

OPPORTUNITY OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

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## AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

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Title: *Opportunity of Women Leadership in School Organization*

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Opportunity of women leadership in school organization is considered as one of the most crucial components in ensuring effective leadership in schools. The main purpose of this study was to explore opportunities, challenges and problems faced by women school head teachers. To fulfill the purpose of the study, I needed to make an exploration into the perceptions and practices of women school heads. Therefore, my research is subjective in nature. I followed humanistic model of social research and adopted qualitative approach of inquiry. More specifically, this research is based on ethnographic approach. In this study, five public schools were chosen – three from the rural and remaining two from the urban area from Kathmandu valley. The schools were led by women. So, criteria based purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants for the study.

Five school female heads were the key informants of the study. The in-depth interview guidelines for the participants were prepared and piloted. Thence, in-depth interviews with the concerned head teachers were conducted. Five schools were also observed and diary was also maintained for reflection. Based on the obtained data thereof, thick description was made. Post-codes and categories were also made based

on the themes that emerged while analyzing the data. Accuracy and credibility was also maintained by applying triangulation of data and member checking.

Gender-based discrimination was one of the key findings of the study. The origin of discrimination was the own home of the participants. The school key stakeholders and society were found biased against women head teachers. The major problem for the women head teachers was time management. From these finding, it was concluded that though there is a limited opportunity for women in school leadership, they are performing their responsibility (with difficulty). Due to unlimited difficulties, sometimes, women leaders are frustrated and want to quit their leadership roles.

There is no conducive environment for them to lead the schools. There are limited policies to promote the leadership position of the women; moreover, it is very difficult to translate it into practice due to social, cultural and biological limitations of women. In addition, Nepal has a traditional patriarchy society that is why, women are always ignored in our society and men always hold the superior positions. To promote the leadership capacity and environment for women, the principle of equity should be implemented right from the home and society level. It was concluded that the traditional patriarchal mindset is the key barrier for the women empowerment. So, the Cultural Revolution is the crucial need of today.

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July 7, 2013

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DEO	District Education Office
EFA	Education for All
MCPW	Microcredit Project for Women
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOE	Ministry of Education
MLD	Ministry of Local Development
MWSW	Ministry of Women and Social Welfare
NG	Nepal Government
NNEPLC	Nepal National Education Planning Commission
NPC	National Planning Commission
PCRW	Production Credit for Rural Women
SMC	School Management Committee
WDD	Women Development Division
WEU	Women's Education Unit
WID	Women in Development

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The individual who can influence other and who is likely to carry out the leadership role is the leader, other members are followers. Yukl (2006) defines leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (p. 8). Actually, leadership is a process and it is the property of the organization rather than of the individual.

School leadership has become a priority in education policy agenda internationally. It plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment. Effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and equity of schooling. Moreover, leading a school is a wonderful opportunity to influence the lives of thousands of young people and women should not miss out (Florence & Samuel, 2005). Despite the efforts by international community to raise the participation of women in leadership, management in education is still largely male dominated, especially so in the context of our country.

Daft (2005) remarked that organizational leadership is both an individual and an organizational phenomenon. According to him, some people are always pleasing in a diverse situation, while others are irritable or hostile in the same situation. Moreover, the organization also depends on the personality of the leader for its success. In addition to the personality, gender is also taken as the crucial component for leadership. Historically, the vast majority of noted leaders have been men (Bass &

Riqaio, 2006). This is particularly true for those labeled charismatic transformational leaders like Gandhi, Mandela, Kennedy, and even the notorious ones like Hitlers, Stalin, and Bin Laden. In comparison to males, only a handful of charismatic female leaders easily come to our mind: Eleanor Roosevelt, Queen Elizabeth II, and Golda Meir (Cubillo & Brown, 2003).

Yet if the elements of charismatic transformational leadership are analyzed, women might be more likely to be engaged in transformational leader behaviors and can become more effective transformational leaders than men (Bass & Riqaio, 2006). As suggested, “Women as a group may be more likely than men to develop the kinds of relation oriented and socio-emotional behaviors that are critical to the development of transformational leadership” (Bass & Riqaio, 2006). Women have therefore, now become practicable and valuable contributors to the workforce, not only on the “sticky floors” doing low-paid, unskilled but often essential jobs, pushing through the “glass ceiling” and pushing aside “glass wall” to become leader in their own right (Cubillo & Brown, 2003).

In the context of Nepalese school system, there are women human resource in various positions like teachers, head teachers and even the assistant staff for the school administration. According to the Department of Education (2012, p. 6), the proportions of female teachers by levels, in all types of schools, are: 41.5% at primary level, 27.4% at lower secondary level and 17.3% at secondary level. Out of them very few women were found to be the school heads. Why is the number of female head teachers scarce in schools? This is a crucial question for me. Recently, the government’s attention has been directed towards the appointment of female head teachers in schools. There is a provision in SSRP (2009-2015) that priority will be given to female teachers (Ministry of Education (MoE), p. 84) to make them head

teachers; the present scenario does not show this in practice. Though they are minority in number, they are making a valuable contribution to the Nepalese education system.

According to Crawford, Kydd, and Riches (1997), if women are promoted in part to their numbers in the teaching workforce and assumed they are no less capable than men, they would hold at least 60 per cent of senior posts in schools and colleges, in its place of the minority position they hold now. They further added that in 1985, there were no women chief education officers and in 1990 there were 12 out of 116 and more being selected. CERID (2009) cited MoE (2007) that there are only 8 per cent female head teachers in Nepal. Though the government has paid special attention to increasing the number of female teachers at primary level, there has not been such concept and programs developed so far for the appointment of female head teachers (Ghimire, 2009, as cited in CERID, 2009, p. 16). While this might reflect equal opportunity policies coming to end the gap, this may equally call women's attention towards preparing themselves for the leadership positions.

Therefore, I tried to find out what kind of opportunities, challenges and problems were faced by the women head teachers to perform their leadership roles? How have they been achieving their desired goals? What were/are the policies regarding women leadership and how can we promote women leadership in schools? These were the concerns and scope areas of my research.

### **Rationale of the Study**

I conducted this study to satisfy my curiosity to know what kind of opportunities, challenges and problems were faced by the women head teachers and how can such challenges be minimized? How can women school head teachers assess their own/organizational achievements and how are the policy provisions regarding

women leaders in the school and what strategies are women head teachers applying to face the challenges and constraints in their leadership positions?

After spending a long time in school education I still have not got the satisfactory outcomes of school education. For this all, the prime responsibility goes to the school heads. And carrying out this task seems to be quite daunting for them. Furthermore, it is commonly held that this is more so when school heads are female. I therefore wanted to know whether it is really so in case of women school heads or not.

This particular research topic may be a new area and can contribute to better school leadership on the part of women heads. This research also helps women leaders to know about their job roles and position. Moreover, this research also helps them understand the opportunity, challenges and problems they have in their positions so that they can prepare how to meet their career aspirations and bring about organizational achievement. Furthermore, they can also understand what kind of policy is required regarding women leadership in Nepalese schools. In this sense, the research can be a valuable means to the policy makers to generate the policies and plans relevant to the situation of the research. Currently, to increase female participation in education, SSRP has made the following provisions (a) special provisions for maternity and paternity leave, infant feeding breaks, and provision for substitute teachers (b) reduced eligibility period for promotion of teachers from disadvantaged groups including females (MoE, 2009, p. 23).

Finally, the research can add a milestone in the area of women school leadership. Especially, it may help the persons who want to know the existing condition of women leaders in school origination. This study may also help decision makers like Ministry of Education (MOE), Department of Education (DoE) District



Education Office (DEO) School Management Committee (SMC) etc. to promote women leadership in schools.

### **Research Problem**

Leadership is a subject that has long aroused interest among many people. The term cannot simplistically give an image of powerful, dynamic individuals who command victorious armies, direct corporate empires from a top shiny skyscraper or shape the course of nations (Yukl, 2008). According to Bass and Riggio (2006), the issue of how men and women have been of interest to scholars for decades. There are two key questions: Do men and women lead differently? Another question is whether men or women, as group, are the more effective leaders and under what circumstances? These questions are serious and needed to explore the reality.

Women in educational leadership are in minority in Nepal as is the case in many parts of the world. Our education system itself is patriarchal, it just perpetuate or ignores inequalities between men and women. The under-representation of women in school leadership in particular and in education in general, is an area of concern of different societies. Davies (1990) concluded that “educational administration is still seen as a masculine occupation in many countries” (p. 62, as cited in Rarieya, 2007, p. 470). Whilst a number of writers have attempted to identify and categorize some of the internal and external barriers to the progress of women’s careers in educational leadership (Rarieya, 2007, p. 469), little discourse has occurred in Nepal concerning how women experience leadership and even less about the role of gender in educational leadership.

In our context, MOE (1997) stated that female representation in executive positions is considerably low. No measure has been taken yet to increase the number of female head teachers in schools. There were mainly men head teachers in most of

the school. The number of women leaders is in small range in Nepal. Really true leadership should ensure women's participation equally for developing the female careers. According to Vidya (2008), MOE policy calls for minimum one female teacher for each primary school. Currently, the proportions of female teachers by levels, in all types of community schools, are: 37.8% at primary level, 20.6% at lower secondary level and 13.8% at secondary level (DOE, 2012, p. 6). Most of the female teachers are working at urban and accessible areas of the country. Strong social and political barriers have been blocking female involvement in government and communities in recent years (Vidya, 2008).

Though there are encouraging numbers of female teachers in schools, especially in urban area, the number of women leadership is very low. What is the reason behind it? Against this backdrop, the question at hand is not whether women can excel in school leadership, rather whether they have opportunities. So, the central task of this research was to explore the actual condition of women leadership in school organization in Nepal. I wanted to know the real experience of women leaders in their working environment. I would like to explore their interpretation and personal feelings about the leadership that they meant.

According to Tomlinson (2004), women are challenging assumption, seeking the leasing of the model of a career as a continual sequence of promotions, demanding on the skills and attitudes naturally developed from their shared experience as women. There are clear differences between the ways men and women describe their leadership performance and how they usually influence people they work with. He further focuses that women actively work to make their interactions with subordinate's positive for everyone involved. More specially, the women encourage

participation, share power and information, enhance other people's self-worth and get others excited about their work. But why are the women heads less in our schools?

In the context of Nepal, the position of women as leaders is not enough. It also influences our patriarchal culture. Patriarchy is one of the prominent characteristic of the Nepalese society. Boys and girls from the very beginning of their life learn about the gender roles and see the differences of being a girl and a boy. Children get oriented about gender role and norms beginning from their own homes. The socialization process at home make the children learn about division of labor and appropriate behavior as well as the type of toys they play is based on their sex. The clothes they are made to wear and the manners and behaviors they are taught reflect gender serotypes. Parent's differential treatment of boys and girls and interaction with them make the important basis for gender differences (McHale, Crouter, & Witheman, 2003, as cited in Bajracharya, 2009).

In the context of Nepal, there are many men in leadership position but the number of women leaders is small. They are also suffering from many problems to perform their duty in a right way. Any society reflects its traditional norms, and cultural values. Similarly, school is also a miniature society which also has its own norms and values, and is in tern affected by the socio-cultural value of the community. In our society, women are dominated. In this situation, how can we promote women in the leadership roles in schools? And how do our policy makers help to promote the status of women leaders?

According to Code of Manu, women had been relegated to inferior position to men both in society and politics (as cited in Shrestha, 1997). But socially and economically the Nepalese women is dependent on the father, husband and son

according to the changed circumstances. The Code of Manu prescribed the following rites:

"By a girl, by a young woman or even by an aged one nothing must be done independently, even in her own house and as such in child-hood, a female was protected by her father, in youth by her husband, after her husband was dead, by her son, and therefore a woman could never be independent." She further said that whether relations lived in dishonor, the family seldom prospered and it perished like a house of cards. The reason of such a belief in Nepal was that the Nepalese society was generally patriarchal.

But this only reflects one side of discrimination. In order to understand the consequences of such discrimination, I was interested in exploring the experiences from women's' leader perspective. So, the essential point here now is to explore why women leader participation is in small range and how they perceive about their leadership role. So, in this context I stated the problem as what is the condition of women leadership in School organization.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to explore opportunities, challenges and problems faced by women school head teachers. Similarly, the study aimed to examine the experiences of women administrators in educational leadership programs especially in school organization.

### **Research Questions**

On the basis of above stated study purpose, the following research questions were formulated.

- How do policy environments of Nepal promote women leadership in schools?

- What opportunities, challenges and problems are there for school women head teachers?
- What strategies women head teachers are applying to face the challenges and constraints?

### **Delimitations of the Study**

This study aims at uncovering the opportunities, challenges and problems of school leadership for women school heads. In order to do so, I specifically focused on exploring the said aspects and not given attention to other various circumstances regarding their leadership roles. My study, however, does not represent the experiences of all the female school heads in Nepal. Moreover, it does not talk about other dimensions like status of women leadership in school organizations. This study has covered the schools up to secondary level.

### **Organization of the Chapters**

There are altogether seven chapters in this research report. The first chapter describes the introduction of the study with research purpose and research questions. Similarly, chapter two captures the related literature for the study. Chapter three is about the methodology of the study which describes the entire methodology of the study. The policy environment for women leadership in school is described in chapter four and there is the description about the opportunity of women leadership in chapter five. In the same way chapter six provides the information about the women head and their challenges in leadership position. In the final chapter, there are findings of the study, discussion about the findings, conclusion and implications of the study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The main purpose of this chapter is to review related literature focusing on women leadership in school set up. During the review of related literature, I have captured some literature concerning the major theme of my research. Similarly, I have reviewed some related theories and studies as well.

#### **Education and Women Empowerment**

Empowerment “refers to gaining or recovering one’s own power or giving power to someone else. Empowerment in any sense that really matters must result in a substantive transfer of resources” (Mendell, 2010). In other words, empowerment is a process of meaningful change, one person at a time, from one generation to the next (UNICEF, 2007). Therefore, empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of an individual or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Talking about women empowerment, Key UN Conferences of the 1990s defined it as having five components: women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both inside and outside home and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create more justice social and economic order, nationally and internationally (UNESCO, 2005). Thus, women empowerment is to make women skillful primarily by giving them education. In this regard, education empowers people by increasing their efficiency, decision-making capacity, and finally by changing their daily life-style.

Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPLC) recognized the need for recruiting women in teaching profession as early as 1956. The commission in its report entitled 'Education in Nepal' stated 'women are better adapted to working with children of primary school age than men' (p. 173). That could be reason why majority of female teachers (82%) (Bista, 2008) teach in the primary level. The commission recommended the government to consider planning 'definite procedures that will bring qualified man and women into teaching professing' like in many western countries. However, no concrete programs were developed and implemented to put these policy intentions into actions. As such, a national system of education was yet to be developed. The phenomenon of schooling was new. There were only a handful of educational institutions in the country.

Although the new political atmosphere that was created after the overthrow of the Rana regime gave impetus to educational development, there existed a number of socio-cultural, economic, political and institutional barriers for the promotion of education in general and the promotion of girls' education in particular. Evidently, girls were seen not worthy of being made literate and educated.

Improving the status of girls' schooling calls for a response that addresses the root causes of gender disparity while much of it can also be tackled by devising appropriate educational strategy. Regarding this, the government of Nepal has for a long time adopted the strategy of deploying female teachers in schools in order to reduce gender disparity. Education policymakers and planners in Nepal have been consistently guided by the assumption that the presence of female teacher would attract parents to send their girls to schools and retain them in schools until they complete primary schooling. Moreover, students both in Nepal and elsewhere have showed that female teachers provide better response to problems faced by girls in

schools. It has frequently been reported that early school leaving of girls without completing full primary education decreases with female teachers' presence and, girls are more likely to learn well when they are taught by female teachers (Bista, 2008).

Constitutionally and by all its international commitments, the government is committed to ensuring access to free, compulsory, quality primary education. Yet Nepal has not been able to attain gender parity even at the primary level. Consequently, Problems of disparity in access and inclusion for various groups persists in Nepal. Nepal's current international commitments include MDGs and the declaration on Education for All (EFA), commitment to ensuring equal opportunities in schooling for girls, children in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities by 2015. Both EFA and MDGs also include elimination of gender disparity at the primary and secondary levels by 2005 and at all levels of education by 2015. Based on the goals of EFA Dakar Framework for Action, MOE has formulated a 15-year National Plan of Action for education for all (2001-2015). The Action Plan's target is to achieve 90 per cent literacy for ages 15 years and above by 2015 (NPC, 2002). Similarly, the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) has adopted education as one of its major strategies for reducing poverty and raising living standards. It focuses on developing an inclusive and integrated education system and providing scholarships for groups that require aid (NPC, 2002). It aims to carry out programs of literacy, post-literacy, income generation, and non-formal education, particularly for women and disadvantaged communities.

