

NARRATIVES OF WOMEN TEACHERS' ON THEIR CLASSROOM
AUTONOMY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted for candidature
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DEDICATION

This work is profoundly dedicated to my facilitators of Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED), family, friends and the community who have always been precious part of my life. I am always indebted to their patience and the encouragement they have been showering for the successful completion of M. Phil journey.

AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Irina Aryal* for the *Master of Philosophy in Education (Development Education)* presented to Kathmandu University School of Education on May 12, 2023.

Title: *Narratives of Women Teachers' on their Classroom Autonomy*

Abstract Approved

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The study explores the understanding on teacher autonomy, process of developing, practicing and updating autonomy of four women teacher teaching in secondary level from Kageshwori Manohara Municipality, Kathmandu. Teachers' autonomy has always been shadowed in teachers' professional development which is also a key towards teachers' job satisfaction.

There are countable studies on teacher autonomy in Nepal and limited researches focus on teacher autonomy but still women teachers' autonomy and the Nepali context of practicing their autonomy are unexplored yet. Thus, this research explores, analyzes and interprets stories of secondary level women teachers' narratives of practicing their classroom autonomy. In addition, the study attempts to explore women teachers' experience of challenges and constraints while developing and practicing their classroom autonomy. While doing so, based on two research questions to be analyzed both in a different way the study has employed two different theories. Firstly, this study used feminist theory (Liberal Feminism) to discuss the first

research question, how do secondary level women teachers' relate to the influence of socio- cultural environment on the development and practice of autonomy? Feminist theory is based on and applied to provide a critical lens in identifying the complexities and layers within the stories told by all four participants. Secondly, the study has also used Vygotskian theoretical framework on teachers' autonomy for addressing the second research question, how do they explain their stories of professional growth and promoting autonomy in classroom practices?

The study reveals some important accounts of women experience of practicing, developing and updating autonomy. Furthermore, the analysis brings five reflective discussion in chapter four and five. This study raises issues for future research and has consequences for policy, educational institutions, instructors, and teacher training planners. Teacher require ongoing supervision, monitoring, and support from internal and external resources, as well as professional growth and training in these areas. School management committees should talk about ways to motivate students in the classroom, keep track of how lessons are taught, and plan breaks, workshops, and training sessions for teachers and students.

Finally, this study is all about the story of four women teacher whose autonomy is guided by the underlying socio cultural values and the struggle they have gone through developing, practicing and updating it.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCING MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

While thinking about various educational topic for my research, teacher autonomy triggered me in the third semester after getting rejected on the topic of slow learners during the demo presentation. Hence, in this chapter I presents a prologue, the description of the story which made me think about women teachers' classroom autonomy as well as the introduction of the research agenda. Similarly, in my research agenda, I present the problem I discovered, as well as the purpose of the study, research question, and rationale of the study. Finally, I articulate the chapter essence.

Prologue

During the first phase of pandemic (COVID-19) I got chance to participate in one of the teachers training where I met many women teachers through the virtual platform (online mode). First day of training went well. On the second day of the training, our trainer focused on how we can practice learner's autonomy into our classes. Participants were divided into seven different groups.

We were ten members and coincidentally all were women. The topic of discussion supposed to be application of learner autonomy in the classroom, but the actual discussion of our group focused on teachers' autonomy and all started to share their everyday life during the pandemic. Some even said that after taking different training they could rarely use new knowledge in their classroom. There are always guided for fixed classroom routines. This scenario shows that there are challenges to practice the women teachers' autonomy. So, women teachers are not getting opportunity to utilize

the new ideas that they have learned from training. We discussed challenges prevalent in our teaching and learning process such as school culture, classroom size, curriculum, etc. Most of the women teachers of our group were lacking behind and, were not able to enhance their own skills and caliber and lots of hindrances were enlisted during our training.

During conversation with women teachers made me feel that still women teachers' are lacking classroom autonomy as they said they are guided, observed and need to follow the routine work and they don't have any space to utilize the learned things from training to their classroom. This made me more curious to know the story of women teachers' teaching in secondary level, how they practice their classroom autonomy, as I am also a teacher teaching in secondary level.

My Teaching Experience

I have more than a decade long experiences in teaching as a secondary level teacher. If I reflect on my experience, I had different experiences in between the years of teaching. In my early days of teaching, I used to be observed and guided. I was supposed to follow what the school management has assigned. I never got a chance to think of the chapters that I needed to teach in the early or later months of academic years. It was like following the text book blindly. I use to submit my lesson plan as per the guideline and follow the same unit test routine, and individual presentation routine. I never got a chance to take a test when my students were ready. I reflect that it was totally following a schedule than teaching or facilitating the students.

Introduction to Teacher Autonomy

My experiences say that teachers should always be good learners and we should

be ready to learn new skills or techniques to make a classroom a better place for our learner's. I think the professionalism of the teacher is always based on our competence and that competence is gained from our motivation towards our work. Teachers can have better motivation for their work first through their own studying and exploring habit and other can be influenced by several factors. I think the concept of teacher autonomy is the professional independence of teachers, responsible for updating their own knowledge and application of those learned things to make an autonomous decisions in their classroom teaching. We can also understand teacher autonomy as what teachers learn and teach and how they teach in the classroom. I feel teachers' autonomy is really a need for any classroom to make learning better. Teachers autonomy also covers various aspects such as space, freedom, flexibility and respect for teachers' (Ramos, 2006) and this supports to share knowledge with learners in the classroom.

As per Little, (1995) teacher autonomy is the ability to direct one's own teaching or professional action. Having a strong sense of personal responsibility for teaching, as well as ongoing reflection on and analysis of the teaching process, are requirements for engaging in teachers autonomy, in my opinion. Going through the literature on teacher autonomy, it reflects that autonomous teachers are a person who have the capacity of self-directed teaching- learning in the classroom for professional development.

Statement of the Problem

Formal education is thought to be the most essential part of life. Teachers are believed to be role model in society. They contribute in many ways. One of them is practicing their autonomy to promote learning in the best way in their educational

institution as well it has great contribution to the whole society. However, all teachers in all educational institutions do not reach the expectation and several factors may contribute to this. Once I got an opportunity to participate in a training where I talked with many women teachers about the practice of autonomy in their institution and many were complaining about, not being able to implement new skills, no cooperation among colleagues, no support from the administration and some shared their own personal time management problem.

Combining the viewpoint of Little (1995), Tort-Moloney (1997), Aoki (2000), and Smith (2000), teacher autonomy is the teacher's ability to engage in self-directed instruction, freedom, and responsibility to make decisions about one's own teaching as well as exercising affective and cognitive control over the teaching process through continuous reflection and analysis. And further suggests that a teacher's responsibility is not only to educate, but also to learn about many elements of both teaching and learning, i.e. the teacher as learner.

Being a woman teacher, I faced difficulties while practicing and updating my autonomy. I personally feel that there are lots of hindrances in women teachers' journey. I have experienced different realities from my working environment for a decade. And my experiences says that, still we women are bounded with patriarchal norms. Being in same line, Poudel (2013) states in society patriarchy has bounded structure for women. Similarly, Hindu philosophy and religion have also encouraged patriarchy (Dunda, 2003). I have also experienced that women teachers are dominated and are not regarded equal as a man in our societies. Then encouraging them for the practice of their autonomy improves their caliber and skill. Similarly, Thapa and Lama

(2012) mentioned that culture and human thoughts are the barriers of women to push them backwards. The patriarchal thoughts and culturally rooted orthodox practices are the major causes behind the discrimination among men and women in our society. In a similar context, Leatherby (2003) says that women are identified as overtly dependent and are biased and victimized. Women teachers have various roles to perform, and living in the ground reality of the patriarchal society, when and how they practice and update their autonomy.

According to International Labour Organization (2016), this crucial link between education and development is made by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Global leaders vowed to "provide inclusive and equitable quality education and encourage lifelong learning opportunities for everyone (p.2) " by adopting Sustainable Development Goal 4. This objective cannot be met unless the number of trained teachers is increased and they are given the tools necessary to influence educational change in the lives of the students they educate. Many teachers frequently face challenging living situations, lack proper initial training, ongoing professional growth, and reliable support. They occasionally experience prejudice and even violent assaults.

Similarly, if we see the global context, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) have also envisioned teachers' professional development, but teacher autonomy is still a matter to be explored to promote inclusive education. There are lots of quality policies in the context of Nepal as the Teachers Professional Development Policy (2006), National Education Policy (2020), and teacher development policy guideline (2011); however, the achievement in education has not reached to the expectation. All the

policies and provisions seem to be more students centric, so teacher are lacking behind. Within the teacher, women teachers are still not in focus. Teachers' professional development is the major focus of any policy but without promoting teacher autonomy it may not be fulfilled.

Similarly going through some of the empirical studies as conducted by Baradaran in 2016, among Iranian Female EFL Teachers, the analysis showed the female participants' autonomy sense was significantly lower than the males'. However, females gained stronger correlations between their autonomy and the teaching style sub-constructs. In the same line another study also confirmed that male teachers naturally felt more sense of autonomy than females did; also, they are more extraverted, open, and conscientious than female teachers (Fadaee et al., 2021).

Any study unable to understand teachers' context of upgrading and practices of autonomy in our changing educational context will still promote one-size fit concept in education. Literature about autonomy focuses on teachers' role in autonomous learning, learner's autonomy, new learning environment and challenges in promoting and cultivating learner autonomy (Yan, 2012; Peng & Xuezhang, 2005; Reinders & White 2011 & Alibakhshi 2015). In the context of Nepal some research studies are undertaken on teachers' perception on learners autonomy, self-directed learning for learner autonomy, becoming autonomous learner, learner autonomy practice, learner autonomy concept and consideration and learner autonomy: A Western hegemony (Bhattarai, 2021; Adhikari, 2010; Dhimi, 2022; Poudel, 2014; Neupane, 2010 & Pokhrel, 2016). But teachers' autonomy in context of Nepali education is left to explore and there is no any single article published concerning women teacher autonomy. So, there is paucity

of research which has explored the practices of teacher autonomy and rarely any research on teacher autonomy is conducted in our educational context. Therefore, I see a gap in the knowledge that attempts to understand women individual experiences, to unpack the complexity of developing, practicing and updating autonomy.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to interpret and analyze stories of secondary level women teachers' narratives of developing and practicing their classroom autonomy. In addition, the study explored women teachers' experience of challenges and constraints while developing and practicing their classroom autonomy.

Research Questions

In the line with the purpose of the research, the study attempted one major research question and two sub-questions.

- Q. How do secondary-level women teachers explicate the stories of developing, updating and practicing classroom autonomy?
- a) How do secondary-level women teachers relate to the influence of socio- cultural environment on the development and practice of autonomy?
 - b) How do they explain their stories of professional growth and promoting autonomy in classroom practices?

Rationale of the Study

I have felt and experienced many times discrimination and domination caused by patriarchal thoughts in my working environment. I have challenged my knowledge and cultural practices and moved forward. I always support as well as guide teachers in my institution. Working as a coordinator and thinking and practicing for the sake of

the institution have developed me personally and professionally. Working sincerely by challenging difficult situations and taking the responsibilities that come my way made me who I am now. Since our society is guided by patriarchal norms and values, which can be reflected in any working environment. So, there is a need to understand women teachers' capacity to take charge of their teaching.

Practice of autonomy by any teacher in the teaching process is interdependent among administrators, teachers and school culture. I believed that women teachers have the capacity, can accept a challenge, respect the situation, and can work to refine their belief system. Thus, women teachers are also part of success in any educational institutions and they contribute to the better educational growth of that institution. Unfortunately, women teachers' autonomy is highly ignored and neglected where their commitment could promote success for educational institutions. Therefore, this research study explored, analyzed, and interpreted secondary level women teachers' narratives of practicing their autonomy. Furthermore, it interpreted their narratives in socio- cultural context. Autonomous teaching should complement autonomous learning (Camilleri, 1997). I find teacher autonomy and learner autonomy interdependent to each other. If we are enhancing the learner autonomy, there is a need to understand how the teachers are applying and updating their autonomy. Studies are already there which talks about the need for teacher autonomy and satisfaction with the practice of teacher autonomy (Sehrawat, 2014; Wilches, 2007; & Tadic; 2014).

However, those studies mainly focus on the Western context as why we need teacher autonomy. I feel teacher autonomy varies in accordance with time and context. So, there is still a gap to be explored how teachers update and practice autonomy. So,

teachers' role in updating their classroom autonomy can be one of the prominent concerns. When I reflect on literature, I find there is a need to understand the ground reality of teachers' while promoting their autonomy. Secondary level women teacher understanding, their experience in their everyday life of Nepali context is unexplored yet. Hence, I felt the need of exploring the knowledge of teacher culture and pedagogy as well as their update of competence autonomy in school education: their understanding and practice of classroom autonomy through their unheard stories.

Significance of the Study

This study looks critically into teacher autonomy, and situation for developing it. It has explored the new or needed revision of the school strategies and training institutions for developing teacher autonomy. Thus, I believe this study serves two purposes. First, it helps to understand how the teacher narrate their stories of practicing classroom autonomy. Second, it helps to understand how teacher upgrade and update themselves in our context. It is also significant for the curriculum designers to think beyond the existing teaching culture and pedagogy and keep some space to use teacher autonomy.

Practically, it is significant for me to reflect upon my understanding and practice to find the existing gaps and then promote teacher autonomy in my working institution. Finally, this study is beneficial to the learner, teacher and school administrator to create comfortable school culture to practice teacher autonomy promoting learner autonomy. And researcher, planner, and policy makers who without hesitation could form the policy to renovate the overall educational system and process.

Moreover, this study has personal and professional significance for me. The

opportunity to explore and engage in the research process, use of research methods, and analysis of information to generate knowledge using the theoretical framework, enhanced my personal and professional skills. Moreover, sharing space with participants and listening to the narratives and stories provided me with a first-hand perspective on the subject matter. This study contributed to enhancing my engagement in the area of women teacher classroom autonomy that I am passionate about. By engaging in the research process, the knowledge I have gained from various literature reviews from across the globe, and the analytical skills in the application of these theories, have developed my expertise in the subject area. This is not only helpful in my day to day work but I believe also will help in building my career growth prospects.

Chapter Essence

In this chapter, I presented my inspirational journey to explore the stories of women teachers in developing and practicing autonomy with the support of literature on women teachers, their involvement and their childhood learning process and practicing their autonomy in the classroom. I also explored the praxis existing in my research agenda. Similarly, I presented the purpose of my study, research questions and the rationale of this study.

CHAPTER II

DIGGING THE LITERATURE

This chapter, hence, critically examines relevant literature on teacher autonomy, its areas, and relevance with learner autonomy. I have arranged this chapter into different sections. The first section consists of a conceptual review where different sub-theme are presented on the main theme ‘what does autonomy mean?’ such as meaning of autonomy, teacher autonomy, areas and dimensions of teacher autonomy have been discussed. The second section focuses on the theoretical perspectives where the literature on Vygotskian theoretical framework on teacher autonomy and feminist theory are reviewed. Besides, this chapter also unfolds the policies and practices relating to teachers autonomy and professional development.

What does Autonomy Mean?

Going through the literature I found that the concept of autonomy first appeared in language teaching with the assistance of the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project, which was established in 1971. The project report to the Council of Europe by Holec (1981) serves as a foundational early document on autonomy in language acquisition. Meanwhile, as a natural byproduct of self-directed learning, Smith (1982) defined autonomy as the ability to guide one's own learning, in which learners decide their learning objectives, progress, and evaluation (as cited in Suc & Duo 2010).

Furthermore, in its early stages, the theory and practice of autonomy in language acquisition were linked to concepts of individualization. Self-directed learning was central to the practical application of autonomy, which led to the

establishment of self-access centers and learner training as experimental focal points. Nunan (1997) defined five levels of autonomy: awareness, participation, intervention, creation, and transcendence. Learners are aware of the pedagogical goals, content of the materials, learning styles and strategies, and so on at the awareness level; at the transcendence level, learners make links between the classroom and the outside world and become teachers and researchers; and at the creation level, learners create new materials (as cited in Benson, 2007). Littlewood's (1997) three-stage model, likewise, included language acquisition, learning style, and personal development components (as cited in Benson, 2007). Going through various concepts on autonomy, this clearly demonstrates that autonomy is a vast subject to explore.

Understanding Teacher Autonomy

As per the review of literature, what I have analyzed is, the concept of autonomy is frequently connected with a fundamentally learner-centered concept. However, it has grown over the last thirty years or more, in a framework mostly designed by and for teacher. Teacher autonomy research in the field of second language teaching has only been around for a short time. Little (1995) was one of the first to investigate it, and his references to responsibility, control, and freedom drew strong parallels with learner autonomy.

Similarly, going through the literature I got to know that so many people contributed to clarifying the concept of teacher autonomy. Some early efforts to define teacher autonomy included Smith (2000) and McGrath (2000) in the publication, learner autonomy, and teacher autonomy: future directions by Sinclair, McGrath, and Lamb (2000 as cited in Lamb 2008). Similarly, at the 1999 AILA

Scientific Commission on Learner Autonomy Symposium in Tokyo (Dam, 2002), other relevant efforts were launched as a major emerging concern and the overall theme of the follow-up symposium, to be held in Singapore in December 2002, has been designated as 'relationship between learner and teacher autonomy' (as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 1).

The definition of teacher autonomy has been discussed, and many academicians have contributed to it. Among them, Sherawat (2014) was the one who accumulated some of the contributions to make a clear understanding of teacher autonomy. Teacher autonomy as reflected by Little (1995), is the teacher ability to engage in self-directed instruction. This viewpoint entails a strong sense of personal responsibility for the teaching, as well as exercising affective and cognitive control over the teaching process through continuous reflection and analysis. Similarly, Aoki (2000) defines teacher autonomy explicitly, stating that it entails the ability, freedom, and responsibility to make decisions about one's own teaching.

Based on the descriptions given above, teacher autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own teaching, allowing for some flexibility in and outside of the classroom while maintaining full accountability. It enables teachers to reflect on, review, and evaluate their teaching and learning activities over the course of their careers. Smith (2000) defines teacher autonomy as the ability to develop acceptable skills, knowledge, and attitudes for oneself as a teacher in collaboration with others. In a different view, Benson (2000) defines teacher autonomy as the right to freedom from control (or the ability to exercise this right) as well as true freedom from control.

According to these criteria, what I have derived is, teacher autonomy helps

teachers to gain suitable pedagogical skills for effective teaching. It is not just for oneself, but it encourages each individual teacher to share their thoughts, skills, information, and experience with one another in order to progress cooperatively. It also makes teachers aware of how much flexibility they employ in their teaching practice.

According to Huang (2005), teacher autonomy is a teacher's willingness, capacity, and freedom to control their teaching and learning. Teacher autonomy entails the freedom to research, learn, and teach. Higher authorities should not exert excessive control over teachers work so that they can perform their duties without fear. In the same line, Benson (2000) highlights a notion of autonomy, which says is the right to be free from the influence of others, and I think this is quite difficult to achieve in teaching learning. Many teachers, in my opinion, appear to want to see themselves as independent professionals, free of control from colleagues, management, the institution, or the educational system, and capable of making and acting on their own. In practice, however, teachers are constrained by a number of educational authorities, such as contracts, administrators, school rules, curricula, and students' aspirations, demands, and expectations.

Researcher like Smith (2000), have linked the idea of an autonomous teacher to the potential for self-directed professional growth. This concept encompasses a wide range of issues, including teachers' responsibilities to be aware of time, reason, and place, as well as pedagogical skills and current information as part of their teaching practice. Similarly, it emphasizes teachers' responsibilities to be always ready to execute their work and progress professionally, rather than just their duty to

empower students.

Again, Smith (2000) in a different way further redefined teacher autonomy as teacher- learner autonomy, considering it in connection to teacher learning and further suggests that a teachers' responsibility is not only to educate, but also to learn about many elements of both teaching and learning, i.e. the teacher as learner. Along the same line, Tort-Moloney (1997) has also emphasized the importance of teacher autonomy in terms of a teachers' ability to govern their own teaching learning and reflection on teacher learning. Based on the definitions of various academicians and researchers, I conclude that teacher autonomy is also a responsibility of the teacher to keep up with new pedagogical skills and curricula, for which teachers' must invest some self-study time.

According to the preceding viewpoint, learning or updating has great importance in the journey of teachers teaching careers. Continuous learning provides teachers with several possibilities to acquire various pedagogical knowledge and abilities, as well as creates pedagogical competency, which encourages the habit of self-learning and this is key for the professional growth of the teacher.

Understanding Teacher Autonomy through Multiple Interpretations

As per the view of Smith (2003), teacher autonomy has been utilized to demonstrate its many aspects from its inception to the present. And the first aspect is professional action that is self-directed. Teachers may be autonomous in the sense that they take personal responsibility for their teaching and exercise affective and cognitive control over the teaching process through ongoing reflection and analysis. Similarly, the second aspect is the ability to pursue self-directed professional development. In a

different view, Tort-Moloney (1997) defines an autonomous teacher as one who is aware of why, when, where, and how pedagogical abilities can be acquired through self-conscious awareness of teaching practice. The third aspect is freedom from external control over professional action or progress.

Based on the aforementioned notions teacher autonomy demonstrates a distinct path for its application. To begin, with the first one, I analyze it discusses teachers' professional activity, in which teacher pay attention to their job and obligation while reflecting and evaluating. Second clarifies that teachers may improve their professional lives by obtaining pedagogical, personal, and social skills, as well as current information, throughout their teaching careers. Furthermore, the generally held concept regarding teacher autonomy is independent from external interference in one's professional career (both professional action and professional development). When teachers exercise their autonomy, a clear distinction should be made between the teachers' potential and willingness to engage in self-direction and actual self-directed behavior. Teacher autonomy is defined as the ability to direct, control, or accept responsibility for teaching and learning. It allows for varying levels of ability and attitude. The ability to self-assess, develop specific skills for oneself as a teacher, criticize oneself, self-development, self-observation, self-awareness of one's own teaching, continuous reflection, sustainable development, collaboration with others, questioning oneself for self-improvement, and updated knowledge and skills.

Understanding the Need for Teacher Autonomy

Working at an educational institution for almost a decade taught me that I need considerable autonomy to complete any assigned duties. And the sense of knowing and

applying autonomy helped me feel more at ease with any obstacle that came my way. And I strongly believe that teacher autonomy is essential for a smooth teaching and learning experience.

Despite socio-political pressures to standardize and promote hierarchy, educators have increasingly valued teacher, institutional, and learner autonomy (Veugelers, 2004 as cited in Prichard & Moore, 2016). Teacher autonomy has been defined as the freedom of a teacher to make decisions about what and how to educate. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) associate teacher autonomy with professional emotions, which in turn instills in teachers a sense of complete responsibility for their teaching job and motivates them to be lifelong learners throughout their teaching career. As a result, teachers advance in their professional development by seizing opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. Al-Mansoori (2008) expands on the importance of autonomy in the lives of teachers, making the argument that an independent teacher is self-directed, thoughtful, and collaborative in both the community and at work.

Teacher autonomy permits teachers to reflect on their actions and think critically about their teaching techniques. In teacher autonomy, there is no "I" (isolationism), but rather a greater emphasis on collaboration among instructors. Being a teacher, I understand, when teachers are encouraged to share their knowledge, skills, and experiences with one another, teacher networking flourishes. Teacher autonomy also aids student learning since an empowered teacher may alter the curriculum to meet the requirements of the students and their learning styles (Prichard & Moore, 2016). Finally, Teacher autonomy can benefit numerous areas of teaching and learning, including teacher professional development.

