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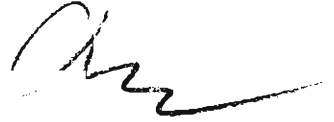






# Planning and Practice:

Factors impacting on the development of initial  
education in Nepal, with special reference to  
English language teaching, 1950-1995



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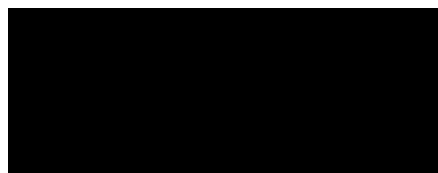


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No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other institution.



*Chelbourne*

*February 1999*

### *Dedication*

*This thesis is dedicated to the little girl abandonned in central Kathmandu because her parents could no longer afford to keep her, the child heard crying himself to sleep because poverty dictated he was hungry and sick, the woman in the adult literacy class who wanted to learn to read and write so that she would know which way the bus was going and so she could write a letter to her granddaughter, the dead child on the floor of the church in Bangladesh, and the young boy in India who clutched at me through the jeep window in order to prevent a teacher from leaving his rural village on the Deccan in Andra Pradesh. It was he who committed me to the path.*



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## THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to examine the planning and practice of the goals for the development of initial education in Nepal between 1950 and 1995.

Firstly the thesis sets out to explore the historical, religious and cultural background of the development of Initial Education in Nepal against which the modernization of Nepali education was attempted. The thesis elaborates on the profusion and confusion of educational aims of Nepali government planners and foreign aid workers, and the ways in which these plans impact on Nepali classroom practice and conditions, teacher training programs and the teaching of English as a Foreign Language.

A consistent theme is the limited success of the successive five year plans for educational development of His Majesty's Government of Nepal since planning was inaugurated in 1952. Evidence marshalled in the thesis points to a pronounced disparity between the planning and execution of the goals for the development of initial education in Nepal during the period in which research was undertaken (1991-1995). The thesis sets out to answer why Nepali planners and educational developers incorporate ideas that are inappropriate to the Nepali situation - the degree to which these ideas are taken up with little attempt to make appropriate adaptations, and no apparent plan for coordinated implementation.

The primary research into teaching conditions was done within a designated geographic research area, which was chosen to include the major urban development areas - Kathmandu Valley, Pokhara Valley, heavily populated towns on the Terai, one area (Trusili) in the low hill region outside



Kathmandu Valley and a remote area of the Terai recently opened up for development.

Ethnographic data recorded during the research period have enabled a first-hand account of the conditions affecting education in schools: school facilities, background and training of teachers, curriculum choice and presentation, and textbook usage and design. Much of the discussion concentrates on the poor general education of teachers and, using English language teaching as a focus, how the inadequate background of teachers in a particular subject area impedes teaching. Specifically, the standard of English language teachers and the types of errors committed by Nepali teachers of English are described and assessment made through the use of oral interviews, written questionnaires, cloze tests and creative and descriptive writing exercises.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As indicated in the Introduction to this thesis this research resulted from the persistent requests for advice from officers of Plan International (Nepal) which stemmed from their concern over the problems they were encountering in their attempts to improve the quality of Initial Education in Nepal. Without their continued encouragement and the assistance of the Private and Boarding Schools' Association (PABSON) and the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) the thesis research would not have been possible. My thanks go to all those who were involved in facilitating the work; in particular Binu Rana (Project Officer Rautahat District, Nepal), Ram Ashish Giri (Senior Lecturer, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, and Secretary of NELTA), Dr Raj Awasthi, (Senior Lecturer, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu). Most of all my thanks go to the Nepali teachers who have contributed to the research.

Throughout the research I have been grateful for the encouragement of friends and colleagues. Special thanks go to Professor John and Mrs Shirley McLaren. Shirley's practical help and advice, along with her continuous encouragement, has been invaluable. My thanks also go to Ruth McFarland who travelled with me to Nepal in 1991 and 1992 and to Carol Andrew, who accompanied me in 1994.

I am appreciative of the emotional support given by Professor Stephanie Fahey when I needed to rewrite the thesis. My thanks also

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

go to Dr Yoland Wadsworth for her guidance with methodology; especially her advice on the place of intuition within the research process. I will always be appreciative of the help given with English as a Second Language (ESL) by Yvonne Williams and Christine Riddell. Christine allowed me to audit several of her ESL units at Victoria University of Technology in 1996. Later she never failed to answer an inquiry or a call for help. My thanks also go to Dr Kate White (Acting Head of the Post-Graduate Research Unit at Victoria University of Technology), for her constant encouragement and support and to Professor David Lawson, (Pro-Vice Chancellor, International, Victoria University of Technology), who in his former role as Faculty Dean ensured I received funding for two field trips to Nepal.

In particular I wish to thank my supervisors, Dr. Stephen Duggan, who oversaw the initial research; and Professor John D. Wilson (Department of Education, Victoria University of Technology), Professor Ron Adams (Head of City Campus and Deputy Director of the Europe-Australia Institute, Victoria University of Technology), and Dr Anitra Nelson (RMIT University), who shared in the oversight of the writing process. Any words I write would be inadequate to express my gratitude to my rewrite supervisors.

To my husband I say this: "Your help and support have not passed unnoticed."

Melbourne February 1999



## A NOTE TO THE READER

As noted in the Introduction, Nepal does not issue research visas. All attempts to obtain such a visa from within Australia proved futile. The Royal Nepalese Consul in Melbourne and Sydney, as well as the central base in Japan, recommended that the research be undertaken on a tourist visa. On the one hand this proved to be sound advice, as I was received and given interviews by government officials at all levels with no inquiry as to my visa status and no impediments to the information being sought. However, as a tourist visa gave me no official status within the country and given the conditions of a tourist visa, namely that no paid or voluntary work could be undertaken, I was reluctant to press the Nepali government for any formal assistance with the conduct of the research.

For the purpose of the research the term Initial Education has been used. This is defined as that part of the formal education system that extends from pre-school to upper secondary level.

The style adopted for the purposes of documenting this thesis is based on *The Chicago Manual of Style: the Essential Guide for Writers, Editors and Publishers* (14th. Edition), 1993.

Where possible definitions of unfamiliar Nepali or Sanskrit words have been included in brackets within the text.

Some unpublished documents to which I had access were inconsistent in their page numbering. In some cases reports had numbered pages, in other cases not, in particular 'Surveying English Language Teaching - Nepal, 1983-84'. An additional problem was experienced in

reading accurate dates as Nepal does not operate on the Gregorian calendar: for example the year 1993 is recorded as 2049 in Nepali documents.

Noted historian on Nepal, Father Ludwig Stiller, writing in his book *Nepal: Growth of a Nation* states:

Many of my friends will be surprised at my use of 'Nepalese' in place of the more familiar 'Nepalis' ... The less familiar spelling suited my purpose and my audience more than the more familiar one. (1993, ii)

Although the term 'Nepali' can sometimes cause confusion for Westerners unfamiliar with its interchangeable usage between language and people, unlike Stiller I have made no such concession to a Western audience within the text of this thesis. During the course of the research I have had extraordinary assistance from many Nepalis. Out of respect to their commitment and help I use the term Nepali (which they favour). I am honoured to call them my friends.

Similarly, to distinguish between cultural and geographic use of the term 'western', I have consistently referred to British, European and North American influences under the generic term 'Western'.

Rosemary Kerr

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ACTFL	American Council for Teachers of Foreign Languages
AGFUND	Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development
ANEC	All Round National Education Commission
APEID	Asian Programme for Educational Innovation and Development
APPEAL	Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All
ASLPR	Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BCom	Bachelor of Commerce
BCE	Before the Common Era
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BLaw	Bachelor of Law
BNFP	Basic Needs Fulfilment Programme
BPEP	Basic Primary Education Project
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Development Committee
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CERID	Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development
CEIFL	central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, India
CTSDC	Curriculum, Textbook and Development Centre
CWIN	Child Workers in Nepal
DEO	District Education Office/Officer (interchangeable)
EFA	Education for All
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EL	English Language
ELT	English Language Teaching/Teacher (interchangeable)
ERDP	Education for Rural Development
FOE	Faculty of Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSS	Gonoshashajjo Sangstha, Bangladesh INGO
HMGN	His Majesty's Government, Nepal
IA	Intermediate Arts
ICom	Intermediate Commerce
IED	Intermediate Education
INF	International Nepal Fellowship
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
IOE	Institute of Education
ISc	Intermediate Science
IST	In-Service Training
Kg	Kindergarten
MA	Master of Arts
MOE	Ministry of Education (1950-71, 1998- )
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture (1971-91)
MOEC/SW	Ministry of Education, Culture and Social Welfare (1991-97)
NEC	National Education Commission
NELTA	Nepal English Language Teachers' Association
NEPC	National Education Planning Commission
NESP	New Education System Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRS	Nepalese Rupees
ODA	Overseas Development Aid
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PABSON	Private and Boarding Schools' Organisation, Nepal



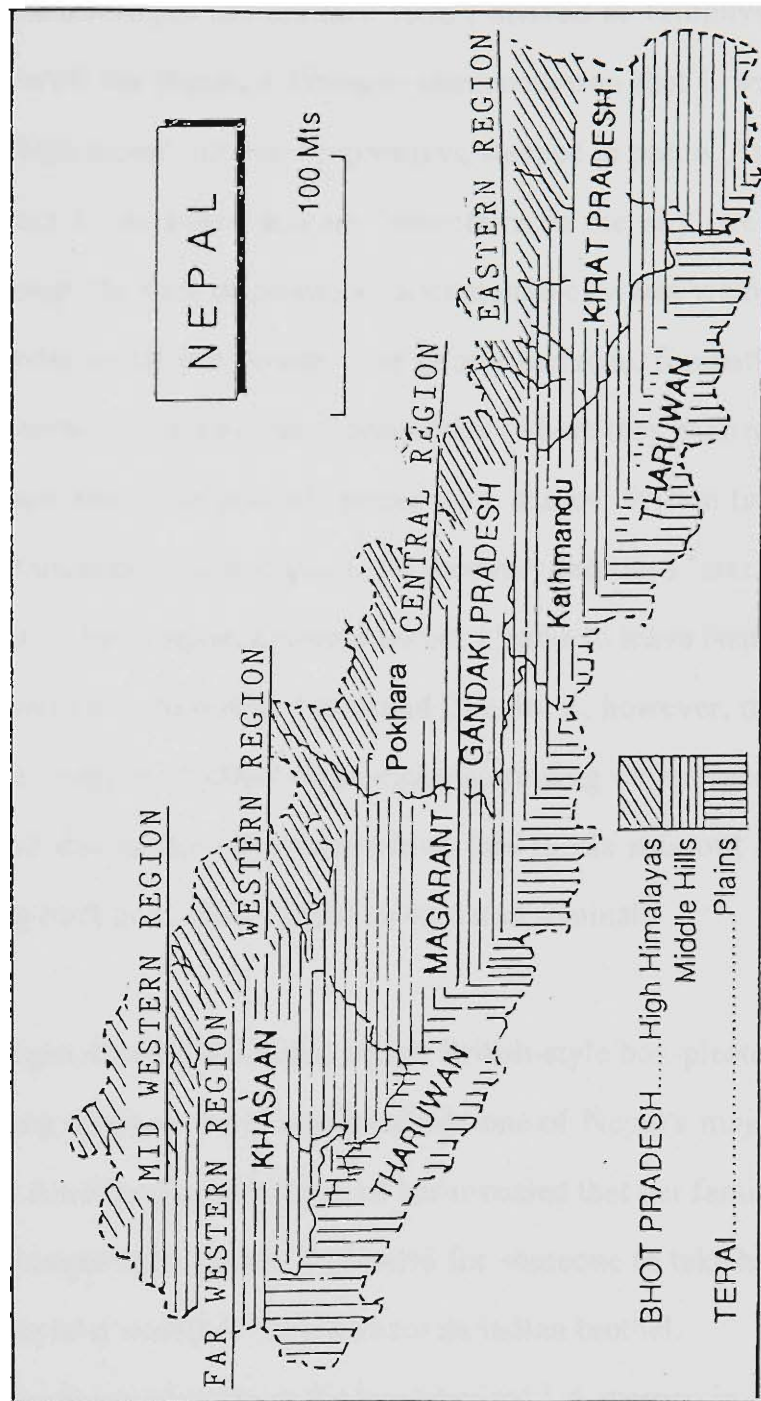


## Acronyms and Abbreviations

PEP	Primary Education Project
PEDP	Primary Education Development Project
RC	Resource Centre
RP	Resource Person/Received Pronunciation
RPP	Panchayat Party
SEAD	South East Asia Development Organisation
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
TA	Travel Allowance
TAR	Technical Assessment Report
TU	Tribhuvan University
UMN	United Mission to Nepal
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
Y	Year as in Y1 (Year 1)







Map 2

Source: Bista 1991, 12

### Introduction, Literature Review and Methodology

When I first visited Nepal in February 1990 I arrived at Tribhuvan International airport with the standard Western misconception that I was entering a country of high mountains and deep valleys, steeped in peace. As I left the airport precinct I was aware that my 'mountains in the sky' were barely discernible through the haze of pollution. Kathmandu city was visibly over-populated and under-resourced. Roads were poorly surfaced, footpaths unpaved, litter lay everywhere, public instrumentalities (where they existed) were poorly maintained, sanitation and safe water were scarce. Within two days I had developed bacillary dysentery and, on recovery ten days later, I discovered that the nation had erupted into civil unrest. Unable to leave Nepal for four weeks, I vowed never to return. I returned five times; however, my first visit provided a number of other consciousness-raising experiences which eventually gave rise to the questions which this thesis sets out to investigate. Reflecting back now, three images stand out as seminal:

1. A little girl dressed in a faded cotton British-style box-pleated tunic sitting alone on the footpath outside one of Nepal's major hospitals. A notice placed in front of her revealed that her family could no longer care for her. It pleaded for someone to take her in. We prayed it would not be a tout for an Indian brothel.
2. The cacophony of noise at the bus terminal.<sup>1</sup> A woman in an adult literacy class indicated that she was attending classes so she could 'learn how to read and write so that I can read which way the bus is going, and I can write a letter to my grand-daughter'.

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<sup>1</sup>In countries like Nepal and Bangladesh where literacy rates are low, spruikers are employed to shout out barge, bus and train destinations.

Her statement echoed the sentiment expressed by many other women, who claimed that they wanted to be able to read and write so that they could get a loan to commence income generating activities. Both responses suggested that the women desired the opportunities that are open to those who are literate.

3. Plan International fieldworkers' constant requests for advice on how best to assist teachers who had a low level of general education, no teacher training, and who were faced with exceptionally large classes conducted in inadequate facilities.

My experiences seemed to encapsulate some of the primary concerns of Nepalis, and so the subsequent research was influenced by an intuitive perspective - which Marshall and Rossman claim is a research tool that allows: 'ideas to incubate, and through retaining a respect for the mind's capacity for reorganization and reconstruction, the researcher finds richer questions evolve' (1989, 29).

The little girl not only symbolised the poverty of Nepal; the style of her school uniform suggested that, although Nepal had never been formally colonised by the British, there was some kind of colonial legacy. Literacy problems were indicated by the second experience, particularly amongst women, while the third experience suggested that Nepal's system of Initial Education was experiencing serious difficulties<sup>2</sup>. As a result of the persistence of the Plan International fieldworkers I was drawn to examine the goals and conditions under which the Nepali system of Initial Education operated between 1991 and 1995. This became the subject and rationale of this thesis.

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<sup>2</sup>For the purposes of this thesis the term 'Initial Education' refers to the formal system of education from pre-school to higher secondary.

Further, there were many times during the research period when, following the ethnographic method of semi-structured interviews (Burns 1997, 330), I found that I learned a great deal more by allowing interviewees to follow a pathway they had introduced. This not only enabled access to additional information, but also imparted a deeper understanding of the complexities of the situation. It frequently provided contrasting points of view and an opportunity for triangulation (Burns 1997, 324).

To ascertain the material conditions which existed in Nepal's system of Initial Education between 1991 and 1995 four fieldtrips were undertaken:

February 10-20, 1991;

December 3, 1991 - January 23, 1992;

January 3 - February 25, 1994;

November 1 - December 14, 1994.<sup>3</sup>

My intention of these fieldtrips was to collect data pertaining to the qualifications, general education and background of teachers in Nepal, as well as to record observations, interviews and attitudes towards Initial Education in Nepal experienced within the research area 1991-95.

As the research developed, English language teaching (ELT) seemed to best illustrate a major contradiction which emerged as characteristic of the planning and practice of initial education in Nepal. As a result, the latter fieldtrips focussed on how planning goals (or the lack of them), material conditions and teaching standards impacted on ELT. In Nepal English was taught as the major foreign language, yet the Government of Nepal had no official goal as to how English could best be supported and taught. My fieldtrips revealed that the lack of such a plan created an atmosphere of confusion in the practice of teaching English and added to the disparity

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<sup>3</sup>My first visit to Nepal was made in February 1990. In addition to the dates listed a further research trip, not part of this thesis, was made to Nepal in March 1997.

existing in the overall system of initial education in Nepal between the children of the elite and the lower classes. Furthermore, despite the perception of educationists and guardians that the standard of ELT in Nepal was declining, the available literature suggested that the most recent government sponsored survey into ELT was that undertaken on behalf of the British Council and His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMGN) in 1983/4. Apart from this evidence, only two independent surveys of English language standards could be found. These surveys involved the standard of English language demonstrated by Proficiency Level students (P.C. equivalent Year 11 and 12)<sup>4</sup> on Tribhuvan University's (TU) Pokhara campus (Giri <sup>5</sup> 1985 and 1986).

The lack of independent research into material conditions and teacher 'growth states'<sup>6</sup> and the lack of a government goal for the teaching of ELT suggested that there was a need for an independent examination of how the system of Initial Education was being practised in Nepal between 1950 and 1995.

Initial observations made during February 1991 suggested that material conditions in Nepali schools, and teaching standards within the geographic research area, were as poor as the Plan International fieldworkers indicated. This thesis aims to explore the extent of the deficit conditions between 1990 and 1995, and to suggest some possible reasons for them. Using ELT as an example, the thesis attempts to demonstrate how the apparent disparity between goals and practice impacted on the system of

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<sup>4</sup>This level equates with years 11 and 12 in Australia. (Referred to as Y11, Y12 etc. henceforth).

<sup>5</sup>Ram Ashish Giri is a lecturer in English language at Tribhuvan University's Faculty of Education, Kathmandu. He has a Masters Degree from Columbia University. He also acted as a translator for the section of the research facilitated by the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association and the Private and Boarding Schools Organisation of Nepal during 1994.

<sup>6</sup>For the purpose of this thesis the term 'growth state' as defined by Beeby (1968) (cf. p. 27) is used to describe the behaviour and standards of teachers in Nepal.

initial education in Nepal. These aims gave rise to two specific and guiding questions:

- (1) What were the standards of teachers and conditions in Nepali schools, 1991-95?
- (2) What do these conditions indicate about the planning and implementation of the goals for initial education in Nepal 1950-1995?

As previously implied (cf. p. 3 above), the answers to these questions are framed primarily by data collected during the four fieldtrips. However, to contextualise both questions and answers it is necessary first to review the literature informing the study, and to outline the methodology followed.

### **Literature Review**

While the emphasis of this thesis is on the data collected during the fieldtrips already referred to, the analysis also relies on literature and other written materials which are frequently used throughout the thesis. For instance, a number of writers have commented on development issues in Nepal (cf. H. and M. Reed 1968, Wood 1977, Vir 1988, Bista 1991, Raeper and Hoftun 1992, N. R. Shrestha 1993, Pigg 1993, Macfarlane 1994, Seddon 1994 ). Bista, a Nepali social anthropologist of international renown, claims that the social elements of karma and fatalism contained in Hinduism and Buddhism have impacted adversely on the development process in Nepal. Conversely, Pigg develops his argument from the perspective of how development has affected Nepali society itself. But Pigg goes further - suggesting that there was a desire by the elite to strengthen the status quo. Macfarlane, while accepting Bista's claims, argues that the social characteristics Bista attributes to religious influences prevalent in Nepal are more Indian in origin than specifically Hindu (1994, 126). But as fieldtrip

observations indicate, Nepalis do not find the view that Nepal is a satellite of India acceptable. However, Raeper and Hoftun indicate Nepalis from all levels of the social spectrum are critical of the amount of political and economic influence they claim India has had over successive Nepali governments from the time of the Rana regime (1992, 132) <sup>7</sup>.

Vir outlines the development of education in relation to the state policy of Nepal as a developing society (1988, Preface ix) and, similar to Pigg, examines how Nepal's social hierarchy is tempered by increased education amongst the general population. He claims that this tempering enables tradition and modernisation to co-exist, though he also notes that 'persons from the higher strata of Nepali society are more disposed towards the process of modernisation' (158). The accuracy of such a claim would explain, in part, fieldtrip observations of the elite's preference for private English medium schools. The suggestion by Vir that the elite are more disposed towards modernisation may qualify the claims of Pigg and N. R. Shrestha that the elite made use of the development process solely to consolidate their own position. Macfarlane sees India as a periphery of the West, and Nepal as a periphery of India, concluding that this makes Nepal a periphery of a periphery. Macfarlane's view is highly controversial but, along with Bista and H. and M. Reed, he is in accord with the central premise of this thesis, that no single factor is responsible for Nepal's problems in achieving its development goals. The legacy of neo-colonialism and a belief in fatalism may be factors in developmental problems, but, like the political explanation given by Raeper and Hoftun (cf. p. 19 below), they are not a sufficient explanation. Many other factors exist, and these include

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<sup>7</sup>William Raeper and Martin Hoftun both had a long association with Nepal. They made a study of the 1990 revolution and the events that led up to it. They were both killed in an air crash in Nepal July 31, 1992).

geographic, demographic, and economic factors. While this thesis refers to how such factors have impacted and interacted on the development goals of Initial Education, it concentrates on the social and historical influences.