Article 13(3) of the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) states that provided that nothing shall be deemed to prevent the making of special provisions by law for the protection, empowerment or advancement of women. Nepal still has many challenges to overcome regarding gender equality. Recognizing this fact, the Interim



Constitution (2007) has stated in one of its state policies that “The State shall pursue a policy of encouraging maximum participation of women in national development by making special provision for their education, health and employment” (Policy 8).

According to Yadav (2003) the education of women is now considered an essential feature of our national life. In India, education is the most important instrument for human resource development. Education of women, therefore, occupies top priority amongst various measures taken to improve the status of women in India. She further focused that efforts have been made over the past three decades of planned development to enroll more girls in schools and encourage them to stay in schools, and to provide non-formal educational opportunities for women.

It indicated that women education is most important. That is why government and non-government agencies should consider women education an important factor for women empowerment. Most importantly, it is necessary to develop and implement specific problem-sensitive indicators to monitor all aspects of holistic education and institute a gender auditing system.

### **Gender Sensitivity in Education Sector**

In nearly all societies, men and women, boys and girls, have a different status and play different roles. This means, men and women are different both by sex and by gender. According to Gordon (2000), “Sex is biologically determined, while gender is socially and culturally constructed and transmitted during the process of socialization” p. 1). Since ‘gender’ describes the characteristics that a society or culture defines as masculine or feminine, “being sensitive to gender is not a matter of manners, but very much correlated with being sensitive to culture” (Potter, 2008, p. 55).

The Nepalese government has formally assured that men and women have equal rights, but this has not been translated into reality. Paudel (2011) brings out the

fact that many provisions have been enacted concerning gender equality, including the 33 percent inclusion methodology ensuring women's participation in each sector, as well as the ban on insensitive words in working areas to ensure gender sensitivity. On the other hand, she sees the implementation of these provisions by men an overwhelming obstacle, especially in a patriarchal system (Paudel, 2011, State attempts section, para. 1).

Similarly, education is managed through a series of committees at district, Village Development Committee, and school levels. There are statutory requirements for at least one female member in committees at all levels. However, women's representation at decision-making levels and education administration in general is not very high - only 5 per cent at the officer levels in ministries and departments, although in teaching women's representation is much higher (Bista, 2001). In my observation, there are only one woman in the first-class and no women as special class officers in the Ministry of Education.

Further, the Gender Equity and Development Section is only one section among three under the Division of Education Management. It is headed by a second-class officer. In the management hierarchy this is too low a position to influence major decisions on planning, programming, preparing budgets, or designing curriculum and training materials. So, it has been devoting its time mostly to management of scholarships and occasional gender training.

Although women's representation in the teaching profession is better than in administrative position, they are concentrated at junior positions. For example, in 2004 they constituted 24 % among school teachers in total, but their proportion among head teachers did not exceed four per cent at any level. This is likely to discourage educated women from taking up teaching as a profession.

To look into the current data of female teachers, the scenario has improved slightly.

Table 1

*Total Number of Women Teachers by Levels in all Types of Schools (DOE, 2012)*

Level	Female	Male	Total
Primary (1-5)	74,169	104,365	178,534
Lower-secondary (6-8)	13,809	36,580	50,389
Secondary (9-10)	6,426	30,622	55,476
Higher secondary (11-12)	2,863	15,565	18,428

The table above presented the total number of teachers reported at primary, lower secondary and secondary and higher secondary levels in the beginning of the school year 2012-2013 in all types of schools. As a whole, there are 178,534 teachers at primary level; 50,389 teachers at lower secondary level; 55,476 teachers at secondary level; and 18,428 teachers at higher secondary level. Of them, the numbers of female teachers are 74,169; 13,809; 6,426 and 2,863 respectively at primary, lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary levels. This showed that that in the teaching field there were not enough women teachers, and even among them, the large scale of women teachers were at the primary level.

In the case of female head teacher, they are limited in number. There are only 8 percent female head teachers (DoE, 2007, as cited in CERID, 2009, p. 3). Female head teacher is a motivation for the female teachers in school. Such motivation helps to retain them in school, which ultimately contributes in girls' enrolment, retention and performance. But the number of female head teacher is hardly 5% (Dahal, 2008, as cited in CERID, 2009, p. 3). This may be due to the cause of less opportunity for them in gaining education. It shows that till now, women have not equal opportunity

as that of men in all sectors. As a corollary, their participation is lower in all decision making levels.

### **Barriers to Women's Progress**

A number of writers have attempted to identify and categorize the barriers to the progress of women's careers in education leadership (Brown & Ralph, 1996; Coleman, 2001; Hall, 1996, as cited in Cubillo & Brown, 2003). Cubillo and Brown explain the under-representation of woman in senior management positions attributing to socialization and stereotyping. Schmuck (1986) warns of the dangers of subscribing to this "deficit" model where women are seen to need to be trained or educated up to the level of men, rather than be valued for what they might bring to the field of management.

A second group of theories considers internal barriers such as one's lack of confidence, lack of competitiveness and a fear of failure. Often the result of socialization and the historical dominance of men over women, these internal barriers are not easily overcome (Acker & Feuerger, 1996, as cited in Cubillo & Brown, 2003). However, these qualities should not necessarily be seen as weaknesses, but strengths that women could utilize for effective leadership and management. Kruger (1996) reports that women have successfully used adaptation and conflict-avoidance strategies to solve their problems. However, one of the main barriers is low family support in our patriarchy society. Women have to do all household chores and take care of children. But, it is not necessary for men. This seems to have hindered women in positioning themselves better in the organization.

According to Vidya (2008) the barriers to female participation in education are a warren of socio-cultural, economic and political realities. These are very influences of girl's education, which in turn are influenced by community and even by family.

When families decide whether their children will be educated, or whether they will have better educational opportunity, sons are chosen. Educating a son is investing in his ability to look after his old ageing parents while educating a daughter is considered a no-return investment. When she marries, she becomes another family's asset.

Vidya also focuses that both the opportunity and cash costs of educating the daughters of subsistence farmers living near or below the poverty line are restricting the education to girls. Even when they are sent to school, there is high chance that they quit school. Most of the time, it's the eldest daughter who often provides most of the sibling care. Farm and domestic work also pull them out of the school. Although tuition and books are free in public schools, other forms of student fees are still in practice, which keep girls away from school. In my observation, other barriers for female are specific culture and religious beliefs and values. In the context of Nepali society, there are some traditional beliefs which prevent female from engaging in outdoor activities.

### **Opportunity of Skills Development and Training for Women**

Nepal government (NG) has tried to involve women in various training programs for many years. The first women's training center was established in Kathmandu in 1956. Successive development plans have emphasized skills development training for women since 1975 (Vidya, 2008). Numerous small training, and income generation projects have been initiated for women by the government, semi-government, and various private sector and foreign agencies in the last 40 years. In the eighth five-year plan, NG provided credit, technical knowledge, and entrepreneurship training and market services to women. The Ninth Five-year plan

promised to increase women's participation in all technical, entrepreneurial and management training.

The National Planning Commission formulated the Three Year Plan (2011-2013) with the broad objective of building a prosperous, modern and just Nepal. It has incorporated special programmes for women and disadvantaged groups. Under the heading of “Gender Mainstreaming and Inclusion”, the three year plan includes programmes relating to the “empowerment of women and gender equality”. Similarly, article 13(4) of the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) guarantees that there shall be no discrimination with regard to remuneration and social security between men and women for the same work.

Nepal has passed many progressive laws for the realization of rights of women, and the Interim Constitution of Nepal includes provisions that support gender equality and social inclusion. However, awareness and implementation of these laws remains limited.

### **Government Policies and Programs for Increasing Women's Participation**

Government policies have tried to respond to female's problems in various ways. In its sixth five-year plan (1980/81-1984/85), Nepal government had already emphasized female's involvement in all programs and projects recognizing legal impediments to their economic empowerment. It has also enunciated special programs for meeting their needs. The seventh and the eighth five- year plans expanded on the themes. Required legal reforms were also to be implemented to facilitate female's participation in development activities. The eighth five-year plan (1992/93-1996/97) focused the need for increasing female's representation at decision-making levels in the government, nongovernment and semi-government sectors for developing a monitoring system for recording gender discrimination at work. A suitable

organizational structure for coordination and monitoring of activities relating to women was envisaged (Acharya, 2001, Development Experience section, para. 1).

During the period of eighth plan, the government formulated and presented an Action plan in the United Nation's Fourth world Conference on women (Beijing, 4-15 September, 1995). The main points of the Action Plan (NG, September 1995) are summarized below with Nepal's Commitments at the Beijing Conference. Moreover, the tenth five-year plan (2002-2007) which was also Nepal's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) acknowledged that exclusion is the main reason for the deprivation suffered by women. The PRSP, however, failed to present a realistic strategy and concrete mechanisms to mainstream inclusion.

Nepal revitalized woman as integral rather than a sectoral beings. The country reforms discriminatory laws to women and establishes rights to ancestral property. There will be the appropriate law and law enforcement agencies for implementation of laws against women violence. Primary health care facilities for the women will be improved. The women access to universal literacy and technical school will also be increased through scholarship and quotas for female students. The nongovernmental organizations will be forced for advocacy, institution building, and delivery of services to women.

### **Sectoral and Institutional Achievements**

The women in development (WID) policies in successive five-year plans have enunciated programs mainly in the areas of legal reforms, institution building, employment, income generation, education and health (ADB, 1999, p. 48). Legal reforms have been initiated in several fields, like facilitating women's employment and income generation programs have included major credit programs, technical training in agriculture, forestry, small-scale cottage industry, etc., and involvement in

programs have focused on increasing girls' schooling at all levels, and informal education for women and out-of-school girls and boys, especially from disadvantaged groups of population. Moreover, resources have been allocated for these components accordingly. Health programs have concentrated on family planning and immunization and, in later years, on basic and primary health care services.

As regards gender-responsive institution building, both to mainstream/ advocate gender concerns and to execute women/gender programs, several initiatives have been introduced at both central and local levels (ADB, 1999, p. 48). ADB (1999) further states that a number of institutions including Ministry of Women and Social welfare (MWSW), a division in National Planning Commission (NPC), and Women Development Division (WDD) in Ministry of Local Development (MLD) have been established for the development of women. On the other hand, women participation has been increased in sectoral programs such as farmer training, forestry training, and other skills training. Initiation of specific programs for women has also been taken. Large national level credit programs such as Production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW), Women Development program within Small Farmers Development Project (WDP/SFDP), five regional banks, and Microcredit Project for Women (MCPW) are some notable examples. In education sector program such as special provisions for female teachers is the key example. These types of women empowerment activities help to promote the women leadership in different sectors including education.

In the central level, NG's development structure is composed of the National Planning Commission (NPC) chaired by the Prime Minister, and line ministries. From the gender perspective, the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare (MWSW) and women's machinery in NPC are most important at the national level, as their operations cut across all sectors. The creation of this Ministry and the inclusion of



women in the Cabinet represented progress since there had been no women members in the Cabinet during the first half of the 1990s (ADB, 1999, p. 48). However, the bracketing of women's affairs again with social welfare was not a technical provision to fulfill its mandate effectively. Therefore, its focus has been on gender advocacy and inter-ministerial coordination in the first two years of its existence.

### **Ministry of Women and Social Welfare: Gender-Related Activities**

Ministry of women and social welfare prepares and publishes the status report on women's development. It also reviews, analyzes, and publishes women- related activities of selected INGOs. This ministry conducts series of seminars at various levels on women's inheritance rights to make proper law for the women. It also prepares indicators on women's development for monitoring purposes. It develops training and workshop packages for secretaries, joint secretaries, and even for the media personnel. It organizes special preparation course for female applicants to section officer openings in the government. It prepares working group for formulating policies and programs for preventing domestic violence and prepares plan of action on violence against women (ADB, 1999, p. 49). Due to resource constraints and lack of experience of MWSW, it is working at a snail's pace. The role of National Planning Commission (NPC) in this regards is very crucial. The roles of NPC are to approve plans and to conduct periodic monitoring and evaluation. NPC has a women's division mandated to review all programs and projects from a gender perspective and to coordinate programs with funding agencies. It also reviews progress of the implementation of the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Moreover, the division functions as a social sector, which reflects the persistent perception that women's or gender issues are necessarily welfare issues.

Only three other ministries –Local Development, Agriculture and Education – have women's divisions. The Women Development Division (WDD) in the Ministry of Local Development (MLD) is the largest of all existing WID institution in NG. It is implementing credit programs such as production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW) and Micro Credit Project for Women (MCPW). It has nearly 800 staff positions. It was established in 1982 for implementing the PCRW program and has expanded continuously since then (ADB, 1999, p. 49). Recently its role has been expanded to include planning, programming, and administering programs for other disadvantaged groups as well. Accordingly, the Division has been renamed as the Division for women and Target Group Development. Similarly, the Ministry of Education has two separate units engaged in women's education development. The Women's Education Unit (WEU) is responsible for formal education for girls and women. The Non-Formal Education Program under the Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) funded by the World Bank has a larger-scale women's literacy program. Similarly, a Non-formal Education (NFE) Council composed of representatives from different ministries, NGOs, and INGOs involved in NFE, has been established in the Ministry of Education. The major responsibility of the council is to coordinate, and oversee the NFE policy formation process, but it has no women's representation.

To analyze the ninth five- year plan (1997/98-2001/02) approach paper issued by the NPC in 1997, the approach to women's problems changed to a certain extent along the lines of the Beijing Platform for Action. With regard to women's issues, its main objectives of development policy are specified to involve women actively in various development fields, to increase women's access to political, economic, and social sector, and to promulgate legal reforms to ensure women's equal legal rights. Equal participation of women is to be promoted by incorporating specific policies,

targets, and programs for women in sectoral development policies and plans [ADB, 1999, p. 50). Special laws are promised for increasing women's participation at all levels of decision making, for establishing women's right in landownership and for technical training in all fields.

To analyze the policy provisions, NG has included international concerns and accepted that women need to be empowered in their own right, and not only for increasing the efficiency of development programs. Because of political instability, the Ninth Plan had been under preparation for almost two years. Successive governments revised it. Committees have been formed by the Women's Division in NPC for coordinating sectoral programs, but the sectoral ministries have little interest in such committees. Most of the sector subsector plans at departmental level do not have women representation. Moreover, women's participation has not been ensured on vegetable, fruits, or livestock farming despite the overwhelming importance given to women's participation in the Agricultural perspective plan (APP) (ADB, 1999, p. 50).

The above review gives a short glimpse about the women participation in leadership position. These reviews did not clearly tell about the real position of opportunity of women leadership in the educational setting especially in the school sector. So, to fulfill this gap I have tried to conduct this study. My major concern is to explore the opportunity and challenges of women leadership in education sector especially in the school area. I have also tried to explore the reality from my participant's views through their own experience in their work field.

### **Theoretical Review**

Theories provide an important base for understanding the realities that come across the process of research. For the same purpose of understanding the realities, I

linked my research study with several theories. Some related specific theories are discussed below.

### **Traits Theory**

Many people have strong views on what makes an effective leader, and assume that the leader will have a position of some power or authority. In the literature of leadership studies, this is defined as the trait theory approach whereby researchers have tried to identify the common personality characteristics of individual effective leaders (Crawford, Kydd, & Riches, 1997). Yukl (2006) states that the trait approach “emphasizes leaders’ attributes such as personality, motives, values, and skills. Underlying this approach was the assumption that some people are natural leaders, endowed with certain traits not possessed by other people” (p. 13).

Early efforts to understand leadership success focused on the leader's personal traits. According to Daft (2005), fundamental to this theory was the idea that some people are born with traits that make them natural leaders. The Great Man approach sought to identify the traits leader possessed that distinguished them from people who were not leaders. Generally, research found that only a weak relationship between personal traits and leader success. Indeed, the diversity of traits that effective leaders possess indicates that leadership ability is not necessarily a genetic inheritance.

According to Hoy and Miskel (2001) many individuals still believe that Aristotle did centuries ago that from the hour of birth, some are marked for subjection and other for rule. Aristotle thought that individuals are born with characteristic that would make them leaders. The conception that the key factors in determining leadership are inherited produced the so-called trait approach of leadership.

Many researchers made their efforts to identify leadership traits in light of Stogdill's (1948) findings and turned their attention to examine leader behavior and

leadership situation. A concern with traits is also evidenced by the recent interest in emotional intelligence, which includes characteristics such as self-awareness, the ability to manage one's emotion, the capacity to be hopeful and optimistic despite obstacles, the ability to empathize with others, and strong social and interpersonal skills.

