation where teachers are trained in delivering content and are expected to teach a subject, it is not realistic to expect the revelation of many positive practices. However, some practices were gleaned successfully, which may be enhanced further and shared further to other schools.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter Overview

This chapter begins with summarizing the data collection and analysis processes. It then discusses how I responded to my research question. It also includes a discussion on the major conclusions linking poststructural theory and Bordieu's theory of cultural reproduction which I used as lenses for this study. The chapter ends with the presentation of relevant implications derived from the study.

Summary of Data Collection and Analysis

The major focus of my study was to discern teachers' perspectives and practices on gender equality. I was guided by a set of beliefs, namely multiple realities (ontology), and constructivism (epistemology). Using a feminist perspective in general and post-structural feminist theory in particular, I conducted qualitative research. I used in-depth interviews, observations and document study to collect data. I purposively selected Srihandapur. With the support of informants, I chose all three schools situated within its geographical area: Srihandapur Primary School, Srihandapur Higher Secondary School, and Golden Siddhartha Academy.

In addition, I purposively selected the teachers for in-depth interview and class observations with the permission and consultation with the gate keepers, i.e. 'head teachers/ principals' of the selected schools. I observed schools keenly and intensively from the perspective of research participants during school hours repeatedly and continuously. I gathered the data until I reached a theoretical saturation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 202, as cited in Patton, 1990, p. 185). In other words, I collected the

data until the data collection process revealed no new data to me and my research assistant. The data were collected strategically, securing the consent of teacher and observing the ethical principles that classes, students' right to learn, and teachers' responsibility to teach were not hampered.

I transcribed all the data following the definition of Clifford, (1990) (see chapter 3 data analysis and interpretation). I immersed myself in the data by thoroughly reading the transcribed texts several times (Bernard, 1991; Polit & Beck, 2004), thereby tidying it up. I catalogued the data school-wise and teacher-wise, and then conducted data analysis using the inductive content analysis method: coding, categorizing, and abstracting to making sense of what is in the data (Creswell, 2003, p. 190). By doing so, I discovered teachers' understanding of gender concepts' and their perceptions and practices as expressed and exhibited by teachers themselves. To give meaning to the data (Creswell, 2003, p.194), I linked these findings with theories and related literatures I studied throughout the research period. In relation to concepts of gender, gender equality and gender equality in education, I examined the results relating to UNESCO's definition of gender and gender equality in education and the post-structural feminist perspective on gender.

Findings and Discussion

In this this section, findings that are revealed from the research question-wise data analysis are presented and discussed from poststructuralist feminist perspectives using post-structural concepts and Bordieu's theory of cultural reproduction where I found them relevant.

Poststructuralist feminists have a great concern with language and believe that through language gender is constructed and dwelled meaning (knowledge) through language. Using this lens, my study was based on the belief that knowledge and

understanding about gender was conveyed through language and therefore, I sought to understand teachers' understanding of the gender concepts and their perceptions and practices through their expressions and interactions in Nepali language during in-depth interviews. Chapter IV gave a detailed account of teachers' perceptions on gender equality, 'gender', 'equality', 'gender equality' and gender equality in education.

Teachers are Familiar with Gender Equality Concepts, but Perceptions are Still Conventional

The study found that teachers, both men and women, are familiar with the concepts 'gender' (*Laingik*), 'equality' (*Samanata*) and 'gender equality' (*Laingik Samanata*) regardless of their genders and the level of school at which they teach.

The term 'gender' is known to all participants. However, the majority of them perceive it to mean the same as sex (*Linga*) in binary male and female concepts, without making distinctions between these two concepts. This could be because of the language. As most Asian languages including Nepali have only one word – 'linga' used for both sex and gender unlikely in English which has two different words – sex and gender (Bhasin, 2000). Though, 'linga' for the concept 'sex' and 'laingik' for the concept 'gender' has been in usage for some years, linguists and development professionals are still trying to find out culturally suitable, and easily definable or self explanatory word, which wipes out the generation old concept made based on external genitals (Shrestha, 1994). This could be the reason some of the teachers even did not feel the need to distinguish between these two terms, which indicates that the ideology of binary -male and female, and societal divisions along such biological concepts is still prevalent. As the term 'linga' also denotes male external genital, hesitations to talk about were observed at the outset of in-depth interview. Most teachers are

governed by the essentialist belief that gender divisions are normal and natural, and assume that there is a core and essence of humanity that makes people what they are which is fixed. Though, this essentialist' theory of biological determinism was challenged by many social constructionists including post-structural and postmodern feminism.

Poststructuralist feminists argue ubiquitous division of people through language into two unequally valued categories, thus they trouble the binary construct, because such construct placed women usually on the wrong side of binaries and at the bottom of hierarchies. For instance according to structure, the first term in the binaries such as culture/nature, mind/body, and rational /irrational, subject/object are male and privileged whereas the second term is female and disadvantaged.

Foucault's (1970) study on archaeology of the human sciences has revealed the history of how language has been used to construct these binaries, hierarchies, categories, and complex classification schemes that are said to reflect an innate, intrinsic order in the world.

My study has also found that teachers are also familiar with the term 'gender equality'. However, they perceive the concept of 'equality' in the form of a formal equality (sameness) that treat men and women alike without differentiating (*Bived nagarnu / Saman Babahar Garnu*), while the approach of the CEDAW for gender equality is the substantive equality approach - equality of outcomes. Similarly, with regard to teachers' perceptions towards 'gender equality in education', their perceptions were marked by giving equal opportunity (*Saman Awasar*) to girls and boys in and out of classrooms, while the UNESCO's gender equality framework includes equality of access, equality in the learning process; equality of educational

outcomes; and equality of external results. All these dimensions are critical for creating equality of outcomes.

The above discussion shows that teachers' perceptions towards the concepts of gender, gender equality and gender equality in education are not updated in line with the contemporary gender concepts due to the lack of exposure and training on gender. As revealed by my study, only one participants of this study has had a gender session in formal ten month training provided by NCED. The rest have not had the opportunity to enhance their knowledge formally on 'gender' as it is yet to be systematically integrated in Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) (Terry & Thapa, 2012). They still live with conventional concept. This perception is prevailing as these teachers are also the products of the society and have not had exposure to contemporary understanding on gender and post structural feminism, on which this dissertation is based.