Methods for Enhancing Teacher Autonomy

Teacher autonomy appears to have a significant influence on any teacher's teaching career. The development and practice of teacher autonomy leads to empowerment and happiness; as Littlewood (1997) observed, we all need the capacity and willingness to modify our behaviour in order to become more autonomous (as cited in Ramos, 2006). Some major factors according to Littlewood (1997) that might influence a teacher's conduct to become more independent include, a) self- awareness: it enables instructors to recognize their own learning and professional strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation and reflection assist them in developing self-awareness; b) awareness: Teachers should be aware of their surroundings and the environment in which they teach. Teachers who can understand their own needs, objectives, capabilities, ambitions, changes, and dreams gain autonomy and knowledge of their teaching process. Observation, monitoring, and critical thinking, for example, all play key roles in determining what, why, where, and how to educate; c) responsibility: we cannot even consider a small amount of autonomy without responsibility. It provides teachers with independence and empowerment while also increasing their dedication and commitment; d) challenges: they encourage teachers to take the next step by increasing their awareness of their own abilities. They can also assist them in exploring new ideas and making decisions; e) participation and collaboration: autonomy for teachers does not simply imply independence and isolation. Growing together is a request to improve the teaching and learning process. Sharing, negotiating, cooperating, promoting, listening, and respecting others are key characteristics that assist teachers in improving professionally in their teaching careers. f) changing roles: traditional

teaching methods are being abandoned in favor of shifting the teachers' function from controller to adviser, educator to guide, transceiver to observer, and examiner and make judgments to a researcher in today's world (as cited in Ramos, 2006, p. 193).

Thus, autonomy does not necessarily imply effortless conduct; rather, the above-mentioned methods should be explored, and significant efforts should be made to build an autonomous practice in one's teaching and learning behaviour. To become independent, teachers should be aware of various aspects of their own teaching. I summarize that if any teachers are self-aware, responsible, risk-taking, inventive, collaborative, and participatory in their teaching and learning process, then we can regard them as autonomous teachers.

Areas of Teacher Autonomy

Teachers may have some influence over their teaching process while practicing teacher autonomy. In this context, the teaching process encompasses all elements of teaching, including assessment, curriculum development, school administration, and professional development are all parts of the job. Many of these fields need instructors to take on various tasks in their working environment (Wilches, 2007).

Firstly, teaching and assessment are interrelated areas of education. An autonomous teacher has authority over their teaching objectives, course content, capacities, techniques, and teaching documents, as well as evaluation criteria and defined processes for student achievement, time management, and classroom atmosphere. It specifies the various roles of teachers in proposing, initiating, implementing, and evaluating the new curriculum through their teaching and learning, assessment goals, approaches, methods, content, and materials, as well as the

implementation of extra-curricular activities to improve teaching and learning.

Secondly, school operations is also a core area where teachers apply their autonomy. Teachers may exercise autonomy in school functions such as school finance, school expenditure, income sources, budget planning, class scheduling, class makeup based on student enrolment, and so on. However, the position of the teacher in the school may have a significant influence on it.

Finally, professional development is also a core area of teachers' autonomy. In this domain, teachers exercise autonomy in terms of professional follow-up linked with education and tutoring options, as well as decisions about the content, methods, instructors, and location. Teachers' autonomy permits a teacher to accept or reject in-service training based on a variety of considerations such as topic relevancy, teacher interest in the topic, location, convenience, rewards, past experiences, time quantity, teacher devotion, and so on.

As a result, teachers can exercise autonomy in a variety of domains connected to teaching and learning. Teachers are not just teachers; they are also assessors, curriculum designers and developers, educational managers, experts, and so on. These integrations with teaching broaden their tasks and responsibilities, resulting in considerable professional growth for teachers' competence and confidence in teaching and learning.

Teacher Autonomy and Professional Development Opportunities

Teacher professional development is an essential need for today's education, with the goal of increasing the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Throughout their teaching career, they will receive specialized training, formal education, continual

learning with pedagogical skills, and updated information. The function of the teacher is not limited to teaching; it also includes curriculum developers and educators, administrators and evaluators, social change agents, school education improvers, and so on.

Lamb and Simpson (2003) confirm that self-directed professional development opportunities or teacher preparation programs with agendas include co - operation, active experimentation, collaborative decision-making and introspection that help teachers gain a greater sense of and ability to exercise professional autonomy, as well as greater awareness of innovative theories and practices and favorable attitudes toward teaching and learning (as cited in Wilches, 2007). Furthermore, academics have emphasized the significance of professional development as a strategy for promoting teacher autonomy as well as professional development in this sense it encompasses many activities such as applied research, teacher study groups, symposiums, and proper education programs are all examples of formal education programs that improve their levels of knowledge, skills, competence, and performance in their teaching and learning process.

Teacher Autonomy: Freedom of Curriculum Planning to Assessment

In my understanding, teacher autonomy is the practice of freedom for teaching and learning process where teachers take full responsibility for their teaching. This thought is aligned with the thought of Benson, (2000) and Shaw, (2002) who mention that teachers' autonomy is the right to freedom from control and freedom over teaching. I think when teachers can feel or have an individual feeling of execution to liberty of the needed actions in their teaching and learning processes then they are actually in the

practice of their autonomy. This sense of freedom can have a significant impact on curricula planning and implementation in the classroom.

A different view is forwarded by Barfield. et al, (2002) and says that teacher autonomy is defined as a continuous method of inquiry towards how instruction can better encourage learner autonomy. This means teacher autonomy is a multistep process that involves action, negotiation, understanding, and a collaborative process of teaching and learning. Teachers practicing their autonomy should understand the need of their students, apply certain actions and know the obstacles, and then teachers and students work together for better learning. We can also say that teacher autonomy is a multifaceted capacity that includes collective decisions based on students' requirements and interests, teachers' consciousness, expertise, and liberty from artificially imposed agendas (Castle & Aichele, 1994). When we talk about teacher autonomy, it not only talks about freedom but there are some responsibilities to fulfill and teachers should continuously work on enhancing their skills and capacity so that they can adapt and have confidence in the knowledge transformation process.

Similarly, Little Wood (1996) describes autonomy which matches with the combined view of Benson, (2000) and Shaw, (2002) and Barfield et al. (2002) and focused on two different perspectives, the ability for autonomous decision making, which usually includes skills and knowledge for action, readiness, confidence and motivation to carry out choices. It means that enjoying freedom may not be enough to practice teacher autonomy. Those teachers should have the capacity for making good decisions, confidence, and self-motivation for taking necessary action in the process of teaching.

I feel that teacher autonomy is linked with our personal and professional growth and an autonomous teacher should not always be dependent on external factors but have self- motivation for their own development. McGrath (2000) provides a different view than that of other scholars and says that teacher autonomy may be defined as independent professional growth and freedom from external control. During the process of practicing teacher autonomy, we focus more on external factors or hindrances but some time lack of teachers self - motivation towards their teaching can also be hindrances, and I think both factors are equally responsible.

According to Little (1995) and Huang (2005) teachers autonomy refers to a teacher eagerness, potential, and liberty to direct their learning and instruction. So, when any teachers have the intrinsic or extrinsic motivation for teaching and learning process, they are free to take further steps on their teaching without any hindrances and they pose the capacity to take charge of or can have the responsibility for their teaching, and finally, a teacher can be said to be an autonomous teacher. Smith (2000) puts a different view, the ability to develop relevant skills, understanding, and perceptions for oneself as a teacher in collaboration with others is defined as teacher autonomy. This notion does not focus on freedom, but it takes the practice of teachers' skills of coordination, responsibility, and decision making as essential for an autonomous teacher, which is led by the teachers' attitudes toward being a teacher.

Based on the various literature, I conceptualize teacher autonomy as interconnectedness, commitment, group solidarity, expert discretion, and dedication to the learning institution. Teacher autonomy changes based on situation, personal strength, and level of freedom and teachers must be encouraged to work together in a

collaborative environment. Because teacher autonomy is motivated by a desire for personal and professional development, an independent teacher may actively seek opportunities to grow further throughout their career.

Having a broad sense of teacher autonomy Mausethogen and Molstadt (2015) talks mainly about three viewpoints on teacher autonomy First, there is didactical liberation and the absence of command; second, there is a desire and potential to rationalize practices; and third, there is local responsibility, which means that to be an autonomous teacher, a teacher should be allowed to design their curriculum, and should possess a strong commitment to prove their good practices and should take responsibility of what they are teaching is quality knowledge.

Having expanded view on teacher autonomy from curriculum planning to assessment, Short(1994) conceptualizes teacher autonomy as the real and perceived ability to exert control over instruction, evaluation, curriculum design, school operations, or career development issues, within the parameters of the accepted educational goals by the school community. This improvement and exercise of autonomy is mediated by the synergistic interaction between individual factors, such as teachers' professional expertise, abilities, opinions, and perspectives that influence performance, and environmental factors, such as policy initiatives, supportive supervision, working conditions for teachers, and stakeholder interests and support in the school, which may support or dissuade teachers from making certain decisions.

Finally, a teacher has academic freedom when they are able to manage their own learning and instruction. This is known as teacher autonomy. Ability and attitudes are involved. Self-accessibility for the benefit of their students, the capacity to grow as

a teacher, awareness of one's own teaching, ongoing reflection, being willing to change through collaboration with one another, and an effort to make up for what being a teacher lacks I believe that a teacher can only be an independent teacher, if they have the time and desire to learn new things, stay current on them, and put their responsible teaching methods into practice. Teacher autonomy is crucial to ensuring a positive learning environment, and they need time, freedom, flexibility, and respect to carry out their duties.

Reflection

Teacher autonomy as what I learn

Teacher involve in all classroom plan

With school administration's love and care

Develop a culture to learn and share

To get the expectation to be fulfilled

Getting involved in teaching kids

Working to develop own esteem

Which could be reached with team

Creating a good environment

Helping the kids to be independent

Sometimes love like mother and support as father

To create a better future together

Playing a role of motivator and facilitator

With a hope that one day kids will be creators.

Above lines are my reflections after reading the literature related to teacher autonomy. From the various review, I got to know teacher autonomy as a big area to be explored. The concept of teachers' autonomy for my study is delimited to teachers' freedom of control over teaching, self-awareness and update, teacher's responsibility and commitment and finally autonomy as a need for personal and professional growth.

My Theoretical Referent

There are various theories that deal with the issue related to women. No single theory is enough to understand and analyze the issue of my research. First, I believe that the women's issue can be related and understood well through feminist theory. Contextualizing, women teachers' autonomy, taking reference to feminist theory was also essential. The feminist theory raises the voice against the male chauvinist society. Therefore, I am referring to feminism to analyze the secondary level women teacher autonomy.

Simultaneously, I have adopted Vygotsky's theoretical framework on teacher autonomy to understand how the parents, guardian and teachers' involvement worked as scaffolding for the children, and how the children learnt the socio- cultural values, skills, attitudes and behaviors from them in relation to four teachers' childhood stories. I firmly believed that feminism is a concept established by women specifically to promote fairness and equality in socio-cultural activities in society. It is not the theory against man. Instead, it is a theory against male chauvinism. The main argument in favor of this theory focused on gender balance is the equilibrium between men and women in society. Liberal feminism is the most frequently accepted social and political theory

among feminists because it emphasizes equal individual rights and liberties for women and men while downplaying sexual differences. Liberal feminists uphold the validity of gender equality and stress the significance of establishing social, familial, and sexual roles that support women's autonomy and self-fulfillment (Kornberg, 1974). They tend to highlight the similarities rather than the average differences between men and women, blame the social construction of gender for the majority of personality and character variations between the sexes, and advocate a single set of androgynous qualities for both sexes.

According to Yearout et al. (2017), the community's pervasive gender gap has been one of the biggest problems for women. Given the material above, it is clear that feminism strives to bring attention to issues of dominance, discrimination, injustice, and many social practices. By developing such a philosophical idea, I attempt to relate my research to the experiences of secondary level women teachers and the practice and update of their autonomy in our Nepali context. There are various conceptions about feminism where Campell and Wasco (2000) say that due to social biasness, women are seen backward but women's experiences have not been studied at this time. Thus, the feminist theory is the central part of my research as my overall focus remains on women's ability to maintain their equality through their own environment.

Feminist is regarded to be crucial to look at women in society. It does not envisage the roles and responsibilities of women alone rather it focuses on the overall assets of equality, equity, and gender –friendly social strata. Moreover, it also challenges the conventional practices of the society and threatens it for change. Besides that, it puts women's issues in front and explores social injustice and inequality, poses

positions, locates absences, and tries to adjust in every aspect of society. These thoughts are closer to Lather (1991), who believes that our consciousness, skills, institutions and power distribution and privilege are the central to gender shaping. This has affected and halted the majority of societies towards despair and as a result they have fought for several years. In this regard my research is likely to explore, compare and analyze women's pejorative perspectives and offer strong arguments to contribute to educational institutions to make gender- friendly and justice oriented. Thus, it is a focal research lens to overview the overall situation and status of secondary level women teachers.

I found the feminist theory pertinent to my research agenda since my research participants (women teachers) who were involved in my research process, have also faced certain dominant behavior in their homes as well as in their working environment. They are found to leave their own dream .They are also found to be bounded by multiple roles that women in patriarchal societies are involved in. Their childhood to present socio- cultural context somehow directly or indirectly influenced their practice and update of autonomy which is crucial for 21st century teaching learning to make their students an autonomous learner.

Apart from feminist theory, the study has also used the Vygotskian theoretical framework on teacher autonomy for addressing the childhood learning and practice of autonomy of women teachers. Theoretical framework on teacher autonomy was first outlined and applied by Lev S. Vygotsky (Moloney, 1997) in which Vygotsky posits his view based on the notion that human actions take place in social contexts which are reinforced through interaction in society and develops knowledge by co-construction.

When a child is young, according to Vygotsky, he or she is totally dependent on

other people. These individuals, in particular, might be the child's parents who guide the child's action by instructing them on what to do, how to do it, as well as what not to do. Parents largely use language to put these directives into practice. Vygotsky's theory assumes that learning arises when children interact and share knowledge through collaboration. At first, a child completes a new task with the assistance of someone senior to him/her. Then, the child internalizes that he/she can accomplish it independently. In this way, social interaction is advocated to mediate learning.

It can be difficult to define what takes place in a classroom. No one ever retains what is taught, and no one ever passes on what is learned. Vygotsky proposed a cognitive process that goes from social intent to knowledge acquisition by internalization and Zone of Proximal Development, and traditional models of teaching and learning are obviously insufficient in that they do not explain what actually occurs in the classroom (ZPD). By using the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to support his claim that children have varying degrees of problem-solving aptitude, Vygotsky focuses on the internationalization of knowledge (knowing how) (Prior & Gerard, 2007). He defines ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by the independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Moloney, 1997,p,8).

In Vygotskian terms, the intersection of what can be taught and what can be learned in the classroom constitutes a ZPD, where learners' individual needs are taken into account in an interactive manner. Thus, teaching and learning are conceptualized in the same way that caregivers scaffold children's learning, and support is given so that a

learner can internalize a course of action that he or she can then carry out independently.

The notion of learning through scaffolding provided by the parents was relevant to my research agenda since women teachers found their childhood learning has played a supportive role in either enhancing their autonomy and all of them agreed that they learned through the scaffolding provided by their parents or guardians. Similarly, to Vygotsky mental abilities are conditioned from the outset by social relationships and guided participation involves children having dynamic shifts over development in children's responsibilities. The ability for learners to learn autonomously is not innate, so developing learner autonomy is likely an increasing awareness of social as well as learning processes for teachers as well as for learners. Therefore, establishing a framework that will enable positions of authority to develop is key to fostering learner autonomy.

Teaching, in Vygotsky's view, serves to mediate the perceptual development of the person by focusing on the processes and abilities the individual is capable of, and because it is dependent on social skills that are naturally acquired long before anyone becomes a teacher, teaching seems to be a reflection of character. Teaching is an interpersonal relationships developmental process that involves avoiding or surmounting obstacles. It is also an intellectually challenging process to develop practical teaching knowledge.

Therefore, encouraging teacher autonomy is crucial to the development of a learner- centered environment, and this can be done by understanding the learning process that students are engaged in as well as the social interaction and psychological

self-discipline of the students.

According to the Vygotskian perspective, teaching is a challenging, compassionate activity that a teacher can become steadily more skilled at over time through curiosity, ongoing education, and skilled support. As a result, an autonomous teacher is aware of the reasons behind, times, places, and methods for acquiring and using pedagogical skills in the self-conscious awareness of teaching practice. Due to lack of professional development, the majority of teachers currently work alone and in blissful isolation. They propose a model for teacher education that relies on cooperation of students, teachers, institutions, consultants, researchers, and curriculum developers who are all inextricably linked to both the inter-psychological and intra-psychological levels. This model aims to combat the isolation of teachers.

Hence, the Vygotskian theoretical framework of teacher autonomy is relevant in my to study purpose as it helps to clarify the childhood learning of women teachers as well as professional practice of teaching learning in the present classroom. The last thing that needs to be done is to give teachers the tools they need to overcome the barriers to learning that result from the economic and social factors that drive both students and teachers to the classroom.

Investigation of Earlier Studies

A number of studies on teacher autonomy have been conducted worldwide. However, finding literatures in the Nepali setting was a difficult task for me. Some notable research publications and articles on the subject are included below.

Clement and Roland (2000) conducted a study which sought to establish a theory of link between primary school teachers' autonomy and collegiality as well as the

influence on their professional development. In the first phase, thirty-nine teachers from eleven primary schools in Belgium participated in semi-structured interviews regarding autonomy, collegiality, and professional growth. The findings supported the presence of collegiality varieties. Autonomy was discovered to be a balancing act between too much and too little reliance on others. Novice teachers, in particular, are hesitant to seek assistance from peers for fear of appearing less qualified or competent.

Similarly, Pearson and Moomaw (2005) conducted a quantitative study on the association between teacher autonomy and stress, job satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism where 300 teachers were involved in Florida. To define the sample, a teaching autonomy scale was created using demographic factors, and discovered that there was no connection between work satisfaction and curriculum autonomy. Additionally, a high level of professionalism and empowerment were found to be connected with greater work satisfaction.

In the same way, Wilches (2007) released a review paper which defined teacher autonomy as a perception of independence from obstruction or as an instructor's exercising authority over school affairs. Munoz (2007) also conducted a study and the results showed that teachers expressed some of the characteristics of self-directed professional activity and growth in their comments.

On the said manner, Sehrawat (2014) defined teacher autonomy as the freedom to research, learn, and teach. It is found that teacher autonomy is motivated by a desire for both individual and professional growth, so that independent teachers can identify chances for advancement in their professional careers. It is also demonstrated that instructors should have some professional freedom since when they are given the

freedom to teach, they do more effectively.

And scholars like Dikilitas and Mumford (2018) conducted a quantitative study which explored that responsibility works as a chance for autonomy to emerge in accordance with the individual's developmental requirements. Similarly, Vazquez (2018) conducted a review using an exploratory technique and was based on the findings of 20 studies published on the same subject during a 25-year period. It is stated that pedagogical research and critical reflection into the application of autonomy pedagogy seem to be especially efficient strategies for encouraging both future and current educators to promote in the context of learning a foreign language, teacher and student autonomy.

Other scholars Kosar and Akbana (2018) conducted a study which sought to investigate the relationship between individually guided professional development activities and the emergence of autonomous teachers. Sixty English as a Foreign Language instructors from various Turkish state institutions were chosen as participants, and a questionnaire was presented to obtain the desired data. The research found that while participants did not perceive themselves as self-governing in terms of knowledge and skills, they did think there was a strong correlation between personally directed professional development activities and the development of independent teachers.

In a study by Al Asmari (2012) the importance of including learner training in the teaching process and combining it with studies to help students become independent is highlighted by the findings. In a similar vein, Yuliani and Lengkanawati (2017) carried out a study which suggests that encouraging learner autonomy requires assistance in a few key areas, particularly the way that teachers and institutions are treated

professionally.

According to Erdik's (2018) research, the aim of the study was to ascertain the relationship between students in the seventh and eighth grades' attitudes and anxieties toward math classes and the ways in which math teachers encourage and model learner autonomy in math classes. It was found that there is no statistically significant relationship between students' levels of anxiety and attitude toward math class and the degree to which teachers support learner autonomy.

Similarly, the research carried out by DLEK (2022) investigate the relationship between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction. In line with this, the findings indicate a significant and positive relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and their level of autonomy; teachers autonomy behaviors serve as significant predictors of this relationship. Additionally, autonomous behaviors of teachers reveal 7.2% of their job satisfaction. The relationship between the conditions and factors affecting preschool teachers' autonomy and fostering the autonomy of preschoolers in kindergarten was the subject of a study by Devjak et al. in 2020. The study's findings indicate that although it is not essential, preschool teachers' (N = 524) assessment of the conditions and factors for fostering children's autonomy has a positive impact on this goal. The preschool teacher as a person and the involvement of the kids are the most crucial elements in encouraging children's autonomy.

Hence, going through various literature made me clear that learner autonomy is prioritized over teachers' autonomy. As well as most of the literature is Western centric. Similarly, there is no focus given on women teachers' autonomy in any studies, which helped me to be clear on persisting gap in literature where I could at least explore certain

issues associated with women teachers' autonomy.

Policies and Provisions: National Education Policy of Nepal

The most crucial foundation for development is education; without it, development is impossible. The national education policy aims to produce qualified, skilled, and technologically savvy human resources for the country's transformation so that it can imprint the slogan "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali" by guiding it down the path of prosperity. Therefore, "Educated, Civilized, Healthy and Competent Human Resources, Social Justice, Transformation and Prosperity" is the policy's catchphrase. Looking back on Nepal's educational history, no policy has ever been able to guarantee that everyone has access to education, which is one of their fundamental rights. The policy was unveiled to make it compatible with the federal structure and the provision of education as encapsulated in the federal constitution of the country as the country transitioned to a federal mode of governance.

The clause has secured a number of rights, including the right to free and compulsory education up to the elementary school level, free education through the secondary level, free access to higher education for those who are disabled or from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, education in native languages, and the right to open schools and other educational institutions. The government has developed a new education policy to ensure that this clause is followed.

The goal of Nepal's 2019 Education Policy is to produce qualified and self-driven teachers in all of the nation's schools within five years by giving attention to elements like motivation, professional integrity, and capacity building (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2019).

However, motivation of teachers is always thought to be enhanced through training and capacity building but there exist intrinsic and extrinsic factors behind the motivation of teachers to practice their autonomy in the classroom.

Research Gap

Going through the studies I reviewed, I have been able to understand that teachers' professional development is given emphasis in the national and international arena but teachers' autonomy is less addressed. There is even ample research carried out in the area of teacher autonomy in both qualitative and quantitative research. And majority of them focused on teacher autonomy for learner's autonomy, teachers' autonomy for job satisfaction and professional development and different factors are directly and indirectly associated with teachers' autonomy as students learning. Studies carried out on the relationship between practice of teachers' autonomy and academic achievement of the students in different subjects as English and mathematics were also extensively found.

Similarly going through some of the empirical studies as conducted by Baradaran in 2016, among Iranian Female EFL Teachers, the analysis showed the female participants' autonomy sense was significantly lower than the males'. However, females gained stronger correlations between their autonomy and the teaching style sub-constructs. Moreover, the following results could be inferred as statistical results:

- a) Males naturally feel more sense of autonomy than females do.
- b) As teacher autonomy increases, its correlation to different teaching styles becomes weaker.
- c) As a teachers' sense of autonomy decreases, his/her tendency increases to use the formal authority style which does not need much expertise and qualifications.
- d) The high

tendency to use the facilitator style can be related to the fact that about 70 % of the participants of each group have got a teaching degree. In the same line another study also confirmed that male teachers naturally felt more sense of autonomy than females did; also, they are more extraverted, open, and conscientious than female teachers (Fadaee et al., 2021).

Many research studies were conducted linking teachers' autonomy, however, all are found to be quantitative. In order to draw attention to the necessity of fostering more individualized and unstructured processes in teacher autonomy, Dikilitas and Mumford (2018) carried out a study which investigate how reading teacher research is conducted by university language teachers to demonstrate how this impacts their process of autonomous development.

DLEK's study explored the relationship between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction (2022). This study set out to look into the connection between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction. To accomplish this, the study employed a relational survey paradigm. The study sample consisted of 368 instructors working in different Batman City (Turkey) schools in the spring semester of the 2020-2021 academic year.