Daft (2005) agreed that traits research has been an important part of leadership studies throughout the twentieth century and continues into the twenty-first century. Many researchers still contend that some traits are essential to effective leadership, but only in combination with other factors. Some of the traits considered essential are self-confidence, honesty and integrity, and drive. In my study, this trait theory helped to analyze the leadership practices of the women heads. I tried to link this theory to my research findings.

The traits theory is related with my study in that many of the women leaders are holding their positions because they have certain traits like self-confidence, honesty and integrity.

### **Feminist Theory**

According to Hole and Levin (1975), feminism by definition challenges the status quo. It questions the political, social and cultural institutions, ways of thinking and the vary articulation of those thoughts. Feminism seeks to change not simply men or women or both as they exist at present, but seeks to change the relations between them (Barrett, 1980). Barrett further added that although the basis for this will be provided by an autonomous women's liberation movement, the strategy must involve political engagement with men rather than a policy of absolute independence.

Feminists have challenged long-established beliefs, contested dominant paradigms, identified new areas of research and introduced new strategies of analysis

(Hawkesworth, 2006). According to Hawkesworth (2006), in feminist scholarship many factors have been identified that contribute to the higher incidence of depression among women: low wages, higher levels of poverty, childhood, sexual abuse, rape and domestic violence, stress of work and family responsibilities, inadequate leisure time, sexism, racism, and homophobia (p. 46). She further focused that knowledge production is a rich ground for feminist engagement because the authoritative account of the world accredited by academic disciplines –whether in the humanities, social science, or natural sciences – have profound effects on women’s lives and often are riddled with errors and distortions.

Feminist convictions standardize scholars to power dynamics that structure women’s lives. Feminist scholars have pointed out a remarkable uniformity in the kinds of distortion that obstruct the acquisition of truth. Shared cultural values, such as racism, sexism and heteronormativity pose powerful obstacles to achieving objectivity (Devault, 1999, p. 11). Feminist inquiry has been characterized as “oppositional research” because it challenges the right of the powerful across these diverse disciplines to define realities (Devault, 1999, p. 12).

According to Bhagwat (2004), modern feminism insists, as did historic feminism, on the need for separate women's movements to combat women's specific oppression. The demand that maternity must be an option, and not a social duty, led to a 'free use of contraceptives' and the right to abortion is the common demand of women's movements the world over.

Feminist argue that only including or adding women in the domain of sociology does not serve the purpose of understanding women or justifies the absence of women’s perspective in sociological theories from the perspective of the women. By doing so, the inequalities in the society, government policies from women’s

perspective and so on can be studied (Bajracharya, 2009). Feminists start by listening to women, to what they say about their experience in the past, their needs in the present and their hopes for the future (Price, 2009). Price also focuses that feminists share an analysis of women's oppression that exists in all social realms including the political, the economic and legal. Moreover, feminist recognize that gender oppression acts dynamically with other axes of oppression such as race, ethnicity, class, citizenship, sexuality and physical and mental ability/disability. Feminists are committed to being a force for change in women's interests.

Price (2009) further talks that the best feminist theorists ground their work in the experiences of women who live in a culture that hates them. This grounding involves first and foremost a willingness to listen to women, to identify with women and a commitment to understanding that women are free until we all are free.

**Socialist feminism.** According to Bhagwat (2004), the socialist feminist part of the women's movement was in the meantime developing in new ways. A conference held in July 1975 marked the first organized attempt at a gathering together of women socialist feminists. She further focused that social feminism was dedicated to educational reforms and philanthropic activity like temperance and religious work. The social-feminists established nursing and teaching as female professions, and believed that women had unique qualities connected to their maternal vocation, which, if socially mobilized, would make the world a better place to live in.

Socialist feminism evolved as a "major paradigm in feminist thought and strategy. The two most conspicuous theoretical approaches that have held influence over many socialist feminists to this date are dual systems theory" and "the gender system" (Bhagwat, 2004). The dual systems approach focuses on two autonomous systems: the system of male domination, often terms as patriarchy, and the system of

mode of production, in most cases capitalism that interact to women's subordination and oppression (Philipson & Hansen, 1990).

Socialist feminists are concerned with the exigent capitalism and male supremacy. According to Philipson and Hansen (1990), socialist feminists recognize the fact that women are divided by class, color and political belief, hence, they experience a common oppression as women. They claim that oppression needs to be understood, not just in terms of inequalities of power between men and women, but also in terms of the requirements of capitalism and the role of state institution in a capitalist society.

Bhagwat (2004) agrees that socialist feminists want a theory that avoids the weaknesses of classical Marxism as also of radical feminism while incorporating their insights. They assert that it is necessary to develop a militant feminist consciousness and also to secure equality by transforming the economic base. Production, reproduction, sexuality and socialization of the young, which are the four basic dimensions of a woman's life, must be considered together (Bhagwat, 2004, p. 14). Women must effectively take part in public production, but a women's domestic labor, too, is productive labor.

The socialist feminists want to battle against capitalism, but also want to pursue the slogan and programmed, "personal is political" (Bhagwat, 2004). They thus recognize the importance of both subjective and objective factors in liberating women.

Socialist feminists propose the complete eradication of all the political, economic and social foundations of contemporary society. Specifically, they argue that education, work, sexuality and parenting must undergo through the transformations. Sexual division of labor, which locks men and women into



stereotypical occupational categories must cease. Women should be permitted, respected and valued for all the types of work and given equal opportunity even in the traditional sphere.

Feminism is quite relevant in my research context in that it examines the suppressions of women and initiates women's liberation. My research also agrees that there exists gender-based violence and discrimination against women and it speaks to eliminate such malpractices. The focus of my research in this sense is to advocate that gender roles need to be abolished.

### **Review of Related Studies**

In this subsection, I have tried to review some studies related to my research. A brief summary of the review is presented below.

Frost and Durrant (2003) wrote a research article on the topic “Teacher leadership: Rationale, strategy and impact.” In this article, he discusses teacher leadership. It challenges the current orthodoxy of school organization and seeks to extend the current debate about distributed leadership. It focuses on learning centered development work in which teachers act strategically to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The article includes illustrative cases and proposals for strategies to support teacher leadership. It also offers a framework for planning and evaluating the impact of teacher-led development work.

Parker (1996) wrote a research article on the topic “Gender, culture, and leadership: Toward a culturally distinct model of African-American women executives leadership strategies.” In the article, he discussed that the current literature is the Anglo-American male hierarchical model. This article challenges the practice of applying these culturally African- American women executives. It discusses two problematic assumptions that underlie the Anglo dominated gender and leadership

research. Racism and sexism are parallel processes and women are sufficiently homogeneous so that generalizations based on one group can explain the leadership styles of all women. It proposes that African-American women executives' leadership styles and behaviors may reflect attribute of both the Anglo-male and female leadership models, as well as a distinctly African- American female approach to leadership.

Cubillo and Brown (2003) wrote that the under-representation of women in position of senior management within educational institutions continues to be a matter of some concern, particularly as the teaching force is largely dominated, nationally and internationally, by women. Studies on gender reveal a number of barriers to women seeking educational leadership and management positions. Cubillo and Brown's (2003) study was based on narratives drawn from women aspiring to leadership and management in different educational contexts, from very different parts of the world. The vertical barriers faced by each of the women within their culture and environments.

Larusdottir (2007) wrote a research article on the topic "The fact that I'm a woman may have been the defining factor": The moral dilemmas of an Icelandic head teacher." In this article he discussed the values and moral dilemmas of one Icelandic head teacher. The research has explored the values underpinning the work of female and male educational leaders and how values impact upon their actions, in particular when encountering moral dilemmas. Moreover, this article adds another theoretical dimension, that of gender, to Begley's model. Results show that the motivation behind the head teachers' values is primarily based on consensus. They also show how the head teacher attempts to act as a mediator between competing values of the various leadership arenas while coming to terms with her own. Gender was found to

effect on the head teacher in various ways as she felt the need to negotiate and contest her values and leadership actions against stakeholders of various arenas.

Tomlinson (2004) wrote on the topic "women as leaders and managers" in his book *Educational leadership: Personal growth for professional development*. He said that management encompasses the full range of women's natural talents and abilities but there are powerful forces resistant to feminine leadership. The masculine corporate culture has high control, competitiveness, an emphasis on strategy, lack of emotion, analysis for rational problem-solving, managerial effectiveness gauged in terms of financial gain rather than employee satisfaction, so that women have to change by adapting and camouflaging their femininity. There is also indifference towards feminine leadership among women. Some women deny its existence and fear that acknowledging it will demonstrate their ineffectiveness. They have learned to accommodate to masculine culture, hence they are not anxious about encouraging feminine leadership in subordinates. He further focused that the reason for the effectiveness of a feminine leadership style include a strong desire to succeed in men's domain, the capacity for endurance of stress and a higher level of general health in working women, the ability to manage a wide range and number of tasks simultaneously leading to good organizational abilities, intuition and problem-solving, and a willingness to be part of a team.

Oplatka and Tamir (2009) wrote a research article on the topic "Don't want to be a school head: Women deputy heads' insightful constructions of career advancement and retention." In this article, they wrote that in light of feminist scholars who have called for challenging the epistemology of existing theories and concepts in social sciences and recreating an innovative knowledge in which women are the focus, the current study aimed at tracing the career stories of 25 Israeli female

deputy heads who explicitly do not aspire to headship. These deputies hold a stance that is in sharp contrast with widespread beliefs on career aspiration and advancement, albeit that they are considered to be competent candidates for headship. The female deputies' stories revealed that they construct a clear and sharp distinction between the deputy's role and that of the school head. Whereas the former is perceived to be challenging and less complicated, leaving them sufficient space to establish informal, warm relationships with staff and students, the latter is portrayed as stressful, formal and essentially administrative-oriented. This distinction corroborates the dichotomy of masculine versus feminine leadership, and provides insights into new conceptions of headship and deputy headship in the era of responsibility and accountability.

Shakeshaft (1989) wrote in her book *Women in Education Administration* that the United States took the debate about women teachers' motivation which is still furthered by questioning explanation of women managers' behavior based on male paradigms of leadership and effectiveness. She further said that given the constraints on women's careers, their promotion orientation is bound to emerge as lower if it is interpreted within this paradigm. The concepts need to be redefined if they are to accurately reflect women's experiences.

Christman and McClellan (2008) wrote a research article on the topic "Living on barbed wire: Resilient women administrators in educational leadership programs." In this article, they wrote that the ability of our participants to have a more fluid use of gender has given them resiliency within their academic leadership. In fact, their subconscious or conscious play with gender norms has helped them traverse fences that others build around them. They further claimed that when they started this study, they attempted to explain the participants' resiliency through their expectations of the

participants' gender, and they found themselves critiquing the participants based on these gender expectations.

They also thought that they would hear proclamations from the participants of how their feminine traits, such as collaboration, caring, being relationship centered, and nurturing, sustained their place in administration. Initially, they expected to hear more of themselves, the feminine bonds of their gender. But this is not what they got. What they discovered was that even in their attempts to open a confidential conversation; they were treating the participants with heavy-handed bias. Women faculty and students can learn from these extraordinary resilient women leaders, but we must be careful not to evaluate too quickly using socially constructed norms ourselves.

The authors further added that we must push ourselves to meet within a borderland where women are in full consciousness of socially constructed expectations yet capable of traversing borders and traveling in complexity and finding there a respectful place where we embrace all sisters and hear the voices of women living lives on barbed wire.

Earley and Weindling (2007) wrote a research article on the topic "Do school leaders have a shelf life? Career stages and head teacher performance." In this article they explore several issues about school leaders, career stages and performance. It draws upon various pieces of research, including the longitudinal study of secondary head teachers which began in the early 1980s at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), England, to raise some key issues about head teachers' careers, the various stages of headship, and the relationship between length of tenure and school leader performance. The article concludes with some thoughts regarding the future of headship and what needs to be done to ensure that the quality of

leadership remains as good as it should be. If leadership at the apex of organizations is as crucial as all the research and inspection evidence suggests, then what needs to be done to ensure a longer 'shelf life' for school leaders and is the notion of a limited or fixed-term contract worth revisiting?

Hopfl and Matilal (2007) wrote a research article on the topic "The lady vanishes: Some thoughts on women and leadership." In this article, they wrote that it considers why women are considered a threat to organizations and why organizations seek to subject women to the therapeutic imperative of rationality as the price of membership and of success. Put simply, it considers how women have to demonstrate male characteristics in order to succeed as leaders and must set aside feminine qualities: to live hyper-abstractly -in order thus to earn divine grace and homologation with the symbolic order. These results in an irresolvable lack in terms of what the organization desires for its completion. Originality/value – leadership is defined by the phallus and women's leadership by its absence.

Jones (1990) conducted a research on "The attitudes of men and women primary school teachers to promotion, educational management and administration." He wrote that men and women teachers' attitudes to promote found some differences in their expectations of themselves and others as leaders. Based on what they said rather than what they did, both men and women favored a democratic model of management which they saw both men and women head as capable of providing effective leadership. However, while men saw themselves as more innovative than women in introducing change, women did not see their male colleagues in this way. Women preferred to use staff expertise in bringing about change, men drew on adviser support and expertise.

Acker (1989) in contrast makes gender the central theme of her book on teachers' careers. She sees her task to map the variations in promotion, subjects taught administrative responsibilities and daily experience. In this way, she aims to rectify a situation in which many possible questions about teachers' careers and experiences have not yet been answered or even asked, because the dominant model has limited the scope of our collective imagination.

Bem (1977) wrote in his book "Psychological Androgyny" that it is possible for people to exhibit both masculine and feminine qualities and tended to polarize the qualities, so that "masculine" characteristics are associated only with men and "feminine" with women. At their extremes both set of characteristics become negative. Advocates of androgynous approaches to management argue for an integration of the characteristics so that management behaviors incorporate both masculine and feminine behaviors. According to this model, manager in schools, whether men or women, would be able to draw in both male and female qualities as the situation require. If empirical research based on observation was able to show that this is what effective leaders do, then contingency theories of leadership would need to be modified to take account of the new data.

Crawford et al. (1997) wrote in their book "Leadership and teams in educational management" that there is relatively little data in research about women managers in education that can be used to challenge theories of educational management or lead to their re-conceptualization to include both women and men. Although definitions of career that do not work for women have been questioned, there is only a limited quantitative research base in Britain about the career routes of both men and women teachers. The picture is even sparser in further and higher education. They further focus that other research is needed that challenges traditional

stereotypes of what constitutes appropriate management behavior and process. The association of management and masculinity has been established as a fact yet it is treated as such, with negative consequence for women education.

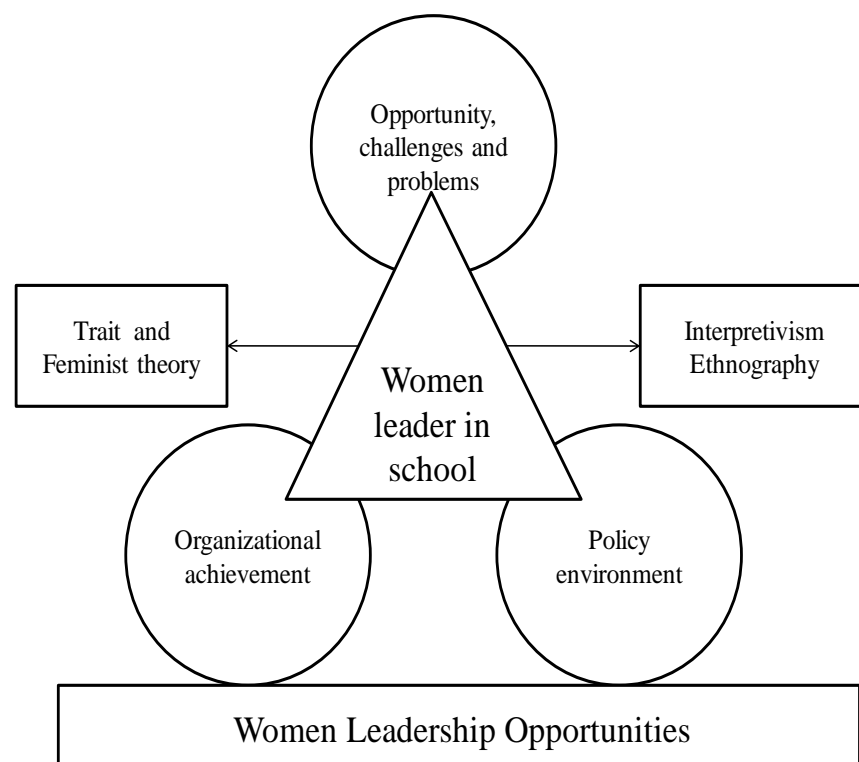
Powney and Winer (1991) wrote in their book "Outside of the norm: Equity and management in educational institutions" that the strategies used by the women and black managers they interviewed to fight back against the obstacles they faced once in senior positions. The problems included invisibility, visibility, tokenism, hostility, harassment, patronage and exploitation. A number of people commented on their isolation, a sense of people waiting to see them fall. The authors question the implications of this sense of isolation when set against the expressed preference of most for a democratic style of leadership. They suggest that potential conflict between the two positions might explain the group of six white women whose style is described as self doubting that is they advocate one management style but use another. Black women managers in their sample were least likely to use participative approaches to management. The study thus provides a useful basis for considering difference in women's management styles.