Seddon claims Nepal's poor economic performance is the result of development strategies that have been applied unevenly. Kumar, although writing mainly about India, indicates that in South Asia it was generally concluded that only the better off section of society benefited from the development philosophies guiding programs between 1950 and 1990 (1994, 46). Seddon lays some of the blame for this on international donors' emphasis on economic development at the expense of social development, and suggests that encouraging the democratic process in Nepal will bring about a much-needed interaction between economic and social development. N. R. Shrestha concurs with Seddon's view that development has been uneven but argues that this occurred because the Nepali elite, who had an 'Orientalist' predisposition (cf. below, p. 17), used the development process for their own benefit. In addition, N. R. Shrestha (1993, 5) suggests that religious factors also impacted on the development of initial education, because many people were locked into a poverty cycle which was perpetuated in part by the need to borrow money to celebrate religious festivals. In looking at the socio-political restraints on development and evaluating the macro-economic impact of aid on the economy, Narayan Khadka (1991) has indicated that Nepal was becoming aid-dependent. He advocated that donors needed to encourage projects to become self-reliant and that the Nepali government needed to restrict donors to projects which would be in the best interests of Nepal. Khadka's claim concurs with H. and M. Reed (1968), Crowley (1990) and Matheson (1985), who noted that a number of innovations had been made in Nepal that were inappropriate to the socio-



cultural pattern. In addition, they observed that some programs had been impractical due to the restraints of limited personnel, infrastructure and finance.

Hugh and Mary Reed (1968), who worked on a project implementing science education in Nepali schools in the 1960s, accepted that religious tradition influences Nepali society, but argued that these beliefs could be used to benefit development provided they were harnessed rather than confronted. Dharam Vir (1988), who studied the relationship between education and polity in Nepal in 1974, argued that although the State now takes responsibility for the development of initial education in Nepal, institutionalised religious belief influences the State and in effect each supports the other.

Others have written on general development issues which further contribute to an understanding of development in Nepal. Amongst these are Rostow (1960), Andre Gunder Frank (1969), Carnoy (1976), Said (1978 and 1994), Weiler (1982) and Lewellen (1995). However, while this thesis attempts to take account of both Western and South Asian perspectives regarding Nepal's developmental challenges, it takes note of Pigg's warning that:

the role of development in Nepal has been limited by the rhetoric of development [and] ... Most discussions of development in Nepal debate economics, administration, or politics within a framework that separates development from the society (1993, 45).

He argues that an approach to development should be built on an understanding of the specific social and cultural context (45). This thesis attempts to heed Pigg's suggestion. Not only does it attempt to take account of the social context in which development has had to take place in Nepal,

but it seeks to balance discussion of development rhetoric with first-hand data and observations collected during fieldtrips.

With respect to the planning goals for the development of initial education in Nepal (1950-1995), this thesis employs Vir's division of the development of initial education in Nepal into four main periods:

- traditional education (prior to 1846),
- modern education (1846-1950),
- the rapid expansion of modern education (1951-70) and
- planned development of modern education (1970 onwards).

HMGN set goals for the development of initial education through a series of eight five year plans, an exception being the initial planning period which covered three years. The list of the plans is as follows:

- 1952-55 Initial Planing Period;
- 1955-60 The First Plan;
- 1960-65 The Second Plan;
- 1965-70 The Third Plan;
- 1970-75 The Fourth Plan;
- 1975-80 The Fifth Plan;
- 1980-85 The Sixth Plan;
- 1985-90 The Seventh Plan;
- 1990-95 The Eighth Plan.<sup>8</sup>

During the periods being researched - the rapid expansion of modern education (1950-70), and planned development of modern education (1971 - onwards) - HMGN aimed to achieve:

- a single system of adequately funded government schools;
- good facilities;

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<sup>8</sup>The dates vary in some literature. A 1998 document from the Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development (CERID) indicates the Eighth Plan as covering the period 1992-97.

- the availability of free education for all (EFA) by 1985 (now amended to 2000);
- increasing the literacy rate;
- encouragement of the enrolment of girls;
- an adequately qualified and trained teaching service and
- provision of tertiary institutions.

Later goals included:

- equity of access;
- qualitative improvement of material conditions in schools;
- universal availability of quality texts and
- the development of a system of technical and vocational education.

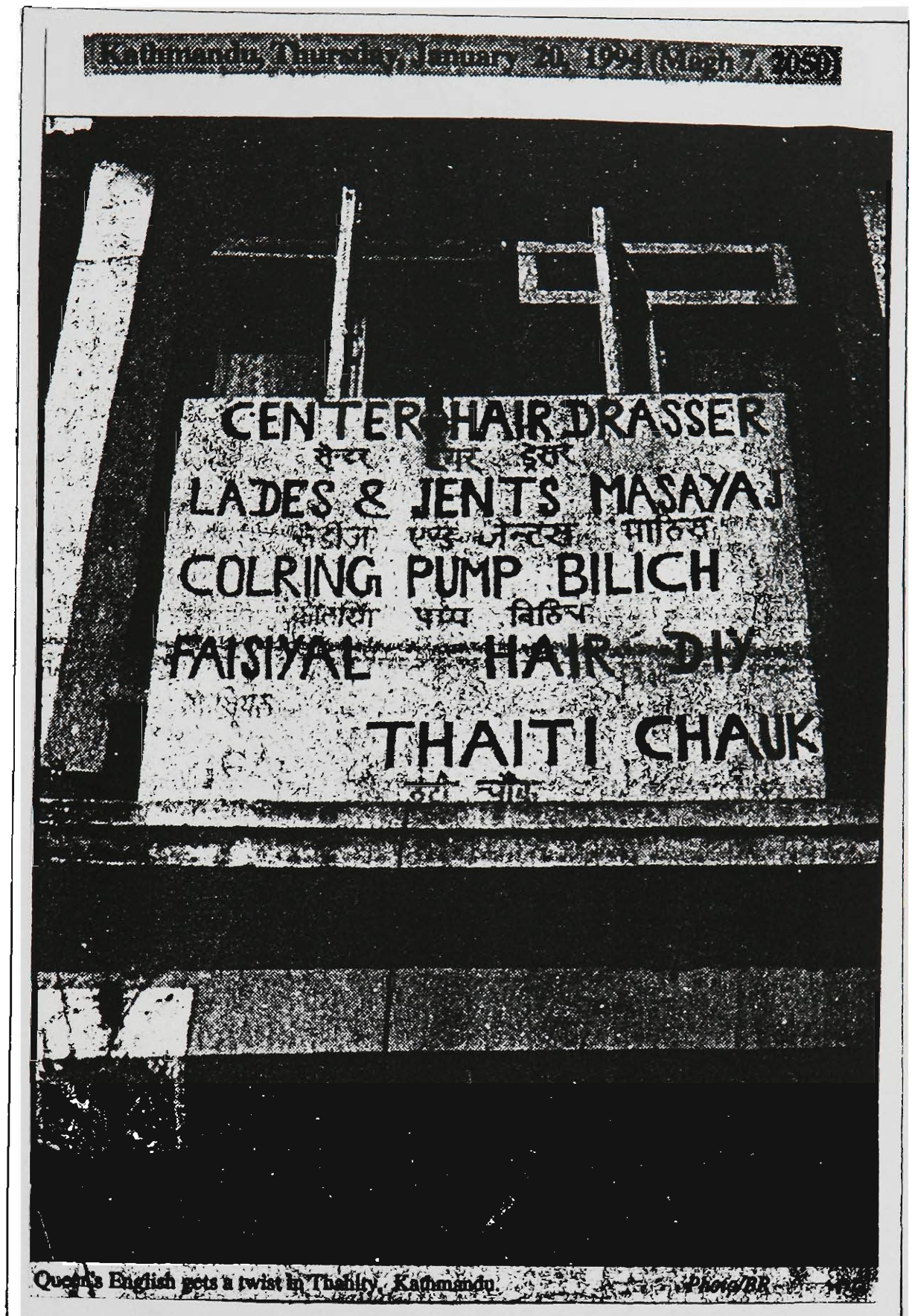
(Wood 1977, Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development [APEID] 1984, Nepal District Profile 1986, Vir 1988, Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All [APPEAL] 1991).

As this thesis describes, the model of initial education chosen in 1952 was based on the British colonial system in India which used a teaching methodology of rote learning. This method allows little scope for the practical application of curriculum and does not promote the development and use of technical skills.

The influences on HMGN regarding its choice of goals, and the context in which they were implemented, were revealed through the secondary sources already noted and primary sources, i.e. government documents (cf. bibliography). At the commencement of the research (1991) not a great deal of literature specifically related to educational development in Nepal was listed in Western libraries. But the list has grown in the intervening years. Some secondary sources were found in bookshops in

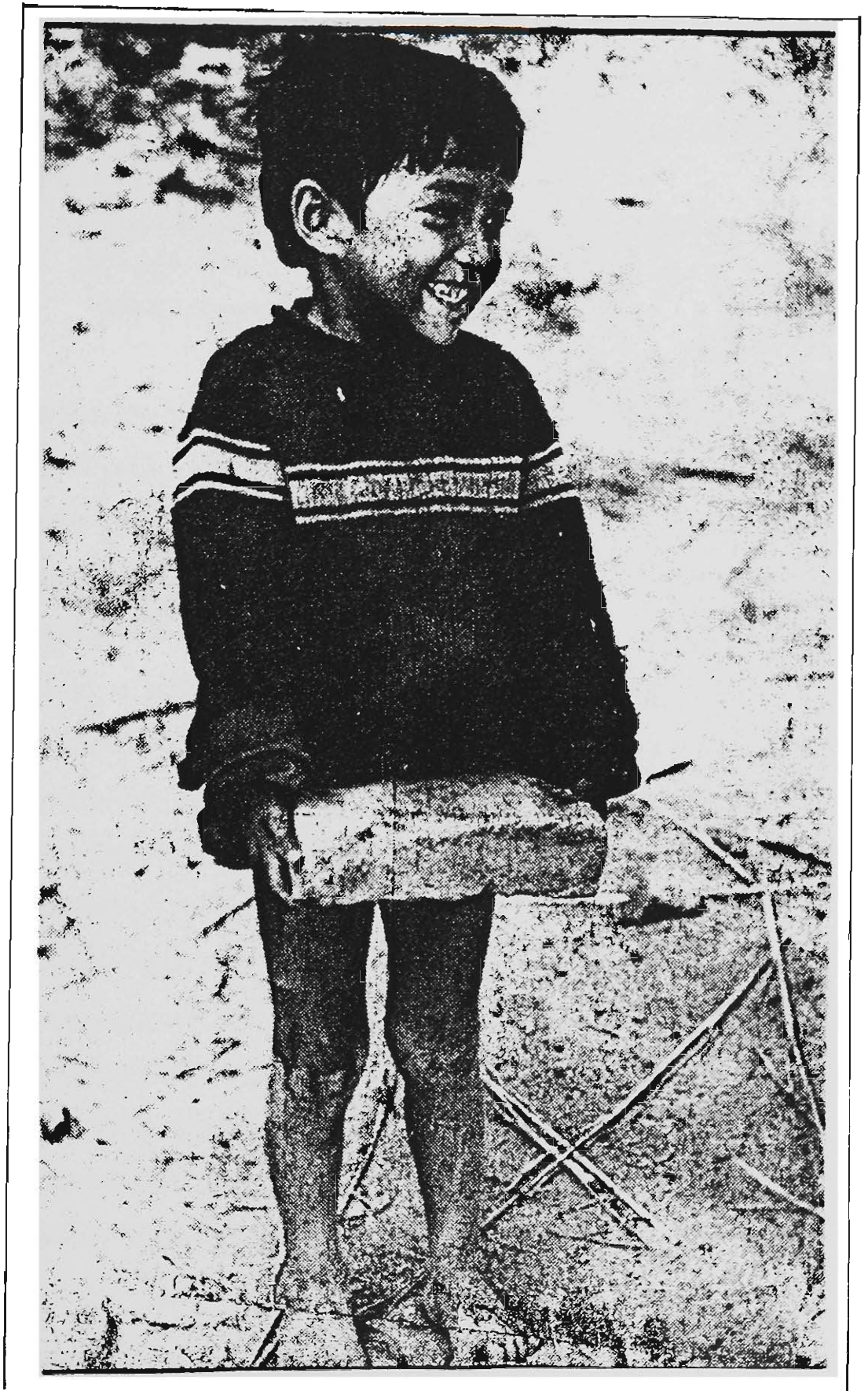
Nepal, and some fieldtrip interviewees facilitated access to unpublished documents and articles which have been listed in the bibliography. Applying Freire's claim that 'education is not neutral, it is for domestication or liberation' (see Hill 1992, 2), the choice made and followed by Nepal after 1950 might be said to have had the effect of 'domesticating' the general public.

Havelock and Huberman claim that anything that sheds light on attitudes, especially in relation to social innovations, is valuable in the research process (1977, 10), and during fieldtrips letters and editorials published in local English language newspapers, signs written in English (cf. p. 12 below), the ever-increasing number of badly written banners advising of the opening of new private English medium schools, and the number of school-age children on the streets during school hours all provided background to community attitudes towards education (cf. p. 13 below). Further insights were provided by observation of children from government schools clutching a single tattered text on their way home from school in contrast to expensively British-styled uniform-clad children being driven home from their private English medium schools, and by the discovery that the night porter or waiter in a hotel or restaurant proved to be a teacher supplementing his income. All these experiences form part of an outsider's immersion in the setting, which researchers (Marshall and Rossman 1989, 19; Wadsworth 1995, 11) nominate as necessary in order to identify the informal processes and cultural context that explain public policy outcomes. The researchers claim such experiences assist in the examination of prevailing myths, and help identify the range of factors affecting social and political responses.



An example of a sign written in English in Kathmandu





This child is typical of many children who play in the streets of Kathmandu during school hours

This understanding of the setting has been supplemented by the works of Vir (1988), Bista (1991, 116-132) and Stiller (1993), who give outlines of the history of initial education in Nepal prior to 1950. Vir notes that in Nepal,

a formal education system has not been a part of either the central or the political traditions and prior to 1951 the intention was to withhold education from most Nepalis (1988, 9).

He goes on to claim that 'liberalisation of education was brought about by the idea that education was important for economic development' (38). This view was prevalent in 1950 when Nepal embarked on its development programs. The nation's initial exposure, therefore, was to the prevailing post World War Two (WWII) Western paradigm that 'formal education made a significant contribution to the modernisation process' (Harbison and Myers 1964).

As already noted, there was a paucity of independent ethnographic data on material conditions in schools and on the 'growth states' of Nepali teachers. While some data regarding the number and type of schools, literacy rates and college graduates in Nepal during 1952 were available (Wood<sup>9</sup> 1977, APEID 1984, APPEAL 1991, Macfarlane 1994) and some description of the evolving conditions and the staffing of schools was presented by H. and M. Reed (1968), Mitchell (1977) and Macfarlane (1994), no detailed description of the actual conditions pertaining to the initial education system in the 1980s or early 1990s could be located until the *Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance*<sup>10</sup> was published in 1996.

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<sup>9</sup>H. B. Wood was an adviser to the National Planning Commission for Education in 1952 and he has maintained a life-long interest and connection with Nepal.

<sup>10</sup>National Planning Commission *Primary Education, Final Report: Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance*, 1996, HMGN and UNICEF. In the text it will be referred to as *Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance*

Vir (1988) provides some insights into the possible background of Nepali teachers, but his conclusions are based on research done in 1974. However, in the light of the low status and background of Nepali teachers, most researchers agree that education was not regarded as a high status occupation in Nepal (Pigg 1993, 50; G. M. Shrestha and Bennett in Bambach 1993a, 2-3; Bambach 1993a, 3). Other information available pertaining to the professional status of teachers (APEID 1984, APPEAL 1991) appears to have largely been based on Nepali government information. Statistics on the number of trained and untrained teachers in Nepal were available (*Statistical Pocket Book*, Nepal 1994), though, as the Nepali government has no set measuring instruments for collecting such data, the reliability of the information and figures is in doubt.

Surveys were undertaken on behalf of the Nepali Government during 1992 and 1993 by an international technical assessment team investigating the problems associated with the lack of a career structure for primary school teachers (Bambach 1993, Manandhar 1993, Y. R. Pant 1993, L. P. Tripathi 1993). However, while this assessment reviewed teacher status, in-service training programs and teaching service regulations, no survey of the general education or training qualifications of teachers actually working in the field of initial education was undertaken during the technical assessment period.<sup>11</sup> A report written by Bambach in August 1993, and based on 1991 figures (source unstated), cites 38 percent of primary teachers as qualified and trained, 55 percent qualified but untrained, 4 percent under-qualified but trained, and 1 percent under-qualified and untrained. In Nepal the term 'qualified' for primary school teachers applies to teachers with School

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<sup>11</sup>In fact fieldtrip interviews with the implementation team (Cowell, Kelly and Malik, Feb. 1994) suggested the Nepali advisers were uninformed regarding the actual standard of many Nepali teachers.



Leaving Certificate of Nepal (SLC), Y10 or its equivalent from India or elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> The term 'trained' can mean anything from basic training of five to one hundred and fifty hours of in-service training to pre-service training of one year's duration onwards. Until Matheson (1985) and Crowley (1990) wrote an assessment of the Education for Rural Development Project in the Seti zone (which was jointly funded by the Nepali government, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other multilateral agencies) and the Primary Education Project (PEP), there appears to have been little other direct written evidence of the reality of the initial education system.

As well as the arguments presented earlier regarding the hierarchical religious and social structure of the society, and the possible influence of India and neo-colonialism (cf. p. 6 above), additional factors affecting the choice of plan for the development of initial education made in 1952 must be considered. First, the educational experience and social and political background of the planners was limited. Along with Wood all members were male. Apart from Wood they were politically allied with the new government. Few women were available to contribute as prior to 1950 initial education was largely restricted to males and, as society was male dominated at the time, women would not have been considered for inclusion on the planning committee. As a result, the curriculum chosen was in accordance with what men regarded as important. Second, there was an extremely low literacy rate within the Nepali community, with very few high school or college graduates (Wood 1977, Macfarlane 1994), which meant there was no trained or semi-trained manpower base needed for the country's economic modernisation.

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<sup>12</sup>I am reluctant to give a subjective comparison between the Nepali Y10 and a Western equivalent level. First, the basis of assessment is quite different and, second, the SLC is measured at three levels of pass. However, if the commonly held view in Nepal that teachers come from the third level of passes of SLC is correct, then it is likely that the general knowledge and problem solving skills of Nepali teachers would be quite low.

Third, there was little infrastructure for education. Fourth, the prevailing development philosophy or paradigm of the major development agencies was based on the premise that a literate and technically trained society would lead to economic prosperity (cf. p. 14 above).

Despite the liberalisation of the government's attitude, insufficient funds were allocated for education, suggesting, as Vir claims, that education was not viewed as an indispensable investment for economic growth by the Nepali government (1988, 43). Vir suggests this probably occurred because the plan for the development of initial education was wholly unrelated to the national goals (43) - a choice that Bista (1991), N. R. Shrestha (1993) and Pigg (1993) claim was influenced by a fatalistic belief in karma combined with an attempt by the elite to maintain the status quo. The fact that the elite quickly opted out of the government system and encouraged the development of a system of private education for their own children suggests that Pigg and N. R. Shrestha may have a valid claim. Further arguments of N. R. Shrestha and Pigg that development in Nepal was uneven, are supported by Vir, who indicates that, in 1952, two-thirds of the limited number of high school and college graduates were situated in Kathmandu, and that this remained the case in 1974 (1988, 79).

Vir (1988), Stiller (1993) and N. R. Shrestha (1993) also claim that, although Nepal was never colonised by the British, the Nepali people, particularly the elite, were strongly influenced by the British occupation of India. Vir and Stiller indicate that admiration for the British is shown by the commencement of Durbur school in 1852, and the desire of the elite for a private system of schools offering instruction via the medium of English. This implies a further influence on the development process: that of Orientalism (cf. p. 7 above), which, following Said, may be defined as the

ontological and epistemological distinction between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident':

Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point, Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient - dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having an authority over the Orient (1994, 3).

Fieldtrip observations suggest an acceptance in Nepal that, in order to modernise, superior Western approaches should be adopted. This suggests that an orientalist predisposition affected the State's choice of goals and model for the development of initial education. In addition to this orientalist predisposition Vir (1988), Bista (1991), N. R. Shrestha (1993), Pigg (1993) and Macfarlane (1994) claim that the State's choices were also affected by the socio-religious values of Nepal.

Whatever the major planning influences may have been, and despite the goal of HMGN for a single system of initial education consisting of adequately-funded Nepali language schools, a private English medium system developed as well. As a result a dual system was created. This occurred without apparent opposition from either the government or the general population.

The lack of resistance may be related to Raeper and Hoftun's observation (1993) that political conditions in Nepal remained volatile after the 1950 revolution. This interpretation conforms with the views of Crook. Writing on knowledge transmission in S. E. Asia, he suggests that in a closed society (such as Nepal's was prior to 1950), when the society is opened up the 'society goes into shock as reproduction goes into production.