Besides, the MDGs gender goal indicators also refer only to numerical parity of enrolment, not a wider concept of equality (Acharya, 2007, p. 2). Similarly, EFA also focuses on 'parity in education' by focusing mainly on equal access to education not 'equality in education'. A study by Chisamya, DeJaeghere, Kendall, and Khan, (2011) in Bangladesh and Malawi has found that educational initiatives focused on achieving gender parity has not signalled an end to (or transformation of) gender inequities in the schools or communities. Gender parity often maintained a gender inequitable status-quo, did not address systemic discrimination or violence, and at times may even have been detrimental to equality and empowerment outcomes in the schools. If the study was conducted in Nepal, findings would have been similar to the status of girls and women in Bangladesh and Malawi. Thus, current international efforts focused on equal opportunity for parity rather than equality also have

contributed in nurturing current teachers' gender equality concepts equated with parity.

Post-structural feminists are concerned with the concepts of power and institution. Aiming to gain insight on how power relations are constituted, and reproduced in school through teachers' practices in and out of the classroom in school, I did systematic observation of the class room teaching and teachers' interactions in school. While observing verbal as well as and non-verbal languages were observed to get the true sense. Chapter V exposed vividly the teachers' practices on gender equality to contribute in achieving gender equality in education.

Teachers Value 'Gender Equality', but Perpetuate Inequality Inadvertently

With regard to practice, the study discovered that all teachers value gender equality and claim that they practice equality. In reality, they unconsciously treat students unequally by concentrating their attention more on boys than girls, reinforcing gender stereotypes embedded in the text books, arranging sex-segregating seating, using gender exclusive and non-honorific language, excluding girls in many sports and games, and imposing a sex segregated dress code. These practices contribute in constituting and reproducing unequal power relations inadvertently as these practices may not facilitate in developing the sense of equal worth amongst the students of different genders. Such practices of teachers may contribute in reproducing patriarchal cultural capital in the society by putting the dominant group, the privileged ones, in more privileged positions. Similarly, such practices make children learn to accept dominant ideologies of feminine and masculine gender (Measor & Sikes, 1992) rather than deconstructing these ideas as urged by post-structural feminists such as Butler (1990) who advocates for 'gender trouble' and Lober, (2006) who appealed for a degendering movement to achieve gender equality.

I argue that such practices in and out of the classroom are not unusual in the context given that teachers have not had exposure and that the EFA policy document itself doesn't make sufficient efforts to instil contemporary ideologies. What could one expect from the teachers who lack exposure to contemporary gender discourse of the time? Maslak (CERID, 2005) who has analyzed EFA policy documents of 1990, 1996 and 2000, has found that these documents do not align with the ideologies of the time, rather predominantly reflect the WID ideology perpetuating the same liberal model whose concern is to establish equality of opportunity for girls to existing educational resources without radically transforming the present social and political system (Weedon, 1987, p. 5).

If teachers were given exposure to contemporary gender discourse and developed skills on gender responsive pedagogy such as the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) (Mlama, *et al.*, 2005), and Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) (Jung & Chung, 2005) have done to enable teachers to teach gender equality, teachers would have better perspectives to break the cycle of reproduction of patriarchal culture through deconstruction of present concepts of equality equated with numerical parity and equal access by following appropriate pedagogy.

Post-structural feminists view school/ institution should serve to acknowledge and critique set notions of identity, including gender and marginalized identities (UNGEI, 2012, p. 4). In this process, teachers/educators as facilitators play important role in providing situations and spaces whereby teachers and students can participate in reciprocal exchange, where teachers are no longer the disseminators of knowledge, instead, and teachers facilitate learning experiences. Thus, pedagogy is a central

concern in education for post-structural feminists. They believe that it's where theory and practice meet.

Practices that contribute in promoting gender equality in education were garnered from in-depth interviews with research participants, school observations and document study and were presented in chapter VI along with the challenges teachers faced while practice gender equality.

Prevailing Practices in Schools Contributing to Gender Equality in Education

Although teachers have not had the exposure to new concepts which prompt progression, conscious attempts have been made and various positive practices have been initiated consciously to address gender inequalities. One of the most noteworthy is the incorporation of gender equality in school text books such as children's rights in the subject of Nepali in grade four, and '*Laingic samanta*' (gender equality) in the subject of Environment, Population and Health (EPH) in grade nine. This has made students and teachers familiar with the terms. Another one is teachers' conscious attempt to interact equally in the class with girls and boys, who make students, feel that they are valued and given opportunity equally. Comfortable unisex uniforms in Shrikhandpur Higher Secondary School is also considered a good practice worth emulating as it nurtures a feeling of equality, and enables girls to participate in games and sports freely. Besides these practices, there are many practices which support achieving gender equality. They are: 1) 'culture of morning assembly' led by boy and girl students turn by turn, which builds students' confidence and implicitly conveys the message of 'Laingic Samanata', 2) mandatory provision of female representation in SMC, and PTA which has created a space and place for woman to show their capacities to play various non-traditional roles, which is in feminist term – deconstruction of gender roles, 3) mandatory female teacher, which has created a role

model to girls for employment other than working at home and developed safer feelings in parents to send girls to schools, 4) scholarship schemes for girls and disadvantaged groups, which has given them the opportunity to get education to children from low income families, 5) welcome to school program, which has helped to bring children into schools from hard to reach families, particularly girls by convincing parents and guardians, and 6) I/NGO support, which has helped in mobilizing and managing resources, bringing new perspectives, experience, and in some cases initiate change along with gender equality. All these practices contribute to nurturing gender equality 'habitus' in the young students thereby helping in creating gender equality 'field' – family, society and school.

Teachers Encounter Various Challenges While Practicing Gender Equality

While practicing gender equality to change the state of inequalities, teachers encounter many challenges such as traditional norms and values; low levels of gender awareness of students' parents; low education level of females; low representation of women in decision making; and lack of focus on higher education for girls and parents' discrimination against community schools. These findings indicate that changing perceptions and practices in gender is a complex and delicate issue as it demands a transformation in our social norms and values, and beliefs. It is more challenging in a country like ours where education and awareness levels in this regard are quite low.