Florence and Samuel (2005) conducted a study entitled "Being a female head teacher". According to their study, although efforts by the international community to raise the participation of women in leadership, management in education is still largely male dominated. Efforts to address these disparities have failed because many researchers hold the assumption that male and female experiences in leadership are similar. The study used a narrative inquiry approach based on semi-structured in-depth interviews to collect data. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach. The findings from the study illustrate that patriarchy works inconsistently for women in society. Whilst on one hand, it facilitates women's



achievement of education which is a requirement for leadership; patriarchal structures enhance the negative perception of females as effective leaders. The support of male parents earlier in life emerged as a major factor in nurturing the women's self confidence, hence their ability to take on the challenges of leadership later in life. The female head teacher participants' approaches to leadership were based on own philosophies that appeared to determine how they view and experience leadership. Also indicated is the fact that the female head teachers faced a lot of challenges because of their gender including rejection, threats and discrimination. In addition, they revealed the fact that the demands of administration and their roles as wives and mothers were major challenges to be countered for effective performance.

On the basis of the above concepts, I have tried to prepare the conceptual framework of my study which is presented below.



*Figure 1.* Conceptual framework

According to the above conceptual framework, for the effective leadership there is the need of inter connection among opportunity, challenges and problems, policy regarding women headship at schools and organizational achievement. The vital role for this should be played by the women leaders in the today's' changing context.

Through this research study, I wanted to know what the existing condition of the opportunities of women leaders is in school organization. For that purpose, I tried to use two theories –leadership and feminism in my research. I caught interpretive paradigm and adopted ethnographic enquiry as methodology for the study. I also wanted to know what opportunities, challenges and problems are there for a women school head teacher.

How are policy environments helping to promote women leadership in schools and what strategies women head teachers are applying to face the challenges and constraints in their work field environment? I tried to find answer to my research question through in-depth interview, observation and diary from my participants. In the next chapter, I have explained the detailed methodology of my research.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented a thorough review of related literature focusing on women leadership in school setting. This chapter has reviewed some thematic issues (like education and women empowerment, gender sensitivity, opportunity and barriers to women empowerment), legal provisions (like Interim Constitution of Nepal, three year plan) focusing on the provisions and programs for increasing women's participation, theoretical underpinnings (like traits and feminism) and some empirical studies concerning women leadership in schools.

## CHAPTER III

### METODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the research methodology and design which I used in my study. It describes how I selected my research field, introduces the research field and presents the rationale for the selection of participants. Likewise, it describes the data collection procedures, tools and processes of data analysis and interpretation. Moreover, it also presents some quality standards of the research and ethical considerations on the part of the researcher.

According to Guba and Lincoln (2005) the purpose of the research determines the methodology and design of the research. The methodology provides a direction and framework for developing specific designs and concrete data collection tactics.

#### **Research Design**

Based on the nature of my inquiry into the opportunity of female school leadership, I based my study on qualitative design. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) mention that qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. This means qualitative researcher study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p. 3). Qualitative method provides flexible sets of theories to cover multiple realities of human subjectivities.

Creswell (2003) says that “qualitative inquiry employs different knowledge claims, strategies of inquiry, and methods of data collection and analysis” (p. 179). Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) highlight that qualitative research focuses on multivariate issues which cross cut the complex socio-historical field including class,

cast, gender, race and ethnicity. They further argue that qualitative method includes “interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary and sometimes counter disciplinary field.” That’s why; qualitative method crosses the boundary of particular theoretical approach.

Qualitative research is an interpretative research (Creswell, 2003), with the inquirer typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants. The participants are interviewed and observed in their natural setting such as home, office, school etc., which provide the researcher the actual experiences of the respondents. Looking at the nature of inquiry in the present research, I thought qualitative research methodology can do justice to the study. Thus, I adopted the qualitative premise of inquiry. My research questions also demanded the humanistic model. Since my research questions, were set to enquire and explore the experiences, perceptions and responses, they needed dialogic interaction with my participants and that was possible only by adopting humanistic/qualitative model of social research. Therefore, I adapted qualitative research approach.

### **Research Paradigm**

A paradigm is a world view, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world. As such, paradigms are deeply embedded in the socialization of adherents and practitioners (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When we talk about paradigm, our concern is about ontology, epistemology and methodology. According to Richards (2003), “Ontology, literally the science or study of being, is concerned with the nature of reality and their stances” (p. 34). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) state that ontological assumption concerns the very nature of essence of the social phenomena being investigated (p. 7). Perception of reality differs from person to person based on his or her context. Ontologically, my study was based on multiple realities because each of my participants perceived reality differently. So,

my ontology was multiple realities because I wanted to know experience, feeling, value and everyday life reality of my participants in their natural setting while performing their leadership roles as school head teachers.

Epistemology is theory of knowledge which serves to decide how the social phenomenon that will be studied (Creswell, 2003). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2002) describe that “epistemology forms concern the very bases of knowledge – its nature and forms, how it can be acquired and communicated to other human beings” (p. 6). My epistemological conviction is based on subjectivism. I believe that my participants form their knowledge according to their own perceptions and thoughts. Therefore, I can get different perceptions and experiences of my participants over the same issue in question.

Methodology refers to the philosophical and epistemological foundation of knowing about the world. According to Parajuli (2002), a researcher selects particular theories or methods not because s/he is convenient but s/he has believed in particular ontological and epistemological assumptions.

Methodology links a particular philosophy to the appropriate research methods and bridges philosophical notions to practical and applicable research strategies (Byrne, 2001). Quantitative research is its research style and questionnaire based on survey, experiment, etc. is its method for generating numeric data. On the other hand, humanistic model of social research are based on ontological premise of naturalism or subjectivism. They believe the social world can be studied from the standpoint of individuals who are part of ongoing investigation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

## **Research Approach**

Qualitative research works, according to Creswell (2003), “embark on many kinds of approaches like ethnographies, grounded theory, case study and narrative” (p. 18). For my research I used ethnographic method as an element of humanistic enquiry.

I adapted an ethnographic approach under qualitative design because of my ontological and epistemological premise that the realities are subjective and multiple and that the knowledge can be created or recreated, perceived and interpreted by people themselves. According to Hamersley and Atkinson (2007), ethnography plays a complex and shifting role in the dynamic tapestry that the social science has become in the twenty- first century. Ethnography is one of many approaches that can be found within social research today. They further focus that the social world should be studied in its natural state undisturbed by the researcher.

Following qualitative research paradigm, my inquiry is based on the principles of ethnographic research. Ethnography emphasizes the subjective reality of individuals and stresses the relativistic nature of social world which can be understood by adopting the point of view of the individuals who directly involved in the activities which are to be studied (Burrell & Morgan, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In this understanding, I adopted the ethnography in my research study. I intended to extract from my study the challenges and opportunities of women leadership by exploring the way women leaders describe and structure the challenges they face. My study on exploring experience, perceptions and responses is thus guided by the assumption of ethnographic inquiry that highlights the importance of knowledge as something which is personally experienced and which can thus be best understood

from the inside that is from the subjective experience of individuals. That's why; I think the appropriate way of my research study was ethnography.

### **Study Area and Participants**

It was the beginning of my research, when I decided about my field of interest; I began to think about some convenient research sites. Flick (2009) has suggested that the qualitative researcher has to look the location from which the problem is seen and answer of research question get with data. Taking this in consideration, I decided to select my research site as Kathmandu valley.

Cresswell (2003) addresses that the purposively sampled participants or sites provide best help to the researcher understand the problem and the research questions in qualitative research (p. 185). I chose Kathmandu valley because of my convenience since I have been living in Kathmandu. Moreover, constraints of time and resources also played the role for the selection of this particular site.

I chose the community school only due to my clear understanding about the role of government and community. I also decided upon taking all levels of schools (primary, lower secondary and secondary) in order to cover the entire school education system. With these criteria for selection of the schools, I began my search for schools and location. Similarly, due to the nature of my study (exploratory and in-depth), choosing a large number of schools and participants was not possible. Therefore, I decided to limit the number of schools to five. Out of the selected five schools, two schools were urban and three were rural. I chose the schools purposively because female headed schools were necessary for me. At the beginning, I thought my research locality would be remote district but it was not possible because it was difficult to find women leaders in rural community schools. That's why I rejected my

previous thought. After that I chose Kathmandu valley because it was in my easy access.

At the time of school selection I went to District Education Office, Kathmandu to find the list of schools. I chose the schools which were led by women in rural and urban areas. I also collected school telephone numbers and made phone calls in order to confirm their location and to initiate establishing rapport with the school heads. After that I went to the schools several times, I met the head teachers, school management committee members and teachers. After the rapport had been built with the selected head teachers by informing them of the research purpose, their approval for interview was taken. After that I conducted in-depth interviews with them. I also went to the schools several times for the purpose of observation.

I selected my participants through purposive sampling procedure. I wanted to know about the opportunity, challenges, and problems of women head teachers with the existing policies. In order to study these aspects about female leadership, I selected five women head teachers and two management committee members as per the purpose of my study.

The following table depicts the details of my study site and participants.

Table 2

*Details of Respondents*

<u>Respondents</u> <u>(Pseudonyms)</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>School's</u> <u>Name</u>	<u>School level</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>
Rasmi	F		Primary	Headteacher
Bimala	F		L.Secondary	Headteacher
Nirmala	F		Secondary	Headteacher
Kanchan Sharma	F		Primary	Headteacher
Devi Sharma	F		Primary	Headteacher
Bimal Sharma	F		Primary	SMC Member
Hari Giri	M		Secondary	SMC Member



### **Introduction to the Research Field**

I selected one primary school with a female head. It was located at Danchi which was in a rural area of Kathmandu district. One day, I visited the school. It had nearly one ropani land where there was a long weak building (Tahara). There were six rooms including administrative room. There were five teachers including head teacher and an assistance. Interestingly, they all were female. I also took another school for the study which was a lower secondary school and was situated at Ganeshwor, Kathmandu. It was an urban school. It was also headed by female. The school had two ropani land and 12 roomed building. There were 10 teachers and an assistant in the school. The majority of the teachers were found to be female even in this school.

The third sampled school was situated at Thali, Kathmandu. It was primary in status and situated at another rural area. It was also headed by a female teacher. The school had nearly two ropani land and there was a building with seven rooms including for office. There were all together six employees including an office assistant. The majority of the teachers were female.

Similarly, I took another secondary school from urban area headed by female. The school had well equipped building having furniture, library and science lab. There were altogether 17 teachers and two school assistants. There were just three male teachers in the school.

The fifth sampled primary school was situated at the rural area of Kathmandu district. There was a female head teacher in this school as well. The physical condition of the school was poor. It had one Ropani land and just a small building with two rooms. There was multi grade teaching system in this school. Three female teachers including the head teacher were working there.

### **Profile of the Participants**

One of my participants was Rasmi (pseudonym) who lived in Gaushala, Kathmandu. She was born in 2018 BS. She was married and had completed S.L.C. and received 10 month teacher training and one month management training course. She had been working since 2047 BS but she gained the status of the permanent teacher only in 2053 B.S. Before coming to this school, she was in Kavre as a teacher.

My next participant was Bimala (pseudonym). She was born in 2026 BS. She was married. She had completed her PCL level and she was studying Bachelor degree. She had taken 10 month teacher training course and one month management training course. She had been working since 2050 BS and became permanent in 2053 BS. She started her job from Solukhumbu.

Likewise, my next participant was Kanchan Sharma (pseudonym) who lived in Chabahil. She was married and had completed her school level education from Kantishwori Secondary School, Kathmandu and got IEd degree from Tahachal Campus. She had got one month management training as well. She had been working since 2042 BS and became permanent in 2053 BS. Since then, she had been working as a head teacher in the school.

Nirmala (pseudonym) was my next participant. She lived in Kapan, Kathmandu. She was born in 2028 BS. She was married and her birth place was Ilam. She had completed her school education, PCL education and bachelor level education from her home district. She was studying at Master's level at Tahachal Campus, Kathmandu. She had got one month management training as well. She had been working since 2050 BS.

Devi Sharma (pseudonym), primary school head teacher was my next participant. She lived at Ghagalphedi, Kathmandu. She was born at Thankot,

Kathmandu in 2032. BS She was married. She completed her SLC from her birth place. She started her PCL but did not complete due to home responsibility of her married life. She had been working since 2054 BS in Rahat Quota. She had got 10 month teacher training and one month management training as well.

I consulted with two members of school management committee as well. Bimal Sharma (pseudonym) was a member of school management committee of a primary school. He lived in Danchi, Thali VDC, Kathmandu. He was born in 2009 BS and had passed SLC. He had three years of experience in school management. Hari Giri (pseudonym) was another participant of the study. He was the management committee member of a secondary school. He was born in 2025 BS and had four years of experience in school management.

I made informal talks with the selected participants before probing into my research. I requested them for providing their time for interaction with them for a prolonged time. I managed time when they felt free. I talked with them in a friendly manner which made me easier to interact with them while interviewing. I also informed them about the purpose of my research before interviewing them. I also felt easy to interact with them as we were in the same educational profession. They also believed me. I developed intimacy and I found that there was warm environment to talk. I did not only visit their school but also spent much time at their homes when they provided time for me.

### **Study Tools**

I used the following study tools for the data collection purpose.

#### **Interview Guidelines**

Using interview guidelines is quite common in qualitative research. It is in fact the most used tool in qualitative inquiry to gain an understanding of the social world

from the perspective of individuals being studied (Elliott, 2005). Moreover, an in-depth interview indicates that the study is directed towards a qualitative research. This study followed semi-structured interview schedule.

Prior to visiting the field, interview guidelines were developed with reference to research objectives. Separate set of interview guidelines were developed for each groups of participants which were head teachers and School Management Committee members. Before finalizing the interview guidelines, they were once piloted with a school head and a SMC member each. The interview guidelines are attached in the Annex I. For the convenience of permanent and complete record of speech that occurred, audio tape recording was used to capture the interviews. The interviews were recorded with the due permission of the participants. Interview was also backed up by written field notes to record the non-verbal communication and other contextual factors whenever required, whereas note taking was used to record the interview with other participants like school management committee members.

### **Observation Sheet**

Observation draws on direct evidence of the eye to witness events first hand. It gives the researcher a chance to capture the situation as it happens rather than at a later occasion. This allows researcher to see the things that might otherwise get missed and to discover the things that the participant might not express in the interviews (Patton, as cited in Cohen et al., 2000). Observation allows gathering data on the physical setting, human setting, interaction setting and programme setting (Morrison, as cited in Cohen et al., 2000).

In this study, observation sheet was used to capture the physical setting that is the physical environment of school, the human setting that is the organization of teacher and student. Observation guideline was developed with reference to research

objectives (see Annex II for the Observation sheet). Data from the observation helped me to analyze the real situation of the school female heads.

The head teachers were pre-informed about the purpose of observation taking their permission before making field observations. The data were recorded in the observation sheet. My role during the observation was that of non-participant observer noting down the things as they occurred and making notes of the things that were noticed that was beyond my observation guideline. I observed the interpersonal communication skill and working style of the selected head teachers. Observation helped me in collecting detailed information about my participants and seeing their reality.

### **Diary**

The daily diary writing is one of modes of data collection in ethnographic studies. The reason for keeping a research diary is to facilitate the research process through recording observations, thoughts and questions as they happen, for later use by the researcher, and to stimulate reflective thinking about the research (Newbury, 2001). Keeping records of daily activities with a specified format of what one did in a day, with whom did they do, why did they do the particular activity, what they like the most on that day and what they did not like help to identify their everyday life activities. In this study, diaries were an adjunct to interviewing and informed the interview process. The resulting 'rich data' and previous interview content were used to explore their situations and to confirm the findings in subsequent interviews. More specifically, diaries have been used to analyze everyday activities of women leader at home and in school with the criteria of what they did in a whole day.

