EXPLORING BEGINNING ENGLISH TEACHERS' MENTORING
EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES IN NEPAL: AN INTERPRETIVE
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Keshav Prasad Bhattarai* for the degree of *MPhil in English Language Education* entitled Exploring Beginning English Teachers' Mentoring Experiences and Practices in Nepal: An Interpretive Phenomenological Study presented on *31 December 2023*.

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The phenomenon of my research 'early career stresses as a helpless beginning teacher' emerged out of my experience of one special event that happened in the first few days of my teaching career when a simple question of a talented girl in the classroom stuck me. That question became a vexing problem when I could not answer it satisfactorily to her in the classroom. That incident made me feel scared for the next day's class in case I could not find an answer of my own. It was because I could not expect support and help in that remote village of a hilly region, and I didn't have any online or other resources for my assistance. I felt the dire need for support and help at the workplace. However, I knew there was not any possibility of support and help. In this context, the national curriculum framework of Nepal mentions the support structures or support mechanisms for the teachers. However, it is limited to the occasional teacher's training, which does not work well practically at the time of need. Thus, the phenomenon 'early career stresses as a helpless beginning teacher' led this study to explore English language teachers' perception of 'support mechanisms' and their experiences of receiving and providing 'support' at the workplace.

Once the phenomenon of this study, 'my early stresses as a helpless beginning teacher', triggered my mind, and I intended to find English language teachers who had similar experiences that I had gone through. I located their site and selected them as the participants of my study. Then I got ready to videotape their interview, from which I gathered their lived experiences of receiving support and help or teacher mentoring for their professional development at the workplace. After I ensured full justice to the validation of the phenomenological materials and review of the

professional and research literature, I analyzed the phenomenological materials using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a method of analysis. As IPA is a detailed exploration of each individual's experiences, I realized the analysis process is more iterative and inductive for the experiential claims of each participant. In this sense, as an IPA researcher, I came to make a detailed analysis of each participant's case, called 'Idiographic Analysis' by linking parts to the whole and connecting the analysis of each experiential expression iteratively back and forth in various layers of phenomenological reflections, called 'double hermeneutics' analysis. Thus, I interpreted each participant's claims and concerns iteratively based on their lived experiences.

After analyzing each case of the participants and each experiential claim of the participants in detail, I came to find some key insights from this study. Firstly, most teachers enter the teaching profession without preparation or any prior knowledge of the teaching and teaching profession. They happen to make an easy entry into the teaching profession whenever they are free or in the gap from one academic level to another. Secondly, the teachers feel 'reality shock' as they do not find teaching job as easy as they might have thought or as they cannot meet their ambition and expectation in the teaching profession. Slowly and gradually, many of them quit their jobs in the first few months or years. A few teachers who remain on the job go through a lot of hurdles in teaching and tolerate many ups and downs in their early journey in the teaching profession. Thirdly, the teachers who need to retain and grow in the teaching profession seek help and support at the workplace and in their professional networks and receive informal and unstructured types of support and help from their teacher colleagues, friends' circles, faculty members, and even from the seniors as there are no formal and structured types of teachers' support mechanism or teachers mentoring system. Finally, teachers, who remain in the profession, are one of the prestigious and role models of the society, and they enjoy good social life and prestige in the society in the Nepali context. It concludes that there is a dire need to establish formal and structured types of teacher support mechanisms institutionally at the workplace to help teachers develop professionally.

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Keshav Prasad Bhattarai   31 December 2023
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शोध सारांश

केशव प्रसाद भट्टराईको मास्टर अफ फिलोसफी (दर्शनाचार्य) उपाधिको को लागि नेपालमा आरम्भिक अंग्रेजी शिक्षकहरूको मार्गदर्शन अनुभव र अभ्यासहरूको अन्वेषण: एक व्याख्यात्मक फेनोमेनोलोजिकल अध्ययन १५ पुष २०८० मा प्रस्तुत गरियो

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प्रा डा लक्ष्मण ज्ञवाली

सोध्सर अनुमोदनकर्ता

मेरो अध्ययनको विषय मैले शिक्षणकालको सुरुका वर्षहरुमा भोगेका अप्ट्यारा र कठिनाइहरुका कारण शिक्षणमा उब्जिएका तनावहरुसँग सम्बन्धित छ ।तनावको विशेष घटना मैले एकजना छात्राले अप्रत्यासित रुपमा सोधेको प्रश्नको सन्तोषजनक जवाफ दिन नसकेपछि उत्पन्न भयो र त्यही कारणले अर्को दिन पुन: त्यही कक्षामा कसरी पढाउन जानु भन्ने सम्मको नैतिक प्रश्न उठ्यो । म एक पहाडी जिल्ला धनकुटाको दुर्गम गाउँमा भखैँदेखि पढाउन थालेको नयाँ अंग्रेजी शिक्षक थिएँ । त्यहाँ मेरो विषयवस्तुमा मलाई सहयोग र सर-सल्लाह दिन सक्ने अर्को कोही अंग्रेजी शिक्षक थिएन । अन्य स्रोत सामग्रीहरु पढेर, खोजेर वा अहिलेको जस्तो फोन गरेर वा अनलाइन इन्टरनेटबाट उत्तर पत्ता लगाउन सक्ने कुनै विकल्पहरु थिएनन् । यहाँसम्म कि अंग्रेजीको शब्दार्थ हेर्नको लागि मसँग तथा विद्यालयमा एउटा डिस्नेरी सम्म पनि थिएन । त्यस्तो परिस्थितिमा शिक्षकहरुलाई सारो-गाह्रो वा अप्ट्यारोमा दिशानिर्देश गर्न, सर -सल्लाह तथा सहयोग प्रदान गर्न एक 'सहयोग संरचना' को अति जरुरी रहेछ भन्ने मैले महसुस गरें । मलाई शिक्षणका पछिल्ला दिनहरुमा समेत पढाउने कार्यमा सारो-गाह्रो पर्दा वा साथीभाइससँग सर सहयोग लिन नसक्दा त्यही सहयोग संरचनाको आवश्यकता महसुस भइरहन्थ्यो । र आज यो मेरो अध्ययनको विषयवस्तु बन्न पुग्यो । हुन त नेपालको राष्ट्रिय पाठ्यक्रमले पनि शिक्षकहरुलाई नियमित सहयोग र तालिमको लागि छुट्टै सहयोग संरचनाको उल्लेख गरेको छ । तर त्यस्ता सहयोग गतिविधिहरु कहिले काहीं गरिने तालिम र गोष्ठीहरुमा सीमित छन् र त्यी व्यहवारिक रुपमा कक्षा कोठाको वास्तविक समस्यालाई समाधान गर्ने खालका छैनन् । त्यसैले पनि नयाँ शिक्षकहरु के कस्तो तालिम तथा अन्य सहयोग लिएर वा दिएर एक सक्षम व्यावसायिक शिक्षक बन्न सक्छन् भन्ने विषयवस्तुलाई मुख्य केन्द्रमा राखी यो अध्ययन गर्न म उत्सुक भएँ।

यस अध्ययनलाई व्यवस्थित रुपमा अगाडि बढाउन मैले सबैभन्दा पहिले नयाँ शिक्षकहरुले कसरि तालिम तथा अन्य सहयोग आदान प्रदान गरेर दक्ष शिक्षक भएको अनुभव गर्छन् भन्ने अर्थपूर्ण जवाफ दिन सक्ने शिक्षकलाई

मैले खोजें । तिनीहरुको नाम, थर - ठेगाना र फोन नम्बर पत्ता लगाएँ। उनीहरु मध्ये केहीलाई फोनमार्फत र केहीलाई चाहिँ भेटेर मैले अध्ययन गर्न लागेको विषयवस्तुको बारेमा जानकारी दिने र प्रतिक्रिया लिने काम गरें । मेरो अध्ययनको उद्देश्य अनुकुल देखिएका शिक्षकहरुलाई मैले मेरो अध्ययनको सहभागीको रुपमा छानें ।

त्यसपछि उहाँहरुको अनुभव सङ्कलन गर्न मैले अर्ध संरचित प्रश्नावली तयार गरें र उहाँहरुसँगको निरन्तर अन्तर्वार्ता जुमबाट भिडियो रेकड गरें। एकैजनासँग आवश्यकता बमोजिम दुई तिन पटकसम्म अन्तर्वार्ता लिएँ र मेरो विषयवस्तु 'शिक्षक सहयोग संरचना' तथा व्यावसायिक दक्षता अभिवृद्धि संरचना सम्बन्धीका विविध साहित्यहरुको अध्ययन र समीक्षा गरेपछि सङ्कलित समाग्रीहरुको विश्लेषण र समालोचना सुरु गरें । उक्त विश्लेषणात्मक समालोचना मैले Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis(IPA) विधिको विभिन्न चरणहरु पहिल्याए गरें । मैले IPA प्रयोग गर्नुको मुख्य उद्देश्य भनेको यसले सहभागीहरुको अनुभवहरुलाई विस्तृत अन्वेषणमा उतार्ने काम गर्दछ । यसरी सहभागीहरुको भावनालाई जस्ताको त्यस्तै उतारेर फेरी तिनै भावनाहरु, म IPA अनुसन्धान कर्ताका रुपमा मेरो दृष्टिकोण र भावनाको माध्यमबाट पुन: विश्लेषण गर्ने अर्को तहको ' विशिष्ट विश्लेषण ' Double Hermeneutic Analysis गर्न पुगें जसले साना मसिना भावका टुक्राहरुलाई सिङ्गो विषयवस्तुमा जोड्दै प्रत्येक भावनाका क्षणहरुलाई सिङ्गो परिस्थितिससँगको सम्बन्ध र यसको अर्थ निकाल्ने काम गर्यो ।

मैले प्रत्येक सहभागीका अनुभव र भावनाहरुको छुट्टा छुट्टै साना साना अंशहरुको समेत विश्लेषण गरी सकेपछि , यस अध्ययनबाट केही प्रमुख अन्तरदृष्टिहरु प्राप्त गरें ।त्यस मध्ये पहिलो मैले प्राप्त गरेको अन्तरदृष्टि भनेको अधिकांश शिक्षकहरु सजिलै प्रवेश पाउने हुँदा फुर्सदको समय काट्न वा अन्य जागिर वा अन्य बाटो नपाउन्जेलका लागि शिक्षण सम्बन्धी कुनै पूर्व तयारी वा पूर्वज्ञान नलिइकन शिक्षण पेशामा प्रवेश गर्दछन् । दोस्रो उनीहरुले शिक्षण पेशामा जुन सजिलोपन पूर्व अनुमान गरेर आएका हुन्छन् त्यो पाउदैनन् र " वास्तविक झट्का " (Reality Shock) महसुस गर्छन् । त्यसपछि कि त उनीहरु पहिला केही महिनाभित्र वा वर्षभित्र जागिर छोड्छन् कि त साह्रै धेरै शिक्षण सम्बन्धी कठिनाइहरु भोग्छन् ।तेस्रो यसरी जागिरमा टिक्ने नयाँ शिक्षकहरु एक — अर्काको साथी सर्कलमा सहयोगको अपेक्षा गर्छन् वा प्रशासन तथा शिक्षा व्यवस्थापनका माथिल्ला निकायहरुबाट तालिम , निर्देशन तथा परामर्श जस्तो ' सहयोग संरचना ' को अपेक्षा गर्छन् । तर सहयोग संरचना औपचारिक रुपमा स्थापित नभएकोले उनीहरुले पाउन सक्दैनन् । अन्त्यमा उनीहरु आफैं मेहनत ,परिश्रम र सक्रियतामा नजिकका साथी सर्कल र अन्य शैक्षिक नेटवर्कबाट तालिम सहयोग लिएर व्यावसायिक शिक्षक बन्दछन् । यसरी स्थापित भएका शिक्षकको समाजमा राम्रो इज्जत र प्रतिष्ठा रहेको पाइएको छ । त्यसबाट नेपालमा शिक्षक सहायता संरचना दरिलो र भरपर्दो नरहेको तथा शिक्षकको पेशागत दक्षताका लागि स्वयंले सङ्घर्ष गर्नुपर्ने तथा अप्ठयाराहरु

सामना गर्नुपर्ने बाध्यता रहेको पुष्टि गर्दछ । त्यसैले शिक्षकलाई निरन्तर आवश्यकीय सहायता प्रदान गर्न तथा दक्षता

अभिवृद्धि गर्नका लागि भरपर्दो र विश्वासिलो " शिक्षक सहयोग संरचना " निर्माण गर्नु पर्ने निष्कर्ष निकाल्दछ ।

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केशव प्रसाद भट्टराई

उपाधि उमेदवार

This dissertation entitled *Exploring Beginning English Teachers' Mentoring Experiences and Practices in Nepal: An Interpretive Phenomenological Study* by *Keshav Prasad Bhattarai* was presented on 31 December 2023.

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

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Keshav Prasad Bhattarai

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree at any other university.

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Keshav Prasad Bhattarai

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all scholars who intend to get involved in studying and researching in teachers' mentoring and teachers' support system.

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Last but not least is my entire family: my parents, my beloved and son who always supported and wished for the best in my study and research journey. I will gladly acknowledge the inspiration and support of my school and college families: Peacezone Awasiya Ma. Vi. Itahari, and Kasturi College of Management, Itahari and also for compromising my frequent absences during my M. Phil. journey for the good cause of mine.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARMS	Action Research Mentoring Schemes
B. Ed.	Bachelors in Education
BPEP	The Basic and Primary Education Master Plan
CDC	Curriculum Development Center
CET	Circle of English Teachers
CETRAP	Center for English Teachers' Research and Pedagogy
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CTPD	Continuous Teachers' Professional Development
ELT	English Language Teaching
HISSAN	Higher Institutions and Secondary Schools' Association Nepal
I. Ed.	Intermediate in Education
M. Ed.	Master of Education
M. Phil.	Master of Philosophy
MoE	Ministry of Education
NPABSON	National Private and Boarding Schools' Organization Nepal
NELTA	Nepal English Language Teachers' Association
OLD	Open and Distance Learning
PABSON	Private and Boarding Schools' Organization Nepal
Ph.D.	Doctor of Philosophy
SSDP	The School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	The School Sector Reform Plan

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CHAPTER I

RAISING THE PHENOMENA OF INQUIRY

This chapter gives a short glimpse of my experience as a helpless beginning teacher that made me feel humiliated, frustrated, and vulnerable in my teaching career. As research showed evidence of teachers' frustration and quitting their job in the first few years of teaching due to the lack of support mechanism at the workplace (Kutcy & Schulz, 2006; Kutsyuruba et al., 2016; Long et al., 2012; Souto-Manning & Dice, 2007). I also felt the same. Furthermore, it incorporated my feelings and stories of growth and development as a professional English teacher by receiving help and support from different resources like friends' circle, department head, and administrative support and by upgrading my academic qualifications. This chapter also included rationale of the study, problem statements, purpose, and research questions.

My Experience of Helplessness in the Classroom

Immediately after I passed I. Ed., I became an English teacher at a lower secondary level in a remote village in Dhankuta district of Nepal. Since the school had not been able to recruit a senior English teacher for the secondary level in a vacant post for a long time, I was asked to teach in Grades 9 and 10, too. As a young and energetic teacher, students liked me and I became a popular teacher in no time.

One day, I had a lesson to teach a beautiful story entitled 'That Little China Chip' to 9th Graders. It was a beautiful love story of the writer's mother. I had read the story thoroughly and prepared to teach to my level best in the classroom. On that, I was describing the story interestingly (translating into Nepali, the learner's mother tongue), and students were pin-drop silent, listening to me.

Unexpectedly, one first bencher interrupted and made me feel ashamed by asking an unexpected question: "Who was Merge? Was that the same man who came to her home with her brother?" Though the query was from the same story, the unexpected question made me feel a bit nervous and I failed to answer it, as I could not connect this question to the plot of the story. However, I tried to answer as efficiently as I could. I realized I was not fortunate enough to make sense of the statement "It was the sound I wanted to forget" whether Merge or somebody else in the story said it. The girl wanted to know if it was said by Merge and who was that

person. In that immediate context, my logic didn't work, and I failed to answer it confidently and correctly.

I pretended as if I knew the fact and told her something tactfully. She, the first bencher, either couldn't argue or didn't wish to make a dispute any longer thinking that there was no use of her claim; she just nodded and remained silent. It was almost the end of the class. So, I tried to conclude the story tactfully and escaped from the class.

As I came out of the class, I was still scared and regretted not being able to produce a sensible meaning of that sentence. I realized that I spoilt the beautiful plot of the love story. I went home and read the text again. But I couldn't help myself. Perhaps I was too nervous and helpless. I was really scared of going to the same class the next day again.

This event frequently retracted in my mind and tortured me a lot. I realized that my fame or charm as a young, energetic and talented teacher had collapsed. There was nobody to help me at that place; neither any sources of online access nor any other persons to help me with English subject. We had to walk for hours to reach the centre of the Rural Municipality to make a call on the telephone. Moreover, neither the school nor I had an English dictionary to check the difficult word-meaning.

When I remember this incident, I feel that the beginning teachers are helpless. They need continuous help and support at their workplace. They are not able to work independently. They expect a good environment of collaborative support with other teacher colleagues, and faculty members and guidance from the administration to avoid the "position of dependency" and to develop "greater independence and professional autonomy" (Manesi & Betsi, 2013, p. 109). Thus, I realized that the beginning teachers are so delicate and required lot of support and guidance to feel secure, and independent and grow professionally.

My Realization of Mentoring

Now, I have come to realize that the continuous help and support that the beginning teachers receive from their teacher colleagues, friends' circles, their administrative heads, or from the administration and even the feedback they receive from the students in the classroom are all parts of teacher mentoring. Thus, 'mentoring is used to develop knowledge and skills for early career academics across the academic roles of research, teaching, and service" (Fowler, 2017, p. 1). Teachers;

naturally, spontaneously and continuously receive support and feedback from different sources at the workplace. Such support mechanisms are frequent, informal and often implicit in nature.

Even though there is no structured and formal support mechanism for the teachers; except for some training and workshops in our country, the teachers regularly receive mentoring or help and support. For example, teachers get regular feedback from their daily teaching lessons; they exchange test questions and model notes with other teacher colleagues; they keep on discussing related issues or lessons in the staff room or the canteen, and receive continuous useful tips, suggestions and insights at the workplace. Likewise, the administrative heads, directly or indirectly help teachers by recommending them to attend a number of professional trainings, workshops, and conferences and guide them in their continuous professional development. These all-implicit help and support mechanisms are the parts of teachers' mentoring.

In this sense, all forms of support systems or mechanisms to help beginning teachers with their day-to-day classroom activities are 'mentoring process'. It can be from senior teachers to beginning teachers, or among or between the faculty members, or from senior administrative heads to the beginning teachers. Lofstrom and Eisenschmidt (2009) mention that all forms of 'support structures' (p. 681), established to provide the beginning teachers with regular feedback, reciprocity, trust, and collegiality, are all mentoring processes.

Teachers' mentoring is a process of creating learning opportunities where beginning teachers get involved themselves in sharing and talking to seniors and learning something within the community. Arshad et al. (2017) asserted that mentoring provides a forum for direct dialogue between seniors and juniors, providing learning opportunities among the organization's members. Mentoring, in this sense, helps teachers build good learning relationships with the members of professional organizations beyond their hierarchical boundaries.

Teachers' mentoring is a teacher development process through mutual help, support and continuous guidance from seniors to juniors within the school community. One-time delivery of teachers' training may not be sufficient to develop teachers in a real sense. The beginning teachers require regular feedback and guidance throughout their professional careers. Mentoring helps the beginning teachers develop professionally when they interact and work collaboratively in the group (Tang &

Choi, 2005). Thus, mentoring is also a strategy for teachers' development through mutual work, support and guidance to each other at the workplace.

Teachers' mentoring, in this sense, is a means of supporting, helping and guiding the beginning teachers in order to prepare them to teach in the classroom effectively and also to develop them professionally. In this context, Hobson et al. (2009) identified "a range of potential benefits and costs" (p. 207) of teachers' mentoring. They provided some conditions to maximize the benefits of mentoring and to minimize the costs of mentoring by employing certain strategies for effective selection of mentors and developing the qualities of mentoring.

In this sense, beginning teachers require regular support, guidance, mutual understanding and strong motivation to retain in the teaching profession. "Early career teacher attrition is a matter of economic, social and educational concern in many countries" (Long et al., 2012). They further described that mentoring could solve the problem of beginning teachers' attrition. It showed that the teachers' mentoring helps teachers get the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching and retaining in their profession.

My Experience of Receiving Support

Although I kept on upgrading my academic qualifications, passed B. Ed., M. Ed. and became a lecturer, I was still struggling a lot with classroom pedagogy and content knowledge. The main problems were analyzing content, deducing or comprehending the text appropriately, and dealing with the adult students' behavior. I often felt difficulty in deducing the appropriate meaning of some reading texts in English and sometimes felt some pedagogical problems like dealing with adult learners and their disciplinary issues.

As I started sharing my problems or issues among my friends' circles and teacher colleagues and sought help, I most often got very useful insights, ideas, and support from them. It is, in fact, an informal mentoring process in which a mentee or a needy or less trained person initiates and maintains a good relationship with the mentor in contrast to "formal mentoring, where an organization or institution arranges for mentor and mentee's relationship for the sake of learning" (Marshall, 2017, p. 1). Some colleagues shared their unique style of delivering content and dealing with students. Furthermore, teacher colleagues sometimes raised very interesting topics of discussion related to classroom pedagogy and students' behavior in the staff room at Janta Multiple Campus Itahari, where I started my beginning teaching career at the

university level. These rich discussions helped me model the same behavior in such a situation.

I also frequently turned to senior lecturers for help in the content areas for conceptual clarity and guidelines for my future career. The senior faculties guided me to join the regional and national level of English language teachers' professional organizations, like the Circle of English Teachers (CET), Centre for English Teachers' Research and Pedagogy (CETRAP), and Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA). I got many opportunities to attend teachers' training and to share my experiences with teachers with an array of experience and expertise. In these forums I experienced high and low moments, which helped me reflect on my strengths and limitations. Students' remarks also encouraged me to work hard for pedagogical choices during these periods. I got opportunities to present papers and attend conferences. I even started to publish, and so on.

I realized that, though there is no formal mentoring programme or support system in Nepal, the teachers are receiving help and support directly or indirectly at the workplace from their teacher colleagues, friends' circles, faculty board, and even from the seniors. The only requirement is that one must feel the need for help or support and, provided that they have the zeal to develop professionally. When they feel the need for something, they initiate or seek opportunities to get it, seek help, and ask for support and regular guidance from different sources, as I received during the beginning days of my teaching career.

The mentoring process is not usually a formal structure where an organization manages or arranges every support to a mentee. It could be an informal process in which an individual receives support and help continuously without explicit instructions. Hobson et al. (2009) mention that there are a number of influential perspectives on transferring professional knowledge from one individual to another. Their positions implied that mentoring takes place at various stages of professional development over an extended period of time, including a number of goals and purposes. Mentoring also incorporates different strategies and practices according to the learning contexts.

Having observed various conditions, purposes and strategies of teachers' mentoring in the study of Hobson et al. (2009), similar notions of strategies and purposes have been observed in the study of Conner (2015), who agrees, "mentoring can exist in many ways" (p.26/27). It could either be a formal or an informal process;

it could happen for various purposes, like for the acquisition of advanced skills by college graduates or by teachers for their pre-service induction or in-service teachers' training for certain period of short time or for an extended period as a continuous process of career or academic advancement.

Moreover, in a real sense of mentoring process, there is no hierarchical position between the mentor and the mentee as it is in the formal programme or the offices. Anyone, who can guide at least in some desired situation or context professionally, can be a mentor. The mentor can sometimes be any member of the peer group or even a person having a less hierarchical position in the group or community. Students' responses and feedback, which give the beginning teachers the necessary knowledge and insight about the classroom and school environment, can also be part of mentoring.

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Rationale of the Study

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While reexamining the accessible literature on the support system in Nepal, we can find two types of teacher support mechanisms. Firstly, there are various types and levels of government-led or government-facilitated formal teacher training and workshop programmes like Continuous Teachers' Professional Development (CTPD), and 'Refreshers' Training', often occasional and 'one-shot' types of support mechanisms. Such a 'one-shot' type of support mechanism requires frequent follow-up and regular feedback to the trainee teachers. However, due to the lack of such follow-up and regular monitoring system, the impact of such training has turned to meaningless effort and waste of time on one hand and the other has reflected very little impact in the classroom performance of the teachers and the achievement score of the students in the examinations (Gautam, 2016). In this sense, the one-shot type of training doesn't show good results in the classroom performance of the teachers and the students' achievement.

Moreover, there are some informal types of teacher support mechanisms or opportunities through which teachers can receive and gain some pedagogical knowledge and skills on their own personal initiations Gnawali (2016) mentions that the teachers engage in various teachers' trainings, workshops and other professional activities organized by some professional organizations like NELTA and develop professionally. Similarly, non-governmental organizations like British Council, *Karkhana* frequently organize various trainings and other teachers' development programmes, like Action Research Mentoring Schemes (ARMS-Nepal) and support

teachers' research in Nepal (Smith, 2020). Many other private institutions and organizations, even private school organizations and colleges like PABSON, NPABSON, and HISSAN, also conduct occasional training and workshops to refresh in-service teachers at their workplace.

However, it showed that the occasional and 'one-shot' type of training programmes and seminars for the teachers could not help teachers in a real sense to overcome the day-to-day problems they face in the everyday classrooms (Gyawali, 2023). It is because the ideas, knowledge and even the skills they receive in the occasional training, as the ready-made capsules, might not be applicable in their context of teaching, and they might not use it due to the lack of necessary resources, motivation and support from the administration to fit in the classroom. It doesn't seem easy to get support from the seniors and administrators at the workplace.

In this sense, this study contributes to capturing all sorts of spontaneous, self-initiated and practical types of support strategies at the workplace on the one hand and the other hand, establishing them as a regular, accessible and easy means of support mechanism in the vast knowledge of English Language Teaching (ELT) literature. Moreover, it equally contributes to establishing informal, continuous and implicit forms of support mechanisms for the whole school and university communities by forming college-based faculty circles, subject departments and other easy means of support structures. This study further encourages individual teachers use their self-directed, self-initiated support mechanism, however, and whoever is accessible in and around the teaching-learning environment.

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Statement of the Problems

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In most educational institutes where I worked as an English language teacher, the administrators and the faculty members frequently talked about teachers' training, seminars and workshops. The major concern behind such discussion was focused on faculty development or teachers' development. However, the administration rarely conducts teachers' training, and seminars and encourages teachers to participate in such professional development. Practically very few English teachers get opportunities to participate in such professional development training and workshops because in Nepal, "the knowledge about primary (or even secondary) school English teacher preparation is scarce" (Sah, 2022, p. 2). Those who receive the opportunity to participate in such 'one-shot' type of occasional training or workshop are not found to implement the knowledge and strategy in the day-to-day classroom effectively.

Hence, there is very little or no positive transfer of knowledge and skills in the classroom pedagogy and students' achievement (KC, 2021; Subedi, 2015). It is mainly due to the lack of regular follow-up, monitoring and feedback from the authority or from the administration and, in most cases, owing to the lack of resources and support from the administration. So, teacher mentoring can help teachers in the real sense because it is a process of continuous help, support and guidance.

While observing the important educational plans and policies of the government of Nepal from 1948, when the 'Basic Teacher Training Center' was established to 'The School Sector Reform Plan' (SSRP) (2009-2015), and 'The School Sector Development Plan' (SSDP) (2016/17-2022/23), we find that they highlight the importance of teachers mentoring and teacher support system at the workplace but it has not come into real practice. 'The School Sector Development Plan' (SSDP) (2016/17-2022/23) mentions, "schools and districts education officers will be encouraged to implement school and cluster-based teacher development activities ranging from mentoring to participation in professional forums" (SSDP, 2016/17-2022/23, p. 77). The secondary curriculum also encourages teachers to use innovative and transformative teaching pedagogies in the classroom as it mentions, "teachers should play the role of motivator, innovator and resourceful facilitator" (Secondary Education Curriculum, Grade 9-10, 2071, p.9). However, the trend and the practice of teacher development strategy seemed to be very traditional in Nepal. It seemed to focus on occasional and 'one-shot' types of teacher training, which "have not demonstrated remarkable effects on students' achievement and in supporting teachers in a real sense" (NIRT, 2016, p. xiii). So, teachers require continuous support mechanisms at the workplace and a kind of practical guidance regularly so that they can be benefitted in their day-to-day practical teaching and learning activities in the classroom.

To illustrate some, the report of 'Nepal Education Sector Analysis' (2017) mentions the need for "teacher training for vocational stream schools and the in-service teachers training for both secondary and lower-secondary level teachers in Nepal" (p. xiii). Likewise, the framework of 'The Basic and Primary Education Master Plan' (BPEP) (1997-2002) mention the need for 'initial teacher training and professional support for teachers' (p.1). Similarly, 'Customized Teachers Training Curriculum' (2075 B.S.), 'Open and Distance Learning' (ODL) Policy (2063 B.S.)', and 'Teacher Induction Training Curriculum' (2075 B.S.), all mention 'one-shot

done' types of teachers training programmes but do not mention about regular type of teachers support mechanisms or support systems in order to help them develop professionally. What's more, these formal and occasional types of teacher training and workshop programmes have not proved to be beneficial enough to address teachers' day-to-day classroom problems.

In this context, there is a dire "need for ongoing and need-based regular support system to help teachers develop professionally" (Joshi et al., 2018, p. 72). They also mention that the teachers get highly benefitted by their kind of self-directed or self-initiated learning and profession-related teacher training, workshops, and seminars. Likewise, peer-support learning strategies like community of practices and the circles of faculty board at schools and colleges are equally beneficial. In fact, these forms of regular support mechanisms are the parts of teacher mentoring.

Teachers also need platforms and professional networks to reflect on their regular classroom impressions and problems. But very few teachers share their issues in groups of colleagues, in the faculty or in professional organizations. Daresh (2002) rightly observes that many beginning teachers hesitate to request help and support from other teachers and quit the job before they get established in the field. But in our contexts, no studies are exploring the fact of teachers' problems and their frustration due to which some might have already quit their jobs whereas some are still struggling to survive.

The problems discussed above entail several questions. How do the teachers, especially the beginning teachers, experience their struggle phase to build confidence in the classrooms and grow professionally? How do they develop strategies and receive support for their professional growth? How do the teachers get feedback on their strengths and weaknesses about their classroom pedagogy and subject matter? How do the teachers reflect and share their day-to-day problems? Moreover, how do their strategies become similar to and different from existing mentoring strategies? Since there are no explicit formal mentoring programmes or one-to-one reciprocal support systems in Nepal, these issues and questions remain unanswered in our ELT communities for the ELT researchers and practitioners in our context.

Thus, my research problem for this study is geared towards exploring how teachers perceive mentoring processes that they receive during their beginning stage of professional development and how they express it as being mentored or being supported in different ways. Moreover, this study also examines mentoring strategies

that beginning teachers receive in our local contexts and explores if these strategies are similar to or different from existing mentoring strategies in the available literature.

Research Purpose

The research purpose of this study was to explore beginning English teachers' perceptions and experiences of mentoring practices at their work place and also the strategies how they received mentoring and support mechanisms to develop themselves professionally.

Research Questions

This study aimed at seeking an answer to the following research questions.

i)   How do the beginning English teachers perceive the concept of mentoring?

ii)   How do beginning English teachers express their lived experience of receiving mentoring and support mechanisms?

Delimitations of the Study

This study focused on exploring the English language teachers' perception of teachers' support mechanism or teachers' mentoring system that is available inside or outside the workplace. It also explored the English language teachers' experiences of receiving and providing support at the workplace in order to develop professionally. Moreover, it also examined the mentoring strategies how the beginning teachers received support or mentoring processes during their professional development.

Chapter Summary

I started this chapter with my reflection on 'being a helpless beginning teacher at a government aided school in a remote village of Dhankuta district'. It helped me identify the problems of the beginning teachers, who were really helpless and forced to 'either quit the job or struggle at the workplace' without any support'. Drawing on my own experiences of being helpless teacher at the workplace and other scholarly observations, I developed the rationale of my study. It also helped me set the purpose of my study for exploring the beginning teachers' perceptions and experiences of mentoring practices at their workplace in order to get themselves professionally developed. Then I came to frame my research questions on the basis of the purposes and finally I delimited my study confining this study on mentoring practices of the beginning teachers at their workplaces.

CHAPTER II

RELATING THE PHENOMENA TO LITERATURE

This chapter critically examines the available literature on teacher mentoring as a support system. In this sense it includes the essence of what the experts and scholars express about mentoring processes or about the teachers' support mechanisms for teachers' development. This chapter mainly includes 'history of mentoring and its evolution to teacher development strategy, existing mentoring theories and its assumptions and some empirical studies on teacher mentoring.

History of Mentoring and Its Evolution to Teacher Development Strategy

Mentoring is a kind of support and guidance to the beginning teachers to develop their professionalism. It can be either formal or informal. However, mentoring concept started with an informal type of support and guidance as, "mentoring is considered as an effective method for personal's professional development and training. It originates from Homer's Odyssey; goddess Athena disguised as Mentor, a friend of Odysseus, so that Telemachus would emulate him to learn the skills he would need" (Anagnou & Fragoulis, 2014, p. 136/137). This shows that the concept of mentoring developed as an informal but careful guidance and help by the mentor (Athena) to the mentee (Telemachus) as a family member or friend in order to help the mentee (Telemachus, son of Odysseus) learn the skills he would need. In this sense, mentoring is a process for providing support, help and guidance to a mentee (a friend, colleague, student or an employee) for his/her professional development.