Pedagogy is a central concern for post-structural feminists in education. They believe that it's where theory and practice meet. Thus, they advocate appropriate pedagogical styles –dialogue- that enable women and men to listen to themselves and each other, so that they live as well as teach gender equality, which means increasing consciousness among students of misconceptions, prejudices, and stereotypes, and the

ability to criticize and challenge these. Pedagogy for gender equality is not only a matter of professional orientation, but also of changing personal behaviour among teachers and other education officials, and challenging some of the deeply held assumptions that perpetuate inequalities (Aikman, Unterhalter, & Challender, 2005).

Strategies to Address Challenges and Promote Gender Equality Practices

Post-structural feminists argue that ubiquitous division of people into two unequally valued categories - the gendered social order gives gender inequality. They urge for degendering movement to deconstruct binary opposition (Lober, 2006), for deconstruction of gender by resisting 'performativity' - culturally sustained socially coerced gender performances (Butler, 1990), for challenging the relations of dominance through discourses/practices (Lather, 1991), and for converting capitalist patriarchal masculinity to feminist masculinity through feminist consciousness raising (Hook, 2000).

As strategies to address gender inequalities, post-structural feminists call for deconstruction particularly 1) binary gender category and 2) sex-gender system and when it comes to education 3) equality education equated with parity. Chapter VII illustrated the teachers considered strategies for ensuring gender responsive pedagogy. They were:

1. Creating gender awareness in all. 'Sabai laai chetana jagaunu parcha' by incorporating contemporary gender equality education in the curriculum of formal and non-formal education to reach every member of every family;
2. Engendering Teacher Education program by incorporating contemporary gender equality education in Teachers Professional Development Training (TPD) program of NCED.

3. Engendering School Education by making textbooks, materials, methods of teaching, school administration and management free from gender biases, stereotypes and sexist language.
4. Ensuring female teachers' participation in decision making by amending the Education Act to ensure 50 per cent space in all decision making mechanisms including school administration and management as applied in the Forest Users' Committee.
5. Developing Gender Equality Education Policy by developing comprehensive gender equality education policy for gender proofing to ensure that any potential gender discrimination arising from that policy has been avoided and that gender equality is promoted (Area Development Management Limited [ADM], 2000, p. 52).
6. Exposure and interaction opportunity to teachers by incorporating an interaction and exposure visit to exemplarily schools in TPD of NCED, or in ASIP of DEO or DOE or in SIP of Schools.
7. Advocating the issues: 1) implementation of the House of Representative's thirty three percent women representation resolutions into the education system, including in teaching and school governance at all levels, 2) girls and disadvantaged children's access to a minimum of higher secondary levels to increase employability, and 3) adequacy and proper use of scholarship to ensure support to those who need (UNICEF ROSA, 2007).
8. Mainstreaming gender equality in school level by ensuring it in School Improvement Plans (SIP) and assigning Gender Focal Persons in School.

Conclusion

The thrust of my study was to explore teachers' perceptions and practices on the concept of gender equality in relation to education. With the study of the literatures and the analysis of the findings from the study, I would like to conclude that the current teachers' perceptions and practices that are discovered from this study are the results of teachers' socialization in the past and lack of exposure to contemporary gender concepts. Exposure to contemporary concepts is a pre-requisite for teachers to play a crucial role in shaping such concepts and perceptions in students as they are central to creating learning environments in schools. Achievement of equality in education depends not only on children's access to school, but whether the concept of gender equality is nurtured amongst the young children through teaching as well as non-teaching behaviour of teachers in schools. But, in order to enable teachers to contribute to nurturing gender equality concepts in students in line with the contemporary concepts, it is the teachers who must have such concepts and the skills in translating these concepts into practice. Thus, my argument here is that without educating teachers in gender equality and in the gender responsive pedagogy - teaching and learning processes- teachers' prevailing conventional concept will not be transformed. Until this happens, as Bourdieu's cultural capital reproduction theory says the teachers will continually transmit the dominating patriarchal values and norms through curriculum content and teaching practices to retain inequalities in education.

Contemporary gender equality concepts do not develop on their own. They must be learned and old concepts must be de-learned while the prevailing ideas, such as perceiving human beings in binary (male –female) and hierarchical (stronger – weaker) categories, are deconstructed. Thus, the post structural feminist urges for

degendering practices (Lober, 2006), such as using non-sexist and non-pejorative language during interactions with students and teachers, unisex uniforms, equal participation in games and sports, and all subjects of studies as per students' interests. To do so, the teachers require professional and personal orientation to understand their own gender socialization and to understand how gender discrimination takes place in schools, as well as their role in addressing it, so that they will be able to raise consciousness among students about misconceptions, prejudices, and develop the ability to criticize, challenge some of the deeply held assumptions that perpetuate inequalities which in turn form gender-fair personal behaviour.

Lack of contemporary concepts keeps teachers behind the times, which means keeping a whole generation behind in redressing existing inequalities and addressing their underlying causes. This necessitates training for teachers on gender and gender equality not only in achieving parity in education but achieving substantive sustained gender equality in education. Very limited work has been done in teacher training courses to develop teachers' understanding of gender inequalities and how to overcome them in the classroom. FAWE in Africa has been providing teachers training on 'Gender Responsive Pedagogy' by training manuals based on Gender Responsive EFA Plan (UNESCO, Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, 2004) in line with EFA goals. In Nepal, too, if we develop pedagogy suited to our context and train teachers to progress in developing perceptions, they can make a difference inside school, even in contexts in which there are extensive gender inequalities outside the school.

The current trend of 'fitting/accessing women/girls into existing patriarchal education in which gender was equated with girls and equality was associated with parity (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005), does not cultivate gender equality habitus –

dispositions such as bodily comportment, ways of speaking or ways of thinking and acting (Giddens, 2009) - and practice. Rather, it perpetuates notions of inequality while striving to achieve parity in education to fulfil EFA goals. It does not challenge 'Doxa' – by virtue of being born with male sex organs boys are superior and by being born with female sex organs girls are inferior. As long as education keeps on perpetuating the notions of gender inequalities based on biological difference through text books, and teachers' gender unresponsive pedagogy, students will not accept and value equally the differences between women and men and the diverse roles they play in the society.

Thus, as a qualitative researcher, I would ask how we can develop socially suited local knowledge based Gender Equality Education (GEE) programs by using non- hierarchical binary language and prevailing positive practices for teachers. Without this, conventional concepts and practices related with gender may not transform. Without deconstructing teachers' conventional concepts and practices about gender as argued by post-structural feminist, a new generation of students may not be able to form their perceptions and practices in line with contemporary concepts that are required for achieving substantive gender equality in education in the truest sense.