Besides the primary data, I have also received secondary data through literature study. For this, I consulted different books, journal, research articles, and

empirical studies. Such data have extensively used in the literature review chapter. Similarly, some secondary data are used to substantiate the primary data in the data analysis and interpretation chapters.

### **Data Collection Method and Process**

According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research takes place in a natural setting and multiple methods are used to collect data. Likewise, this study also followed the concepts of ethnographic research tradition. Based upon ethnography research methodology, the study explored everyday experiences of the selected participants. This was done by observing and interviewing with the selected schools' female heads and consulting SMC members.

Similarly, I prepared daily writing and reflection as well. It took me nearly two months period in doing the field work. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) said that qualitative research focuses on multivariate issues which cross cuts the complex socio-historical field including class, caste, gender, race and ethnicity. During the data collection period, I followed the notion of Denzin and Lincoln and collected the necessary data. Qualitative method provided flexible sets of theories to cover multiple realities of human subjectivities. The data collection tools that were used in the study have been discussed earlier.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data (Creswell, 2003). Creswell further focuses that it involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data. To analyze the data at first I transcribed the whole data and made possible themes. Then, I developed categories based on the themes that emerged from the data.

After the theme categories were developed, thematic data analysis and interpretation of the study was done as per the knowledge and experience of the researcher. The data from the field were reduced into emergent themes through coding and condensing the code and then linking them with theoretical discussion. Drafting summaries of the field notes and noting relationships among the categories have also been done. When I analyzed the qualitative data, I interpreted what I saw or heard, drawing on contextual information to make sense of it.

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2008), ethnographers deals with unstructured data for which there is a need of development of a set of analytic categories that capture relevant aspects of these data and the assignment of particular items of data to those categories. Detailed, repeated readings were done to know data. The data were organized by means of coding and indexing. The transcript of the interview notes, and observation and field notes were intertwined with each other where I continually moved back and forth in framing analytical meanings.

### **Quality Standards**

Qualitative research study is a subjective endeavor. That may be reason why many people raise questions over its authenticity and validity. That's why it is needed to test and demonstrate that the study is credible. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, pp. 19-20) have raised critical credibility issues. They mainly focus on maintaining the triple crises – crises of representation, legitimation and praxis. To address the crisis of representation, I included not only female head teachers but also male SMC members. Crisis of legitimation was addressed by depicting their real-life experiences and meanings the participants brought about leadership opportunities. Crisis of praxis was addressed by reflecting on their practices. Similarly, the following strategies were also used to maintain accuracy and credibility of the study.

### **Triangulation**

As discussed in the earlier section, I adopted triangulation approach. In order to triangulate the data, I collected the data from various methods like interview, observation, diary, etc. I adopted three layers of interpretation as far as possible like people's interpretation, researcher's interpretation of people's interpretation, and theoretical interpretation of researcher's interpretation.

### **Member Check**

According to Lincoln and Guba, the member check whereby data, analytic categories, interpretation, and conclusion are tested with members of those stake holding groups from whom the data were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility (1985, p.314). Likewise, I adopted member check technique to make my research study credible. Guba also focuses if researcher is to be able to maintain that his/her reconstructions are recognizable to audience members as adequate representation of their own realities, it is essential that they are given the opportunity to them (p. 314). In the qualitative research, findings use member check through taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to participants and determining whether these participants feel that they are accurate (Creswell, 2001, p.196). Considering this principle, I checked my findings with my participants.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Qualitative researches, with its primary tool interview, may reveal sensitive personal information, thus, the ethics of the researcher is to protect the rights of participants by observing the ethical principles (Bryman, 2008). 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 purpose and the expected roles of the participants in advance. Interviews were conducted when the participants were free and while they were ready. I interviewed them and observed the practices with their consent. The other aspect that the researcher always needs to consider is maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. I did not reveal the identity of the research participants (since pseudonyms were used) and schools throughout this dissertation. It means I have maintained anonymity of research participants. I maintained confidentiality while using the ideas and views of the participants. I was completely aware about the use of information obtained from the participant. I did not misuse the information obtained from the participants. I expressed my deep appreciation for their contribution.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has described my research paradigm and methods, processes and research field and participants. My enquiry based on the principles of ethnographic research helped me in developing research questions and then selecting the research fields and respective participants for the study. This also helped me to come close to the subjective experiences of the women head teachers directly through interaction with them. Observation also allowed me chart out network between head teacher, teacher, SMC member etc. The interaction and interview along with daily diary and informal interactions with my participants helped me triangulate the data.

Data from the fields were analyzed following the process of coding, categorizing and developing themes. This was followed by the description, analysis, and then interpretation. In the process of analysis and interpretation, I attempted to

understand field data with theories. Analysis and interpretation of data have thus been attempted at reflecting the subjective reality.

## CHAPTER IV

### POLICY ENVIRONMENTS FOR WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

In this chapter, I have analyzed the policy environments which help to promote women leadership in schools. Nowadays, in the context of Nepal, the government has been implementing positive practices in policy environment to promote female teachers or leaders in schools. The government has started to provide 33% reservation to women in every sector to empower women and has also provided equal chance for women participation (Bahadur, 2006, Introduction section, para. 1). It helps to raise women participation in leadership positions. In the school sector, the government has ensured women teacher in primary level. It is a positive practice for women participation in education sector. But only this is not adequate for improving women participation in leadership positions.

#### **Understanding Policy Provisions**

In the context of Nepal, there is deep rooted patriarchy stereotype thinking mindset, hence it is not easy to overcome this condition. Home and school environments should also be improved and modified for empowering women in all sectors. According to UNESCO (2010), the commission on the states of women assessed progress in twelve critical areas of the Beijing platform for Action, including education and training of women and girls. In preparation, UNESCO conducted an online consultation on this topic on behalf of the United Nations system. One of the most significant conclusions was that current education and literacy initiatives are not responding to the complex needs of women and girls affected by compounded forms of discrimination. It concluded that achieving gender equality in education is not only

about access, but also about learning environment, curricula, attitudes, and a host of wider political, economic and social considerations. Regarding the policy for the women, one of my participants Devi Sharma said:

*In my opinion if we really want to empower women, the policy should be implemented in time according to written document. The society, community and family members should believe the work of women as equal as men. We claim that we can lead better than male. If we facilitate properly the parents start to treat their daughter and son equally. I think that girls are discriminated right from their own home. They are oppressed by their own parents as well.*

As explained by the research participant there is policy for improving women's status. For evidence in Interim Constitution 2007 of Nepal, article 20 says (a) no one shall be discriminated in any from merely for being a women, (b) every women shall have right to reproductive health and other reproductive matters, (c) no, physical mental or any other form of violence shall be punished by law, and (d) son and daughter shall have equal rights to their ancestral property. If we see these statements, there are beautiful provisions in the words but in practice the condition is just the opposite. We talk about the equality of the son and daughter but in practice we discriminate more or less in our family as well. To respect the rule and policy, we should start from our home than only it translates into our society.

According to the Interim Constitution 2007, women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women are important liabilities and responsibilities of the state in legal and moral terms. International cooperation has continued and women are more aware of their rights. They are thus, in a stronger position now, to shoulder their responsibility than before. These above mentioned rights seem to be political ones. As

politics is the backbone of any country, unless an issue is addressed politically it cannot be materialized in substance.

In this direction, Government of Nepal has also targeted to end gender disparity at different levels in the Nepalese society. “The realization of the effectiveness and substantial differences in gender equality and women empowerment are the areas of concern in the Interim Plan” (Government of Nepal, 2007, p. 101). It has also approved the process of recognition and monitoring and valuation of women's works and their roles in the entire economy by engendering macro economic framework and the development process and by making them gender sensitive. Special features of the program include: Protection and rehabilitation of women affected by the conflict, inclusion of women in all sectors of development, implementation of the State's commitment for complete gender equality, creation of positive pressure and advocacy, use of social development for conflict settlement and permanent political stability, institutional capacity development of national mechanism, gender focal point and women development office, identification of specialized and shared responsibilities of all agencies working on gender equality and women empowerment and implementation of the gender management system (Government of Nepal, 2007).

Long vision of this plan is to build a new Nepal, as a just, gender inclusive and equitable country, by ensuring the fundamental and equal rights of women. The objectives of Government of Nepal are to build an equitable and gender inclusive society by ensuring equal rights of women of all castes, creed and regions in the social, political and economic aspects of national development, and to put an end to all forms of violence and discrimination against women including human trafficking;

social rehabilitation of conflict-affected and displaced women and to ensure the active participation of women in conflict resolution and the peace process.

Avenues to meaningful changes for equality in all aspects of the society have been opened by the amendments to acts that were discriminatory against women. An environment has been created for the partnership of the government, donor communities, NGOs and the private sector. Women's active participation will be ensured through gender mainstreaming in all the areas of development. Policy and legal reforms as well as other necessary measures will be taken to ensure at least 33 per cent representation of women in the policy and decision-making process at all levels (Government of Nepal, 2007). In this concern, the participant further said,

*In our time I hardly got chance to study but my brothers got chance easily. In that time my parents thought that there is no any benefit to enroll the girls in school as they were supposed to go their husband's home and there is no meaning of education for them. In my understanding this type of discriminating behavior with girls and boys are decreasing these days. However, even now some parents enroll their son in the institutional school and at the same time, their daughters are studying in the community school. So, by these stereotyping causes in the government school there are more girls than boys these days as well. Girls come to school after finishing all household work as boy comes after just washing the hand of eaten rice. If we really facilitate the situation the girls get the proper environment from home and other fields as well.*

In the social, economic and political spheres, active participation and empowerment of women of the backward groups, *Adibasi Janajatis, Madhesis, Muslims, single women, women with disability and the marginalized*, will be ensured.

In order to completely end all kinds of violence and gender discrimination against women including human trafficking, tasks will be undertaken to create a strong environment, including a legal framework (Government of Nepal, 2007). Three Year Interim Plan has clearly stated that “Women will be encouraged to actively participate in the institutionalization of democracy and the electoral process. Gender management and a gender management information system will be launched and enforced, and the policies and legal reforms will be closely monitored and evaluated” (Government of Nepal, 2007, p. 104). The plan further states that emphasis is given to specialized gender analysis, gender auditing, budget implementation and monitoring of national, regional and local development plans and programs, and envisioned for enrichment of the institutional capacity of women development offices, legal economic and social awareness raising programs for the targeted community, and economic empowerment of the targeted groups.

National Planning Commission (NPC) (2005) states that gender equality is among the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations because all the other goals—achieving universal primary education, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development depends on it. In Nepal, no plan has missed equality in its programs, but in the implementation phase almost all such pro-equality programs have got eliminated. But obviously, women empowerment has not materialized so much till now. Until now a number of female teachers are not equalized with that of the males. As the result, the challenges of female teachers of Nepal have not been over in spite of formulation of dozens of women related programs (Duwadi, 2009).

### **Policy is not Panacea to Promote the Condition of Women Situation**

In the present context of Nepal, there are a lot of problems to promote a women leadership. Nepal is one of the patriarchic cultural societies, that is why; it hesitates to support the implementation of the policy of women empowerment. It should be implemented in a proper way. If we really want to empower women, the policy should be implemented strongly. In this concern, one of my participants Kanchan said,

*Nowadays the policy asks about empowerment of women but implementation part is not satisfactory. If all policies are applied in a proper way, it would be better for women. Women should provide chance to show their performance in their interested field.*

According to her, only written document is not enough for promoting women's condition. If policies are implemented sternly, then only it would make the condition of women better.

In the context of Nepal, policy alone is not sufficient to change the people's traditional patriarchy stereotype thinking concepts. All parents must do equal behavior to their son and daughter. The parents should give equal chance for the education of children. They should show equal behavior towards their son and daughter. In the context of our country, there are strong roots in the patriarchic culture where daughter should do all household chores and son sits just reading and playing. This type of unequal behavior affects women's performance. It is a barrier to women's achievement in academic endeavors. That is why; just the policy environment can't help to promote the condition which has risen to reach the leadership level of women. If we really want to promote the condition, it would change the stereotype patriarchy cultural mindset. According to UNESCO (2010),



universally, women face gender obstacle than men in holding of authority in the professional area. It further says that among the sampled 22 middle and high income countries, women hold the majority of teaching positions in 17 countries but when it comes to management at the school level, they hold the majority of positions in slightly more than half (12) of these countries. Women make up the highest prosperities of teachers and school level management personnel in the various countries of central and Eastern Europe, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia (UNESCO, 2010). In contrast, women constitute the minority of both teachers and school level management personnel in middle income countries, such as China, Indonesia, Mexico and Peru.

Analyzing the above statements shows that there is the low condition of women leadership in schools, not only in Nepal but in other western countries as well. Especially in underdeveloped countries, the women participation in leadership is not satisfactory. Most of the leadership positions are occupied by men. It has also determined the enrollment of girls' schooling. Girls' schooling is one of fundamental levels of women leadership positions. UNESCO (2010) also agrees that low participation rate for girls in schooling may reinforce the low representation of women teachers as fewer female overall will complete teacher training programmers. If we really increase women leadership positions, it will raise girls' schooling enrollment rate.

For increasing girls schooling enrollment rate, we should give equal opportunity to daughter for reading environment both in home and school. I also agree with the concept of UNESCO as it explained achieving gender equality in the education is not only about access, but about learning environment, curricula, attitudes, and a host of wider political, economic and social considerations. It is true

that only access is not enough for girls' learning achievement. Internal and external environments often influenced the education of girls. Moreover, only enrollment in the school does not help to promote girls' education. For this, equal opportunity and reading time should be provided to girls like that of boys both at homes and at schools; and they should provide girls with a friendly environment in school for achieving the desired goals.

During the conversation, my participants Nirmala said:

*The policy just talks about the empowerment of women but the implementation part is very weak. Only written document does not change the behavior of the people. It is necessary to change the attitude of the family and community members regarding women rights and empowerment. There should be suitable environment to provide opportunity to show the potentiality of the women in real practice. Just paper document is not sufficient for this.*

I agree with my participant because in the context of Nepal we see there are many opportunities for women empowerment but in the real situation the women are not getting that opportunity. For instance, there are specific quotas for women in the school but in practice in many of the places male are occupying that positions. In this condition how can we believe in policy? The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) states in Article 20, no one shall be discriminated in any form merely for being a woman, every woman shall have the right to reproductive health and other reproductive matters, no physical, mental or any other form of violence shall be inflicted to any women, and such act shall be punishable by law and son and daughter shall have equal rights to their ancestral property (Government of Nepal, 2007).

I raise a question, do these constitutional provisions implementing properly? If yes, why are many women suffering from mental and psychological problem in our

country? In our country, many women till now are suffering from dowry system which is banned in law. As a researcher, I talked to one of my participants who, being a woman, was suffering from many problems. Out of them, one notable problem she shared with me was quite heart touching. One year ago, she got married to a man in traditional social culture. At the time of engagement, her father in law said he just wanted a daughter and he did not want to take dowry from her parents. Her parents also expressed their poor economic condition. They negotiated and engagement was held and she got married. She was an assistant of government office on a contract (karar) basis.

After marriage, she came to Kathmandu to join her duty. After some months, her husband's family started torturing her by taking the matter of dowry. They demanded 50 thousands from her parents as dowry otherwise they threatened to go for second marriage of their son. It was impossible to give that amount of money to her husband's family due to low economic condition of her parents. She wanted to stop her husband from second marriage but the situation become worse. She was in great tension. She wanted to go home but she could not do so in that situation. Sometimes, she shared her tension to the friends and her friends suggested her not to worry. They also advised her to get second marriage. She did not want another marriage. She was then in a great dilemma and tension, I think she was not just one person who was suffering from that kind of problem. Our social structure also oppresses women in one way or the other. They think that females are only commodities which can be bought and sold in the market; they don't have feeling and emotional sensitivity. In our country, there are legal provisions that ban polygamy practice but reality is different. The patriarchy culture also supports male domination.