Similarly, while conceptualizing the historical development of mentoring, Hezlett and Gibson (2005) state that various scholarly articles on mentoring and practitioners' publications started to be appearing in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Likewise, "The earliest report on mentoring in literature is presented by Kanter (1977), when she interviewed 20 saleswomen in a business firm (called Indsco) in the US to investigate the 'gender-effect' in relation to 'organizational behavior", as cited in (Arora, 2016, p.9). Moreover, as Arora (2016) mentions, traditionally, there was the natural practice of providing 'informal support' to a young junior employee by another older and senior employee in the workplace. Such an action has later become known as 'mentoring' in literature.'

Although, the practice of mentoring developed along with the concept of collaboration, support and guidance in education, it lacked educational concept in the "theory and implementation of mentoring" (DeBonis, 2016, p. 17). However, according to Murray, 2001; Touchton, 2003; Tenner, 2004; Zellers, Howard and Barcic (2008), the first 'formal mentoring pragramme' was found to start in academic literature in the 1980s.

Cohen and Galbraith (1995) noted how mentoring occurred in academic environments, including in the classroom, through community-based activities, and by participation in experiential learning on and off university campuses. They developed roles for the mentor defined as "six separate but interrelated functions: relationship emphasis, information emphasis, facilitative focus, confrontative focus, mentor model, and mentee vision" (as cited in Conner, 2015, p. 26/27).

Although the mentoring concept did not directly appear in academic literature, it has clearly incorporated workplace mentoring, and it is automatically connected with teaching and school activities. Now, it has been a burning issue in academic research and pedagogy. So, it needs to be studied in our context as well.

Existing Mentoring Concepts

Mentoring is a process of supporting and guiding someone who needs support and guidance to acquire some specific knowledge and skills. In this sense, mentoring includes at least two participants; i.e. the giver and the receiver. Mentoring can also be practiced in a group to each other in friends' circles, forming a kind of community of practice. As Pfund (2016) states, "mentoring doesn't happen in isolation" (p.4). Thus, mentoring is a collaborative process, a kind of learning relationship, a process of teacher support mechanism and a strategy for teacher development as a whole.

Mentoring as a Collaborative Practice

Formal or informal mentoring, collaborative work, mutual understanding and friendly relationships between mentor and mentees or in the friends' circles, are common features. They require building appropriate relationships between or among the members and working collaboratively to grow together professionally, especially focusing on the mentee's needs and interests. "Collaboration, as a significant part of mentoring, is positively and directly allied to the success" (Fowler, 2017, p. 2) of both the mentor and mentee or the whole mission of teachers' professional development. In this sense, collaboration is a crucial aspect of mentoring, and it helps both mentor and mentee to reach to their respective goals.

Among many mentoring philosophies and strategies, collaborative practice is one of very important mentoring philosophies. It helps both the mentor and the mentee to develop together in a friendly and desirable way. Souto-Manning (2007) examines mentoring approach to support the beginning teachers who are helping diverse students in their classroom and finds such mentoring experience was highly successful. This study further explored that the beginning teachers' enthusiasm and energy combined with university expert educators' experiences brought a successful outcome in classroom pedagogy. In this sense, collaborative mentoring is one of many successful instructional strategies for beginning teachers in the classroom.

Teachers mentoring and collaborative practice in teaching are the parts of teacher education and teacher development. As teachers' mentoring includes two parties; mentors and mentees, it is a collaborative work. However, there should not be hierarchical differences between the mentor and the mentee to enhance collaborative practice. Moore and Swan (2008) find that 'mentoring and collegial collaboration' (p. 68) are parts of teacher induction and, thus, largely a part of teacher development. They further mention that beginning teachers are valuable in collaborative teaching practice to bring fresh perspectives of the nature and the content of the new course and ideas on teaching pedagogy as they might have passed out the course more recently than the veteran teachers. So, collaborative practice and mentoring are closely connected in teaching pedagogy in the classroom and as parts of teacher development.

Mentor mentee relationship for their mutual 'collaborative partnership' is one of the key issues in teachers' mentoring. The effective mentoring programme emphasizes on building 'collaborative partnership' between the mentor and the mentee. The friendly and mutual relationship between the mentor and mentee ensures effective collaborative work to develop pedagogical knowledge. Hudson (2004) emphasizes a friendly and mutual relationship between mentor and mentee, building a 'collaborative partnership' for the development of pedagogical knowledge and for directing reflection on practice (p. 217). Thus, collaborative partnership enhances the capability to solve day-to-day instructional problems in the classroom, building mutual trust and a friendly relationship between the mentor and the mentee.

Emphasizing the benefits of collaborative and reflective practices in mentoring approaches, Rodie (2011) remarks that the changes and the varieties in the form of mentoring and its approaches result from increased theorizing about the benefit of

collaborative and reflective practices in promoting teacher learning. Thus, collaborative practice in the mentor-mentee relationship is a key strategy for teachers' mentoring.

Mentoring as a Learning Relationship

The mentoring process becomes more effective if there is friendly and mutual understanding and relationship between mentor and mentee. Such kind of relationship can either be formal or informal. It is a kind of 'learning relationship' and also may be a 'voluntary' type of support from an experienced or more knowledgeable person to a less knowledgeable one (Hautala, 2014, p. 10). Most importantly, Hautala (2014) presents four types of mentoring relationships, largely based on formality and duration of time frame. She displays two types of mentoring relations, 'Highly Structured' and 'No Structured' based on formality and other two types; 'Short Term-Spontaneous' and 'Long Term-Life Time' based on time frame (p.10). In this sense, mentoring is a learning relationship from which both benefit professionally.

There are various qualities and specialty of the mentoring relationship. The mentoring relationship becomes productive when the mentor and mentee feel comfortable exchanging their ideas and knowledge openly. Their professional growth and success depend upon the relationship they build in their early days of mentoring. 'Professional Friendship' is one of the core components of mentoring relationships that holds reciprocal caring, showing a sense of regard, concern and consideration to each other, which Gardiner views as a 'Professional Friendship' (Gardiner, 2008, p. 203). This kind of special friendship offers a unique mentoring relationship, ensuring the growth and development of both mentor and mentee.

Mentoring relationships do not end even after the formal mentoring period is over in most cases, especially if the mentor and the mentee work in the same academic institutions or if they really maintain close informal relationships with each other. In this context, Erdem and Omuris (2014) aim to explore the long-term 'New Period Mentoring Relationship' between the mentor and mentee who work in the same academic organization and continue maintaining good mentoring relationships even after the formal mentoring period is over. They further mention that there may be different phases of mentoring relationships even after terminating the formal mentoring process at school or college. There remains a kind of silent unpredictable period, which they call the redefinition phase, just after quitting the formal mentoring programme. Then, it can develop into 'peer mentoring', friendship and gradually to

understanding the long-term implications of mentoring process.

The structured or formal mentoring programme requires special qualities to turn them into effective outcomes. It needs to specify mentors' good qualities and the list of 'dos and don'ts' to follow during the mentoring programme. In case of informal mentoring, the mentee initiates and seeks special features of mentors and receives help in need. DeBonis (2016) the good qualities of the mentoring relationship between the mentor and mentee and finds a number of qualities that make a successful mentorship relationship and ensure the success of a structured mentorship programme. DeBonis (2016) claims that 'Positive relationship between a mentor and mentee can set the stage for success in a beginning teacher's career' (p. vii).

Unlike teaching (traditional way of one-way delivery of lecture), mentoring is a two-way support and learning system. Thus, mentoring is defined as a 'reciprocal relationship' (Astrove, 2017). In this sense, mentoring is a process of mutual growth, mutual development and mutual learning system. The mentor and mentee both benefit from the way they help, support, share and care for each other. In the structured or formal mentoring programme, the mentor may use power hierarchy as he/she is supposed to be a more experienced, more capable, and technically better person. However, in the informal system of mentoring, there is no power hierarchy. They perform as if they are 'professional friends' (Gardiner, 2008, p. 203). They do have regular informal collaborative work in need, and both of them 'learn, develop, and grow from their mentoring interactions' (Astrove, 2017, p. iii). Thus, mentoring is a two-way collaborative learning opportunity for both mentees and mentors.

Mentoring as a Support Mechanism

Teachers' mentoring is a kind of support mechanism for beginning teachers. The beginning teachers lack the pedagogical and practical knowledge to handle classroom activity as effectively and efficiently as the veteran teachers. So, they are in the position of 'swim or sink' in case of day-to-day classroom activities. Mentoring, in this sense, is an essential strategy to help beginning teachers retain in their profession successfully. He (2009) defines teachers' mentoring as a 'collaborative effort that includes emotional and pedagogical support and guidance to the beginning teachers' (p. 263). Similarly, Peiser (2017) mentions that the definition of mentoring differs based on varied purposes of mentoring. It is considered as a 'helping or nurturing process', which is ultimately a broad form of support mechanism for beginning teachers. Positive support for needy people is always motivational and

encouraging.

Likewise, the beginning teachers who are in problems with day-to-day instructional strategy get benefitted with benefit from the positive and emotional support they receive. Oxford and Bolaños-Sánchez, (2016) find the 'positive influence of the mentor's support in learners' life directing to the success and satisfaction (p. 113). They further conclude that a mentor's supportive guidance helps learners or mentees build strong confidence and take a more central role among the members of their communities of practice (p. 30/31). In this sense, the positive help and psychological and emotional support to the beginning teachers be beneficial and useful to solve their day-to-day problems in the classroom problems.

There are many forms of support structures in the mentoring process. One of them is peer support or peer mentoring. Peer mentoring can be both a formal and informal form of support system. It occurs in different forms like 'peer observation and peer evaluation' in the formal practicum or practice teaching system. Peer mentoring may be in informal support as in the 'community of practice', or in 'teacher colleagues circles'. Nguyen (2013) states that peer mentoring is a supportive process that is based on close and equal peer-based relationships in which the peer plays the role of a mutual mentor. In this sense, peer support is an emotionally and psychologically close relationship-based support in teacher mentoring.

Mentoring is not solely a one-way support system from mentor to mentee. It is a reciprocal support system in which both of them exchange their ideas, reflect their experiences and learn together. 'Mentoring relationship is often guided towards an exchange of ideas, knowledge, help and support in various forms for the purpose of their mutual growth and development' (Wasonga et al., 2015, p.4). Thus, mentoring is a kind of 'nurturing, befriending, and being a role model' to each other for mutual growth and development.

The support system is the crux of the mentoring process in which a more experienced person, at least in one professional context, supports personally or professionally to a less experienced person to help him/her develop professionally. Hudson et al. (2013) define mentoring as 'one-to-one support by a more experienced practitioner to less experienced practitioners to help him/her develop professionally' (p. 207). All the forms of support mechanism that a beginning teacher receives from his teacher colleagues, friends' circles, senior faculties, or even the feedback from his/her day-to-day lessons or the students' responses that are helpful to develop

professionally are parts of mentoring.

There are very few or not any studies on teachers' support programmes in our context like 'professional friendship' (Gardiner, 2008, p.203); 'team mentoring' (Le Cornu & Linda, 2015, p.206), 'critical friendships or Critical friend' (Swaffield, 2008) and 'community of practice' (Wenger, 2006) in our teaching and learning literature. So, such practices and strategies, which support teachers' professional development, need to be studied systematically, recognized and established in the practical field of the English language teaching (ELT) community in Nepal.

Mentoring' as a Key Strategy of Teacher Development

Mentoring is a key strategy for teachers' professional development (TPD). It is in the sense that it helps the beginning teachers to develop their teaching capacities and build their competency in teaching. In the words of Richter et al. (2013), the quality of teachers' mentoring helps in building a positive impact on teachers' professional capability and promoting the growth of teachers' efficiency in teaching, fostering teaching interest, providing them with job satisfaction and reducing psychological illness. In this sense, teachers' mentoring is one of many significant ways of teachers' professional development.

Similarly, mentoring is a process of teachers' professional development by helping beginning teachers connect teaching theories and practices together. Mentoring beginning teachers prepares them to learn theoretical and practical teaching knowledge. 'During the last 20 years, mentoring has increasingly been known as a key strategy in teachers professional training and development in teacher education, health care, business and industry' (Peiser et al., 2018). Teachers' mentoring, in this sense, is a part of teacher education or teachers' professional development by providing beginning teachers with both content and pedagogical knowledge in teaching.

The purpose of teacher mentoring is to assist teachers' professional development. It is a process of assisting novice teachers to their day-to-day classroom activities and in both the content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Hobson et al. (2009) state that teachers' mentoring plays an important role in supporting beginning teachers in their preparation as a teacher for their classroom activities or as tools for teacher induction and in teachers' professional development. In this sense, the main purpose of mentoring is to prepare beginning teachers as professional teachers.

There are many strategies and ways to develop teachers' professional skills. Teachers' mentoring is one of the prominent strategies or methods of teachers' development. Supporting the idea, Chitpin (2011) states that peer mentoring is one of many methods for teachers' growth and professional development. Teachers' mentoring promotes mutual understanding between or among friends' circles, teacher colleagues, and faculty members and exchanging emotional and psychological support to each other. All these activities help in developing the beginning teachers professionally.

Mentoring not only helps in developing both mentors and mentees professionally but also helps in confirming quality education. Tang and Choi (2005) mention that mentoring contributes considerably to the professional development of both mentor and mentees and helps enhance quality education. They further examine the connection of theory and practice in the mentoring process and its effect on teachers' professional development. They have concluded that mentoring plays a significant role in teachers' professional development.

Linking Mentoring with Teaching and Learning Strategies

There are many other established theories related to teaching and learning principles of teachers mentoring, support mechanisms, learning relationships and collaborative process of teaching and learning. Some of them could be the informal learning theory, behavioural learning theory (Leaners' reaction to stimulus or reinforcement supports learning), cognitive theory (social interaction: Piaget), constructivism (Scaffolding of Vygotsky: 1978), social cultural theory (learning as a social process) and collaborative learning theory, (Deutsh, 2000- Cooperation and Competition). Although these theories have their own assumptions about teaching and learning, they resemble in many ways with teachers' mentoring strategies. Moreover, there are some mentoring models defined and developed by experts too, such as; 'helping strategies' Gardiner (2008); 'peer mentoring or co-mentoring' (Le Cornu, 2005, p. 358); 'critical friendships' or 'critical friend' (Swaffield, 2008); 'community of practice' (Wenger, 2006) and so on.

Although all these theories and models support mentoring theories, their assumptions and strategies resemble mentoring strategies, the informal learning theory would be applied in this research work. It is because the researcher intends to incorporate all the informal relationships between or among teachers, faculties, and friends' circles as the participants exchange help and support in the mentoring

process. It is assumed to emphasize mainly the friendly and reliable relationship between or among people at school, faculty boards and specifically between the mentor and the mentee.

In this context, collaboration in education refers to "the action of working with someone to produce or create something" (DeBonis, 2016, p.13). It denotes mentoring as working together to help and support each other. In the same context, Cox (1997) explains the impacts of mentoring relationships, which have been the subject of considerable research for the last thirty years. He further mentions that this body of research indicates that mentoring positively impacts career success, career satisfaction, and commitment. These all-positive impacts are the products of mentoring relationships or, in other words, due to good collaboration of mentor and mentee. It means collaboration is working with someone together for a good cause.

Although the mentoring philosophy assumed a kind of support from senior to junior or from more experienced to less experienced in the beginning, it now has multidimensional roles. According to Manesi and Besti (2013), it gradually becomes "a collaborative activity among colleagues searching for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in schools, or looking for ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement" (p. 114). They further say that it is based on reciprocal respect and learning by practising democratic pedagogy: problem posing, dialogue and problem-solving.

However, such informal and reciprocal support and help mechanisms have not been recognized as mentoring literature in Nepal. It has focused only on formal organizational mentoring from a more experienced to less experienced person prevalent in the West.

Empirical Literature

I have gone through different empirical studies, which include collaborative mentoring, informal mentoring, mentoring beyond academic field (mentoring to young manager) and mentoring strategies for developing professionally. A brief analytical description of each study is given below:

Despite mentioning fundamental concerns of mentoring such as, formal and informal mentoring system, implicit support mechanisms at the workplace and structured mentor-mentee relationship to help teachers develop professionally, Dahal (2023) studied the effects of collaborative mentoring to the in-service teachers' well-being in the Nepalese context. She used reflective journals of 6 private schools'

teachers and carried out semi-structured interviews to test their emotional and mental well-being. She concluded that collaborative practices of teachers are useful for teachers' mental and emotional well-being. So, this study confines its purposes or aims "to explore the usefulness of building collaborative relationships through collaborative mentoring for teachers' emotional and mental well-being" (p. 89). This study couldn't widely explore how teachers individually initiate self-learning and receive implicit and evolving types of help and guidance from different human and contextual sources that my research study incorporates.

Bhandari (2022) examined the English language teachers' understanding and practices of mentoring in Nepal. He employed a descriptive phenomenological research design. He selected 4 secondary level English teachers from two community schools of Rupandehi district in Nepal. He employed interviews as a technique for collecting teachers' experiences. He found that the teachers experienced positive results of mentoring. He also inferred knowledge that the common mentoring practices were peer support, profession related training and workshops, conferences and seminars. However, Bhandari did not explain about the nature and processes of mentoring, i.e. formal-informal, implicit-explicit, structured and unstructured types of mentoring processes. Without mentioning strategies of formal and informal mentoring system, we cannot claim what are mentoring practices. My study included all possible strategies of informal or unstructured mentoring and established that all forms of support mechanisms either the support from peers, faculty members, department heads to the institutional professional support to teachers are part of mentoring.

Highlighting the technology assisted teaching and learning, Upadhayaya (2022) carried out research study on mentoring teachers during Covid-19: A collaborative organizational approach. He aimed to illustrate how mentorship technique helped in boosting motivation of the teachers for online instruction during Covid-19. Ten English language instructors form Nursery to class ten, were selected from a government school in Kathmandu and mentored by the head of the English Department and a computer assistant for two months. Then, the effectiveness of mentorship was measured by using narrative methodology and semi-structured interview of the teachers after the course was over. The data was analyzed through thematic analysis technique. The finding highlighted that any difficulties that the mentee teachers faced were restored or overcome by the help of the mentors. So, mentorship helped teachers overcome their day to day problems. This study differs

from my study in the case of methodology and in the process of creating knowledge how teaches grew professionally by receiving or without receiving implicit and explicit supports and guidance from others. My work emphasizes the lack of structured mentoring that affects the informal and implicit forms of mentoring as well.

Smith (2022) carried out a research project on mentoring teacher-research: From situated practice to 'Global Guidance' in Nepalese context. This study aimed at facilitating teacher-research in Latin America and South Asia. In this sense, it emphasized issues specific to teacher-research mentoring. It helped teachers to select a topic and develop research questions; guiding teachers to generate, analyze and interpret data; supporting them to plan and evaluate change; and motivating teachers to share and reflect on their research. It concluded how it established practices of teachers mentoring for teacher research and how it provided useful and relevant support to the beginning teacher-researchers or teacher educators. In this sense this study presented a structured form of teacher mentoring and excluded many essentialities of mentoring, like mentoring forms, strategies and processes which my study incorporates.

Similarly, Sitaula (2014) conducted a research study on mentoring novice English teachers in the Nepalese private schools: A Doctoral dissertation at Kathmandu University, School of Education. She aimed to explore how mentoring practices helped new teachers develop their professionalism. She employed interpretive research paradigm selecting 12 English teachers from four private schools of Dhading district. She used written narrative open-ended interviews for collecting information. She found that teachers are getting mentorship from seniors, head teachers and through responsible at the workplaces despite being aware of the processes and consequences. Such practices are useful for developing their professionalism and impactful for their students' learning achievement. She recommends that formal and effective mentoring is essential for teachers. This study has also left many of the basic questions of mentoring issues unanswered; like what mentoring is; why it is for; and how it works in real practices in the sense that it only captured informal mentoring practices that a teacher received mentoring from his seniors, head teachers and other responsible persons at the workplace. Moreover, my research incorporates all basic forms, strategies and processes of mentoring in both, formal and informal practices.

Gardiner (2008), in his study 'mentoring: towards in improved professional friendship' studies the roles of friendship in the mentoring process and redefines mentoring as 'professional friendships' using five sources of data, including his own lived experience and others being a systematic literature search; a mentee questionnaire; a set of mentoring case studies provided mainly by mentors; and in-depth interviews with mentors. He concludes that professional friendship is a core component of mentoring relationships, and the finding of this thesis contributes to redefining professional friendship in our context of teachers support. In my model of mentoring strategies, 'professional friendship' can be one of the 'Continuous Implicit Support' (CIS) mentoring strategies adopted by Nepalese English language teachers for their professional development.

Similarly, Wright (2014), in her study entitled 'Developing a comprehensive mentoring program' explores various strategies for developing comprehensive mentoring programmes, which are essential for orientating beginning teachers during their first years. This study adds some useful insights to my study about the strategies, like 'collegial collaboration, self-reflection practices combined with a trusting, caring, confidential mentoring relationship, positively impacted teacher, student and school progress' (p. 29) that the beginning teachers adopt automatically or unknowingly to develop themselves at the workplace.

Hirsch (2016) studied 'if undergraduates serving as peer mentors in a learning community attribute the mentorship to develop themselves as exemplary leaders' at A & M University, Texas. Collecting data through qualitative approach using personal-best leadership reflection and short answer responses, he concluded evidence that their leadership skills were positively affected by serving as a mentor. This thesis is useful for my study to generalize some informal strategies of peer mentoring and comparing with critical friendship in the mentoring process.

Arora (2016), in her study 'An Exploration of Mentoring among Indian School Teachers' in Bangor University, confirms the existence of 'informal mentoring' among teachers and reveals its concept prevalent among teachers. She further argues that informal mentoring can be promoted without intensive modifications. Arora uses a mixed-methods approach using questionnaires (N=171), semi-structured interviews (N=16) and documents (N=2) with six schools and an educational expert. She further confirms that 98% of participant teachers prefer 'mentoring' to supervision. So, this study helps me explore and generalize some

informal mentoring practices strategies in Nepal. This study differs from my thesis proposal in the contexts of study and methods of study as it uses mixed-method approaches.

Swanepoel (2012) studied 'the effect of mentoring on the development of leaders at the University of Pretoria, South Africa and concluded that mentoring can be used as a tool to develop effective leaders and it is essential to make good leaders. Primary data were collected from six participants and secondary data were consulted from South African and International literature. This is a qualitative study, and it underdoes interpretive phenomenological analysis. My study is also a qualitative study, which includes interpretive phenomenological analysis. However, this thesis contributes to my study with informal mentoring strategies that beginning teachers can receive from their workplace.

Having read the above literature on mentoring, I realized that mentoring can be held in different teaching contexts informally from a senior to junior, between or among friends' circles, faculty members and so on. Moreover, there are many practices of guidance and support to each other in teaching between colleagues and seniors to juniors. But these practices have not been recognized, documented, recorded and established in the English Language Teaching (ELT) Community yet.

Research Gap

The literature reviewed above shows that there have been adequate discussions and explorations of teachers' mentoring and its use as a strategy for teachers' professional development and its impacts in the global classroom scenario. The policy documents of Nepal, such as BPEP (1997-2000), SSRP (2009-2015), SSDP (2016/17-2022/23); 'Customized Teachers Training Curriculum' (2075 B.S.), 'Open and Distance Learning' (ODL) Policy (2063 B.S.)', 'Teacher Induction Training Curriculum' (2075 B.S.), and even the 'Secondary Education Curriculum, Grade 9-10' (2071), among others have envisioned to provide different types of teachers training and workshops to the teachers. However, the existing literature shows that there is no good impact of teachers training on the classroom pedagogy of the teachers. In the achievement score of the students (Gautam, 2016) and "although a variety of training courses have been provided, including on child-centered and activity-based learning, there has been insufficient transfer of these methods to the classroom" (SSDP, 2016/17-2022/23, p. 25). Moreover, there are a few policy documents in Nepal which aimed "to develop a mentor programme" (SSDP,

(2016/17-2022/23, p. 50) and a few empirical studies (Bhandari, 2022; De Costa et al., 2022) which include various definitions of mentoring in the global context and their practices how mentoring happened in some particular cases. However, they missed the link to exploring the formal and informal status of teacher mentoring in our ELT contexts. The literature also overlooks how teachers develop professionally having or without having any support mechanisms or support system at the policy level of teachers' development and in the practice ground of teachers' development in Nepal.

On the one hand, the educational policy has envisioned the need for professional development of a teacher, and teachers are receiving occasional training, and teachers are receiving occasional training and workshops as part of their professional development. On the other hand, the literature above showed no good impacts of teacher training in the practical field. The situation leads us to the question of how teachers work in the real field. It further showed that teachers are growing and developing into professional teachers are working in the classroom by receiving help and support informally at the workplace. But these means of day-to-day support mechanisms at the workplace and the helping strategies to each other to retain in the profession and professional development of a teacher have not been identified, acknowledged and recorded in the literature of ELT context in Nepal. Thus, there is a missing link between how the teachers are regularly working at the workplace and growing as a professional teacher in the Nepalese ELT context and how they experience receiving support and other strategies of professional development. In crux, the ELT context of our country ignores the vexing issues how English teachers develop professionally. So, this study is oriented towards the direction of exploring the English teachers' experiences of teachers mentoring practices and strategies in the ELT context in Nepal.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I explored the concept of mentoring how it originated from a myth as Homer wrote in Odysseus that Telemachus, the prince of Athena got mentored from a friend of Odysseus and learned the skills he needed as a prince. Then I explored both the theoretical and empirical assumptions that are related to the concept of mentoring and how mentoring came into education field or developed in the latter period widely. The philosophical underpinning of informal learning theory gave me descriptive insights to explore the phenomena of mentoring process at the

workplace. I explored the critical concepts of mentoring; as 'collaboration, learning relationship, support mechanism and the strategies for teacher development'. Then I presented the previous studies with reference to different forms of support mechanisms or support systems to the teachers. I explored both the contexts from Nepal, where there is no structured or formal mentoring system and the context in the countries, especially in the Europe and America, where there is structured and formal form of mentoring. Finally, I generated the research gap and devised the conceptual framework of this study to proceed this work ahead.

CHAPTER THREE

CRAFTING PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with my philosophical consideration that laid the foundation for the worldviews of this research, i.e., ontological, epistemological and axiological grounds for this study. As philosophical principles are a set of assumptions "that can shape the researcher's thinking" (Somekh & Lewin, 2005, p.113), I believe that these assumptions guide me to conduct this research study. This led me to the selection of a research paradigm and research design for my study. As a researcher, I stand on my position in the methodological choices and even in specifying the concept of phenomenological assumptions. I would, thus, choose the appropriate philosophical assumptions and methodology for the analysis of experiential details of my participants and to reach the phenomenon of the study.

My Ontological Senses

Ontology is a set of assumptions about how the world is perceived, looked at in each individual's perspective and in each reality of contexts. In the words of Somekh and Lewin (2005), "ontology is the nature of being" (p.113), how you are being in a particular context, or how you perceive the reality of something. It describes how you exist yourself in a particular context, thing or situation. Creswell (2013) said, "ontology is the nature of reality" (p. 16); what reality you perceive or feel as being the part of a particular context or thing. "Reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by participants in the study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 17). It assumed that each individual is uniquely different. So, the realities, each human being possessed or created in his mind, are different. So, ontologically, I believe that 'teachers' mentoring' is perceived in different forms, in different strategies and in different processes of continuous professional development of teachers. I believe it is perceived in different forms as coaching, training, workshops, professional support to the teachers; as the different strategies of teaching, learning, helping, supporting and developing professionally, and in different processes as formal, informal, continuous and one to one or in the groups of teachers.

My Epistemological Senses

Epistemology is how you know what you have in your mind. Somekh and Lewin (2005) said, "epistemology is knowledge and truth" (p. xiv /1). In this sense,

how you know what knowledge and truth you received, you perceived or you learnt. Creswell (2013) said epistemology is "how the researcher knows what she or he knows" (p.16). It refers to many philosophical questions relating to what knowledge or truth is. It means to say that epistemology is the knowledge of how you perceive the truth or reality. It asks many questions relating to how knowledge is formed. It asks questions like, what are the sources of knowledge? how reliable are these sources? what can one know? and how does one know if something is true? It says piece of knowledge is built or derived from a particular source or context.   In this sense, the truth is built or formed by each individual's involvement in a particular time and space. From this perspective, I received knowledge of 'teachers mentoring or knowledge of teachers' support mechanism' from the teachers who have directly or indirectly experienced mentoring at their workplace. I would then interpret their experiential details and how I understand them. In this sense, I would make sense or meaning of the experiential details or statements of the participants

My Axiological Senses

Axiology is also known as the 'Bias Principle' of the study (Maarouf, 2019, p. 9). Axiology assumes that everyone involved in the research has their own values, experience, beliefs and ideas about the subject or thing, and the values possessed by them have some influence on the research work. The participants of the research must have their own values, experiences, beliefs and ideas about the topic, or the subject of the study and they are highly valued or their experiences are greatly valued in the research. Likewise, there would be some unavoidable bias of the researcher too "however, researcher's values, experiences, beliefs and ideas should be a source of reinforcing research not to be an obstacle in the way of reaching the truth" (Maarouf, 2019, p. 9). As a researcher, I have tried my best not to unify my experiences with the participants' experiences, as their experiential statements and views required to be treated freely and deserved free interpretation as they expressed. However, as an English teacher myself and as I possessed a long experience of powerful high and low moments and struggle in course of growth and development as a teacher, I have included my experiential biases professionally from the topic or area selection to the meaning-making procedures only at the necessary spaces, where more clarification is required and my experiences or viewpoints would significantly fit in the space.

In short, axiology is "the role of values in research" (Creswell, 2013, p. 16); the values of a particular context, setting, place and time, the values of the participants

and the researcher. So, the construction of knowledge is value-laden. As the researcher, I have been aware of the positive influence of values on research work.

Choosing Interpretivism as a Research Paradigm

Interpretivism enables researchers to gain depth of human experiences and perception on some particular topics or social contexts of his or her interest (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The principle of interpretivism, in this sense, resemble with the purpose of my study that was to explore the beginning English teachers' perceptions and experiences on teachers' support mechanisms or teachers' mentoring system. Furthermore, interpretivism is more concerned with particular social context that my study was based on too. Ryan (2018) argues that interpretivism focuses on the subjective meaning or multiple realities of truth and knowledge. He further describes that the truth or reality is constructed in social contexts that give different meaning to different people or different meaning in different social contexts. Similar to the notion, my study also aimed to explore multiple realities of the experiential statements of my participants based on the particular social context and analyze them to make meaning of the interpretation. Similarly, as my ontological perspective of this study is anti-foundationalist and epistemological analysis is subjective, the ontological perspective of interpretivism rejects foundationalist approach that adopts permanent or unvarying standards; instead, interpretive epistemology is subjective that explores multiple realities of the experiential details of the participants based on the contexts (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Thus, interpretivism provides guidelines how the researcher gets detached himself from his personal biases and prejudice in the interpretation of the experiential statements and also provides places to make his position in the analysis of the statement (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). This study also aims to invite the researcher's position where the study demands, but not in the place where the researcher wants. So, I chose interpretive paradigm for the study of my research work.

Choosing Phenomenology as a Research Approach

Phenomenology is the study of lived human phenomena within everyday social contexts (Somekh & Lewin, 2005, p. 121), and the broad assumptions or the principles of a study of lived human experiences or phenomena are the phenomenological approaches. Van Menan (2016) says, "…phenomenology is a human science which studies persons". However, study of 'persons' doesn't mean that it is a study of an individual person or individuality of the human features. Its aim

is to find the 'commonality' from an individual person as Creswell (2013) says, "the basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences within a phenomenon" (p.58) because the individual phenomenon is studied by narrative inquiry and phenomenological study aims at exploring the commonalities or harmonious qualities of more participants.

Phenomenological study is an approach when we assume broad ontological and epistemological assumptions of a study; phenomenology is a methodology of a study when we see its systematic guidelines, processes and ways of studying lived human experiences at a particular context and topic, and phenomenology is a technique or strategy when we talk about collecting of phenomenological materials on the ground (Vagle, 2018).

Thus, this study assumes a phenomenological assumption or approach in exploring the lived experiences of English language teachers on the phenomenon of "the state of receiving and giving professional support" at their workplace. Similarly, it follows a phenomenological methodology or procedures as this study includes systematic guidelines or processes of carrying out the research on the lived experiences of English language teachers on 'receiving and providing professional supports', especially focusing on 'receiving or experiencing support mechanism' at the workplace. Thus, the phenomenological approaches help me choose the strategies, techniques or ways for gathering phenomenological materials from the participants and sites.