In Nepal, if transformation in concepts and practice do not occur, the achievement made in parity up to the secondary level may drop-down as soon as affirmative action stops. Therefore, findings of my study call for action in developing socially suited local context-based Gender Equality Education (GEE) and Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) to develop new cultural capital in teachers so as to enable them to transform prevailing conventional perceptions and practices.

Implications

I began my study by reiterating the statement, “Gender equality must become lived reality”. It is my vision and personal and professional mission in life. To make it happen, I believe education is the key, if not delivered by perpetuating the patriarchal value which is the current cultural capital (in Bourdieu’s words) of most of the teachers. Without educating teachers further for developing a new capital in this case, knowledge and skills, on “Gender Equality Education’ and ‘Gender Responsive Pedagogy’, prevailing perceptions and practices that are detrimental to achieving gender equality in education may not transform. Thus, the implication of my study is very clear that there is a need of gender inequality awareness to all to deconstruct hierarchical binary gender construct so as to reconstruct in line with contemporary gender concepts if substantive equality in education is to be achieved in a sustained way.

Despite the fact that teachers unconsciously treat students unequally, there are indeed various positive practices that address gender inequalities. One of the noteworthy practices is an introduction of comfortable unisex uniform in Shrikhandpur Higher Secondary School. It nurtures feeling of equality, and enables girls to participate in games and sports freely. Another is the practice of ‘news sharing’ by students in the class turn by turn. These practices contribute to nurturing gender equality ‘habitus’ in the young students thereby helping in creating gender equality ‘field’ – family and society. This implies that awareness of the importance of gender and gender equality is on the rise. However, these practices which are already in place need to be reinforced and expanded further in creating it as a new cultural capital in teachers by incorporating them into Teachers Professional Development (TPD) program. For doing so, policy makers at the national level may develop

strategies for identifying and incorporating best practices in the teachers training and education program of NCED.

As the study revealed, teachers encounter many challenges in trying to practice gender equality. There is a need to create gender awareness for all ‘Sabai laai chetana jagaunu parcha’, as a movement to end inequalities by incorporating ‘gender equality education’ in the curriculum of formal and non-formal education to reach to every family member. A consensus needs to be developed that gender awareness is not only awareness about discrimination against women and girls. It is about all genders including third gender. Gender bias and stereotypes are persistent problems. It is not the one or the other gender’s problem; gender bias is the problem of all.

Teachers being the key change agent, the most reachable person in every nook and corner, would and could play an important role in raising consciousness as a campaign to begin a movement against this social evil. However, we cannot make an instant use of the teachers in this process without doing something to their perceptions. ‘Gender equality education’ through TPD could be the best first move towards this. Policy makers at the national level, DEOs at the district level and teachers at the school level need to develop strategies and program so as to include in and implement ASIP and SIP.

The study revealed that female teachers’ participation in school administration and management is found limited even in the school where majority of teachers are female, because they are not in decision making positions such as head teacher or assistant head teacher. They do not have opportunity to participate in School Management Committee, as the Education Act (Eighth amendment), 2004, article 12.1 has made the presence of only a female member from parents, but not female teacher, mandatory in all types of schools. Though there is a provision of a teacher’s

representation, female teacher is hardly selected. Equal participation of male and female is a prerequisite for making the school governance gender responsive. Therefore, it is essential to ensure a minimum of 50 per cent women participation in all decision making (Terry & Thapa, 2012) so that critical mass will be created to voice girls/ women and boys/men concerns equally in SMC and other mechanisms. They will not be lost in the crowd of men, as is the present case. Besides, there is a need of making women's active participation mandatory in the decision making process by ensuring that they will have authoritative positions such as chair, vice-chair, and secretary as applied in the Forest Users' Committee (UN RHCO, 2012) and building their capacities and confidence in order to achieve a 'critical mass of confident and capable women' for propelling transformation. Policy makers at the national level need to apply policy of gender mainstreaming a globally accepted strategy in practice more pervasively in schools. It is the site where the change should take place first for bringing about change in the generation.

As my study revealed and mentioned earlier on the current practice of 'fitting/accessing women/girls into existing patriarchal education may not cultivate gender equality habitus'. Therefore, the educationists, educators and researchers at the national level need to explore further the content and elements to be incorporated in developing our soil suited, local context based 'Gender Equality Education (GEE)' program and 'Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP)' for delivering it within and through TPD to equip teachers in cultivating new cultural capital on gender equality. It is acknowledged that more comprehensive study would be needed to reveal the local context specific contents of 'gender equality education' and the pedagogy.

REFERENCES

- Acharya, M. *et al.* (2002). *Gender budget audit in Nepal*. Kathmandu: UNIFEM.
- Acharya, S. (2007). *Social inclusion: Gender and equity in education swaps in South Asia, Nepal case study*. Kathmandu: UNICEF.
- ADB & MOES. (2006). *Gender mainstreaming strategy*. Kathmandu: Author.
- Aikman, S, Unterhalter, E, & Challender, C. (2005). The education MDGs: Achieving gender equality through curriculum and pedagogy change. *Gender and Development*, 13(1), 44-55.
- Aikman, S., & Unterhalter, E. (2007). *Practicing gender equality in education*. United Kingdom: Oxfam GB.
- Allana, A., Asad, N., & Sherali, M. (2010). Gender in academic settings: Role of teachers. *International Journal of Innovation, Management and Technology*, 1(4), 343-348.
- Andersan, J. H. *et al.* (2001). *Postmodern and poststructural theory: Handbook of research for educational communications and technology*. Bloomington: The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT).
- Anderson, J. H. (1992). *Connecting voices: Feminist pedagogy and hypertext*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Andrade, A. D. (2009). Interpretive research aiming at theory building: Adopting and adapting the case study design. *The Qualitative Report*, 14(1), 42-60.
- Ankerbo, S., & Hoyda, K. (2003). *Education as a means to women's empowerment*. California: Sage Publications.