In our country, women are facing many problems right from home and society. They feel dominated in all places; it starts from home, school, collage, office etc. Not only male are dominating women but women also are dominating other women. It is also an awful problem in our country. Moreover, only the enrollment of girls in school is not enough for empowering girls and promoting women leadership. Along similar lines, only making policy is not enough for raising participation of women in leadership. It should be sustainable and guarantee equal opportunities in all environments - in home, in society, in school and anywhere. Regarding this concern, one of my participants Bimala said:

*In my view the government should try to provide leadership training to support women leaders. The government should try to increase opportunity for women in leadership position, encourage them to make better leaders. The government should try to provide some necessary facilities to women leaders, like child care center for looking after their children etc.*

According to her, proper leadership training is necessary for women. Women are backward due to various social situations. So, opportunity should be provided for them to develop their knowledge and skill for the leadership empowerment. Naturally women are different from men. They have to bear and rear the children. It is a sort of mandatory duty for the women. The men are free from this natural phenomenon. Women are backward due to these responsibilities. So, the government should create proper environment for the women. Similarly, the government should manage child care facility for the women. If the government does so, women become free to some extent and they invest their time for effective leadership. In this concern, one participant said:

*In my opinion, Nepali women are not confident to hold leadership positions. So, in practice the government should provide leadership training. The society does not believe women for leadership positions. We have the willingness, we have honesty and hardworking behavior as well but we have no confidence, we should get the personal and leadership development opportunity. We are looking for opportunity.*

From the above opinion it makes clear that she also agrees with my former research participant. According to her, women need confidence building intervention. Government should develop and provide such interventions. They are seeking for opportunity. They are interested in holding leadership positions and they have strong belief to fulfill the responsibilities. In this concern, another participant expressed her opinion as:

*We have not sufficient policy for the women empowerment. It is just written but not implemented properly. If there is the real interest of the government there would be appropriate program for women. The government should bring programs consulting with the concerned women stakeholders and should focus on the needy people.*

This statement makes it clear that only written policy does not help women in their empowerment. To overcome the dominance of male, meaningful program is necessary. There is a strong root of patriarchal culture and practice in Nepal since long ago. That's why in our country, the women situation is not satisfactory. In the decision making level, women are scarcely found. If we really want to raise women's situation in leadership positions, the concept of patriarchy cultural mindset should be changed.

### **Chapter Summary**

In our country, there is the practice of patriarchal culture since thousands of years ago. It cannot be deconstructed easily. It has stayed in depth with strong roots, that's why; only policy is not panacea for women empowerment and for rising participation in decision making level. That is why; besides policy, making the mindset of the society members and family members should also be changed through suitable interventions in the society. It should start from the individual unit that is from home. Mere making leader is not enough; it should sustain the position as well. Nowadays, the government also wants to raise women's position. That's why; 33% reservation quota for women has been promulgated. It really helps to uplift the position of the women in the society. It is a praiseworthy step for women empowerment. But only reservation is not enough for raising the position of the women. The practice should start from their home and society.

## CHAPTER V

## OPPORTUNITY FOR LEADERSHIP POSITION

In this chapter, I have tried to discuss the opportunity for women in leadership positions on the basis of evidences from the real practice in real setting. I have captured the views of my participants about this serious concern. I have tried to catch the real feeling of the women leaders who were practicing their roles in the school as heads.

During my field work, while waiting for my participants I talked with a male teacher. He said that he was not satisfied as a teacher under the female headship. I asked him to justify his dissatisfaction. In answer, he said that the female head was the powerful person that's why he, being a male, did not like to work under her. When I met my participant, I talked with her about her status and motivation. She said that at first she didn't want to take the responsibility of leadership position because of the fear and thinking of possible unnecessary burden. She thought that it was difficult for her to hold the leadership position and her home responsibility together. Regarding this concern, she said:

*I didn't get more opportunity being a head teacher. I have got just simple training; I could not get more information about central level programs because of being a woman head teacher. The senior level officers don't believe me as they ask women can't take challenge that's why opportunity goes to men. They don't believe us (hami mahilaharu lai mathilo level ko karmacharile biswas nai gardayanan. Uniharu hamiharli abasar dinna nai chahadainan yadi diya bhanepani aafno mancheli matri dinchhan).*

According to my participant's view, she did not get more opportunity being a woman head teacher. In this regard, the tenth plan (2002-2007) underlined the need for the development of indicators to assess girls'/women's participation in all sectors including education (CERID, 2009, p. 1), but this was not found in practice.

According to Sandra (1990), the dual system theory focused on the sexual division of labor between men and women that women's unpaid labor in the home was essential for the maintenance of the patriarchal-capitalist. Due to the fact that they have to perform dual responsibilities, female hesitate to take leadership position.

Another female head teacher's Bimala view was slightly different from others in this regard. She had got different trainings like management training, instructional leadership training as well as teaching strategy. Rasmi also agreed with her view, she further said "Working as a head teacher, I got some opportunities like involvement in some meeting, seminar and training etc. but it is not enough for us. For the empowerment of women leadership, government should provide appropriate opportunity and should inspire the women." According to the above statement, women head teachers are not fully satisfied being women heads though they got the chance for different kinds of participations. In this concern, participant Nirmala's view was:

*I feel proud of being a head teacher; it is my first opportunity to become a head. I feel that people become perfect by doing rather than by mere reading. In this way, I gained a lot of knowledge by working in this field. I know when I was made head teacher I faced several problems, I tried to find solutions, and I searched the way how to find the solution. I gained knowledge how to solve the problem. In this way, I interacted with many people. I got opportunity to*



*participate in many seminars and meetings. I have gained a lot of experiences being a head teacher which I had not gained before.*

From the above statement it is clear that she was satisfied with her leadership position which was her first opportunity in the leadership position. She believed that people become perfect by practicing than by mere reading. This can be attributed to the traits approach to leadership in that the trait viewpoint suggests that leadership is inherent in a few select people and that leadership is restricted to only those few who have special talents with which they are born (Yukl, 2006).

According to my participant Nirmala by practicing leadership, she gained a lot of hands-on experience and skills in her field. Now, she has a good store of knowledge and skills for her profession and she has become able to face the problems on her way. She also said that she has got an opportunity to interact with many people, to participate in many seminars, to conduct many meetings. Similarly, she gained a lot of experience which she has not got otherwise before. I also agree with her view that learning by doing is the best way for enhancing leadership capacity because in my practical life, I have also experienced it more.

Theories do not say that only men are capable of developing leadership, women are also equally capable. That's why; women should be provided with a chance to perform their work. When they get the chance, they can perform their duty and responsibility effectively. In this regard, Hekman (1990) said that women's role as homemaker and child career has genetic origins which would evoke criticism from feminists. She further said that feminists and non-feminists have advanced against the claims of the socio-biologists who have effectively undermined most of their major claims, particularly their attempts to establish the genetic basis of social behavior. In this regard, my participant Davi said:

*I feel I have got opportunity. I have got the chances to take part in seminar, workshop, training, meeting etc. If I did not get the opportunity to lead as a head teacher, I would not get chances to develop my leadership. If I was not a head teacher, I would not get chance to meet many people in the field of education. I could not share my experience with others. If I was only a teacher, I would be limited only inside the school premises. That's why the leadership role provided me a lot of opportunities. It helped me to build up my confidence. It made me strong and as an effect now I have confidence for speaking in mass. I can express my views in different meetings of resource centers and DEO as well.*

According to my participant, she was happy by getting the opportunity to lead her school. She said that if she was not the head teacher, there would be less opportunity for her to develop her capacity as a leader. She would not get many more opportunities to learn and express her views. She has got the opportunity to participate in different seminars, workshops, meetings and other different events. Similarly, she has got the opportunity to meet the key personnel of the education field which helps to develop her leadership skills and confidence.

There will be less such opportunity for the teachers. The leadership role develops confidence level, effective public speaking practices as well as rich relationship with the educative personnel. My participant further said that the leadership role taught her to adopt herself in intellectual circle like district education officer, supervisors, resource persons etc. She has got much confidence now and can present her ideas more powerfully now. When women get a chance to lead, it really builds up their confidence. By gender, women are not weak for the leadership

position. If they get the chance to lead, they have proved that they can work not less effectively than men can do.

### **Discrimination Starts from Childhood**

During the in-depth interview, I got the opportunity to listen the struggle stories of the research participants. Out of five research participants, three were in the nuclear family and remaining two were in an extended family. In their view, a nuclear family is easier than an extended family. According to them, in the time of their childhood, there was no proper environment for the education of the daughters. They were lucky compared to other females of that time. They at least got the chance for study. One of my participants Nirmala shared a measurable story about her past. Her mother died when she was very young. She had struggled in her student life staying with her father and step mother. According to her, she had faced serious economic problem in her study. She passed her childhood with much difficulty. Now she has a nuclear family, proper education and medium class economic condition and she is satisfied with leadership role she has been discharging at her school. Moreover, she is also studying master degree now. She said that,

*I passed my childhood with much difficulty. When I was small my mother died and father got remarried with another woman. I was born in Ilam district. My childhood was spent with my stepmother. I did not get proper love and affection from my father and my step mother. I faced economic problem as well. At this period almost all citizens of the village were against the girl's education. I struggled with the society. According to them, the future of daughters depends upon the status of their husbands. I completed intermediate level with much difficulty and tried to search a work to earn some pocket money. There was the vacancy from the government side. I*

*applied, took exam and got selected for the teacher in 2050 BS. I started my teaching profession from Karpok Higher Secondary School. I stayed at a hostel in the school.*

The above statements show the real situation of Nepalese society in terms of girl's education though the situation has changed to some extent now. The guardians think negatively in the case of girl's education in most of the situation. In the above case, there are grievances of a woman about her miserable study life. It is difficult for woman to study. Endless struggle is necessary for the improvement of the profession as a leader. So, many barriers are to be faced to get success. The participant was intelligent and able to do anything for the effective leadership but as women she was limited by marriage and has been facing many problems due to the fact of being a woman. Regarding this concern, she further said,

*I joined bachelor level as well. At the same time, I got married though I was not interested. I was an intelligent student; that's why I have not experienced any failure in the school education but in the bachelor level due to household chores and load of profession I did not complete the entire subject. In the first year, I failed in one subject. After sometime I completed my bachelor in study and stopped my study for ten years. I have been continuing my profession and I gave birth to a child. I am interested in study till now. So, I have joined master's degree at this present time.*

It shows that women always have to struggle to get chance for study. My one participant Davi said,

*I was born in Thankot. In my school time there was no school near our village. At that time, the society was against the girl's education though my parents admitted me to a school. Our society used to believe that education is*

*not necessary for girls. In that traditional society, my parents decided to educate me and admitted me to the school. That effort of my parents helped me to become a head teacher in the school today. It was praiseworthy and courageous attempt of my parents. My father had to work abroad and he used to write letter to my mother. My mother had learned to read and write according to the need. That situation helped me to study and I became an educated person. I was an intelligent student. So, I got the chance to pass SLC. After that my parents forced me to marry and I got married. At that time I was a first daughter in our village who had passed SLC. I was also the first daughter-in-law in my husband's village who passed SLC.*

From the above narration, it is clear that situation creates the environment.

This case can be analyzed through the lens of socialist feminism. Socialist feminists are concerned with the exigent capitalism and male supremacy. If her father had not been to abroad, she would not have got the chance to study. So, the need and situation created the positive environment for her to become an educated person. In this regard, Bhagwat (2004, p. 23) says that women must effectively take part in public production, so is the case with the participant's mother. It also makes clear that if there is the critical condition, and society feels the need, women can come up in the forefront.

### **Discrimination against Women in Workplace**

According to my all research participants, they had felt discrimination in several times in their workplaces. Due to this, they had felt uncomfortable to work. According to them, they are discriminated by community member, society, parents and others because of our society's stereotype thinking. According to them, they did not get proper support from the SMC, DEO, and other superior and subordinates. One

of my participants said that she felt discrimination by society in her work place. Sometimes they misbehaved female head teacher. They said that many times they had felt unequal behavior in the school and the community. According to them, parents also hesitate to admit their children in the school due to female head. They also felt that sometimes teachers also misbehaved them. Rajput (2003) says that before we change the habits of the society we must change individual mindset. I also agree with his view. If individual mindset is not changed, we can't change our society's stereotype thinking.

My research participants were facing many challenges while performing their leadership roles. Many of them said that sometimes they felt burden because of the responsibility at home as well as in school. Desai et al. (2003) say that in modern world, the role of woman goes much beyond home and bringing up of children. She is now adopting a career of her own and sharing equally with men the responsibility for the development of society in all its aspects (Desai et al., 2003). I agree with my research participants' view because they really perform duo responsibility in our patriarchal mind set cultural country like Nepal.

My research participants further said that many times they felt they were not adequately supported by SMC members, society, teacher, parents and students. On the other hand, at home they should perform their all household chores. In such times, they can't get proper support even from family members. At such moments, they felt the school leadership position as a burden for them. In this context, Kanchan said:

*I have a joint family, that's why I am facing many problems for maintaining time and other things. If I had got support from my family, my study would be raised. In our country, the society also sees female differently. We can't do all things easily. We perform our duties as a daughter, as a daughter in law, as a*

*mother, as a sister in law and so on. But we are not getting proper support from the family. I am just one daughter in law working outside the home. Others are just doing house hold work, field work, growing grain, planting and cutting grass, taking care of domestic animals etc. If my economic condition was strong, I would promote my study. In our social context, male can easily go outside home as they have not deep home responsibility like female. That's why there is a vast difference between male and female in our social structure.*

Kanchan further said:

*It can't change easily. Male don't need to think if they return home late from outside, at that time their family members get angry with him but female always consider if she returns home late her family member will get angry with her. Like this way all thing like socially, mentally, and physically are vast different with male and female condition of our country structure. Female are always afraid of these things.*

The above statement makes it clear that in our culture of patriarchal society, it is really difficult for women leaders because of their duo role model situation. Since our country chiefly follows patriarchy, women are facing a lot of problems. They perform both roles in home as a daughter in law and in school as a head teacher. On the other hand, the condition of female is different in our country in rural and urban areas. The female in the rural area are facing extra load than urban. Urban female are engaged only inside the home. They don't need to care of domestics' animals like cow; buffalo etc. but rural female should do that. So, the condition of rural female head is different than urban female head. Badal and Sangeeta (2009) transcribe the Oxfam gender and Development Unit 1993, through the world; the poorest people in the

community are mostly women and their dependent children. They are really suffering the burden of socially, mentally and physically.

Many of my research participants said that in the beginning, they felt school leadership as a difficult task because they had no idea how to take leadership role in an appropriate way. But they realized that only by combating many challenges, they could gain a lot of knowledge. After that they felt easy and interesting. I think they can try for perfection by facing many challenges.

Many of my research participants said that they have not got more opportunities like their male counterparts. But according to them, they are satisfied with their leadership roles. In the leadership role, they have got some opportunities like attending meeting, seminar, workshops, management training, etc. According to them, attending such events make them strong and self confident. They said that getting the chance to be select into the leadership position was their first opportunity. After the selection the male teachers wanted to replace them and hold a position because they didn't want to be the subordinate of women leaders. Some said that some women teachers also wanted to replace them. One participant Sujata Rajaptala said that:

*When I was selected as a head teacher in that time the former head teacher was also a woman. She went to the US leaving the charge of head to another teacher. But all teachers and school management community wanted to make me head teacher but in that time I didn't want to be the head teacher because my child was small and I also had home responsibility. That's why I didn't want to take the burden. I was also afraid; I didn't know how to lead the school being a head teacher. At that time, another person came into the school from outside but the school member didn't want so. That's why I was made the*



*head but later former head teacher came back to school from the USA and she didn't accept me. She tried to replace me but she couldn't but now she also helps me.*

From the above statement it is clear that in the first time she didn't want to take leadership position because of her home responsibility but later on she decided to work as a head teacher. From her dealing, I think that only male is not the opposition of the female. Female is equally responsible for this. During my field visit, I talked with a male teacher about this concern. The male teacher said that he did not want to work under woman leadership. Accordingly, I thought it was the impact of our patriarchal culture that dominates women.

Another participant said that she wanted to quit the leadership position due to domination of the society, local people, teacher, parents, etc. She further said that people think that women are weak, and they can't handle the leadership position. They had faced many challenges in their workplace like internal/external problems, academic/non academic problems, etc. Sometimes, students also create problems. Another research participant Rasmi also said that students, teachers, parents don't cooperate and SMC also hesitate to believe in women leader.

According to my research participants, if the government wants to raise women position of leadership, proper policy should be formulated and enforced on time. Society, community and family should believe women and their working capacity as equal as men, or better than men. Parents should show equal behavior to their daughter and son. Parents shouldn't discriminate the daughter in their home. They should get equal opportunity in education. Parents should minimize the household chores to daughter. The opportunity to take part in leadership training helps

to improve the capacity of woman leaders. Government should also manage technical assistance to women, especially by opening child care center for their children.

My research participants had taken up teaching profession after completing their SLC. Though they had got nominal leadership development opportunities they have performed well in their schools as leaders. They have contributed so many notable activities in their school. They have led to make school building, to make furniture, lab, library and other infrastructure of the school. Likewise, they are playing the role of instructional leadership in their schools. Some of them have been updating their school as well. They have developed a good rapport and team with their teaching staff. They also have developed positive and functional relationships with their School Management Committee, Parent Teacher Association and other stakeholders of the school. Most of the participants were satisfied with their leadership role in the school. They have faced many challenges. More so, some participants reported that they were not able to pay sufficient time for the school due to their home responsibility. My one participant shared an interesting but crucial thing that there is always a bag hanging on the shoulder of the women to buy home daily needs like vegetables and other essential goods. She further added that women are more capable than men but the society creates obstacle for the women. She said man dominates woman.