Choosing Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a Methodology

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) comes from "a hermeneutic phenomenology tradition" (Vagle, 2018, p.179), as its research design is grounded on the principles and assumptions of the phenomenological approach. It also indicates that IPA is hermeneutic in nature of study. However, Smith et al. (2009) said, "IPA researcher is engaged in a double hermeneutic because the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them" (p.3). There is a hermeneutic circle of reading, interpreting, and reflecting on the data, from part to whole and vice versa, in hermeneutic study. One example of a hermeneutic circle can be taken as a notion that one understands the text as a whole by reference to its constituent pieces, and that one understands each constituent part by reference to the whole. The circle serves as a metaphor for repeatedly re-contextualizing one's understanding of the part and the whole. However, in IPA, the

researcher not only makes sense of the parts (each experiential chunk and statements) and the whole (to the context) and vice-versa but also implies meaning to each constituent part and the whole again by re-contextualizing the text in the researcher's perspective in order to generate the deeper meaning of the text. In this sense, it is double hermeneutic.

Tuffour (2017) said, "In relation to IPA, the 'part' corresponds to the encounter with the participant in a research project, and the 'whole' the drawing of knowledge and experience of the researcher" (p. 4). In this sense, the researcher moves to make sense of the participants who must have made meaning of his interpretation of the context. Moreover, IPA aims to comprehend the situation and context of the research from participants' viewpoints. Shinebourne (2011) mentioned that IPA is so critical and probing in gathering materials to reflect that it explores the phenomenon that the participants are unwilling to do themselves. In this sense, the double hermeneutic is the detailed move from part to whole and whole to parts.

"The third major influence upon IPA is ideography" (Smith et al., 2009, p.29), which emphasizes the thorough interpretation and reflection of a phenomenon under study. This is a process of reading and analyzing data minutely, each emphasizing commonalities and differences to each other and thus, exploring to the converging and diverging ideas of the participants in the study (Tuffour, 2017). In this sense, ideography aims at reaching the participants and to their experiences minutely case-by-case and exploring to their commonalities and differences to each other.

Thus, following the traditions and guidelines of IPA, this study makes a deeper exploration of the lived experience of English language teachers on the phenomenon of "the state of getting and providing professional help or support" at the workplace. From the lens of IPA, it is a meticulous study of each of the participant's or English language teachers' experiential statements, each segmental part, to generate meaning in the whole and iteratively contextualizing and re-contextualizing the whole into the part. In this sense, the success of interpretation depends upon diving into participant's each phenomenological expression in the parts, which are in fact, itself the product of the interpretation of the participants (reaching to the whole in the first order), and moving towards generating the meaning of the researcher again into the whole (second order). So, in a sense "the participant's meaning-making is first-order, while the researcher's sense-making is second-order" (Smith et al., 2009).

It is iteratively going into participants' expressions and interpreting and sense-making of each meaningful experience of the participants and reaching the broader meaning.

Choosing Double Hermeneutics as a Research Method

"The phenomenon lies hidden. It's tantalizing, it's underneath…" (Smith 2019, p. 5). About Smith (2019), some teachers' support mechanisms are visible, like teachers' training programmes, seminars, workshops, conferences, inductions and even the teachers' mentoring programmes; they are visible. I would like to connect one example of a classroom problem to this context. Suppose you are a teacher. You were unexpectedly stuck on some particular content or knowledge in the classroom and required to clarify with your students at the earliest possible. At this moment, you would not expect to get helped or supported by teachers' training, workshops, and seminars. Instead, you would seek immediate help from your closest friend; or you would call to anyone in friends' circle, get helped or supported from online-digital media or platform. However, these forms of teachers' support are invisible, hidden, or not marked.

Although the phenomenon is invisible, underside, or unseen, "it's also connected with what is already visible. And there are clues in what is visible to help access the phenomenon underneath" (Smith, 2019, p. 5). As my participants experienced, the teachers kept on receiving informal type of regular support from others, and they continuously provided help and support to others. But it is hidden, not marked. So, the continuous, informal support system that the teachers keep on exchanging at the workplace is invisible. Though such kind of teacher support is invisible, it is an important part of teachers' development. Such help and support mechanisms are not connected with the visible forms of teacher support in the existing literature. In fact, if there is no continuous support at the workplace, it is really difficult for teachers to grow professionally. So, such kind of 'implicit, informal and regular type of support mechanisms for teachers' growth and development are the 'phenomena' of this study.

Although the phenomenon lies invisible, it has a capacity of enchanting and inviting analytical reasoning that as Heidegger stated, is 'logos' (Smith, 2019, p. 5). The phenomenologists thus give the *logos* an and account and make it appear as a phenomenon in the researcher's mind. In this sense, connecting with my research study, I find that the unseen or unmarked form of teachers' support is implicit and informal but continuously exchanged at the workplace. As the phenomenologists set

their journey to search for meaning, which is feasibly unmarked or unseen at the entry stage of 'appearing', I tried to explore unseen or unmarked forms of teacher support and show its appearance in English Language Teaching (ELT) discourse. Smith (2019) further stated that phenomenology aims to discover a meaning that may be unseen by an entity's form of manifestation. In that situation, interpreting a text is the appropriate way of looking for meaning, and Heidegger connects phenomenology with 'hermeneutics for the same reason, i.e. interpretation of the text and deriving meaning that is hidden or unmarked.

To understand 'Hermeneutic phenomenology' and 'phenomenology' in general, we should understand the philosophical instances of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Edmund Husserl (1849-1938), who have their way of living and seeing the life world (Laverty, 2003, p. 22/23). The clear distinction of Heidegger's phenomenology is moving away from just the consciousness, or just 'knowing the world' to 'being in the world' or diverting away from the epistemological view of *'to know'* to the ontological view *'to be'* in the world (Vagle, 2018, p.78). As Laverty (2003) further described that, Husserl understood human beings primarily as 'knowers' and Heidegger understood "human beings and the world is indissolubly related in culture, in social and in historical contexts" (p. 24). In this sense, Husserl's philosophy of 'consciousness' and 'understanding' are fundamental systems of human reality, but they are not the basic conditions to 'know' the world. It is, in fact, the manner we are in the world. So, hermeneutic phenomenology is the analysis and interpretation of the life world or human experiences as they are lived, not how they are understood or taken for granted outside of the context.

Now to understand 'Double Hermeneutics', we should learn that hermeneutics interprets human experience or human life world as being a part of it, being insider in the pain, in hate and in love of the participants itself. So, hermeneutics phenomenology interprets the participants' life world as if it were the researcher's world. But, double hermeneutics refers to the process of double interpretations by the participants who were also supposed to express their life-world interpreting of their being in the situations, so it is already an interpretation of a life world; and again "researchers are doing interpretation, of their participants' interpretive work and for both, interpretation is of the experiential meaning of the phenomenon" (Smith, 2019, p. 6). In this sense, the researcher is interpreting the lived experience of the participants; the second time the participants have lived in the life world, experienced

it and had already interpreted the life world. This phenomenon of 'double being' and 'double interpretation' is double hermeneutics.

Choosing Participants

As "IPA studies are conducted on small sample sizes" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 51), I chose five participants because the detailed analysis of an individual's transcripts consumes a relatively long time for interpretation and reflection. I selected the participants purposively so that they could offer significant insight into my research project in a particular context. Vagle (2018) didn't expect "magic numbers" of research participants (p. 131), but emphasized on how the researcher controlled the research study. So, the participants, whom I believe could make a significant contribution to my research, were first contacted via my cell phone calls because they were in my contact lists. While choosing the sample, I tried to make them an equally homogeneous group as "IPA researchers usually try to find a fairly homogeneous sample" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 51). Then I obtained their consent to sit for a short physical meeting. However, one out of five preferred to attend virtual Zoom meetings since it was about 50 kilometers far from my research site, and four of them became ready to sit for a short meeting physically. I clarified my motives to meet them and about the research project, its objectives and motives. I also requested them to contribute to my research work as I thought they were suitable participants for my research study. They agreed to contribute from their side and I took their short bio as follows:

Manish

Manish is an M.A in English. He works full-time in a full government-aided school. He has been working as a teacher in different capacities, from a primary-level English teacher to a part-time English lecturer at the university level. He has experience in teaching both at private and public schools in eastern Nepal. He has got enough exposure to teachers' training as he is a permanent English language teacher in a government school, and there are several mandatory types of in-service paid training for teachers. He became a life member of different professional organizations like; 'The Center for English Teachers' Research and Pedagogy' (CETRAP), the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) and other local organizations. He seemed to be a very sincere and dedicated teacher at his workplace.

Manisha

This participant is an M. Ed. in English Education from Tribhuvan University.

She is also a permanent English language teacher at a government-aided school in Damak, Jhapa. She possessed around 15 years of teaching experience from elementary level to the university level in both private and public schools. She has gained a good professional and social identity as a teacher educator and teacher trainer from a close circle of friends, and communities of practice to a large professional network and educational community as she received one of the very prestigious teachers' awards, called 'Teachers' Excellence and Achievement' (TEA) for her visit to the United States of America (USA) in 2020.

Yunish

This participant has taught in private and public colleges for over 12 years. He is an M.A. in English from Tribhuvan University. He works full time, also sometimes called whole time, as he teaches from morning 6 to evening, later 6 o'clock, for different streams of high school students to master's degree students in the same institutions. Besides, he manages to teach part-time in a private college around the city. He is also a life member of some professional organizations, like CETRAP and NELTA and has received ample opportunities to participate and even to present in many teachers' training, workshops and professional conferences.

Yunisha

She has an M.A. in English from Tribhuvan University. She has taught in different private schools and colleges for about 15 years. She has been a life member of a professional organization for English language teachers, called CETRAP, and currently working as an executive member of the committee. She has also had ample opportunities to participate in different teachers' training, workshops and professional conferences. She has also presented papers on pedagogical issues and her experiences as a teacher in local level professional organizations.

Sumit

This participant has an M.A. in English from Tribhuvan University. He has been teaching in different private schools and colleges for about 15 years, and currently, he is a renowned English teacher at a private college in Itahari, Sunsari. He is also a life member of CETRAP, a professional English language platform in the local area. He is one of the trained teachers and educators as he has participated in various teachers' training, workshops, seminars, and conferences and presented papers among the professionals.

Choosing Methods for Data Collection

While gathering phenomenological materials, a researcher should feel free to choose any resources or methods that fit well for his research study (Vagle, 2018). He further pointed out that one of the 'most often used' and 'standard techniques' of gathering information in phenomenological research is 'interview' (p.135/36). I used because the 'interview' technique for gathering the lived experiences of my participants in this research because the interview helped researchers to conduct in-depth and truly useful discussions with participants and also alleged idiographic obligations of IPA (Miller et al., 2018). It showed that the interview provided a rich and detailed first-person story of the participants' experiences. I felt the interviews were the best-suited and easiest way of exploring participants' "stories, thoughts and feelings" (Smith et al., 2009, p.81). Interviews also helped the researcher build a good rapport with the participants and explore feelings and emotions openly.

I conducted 'semi-structured, one-to-one interviews' (Smith et al., 2009, p. 81), as IPA recommends. Semi- structured and one-to-one interviews helped me build a good rapport with the participants and create a good space for them to listen to me carefully, comprehend my queries and answer them sincerely, one after another, in a friendly and familiar tone. I asked semi-structured or, most often, unstructured questions to my participants one after another and allowed them to talk as freely as possible, just listening to them carefully, thoughtfully, and slowly as if it was a usual conversation (Vagle, 2018), and responding them saying 'yes *(hajur),* yes*'* more frequently and asking some of the probing questions in the middle if necessary or if that would be relevant to the context. I just helped them unfold their 'life world or life stories' in detail through multiple interviews, conducted repeatedly though "there is not a prescriptive number of interviews recommended in IPA" (Miller et al., 2018, p. 245). I felt multiple interviews were necessary if the researcher wanted to explore the real world of the participants and to make a good relationship with them along with addressing the 'idiographic' commitment of IPA.

I conducted physical face-to-face and virtual zoom interviews per the choices, convenience and preferences of my participants. I recorded their life stories and lived experiences both on my mobile and on my laptop directly when I conducted Zoom virtual interviews at the convenience and preferences of my participants. I also took some notes, but not too many, as suggested by Vagle, (2018) because taking notes and listening to the participants simultaneously could confuse the researcher and make

him miss the track of the interview. It also could miss important lived experiences of the participants. So, I took notes, to remind myself that I felt instantly it was remarkable. However, I didn't analyze why these chunks were remarkable for me during the interview; I just addressed my feelings as I felt it was remarkable. Immediately after every interview, I listened to the audio at least once thoroughly to prepare for the next interview with missing parts. While listening to the audio, I checked and compared my quick note I had written during interviews and also add and circle some of the words or sentences if I ap-0gain found some remarkable expressions. Then, I would start working to transcribe every word and lived experiences of the participants systematically and at ease. I requested my participants to allow me another opportunity to talk again in case anything was missed on the research topic or any professional issues almost every time I conducted an interview with them, and they fairly agreed.

Choosing Analytical Process in IPA

It is challenging to distinguish between gatherings of phenomenological materials from the analytical process in the phenomenological study since they subtly overlap (Vagle, 2018). Moreover, the analysis process depends on the approach the researcher uses under phenomenological study. Similarly, the interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) doesn't recommend only one or the other way of working with collected materials. However, like another phenomenological study, IPA also tries to specify its features and emphasizes a particular process of analysis.

Since IPA focuses on studying each participant's lived experiences along with their converging and diverging ideas analytically in detail, this study focused on the close, line-by-line analysis of an individual participant's experiential statements and reservations. Then, I developed 'emergent patterns, i.e. themes' (Smith et al., 2009, p. 84), identifying their converging ideas in their experiential claims. I even observed commonalities and divergent ideas the participants expressed.

Choosing Analytical Patterns in IPA

Although there is no single 'right way' to conduct data analysis in Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), it specializes on some shared features (Miller et al., 2018). There is ample flexibility in the analytical patterns. The patterns and the levels of interpretation might vary between the novice and the experienced researchers. However, the levels of interpretation vary ranging from the basic level of being too descriptive of the content to the higher level of social interpretive,

metaphorical and highly personal psychological analysis. In this study, I followed six general steps of data analysis cum three layers or levels of interpretation of Smith (2019) and Smith et al. (2009). It mainly incorporated the following steps.

Step: 1 Reading and Re-reading

Like other phenomenological studies, the first step of IPA analysis involves the researcher engaging with the original data. In most of the IPA studies, the researcher begins with making the first written transcripts. The main purpose of this stage should not be making a 'quick and dirty' synopsis of the transcripts, but it should involve the researcher's deep understanding of the participants' tone, participants focus and their linguistic and conceptual meaning of the particular context (Smith et al., 2009). So, the first step of IPA analysis is researcher's involvement in deep reading and re-reading of original transcripts and reaching to the deeper understanding of contextual meaning of the transcripts.

Step: 2 Initial Noting

Until the researcher starts re-recording the transcripts in his mind or re-scripting the concept in his mind, his understanding level doesn't get matured. And the best way of building conceptual scripting of the transcripts in the researcher's mind is starting to take initial notes and raise comments. It is the beginning stage of making exploratory comments on the transcripts at the descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual levels (Smith et al., 2009). So, at this level, I began with making descriptive, linguistic and conceptual notes and comments on the transcripts. Descriptive comments mainly contain description of the contents or the subject of the talk and what the participant has said. Linguistic comments focused on the language used in the transcripts, and conceptual comments included critical questioning of the context and nature of the transcripts. It mainly focused on 'deconstruction of the context' by fracturing the participants' narratives and getting close to their meaning in the context.

However, this step also increased familiarity with the transcripts and opened the horizons of the researcher's mind. In this sense, it is a detailed and time-consuming stage when the researcher plays with the original data in an exhaustive nature and tries to reach a deep understanding of the context. The final stage of this level is writing an overview of the initial notes of the transcripts.

Step: 3 Developing Emergent Themes

Developing emergent themes is a process of reducing the volume of details. I reduced the volumes of transcripts, or the bundle of or the heap of materials, specifying them into smaller volumes and reaching the gist of the context or meaning. In so doing, I pointed out the main focus of the transcripts and recalled what was obtained or learned from the previous two steps: reading and re-reading the transcripts and initial noting. Further, I reached playing the transcripts and initial noting, I broke up the narrative flows (divergence, cutting into parts) a process of fragmenting the participants' experience in the first stage. I again reached the stage of finding the commonalities of transcripts or the initial noting into a common gist as a whole (convergence) of meaning or context. This process represented the whole hermeneutic circle as 'the original whole became a set of parts and then came together into another new whole at the end of the analysis in the write-up (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher had a central role of organizing and interpreting the transcripts. So, my role as the researcher would be to contribute my own interpretation along with the participants and make meaning of what they have already expressed or interpreted.

The major goal of translating notes into themes is to create a succinct and sharp presentation of what was significant throughout the entire transcript. Themes express both the psychology of the participants and the context; and it is usually expressed in phrases or chunks of language that point out the commonalities in meaning and context of the transcripts though the initial noting contained both the similarities and differences. The emphasis is always to capture the essence or the whole of the transcripts, as in the hermeneutic circle where the part is interpreted in relation to the whole, and the whole is interpreted in relation to the part (Smith et al., 2009). In this sense, as the researcher of this study, my role was to turn my analysis process into double hermeneutics as I again interpreted my analysis on what they had already made meaning or interpreted from the side of the participants.

Step: 4 Searching for Connections across Emergent Themes

After establishing themes, I sorted them out and looked for similar patterns in order to develop 'super-ordinate themes' because it was not possible to incorporate all the sub-ordinate themes for the analysis (Smith et al., 2009). In so doing, I followed several strategies like *abstraction*, a process of identifying patterns between emergent themes; developing a sense or meaningful unit (super-ordinate themes); *subsumption*, bringing a series of related themes together; *polarization,* categorizing themes focusing on the differences of the patterns, *contextualization*, observing the

background of the transcriptions like culture, gender, social phenomenon, and its effects, *numeration*, recognizing the frequency of themes on the transcripts, *function*, highlighting the positive or negative sense of the transcripts, and finalizing the themes by covering up all possible emergent themes, and *'bringing them together'* is the way of looking higher level of connection in the emergent themes.

Step: 5 Moving to the Next Case

As a researcher, I need to give each case equal time, priority, and focus. This is a kind of 'idiographic commitment' in IPA (Smith et al., 2009). I would give each participant's experience equal importance, allowing each case to develop or emerge a new theme or new meaning. I gave each case separately special focus and reached to the dipper knowledge and meaning of the transcripts.

Step: 6 Looking for Patterns across Cases

This step is closely related to the fourth step of analysis previously mentioned here where I looked for the unique idiosyncratic manner of each case to find out the connection across the cases in this study. Moreover, this step is usually a way of "laying each table or figure out on a large surface and looking across them" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 107), though I have not laid on any table to show the connections of the patterns here. I have just made linguistic contextual description. Although each case has its unique idiosyncratic instance, they might have shared some common features and meanings even though the language and context were different. In so doing, it was impossible to capture all the participants' experiences. So, I would mainly emphasize connections in meaning and context of the strongest and most impressive case and context of the transcripts.

Step: 7 Taking it Deeper: Level of Interpretation

There are levels of interpretation of the text. However, the novice researchers are often found to be too descriptive in their analysis and do not follow the basic levels of interpretations (Smith et al., 2009). Though I am also a novice researcher, I tried to follow all three levels of interpretations: social contextual analysis, metaphorical analysis and emotional psychological analysis of the transcripts (Smith et al., 2009). I interpreted participants' experiences by comparing, contrasting and evaluating from a social contextual point of view in the first basic level. Then, I also made a metaphorical description if the participants had used any metaphorical words and chunks of language in the second analysis stage. Then, at the third level of analysis, I captured their personal emotional sense of the particular contexts or events

that made them overwhelmed and amazed to the particular lived experience of the life world.

Step: 8 Writing in Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Write-up in research studies is an attempt to make sense of what the participants have said to the researcher (Smith et al., 2009). So, it is one of very vital and important sections in research studies. I wrote a narrative account and a comprehensible text so as to make it systematic and persuasive to the readers. It is because the sense-making process doesn't create value unless the readers make their sense of the text as well. In this sense, a write-up is substantial, discursive and the main purpose of a write-up is to interpret the data and to communicate the sense to the readers.

As I began writing this study, I basically made a general description of what participants said or what sense the transcripts communicated to the researcher in general. That mostly started with making a number of possible superordinate and sub-ordinate themes out of the transcripts. I didn't present or show the themes in figures and tables but tried to make my writing more systematic, descriptive and emotionally reflective, weaving the dialogue between the participants and the researcher. When I was emotionally overwhelmed on the particular section of this writing, my poetic senses emerged out of it and I came to express my feelings along with the participants' feelings in the poetic languages.

Thus, moving forth and back to the transcripts, I frequently reached to the participants' experiences and brought their experiences into my writing and iteratively repeated the same process, which became my key strategy of writing. In so doing, I frequently used participants' extracts in my writing and provided the evidentiary basis for the transcripts. I labeled each participant's extract or the individual's transcripts with a unique identifier or a pseudonym of the participants. Moreover, I analyzed individual participants' extracts or transcripts connecting with the bases of my own experiences and sense making in the hermeneutics and double hermeneutics. Having finished writing of the first super-ordinate theme, I moved to the second theme and went through the same process up to the third theme or others. The same process was repeated for each super-ordinate and co-ordinate theme.

However, there is another way of writing in hermeneutic and double hermeneutics. One could quickly write a draft of the themes without interruptions

descriptively and observing and editing the drafts later in leisure time as per the time and wish (Smith et al., 2009). This also applies the same 'back and forth' process of observing the draft minutely each time you get leisure and continue editing, writing, improving and rewriting until you get final writing. However, the danger of such writing is postponing writing for a long time and almost diverting concentration permanently to begin with writing again. Thus, it requires enough patience and repetition of the works very frequently until you get it final.

Ethical Considerations

I was fully committed to maintaining ethical practices while gathering phenomenological materials and analyzing the lived experiences of the participants in their transcripts. I was aware of accepting the scrutiny of institutional ethics committees and personally following all known ethical considerations. Although there is no exhaustive list of ethical solutions, some important parts of it could be, avoidance of harm; drawing pre-informed consent of the participants; granting anonymity of their identity, and the right to withdraw within a time frame (Smith et al., 2009). General ethical practices are further specified and clarified as in the following two sub-headings.

No Harm, No Risk

I would sincerely avoid the possibility of harm to the participants during my research process, from the collection of materials to the analysis and writing. I would not deliberately violate the fairness principles of qualitative research. I would be always sensitive and aware of the participants' psychological, emotional and physical safety and well-being in this study. I would use their anonymous names to hide their identity in writing; assure their privacy to keep within my secret records and use them anonymously in general themes. I would firmly abide by the cultural and religious values and sensitivity in this study. They would be informed earlier that they could postpone or quit their participation in the research process if they felt any difficulty or deficiencies in the research process or if they felt that it could harm their personal beings.

Early Information, Consent and Planning of Time

I gained the 'Early informed and Consent' principle as I had informed the participants and received their consent before I conducted in-depth interviews with those participants. It helped me gather the natural lived experiences of the participants as they happily agreed to share their experiences on teachers' support, teachers'

growth and mentoring experiences. I not only informed my participants about the areas and topics my study would cover, highlighting the general gap I would intend to cover, but I also shared the likely outcomes of data analysis of the research study (Smith et al., 2009). In so doing, it helped me to confirm the participants for my purpose and finalize with confirmation of consent before I conducted interviews. After I gathered the information, I planned to begin preparing and figuring out the keys to transcripts. Although I had planned to go a bit more swiftly and efficiently in course of my write-up of this study, it took a longer time for a part time student (Smith et al., 2009). At this point, I should admit that I really felt to get hassle-free my mind before I instructed it to receive pressure of accomplishing a task haphazardly.

Quality Standards

From the beginning of the investigation of a study, the IPA researchers required the underlying qualities of the IPA studies that they were open-minded, flexible, patient, possessing feelings of empathy and the willingness to enter into and respond to the participants' world. Moreover, the IPA investigation should follow the basic principles of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) perspectives. These principles or IPA perspectives include the researcher's quality of being determinant, persistent, and curious enough to spend sufficient time for the study and acquire the necessary skills for researching effectively (Smith et al., 2009). Similarly, it is IPA demanding set of qualities that requires a helpful supervisor who could realize the fact that there is no such thing as a 'perfect data' or 'data collection event', and no version of events which is 'the truth' (Smith et al., 2009). Although there would not be entirely in control of the process of the qualitative research, it would be expected that the researcher should be able to engage with complexity, i.e. the quality of limiting 'a certain amount of unpredictability, chaos and mess' (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, I believe this research work would maintain the desired quality of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) as it follows a set of assumptions of ethical practices and quality standards.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the details of how and why I made my methodological choices. The bases of my methodological choices grounded on the participants whom I intended to choose for inferring the experiential details; the process how I intended to collect the experiential details from my participants and the process of interpretation how I planned to analyze and interpret the experiential

statements. The methodological choices were further based on the research gap I explored in the previous chapter. Then I explored the philosophical ideas, beliefs or assumptions that guided me to set the nature of my study. Thus, I came to frame the interpretive paradigm of my research and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the research method. I also specified the tools for collecting experiential details of my participants, i.e. multiple interviews in the time intervals. Then, I specified the number of participants and also a short background information of the participants to authenticate the subject of the phenomena of the study. When I set the paradigm of my research and the method of the study, I presented in details how I analyze and interpreted the participants' experiential details in double layer of interpretation; i. e. also called double hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry. Finally, I explained how I maintained the ethical consideration and quality standard in my research study.

CHAPTER IV

UNDERSTANDING AND PERCEIVING MENTORING

In this chapter, I responded to the first research question: how do beginning English teachers perceive the concept of mentoring? Through this research question, I drew on English teachers' perceptions of how they understood the meaning of mentoring. To be more specific, this research question tried to explore the beginning English teachers' perception on how they noticed getting themselves changed or transformed into 'master teachers' (Wright, 2014) so that they would realize how they received mentoring. In this sense, this research question sought to explore teachers' perception of their transformative processes (Woodrow & Caruana, 2017). 'The transformative process' here refers to the mentoring process of teachers. Thus, this aims to explore the teachers' understanding of how they grew as professional teachers.

Understanding Mentoring for What, Why and How?

The participants realized and perceived the meaning of mentoring from different angles. They seemed to be critical of what mentoring is, what it is used for (means why) and how it is received practically at the workplace. In this sense, the participants realized its form, what it is, its utility, why it is and its process, how it is. In short, they perceived it what it is 'as a form'; why it is for 'mentoring as a tool or strategy'; and how they understand it takes place, 'mentoring as a process'. As an entity, they recognized mentoring as the 'support mechanism to the beginning teachers' (Hobson et al., 2009, p. 207) but different in nature and formality: as they said, mentoring is a casual and informal type of support mechanism to the beginning teachers. In fact, mentoring is defined as a 'support mechanism' or 'support system' as the form of 'help, support, and guidance' (Conley, 1995, p.7); however, it varies in nature, formality and process. As a strategy, mentoring is a teachers' development strategy. Mentoring is supposed to be a kind of sharing, caring, guiding, supporting, networking, collaborating to one another in order to grow into a bold, assertive and professional teacher. In this sense, the participants realized that mentoring is a strategy for teachers to network, collaborate, and develop. Finally, teachers' mentoring was realized as the process how it is delivered and received; i.e. implicitly or explicitly, and its structure of delivery.

My participants also experienced different forms, strategies and the processes of teachers' mentoring. As they expressed, the common form of mentoring is 'teachers' support mechanism' as in the form of 'help, support, and guidance' to the beginning teachers at their workplace. He (2009) also found mentoring as a form of help, support and guidance in order to make teachers socialize in their teaching context and to help them gain pedagogical and content knowledge. It showed that the teachers required regular help, support and guidance or a regular 'support system' in order to tackle the problems that occur in day-to-day classroom practices.

As my participants further expressed, mentoring is also a strategy for teachers' networking, teachers' collaboration and teachers' development by caring and sharing at the workplace. Some of my participants said, mentoring is also a helping strategy from senior or more experienced person to less experienced or junior person. Wasonga et al. (2015) also found mentoring as a nurturing strategy, in which a more experienced person helps, guides or supports to a less experienced person. It echoed that mentoring is a strategy of networking, sharing, caring, teaching, guiding, collaborating and developing in which a senior or more experienced one teaches, serves, helps, supports or supervises the junior ones at their day-to-day and regular work.

Mentoring, as my participants further expressed, is a process of exchanging help, support or guidance that happens informally, continuously and implicitly in day-to-day activities at the workplace. As they expressed, it is not only an informal support or help (teaching) but also an implicitly ongoing teaching and learning process. In this sense, mentoring is both a teaching and learning process that the teachers do in the close circles of teachers' colleagues, or in a large circle, outside the school community. Teachers keep on sharing the ideas, knowledge informally and implicitly and keep on learning together. Koutsoukos (2022) found mentoring as a 'communication and relational skills' in learning which is a process of informal learning and at the same time explained mentoring as a 'positive attitude to lifelong learning' (p. 1). Teachers do not prefer very superior mentor for their support and help. They often want a close colleague who teaches the same course and can share his/her experience informally and practically (Colognesi et al., 2020). In this sense, mentoring is a process of teaching, learning, building interpersonal professional relationships and also a process of lifelong learning.

Thus, based on my participants' experience, this chapter derives three main themes, as well as their one-to-one sub-themes. Mentoring is, as it is identified or recognized in teachers' community, called 'mentoring as a form'; secondly, mentoring, for its purpose or why it is used for? is known as 'mentoring as a strategy'. Mentoring, in fact, is used for teachers' networking, collaboration, and development. Finally, mentoring as a process; means how it is delivered or received. The mentoring process includes the formality of delivery; about how mentoring happens. In regards of formality, mentoring is either continuous, regular or occasional process or one time done activity like training and workshops and either explicit or implicit in its modes of delivery.

As my participants expressed, the teachers' mentoring is recognized or identified as the form of 'Teachers Support Mechanism'. So, mentoring as a 'form' derives only one sub-theme: 'Mentoring as a Support Mechanism (SM)'. It could be in the form of help, support and guidance. Secondly, mentoring as a strategy, as mentoring is for 'teachers' networking, teachers' collaboration and teachers' development', again derives only one sub-theme, 'mentoring as a strategy of teachers' networking, collaboration and development'. Finally, mentoring is also found to be 'a process of doing' as my participants experienced in a practical context. In this sense, mentoring is 'a continuous and implicit' teaching and learning process. Thus, the process of mentoring derives only one sub-theme: Mentoring 'as a Continuous Implicit Process (CIP) of teaching and learning.

Teachers' Mentoring as a Form

This theme, 'Teachers' Mentoring as a Form' came out of the experience of my participants who envisioned mentoring as an 'identity' synonymous to 'teachers support system or teachers' support mechanism'. In this sense, my participants objectified the term 'teachers' mentoring' as a form of 'teachers support'. In fact, this theme emerged out of my participants' experience when they referred to teachers' mentoring' in the field of teaching and learning. It further indicated that the form of teachers' mentoring was meant for what or how teachers' mentoring is portrayed in the teaching and learning field. Sowell (2017) writes, 'mentoring is a primary form of teachers' induction' (p. 5). It indicated that mentoring is recognized as a form of teachers' induction that is closely referred to as teachers' training or teachers' support and guidance. It further implied that teachers' mentoring was also meant for the basic form of 'support and guidance' to the beginning teachers, especially to those who

need support in course of teaching in the classroom. Moreover, Conley (1995) also explained that mentoring is one of two different forms of teachers' collegiality. It also showed that teachers' mentoring is a form of collegial help, informal support, and guidance between or among teacher colleagues, friends' circles, or collegial relations at the workplace. So, a more informal, non-hierarchical, supportive mentoring process is discussed for effective applications of support and help to the teachers (Ewing, 2021). Thus, my participants clearly envisioned that teachers' mentoring is a form of 'Teachers' Support Mechanism'.

Although this theme, 'mentoring as a form' indicated 'the support system or support mechanism', it further explored the nature of 'help, support, or guidance'. There are many forms of support: teachers' training, workshops, induction, coaching, supervision, guidance, personal collegiate support etc. Based on my participants' experience, there are both 'formal and informal types of support systems and the structured and unstructured types of support systems or mechanisms in our teaching and learning contexts, which are all parts of mentoring. As they expressed, 'the formal support systems, like local education department of municipal level, district level "Education Development and Coordination Committee' and even the principals, head teachers, and coordinators of the schools and colleges are just for namesake" (Manisha, 2023, interview). She further explained that they couldn't support in reality, as they are not capable to guide in all subject matter or in other skills of classroom management too, and also, they are deliberately reluctant towards their duties and responsibilities. In this sense, there requires a kind of 'Continuous Support Mechanism' built around schools' community, friends' circles or community of practice as an informal form of support mechanism. Her idea resembles the ideas of Anagnou and Fragoulis (2014), who explained that one of the very crucial learning strategies for teachers is 'lifelong learning' that goes continuously and informally. In fact, there is an informal and implicit form of help and learning system that continues throughout the teaching profession.

Comparing the formal or structured mentoring system with the informal mentoring mechanism, Ragins and Cotton (1999) explained that mentees of informal mentoring relationships receive better help, care and support than the mentees of formal mentoring. In this sense, 'support and guidance' come under informal form of teachers' mentoring. Thus, this theme, 'Mentoring as a form' derives only one sub-theme: 'Mentoring as an informal and casual support mechanism'.