- Baden, S. & Green, C. (1994). *Gender and education in Asia and the Pacific*.
Cambridge: Institute of Development Studies.
- Best, J. W., & Khan, J. V. (2006). *Research in education* (9th ed.). New Delhi:
Prentice-Hall of India.
- Bhasin, H., & Khan, N. S. (1991). *Some questions on feminism and its relevance in
South Asia* (4th ed.). New Delhi: Kali for Women.
- Bochenek, M., & Knight, K. (n. d.). Establishing a third gender category in Nepal:
Process and prognosis. *Emory International Law Review*, 26.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New
York: Routledge.
- Canadian International Development Agency. (2010). *Education gender equality*.
Canada: Author.
- Castell, S. (1993). Against the grain: Narratives of resistance. *Canadian Journal of
education*, 18(3), 185-305.
- CERID, (2004). *Female teachers in primary schools: distribution pattern training
and transfer*. Kathamndu: Author.
- CERID, (2005). *Education and development. Vol (22)*. Kathamndu: Author.
- CERID, (2006). *Education and development. Vol (22)*. Kathamndu: Author.
- CERID, (2009). *Education and development vol(24)*. Kathamndu: Author.
- CERID. (2003). *Effectiveness of incentive /scholarship programmes for girls and
disadvantaged children*.
- CERID. (2004). *Gender issues in school education in Nepal*. Kathamndu: Author.

- CERID. (2006). *Gender equality and gender friendly environment in school*.
Kathamndu: Author.
- Chafetz, J. S. (1990). *Gender equity: An integrated theory of stability and change*.
Newbury Park: Sage Publication.
- Charlotte K. C., & Sorensen, A. S. (2006). *Gender communication theories and analyses: From silence to performance*. United Kingdom: Sage Publication.
- Chisamya, G., DeJaeghere, J., Kendall, N., & Khan, M. A. (2011). Gender and education for all: Progress and problems in achieving gender equity. *International Journal of Education Development*, xxx, xxx-xxx
- Chitrakar, R. (2009). *Overcoming barriers to girls' education in South Asia deepening the analysis*. Kathmandu: UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA).
- Chitrakar, R. (2009). *Overcoming barriers to girls' education in south Asia: Deepening the analysis*. Kathmandu: UNICEF, ROSA.
- Colclough, C. (2004). Achieving gender equality in education: What does it takes? *Prospects*, 34(1), xx-xx.
- Coulter, R. P. (1995). Struggling with sexism: Experiences of feminist first-year teachers. *Gender and Education*, 7, 33–50.
- Coulter, R. P. (1996). Gender equity and schooling: Linking research and policy. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 21(4), 433– 452.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: A qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Cumming, C. (2012). *Final mid-term evaluation of the school sector reform program (SSRP)*. Kathamndu: Government of Nepal/ MOE.

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *Qualitative research. (Vol-1)*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Eamer, N. B., *et al.* (2012). *Post -2015 development agenda: Goals, targets and indicators* (special report). Ontario: The Centre for International Governance Innovation [CIGI] and the Korea Development Institute [KDI].
- Elaine, U., & North, A. (2010). Assessing gender mainstreaming in the education sector: Depoliticized technique or a step towards women's rights and gender equality? *Journal of Comparative Education*, 40(4), 389-404.
- Elo, S., & Kynga, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107–115.
- Facio, A., & Morgan, M. I. (2009). *Equity or equality for women? Understanding CEDAW's equality principles*. Kuallampur: IWRAW Asia Pacific.
- Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressor*. Great Britain: Penguin Books.
- Full Bright Consultancy. (2006). *A study report on effectiveness of primary teacher training in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Author.
- Gore, J. M. (1993). *The struggle of pedagogies: Critical and feminist discourses as regimes of truth*. New York: Routledge.
- Gore, J. M. *et al.* (2004). Towards better teaching: Productive pedagogy as a framework for teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 375–387.
- Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission. (2003). *The tenth plan: Poverty reduction strategy paper 2002-2007*. Kathmandu: Author.
- Government of Nepal. (2004). *Education act, 2028 (1971) [8th Amendment] Ordinance, 2060 (2004)*. Kathmandu: Author.

- Government of Nepal. (2004). Education rules, 2002 [2nd amendment] 2004.
Kathmand: Author.
- Gunawardena, & Jayaweera. (2008). *Gender mainstreaming: Does it happen in education in South Asia?* Kathmandu: UNICEF, ROSA & UNGEI.
- Halai, A., (2006). *Ethics in qualitative research: Issues and challenges*. Pakistan: EdQual RPC.
- Herz, B. (2006). *Educating girls in south Asia: Promising approaches*. Kathamndu: UNICEF, ROSA & UNGEI.
- Hooks, B. (2009). *Feminism is for everybody*. Cambridge: South End Press.
- Houser, N. M. (2004). *Theory and Practice in Action: Using Feminist Pedagogy to Inform ESL Teaching* [Qualifying Portfolio Paper]. Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Retrieve 28 July, 2012 from <http://www.csse-scee.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE21-4/CJE21-4-Coulter.pdf> .
- Huxley, S. (2008). *Progress in girls 'education: The challenge of gender equality in South Asia*. Kathmandu: UNICEF, ROSA & UNGEI.
- Ifegbesan, A. (2010). Gender-stereotypes belief and practices in the classroom: The Nigerian post-primary school teachers. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, 10(4), 29-38.
- Jung, K., & Chung, H. (2006). *Gender equality in classroom instruction: Introducing gender training for Teachers in the Republic of Korea*. Bangkok: UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education.
- Kabeer, N. (1994). *Reversed realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought*.
- Kea, C. et al. (2006). *Becoming culturally responsive educators: Rethinking teacher education pedagogy*. Arizona: National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems.

- Khaniya, T. R. (2007). *New horizons in education in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Kishor Khaniya.
- Kimbal, S. M. (2002). Analysis of feedback enabling condition and fairness perceptions of teachers in three school districts with new standard based evaluation systems. *Journal of Personal Evaluation in Education*, 16(4), 241-268.
- Kosmerl, K. M. (2003). *Teachers' perceptions of gender bias in the classroom* (Research paper for Education Specialist degree). University of Wisconsin-Stout.
- Krauss, S. E., (2005). Research paradigms and meaning making: A primer. *The Qualitative Report*, 10(4), 758-770.
- Krefting, L. (1991). Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 45(3), 214-222.
- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York: Routledge.
- Lecompton, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (1999). *Analyzing and interpreting ethnographic data*. Walnut Creek; London; New Delhi: ALTAMIRA Press.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and emerging confluences. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *A hand book of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) Thousands Oak, CA: Sage Publication.
- Lorber, J. (2000). *Using gender to undo gender: A feminist degendering movement*. [Adobe Digital Editions version]. Sage: London.
- Maathuis, E. H. (2008). *From parity to equality in girls' education: How are we doing in South Asia?* Kathmandu: UNICEF, ROSA & UNGEI.