This in turn challenges the status quo and destabilises the State' (1996, 7). As a result of the volatility in Nepal, many Nepalis decided to live in exile in India after 1960 because of fear of Nepali Government reprisals for any opposition. Despite the government's claim that the political system between 1960 and 1990 in Nepal was one of partyless (Panchayat) rule, and that it would neutralise the elite's influence; according to Raeper and Hoftun the system created an even stronger elite (1992, 11). Fisher describes this period of Nepal's history as one of absolute monarchy (1997, 1). Raeper and Hoftun claim that many Nepali people believed that 'development in Nepal [between 1960 and 1990] had failed because of political repression' (1992, 24). However, as noted (cf. p. 6 above), like all the arguments already discussed, the argument that political turmoil alone impeded development in Nepal is insufficient.

What is apparent is that the model accepted regarding the development of Initial Education in Nepal in 1952 was based on conflicting goals and a lack of coordination and communication between planners and the Nepali government. Fieldtrip observations and experiences indicated that a lack of communication and coordination noted by H. and M. Reed in the 1960s, was still evident and impacting on projects during the period of this research in the 1990s. However, while the mismatch between the model for educational development and government goals can be explained by a lack of coordination and communication, the government's acceptance of the plan put forward by the national planners in 1952 for the development of initial education points to a number of other factors at work.

A factor identified by H. and M. Reed as a restraint on development was that insufficient consideration was given to the religious and social divisions within the society. They claimed that between 1950 and 1968 the

goals for development were implemented in a manner which confronted the caste system. In addition to the views of H. and M. Reed, Bista (1991, *passim*), Seddon (1992, 161) and Macfarlane (1994, 119) claim Nepali social structure, which designates skills by caste, and the Brahmanic attitude which views the function of education as a means to free one from menial work, have impacted upon the development of technical schools. Like H. and M. Reed, Bista, Seddon and Macfarlane suggest that technical education and science based subjects had not developed according to the Nepali government's goals because of a mismatch between the Nepali culture and the ways in which attempts were made to implement the goals.

The foregoing views suggest that there are a number of perspectives from which development programs in Nepal must be evaluated, and these are discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Four of this thesis. However, as already indicated, the primary focus of this research is on examining the material conditions of schools observed and of teachers surveyed in the research area between 1991 and 1995. It is through the independent fieldwork, undertaken during this period<sup>13</sup>, that the thesis seeks to make a contribution towards understanding the problems facing initial education in Nepal during the 1990s.

During the fieldwork, as evidence of a disparity emerged between the planning of educational goals and their implementation, the research focussed on how the teaching of English in Nepal was affected by the apparent failure to achieve the main goals for the development of initial education. The method of assessment and analysis for the survey of ELT and English

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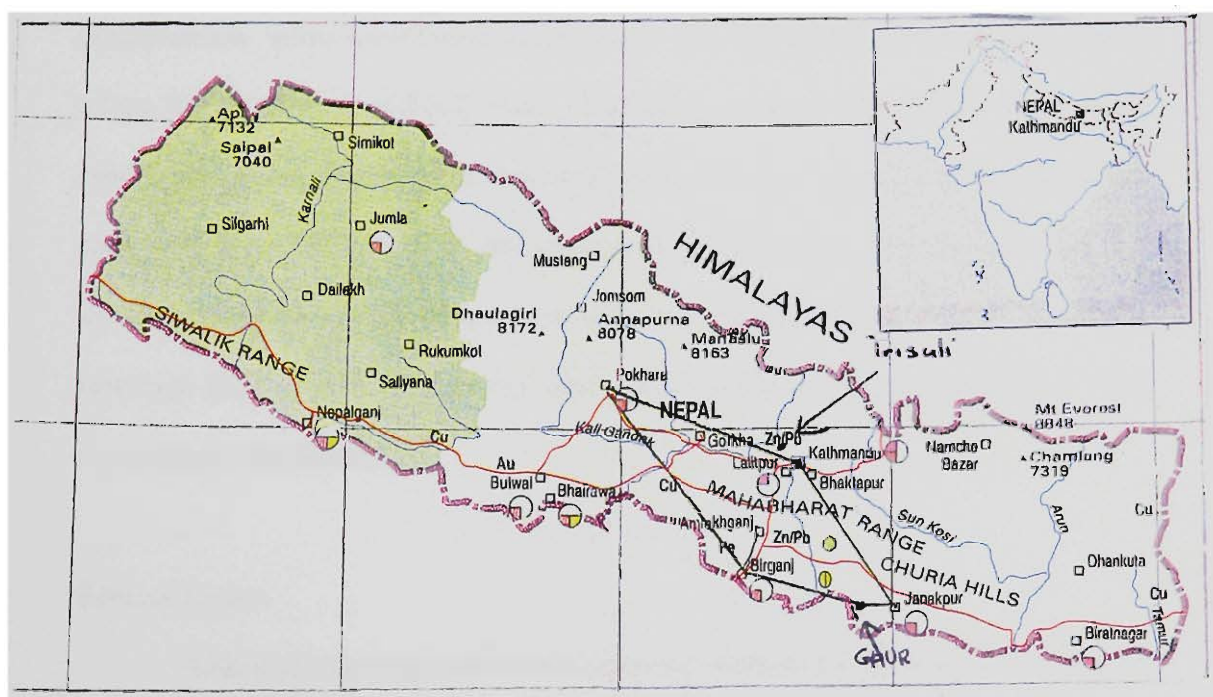
<sup>13</sup>While I acknowledge that teacher training workshops, and data collection were facilitated by representatives of Plan International (Nepal), the Private and Boarding Schools' Association (PABSON), and the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA), as well as some committed school principals, they in no way sponsored or influenced the research.

language teachers in Nepal is detailed in Chapters Seven and Eight of the thesis.

## Methodology

### *Delineation of the Geographic Area for Study*

The geographic area in which the research took place extended from Kathmandu Valley, north-west to Trisuli, west to Pokhara Valley, then south to the Terai regions of Birganj, Janakpur and the remote town of Gaur. With the exception of Gaur these places were heavily populated and had been exposed to development for several years.<sup>14</sup> It was expected that these areas would have had a greater chance than the remoter regions of achieving the nation's development goals. The area chosen for the research for this thesis was also influenced by time and budgetary constraints.



Map 3. Geographic Research Area

<sup>14</sup>In the study of English language standards made in 1984, Davies claimed that the accessible areas in Nepal would be likely to indicate a higher level of achievement of the goals for education than those in remote areas. (Survey of English Language Teaching in Nepal: Report prepared by a British Council/ODA team for HMGN Ministry of Education and Culture. December 1983-February 1984, npn).

### *The Model*

As the purpose of this research was to describe the existing conditions in schools and the professional level of teachers, the methodology involved a number of research techniques, implemented over a succession of phases (cf. p. 31 below). However, as the overall methodology was that of 'progressive focussing', the commencement point for the research was observation and informal interviews (Burns 1997, 330). These were based on the first of the guiding questions: What are the standards of teachers and conditions in Nepali schools, 1991-95? (cf. p. 4 above). Using the method of progressive focussing the research followed parallel paths. The main path focussed on 'learning from experience' (Connell 1982 in Wadsworth 1997, 11), and a series of four fieldtrips took place between February 1991 and December 1994. The field research involved a number of research methods: observation, semi-structured interviews, survey questionnaires and, later, when the problems of ELT were discussed, several approaches were used relevant to the assessment of standards of ELT (cf. Chapter Eight). The other path was an examination of the choice and implementation of goals for the development of initial education in Nepal as framed by a review of the relevant literature and written materials noted in this introduction and throughout the thesis.

### *Ethical Issues*

Although the data collected respected anonymity, during the course of the research several attempts were made to obtain the informed consent of those participating in the study. Early in the study in February 1991, and again between December 1991 and January 1992, the nature of the research and the participant's right to withdraw from the program at any stage was

explained in both Nepali language and English. When these explanations were made and the ethics clearance form presented, the participants made it clear - both in English and Nepali - that they felt such documents were unnecessary. As a result the interpreters advised that the Nepalis were unfamiliar with the rules of Western research. The participants' view was:

- that the signing of a document identified them as attending a workshop;
- the signing of documents or written statements was associated with officialdom and government;
- the research was anonymous therefore the signing of such a document was unnecessary; and
- the research could be beneficial to the Nepali teaching service.

A similar response was experienced during 1994. As an identifying code was all that was necessary to collate responses to the ELT assessment process, it was decided not to insist on the signing of an ethics clearance at any point in the research but to do everything possible to protect the identity of those contributing.

### *Sampling*

Because of the difficulty of obtaining a visa for independent research in Nepal, all the research was completed using a tourist visa. Although members of the government were aware the research was taking place, and in some cases willingly participated in interviews, HMGN did not facilitate the study. This meant that the participating schools and teachers were largely part of an opportunity sample (Burns 1997, 86). Of this sample, only a small group of schools was able to be specifically chosen for inclusion in the study, with the others chosen as opportunity presented. The 'chosen' schools



consisted of the historically important school, Durbur High School, and the most prestigious schools in Nepal, Budhanilkantha, Gandakhi Boarding School (GBS), and St. Xaviers. As the thesis is biased towards qualitative research, the aim was to describe qualitatively the situation found in the schools researched. There has not been a strong emphasis on quantifying the situation statistically.

Twenty-five schools were observed in detail and the number of visits to each school recorded along with the reason for their inclusion. The descriptive observations of eleven of these schools are detailed in Chapter Five where it will be seen the ratio of private to government schools is higher, as there was a greater variety of standards in private schools. However, overall a balance between the number of government schools and private schools observed was maintained. Nevertheless, given the risk of bias in opportunity based selection (Burns 1997, 86), only indications can be posited: generalised conclusions for the whole of Nepal cannot be made. Similarly, as the bulk of the data pertaining to the education, qualifications and background of teachers were collected from groups of teachers during workshops,<sup>15</sup> it is acknowledged that the incentive for teachers to attend in-service training workshops may have been stronger amongst those who were untrained and this in itself may skew the data. While there is no evidence that this was the case, it must be acknowledged that those teachers who did not attend the workshops might have had quite different characteristics to those who attended. Further, the incentive to attend workshops arranged by Plan International may have been linked with a desire to please the International Non-Government Organization (INGO) working in the teachers' communities. In the case of workshops organised by PABSON, staff were

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<sup>15</sup>Some additional data were collected on visits to schools through the use of the same questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observations used in workshops.

generally required to attend by the principal of the school in which they taught. However, the workshops organised by NELTA appeared to be free of coercion. Furthermore, as the surveys indicate, the teachers attending workshops were generally young. It may well be that their youthfulness equated with enthusiasm whereas older teachers may be confirmed in their ways. To overcome this possibility the data collected on government schools and teachers were compared with data supplied by HMGN and UNICEF (*Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance* 1996). The subsequent comparison indicated that the thesis sample profiling 294 teachers generally reflected the HMGN and UNICEF information regarding teachers' general education and training in Nepal which was compiled in 1995. Similarly, the government schools visited during the thesis research fitted the standard described by HMGN and UNICEF (*Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance* 1996).

As is the case with other studies, the combined HMGN/UNICEF study did not include private schools. As a result no data were available for comparison with the thesis data pertaining to private schools.

### *Questionnaires*

In phases two, three and four data were collected from teachers through questionnaires (cf. Ethical Issues p. 22 above), which sought responses to simple questions about a teacher's general education, teacher training, age, gender, experience and background (cf. Appendices A, p. 291 and B1, p. 293 below). A number of questionnaires were distributed and completed during workshops arranged by Plan International, PABSON or NELTA. These in-service teacher training workshops varied in duration from two successive days to a half day. On other occasions, a small number of questionnaires were filled in by teachers during visits to their schools.

Generally there were no time constraints as to how long a teacher could take to complete the questionnaires and the participants were free to converse with one another. However, due to an administrative oversight - not the fault of the researcher - during January 1994, for three schools visited on the Terai only a portion of the questions could be answered because of time constraints which occurred when the visits to schools had to be hastily arranged. As most of the research was independently funded,<sup>16</sup> financial constraints prevented a longer stay or a return visit to these schools.

A further difficulty was that because of time and budgetary constraints, the questionnaires were not able to be pre-tested. An attempt to compensate for the lack of a pre-test was made by having the questions read and discussed by representatives of the facilitating groups. During this process it was felt the issue of 'caste' was sensitive and advice was given to delete a question pertaining to caste.<sup>17</sup> However, despite preliminary discussions, two ambiguous questions were not noted until the research was underway. The first of these asked, Do you have any tertiary qualifications? This question created confusion for the participants as, until 1992, Y11 and Y12 were undertaken on a campus of TU. In Nepal this level of study was considered by many to be a level of tertiary study, whereas in the West Y11 and Y12 are generally regarded as secondary schooling. A further problem occurred in relation to tertiary qualifications as in Nepal the certification of Intermediate Education (IEEd) is regarded as both a level of general education and a teaching qualification, whereas the other intermediate certificates in arts, science and commerce are not. When the problem of overlapping caused by

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<sup>16</sup> Two return airfares were contributed by the Faculty of Human Development of Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne.

<sup>17</sup> The advisers gave no direct answer as to why a question on caste should be deleted, but I concluded that it was seen as politically and socially sensitive in Nepal.

the confusion of terminology was realised, adjustments were made when collating the data.

### *Observations*

Fieldtrip observations were ongoing and included direct descriptive observation of the conditions of school buildings, playground facilities, sanitation, maintenance, general equipment and storage. Descriptive observations of schools, including criteria for selection and the number of visits made to a particular school, are contained in Chapter Five of the thesis. Further non-participant observations were made throughout the research period of teachers' behaviour and attitudes to teaching - attendance, punctuality, planning and evaluation - as well as the teaching methodology they employed. These observations were correlated with responses contained in the questionnaires. Some observations were made as a participant observer while filling the role of a voluntary in-service teacher trainer, during thirteen teacher training workshops in the research area. As already noted, these workshops were variously organised by field-workers from Plan International, PABSON and NELTA.<sup>18</sup> Additional observations of teachers were made during visits to schools where interaction took place between myself, teachers and children.

### *Interviews*

As noted (cf. p. 2 above) to enable triangulation, information was collected during semi-structured interviews (Burns 1997, 330), sometimes with the help of a Nepali interpreter from Plan International, PABSON or NELTA. Information obtained in these interviews confirmed, corrected or complemented data obtained from participant and general observations (Burns

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<sup>18</sup>It was in this role that the bulk of the data were collected for Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight

1997, 315). On occasion, information obtained in one interview contradicted that of another informant and demonstrated that further research was required. Semi-structured interviews were favoured given Taylor and Bogdan's claim (1984, 77) that the advantages of this method include the chance of increased rapport, a lesser chance of the perspective of the researcher being imposed, and the informant being given the opportunity to be equal in status to the researcher in the dialogue. However, the latter, while encouraged, was difficult to achieve in view of the commonly-held Orientalist and hierarchical attitudes in Nepali society. The fact that the interviewer was a Westerner and the interpreter was a member of a higher caste could have influenced some responses. Data were also supplemented with information obtained from informal interviews and fieldtrip observations.

### *Interviewees*

Interviewees came from the following groups:

#### A. School level.

Semi-structured interviews and discussions undertaken at this level included government school teachers, head teachers, private school teachers and principals. These interviews and discussions were generally undertaken as the opportunity arose. However, some interviews with principals were pre-arranged. These included Budhanilkantha, St. Xaviers, Durbur High School and Gandaki Boarding School. Some interviews took place in social situations. Guarantees of confidentiality were given and permission requested to quote a pertinent comment. However, as already noted, although those interviewed spoke freely, Nepalis were reluctant to sign any documentation granting permission (cf. p. 23 above).

### B. Guardians and community spokespersons.

Interviews were conducted with guardians of pupils in private schools as opportunity presented. A community meeting of local people, whose children attended government schools, was arranged in Nagarkot by fieldworkers of the INGO Plan International. Nagarkot was selected because I was known in the area and it was a district which Plan had been working in for two years. Further, the area was multi-ethnic and contained a large community which was Tibeto-Burmese in origin, and, although they spoke Nepali, they had a different mother-tongue, linguistically divorced from Nepali. It was also a popular tourist destination on the edge of Kathmandu Valley, which meant that the community had had a small amount of exposure to the English language.

(C) Multinational spokespersons, INGO directors and fieldworkers, Consultants working for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) projects, and representatives of local organisations: PABSON and NELTA.

These interviews were selected and arranged on the basis of the experience of their agents and the relevance of their expert knowledge to the thesis research.

(D) MOEC/SW<sup>19</sup> officials, the Vice Chairman of the National Education Commission (NEC 1992), the Assistant Minister to the MOEC/SW 1993-94, the former Minister for MOEC/SW who introduced and implemented the New Education System Plan (NESP).

These people were selected on the basis of their position, experience and relevance to the research.

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<sup>19</sup>The Ministry has changed its name several times. Originally it was the Ministry of Education (MOE). Later during the NESP it became the Ministry of Education and Culture, then around 1990 it was named the Ministry of Education, Culture and Social Welfare (MOEC/SW). In 1998 it was renamed MOE.

(E) Community leaders, teachers' college lecturers, university lecturers involved in English language teaching at tertiary level.

The selection here was largely as opportunity presented.

(F) The Vice Chancellor of TU.

This interview took place early in November 1994. He was interviewed to obtain a perspective from a leader in the tertiary sector on the system of initial education in Nepal.

(G) Officials and staff of the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERID).

They provided an overview of research that had been undertaken into the development of initial education in Nepal during the period 1980-94.

(H) Officers of the Sanothimi Materials publication centre, distance radio teacher training, curriculum and text-book designers.

These categories were deliberately selected and sought because of the position and experience of the people involved.

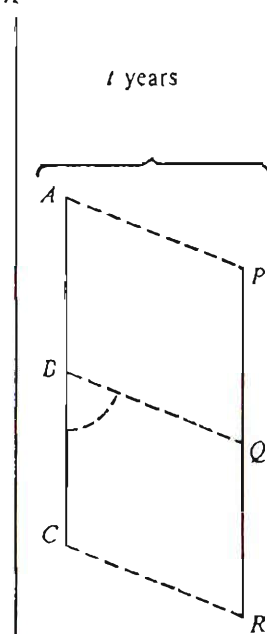
### *Data Evaluation*

Each section of the collected data is tabulated, compared and analysed in Chapter Six of the thesis, using the frameworks of Beeby (1966) (cf. Figure i, p. 31, and p. 97 below), Schon (1982) and Joyce and Showers (1988). In addition, the thesis brings together the data collected through other surveys and consultancy reports completed under the auspices of the ADB, the British Council and the Nepali government. Beeby (1966), who had extensive experience in the development of initial education in Third World countries, argues that all societies need to pass through a series of stages in the development of their initial education systems and that teachers similarly pass through a series of professional growth stages (cf. p. 97



Chapter One

below). Later, in 1980, Beeby modified his taxonomy slightly and claimed that his fourth stage of development - the stage of reason - may not be 'acceptable'<sup>20</sup> to all societies.

STAGES IN THE GROWTH OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL SYSTEM			
(1) Stage	(2) Teachers	(3) Characteristics	(4) Distribution of Teachers
I. Dame School	Ill-educated, untrained	Unorganized, relatively meaningless symbols; very narrow subject content—3 R's; very low standards; memorizing all-important.	
II. Formalism	Ill-educated, trained	Highly organized; symbols with limited meaning; rigid syllabus; emphasis on 3 R's; rigid methods—"one best way"; one textbook; external examinations; inspection stressed; discipline tight and external; memorizing heavily stressed; emotional life largely ignored.	
III. Transition	Better-educated, trained	Roughly same goals as stage II, but more efficiently achieved; more emphasis on meaning, but it is still rather "thin" and formal; syllabus and textbooks less restrictive, but teachers hesitate to use greater freedom; final leaving examination often restricts experimentation; little in classroom to cater for emotional and creative life of child.	
IV. Meaning	Well-educated, well-trained	Meaning and understanding stressed; somewhat wider curriculum, variety of content and methods; individual differences catered for; activity methods, problem solving and creativity; internal tests; relaxed and positive discipline; emotional and aesthetic life, as well as intellectual; closer relations with community; better buildings and equipment essential.	

Reproduced from Beeby 1966

<sup>20</sup>By this Beeby means that the value systems and structure of some societies may find the characteristics of his stage four - the stage of meaning - threatening, or even endangering their society's cultural stability.

Schon, writing on professionalism in a Western environment, indicates that for successful change to take place there must be agreement about the change between both professional and client. Joyce and Showers (1988, 131-33), writing about in-service training programs, also in a Western context, claim that teachers largely teach from their own reserve of experience and that to extend this reserve by promoting in-service training out of the teacher's own setting is insufficient. They maintain training must be followed up and supported, preferably within the teacher's own environment, for skills to be successfully added to the teacher's knowledge base and implemented. Tripathee working from the premise that Nepali teachers' experience of teaching is limited to the practice of rote learning, claims that in Nepal teacher training should be mandatory for the sake of the efficiency of the professional standing of the teacher (1993, 1).

### **The Research Process**

The research process comprised four phases as follows:

#### *Phase One (February 1991)*

The February 1991 fieldtrip to Kathmandu Valley focussed on the observable conditions in the field. During this period a small amount of data was collected to identify what questions really needed to be asked (Wadsworth 1997, 9). This phase of the research, conducted in Kathmandu Valley consisted of:

A. Semi-structured interviews, group discussions with teachers, and observations which sought information regarding attitudes, and problems teachers perceived as being associated with their role.