Mentoring as an 'Informal and Casual Support Mechanism' (ICaSM)

This-sub theme, 'Mentoring as a 'Support Mechanism' (SM) came out of my participants' experience in viewing 'mentoring' as a 'support system' in which one keeps on giving and receiving 'help and support' casually between or among friends or sometimes, from senior, more experienced to junior, less experienced without structured phenomenon or in informal basis at the workplace. Le Cornu and Linde (2015) found that sharing knowledge, experience, help and support was easier and more desirable in the informal setting of team mentoring because the members in such a setting feel safe, equal and friendly to each other. This idea of sharing also reflected that mentoring is a kind of sharing, help and support that keeps taking place between or among teacher colleagues, friends or from senior to junior at the workplace in an informal setting.

Based on my participants' experience, teachers' mentoring is informal and continuous help or support mechanism. Unlike the practices of informal mentoring, a formal system of mentoring came into practice in the 1980s in many parts of the world for the support and professional development of the beginning teachers (Hobson et al., 2009). However, as the concept of mentoring developed, it was a kind of informal support from a senior learned person to a junior one. In this context, Greek mythology explained that the word 'mentoring' came from 'Mentor', the name of the old sage who had taken care of the young 'Telemachus', son of the King of Athena, popularly known as 'Odysseus', who was away from home in the Trojan war (Meschitti & Smith, 2017). It showed that mentoring was found in the form of help, support and guidance, as 'Odysseus' received it from a learned sage. To begin with Manish:

> *Teachers' mentoring is a form of help and support to the teachers. Even if a teacher is good or competent in teaching content, he may fail to apply various teaching strategies in the classroom, especially in the beginning stage of his teaching. So, he requires help, support and guidance about handling the class, interacting with the students, etc. To help teachers solve these all problems, teachers require mentoring. As far as I know, teachers' mentoring can be of two forms: One is formal type, and another is informal type. In our context, I don't feel there is formal, structured mentoring, although a principal or head teacher should have played the role of mentor.*

In this account, Manish assumed that mentoring is a form of help and support. He further described that the teachers required '*help, support and guidance*' in order to handle the class, manage students in useful interaction and to apply various strategies in the classroom. It showed that beginning teachers might face many problems while teaching in the classroom and require 'support' in order to run day-to-day classroom activities effectively and successfully. Concerning the matter of teacher mentoring, Anibas et al. (2009) explained that the beginning teachers face number of problems in the classroom and seek out the solution, mainly two things: 'collegial relationship and professional support system' (p.212). Collegial support is an example of casual and informal support that a teacher receives from or provides to one another at the workplace. It revealed the fact that the beginning teachers required help or support as they encountered a number of problems at the workplace. These all support mechanisms, as Manish indicated, is teachers mentoring.

Manish further stated that there could be formal and informal mentoring systems. However, he further admitted the fact that the head teachers and other authorized persons should have played the role of mentor in the formal system of mentoring, but it seemed that they didn't assume to do it. In this sense, the beginning teachers seek out help and support from anyone they get in their surroundings or whomever they think that could be applicable for. The teachers might get support from colleagues or any members of the faculties whom they are close to. Burak and Simsar (2022) revealed that the mentor should be a model whoever it is and should be able to support regularly in various problems of the classroom. In this sense, there is no need of formally assigned or selected mentor who will teach an assigned task only, it required such a mentor who could be a friend, or a faculty member, a senior or anyone who could help professionally. In this sense, teachers' mentoring is a form of 'help, support and guidance' and it is what we meant to say a 'support mechanism' that is regular and informal without any formality and boundary.

To many extents, Manisha's experience in the meaning and understanding of 'teachers' mentoring' is not different from that of Manish. However, she presented it a bit differently though she had a good sense of mentoring as a 'support system'. She said,

> As far I know, it is concerned with teachers' help and support. Teaching
> profession is like the one, which can never be perfect. Teachers face many
> problems daily in or outside the classroom on teaching content, teaching

pedagogy or the problems related to students' behavior and so on. In such situations, teachers need a kind of help, support or guidelines. The person who provides help and support is called a mentor, or the process or thing that helps teachers in teaching is also a process of mentoring, and the whole process of support from which we benefit is a mentoring process.

Manisha's account also revealed that mentoring concerns teachers' help and support. As she explained ahead, she asserted that the teaching profession is always challenging and remains at risk of any kind. It was meant to say that '*teachers face many problems daily in the classroom or outside the classroom'* in different issues. As Manisha echoed, teachers' mentoring was essential at that situation when teachers were in trouble. It also showed that if teachers didn't get supported in very troublesome situations, they would fall into a kind of frustration with the teaching profession. In the same context, Kutcy and Schulz (2006) studied teachers' frustration in the course of their teaching and found that they have 'frustration in their daily work with students, parents, and administration' (p. 78). They further stated that teachers' mentoring is one of the very useful forms of help and support to teachers who need help in order to get rid of their problems and frustration of any kind.

Moreover, Manisha further mentioned that anyone who can help someone meaningfully in a time of need, or who can solve the problems that occur in the course of teaching, and who provides help and support to the teachers could be a mentor because there is no uniformity in the definition of a mentor and it can be anyone. In this context, Tang and Choi (2005) rightly said, 'mentoring has taken on different meanings over historical phases' (p. 384). Manisha even reflected that the way or process, model behavior of someone, or technique of handling something, or even the resources that could be useful and that can support teachers in the teaching and learning process could be taken as a mentoring process. Aderibigbe et al. (2018) also mentioned that all the effective strategies for supporting teachers for their professional development is widely known as mentoring. It showed that not only the human's support, but also all means of support for teachers' professional development are known as the form of teachers' mentoring.

Almost in the same context, perhaps not knowing the specific qualities of mentor and mentee, Yunish appeared to say that mentoring can be hierarchical, that serves from senior to junior in his first attempt but immediately later, corrected to

recount the statement as he came to say, *'it may not be true as well'*. Here, he continued saying,

> *The novice teachers may have different difficulties and problems while coming to teaching field. So, supporting, helping, and guiding teachers to overcome such problems is mentoring. To my experience, only a more experienced person can support or guide to a less experienced or novice teachers. However, sometimes, it may not be true as well, and the less experienced person himself seeks knowledge and asks for help from seniors and experienced ones. In government sectors, there can be new teachers' induction, training and mentoring, but in the private sector, I often don't find such practices formally.*

The account of Yunish pointed that '*supporting, helping and guiding teachers'* to *overcome* day to day practical problems that may appear unpredictably in the classroom is mentoring. He further stated that teachers face '*different difficulties and problems'* in the classroom and should be solved tactfully. It indicated that teachers alone could not solve all the problems in the classroom and needed help and support. This idea of support aligned with the argument of Burak and Simsar (2022), who mentioned that teacher mentoring helps teachers to socialize in the school environment, acquire teaching ethics, manage emotional and social well-being and develop classroom management skills. It reflected that many teachers who faced problems in the classroom or outside of the school environment feel helpless and frustrated. Asención Delaney (2012) rightly said that new teachers should not be left alone to face the many challenges of their professional lives. This implied that many teachers who feel helpless in the first few years of teaching either quit the job or struggle without help and support in frustration.

Moreover, Yunish, without feeling much confidence, asserted in his first attempt that the senior or experienced person could only guide the junior. In this sense, there is a hierarchy in the teachers' mentoring. However, immediately later, he came to correct the statement and said, '*sometimes, it may not be true as well'*. From his expression, it echoed that mentoring relation was hierarchical even though he immediately expressed 'doubt' on it. In fact, effective mentoring does not require formal hierarchy between the mentor and mentee as Fowler (2017) explained that there would be a kind of very friendly informal kind of relationship spontaneously emerged out 'between a person with advanced experience and knowledge and a less

experienced person' (p. 2). Therefore, it reflected that even though they have different level of knowledge, the effective mentoring demanded a kind of 'collegial relationships' and support between the mentor and mentee.

Moreover, Yunish also asserted that there are some formal institutions and programmes for effective mentoring of the beginning teachers in the government level in Nepal, though he further clarified that they would be known as differently as teachers' induction, teachers' training and so on. He further admitted that there were no such mentoring practices in private sectors in Nepal. In my experience too, even if involving in teaching profession more than 18 years in different capacities, schoolteacher to college lecturer and now principal of a high school, I didn't experience any direct form of mentoring, either formal or informal in Nepal. As far I know there are both formal and informal systems of mentoring in many parts of the world as Johnson (2013) rightly said, "Mentoring constitutes a long-term process utilizing formal and informal relationships for faculty development" (p. 3). In this sense, Yunish's concerns and knowledge of the existence of teachers' mentoring in Nepal implied that there is no recognized form of formal or informal mentoring in practice in Nepal.

Yunisha, another participant of my research seemed to be a bit more sensitive in her experience of the beginning stage and said the meaning of mentoring a bit differently. She said,

> *It is very serious thing that teachers need to feel comfortable in order to go to the classroom and teach. They need courage to go to the class and start teaching. They cannot even write on the board at the beginning stage. So, in such a situation, making the beginning teachers feel comfortable in the classroom is mentoring. Thus, it is a form of help or support that makes the teachers feel comfortable in the classroom and in the school environment. Furthermore, the beginning teachers require many things in the classroom, may be resources, knowledge about the new school environment or also may be content knowledge. So, providing guidelines or delivering support to the beginning teachers in different teaching fields is called mentoring.*

Yunisha's experience of entering into teaching is terrifying. She asserted that one required courage to enter into the classroom. She even said that a teacher might be unable to write on the board properly. This reflected that the teachers might encounter a number of unexpected problems or troubles. As Harrison et al. (2006)

said, "developmental mentoring' involves elements of challenge and risk-taking" (p. 1055). Moreover, such problems might push the beginning teachers into an unexpected reality because many of the beginning teachers might have taken a teaching job, one of very easily available and cheaply responsible jobs. But when they fall under the pressure of teaching, students' and administrations' observations, they come to feel a kind of 'stark reality' (De Jager, 2011, p. 3). This situation as Yunisha indicated leads the beginning teachers into a serious terrifying situation.

Thus, she added that the beginning teachers needed very careful and sincere support to their day-to-day activities. She emphasized on the beginning teachers' comfort in the classroom. The beginning teachers should be sincerely guided, and supported at the workplace as mentoring help the beginning teachers develop professional knowledge (Löfström & Eisenschmidt, 2009). As Yunisha implied the beginning teachers might not be able to know the 'pricks and tricks' of the classroom. So, they might not feel adjustable in the classroom. They seemed to be unknown 'How come the pricks' and 'who helps with the tricks. It implied that the beginning teachers might get puzzled by what they have heard and learned about classroom teaching and what they should have been doing in real classroom world (Kutcy & Schulz, 2006). There seemed to be a quite vast discrepancy between their expectation and the reality of teaching. It also reflected that mentoring is a form of help and support.

Sumit, now finds himself as a professional teacher. However, he still feels that he required support in his teaching. The support, as he said, is required for different purposes, depending on the teaching contexts. In most cases, he expects a kind of clear briefing from the administration and sometimes he expects that the administration would help teachers manage the students' disruptive behavior. He said,

> *Teachers' mentoring is how he gets mentored or how he gets supported at the workplace. Teachers face different types of problems at the workplace related to classroom management, students' disruptive behavior, and about the content knowledge. Although I am now a professional teacher, I still need support depending upon the situation. I expect clear briefing from the administration on dos and don'ts before sending us to the classroom. Most often, the senior persons like principal, coordinator, faculty head, department head or the senior member of the faculty help, support and guide the less*

experienced persons or to the juniors. So, as far I know, such type of supports and guidance from senior persons is called teachers mentoring.

Sumits' account is also closely identical to the previous participants' experiences to many extents. Sumit also asserted that though he is now a professional teacher, he still required help and support at the work place. It is because as he said, teachers faced different types of problems and the teachers are in day-to-day troubles, sometimes in pedagogical issues, classroom management and course contents. Kutcy and Schulz (2006) write about teachers' frustration as they face different types of problems like classroom management, diverse students in the classroom, dealing with difficult parents, and tolerating administrative pressure. It implied that no job is out of risk and full of comfort. Every job had its own limitations. So, teachers are required to face all the problems, seek solutions, ask for help and work to the best of their level. The only thing is that they needed help and support, as everyone required.

Moreover, Sumit further explained that there is a kind of formal system of 'help, support and guidance' like every school enjoys at least one principal, who is a kind of mentor for other teachers, head of the departments as well as the resource person or representatives of Education Department of local government and so on. However, he further said this formal support system is so called, just for show off. Therefore, as he understood the meaning of mentoring, he found it an informal type of support and guidance from a bit more experienced person to a less experienced person or whoever is better in content and pedagogical knowledge than others can be a mentor. This idea of mentoring from a senior one aligns with the idea of Meschitti and Smith (2017) who explained that mentoring is a kind of informal relationship where one senior or more knowledgeable person helps or supports to a less expert or less experienced one. It showed that teachers could receive mentoring, i. e., 'support and guidance' from any person who has better knowledge than him/her.

From all of these expressions of my participants, I, as a researcher, infer that 'teachers mentoring' is a kind of 'support mechanism'. To be more specific and detailed, it is a kind of informal relationship between the mentor and the receiver (mentee) where the mentor is supposed to be more experienced and more expert on the particular subject or topic of knowledge than the mentee. It seemed to have been many instances that mentoring is 'help by one person to another' (Meschitti & Smith, 2017, p. 167); Mentoring is a 'guidance of an experienced, senior advisor' (Given & Kelly, 2016, p. 3), Mentoring is 'forms of informal learning' (Anagnou & Fragoulis,

2014, p. 133) and existence of both 'formal and informal mentoring' (Arora, 2016, p. i). Thus, the sub-theme 'mentoring as a Support Mechanism' seemed to have come true in real sense as the participants expressed that mentoring is a 'support system', that keeps on exchanging or '*giving and taking'* continuously between or among friends' circle, from senior faculty to junior or in the teacher colleagues. Furthermore, it is informal in the sense that one of the participants literally said, '*I don't feel there is formal, structured mentoring although a principal or head teacher should have played a role of mentor'* (Manish, 2023, interview). It showed that though there is no formal, structured mentoring system, they need a kind of informal, regular type of support mechanism at the workplace. It also echoed that they felt the significance and importance of 'Support Mechanism'(SM) that continues regularly, informally as a continuous process.

<div align="center">**Teachers' Mentoring as a Strategy**</div>

This theme 'Teachers' mentoring as a strategy' is emerged out of my participants' experience that explained teachers' mentoring is 'a strategy' of teachers' networking, teachers' collaboration, and teachers' development. In fact, 'strategy' refers to an approach in general and to a method in a broad sense and also to be more specific, a technique of doing something. Sandybayev and Erdem (2015) found mentoring as a strategic approach to increase intrinsic motivation and efficiency at work. However, my participants observed mentoring as a strategy to teachers' development through teachers networking and collaboration. Likewise, Kardos and Johnson (2013) looked at mentoring as a strategy to improve public schools and retain teachers. It echoed that improving schools was meant for developing teachers and encouraging and ensuring their retention in the profession. In this sense, teachers' mentoring is a strategy for teachers' development. Meschitti and Smith (2017) mentioned that mentoring was meant to provide strategic advice for improving personal and institutional growth and development. It suggested that mentoring is a strategy to help personal development in the profession and also to help in institutional development along with the members of the institutions. Thus, all these expressions above echo mentoring as the strategy for developing teachers and thus helping in the wholesome development of an institution.

Furthermore, these all are strategies for building relational networks and collaboration between or among the members of an institution and for establishing networks with other institutions for the professional growth of the teachers. Such a

strategy of mentoring develops mutual relationships, helps them grow professionally and ensures support between or among friends in a circle or in an institution. Kadji et al. (2014) write that mentoring is recognized as a strategy to help schools become professional learning communities. It means that schools could be the platform for professional practices for teachers. Moreover, the teachers could also help each other in the friends' circles within a school community or collaborate with other teachers in networks of wider school communities for their professional development. Carter and Francis (2001) explored strong evidence of the importance of mentoring strategy for establishing collaborative and professional learning environment among teachers and supervisors in a survey conducted among 220 beginning teachers and 245 supervisors and mentors. It showed that teacher mentoring could be a strong strategy for involving teachers in their professional networks, collaboration and professional growth and development. In this sense, the theme 'teachers' mentoring as a strategy' derives only one theme: 'Mentoring as teachers' networking, Collaboration and Development'.

Mentoring as a Strategy of Teachers' Networking, Collaboration and Development

This sub-theme 'Mentoring as Teachers' Networking, Collaboration and Development' was developed out of the experience of my participants who involved in various professional platforms, built relational networks, shared and received useful knowledge and skills, took part in professional training and workshops, worked in different school projects and developed themselves as the professional teachers. Biehle et al. (2021) found that mentoring strategy helped faculty members develop interpersonal relation, exchange of knowledge between or among peers and also helped them develop professionally. It showed that peers helped each other by sharing and caring in order to develop professionally. As my participants expressed, mentoring is a strategy for establishing relational networks and sharing problems and ideas among friends so that they can develop as professional teachers. Handrianto et al. (2022) mentioned that the mentoring strategy played a significant role in improving teachers' professional development during their professional journey. It revealed that the mentoring strategy is for making teachers' professional growth. Moreover, Heikkinen et al. (2018) found teacher mentoring as a strategy for establishing collaboration between or among teachers' colleagues and developing professionalism. Thus, all the expressions above showed that teachers' mentoring is a

strategy for teachers' development through engaging in professional platforms and professional networks and helping them develop professionally. Moving towards my participants who experienced teacher mentoring as a strategy of developing teachers by engaging in various collaborative works with the teacher colleagues of their professional networks within their workplace or outside of their workplace, the first participant comes here, in his pseudonym, as 'Manish',

> *We often hesitate to share the problems, thinking they can dominate us. Even if we are imperfect, we must say I am perfect, hiding the reality. However, when it is urgent, we sometimes share it and ask for help to a close teacher colleague or in a small or closed teachers' or friends' circle. If necessary, we even share with our friends in our professional networks outside the school community, like CETRAP, NELTA, etc, One day one of my new teacher colleagues shared his problems of his classroom. I had to talk to his students, counseled them and solved his problems so that he could go to the class regularly. Now he is a good teacher.*

Manish's account showed that he did not experience a good sharing culture at the workplace. He said, "We often hesitate to share the problems, *thinking they can dominate us."* They hesitate to share their problems in general situations but as it is urgent, they share it in their friends' circle, with the seniors or with the people in professional networks. As he further said, "*We sometimes share it and ask for help from a close teacher colleague or in a small or closed teachers' or friends' circle".* Aderibigbe et al. (2018) found 'mentoring' to provide regular and field-based practical support to the teachers and help in their professional learning. It showed that mentoring helped teachers work collaboratively at the practical field or at the workplace. As far as I know, sharing knowledge in a small circle of teachers' colleagues or to a larger network helps teachers develop professionally. Anagnou and Fragoulis (2014) write about informal and life-long learning of teachers who take part in various collaborative works, sharing knowledge in a small circle of friends, and engaging in self-directed learning, incidental learning and socialization with different communities of practices to develop professionally. It reflected that teachers engage in various professional organizations like CETRAP and NELTA, where they get the opportunity to work collaboratively with other teachers in their networks and exchange ideas and knowledge informally that help them develop professionally. So, these all-teachers' development strategies are teachers mentoring. In this sense,

mentoring acts as a teachers' development strategy by engaging them in different activities informally.

Manish further expressed that he had the experience of tactfully solving his friend's classroom problems. He further said, "*I had to talk to the students, counseled them*" for supporting my teacher colleague to make his classroom run smoothly. He gave good counselling to those students. There were some misunderstandings between teachers and students. It showed that he helped his friend at his classroom management problems as he said, he '*solved his problems so that he could go to the class regularly*'. He also helped them realize their faults, and then the students started behaving well to the teacher in the classroom. This showed how one teacher helped another in need at the workplace. It also reflected that such help to one another is a natural human behaviour that happens spontaneously throughout our life, informally and implicitly. Peiser et al. (2018) emphasized workplace sharing, helping and collaboration between or among teachers for their professional development. It showed that there could be a kind of continuous help and support mechanism between or among teachers at the workplace that occurs informally and spontaneously. Lin and Lee (2014) studied the informal learning theory and practices and concluded that informal learning helped teachers acquire knowledge and skills useful for the workplace and develop professionally. In this sense, teachers could help each other in the informal setting of the school environment, exchange ideas to each other at the workplace and develop themselves professionally.

Having realized a clear sense of networking, collaborating and developing as a professional teacher, Manisha, one of my participants, explained that she acquired knowledge from a small circle of teacher colleagues or from a small community of practices that helped her develop professionally. She explained,

I have experience sharing my problems with friends in my close circle near my school and getting help from them. I often shared my problems with friends whenever I meet to them. They even said, 'you have always issues to share'. There are three good secondary schools in my area and we; English teachers are familiar to each other. Whenever we, English teachers, meet in any programme, we certainly talk about some classroom or content-related issues and share our ideas on the topic or even share our strategies on how we are doing in the particular topic, etc. There will be very friendly talk with those friends, and they are useful for my day-to-day classroom strategies.

The experience of Manisha showed that she had experienced all the mentoring strategies like networking, sharing, collaborating and developing as a professional teacher. She shared her problems and ideas with her friends in the school and sometimes in a friends' circle outside the school environment. As she said, "I often shared my problems with friends whenever I meet *them."* It implied that she had a good habit of sharing and networking with friends. Camayang, and Bautista (2021) write about the importance of collaborative learning, learning in partnership and the concept of peer mentoring or a little teacher for their ongoing professional development. It reflected the concept of mentoring strategies that is developing through sharing, networking and collaboration between or among teacher colleagues as Manisha said, "*Whenever we, teachers meet, we share our strategies how we are doing in the particular topic."* Such a sharing and learning with partners often takes place at the workplace or sometimes in any informal school environment. Chen and Bryer (2012) presented the idea how informal learning takes place through social media support and develops social learning and helps to develop professionally. In fact, all these procedures are mentoring strategies, as Manisha said, the way you learn or get supported by the people or friends, meeting and sharing ideas and problems in friends' circles in an informal way of learning.

Moreover, Manisha further stated that she got helped from her friends in close networks and developed as a professional teacher. She further claimed that they shared their useful classroom strategies, which she said, were *'useful…for her day-to-day classroom strategies'.* It implied that she got help and support for her classroom activities through informal types of teacher' gatherings, meetings and sharing with her friends or friends' circles in and outside of the school environment. In regards to such informal learning behavior, Carliner (2013) said, "the earliest forms of learning for work were informal, including de facto and formal apprenticeship programs and the school of life" (p.5). It implied that learning took place much earlier than the beginning of a more organized and structured formal education system. Such activities; helping, supporting, collaborating and developing as assertive and confident teachers are informal mentoring strategies.

Yunish's experience of networking, sharing, and collaborating with the teacher colleagues, was also not far different from previous participants. Although he didn't use the word, 'Networking', he clearly said that he was involved in some professional organizations where they worked together and gained necessary skills

and ideas. He asserted,

> *Yes, I have got opportunities to meet and share with some friends from other academic institutions or professional organizations. Recently, I have had one experience of participating in a provincial-level training programme, where we got the opportunity to listen to their ideas and knowledge and to share our problems with them. Such sharing will be more effective, useful and helpful for immediate tips for the classroom activities and for long-term lesson as well. Moreover, I am also involved in other professional organizations like NELTA and CETRAP, in which we work together on various collaborative academic projects and work for the professional development of English teachers.*

Here, Yunish's account presented the example of networking with other teacher colleagues and receiving learning opportunities, as he said, "*Yes, I have got opportunities to meet and share with some friends from other academic institutions or professional organizations*". Networking with other professionals of the same field, help people remain up to date with the current ideas and pedagogies and get transformed as required for the field. Gnawali (2016) presented different ways of professional development of teachers, such as establishing reciprocal relationships between or among professionals in the networks and using useful resources available in the networks or in professional organizations like NELTA. In this sense, Yunish's opportunity to meet teacher colleagues from other academic institutions and share ideas and problems related to each other's content knowledge certainly seemed to enhance their professional ability and help them develop professionally.

Similarly, he also presented the experience of working together with the friends in different professional organizations like CETRAP and NELTA and also working collaboratively '*in various academic projects*', like writing and publishing. His idea of working together matches with the concept of Meschitti and Smith (2017) who concluded the importance of mentoring as they explained 'the role of group mentoring' in which teachers work collaboratively helping each other and the concept of 'mentoring as an instrument to change institutions'. This also implied that such an opportunity to meet people with similar interests and professions, working in related and relevant fields, informally enhanced a lifelong learning environment. Harrop and Turpin (2013) explored "learners' behavior, attitudes and preferences towards informal learning spaces (p.58)" and found nine attributes of learning spaces including social conversation, community and resources available to the learners. It

implied that the informal type of support, help and collaboration for teachers are some examples of mentoring strategies for teachers' professional development.

Yunisha, one of my participants didn't get much opportunity to get involved in formal type of networking and collaborating with other teacher colleagues at her workplace. However, she experienced sharing ideas and problems within small friends' circles at her workplace and outside in some professional organizations where she was involved as a life member. She further said,

> *We have a subject department, and we sometimes do have such discussions and sharing, especially about the course progress and completion of the course timely. Moreover, we share some strategies as well. For example, how we can revise the course after completion so that the students' free writing skills would be fine and can secure good marks and like. I am also the member of CETRAP, and I frequently get opportunities to take part in different training, workshops which would be very useful for teaching strategies and classroom management. I have also got opportunities in writing journal articles along with teacher colleagues together.*

Here, Yunisha presented a very good example of discussing and sharing ideas and problems in the meeting of her subject department. She asserted that they discuss on the course contents and evaluation schemes in such meetings. It implied that such meetings could be very good platforms for sharing ideas and problems and collaborating on various school projects between or among members of the faculty members in the department. Tang and Choi (2005) presented strategies for developing professional 'mentors' to connect theoretical and practical knowledge of professional development by sharing, collaborating and establishing good relationship at the workplace and resulted that there was a good construction of knowledge and development of mentoring practices at the workplace. They also found improvement in teaching and learning at their workplace. It reflected that sharing of knowledge and collaborating at the workplace establishes positive results in the development of professional teachers. Such the informal type of support mechanism and good culture of sharing between or among the faculty members helps to improve teaching and learning in the institutions. It further implied that the adult learning processes embraced a kind of informal learning procedure, as shown in the above examples of networking and collaborating in informal situations.

Likewise, Yunisha also presented the example of networking with other teacher colleagues in professional organizations, like CETRAP, where she is a life member and an executive member of the organization. As she said, they work together collaboratively by writing and publishing articles. It is also a good example of networking and collaborating within teacher circles for a good cause to develop professionally. It is also a kind of adult learning and a way of developing professionally. Koutsoukos (2022) enlisted the key qualities of developing mentors or adult professionals; some of which being positive attitudes in lifelong learning, having sufficient training, establishing good inter-personal relationships between or among members of the department and developing communication skills etc. It showed that mentoring as a strategy of teacher development works by improving interpersonal skills between and among faculty members, building good sharing culture and communication skills and having positive attitudes towards lifelong learning. Yunisha's experience of sharing and collaborating works together within the members of the department depicted the same. Straub (2009) presented the way of networking, sharing, collaborating and adopting innovative technology by adult learners in an informal setting and developed three key insights, one of which is that the 'adoption of knowledge must address cognitive, emotional and contextual concerns' of the learners. It reflected that good relational networks with a positive attitude of collaboration in a familiar contextual environment help adults learn or adopt desired knowledge and skills successfully.

Sumit presented his experience of sharing, collaborating and developing as a professional teacher differently than previous participants. He said,

> *Sometimes, I help friends, even if it is not my duty; I suggest to them that you need to behave in such a way to the students; we need to write in such a way on the homework copy and so on. Sometimes, the problems make me emotional, and I want to share with a friend or colleague, and I can also feel others' problems. One day one of my friends indicated my errors on homework checking and I took it positively and corrected it. Sometimes, I also help others, thinking that it can be like mine. As a member of the organization, I have got many professional benefits from one of our professional organizations called Center for English Teachers' Research and Pedagogy (CETRAP). It helped us to make a circle or network of teachers in our local level. I got chance to share my problems and now I have been frequently*

talking to some friends who teach the same subject at other colleges. We also meet together in the programme and share and work together in a number of ways.

To Sumit, mentoring is explicitly teaching or instructing the friends rather than just sharing the ideas indirectly. Such an explicit teaching help people feel close to each other within the same institutions or among the people of the same professional networks. He sometimes teaches his friends about 'what to do and how' by saying, "Y*ou need to behave in such a way to the students; we need to write in such a way on the homework copy and so on."* However, we do not have an 'open sharing culture' and helping or teaching friends at the workplace. Such a direct or explicit teaching is often meant to dominate the other thinking that he/she doesn't know the minor things too. To Sumit, such a culture is a kind of hindrance to being more interactive and open within the friends' circle and hampers learning. Kim and McLean (2014) identified the way 'how differing cultural factors affect informal learning in the workplace' (p.39). It implied that the cultural influences, as Sumit thinks, seemed to hamper workplace learning of the adults and, thus, influence mentoring strategies at the workplace.

Moreover, Sumit also experiences of networking and collaborating works with the teacher colleagues outside of his school community. Such networking helps them form a community of practice where they can share their knowledge or ideas, help each other solve their day-to-day problems, and establish a platform for sharing and caring for each other informally in times of need. Manuti et al. (2015) write that the traditional models of learning were unable to explain almost all the complicities of the workplace and needed continuous learning environment like networking with the teacher colleagues and forming a community of practices where people can share and learn continuously and informally. It showed that the informal way of engagement of teachers in different learning communities, networking, and learning platforms helps teachers develop their professional knowledge and skills.

As my participants mentioned above, teachers' mentoring is a strategy of teachers' networking, collaborating and teachers' development. My participants expressed their experiences in different professional networks as a community of practice within the institutions and with the friends in the networks of different professional organizations like NELTA, CETRAP etc. The relationship that the teachers build, through various networks of teachers' professional communities or

organizations is a vital platform for professional development. Kearney (2014) emphasized on relational networks between or among the professionals in teacher induction programme in Australia where helping strategy between peers, was a key feature of that mentorship programme. They also found out that the supporting or helping strategy is an important feature of teachers' development.

Moreover, teachers' mentoring is also a kind of collaboration in the circle of teacher colleagues, faculty members, seniors and administrators in an organization. Broadly, it functions as a collaborative work between pairs, or peers or in the networking circles inside or outside the school communities. Coppola et al. (2021) explained 'bidirectional and co-constructed mentorship' (p.1), where 'innovative collaboration' (p. 1) is considered one of the vital strategies of teachers' professional development. The informal relational networks of teachers help them work collaboratively in the creative circles of professionals. Such informal creative circles also function as the mentoring networks in between or among the members of the teachers and help them develop professionally. In this sense, mentoring is both the strategies of networking and collaborating for professional development.

Teachers' Mentoring as a Process

This theme, 'Teachers' mentoring as a process,' came out of the experience of my participants, who found mentoring to be a process of teaching and learning. In fact, the term process refers to the way how something is done or carried out to reach to the destination or the products. In this sense, teachers' mentoring is a mode of delivery of teaching and learning. McCaughtry et al. (2005) found teachers' mentoring is a process of guiding the new teachers in non-teaching issues, 'including dealing with administrators and parents' (p. 332) and contributing novice teachers with knowledge of implementing new syllabus, curriculum and with other necessary knowledge and skills of teaching. Thus, mentoring is a process of teaching novice teachers and helping them with the necessary knowledge and skills. Similarly, El Abdul (2023) also found that mentoring is an informal and continuous process of teachers' professional development in which teachers themselves take the initiative to learn something. He further says that teachers can get help from seniors or from teacher educators who can help them in fostering their professional development. In this sense, teachers' mentoring is a process of teachers' professional development.

Teachers' mentoring is a relational and mutual help to teach others between or among teachers' colleagues, or within a community of practice. In this sense, it is a

reciprocal process of learning. It means mentoring is a process of teaching and learning in which the mentor and mentee both can learn from each other. It is a informal and relational guidance and support. Leeder et al. (2022) found that mentoring is a 'two-way process' (p. 309) in which the mentor and mentee both learn reciprocally from one another. It showed that mentoring is a process of getting help from another. In another sense, mentoring is the process how it is delivered and received to each other. Moreover, Tang and Choi (2005) mentioned that mentoring is a process of "connecting theory and practice' (p. 383) together, and the core of the mentoring process is 'improving teaching and learning' (p. 383). It showed that teachers' mentoring is a process of helping and guiding to one another in a practical base. It is a kind of support and guidance that helps new or inexperienced teachers bring their theoretical knowledge into the practical field.

Mentoring as a process refers to a delivery system of help and support. There are mainly two systems of delivery of help and support to the teachers. Firstly, there is a formal system of help and support. Such a formal help and support system includes teachers' training, workshops and the kind of teachers' orientation and dissemination programme. Gautam (2016) mentioned that government of Nepal has invested a huge amount of money and resources to deliver training and workshops to the teachers but very little have been received for the use of classroom purpose. It showed that the formal support system is often occasional, traditional and just for ritual sake. There is no remarkable use and implementation of the knowledge and skills of such training and workshop in the classroom.