The goal of the study by Kosar and Akbana (2018) was to look into the connection between such activities and the emergence of autonomous teachers. A questionnaire was sent to sixty English as a Foreign Language instructors from various Turkish governmental institutions in order to collect the required information.

However, I could feel a gap existing in the exploration of subjective experiences of women teachers' regarding how they gained the knowledge that they have a crucial role in their childhood social and cultural learning, how their earlier experiences shape

their present days as well as their everyday experience. And since my study concentrates on exploring the subjective experiences of the teachers in developing, updating and practicing their autonomy, I find the study having pertinence to fill the gap.

Chapter Essence

In this chapter, I reviewed numerous books, journal articles, dissertation articles, books, empirical studies, ideas, and issues pertaining to the autonomy of teachers. Then I scribbled a brief poem of reflection. Finally, I discussed the conclusions from the empirical studies I went through in order to conduct a thorough study of the factors influencing teachers' autonomy. Finally, I explained the research gap for my study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The philosophical foundation of my research, which underpins the whole investigation, is presented in this chapter. As a part of the study's paradigmatic analysis, the interpretative viewpoint is discussed. It continues by outlining the narrative inquiry for my study and presenting my personal ontological and epistemological presumptions. In this chapter, I also go into the methodology, research site, participants, information-gathering techniques, and procedure for creating meaning. The legitimacy of my study and the ethical standards I upheld throughout the whole research process are finally covered in this chapter.

Philosophical Underpinning of My Research

As I understand that philosophical assumptions act as a guide for the researcher's journey to adopt the appropriate research method for better results. One of the most important components of research is the philosophical premises. Indeed, as Pring (2000, as cited in Jackson, 2013) articulates, without the explicit formulation of the philosophical background and implications of my study for verification, explanation, and deriving knowledge of teacher autonomy, to identify the deeper meaning of the research and become committed to completing it. Moreover, I need to be well informed about the philosophical underpinning of my research to secure the quality of the study that I carry out.

Similarly, I have learned different aspects of our culture have a direct influence on our personal growth. Being a teacher and a mother, I have tried to overshadow the

false beliefs I generated from my childhood experiences. In the same way, my all four research participants also had some influences from our societal norms. I find their involvement and learning are different and subjective. The same difference has allowed me to understand that the experiences of teachers in developing, practicing and updating their autonomy are different and subjective. This is even agreed by Gergen (2009) who mentions individual are living as relational beings in their context, and thereby their experience is shaped by the context.

My Ontological Stance

The ontology of research design particularly deals with the question of what is knowledge, or the nature of reality. It is the science of being studied. Individual consciousness can create reality or it can be external to them (Saldana, 2014). And I strongly believe the notion of reality discards the existence of a single truth but believes that truth is something created or constructed differently by different individuals in different contexts. And free time discussion helped me to understand women teacher according to their social, cultural, and economic backgrounds; I am now able to understand that the reality of women teachers experiences is subjective, varying from one socio - cultural context to the next (Cohen & Morrison, 2012). The same subjective nature of reality guided me throughout my research journey as my ontology, and supported in deriving knowledge of my research participants about their process of development, practice and update on their autonomy which was subjective in nature.

The ontological question helped me to explore what kind of reality exists. For my study, I strongly believe in potential multiple realities and those realities are based

on multiple facts and beliefs. Reality is also relative in accordance with time, place, and individual. The reality was in the mind of all my participants and my participants had lots of information and knowledge that I was seeking for. According to Manion and Morrison (2002), knowledge is personal, subjective, and unique

My Epistemological Stance

The nature of knowledge and the interaction between the knower and the known are the main topics of epistemology (Social Epistemology A Journal of Knowledge, Culture, and Policy, 2003). Formal/informal interviews were used in conjunction with the narrative inquiry approach to assist provide descriptive responses to ‘what participants think about their own practice and update of their autonomy’. According to Leggo (2013), the epistemological question is the most important one for a researcher who is interested in what and how one knows. In order to practice and update classroom autonomy, I looked at the research participants’ subjective multiple realities, both intrinsic and extrinsic. I gathered the experiences of my research participants’ difficulties and limitations, which proved to be an invaluable source of information for my investigation. According to Taylor and Medina (2018), epistemology is the creation of knowledge, whether that knowledge is internal or external to the knower, with a standard that explains the entire process.

My own experience had already given me a sense that the reality of women about developing, practicing and updating autonomy is all about their individual experiences (Levers, 2013). And keeping the same sense in mind, I started the journey of exploring the women teachers' participation in their childhood socio- cultural learning and the impact of those socio- cultural learning in their classroom practices

and interpreting their experiences and stories from their world (Billsberry, 2009).

My Axiological Stance

Axiology encompasses the disciplines of ethics, pragmatics, and aesthetics, and is also known as value theory. There is nothing greater than false values, but societal values are not the same. This value serves as the yardstick by which epistemological and ontological statements are judged. The second definition of axiology is incorporates the researcher beliefs and values into generating new information in the research literature (Creswell, 2009). As a researcher in a culture where several realities exist, I appreciate and acknowledge the different realities relevant to my research.

In the case of women teachers, classroom autonomy schools with the conviction that the practice has its own culture and atmosphere. I more closely agree with Richards' statement from 2003 that "axiology is concerned with truth and worth" (p.36). During the research process, I was more conscious that my own experiences, values, objectives and subjective point of view should not play any role in the research process. Including interpretation and analysis of information. As, I am also a teacher I was more conscious not to be dominated by values and beliefs while collecting and interpreting the information.

My Research Paradigm: Interpretivism

I positioned my study within the interpretative paradigm keeping in mind that my goal was to elicit the stories of classroom autonomy from women teachers teaching at secondary level. I chose this paradigm because my research question included examining the ways in which teachers describe using classroom autonomy. I interviewed the participants to elicit their first-hand accounts of their experiences with

teachers' autonomy in the classroom. My research is based on narrative inquiry in which knowledge has been obtained by listening to the stories of my research participants and interpreting them. While interpreting the stories of my research participants, I have also reflected upon my own experiences. In fact, my own experience has taught me that women teachers have their own perspectives, views, background and practices (Yanow & Schwarts-Shea, 2011) regarding their process of developing, practicing and updating autonomy. And since the notion of making meaning through the world view of women teachers is incorporated by the interpretive paradigm, it was of primary significance for me in my research journey. So, I conducted research using an interpretative framework that supports narrative inquiry method to knowledge building.

Meaning is a social phenomenon, hence it is created by society (Wills, 2007). Due to our inherent variances, meaning is derived differently by each person. The researcher investigates how individuals perceive life in the real world (Tylor & Medina, 2011). I made an effort to investigate the subjectivity, diversity, and autonomy of women teachers in the classroom. As a result, I used a range of literature to develop many thoughts and facts from their expertise and experiences.

Similar to my experiences, my four research participants had constructed meanings and understanding about their socio cultural learning since childhood and their practice of autonomy in their varied socio-cultural context (Creswell, 2013). At the same time, since the paradigm of interpretivism offered me an opportunity to see their experiences with my own reflection, I could develop a confidence that the realities of women teachers can be interrelated with the context of my community as

well. Therefore, I employed interpretive paradigm to explore the experiences of women teachers regarding their participation in the socio- cultural learning during their childhood. Here, the perceptions and practices of the women teachers are subjective, while their discourses are interpreted in terms of subjective judgement, with the paradigmatic lens of interpretivism.

Research Design

I employed narrative inquiry in my study for data collection and dissemination. I only had four participants for the research journey. The participants' communications, regular encounters, and meetings were how I obtained the information. Themes were developed based on the information. Within the qualitative paradigm, there exist narrative, biographical, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographical, and case study methods for collecting and analyzing information (Creswell, 2009). Inquiry in this research begins with comforting rapport building with the participants to develop familiar bonding for expression.

According to Creswell and Plano (2007), research design encompasses the techniques used by a researcher in information collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting. It is even regarded as a blueprint for how research will be carried out because it addresses issues ranging from what method/s will be used to collect information and why the particular method/s will be chosen to how the information will be analyzed so that the answer to the research question/s can be explored (Grey, 2014)

I have endeavored to accomplish this in an effort to build knowledge based on Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional realms of narrative inquiry, namely, personal and social interaction, (past, present, and future), and context (place). Narrative

research, in my belief, tries to detect well-founded and supportable advice, resulting in outcomes that appear to be true or real (Millar, 2016). As my diversion is more toward subjective reality, I have applied a qualitative research approach as my research design.

Narrative Inquiry: My Methodological Approach

Listening to the stories has always been a passion. I used to choose stories as a way of sharing my experiences before embarking on my research journey, and I found it easier to perceive the attitude, beliefs, thoughts, and ideas of others by listening to their stories. At the time, I had a vague feeling that story telling could be a useful way to explore knowledge, and that feeling grew stronger when I learned about how narrative inquiry could be applied to my research journey. Narrative inquiry in my understanding is the approach of meaning-making from the information collected. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state that, narrative inquiry is the process of collecting stories told by individuals and those stories are from their lived experiences not from vicarious experience.

I believe that narrative inquiry helps us to understand how everyone see and interprets their world. It also further helps us to hear and know how individuals construct meaning from their or within their lived experiences. In the process of narrative inquiry, I tried to understand my research participants as a whole, so that I was able to explore the internal and external world of my participant (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Every person lives in their own world, which is full of experiences that are influenced by their place, time, and context.

By listening to the teachers' experiences, I was able to unpin my research participants' personal experiences (Chase, 2008) about their involvement in developing

and practicing their autonomy. While assembling their stories, I also reflected upon my own stories. Women teachers' lives in different socio cultural contexts consisted of different stories and I could get better insight into experiences of storytellers (Webster & Mertova, 2007). The beauty of narrative inquiry I discovered was that it allows us to reflect on our own story and a better understanding of participants' story.

By doing this, I was able to present the women teachers' experiences in all of their complexity and richness (Mumby, 1996 as cited in Bell, 2002). At the same time, the process, in my belief, was also helpful in authenticating knowledge and social experiences (Ehmke- Pohl, 2013) of the teachers by inculcating verisimilitude.

Research Site and the Selection of Participants

I choose four women teachers with five years of experience from Kageshwori Manahora in Gothatar, Kathmandu, purposively. I selected the participants purposively aligning with Gentles et al. (2015), who consider it as an appropriate strategy in qualitative research. Furthermore, it allowed me to select teachers who have knowledge about their involvement in their socio -cultural context (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

As this research is narrative research, the sample size for narrative research design is flexible, where there can be participation of one to twenty five (Adhikari, 2021). I chose Kageshwori Manahora Municipality because I was aware of the diversity of its population and the social and cultural milieu in which they live. Additionally, because it is close to me, I found it easier to interact with the participants and get information. I have given a brief overview of each of my four research participants.

Participant 1

Reeta Nepal (pseudo name) is a thirty two year-old woman. Her family belongs to the middle class, and she is the youngest kid. She had been responsible for her studies since she was a child. She was also accountable for her academic work. She had a good sense of discipline. She is a trustworthy educator as well. She struggled to complete her undergraduate studies. As soon as her SLC exam was finished, she began her career as a teacher. She is proud of herself for having completed her Bachelor's degree via job, earning, and study. She regrets, though, that her poor financial situation prevented her from pursuing a nursing degree. I had the opportunity to collaborate with a public school to finish my school project, "*Good and Bad Yes I Can Decide*." Since then, her methods of teaching and organizing have had an impact on me, and I have come to respect her sense of responsibility for her job. I believed I could establish a solid rapport with her and that she would feel at ease discussing her experience with me. Therefore, I decided to include her as a research participant.

Participant 2

The age of Manika Khadka (pseudo name) is forty five. She is a Dolakha native. Over the course of her education, she was the first out of fifty students. She has a good level of financial stability. Her father, a teacher, advocates for education for all of her siblings. She is dependent, diligent, and responsible in her line of work. She loved teaching since her husband and her family gave her their entire support. She teaches health, population, and environmental education at public secondary schools. She earned a dual Master's degree in education and population education. She is one of my school's guardians, and she routinely visits to discuss with the administration about

her child's academic progress. I eventually came to the realized that she may be the study participant I was looking for as a result of the way she spoke and shared her experience as a public school teacher.

Participant 3

A thirty six-year-old woman, Romi Shrestha (pseudo name) was born in Silong, a picturesque hamlet in the Indian state of Meghalaya. It was in India where she finished her secondary studies. Her family relocated to Nepal, and she eventually attended Diktel, Khotang, where she earned her Bachelor's degree. Finally, she decided to pursue a Master's in Major English while continuing to live in the charming tiny Newari hamlet of Kritipur. I met her before seven years in one of the trainings organized by Orient Black Swan for English teachers in our school. Since then, she is close to me and the way she expresses her idea and experiences during our visit has always been a wonderful time. As far as I know she is one of the laborious teachers. I have always found her busy in her teaching and learning process. Her dedication, sincerity and experience in teaching profession made me think to accept her as my research participant.

Participant 4

The age of Rina Dahal (pseudo name) is thirty two. She was born in Dolakha District, where she completed her school education. She moved to the Kathmandu Valley after completing her SLC. She attended Padma Kanya Campus for her +2 and Bachelor's degrees, and Tribhuvan University for her Masters degree in Sociology. Agriculture was the main source of income for her family. One sister and two brothers make up her 3 siblings.

She is married and the mother of a princess. She has been teaching secondary social studies in a private institution close to Jorpati for seven years. She is honest, diligent, and dedicated to her career as a teacher, which led me to consider choosing her as a research participant. According to Hardling (1991), who asserted that women's narratives and stories are a form of scientific knowledge, each participant was exceptional, insightful, and gave me a fresh perspective on the topic of my study. It helped me understand autonomy and its development from each participant's point of view. Even though we had a terrific relationship while the inquiry was still ongoing, once the study was complete, we remained distant as the researcher and research participant from the relationship that had been formed. Our standard "hello" is still present, nevertheless, as we are not disinterested in our work.

I tried to dig into the information. The individual inquiry varied from one participant to the other, some were more open to talk about their practice of autonomy and some linked with other aspects. However, all four participants were open and non-hesitant to discuss personal issues. I would like to note that the interpretation and analysis was limited to what information could be generated from several rounds of sitting and, my own analysis of what I observed during the inquiry process. Abiding by the principal of narrative inquiry, I went for the inquiry process without any prejudice and did not judge their actions as right or wrong, but rather attempted to understand why they felt that way, and where the feeling was coming from. I also would like to confirm that all the participants were the secondary level women teachers' busy teaching in schools, public and private.

Meeting My Research Participant's

In the style of a short story, I explained the scenario in which I met all four research participants. Choosing them as my research participants marks the beginning of information collection for my study.

It was the month of July, and I was searching for secondary level women teachers teaching in a community school in Kageshwori Manohara Municipality. During that time, I was working with one of the community schools for the school project "*Good and Bad Yes, I can decide*," and this project was about adolescence, sexual abuse, and the Nepali community's tendency to remain silent, and we were working with boys and girls students to say no when they felt any bad touch or situation. I had a conversation with the secondary in-charge, and he took me to the principal's office, where we had a discussion and decided to work together.

While at the principal office in Nirman Secondary School (pseudo name), a quiet and gentle lady was sitting on the sofa. She looked calm but the way she was eagerly waiting to know why she was called to principal's office, showed her irresistibility towards the time. Then, the Principal introduced me and also about her. She was a secondary level teacher. Then, she seemed to be ok after she knew the reason behind my visit to her school. As I am also the secondary HPE (Health Population and Environment Teacher), I was happy to have a lady teacher to coordinate with me on the project, and we completed it successfully in 3 months by using both virtual and physical modes.

The project brought me closer to Reeta Mam (a pseudoname), my first research participant, and while I was working on it, I told her about my dissertation topic and

asked if she would be one of my research participants. She shared, "I would love to," but meeting physically time and again during school time might create problems. Then I told her that as per her convenience, we could meet either physically or virtually. So, as per her comfortable time, we scheduled the interview. I shared my research agenda with her, and she replied that she would share her experience as she already had a decade long experience.

Then, she questioned me, "Madam, can I describe my narratives in Nepali?" I replied that she could do it. Then, Reeta Mam was happy and agreed to do so. Then, after some days, our online interview time was in the early morning, at 6:30 am, through google meet when her two babies were sleeping, and she shared that as her husband was there with the children, she had time.

Monika Khadka (pseudo name), my second research participant, seems to be a very confident teacher, as well as a loving mother. She seems to be a conscious mother for her son's study, based on her presentation at every meeting. I found her to be a smart lady. She possessed good communication skills and was free and frank to ask and share. She was comfortable and proud of her teaching. I found her very expressive, so she shared her stories in an easy manner, and I was listening and noting them down in an efficient way.

After the first phase of pandemic, on the 4th day of school reopened, Monika Khadka brought her son in scooter in school. I was near school gate talking with some guardian at around 7:40am, she came to me and share that she was not much confident to send her son to school at first day, so she brought on fourth day. I welcomed the boy and sent him to his class. She, too, returned to her home.

Similarly, she started to pick up and drop her son regularly. I saw her every day near the school gate, and one day she asked if I was studying MPhil in Development Education, as her son had told her. She asked me how I was managing my time, since whenever she comes to school, she sees me there. I explained the significance of having MPhil classes in the evening after school ends. Then I asked her if she was a secondary-level teacher in one of the government schools in Kageshwori Manahara, and she confirmed that she was a secondary-level teacher.

After talking to her for about five to ten minutes, I shared my dissertation topic and she shared its interesting topic and immediately, I asked her if she would be one of my research participants. She easily accepted and told that because we are both teachers, our working days would make it difficult to meet, so if you want to talk to me, please call me; we can meet any Saturday; she waved and exited the school. Then, after a week I finalized my checklist from my supervisor. I called on Friday and asked if we could meet the next day, i.e., Saturday at 1 pm. She accepted, and we met outside in one of the cafés nearby her home.

Similarly, Monika Khadka had an educated family, and as her father was also a teacher, her brothers were also educated. So, she was always encouraged to study. She was always supported in any manner by the family, and she shared that her level of confidence is developed and enhanced by the supportive family.

Romi (pseudo name) my third research participant has been one of my good friends for seven years and teaches at one of the private schools in the Jorpati area. As we met after the pandemic, we enjoyed our regular *gufsuf* (chitchat). And we had a conversation.

Romi: How is your MPhil education going?

Me: "It's OK but..."

Romi: Why but?, Is it very hard to complete?

Me: It's not very hard, but we need to have time and dedication. Allocating time for study has been troubling these days.

Romi: Oh! Then, is it going to be over soon? You have already taken your third semester examination, I guess?

Me: Yes, the exam is over, but still a long process is left. I have not started my dissertation yet.

Romi: Then, do it and get a degree.

Me: I am in need of four secondary level women teachers, as my research participants; I found one from my partner school " Nirman Secondary School", as a part of a public school and till two more left to find.

Romi: "Ok , then, What have you planned?

Me: Not sure who could be the best source of information for my research and who would be the next one.

Romi: That means the dissertation is bothering you, isn't it.

Me: Yes!

Romi: Don't worry, I have a solution for you. Take me as one of your research participants.

Me: Are you serious?

Romi: Yes, of course. A friend in need is a friend indeed!

Me: Ok let me share my research agenda, it is about the teachers autonomy. I will share the theme based on what I will be asking for information from you.

Romi: Ok then, I hope my information will be useful.

Then we had momos, sizzler, and juice, took some photos, had some chitchat, and enjoyed our meet.

During the first phase of the pandemic, I got a chance to take part in one of the teacher trainings, where I met Rina (pseudo name), my fourth research participant, through the virtual platform. It was the training on promoting learner autonomy in the classroom. We also had a very good discussion about teachers' autonomy during that training. There, we shared our numbers with each other during the separate room discussion. She was found to be knowledgeable on the topic of discussion but was hesitant to share, so we had turn-wise sharing on the topic so everyone's voice would be heard and everyone would get equal participation.

After some days one Saturday our school organized an online workshop on the use of online tools and techniques for teaching, where I also facilitated the session. The photographs of the workshop were shared on social media, and Rina saw the photographs and sent me a message to share the content of the workshop. I shared all the screenshots of the workshop with her and added some voice notes to her messenger. After some months, when I was planning for my research participant for my study, I sent her a message and asked if she could be one of my research participants and could manage free time for discussion. She agreed, and we planned to meet at one of the cafe on Saturday near Jorpati area

Information Collection Method

My research goal was to examine the experiences of women teachers in terms of developing, practicing, and updating their autonomy. The participant's interview was a major strategy for collecting narratives for my study. The interview was one to one with open ended as well as sometimes when I felt participants going out of the track, I used probing questions emphasizing the past experiences and life stories of women teachers. The narrative interview explains real life experiences of an individual (Muylaert et al., 2014). In depth interview was used to collect and interpret stories of women teachers teaching at secondary level.

In-depth Interview

In my study, the information was generated through in-depth interviews with the women teachers, in the form of storytelling, and informal conversation. While conducting the interview, after taking the consent from the participants, audio/video recording was taken, and at the same time, I took the notes too. The interviews were conducted in mutual agreement (Clandinin, 2013), and I had prolonged engagement with the participants during the series of interviews I conducted.

As I seek detailed information on the understanding and stories of women teachers'. An in-depth interview was my first priority for information collection and gathering related information. In-depth interviews were useful as I wanted to collect detailed information about an individual's thoughts and behaviors or wanted to explore any issues in-depth and also analyzed with facts and real experiences. Interviews are often used to provide context to other information (such as outcome information), providing a more complete picture of happenings and reasons (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

The method that is probably most frequently used in qualitative research is individual interviews. They come in a variety of forms, but one thing they all have in common is the capacity to give the person a undiluted focus. They offer a good opportunity for an in-depth investigation of respondents' viewpoints, justifications, and emotions in order to comprehend the personal context in which the research phenomena are situated and to provide an in-depth examination of the subject (Legard et al., 2003).

After the situations were under control during the pandemic (COVID-19), I considered returning to the research field. As a result, I was able to communicate with the participants virtually. I communicated with them via messenger, google meet, zoom, and phone calls. I recorded the collected information in various ways and on multi-media. I realized that the majority of narrative inquiries begin with storytelling (Clandinin & Huber, 2014).

So, when conversing with them, I encouraged them to begin with recollections from their childhood. They would occasionally veer off course. But I asked them probing questions to bring their stories back to my study aim. I even continued to reflect on my stories, which not only helped me have warm interaction with my participants (Palaganas et al., 2017), but also benefited my goal of knowledge co-construction (Duncan, 2017) through simultaneous involvement of myself and my research participants

Transcribing the Assembled Data and Translating Them

The information I gathered from my participants was to be safely stored so that it could be used later in the information generation process. As a result, I used multimedia to store the information I gathered from various participants, creating individual folders.

After I finished the series of interviews, I began transcribing the information I had gathered. I listened to their stories and wrote them down in Nepali. The transcribed information was later translated into English. While translating the transcribed information, I tried to avoid distorting the meaning and essence of their stories. After completing the translation task, I returned to my participants and read the transcribed information to them again so that they could make any necessary corrections, and in some places, I was corrected too.

Meaning Making and Interpretation

The stories I gathered from my research participants were not just for me. For a narrative inquirer such as myself, the stories help to build knowledge about the participants' ways of seeing and experiencing the world around them (Webster & Mertova, 2007). To achieve the research goal of constructing knowledge from participant narratives, I needed to identify similarities and differences in the experiences of my research participants, which I did through the coding and categorizing process.

During the coding process, I labeled the words, phrases, and paragraphs in the translated information that I found relevant to my research discourse. The information was divided and categories were assigned based on the similarities and differences between the labeled words/phrases (Dey, 1993). Following categorization, I thematized the replicating ideas from the categorized data (Ayres et al., 2003 as cited in Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

Using my research questions as a guide, I created different themes for chapter four and five, discussion questions were further generated for both chapters. The

research participants' narratives, which were organized into different themes, were further analyzed, with ample support from literature and theoretical backing. Aside from the relevant literature and theoretical support, the process of meaning making also included my personal experiences that were relevant to the themes I generated. The sense I made was validated by the analysis I conducted, which compared and contrasted the experiences of the research participants with the experiences indicated by previous studies and the conviction carried by theory relevant to my research.