- B. Observations of teachers' inter-relationships and their responses to each other's problems.
- C. Observation of campus facilities and informal discussions with teachers' college lecturers on Tahachal campus to ascertain their views of the needs of pre-service teacher training in Nepal.
- D. Informal discussions with INGO workers to establish their perception of Nepal's educational needs.
- E. Two days of intermittent observation of classroom management and teaching methodology in a government school in Kathmandu Valley.
- F. Informal interviews with representatives of MOEC/SW, and the Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP).<sup>21</sup>

Running parallel with evaluation of the fieldtrip and providing a framework for understanding the information collected, the following questions guided a review of the literature:

1. What were the major factors influencing the development of initial education in Nepal, prior to 1950, against which the modernisation and development of initial education has had to take place?
2. What were the goals and what influenced the selection of goals for initial education in Nepal between 1950 and 1995?
3. What has been achieved by the eight plans in terms of material conditions in Nepali schools, and the standard of teachers?
4. What influenced the choice of English language as the major foreign language taught in Nepal?

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<sup>21</sup>During the interviews it transpired that some of the representatives also did consultancy work in education for Plan International (Nepal) and Save the Children (Britain).

5. Using the example of ELT, what were some of the basic problems - related to the material conditions, the standard of teachers, the curriculum, and texts - discernible between 1991-95?
6. What factors may assist understanding of the gap observed between policy and practice in the development of initial education in Nepal?

The data collected at the end of the first fieldtrip indicated that teachers believed that their working conditions were poor. Specific problems listed related to inadequate physical facilities and equipment, large classes and poor support from guardians.<sup>22</sup> Given that the initial data regarding teachers' perceptions of problems affecting their role as teachers were collected in an area that had experienced several years of assistance from an INGO, an additional question emerged: How typical were the responses of teachers in communities assisted by INGOs compared with communities which had not had INGO assistance? This question led to the second phase of fieldwork.

### *Phase Two:*

Phase Two commenced with a fieldtrip December 3rd 1991-January 30th 1992. The general aim was for the researcher to be immersed in the world of the researched (Wadsworth 1997, 11), and having done so to evaluate the material gathered. More specific aims were:

- (a) to broaden the research to include private as well as government schools;
- (b) to extend the research area from Kathmandu Valley to include Pokhara valley;

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<sup>22</sup>Because of the structure of Nepali society, and inaccessibility to schools in many areas, children are frequently housed with relatives. As a result the term 'guardian' is the name given in Nepali society to those responsible for a child's education.

- (c) to develop a focus on material conditions and teachers, and to examine the curriculum and texts in use in government and private schools for ELT;
- (d) to continue observations of Nepali schools and teachers;
- (e) to expand the number of interviews of personnel involved in initial education in Nepal.

These aims involved the collection of data from government and private school teachers, government school principals, private school principals, officials of the BPEP, the Vice Chairman of the National Education Commission,<sup>23</sup> members of PABSON, and long term missionaries from the United Mission to Nepal (UMN). The data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted in English - sometimes with the aid of an interpreter - written questionnaires (cf. Appendix A, p. 291), and personal observations.

The specific objectives of Phase Two were to:

- (a) ascertain the amount of planning done and the type of problems experienced by, Nepali government and private school teachers. The teachers interviewed and the government schools observed were divided into those with INGO, multilateral or other external assistance, and those reliant on government assistance alone;
- (b) collect additional data from government school teachers using questionnaires, interviews and observation (see [1] above);
- (c) collect data from private school teachers using the same questionnaires, interviews and observations as were given to government school teachers.

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<sup>23</sup>Dr Uprety was first interviewed in 1992 and again in Feb. 1994. Dr Trailokya Nath Uprety is a former V.C. of TU and Ambassador (retired).

- (d) have semi-structured interviews with officials of the MOEC/SW both as arranged and as the opportunity presented;
- (e) interview those involved in the development of plans for Nepali education both in Nepal and at United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in Bangkok;
- (f) make additional descriptive observations of the physical conditions of Nepali government and private schools;
- (g) interview those involved in curriculum and materials development at the government centre at Sanothimi in Kathmandu Valley;
- (h) obtain copies of curriculum and texts and ascertain the manner in which these materials were used by teachers;
- (i) obtain copies of textual materials in use in Nepali private schools and assess teacher usage and response;
- (j) collect articles drawn from the Nepali press regarding education;
- (k) obtain research materials (books and documents) not available outside Nepal.

The basic findings at this stage were that teachers in the research area were poorly educated and inadequately trained, and that the texts and curriculum were both inadequate and inappropriately externally influenced. From these findings, a question emerged: What were the deeper processes that may be adversely affecting educational planning and practice in Nepal?

### *Phase 3. January 1, 1994 - February. 23 1994*

This phase involved an extension of the research area to include Trisuli, a short distance north-west of Kathmandu Valley and south of Kathmandu Valley to the Terai region (cf. Map 3, p. 21 above). The broadening of the area took place to facilitate the collection of data regarding teachers and schools in Nepal. At the same time ELT was chosen as a focus for the problems that were associated with the emerging evidence of a disparity between the planning and practice of the goals for the development of initial education in Nepal.

This choice involved more participant observation, which took place mainly during ELT workshops. The data collection involved a number of ELT assessment procedures which, as indicated earlier, are contained in Chapter Eight (cf. Appendix B2, p. 298 below). As part of the assessment procedure, and to facilitate the collection of additional data on the background of teachers, the questionnaires were expanded and rephrased (cf. Appendix B1, p. 293 below).

This phase also involved additional visits to schools and return visits to schools as the opportunity presented. The list of people interviewed was extended to include UNICEF's Regional Adviser for Education, South Asia Region, from the regional office, and education advisers for UNICEF from Nepal's national office; Western and Nepali consultants working in Nepal with the Primary Education Development Project (PEDP) and the Vice Chairman of the National Education Commission 1992 were also interviewed.

### *Phase Four: November 1 - December 14, 1994*

Phase Four involved further interviews with teacher educators, particularly staff of the English language department at Tribhuvan University



(TU). It also involved follow-up interviews with the then Director of the BPEP, the UNICEF Regional Adviser South Asia, curriculum and textbook designers for the new curriculum and texts for the teaching of English in government primary schools, and members of NELTA and PABSON. Return visits were also made to a number of schools (cf. Chapter Five).

Throughout all phases there was an ongoing review of written materials. This was used to assist the understanding of the data collected during fieldtrips.

As previously indicated, some difficulties occurred during the field research due to budgetary and time constraints as well as the problems associated with undertaking independent research in a developing country like Nepal. These factors have been taken into consideration when drawing conclusions. However, despite the problems, at the very least it can be concluded that the fieldtrip evidence indicates that, in the schools visited and amongst the teachers questioned, there appeared to be a considerable disparity between the planning goals for the development of initial education in Nepal and the practice of those goals. As argued in Chapters Seven and Eight, this disparity appears to have had a detrimental impact on the teaching of English. To understand how the disparity came about, it is necessary to examine the historical and social background to the development of education in Nepal. This commences in Chapter Two, which forms a basis for ongoing discussion throughout the thesis.

## Historical Timeline of Nepal as Related to Kathmandu Valley

<b>Prehistory</b>		<p>This period is shrouded in myth and legend. These suggest possible Chinese influence and that Kathmandu Valley was once a lake.</p> <p>A fossil-tooth has been found in Kathmandu Valley, and it is believed to be 1,000,000 years old. There is evidence of Aboriginal tribes in Nepal in Nepal during this period. Evidence of the Nepa/Gopala (herdsmen) appear towards the end of this period.</p>
<b>Ancient History</b>	1000BCE	Evidence of people of Tibeto/Burmese origin (Kirats/Kirantis)
	900BCE-800BCE	Evidence of people of Indo-Aryan origin (Khas)
	200BCE	Asoka visits Nepal. Hindu and Buddhist preachers follow his visit and commence preaching and teaching.
<b>Beginning of the Common Era</b>		<p>Nepal consisted of a number of princely states</p> <p>Lichchavi dynasty 5 caste hierarchy indicated</p>
<b>Medieval Period</b>	1099	Lichchavi dynasty begins to fragment
		Buddhist culture and Magyar influence becomes evident
<b>14<sup>th</sup> century</b>	1320	A reign of terror is believed to have taken place under the reign of the Mallas, resulting in book-burning and temple destruction.
		64 caste hierarchy
		During the Moslem invasion of India, many Indians moved north to Nepal. Mallas continue to be dominant.
<b>Late 'Medieval' 18<sup>th</sup> century</b>	1737	An invasion by Gorka state begins to unify Kathmandu Valley and surrounding ststes and Nepal gradually becomes a unified nation.
	1846	A treaty is made with the British East India Company and Nepali Prime Ministers of the Rana caste assume dominance over the Nepali king
<b>Twentieth Century</b>	1938	A major earthquake takes place in Kathmandu Valley
<b>Modern History</b>	1950-51	The Rana era was overthrown by revolution. Nepal becomes open to the West. King Tribhuvan promotes the Constitutional Monarchy.

# Historical Timeline of Nepal as Related to Kathmandu Valley

1960	His son, King Mahendra, dissolves the government, and sets up a national system of panchayat democracy with himself as the final source of power.
1972	King Birendra ascends the throne
1990	Civil uprising Constitutional monarchy returned with elected parliament.
1995-97	Democracy continues, but successive changes of government indicate political instability.

## Timeline of Educational Development: Nepal

PERIOD OF EDUCATIONAL TRANSITION	ENCULT- URATION and Informal spread of information <b>250 BCE</b>	Religious enculturation. Priests follow Asoka. Hindu and Buddhist tuition commences. Hindu Sanskrit schools for males only, limited to high castes.  Malla kings did not place restrictions on who could attend school (males only). In theory untouchables were eligible.
	<b>1382 CE</b>	
PERIOD OF MODERN EDUCATION	<b>1846 CE</b>	British East India Company Treaty  Selected Nepali youth chosen for British army, educated to Y8. After retirement these youths commenced tutoring in villages.
	<b>1853</b>	Durbur High School established in palace grounds
	<b>1901</b>	Dev Shamsher Rana establishes vernacular schools (150 approx.).
	<b>1903</b>	Vernacular schools closed by Chamsher Rana. Select group of Nepali men sent to Japan, India and Britain to study.
	<b>1904</b>	Civil code schools established.
	<b>1912</b>	Nepali Basha Prakashini Samiti published Chandrika (Nepali Grammar).
	<b>1918</b>	Tri Chandra Tertiary College established and affiliated with Patna University, India. Limited number of primary and secondary schools were established for upper caste males.
	<b>1933</b>	SLC Examination Board established.
	<b>1938</b>	Education code promulgated.

## Timeline of Educational Development: Nepal

PERIOD OF MODERN EDUCATION	1940	Syllabus for first five years of primary school established. Also some schools established on Ghandian pattern for basic education.
	1947	Padma Kanya school for girls established..
PERIOD OF RAPID EXPANSION COMMENCES 1951-70	1950	Schools established by popular initiative.
	1952	National Board of Education established. Education recognised as a right of all people.
	1953	Padma Kanya College for girls established and the National Education Planning Commission established.
	1953	Establishment of educational structure with emphasis on universal primary education and establishment of university.
	1959	Tribhuvan University and institutions of Liberal Arts, Science and some professional colleges were established.  Secondary - high and middle, multipurpose high schools established. Primary classes 1-5 established. Vocational ed. included in Y3-Y5
	1961	All-round National Education Commission (ANEC) moved to eliminate English language from the Primary School curriculum. Community backlash prevented this move.
	1960-62	Rapid expansion of adult education and teacher education
	1970	Vocational ed. introduced at selected high schools. Free and compulsory primary ed. in selected districts. Govt. unable to meet salary costs.

## Timeline of Educational Development: Nepal

PERIOD OF PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (1971-92)	1971	National Education Systems Plan (NESP) commences. Infrastructure and financing of education reorganized (FOURTH PLAN). Primary education to Y3 only.
	1976	FIFTH PLAN restores primary education to Y1-5.
	1979	Teacher training no longer compulsory to be employed as a teacher.
	1980-85	SIXTH PLAN. Expansion of adult literacy, vocational ed. and trade schools.
	1981	Education for Rural Development Program commenced in the Seti Zone
	1984	Primary Education Project (PEP) commenced in six districts.
	1985	SEVENTH PLAN introduced.
	1988	Basic needs fulfilment project (BNFP) established to give all teachers 150 hrs IST. Aim for all children aged 6-10 to enrol in school. Private school policy discussed. Career structure for teachers discussed. Policy to encourage girls to attend school implemented.
	1992	National Education Commission (NEC) introduces EIGHTH PLAN.

## Chapter Two

### Initial Education in Nepal, BCE-1950

#### Introduction

This chapter explores the context within which the modernisation and development of education has had to take place from Before the Common Era<sup>1</sup> (BCE) until 1950. The period BCE-1950 covers the stages of development designated by Vir (1988, 28) as 'the period of traditional education prior to 1846', and 'modern education 1846-1950'. Drawing on the work of Vir (1988), Bista (1991) and Stiller (1993), it will be shown that during these two stages of educational development the State began to play an increasing role in the control of initial education, an area which was originally the province of the extended family and religious institutions.

The chapter will show how foreign influence on Nepal was limited until HMGN signed a treaty with the British Government in India in 1846. This treaty involved the provision of Nepali youth for service in the British army, where they obtained formal education to Y8, which on retirement they were able to share with their own villagers. The treaty ensured additional contact with the British in India and indicated a desire within Rana ranks to emulate some British ways. A result of this emulation was the development of a British style school in Kathmandu in 1853/4, which in turn resulted in the gradual exposure of Nepalis to British educational thinking and practice in relation to curriculum, texts, methodology and English language teaching.

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<sup>1</sup>This term has replaced B.C. as it more accurately reflects the findings of modern research, Christ's birth having most likely occurred around 6 or 7 BCE. It is also more appropriate in dealing with a non-Christian culture.



## Initial Education in Nepal, BCE-1950

### Traditional Education

Prior to 1846, education consisted of a widely dispersed enculturation process, based on relationships and imitative skills transmission with the extended family performing the role of the major educator. To this day, the process remains an influence on the Nepali educational sector. Other informal methods of knowledge transmission during this early period included the information spread by porters who carried supplies to isolated villages along ancient trails,<sup>2</sup> and the mingling of people along the borders. According to Vir, this system of informal knowledge transmission appears to have been the norm until after the visit of Asoka<sup>3</sup> to Nepal in 250 BCE (Vir 1988, 27).

After Asoka's visit, formal instruction for high-placed males was commenced by Hindu and Buddhist preachers, from which time, according to Vir:

The early history of the educational system in Nepal [was] characterized by a strong religious bias. The religious bias on the system of education may be seen in the impact of the Hindu religion on the one hand and of the Buddhist philosophy on the other. Accordingly, there existed, side by side, two systems of education, known as the Sanskrit schools ... and the *gompas*. It is apparent from a review of these two systems of education in Nepali society that it was not vocational but formal (1988, 24).

Numerous references to these institutions are found in the Upanishads and Brahmanic literature. It is suggested that in these ancient times many assemblies of renowned scholars, who were specialists in different branches of learning, acted as gurus or holy teachers (Singal 1972, 33-234, 295-296;

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<sup>2</sup> However this mobility, dependent on often poorly maintained swing bridges, on foot trails, over deep ravines, was a fragile link with the world beyond the village. To this day considerable courage and dexterity are required to traverse bridges in disrepair. In December 1991, my friend chose to walk eight extra mountainous miles and waded through rivers rather than recross a broken bridge she had earlier been forced to use on her way to visit the hospital at Am Pipal.

<sup>3</sup> Asoka (273 - 232BCE) was an Indian Hindu emperor, who exercised power over most of the Indian sub-continent. He was renowned for his tolerance.

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Vir 1988, 29; Bista 1991, 116). Bista believes that the role of guru was often assumed by a boy's father (1991, 117). According to Bista, as a number of institutions developed, education followed first the Hindu model, oriented towards the one to one relationship of male teacher (guru) and male pupil (shishya), then later Sanskrit Pathsalas (district places of learning) commenced. Instruction was offered only to male Brahmin and Rana children (117). It may be the case that the mode of learning adopted in Nepal at this time, which took the form of memorisation and repetition of Sanskrit texts, set the basic style of knowledge transmission which became the norm in the formal places of learning. As will be seen in later chapters, this mode of learning still dominates in 1990.

According to Bista, around the twelfth century a change took place in the educative process amongst the higher castes. The transmission of practical knowledge began to be replaced by the teaching of ritual, prayer and the reading of religious texts (Bista 1991, 118). Vir indicates Buddhist schools also existed throughout this period (1988, 28). Originally intended for the training of monks, the Buddhist gompas and bihars<sup>4</sup> emphasised the practice of ritual and meditation. Vir suggests that, when the Buddhist schools were opened to all males, an anomaly was created as the Sanskrit schools were restricted to imparting education to high caste Hindu males only (29). Bista has noted a further difference between the Buddhist and Hindu schools: the latter were single teacher schools with disciplines based mainly on the Vedas and other Hindu classics which required a high proficiency in Sanskrit, whereas the gompas and bihars were corporate institutions, providing a more liberal education (1991, 118).

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<sup>4</sup>A bihar is a monastery distinguished by having a sanctuary which contains the Bhudda Rupa. *A Popular History of Bhuddism*. New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, p 265

## **Initial Education in Nepal, BCE-1950**

Although the presence of the Hindu caste system became dominant with the rise of the Mallas in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, Vir claims the Malla kings did not place any restriction, other than gender, on who should have access to education (1988, 29). He points out that while, in theory, this allowed for the education of some untouchables, in reality access to education was constrained by gender and caste (29), and was also governed by poverty and proximity to a place of learning. These limitations played a large part in ensuring that informal learning remained the main source of knowledge transmission for the masses until access to education was liberalised in the 1950s.

It is likely that, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the strong religious bias of the curriculum of Nepali Sanskrit schools reinforced the traditional values and life styles of the Nepali people. Religion and tradition were further reinforced when Sanskrit schools diversified their roles to include primary schools, secondary schools and a college,<sup>5</sup> as all continued to emphasise training in, and interpretation of, the Sanskrit manuscripts.<sup>6</sup>

From around the fourteenth century Nepal admitted only a very few foreign visitors (for trade, diplomatic and political reasons). Amongst those accepted were a small number of British Residents<sup>7</sup> who were admitted during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This policy of isolation continued until 1950/51. Despite the fact that the Residents were confined mainly to the Kathmandu Valley, Wood (1977, 153) and Stiller indicate that they had considerable influence (1993, 62-74), and their presence appears to have contributed indirectly to a change in the formal

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<sup>5</sup>There appears to have been only one college in Nepal at this time.

<sup>6</sup>Many Nepali documents were recorded in Sanskrit until the 1980s.

<sup>7</sup>This was an officially designated diplomatic position.

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education system. Stiller claims that the commencement of Durbur school during 1853/4, in the grounds of the Rana palace in Kathmandu, resulted from a visit to Europe and England by Jung Bahadur Rana in 1852 (162). This claim is supported by Vir, who adds that the school was an English medium school specifically for Rana children (1988, 32). Vir (32) and Stiller (1993, 162) suggest that the school was commenced because the Ranas felt access to an English education would benefit their own elite position in Nepal at this time by providing them with access to knowledge of English language and Western ways. There is no doubt that the establishment of the Durbur School effectively signalled the beginning of a new approach to education in Nepal and commenced a period of development designated by Vir as 'the Modern Era of education in Nepal' (1988, 29).

### **Modern Education, 1846-1950**

During the era of 'Modern Education' (Vir 1988, 29), a small number of Nepalis were exposed to life outside their national borders. This happened as a result of three factors. The first was the agreement in 1846 between the British in India and the Nepali government to allow the recruitment of Nepali youth, for what became known as the Gurkha regiment of the British Army, which involved their being educated to Y8 equivalent. After twenty years service in the British Army, these soldiers were retired with a pension and Wood claims this allowed Nepalis to gain some formal teaching, as many retired Gurkhas tutored the youth of their village (1977, 151). The second factor is that, as a consequence of the presence of British Residents in Kathmandu Valley, a regard for British ways grew up amongst the rulers and elite groups in Nepal, some of whom travelled to England and Europe (Stiller 1993, 104). The third factor was the establishment of Durbur

## **Initial Education in Nepal, BCE-1950**

School in 1853/4, which marked the shift away from education dominated by religion. The choice of English as the medium of instruction suggests that even though Nepal was never a British or European colony, it was still influenced by what Said labels 'Orientalist philosophy' which assumes the superiority of the Occident over the Orient (cf. pp. 7 and 15 above).

Durbur school was run on British lines, and staffed by British and Indian teachers. It was established for Rana children and members of the elite and was a major innovation for Nepal. Despite its relatively small area of initial impact and its elite clientele, the Euro-Indian influence came to constitute a power structure, which became the model upon which the Nepali government planners based their recommendations in 1952, when Nepal sought to modernise and formalise its education system (Wood 1977, 155). Although the state's incursion into education in 1853 was significant, its influence and interest was slow to expand. It would appear that the Ranas were attracted to English medium instruction partly because it enabled their children to maintain their superiority, so that this elite group felt no necessity to broaden accessibility to education beyond their own cohort.