The second type of support mechanism is an informal type of support mechanism. Such an informal type of support is received by the initiatives of each individual who need such help and support. Teachers' mentoring is one such informal and continuous support system in which a more experienced person, either a friend, colleague or senior, supports a less experienced person in the case of teaching pedagogy and in the case of non-teaching issues of classroom management. Martin (1994) wrote about mentoring process on pre-service teacher education and found that teachers' mentoring is an important process of teachers' professional development but it depended on how it is delivered and received. It also emphasized that a kind of informal, continuous system of teachers' support and guidance is quite helpful to the beginning teachers. It showed that the informal type of regular support and guidance from a senior teacher, colleague or even from the friends' circle would be a more

effective and useful process of teaching and learning than that of the ritual kind of training and workshops. Thus, the third theme, 'mentoring as a process' further developed a sub-theme, called 'mentoring as a continuous, implicit process' of teaching and learning.

Mentoring as a Continuous, Implicit Process (CIP) of Teaching and Learning

This sub-theme 'Mentoring as a Continuous Implicit Process' explored the participants' experiences on how they received support and help continuously from the beginning of their teaching career and developed as the professional teachers. Furthermore, as they expressed, they learnt necessary skills and knowledge of teaching and engaging students in the classroom by struggling at the workplace, by modeling the senior teachers' roles in the classroom and by interacting with the students and teacher colleagues continuously at the workplace. Thus, mentoring process is employed to provide the early career teachers with necessary skills, knowledge and relational networking within communities of practices (Hussey & Campbell-Meier, 2021). In this sense, the skills and knowledge of teaching are gained implicitly, by the experiences and the behavior of each individual, and even by the environmental setting at the workplace. That includes interaction with the students, teacher colleagues, friends, faculty members, modeling the senior ideal teachers' role in the classroom, and collaborating works with people around as Barondess (1997) says, "implicit processes, …are not consciously or deliberately displayed" (p. 348). These behaviors are embedded in the role and guidance of the seniors, intellectual behavior of the friends' colleagues, and in the interpersonal relationship with the people around at the workplace. These all behaviors surrounded with the teaching learning atmosphere or at the activities are the parts of continuous mentoring, help and support to a beginning teacher at the workplace.

Thus, my participants, though they do not experience an explicit, formal and structured type of support or mentoring at the workplace, gained knowledge and skills continuously by modeling the roles of seniors or ideal teacher colleagues, by the interaction with students, faculty members and from the wholesome teaching-learning atmosphere. Explicit mentoring would be more direct, structured, and formal kind of support mechanism (Hudson et al., 2013), however, implicit mentoring would be more indirect, unstructured type of knowledge or skills that one could earn or gain by his/her own initiatives and effort at the workplace informally and continuously. To begin with my first participant, Manish says,

Once, one friend shared his classroom problems and said he even reached the position of quitting the teaching profession. Though he was good in study and content, he shared that when he used to go inside the class for the first few days, he became nervous in front of the students and I felt hesitation and could not teach well. After he shared, I gave him some tips and encouraged him and he didn't quit the job. Likewise, in my beginning stage too, the principal asked me to control the class and gave me a stick too. I found one student was frequently being mischievous and torturing me and I used the stick one day. But the next day his father came and met me and very politely complained me about the previous day punishment to his son. I felt guilty and I realized my mistake very seriously.

Here, Manish's account showed that one could learn from the incident he/she was exposed to. Manish said, '*once one friend shared his classroom problems'*, and Manish helped and encouraged him indirectly. Manish helped his friend though he was not a mentor formally. It was a kind of indirect help and support to the friend who was new in the teaching field and felt nervous in the classroom. The students made him fun to many extents, and he could not receive good responses from his students. Manish gave him some tips and encouraged him that helped him model such behavior in the class and established good teaching and learning environment in the classroom. As he gave some tips and encouraged him, it was a kind of implicit help and support. Yip and Walker (2022) studied the effects of implicit followership theory on leader integrity and mentoring and concluded that the mentor's ethical and relational support and behaviour would determine the effects of mentoring relations with the mentee. It showed that the mentoring effect would not solely depend on what the mentor supports and helps to the mentee, but it also depends on how he behaves, and what kind of image he formed during the mentorship period. In this sense, there would be continuous and implicit mentoring throughout the mentoring period to the mentee.

Moreover, Manish gave another example of his punishment to a boy in the classroom and its effect, as his father appeared to complain about it on the second day. It happened when he was a new teacher and he used to carry a stick to frighten the children with the school principal's permission. The problem arose when he used the stick once on a boy in the classroom, and he exclaimed with fear the next day as he said, 'But the next day, *his father came and met me'.* However, there was nothing

seriously wrong that the guardians very politely questioned what wrong that his son had done. Manish politely described how he came to use the stick and the matter was settled very easily. Such an incident that occurred unexpectedly and the relational exposure with someone that appeared informally also teach people with necessary knowledge and skills required for the profession. Harrop and Turpin (2013) named such informal sources of knowledge as "informal learning spaces and explored learners' behaviors, attitudes, and preferences towards informal learning spaces" (p. 58). In this sense, the informal sources of knowledge are also part of mentoring.

Thus, Manish learnt a very good lesson: he should have used the stick in the classroom at any cost. He learnt a good lesson from the behaviour and the way that the guardian had talked and raised questions tactfully and with very serious points about why he used the stick. That was a kind of implicit knowledge he gained from that whole environment. Thus, there would be a kind of continuous learning from the incidents that unexpectedly occur at the workplace. Such unexpected situations, unstructured and informal behavior of anyone at the workplace can be a source of implicit knowledge that helps teachers to grow up professionally. As Yip and Walker (2022) further said, "implicit theories are stable belief systems developed as a natural consequence of the way humans categorize their environments" (p. 4). It showed that the world would be the source of knowledge for the people who could see and notice its implicit message to his/her life. It also implied that teachers keep on learning something and gaining knowledge and skills from wholesome atmosphere at the workplace.

Like Manish, Manisha also shared her experience that she didn't receive direct and explicit mentoring at her workplace but she learnt much and gained necessary skills and knowledge from the wholesome setting and atmosphere at the workplace and sometimes from outside of the school environment where there would be gatherings of English teachers like teachers' training and workshops. She says,

> *Whenever I meet some of my teacher colleagues in any gathering like English teachers' meeting, teachers' training or any such occasion, they would complain me that I would always have some issues related to my course content in order to talk about or discuss on with them. I would raise some issues of any teaching content and ask them to give their opinion. It would help me solve many problems. I would listen to others and make my own strategies for the classroom. Likewise, I keep on sharing my curiosity with the*

friends so that I could learn about their ways and strategies on the topic. Similarly, even at my workplace, I would carefully observe other teachers' behavior at my workplace or at school and make my own strategies. Some friends also keep sharing their classroom activities and strategies that help me learn about new ideas and teaching pedagogy.

What I found striking in her sharing is her curiosity about learning new things every time she finds any gathering of English teachers. She further said, "*I would always have some issues related to my course content in order to talk about or discuss on with them*". It showed that she raised issues frequently among other teacher colleagues and would listen to their arguments or opinion. It is her curiosity that she makes her own initiatives to learn the things and keep on learning in any informal situations. Jeong et al. (2018) made an integrative literature review on informal learning at the workplace and concluded that the implicit and informal learning at the individual, group and organizational level is vital for professional growth. It further implied that the informal learning at the workplace, or the implicit knowledge gained from all the context of teaching and learning activities, from each individual, from the discussion and sharing of friends, teacher colleagues, is the vital source of professional development. Feng et al. (2022) studied on 'Implicit Mentoring' and concluded that implicit mentoring derived from different types of interactions in real life situations at the workplace. It further implied that teachers can received continuous mentoring from all the interactions, communications, and discussions held around the teaching learning atmosphere.

One of my other participants, Yunish's experience is also not far different than that of Manish and Manisha's. He also gained necessary skills and knowledge of teaching from different people around and from the environment at his workplace. He further said that he learnt many things from teacher colleagues, even from the students, by the interaction with faculty members at the workplace. He further mentions:

Since there is no formal and structured support system, we receive and give it occasionally, randomly and implicitly. A few days ago, one friend of mine called me and asked which subject I was teaching at my college these days and what content or chapter I was dealing with before the first term exam. I just answered him with the information what I was teaching or dealing with. Then he started saying that he was teaching in another chapter, which he said

was so lengthy and also explained what and how much a teacher should cover in that chapter. He explained his idea, which was of course beneficial for me to apply when I started that chapter a week later.

Here, Yunish expressed his experience that there is no structured, or formal kind of support mechanism and no culture of sharing and caring to each other at the workplace. He further admitted that he received knowledge and skills randomly, occasionally through interaction and exposure to the environment at the workplace. Smith et al. (2013) presented a workplace environment for mentoring that included voluntary and spontaneous mentoring interaction, exposure and a collaborative climate at the workplace. Such an ecological exposure for teaching and learning activity helps the beginning teachers to model ideal teaching styles or activities and develop professionally.

Yunish further presented one of the examples of an interaction with a friend who asked him about his teaching content and also shared his recent experience of teaching a chapter that took long time involving in unnecessary futile exercises. He further suggested how this chapter covered an intended objective of the chapter and that was really useful technique for him to apply in the classroom next week. It implied that such the exposure and sharing of the experience is an implicit source of knowledge. Feng et al. (2022) presented different forms of implicit mentoring like top-down, peer-to-peer and bottom-up relationships between mentor and mentees or between or among people at the workplace. It implied that teachers gained knowledge of teaching pedagogy practically at the workplace by the exposure of people around, i.e. teacher colleagues, faculty members, seniors and the wholesome environment.

The experience of Yunisha, on the concept of receiving mentoring or implicit support from the behavior of the people at the workplace and from the favorable environment at the workplace, resemble with the concept of other participants previously mentioned. To put her argument:

We often engage in a kind of informal talk about making our teaching students centered. We sometimes share our practice activities while teaching particular lessons and we follow each other's plan in the classroom collaboratively. We also talked about students' achievements, improving their writing skills, teaching them paragraph writing, sentence structure, and so on. However, there are no much strategies for teachers' development but teachers continuously receive knowledge and insight about teaching pedagogy from the

discussions and observation of others' behavior. The workplace environment, interaction and discussion on the issues related to teaching content help beginning teachers grow professionally.

As of previous accounts, what Yunisha attested is, there is no formal and structured support mechanism established at the workplace. She further mentioned that teachers regularly engage in '*informal talk*' and finding out better strategies, and activities for teaching. It also showed that the teachers make their own initiatives to gain knowledge and involve themselves in useful discussions and sharing about teaching pedagogy, teaching content, and classroom management. Thus, they gain practical professional knowledge regularly and implicitly throughout their teaching period. Osman and Gottlieb (2018) mentioned that the social forces, interpersonal relationship and interactions of any kind help teachers develop professionally and nurture their professional skills, self-awareness and mindfulness. It showed that all these social forces are the sources of knowledge and skills that is gained informally and implicitly at the workplace.

As Yunisha further expressed, *"the workplace environment, interaction and discussion on the issues related to teaching content help beginning teachers grow professionally",* the teachers could receive more practical knowledge and skills from such informal occasions of interactions, discussions and sharing of the contents. Hudson et al. (2013) find all these unstructured and informal help and support mechanisms are implicit sources of teachers' knowledge that can be made explicit knowledge by making each activity visible and apparent. It implied that all the invisible and implied sources of knowledge are implicit sources of knowledge that help teachers develop professionally.

Like other participants, Sumit also remembered incidents that made him feel insult in front of other friends and teacher colleagues. He got a very useful message or lesson from that incident: we should never point out others' mistakes publicly in front of others and how to behave with people at the workplace. He even learned how to point out students' mistakes safely so that they would not feel nervous and dominated in the mass. Sumit puts his argument as:

> *Knowingly and unknowingly, we may frequently commit mistakes and errors in the course of our daily work, daily teaching and learning activities. I have got very useful message and lesson from each of my mistakes and weaknesses. One day one of my colleagues pointed out my mistakes, which I had committed*

while checking students' homework copy. I suddenly realized and corrected my mistakes. That incident didn't only make me feel insulted in front of other faculty members but also provided me with many other good, implied message or lessons. That incident was a kind of insult for me as my friend pointed my mistake in front of other many faculties. The lesson I learnt from that incident was 'That I would be very sincere and ensure the safety or high morale of the students while pointing out their mistakes individually in the classroom and simultaneously while pointing out the mistakes of my teacher colleagues very sincerely.

Sumit's account also revealed that teachers keep on learning lessons and skills continuously by interacting with people and learning from the context at the workplace. To be specific, Sumit felt insulted when his friend pointed out his mistake in front of other teacher colleagues publicly as he said, *"that incident was a kind of insult for me as my friend pointed my mistake in front of other many faculties"*. From this incident, Sumit implied meaning or derived message that we should ensure high moral of each individual when we pointed out someone's personal mistakes or weaknesses in the mass. It is an implicit knowledge that Sumit earned from the situation he was exposed to. Seals (2022) made a number of recommendations for effective mentoring. Sharing personal experiences, helping them maintain comfort zones, setting examples, and preparing them for ups and downs are some useful strategies that provide teachers with some implicit knowledge and teaching skills.

Sumit presented an example of acquiring implicit knowledge from the wholesome environment he was exposed to at the workplace. It implied that he didn't learn it from any structured mentoring or support mechanism; rather, it was all from the context at the workplace. It was an example of informal or lifelong learning that continues throughout the professional journey. Informal learning might derive "from experience, tacit knowledge, transfer of learning and intuitive practice to disclose the range of different phenomena" (Eraut, 2004, p. 247). It showed that Sumit gained or acquired all the experience and knowledge, was an example of informal learning. It also reflected that the teacher could gain knowledge and skills continuously at the workplace by interacting with people around, observing minutely the behavior and system of the people and institutions. Middlebrooks and Haberkorn (2009) concluded that mentoring support incorporates implicitly inherited knowledge and skills required for the professional development of teachers. In this sense, teachers should keep on

struggling at the workplace, which gives them knowledge and skills for their day-to-day activities.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the concept or meaning of teachers' mentoring or support system in the way how my participants perceived or experienced it at the workplace. In the beginning of the chapter, I discussed 'what, why and how' aspects of mentoring; i.e. what mentoring is; why mentoring is for, and how mentoring happens in order to clarify the subject or to clarify how it is perceived and what it is meant for, at the workplace. Then, on the basis of the participants' experiential details, I tried to create the themes: mentoring as a form (what?), mentoring is an strategy (why?) and mentoring is a process (how). As I further analyzed the participants' experiences, again I found three sub-themes: mentoring is a continuous implicit support mechanism; it is the strategy of teachers' professional development, and it is an informal teaching and learning process. I analyzed and interpreted the participants' experiential statements connecting and contrasting with the scholarly statements and concluded the ideas how my participants perceived and experienced the concept of teachers' mentoring.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXPERIENCING MENTORING

In this chapter, I responded to the second research question: how do beginning English teachers express their lived experience of receiving mentoring and support? Through this question, I drew on English teachers' experiences about their professional growth and development. To be specific, it included teachers' experiences of how they came into the teaching profession and how they developed themselves as the professional English language teachers. In this sense, this chapter incorporated the lived experiences of the participants about how they entered into the teaching field; how they ascended the developmental steps on and how they came to be the professional teachers. This chapter begins with a short reflection on my own entry into the teaching field and then moves on to an explanation of three main themes. The themes that my participants' experience and expressions directed to develop are 'stepping onto teaching territory, journeying through the dark, and fruiting professionally'.

Questions and Confusions at My Career Entry

As the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) researcher, before I enter into my participants' accounts, and into the themes of this chapter, I want to recall one of my experiences, which happened to me while I was intending to get a job for the first time. This is because; the IPA researcher is like the participant and also sees the participants' experience from insider's perspective. The IPA researcher's experience also plays an important role in the analysis of others' experiences (Smith et al., 2009). My own experience of entering into teaching, as the IPA researcher, goes like this below:

It must be in 2052 B.S. in Kathmandu. I was from a remote village of Dhankuta district and that was my first visit to Kathmandu. In fact, I had no special purpose to visit to Kathmandu. After I took final examination of I. Ed. I just wanted to visit to the capital city of my country. Furthermore, I personally desired to live and study my Bachelor's degree (B. Ed.) in Kathmandu. But, I knew that my parents would not be able to afford for my living and studying in Kathmandu. So, I thought I would try to search for a good job in Kathmandu and live in there. However, I had no idea how I could get a job and which job would suit me.

It was my good fortune to meet one of my favorite schoolteachers who lived in Kathmandu and ran an Educational Consultancy in Putali Sadak. He was my favorite teacher as he frequently visited my home. He once gifted me a pen and a copy, as I stood first in the class. I felt he was the person I was looking for. On my first visit to my teacher, I didn't hesitate to request him to help me find a job so that I could continue my studies in Kathmandu. He laughed a little and said that he would try his best. I became happy for a while until when he started asking me other several questions. I still remember his first question: "Keshav, what job do you think you would feel appropriate for? I tried to figure out for a while but couldn't pinpoint which job I was really fit for. Perhaps he knew that I didn't have any answer but just waited for a while for my response.

I don't remember all the questions he asked, but he added some other questions like 'can you speak English? Can you work on a computer? Have you got any professional training or skills? I remember that my response to almost every question ended with "No". Soon, I realized that my degree, I. Ed. majoring in English was a very small thing and the fact was, neither I could speak English fluently nor did I have any computer or any other professional knowledge and skills. In fact, I had heard about the use of computers in any job for the first time. Likewise, I hadn't received any professional training for any profession too. I realized I had, in fact, nothing to do with, any skills, qualifications, and experience of any work that would fit for any job. The realization made me feel worried and thoughtful.

Back then I had made a conviction that my study in the campus level majoring in English in I. Ed. suits teaching jobs in boarding schools, and I heard that teaching in boarding schools was easy in Kathmandu. My degree I. Ed. majoring in English was also suitable subject for teaching in boarding schools. But having faced with several questions, I was a little hopeless. Not knowing what to say further, I happened to say, "Please search me a teaching job at a boarding school". By then, perhaps he had read me well. He advised me to meet a primary school principal near 'Old Baneshwor', Kathmandu, and I started teaching social subject studies for grades two and three. Now, when I remember those days, I wonder how I spent that whole year teaching the children in grades two and three.

Stepping onto the Teaching Territory

The theme, 'Stepping onto the teaching territory' emerged out of the participants' experiences about how and why they came into the teaching profession.

Each participant had similar but different in a specific context, narratives about their entry into the teaching profession. Mangaoil et al. (2017) found some of the reasons and factors for motivating people to pursue their early career into teaching. They enlisted their perception of 'teachers as models' or 'as exemplary icons' in society or 'as their parents are teachers' that help people get motivated to choose the teaching profession. Moreover, as people enter into teaching, how they experience teaching and how long they do serve are also other factors to consider while talking about teachers' entry into the teaching profession. McLean et al. (2019) also explained two types of influencing factors: personal, also called internal and external, also called classroom environment and policy, in entering and sustaining the teaching profession. It seemed that there are crucial reasons or motivating factors for stepping onto teaching profession and developing as professional teachers by struggling and sustaining in the field.

Thus, it is necessary to explore some influential factors and reasons why people enter into teaching and sustain themselves in the field. To this context, Chiong et al. (2017) found two main factors why teachers enter and sustain in teaching professions: 'teachers' perceived professional mastery and altruistic reasons' (p. 1). They enlisted other specific expectation of teachers while entering into the teaching profession and the factors for teachers' retention in the field like intrinsic reasons (love of children and love of teaching or subject); altruistic reasons (material benefits, job security, working hours, holidays); and teachers' own perceptions that he/she is capable of teaching or his ability suits teaching etc. Based on my experiences too, I believe that a teacher's entry into the teaching profession or the recruitment of teachers into teaching directly influences teaching and learning activities in the classroom and slowly and gradually impacts and influences the whole educational system. Thus, it is necessary to explore the lived experience of teachers, how they entered into the teaching profession and how they perceive it or develop their concept. On the basis of my participants' expressions, following two sub-themes are found to develop about entering into teaching territory: Entrancing at easy entry and settling sentiments.

Entrancing at Easy Entry

This sub-theme, 'Entrancing at Easy Entry', gave voice to the participants' experiences in relation to their entry into the teaching profession. As my participants expressed, it seemed that most of them stepped onto teaching because of its

conveniences, and easy accessibilities. In most cases they were found to step on to teaching by chance and in some cases by choice. For them, teaching seemed to be a kind of common profession to begin a career or as a transit point of their life. Such kind of job entry in most cases is achieved by chance. Anibas et al. (2009) puts on his experience as he said that teaching is an easily accessible job out of 'limited employment contracts' (p. 211) and it reflected as one of few common professions in their context.

As my participants expressed, entering into any job varies on an individual's personal choice or interest. Teachers' personal interests, motivations and aspiration are also remarkable traits for choosing their job. Borg et al. (2014) presented two types of career choices: random selection and unplanned changed decision while entering into teaching profession. It was the matter of chance and sometimes, choice as humans go back to their experience and find better experience of all in their 'consciousness' and come to choose one in specific time and context. For Husserl, the phenomenological study emphasizes the content, which is experienced in the consciousness of the individual and calls it 'intentionality', the relationship between 'the process of occurring in consciousness and the object of attention for the process' (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, this sub-theme, 'Entrancing at Easy Entry' contained similar lived experience of my participants. To begin with Manish, he became a teacher in a private boarding school by chance. He stated,

> *After I completed class 12, one day, I went to my home village to the hills from Saptari, where I studied after school. On the way, I lived for a day at my friend's house in Phattepur. I was not intentionally going to seek a job, but there was a vacancy for a lower secondary English teacher at a neighboring private boarding school of my friend's house, and they proposed me for the job. It was my free time so I easily accepted it.*

The expression of Manish showed that he found his teaching job by chance without any prior plan and preparation as he was going home to the hills. Manish didn't seem to be aware of any reasons for entering into the teaching profession so hurriedly. He explained that it was his *'free time'* and he was *'proposed'* for the job. Then, he rightly accepted it happily. Entering into the teaching profession is a matter of good status and good prestige as well, and it is a matter of good future prospects (Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014). However, Manish didn't seem to reflect any remarkable intentions or reasons why he chose the job. Manish seemed to accept the

job opportunity without any prior plan as he was just offered. However, accepting a job so easily meant that he had some good thoughts or good future prospects for the job.

However, it was a golden opportunity and an unexpected chance, so he accepted it and started teaching. However, such an unexpected encounter into job sometimes does not meet the expectation, emotions and intentions of both, the employers and the employee, because the employee especially the new teachers, are often found unprepared for the job, as Anibas et al. (2009) mentioned that the beginning teachers would feel anxious about handling the responsibility and at the same time managing time for preparation of their lesson and also had to face course overload. From this statement, the meaning can be inferred that entering into teaching unexpectedly by chance indicated that they are unprepared to practically face many challenges they would encounter in the classroom.

Like Manish, Manisha also had similar experience of entering into teaching profession by chance. She just wanted to utilize her short gap of her higher studies after she appeared in the final examination of B. Ed. and the beginning of Master's Degree. She stated,

> *During the gap of result publication after B.Ed. final exam, I started teaching in a private boarding school near by my hometown, Terhathum. But I quit it in about 9 months and again started studying for a Master's Degree in Kathmandu. After I completed Master's Degree, again I needed job urgently and again came in teaching.*

Here, Manisha's experience showed how teaching was easier and more flexible than most other professions. It reflected the situation that stepping onto teaching was an easy game as Manisha did. Literally, in her case, teaching seemed to be simply a time pass. It is in the sense that she entered into teaching whenever she was free at home waiting for the result and wanted a job. She enjoyed it for a while as her wish and again quitted it whenever she had another commitment i.e. going to Kathmandu for further study. From her experience, it can be inferred that teaching in a boarding school was more flexible and easier than entering into other jobs. However, it was not only due to the nature of teaching job that was so flexible. It seemed to indicate that the new comers do not see proper future prospects in their teaching as Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) write, "a lack of future prospects was the predominant reason for teacher attrition" (p. 37). It indicated that most young and

early career teachers do not see a better future, and either they start upgrading their academic level or join in another job.

Manisha's experience of entrancing into teaching at her wish and quitting the job whenever she thought to do so also indicated that the beginning teachers would not be prepared enough to continue their jobs long-lasting. It showed that they were found to be careless and less responsible towards their job. It also indicated that they could quit the job at any time ignoring their duty and responsibility. Such status of the beginning teachers is associated with the problems of teacher attrition as Fantilli and McDougall (2009) also mentioned the situation that 40 to 50 percent of the beginning teachers leave their profession in the first few years of teaching for a number of reasons including lack of support and guidance at the workplace. In this sense, Manisha's situation of entrancing into a job and quitting at her wish is also an example of the problem of teachers' attrition in our context too.

Teaching is not always the first choice for all my participants. It is one of the ways of settling the personal and family issues when one comes to the state of making decision of his/her career choice. To draw on Yunish's experience, he didn't want to come to teaching but he had to compromise his wish for some reasons. He stated,

> *When I was young, I used to feel that I wouldn't come to teaching. So I joined humanities although many of my relatives and friends of my age or batch joined the Education faculty. Afterwards, when I passed my Master's Degree, I became worried about my financial dependency on my family. So I thought of earning for myself. Teaching was an easy access because at that time many +2s were being opened everywhere even in the villages. So I talked to some friends and relatives and expressed my interest in returning to my hometown and starting to teach. Soon one of my relative brothers informed me that there are some classes lying vacant in a school and a college too. Then I came and started teaching.*

Based on Yunish experience, it is found that he *'wouldn't come to teaching'*, so he *'joined humanities'* as many of his relatives and friends joined the Education faculty, which is basically known for growing teachers. However, to sustain his life after he completed his study and to be '*independent financially'* he joined teaching just as McLean et al. (2019) mentioned that teaching is "fallback career, or the extent to which one views teaching as a "backup" or "second choice" career" (p. 205). In this sense, Yunish entry into teaching, just viewing the job as a 'backup' career,

seemed that he assumed the job for his convenience in order to fulfill his immediate interest.

Similarly, Yunish's expression and experience also resembled the concept and realization of other participants that teaching was an easy job to settle their life, at least for an immediate context. It seemed that he was not prepared for it, though he had to join it for many reasons. He clearly said that he studied *'Humanities'* to find job other than teaching. It showed that human life wouldn't be exactly like what we expect, and it required the changes in plan or concept to adjust on the immediate context. It reflected that he came into teaching unplanned and unwilling to do it so far. It indicated that such an unplanned entry in teaching, according to Menon (2012) created difficulties in many ways since they would not be well prepared to deal with the realities of the classroom teaching. Thus, Yunish's entry into teaching also looked similar to other participants in case of making it just a chance, not a choice.

Yunisha was closely identical to Yunish's story, although she presented it a little differently. She seemed to express almost the same meaning as Yunish said, that he wanted to get rid of his financial dependency on his family any longer. She also wanted to be independent, finding a job and working away from home as her newly married husband and his family would want her to be the housewife. She reported,

> *After my marriage, my husband and his family wanted me to join their family business or work for the household works. They had a shop and some cattle at home. But I wanted to be independent and go out of home and join any job of my capacity. Teaching was easy to find out. I had just passed class 12 but had no teacher training. However, I applied for a vacant post of an elementary-level teacher and got it at a private boarding school. Then I started teaching.*

Yunisha seemed to work something of her own capacity. However, there was a family pressure to engage in family business. As Yunisha expressed, *"My husband and his family wanted me to join their family business',* she seemed to have a kind of family pressure to join their own business. From her expression, we could infer meaning that she was not supposed to join any other work out of home. However, she further mentioned that *'But I wanted to be independent and go out of home'* which reflected that she wanted an alternative way to avoid the family business so that she would feel independent. In that sense, she seemed to be ready to join teaching in order to maintain the balance between both of her interests of life: her personal freedom and the family. Furthermore, it seemed that she wanted to join teaching for two reasons:

first, the family would not allow her to join any other job except teaching, out of her family and second, she thought that her family would be convinced if she joined teaching because teaching was a more prestigious and easier job than any other job in the society. She made teaching an easy tool to balance or convince the family and to satisfy her own interest. As McLean et al. (2019) said, "Teaching will offer a steady career path, …teaching hours will fit with the responsibilities of having a family" (p. 207). It showed that teaching was an easy and flexible job that would fit even for a housewife maintaining time and workload.

In other sense, her experiential statement, *"I had not got any training"* clearly indicated that she was not well prepared to become a teacher, but she had to accept it to settle her family sentiments. She seemed to just want to go in teaching and "hit the ground running" (Anibas et al., 2009, p. 211) even if she was not trained and well prepared. Her expression reflected that she wanted to bear whatever it comes in teaching and enjoy a bit of freedom of modern woman's life avoiding family burdens and responsibility. For that, teaching became a good option for her to convince her family managing the time for both; her family and her interest.

Sumit's experience was also not different than that of other participants' realities in nub. He narrated that he stepped into teaching profession by choice. However, he revealed the fact as other participants mentioned that teaching was an easy and fast job opportunities. He seemed to notice it when he completed his master's degree; and started searching for the job and immediately found a teaching job. He asserted,

> *There are a few reasons why I came to this teaching profession. Firstly, it is my interest to come into this profession. Secondly, I found teaching very easier and faster job opportunities to stand on my own foot. Thirdly, English is a socially prestigious language and has a broader scope. Personally, I find teaching very interesting and prestigious in the society.*

Sumit's expression was a bit different than that of other participants in the sense that he came to choose teaching profession as most of others entered into teaching by chance or by convenience. As an English teacher, he seemed to enjoy the social prestige of English language in the society as he said, "*English is a socially prestigious language".* Not only the prestige of the English language, he also seemed to be proud of his teaching job as he found teaching is also a prestigious job. Durdukoca (2019) found one of the first remarkable reasons of teacher retention is

due to the social prestige of teaching profession in Turkey. Although teaching is an easy and flexible job, as Yunish said, "I found teaching very easy and faster job opportunities", he seemed to be equally confident in enjoying the social prestige of the teaching profession as an English teacher in society.

Based on the experiences and expressions of my participants, teaching was an easy job, to begin their careers most of them. However, the teachers enter into teaching for different reasons. Some of them entered into teaching by chance as they got it and grabbed the opportunity so that they could at least, learn something and build an experience of teaching. They would simultaneously earn a little too. Some of them were found to approach teaching because they wanted to pass the time until they got the result of their last examination or to settle at least for a short period until another better job would be found. Whatever the reasons were, it showed that the teaching job was a place to settle various personal and family sentiments lacking a systematic entry rules: qualifications, trainings, skills and experiences. It indicated that the beginning teachers come into teaching unplanned and unprepared as one of my participants, Yunisha, started teaching to the young students and got sick on the first day. She said, *'my voice got down and even I couldn't talk through my throat by yelping and shouting with the children the whole day'*. It seemed that she had thought of an easy job teaching to the young students as she didn't have to deliver high, intellectual content and would be easy to pass time with the children. But she found just opposite and felt 'reality shock' as Senom et al. (2013, p. 119) mentioned, in a real classroom.

It also revealed that teachers' regular teaching experience and their experience of a particular context or time had a different meaning. Yunisha, as the beginning teacher was not ready to address or to solve the problems she encountered unexpectedly in the classroom. This idea of 'an experience' of teaching on a particular day or context is 'an experience' out of day-to-day common 'experiences' of teaching through the lens of IPA researcher because 'becoming aware of 'an experience' out of many other common experiences is subject of inquiry in Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith et al., 2009). This idea of 'common and particular experience' could be connected in a number of ways to the particular experiences of the participants.

Furthermore, as my participants reflected, some of them left the job in the first few years of entry and again started searching for another job or joined in the higher

studies. It clearly showed the teachers attrition problem in the field. As Stanulis et al. (2002) found in the United States that more than 30% of the beginning teachers leave their profession in the first few years only due to the lack of support at their workplace. Although I couldn't count exactly the percentage of teachers' attrition in our context, some of my participants have mentioned that this was their 2nd and even 3rd time retreat in the teaching profession (Manisha 2023, interview); Yunisha 2023, interview). Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) found the trend of teachers' fluctuation in their entry and leaving the job very frequently without teaching or engaging in the profession in a remarkable time period. They seemed to experience many factors for leaving or quitting the job. One of such factors is the realization of *lack of future prospects* in the teaching profession. Thus, the participants' experience revealed the fact that teaching profession lacked attraction and charm to the early career teachers.

Settling Sentiments

This sub theme, 'Settling Sentiments' emerged out of my participants' experiences of how they entered into teaching in order to settle their sentiments: personal and family or social sentiments. Their expression reflected that they started feeling the need of job when they realized that they needed to be independent financially to fulfill their personal interests when they involved in taking responsibility of their family. More pertinently, sentiments, like personal interests, emotions and ambitions also became compelling forces for them to get to a job urgently and earn for living.

As I analyze the expressions that '*I need to be financially independent*' (Yunish, 2023, interview), *'I wanted to work away from home and stand on my own'* (Yunisha, 2023, interview), '*My family wanted me to return back to home town and settle as a housewife*' (Manisha, 2023, interview), I came to sense that they had a urgent and compelling sentiments of having jobs as soon as possible and found an 'Easy Entry' in teaching profession. It showed that these were the strong push factors, the sentiments of their family and also the expectation of the society, that while reaching a certain stage or age of life, the family and the society also start expecting some financial contribution or just an identity as a job holder in the society. The compelling force seemed to help increase their personal and family sentiments. As an IPA researcher, I have tried to explore my participants' interests, concerns, emotions, and other compelling stories or feelings about entering into the teaching profession. It is because, the IPA inquiry demands exploring such sentiments, compelling stories

and feelings of the participants without presuming to limit those experiences and only within a range of possible events, thoughts, feelings and actions (Smith et al., 2009). It indicated that the participants are free to share their stories, concerns and even the sentiments behind their entry in teaching profession.