In case of required further clarification or addition of information, the participants were contacted and got the information (face to face as well as virtual meeting). Interpretation of the information was focused on the research objective, its paradigm, and its foundation of theories. The units of the analysis were the four women teachers who participated in my research.

Quality Standards of My Study

The quality standards of the research vary upon the ways that the methodologies, techniques and processes employed for grasping the actual essence of participants' view from the beginning to the conclusion. It was important for me to make the research valuable and authentic. Guba and Lincoln (1989), who believe that quality standards like research and policy analysis are crucial for evaluating the quality of disciplined research, emphasize the significance of upholding quality standards in a study. I conducted my study, by adopting narrative inquiry as a research methodology. And since narrative inquiry deals with the experiences of the research participants assembled in the form of narratives (Clandinin, 2013), I feel my study has incorporated norms of a plot which is one of the major components of a story. While illustrating my

participants' stories, I tried making sure that the narrations make proper depiction of the ups and downs of their lives (Freytag as cited in Griffith, 2006). In qualitative research, the quality standards for interpretive paradigm vary. By reviewing Connelly and Clandinin, (2006) I was aware that narrative inquiry involves working together with participants over time in a place, as well as in social interaction with the milieu, to understand the narrative experience. Now, from this vantage point, I followed the various three-dimensional narrative inquiries into temporality, sociality, and place. These three dimensions are known as the common place of narrative inquiry and are presented in the brief discussion below.

Temporality

While generating meaning from narrative events in the form of stories and experiences of teachers, I tried to explore how their present story and experiences of developing, practicing and updating their classroom autonomy have been shaped by their past life and how they are preparing to move ahead in future. I connected past, present and future experiences of my participants (Clandinin & Huber, 2014). Doing this, as Maggetti et al. (2013) hint, has enriched the credibility of my research since some experiences which remain curtailed in my first attempt at unveiling could be explored in the attempts that follow. Standing upon different notes of time, I used narratives to connect between past, present and future life experience of my four participants centering the ethical notions.

Sociality

Since I am practitioner of a narrative inquiry and my study environment included both a physical environment and a virtual platform, I am aware of the social

contexts in which people's experiences and events are taking place. Along with this, I am also conscious of the connection between myself and the research participants. I believe narrative inquiries are concerned with personal and social interaction (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). In my personal view interaction refers to the feelings, hope, desires, moral obligation which has been employed during my research. Similarly, my sociality was influenced by the situation and environment in which I gathered the narratives. I did my best to collect their stories in an environment that the women felt comfortable in, and I developed a good rapport with them. As Connelly and Clandinin (2006) mention, the development of rapport allowed both of us to share our deep feelings, hope, emotions, and moral identity, which contributed to the quality of my study.

Place

I believe the place has an influencing power to connect with the memories and experiences of the participants in my study. Place describes the distinct, concrete, topographical boundaries of a place or series of places for socialites and temporalities of the participants' stories and experiences (Clandinin & Huber, 2010)

So as a narrative researcher I was equipped with the relevant knowledge about the impact of the virtual platform while collecting the lived experiences of the research participants. Hence, in my case, the place was the school compound, restaurant as well as virtual platform created by the pandemic situation.

Informed Consent and Confidentiality: My Ethical Standards

In my study, I tried my best to be sincere, honest, and ethical while collecting, expressing and reflecting on the stories of the women teachers. I assembled their stories, only by taking their consent. Acknowledging the notion of human dignity

(Luban, 2009), I did not ask any questions that undervalue their lives and worldviews. Rather, I was engaged with them, paying proper respect and value to their personal and professional dignity. I was even aware of the cultural sensitivity my research agenda incorporates. Hence, my focus was not to violate the sensitivity of the cultural norms and religious values which I employed during my research agenda.

Ethics comprises the basic assumptions on what is appropriate or inappropriate in particular context. I have experienced that our society is embedded in ethical norms and values which get manifested as principles for individual and interpersonal conduct, obligatory codes, individual values, attitude and belief system (Saldana, 2015). And since my stance as an academic researcher is relational to the society to which I belong, it is crucial for me to abide by the ethics of being a researcher.

I tried my best to create an atmosphere which offered my research participants with the sense of security so they can open themselves to share their experiences (Clandinin, 2013). Similarly, the focus on respecting cultural sensitivity was also taken into account relating to the norm of not harming the physical, social, cultural, religious, economic and emotional aspects of my research participants. While presenting and analysing information collected from them, I have incorporated confidentiality of the research participants (Saldana, 2015). Hence pseudonym was used in the process of meaning generation through the collected information. Besides, I have aligned with other ethical concerns as required by the research guidelines of Kathmandu University School of Education.

Chapter Essence

This chapter's main objective was to lay out the framework for my research

methodology. Ontology and epistemology were the two main issues in philosophical premises, which I presented along with the research paradigm and my axiological position. My inquiry was qualitative in nature. I have now explained the justification for using narrative inquiry as well as the methodology I used for my research. The entire procedure has been displayed, starting with participant selection and ending with information collection, analysis, and interpretation. I also discussed the quality standards that my study upheld and the ethical factors that I built into my research.

CHAPTER IV
UNCOVERING SOCIO-CULTURAL SCENARIO OF MY RESEARCH
PARTICIPANTS

In this chapter, I unfold the stories of my research participants. My research colloquy explored how the teachers were brought up or reared and how their socio-cultural context impacted their developing phase of autonomy. Hence, it was essential for me to know how the women teachers had developed their autonomy since their childhood. From their stories, I came to know that their childhood had various socio-cultural contexts based on the environment in which they were brought up. They have different levels of autonomy. I could even derive that their primary habitus is the guiding factor for developing their autonomy while working as teachers (Helwig, 2006).

My research was not only focused on exploring the socio-cultural context, but I also wanted to unpack how their childhood involvement is reflected in the developmental process of a teacher autonomy. Hence, in this chapter, I explored the stories of how the women teachers' childhood was guided by different socio-cultural contexts. While doing so, I line up with the feminist theory, so that I can make better sense of how the women teachers were guided by the socio-cultural norms and values to enrich the potential of the women teachers to evince their knowledge and skills regarding socio-cultural practices in the developmental process of women teachers' autonomy.

I uncovered the stories of my research participants, aligning with the socio-cultural context for the development of their autonomy to answer my first research question "How do secondary-level women teachers relate the influence of socio-cultural environment on the development and practice of autonomy?"

Primary Habitus: Process of Developing Autonomy

I began my research journey with the assumption that teacher autonomy is shaped by their primary habitus, i.e. all of their childhood experiences and inherited knowledge, and this assumption was developed by my own childhood experiences, where I always thought many times before I conducted any activities or classroom tasks in my previous teaching days. I do realize that my childhood environment and memories were always a point to be noticed and a hindrance at times during my college days as well as in my teaching journey.

The sense I developed about the contribution of primary habitus in creating a different environment during the teaching-learning and was further strengthened by the stories of my research participants, which are lined up with the motive of saying primary habitus as the basis for the development of an individual's autonomy (Aryal, 2021; & García, 2015).

I discovered how crucial socio-cultural beliefs are in the formation of autonomy in any child when I was in class ten. *"Please don't be quiet all the time; try to speak with teachers and discuss what's in your mind,"* my teachers used to advise, and I used to wonder, "How do I talk in front of so many people and teachers?" And I was often reminded of my grandmother's advice: speak less, listen more, and ladies should not reveal their thoughts to everyone.

I was born in a rural area of Nepal. A patriarchal society dominated my family's norms and values. As a member of a mixed family and a girl child, I was taught not to speak when others were conversing. I was instructed not to speak in front of others. My grandma used to remark that we girls are the soil, since we just create and give to others and do not say anything. As my mother was working in the fields from dawn until evening and growing cattle, our grandma raised our brothers and sisters, and she used to tell us amazing inspirational stories.

She used to tell us stories of women who were restricted within their household in order to make life lovelier for family members. She also recited stories from the Ramayana (Hindu epic where journey of Ram and Sita is explained). Sita looks to be patient and she obeys patriarchal norms and laws, thus she is viewed as a deity in the twenty-first century. Grandmother believed that a woman should always be patient, not discuss or express her sentiments with others, and should keep to herself. This type of tale and the accompanying impressions were the governing principles of my youth, and I also believed that I should not speak while others or males were speaking. In certain respects, I came to believe that women should always listen to and grasp patriarchal ideals, and then discreetly obey them.

It was a magnificent winter evening, while one of my cousin brothers was reading "Swastani," (Maghmahatmaya series of Skanda Purana) and it was the chapter about Goma, a 7-year-old, marrying Bhicchu, a 70-year-old. I listened silently, and we were all enjoying hearing the stories that had been told to us. Then, after finishing a certain chapter, we were given an orange slice as "*Prasad*." Later, before going to bed, we all sat near "*Makal*" to enjoy the warmth of the coal in our grandparents' room and I

asked my grandma why that little girl Goma married a 70-year- old guy. Grandmother grinned and said she was cursed since she did not do what the old man asked. Granny informed us once again that the seventy-year-old man was Lord Shiva, and she said that every woman's life is directed by her fate, and we cannot struggle against it. So, being a woman is like going through ups and downs in life, and we should consider good of others without showing our suffering. I saw how patriarchal mind-sets changed from generation to generation. This experience triggered my realization that our childhood stories play a great role in developing our autonomy.

Similarly, on a wonderful Saturday, our grandmother was sharing with us about the role and responsibility of women. I thought I would also be like my grandmother. She was my role model. She married at the age of 6, and since her childhood she has been a dedicated daughter-in-law; in her early twenties, she was already a responsible mother of four; and in her 40s, she was already a respected grandmother and one of the reputed *amas* in Gorkha bazaar. Here, I reflect that the influence of any character also supports the development of autonomy in any individual (García, 2015). I also developed the habit of listening and learned not to raise my voice. This has impacted my school and college life. I could not freely share what I knew and was always hesitant to share anything. Instead of sharing all of my grandmother's struggles and sacrificing experiences, she might have discussed some heroic women, or speaking for one's own dignity, or some skills that every single lady should have in this competitive world. I would have established the practice of sharing as well. This would have increased my self-assurance. My experience differed from my research participants; they were just influenced by socio-cultural ideals.

Socio-Cultural Context of My Research Participants

Reeta my first research participant, was reared and cared for by her sister in law. As she was the youngest among all, she was cared more by her sister-in-law. She was taught the roles and responsibilities of women. Her sister in law focused on her study as well as her behaviors towards the family and the responsibility of women towards her family. She shared that her sister in law focused on her study along with the role of daughter in law to support her little sister future days. So still Reeta focuses on her family over her study and career.

"As I was a topper in my school and college days, now I feel pinched about why I am not able to continue my study. But I have a commitment to continue. My recent focus is my children, now I should take care and support their good health and when they will grow I will definitely study. As I have a nuclear family, managing caretaker for babies is impossible, it may still take time for the continuation of my studies as I do not want to disturb my husband's office work because of my study. I still remember, my sister-in-law used to say we women should know how to care for family as we are the one responsible for making beautiful family. So, care for children and husband should be always our priority. Sometimes I think that may be because of what I have learned since my childhood, I am also a caring teacher.

While I was listening to Reeta's story, I remembered my own childhood. I remembered how my grandmothers used to have discussions about the role of women. During Swastani, the month of Magh, she used to tell many stories about sacrificing women who worked and lived for the family, and because of them, the family is happy which I also inherited from my childhood: the maternal instinct toward family. So, as I

am also the mother of a daughter, I focus on teaching the positive aspects of our cultural norms and values. I encourage her to be a confident, sincere, sensible, and emotionally strong person to have a beautiful future.

In this personal story, Reeta talked about herself in terms of not being able to continue her study. She is found to be bound by her multiple roles as mother, teacher, and wife. She shares that her priority is her children, which remained in my grandmother's stories of women working day and night to make their families happy. She further shares that she does not want to disturb her husband's office work because of her studies. Reeta is found to follow all the roles and responsibilities of a patriarchal society, and she rarely prioritizes herself or her happiness. She is found to be bound from patriarchal discipline. Similarly, she also shares that her caring nature was inherited by her childhood experiences, which have helped her in her professional development (García, 2015).

Similarly, Monika, my second research participant, spent her childhood in Dolakha District with her parents. She has no bitter experiences from her family, as all were educated, and since she was the youngest of all, everyone supported in her studies. *As my father was a teacher and my other senior siblings were also educated, my family focused on my education. Everyone used to say, "Study well, you should be a government officer," but I had a dream of being a nurse. I never thought I'd be a government officer. As we were residing in the village, people used to say, "Kasto chada chora chori," "Kehi ritiriwaj sikayeko chaina" (so wild children, they are not taught any rituals and culture). However, our father told us to focus on the study; rituals and traditions would be learned when needed.*

Likewise, Romi, my third research participant, grew up in a matriarchal society where women led the family, and she never saw women as inferior. Her family belongs to the patriarchy, but she and her siblings never got the patriarchal flavor during their childhood. Her mother could not get education because her parents did not feel the importance of it. So her mother used to focus on their education and skill development. She used to encourage her children to be independent. Romi narrates that, *I grew up in the Indian village of Meghalaya, where my four siblings and I attended a convent school. We learned the matriarchal discipline, but it never taught us the discriminative practices. We were taught to be confident and independent and were encouraged to be good human beings, our parents used to say "Our children are our treasure, so your happiness is our dream. So work confidently, responsibly, and sincerely to achieve your dream; you all are capable enough".*

Romi narrated that women teachers' are equal, and based on the knowledge and capacity we possess, the autonomy of teachers may differ. "The question of autonomy has frequently been linked with the individualism and collectivism factor in cultural difference," writes Holliday (2007, as cited in Neupane 2010). Their identity is formed by the organizations to which they belong. Thus, autonomy, according to Holliday, operates in individualistic cultures rather than collectivist cultures.

Romi represents the voice of all my participants, who perceive that their confidence and perfection in the completion of class activities are reflected in the way they were brought up and the way they were taught to be. As Garcia (2015) articulates, in the later life of any individual, their activities, their thoughts, and their perceptions are guided by the way they were brought up, the lessons they were told, and the

childhood tales that are inserted in their minds, bringing the inherited result in the later phase of life. The youngsters pay close attention as they watch the adults at work, exercising their independence as long as the adults demonstrate an ethical attitude, while they always maintain politeness in the presence of their elders.

Romi's narration hinted that the whole environment as childhood, words, treatment, and encouragement have their influence on the development of the person. This is even agreed upon by Helwig (2006), who says that children will claim areas associated with the practice of capacities as they acquire skills and abilities relevant to psychological requirements for competence and self-expression, depending on the opportunities provided by various cultural situations, and this encouragement works as positive reinforcement for personal and professional growth, which can be reflected even in Monika's Story.

Similarly, Rina my fourth research participant had her childhood in one of the remote villages in Dolakha district, and she belongs to a low-economic family status where her siblings used to support their parents in the field. She was supported and encouraged by her parents. They used to motivate their children for better study habits because they were illiterate and could not have a better economic status.

She narrates *Father used to say I wanted my daughters to be educated, but you shouldn't forget the cultural values of our society. So, my sisters and I were taught all of the household chores as well as how to respect our in-laws. So, in the future, our father won't have to listen to his daughter's complains that she doesn't understand the cultural and traditional significance.*

Rina's reflection epitomized the words of Reeta too, and in common narration,

they recalled their family's emphasis on girls to follow the rules and regulations and have more respect for their in-laws. She further shares that, learning some rules and regulations since childhood has helped me to accept that there are certain rules to be followed. She explains that she learned some qualities of a teacher as a child by watching her mother's care and love, as well as how she handled many ups and downs in her home. She goes on to say that our patriarchal norms have their own value, which has kept our society disciplined. However, she lacks necessary self-esteem; this could also have been easily boosted in her childhood days.

Romi, on the other hand, had a different experience; her siblings were all treated equally, and the emphasis was on development and encouraging all the children to do better in school so they could have a better life. Monika's parents, like Romi's, prioritized education over work. They wanted her to be confident and self-reliant.

Developmental Phase of Autonomy: Motivational Stories from their Childhood

I drew these teachers' distinct stories of being motivated and encouraged by their teacher from my interactions with my research participants. Those narratives suggest that teachers' motivation is essential for boosting learners' autonomy (Panta, 2019). And the story of each participant is summarized below.

Reeta, my first participant, completed her schooling at one of the public schools in the Kathmandu Valley. Until class 4, she was an average student. Once, she failed mathematics and science in the second terminal examination of grade five. Her brother and sister-in-law were worried about her study. They scolded her very badly. Her teachers were also not happy about her performance. She was sad and demotivated toward her studies. She always remembers and respects her science teacher and the way

he encouraged her towards study on the first day after the result. She never forgot that encouragement. That was the turning point in her academic life. She shares,

He came and asked us how many students failed science subject. We were around twelve (two girls and ten boys) in the class. He said nothing in class and took the course forward. During the break, he summoned two of us to the chautra in the school compound, where he was seated alongside other teachers. He asked, "Is science a very hard subject? We had no answer to "Do you understand what I teach?" and we were quiet. Then, he told us, "From tomorrow, I am your friend. During break time, come and ask me confusing topic of any subject. I will support you both. Then we two came to the class and planned to discuss an unknown or less confident topic with Sir.

We continued a similar routine of asking Sir for a month, and as other teachers were also together, every time we went to ask, we got support in other subjects too. This helped us to know the subject matter clearly, and after one month, we started studying in class, and only in case it was very hard, we used to ask. Otherwise, we tried turn by turn to solve those questions. Then, her final examination went well, and both secured positions. It was encouragement and support from her teacher for better study that motivated them towards improving academically.

She described how her teacher's time and passion aided her academic success. This demonstrates that if a teacher is eager to elevate their students, they can always be an example, and thousands of students may be driven to progress academically. It also helps students comprehend what they are capable of. Monika my second research participant also have a similar story to share. She completed her school education at Ishwor Ma.Vi (Pseudo name) Malu in Dolakha. She had very good teachers in the

early days before her first terminal examination. However, due to school politics, many teachers were transferred.

Among them, Principal Sir, who was an English teacher, also got transferred. They could not get an English teacher as the new principal came from the Nepali background. Her words are: *When, we had our first terminal examination, and everyone failed English. We had our optional math teacher with good knowledge of English; then, after the first term, he used to help us in English after school and with the help of our optional math teacher, and we passed our S.L.C. examination. He motivated us to study at home and come with confusion, so that he could support us, and we did the same, which promoted our self-study habit as well.* This story emphasized that teachers do not need to be perfect in order to inspire students, but they must have the enthusiasm to push students to study. If teachers can play the role of flawless facilitators, then competence is irrelevant (Devjak et al., 2020).

Similarly, Romi shares her childhood memories, *as I studied at a convent school in Shilong, we had very good English teacher. He used to teach us in an adventurous way. His expression, hand movement, etc. made me feel that I was watching some drama in a theater. So, I was motivated to study English literature. But, I always had problems with tense, mostly confused in all. So, I asked my English teacher how I could understand tense in a better way. He taught me the tree diagrams and how to create a pictorial plot to understand the tense, which eased me into my English study.*

Romi's English teachers' way of teaching motivated her towards English literature, and now she is an established English teacher and still uses the same

technique in teaching tenses in her classes. The pleasant behavior of the teacher is the foundation for increasing learner autonomy. When students feel at ease asking questions and sharing their experiences, learning is excellent (Núñez et al., 2014). This immediately leads to improved academic performance among students. Teaching is never simple, but the environment generated by teachers in the classroom drives the learning environment in the right direction. Teachers can serve as role models for students. They can maintain close contact with the students. The educational environment can be welcoming and accepting the uniqueness. As, students cannot study in a controlled environment, teachers purpose should be to inspire students to explore new ideas. Furthermore, teachers' undue involvement inhibits their creativity (Panta, 2019).

Similarly, Rina completed her schooling at Dolakha. During her schooling, she always found mathematics a very difficult subject; learning mathematics was like going swimming without knowing how to swim. So, she struggled to learn mathematics. Their mathematics teacher was very strict, and she could not develop the courage to ask questions to her teacher, so she had lots of confusion. Because of her low math score, she failed the first and second terms of grade nine. She further shares,

After our second terminal examination, our mathematics teacher got transferred, and luckily our new mathematics teacher was very friendly and used to teach us in an effective way. If we didn't understand a problem, he would clarify it twice, thrice, and sometimes he would solve it in our copy. This made it easier to do all my mathematical problems. While teaching, he was fond of using different teaching materials like sticks on a bench or board so that it would be clear to us. The way he

used to say "Lati Yeti Pani Aaiyena" (Could you do this much as well?) and solve for us in our exercise book which was the best part of my mathematics class. His soft and motivating words and confirmation that he was always there in case of confusion encouraged me and my friends to pursue the study.

Similarly, I take great joy in Reeta, Monika, Romi, and Rina's stories. The pleasant and engaging teachers inspired all of them. They discovered an easy atmosphere with their teachers to ask and discuss questions. This pushed them to clear up any confusion and helped them to do better academically. In order to encourage learner autonomy, the learning environment at school has to be welcoming and autonomy-supportive, and teachers have a responsibility to provide students with greater learning chances (Kong, 2020). The exercise and development of learner autonomy may be considered as an educational objective that is cross-culturally relevant, even when using it as a guiding notion, which necessitates various pedagogical approaches and encounters various types of constraints (Smith, 2007).

Reflective Discussion

Thus, based on my first research question and research analysis, I have discussed two different questions as, does socio-cultural environment influence the development of autonomy? and, does multiple role act as a hindrance to update of women teachers autonomy?

Does Socio-cultural Environment Influence the Development of Autonomy?

Socio-cultural environment are seen to be influencing women teachers, either in developing, practicing, or updating autonomy. After analyzing and interpreting the information collected from my four research participants, I came to this point of

understanding how children are reared at home and treated in school has a direct impact on their developmental phase, and they understand their impact when they are young. The youngsters pay close attention as they watch the adults at work, exercising their independence as long as the adults demonstrate an ethical attitude, while they always maintain politeness in the presence of their elders (Garca, 2015).

Adopting narrative inquiry as the knowledge source, I have attempted to generate the key messages out of the narratives that were told to me by the participants. Without generalizing and also acknowledging the uniqueness of each story that was being told, I also see some similarities in the feelings expressed by the participants. One of the common ones was depression or regression, which explains why they were not taught to be confident and forward in speaking or initiating anything for themselves.

One of my research participants told me that our overwhelming maternal nature as women demotivated us from pursuing personal growth. Seniors childhood lessons should always be intended to teach children to think beyond. Not only Reeta but Rina also expressed similar sentiments about our society's socio-cultural practices in which women were denied opportunities for advancement because they were raised with patriarchal dominating values. Teachers' social nature and socio-cultural behaviors as practices are important factors that shape and foster their autonomy (Aryal, 2021).

Rina (pseudo name) shares that, and she was also part of patriarchal society; her parents told her to study as well and taught her the patriarchal norms and values too. They used to tell her to listen more. However, in her twenties, she developed her voice to speak in any circumstance, and she couldnot see injustice to anyone, so she spoke immediately when she felt something was wrong. And I analyze all my

participants' regression as the result of awareness, education, as well as the constraints they faced in their teaching and learning practices, which made them realize the need for a growth-oriented environment since childhood to have a better professional life. The individualism and collectivism components of cultural difference have frequently been linked with the issue of autonomy, writes Holliday (2007), as cited in Neupane (2010). Their identity is formed by the organizations to which they belong. Thus, autonomy, according to Holliday (2007), operates in individualistic cultures rather than collectivist cultures.