Some of them reported that they have to face misbehavior and discrimination while performing their leadership role. Being a woman, I also agree with my participant's opinion. In the context of Nepal, there is low condition for women leadership position, very few persons reach at the leadership position in our country and moreover, if they reach at the position, they will have to face many challenges. Ours is one of the developing countries suffering from conventional stereotypical

thinking which behaves women as second grade citizens. Women are dominated in their home and that spreads to the society.

I agree with my research participants' opinion that they are performing multiple responsibilities as a daughter, as a daughter in law, as a mother, and as a school leader. They are performing a lot of duties in a single day. Therefore, the matter of time management is really difficulty for women leaders. Our patriarchy cultural society does not understand the problem of women. Being a woman I have also faced discrimination and misbehavior of the males in my workplace as well. In the office a client addresses 'Sir' for male and 'sister' ('didi or bahini') for women staff. Why that kind of different behavior for the women, why they don't call male by saying 'brother' 'dai or Bhai'. Really it is the discrimination and domination for the women. In my recent experience we five persons - three male and two female – went to one office for official work. We all entered one officer's room. The officer asked us to search file because he thought we two female were office assistants and three male were officers. After that he requested to sit just for male and ordered tea for them. In that time we felt discrimination because we were women that's why he couldn't think we were also officers. I thought it was not just his misbehavior towards us; it was the cause of our patriarchal traditional cultural system of Nepal. It can't easily be removed. It needs some concentrated efforts of all since it has strong and depth roots into our socio-cultural system. Therefore, it is hard to erase.

In school observation a teacher said that he wanted to replace the women head and that he wanted to become the head teacher. He expressed his uneasiness to work under the female head. This is the reality in our situation. Especially, in the urban area in most of the families the husband and wife work outside home. While they return home from their duty, the wife needs to do additional work of home but the

husband generally spends time by talking to others or watching television. One question always comes in my mind that why our culture always dominates women.

In our patriarchal cultural society, there is a clear bias towards women everywhere and women head teachers are no exception. My one participant (Kanchan) said in the eyes of the society women are incapable, unqualified persons. In the view of SMC member, it is difficult to work with the woman head than man. The reason is women are vehicleless and in most of the cases it creates difficulty to go to the needed places in time. They further said that in school if there was a male head they cannot be engaged like this. He shared that even the MC members prefer male heads in school. In their opinion, females are active, honest and capable but they have not adequate time for the school due to their biological problems as well as the responsibility at their home. In comparison to male, female have less relation with the community and this, in turn, creates obstacles to perform the school tasks.

### **Chapter Summary**

In our country, there is deep rooted stereotype patriarchal society for millions of years, that's why female are always under the rule of male, they are never free in their self desire. One slogan says that in the child stage female should stay under the rule of father, in the young stage they should stay under their husband and in the old stage female should stay under their son. The real question is when they get free to live and work according to their capacity.

On the other hand, parents think that daughter education is not necessary as like as son and they also hesitate to give equal opportunity to those for all sectors like as their son. Our stereotype society thinks that female should work inside home. Like household chores, looking after children, caretaking older people and doing all household management. Due to this type of stereotype concept, female are

discriminated in their own home and workplaces as well. This type of thinking affects the education of female and their work performance. Under this complex condition, how female can perform leadership roles effectively.

## CHAPTER VI

### WOMEN HEAD AND CHALLENGES IN LEADERSHIP

In the previous chapter I discussed the opportunities which women head teachers have got. The everyday complex life experiences which they have been facing since their childhood, their school age and till their current leadership position are discussed thoroughly. In this chapter, I have tried to discuss the challenges in their leadership position and possible strategy to overcome the challenges.

#### **Challenges**

Many of my research participants said that they were facing a lot of challenges in their leadership positions. Our patriarchal cultural society does not believe in women's capacity and as a corollary, the male want to hold leadership positions. Males do not want to work under the leadership of women due to their superiority complex. In the context of my school observation, I talked with one male teacher. He said he was not satisfied with his female head.

According to Acker (1989), women teachers were seen as choosing to prioritize family over career, thus lacking commitment and impeding teaching's claim to full professionalization. In some versions, women teachers were naturally subordinate and amenable to bureaucratic controls as well as being intuitive and un-intellectual. During the study, I found some research participants feeling dissatisfied and taking their leadership role as burden due to difficulty in time management. They were also upset when male teachers undermined their capability in school leadership. During my field visits, I requested my participants to write their daily dairies. Out of them, the diary of a day is presented below.

10 Jun, 2011

*Today I got up at 5.30 AM. After that I cleaned the home. Then I prepared tea for my family and served it to all. After taking tea my husband went for morning walk, I was also interested in going with him but I didn't get chance to go because of morning work load at home. I cooked meal and served to my family. After taking meal, my husband went to his office. Children also went to their school. My daughters-in-laws were at home sitting under the warm sun and chatting with each other. I cleaned the dishes and went to school hurriedly. It was late for me. I felt stressed. I thought working the leadership position is the burden in this situation.*

*I also faced the problem of transportation on the way. I reached school at 10.30 AM. When I entered the office room, I listened to my staff saying, "How can she run the school in this way" (kasari yasto manchhe le school ramrari chala aunasachha). Listening to this sentence I felt bored and tensed. I thought why my co-workers also didn't understand my problem. It was not my regular problem, though.*

*At office, I was busy the whole day. When the bell rang at 4.00 PM I walked for home. On the way, I spent half an hour to buy vegetables. When I reached home at 5:00 PM, I saw there were dirty dishes of my daughter in law's lunch. I cleaned all the dishes. When my husband came home he asked me for tea, I prepared tea for all my family and washed all cups as well. After that I started making meal for dinner. When the dinner was taken, I washed dishes. I finished my household duty at 9:30PM. After that I entered my room. At that moment I thought why only female are responsible for all household chores when we have to get equal opportunity in all things?*

From the above diary of a school head, it is difficult to analyze the position of a female school head. Really, women are facing such kinds of domestic violence which is the major barrier to their personal and leadership development. According to my research participant, sometimes she feels deeply stressed. During my field visit, I had seen that women teachers were always in a hurry to go home due to their heavy work load and responsibility of their family. I saw male teachers were chatting in the tea shop by taking tea after their school. Sometimes, they assemble in the restaurant with their friend as well. Women teachers always seem worried about home and children.

Bennett (1992, as cited in Badal & Sangeeta, 2009) has written that women normally work up to 15 hours more per week up in rural India than man. She said that the census 1981 shows that, of the rural working age population, only 16 per cent of women were absurdly active compared with 53 per cent of man. Feminist work focuses on the gender roles rather than gender relations and explained women's subordination in the social system in relation to their roles as housewives or mother (Johnston et al., 1994). I agree with their view because in our patriarchal society, there are multiple ways to look at women, they are not only oppressed by males but also by females in many instances.

In the context of Nepalese universities, among the total number of 491 professors, only 56 are women. Likewise, in the higher level study in MPhil, out of the total number of 352, men are 296 and women are only 56 and in PhD level, there are total number of 280 students, and out of them male are 234 and female are 46 (Lamichhane, 2067 BS). From this figure, we can see the opportunity of women in leadership position. The question rises where the equal opportunity is for women. Desai et al. (2003) said that the issue is of the perception of gender roles in society.



In the early decades of the 19th century, women were almost completely excluded from the formal system of education and it was believed that girls could acquire all that was necessary, as education, in their domestic surroundings. One of my research participants agreed that those who were able to obtain higher education were mostly from the upper castes, thus underscoring the access to education for women and lower castes. She further agreed that in the modern world, the role of women goes much beyond home and bringing up of children. She is now adopting a career of her own and sharing equally with men the responsibility for the development of the society in all its aspects.

In our country, the Government has started to provide 33% reservation for women (Bahadur, 2006, Introduction section, para. 1), which is not sufficient for improving women condition in all sectors, rather the government should try to change the mindset of our patriarchal culture and equal opportunity should be provided to girls in their own home as equal as boys. Parajuli and Acharya (2008) brought out the issue of access to education for girls stating that many of the interviewed girls from nine schools from three districts said that they had to do household chores and they did not get much time as they required for study. Jain (2003) also agrees that women and girls were working 18 hours out of 24. Boys played or went to school while girls cooked, cleaned, and carried firewood and fodder.

Our religious aspect on the one hand depicts the image of women as a source of power (shakti), in the real situation while on the other hand, women are dependent, exploited, and oppressed and considered subordinate to males (Berreman, 1993; Forbes 1996, as cited in Badal & Sangeeta, 2009). There are controversies in the views towards women. There is a vast difference between our religious aspect and

social cultural aspect. Our culture always teaches female to be tolerant without any debate against our traditional patriarchal norms and values.

Since childhood, female always learn with their mother and grandmother how to manage home responsibility. Female don't learn their father's occupation, they always see works and behavior of their mother who is always giving time for their family members without showing her fatigues and sometimes she can't say her illness to family member because of workload. She has always tolerated with her family members and is always busy to perform her household chore duties. But in our society, we never teach males their mother's duties or home management, they are always near with father and learn outside activity and always engage in study, which helps them be strong and self confident of their childhood but on the other hand, female always become soft minded, sentimental due to this cause she always feels nervous and weak minded. It is all due to our patriarchal mindset culture.

Hekman (1990) also agrees that this characterization of women has defined their status in all aspects of cultural life; it has had a particular impact on women's efforts to engage in intellectual pursuit. She further said that because of cultural life aspects, women are defined as incapable of producing knowledge. They are therefore defined as incapable of engaging in intellectual and scientific activities.

Our culture doesn't feel it necessary to educate female but it feels necessary for male to gain education. And when the female are not given adequate access to education, they are not likely to get any leadership and decision-making positions. That's why our social structure this way leads to lower participation of women in leadership positions. The data presented below show the position of women participation in various fields.

Table 3

*Representation of Women in the Civil Service*

Level	Male	Female	Total	Male percent	Female percent	Total percent
Gazetted	10283	753	11036	93.18	6.82	14.61
Specialist	83	4	87	15.4	4.6	0.12
First class	415	13	428	96.96	3.04	0.56
Second class	2506	114	2620	95.65	4.35	3.47
Third class	7279	622	7901	92.13	7.87	10.46
Nongazetted	34934	7723	42657	81.9	18.1	56.47
First class	12958	1792	14750	87.85	12.15	19.53
Second class	15863	2920	18783	84.45	15.55	24.87
Third class	5193	2974	8167	63.59	36.41	10.81
Fourth class	920	37	957	96.13	3.87	1.27
Level less	20387	1455	21842	93.34	6.66	28.92
Total	65604	9939	75535	86.85	13.15	100

Source: Civil book, 2067 (as cited in Lamichhane, 2067 BS)

Table 4

*Representation of Women in the Decision Making Level*

Parliament	Election of 2048	Election of 2051	Election of 2056	Election of 2064
Women participation	7	7	12	197
Percent	3.4	3.4	5.8	33

Source: Women in Governance Amassment Analysis SAP Nepal, 2003 (as cited in Lamichhane, 2067 BS)

Analyzing the above data, we can see low level of participation of women rather in different sectors of civil service. In civil service there were altogether 75535 service providers, among which 86.85% were male and remaining just 13.15% were women. Similarly, out of 11036 total gazette officers, only 752 were female. Out of them, 93.18 per cent were male and just 6.82 per cent were female and out of 42657 non gazette employees, 81.9 % were male and only 18.1% were female. In the civil service, there is very low level of participation of women in decision making position but we hope that it will increase in future if the government provides equal chance to

women in all sectors. If we analyze the condition of the women in political sector, the representation of women is increasing day by day. Now in the parliament, there is comparatively high percentage of women law makers than the previous time. Acker (1989) also agrees that women are rarely in high-level positions and thus not well placed for instigating reform. There are also tension between individual career progress and bringing about feminist social change. In our country, parents also discriminate their daughter. That's why the discrimination starts at their home and it spreads in society and all over the world.

### **Strategies for Combating the Challenges**

Women heads are applying different strategies to face various challenges when they perform their duties. Similarly, my participants were applying different kinds of strategies to face various challenges in their workplace. One of my research participants Anju Dhakal said that sometimes she felt challenges in her occupation, at that time she tried to face the challenge by herself but sometime it couldn't be possible. Due to being a woman, she has to face discrimination in society and even at the district education office. Sometimes they used to give tension to her, at that time she tried to take help from other persons like neighboring school heads. Regarding this concern, her voice was:

*I have one experience which I want to share, one day the district education officer came in our school. He wanted to drink alcohol with snacks but it was not possible for me to manage it. Due to this reason he was angry with me and did not report my file to DEO. If I were male I would fulfill his interest and he might happily help me. In this way my file was not forwarded in district education office that's why I didn't get Rahat quota on time. These*

*days I am also aware about that bad practice and try to manage such work taking help of others.*

The above statement shows the problem of female head teachers to adapt to the ugly culture of our society. She is not able to preserve her honesty and values in this culturally degraded society. Being a women head, she faced different kind of problems. The cause of patriarchal society, women heads should apply various strategies for performing their duties in their workplace. It is really very bitter experience for the women. One of my participants Nirmala said:

*There are many kinds of problems like internal problem, external problem, academic problem, non academic problem etc. In non academic problem, first of all I try to convince them. If they are not convinced, I do not set back to call the police as well. In the academic problem I convince the teacher, parents and students. I interact academically with them if it is not possible to solve the problem I take action against them. Sometimes students also create problems, in such conditions; I make the problem solving team and assign the task to them. I provide support to solve the problem.*

In order to solve the problems different kinds of strategies are necessary as stated in the above statements. From the above conversation it makes clear that to lead the school only one kind of strategy is not sufficient. Head teachers should apply contextual leadership style to solve the problem. In comparison to the male head teacher it is really difficult for female heads to lead the school.

My research participant Bimala said that sometimes students, teachers, and parents do not co-operate with her due to the fact that she is a woman. They felt she couldn't do more action against them. She further said that sometimes she has faced many critical problems in the school. SMC also hesitates to believe her only on

rationale for her to be a woman. In such times, she feels discriminated. She said that in this time she was applying strategies to overcome this type of challenges

*I have to convince the teacher, parents and students. Sometimes I go to District Education Office and discuss with the responsible person. Sometimes I also take help from my husband, who works in Ministry of Education; he has much more idea how to solve that kind of problem. He helps me to solve the problem and that time I feel strong.*

From the above opinion, it is clear that women head teachers are also capable of solving the problems. They develop an idea and use to solve the problems by taking help from other helpful and responsible persons. They have convincing capacity as well.

Rasmi said that being as a head teacher she has faced several challenges. "If I am just a teacher, my duty would be only teaching; now I have so many responsibilities. Being a woman, I have household responsibility as well. I perform my duties as a daughter-in-law, wife, mother, etc. That's why I feel I have more challenges than male head teachers." She further said in such situations she tried to manage and perform all duties and responsibilities. It is very difficult to manage time for her. She wakes up early in the morning and stays till late night in this way she manages her time and performs her task on time. Varma (1997) said that social and family pressure and lack of time from household chores, traveling long distances, etc. add difficulties. I also agree with their view that in our patriarchal society it is difficult for women workers to manage time. One participant Davi said:

*After being a head teacher I faced several challenges like uncooperative behavior of school management committee. The society does not believe in school led by women leader. For example – one day I was chatting with a*

*parent. Her daughter was studying in class four. She was weak in study. Her parent and I were discussing the weakness of her daughter's education.*

*During the discussion she blamed the school and said the cause of this was the woman head teacher. Listening to this view I felt bored. I thought it was not because of me, it might be because of carelessness in her reading habit. I felt the society also discriminates women.*

In this way, my research participants were facing various challenges as being women and they were also applying strategies to overcome that type of problems. They were convincing parents, SMC members and other stakeholders. They were performing their duty honestly on time. They are showing their capacity in their work field.

### **Chapter Summary**

In our country, there is a strong in-depth patriarchal mindset and due to the cause of patriarchal society, women are facing various challenges in their home and also at workplaces. In this way, women leaders are also facing various challenges in their workplaces. Despite the various challenges, women leaders are also performing their task honestly. They are applying various strategies for performing their task effectively and completing on time. Besides various types of discriminatory treatment to the women leaders, they are also facing problems in time management. Yet, they are managing all their challenges in their duty. Sometimes they also take help of male counterparts in fulfilling their responsibilities.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The major concerns of my study are opportunity, challenges and problem of women head teachers regarding their real life experiences, perceptions and responses of their work environment. Within the work environment, the questions like what the real condition of women leadership is, what kind of opportunity they have got, what kind of challenges they are facing in their workplaces, what strategies they are adopting to overcome the challenges and what the practices to promote women leadership are especially in the school sector were the major concerns of the study. In this chapter, I have tried to present the major findings and conclusions of my study in relation to my research questions. This chapter also gives the ways for promoting the women leadership in school.