Number of push and pull factors might have pushed and pulled to my participants for searching, selecting and entering into teaching profession. However, one of the very crucial reasons for entering into a job was settling their personal and family interests and ambitions and also settling personal and family expectations and sentiments. In reference to this context, Heinz (2015) explained a number of factors or reasons for entering into the teaching profession. Some of very remarkable factors he mentioned were 'addressing family matter, making good sources of income and having job satisfaction' (p. 279), which were closely related to the issue of addressing a person's and the family's interests or sentiments. In this context, Manish asserted,

> *Since I was staying away from home for my higher studies and I had completed +2 level staying at my relative's home, I thought I need to stand at on my own foot independently since my family could not afford my higher education for a long time. I wanted to find a permanent type of job. So I wanted to go to Dhankuta and apply for any suitable job in Public Service Commission (Loksewa). One day I set my journey in order to go to Dhankuta for the same purpose but the last bus had already left when I reached Dharan Bus Station. Then I went to live with one of my relative brothers in Bijayapur where I again got opportunity to teach at a government school.*

Manish explicated a remark 'I *need to stand at on my own foot independently'* which referred to the fact that he wanted to be independent financially by his own and also wanted to help his family get rid of sending money for his higher study any longer, as he also said, *'my family could not afford my higher education for a long time'*. It seemed that he was worried about his family's financial condition and he realized that it was his responsibility to support his family what he could do from his side. It also indicated that teachers might enter into teaching profession with a lot of mental baggage, pressures and personal and family's sentiments and make "unplanned entry into a job" (Borg et al., 2014, p. 22). It reflected that teachers enter the teaching field with a lot of mental pressure, sentiments and baggage. It also reflected the fact that the teachers would not be mentally prepared to teach in the

classroom with the mental baggage and sentiments and they required a kind of regular support and guidance (Aderibigbe et al., 2018).

Moreover, the expression, *'I wanted to find a permanent type of job'* was another very emotional expression that referred to his personal awkwardness of the feelings of uncertainty and unemployment. Chiong et al. (2017) had similar reasons for how and why teachers enter into the teaching profession and how they stay there permanently. They further mentioned that 'Altruistic and intrinsic motivations' (p. 24) are the major motivating factors for teachers to enter and continue teaching. Here, 'Intrinsic motivation' includes motivation related to 'finding the subject and the process of teaching' and 'altruistic motivation' includes 'finding teaching socially meaningful' (p.5). It was meant to say that the job they hold, should be able to satisfy a person's interests and also should be suitable for the family and socially acceptable. Therefore, their personal emotions and family sentiments seemed to be powerful thriving forces to enter into and to sustain the teaching profession in their context.

Like Manish, Manisha had a similar idea in the matter of job entry and sustaining into the profession. Manisha reflected that women felt dominated at home, especially in the joint family. However, the women of this modern age wanted a bit of personal freedom. So, Manisha wanted to have a job so that she could go out of home and earn a living on her own. As she expressed, women also dreamt of living a better and more advanced life than just being a housewife and they wished for their life to be independent and free of family and social taboos, as she stated below:

> *I had already passed master's degree when I had a baby girl. I was living in a flat with my husband in Kathmandu. I didn't have any job and there was a kind of pressure from my family to return back to my home village and live as a housewife along with my baby girl there. But I wanted to do something on my own and wanted to live an independent life having a job myself. So, I needed a job urgently to settle my personal life and to comfort my family too. Being an educated woman, I wanted to join any job and earn money for my living rather than working small household chores at home and just being a housewife. One day, I saw an advertisement about a vacant post for an English teacher in Nuwakot. I didn't even ask where and how remote place it was. I followed the address and phone number. I went to Nuwakot and started teaching.*

Manisha's expression, though not explicitly revealed, showed a hidden but common family story of most of the modern educated women in our community as she said, '*there was a kind of pressure from my family to return back to my home village and live as a housewife'.* It seemed that they would struggle a lot to find a job in their beginning career of life so that they could make a reason to go out of home and enjoy freedom and also convince the family. Rather than going back to home village to live a life of housewife, she started searching for a job and tried her best to get employed. Chang-Kredl and Kingsley (2014) studied the identity expectations of teachers prior to entering into the teaching profession and found that settling personal and family sentiments is also one of the remarkable reasons for choosing the teaching profession. Manisha also felt that one of the very intense factors for joining teaching profession was to manage her personal and family settlement. Manisha further explained that her family would want her to return to the hometown and settle there as a *'housewife'.* As '*an educated woman'* she would try to get employed and contribute to her family settlement. In phenomenology, it is relevant to explore the sentiments, feelings, and interests of a person and relate them to the expectations and values of society in order to explore a valid understanding of reality (Moustakas, 1994). That's why she was ready to go even to the remote area as she said, '*I didn't even ask where and how remote place it was'.* Having received such an opportunity, she even didn't ask about the place but she thought she would grab the opportunity first and settle her personal and family sentiments.

In such case, beginning teachers seemed to expect a kind of support mechanism not only the formal one, like training and workshops but also the informal kind of support or guidance that address their personal emotions and also sometimes the sentiments of their family. Anagnou and Fragoulis (2014) highlighted the importance of informal support to the teachers and presented the fact that formal education like training and workshops represents a small part of learning process. So, the teachers should get opportunity of receiving a great deal of informal support, learning environment and guidance at the workplace.

Yunish had a similar experience to Manisha's in case of job entry. He also wanted to get a suitable job so that he wouldn't be much depended upon his family for financial support any longer. He wanted to settle down permanently to a fixed place. More importantly, he wanted to return to hometown or at least to his neighboring town to be close to his family. He recounted,

After completion of my Master's Degree in English, I thought I should not be depended upon my family for financial matter any longer. Up to that time, I was purely a student. I was not having any job by then. I could easily notice the complications of my family to afford for my education for a long time. So, I started seeking for a job, especially teaching in college level and shared my message to my friends and relatives as well. My one relative brother helped me get a vacant post of a secondary-level English teacher in a neighbouring hometown where I wanted to return back, and then I started teaching.

Here, Yunish's remarks showed that he was worried about his financial dependency upon his family and sought for a job, especially teaching in college level that he thought, would fit for him the best. However, he started teaching from a secondary school and still continued seeking for better and permanent job in the future. I feel that Yunish's reflection *'by then I was purely a student'* meant a lot. He felt that he was burdening his family as a student spending money that was saved bit by bit by a working-class family. So, he seemed to search for a job. Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) mentioned that teachers have personal and family related reasons in pursuing and existing the job. It denoted that Yunish entered into teaching profession in order to fulfill his immediate need but still longing to find a better and permanent job, which was his main target.

Moreover, Yunish's expression revealed the fact that he had come to this teaching job in order to settle his personal and family's interests. That's why he didn't retain in this job for a long time. Such teachers who are not far sighted needed a kind of counseling to retain in the teaching profession. Yunish also required a kind of guidance and support to retain him in this job for a long time. One of such contexts as expressed here, converged with the expression of McLean et al. (2019) who wrote that the beginning teachers should be guided and supported in teaching to maintain their livelihood better and easier. They further stated that the beginning teachers should be able to manage both their personal freedom and their family. In this sense, it seemed to require a kind of support mechanism, not only a formal one but also a kind of informal too.

Yunisha's expression was also not different in crux than that of other participants. She also explains her 'Job Hunt Aura' as,

I need to say about my life before I tell you my professional journey to teaching. After marriage, I had to do all the household works. There were

cattle at home. They had also a shop and some other businesses. They thought I had to work at home or at their shop. They thought we had enough to do with our own business. So there was no need to go out of home. But I wanted to go out of home and earn for living by myself so that I could feel independent and I wanted to utilize my education as well. I got notice of one vacancy and applied for the post of a teacher. I was selected and started teaching.

Her expression showed that she seemed to have this job, to get rid of the responsibility of becoming a housewife. It seemed to be natural that she, as an educated woman, intended to have a job so that she could utilize her education properly and also could feel free and independent financially.

However, it also revealed the fact that such teachers might not have full commitment and dedication towards the job since they just wanted to utilize time and made the job an alternative platform for time pass. Such teachers lacked working socializations, motivation and dedication as well. So, regular support and guidance to the teachers help them motivate towards learning environment, socialization of the workplace, development of positive psychological and emotional thought and acquirement of teaching ethics (Burak & Simsar, 2022).

Sumit had a bit different type of entry in teaching than that of others because he entered into teaching by choice, not by chance. He was more prepared for teaching than other teachers who came into teaching for settling their immediate interest or to avoid other personal and family circumstances. He stated,

I wanted to make my first demonstration class very impressive. So, I had planned some strategies to impress students and the judges. Accordingly, I taught reported speech involving three students in conversation practically. However, when I finished teaching, I was not sure if I taught it well or not. I lost a bit confidence. I was selected out of 50 in writing, out of 25 in interview and it was the final demonstration only within 10. Luckily, later, they declared me 'selected candidates' and I started teaching.

Based on his sharing, Sumit came into teaching by choice but soon, he realized that teaching was not as easy as he thought before. Having come with unrealistic expectations in the teaching profession, the beginning teachers soon get worried about teaching as they cannot meet their expectations (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Although Sumit seemed to enter into teaching profession a bit more prepared than other participants, he did not feel strong confidence for his teaching and other

responsibilities in his beginning stage. Because he was not sure how he would teach in the classroom afterwards. He seemed to lose confidence. In the context, Fowler (2017) explained that the teachers lost confidence in performing their various roles, responsibilities and duties in the beginning stage of their teaching.

While observing all the participants' experiences, I found that they seemed to have a similar obligation for choosing the profession. Although some specific reasons were different, they all needed one job or another as soon as possible. However, most of their common reason was settling down their personal interests, ambitions and family sentiments. It was meant to say that most of my participants joined the profession because of their family problems and to maintain their personal expenses. To this context, Noor and Zainuddin (2011) have explained that the work-family conflict affects person's emotional and social well-beings and affects their wholesome environment. It indicated that even if they got the job, they would need time to settle their personal interests and family's sentiments. While giving the sense of having job in such condition and the expectation from it, as a phenomenological researcher, like Vagle (2018) who said that human was bound to be a social creature, a human at all costs. So, he moves in "a search for what it means to be human" (p. 105) or searching the meaning of 'a human' within ourselves. Thus, as my participants expressed, they had just entered into teaching profession in order to settle their personal and family sentiments rather than establishing as a good teacher in the future or earning good money for the future or establishing as an academic professional.

In this situation, the beginning teachers required counselling and professional guidance so that they could feel comfortable at the workplace and the importance of the job, family life and emotional well-being.

Journeying Through the Dark

This theme, 'Journeying Through the Dark,' came out of the participants' expressions that included teachers' struggles and sufferings in their teaching journey. Their experience shows that teaching in the beginning stage is challenging. As they said, teachers go through various ups and downs throughout their teaching journey. Menon (2012) also expressed a similar idea that beginning teachers often experience a lot of pressure and control at the workplace, due to which they fall into stress and frustration. He further asserted that the frustration and stress of the teachers are due to the lack of help, guidance and support from teacher colleagues, friends and school administrations. In this sense, teachers in the beginning phase struggle a lot for

establishing their identity and also establishing themselves as a professional teacher.

Based on my participants' experiences, the theme, 'Journeying through the Dark' was further categorized into two sub-themes: 'A Crow in the Mist' and 'Measuring the Mist'. It mainly incorporated the analysis of the problems and challenges the teachers have gone through and how they came out of those problems. As most of my participants expressed, teaching in the beginning stage was a kind of confusion and frustration like being *'a crow in the mist'* (Manish, 2022, Interview). Moreover, all of the participants shared their struggle and hard work about how they parted the black cloud of their teaching journey. Alam (2018) explained a similar situation of the beginning teachers who faced a number of challenges during their beginning stage of the teaching journey and reached the situation of either 'sink or swim' (p. 333). However, this situation could be overcome helping the beginning teachers with emotional support and collaboration. So, these sub-themes, 'A Crow in the Mist and Parting the Clouds' carried my participants' journey to teaching as a beginning teacher.

A Crow in the Mist

This sub-theme, 'A Crow in the Mist,' was generated from the experience of my participants, who went through a lot of confusion and frustration in their course of teaching in the beginning stage. As they reflected, the beginning teachers were found to be helpless in many workplace circumstances. They expressed that they felt like they were 'Lost at Sea' (Kauffman et al., 2002). Thus, the sub-theme, 'A Crow in the Mist' is the exploration of the participants' lived experience of their struggle along with the high and low moments of their teaching journey in the beginning stage.

The participants recounted that they experienced the both sides of a coin: the high and the low moments. They further asserted that they must have enjoyed some good parts of their new job; like they got employed, received salary, enjoyed with new friends, students and so on, and at the same time they encountered so many problems at once which they might not have expected before. It made them feel a kind of frustrated from their job and led them to look for ways out for solutions when they encountered so many problems. It was meant for that the beginning teachers should face various unexpected troubles and problems that might occur in course of teaching in their beginning phase. Çakmak et al. (2019) also had a similar idea and said, "the beginning teachers face a variety of difficulties or unfamiliar conditions as much as they gain necessary skills" (p.1). In that sense, the beginning teachers

experienced the situation that they had good knowledge of 'what to teach' but they might lack the knowledge and skills for 'how to teach'. It is because they had fix syllabuses and textbooks, necessary resources to read and they could be prepared for this purpose. However, one of their very important and difficult tasks was 'how to teach' because they lacked the experience of teaching context and didn't get helped only by reading the books.

In this sense, the beginning teachers felt difficulties in different circumstances of the work place as Senom et al. (2013) listed a number of problems like dealing with the students and with their behavior; managing classrooms, finding and choosing the skills and knowledge to be taught; learning to prepare lesson plan and implement it successfully; evaluating students' experience and understanding and analyzing it; balancing the complexity of content to the students' level and capacity and so on. It shows that there are challenges to adapting and effectively using this knowledge practically in our teaching context. As reflected in the lived experiences of my participants, they face several such and other more problems, specific to the Nepalese contexts. To begin with Manish,

    Although I liked teaching, I felt like 'kuhiro ko kaag' (A crow in the mist) because I felt or realized that I was burdened with many problems at once. I found every day new and different. I faced one problem on the first day and another on the next day. It is because I felt challenges in handling adult learners in the classroom, managing the diverse capacity of those students in the classroom, and upgrading the low performance of poor students to the average and above. I realized that some students learnt fast but some could not. The most difficult problem is to manage students' diverse nature, attitude and behavior in the classroom.

Based on Manish's sharing, the beginning teachers had to go through so many problems at once unexpectedly. He stated that he felt every day new and different. The experience of yesterday didn't work on that day and on the following day. He also explained a number of challenges he faced, like adult students' behaviour, managing diverse students' capacities, and upgrading the low performers' grades to the average students, which burdened him during his transitional period. His idea aligned with Dayan et al. (2018) who wrote that the beginning teachers faced many difficult situations unexpectedly during their transitional period including managing diverse capacity of individuals, applying appropriate instructional pedagogy.

As Manish stated, he felt like 'A Crow in the Mist' *(Kuhiro ko kaag)*. It reflected that he felt 'helpless, puzzled and directionless' about what to do, how to do, and whom to ask for help. The beginning teachers couldn't easily figure out the problems that they might encounter in their teaching journey. However, as they expressed, they must have expected that a variety of problems, difficulties and unexpected conditions occurred very naturally. Such a condition of arising problems and facing challenges was called 'bumpy moments' of teachers (Chakmak et al., 2019, p.1). Manish seemed to go through many 'bumpy moments' that made him feel '*kuhiro ko kaag*'.

Manisha, though she reflected her 'Lost' a little differently than that of Manish, she said that her classroom, in her beginning stage was an ugly place from where she wanted to escape as soon as possible. In her beginning stage, she felt almost frustration from her job and reached the condition to continue or quit the job. She stated,

> *When I went to Nuwakot as a +2 English teacher, they asked me to teach a literature-based course called 'An Outline of English Literature', which I felt was the most difficult subject. I had never studied such a history of literature, and I never wanted to teach that course. They said that I was fresher and had been appointed to teach that subject. I didn't know how I completed that course that year. I felt so difficult and frustrating to spend 45 minutes of that class. I wished that the bell would ring as fast as possible so that I could escape from the classroom.*

From her description above, Manisha was compelled to teach the most difficult subject she didn't want to teach. As she reflected it was difficult for her since she had not studied any literature course of that manner before. When she put her problem to the administration, it seemed that the administrator not only ignored her feelings and facts, but instead, he compelled her to teach it compulsorily, recounting that she had been appointed to teach the same subject. So, it was the situation whether to quit the job in the beginning stage or tolerate all the hurdles was the situation. She didn't have any other options. She had to either 'sink or swim' as Alam (2018) mentioned and further explained that entering into teaching for the beginning teachers is very 'scary' (p. 333). Alam (2018) further stated, "there are numerous unexpected and difficult situations for teachers come to handle" (p.334) during their beginning stage of teaching. As Manisha explained, she also experienced a similar situation as

her administration compelled her to teach a new subject which she had never studied before. It also showed that Manisha either should have taught the subject or leave the job instantly because she had not been heard by the administration as well.

Manisha further stated that it became so much frustrating for her that she didn't know how she spent 45 minutes each day in that classroom and the whole year. She reflected her lost and stress that she wanted to escape from the class before the bell rang and wished that she would get out of the classroom as soon as possible. She had lost confidence and was in terrible confusion about whether to quit the job or to tolerate everything for the sake of saving the job. Amin & Rahimi (2018) also reported similar situation of the beginning teachers that the beginning teachers had to show or perform the same level of confidence and performance as the senior and experienced teachers did in the classroom. They further said that the beginning teachers were sometimes misbehaved assigning them even tougher and harder assignment or works than the senior and experienced teachers. It implied that either she had to show the ability that she had never possessed or she had to quit the job.

Yunish, though he presented a similar situation, he voiced to recount it differently. He felt difficulties in handling the course that had been assigned to him. The subjects assigned to him were his own area, which he had studied before, but they were theoretical and boring for him to teach and for students to listen passively. He asserted,

> *There were many challenges: Firstly, my teaching subject itself was boring, just a theoretical course; not a step wise procedure of grammar or beautiful literature like stories and novel. I would really be worried about how to motivate students in the classroom. Next, the students would always be passive listeners, and they felt bored listening to the teachers alone due to the nature of the course and perhaps my instructional strategies as well. Other common problems that I often feel were, lack of my own preparation, diverse capacity of students in the classroom, students' attitude and behavior and bring the theoretical courses to practical one. Sometimes it would make me crazy and frustrated.*

In this account, Yunish had a kind of frustration for not being able to create an effective environment in the classroom as Erdogan et al. (2010) mentioned that the teachers faced "problems associated with classroom management" (p. 881) in their beginning stage of teaching. Yunish further realized that there were a few reasons

associated with the nature of his course, which was boring in itself; it was a theoretical one, and he also followed the traditional method of teaching. It indicated that he lacked good knowledge for implementing suitable classroom strategies and also, he was not well prepared to resolve all the problems and issues of the classrooms as Dias-Lacy et al. (2017) wrote that the beginning teachers "may feel unprepared to handle behavioral and academic issues among their students" (p. 265). It showed that beginning teachers might not have the confidence and capacity to create a motivating environment in the classroom during their beginning stage of teaching.

Moreover, Yunish further voiced that he came to face many other problems like the one in that he lacked time for preparation for his classes; he faced behavioural and disciplinary problems with the students in the classroom and also issues with managing noise in the classroom. These problems were directly related to disciplinary behavior of the students, attitude, and classroom management. As he expressed, classroom noises, disciplinary problems of the students and the problem of classroom management were main problems which aligned with the idea of Erdogan et al. (2010) who wrote, "students' lack of motivation, and breaking the rules and routines can be mainly due to the nature of the course" (p. 888). Thus, the problems of the classroom made them feel discouraged and might quit the job.

Motivating the students in the classroom and dealing with the nature of the course became one of the serious problems for Yunisha, one of my participants who had to deal with the younger children she was unprepared for. From the first day of her class, she was exposed to the small kids and faced the same kind of problems for a long time. She reported,

> *I don't forget the first day of my teaching. I was confused and nearly quitted the job on the first day only. Without teaching me how to handle small children, they sent me to an elementary class saying that lady teacher would be better in the lower grades. The class was so noisy; I couldn't control them; I was puzzled how to persuade them to the course; they were so ignorant, made noise; fight and blame to each other and also used to cry frequently. Perhaps I didn't understand their language, and they would certainly not understand my language, too. I was so nervous that I would nearly burst into crying after children when they kept on crying continuously and nothing could help them stop crying. On the first day, when I reached home after school, my voice had gone down completely that I was unable to speak out. I was*

confused about whether to go to school the next day or not.

What we can infer from her expression is, she faced a lot of problems and challenges from the first day of her teaching. She seemed to be so frustrated that she had nearly quitted the job on the first day only. However, it was her first opportunity to start her career. So, she couldn't decide instantly. Moreover, her expression, '*I would nearly burst into crying after children*' showed that she was emotionally so tormented that she was ready to leave the job on the same day. Yunisha seemed to become completely helpless and raw in her practical knowledge for motivating to the young learners. It seemed that the beginning teachers lack practical pedagogical knowledge for the application of classroom activities successfully and effectively (Barkauskaitė, 2017). It showed that Yunisha seemed to fail to apply her knowledge and skills effectively in the classroom although she had theoretical knowledge of education. Though this seemed to be her personal experience, there might be many other voices that have not been heard yet and they are common. Such lived experiences of teachers are also the part of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) that attempts to reach as close as possible to the personal lived experiences of the participant (Smith et al., 2009) and explores it as a common matter of all humankind.

Similarly, as Yunisha expressed in the account above, we can infer meaning that the main challenges and problems of Yunisha were molding the young children's behaviour successfully in the classroom. As she said, *the class was so noisy; made noise; fight and blame each other and also used to cry frequently' were referred to the young students' classroom behaviou*r that the teacher needs to adapt and shape them to the best of children's performance. However, as a beginning teacher, Yunisha failed to manage the students' behavior and classroom activities. In fact, the beginning teachers are usually found to lack effective strategies to mold mischievous behavior of the students in the classroom (Adeyemo, 2012). Thus, Yunisha faced challenges and problems because of her inexperience in classroom practice.

Similarly, Sumit's experience resembled with Yunisha's situations too, as both of their basic challenges were disruptive and mischievous behavior of the students and also the problems of classroom management. However, as Sumit presented, his students were adult learners, and their classroom behaviour was quite different from that of children's behaviour. Sumit reported,

As students' number was large in the classroom, about 50 in one class, it

would create noise. The administration would not like noises in the classroom. So, I had to keep on changing my strategy according to my needs. There were some students who were mischievous and their interest was just to time pass, rather than helping their study. I needed to control or handle them successfully. Moreover, I was like the person who couldn't tolerate a small disruptive behavior of the students too. So, I felt much awkward even if only one or two students would disturb the class. Because of that I would feel stress. Another important thing is that addressing the diverse capacity and needs of the students was one of another very tough challenges that caused severe stress to my mind.

Here, Sumit began his sharing by highlighting the fact that large classroom are naturally noisy. His statements also echoed that it was natural to find some typical students with mischievous or disruptive behaviour out of many students in each classroom. What's more, the adult students seemed to be still more complicated. They made deliberate noises and made others fun. As Sumit said, *"the administration would not like noises in the classroom"* and condemned such behavior. Noisy classes were meant indicative of the fact that the teacher was not capable enough to control the classroom. Such problems associating with the challenges of managing disruptive behavior of the students and challenges in creating good classroom environment are associated with the concept of classroom management (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). They also mention "Teachers' managerial abilities have been found to positively relate to students' behavior and achievement" (p. 227). It showed that Sumit, as a beginning teacher might not have been able to gain the managerial abilities to settle students' disruptive behavior and transform it into their success and achievement.

Thus, this sub-theme, A Crow in the Mist' carries my participant teachers' lived experience of distress, frustrations and disappointment in teaching due to various reasons. They seem to have mainly two types of problems: problems related to classroom management and the problems related to delivering the content knowledge. Based on their experience, they required support and guidance to overcome the both types of problems. As they further expressed, they are full of stress and also feel awkward for not being able to manage the classroom environment and also not being able to confident in the content knowledge and effective delivery of it though they are good in content knowledge. The need of a kind of regular support and guidance to the beginning teachers is highlighted by Wasonga et al. (2015) and

described that the regular guidance and support by the senior faculties, administrative heads, principals or also from teachers' colleagues benefit both the beginning teachers and the whole education system. Thus, effective mentoring is the way of overcoming the distress, frustrations and disappointment of the beginning teachers. Vagle (2018) stated that Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is 'situated in a hermeneutic phenomenological tradition' (p.179) that captures participants' interests, feelings like distress, frustrations and disappointments and their lived experiences of a particular context. It showed that this sub-theme 'A Crow in the Mist' was found to capture all the sentiments, distress, feelings, and even the frustration, regrets and so many other feelings of the beginning teachers.

Measuring the Mist

This sub-theme, "Measuring the Mist' was generated from the lived experiences of my participants' struggle in judging their problems, trying to identify them and searching for the ways out to overcome the problems during their beginning stage of teaching. According to Gut et al. (2014), beginning teachers struggle to identify pupils, manage teaching and learning speed, keep up with the increased workload and try to overcome the problems with many tricks that appear in the field experience. Their study revealed that the beginning teachers lack coherence in the work and search for help, support and guidance. It reflected that the beginning teachers felt lack of support and guidance at the workplace. The beginning teachers could not figure out the real problems in their beginning stage of teaching and struggle in adjudging the problems in real form and in searching for the ways out.

As I reflect upon my own journey as a beginning teacher, I realized that I was not able to catch the 'tricks and tracks' of the classroom in my first attempts and struggled rigorously my own testing and applying various tricks in the classroom. However, I would not be able to find the best tricks for all situations as the class would be a heterogeneous group, and none of the tricks would fit all the contexts. However, I didn't want to share all these hurdles to the administration and even to the friends as I would feel dominated or I knew that they would make me fun of the matter. I found that my situation of struggle and hesitation aligned with the idea of Amin and Rahimi (2018) who described the beginning teachers' challenges and their hesitations for not being able to share their problems to anyone as their voices would not be heard and would not be treated as the mainstream problems. Thus, the sub-theme 'Measuring the Mist' basically would be personal accounts of my participants

who tried their best to judge the mist in order to part the clouds and clear the path ahead for their journey.

      As I enter into my participants' account, I found Manish who had two immediate problems as he began his teaching: how to teach or which tricks to use in the classroom and how to find which tricks to use in particular context. Manish said, "*While teaching, I feel difficulty in how to teach. Sometimes students learn easily and sometimes they do not learn. Sometimes my tricks work in the classroom well and sometimes not. Similarly, some of the students learn fast and easily but some of them can't learn how much I try for them. So, I feel confused and try to notice why it happens. I feel sometimes my preparation for the class is good and sometimes not because I don't have time and I have other things to do.*

      The expression of Manish shared that he didn't have tricks of teaching as he said, "*I feel difficulty in how to teach*". He further added that his tricks of teaching didn't always work, and realized that his students were of diverse nature. Casey and Childs (2007) also mentioned the problems of the beginning teachers, as they said, "beginning teachers need to understand how children learn and how to teach children with a variety of needs" (p.4). What we can infer from this expression is that the beginning teachers lacked knowledge of addressing the need of diverse students. It showed that the beginning teachers needed regular support and guidance in order to help them build their career better.

      Furthermore, Manish reflected that he sometimes taught very well and the students also responded him well in the classroom. However, sometimes he couldn't make his class as effective as he wanted. He realized that it was all because he couldn't get enough time and resources to prepare his class timely and appropriately. In this sense, the beginning teachers seemed to appear in the class unprepared and unorganized as Menon (2012) said, "teaching is a difficult one for new teachers, who often find themselves unprepared to deal with the realities of the workplace" (p. 228). It showed that the beginning teachers seemed to lack enough preparation for the class but they might not realize why they couldn't teach very well in the classroom. In fact, the beginning teachers lacked experience of teaching and practical problems occurred in the classroom.

      The beginning teachers also found problems in delivering the content knowledge. As one of the participants of this study expressed, she didn't possess deep

and clear knowledge of the teaching content, and she had a problem about the content. She also expressed that she had a problem in delivering the content. Manisha said,

> *When I was first appointed as an English Teacher in +2 level, they assigned me to teach a course that was completely new for me because it was a literature-based course and I had not studied such a course before. When the content was new, I would feel lacking words to deliver in the classrooms because we would not have broader knowledge of it. I requested the headmaster and also a senior English teacher who had been teaching English for a long time to help me exchange that literature-based course for a compulsory English course, which had grammar and reading comprehension texts. But they denied and said, "we have appointed you to teach the same subject because you are fresh and new teacher who have better knowledge than the old ones".*

A bit differently than that of Manish, Manisha presented two different types of problems in the beginning stage of her teaching. Firstly, she had to teach the subject which she '*had never studied before'*. As Manisha expressed, teaching the new subject was difficult for her, but there was no alternative. She couldn't change it even if she requested to the head teacher and another English teacher. It seemed that the beginning teachers would not be heard so easily, and they were also compelled to teach the subject or content neglected or given up by others. A study by Senom et al. (2013) revealed that the beginning teachers do not feel well prepared to face all the obstacles occurred in the beginning stage of their teaching but in reality, they had to perform the same or even more commitment and responsibility than that of seniors or in service teachers because as Manisha said, '*But they denied'* to address her request'. This study showed that the beginning teachers were compelled to perform tougher and more convoluted responsibilities than the seniors or in service teachers.

Manisha not only faced the problem of a new content area or new subject matter but also faced the problems of being neglected or ignored. She asserted that she had requested to the head teacher and to the senior English teacher to help her exchange the subject but they completed neglected or ignored her voice. She had requested that she be a newcomer, so she wanted to teach a bit more comfortable subjects, which she had gone through her schooling, but they completely denied. It reflected that the beginning teachers lacked support not only from the teacher colleagues but also from administrative heads as Dias-Lacy et al. (2017) revealed the

fact that the beginning teachers feel stress due to the lack of appropriate support from the required sources and especially due to "lack of administrative support" (p.265). The same situation was observed when my participant, Manisha urged to the head master, *"please, help me exchange the literature-based course to a compulsory English course"*. Her voice was not heard and didn't get any help; instead, she was compelled to do it. In this sense, the beginning teachers seemed to be helpless and distress in the beginning stage of their teaching career.

Another participant, Yunish reflected that teaching in the beginning stages is challenging job due to the lack of experience. He admitted that there are problems due to the teachers' inexperience of the content and context both and simultaneously due to the lack of appropriate help from the students and the administration. He said,

> *When I started teaching in the college level, I slowly and gradually started feeling that there were many challenges. I realized that the problems occurred due to a lack of experience in practical classroom teaching and due to diverse teaching contexts. It was mainly due to the lack of preparation for the lesson and the delivery of content that disturbs the class. Moreover, the nature of the course was also one another challenge for me because I felt very difficult to teach a theoretical type of course which was often taught through lecture method and students get dozed off in the classroom. Other problems include nervousness of the teacher, the students' attitudes towards learning and students' disruptive behavior in the classroom.*

Based on Yunish's experience, the beginning teachers face many problems related to teacher's own personal problems like lack of effective teaching strategy, psychological stress and also due to the nature of the students: their attitudes and disruptive behavior. Yunish reflected that teachers feel nervous and stressed while facing the classroom for the first time due to the lack of practical knowledge and experience of the real context of the classroom, as he said, *"include nervousness of the teachers"*. They lacked confidence in delivering the content knowledge in the classroom. Barkauskaitė (2017) dealt with the number of problems of the beginning teachers including teaching processes, individualizing the content knowledge, motivating the students and working with the students of special needs. It showed that the beginning teachers required acquiring knowledge and strategies for managing the classroom properly.

As he further expressed, *"other problems include nervousness of the teacher,*

the student's attitudes towards learning and students' disruptive behaviour in the classroom" the beginning teachers felt nervous and stressed due to the disruptive *behaviou*r of the students and also due to their attitudes towards teaching and learning. Yunish echoed that the disruptive students frequently tortured and misbehaved to the beginning teachers. Students' disruptive behavior impacts badly in the successful delivery of the content in the classroom and also creates serious problem in the students control and effective classroom management. In this context, Adeyemo (2012) also highlighted the importance of effective classroom management and concluded that there is a positive relation between effective and successful classroom management and the achievement score of the students in the examination. It showed that the beginning teachers required support and guidance to avoid stress and nervousness in the classroom for the successful classroom management.

Moreover, Yunish presented another problem of novice teachers. According to Yunish, the beginning teachers also faced problems due to the nature of the course. He reflected that the beginning teachers lacked effective strategies suitable for successful delivery of variety of content knowledge. He further admitted that he felt difficulty in teaching theoretical nature of the courses because students felt dozed off as the passive listeners in the classroom. It created monotony in the classroom and also created issues in students' discipline. Amin and Rahimi (2018) identified a number of challenges of the beginning teachers including 'students-teachers' relationships, managing time and successful handling the course content and effective delivery of the content knowledge'. It revealed that the beginning teachers faced multiplicity of roles and challenges together.