It was not until 1901 that the State's involvement was strengthened by educational innovations made by Prime Minister Dev Shamsheer Rana who, Stiller claims, introduced measures which were four years ahead of similar schools started in Bengal in 1905. Stiller notes that these few basic schools started by Dev, which survived in Nepal, were converted to the government system in the 1950s (1993, 136).

In 1905 Dev established between twenty and fifty vernacular schools in Kathmandu Valley and approximately 100 outside the Valley. Teachers were appointed at a ratio of one to fifty pupils. The schools had no syllabus and no text-books beyond those hastily improvised by the educated few

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sharing their knowledge. Although small in number, and limited to males, these schools signified a move away from religious domination of curriculum, texts and teachers. They demonstrated a broadening view regarding access to education: Dev's opting for vernacular schools was a departure from the common belief amongst his peers that the country needed Western expertise, not basic localised education. Stiller suggests this humanitarian action constituted a threat to the status quo and was a major reason for Dev's short time in power (Stiller 1993, 136).

According to Stiller, the Nepali belief that Western expertise was needed is evidence of pro-western influence gaining strength amongst the ruling elite at the beginning of the twentieth century (1993, 136). He concurs with Vir's view that the Nepali elite wished to control what type of education was available and who had access to it in order to secure their own position. Vir claims that by restricting the Western style education to their own elite group the Ranas believed they could maintain the status quo and strengthen their own power base (1988, 33). In so doing the Ranas were also tacitly acknowledging that they believed a Western style of education was better than anything their own culture could offer.

Aryal (1970, 2) and Stiller (1993, 138) have argued that, while the State's role in educational policy was continued by Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher Rana, it was even more pro-Western. Chandra Shamsher deferred to the elite, who believed that foreign expertise was essential for Nepal's development, by sending small groups of elite Nepalis out of the country to obtain access to foreign knowledge. He closed the vernacular schools, suggesting a desire to maintain an exclusive educational system as the province of the higher castes and the elite. These policy changes by Chandra Shamsher ensured the protection of the status quo.

## Initial Education in Nepal, BCE-1950

Subedi suggests that the desire for the preservation of Rana status through the control of education was confirmed in 1905 by the establishment of a Civil Code School. This school conducted examinations known as two pass, four pass, six pass, eleven pass and fourteen pass. These standards then became a prerequisite for obtaining a government job at a relevant level (1993, 38). The school's standards ensured the best occupations and life styles for the higher castes; a move commensurate with the Hindu belief that only the lower castes should soil their hands.

Vir claims Chandra Shamsher Rana was compelled to modify his educational policy during 1912 because the British declared that all recruits to the British army should have basic literacy and numeracy skills before being accepted. This made it necessary to provide some schools for lower caste males in areas where Nepalis were likely to be recruited for the Gurkha regiment. According to Vir, potential soldiers were the first common people to gain regular access to education in Nepal (1988, 34). In addition, a committee known as the Nepali Bhasha Prakashini Samiti was established to publish Nepali language books, and they produced *Chandrika*, a book of Nepali grammar. These developments indicate two seemingly disparate desires: first, that the ruling junta was responding to the need to establish a common national language; and, second, that there was a desire to remain in favour with the British in India. Although these developments had different motivations, they were both instrumental in providing some access to education for the general public.

Vir (1988, 34) also indicates that during this period some families living on the Terai<sup>8</sup> brought teachers from India to teach children at home.

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<sup>8</sup>In topographical terms Nepal is commonly divided into three main regions: the Terai, a low swampy area near the Indian border, the middle hills, which includes Kathmandu and Pokhara Valleys; and the mountains (Himalayas and Annapurnas) near the northern border (cf. Map 2, p. iv ).



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Although affecting only the well-off, it indicates both a growing desire for education in Nepal, and that the Ranas had failed to monopolise completely access to, and the content of, education.

Later, in 1918, when there was still only one high school in the whole of Nepal, the government established the country's first tertiary institution, Tri Chandra College (Vir 1988, 34). Tri Chandra College was affiliated first with Calcutta University and later Patna University. Vir claims that it was hoped that the college's establishment would keep Nepali youth in the country and control exposure to what was, at the time, believed to be superior Western ideas and technology (1988, 34). This suggests there could have been an ongoing tension in Nepal regarding Western influence and it could be interpreted as 'orientalist resistance' referred to by Said in his treatise on the effects of colonialism in developing countries (1994, xii). Conversely, as Vir argues, it could also be said that the college was started to enable Chandra Shamsher Rana to impress the British with his progressive ways.

According to Subedi (1993, 38), in 1933 the SLC Examination Board was established and, following this, in 1934, a two year degree course was introduced into Tri Chandra college. Later, when the Education Code was promulgated by the government in 1938, it laid down rules regarding the establishment of schools (APEID 1984, 1). The code was followed in the 1940s by the publication of the syllabus for the first five grades of primary school. This syllabus included Nepali, English (not compulsory for the first two grades), arithmetic, history, geography, Sanskrit and drawing. Although the government's moves during this period indicate some expansion of schools and curriculum, Subedi (1993, 38) notes that it was not until 1947 that Padma Kanya School for girls was started .

## **Initial Education in Nepal, BCE-1950**

UNESCO literature suggests that, during the 1940s, some schools developed in response to local influences and initiative as attempts were made to return to basic schools along the lines of Dev Shamsheer Rana's model of 1901/5 and Gandhi's pattern for basic education (APEID 1984, 2). It is evident that the State's domination of the control of education had become well established by the late 1940s, but Vir asserts that there was a great deal of pressure for educational and other reforms, building within and outside Nepal, after WW II (1988, 35). It is likely that this came from the return of the Gurkha soldiers after demobilisation, the cumulative increase in the numbers of Nepalis having access to education within and outside Nepal, and the gaining of independence in India in 1947.

The independence movement in India had an influence on Nepalis within and outside Nepal (several Nepalis resided in India as political refugees). Stiller indicates that Nepalis did not escape the effects of Orientalism despite Nepal never having been subjected to any direct European or British colonisation (1993, *passim*). As noted earlier, like the British Residents, the British in India had an indirect influence, mainly experienced on the Terai and through the Nepalis and Gurkhas educated in Indian colleges and universities. Members of the Nepali elite also travelled in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In all these ways, Nepalis formed an ambivalent attitude towards things European. On the one hand, the Ranas maintained the isolationist approach that had been prevalent in Nepal since the fourteenth century; on the other, they personally admired and copied things European. The Ranas were able to utilise the aspects of Western culture they considered superior to their own culture in the apparent belief that 'superior' ideas would assist them to consolidate their position to rule. This attitude suggests that from the mid-nineteenth century Nepal showed signs of

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‘European culture gaining in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate or underground self’ (Said 1978, 3). At the same time, it would appear that the Ranas followed British patterns simply to secure their own dominance.

As a consequence, according to Vir, despite the government-instigated expansion of educational institutions and curriculum, religious influence did not cease with the state’s increased involvement, and ‘until the 1950s [access to] education [in Nepal] ... remained the privilege of high priests, aristocrats, the ruling stratum, and those involved in commercial transactions’ (1988, 53). As belonging to a privileged elite in Nepali society depended largely on caste, itself a product of religious beliefs, historically the people in power were those who belonged to families which had traditionally received education, either from Brahmin priests or highly educated foreigners. As Vir has argued, ‘The relationship between polity and education was not uni-dimensional. It was two-way traffic’ (1), and historically Nepal’s ‘educational system remained closely associated with the traditional system’ (24). Thus it would appear that despite the increasing pro-Western sentiment, until the 1950s the Nepali education system remained heavily affected by historical and socio-cultural factors, both of which were interwoven with religious tradition with state control.

H. and M. Reed observed that even after the overthrow of the Ranas in 1950 this interweaving of tradition and religion continued:

Religion and learning are closely interrelated in Hindu traditions. Indeed, the Brahmins have had tremendous influence in education in Nepal - directly on religious and indirectly on secular instruction ... Brahmins exercise considerable control both religiously and socially. The Brahmin supports the educational status quo, and is in turn strengthened by this status quo (1968, 108).

## Initial Education in Nepal, BCE-1950

Their conclusion in the late sixties identifies Nepali education as a conservative cultural institution, which had resisted opportunities to change (1968, 108).

Also noting this resistance to change, Bista reflected upon the impact of socio-cultural factors in Nepal's development process. Noting the restraint on development created by a social system based on caste and the pervasive influence of fatalism, he concluded that fatalism was an insidious inhibitor of the development process (1991, *passim*). His premise is supported by Epstein's 1972 study of an analogous situation, the modernisation process in Wangala, a South Indian village (136). Like Nepal, Wangala also had a caste hierarchical structure sanctioned by Karma and entrenched cultural patterns. Epstein's evidence suggested that this type of culture was slow to accept change, and then when change did occur, it did not progress beyond a certain level due to the co-dependency network that exists within a caste system. Epstein concluded that if the rules of behaviour adhered to in the caste system were broken down too rapidly in the transition from a feudal society to a modernised one, it threatened to throw the society into economic chaos. While highlighting co-dependency within the caste system, Epstein's study does not state who receives the greatest benefits in a system of stratification and interdependency. However, he does highlight the fact that in a caste society change takes place only to the extent that it serves a need and does not threaten the existing lifestyle. In fact Epstein highlights the mendicant characteristics of a caste society.<sup>9</sup>

Epstein's study supports another observation made by H. and M. Reed while studying Nepali education in 1968:

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<sup>9</sup>The term 'mendicant' is used here in the sense that the Franciscan friars obtained alms only to the level required to sustain their pattern of life.

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Nepal's religions in the final analysis, are meaningful to the people, enriching their lives incalculably. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Animism cannot be casually thrust aside for in them lie much of the colour and strength of Nepalese culture. *While the influences of religion cannot be ignored in planning Nepal's development, neither is it productive to confront them head-on. They must be taken into account when laying out strategy.* (1968, 123) (Italics mine)

They suggest that, given the cohesive value of Nepal's religions and culture, consideration of ways of working within the constraints of Nepal's religious and cultural system when modifying education has been largely ignored by Nepali planners and Western developers. This suggests that the implementation of educational programs in Nepal has been impeded by cultural tensions.

The difficulties Nepal has had developing a system of technical education as part of the structure of the formal education system would also seem to demonstrate the continuing strength of caste and social resistance. In the period between 1950 and 1992 no strategies to address significant cultural restraints were included in the planning of technical education. For instance, in 1970 the planning paid no attention to the need for working within caste designations relating to occupations as they affected vocational and technical education. Nor were strategies to deal with the implications stemming from the caste system included in the National Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971. The NESP included several aims which emphasised vocational training and the development of technical skills. These 1971 recommendations were followed by the Fifth (1976) and Sixth Plans (1980), which aimed at the expansion of technical campuses and the establishment of trade schools. That these plans all met with limited success is suggestive

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of the negative impact, amongst other factors, of Nepal's social and caste attitudes. Bista also claims that attitudes from within the society, combined with the belief that the purpose of education is to ensure that you do not have to work, contribute to Nepal's lack of skilled teachers in the area of technical education (1991, 88). It must be added that the problem of the development of technical education was also due to a lack of finance to purchase and maintain equipment needed in technical schools, along with a lack of skilled instructors.

Despite the continued lack of success specifically in planning for developing technical skills, the caste system's role in this remains unexplored. Is it that the leaders of Nepali society are not serious about general development of technical skills, as they believe that they have little place or status in the light of their religious traditions? Planning, without appropriate implementation procedures, seems to reflect Nepal's attempt to incorporate educational arrangements suitable for predominantly casteless societies without seriously evaluating their suitability to Nepali society. The at times indiscriminate incorporation of such ideas has caused confusion and difficulty in the development of initial education in Nepal. Nepal continues to reflect Thomas's claim that developing countries in general need to trial and monitor educational innovations according to 'the culture, social structure, politics and economy of each country concerned' (1971, 79). The lack of, and need for, such testing in Nepal will be alluded to throughout this thesis.

It must be said that caste societies are not alone in rejecting low level technical education as worthwhile. It took many generations before Western societies began to see technical education as being of equal importance to advanced, specialised education and professional work. Historically, developed societies have overlooked the importance of technical skills, but,

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as Bista argues, in Nepal further difficulties are encountered by those who have acquired low and middle technical skills, particularly when they endeavour to change the perceptions and entrenched habits within their respective fields (1991, 88). Although some Nepalis acquire technical skills, they frequently use their qualification to obtain work outside the technical area, preferably in an administrative position.

Bista believes that resistance to change is understandable in a community emerging from historic and geographic isolation (1991, 1). Technical expertise was, and is, only one area in which Nepal lacked skills and structure. Vir argues that originally the country's problems in adapting to change were compounded by the lack of a developed infrastructure and of personnel trained to implement initial education (1988, 36).

### Conclusion

As indicated, several factors influenced the development of initial education in Nepal prior to 1950. For centuries, major influences were the Hindu religion and the Buddhist philosophy which ensured that education, including the enculturation process, was caste and gender bound. In the classroom, instruction was based on memorisation and repetition. Although state control of initial education has been relatively recent in Nepal, the state itself was both sustained by, and is a supporter of, such religious beliefs, with the result that religious influence upon educational development, although more subtle, has not ceased.

After the state emerged as the main provider of education, the development process was uneven, partly due to internal political pressure from the Ranas who desired to maintain the status quo. Through control of educational planning the Ranas:

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- (a) influenced who had access to ideas from outside the country;
- (b) limited the number and types of schools established;
- (c) did little to ensure consistent development of schools and teachers;
- (d) did little to promote and coordinate the development of an infrastructure for education; and
- (e) failed to promote the training of skilled personnel to run and maintain such a structure.

This control and suppression of educational development by the state enabled the ruling elite to maintain caste values and economic and gender inequalities. Despite the state's attempt to control access to content of education, towards the end of the era designated by Vir as 'the period of modernisation of education 1846-1950' (1988, 29), pressure mounted for greater access to education and external knowledge. As a result, when the Rana government was overthrown in 1950, the position confronting the development planners of initial education in Nepal was one of a small, diverse and unstructured system, consisting in part of English medium schools and vernacular language schools.

Secondary sources suggest a long established pattern of behaviour in Nepal of incorporating new ideas (in particular ideas from Western sources) as long as the status quo is not threatened. Epstein's 1972 study in South India suggests that this pattern of behaviour is characteristic of caste societies. The first government intervention into education was to set up an English medium school limited to the elite, and later this was followed with the establishment of vernacular schools, similar to the British colonial model. Such an acceptance of British influence on the medium and content of initial education in Nepal might be interpreted, following Said, as



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Orientalist complicity. However, education was subjected to many internal political pressures and controls, which cannot be wholly explained by Orientalism or Orientalist resistance to the Occident (Said, 1978, xii). It would appear in Nepal that any such pressure may have been compounded by religious and social constraints which serve to continue the existing interdependent life-style.

The conclusions to be drawn from the literature surveyed in this chapter are that the factors affecting Nepali education until 1950 were largely internal and multi-faceted. As the state's influence increased, religious influence did not cease. The external influences emerged slowly and coincided with the state's growing involvement. The factors which influenced the choice of goals for the modernisation of education in Nepal between 1950-1971, and Nepal's response to these influences, will be considered in the next chapter, where it will be shown how the English medium schools and vernacular schools laid the foundation for the dual system of Government-run Nepali language schools and privately managed English medium schools.

### Foreign Aid and Development of Initial Education: 1950-1970

#### Introduction

The factors influencing the development of initial education in Nepal prior to 1950, as outlined in the previous chapter, were largely internal (socio-cultural, religious, and political), with some external influence exerted by the British in India which stimulated Orientalist overtones. This chapter will demonstrate that historic, religious, socio-cultural, political and economic factors along with geographic, topographic factors continued to influence the selection and implementation of goals for the development of initial education in Nepal after this date. However, as this chapter argues, after 1950 the introduction of global financing and international theories regarding development of education also had major impacts (Pigg 1993, 45; N. R. Shrestha 1993, 5; Stiller 1993, epilogue; Bista 1991, passim; Khadka<sup>1</sup> 1991, 135 ; Vir 1988, 24; H. and M. Reed 1968).

#### Prelude to Development

After the 1950 revolution Nepal found itself in a situation later described by Weiler as characteristic of 'dependent countries':

Dependent countries face the awkward choice of either cutting themselves loose from the international network on which they depend - at the expense of great and perhaps fatal losses in resources - or in planning their development in compliance with the interests and aspirations of the dominant partners in this international power structure. However that decision is made, it would be unrealistic to conceive of the task of planning the development and reform of

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<sup>1</sup>Narayan Khadka is a S. E. Asian economist of renown. His book *Foreign Aid, Poverty and Stagnation in Nepal* is referred to by foreign embassies in South and S. E. Asia.

education in dependent countries without the full awareness of this powerful conditioning element (1982, 114).

In Nepal, however, additional factors were at work; the socio-cultural structure which made the dependency and its results, as described by Weiler, more complex. After the revolution in 1950, the pressure for development gained momentum, which, as Khadka (1991, 136) and Pigg (1993, 45) argue, was part of an 'overt aim to modernise the country'. N. R. Shrestha (1993, 5) claims this overt aim was arrived at because sections of the Nepali community, especially the elite, had been psychologically colonised by their experiences of the British in India. N. R. Shrestha suggests this group from the Nepali elite wanted the material gains of *bikas* [development] specifically to improve their own position (5), while Pigg argues that 'Nepal's newly defined project of modernisation tapped directly into the politics of foreign aid' (1993, 45), this aid was then misused to legitimise the expansion of state power under the panchyat value system (49).

Although Khadka (1991), Pigg (1993) and N. R. Shrestha (1993) explain Nepal's desire for modernisation from different perspectives, all agree that in 1951 the Nepali Government embarked on a program of development in accordance with perceived economic necessity. Khadka argues that because of its agrarian economy, difficult topography, lack of technological skills and lack of capital, successive Nepali governments have had to rely on developed countries for technical assistance and money to fulfil the nation's development needs (136); in Khadka's and Bista's view Nepal is now an aid-dependent nation.<sup>2</sup> Their claim implies that Nepal's development would be vulnerable to international influences which Weiler suggests affect

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<sup>2</sup>See Andre Gunder Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution*. New York, Monthly Review Press, 1969.

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developing nations which are 'tied to, and dependent upon, an international network of economic wealth and political power over which they have little or no control'. In these countries:

Patterns of trade, investment, and profit are set and controlled by the richer industrialised countries of Western Europe and North America, and ... the priorities ... are determined by decisions that are not taken by the country itself (1982, 116).

At the same time, Nepal's development programs appear to have been based on the UNESCO World War II paradigm which advocated that 'improved health, education, agriculture and communications would enable a traditional or less advanced society to rapidly progress.' Between 1950-70 this paradigm, which claimed 'formal education made a significant contribution to the modernisation process' (Harbison and Myers 1964), was strongly influenced by modernisation theories, as advocated by Rostow (1960) in his 'Stages of Economic Growth' (in Lewellen 1995, 55). Although humanitarian views, such as those expressed by Rusk in 1962, linking education with economic redistribution and equality, encouraged a widening of the narrowly based economic paradigm of the 1950s, the view did not find favour in Nepal. In fact Rusk's humanitarian view was largely ignored in developing countries. In particular, Coombs, in a major policy statement, reinforced the economic approach by advocating that schools were primarily places to develop vocational skills and that the economy and the schools should be aligned (1968, 34).

In contrast, Freire claims that the assumption that education should contribute to economic development, promoted a 'banking concept' philosophy of education (Freire 1970, 58-66 in Hill 1982, 2), which Hill

suggests relegates people to the realm of 'human capital' (1986, 2). Freire's claim that 'Education is not neutral ... [but] is either for domestication or for liberation' (in Hill 1982, 2), tacitly supports Carnoy's observation that when choices were made by the elite in developing countries, formal education was often an instrument used to maintain their power (1976, 245). This in turn translates into a new form of colonial dependency (1976: *passim*). N. R. Shrestha (1993, 5) persuasively claims this was the case in Nepal.

Nepal's choice to focus on preparing the lower classes for the workforce - when considered in the framework of the arguments of Bista (1991) regarding the influence of a fatalistic view towards the retention of the existing order, and N. R. Shrestha's claim that the elite wanted development to improve their own position - is not surprising, as this perpetuated the status quo: it confirmed the fatalistic view of one's place in society being fixed. Although its poor economic status placed it in the situation of dependency, its position as a symbolic buffer zone between India and China allowed Nepal to maintain a stance of political neutrality and enabled the nation to attract aid from a number of sources.

### Foreign Aid Donors

Khadka (1991, 137) and Pigg (1993, 47) state that after the 1950 revolution the United States and India were the most important sources of aid to Nepal. After 1951 Nepal became one of the recipients of the US Point Four Agreement introduced in 1949, as a response to the Cold War (Khadka 1991, 137). During the early 1950s US aid to Nepal was largely technical and village-based, but by the mid 1950s aid had expanded to include economic support for the development of transport and industry.

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Motivated by a perceived need for defence against China, Indian aid centred on the development of transport and communication systems in Nepal (Khadka 1991, 152). Khadka notes an exception to this occurred in 1960 when India assisted with the development of TU (159). In the context of Rostow's stages of growth theory, the focus of Indian aid was also intended to bring Nepal to a 'precondition for take-off' (Lewellen 1995, 56).