- Mack, N. et al. (2005). *Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide*. North Carolina: Family Health International (FHI).
- Majapuria, I. (1991). *Nepalese women*. Gwalior: M. Devi.
- Maseno, L., & Kilonzo, S. M. (2011). Engendering development: Demystifying patriarchy and its effects on women in rural Kenya. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 3(2), 45-55.
- Mathema, K. B. (2007). Crisis in education and future challenges for Nepal. *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 31, 46-65.
- McElroy, B. A. et al. (n. d.). *Teacher training: The superhighway to gender equity in Senegal*. Retrieve from <http://www.e4conference.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/24en.pdf>
- McLeod, J. (2008). *Legacies of poststructural feminism in education*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne.
- Mercy, T. M., & Lucia, F. L. (2008). *Girls' education in the 21st century gender equality, empowerment, and economic growth*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Mhlauli, M. B. (2011). Teaching for gender equality in primary schools in Botswana: Reality or illusion? *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 24(1), 134-143.
- Ministry of Education [MOE]. (2009). *School sector reform plan 2009-2015*. Kathmandu: Author.
- Ministry of Education and Sports/ Department of Education [MOES/DOE]. (2007). *A strategic implementation plans for gender equality in girls' education*. Bhaktapur: Author.
- Ministry of Education and Sports/ Department of Education. (2002). *Gender audit of the basic and primary education programme –II*. Bhaktapur: Author.

- Ministry of Education, Department of Education. (2011). *Flash I report 2068 (2011-012)*. Bhaktapur: Author.
- Ministry of Education, UNESCO & UNICEF. (2010). *A study on gender responsive budgeting*. Kathmandu: Author.
- Ministry of Education. (1971). *The national education system plan 1971-76*. Kathmandu: Author.
- Mlama, P. *et al.* (2005). *Gender responsive pedagogy: A teacher's handbook*. Kenya: Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE).
- MOES/ Nepal National Commission for UNESCO. (2003). *Education for all national plan of action Nepal 2001-2015*. Kathmandu: Author.
- Morley, L. (2010). Gender mainstreaming: Myths and measurement in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania. *Compare*, 40(4), 533-550.
- Morse, J. M. *et al.* (2002). Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), 20-22.
- Mushi, P.S.D. (1996). Tanzania secondary school science teachers' perception and reaction to gender difference in performance in science. *UTAFTTI (New Series)*, 3(2), 91-130.
- Mwaka, M. N. A. (2010). *A discourse analysis of gender in public health curriculum in Sub-saharan Africa* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Pretoria, South Africa.
- National Planning Commission. (2007). *The three years interim plan*. Kathmandu: Author.
- National Planning Commission. (2010). *Nepal millennium development goals progress report 2010*. Kathmandu: Author.

- National Planning Commission. (2011). *Approach paper to three year plan 2010-2013*. Kathmandu: Author.
- Nielsen, J. M. (Ed.). (1990). *Feminist research methods*. London: Westview Press.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. L. (2007). Sampling designs in qualitative research: Making the sampling process more public. *The Qualitative Report*, 12(2), 238-254. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR12-2/onwuegbuzie1.pdf>
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Leech, N. L., & Collins, K. M. T. (2008). Interviewing the interpretive researcher: A method for addressing the crisis of representation, legitimation, and praxis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 7(4), 1-17.
- Parjuli, M. & Acharya, S. (2008). *Measuring gender equality in education*. Kathmandu: UNESCO.
- Parr, S. F. (2003). The human development paradigm: Operationalizing Sen's ideas on capabilities. *Feminist Economics*, 9(2 /3), 301 – 317.
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. CA: Sage
- Pew Research Center. (2012). *Gender equality universally embraced, but inequalities acknowledged*. Washington, D.C: Author.
- Pierre, E. A. (2000). Poststructural feminism in education: An overview. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(5), 477-515.
- Poudel, L. N. (2007). *Power, knowledge and pedagogy: An analysis of the educational exclusion of Dalits in Nepal* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Kent, Canterbury.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Ritzer, G. (2000). *Sociological theory* (5th.ed). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Rocco, S. (n. d.). *Gender effects of school uniform*. Retrieved from
<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au>
- Roth, W. M. (1998). Teacher as researcher reform: Student achievement and perceptions of learning environment. *Learning Environments Research* 1, 75–93.
- Sadker, D., & Zittleman, M. (1994). *Failing at fairness: How our schools cheat girls*. Toronto: Simon & Schuster Inc.
- Saigol, R. (1995). *Knowledge and identity articulation of gender in educational discourse in Pakistan*. Lahor: ASR Publication.
- Schensul, J. J., & LeCompte, M. D. (1999). *Essential ethnographic methods*. Walnut Creek; London; New Delhi: Altamira Press.
- Seale, C. (2002). Quality issues in qualitative inquiry. *Quality Social Work*, 1(1), 97-110.
- Shawna, A., & Larson, S. A. (2001). *Senior teacher perceptions towards inclusion* (Unpublished master's research paper). University of Wisconsin-Stout, USA.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22, 63-75.
- Shrestha, S. L. (1994). *Gender sensitive planning what, why and how in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Women Awareness Centre Nepal.
- Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (1993). *Breaking out again feminist ontology and epistemology* (2nd.ed). London; New York: Routledge.
- Stromquist, N. P (1990). Gender inequality in education: Accounting for women's subordination. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 11(2), 137-153.

- Subrahmanian, R. (2005). Gender equality in education: Definitions and measurements. *International Journal of Educational Development* 25, 395–407.
- Subramanian, R. (2002). *Gender and education a review of issues for social policy*. NA: UNRISD.
- Subramanian, R. (2006). *Mainstreaming gender for better girls' education: Policy and institutional issues*. Kathmandu: UNICEF, ROSA & UNGEI.
- Terry, G., & Thapa, N. (2012). *Gender audit of Nepal's school sector reform programme*. Kathmandu: DFID Human Development Resource Centre.
- Tomasevski, K. (1993). *Women and human rights*. New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd.
- Tuminez, S., A. (2012). *Rising to the top? A report on women's leadership in Asia*. Singapore: Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore.
- UNDP. (1995). *Human development report 1995*. Oxford; New York: Author.
- UNESCO – Section for Women and Gender Equality. (2006). *Passport to Equality*. Paris: Author.
- UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education. (2002). *Gender responsive EFA plans*. Bangkok: Author.
- UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education. (2004). *Guidelines for implementing, monitoring and evaluating gender responsive EFA plans*. Bangkok: Author.
- UNESCO. (1999). *Guidelines on gender-neutral language* (3rd ed.). Paris: Author.
- UNESCO. (2004). *Gender sensitivity a training manual*. Paris: Author.