Similar to Yunish, Yunisha also had a problem of classroom management and problems of motivating to young students and comforting the small kids in the classroom. She didn't know how to behave, how to talk with the children. She realized that they don't understand her language. She stated,

> *There were no guidelines, no training, and no induction to the new teachers.*
> *They would order, go to this class and that class, it is vacant. There would be*
> *noise and yelling cry of the young kids continuously in the classroom. I tried*
> *to comfort them, but they would not understand my language and perhaps I*
> *could not understand their language too. I was bored and fed up with running*
> *after the children in the classroom. I would feel furious and sometimes I would*
> *scold and even slapped them a bit and again immediately felt I have not done*

justice to the small kids. However, I tried to do better. I knew myself that I was a sincere teacher. I would always become observant and see what others are doing. When I heard others' complaints at school I used to correct immediately and became alert or aware of those problems.

Based on Yunisha's experience, there were a number of problems: "*no guidelines, no training, and no induction*" to the new teachers, lack of administrative support, and the problems of classroom management. Firstly, she stated that there were no any guidelines of the school or any systematic instruction to the new teachers. Stanulis et al. (2002) also explain the similar situation that the beginning teachers are compelled to quit the job "due to lack of support and structured induction that listens to the needs of teachers" (p. 71). It seemed that the voices of the beginning teachers are not heard by the administration at the workplace. As a result, the beginning teachers would feel helpless and fed up with the job. The beginning teachers expected help and guidance from the administration, i. e. the administrative heads, senior faculties and even by the teacher colleagues. It showed that if they didn't get regular support and guidance at the workplace, the beginning teachers were compelled to quit the job.

Yunisha's experience of her beginning stage of teaching offered us knowledge about the situation that the school administration, especially the administrative heads, like the principal of the school or college, faculty heads, seniors, and even the teacher colleagues didn't support the beginning teachers due to which the beginning teachers seemed to be helpless and face multiple challenges. Mansfield et al. (2014) stated, "beginning teachers experience multiple, varied and ongoing challenges and that personal and contextual resources are both important in sustaining them through the beginning years of their teaching career" (p. 547). It showed that although the beginning teachers faced many challenges, the personal and contextual support and resources could help them sustain in the teaching profession.

Yunisha also had a problem of classroom management as she had young kids in the classroom, and they would make continuously yell of cry and mischievous acts. She reflected that she didn't have knowledge about dealing with small kids and their behaviour. She was new and she had been assigned the class without any prior instruction and training. She had to face the situation at all costs without alternatives. So, managing the class was one of her serious problems. Lew and Nelson (2016) stated that the beginning teachers face challenges in dealing with the students in the

classroom and face problems in classroom management due to the lack of practical field experience. This study shared that the beginning teachers required support and guidance to manage the classroom effectively and successfully.

Sumit's account resembled Yunish and Yunisha, who had to deal with the problems of students' disruptive behaviour, diverse students in one classroom or managing a classroom, and dealing with a lengthy and vast course within the given time. He stated,

I had to face many problems dealing with the students. Firstly, I was assigned to teach to a large class having 50 adult students in one classroom. Secondly, the students were of diverse background and diverse capacity. It was really a frustrating noisy classroom that I sometimes felt so should have punished the adult students too. Thirdly the attitude of the students towards learning was another frustrating challenge for me as a new teacher. I would realize that the problems would not be sorted out and solved by my effort only. The administration also should have helped the teachers. What's more, completion of the given syllabus within given time with such a devastating student was another serious challenge for me. However, I would wait and use my own tricks rather than sharing it with others.

Here, out of five participants, Sumit is my fourth participant, who admitted classroom management was one of serious problems for the beginning teachers. Sumit's expression revealed that classroom management is one of the very common problems for most of the beginning teachers. However, most of the classroom management problems were seemed to appear due to students' behavior in the classroom. However, Malmgren et al. (2005) presented a number of issues related to classroom management. They further explained that the focus of classroom management is important because it is related to the selection of effective methods of teaching or teaching strategies, managing students' behavior and for maintenances of health of education or wholesome healthy environment in a classroom. So, Sumit also admitted that it was one of very important issues for him in order to manage a large class as he said, "*about 50 in one class*", to discourage disruptive behavior of the students and to create a wholesome positive attitude of the students towards teaching and learning.

Moreover, Sumit also realized the fact that the teachers' managerial abilities played a vital role in a number of cases of classroom management. He further

expressed that there were some issues, which could not be solved by the teacher alone. He further gave the example of completion of given syllabus in the given time, which in fact the common problems of many teachers because of the accidental school closure, too many holidays and teachers' personal casual leaves. In such, the matter, as Sumit expressed, the administration required to be supportive and provide extra working hours in specific cases. In this context, Little and Akin-Little (2008) presented that the role of administrative support helped teachers uplift their managerial skills and abilities. Thus, the administrative support played a vital role to increase the capacity of classroom management to a beginning teacher.

The sub-theme 'Measuring the Mist' tried to explore my participants' lived experiences of resisting the problems occurred in their professional journey, especially in the beginning stage, trying to detect them and searching for the better ways out. As they expressed, the participants faced so many problems and challenges in the beginning stage of their teaching. Based on their experience, the challenges included a range of problems from teachers' internal or personal issues to other external issues. The teachers' internal issues included problems like time management for the preparation of the lesson, personal quality and capacity of presenting the lesson, motivating and engaging the students in the classroom, delivering the content tactfully and effectively and the personal tricks and ways of handling students. Similarly, other external issue included matters related to administrative support, nature of the course or syllabus, availability of teaching resources and classroom environment. Having analyzed all the issues, 'teachers' ability to classroom management' was found to be a core skill or ability that could integrate many of their internal and external issues for successful and effective teaching. A study by Malmgren et al. (2005) has explained the importance and also three models of classroom management: "Assertive discipline (emphasizing the importance of teacher-imposed structure (p. 37), Logical consequences (emphasizes the importance of assisting students in meeting their innate needs (p. 37), and Teacher effectiveness trainings (highlights the importance of intrinsic motivations and encouragement of teachers" (p. 36-38). As our participants' experiences showed, these models of classroom management could be helpful to solve the immediate problems of the classroom and address other internal and external issues of the teachers.

Fruiting Professionalism

The theme, "Fruiting Professionalism", surfaced in my participants' lived experience of being or reaching the stage of gaining fruits from their teaching profession, like earning a living, enjoying the classroom, receiving opportunities for teachers' training and workshops, and gaining professional and social identity. As I mark the participants' expressions and experiences about their entry in teaching and their latter developmental pattern as a professional teacher, it seemed that they entered in teaching profession either by chance or choice; went through various high and low moments during their beginning stage of teaching, and finally they reached to the stage of fruiting something good from their profession. In this sense, this theme included participants' experience of starting to make a certain amount of money; gradually progressing it; involving in professional friends' circles; participating and sharing their own lived experiences, involving in various professional training and workshops, and gaining professional and social identity and height. These all changes and gradual progress of teachers can be termed as 'teachers' transformation' which is essential for transformation of the whole school environment and to support students' outcomes (Martin et al., 2019). However, this transformation doesn't solely represent of whole part of teachers' development. It still moves from parts to whole and vice-versa as in the 'hermeneutic circle' or more 'double hermeneutic' as in IPA because teachers' development and growth process is continuous process of teachers' transformation in one skill, or behavior and returning back to learn and ripen another skill and behavior, constantly and dynamically moving between the parts and whole (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, this theme "Fruiting Professionalism" includes the experiences of my teacher participants about their developmental patterns to reach to the stage of professional teachers generating incomes and benefits from the profession. In this sense, this theme captures the processes or strategies of teacher professional development or teacher education.

This theme 'Fruiting Professionalism' focused on the final or product part of the stages or patterns of teachers' professional development. Teachers' professional development is a reciprocal practice or two-way interaction of a teacher between the teacher's own strategy, hard work or effort and the whole teaching-learning contexts around him: becoming resources of the whole contextual associations and using resources and opportunities of those contextual or environmental associations (Gnawali, 2016). In this sense, teachers' professional development is a reciprocal and

mutual exchange of knowledge, resources and even the opportunities available in the teaching and learning context, environment (institutions, professional platforms, associations) and the teachers' effort, hard work, curiosity and diligences. When teachers had a good use of those opportunities and resources, they would grow and start making a lot of achievements. This stage of receiving achievement from teaching profession is a stage of Fruiting professionalism as my participants have experienced. This stage of fruiting professionalism is further categorized into two sub-themes: Harvesting Professionally and Securing Social Identity.

Harvesting Professionally

This sub-theme "Harvesting Professionally' was developed from participants' experience of achieving success in teaching. It included participants' experiences of making money from teaching, enjoying teacher colleagues and school or classroom environment and receiving opportunities to attend teachers training or workshops, seminars, conferences and achieving scholarships, awards and honors. All these opportunities, experiences, and achievements helped teachers develop their identity and social prestige. A study by Klimek (2019) found that the status of teaching profession was high and desirable but the prestige of the teachers depended on how good, knowledgeable and dignified status they had built and possessed. In this sense, the opportunities of teachers' growth and development, trainings and workshops, awards and certifications and the wholesome built status of a teacher are remarkable indicatives of teachers' achievements and earnings.

As the participants expressed, they got professional platforms where they could develop their professional capacity; they also built friends' circles where they could share their problems and listen to useful classroom strategies; possessed permanent or prestigious job that fruited them for living, and also received scholarships, awards and extra income to some extents for their better life. Teachers reached to that stage of development experiencing many high and low moments struggling through continuous practice, problems and challenges for years. Moreover, the teachers showed their power to combat years of struggle and challenges when they were also supported and encouraged continuously at the workplace. Gaikhorst et al, (2017) said that the challenges, issues, and worries that aroused in the classroom could be turned into engaging tasks by providing teachers with regular and enough support. Here the participants experienced that the friends' circle, the school administration, and professional organizations were the platform that provided

continuous support to teachers and became as the change agents for teachers' professional development. To begin with Manish to the same context,

> *I have gained a lot from this profession now. First of all, I have been recognized as an established English teacher in the society and I have also got opportunity to teach both, at a reputed private college in Itahari and also at a government school as a permanent teacher. I have also got opportunities to receive some formal and informal teachers training in service 'Teachers Professional Development' (TPD) training from the government as a permanent government teacher. I have got much informal training. I am also a member of NELTA and CETRAP. They are professional organizations conducting many training, workshops, paper presentations and conferences. I have taken part almost all of them. Having received all these opportunities, I have been able to earn for living satisfactorily.*

Here, Manish expressed his lived experience of being established as a recognized English teacher in society. He seemed to claim that he became an established English teacher in the society because he felt that teaching at both a reputed private college and a government school was an indicator of being an established and competent teacher. As he expressed, being an established teacher was gaining fruits or achievement from his job. Moreover, he seemed to get opportunities to receive teachers' trainings, workshops, and the opportunity to involve in different professional organizations and build professional networks. That is also a kind of achievement he got from teaching. This view of teachers' achievement resembles the concept of Senom et al. (2013), who said that teachers are found to develop their teaching skills and knowledge through a lot of training programmes, informal internships, informal talks and discussions, and also through years of high and low moments of teaching experiences. It seemed that teachers enhanced their working capacity and resilience experiencing a lot of ups and down moments during their teaching period.

What we could also infer from Manish's expressions '*got opportunity to teach both at a reputed private college in Itahari and also at a government school*' and '*I have been able to earn for living satisfactorily*' was that he seemed to live his happy life enjoying his only source of income i. e. the teaching job satisfactorily. Moreover, he reflected that he went through various 'ups and downs' or 'high and low' moments but what he was getting financially, academically and socially was satisfactorily for

him. Mullen et al. (2021) also mentioned that job satisfaction and other achievements of teachers are associated with teacher resilience that leads to other positive outcomes like enjoying various opportunities or achieving success in the profession. In this sense, job opportunities, satisfactory sources of income and gaining social identity were symbolized as the ways of harvesting fruits from their job.

Quoting another participant, Manisha for her experience of resilience and achievement in teaching profession reflected that she also got permanent job, received many opportunities of training and workshops, and even the prestigious teacher's award for her visit to the United States of America. She stated,

I have had many opportunities as a teacher. Last year I got TOT training so that I could train to other fellow teachers. I have been able to use many teaching strategies and techniques in the classroom because I am now involved in NELTA and got many opportunities to receive teacher training and also the TPD and EMI training from the government. Now, I believe I have been established as a professional teacher and now I need to develop as a trainer. Currently, I have been teaching at a school as a government permanent teacher and at a private college, too. I put my application and got selected in Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA) for my visit to the USA in 2019.

Manisha's accounts also attested that she achieved a lot in being a teacher. She further reflected that she received many opportunities, got '*TOT training so that I (she) could train to other fellow teachers',* and received other important in-service teacher training like TPD training, EMI training and so on. It showed that she had been able to gain a kind of prestige and identity in a teachers' circle. It also echoed that such gains are due to regular professional support from different areas of concern. Webb (2018) also said, "opportunities for such professional development can be a means of keeping in-service teachers in the classroom" (p. 16) and help them realize their achievement. It also indicated that the teachers get encouraged to sustain the job and become resilient when they continuously receive professional opportunities and accomplishments.

Manisha further expressed that she became "*a government permanent teacher"* and also a teacher at a private college. It seemed that she had already gained a kind of good reputation as an established teacher in the society. As the outcome or benefit of her reputation, she got an opportunity to teach both at a government school

and a private college. Moreover, she also expressed that she received a prestigious teacher award as she said *"I got selected in Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program (TEA)"* for her visit to the United States of America (USA) and got opportunity to gain rich knowledge of new educational system and pedagogy of teaching. These were the benefits and the achievement that Manisha received as a professional teacher. Tait (2008) found that a teacher could benefit or take advantage from all opportunities he/she received during the professional journey. It reflected that when teachers struggled to sustain in teaching and remained resilient in their work, they would get support and opportunities that would benefit in their life.

Like the previous participants, Yunish was also not different in his perspectives of receiving fruits or benefits from his job and gaining for his professional development, financial requirement and professional identity. He further mentioned,

> *Now I feel I have got many opportunities as a professional teacher. I have got good job, not only in a college, but also in 2/3 private and public colleges as per my wish and available time. I have been a permanent lecturer in a public campus. Moreover, the teacher community of this area, cordially invite me to join to some professional organizations and they have also handed over the responsibility to work in the executive committee of NELTA and CETRAP. I have had opportunities to attend NELTA International conferences and many other training and workshops.*

This sharing by Yunish also showed that he had been able to gain professional development, financial income for living and professional identity from teaching job. As he said, I *have got good job…in a 2/3 private and public colleges',* he meant to say that he earned for living well or satisfactorily as he said that it was a '*good job'.* It seemed that he was satisfied with his sources of income though nobody gets satisfied with money and wealth very easily. Moreover, he also reflected that he gained professional knowledge and skills as he got opportunities to receive various teachers training and workshops and also attended the conferences for professional development as Gu and Day (2013) also mentioned that teachers having opportunities of in-service professional development activities gain qualities for classroom activities and help in teacher retention. It also showed that the opportunities for teachers' professional growth and development benefit for both, teachers and students in the classroom.

Furthermore, he also reflected that he gained good professional identity as he said, *"they handed over the responsibility to work in the executive committee of NELTA and CETRAP".* It showed that he was given responsibilities and acknowledged his identity in two executive committees of professional organizations, like NELTA and CETRAP. Such organizations or Teachers Associations (TAs) as Gnawali (2016) presented "employ different strategies in order to support professional development of their membership" (p. 170). Having gained these professional opportunities do not only help teachers develop their identity and networks, it also helps them learn useful classroom pedagogy and teaching strategies.

Yunisha also presented similar ideas about the achievement or the benefits from teaching profession. She also received better prestige in her teaching community, got a good job and made a good earning which her family valued now. She said,

> *My seniors have recognized me as a hardworking and honest professional in CETRAP and they have given me opportunity to work as a secretary. I have got a good job in a reputed college and made good earning which is really valued by my family who wanted me to join in family business rather than the teaching job in the beginning. I have got many opportunities to present papers in our professional organization and training from PABSON and other professional organization.*

Yunisha's account showed that she gained a professional height and received a kind of professional support and prestige from her teaching community as she said, "*my seniors have recognized me as a hardworking and honest professional"*. It indicated that the seniors, in her teaching circles, trusted her as an honest teacher and handed over the duties and responsibilities in the professional organization. It seemed that the seniors, in her teaching community encouraged and helped her develop professionally. It is a form of informal support system to the teachers for their professional development especially through mutual support and informal exchange of knowledge (Anagnou & Fragoulis, 2014). As Yunisha expressed, she also received regular support and guidance from her teachers' community informally and from the senior educators that helped her become an established English teacher.

As she said, '*I got a good job and made a good earning which is really valued by my family',* it indicated that not only she is satisfied with her job and earnings, but also her family, who had a traditional mindset that teaching is a low paid job and

wanted her to join their family business rather than engaging in a school job as a teacher, seemed to value her earning now. Having made a good earning from a job was a happy indicator and high level of job satisfaction. Bandura (1997) identified four various sources of teachers' personal efficacy: repeated mastery experiences, vicarious experience, social persuasion and emotional states of experiences including job satisfaction (as cited in Tait, 2008). Yunisha seemed to have these elements like rich experience, family and even the social encouragement or persuasion and emotional well-being from her teaching profession as he expressed her satisfaction very well. So, having a good job or a prestigious job in the society is itself a good and happy indicator that increases high level of job satisfaction.

Unlike other participants, teaching was a choice for Sumit who like others acknowledged his gains and achievements that he received from teaching profession. He said,

> *Professionally, I rate myself as one of good and successful teacher as I have been teaching in a good and prestigious school and colleges. I learnt that none teaching techniques are perfect in itself and are equally applicable for all teaching contexts. Now, I have learnt to modify the techniques or strategies according to the teaching content and context. I evaluate myself about how fluently I can speak in English and can deliver the content, can make choices of words and vocabularies in my spontaneous talk. I realize that I have progressed a lot in comparison to my beginning stage. I have joined different professional organizations and I have got opportunities of attending many training and conferences. I am now an established favorite teacher in the eyes of many students at a reputed college. I can read their response, their feedback and even their behavior while teaching and outside the classroom too.*

This account of Sumit showed that he gained a lot satisfaction from his job. As he expressed, he developed professionally as a popular English teacher in the eyes of his students by getting involved in many '*professional organizations'* and '*attending trainings and conferences'*. It indicated that the beginning teachers engage themselves in different activities for professional development, like attending training and conferences and involving in professional organization. Postholm (2012) concluded in his study that teachers' development is the outcome of both individual and organizational factors. He further explained that positive school culture, cooperative

learning environment and attending organizational activities are the remarkable ways of teacher's development. Sumit's claim of being an established teacher and gaining a lot from the teaching profession would be attested as he said he attended teachers training and conferences and learnt a lot from positive school environment.

Moreover, he rated himself as '*one of good and successful teachers*' and the main reason was he learnt various pedagogical strategies; learnt to modify the methodological strategies as per the teaching context, could '*speak English fluently*', thus, could describe the content well. It showed that he seemed to build a good confidence in teaching and believed himself that he could handle his classrooms successfully and effectively. The confidence and strategies for classroom management he developed during his developmental stage of teaching resembled with the concept of Lew and Nelson (2016) who explained that teachers must be confident enough and must possess a good knowledge of classroom strategies in order to manage the classroom effectively and successfully. In this sense, Sumit seemed to prove himself that he possessed all these knowledge and strategies of classroom management and attested his rating himself of being a successful teacher was convincing.

While observing the participants' expressions and experiences minutely, I personally see that all of my participants believed that they gained a lot from their profession. Moreover, their experiences like having a good job and making money satisfactorily, receiving a good friends' circle, enjoying classroom environment, and getting various opportunities like attending fruitful professional training and conferences, and receiving awards and honors showed that they have already achieved a good identity in their teaching communities and also the qualities of teaching in the classroom. As my participants expressed, the developmental strategies and qualities they gained, are the strategies of teachers' professional development. In case of teachers' professional development and changes in teachers' quality, Sancar et al. (2021) said that the strategy of professional development of a teacher is a multidimensional construction that brings changes in performance of a teacher's professional life. From this statement, meaning can be inferred that all participants were engaged in various activities for their professional development

Moreover, the qualities of the teachers and the strategies of teachers' development have direct impact on developing the qualities of education and also increasing students' achievement. Bhai and Horoi (2019) found that teachers'

qualities, experiences and certification of degree have direct impact to students' achievement scores. As they only talked about the teachers' qualities and students' achievement, they have not been able to explore an important issue how the teachers achieved these qualities. Thus, the participants' experiences showed that the teacher participants were able to gain good success and achievement from their profession and their success and achievement were associated to the success of students and the success of whole education system.

Securing Social Identity

This sub-theme, 'Securing Social Identity,' came out of my participants' lived experience of gaining social identity, social prestige, social status and social behaviour as a professional teacher in their own community and in society. There is a common impression that teaching is one of the most neglected jobs in the society and it is one of the least paid jobs out of many others in the society. This view aligned with the concept of Watt and Richardson (2007) who said, "teaching profession is perceived to be less lucrative compared with the other fields with increasing salary gap between teaching and the other professions as a main consideration" (as cited in Mangaoil et al., 2017, p. 238). However, my teacher participants seemed to be happy with what they have got and enjoyed teaching profession well as they have reacted it really well.

As my participant expressed, they have been treated really very well in their community and in the society. As most of them recounted, they were supposed to be one of the prestigious, educated and intellectual properties of the society. They acknowledge teachers as one of the complete beings in the society. Villegas and Lucas (2002) find teachers as visionary intellectual persons who can articulate and address multicultural facets of the society. They further termed such teachers as the 'culturally responsive teachers' at least having six different characteristics. This showed that teachers are valuable and responsible members of the society.

Based on my participants' experience, 'teaching is regarded as a noble profession' (Mangaoil et al., 2017, p. 237) in the sense that Manisha, one of my participants said, *there is a kind of different style of treatment to the teachers in the remote village. Sometimes, when I walked around the village, they instantly invited me at their home, offered me seats, tea and whatever 'khaja' they have. They would appreciate me saying how hardworking you are being a woman; how great you have read, etc'.* All these statements reflected that people really value teaching as a

virtuous job and teachers as the ideal authorities to deliver good knowledge to the students and to the society. This kind of special attention and honor for a teacher resembled with the explanation of teachers' status by Mingren and Shiquan (2018) who write, "Teachers are rare "educated people" in the villages, and they enjoy high status in rural areas" (p.97). They further explained that the teachers are invited as an honoured guest to special functions and rituals, like marriage ceremonies in society and offered a special 'seat'. Some of my participants also had similar experience of being invited and honored a special seat in some social or cultural functions in the society. Here goes what my participants experienced as a teacher in the society beginning with Manish, who said,

> *As I am also the member of some professional organizations like, NELTA, CETRAP and so on, there is a kind of teachers community for discussion, exchange of knowledge and paper presentations and so on. There are friends' circles or communities of practice, and they respect me and call in every meeting and discussion. I feel I am much honored or respected in the society as well as they invite me respectfully in every kind of social gatherings, social rituals and social and community discussion. They ask me for many things they don't know and they think I am one of educated persons in the society. Perhaps I have also been able to contribute something to the society or to my community. That's why they give me respect in the society.*

Here, the expressions *'there are friends' circles and community of practices; they call me in every meeting and discussion'* denotes that Manish received a good platform for sharing and practicing their issues in the friends' circle and in the community of practices. He received a kind of prestige and good identity in the society in the sense that they invited him in the meeting respectfully. Kan (2015) also had similar perception of teachers and teaching profession and explained that teaching was considered as an important job for social evolutions and teachers were perceived as the important guide having social responsibility. In this sense, teachers are considered as the respectable members of the society and teaching as a noble profession.

Not only in the friends' circles and community of practice, Manish seemed to get invited in different social functions and cultural rituals. As he expressed, *'they invite me respectfully in every kind of social gatherings, social rituals and social and community discussion',* the people in his community or in the society gave him

special honor and invited him as a learned figure, a guardian, or as a guest. Although there is no remarkable social hierarchy given to teachers in Nepal, they are treated as learned and intellectual persons in most of the traditional societies and give them a special hierarchy in the social gatherings. Unlike that there is a kind of hierarchical status in some countries and society as Koutouzis and Spyriadou (2017) explained that teachers' professional and social identities are determined 'on the basis of specialty, seniority and hierarchy' (p.190). It reflected that there is no special or overtly seen position or hierarchy given to teachers in Nepal, but on special occasion, they are treated as the intellectual and learned persons in the Nepalese society. Unlike the Nepalese society, the teachers were specially ranked or structured hierarchically in the Chinese society as Zuoyu (2002) wrote, "According to Confucius, they were among the five categories of those most respected by society: The God of heaven, the God of Earth, the emperor, parents, and teachers' (as cited in Guo, 2005, p.69). As my participants expressed, although there is no such a hierarchy in Nepal, teachers are treated well and are invited as intellectuals, learned figures in most of the traditional societies in Nepal.

Likewise, there is a kind of realization of social prestige and social identity of teachers in the expressions of Manisha, one of other participants for this study. Like Manish, her expressions also referenced how she felt or realized the kind of social prestige or identity in the society. She said,

> *Many of my female friends appreciate my hard work and even say they count me and showcase me as an exemplary woman to their children. In the village, there is their own way of appreciating to people. They say how much laborious you are! You have studied a lot; you are down to earth. How interesting and friendly you are too! Now I also realize I am one of socially recognized woman. I became permanent teacher. When I go to the society, they appreciate me and also they frequently ask me, "isn't it you who was selected to visit USA?"*

Here, Manisha's expression showed that she was treated as an educated and reputed woman in the society. She further said that people recognized her as an '*exemplary woman*' in the village where she taught. She also said that some female friends in the society highlighted her name and showcased her as a role model or an exemplary woman to their children. It implied that teachers were considered as the exemplary persons in the society. In this context, Spruyt et al. (2021) said, "Being a

teacher is a salient social identity, implying that teachers are likely to be sensitive to references to their occupational category in the public sphere" (p. 2). This view showed that Manisha secured a prestigious identity in the society where she lived. It also reflected that the people replicated a teacher as a role model or as an exemplary person in the society and is ranked in a special position in any social gatherings.

Similarly, based on her expression, it seemed that people respect and admire the hard work of the teachers and appreciate them for their achievement. As Manisha quoted a villager's quotation *'you are so hardworking' ...isn't it you who was selected to visit to the USA*?" the statements referred to the meaning that teachers were also admired and appreciated for their glorious status. In fact, 'the social representation of teachers is crucial for their status' (Symeonidis, 2015, p.73) and the people, representing from the school location, are the source of social representations and their feedback and voice represent the social status of teachers. Moreover, to the context of teachers' identity and status, Mingren and Shiquan, (2018) mentioned "rural teacher identities are conceptualized as rootless transients, hometown educators, and rural knowledge workers" (p. 91). From this, the voices and social behavior of the people represent the teachers' social identity and social status of the teachers. It seemed that the teachers represent positive social beings and they are admired and behaved respectfully in the society.

Like Manish and Manisha, Yunish had no different perception in the case of receiving good social behavior and prestigious social identity of teachers in his society. He quoted,

> *I think the teachers' community and also our society have recognized us well.*
> *Now people recognize us as a permanent lecturer of one of reputed and*
> *largest colleges in Itahari. Sometimes they invite us as the expert in any*
> *academic type of competition or function. They also invite me in various*
> *social gatherings, even in some political and other social rituals in the society.*
> *I feel the community respect us as an educated, hardworking, fair and useful*
> *person in the society.*

Here, Yunish experienced a very good identity as a teacher in his society. He seemed to enjoy the kind of respect and identity the society had given to him in the sense that he profoundly recounted, '*the teachers' community and also our society have recognized us well'.* It further reflected that he had been treated and behaved very well in society as he was frequently invited as an expert in many competitions

and in social gatherings. He even admitted that he would be invited in different political discussions as a learned, matured and conscious political member. In this context, Mingren and Shiquan (2018) explained that the process of teachers' involvement in different academic activities and social rituals and also expressing and interpreting their ideas and knowledge and guiding people towards the right tracts builds teachers' identity in society. It showed that such kind of teachers' involvement and teachers' participation in social and cultural gatherings uplifts the teachers' identity in society.

Yunish's further expression as being '*a permanent lecturer in a reputed college*' in Itahari; also, being invited in various political and social gathering and discussion; and also having experience of people's reactions and feedback in the society, as being a hardworking and useful person, showed that teachers' dignity is very high in the society. It also represents and highlights the teachers' prestigious identity and glorified teachers as a crucial role model in the society. It also reflected that teachers have special status in society though it has not been ranked in any research as Stromquist (2018) made a survey and ranked the teachers' status in the third among five professions: Teacher, Medical Doctor, Engineer, Police and Nurse as he wrote, "ranked in third place was teaching" (p.14). As Yunish presented various situations where the teachers are invited, admired and given special place, it inferred meaning that the teachers were also given special status in the society where they lived.

Like Yunish, Yunisha also uncovered a similar case about the identity and status of the teachers in society. She said,

> *As a female teacher, now I have been respected at my college, in my family, and even in the society. They see me as a hardworking, educated woman. In many cases they value me as a role model in the society and invite me in the social functions. Even within relatives and family, they see me not only as a housewife, but also give special rank as a professional lady.*

The experience of Yunisha also presented a remarkable, prestigious identity and good social status of a teacher. She said that she had been given special value at college, in her family and in society, too. Her experience showed that she would be invited to special social functions. A study by Klimek (2019) suggested that the status of the teachers varies according to the general perception of the people towards the prestige and respect of the profession. Generally positive perception of the people

towards the teaching profession enhances the status of teachers. What we infer from the instances is, the teachers' status is perceived from the appreciation he received from the society. Furthermore, a teacher gets appreciated if his performance is appreciated in the classroom. In this sense, there could be individual differences to the respect and given status to the teachers and the teachers get either positive or negative treatment depending upon the impression they left in the classroom and in the society.

Moreover, Yunisha's expression that she would be given *'special rank as a professional lady'* referred to the fact that she had a very good identity and status in her community. It simply showed that she was thought to be a prestigious, smart lady by her family, relatives and society. Moreover, it could be her indicator of job satisfaction level and might also indicate satisfaction of her whole life as a lady teacher who felt quite satisfactory and proud of having received a special rank as a professional lady. Her experience of special identity and status of teacher aligned with the argument of Fwu and Wang (2002) who also found higher professional dignity of teachers and better satisfaction of teaching job in Taiwan in comparison with other international teachers. It further attested or proved that she had a high job satisfaction level and better job status in the society where she lived.

Similarly, Sumit's experience is also not different than that of other four participants in the case of teachers' identity and teachers' status in the society. He shared some of the situations where he received special treatment as an educated and learned member of the community. He recounted,

> *Working as a schoolteacher in Nepal has been one of the great prestige issues in my close relatives' circles because there is none in the teaching field except in my family within our close relatives' community circle. They are either in UK army or in Indian army and none of them are much educated although they earn a lot of money. However, now they have realized the importance of education and they have heard that I am one of established lecturers in a reputed college in Itahari and living a good prestigious life in academic circle. So, they have started to value me as an educated, learned person. They sometimes invite me as a guest of some social rituals or social discussion as an educated person. They also ask for help in some academic and administrative works.*

Here, Sumit's expressions, *"being a teacher in Nepal has been a great prestige issues in my close relatives' circles"* showed that being a teacher matters in

life. Sumit provided with the instances that there were not any other '*much educated*' *and 'teachers'* in his close family and community circles. They were either in UK or Indian army. From these circumstances, Sumit echoed that teaching was considered one of much remarkable jobs in his community then. It also reflected that their main job was just being foreign armies and earning a lot of money. He added one remarks, *'Although they earned a lot....',* they realized then that being an educated and learned man mattered in life and also being a teacher mattered in life and in the society. This idea closely aligned to the findings of Verhoeven et al. (2006) who studied the teachers' status in Flanders' community in Belgium and revealed the fact that teachers enjoyed a special status or image in the society and also a higher and better-ranked prestige than that of the general public thought of. It also attested that the teachers enjoyed better and more prestigious life in Sumit's close relative circles too.

Moreover, he also admitted that they invited him *'as a guest in a special rituals and social discussion as an educated person'* referred to that he had been honored as a learned and educated person. Saha and Dworkin (2009) explored traditional characteristics of teachers and mentioned, "teacher occupied a privileged position not only in the classroom but also in the wider community". Here, Sumit also presented himself as almost in the same category of traditional teachers where he had received a special privilege in the society as well. It reflected in nub that teachers enjoy better privilege in the society.

Thus, this sub-theme, 'Securing Social Identity' incorporated the participants' lived experience of having a good prestige, feeling privileged in their family or in their close relative circles and also receiving positive social behavior and building good social status in their society. Although "teachers feel that their work is relatively underappreciated in society," (Spruyt et al., 2021, p.1), the expression of my participants and their experiences proved, "the teaching profession has always had a special position in society" (Verhoeven et al., 2006, p. 479). So, the experience of my participants showed that they secured good social identity and good social status in their society.