#### **Summary**

Opportunities of women leadership are closely related to the education and personal traits of the women themselves. Without higher education, we cannot imagine the empowerment of women to leadership positions. Thus, education is one of the most necessary means empower women. Moreover, personal qualities like self-confidence, honesty, and integrity are also the influencing factors contributing to women school leaders.

Despite being within boundary of patriarchy which means rule of men over women and therefore, women are subject to be dominated by men, some schools have women head teachers. Though they have risen to the position of head teachers, they are not yet free from all those male dominations, may it be at schools or at their



homes. Recognizing this fact, women school leaders are still surviving in their leadership oftentimes confronting with various challenges of being a women and yet in other times seeking cooperation of males. In this respect, various efforts have been made time and again by different sectors like the government of Nepal (through policies and rules), and non-governmental organizations to empower women. However, women are still not empowered sufficiently to face the challenges of being free woman in general and a successful woman school head in particular.

### **Findings**

The major findings of my study are summarized below as per the research questions.

#### **Policy Environment for Promoting Women Leadership in School**

I analyzed the current policies regarding women leadership especially for the school heads. Though there are some general policies for the empowerment of women leadership, no special policies were found in the policy documents that specially address the women empowerment issue.

#### **Gender Based Discrimination**

My research study is based on the humanistic model following the qualitative premise. In my research study, I collected data through interview, observation and everyday life dairy. In this way, I found that our country culture is one kind of traditional patriarchal culture. It is deeply rooted and it has made such type of concept strong which cannot be easily removed. I analyzed my participants' views and their experiences of workplace and outside workplace. They are feeling discriminated. They are discriminated by the society, SMC members, and parents and even with their teacher and staff as well. They are feeling discriminated anywhere in the society. It starts from home and spreads all over. At home, men are decision makers and women

are merely subordinate to them in most of the cases. Generally, women do not get the opportunity to take part in decision making process. More specifically, schools where there were woman heads the guardians hesitated to admit their children. They did not believe in the capacity of women. They feel that women are weak and they do not lead the organization. That kind of concept is reserved in the patriarchal society.

It was found that women heads were not happy in the outdoor meeting, workshop, and seminar related to their profession. According to them, they are dominated by the male participants. They do not trust them. They feel that women are incapable and unqualified. They treat women like second class citizens.

### **Discrimination Starts from Home**

I found that such type of discrimination starts from home. My participants expressed the insufficient time for study. Their most of the time was consumed in the household chores. Males have a lot of extra time that's why they can meet many people. They get opportunity to interact with people and engage in the society which helps to develop their leadership capacity. In our patriarchal society, man is taken as one and only who can go outside home, earn money and lead the institution. Women are naturally assigned for the cooking, cleaning, washing, etc. That kind of stereotype patriarchal thinking is strong and it has long tentacles in the society. In our Hindu culture, female should live under the shadow of male.

During the childhood, the female should remain under the direction of their fathers. After marriage, the role of the female changes; their husbands control them. At that time, she should perform other roles because her identity is also changed and she should adjust in the unfamiliar culture and practice. Similarly, in the old age, women should depend on their sons. Parents feel that sons are just for gaining knowledge and daughters are the kitchen holders. That's why the girls can't escape

from the household chores in our patriarchal society. This discussion shows discrimination starts from home.

### **Bias against Women Head Teachers**

The impacts of social discrimination affect women in their leadership position as well. Women are taken as incapable and unqualified persons. The SMCs are also not happy with the female heads. They feel uneasy to work with the female heads. They show the biological problem of female. According to them, the outdoor work of school women leaders is not appropriate. They generally do not possess personal vehicles. They are also loaded with family responsibility. Other many reasons are also there which do not help women to lead the institution. It is difficult to interact with the entire stakeholders of the school for the women.

### **Problem of Time Management for Women Leaders**

It was found that time management is the crucial problem for the women leaders. They are overloaded with their home responsibility. Biologically they are mother, and socially and culturally they are kitchen holders and care takers of home. They cannot remain detached from home as compared to male. They have the extra burden of family chores. In most of the cases, they are thinking about their family. That's why the time management is a very difficult task for women.

### **Discussion**

The study found that there is great gender based discrimination in our society. Females are dominated in the family as well as in the society. There is discrimination against women in education, opportunity, profession, and other different roles as well.

According to socialist feminism, the two most conspicuous theoretical approaches that have held influence over many socialist feminists to this date are "dual systems theory" and "the gender system". The dual systems approach focuses

on two autonomous systems: the system of male domination, often termed as patriarchy, and the system of mode of production, in most cases capitalism that interact to head to women's subordination and oppression (Philipson & Hansen, 1990). My study findings also support this notion. Socialist feminists are concerned with the exigent capitalism and male supremacy.

Socialist feminists recognize the fact that women are divided by class, color and political belief, hence, they experience a common oppression as women. They claim that oppression needs to be understood, not just in terms of inequalities of power between men and women, but also in terms of the requirements of capitalism and the role of state institution in a capitalist society.

According to the finding of the study, home is the origin of discrimination for women. The unequal and cultural division of work for the women at home is the major obstacle for women empowerment. According to Hawkesworth (2006), stress of work and family responsibilities, inadequate leisure time, sexism, racism, and homophobia are the major barriers for women for empowerment. This notion is exactly tallied with the findings of my research. The study implies the need to provide women with equal opportunity like men from their own home.

Our society also does not believe in women and their capacity and does not provide women with equal opportunity for participation in all kind of works. The people in the patriarchal society have the concept that women are just responsible for household chores, are caretakers of children and senior household members. But they should think that women can do all kinds of works that men do if they get equal opportunities as men.

The finding of the study also shows that there is gender discrimination against women in their work places especially for leadership position. Male domination was

observed in the practice. Tomlinson (2004) said that there are powerful forces resistant to feminine leadership. The masculine corporate culture has high control, competitiveness, emphasis on strategy, lack of emotion, analysis for rational problem-solving, managerial effectiveness gauged in terms of financial gain rather than employee satisfaction, so that women have to change by adapting and camouflaging their femininity.

### **Conclusion**

The major purpose of the study was to explore the opportunities, challenges, and problems of women school head teachers. From the above findings, some crucial conclusions are drawn. There is a limited opportunity for women in school leadership. So many obstacles are there for the women leaders to perform their responsibility. Due to unlimited difficulties, sometimes, women leaders are frustrated and want to quit their leadership roles. There is no conducive environment for them to lead the school. There are limited policies to promote the leadership positions for women but it is very difficult to translate it into practice due to social, cultural and biological limitations of women.

The home is the most crucial component for women. Our traditional patriarchal culture does not support women to take charge of vital social responsibility. The constraint of time is another major obstacle for the women to lead the institution. In case of knowledge and skills, women are in no way weaker than men. They are honest and hardworking as well. They have the capacity to lead the school but environment is not suitable for them. Even the family members in many cases are not cooperative with the women. The society is also not in the supporting position for the women leaders. The perception of teachers and staff towards their female head is not cooperative in most of the cases. In my reflection males have got a

lot of opportunities at their home which is not available for females. Parents also support sons and their education but ignore daughter's education. There is also the practice of early marriage of girls which creates obstacle for the development of their confidence. Nepal has a traditional patriarchal society, that's why women are always ignored in our society and men always have in the superior position and capacity.

Research findings show that women leaders are more serious and honest in their responsibilities. They are confident of their roles. It is the trait of the women. Daft (2005) agreed that traits research has been an important part of leadership studies throughout the twentieth century and continues in the twenty-first century. Many researchers still contend that some traits are essential to effective leadership, but only in combination with other factors. Some of the traits considered essential are self-confidence, honesty and integrity, and drive. These traits were possessed by my research participants.

### **Implications**

In order to promote the leadership capacity and environment for the women empowerment, the principle of equity should be implemented from home and society as well. The traditional patriarchal mindset is the key barrier for women's empowerment. So, the Cultural Revolution is the call of the day. Women friendly cultural development is a key task for us today.

The policy makers should be honest and responsible for making proper policy for women empowerment. Without a strong foundation, the position improvement of women leadership is not possible. For this, proper attention needs to be given to girls' education. Moreover, attitude is the most crucial factor for change. So, positive attitude should be developed in the key personnel who are directly responsible in the sector of women empowerment.

This study is just a small stone thrown into a great pond that spreads ripples throughout. It is simply an attempt to explore the condition of women school leadership in Nepal. The finding and conclusion of this study helps the education planners of Nepal to peep into the situation of women leadership. It also helps the education policy makers, school head teachers and even female leaders to know the situation of women leadership in the school sector in Nepal.

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## ANNEX I: INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

### **For Female Head Teachers**

1. Would you tell me something about your background to the teaching field?
2. What motivated you to becoming a teacher and also a head teacher?
3. Please, elaborate on how you became a head teacher?
4. What challenges did you find in being a female head?
5. What opportunities do you see in being a female head?
6. How do policy environments of Nepal promote women leadership in schools?
7. What opportunities, challenges and problems are there for a school women head?
8. What strategies women head teachers are applying to face the challenges and constraints?
9. If you think something important has been missed in our conversation, please share.

### **For SMC Members**

1. Would you tell me something about your background to your involvement in the educational field?
2. What challenges do you find in making a woman your school head?
3. What opportunities do you see female headship in your school?
4. How do policy provisions promote women leadership in schools?
5. What opportunities, challenges and problems are there for a school women head?
6. What strategies women head teachers are applying to face the challenges and constraints?
7. If you think something important has been missed in our conversation, please share.

## ANNEX II: OBSERVATION SHEETS

**Observation 1**

- Active boys
- Passive girls
- Satisfy the school administration
- Head teacher is a good person
- Female work harder than men.
- She is in a hurry
- Time on non educational activities
- She wants student achievement
- She feels dominated by the local people
- Well decorated by pictures and well-known quotation
- Boy pulling hair of a girl, girls are shy, no reaction
- Male dominance
- Why are women not reactive?
- Girls keep that kind of activities secret.

**Observation 2**

- Male teachers want to replace female head
- He said female head is being powerful in from of men
- Male don't want to be subordinate of female
- Women can easily accept male leadership
- Male dominated society
- Though women are qualified and capable, men can't accept their leadership
- Parents also do not like women head teacher

- Girls have to do households chores
- Girls don't have enough time to read at home
- Girls have to do even their homework at school
- Reflection of patriarchal culture

### **Observation 3**

- Women open door/clean office room/fetch water to the office
- Women can also drive and go any places like men
- The school building is new
- A temple is near school, mainly females are in line to worship
- They bring their children believing to recover from their illness
- Girls are more than boys in school
- Some girls go home in break time because they are house workers.. they should prepare lunch for their house members...they should wash the dishes
- Boys are playing
- The dual system theory focuses on the sexual division of labor

## ANNEX III: DATA CODES

Title	HT 1	HT 2	HT 3	HT 4	HT 5
Opportunity	Trained Managem ent training meeting	Not more opportunity training meeting seminar not to get more information of center level programmed. Don't belief senior level officer Stereotype thinking like as women can't take challenge that's why opportunity should provide to men.	Provide training Meeting Seminar	First opportunity is make head. Gain a lot of knowledge. Involve training/meeting/ seminar ect. Make me strong, confident and capable person, gain lot of experience. Make me better. Opportunity to intricate many people.	Participate Training/meeting/ seminar, gusty ect. Meet many people who involved in education sector. Provide a lot of opportunity. Build of confident, make strong/can easily speak with other people, like DOE ect. Give lot of experience /confidents
Family background	High educated Nuclear family Good economic status	Joint family High education Medium economic status.	Joint family Father in Indian Military. In primary schooling used to 2 hours	Childhood was very difficult because of mother death. Study resource less condition. Lake of opportunity to study for daughter Struggle for reading	Born at Thankot Father work in aboard. Mother can't read, Intelligent student.

			walking.	Now nuclear family. High education. Median class economic condition.	Now joint family. Both husband and wife passed S.L.C. Economic condition is normal.
Experience of outside	Discriminate Who discriminate community member Why discriminate Stereotype thinking Lack of support from the SMC, DEO, Subordinate, ect.	Several times dominate direct/indirect. Discriminate by society/workplace Show wrong behaves like second level of citizen.	Some time feel uneasy when people dominate.	Many times feel un comfortable.	Some time feel discriminate Society discriminates to us. Do unequal behave with male and female. Parents hesitate to admit their children in the school which is women head teacher. Some time teacher also misbehaves.
Challenge	Difficulty of get Vehicle More responsibility in home.	Face several challenges. Taking school accountability and responsibility. Home responsibility. Feel more challenge.	So difficult task. No any idea, leadership role and responsibility in begin.	Face many difficulties/ challenges Police administration also don't help proper way. One time face so	Feel difficulties /challenges in occupation. Some time can't face along such type of challenges what's why need

	Several challenge like as don't support from SMC member, Society, Parents.		SMC give challengeable task Face different kind of problem like as teacher is not working his/her duties on time. Some time parents not help. Student also create problem. Sometime student/teacher/parents don't cooperate. Committee also hesitates to belief.	difficult situation like as out person also attack throw verbally bad sentence, vandalized in the school. Sometime feel quit the leadership role. Problem of security also. Dominate throw society, local people/teacher/parents. ect. People though women is afraid. Face internal problem/external problem, academic problem, non academic problem ect . Some time student also create problem,	help other. Don't belief to women from DOE and other person. Sometimes feel tension.
Policy environment	Want empower to women Not implement in proper way	Want empower to women But not implement in proper way. Only written document. Give to chance for	Now a day's policy begins support to women.	Policy make only written document. It should implement in proper way.	Not suitable for women. It is just written document. Not the proper way implements.

	Only written document.	women.			
Facilitate the situation	<p>Policy should apply on time</p> <p>Society, community and family should believe to women and their work capacity as equal as man, or better than men.</p> <p>Parents don't behave differently towards their son and daughter.</p> <p>Give same opportunity.</p> <p>Shouldn't discriminate</p>	<p>Should give leadership training</p> <p>Support to women leader.</p> <p>Increase opportunity for women position, encourage them to make a leader.</p> <p>Give to facilitate to women leader.</p> <p>Provide child care center.</p>	<p>The society looks to women in positive way and give right opportunity.</p> <p>Parents also give equal opportunity to their daughters and son.</p>	<p>Government should make awareness programmed.</p> <p>Government should give training for raise women confidence, empower them, should give opportunity to make leader.</p>	<p>The government wants to improve women's condition. They bring appropriate programs.</p> <p>Government should programs demand based not supply based.</p> <p>It will be available in needy people who want it.</p>



	<p>te from their home. Provide equal chance for education. Minimize household chore to daughter. Provide chance to other field.</p>				
<p>Start teaching profession and motivate /support</p>	<p>After S.L.C. Family member specially husband.</p>	<p>After S.L.C. Family member specially father.</p>	<p>After S.L.C. Motivate father/husband Support from family/teacher/parents/student. I become strong.</p>	<p>From 2050. When completed PCL level. Husband/ friends/ well-wisher ect.</p>	<p>For 2054 from private source. For 2060 from Rahat Kota. Motivate myself/VDC First of all empower ourselves not other pull up. Do lot of struggle. Gain little support to my family but not enough.</p>
<p>Contribute for school</p>	<p>Build a new building.</p>	<p>Built a new building Collect money from earthquake trust,</p>	<p>Replace old building/make new</p>	<p>Upgrade the secondary level. Build two building</p>	<p>Established the school. Lead to build the</p>

	Brought new furniture, play equipment .	village development committee ect.	building Management is not taken decision, convince them and take decision and make new building.	replace one old one. Make library and science lab. Add three toilets, manage drinking water. Add teacher, progress school academic performance.	building. Tri to make good relationship with SMC/teacher/parents/ other stakeholders ect. Make good environments inside/outside of the school. Try to mention quality education.
Satisfied with leadership role	Yes.	Yes.	Yes, I want to better then now. Want to coordinate with shareholders/ government bodies.	Full satisfy. No enough time to do work Problem to manage home responsibility/ office duties. Capable/ confident Effect of patriarchy culture male free/ female overload like as care children/ household task. Bring bag for brought essential thinks for home all time when go out side of home. Women more capable then men. Society barrier for women. Male dominate to women leader.	Satisfied but sometimes fell discriminate because of people