Two of my research participants, Monika and Romi, shared a varied view. They are confident teachers, have decision-making capacity, can tackle any kind of classroom situation, and can motivate their students to be confident. This was their childhood learning that helped them become strong teachers. Three domains of autonomy are communication, learning, and (by process of transfer) their personal lives. (Littlewood, 1996). In the same vein, one of my research participants shared that we live in a diverse socio-cultural background, and this diversity hampers the practice of autonomy, just as we have diverse classrooms. Nepal is multiethnic and multilingual, so having a unique cultural context for each individual present in the class will sometimes hamper the practice of different methodologies, and the same methodology or technique will never be applicable in such a context. So, teachers should be very tricky to deal with and teach in those classrooms. Children will claim areas associated with the practice of these capacities as they acquire skills and abilities relevant to psychological requirements for competence and self-expression, depending on the opportunities provided by various cultural situations (Helwig, 2006).

On the other hand, my research did not focus on male teachers' upbringing in any social or cultural scenario and their perspective on developing autonomy. I can only assume that upbringing in Nepali households reinforces the role of a man as a confident, fearless decision maker, whereas women are taught to be child bearers, tolerant, and confined within themselves to protect family honor and reputation. And all my research participants believed that the family, being the primary agent of socialization plays a very significant role in children's acquisition of values, attitudes and behavior suitable to society (Figueiredo & Dias, 2012).

Aligning with Vygotsky's notion, Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) stated that parental involvement in students' education starts at home, where parents set a safe and healthy environment, provide appropriate learning experiences, support, and have a positive outlook on their children's education. So, children have long term impact on what they have learned in their childhood. Children's development is directly impacted by how they are raised at home and how they are treated in school. Children observe adults closely at work and exercise their independence as long as the adults act ethically. When they are around their elders, they are always respectfully quiet. Individualism and collectivism components of cultural differences have frequently been linked to the autonomy debate. So, having positive, supportive upbringing result in a confident, capable and communicative individual whereas negative and suppressive upbringing has the opposite result.

Teaching, in Vygotsky's view, serves to mediate the cognitive development of the individual by focusing on the functions and capacities the individual is capable of, and because it is dependent on social skills that are naturally acquired long before

anyone becomes a teacher, teaching seems to be a reflection of character. Teaching is an intrapersonal developmental process that involves avoiding or surmounting obstacles. It is also an intellectually challenging process to develop practical teaching knowledge. Therefore, encouraging teacher autonomy is crucial to the development of a learner-centered environment, and it can be done by encouraging an understanding of the learning process from a young age.

Does multiple role act as hindrance to update the autonomy of women teachers?

When I think back on the previous year, I giggle and wonder, "*Did I do something wrong?*" I am a mother of an eight-year-old girl, a wife, a daughter-in-law, a sister-in-law, a teacher, and an MPhil Scholar who is struggling to complete her dissertation. My multiple roles were often a barrier for me. After finishing the third semester's online classes and having recently defended my proposal, I was puzzled as to how I would finish my dissertation if there was no class. So much work would constrain me. In particular, my father-in-law supported me during my studies by taking care of my baby. And I knew that if I told him my college classes were over, he would not support me, so I talked to my husband about it and decided to tell him my classes were still going on. My school starts from 7:30 am until 5:00 pm. Managing time for study from home was very hard, so I told my father-in-law I would be home at 8 p.m. and have dinner at school for the last three months of college. I began studying in the school library after telling my father-in-law and daughter that I was in college every day.

I contacted some seniors and went to the college library after school with my husband to continue my work. I read seniors dissertation and worked for three months.

During that time, I completed several interviews and transcribed the interviews, and I was approved to work on the dissertation draft. So I figured out that seventy percent of the job was done. And I informed my in-laws that my college classes were completed. But, once I quit working in the evenings, I had almost no time to work on my dissertation since I was too busy in the kitchen and with my daughter. Months and a year passed before I took a week off from school. My daughter used to go to school during the day. I had no disturbances, so I completed chapter four.

Similar to my own story, I have plotted some summarized stories of all my participants. Reeta shares that, in recent times, she still has some difficulty, but in the name of having difficulty, she has not stopped working. She tries to balance both her family and school. And in this pandemic, she needed to take classes and also look after two kids' classes along with household chores, which made it difficult for her to plan lessons. Sometimes she used to have classes at the same time as her children, so she could not take classes, and she would share some notes for students to write. She knows that she should not cheat while teaching students, so how much she could manage while trying to have effective classes is unclear.

She further says that she has family support in her teaching career, but as her children are not old enough, she may not be able to continue her studies. Because she has a nuclear family, she is still unable to handle the baby's time. She may take some time to continue her studies since she does not want to disrupt her husband's office work because of studies.

From Reetas's narratives, I can deduce that she is a responsible teacher, but as she is also a mother, her motherhood takes its toll on her teaching practices and on her

studies. I do find her to be a loving and caring wife, as she does not want to bother her husband because of her studies. But her willingness to have effective classes for students and to continue her studies seems to be shadowed by her multiple roles.

Monika had different circumstances, which she explains as: when she was studying for her Masters, she was already a mother of two children. She could not attend regular classes at college but used to meet friends once a week and prepare notes. But during her second year exams, she could not pass two exams as her son had a high fever on the second and last exam days. She had no one to look after her son, and the whole night she could not study because of his illness. She missed her exam and waited one whole year to complete it. She feels pursuing higher education for working mothers is a very difficult task, as they need to manage work, home, and education.

Monika's story is different from that of Reeta's, but the essence of their stories is the same. Both of them lagged behind because they were mothers, and their love for their children was more important than their exams and continued education. Romi, too, has a similar story to share: After finishing her Bachelor's degree, she considered enrolling in a Master's degree program, but she got married and went to work as a primary teacher at a private school in Diktel. Next year, she had a baby, and after the baby started to go to school, she re-joined school. She could not attend to her Master's degree as her baby was small, and needed to go to TU (Tribhuvan University) in Kritipur. She could not leave the baby at home for her higher education. Then, after seven years, she joined a Master's program in English at TU.

According to Papanek (1994), in order to maintain their sense of individual

identity in the face of change, women probably need to work harder than men. Because they are believed to exemplify and transfer culture and tradition in a unique way as well as to show modernization through obvious changes in their public behavior, women are key players in identity politics.

In my interpretation, Romi could not continue her higher education, as she was no longer only a daughter, she was already a wife and daughter-in-law in one of the patriarchal households. So, her role as being wife and daughter-in-law was prioritized over her dream of studying further. Rina shared a similar story as Reeta, and, because of her family priority, she is still not able to continue her education. When we have a family, our priorities change and our dreams are buried deep inside. We become more conscious of our social roles than of individual happiness. So, while conversing with all my research participants, I realized that somehow their multiple roles became one of the hindrances to updating their autonomy, which can be linked with Fumin and Li (2012), who state that women teachers take on more challenging and multiple roles in the new teaching model.

Hence based on the discussion all four research participants are found to be bound with multiple roles where each role is guided by certain patriarchal norms. Being culturally bounded women teacher they are found to be lagged behind to fulfill their dreams as well as having personal time to update their autonomy. I found feminist theory relatable to the above discussion theme “Do multiple roles act as a hindrance to update the autonomy of women teachers?” According to Yearout et al. (2017), the community's pervasive gender gap has been one of the biggest problems for women. Given the material above, it is clear that feminism strives to bring attention to issues of

dominance, discrimination, injustice, and many social practices. Having this view here feminist theory come into play.

In the present scenario, women started to be empowered and educated so most of them are found to be job holders. But the notion of gender equality is confusion, only women are found to be empowered but still gender stereotypes and dominant social practices are prevalent. So there is a need to improve the thinking practices of both men and women. Women work in the office as men but for the household chores again women become responsible. Both come from work, where women start preparing snacks or dinner, whereas men start either their TV show or rest. Similarly, in case of childcare women are only responsible. There are various conceptions about the feminism where Campell and Wasco (2000) says that due to social biasness, women are seen as backward but women's experiences have not been studied at this time. So, having multiple role women lack personal time to update and to prepare for their new lesson which is one of the prevailing hindrances in practice and update women teachers autonomy. I feel Rina (pseudo name) wants to say that working to improve a students ability to comprehend and write correctly fosters confidence, which is the initial step toward a students abilities.

Teachers are not required to do anything extra in class; instead, they should make an honest effort to ensure that all students understand what they have learned, that they are able to ask questions if they are confused, that individuals understand their capacity, and that they are able to work in a team to complete a task if one is assigned to them. Yes, but in order to develop autonomous learners, teachers must be creative in their approaches and encourage student participation. For the learners, teachers can set

an example. They have to stay in touch with the learners closely. The setting at school must be cozy and encouraging of individuality. In a regulated atmosphere, students cannot learn. Linking to Panta (2019), the goal of teachers should be to encourage students to investigate new concepts.

Additionally, teachers' overbearing meddling limits their originality. Teachers who support choice and reduce pressure to complete tasks will give students engaging experiences that are brimming with excitement and positive energy. (Nez et al., 2014). Students will be more prone to making mistakes in a structured environment marked by deadlines, outside rewards, or potential penalties.

Chapter Essence

This chapter incorporated the narratives of all my four research participants where their childhood stories are noted. Their stories of supporting students' autonomy, with knowledge, motivation, and encouragement towards their students were different and was guided by their childhood experiences of being motivated. Based on the different narratives reflective discussion is presented in this chapter, where literature and theory are linked to discuss both questions along with the narratives and my reflection and interpretation.

CHAPTER V

UNFOLDING THE PACKS OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

In Chapter IV, I uncovered the stories of my research participants, aligning them to my first research question. My research discourse explored how teachers practice their autonomy and what challenges they face during their professionalism. Hence, it is essential for me to know how the developmental phase of autonomy have influences the practice of autonomy. From their stories I came to know that teachers' job is always bound by certain ups and downs and resilience towards those hindrance's finally lead professional satisfaction among the teachers. My research not only focused on uncovering the teachers' practices of autonomy. I also unveiled how the teachers deal with the challenges found in the educational process. Hence, in this chapter, I explore the stories of professional growth of all my four participants guided by socio-cultural childhood learning that has been implemented in the classroom. The narratives and reflective discussion are based on answering my second research question " How do they explicate their stories of professional growth and promoting autonomy in the classroom practices?"

Teachers' Understanding on Teacher Autonomy and its Key Factors.

I believe that each teacher should be permitted to organize alternative activities depending on their lesson, as well as use school resources freely, and these things should be visible in teachers' classrooms. I consider that teachers should be responsible for their teaching and should never compromise students learning. I think schools should also be

responsible, which means that teachers should be provided with training on a regular basis, and teachers should also be enthusiastic about the teaching and learning process.

To start with Reeta my first research participant, it was our third meeting, but it was our first physical meeting because of the pandemic. We conducted our first two meetings online. We both agreed to meet at a cafe near Greenhill City Housing. Both of us were on time as per our plan. We smiled and chose a comfortable table on the garden side to maintain privacy. I ordered black coffee for me and milk coffee for her. As it was a winter day, we thought we'd enjoy hot coffee. I started with a very informal talk if everyone are fine at her home, we had some *gufsuf* (chit chat) about our completed project" *Good and Bad Yes I can decide*" and its implication in all grade involved, she shared she is happy after the completion of the project as many of the students got chance to be aware of good touch and bad touch as well the issues of adolescence and the ways to tackle them. Then, with a sip of coffee, I started asking about teacher autonomy, and she shared the checklist I shared, which was quite easy to understand as it was the summary of what we were talking about that day. She shared that, *teacher autonomy is a process of developing a teachers' caliber that can be very negligible to big, like communication skills to subject matter, classroom control to self-control every single aspect of teaching learning process falls under teacher autonomy.*

Then, I suggested to summarize what teacher autonomy means to her. She shared co-ordination, collaboration, and freedom to use her knowledge and skill in class can be said as teacher autonomy. Further, I asked her, how we could develop a teacher autonomy. Reeta explained, Mam, in this case, *I regard the teacher themselves are responsible towards the development of their autonomy. Teachers*

should evaluate own self how teaching learning is going on. I am on the right track or not. Then, if they find some missing things, that can be supported through institutional trainings and workshops, or sometimes it can also be developed through sharing among colleagues.

Again, I asked her to share: how does she analyze herself as a teacher? She said, *I don't say I am a perfect teacher, but there are so many things I have been learning, and I am trying to update myself through my study, use of motivational videos, and surfing the internet for better techniques to use in my classroom.*

In response to her narratives, I smiled and nodded, and again connected the question of how she practices self-study or self-preparation. For her class, she shared that she goes through the teachers' guide in her free periods, plans classroom activities regularly, and refers to books of different publications in case of need. With another sip of hot coffee, I inquired about her thoughts on whether trainings promote teachers' autonomy. She explained that *Yes, there is a need for different trainings as, in our teaching journey, we came through ups and downs so, there is a need for a place to share. Training and workshops are the best place to share, where we get so many ideas from many participants to deal with and gain new techniques and information to deal with the daily teaching and learning process and training motivates teachers too.*

We could listen to the peaceful background music in between our conversations. Enjoying the music I added again, is there any role of family in developing teacher autonomy? She shared with a silent smile *family is the one place where we share our every ups and downs, and they are the ones to cry in pain and*

smile in gain, so a stress-free family environment brings stress-free teaching and learning, allowing a teacher to have better professional development opportunities.

I asked her to share about her school environment. She reported that she has good colleagues, but the major problem in her teaching is the recent school construction work, which may last for two more years. Now there is a lack of classrooms. So, a huge numbers of students are combined in one class, which has created problems in teaching and learning as well as having control over students in a class is a tough job that sometimes demotivates the teachers to go and teach. The lack of classrooms made storing the teaching materials produced by the classes' difficult. So, there is a problem. She needs to prepare materials time and again.

Finally, as the last question for this meet, I asked her, "How does she define an autonomous teacher? She replied that *to be an autonomous teacher, they should have clear knowledge of content and context, be able to make the student understand what was taught and have good classroom management so students have a better chance of participating. There is a need for sharing between school administration and teachers, and they should also utilize their leisure time to study and plan the lesson before they teach it to the students.* Meanwhile, our snacks were brought to our table. We enjoyed our snacks and departed.

With Monika my second research participant, it was my second meet at a restaurant; we mutually agreed to meet on Friday after school. She reached first and was waiting for me. I apologized for being late. We chose a corner where we could talk privately. She was a very open and frank lady. In the midst of the crowd and noise in the restaurant, we managed to laugh and talk. Our earlier meeting was very

formal and couldnot open up the discussion.

We ordered two hot lemons and one mushroom pizza; she enjoyed vegetarian snacks as to give company to me. We started talking about the Friday school activity and talked about the importance of extracurricular and co-curricular activities for the personality development of the students. Then, along with the first taste of cheesy pizza, we started our conversation on teacher autonomy. She told me that she would ask me to clarify if she doesnot get any point from the discussion. As I had already shared my checklist with her, she was ready for the topics of our conversation, so I asked her to share her knowledge on teacher autonomy.

She shared that: *In my view it is the process of application of our knowledge to our classroom that enhances student learning and finally teachers' satisfaction with teaching learning process.* As she talked about satisfaction, I asked her to clarify what satisfaction meant to her. She thinks satisfaction can be measured in terms of different aspects like one's own teaching techniques, students learning achievement, and the school environment. I further asked, her to share "Explain what factors come under school environment." She shared *For example, if we have good and cooperative colleagues and school administration, the school provides all teachers with teaching materials and holds frequent staff meetings to solve or address any problems; all of this is part of the school environment.*

Further, I asked her how she analyzes her teaching. She said, *I believe I am dedicated to my work and accountable for my teaching and learning process. I seek help from colleagues in need. I am at least learning new technological advancements, and I can lead my content without any disturbance in class and try to*

involve all the students in classroom activities. It may lead to being an autonomous teacher.

When I asked her how she utilizes her leisure time, She shared that she has two period of leisure, and that time she usually utilizes it for going through the newspaper and any interesting library books and if she hasn't plan any lesson, she works on it. As she talked about lesson planning, I further asked how often she prepared her lessons. And if there was any instance of lesson planning that made her life easier, and she explained as: *Since we are not required to submit lesson plans, I plan my lessons to be easy to teach if the content is diverse and new. After one year of teaching in Kapan, I got transferred to Gothatar, Adharbhut Bidhyalaya (pseudo name), and there I got the new subject "Computer," although I had never learned or taught computer. So, for teaching computer I prepared every day lesson plan by referring to different books, teacher's guide as well some-times I use to refer to English publication books too.*

Again, I asked her how she relates teacher training to teacher autonomy. She reported that teacher training acts as a refresher for tired and overburdened teachers, and then teachers can have lots of conversations about improving classroom management, utilizing resources effectively, and assisting teachers in becoming self-satisfied through learning and accepting who they are. Teachers can then have better steps for professional enhancement. As she finished, I asked her how she takes family influences on teacher autonomy. *If I share my case, I have two children. Now they are grown up, but during the starting phase of my professional development, being a new mother and taking school classes would have been a different situation if my*

husband was not the principal of my school. He supported me to manage the timing of my class, and break for breastfeeding otherwise I would have left the teaching profession.

Finally, I asked her how she defined an autonomous teacher. She indicated that an autonomous teacher is a perfect teacher who is aware of her own teaching styles, uses varied classroom teaching for students' understanding, engages the students in every classroom activity, is motivated and motivates students, and has good relations with all colleges. We finished taking pizza and hot lemon during our conversation. As it was already 6 pm evening, so we planned to depart for that day.

Similarly, meeting Romi, my third research participant; she asked me to visit her school in her free time. I sensed that she chose the venue for privacy, and we could discuss things openly as it was a half-holiday at school. We started with a very light conversation at first, and I found that she had a very good sense of humor; she would relate her past experiences in the conversation and was sometimes normal and other times sensitive too. Her life was not easy being a single mother, but she tackled every up and down by smiling and accepting it, so I always found her bold and confident. We started our conversation with a warm glass of water. After she permitted, I started asking her the varied topics. And my first question was to share her views on teacher autonomy. Her sharing goes like this: *I think teacher autonomy is the application of one's own skills in classroom teaching; it is based on the classroom situation and environment. It is all about applying things learned freely in the classroom with the intention of sharing knowledge among the students.*

She discussed the application of freely learned things in the classroom while

speaking about teacher autonomy. So I further asked her to clarify what she meant by that. She expressed that as teachers, we take part in many trainings and workshops; we may get some ideas from the internet as well, but if those ideas or teaching methods are proven and effective, then we should be able to utilize them in our classroom. As we were discussing training and learned knowledge, I linked my next question to her: how does she relate teacher autonomy and teacher training? On this, she shared that, during the first phase of the pandemic, her school teachers had trouble using online tools for virtual classes.

But to ease the situation, the school organized every Saturday evening two hours of workshops and those trainings helped all the teachers to have control of microphone, camera and use of Google Classroom as well as techniques to use Padlet and classroom screen and many, more. Having knowledge of online tools led towards the satisfaction with what teachers were teaching as well as depth of knowledge helped teachers to manage the classroom along with positive feedback.

Here I can relate: we cannot expect any plant to grow and give us good seeds if we only provide water, so nutrients as fertilizer for the growth of plants are necessary. So, teachers sharing with colleagues and getting motivation from administration are important. As much as teacher training is life for practicing teacher autonomy, it also works as fertilizer to boost any teachers' caliber.

In relation to her response, I expanded on her point of view on whether or not the school administration should be aware of the techniques used by teachers. She smiled and gave a big Yes, after all, they are the ones to answer, so school administration should make common classroom techniques, and in cases of varied

techniques, all the teachers should be involved in the process of updating. And, teachers should also share the new techniques they have learned from any recent trainings or workshops in teacher meetings in the presence of school administration so that, if applicable, they can be discussed and applied throughout the school.

She further added that there are formats issued by school administration for lesson plans and the Continuous Assessment System (CAS), but while preparing she uses the internet to search for the best practices and methods that can be utilized in her classroom. Along with that, she has a habit of using social media, where different posts regarding classroom practices are posted on a regular basis. By combining varied knowledge, she prepares and practices her lesson plan.

I could relate to her practices because in my school we have provided format for lesson plans, CAS, various ways of appreciating students, handwriting patterns to be followed, and most importantly, as she stated, we practice the same technique of sharing sessions in teacher meetings if any teacher has recently taken any trainings, which if approved in the teacher meeting we implement in our classroom practices. Relating her previous sharing a question popped up in my mind and I asked her, how she relate school environment to teacher autonomy. Her voices goes like this: *I think both teachers and students' home environments and school cultures affect the teacher autonomy. Sometimes a teachers' cultural background may not match that of the students. And sometimes, students' diversity may have an effect, as we have diverse classrooms with multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural backgrounds, which may be the reason why the same teaching methodologies may not fit all. Within the same timeframe, teachers should be able to use multiple methods to have an efficient class.*

After listening to her, I added, if she could put her view on an autonomous teacher. She explained that teachers who have a good plan for their classroom, take regular trainings and share them among colleagues, have a good understanding of the curriculum, and have a zeal for their students learning can be described as autonomous teachers. We cannot expect every situation to favor us, but based on the time and situation, we can implement the skills or techniques that impart knowledge to our students. When we have a favourable time, we can practice our skills and move forward. Our autonomy practice is also based on the needs of students. Then, school sister entered the office with fruits, we enjoyed fruits and I took a leave from her school.

Similarly, it was my second meet with Rina, I took her first phase of the interview through google meet. I requested her to meet physically to get clear information that was missed in the first online meet. She agreed to that, then we planned to meet on a public holiday. So, we planned to meet at a restaurant in the peaceful environment of Boudhanath Stupa. I took a taxi from my station and picked her up from the third station and both of us went to our destination.

First of all, we both made three rounds of stupa and went to the rooftop restaurant and chose the private corner to avoid any disturbance during our talk. We ordered vegetarian and chicken momo and started to converse. She started with some of her childhood stories then, and we moved to my planned theme of discussion and it went as a good dialogic conversation. I asked her to share her views on teacher autonomy and she smiled and said, *Teacher autonomy include many thing, I don't think I can define it perfectly but I can share some components for it as a practice of*

regular lesson plan, use of school resource, responsible towards teaching regular training and update are the major components of teacher autonomy and good environment plays a vital role for it.

As I heard of good environment, I proved question, to share more on good environment. *She shared that Good environment, includes school and home environment of both teachers and students. If no students are receptive then, teachers won't be able to teach their planned lesson as well as school culture and environment is also essential part for the growth of both teachers and students, neither carefree nor authoritative environment. So, we teachers can easily learn and share with students and colleagues.*

As she talked about lesson plans and updating oneself so I linked question to share her practice. She shared; *in our school, we submit a terminal basis lesson plan, we prepare our teaching materials based on our lesson plan and get ready to be more fluent in the classroom. As per updating myself, I am always ready to learn. I learn and share with co-teachers and take part in any training that comes my way. I even go through some motivational and positive videos to keep myself peaceful and motivated.*

Again, I asked her, how she links in between teacher autonomy and home environment. She shared that: I think updates on teacher autonomy can be done at home as we can have personal time. Going through teachers guide, learning different classroom methods from the internet and most importantly reviewing one's performance of the day and help to find the places for improvement. But if we do not have understanding family members, peaceful home environment then, it might be a

people for the teachers and person may have a stressful teaching. Further, I asked her view on what kind of teacher are autonomous teacher. Rina shared, I think those teachers who are sincere towards their teaching, take support from co- teachers, be motivated and motivate others, have confidence in the content and encourage students for achieving the learning objectives. Then, those teachers can be said as autonomous. Finally we enjoyed our snacks and had some more talk and moved towards our home.

All four participants understood teacher autonomy, and in some manner, they were found to be practicing it too. However all of them have different priorities, some put lesson plan and regular updates as important and some think training are more essential. However, before we can be an autonomous teachers, our students must be at ease, relaxed, and stress-free in order to participate in the lesson. Teachers should be able to take charge of what they are teaching to the students, and finally, the school administration should also be aware of what methods are used to enhance the student learning.