In addition to these two main sources of aid, in the late 1950s several other countries, including the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union, Switzerland, New Zealand, Australia and Canada, contributed aid to Nepal. Khadka claims that during this period Nepal had neither a definite coordinated plan nor clear national goals based on the needs of the country, and as a result the aid program was largely piecemeal. Still, as Khadka notes (1991, 174), in the late 1950s, the British government, which had contributed little in direct economic or technical assistance to Nepal until the presence of US and Independent India's aid became noteworthy, decided to assist Nepal with manpower development (and has continued to do so). Other funding nations also overlooked accountability, and Khadka (141) states that by 1962 US economic support to Nepal totalled USD1,121,150 (NRS44,846,000), of which USD234,650 (NRS9,386,000), that is 21.4%, went into educational development. It would appear from the list of donors that the lack of clear goals and accountability of the Nepali government, (Khadka 1991, 161, 178), did not disadvantage Nepal. This further indicates that the argument, advanced by Weiler (1982, 14, cf. pp. 61-2 above) regarding 'awkward choices and compliance being forced on dependent countries in order to attract funding', did not fully apply to Nepal. No doubt Nepal was able to escape rigorous scrutiny because increased funding took place in the Cold War environment, where the agendas of international funding agencies were

politically biased in terms of the east-west axis. As a result, according to Khadka:

From Nepal's point of view the variety of sources, the different forms of aid and its allocations to different sectors of the economy was a positive feature of its success in expanding its international relations ... The poor and underdeveloped economy of Nepal received major technical support from both socialist and capitalist countries (1991, 190).

Khadka argues the real value of monetary aid to Nepal is difficult to estimate, since the aid figures generally available only account for the amount that has passed through government channels. He states that Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) figures do not tally with Nepali government figures because of variations in accounting and fiscal years (1991, 192). However, along with Pigg (1993, 47), he believes it is likely that the amount of foreign aid received by Nepal between 1951 and 1987, excluding technical assistance and a high percentage of international aid spent directly by the donor agencies, was between USD625,000,000 and USD676,872,000 (Khadka 1991, 192).

In addition to the money channelled through the government, multilateral agencies and INGOs have given aid since the early fifties. H. and M. Reed (1968, 129) and Khadka (1991, 190) indicate that this aid created both benefits and problems. In 1968 H. and M. Reed argued that,

although the multiplicity of donors caused inefficiency and some conflict, achievement was pushed far beyond the capacities of the Nepali nation alone, and that the variety of donors provided Nepal with the opportunity to select the best methods and structures from the different features offered' (129).

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Still, Khadka is of the opinion that the large number of donors resulted in 'a number of projects which the recipient was ill-equipped to manage' (1991, 190). This exemplifies Weiler's theory that a dependent country is often unable to accept projects according to its needs (cf. p. 61 above).

Although H. and M. Reed present a more positive view of the influence of aid donors than those of Weiler (1982, 114), Khadka (1991, 190) and N. R. Shrestha (1993, 6), conditions described in Chapter Five of this thesis indicate the diversity of aid on offer was not used to advantage by Nepal (cf. p. 62 above). A reason for this was that inefficiency was caused by numerous uncoordinated programs. A UNICEF evaluation of project impact in Nepal in 1985, by Matheson, confirmed this chronic lack of coordination (131).

Field evidence 1991-95 indicated that the lack of coordination referred to by H. and M. Reed in 1968 was still apparent (129). Twenty years later, Marten Van der Kraan, Field Director of Plan International, Nepal, in an attempt to address the continuing problems of lack of records and duplication of programs, found that, when he called a meeting of INGOs in Nepal in 1988 there was a continuing unwillingness to cooperate between Aid agencies (field interview, Marten Van der Kraan, 1992). According to UNESCO sources, coordination of facilities remained unsatisfactory in 1991, despite some efforts to address the problem (APPEAL 1991, 3). In addition, according to an editorial comment in *The Rising Nepal* in 1994:

intradepartmental duplication and lack of coordination have caused a waste of resources and energies thereby resulting in below target achievements of the plans and projects ... Each government or development agency seems [to be] working independently as if there is no mechanism to control and coordinate their activities (January 18 1994).



This would suggest that a lack of coordination and cooperation existed at government level as well as between development agencies. In fact, throughout the period of research for this study it was found that different sections of the MOEC/SW lacked information about each other's activities (fieldtrips 1991-94). This was not only the case within the MOEC/SW; it was the case with all ministerial departments.

The confusion and lack of coordination was described by Nandan P. Adhikari, a principal of a large government school in Birganj:

Nepal is like the beggar in the tourist market. He holds up his bowl for alms. Tourists from many different nations drop their currency in his bowl but at the end of the day he does not know which currency to use to obtain his needs. He is confused and troubled trying to decide (interview with Nandan P. Adhikari, headmaster Birganj government school, January 1994).

If this attitude was a correct interpretation of the situation, it might be traced to a combination of indecisiveness, reflecting the earlier features of dependency outlined by Weiler (cf. p. 61 above), the acceptance of karmic belief (Bista 1991, *passim*; N. R. Shrestha 1993, 9), the mendicant Brahminic practice of accepting alms to sustain an existing lifestyle, and Macfarlane's belief that Nepal is a periphery of India (1994, 126). Certainly, unrealistic models of educational planning are likely to occur when donors are unable to come to terms with the specific social, political and educational conditions in a given country. H. and M. Reed cite attempts by American advisers (1950-68) to impose US educational patterns, in the form of comprehensive and multipurpose high schools, which proved to be culturally controversial in Nepal (1968, 15).

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N. R. Shrestha suggests that between 1950 and 1970 the major development agencies advocated centralised planning and required 'a country like Nepal to steer away from, or even dismantle, its indigenous system and technologies rather than build on them' (1993, 18). This philosophy of dismantling the old system aligns itself with Coomb's assumption that 'the optimum path of social change for underdeveloped countries is in the historical footsteps of the developed countries, transforming economy, polity and culture to conform with Western 'modern' industrial standards' (in Carnoy 1976, 246). Lewellen indicates Coomb's and Carnoy's attitude - which is Orientalist in nature (Said 1978, 3) - was common amongst the early modernisationists (1995, 56). H. and M. Reed indicate that during 1968 they found 'there was little questioning of the assumption that the patterns of American democracy could be transplanted to cultures with very different traditions' (127), confirming Said's claim that America's approach to the Orient was largely the same as that of the British (1978, 4).

While Wood suggests that in 1952 Orientalist attitudes did not prevent some Nepali planners from seeking an indigenous system of initial education, apart from the enculturation process (cf. p. 45 above), no true indigenous system of initial education dominated. Prior to 1950 educational development was mainly reliant on local initiative, and as a consequence several different types of schools operated in Nepal. As a result of the absence of definitive government leadership prior to 1950 little formal infrastructure for education had been developed. This led to difficulties related to lack of coordination of resources and inconsistency of standards. Prior to 1950-52 schools variously followed the English System, the Basic Education System, the Sanskrit system, the Gompa System, the Madrasa System and the Bhasa Pathashalas - vernacular System (APPEAL 1991, Ch. 1). Amongst these the dominant

systems were the English System and the Bhasa Pathashalas System. Both had commenced during the mid-nineteenth century and were the models experienced by most of the members of the National Education Planning Commission, 1952 (NEPC 1952), which recommended the initial plan.

### The National Planning Commission 1952

The planners set a goal for a single system of vernacular<sup>3</sup> public education financed by the government. While the plan initially gained government and public support, according to Wood, it soon became apparent that the urban elite felt the government program was 'not superior enough' for their children (1977, 157), in that facilities, equipment and teaching standards were considered inadequate.

The initial plan<sup>4</sup>, devised by the NEPC, proposed a curriculum and teaching style which H. and M. Reed (1968), Vir (1988) and N. R. Shrestha (1993) suggest was clearly borrowed from the model imposed on India by the British. Vir rightly claims this model was wholly unrelated to Nepal's national goal of industrialisation and economic development (1988, 43) as it focussed on literacy and numeracy without practical application.

Reflecting on the 1952 choice, Wood in 1995 observed that the plan was more suited to urban than rural areas. He suggests that because Nepal is largely rural the unsuitability of the formal education system has led to a major problem (Wood, telephone interview, April 16 1995). In addition to the plan's unsuitability in rural areas, Vir claims that the 1952 choice has resulted in 'an ambivalent attitude towards education in rural communities to the present day' (1988, 148).

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<sup>3</sup>These schools became Nepali medium later in 1962.

<sup>4</sup>The initial plan precedes the First Plan in 1955 (cf. Chapter One, Introduction, p. 9)

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As a result of the tension between a desire for improved material conditions and the maintenance of the social order, the schools which placed emphasis on English increased more rapidly than the national vernacular schools; English was seen as the measure of a superior formal school education (Wood 1977, 157). Consequently, the initial plan for a single system was soon overtaken by a dual system of private English medium schools and government-funded vernacular schools. The attitude towards preferring English supports N. R. Shrestha's claim that pro-British sentiment had been carried into the post-Rana society (1993, 6). However, Bista believes the desire for the acquisition of English was influenced both by the belief, established during the Rana regime, that English competency was a passport to administrative positions in government, and by the values emanating from a Brahmin-Chetri-Hindu view of the world (1991, 96-100). Bista's view supports a similar claim of H. and M. Reed, who summarised the Hindu view of language as having 'an inherent metaphysical power. Therefore abstract studies, such as language, are more prestigious in the Hindu milieu than physics, and much more so than technical, practical studies' (1968, 111).

The ambivalence of the rural communities and urban poor is, according to H. and M. Reed (1968, 62, 83), Vir (1988, 148) and N. R. Shrestha (1993, 8), exacerbated by the fact that many families are heavily in debt because of the high cost of frequent religious feasts and pujas<sup>5</sup>. The indebtedness leaves them unable to employ sufficient manpower in the fields and the need for child labour arises, which in turn causes problems with regular school attendance. This supports Wood's suggestion that the initial plan provoked a subtle resistance from the Nepali people, who 'wanted

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<sup>5</sup>Hindu prayer ceremonies.

improvements in their material conditions but not at the expense of their entrenched social or religious order' (1977, 155). Similarly, H. and M. Reed claim that, because education works at the heart of the social order, educational innovations are especially prone to resistance, owing to the desire to maintain the status quo. In 1968 they warned that when 'even superficial changes are attempted, the nation's planners should be prepared for repercussions' (1968, 19). While this response suggests a manifestation of Said's Orientalist resistance, (cf. p. 17 above), Bista (1991, *passim*) and N. R. Shrestha (1993, 9) also suggest that there is a strong Brahmanic desire to maintain the status quo in Nepal. Indeed it is most likely that the two elements reinforce each other.

### Initial Planning

The practicalities of the situation facing the NEPC in 1952 were formidable. Wood claims an inventory of schools in existence for the population of 8,500, 000 in 1952 showed:

- (a) fifty gompas<sup>6</sup>;
- (b) a Sanskrit system consisting of a few primary schools, three secondary schools and a college;
- (c) a British system for the Ranas and other elite;
- (d) an increasing number of vernacular schools (about 100) near the Indian border;
- (e) a few 'basic' schools (similar to Ghandi's indigenous schools in India) (1977, 155).

According to UNESCO documents, some Madrasa (Muslim schools) also existed (APPEAL 1991, Ch. 1). There were only one thousand high school

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<sup>6</sup>Buddhist temples.

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and three hundred college graduates (including those educated in India) available for the workforce (Wood 1977, 155). Wood indicates less than one percent of the Nepali population attended school in 1952, and H. and M. Reed state that in 1954, of the 1 percent, only forty-one of every 1000 children in primary school were girls, and this rose to 370 girls per thousand by 1961 (1968, 96).

Acknowledging the disparate types of schools, the NEPC of 1952 recommended that Nepal adopt a single system of publicly supported vernacular education and aim to make five years free and compulsory education available to all by the year 1985.<sup>7</sup> Under the First Plan the curriculum was liberalised to comprise language arts (Nepali), social science, arithmetic, art education, health and physical education, science, vocational education and English. However, despite the inclusion of natural and social sciences, an official of the MOEC told H. and M. Reed that natural and social science subjects were 'largely ignored', so that the 'abstract not the concrete subjects remained dominant' (1968, 101). The practice of neglecting the practical and technical subjects also worked against the view of the modernists who aimed to use education to develop a technical workforce.

In addition to the emphasis on the development of a national primary school system, Padma Kanya, the first tertiary college for girls, was established in 1953 (Subedi 1993, 38) and in 1959 TU also opened.<sup>8</sup> Vir believes that the establishment of TU at this time was heavily influenced by Brahmin, Chetri and Thakuri interest in higher education (1988, 146), while Weiler (1982, 117) maintains that during this period there was a 'well-known preference amongst donor agencies to assist with the development of higher

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<sup>7</sup>Note the variation with the Karachi date of 1962.

<sup>8</sup>In December 1991 construction of a private university was commenced in Kathmandu in an attempt to alleviate pressure on TU.

## **Foreign Aid and Development of Initial Education: 1950-1970**

education'. Indeed, TU was established 1959-60 with support from India and the US (cf. p. 65 above). The establishment of TU was followed by the development of secondary schools which were divided into middle schools, for years six, seven and eight and high schools for years nine and ten.

After 1952-53 the education system rapidly expanded. H. and M. Reed claim that the initial planning aimed at a free and universal system of initial education, highlighting the individual, citizenship, decentralisation in organisation, and administration and control adequately financed by the government (1968, 127). However, as Weiler notes:

Many plans are nothing but exercises in wishful thinking or even futility ... even carefully designed plans in education encounter implementation problems ... [for] the development of education takes place at the base of the system. Whatever decisions may have been taken at higher hierarchical levels, the key to success or failure of a given plan lies in the hands of local teachers, administrators and parents ... greater attention must be paid to the implementation capability of the local level in the educational system, and to make sure that the community at the base of the system has the information and the resources, and most important the commitment necessary for the successful implementation of educational development programs (1982, 115).

In practice, centralised control in Nepal meant that the implementation capability and resourcing at the local level was not considered.

### **The All-round National Education Committee 1961-62**

After the first ten years of rapid expansion, a national evaluation of progress in the development of Nepal's education system was commenced during 1962 by the All-round National Education Committee (ANEC). This committee found many implementation problems at the local level but,

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according to H. and M. Reed, despite acknowledging these problems, the ANEC re-emphasised central control. However, as H. and M. Reed note, the goals of the ANEC 1962 'can be traced to new information pertaining both to Nepal's internal situation and to principles of development education in general' (1968, 128).

Amongst the factors influencing the ANEC were the withdrawal of democracy in Nepal by the king in 1960 and the proclamation of partyless panchyat government in 1962, which meant that, despite claims to the contrary, ideas were developed from the top down instead of from the grass-roots. Second, although the desire for economic progress was strong and there had been considerable investment in transport and communications, following Rostow's development theory (in Lewellen 1995, 56), the failure by the Nepalis to discover additional natural resources indicated that the country would fail to take off economically. 'In addition', H. and M. Reed concluded, 'the intervening year's experience in education had demonstrated that the system could be neither quantitatively nor qualitatively developed as speedily as hoped' (1968, 128). It would appear that Nepal fell victim to the misguided theories of development prevalent amongst global financiers of the time which ignored significant constraints at work within Nepali society. Further, it was not until twenty years later that the problems associated with centralised planning were taken into account.

Although the ANEC noted the non-acceptance of technical and vocational training there is no evidence to suggest that the committee sought a reason for this. In line with the explanation above, no examination of community resources or of the degree of community commitment to technical education was made. Instead, the ANEC committee recommended the continued expansion of primary education (APPEAL 1991, 2) in accordance



with the economically motivated belief that 'initial education yielded a high rate of return' (Blaug 1973, 18, in Hill 1986, 2). The recommendation was also in compliance with the UN 'Decade of Development', which encouraged the attainment of universal primary education by 1970 (Hill 1986, 3). So, while the expansion of primary education was in line with the nation's needs for literacy and numeracy and conformed to the prevailing UN paradigm, there was no assessment of the suitability of the type of curriculum being offered, or its application to developing a skilled workforce. This indicates that the evaluators continued to be influenced by the 'additive' philosophies of early theorists; they had not reached the conclusion that their 'problems were also fundamentally structural, that is, they had to do with the ways that societies and economies were organised' (Lewellen 1995, 57).

The ANEC emphasised three areas of expansion: school education, university and adult education, and teacher education. However, a decision to remove ELT from the primary school curriculum brought about a strong community backlash. Even though English had displaced more practical subjects, pro-British sentiment continued to be strong in Nepal and, for reasons noted earlier in this chapter, extended beyond the elite. ELT was reintroduced at Y4 and above<sup>9</sup> (Wood 1977, 157).

H. and M. Reed (1968), Vir (1988), Khadka (1991), Bista (1991), Pigg (1993), Shrestha (1993) and Stiller (1993) all reported negative cultural and social barriers to the development process in Nepal. Added to these impediments, is Nepal's difficult and diverse terrain, its landlocked position (cf. Map 3, p. 21 above), and climatic extremes. Seddon (1994, 130) indicates that drought conditions in the 1970s caused insufficient production

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<sup>9</sup>It has been hard to ascertain at what year level English was taught prior to this date. Documents suggest that officially it was Y3 but the pressure from guardians that has always existed regarding ELT confuses the picture as it has, and continues to be taught, in some instances, earlier.

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to be achieved to meet the nation's internal needs in 1979-80. In 1982-83 drought conditions were prevalent and the heavy monsoon of 1993 washed away large sections of the main highway between Kathmandu and India leaving Kathmandu inaccessible by road for six months. This forced the price of commodities up, as all essential foods had to be flown into the city. Weather extremes are not uncommon in Nepal. Such conditions affect a country economically and corrode funds available for development.

H. and M. Reed cite transport and communications problems, related to the difficult terrain, which caused difficulty in delivering basic educational materials to primary schools, communicating new ideas, and providing in-service teacher training (1968, 28). Although transport systems have improved in the 1980s and 1990s, there are still problems of accessibility to many areas. The new road systems connecting the northern and southern borders are narrow and subject to many fatal road accidents. There are no roads which form an east-west link. Maintenance methods are extremely primitive. Although during the nineties the postal and telecommunications services had improved on the conditions experienced by H. and M. Reed (1968, 29), they were still inadequate and uneven across the country.

N. R. Shrestha (1993) believes that lack of infrastructure, combined with entrenched socio-cultural patterns, made centralised planning and control of education ineffective. Although the UNESCO paradigm of 1950-70 advocated the importance of education to economic development, Vir claims often insufficient funds were allocated by the government for consistent development of the initial education system (1988, 43). This aligns with the opinion of Pigg (1993) and N. R. Shrestha (1993), who note that during this period planning and foreign aid failed to produce results of the magnitude envisioned or needed. Shrestha claims this occurred because:

the Nepali elites had completely derailed planning's core objectives ... by ... maintaining a firm grip on development funds (foreign aid) for their personal advancement, rather than building a good society for all. There was no incentive among the elites to rein in foreign debt, for to them there were huge benefits to be gained, without having to be personally responsible for repaying the debt (18).

Despite the problems noted throughout this chapter, the demand for formal schooling rapidly escalated between 1952-1970. The establishment of TU in 1959, the emphasis on adult education in the 1960s, the commencement of some institutions for vocational training, and the eligibility of girls to attend school, are examples of this. However, the increase in the number of educational institutions brought problems of quality control, and revealed a lack of qualified teaching staff. This is not surprising when one considers the lack of infrastructure and the very small base of educational personnel available at the beginning of this period of expansion. In response to the need to improve the quality of the education system which was acknowledged in 1969-70, the Nepali government introduced the NESP in 1971.

### Conclusion

In setting a goal of five years of free and compulsory education for all during the early 1950s, Nepal supported the principle of universal education. The period 1950-70 saw the formation of the MOE, and a National Board of Education. In conjunction with the external financing of development projects the NEPC was formed. During this period global financing became a major influence on Nepal's planning and resourcing of initial education and Nepal was able to attract a large and diverse group of donors. However, the

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resulting development projects were often controlled by the political and economic agendas of the financing agencies and duplication of projects occurred. Many of these projects did not suit Nepal's practical or cultural needs. As a result, Nepal's cultural mores, combined with a lack of internal coordination and communication, prevented educationists from satisfactorily selecting and adapting ideas from the various projects of international donors.

Even so, a national system of initial education was established, and under the ANEC (1962) a tertiary institution for girls, a university, and a policy of encouragement of adult education commenced. Yet the system and curriculum selected continued to follow a British colonial system, which was not designed specifically to meet Nepal's goals for economic development, the needs of rural communities, nor even the desires of the elite. As a result, a system of private English medium schools flourished at the behest of the elite, and the original goal, set by the NEPC in 1952, for a single system of publicly supported education, very quickly became a dual system of underfunded public and non-government funded private education.

Throughout the period 1950-70 coordinated development was impeded by a lack of infrastructure, geographical position, topography, poor transport and poor communications. Besides, Nepal had failed to identify the necessary additional natural resources on which to base economic expansion and develop its infrastructure. Furthermore, there were doubts about the sincerity of the ruling elite's use of aid to benefit all of Nepali society. However, ambivalence was not confined to the elite: Wood (1977), H. and M. Reed (1968), Bista (1991) and N. R. Shrestha (1993) all indicate a reluctance throughout the society as a whole to accept change when it conflicted with existing religious beliefs and social traditions.

Despite these problems, there was a rapid expansion of schools between 1950 and 1970; but a reasonable standard and quality of the education offered was not commensurate with the numerical increase. This motivated the Nepali government to implement the NESP in 1971 - a plan, as the next chapter discusses, with the stated aim of improving the quality of education, as well as expanding provision, at all levels, throughout the country.