As a mutual teacher of my participants, as I started diving into their lived experience of their entry and growth as a teacher, I felt astounded with an image of a teacher when he tries to enter into the profession mostly by chance or by choice, he/she either falls on the ground scattering like the Malabar cotton of Bombax Ceiba (tree) in the first few months/years or stands like the rocks facing the dazzling

currents of the hilly rivers at the edge or in the river forever.

The feelings of teachers' hardships, complaints and frustration on the one hand and their continuous efforts and interest of combating against hurdles like trying to swim in the powerful currents of the mountainous rivers for their continuous growth and development on the other hand, led me towards the feelings of a kind of psychological serenity and I felt like composing a poem as Van Menon (2016) writes, "Phenomenological writing is poetizing activity" (p. 13). Then my poetic feelings overflowed on how I entered into the teaching field and grew slowly and gradually along with the hurdles, ignorance and went across by working hard, as this shepherd does at the farm. Thus, this poem presents the summary of the chapter how I analyzed and presented my participants' experiential details.

A Shepherd at a Farm

> *Newly hired, smiley, and sober with a charm*
> *Curious as a cub and carefree as the kids*
> *Triggering like a tiger and jolly bunny-kits*
> *Observant of all the TWOs and the FOUR footed*
> *Guarding all the horned, crested and snouted*
> *Serving the foods and drinks to cattle*
> *Dreading with the stallion's and capon's clatter*
>
> *"Check the charts", asked the Master.*
> *Makes a move fast and then faster*
> *Plums and peaches, Beets and berries,*
> *Melons and Molasses, Chia-seeds and cherries*
> *"Make the match", asserted the Master.*
> *Swallows his food and flies like a rooster*
> *Chicken and chick, Goose and Gosling,*
> *Cow and Calf, Duck and Duckling,*
>
> *Committed a crime missing the Match!*
> *Under and sunder without the catch!!*
> *Sad to serve the cows with the pellets*
> *To those chickens, straw and silages*
> *Down his calf inside the pigsty*

In the chicken coop, his petty puppy
Overlooked the stallion is at the stable
Forgotten to feed him alfalfa and the apple

"What the hell you did?" The master yelled
The shepherd bowed, vowed and scared
Now my Master, almighty dear GOD
Save my life once, and my dear JOB
Found myself a crow, in the Mist
Pardon for my fluffs and your fists
Yelp for your help, only chance and supports
Promise to dance with kids, and sleep at the pup ports

Became a botch and prayed for a rescue
Felt a pat and the sound 'bless you'
As if I was stabbed, woeful and mournful
With the unseen stain, doleful and sorrowful
Young and youthful, but despondent and dejected
Begging to the master, despaired and downhearted
To the master, I had desolate and deserted
As a defector, I was depressed and dispirited

Thanks GOD, heard my beseech
Wonder and amazed, my voice reached
Unexpectedly believed, Master has the mercy
Is it his courtesy or a real clemency?
His first words were blur, but the final were clear
Asked me to return to the farm, with no doubt and fear
Taught to feed the cow with the straw and silages
To those cheeks and chicken, with the pellets

Looked for the ways out, measured the miasma
Comforted my heart, experienced the lived charisma
The crow parted the clouds, jubilant and joyful

Harvested the cereals, exultant and blissful
Saved and secured, giddy and gratified
Matched with the master, heady and satisfied
Happy in the world, Ecstatic and enchanted
Thanks to the GOD, Rhapsodic and delighted

Chapter Summary

As I poured my scattered and messy desires and facts on the poem above; I began this chapter with my questions and confusions at my career entry and went through describing how my participants entered into the teaching territory, how they went on through the profession and concluded with the participants' experiences how they developed themselves as professional teachers. As I read my own feelings in the poem, I felt a bit more consoled for the status I have gained as my participant teachers were also satisfied with their profession at the end. I could feel the sense of the new teachers as I was like a newly hired 'shepherd' who didn't even know, the cow's food was silages, and the chickens' were pellets.

I was really sorry, as equally as the shepherd in the beginning stage of my teaching. I was sorry for the misfortune; we both, the shepherd and I went through. I was in restlessness and discomfort as the shepherd was, in the agony of losing the job that he, and I had hardly got for his living. Perhaps, I was regretting for my failure in the classroom as the shepherd did for his mismatch of the calf and the petty puppy. After all, there was someone who understood and realized that his mismatch and the miss-serve were due to the lack of proper guidance and support at the work place in the beginning stage of his new job. And I, as a teacher, also continued to grow professionally initiating myself in search for the knowledge as the shepherd made his best effort to bear the hurdles and relived from the curse of his life. Finally, the master consoled him with the blessings and a small pat on his shoulder, as I was consoled too, with the help and support of my teacher colleagues, friends' circles and of the seniors at my workplace

CHAPTER SIX

EXPLORATIONS AND TAKEAWAYS

In this chapter, I presented my reflection, understanding, insights and implications; I drew on from my journey of inquisition of the phenomena of teachers' mentoring. I begin with my reflection that I title it as, 'ignorance to inquiry' where I present the beginning teachers' struggles as an English language teacher in a low resourced remote area. Then, I present the lived experiences of mentoring through the participants' accounts, which reflect the process of reviewing and reiterating the parts and the whole in my journey as an IPA researcher. Next, I attempted to capture the key insights of this study, letting the conclusions drawn out of the whole procedures. Finally, I paved the ways out for implications of my understanding and insights, to let it reach out to the wider communities of English language practitioners.

From Ignorance to Inquiry

As I reflect on the whole journey that I took on as an IPA researcher, I came to realize that the beginning of my teaching journey was full of ignorance, both in content and pedagogy. However, I would feel confident because I used to think like, I was the one who is right, true and learned figure in the community I grew up. I felt I was energetic because I worked like; no one could do better than me in my field. What's more, I was relaxed too, as I felt like no one could harm or challenge me. I used to think that I was a popular teacher among many other friends at that school because I knew most of the students liked me; they were friendly with me; they respected me too; because they would obey my instructions. They would also listen to me attentively; they would complete their homework as instructed. In a way I was happy for who I was and what I was doing.

However, that feeling of superiority didn't last for long. That was just my ignorance. One very trifle incident broke all the confidence that I had then. It broke my confidence; it broke my energy and turned me into a terrified, gloomy English teacher who started to hesitate to go to the same class next day again, and immediately felt like quitting the job in the first few months (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). That incident turned me into an ignorant 'baby boomer' (Raymond, et al. 2016, p. 44) and I felt like a hesitant and ignorant teacher.

The incident happened on one particular day, when one of the first benchers, a curious girl in my usual English classroom, asked me a question unexpectedly while I was describing a beautiful love story of the writer's mother entitled, 'That Little China Chip' to the 9th Graders. Though the question was from the same lesson, I felt a kind of nervousness or something uneasy, and I could not figure out the answer instantly. Perhaps, I fell into the state of confusion and failure (Myers & Anderson, (Eds.), 2012) to answer the question at that immediate context. Perhaps, a sudden fear attacked me. I was nervous as a beginning teacher and experienced an unexpected loss of my confidence. I failed to properly understand that question at the particular context or in that immediate situation. Anyway, I was out of my mind for a while and suddenly felt a bitter nervousness among the students; I could not answer the question.

It was a remote village where teachers were only the sources of all knowledge that is right and true. Moreover, they would acknowledge their teacher as a 'God' of knowledge. It would turn into a big issue if teacher could not answer students' questions satisfactorily or if he/she could not convince the students or ensure them that he would answer the questions or solve the question correctly as soon as possible. Realizing all these, I had a sense of bitter nervousness and hesitation to go to the same class again, and when I realized my condition, I had a feeling of severe frustration as a beginning teacher (Kutcy & Schulz, 2006). I realized that I was really helpless, as I lost all of my confidence and social prestige that I had gained as a new, energetic young teacher. I suddenly lost my social and psychological well-being (Kutsyuruba et al., 2019). I was sorry for collapsing my own prestige, my identity as a teacher rather than feeling guilty on collapsing the beautiful taste of the story. In fact, I should have convinced the students calmly and peacefully, but I hurriedly got escaped from the class without leaving any comforts or good hope to the students for the next day class. At this very moment I realized, "growing into the teaching profession required more than passing certification exams and completing required university degrees" (Myers & Anderson, (Eds.), 2012, p.13). That incident left me an ignorant and incompetent teacher in that remote village suddenly.

The state of complete ignorance and failure led me to reflect upon my own practices. I realized that a small matter of weakness or failure in the classroom could ruin all the prestige of a teacher and could ruin a teacher's prestige, hurting the 'teacher identity' (Myers & Anderson, (Eds.), 2012, p.7). I was boastful of my

identity as a young, energetic, and talented English teacher in the student's and teachers' communities. But then, I had realized that it was all my delusion. I suddenly realized, in a state of confusion and failure, the need for a personal and emotional comfort and support from the seniors, from his/her teacher colleagues and the administration. I felt being helpless. Not alone, many beginning teachers search for support and help in such conditions; however, the evidence of support, help and guidance to the teachers are very weak (Pfund, 2016). What's more, there was a trend of making fun of and disrespecting others in case of their failure and weakness. That might be the reason why most of the beginning teachers hesitate to share their problems and can't reflect their own practices among others at the workplace.

I realized the state of my confusion and failure in my teaching profession in my early stage of my teaching career, left me with a lot of questions in me unanswered. I was not sure, whether I could continue my job onwards or not! I was afraid, how could I go to the same class where I was once proved to be a failure one! How would the students think of me if I entered into the same class again? Would they accept me or respect me as they used to respect previously? What's more, I had no true or correct answer with me till then. I had a vague sense of insecurity if she asked me to clarify it again? There was none who could help in English subject in that remote hilly region of Dhankuta district. How would I seek support since there was no Internet, online support, or anyone more experienced or qualified person to help me in that state of my confusion? What's more, neither I, personally as an English teacher, nor the school, in its library, possess an English dictionary too! What a terrible situation that was!; for a beginning English teacher who was helpless, without any resources in a cold, dark and remote village of hilly region.

Those early stresses were the seeds for this study. I began to think what other teachers would do in a similar situation that I went through. I started thinking of what I should do next. Who do other English teachers consult to when they face such problems? Do they ask for help or for suggestion and support from their senior faculties? Do our workplaces have these support mechanisms? Let me suppose there were seniors and more experienced faculties, too, but do we have this trend of sharing our classroom problems openly, and get help and support from them? Are there any capacity building strategies through collegial and other forms of support to the beginning teachers (Raymond et al., 2016)? These questions were the basic forces of my inquiry.

Researching as Reiterating

As I had many questions, flipping and recreating the memories of confusion and failures in my mind, I started searching for the right way or better way of settling my queries and questions. I tried to know the people who might work in a similar situation that I went through, and tried to learn the way or process how I would approach them so that I could explore the answer of my inquiry. It was not an easy task to find the particular ways out whenever we think of or expected on. I realized that finding a particular method of study and exploring into it was a recurrently working phenomenon and repeatedly testing and failing the one and trying another. It was a complex and reiterative process of studying, testing and analyzing for a specific purpose. For this, I studied the nature of the work that I was holding and the possible ways to get help or support in such cases. I went through many books related to research and inquiry and qualitative research design, e.g. Crafting Phenomenological Research (Vagle, 2018), Phenomenological Research Methods (Moustakas, 1994), and Researching Lived Experiences (Van Manen, 1990). By the time I learned to envision I would go for qualitative research design and study the human experiences, which I felt, would fit to my situation and explore how they tackled the similar situations that I had experienced. Then, I chose 'phenomenology' as a philosophical approach to studying my experience.

Going onwards from this stage, i.e. choosing phenomenology for the study of human experience; again, became a kind of shock and nearly maddening to me since I further read a quote that human experiences and 'particular experience' is different and there are various layers of reflections on human experiences as observed by Smith et al. (2009), "Experience becomes 'an experience' of important as it is registered as significant and requiring attention"(p.185). In this sense, I noticed that there are layers of reflections of an experience as it goes, 'pre-reflective experience, the reflective or 'glancing at' experience, attentive, reflective experience and deliberately controlled reflective experiences (p.185). I also went through an example of 'experience,', i.e. the natural and spontaneous experience as we walk through, 'we move one foot in front of the other', and 'we catch glimpses of each tree as we pass on the trees' (p.184). But we often do not register these experiences in our memories or in our heart for a long time. I realized, my phenomenon of study, the sufferings of a beginning teacher in search for help and support and the story of frustration, workplace shock and quitting of job, demanded studying of 'registered experiences or

thought about experiences' because I had very sincerely registered that incident of my life. Then, I searched for specific method of study of 'registered experiences' or 'thought about experiences' again. Soon I came to read again that Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is concerned of studying the 'thought about' experiences; and the "experiences where the individual is prompted to contemplate, take stock, worry, and try to make sense of what is happening" (Smith et al., 2009, p.184). Thus, I came to choose phenomenology as my research approach and interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) as the method of study.

When I came to decide that Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) best fits for the study of 'thought about' experiences, or the registered experience of the human beings, I again got stuck on the matter how I make sense of those experiences that revealed the facts of 'touched experiences. On one hand, I was concerned about how participants express of what they have registered in their memory or how they would express of what they have experienced or sensed the particular situation. In the same way, I was equally worried about how I interpret or make sense of what their experiential expression senses. In this sense, the researcher is making sense of the participant and the participant is making sense of his/her own experiences. It shows that the researcher plays a dual role, "both like and unlike the participant" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 37). It reflects that the researcher himself is a participant who interprets the context as an insider's perspective on the one hand and the researcher's role is to make sense of what the participants' have expressed on the other hand. "The participant's meaning making is first-order, while the researcher's sense-making is second-order." (Smith et al., 2009, p.37). This process of double layer analysis is called 'double hermeneutic' where by the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant making sense of x" (p.184).

Thus, IPA does not much concern with the first two layers of experiences: the experience of marching of one foot and another while walking and taking glimpses of trees as we pass on them; but IPA is concerned of the experiences of the latter two layers: attentive reflective experiences (how does the participant share his experience of he is walking and glancing the trees) and deliberate controlled reflective experiences (what does the researcher feel or experience of the participant's saying his experience of walking and glancing the trees). In this sense, it is related to the cognition of both, the participants' and the researcher's lived experience, not only the lived experience of the participants. Here, cognition is not an isolated function as we

suppose it in phenomenology, but cognition is one aspect of being in the worlds that come along with people's accounts, stories and are accountable for meaning making. Thus, IPA is a layer of analysis of human lived experiences that goes recurring, reiterative and rigorous understanding of parts and whole connection and moving repeatedly from back and forth. Iterative process is observed even while taking interview to whole analysis process as it says, it is "iterative; you may find that your ideas develop and change, both during the process, and then again after a pilot or first interview" (Smith et al., 2009, p.62).

Similarly, as I went on reading IPA in detail, I came to learn that one of the third major underpinnings of IPA, other two being; phenomenology and hermeneutics (Interpretive & reiterative –Double hermeneutics), was ideography. The literal meaning of ideography is 'study of individuals. Here, "ideography is concerned with the particular" (Smith et al. 2009, p. 31). Ideography is opposite of 'nomothetic', which referred to the study of groups or large population. Ideography, in IPA is observed in two different purposes, i.e. for its commitments to the detail and depth analysis of a particular thing, or concept and experience so that it becomes through and systematic (p.31) and another is, for the interpretation or analysis of how particular expression of any phenomenon (an incident, event, activity) is understood by a particular person in the particular context. In this sense, ideography in IPA emphasizes on the study of a single case in details, and the depth analysis of each participant's experiential details in order to make a general claim out of a single case. Because, the clear perspective of 'ideography' says an individual is universe for their life world knowledge and experiences.

Similarly, while studying the phenomenological view of experience, I noticed two different observations of human experiences. The first one is experience is uniquely embodied, situated and perspectival and the next- experience is 'worldly and relational phenomenon'. From both of the perspectives, the idiographic approach of analysis is useful and relevant; in the sense that if the experience is unique, we need to see, observe and interpret uniquely at that particular situation and context and if it is relational, we need to see them, observe them and interpret them from the view point of convergence and divergence too, to get its diversification in relation. In other words, when we go in details and into the depth analysis of a particular experience, we reach to the both, its particular and unique phenomenon and its how this particular

unique phenomenon varies with other similar relational features too. Thus, it is details and depth analysis of human experiences.

Thus, I used IPA as it concerns of a small sample of study, emphasizing on particular case and context. The idiographic approach focuses on the detailed case-by-case analysis of individual transcripts in order to write in detail understanding of those participants. In this sense, "data collection procedures also obtained the detailed stories, life worlds, thoughts and feelings of an individual participant" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 58). Thus, as suggested in the literature of IPA, I used semi-structured interviews for data collection. It tries to elicit participants' stories, thoughts and feelings in details. The participants were supposed to encourage to speaking freely, openly and given opportunities of desirable lengths to tell their stories with their layers of experiences on it. I, as the IPA researcher noticed that the participants require a very sincere, favorable, comfortable and easy environment to uncover their real-life experiences of any events, context and situation. Thus, exploring and researching was a reiterative process of analysis in my experience in this study.

Capturing Key Insights

Synthesizing the key insights of the whole research analysis is as difficult and challenging as producing cream by curdling and straining milk in the winter season. I compared the sensitivity and repetitive process of capturing key concepts of my whole research works with processing the milk and curd and pulling out the cream and whey separately because both of the processes required passion and patience. More challenging I faced was 'showcasing it' rightly by secreting and unscrambling the cream out the water and whey. Here at this stage, I realize that pulling out all the creams without leaving any in the whey is almost impossible though most of the whole is certainly pulled. I recommend the readers that the real cream that lay unseen and silent can be tasted only if you quench your thirst by drinking all the whey and water together. I had to go through all the chapters with cursory reading while quenching the thirst of the participants' lived experience. Furthermore, in so doing, I went through the whole process of my research writing, especially and very minutely to the chapter IV and V in details.

While preparing to write it again, finding appropriate language and style to present the key insights in a professional platform was equally challenging. I had to go through the text repeatedly and comprehend its parts and whole in details connecting each words and sentences with their intended meaning. I tried skimming

the text and scanning for the particular words, chunks for their meaning to capture some of the key insights from my analysis as follows:

First, my participants perceived mentoring as a form of 'teachers support mechanism'; as a strategy of teachers' networking, teachers' collaboration and teachers' development; and as an implicit, continuous and informal process of teaching and learning. This means that mentoring could be seen from three different perspectives: mentoring as a form, as a strategy and as a process of both; teachers' development and teaching and learning.

Second, most of my participants, except Sumit, had a bitter experience in their first entry in teaching, since most of them left their first job in the first few years. Some of them searched for another job, in order to settle their family sentiments or due to an obligation of the family problem, and some other joined higher studies to continue their education. It showed that teaching job is not as easy to find and retain as most people think. It required skills and knowledge to retain for a long-lasting position in teaching and those who enter into the teaching profession without any preparation couldn't retain in it for a long time.

Third, although many of my participants were happy while entering into the teaching profession in the beginning stage, slowly and gradually; as they faced many problems; felt reality shock and could not meet their expectations, they started feeling teaching journey as 'journeying at the dark'. The themes and sub-themes 'journeying through the dark: A crow in the mist and measuring the mist represent my participants' hardships during their teaching profession, especially in the beginning stage. It further indicated that the teachers who retain in the profession for a long time are really the strong resilient people and they have contributed a lot. They are the real teachers who have both, the passion and patience. They searched for help; they begged for support; they initiated for searching support mechanisms and building support mechanisms of their own; and only, they could retain in the profession for a long time. In this sense, a regular or continuous support mechanism is a must for all beginning teachers at the workplace in order to develop professionally.

Finally, while observing their latter part of teachers' journey of their development, the teachers believed that they gained a lot from their teaching profession as they said, they are having good job, making money, receiving opportunities of trainings, seminars, awards and other social identity that added on their personal and social prestige. The insight from this belief of the teachers is that

teaching profession is one of the prestigious, rewarding and lucrative jobs in the society still today.

Hence, teachers are receiving supports and mentoring regularly and implicitly at the workplace, however, there is still lacking of the formal and structured system of help and support mechanism; or teachers' mentoring in most our educational institutions (Manda, 2023). My participants reported that they received help and support from teacher colleagues, senior faculties, and even from the administration. In their experience, mentoring is a form of 'teachers support'; it is also a strategy of teachers' development, and it is received mostly in the initiation of the teachers themselves informally, implicitly and in the regular basis at the workplace. Moreover, teachers receive implicit mentoring from the teacher circles, community of practices and also from the professional organizations informally although formal and structured practices do not exist in our context of teaching.

Implications: Paving the Way Onward

A research work or dissertation can pave the way on the specific field onwards for those who want to make a move forward, but cannot build a complete pitch road set for all. All the expectations, curiosities, questions and queries of the participants in research or of the readers might not be well addressed by a dissertation though the researcher might try. However, the beginning teachers who are feeling helpless in their beginning stage of teaching and are seeking for help and support at the workplace, can find this thesis a milestone to reshape their teaching journey, 'journeying through a dark to the light'. Moreover, all teachers, teacher educators and administrators of all kinds from a private institutional level to the educational planners of government level also can get insightful understandings and realizations that teachers' mentoring plays vital roles in continuous teachers' professional development (CTPD) from this study.

In the nutshell, as an IPA report of the study, this dissertation provides them all with realistic insights into the lives of all helpless teachers who want to develop professionally but are not getting any kind of support mechanism at any personal or institutional level; especially to the beginning teachers "whose voices might not otherwise have been heard, or whose experiences were ignored, or else constructed quite differently, by mainstream theoretical models" (Smith et al., 2009, p.201). There is a need of very minute and careful understanding, and realization of the dire need of

establishing teachers' support mechanism at every workplace as the major implications echo below:

The first implication is a need of understanding and adopting 'teachers mentoring' as a strategy of continuous teachers' professional development (CTPD) in place of or in addition to a one-shot type of training and workshops. Such one-shot type of teachers' training and seminar models, which are often very expensive too, are not found effective enough and useful enough for their good results in teachers' classroom performance. Moreover, it proves that there is no proper use and implications of teachers' training and workshops in the students' achievement scores and in the application of knowledge and skills in the classroom pedagogy (Gautam, 2016; Kumar et al., 2022). Thus, teachers mentoring can either replace one-shot type of teachers' training or can contribute as a better strategy in case of teachers' professional development.

The second implication is a dire need of realizations and understandings of college and school level educators and administrators for establishing teachers' support mechanisms at the school and college level, simply by forming community of practices, small groups of teacher's circles, like the subject departments or by creating favorable environments of teachers' discussions forum, and sharing help and support to one another professionally. They can appoint teacher mentor in each and every school and colleges to regularly support or help to teachers and to listen to their problems seriously as they appoint an in-charge and a coordinator to instruct and administer day-to-day practical work at every school and college.

The third one is a need for policymakers, experts, textbook writers, teacher educators, and even to the teachers to think rationally and critically on the importance of teachers mentoring to help and support to the teachers regularly, especially to the beginning teachers who are in real need of support in their day-to-day practical problems which cannot be solved by one shot type of teacher trainings, and seminars. It requires critical thought of the policy makers about the need for and importance of continuous support mechanisms to the teachers at their workplace to solve their day-to-day practical problems that differ from one teaching context to another due to the availability of resources, due to the cultural and individual differences of students and so on. The 'wholesome type of teachers' training', which is often, a 'formality of doing for doing sake' may not work for all diverse teaching contexts.

The fourth implication of this dissertation is the 'public announcement of teachers' high dignity in the society and their charming prestige' which is really remarkable and appreciable in the society. It showed that 'teachers feel proud of being teachers' and live a very social and peaceful life in society though the general impression of teachers; sometimes in society, especially among the people who are themselves ignorant and enlightened in many of their own personal and social affairs, might have considered it differently. Teachers have earned for living well in the society without any bad reputation, without any blame of corruption and without fraud of any kind in the society. Teachers are ideal and noble people in society. They are the examples and sample personality in the society. The direct implication of this exposition is the source of teachers' inspiration and teacher encouragement to retain in the profession and develop professionally, and to maintain well-beings of all kinds.

Finally, though the teachers went through very high and low moments during their beginning phase of teaching, comparing their teaching journey with 'journeying through the dark', many teachers have been surviving and retaining in the profession for a long time. It seemed that those who really have passion on teaching, searched for help and support from others and have been receiving informal type of support and help implicitly and continuously at the workplace and in the teaching context around. As they expressed, they have been receiving informal and implicit help from friends' circles, senior faculties, and from the administration as well. Thus, it showed that we can establish an informal type of 'support mechanism or support system' at the workplace so that teachers get the opportunity to receive regular types of informal and implicit support, help and guidance regularly from each other at the workplace. Finally, it can establish their own kind of informal 'support mechanism' at the workplace or they can initiate helping and receiving help from others throughout their teaching journey.

Conclusions

While I was trying to clot the conclusion of my dissertation, I happened to feel a bit poetic and the words of feelings overflowed to put down a poem, being influenced with a quote, "reading phenomenological work is like reading a poem. You cannot summarize a poem without losing the meaning. The same holds true with carrying out phenomenological research" (Vagle, 2018, p. 35). In this sense, I might not be able to present a concise conclusion what it should have been in a narrow sketch. However, I have tried to make a logical conclusion on how I began my

research journey? What I did? What have I found? And how I look forward? Or what next? So, through this poem, I dispatched the note of how a beginning teacher sowed the seed of a research journey? How he presented his struggle with lots of ups and downs due to the lack of his own, personal flaws and faults on the one hand, and some high and low instants of resources and supports on the other hand. Finally, I presented how and why a teacher becomes a stable and committed teacher even if he fights against many taboos related to teaching and teachers and many other deficiencies or problems; like, low income, lack of resources and supports, psychological and emotional pressure and content-wise struggle in teaching and learning (Nguyen, 2013). However, it is an impulse of majority of the teachers that they needed to stay calm, tolerate the problems and retain in the profession by all costs. They initiate to ask for help or seek for the support from others at the workplace. Honestly, I experienced, it was a kind of obligation of the family matter and the determination of my own; that forced my personal being which helped me continue the job. So, it was me who helped me initiate to seek for help from others, or asked for support from others, and perhaps, I believe that many others, as curious as me, do the same. This led me feel a bit poetic. Perhaps, I kept on overflowing my feelings on some rhymes and rhythms for the help and self, support and rapport, system or mechanism, between you and me. I further flew on like: Self-help is the best help; initiating to seek for help is pleading to ask for help; getting help is also learning to help; and leading the path of unknown zone, is growing of my own…

Growing of my own…

> *In sighting the helpless being*
> *In the process of becoming,*
> *Releasing the 'Pandora's box' in hope,*
> *Sowing the seeds in dope*
> *Trying to move, … forward,*
> *Paving the ways onward…!*
>
> *Without knowing,*
> *So delicate, with the feelings flowing*
> *Failing and falling, ups and downs,*
> *Reviewing and reiterating dozen rounds*
> *Just to retain for revival*

And to fit for survival!!

On the ground, and in the sky
Crawling on, and trying to fly,
Struggle for existence and entity
A teacher, only a potential identity
In the mist, or in the fog,
For subsistence in the shock!!!

Paid off a lot for teacher being
Gaining something for becoming
Quenching my thirst for my yearning
Harvesting the fruits was my earning
Proud of being a teacher and my prestige
Trying to grow of my own, NOT a pastiche!!!!

The poem above begins with the context how it sowed the seed of my research phenomenon, i. e. 'my early stresses as a helpless beginning teacher'. It was such a bitter experience, in the beginning of my teaching career, when I was stuck by a simple question of a curious girl in the classroom, and I could not answer it. That was an unexpected query from a student to a beginning teacher, who would surreally feel proud of his own being, thinking so delicately, as if he had already become a perfect teacher. That incident suddenly made me feel a kind of humiliation and frustration in front of the young students of grade IX. It was a heartbreaking obstruction, full of wicked feelings and ego-identity as a young, energetic and popular teacher who felt the dire need of support and help to settle the problem at the workplace. In fact, teachers' mentoring, or support system is quite important for familiarizing the beginning teachers with many necessary knowledge and skills during their first few years (Wright, 2014). Thus, the vexing problem, 'my early stresses as a helpless beginning teacher' that led me feel a severe lack of 'help and support' to the beginning teachers in order to retain in the profession and develop professionally, became a phenomenon of my study and started this inquiry.

Once the phenomenon of my study triggered, I began to read on qualitative and phenomenological studies. I explored English language teachers who had similar experiences that I had gone through. I located their site and selected them as my co-

researchers or participants because they were the ones who had experienced the phenomenon that I had gone through. I realized they would fit my study and also would be willing to participate in lengthy interviews (Moustakas, 1994). Then I got ready to video tape their interview and gathered their experiences on teachers support mechanisms or teachers mentoring. After I ensured full justice to the validation of the phenomenological materials and review of the professional and research literature, I started analyzing the phenomenological materials using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the method of analysis. As IPA is a detail exploration of each individual participant's experiences, I realized the analysis process is so iterative and inductive for the experiential claims, concerns and understandings of each participant (Smith et al., 2009). In this sense, as an IPA researcher, I came to make the detail analysis of each participant's case, called 'Idiographic Analysis' and linking parts to whole and connecting the analysis of each experiential expressions iteratively back and forth in various layers of phenomenological reflections, called 'double hermeneutics. Thus, I detailly interpreted each participant's claims and concerns iteratively based on their lived experiences.

After analyzing each case of the participants and each experiential claim of the participants in detail, I came to find that my participants, the English language teachers, have gone through many serious 'phenomenological encounters' (Vagle, 2018). I came to know that each of the participants has gone through many remarkable experiences, but some experiences have influenced them or triggered them in their mind. These experiences are in fact, the lived experiences of those participants. These experiences might have triggered them positively or sometimes badly in their mind. However, they often hesitate to share their problems to others in their beginning stage of teaching and hesitate to seek for help. De Jager (2011) presented two sub-problems in his study, which he named research questions, and the first problem that Jager put was that beginning teachers do not get the supportive environment to put the difficulties they experience at the workplace. I also found the same thing that the beginning teachers hesitate to share their experiences because they do not find a supportive environment. If they shared their difficulties or problems, the seniors would dominate them, or they would make them fun. Not only the senior faculty but also their friends and teacher colleagues also raise questions about their capacity or knowledge. They would start backbiting and making it fun at the

workplace. It showed that there was no sharing and supporting culture. That culture has made us isolated, unproductive and also destructive.

Even if there is no sharing and supporting culture, my participants expected to have a good culture of sharing, supporting, helping and guiding culture at the workplace. It was meant to say that all of the participants expected and sought a favourable, supportive, and helpful learning environment at the workplace. I do hope, this study explored and highlighted the importance of support mechanism at the workplace and also the importance of motivation, emotional support and the positive roles of mentors (Oxford & Bolaños-Sánchez, 2016) for continuous professional development (CPD) of the teachers. Moreover, teachers' mentoring is densely discussed topic in the ELT literature, but it is one of rarely explored areas in our teaching and learning context. There is no formal and structured mentoring system in Nepal. However, this study showed that all forms of support, help and guidance are teachers mentoring. In fact, all forms of support mechanisms or informal mentoring are the dire need for teachers' professional development (Hobson, 2012; Wright, 2014; Wasonga, et al. 2015; Manda, 2023). It further showed that continuous and implicit support mechanism at the workplace is our cultural practices that help each other develop professionally.

Finally, as I continued writing and summarizing my study, my fingers kept on typing the letters, knitting the ideas and weaving the threads continuously as if that might not have any end. The stronger I was fastening the threads, the wider they were spreading. So, I realized my efforts were still unripe, undeveloped, unfinished or incomplete in too many extents. However, as a whole, I had to feel satisfied with what I had already got in every part. It is because, I have frequently heard of my father reading some beautiful lines from *'Bhagawat Gita'* though my tongue ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते। पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥ didn't perfectly catch; It says that every whole break into another whole and when you take out a whole from the other whole, there again remains another whole. The sun is still whole, though the earth, which is a broken piece or part of the sun, now, is a complete whole   It says in our mother tongue, Nepali; अर्थात् पूर्णमा पूर्ण थप्दा पनि पूर्ण नै बन्छ र पूर्णबाट पूर्ण झिक्दा पनि पूर्ण नै रहन्छ।

So, I felt like accepting it 'unripen' in poetic feelings and came to compose a poem "Unripen parts from the Whole" as IPA also moves back and forth, unripen, in parts and whole.

Unripen Parts from the Whole

Dear Sweet Soul,

I'm more than happy to see you!

But bewildered a bit, is it true?

Awoken and amused that you appeared!

I know your absence was an ample Awkward!

However, Hey,

My anticipation had almost lost!

I had abandoned almost the most!

Then, damn, I did it, done!

Yes, for me, I am now, 'Done'!

I know,

The worth of this, as you imagined,

And the hardship, I did for this, may not match!

So, the summit, I climbed,

And the hatred you damned, could smash!!

Don't know,

If I discouraged you,

Coz, for you, it might be a few,

May vary your expectation

Versus my capacity and passion

I don't blame,

But it was also coz of you,

Who shared my part a few

Awaiting something new

And, rays of hope of morning dew!

I am done!

Damn forget everything,

Coz, inert alarm doesn't ring,

Not in autumn, cuckoos sing
Yes, the TIME, of all kind is the KING!

Of course, I did,
To the level, extreme zest
Now, it lies upon you, the rest
Thankful to all, my fine and best
Quenching my thirst of Quest

Thank you,

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