Being Teacher: Role towards Enhancement of Student Autonomy

I realized how important was teachers role in developing autonomy of any students. When I was a grade five teacher in 2068 B.S, I was recently promoted to grade five teacher from grade teaching in grade three. There were thirty students in my class. Among them, five of them were kind of slow learners, who took more time to complete their task and it was quite hard for them to work with the average students. I struggled to understand and motivate them to study for two months.

New responsibility of grade five, having frequent meetings with the parents of

those five students and using trial and error to motivate them towards their study was not easy task. As, I was the student of social work, I studied varied techniques as rapport building, encouraging, conversation and so on to deal with our research participants. So, I did role modeling of being social worker in school setting for those five students and for other twenty five I led the regular chapters using different methods of teaching and learning. For five of them, I used to organize basic topics of discussion, talk about their hobbies, favorite food and subjects and this technique made me closer to those students and they started to like me and finally it became easy for me to deal with them as they started to open up.

Then, slowly I shifted them towards the study from basic or from their easy subjects by using different game methods so that they were not aware that they were actually learning, I used to make them play word creation , writing some lines about what they like, using different objects to count, add ,subtract and multiply. Showing real objects to support their learning like, using mustard plant to show them the parts of plants and many more. Slowly and gradually those students increased their self –esteem or got motivation towards their study and I started getting appreciation from the school administration and from parents' side. Among those five, two of them left the school in grade 8 and two after SEE (Secondary Education Examination) and one completed his grade XII in science faculty just the year 2079 B.S.

Whenever, I met the parents they appreciated for boosting his motivation. This made me realize that teachers are the ones who can have positive reinforcement on the development of learner autonomy. It helped to develop his confidence level, started to value that he could do and was motivated towards collaborative work.

During the process of autonomous learning, the relationship between the teachers and the students is equal, also, becoming autonomous learning is an ongoing process that takes time, patience and support. Students are in the process of becoming autonomous and are expected to be always autonomous to be lifelong learners. It is the responsibility of the educator to foster this development process of learning. (Yan, 2012). Similarly, I have jotted down the stories of my research participants based on their experiences and practices of autonomy.

To start with Reeta, she is a social studies teacher, who uses different techniques to teach students about geography using maps and drawings, historical artifacts and audio-visual aid. She feel that she can make her students learn better. She shares her story of motivating students to promote their autonomy;

I have a beautiful memory to share, as we need to know so many historical events, social practices, environmental issues and the political division of the country. I introduced a formula diary for my students, those formula doesn't need to be the same for all. We can create our own formula to remember like memorizing fourteen zones of Nepal.(mera bakasa ko nama selu bhe jagha dhau). So, I motivate students to prepare Mnemonics (Formula for self) in every difficult topics. I used to teach students in an interactive way, had discussion from my side and when, I asked students, they were not able to share what they learnt. So, I started using varied techniques in class. There was a group of students in class 10 "A" whom I always found them studying but could rarely mug up and know answers. So, I called them personally in the staff room and taught them the technique of making formula for each topic they study by selecting main words and singing them in rhymes or some time creating some funny stories from those words

for better memory. So, they used the technique taught which helped them to boost their confidence level towards their study. They used the formula technique to study all other subjects and they passed their SLC (School Leaving Certificate).

Before three years she got a call from one of the girls. She was very happy to talk to her and she shared that there was an important thing to share with Reeta. In their college they were provided with the lesson and told to share the important aspect of the lesson in a limited time. Then she used the formula technique, which she knew in grade ten and shared the lesson in front of fifty students in class full of confidence and everyone appreciated her for sharing a new technique in study. Later, a teacher called her and appreciated and asked from where she learned this technique and she shared Reeta's way of teaching social studies.

This memory Reeta regards as the best gift from her teaching learning process, where she could be the reason for someone's confidence. As we have diverse classroom so using the same technique may not be useful. Teachers can use varied techniques which will finally boost students' autonomy. Along with boosting motivation, self-assurance helps people become responsible in their own way. The students must have confidence in their ability to manage their own learning and that they can rely on themselves rather than only on the teacher. A sense of freedom and responsibility sometimes has the inverse effect, bringing happiness and confidence (Szabó, et al, 2000).

Now, I have connected the story to Monika. It was the year of 2065 B.S, when Monika got transferred to Kapan and she was supposed to teach Class 10 section "C". As she was a new teacher and was unaware of seven boys who were lafandar (naughty)

type with no books and exercise books sitting on the last bench, ignoring the teacher's presence in classroom, busy talking loudly. There were so many students not cared and supported by parents. (Aama buwa ko samrakshyan na payeko).

It was my first day at school, when I entered the class except for those boys everyone greeted me. I thought ok, may be they did not notice so I ignored it. I introduced myself and told everyone to open books and exercise book and started teaching, in the middle, there was a loud laughter and giggling, I looked towards the last bench they were disturbing. I went to last the bench and asked what I was teaching, they couldn't answer so were made to stand on the bench and continued teaching and after school, I called them and talked with them. If they didn't bring books and exercise books and didn't pay attention to my class, they would not be allowed to be in class. I used that technique from my teacher during my training session. He used to say, if students don't pay attention or disturbs the class, just ask the question what the today's discussion about in the class was. And if they don't know just make them stand, that will be the greatest punishment as they will be ashamed in the class. I studied psychology in grade twelve where "thorai chetabani chaincha" (need little threatening) was also written and it was needed in the context of my teaching.

The next day, they did not report to the class as they were found to be playing on the ground. In charge sir asked them whose class was going on and why they were out. They replied" Khoi hami chindainau, timi haru mero ghanti ma na basnu bhannu bha cha"(We don't know, she told us not to stay in her period). They came to class; I did not scold them, as I remembered my husband saying" Never try to tackle the boys of Kathmandu they are like gunnda of hindi film"(Villain of Hindi movies).I called one of

the students among them, after the class. I thought he was the one manner less boy leading the group. I inquired about his family, I came to know that he was living in single room family, father was a drunkard and mother used to work as laborer in a construction site and he had other two younger sibling studying in the same school. Then, I realized that he lacked care and support from his family. I used the trick of being caring teacher, encouraged him to study and work for improving the financial status of the family. I explained the struggle of his mother for their basic needs. Then, he cried very badly, my heart was filled with love for that boy. I made him comfortable, as well motivated him to encourage his friends towards study and confirmed that I would support him in any manner to improve his study. And while returning to the room, I realized that, it was not the fault of that boy; it was because of the situation or the circumstance where he lived.

The next day as soon as she entered the class she searched for them, they were in class with books and exercise books and everyone showed their homework. She was so happy at least her work did not go in vain. Slowly classes started to be effective for all and she started to be satisfied. Everyone passed with good results in the SLC. She got transferred from Kapan to Gothatar the next year. After a month of transfer, she got a call from the head teacher from Kapan, those boys came to meet Monika in school and promised to continue their study and left a message Monika saying “Thank you”. She really enjoyed and became emotional by that information.

Her story of motivating student is totally different from the story of Reeta, here Monika acted as a strict teacher, counselled the students, made them realized their family status and the dream finally motivated and made them responsible for their

studies. The instructor does not lose control of what is happening throughout the learning process as a result of learner autonomy. Instead of being a final, static condition that is attained, learner autonomy is a lifelong, dynamic process that is subject to educational interventions. It is crucial to assist learners in being aware of and identifying the methods that they already employ or may employ in order to enable them to assume greater control over their own learning (Smith, 2007).

Similarly, I have connected Romi's story of motivating students, she is an English teacher for grades eight to ten. Every one regards English as a very easy subject but, she shares that it is a tricky subject, if we cannot play with words in correct manner, we fail in conversation and in the written test as well. *I still remember the troubling day for teaching tenses in the class, how much I explained or clarified the students, they were found to be confused. So, I divided students in the different groups and gave different tense for each group, and I instructed them to prepare a tree for each tense and students were provided with different colour papers tape, and scissors and they prepared well tense tree, and each group was provided with five minutes for the presentation on what they prepared, and presentation was out of my box, I never expected small students will bring the varied ways of explanation. There I got to realize that students learning is associated with their active classroom participation. And finally after the students I summarized the tense in pictorial form which made my students clear about the tenses and made me satisfied with how the class went.*

Romi's words hinted that teachers' have a very crucial role in encouraging. The encouragement of the teachers, as she stated was perceived as care from the teacher which could create a favourable environment for learning. The role of care is even

emphasized jointly by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] (2012) where love and attention are considered among the essential essence of providing care. Care, in the case of Romi was narrated in the form of participation and encouragement which was also reflected even in the story of Reeta and Monika.

Further I have jotted down the story of Rina supporting the students to have research based learning where the students study the scientific knowledge system using specifically devised means and procedures with the goal of increasing cognitive skills, world perception, moral and other aspects of the person, as well as communication and collaboration to know the certain themes in a better way. Encouragement as a way of involving in children's learning process is even stated by a study made by Test et al. (2010) on how teachers support the learning of children which revealed that teachers include more intentional talks with the children to support their learning, while the talks were intended to encourage them to engage in particular activity or behavior. Similarly, Henderlong and Lepper (2002) have also indicated that praising the children can be a way of involving in children's learning, instilling intrinsic motivation in them. Parallel to this the story of involving students learning process by encouraging was also narrated by Rina.

It was the incident before the pandemic. I was teaching Grade 9 "Krishi Pradali (agricultural system)". I scheduled a debate for the next day on "Paramparagat krishi pradali bhanda adhunik krishi pradali ramro (Agricultural advancement or commercialization is better than traditional agriculture)" and students were in for and against it. I motivated and encouraged students to give some tactical reason or statements to put their views. Next day the debate went very well as they got time to

research, ask and share with their family. Students came up with varied ideas and excellent statements which made her really happy. Each of them invested so much time to research and they had wonderful points for and against the topic.

She further said that, the debate not only explained and claimed the uses and importance of local traditional agricultural tool but, went on widely sharing the environment friendly tools, zero emission and no need of expertise and many more and the next group also focused on the huge production of agricultural production, raised the global issue of food crisis, hunger and many more. Both for and against group developed their communication and collaboration skills as well to put their voice in front which finally boosted their confidence level. This activity supported the students to have deep learning on the particular topic.

The conclusion I can draw from Rina's story is that there is no miracle cure, and developing learner autonomy requires time and a lot of patience on both the teachers' and the students' side. In other circumstances, it appears nearly impossible to achieve, leaving both parties puzzled and disappointed. It is our responsibility as professionals to remember that, no matter how tempting it is to revert spoon feeding of our learners, it is our responsibility to begin from day one and continue to the end of a course in a manner that allows our learners to develop their independence to the greatest extent possible. Finally, the instructor must believe in the student, and even more crucially, the learner must believe in their own potential (Austin, 2006).

Challenges on Practice of Autonomy in Classroom

I have been a secondary school teacher in a private institution in Kathmandu Valley for 11 years. If I go back to my early years as a teacher, I realize that I had to

acquire and develop new abilities in order to be a competent teacher. Therefore, I constantly ask my students to understand, share, and apply the tested concepts in my classroom. Later, I had extensive training, and years of experience enabled me to develop better classroom practices.

But the knowledge I gained from various trainings and classroom exercises was kept inside me. Rarely did I impart my knowledge to others. I was then given the position of ISA (International School Award) coordinator, which required close coordination with the British Council. Then I understood that I needed to practice speaking and expressing my opinions. If I had done so earlier, I would have been proficient. In light of my contemplation, I am forced to acknowledge that my lack of independence in sharing and asserting myself is directly related to my upbringing.

I got married in the year 2013. I was given the chance to take part in teacher professional development programs run by a reputed training company. Prior to getting married, the training was arranged, and my parents were glad to send me away for a seven- day residential course. However, I had some trouble enrolling in the course because I was no longer a daughter, but rather a daughter-in-law in a superstitious patriarchal household. Although I took part in the course, patriarchal norms and ideals attempted to obstruct my learning and updating.

After the training, I was similarly taught the limitations of a daughter-in-law and given an explanation of the laws and standards that govern our patriarchal culture. Here I felt not only my primary habitus hindered my development but also the habitus of my in laws were some time working as challenges for me. So here my thoughts were aligned with the concept of habitus. Any person's upbringing is important, and the

values, standards, and beliefs that are practiced there are profoundly ingrained and serve to direct our future course of actions.

Being a part of the contemporary Kathmandu valley, my families or my own original learnings have always dominated my education. Therefore, it is usually seen that primary habitus predominates over secondary habitus. Parallel to this I have summarized stories of the teachers where they felt that teaching is not an easy job. And hindrances are there some times from family, socio-cultural norms and some times the working culture and changing situations may play a crucial role too.

Starting with Reeta, she is a public school teacher in Kathmandu. There are varied students in class, i.e cultural background, varied upbringing and mostly students are from the family background where they have low economic status, single room family, drunkard parents, use vulgar words (*chada sabda*) in front of children, no care for children, leave children at school early morning without any information, no food and rarely come to pick them up. So, much problematic family, where children lack their basic needs and love and care.

It is hard to teach empty stomach than the students with difficulty. Students lack focus and they have no any interest towards study. That time there is no use of books, exercise books or the resource person or facilitator. So, I feel very hard and this situations made me feel pathetic. The government should improvise 'diwa khaja' (day meal) till senior grades too and it has to be provided to those schools where it is really a need.

From the story of Reeta, I feel that playing the role of teachers is very hard on this situation and there is no chance of progress in teaching learning. The practice which

is applicable in one situation may not be applicable in another. So, it has clearly shown how socio- cultural and economic condition impact the classroom teaching learning process.

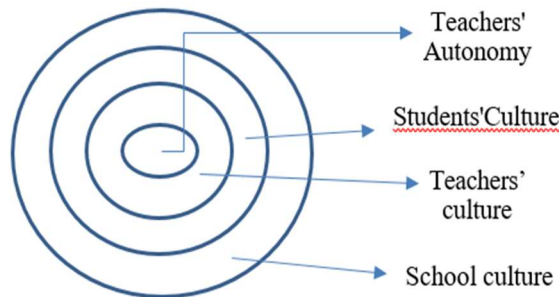


Fig: Intersection of Cultural Perspective

But there is a different story to share from Monika's side. She was a new teacher in Kapan and as she was assigned the toughest class, so she tried her best to prepare herself before she went to the class.

When I had leisure periods, I used to sit in the library preparing lesson plan and some fun activities for motivating my students. And some teachers who were near to the Principal, they used to give bluff in office and enjoy their early ten minutes of each class and if there use to be any noises in the respective teachers' class, the Principal used to come to the library and say that, classes were noisy and teachers were enjoying in library and he never suggested those teachers be on time for their class "yek dui jana kurautae harusanga guff ladaune ra library ma aafno free time ma kam gareko dekhi na sahane" (Because of some gossipers, I cannot use my leisure time in library).

Her story shows that, school administration lack their role in enhancing both teachers and students autonomy. School environment also affect the practice of teacher

autonomy as a negative school environment demotivate the teachers towards their role. There is a need of an encouraging and supportive environment at school which helps to develop sincerity among teachers. Feeling of biasness among teachers finally degrades the school teaching learning process. The growth of teaching in schools is greatly aided by self-engagement in ongoing professional development activities, defining individual goals, and willingness to deal with structural limitations. The administration of the school must release authority to the teachers in order to encourage autonomous practice and create autonomous learners (Kong, 2020).

In case of Romi, cultural differences played a vital role, as she was brought up in a matriarchal society. When she started teaching in Nepal, first she felt the cultural clash and secondly, she had a dilemma while teaching the cultural prospects to students, what to teach, what she learned or what she recently experienced. She could not link her childhood experiences with her ongoing experiences. So, she was having difficulty utilizing her knowledge in classroom practices. The subject of autonomy has frequently been associated with the individualism and collectivism element in cultural differences, writes Holliday (2007), as referenced in (Neupane, 2010). The groups to which they belong shape their identity. According to Holliday, autonomy functions in individualistic societies rather than collectivist civilizations.

Similarly, when I talked about Rina, she had varied stories to share which became a challenge for her in her teaching journey. *During school hours, whatever comes my way, I take support from my colleagues and deal with that. But I feel sometime students less interested towards study and lack of concentration brings frustration and irritation so this is also one challenge as I may not get the expected*

result along with this having varied roles in school, home some time plays tricky games and reduces my confidence.

Assembling the stories of Geeta, Monika, Romi and Rina, I could develop a sense that involving students, satisfying family and school, working with diverse cultural background is not an easy task. Living in the context where a woman has to stand amid the expectational premises of family and community (Beauviour, 1949). However, I believe that sometimes students lack of interest in studying and lack of concentration causes frustration and irritation, which may bring a challenging situation, and will surely affect the teachers performance, so there is need of motivation for teachers and students for practicing teachers autonomy for the process of developing student autonomy.

Recapitulating the stories of all my participants where they shared different forms of challenges they faced, I could get insight that the teachers possess different level of autonomy, and they belong to different cultural backgrounds as school and family which too have a great role for their situation.

Reflective Discussion

Based on my research question and research analysis, I have discussed the major insights as (a) Is Teacher Autonomy a factor for promoting Learners Autonomy?, (b) Is School Environment fundamental for Teacher Autonomy and Job Satisfaction?, and (c) Responsibility: Is it a step towards Teachers Autonomy?

Is Teacher Autonomy a factor for Promoting Learner Autonomy?

Learner autonomy is the term used to describe a learner's ability to control their own learning. The teacher wanted to encourage autonomy in his students by giving

them control over how the class is run. Teachers viewed autonomy as a commitment on the part of students to be accountable for their own learning. Teachers and students have an equal relationship during the autonomous learning process. Additionally, developing learning autonomy is a continuous process that requires time, patience, and support. The autonomy of students is being developed, and they are expected to remain autonomous throughout their entire lives as lifelong learners. The educator's role is to support learner's developmental process (Yan, 2012). Making students truly adept at self-directed learning is not an easy task. The teachers must change from being domineering to being directors, allowing students to learn effectively. The teacher needs to have faith in the pupils, show respect for them, and foster a learning environment where everyone participates equally and cooperatively in class discussions. They actively study and learn while following the teacher's instructions. Students cannot achieve the high efficiency of autonomous learning until they enrich themselves, encourage themselves, realize themselves, and gradually adjust themselves during the teaching evaluation.

In the same line, my research participant Reeta (pseudo name) shares when she had the opportunity to freely apply diverse techniques, she looked for new ways to clear her students' confusion. If any student lacks motivation, she usually encourages them by speaking to each of them individually. Using the formula technique has allowed her to inspire her students to the point where they are self-motivated. We need to communicate with them individually, advise them while we are close to them, and teachers should stimulate and support them, so we might bring change to their environment.

We can encourage intrinsic motivation, which comes from a learner's own motivation or desire. Learners that are intrinsically driven are better able to relate to the learning objectives and are therefore more prepared to accept responsibility for the results. In turn, increased student autonomy and self-determination result in the intrinsic drive. In other words, motivation and accountability can reinforce one another (Szabó et al., 2000). When we talk about fostering children's autonomy, it means involving them and giving them the freedom to play, learn, and use tools and teaching materials where they fit. This enables teachers to give students a choice, consider their emotions and viewpoints, and provide logical feedback. This process is benefited by the teachers' evaluation of the factors and situations that support children's autonomy (Devjak et al., 2020).

Monika (pseudo name) shared that she found it difficult to teach seven boys during her teaching in Kapan. She tried to be strict with them, which brought negative results. Then she called the group leader in the office and made him realize that he should study for his family and showed the positive consequences after his better study. Here, Monika (pseudo name) played the role of strict a teacher, and in difficulty, she did not panic; rather she chose the way of counseling the students to motivate them to work sincerely by making them understand the importance of family. And her motivation worked as positive reinforcement for the students. In the same line, Smith (2007) claims that learner autonomy does not result in the instructor losing control of what occurs during the learning process. Instead of being a final, static condition that is attained, learner autonomy is a lifelong, dynamic process that is subject to educational interventions. It is crucial to assist learners in being aware of and identifying the

methods that they already employ or may employ in order to enable them to greater responsibility for their own education.

Along with boosting motivation, self-assurance helps people become responsible in their own way. The students must have confidence in their ability to manage their own education and that they can depend on oneself rather than only the teacher. A sense of freedom and responsibility sometimes has the inverse effect, bringing happiness and confidence (Szabó et al., 2000).

Romi (pseudo name) had different versions and she shared that a good teacher should also support the students to be autonomous learners, as not only teachers feel challenges, but students are also struggling to learn in different phases. We as teachers should teach students to be comfortable in a variety of situations and to manage stress while studying. She thinks that students' autonomy is a skill and talent that any student can use and be exceptional among their classmates. I think that, as Romi (pseudo name) suggests, a qualified teacher should also empower learners to be independent learners, because not only do teachers face adversity, but students also find it difficult to learn at various stages. We, as teachers, should educate students on how and where to deal with various circumstances and how they can deal with stress while learning. She believes that student autonomy is a skill and talent that any student can use, as well as being exceptional among their classmates.

Teachers who support choice, ease the pressure to complete tasks in a certain way, and encourage action will give the students engaging life experience that are overflowing with enthusiasm and good thoughts as opposed to a controlling environment marked by deadlines, external rewards, or potential punishments (Nez et

al., 2014). Developing a student's capacity to read and write in the correct manner helps to develop the student's confidence, and this is the first step towards the student's autonomy. We teachers do not need to do extra things in class, just make sincere effort so that all our students understand what they have learned. They can ask questions in confusion, they know their capacity, and they can work in a team and fulfill the task if assigned. Yes, but to make the student as autonomous learners, teachers should be tricky and encourage student participation.

I feel Rina (pseudo name) wants to say that working to improve a student's ability to comprehend and write correctly fosters confidence, which is the initial step toward a student's abilities. Teachers are not required to do anything extra in class; instead, they should make an honest effort to ensure that all students understand what they have learned, that they are able to ask questions if they are confused, that individuals understand their capacity, and that they are able to work in a team to complete a task if one is assigned to them. Yes, but in order to develop autonomous learners, teachers must be creative in their approaches and encourage students' participation. For the learners, teachers can set an example. They have to stay in touch with the learners closely. The setting at school must be cozy and encouraging of individuality. In a regulated atmosphere, students cannot learn. Linking to Panta (2019), the goal of teachers should be to encourage students to investigate new concepts. Additionally, teachers' overbearing meddling limits their originality. Teachers who support choice and reduce pressure to complete tasks will give students engaging experiences that are brimming with excitement and positive energy. (Nez et al., 2014). Students will be more prone to making mistakes in a structured environment

marked by deadlines, outside rewards, or potential penalties.

I also found Vygotsky's theoretical framework on teachers' autonomy relatable to the above discussion theme "Is Teachers Autonomy Key for Promoting Learner Autonomy?" While discussing inside a classroom, students try to have active participation, conversation, and engagement. And stress free, biasfree and supportive environment where teachers are allowed to use their autonomy will definitely lead the class to be more effective where students can grow without any difficulties. Having this is where Vygotsky's theoretical framework on teacher autonomy (Moloney, 1997) comes into play. According to Vygotsky, a child is completely reliant on other people when they are young. These individuals, in particular, might be the child's parents, adults or teachers who guide the child's action by instructing them on what to do, how to do it, as well as what not to do. Teachers largely use language to put these directives into practice.

Vygotsky's theory assumes that learning arises when children interact. At first, a child completes a new task with the assistance of someone senior to him/her. Then, the child internalizes that he/she can accomplish it independently. In this way, social interaction is advocated to notify student's expectations and enhancement of capabilities from the application of teachers autonomy to foster learner's autonomy.

Therefore, it is crucial to assist students in becoming aware of and recognizing the strategies they currently use or may use if they are to be given more control over their own learning. Since teachers too experience challenges, I firmly believe that teachers should encourage their students to become independent learners. After all, learning may be challenging for both students and teachers at different times. As a

teacher, it is our duty to impart stress management skills to students while learning as well as how and where to handle diverse situations. And this can be easily promoted through a school conducive environment. And finally students can develop an ability to clarify their understanding, be self-aware, and be able to collaborate with others to complete a task if given with the support of a teacher.