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### Educational Goals and Planning, 1971-1992

#### Introduction

The previous chapter indicated how, between 1950-70, the Nepali government established a system of national education based on a British colonial model modified by the requirements of foreign aid donors. New development plans were introduced every five years, but the curriculum served neither Nepali national development goals, the needs of rural communities, nor the aspirations of the elite. However, despite the unsuitability of the chosen system and a perceived lack of quality, the number of schools and enrolments expanded rapidly. In 1971, in an attempt to improve the quality of the initial education system, the Nepali government implemented the New Education System Plan (NESP). This chapter examines the influences on the formation of some of the goals set by the NESP and the plans that followed up to 1992 (cf. p. 9 above).

The NESP aimed for equal access, a link between education and production, a qualified teaching service, and improved curriculum, textbooks and educational materials. In support of the status quo, the NESP set goals which affirmed the values of the Partyless Democratic Panchayat (RPP) system which had governed the country since 1962. The NESP altered the length of time to be spent within each educational division and specified objectives for each. Primary education was to cover Y1-3 and focus on literacy, lower secondary education included Y4-8 and was to focus on character building, while secondary education, Y9-10, was to produce skilled workers. The NESP also divided higher education into three stages and set goals at each stage for development of low, medium and advanced technical skills ('Nepal District Profile' 1986, HMGN document).

When evaluating the NESP, Edna Mitchell observed that the NESP had introduced a 'curriculum, heavily loaded with science and mathematics which necessitated using teaching techniques and resources which encouraged exploration, manipulation, demonstration, and experimentation' (1977, 164). Mitchell notes that these methods were 'antithetical to the traditions of Nepali education' (164). Her observation concurs with those of H. and M. Reed (1968) (cf. p. 66 above) and suggests that the making of the NESP was not only an attempt to produce a trained Nepali workforce, but also reflects the influence of inappropriate ideas promulgated by global financiers assisting the Nepali government. It supports Weiler's argument (cf. p. 68 above) that developing countries have to make difficult choices when working with international aid donors. As well as noting the cultural conflict that the suggested methods would induce, Mitchell also drew attention to the restraints created by poor conditions in Nepali classrooms and the difficulties and costs involved with distributing equipment to village schools incurred through extreme weather and difficult terrain (1974, 165).

Implementing the NESP created additional concern. As already noted, in an attempt to promote equity and literacy the planners reduced the number of years a child was required to attend primary school from five to three. Small local schools were built in an attempt to facilitate children's attendance. However, children completing three years of primary school in remote areas had no access to lower secondary facilities and fewer students were able to enter higher secondary education. This defeated the aim for the training of manpower which the NESP planned for Y9-10. Consequently, the policy reverted to a five-year primary school structure in 1981 (APEID 1988, 25). In addition, little provision was made to equip schools or train teachers to enable the training of skilled workers at Y9-10 (cf. p. 85 below). There was

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no strategy for overcoming the barriers created by caste. While in theory the NESP followed the late sixties paradigm, which linked formal education with the development of technical and vocational skills, in practice the NESP's training aims overlooked the fact that Nepal was constrained by its very low starting base in the 1950s. Furthermore, although the NESP aimed for a link between education and production, it contained no reference to planning for a policy of parallel, compatible, educational and industrial development as advocated by modernisation theorists (Thomas 1971, 79; Aran, Eisentadt, and Adler 1972, 30-43). This was possibly because the NESP was formulated before the paradigm advocating the need for compatibility between education and industry gained momentum. It was not until the 1980s that Nepal acknowledged the need for compatible planning of portfolios to maximise development.

Interestingly, when the National Planning Commission (1984) evaluated the NESP, the problems went unremarked. Instead, the commissioners claimed that, to ensure effective development, 'nothing was needed except the means to place techniques within the peasant's reach' (Basic Principles of the Seventh Plan 1984, 14). This was a simplistic approach for, as Epstein's study of Wangala village in South India demonstrated (1972, 136), in a caste society change requires more than access to education. For instance, Bista noted that while some research farms in Nepal had shown that crop outputs might be increased threefold, the wider community had been slow to adopt the methods of agriculture necessary to achieve this output (cf. p. 142 below). He suggested that this was indicative of a reluctance to use skills which may not fit with caste, and stressed that Nepalis believe that education ought to free one from the need to labour (1991, 81).



A further problem occurred because the NESP removed the possibility of people entering the formal system of initial education after they had achieved the required standard in the non-formal system. Subedi<sup>1</sup> claims this oversight disadvantaged women and was an impediment to development, as:

Gender discrimination in families ensured the continuance of ignorance and poverty because the knowledge transmission between women remained rooted in superstition and scriptural dictates (1993, 6).

Just prior to the commencement of the Fifth Plan, on February 24, 1975, King Birendra declared primary education free up to Y3 (Vir 1988, 45). However, although textbooks were produced nationally and provided free throughout the country for students from Y1-3, they did not reach the schools until many years after the initial target date.<sup>2</sup> Vir (45) suggests that the failure to supply the basic instructional needs to all students contributed to a high rate of drop-outs and repeaters at the primary school level.

### **The Fifth Plan 1975-80**

Although the NESP fell victim to existing social and economic circumstances, numerical expansion of schools and pupil enrolment continued, which created a demand for teachers that could not be met. In an attempt to train more teachers, radio-based in-service teacher training commenced in 1978, but this measure was not sufficient to fulfil the goal of a universally well trained teaching service. Unable to supply the required number of trained teachers, in 1979 the government allowed classroom

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<sup>1</sup>Subedi is a Nepali feminist and advocate of women's rights and responsibilities in Nepal. Her book *Nepali Women Rising* (1993) was a best seller amongst educated middle-class Nepali women.

<sup>2</sup>Chapter Six indicates that the late delivery of texts is still a problem in the 1990s.

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supervision by untrained teaching personnel. As a result, teachers in training for primary schools dropped from 1356 to 24 over a one year period. A similar drop in the number in training was experienced in the secondary division (Davies 1984, unpublished, 29).

### **The Sixth Plan 1980-85**

Throughout the eighties economic development in Nepal was retarded by global recession. The Sixth Plan acknowledged the failure of the NESP to achieve a qualitative improvement in facilities and teachers and postponed the aim of achieving universal basic education to 'the year 2000' (APPEAL 1991, 10). It targeted people of different socio-economic groups, gave particular emphasis to the promotion of adult literacy, and developed strategies to encourage and assist with the education of girls and children in remote areas. Dominated by economic need, and apparently still influenced by the paradigm of the 1970s, the Sixth Plan indicated that a theoretic link between the goals of the system of initial education and economic development existed. It also maintained the aim to expand campuses of technical education but, as H. and M. Reed (1968) and Mitchell (1977) indicate, in line with cultural values it continued to consolidate TU's campuses of humanities.

In setting goals to target remote areas and the education of girls and diverse socio-economic groups, the plan appeared to be influenced by the newly emerging paradigm of the eighties, which advocated alternative localised approaches. Such approaches focussed on the social and cultural identities of nations (as well as external influences). Kumar claims these theories advocated 'a process of mobilization of local resources with a view to satisfying local needs' (1994, 249). N. R. Shrestha suggests the impetus

to localisation in Nepal came from increased numbers of educated Nepalis who encouraged the government to move away from thirty-five years of centralist planning (1993, 19). In response, multinational organisations and INGOs introduced projects in remote districts which included integrated programs and special education projects to counteract irregular school attendance.

One such program was the Education for Rural Development Project (ERDP) which commenced in the Seti zone of Nepal's far western region in 1981. Remote from Kathmandu, it was essentially rural and had specific needs related to its geographic position. The ERDP was funded by HMGN, United Nations Development Project (UNDP), the United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development (AGFUND). Crowley states that ERDP aimed 'to develop a system of basic education that promoted rural development in Nepal's Seti zone which could be adopted throughout the country' (1990, 1). It was a comprehensive project designed to improve the physical situation of the school through community activities, promote literacy and regularise attendance by using a relevant and practical curriculum, and to provide safe drinking water, sanitation, latrines, vegetable production, tree planting and village cleanliness.

The management of the ERDP was almost entirely in the hands of UNESCO's Chief Technical Adviser who worked alongside the District Education Officer (DEO) and the regular supervisors. Matheson observes that the ERDP began cautiously and took two and a half years to expand. Despite minimal pre-testing, it underwent 'considerable on-the-job' revision (1985, 140). It was still being implemented throughout the Seti zone during 1994.

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Crowley indicates that despite the ERDP being seen by the multilateral financiers and the government as a successful model for development, it was viewed as expensive. This he claims is a common problem and significant numbers of projects collapse because of insufficient finance (1990, 69). However, during the research for this study it became apparent that while loss of financial support was critical, the loss of managerial infrastructure also had considerable impact (fieldtrips 1991-94). Problems arose in maintaining projects when all INGO's activity was phased out of a district. This was particularly noticeable in Thankot and other areas of Kathmandu Valley when Plan International phased out of the district after years of community work (fieldtrip observation, Nov. 1994).

Well-funded and successful projects run by INGOs have also been cancelled by Nepali governments. In February 1994 a successful Mathematics program, managed by the Nepali government and UMN, and sponsored by UMN, was terminated when the government suddenly withdrew, just as the program was set to expand into two additional districts. While acknowledging the success of the program, the official government comment claimed that 'it was inappropriate to continue or expand at this stage'. Some consultants working in Nepal for UMN at this time said they thought the project was 'too successful' and had threatened some members of the elite who used their influence to have the government close the project (fieldtrip Feb. 1994).

A further example of closing off successful programs occurred in 1995. Project officers from Plan International claimed drunken men were paid by elitist members of the community to disrupt evening literacy classes for women. In passing sentence on the drunken men, the magistrate suggested that the situation would not have occurred if the classes had been

held during the day. Therefore he ruled that no classes for women would take place in the district at night. During an interview in March 1995, Binu Rana, a project officer for Plan International, claimed the magistrate's ruling effectively closed off opportunities for women to attend literacy classes as the women were required to work in the fields during the daylight hours (cf. community meeting p. 149 below). This indicated that some Nepalis feared change to their existing social and power structure and supports Adhikari's statement regarding Nepalis' confusion over the ways they should set about achieving their national goals (fieldtrip interview, cf. p. 68 above).

Another project, the Primary Education Project (PEP), which commenced in six districts in 1984, concentrated on low-cost improvement in primary education, as distinct from rural development. PEP had different scope, aims and conditions from the ERDP program in the Seti zone. PEP districts were more accessible and were managed from Kathmandu. Matheson claims that several buildings, costing USD8.92 million, were established to house an Implementation Unit, a Materials Unit, and a Supervision and Teaching Unit (1985, 142). According to Matheson, PEP was modelled inappropriately and without adaptation on ERDP, despite warnings that :

a great deal of revision in the texts and in the presentation of the materials would be required before ERDP materials were acceptable to the wider clientele of the six PEP districts and elsewhere (142).

Matheson indicates that from the outset the management of the PEP was in the hands of the Nepali Implementation Unit, the DEOs and project staff based in Kathmandu. This management structure exposed the PEP to vested interests; during field work in 1994 political interference continued to

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be referred to as a factor that brought the PEP into disrepute. Matheson notes that within six months, political pressures were already apparent as the PEP manifested problems caused by confused political priorities. These problems involved:

- incompatible teacher training, teaching materials and curricula;
- inappropriate staffing;
- a need for better management and travel allowances for supervisors;
- lack of a process of revision of the program; insufficient printing and distribution of training materials; and
- under-procurement of educational equipment and materials (1985, 143).

Still, despite the problems, the PEP and ERDP provided models which could be adapted for future development in Nepal.

### **Seventh Plan 1985-90**

In keeping with the concern for greater emphasis upon local development addressing local needs and quality-of-life issues, the Seventh Plan recommended responsible local committee management for schools, encouragement of the enrolment of girls, campaigns to highlight the importance of women's education, and branch and feeder schools to cater for children of disadvantaged families. Administrative goals included improvement of the inspection system, the provision of free uniform and textbooks, and a morning and evening school system (APPEAL 1991, 23). The Seventh Plan also recognised the need for an attractive career structure for teachers.

In addition, the Seventh Plan pointed to a crisis caused by insufficient money and expertise available to promote a skilled workforce ('Nepal District Profile', Government document 1986, 7), and argued for a direct link (as distinct from the theoretical link implied in the Sixth Plan) between educational development and economic development (cf. p. 83 above). This was a belated explicit acknowledgement of the global perception, prevalent during the late 1960s, that 'education was seen as an important kind of capital investment in a nation's future and as an instrument for national development, especially in the less industrialized countries in the world' (Thomas 1971, 79; Freire 1971 in Hill 1986, 2). However, there is no evidence that this argument influenced 'combined portfolio' planning in Nepal any more than the implied aims of past plans. While the suggestion came at a time when the global paradigm promoting a connection between educational programs and successful national economic development was itself being questioned, it does not invalidate the claim that coordination between ministerial portfolios may have helped maximise use of Nepal's limited resources for development.

In May 1988, additions to the Seventh Plan were discussed at a conference held in Latipur. These discussions raised the possibility of alternative schooling systems (such as annex schools, mini schools and mobile teachers), flexible teaching hours, classroom location, use of modern media, and the revision of curricula and text books (APPEAL 1991, 10). Although during 1991-94 some variation of teaching hours occurred on the Terai to help cope with weather conditions, there was no other evidence of changing teaching hours in response to local seasonal labour problems (as there has been in Bangladesh).<sup>3</sup> The absence of any efforts to vary hours

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<sup>3</sup>Field trips Bangladesh, March 1994, November 1994, indicated that two local INGOs, BRAC and GSS, had made adjustments in the school year to suit the rhythm of the seasons in local

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continues to disadvantage agricultural workers and contributes to attrition. In an interview in February 1992, N. T. Uprety stated there had always been a large drop-out rate of children attending school in Nepal and claimed even in 1992 only thirty-five out of every one hundred children enrolling in Y1 in Nepali Primary schools completed Y5. He believed there was a need to convince guardians to maximize children's school attendance, but he did not display awareness of all the factors working against the community, such as poverty and inappropriate curriculum.

Many of the Seventh Plan's recommendations were premature. For example, urging the use of modern media was generally impractical, as many Nepali government schools either lacked or had inadequate electricity supply. Many schools also lacked blackboards, chalk, teaching aids and texts. Although Nepal had a surfeit of ideas from which it could choose to develop its educational system, many were inappropriate to the Nepali situation and much adaptation was necessary to suit local needs. The failure of the Nepali planners to adapt these ideas suggests Adhikari's claim to be apposite (cf. pp 68 and 88 above).

The Seventh Plan also incorporated an aim which would give all SLC pass teachers at least 150 hours teacher training to focus on developing their practical teaching skills (cf. footnote 11, p. 15 above). This 'Basic Training' was frequently presented to teachers through the medium of radio. D. M. Karmacharyas claims that a major constraint on the success of the training was that only 41 percent of teachers enrolled had access to a radio (1989, 29). Many other constraints operated, such as the program going to air at an inappropriate time, and poor lighting available for study. In addition social customs, ceremonies and religious functions caused 44 percent of

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areas. These organisations claimed to have reduced the 'drop-out' rate considerably through this flexibility



participants to miss broadcasts (17). Evidence obtained during interviews in the field (1991-94) suggested only a partial realization of this in-service teacher training program; occasionally teachers reported having received 150 hours training from the government.

Colclough indicates the global paradigm change in the eighties occurred because, as Marxists commentators of the sixties had predicted, the educational process continued to reproduce the existing power, class and gender relations (1982, 167-186). During the 1970s unrest became noticeable in Nepal. The mood escalated during the 1980s and there was a sense of powerlessness, frustration and political ferment. The Nepali uprising of 1990 represented the culmination of this frustration. The existence of such problems as those, noted above, stirring Nepal 1970-90, and other developing countries, influenced UNICEF to lead a revitalisation of human-centred development in the eighties. The UNICEF decision encouraged the World Bank (WB) to triple its lending for basic education to USD 1 billion (UNICEF 1996).

Goals in the Seventh Plan addressing key problems of quality, access, equity and management of education indicated that Nepal was both responding to internal unrest, and becoming aware of a global change in the attitude toward development, namely that development should reflect an improvement in the quality of the basic life of all the people including low castes and women. In response a third project, the Basic Needs Fulfilment Programme (BNFP), was introduced. BNFP encouraged the employment of female teachers and the setting up and maintaining of Village Reading Centres and Home Reading Circles to enable practice and maintenance of literacy skills, though the Reading Centres and Circles were only available with INGO assistance.

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From interviews in the field, it would appear that BNFP along with PEP gave rise to the PEDP in 1993/94. The PEDP's aim was to design a career structure and IST modules for primary school teachers. BNFP's and PEP's other functions were absorbed by the BPEP. The BPEP's structure was designed in ten levels with seven units centrally located. Its implementation unit was located in Kathmandu, and its Primary Curriculum Development Unit, Curriculum Dissemination Unit, Resource Development Unit and Non-formal Education Unit were located ten kilometres away at Sanothimi. Directorates of the BPEP were established in regions with DEOs in each district. Examination of the structure showed the DEOs role to be vital to the classroom teacher. BPEP was also involved with in-service education.

In 1994 BPEP claimed to be active in nineteen of the seventy-five districts of Nepal. In interviews with BPEP personnel (January 1994) it was claimed that 400 Resource Centres (RCs) were established at local level throughout Nepal. However, an investigation in one district, Trisuli, during February 1994, found that of seventeen resource centres claimed by BPEP in Kathmandu to be operating in the Trisuli district, only one was in fact operational (fieldtrip Feb.1994). Although the *Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance Report* (1996, 41) claims the BPEP had had an impact on the quality of education in Nepal, the Trisuli experience suggests that BPEP's claims of achievement may be overstated (fieldtrip interviews 1991-94).

Considerable antagonism was apparent between the PEDP and BPEP in November 1994 (fieldtrip interviews: Cambridge Consultants, PEDP, and Dr B. P. Khanya, Director of BPEP Nov. 1994). Despite what appeared to be a workable infrastructure, BPEP's ability to coordinate its own activities, or to work with other bodies, was limited by personal rivalries and constant changes within the administration of the MOEC/SW resulting from changes

within the government (Nepal has had several changes of government since the return of democracy in 1990). With every ensuing political change, leadership of various government departments and instrumentalities changes in line with political allegiance.

### **Eighth Plan 1990-95**

As Nepal prepared to implement its Eighth Plan in 1990 an uprising took place, resulting in the installation of a democratic government. The new government convened the NEC 1992. This commission was wholly indigenous, but of the sixteen members of the commission only one was a woman (NEC 1992). Several factors influenced the recommendations of the commissioners. Internationally, the Cold War was at an end; nationally, democracy had been returned to Nepal after almost thirty years of Panchayat rule, and the United Nation's priorities placed human development above economic development, emphasising people-centred as well as localised development (UNESCO 1998 ). UNESCO claimed that this paradigm was a response to the changing nature of world conflict, and observed that of the eighty-two conflicts [in the early nineties], seventy-nine were within nations. The underlying cause was thought to be a lack of equitable development brought about by either the wrong model of development, or development which favoured some income or ethnic group at the expense of others (UNESCO 1998 ).

### **The National Education Planning Commission 1992 (NEC 1992)**

While demonstrating the influence of the UN's holistic approach, and the UNESCO warning about the dangers of inappropriate models for development, the NEC 1992 report (presented in late 1992) still aimed at

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using the initial education system for 'domestication' (cf. p. 64 above), in keeping with the tendency of all major goals to support the status quo. The national goals for education were expressed as: individuality, inculcation of the national norms and beliefs, promotion of the ability to live in harmony with the modern age without losing a sense of national identity, and assimilation of the backward sections of the society into the mainstream of national life (2).

In some instances, the NEC's 1992 recommendations were impracticable in the Nepali context. One example was the production of teaching materials in the vernacular (1992, 4). According to Bimal Lal Shrestha (BPEP), the government was unable to meet the local requirement for educational instruction in 'mother tongue,' as well as Nepali and English, without the assistance of INGOs, as the cost of producing the materials was prohibitive on a large scale in a multi-lingual society (fieldtrip interview Dec. 1991). Another example was the recommendation that primary education become activity based. This was contradictory to the objectives enshrined in the national examinations and therefore difficult for teachers to implement or accept.

The commission envisaged that the goal to localise Nepal's centrally planned and administered education system could be achieved by devolving power to the local DEO. However, during the research period (1991-95) DEOs were frequently accused of corruption, inefficiency and incompetence (fieldtrips 1991-94). The NEC 1992 acknowledged that the inspection system needed to be rebuilt as the whole system of inspection had been totally paralysed by the tripling of the number of schools between 1971 and 1991 and recommended that the number of DEOs be enlarged. The commission argued that incentives should be reintroduced to encourage interest in the

inspection work (NEC 1992, 50). Three DEOs were visited during fieldtrips. Two of these offices were in Kathmandu Valley and one in Trisuli.<sup>4</sup> All lacked basic equipment. There was evidence of a severe morale problem. One DEO complained that, due to the government's removal of the staff's travel grant, his staff spent most of their time sitting about drinking tea, gossiping with their friends, rarely making inspection visits, or implementing training programs. However, he appeared reluctant to correct the situation or assert leadership (fieldtrip Feb. 1992). It would therefore appear to be a self-defeating exercise in the localisation process to devolve more responsibility to the already dysfunctional DEOs unless detailed implementation procedures or priorities are outlined to correct the already existing problems; this feature was overlooked in the commissioners' report.