- UNESCO. (2005). *Exploring and understanding gender in education: A qualitative research manual for education practitioners and gender focal points*. Bangkok: Author.
- UNESCO. (2011). *EFA goals monitoring report: The hidden crisis: armed conflict and education*. Paris: Author.
- UNESCO. (2012). *World atlas of gender equality in education*. Paris: Author.
- UNESCO-IIEP. (2011). *Outcome report on gender equality in education: Looking beyond parity an IIEP evidence-based policy forum*. Paris: Author
- UNGEI. (2012). *Nepal report formative evaluation of the United Nations girls' initiative* (Working paper). New York: Author.
- UNGEI. (2012). *Engendering empowerment: Education and equality a companion volume to E4 conference*. New York: Author.
- UNGEI. (2012). *Gender analysis in education* (Working paper). New York: Author.
- United Nations (2012). *The millennium development goals report 2012*. New York: Author.
- United Nations Development Fund for Women South Asia & Partners for Law in Development [PLD]. (2004). *CEDAW: Restoring rights to women*. New Delhi: Author.
- United Nations Population Fund. (2007). *Gender equality and empowerment of women in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Author.
- United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator's Office. (2012). *Access to and representation of women in decision making processes of local governance structures* [Field Bulletin No. 38]. Kathmandu: Author.
- United Nations. (2002). *Gender mainstreaming an overview*. New York: Author.

- Unterhalter, A. S., & Challender, C. (2005). The education MDGs: Achieving gender equality through curriculum and pedagogy change. *Gender and Development*, 13(1), 44-55.
- Unterhalter, E. (2006). *Measuring gender inequality in education in South Asia*. Kathamndu: UNICEF, ROSA &UNGEI.
- Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist practice and poststructural theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- William, C. R. (1987). *Gender and power*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Women Commission for Refugee women. (2006). *Right to education during displacement*. United States of America: Author.
- Zafar, F. (1991). *Finding our way*. Lahore: ASR Publication.

APPENDIX A

FIELD MILIEU

Srikhandapur

Srikhandapur is a century old Newari town with full of temples of god and goddesses (43) and inns (Patties) settled during Kirati period and called 'Khanpu' by Newars and 'khadpu' by others. It had been acknowledged as the Eastern gateway (Purbi Dhoka) for trade and commerce and travel route to Nepal's eastern parts up to part five (purba 5 number) Bojhpur prior to the construction of highways. Most inhabitants of this settlement engaged in commerce had been migrated to elsewhere for business. Prior to the constitution of Dhulikhel Municipality in 1987, it was a Village Panchayat by its own name. It was included in the Dhulikhel Municipality as one of the underlying conditions for an upgrade in the status of a Village Panchayat to a Municipality was that the Panchayat had to have a population of over 10,000. That led to the inclusion of Srikhandapur into Dhulikhel Municipality.

Currently, Srikhandapur town is spread into ward 8 and 9 of Dhulikhel Municipality and has around 200 households within Newari town. Other people from different castes started settling outside the ancient Newari town. It lies 28 Km east of Kathmandu and 2 Km west of district headquarter Dhulikhel near the Kathmandu University. It is bordered with Panauti Municipality in the South and in the West and Banepa Municipality in the North. A small sacred river known as Punymati flows by this town. Just across the river along the Panauti-Banepa road SOS school and IT Park lie at the border between Banepa, Panauti and Dhulikhel Municipalities. There are three schools within the town in close vicinity. They also shared briefly about the history of formal education of Srikhandapur

Formal Education in Srikandapur

According to them, formal education in this ancient Newari town had begun in 1945 (2002) from the Swata Bhairab Temple's inn (pati). Later on, in 1951 (2007) the then government had given official permission to run classes in the name of Swayta Vairab Primary School. The school had to shift to Layaku palace (Darbar) to run classes up to seven grades as a middle school. The school had been running smoothly for twenty years with the financial support from the then government and fist –full (muthi dan) contribution from the local people. Unfortunately, in 2027, the school had faced a serious problem due to the then socio-economic and political situation, resulting the birth of another Janajagriti primary school from a fraction.

The Janajagriti primary school had run the classes in the house of Shree Omkar Dhuju from his own source. In course of time, the school constructed its own building from the financial support from the Department of Education and local people's donation as one of the underlying conditions for getting approval from the government was that the school had to have own physical infrastructure. When the school had applied for upgrading into lower secondary school, Dr. Chandra Kala Kiran, the then Director of Regional Directorate Office of the Ministry of Education had directed the schools management to run the Srikhandapur Lower Secondary School by combining Swayta Vairab middle school and Janajagriti primary school in the newly constructed building of Janajagriti Primary School. The school upgraded into the Secondary School and then into Higher Secondary School in 1980, (2035) 2010 respectively. This is how this ancient town has got two community schools (public) in ward number eight with same name.

The excerpt I derived from the interview with the resource people:

1. Mr. Purna Bahadur Karmacharya, Ex. Ward Chair, Ward 9, Srikhandapur

2. Mr. HIRAKAJI SHRESTHA, Social Worker, Inhabitant Ward 8, SriKhandapur

SriKhandapur Primary School (SPS)

The school is one of the oldest schools in Kabhre district. Swata Bhairab primary school was its original name. Currently, it is located in upper tole, ward 8, Dulikhel Municipality and it runs through Early Childhood Development to grade five. There are altogether 75 Students (50 Female and 25 Male). There are six teachers and one support staff. There are other teachers from different sources. All teachers are female except the head teacher. School has its own building with child friendly furniture, and a small ground for morning assembly. Very few children attend class regularly as their parents work in the brick factories in Bhaktapur almost for six (Mid October –Mid- April) months. They come back for taking final examination (Excerpt derived from the conversation with, head teacher on 3rd Feburary, 2012).