Is School Environment Fundamental for Teachers Autonomy and Job Satisfaction?

As I am also a school teacher, I sensed that the school environment has always been a key factor for job satisfaction for teachers. When teachers are supported and are kept in close coordination, receive frequent training and have mutual understanding with colleagues, then all the teachers enjoy the working culture. Compared to untrained instructors, trained teachers exhibit noticeably more actions that foster autonomy. Students' engagement increases when teachers use autonomy support throughout instruction. (Reeve et al., 2004). And the joyful school environment leads to the job satisfaction of teachers. In a similar view, all of my four research participants shared what they felt.

Reeta (pseudo name) shares that she enjoys her teaching when her students are clear on the topic taught and can explain it when asked. She loves to have discussions with her students too. Sometimes having active participation in classroom activities makes her feel connected with her students. When she gets time, she frequently has discussions in the school library with my colleagues on the different techniques to apply in class. And the application of different techniques motivates her students to learn better, and their advanced learning makes her satisfied. Based on Reeta's narratives, I assume that she motivates the students through active participation, and the outcome of

her classroom practices has been helpful in building relationship with the students. When students and teachers have a good relationship, the class definitely becomes a better place to learn. And when teacher is able to practice autonomy in class, this leads towards the satisfaction of their teaching. Linking to this, Navaneethakrishnan, et al. (2020) explain that positive relationships exist between student conduct and teacher job satisfaction. The effect of student behavior on teachers' job satisfaction is somewhat modulated by student involvement. Hence based on the discussion, I can say that, the stronger connection between good student conduct and teacher work satisfaction, the higher will be teacher autonomy.

Similarly, Monika for fifteen years, taught in Umeshwor Ma. Vi (pseudo name), so she never felt any challenges as her husband was the principal. She always talked from the teacher's side, not from the administration. "Ma aru teacher lai pani aanya huna chahi didaina thiye" (She was always in favor of justice for all teachers). When she came to Kapan Kathmandu, she faced challenges. Some teachers who used to take things to the principal or administration used to get privileges (kurautae, chakari garne harulai chai aali aananda hunthiyo).

While taking class, she used to get disturbed by the next class noise, as the teachers used to leave class 5 to 10 minutes earlier, and the administrator had to do nothing in that case. When she used to have a leisure period, she would sit in the staff room and read some books, but head teachers would come and say students were talking and scattered in class and some teachers were enjoying themselves in the staff room. So, she used to feel that the head master gave extra privileges to the next teacher. So they went to class late and left earlier, and she was there to listen. (*Yek dui jana head*

master ko najik huna kura lagaune ra head master le sunnae, absent teachers ko milauna na sakeraris pokhne) some teacher closer to the Principal get privilege and principal gets angry as he could not manage absentee classes.

In the case of Monika (pseudo name), I analyze that she was demotivated by her colleagues attitudes and the headmaster's support for them. She could not use her leisure time for her study or updating herself. And her demotivation resembles that she lacks satisfaction in her teaching, and when teachers are not motivated, they can rarely support student autonomy. When teachers are responsible, then only the students' growth takes place. In a similar line, Kandel (2021) claims that for teachers to be competent professionals, autonomy is crucial. There will not be any productive results in the areas of teaching and learning until they are held accountable in their profession. And accountability comes from the school culture where teachers work.

Furthermore, Romi (pseudo name) shares: As we are aware, all private schools have their own rules and regulations. So, if we cannot work effectively following the rules and regulations, it is hard for the teachers as well as for the institutions. Sometimes, if we try to apply what we have learned, there will be confusion or a dilemma about whether to apply it or not. What will the school administration say? As a result, she has frequently failed to apply much of what she has learned in her classroom.

Romis' and Monika's sayings hinted that they lack a comfortable school environment, which might have created a gap between teachers and school administration. There is a need for more communication and collaboration between teachers and school administration. In- school professional development activities

definitely help to understand teachers' calibre as well as how school can be boosted academically. Self-engagement in ongoing professional development activities, setting personal goals, and a readiness to work around structural constraints all significantly contribute to the growth of teaching in schools. The administration of the school must release authority to the teachers in order to encourage autonomous practice and create autonomous learners (Kong, 2020). Along the same line, Yi (2017) claims that the changing school environment also affects teacher autonomy, which necessitates that school administrators give up part of their own autonomy (management autonomy) to teachers.

She shares her early teaching journey as when she started teaching during the first few days, she was observed, but later on, observation stopped. Based on my classroom observation, she was suggested and supported by my school administration. She feels the school environment really plays an important role in teachers' development. She has got supportive colleagues. When there is any issue during their teaching learning, they share it in the teachers' room and find the solution immediately.

From Rina's (pseudo name) narratives, I sense that the regular observation and feedback from the school administration helped her to develop professionally, and those observations helped her to prepare well for her upcoming classes. This shows that Rina was satisfied with her job. High levels of autonomous behaviour and job satisfaction are viewed favourably by teachers. We plan lessons and implement them in our classes, but we cannot expect our planning to always be excellent or readily done. Classroom conditions may not always be favourable. So, I believe that if we can handle the changing situation in a constructive manner, all such teacher as an autonomous teacher.

Additionally, if we pre-inform the school administration about our various plans for class activities, we can also receive support and will definitely be encouraged to work further. Teacher autonomy behaviours are valuable indicators of their work happiness since there is a strong and substantial association between teachers autonomy and job satisfaction (DLEK, 2022).

All teachers appreciate the workplace environment when there is support, close collaboration, regular training, and mutual understanding between staff members. When teachers get to apply learner autonomy supportive activities and instruction, student engagement rises. Teachers' job happiness is influenced by the positive school climate. Until teachers are held accountable, teaching and learning will not produce any positive effects. And the culture of the schools where teachers work influences accountability. Teachers and the administration of the school need to communicate and work together more. Activities for in-school professional development aid in understanding both the caliber of instructors and ways that education might be improved. To promote independent practice and create autonomous learners, the school management must delegate authority to the teachers.

I also found Vygotsky's theoretical framework on teacher autonomy relatable to above the discussion theme "Is school environment fundamental for teacher autonomy and job satisfaction?" According to the Vygotskian perspective, teaching is a challenging, compassionate activity that a teacher can become steadily more skilled at over time through disciplined curiosity, ongoing education, and skilled support. As a result, the autonomous teacher is one who is aware of the reasons behind, times, places, and methods for acquiring and using pedagogical skills in the self-conscious awareness

of teaching practice. Having this is where Vygotsky's theoretical framework on teachers autonomy (Moloney, 1997) comes into play. Vygotsky asserts that due to a lack of professional development, the majority of teachers currently work alone and in splendid isolation. Thus, to maintain the autonomy of teachers which is key for any institutional growth, there should be a supportive and cooperative school environment. This can be either maintained by the feasibility of the resources for updating own self or can be the way to reach and utilize the resources.

Hence, any school environment can be crucial for the practice and enhancement of teachers autonomy by organizing different school trainings, workshops as well as changing harsh school environment to friendly and supportive flourish the positive school environment where school culture starts to change into the professional working culture and finally this increases teachers job satisfaction. Satisfied and professional teachers lead the academics of any institution to the next level. This finally supports creating responsible teachers where student engagement increases.

Responsibility: Is it Step towards Teacher Autonomy and Professionalism?

Working as a secondary school teacher taught me the value of staying updated, and I was appointed as the ISA (International School Award) coordinator, which required me to work closely with the British Council. Then I realized I needed to learn to speak up and express myself; if I had done so sooner, I would have mastered the art of public speaking. My reflection leads me to believe that I lack the practice of autonomy in either sharing or being forward, and this responsibility also requires me to participate in various trainings to involve students in project-based learning, so I have had numerous opportunities to attend trainings and participate in workshops for the

completion of various school projects. And this makes me feel that practicing autonomy is really important for professional growth. A key component of teacher professionalism is teacher autonomy (Demirkasmoglu, 2010).

Similarly, my research participants also share their experiences as, Reeta was assigned a leadership (samyojak) role in the "safa club" to promote student health and hygiene. First and foremost, we concentrated on our school grounds; therefore, we fought to prohibit junk food for schoolchildren. As a result, students were applying what they had learned in their communities.

Students were trained to maintain a healthy atmosphere. Personal hygiene, the school grounds, the school tap, the canteen, and the classroom, among other things, receive special attention. Occasionally, a cleaning campaign and a plantation program were launched. We also had drama performances in the schoolyard. For this, I got support from other colleagues and school management too, and they were happy to assist. Similarly, Monika was given the opportunity to be the coordinator samyojak;- Bidhyalaya ra samaduya kayam rakhne (public relations officer) in both Dolakha and Kathmandu, Umeshwor Ma.Vi, as well as Rastriya Nirman Pra. Vi (Basic level). Any task, whether academic, ECA, public relations, or environmental, would be assigned to all teachers. Based on our abilities, all of the teachers were given responsibilities. As a result, there was no unfair competition. (Chemata anusarko jimyebari). So, those coordinators should organize programs but all would act as supporting hands along with the head teacher.

In Reetas and Monika's stories, some relevance how responsibility boosts teachers caliber, shows how she enjoyed the role of being *safa club samayojak*

(coordinator of sanitation club) and how to accomplish the club activity she involved herself with students, her colleagues and school administration. Frequent communication with students and teachers and leading the project to the community increased her leadership role. And Monika appreciated the way the school provided responsibility to teachers based on their caliber. And this definitely helped the teachers as well as the school as a whole.

But Romi links her responsibility to updating her teaching learning process in different way. She is the middle school in charge, and she attends certain classes as she works on duties and responsibilities. We are always learning and upgrading, and those new skills may be transferred to our classroom. We learn and share among our colleagues as well as come up with fruitful discussions from that sharing. We know new ideas and techniques that can be applied in our teaching learning process, and sometimes she feels that being middle school in charge has boosted her ability as a communicator and helped her to work in a group collaboratively.

The ability to pick one's own methods, tasks, and/or resources, as well as to assess results and work with others to address issues, is known as "teacher autonomy. Teachers are also expected to accept responsibility for their own judgments (Tehrani & Mansor, 2012). Rina does share similar experiences as Romi, where her responsibility in school helped her to update herself and having individual responsibility leads towards teachers' improvement too. Despite being restricted in some areas, teachers exhibit independence in their methods of instruction and learning. It has been discovered that instructors engaged in a variety of autonomous activities, such as independent study, responsibility,

self-learning, self- evaluation, and so on, that aided in their progression toward professional growth.

From the above discussion I conclude when teachers get some responsibility they grow. And their growth brings a positive school environment and classroom practices and when teachers get a chance to practice their knowledge and expertise, they start growing professionally. Hence, the ability to choose one's own strategies is referred to as teacher autonomy, assignments, and tools as well as to evaluate outcomes and collaborate with others to address problems. It is expected of teachers to take accountability for their own decisions. Teacher autonomy and professional development are clearly and significantly related.

I also found Vygotsky's theoretical framework on teachers autonomy relatable to the above discussion theme "Responsibility: Is it a step towards teachers' autonomy and professionalism?" According to the Vygotskian perspective, teaching is a challenging human activity at which a teacher can gradually become more skilled over time through curiosity, ongoing education, and skilled support. As a result, the independent teacher is one who is aware of the reasons behind, times, places, and methods for acquiring and using pedagogical skills in the self-conscious awareness of classroom practices. Having this is where Vygotsky's theoretical framework on teacher autonomy (Moloney, 1997) comes into play. According to Vygotsky, due to a lack of professional development, the majority of teachers operate alone and in isolation. So, any educational institution can play a role in supporting them to develop their professionalism in teaching learning process by providing certain responsibility. First teachers learn to do any task in a professional way with the support of school administration together with this, it also

helps to instill and develop confidence in teachers so no teachers need to work in isolation. Having responsible teachers also helps to develop positive and professional school culture.

Chapter Essence

This chapter incorporated the narratives of all my four research participants where their childhood story and story of their professional growth as practice of autonomy are noted. In my interpretation teacher autonomy is the application of our own skill in classroom teaching which can be based on classroom situation, school environment and also the cultural background we possess. Recalling how teachers practiced the autonomy, many challenges were prevalent, we cannot expect that every situation favors but based on the time and situation we can implement those skills or techniques that impart the knowledge to our students. Their stories of supporting students autonomy, with knowledge, motivation, and encouragement towards their students was different and was guided by their childhood experiences of being motivated by their teachers. But they share a common view on understanding and the need for updating teachers' autonomy for teacher professionalism as well as to support learner autonomy having different cultural backgrounds. Together with this they have the intention to help their students in different classroom activities. They even indicated when teachers have a favorable environment there can be practice of skills to move forward.

CHAPTER VI

KEY INSIGHTS, CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter outlines the reconsideration of my research journey. My research journey began with a reflection on my grandmother's childhood stories, which reflected my cultural learning. I also presented my research topic, which is about how secondary-level women teachers tell their stories about developing and practicing classroom autonomy. This research questions drove me throughout my inquiry.

To find out about the experiences of the women teachers who took part in my study, I used the narrative inquiry. I heard the teachers' stories and even thought on my own. I was able to build subjective knowledge about the teachers based on the narratives they related about developing, practicing teachers autonomy, and inspiring their students through the process of transcribing, translating, categorizing, and thematizing.

In this chapter, I have summarize the major problems highlighted in this study. I recollect the key ideas I gained throughout my study journey and draw conclusion. In addition, as an MPhil scholar, I share my reflective trajectory. Aside from that, in my research plan, I outline the study's implications, as well as the limits I experienced throughout this research and my future aims.

Key Insights

Listening to my grandmothers (stories) music

Enjoying my life how it is,

Understanding cultural norms

*Sometimes, I feel, I am dumb,
 Getting into ups and downs while teaching
 I feel my opportunities are teasing
 Seminars, workshops and training for motivation
 Leading my teaching for more creation
 Remembering my (teachers) role models
 Adapting the way classes you handle.
 Having a drive, is it only me?
 I found many, you and me
 Working with students to support their motivation
 Incorporating, teachers, parents, and school administration
 Enjoying my life how it is,
 Yes I am here, teacher for you
 To support how the situation takes it.*

Irina Aryal

In the lines above, I recount how my research journey began with my grandmother's stories and anecdotes and how the teachers who participated in my research inspired, supported, and utilized various approaches to improve students autonomy. I have also added an anecdote to the insights of my study about how my learning was sparked by my cultural norms and values and communicated to my students. My own experience triggered my notion that family and school environments have an impact on individuals' autonomy. Together with this, the teachers, via their encouraging, engaging, and inspirational involvement with the students, create a

favorable learning climate for them while the students exhibit what they have acquired from their teachers in their learning process. Inspired by the same concept, I began my research journey.

In order to think, reflect, analyze, and comprehend the experiences and views as well as the expectations of women teachers while developing, practicing, and updating their autonomy, I envisioned various processes of information analysis and interpretation in this study. The ability to make decisions for oneself usually begins to emerge in childhood, and numerous socialization processes that help people become aware of their social and cultural standards enhance autonomy. Therefore, providing high-quality instruction free of gender bias aids the whole development of children autonomy in the twenty-first century and this starts from their home. Children learn via curiosity and gain confidence when given logical and scientific knowledge and a supportive environment.

The research question was based on the concept of uncovering my research participant's socio-cultural scenario. In line with this, I continued to explore the teachers' stories. While listening to and analyzing the teachers experiences, I continued reflecting on my own experience of how my grandmother and teachers used to involve me in my social, cultural, and classroom learning, and how I strive to establish a learning environment for my students.

Parallel to the stories of teachers exercising their autonomy, I reflected on how home and school environment shape their childrens learning processes to increase learner autonomy. They possessed subjective knowledge about encouraging, motivating, engaging, and exemplifying themselves, which the four teachers (Reeta,

Monika, Romi, and Rina) recognized as their shared styles of teaching and learning. This led me to the conclusion that teachers' engagement in their children's social and cultural learning stems from their subjective efforts of supporting and engaging with the children, as well as the teachers efforts of exemplifying their behavior, attitude, and working methods.

Four participants were engaged employing narrative inquiry principles to generate the insights (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). The information was coded, thematized, and evaluated to generate subsequent findings (Given, 2008). The results are interesting, but they cannot be generalized. I believe that research is a methodical and scientific approach to discovering the truth. Furthermore, it is a means of revealing the truth based on the participants' stories.

And as a result of my involvement in the research, I was able to get insight into the importance of family and teacher involvement in the development of learner autonomy since their childhood as per the analysis of my four research participants childhood stories. And social and cultural learning help women teachers acquire confidence, assist with decision-making, stay stress-free and motivated, and be motivational when needed, and vice versa. Similarly, how the school environment and teachers' multiple roles influence women teachers' autonomy was also the key information I gleaned from the research journey. I was able to get insight by being directed by two research questions that guided me throughout my research journey.

As a result of my reflective discussion, I have analyzed the major insights as a) socio-cultural environment influences development of autonomy, b) multiple roles act as hindrances to update the autonomy of women teachers, c) teachers' autonomy is key

for promoting learners autonomy, d) supportive school environment is fundamental for teachers autonomy and job satisfaction and, e) responsibility is a step towards teachers autonomy and professionalism.

Socio-cultural environment influences development of Autonomy

After analyzing and interpreting the information collected from four participants Reeta, Monika, Romi and Rina, I came to this point of understanding that socio-cultural values influences the development of autonomy. Any person's actions, ideas, and views in later life are influenced by their upbringing, the lessons they were taught, and the stories they were told as children that are implanted in their memories, leading to the inherited outcome in the later stage of life (Garcia, 2015). The children pay great attention as they observe the adults at work, demonstrating their independence as long as the adults act ethically, yet they always keep silent in front of their elders out of respect. This speaks for all of my participants who feel that how confident and excellent they are when completing class assignments is a reflection of how they were raised and how they were trained to be. Monika and Romi shares in the context that they became confident, thinking men and women teachers are equal, and that was their childhood lesson and based on the knowledge and capacity we possess, autonomy of teachers may differ. Their identity is formed by the organizations to which they belong.

Any child develops a the level of confidence and motivation which is dependent on the behaviors that they have received in their early days at home. And all the children learn from their seniors, having seen dominant behavior in between the male and female in home will definitely affect the way they perceive gender roles.

Here children learn how and where to put their views. And as the family, as the main provider of socialization, is crucial to children's development of values, attitudes, and socially acceptable behavior (Figueiredo & Dias, 2012). In a similar vein, Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) asserted that parental involvement in students' education begins at home, where parents establish a secure and healthy atmosphere, offer appropriate learning experiences, offer support, and have a good attitude toward their children's education. Children's early experiences have an impact that lasts a lifetime which is agreed by my four research participants. As per Romi and Monika, both of them are confident as they got similar treatment and encouragement during their childhood as their brothers but in case of Reeta and Rina they were found to be less confident and this shows that the whole environment as childhood, words, treatment, and encouragement have their influence on the development of the person. This is even agreed upon by Helwig (2006), who says that children will claim areas associated with the practice of capacities as they acquire skills and abilities relevant to psychological requirements for competence and self-expression, depending on the opportunities provided by various cultural situations, and this encouragement works as positive reinforcement for personal and professional growth, which can be reflected their story.

Multiple Role Act as Hindrance to Update Autonomy of Women Teachers

After analyzing and interpreting the information collected from four participants Reeta, Monika, Romi and Rina, I came to this point of understanding that, multiple roles act as hindrances to update autonomy of women teachers. The meaning which I have made from the information of my participants is aligned with the key insights

generated by Yearout et al. (2017), the continuous gender gap in the community has been one of the main issues for women, claims. Therefore, one of the major obstacles to practice and update women teachers' autonomy is a lack of personal time for updating and preparing for new lessons. By putting together the tales of Geeta, Monika, Romi, and Rina, I am able to get a feel of how difficult it can be to involve students, both at home and school, and work with people from different cultural backgrounds.

All of the participants were found to be unable to realize their own dreams in the name of balancing all other factors. Women are shown to be particularly vulnerable when they must contend with the expectations of their families and communities (Beauviour, 1949). So, I came to realized that somehow their multiple roles became one of the hindrances to update their autonomy, since most of the time is invested with their children and kitchen work they rarely have personal reading or resources collection time which makes them feel they are not well prepared for their next classes. Realizing the fact that time management for self seems too hard, my all participants started accepting their daily routine and when they have any free time at school, they try to catch up what they have missed out. And this can be linked with Fumin and Li (2012), who state that women teachers take on more challenging and multiple roles in the new teaching model.

Teacher Autonomy one of the factor for Promoting Learner Autonomy

After analyzing and interpreting the information collected from four participants Reeta, Monika, Romi and Rina, I came to this point of understanding that, teacher autonomy is key for promoting learner autonomy. The meaning that I have

made from the information of my participants is aligned with the key insights generated by Núñez et al. (2014) that, the cornerstone for enhancing learner autonomy is the teachers' supportive behavior. Learning is excellent when students feel comfortable expressing their questions and experiences. This immediately leads to improved academic performance among students. Although teaching is never easy, the atmosphere that teachers create in the classroom influences learning in the proper way. Students may look up to teachers as role models. They are able to stay in close contact with the students. The learning environment can be accepting of differences and friendly. Teachers should encourage their children to acquire new things because they know that they cannot learn in a regulated setting. Teachers over engagement also limits their originality (Panta, 2019).

A study by Test et al. (2010) on how teachers support children's learning revealed that teachers include more intentional talks with the students to support their learning, while the talks were intended to encourage them to engage in particular activities or behaviors. This study even stated encouragement as a way of getting students involved in the learning process. In a similar vein, Henderlong and Lepper (2002) have suggested that rewarding students can be a strategy to get them involved in their education and create intrinsic desire in them. All of my participants related a parallel tale about encouraging pupils to participate in their learning.

Therefore, by exercising autonomy, teachers can also encourage learner autonomy. Competence is irrelevant if teachers are given the freedom to run their own classroom and play the role of perfect facilitators (Devjak et al., 2020). My all research participants in this context that, students who receive regular support and

motivation can overcome their fears, thereby increases their confidence and desire for their studies. My views are also aligned with all my research participants as well as with Panta, (2019) that, motivating teachers is crucial for increasing learner autonomy.

Supportive School Environment is Fundamental for Teachers Autonomy and Job Satisfaction

After analyzing and interpreting the information collected from four participants Reeta, Monika, Romi and Rina, I came to this point of understanding that, supportive school environment is fundamental for teachers autonomy and job satisfaction. The meaning that I have made from the information of my participants is aligned with the key insights generated by Kong (2020) that, the administration of the school must release authority to the teachers in order to encourage autonomous practice and create autonomous learners.

The practice of teacher autonomy is influenced by the school's environment as well since a poor school climate demotivates teachers from performing their duties. A friendly and encouraging environment is necessary in the classroom in order to foster teachers' sincerity. The school's teaching and learning process is ultimately diminished by teachers' feelings of bias. Self-engagement in ongoing professional development activities, setting personal goals, and readiness to work around structural constraints all significantly contribute to the growth of teaching in schools. My research participants Monika and Romi share in this context that in order to encourage learner autonomy, the learning environment at school has to be welcoming and autonomy-supportive, and teachers have a responsibility to provide students with

greater learning chances (Kong, 2020).

In my view, I am also aligned with the statement of both Monika and Romi when teachers finds positive school culture they start to learn , share and update themselves with new and varied easy and motivating methods for their teaching learning. And they can also support their students for effective learning chances and finally that may leads towards the comfortable learning for the students. Hence, teachers who support choice and reduce pressure to complete tasks will give students engaging experiences that are brimming with excitement and positive energy. (Nez et al., 2014).

Responsibility as step towards Teachers Autonomy and Professionalism

After analyzing and interpreting the information collected from four participants Reeta, Monika, Romi and Rina, I came to this point of understanding that responsibility is a step towards teachers autonomy and professionalism. The meaning that I have made from the information of my participants is aligned with the key insights generated by Adhikari, (2021) that, it is possible to assert that there is a perceptible, significant connection between teacher autonomy and teachers professional development.

As per Reeta , Rina and Romi, we are always learning and upgrading, and those new skills may be transferred to our classroom. We learn and share among our colleagues as well as come up with fruitful discussions from the sharing. In my view I align with the statements of my three participants and feels that a key component of teacher professionalism is teacher autonomy (Demirkasmoglu, 2010). We are aware of innovative concepts and methods that can be used in the teaching and learning

process, and occasionally, taking on responsibilities improves our communication skills and enables us to collaborate effectively in groups. Teacher autonomy is the capacity to choose one's own strategies, assignments, and/or resources as well as to evaluate outcomes and collaborate with others to resolve problems. Additionally, teachers are required to take responsibility for their own decisions (Tehrani & Mansor, 2012). Despite being restricted in some areas, teachers exhibit independence in their methods of instruction and learning. It has been discovered that instructors engaged in a variety of autonomous activities, such as independent study, responsibility, self-learning, self-evaluation, and so on, that aided in their progression toward professional growth.

Conclusion

This research explores, analyzes and interprets stories of secondary-level women teachers' narratives of practicing their classroom autonomy. In addition, the study also explored women teachers' experience of challenges and constraints while developing and practicing their classroom autonomy where they were found to be bound by socio-cultural environment and multiple roles. While doing so, based on two research questions to be analyzed both in a different way the study employed two different theories. Firstly, this study used feminist theory to discuss the first research question, how do secondary level women teachers narrate the influence of social cultural environment on development and practice of autonomy? Feminist theory is based on and applied to provide a critical lens in identifying the complexities and layers within the stories told by all four participants. Secondly, the study has also used Vygotskian theoretical framework on teacher autonomy for addressing the second research question, how they explicate

their stories of professional growth and promoting autonomy in the classroom practices. Based on these research questions, in- depth interviews (formal and informal) were conducted among four women teachers and their tales revealed to me that they are aware of what teacher autonomy is and the significance of encouragement in their students learning, based on their own experiences with how their teachers participated in their learning. As I combined their tales with Vygotsky's idea of how students or children learn, I was able to validate my notion that the parents or guardians and teachers consciousness is influenced by how they learned from their family culture and classroom environment which I borrowed from Vygotskian theoretical framework on teacher autonomy.

The analysis brings five key discussion points that surrounds this research. Learner autonomy is dependent on teacher way of dealing and inspiring students so "teacher autonomy is found as factor for promoting learners autonomy. Similarly, taking support from literatures and theory helped me to assume that working culture is the most essential factor for teachers' happiness and developing responsibility so, school environment play a fundamental role in teachers' job satisfaction and enhancing teachers autonomy. While talking to research participants, they were found to enjoy the new responsibility that came their way and they confirmed that working on responsibility helped in improving their working skill. So, Responsibility in the school proved to be a step towards teacher autonomy. Listening and analyzing the stories of the teachers helped me to conclude that socio-cultural environment influences development of autonomy as well as multiple role act as a hindrance to update the autonomy of women teachers.

I realized that teachers had unique experiences of developing, exercising, and upgrading their autonomy. As the purpose of my study was to discover how teachers tell their tales from childhood to professional careers, I shifted my focus to determine how effective they were and what factors contributed to their success or what problems they experienced. For this, I gathered the teachers testimonies about how supportive their families and school environment were. I learned from their tales, which I combined with my own, that the teacher process of developing and updating autonomy is directly related to the type of family they come from and the school culture, whether it is positive or negative. This supported, everyday environment allows teachers to be either happy or demotivated in their institution, which has a direct influence on the learner autonomy.

A positive and cozy environment either in school or home helps any individual to maintain balance in both family and professional life. Any administrator in a plan to uplift school standard should not only focus on students' academics, they should also focus on teachers' happiness and motivation towards their teaching learning and this can be enhanced through regular teachers boost up programs as trainings, workshops or discussion either that can be in house or out of the school premises. No one is perfect in this world so we should keep on learning and learning is mostly enhanced by doing. Autonomy cannot be only promoted through supportive school culture. So, teachers should also be responsible enough to learn new techniques and should be always ready to ask for help in need.

Acknowledging the individual uniqueness, this research also reflects on the similarities in the experience, and influence of the underlying social norms in developing, practicing and updating autonomy. Finally, this study is all about the story

of four women teachers whose autonomy is guided by the underlying social cultural values and the struggle they went through developing, practicing and updating it. Hence, factors like schooling, early experience, school environment and responsibility have influence on teacher autonomy.

Learning, Reflecting, and Relearning to Strengthen Research Methodology

It was my idea to look for Master of Philosophy at Kathmandu University. When I put out the application at the university in February 2018, four years after completing my Master's degree in anthropology, it was going to come true. However, my spouse began studying MPhil in educational leadership. Due to my motherly responsibilities, I was unable to enroll in MPhil in 2018. We both agreed that as soon as his MPhil would be over, he would support my enrollment in the MPhil program at Kathmandu University.

Arriving at Kathmandu University School of Education as a development education student was a novel and fascinating experience for me. But, being a school teacher and pursuing degree in development education was a great challenge. Having no examples to share in the class was the most pathetic part of my study where many used to come up with varied experiences of working in the development field. Learning about research methodology was one of the new experiences. We were introduced to several methods of educational research. In the beginning, the notions of ontology and epistemology were really frightening to me. I must admit that anytime our teachers mentioned research methods, I was captivated. But I also used to stuck up on ontology, epistemology, and axiology. When I started the first semester, I had no

idea about the numerous paradigms that would be used in the study. But as I read the dissertations in the library and the papers recommended by the faculty, I began to understand what research is and how it is performed considering various paradigms.

I agree that I am an average learner. But I did not let that be my downfall. My time at the university has been incredibly fruitful academically. The quantity of assignment and the dates for their submission occasionally upset me. The first semester's four days of instruction, the second semester's three days of instruction, and the third semester's two days of instruction are still fresh in my memory. When I had questions, I talked with my professors frequently. The professor never stopped encouraging me to understand what narrative inquiry is and how the study should be performed using this technique. I even talked with my fellows about their studies to gain their perspective. Throughout this voyage, my colleague Santosh Pokhrel provided me with invaluable support and assistance.

He never stopped urging me to learn more about research techniques. Furthermore, our department head, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Prakash Bhattarai, and our facilitator, Asst. Prof and Acting Department Head Suresh Gautam PhD, as well as Dr. Bashu Prasad Subedi, inspired me to achieve better, for which I will be eternally grateful. I started MPhil in development education in February 2020, and in March my husband and I received funding from the British Council to travel to the UK to see our partner school. I then requested our acting department head, Prakash Bhattarai, PhD, to submit all my assignments during my time on vacation. The global prevalence of the coronavirus increased during our vacation in the UK, and there were several deaths as well. This made our travel back to Nepal difficult. I had regular lessons when I

returned the university after my break, but on the third day, the government of Nepal decided to terminate the physical education program. Our lessons then switched to an online mode.

Collaboration was encouraged in the university's courses. The facilitators were crucial in expanding our comprehension. In our M. Phil. classes, I came to know the true meaning of learning. We had to prepare for the presentations in groups. Obviously, I was unfamiliar with the research classes, academic professional writing classes, and theory classes. It was really challenging for me to grasp the regular lectures at first because I got my Master's degree through independent study. I can vividly remember turning in the assignment for the module. Furthermore, the course's volunteer senior brothers, peer-to-peer comments, and, finally, my facilitators' in-depth discussions reminded me of continuing to take the same classes. We were given a checklist to complete. Every time we turned in an assignment, our facilitators kept a record of it. On many occasions, they used to provide comments for individuals in need. The teacher used rubric to grade us. The Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) students' first and second semester presentations, peer work, group presentations, and newspaper articles served as the benchmarks for the rubrics, with the third semester dissertations served as the ultimate test. These were all the steps I took to conduct research on a topic.

Dissertation writing was the culmination of all educational courses at Kathmandu University School of Education. When I would chat with my seniors, they would always tell me how difficult and time-consuming it is to write a dissertation at KU. They used to mention some individuals by name who had successfully finished all

of their semesters with a respectable overall GPA but had lagged behind owing to the dissertation. Whatever the case, I decided to write a dissertation as I felt the need to educate myself. Various topics were covered in the research classes. These concerns were for the research proposal development. As I was assisting students at the school level, I had the idea to assist students who were slow learners, and I produced a proposal for my research. But as my research subject got challenging, my facilitators advised me to look for an alternative study topic.

My facilitator gave me some excellent comments at the same time, saying that one of my papers may be modified and published in an international journal. I did this, and it was successful. I then came to the realization that although I had written an auto ethnographic inquiry, there could be others who had comparable experiences, so I decided to collaborate with women teachers to learn about their experiences with classroom autonomy. Then I went back to my assignment from the second semester where I discussed how tough it was for woman to work from home and study due to the Corona pandemic. So I had a conversation with my colleague Santosh Pokhrel during which I related a tale about a women instructor and reached a decision to concentrate on the autonomy of teachers. Then I enrolled in an online proposal writing course provided by Basu Subedi, PhD, of PCRC. The manner in which Indira Yamphu, PhD, responded to my first proposal and the chance I had to meet him allowed me to work and share. Along with reading and discussions, I listened to professors and explored many sources to broaden my understanding of the research paradigm and its philosophical views. In addition, I continued to participate in the proposal defenses of my friends and seniors in order to better comprehend the topics

covered by my study.

Prakash Sir arranged the dissertation-support class during this period on a regular basis, and I attended in the regular classes. I also discussed my progress with him while I worked on my research proposal, and he gave me some feedback and let me do a demo presentation in the dissertation-supporting class. I modified my plan with the aid of elders' and friends' feedback. I received a date to defend my research proposal after taking into account all of the suggestions, and it went really well. Later, the research committee and my facilitator advised me on how to enhance my research. They even mentioned some necessary technique adjustments. I considered their suggestions and revised the idea. In the meantime, I consulted my facilitator and received favorable responses from each acquaintance.

I began the adventure of collecting data after my department of developmental education and the research committee approved the proposal defense on my topic, narratives of women teachers in their classroom autonomy. I investigated how my participants see the world through narrative inquiry. I listened to my participants for a long time about their beliefs, experiences, and routines related to understanding and utilizing teacher autonomy. At university, there were no physical education courses, so I got lethargic and devoted more time to teaching in school and college.

I took a week leave from school by delegating tasks to my block in charge. I read the dissertation and found some inspiration for my own. I had previously informed my supervisor about my progress on the interview checklist and interview transcription at that point. As soon as I was given, the go-ahead to submit the manuscript, I began to comprehend how to write Chapters 4 and 5. My supervisor encouraged me by

providing me with a variety of insightful books that showed me the way to consistently go to work. And I frequently visited the University, where Assoc. Dean Prakash Bhattraai PhD and Department Head Suresh Gautam PhD gave me further information. I typically put in two hours of dissertation work by turning up late at school every day. Despite doing all of those things, I was still unaware that this research study was coming to an end. Writing my reflection on my dissertation made feel happy. I finally finished my Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Development Education in 2022 after making a few changes.

I had the opportunity to enhance and grow my interpersonal, communication, and emotional abilities via this research. The manner of presentations, teamwork abilities, group projects, and the positive, encouraging climate that pervaded the university were all praiseworthy. Not only that, but as an MPhil student, I was aware of what a research project is. I really understood the research process, and it motivated me to continue working on several articles for publication in both national and international journals. While conducting this research, I was also able to consider and accept diverse points of view, be adaptable to my job, behave ethically, and accept diversity. In other word, completing a dissertation gave me a new real-world setting where I could use and gain from my theoretical knowledge while also advancing my professional and academic lives. Finally, I want to mention that I have always had a strong desire to pursue higher education and educate myself and will continue to do so.

A Thorough Step in Dissertation Writing

Creating a dissertation draft is a difficult undertaking for any researcher. My experience has shown me that preparing the first draft is really difficult. I was ecstatic

to concentrate on the secondary level women teachers' process of building, exercising, and updating autonomy, which has long piqued my attention. But it took far more rigor than I had anticipated. It was difficult to schedule an online interview, and draw them into my study agenda. But I refused to give up. I became more patient than I had ever been. I had to go through a long journey after gathering data in order to get to meaning-creating. There were different processes in between, and each step required a unique discipline. For me, the most useful duties were chapter-by-chapter editing, conceptualizing and substantiating literature, and submitting my dissertation to my dissertation supervisor for evaluation. I scribbled chapters after chapters. In between, I experienced various ups and downs. Despite my best efforts, I was unable to complete the draft in the time frame I had set for myself.

The most difficult obstacle for me in visiting and re-visiting the participants was the COVID-19 outbreak. For a few weeks, the epidemic bothered me mentally. But I was able to meet my participants electronically by using Google Meet, Zoom, and phone conversations. and this gave me a lot of hope. Similarly, after a few months of COVID 19 breakout, I was able to rebuild my confidence to return to the study area. This would not have been possible without the encouragement and assistance of my dissertation supervisor, Indra Yamphu, PhD, Assoc Prof Dr. Prakash Bharrtai, and Acting Department Head Suresh Gautam, PhD. Furthermore, watching my husband Sagar Dahal continue with his professional career, research, family, and seminars during the epidemic gave me the motivation to keep going.

I could complete my assignment in time. I always received timely and positive comments from my supervisor. The job of creating the first draft of the dissertation,

proceeded with the support and encouragement my supervisor offered and the rigor I invested.

Implications of My Study

I cannot claim that my study on the narratives of women teachers in the context of classroom autonomy is the first in Nepal. While reviewing the literature, I discovered that studies have been conducted on how teacher autonomy fosters teacher professionalism. However, I could not discover any research on creating, practicing, or upgrading secondary-level women teachers' autonomy. This informed me that the topic I chose for my research objective has a scarcity of research. Throughout this, I have attempted to understand how instructors are impacted by their socio-cultural context and how teachers might encourage student autonomy, yet some limits remain. Nonetheless, I recognize the need for more research to properly investigate the practice of secondary level women teachers' autonomy.

During my study, I read a lot of journal papers, dissertations, and reports on how important a family's role is in creating an individual's autonomy, what teachers autonomy truly means in different contexts, and how a school environment supports teachers' job satisfaction. However, the research focused on how social and cultural norms impact autonomy and how secondary-level women teachers acquire, practice, and update their autonomy.

Despite the fact that the agenda was less emphasized, my study helped me realize that social and cultural norms, as well as teacher motivation, play an important part in promoting students' autonomy, which is especially important in the setting of a nation like Nepal. As a result, the study emphasizes the need for more research on

how family traditions may be improved to promote both children autonomy, as well as the function of professional courses in supporting women teachers' autonomy in the context of Nepal. The discussion and interpretation of this voyage may be linked to a variety of researchers and stakeholders, as stated below:

Implications for the Students

The discussion and interpretation of the data above highlight how effective teaching techniques increase student autonomy. Teacher autonomy is absolutely beneficial in understanding student academics and planning measures to support them. Students will have the opportunity to develop their academics and confidence with good supervision from teachers on relevant subjects at the appropriate moment. The positive interaction between students and teachers develops mutual understanding on both sides. This, in turn, benefits student academic progress.

It is essential that teachers carefully evaluate student activity on a regular basis in order to discover any difficulties with various disciplines and conduct corrective training. Furthermore, it is vital to employ a range of tools and tactics in order to meet the demands of varied students. It is commonly known that establishing autonomy in classrooms must be well planned and efficient in order for students to grow with the required abilities and knowledge.

For this, it is critical that teaching and learning are meaningful, with professional teachers devising various tactics and approaches to assess and aid students. Preparation and planning, discussion or meetings about the use of textbooks, the curriculum's purpose, and the employment of various tactics, resources, and essential materials are critical for the proper implementation of teacher autonomy,

which directly influences student autonomy. The stakeholders must ensure that teachers' can use their independence in a positive way abiding by the school's rules and regulations without compromising students holistic development because any carelessness or lack of planning regarding the use of autonomy can be detrimental to the future of potential students. Thus, in order to prosper for the welfare of students, the school policy regarding teachers need for professional development and the practice of autonomy must be updated and implemented.

Implications for Teachers

The above discussions and interpretations will help school teachers decide whether or not they are autonomous teachers. What are the next tactics for improving one's professional level? How can one create better techniques for deep learning and raising students' academic performance? What issues must be addressed for the specific students'? All of this will be achievable for teachers if they can make efficient use of their knowledge while also analyzing each student to see where we need to help them. Any teacher may utilize the records they store at any moment to simply interact with parents or the relevant authority. This eventually assists the teacher in developing a positive and pleasant relationship with the children. Even the school administration will be delighted. Reflecting on one's own professional progress and passion for learning and teaching are beneficial to every Nepali teachers, and many pieces of training for improving confidence, classroom management, and encouraging students may be implemented.

A proactive approach to professional development training for teachers, in which teachers understand how to unlearn, relearn, and operate in varied cultures, may

be delivered by experienced trainers, who must move persistently to accomplish the objectives in the application of teacher autonomy. Teachers' require continual supervision, monitoring, and assistance from internal and external resources such as resource persons, head teachers, and other school administrators. Teachers are critical for increasing student autonomy; hence, it is necessary to understand and inspire teachers. In addition, the school administrators continued support for the teachers is critical to keep them from feeling abandoned by the flurry of activity. Furthermore, teachers may only succeed with constant assistance and monitoring.

Implications for the School Management

The aforementioned discussions and interpretations will help members of the school management committee decide what type of teaching strategies teachers are using to motivate each student. The school management committee should maintain a record of the instructional methods used by various teachers. This might lead to teachers being recognized for their contributions to the teaching-learning process. School administration can arrange for refreshment, workshops, and training to take place in or out of the classroom. This will drive teachers to care about students learning as well as school administration. Finally, schools may analyze their students' total performance, provide required comments, and recognize the true efforts of their students and teachers. The school's academic improvement will be realized.

Implications for Academic Community

My study focused on the subjective experiences of four women teachers teaching at the secondary level. I could explore the different factors such as schooling, childhood

experiences, school environment, and responsibility that influence teacher autonomy.

There might be several other factors that influence teacher autonomy. Any researcher interested in this topic has so many places to explore, such as teacher autonomy, learner and teacher autonomy from both teacher and student perspectives, teacher and learner autonomy from the perspective of school administration, and the utilization of different theories may bring different insights too.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Interview Consent Form

Purpose of Interview: This interview is a part of research for the award of an MPhil Degree at Kathmandu University.

Documentation of Consent

I have been asked to give my permission to take part in this research study, which will need me to complete one to several interviews. I have been told that there are no risks to taking part, and the research committee for the M. Phil. will only have access to the participants' identities under strict confidentiality. I am aware that the interviews might be used in the dissertation, written piece, or book, but only when the research participants' pseudonyms are used. The researcher will uphold the aforementioned research ethics.

Please sign this form to show that we have agreed its content.

Participant with name:

Researcher: Irina Aryal

Appendix B: Interview guidelines for secondary level teachers

MPhil Dissertation ON NARRATIVES OF WOMEN TEACHERS' ON THEIR
CLASSROOM AUTONOMY

By: M.Phil Scholar (Irina Aryal 9849099491)

Kathmandu University School of Education

The concept of teacher autonomy is the professional independence of teachers', responsible for updating own knowledge and application of those learned things to make autonomous decision in their classroom teaching. We can also understand teachers' autonomy as what teachers' learn and teach and how they teach in the classroom. I feel teacher autonomy is really a need for any classroom to make the learning better. Teacher autonomy also covers the various aspects as space, freedom, flexibility and respect for teachers' (Ramos, 2006) and this supports to share the knowledge with learners in classroom.

The purpose of this study is to analyze and interpret stories of secondary level women teachers' narratives of practicing their classroom autonomy. In addition, the study attempts to documents challenges and constraints while practicing their classroom autonomy.

Research Question

In the line with the purpose of the research, the study attempted one major research question and two sub-questions.

Q. How do secondary-level women teachers explicate the stories of developing, updating and practicing classroom autonomy?

a) How do secondary-level women teachers relate to the influence of socio- cultural environment on the development and practice of autonomy?

b) How do they explain their stories of professional growth and promoting autonomy in classroom practices?

Part 1 Background details

- School (When it was established? How many student, teacher...), Years in teaching (your involvement), Special Education background (training type/ duration)

Part 2 Teachers Autonomy

- Meaning of autonomy and its application
- School environment and social cultural context
- Training and workshop in school

Part 3 View about practicing teachers autonomy in teaching learning process

- Perception about teachers' autonomy and practice
- Procedures for improving own autonomy in your teaching learning process
- (school environment and home background) role in promoting and practicing teachers' autonomy
- Any memorable situation (Need of autonomy)
- Challenges and benefits in process on practicing autonomy

Part 4 Updating teacher autonomy

- Teaching methodology
- Use of Personal resources or felt any need of resources to enhance caliber
- Any special role at a school to enhance your caliber

Part 5 Impact of practicing teacher autonomy

- Teachers and students autonomy
- Teachers role to enhance students autonomy and any Special needs to support enhancing teachers' autonomy and suggestions

Appendix C: Interview Transcription

This is the model of the interview that I had taken with one of the participants from the Public school located in Kathmandu Valley. This is just the sample of communication that we did, in our third meet which I had transcribed as below in the original version.

Me: Irina Aryal (Interviewer)

Participant 1: Reeta (Pseudo name)

Interview setting: This interview was conducted face to face during the time of post lockdown because of COVID-19. The interview was conducted dated on 10th December, 2021 at 1:00 pm at one of the cafe in Boudha Nath Stupa. Before the meeting, I had telephone communication with her for her comfortable time for the interview. First we had some chit chat and the meeting (interview) was in the following sequence.

Me: Can you please put your view on teachers' autonomy?

Reeta: Coordination, collaboration and freedom to use my knowledge and skill in class can be said as teachers autonomy.

Me: Then, How can we develop teachers autonomy?

Reeta: Mam, in this case, I regard the teacher themselves are responsible towards development of their autonomy. Teacher should evaluate own self how is my teaching learning going on? I am in right track or not? Then, if something are missed then that can be supported through intuitional trainings, workshops or sometime it can also be developed through sharing among colleges.

Me: Can you please, share how do you analyze you as a teacher?

Reeta: I don't say, I am perfect , but there are so many things I have been learning and I am trying to update myself, through my study, use of motivational videos, surfing internet for better techniques t use in my classroom.

Me: Ok, Do you practice self-study or self-preparation?

Reeta: Yes, I go through teachers guide (Reference Book published by Curriculum Development Center) in my free periods and plan classroom activities regularly and refer to books of different publication in case of need.

Me: Do you think trainings support on teacher's autonomy?

Reeta: Yes, there is need of different trainings as, in our teaching journey we came through ups and downs, and collect and dig inside so many problems, there is need of place to share . Training and workshops are the best place to share, where we get so many ideas from many participants to deal with and we gain new technique and information to deal with daily teaching learning process.

Me: How do you take the role of family for developing teacher's autonomy?

Reeta: Family is the one to cry in pain and smile in gain, so the comfortable family environment brings the stress free teaching learning , where a teacher can have better professional development opportunities .

Me: How do you relate your school environment for the development of your autonomy?

Reeta: We have good colleges but the major problem in my teaching is the recent school construction works which may last for two more years. Now we have lack of classroom. So, huge numbers of students are combined in one class which has created problem in teaching learning as well having control over it is a tough job, which

sometimes demotivate me to go and teach. We lack store for the teaching materials produced from the classes. So, there is a problem, we need to prepare materials time and again.

Me: How do you define autonomous teacher?

Reeta: I feel to be an autonomous teacher, they should have clear knowledge on content and context, should be able to make the student understand what was taught, should have good classroom management and students should get chance of more participation, there is need of sharing between school administration and teacher, they should also utilize their leisure time in study and plan the lesson before they teach to the students. Meanwhile our snacks came to our table, we enjoyed our snacks and departed.