SriKhandapur Higher Secondary School (SHSS)

The acting head teacher said, “I’m shouldering the headship now, as the head teacher of this school has retired recently, who had worked more than twenty years in this school. Currently we have 17 teaching staff including me, and we run classes ECD through 12 grade. We have 6 teachers (3 female and 3 male) for primary level classes, but they also teach in lower and secondary level grades based on the qualification and capability. There is no female teacher in secondary level. However, a female teacher is recruited to teach computer science in secondary level as well. We have separate computer lab and computer course. All classes except grade eleven and twelve run during day time from ten o’clock. Students number is very low (50) in primary classes as there are many primary schools around. In other classes too, number is decreasing. We have more girls in schools. We are receiving supports

from District Education Office (DEO) and other organizations such as GTZ and Room to Read.”

He further said that the School has its own building with enough class rooms, and own school ground with ample space for sports and other extra-curricular activities. It has its own conference hall, science lab and computer room. Teachers are qualified and trained and the management committee is successful in accessing resources from the government and non-government organizations. Despite all these, school has a problem in getting good number of students of both genders, primarily in primary level. There are only 50 students in primary grades. When asked about the reasons of having few students, he said “nowadays, there is a fad in parents in sending their children to boarding schools to show their status. No matter how much we provide facilities still attraction towards boarding continues as it is the trend promoted by the modern education system itself”. Adding on to reasons another teacher said’ reduction in number of its feeder community schools nearby and increasing number of institutional schools in its vicinity, increase in transportation facilities, crave for English language, and decrease in birth rate also are the reasons of low enrolment in this school.” He further said there are around nine different school buses come and collect children from this area. For boarding schools, there is no restriction/ boundary/catchment area. They can collect students from anywhere.

Golden Siddhartha Academy (GSA)

The school was opened in 2005 (2062). A shareholder said “We have nine shareholders. Three major one who invested Rs.100, 000 each and other invested 45,000.” He said that all the four major shareholders do teach in the school. There are no regular teachers for higher grades. Most of the teachers are gents and are in period-base contract. In primary grades there are regular teachers and majority are female.

He further said, “One of the reasons behind having more lady teacher is the attitude of higher grade boys' students. It is difficult to keep higher grade students under control in class. They tend to dishonor lady teachers as they do not command enough”.

When I asked about nurturing the concept of equality in teaching the principal and a shareholder of the school said “we are bound to focus on two things: examination’s result and good will for our growth and development. Last year, all the seven students appeared in Schooling Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination had passed securing distinction marks, which became a flagship for us. This year, thirteen students will take SLC Examination and expecting the same for which we are coaching continuously in major subjects Math, Account, Science and English. What to do? This is the trend and tactic in education as business.” Adding on to principal, Director of the school said “We have 300 students and majority is girls. Though it is a boarding school, it is almost like local school. We have a big challenge in attracting parents to increase number of students by improving our teaching English so that student score high marks as ‘marks in SLC examination’ is the main performance indicator. “He further said that they have to compete with other boarding schools that have got good physical facilities such as building, ground, library and lab, while they are in rented building.

APPENDIX B
IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Research questions	Guiding themes/questions
Rapport Building Questions	<p>Exploring self of teachers</p> <p>About self</p> <p>Family life like as a son (boy) /daughter (Girl)</p> <p>Roles/ functions of male and female members</p> <p>Roles as a boy or a girl in family</p> <p>Division of labor</p> <p>Access to resources and education</p> <p>School life as a boy/girl</p> <p>Relationship and friends</p> <p>Teachers treatment in your school</p> <p>Behaviour of boy students and girl students to each other</p> <p>Treatment from teachers to boys and girls in school</p> <p>Specific experience at your school being a boy or a girl</p> <p>Life in your community as a boy/man or a girl/woman</p> <p>Roles/ functions of male and female members</p> <p>Specific experience as a boy or a girl and why</p> <p>Learning about your role (as a man /woman) function in family and society</p> <p>Experience of 'asamanata 'in the family, school, and society</p>
How do teachers	Exploring teaching culture in the school

<p>perceive the concept of gender equality?</p>	<p>Years of service in teaching</p> <p>Teaching environment in this school</p> <p>Teaching subjects/curriculum/text books</p> <p>Concepts related with gender</p> <p>Meaning of “Laingik Samanata”?</p> <p>Meaning of the term Linga 'sex' and Laingik ' gender'</p> <p>Concept of Samanata 'equality'</p> <p>Concept of parity</p> <p>Similarities and differences in girls and boys</p> <p>Similarities and differences in teachers</p> <p>Gender equality in education</p> <p>Current education and gender equality</p> <p>Promoting gender equality</p> <p>Roles of teachers in promoting gender equality</p>
<p>How do teachers practice (apply) the concept of gender equality in schools?</p>	<p>Applying the Gender Equality concept (Mahilapurush samanata/ laingic) in practice</p> <p>Similarities and differences in girls and boys</p> <p>Gender equality in SMC/PTA</p> <p>Gender equality in management</p> <p>Gender equality in teaching staff/ non-teaching staff</p> <p>Extracurricular activities</p> <p>Gender equality practices in the classroom</p> <p>Gender responsiveness measures</p>
<p>What are the prevailing</p>	<p>What are the things you consider challenge in practicing gender?</p> <p>Socio-cultural</p>

<p>challenges and positive practices in practicing gender equality in education in schools?</p>	<p>Economic Education and awareness Environment What do you plan to face the challenges? Positive practices Reasons / learning Ways of promoting</p>
<p>What could be done in teaching gender responsively for achieving gender equality in education?</p>	<p>What could be done to minimize the challenges you face? And how? Ways of supporting Suggestions for making teaching gender equality Ways to response challenges Ways of achieve gender equality in education Role of education in achieving gender equality</p>

APPENDIX C

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Teacher's name

School Name:

Address:

Class:

No. girl and boy students:

	Description	Situation	Remarks
	I. Inside the classroom		
A	Student teacher interaction		
	Language		
	Education materials		
B	Sitting arrangement		
C	Participation in the classroom		
D	Tasks and responsibilities		
E	Class decoration		
F	Access to resources		
G	Students relationships		
	II. Outside the classroom		
H	Playground		
I	Toilets		
J	Library and reading room		