An aspect of the report which did recommend an achievable goal was the section pertaining to non-formal education. Until 1992 non-formal education in Nepal was generally thought of in terms of adult literacy, and programs conducted by social welfare groups catering for disadvantaged children had not been included as part of the non-formal literacy network. During the research period, programs of non-formal education appeared short-term, lacking in continuity, and conducted by poorly-trained instructors. To rectify this situation, the NEC 1992 recommended standardization and extension of the non-formal network in a way which would allow entry into the formal network (42). Subedi claims a system enabling disadvantaged children to enter the formal network was important because:

6% of children of the poor are engaged as field labourers and thousands are obliged to work as bonded labourers. Many others are

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<sup>4</sup>The two DEOs in Kathmandu Valley requested strict anonymity.

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employed in sub-standard conditions as skivvies, brickmakers, carpet-weavers, porters, boot polishers and newspaper vendors. Some make their living picking through garbage and begging. Hundreds of children spend their lives in the streets and lanes of Kathmandu. Many girls are used in trafficking in the flesh trade. These children are deprived of the right to learn how to read and write through family circumstance and conditioning (1993, 90).

While standardization was a feature of the NEC 1992 Report, and an interlocking of the three-tier plan (cf. figure ii) with the formal and non-formal sectors might have enabled its success (NEC 1992, 43), no strategy for implementation was recommended. This was in fact the fate of its predecessors as well.

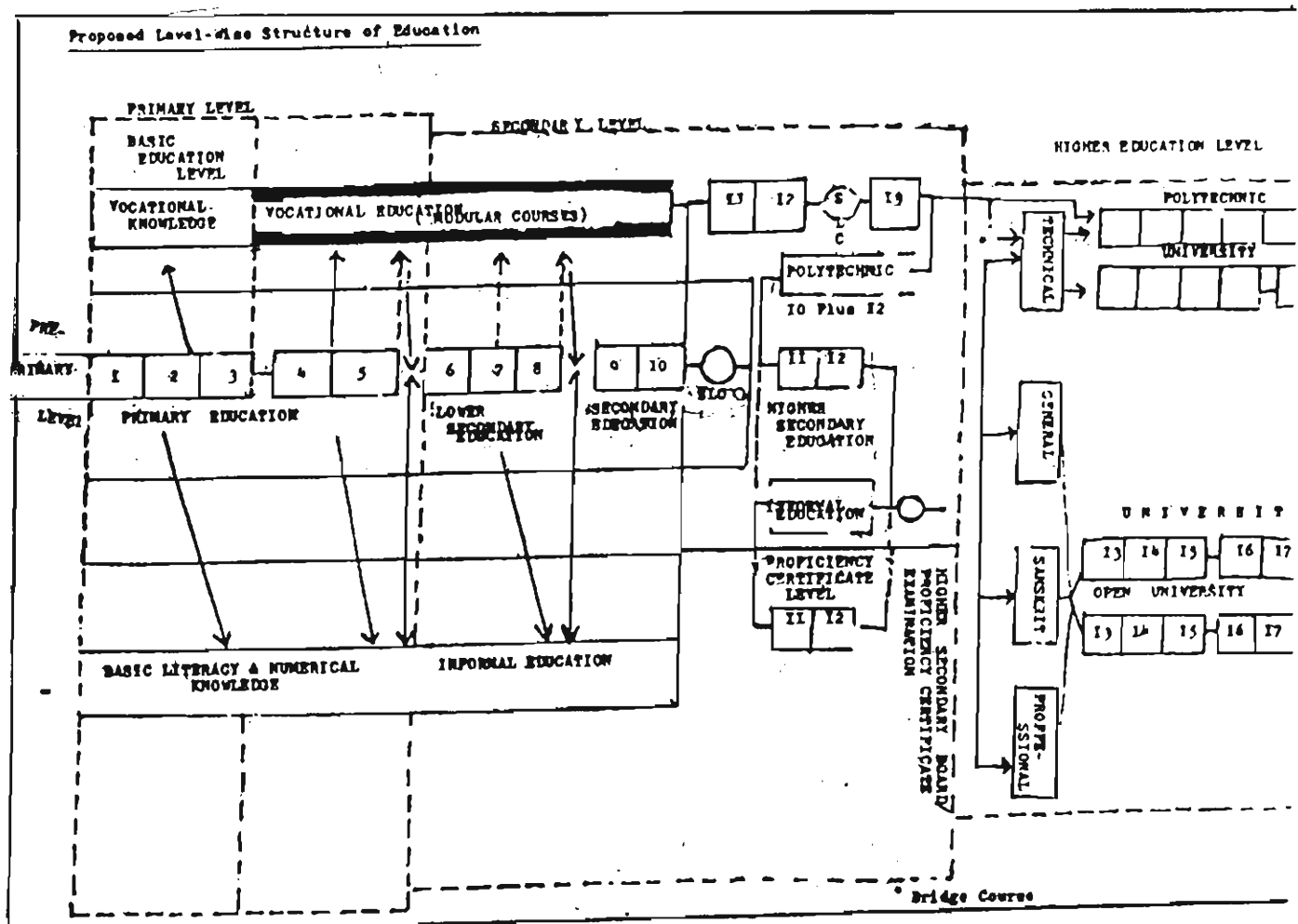


Fig ii Recommended three-tier structure for education. Reproduced from NEC 1992

As noted in Chapter Two, from the time of the First Plan technical education had been a victim of the tendency of plans to overlook the implementation process. Nepal has chronic problems in implementing and obtaining acceptance of technical education. Prior to 1992 many statistical records were incomplete regarding the number, distribution and type of technical schools involved in the education system. However, the NEC 1992 redefined technical education to include:

- (1) scientific and technical skill gained through practical experience;
- (2) vocational training given in general secondary schools;
- (3) the preparatory work done prior to taking up a profession or job;
- (4) the basic skills conferred on literate children and young men and women to enable them to earn a living and to raise their living standards;
- (5) the skill-building knowledge and training imparted to the adult and the old for their livelihood;
- (6) the training received through mobile units;
- (7) the skill and knowledge imparted to the physically and mentally handicapped. (NEC 1992, 26).

By defining the sector in such broad terms, the Commission recognised practical experience as equivalent to the acquisition of formal skills. This recognition was the first official acknowledgment of the value of the continuing enculturation process, and would have been a step towards working more effectively within the caste system.

The NEC 1992 classified higher education into general and technical sections, and also made recommendations to maintain Sanskrit education at secondary level.<sup>5</sup> Possibly this inclusion was to serve the socio-political

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<sup>5</sup>An interesting feature of the latter is that it specifies that no Sanskrit primary schools were to be established.

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interest of religious groups, and to maintain some scholastic access to ancient scripts. However, in general, Sanskrit basically retained a lesser status than English (see figures iii and iv) rather than a medium of inst-

Subject	Y6	Y7	Y8
Nepali	100	100	100
Sanskrit	50	50	50
English	100	100	100
Mathematics	100	100	100
Science (and Environmental Education)	100	100	100
Social Studies	100	100	100
Health and Hygiene	50	50	50
Optional Language	100	100	100
Art Pre-Vocational	50	50	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>750</b>

(a) Optional languages are mother tongue, national language, English and Sanskrit  
 (b) Art/Pre-vocational subjects include painting, dancing, music, handicraft, and any one of the pre-vocational subjects  
 (c) In Sanskrit secondary schools Sanskrit should be taken as an optional language.

Fig. iii Lower secondary subjects and points

Reproduced from the NEC 1992

Subject	Y9	Y10
Nepali	100	100
English	100	100
Mathematics	100	100
Science (and environmental education)	100	100
Social Studies	100	100
Optional	200	200
Extra Optional	50	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>750+100</b>	<b>750+100</b>

(a) Sanskrit should be included in the Nepali Subject as a supplementary  
 (b) Optional subject should carry the full mark of 200. Under the prescribed subject-groups two should be selected or two papers from one subject.  
 (c) A subject or paper not selected as optional may be taken as extra optional  
 (d) In Sanskrit secondary schools Sanskrit, carrying the full mark of 200 should be taken as an optional subject. As for extra optional, one of the general subjects or Sanskrit may be selected

Fig. iv Higher secondary education and points

Reproduced from the NEC 1992



duction as concentration of government resources was clearly aimed at the spread of literacy in Nepali language.

### **Unacknowledged goals 1971-1994**

So far this chapter has concentrated on the major influences and goals included in the plans since 1971. Still to be discussed are those goals and influences that remained unacknowledged or implicit in planning documents. Amongst these were a national definition for literacy, goals to standardise the private school system, goals for the teaching of English language, and goals for pre-school education.

The lack of a standard definition for literacy in Nepal has led to conflicting assessments of the literacy rate within the country and confusion when planning for educational needs. The NEC 1992 called for a national definition of literacy and the *Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance* (1996) indicated that Nepal had adopted the definition of literacy as 'the ability to read and write a simple letter' (1996, 1).

According to UNICEF, literacy rates have improved in Nepal from less than 1 percent in 1952 to 37 percent male and 11 percent female in 1990; (UNICEF 1996), so this represents some success towards Nepal's goal for a literate society, while emphasising the disadvantage experienced by women in Nepal. But during 1992-96 the cost of making one person in Nepal literate was USD10 per annum, a daunting amount in the context of an annual GDP of about USD190 per capita and a population of 22,000,000 ('Master Plan of Operations 1992-96', UNICEF, 55 ).

Recognising the financial constraints on the government's ability to provide the whole community with quality education, and in spite of its criticism of the private school system, the NEC 1992 recommended private

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involvement across the whole spectrum of education. It is possible that if the recommendations had been implemented, the quantity of private involvement could have amounted to the privatisation of education in Nepal. During fieldtrips (1991-1994), the expansion of the private school system was commonly referred to by people from all levels of the Nepali community as Nepal's major growth industry. However, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Five, there was no material standard to which a private school needed to adhere. Most private schools operated in English medium and their growth was, in part, a response to the continuing desire within Nepal for skills in English language.

When in 1962 the ANEC endeavoured to eliminate English from government primary schools, pressure to return English to the curriculum of government schools was strong, and the belief that skills in English language were important still prevailed in 1994. At a community meeting near Bhaktapur during November 1994, English language acquisition was regarded by community members as second in importance only to literacy in Nepali language (fieldtrip, Nov. 1994). This attitude reflects the belief that English language skills provide access to better jobs. It also reflects the view that English language skills are seen by Nepalis as the measure of a superior formal school education (cf. p. 71 above), and the associated view that the West is superior to anything Nepal can offer. The assumption that English language skills elevate one in society lends credence to H. and M. Reed's claim (1968, 111) that, in Nepal, 'language is felt to have an inherent metaphysical power'.

Despite the communal interest which supported the proliferation of English medium schools, the NEC 1992 continued the pattern of the past and made no reference to the teaching of English other than including it in the list

of subjects to be taught from Y4-10. The question as to why the Nepali government has not included to the teaching of English language as a goal for the development of initial education is significant given that the score for English in national and district examinations from Y4 onwards is given the highest possible value of 100 points (cf. fig v). (The standard of English language teachers and teaching in Nepal is discussed in Chapter Seven, where the suitability of texts and in-service training modules being promulgated in 1995 is also assessed.)

Until the time of the NEC 1992, goals for pre-school education remained unstated, no doubt because pre-school education was not widespread in Nepal. It consisted of untrained teachers, uncoordinated curric-

SUBJECTS	YEAR LEVELS				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Nepali language	100	100	100	100	100
2. Mother Tongue or others	100	100	100	100	100
3. English Language				100	100
4. Mathematics	100	100	100	100	100
5. Social Studies	100	100	100	100	100
6. Health and Hygiene & Environmental Education	50	50	50	50	50
7. Art (handcraft, painting, dancing etc)	50	50	50	50	50
8. Science				100	100
TOTAL	500	500	500	700	700

Fig. v      Primary level subjects and points      Reproduced from the NEC 1992

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ula, and was carried out in widely varied physical conditions. The NEC 1992 recommended that pre-school education be incorporated into the initial education system in urban areas for children of four years of age. UNICEF urged for rural areas to also be included, arguing:

Pre-school education would provide a much better alternative to having under-age children in Y1, attract more children into the school system, give children the benefits of a head start leading to better achievement, and reduce the drop out and repeater rates (*Master Plan of Operations* 1995, 62).

UNICEF also suggested the provision of universal pre-school education would allow girls, who were required to mind their siblings, more freedom to attend school.

The NEC 1992 advocated that the government's role in pre-school education was to establish activity-based curriculum guidelines, teacher training programs and inspection procedures. However, during 1994, four private schools in Kathmandu were observed enrolling children aged three and younger at pre-school level (fieldtrip Nov-Dec, 1994). Although these schools were setting up activities to assist with learning, the staff claimed that parents pressured them to teach children to memorize facts. This approach contrasted with the irregular attendance of children in rural communities and highlighted the contrasting values and attitudes towards education in terms of differences within the Nepali caste system. Subedi argued that the attitude of the elite evolved because educated parents felt social judgements on the family depended on their child's success or failure

at school. Under these circumstances failure could stigmatise a child for life<sup>6</sup> (1993, 91).

In a move to demonstrate concern over parental expectations, the NEC 1992 recommended studies of the physical, mental, intellectual and linguistic development of Nepali children (54), as it is suspected that cultural differences in Nepal may provide variants from Western norms in child development. For instance, the Western child spends long hours in a crib or pram being talked to, whereas a Nepali child is often carried on the mother's back as she works in the field where perhaps she may sing or chatter to a friend, or work in silence. Such differences in experience could produce a different pattern of language acquisition. Investigation along these lines might provide a sound basis from which Nepal could evaluate the system of initial education it has sought to implement.

Many of the goals contained in the NEC 1992 reiterated Nepal's main goals since World War II - goals which had often remained unfulfilled due in part to the severe economic constraints limiting the capacity of the Nepali government to carry out its plans.

## **Economics**

Kumar claims that 'catching up' economically with the advanced industrialised countries has remained the ambition of national governments during the second half of this century (1994, 250). The NEC 1992's emphasis on development of manpower for the betterment of the nation exemplified this. Economically, Nepal remained limited by its agrarian economy and relatively slim industrial/commercial sectors. Progress was

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<sup>6</sup>According to Bombay newspaper reports, in recent years pressure on a child to achieve educationally had been linked to a number of child suicides (*Indian Express* and *Times of India* Feb. 1994).

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further impeded by a rapidly rising population (Seddon 1994, 130) and a marked reluctance on the part of the people to employ new methods of agricultural production. And, as noted already, crises precipitated by extreme weather conditions forced a redirection of funds (cf. p. 77 above) leaving less money for equipping schools and training personnel as teachers.

In 1989 Nepal had a budget deficit of NRS12 billion or USD26.6 million (*Statistical Pocket Book* 1994, 240), and by 1994 foreign debt stood at USD85 per capita, i.e. almost half of the per capita Gross National Product (GNP) of USD180 (*Nepal and the World* 1994, 122). Debt has grown since. Although Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was claimed officially to be increasing at an annual rate of approximately 17 percent, the rate measured at constant prices was much lower - between 3 percent and 5 percent. This was only marginally higher than the annual population growth of 2 percent. According to government figures in 1992-93, the GDP was NRS8947, or USD198 per head of population. While it is impossible to judge which set of figures is the more reliable, both those from *Nepal and the World* and those from HMGN's *Statistical Pocketbook* placed Nepal alongside Bangladesh and Bhutan in terms of poverty (*State of the World's Children*, 1994). The educational situation must be viewed within this total fiscal context.<sup>7</sup>

Nepali children are only offered slightly more than half the number of learning hours offered in the classrooms of an industrialised country. In contrast to the USD52 of noncapital material inputs per years spent in Western countries, approximately only USD1.70 was spent in developing countries like Nepal (Lockheed 1991, 24). The teachers often had only ten years of formal education and little or no teacher training. Added to this,

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<sup>7</sup>Statistics of expenditure on education were several years out of date, the latest being for 1991/2.

many children in attendance were chronically under-nourished, parasite-ridden, and hungry.

In the years between 1989 and 1992, the total population in primary schools in Nepal grew from 2,526,147 to 3,034,710, an increase of 20 percent in three years (*Statistical Pocketbook of Nepal*, 1994, 9.2). Still, the rate of children dropping out of the system continued to be high, as was the number of children repeating a level. According to the *Multiple Surveillance Indicators*, the number dropping out and those repeating a year was much higher outside Kathmandu (1996, 43).

Despite increased enrolments and improved access to education, the NEC 1992 claimed that conditions in schools were static, and requested that the education sector's budget allocation be increased from 12 percent of government expenditure, where it stood in 1992, to 15 percent by 1996/97 (46).

During the early 1990s 49 percent of the education budget went to primary schools. According to the NEC 1992, government investment in education for the fiscal year 1990/91 was 10.5 percent and in 1991/92 this increased to 12 percent, 95 percent of it spent on teachers' salaries. In a developing country the remaining percentage given to investment (5 percent of the 1.5 percent increase) is inadequate to improve the material infrastructure. In response, the NEC 1992 recommended that the government increase the proportion to 15 percent in order to cope with the exceptional needs of the country.

Between 1989 and 1992 educational expenditure increased from 282 million NRS (USD7,050,000) to 472 million NRS (USD11,800,000) as a result of the combined influences of currency inflation and increased demand. The government statistics indicated the pupil-teacher ratio remained virtually

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unchanged, declining from 40 to 39 across the period (*Statistical Pocketbook* 1994, 188). These figures also suggested there was an upward trend in the proportion of 'trained' to untrained teachers, as in 1989 'trained' teachers as a percentage of total teachers stood at 40 percent, while in 1992 it had moved to almost 47 percent (*Statistical Pocketbook* 1994, 250). However, it is important to note that 'training' may mean anything from 1 to 300 hours of basic IST, possibly through distance radio, to a three year university degree. Even so, in the early 1990s the majority of Nepali teachers were untrained. The *Multiple Indicator Surveillance Report* (1996, 43) claims that the type of training experienced by the two-thirds of teachers who were classified as trained was often very limited. Just one in four had basic educational training, and only one in twenty had received more extensive training. The educational standard and training of teachers between 1991-95 will be covered in Chapter Six of this thesis, but one implication of the statistical data is that any program to increase the number and standard of trained teachers requires additional spending, which the Nepali government can barely afford.

Although Nepal's policy of neutrality during the Cold War enabled the government to attract aid from various nations (cf. p. 65 above), it was unable to capitalise on this aid. Khadka claims that restraints additional to those based on economic status stemmed from the socio-cultural, institutional and political factors which combined to hinder a desirable rate of growth from any given level of investment (1991, 428). This concurs with the view expressed by H. and M. Reed (1968), Vir (1988), Bista (1991), Raeper and Hoftun (1993) and N. R. Shrestha (1993), that development in Nepal was inequitable socially and economically.



## Culture and Politics

Joshi and Rose (1996, 17), H. and M. Reed (1968, 108) and Bista (1991, *passim*) have all noted strong fatalistic attitudes within Nepali society. Bista claims that this has meant that 'responsibility is continually displaced to the outside, typically to the supernatural,' and that 'this operates to the detriment of the society' (1991, 80). Bista also noted that Nepalis regard working as low status and so do not experience guilt if they are unemployed. He claims there is also a widespread belief that it is the supreme god who finishes all incomplete work (80). He suggests that these beliefs discouraged Nepalis from training for specialization in agrarian or technical areas, and when technical skills are achieved by a higher caste member they are infrequently used for the betterment of national development (128).<sup>8</sup>

During 1990-95 the impact of fatalism on attitudes to education was evident. As voiced by Adhikari, a principal of a large school, 'We Nepalis want development, but if it does not come we are accepting of it' (fieldtrip interview, Janakapur, Jan. 1994). Similarly, Dr Margaret Khalahdina, an early childhood consultant, claimed that her investigations suggested that those 'who want to be educated will get education one way or another; but the majority do not apply themselves seriously since they do not see what use education can be to them' (Janakpur, January 1994). Plan International fieldworkers in Nepal also claimed that the Nepali tendency to renege on an agreement stemmed from fatalism. Amongst examples they cited as impacting on education was a school in Thankot which was built with the assistance of

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<sup>8</sup>Even in the professional areas caste taboos create difficulties. Unaware of the taboos, and much to the shock of those watching, a Melbourne woman physiotherapist, working as a volunteer in Patan Hospital in December 1991, told me how she placed the hands of a Brahmin physiotherapist on a lower caste member to demonstrate a manipulative technique. Fortunately the Nepali was so impressed with the result of the technique she was happy to add the skill to her repertoire but her acceptance was the exception, not the norm. The Nepali later claimed it was the first time she had touched a lower caste person without feeling the need to go to a priest for purification (fieldtrip, 1992).

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Plan International at the people's request. In this case, 15 percent of the labour and materials required had not been supplied by the community as agreed (fieldtrips 1991-94). Plan eventually finished the school from its own funds. An alternative point-of-view to that expressed by Plan is that the overall poverty of the neighbourhood and the need for labour in the fields contributed to the situation. There is also the possibility that grinding poverty lies behind the apathy noted by Adhikari and Khalahdina.

Bista suggests fatalistic caste attitudes combine with *afno manchhe* (nepotism) and *chakari* (sycophancy), two powerful social mores, to greatly constrain development (1991, passim). Matheson agrees in part with Bista. He identifies features of nepotism and sycophancy as severe impediments to the PEP, and claims that the social mores have operated to defend the status quo (1985 141). According to Raeper and Hoftun, the status quo had been protected by the lack of democracy between 1960 and 1990 (1993, 23), but even since 1990, when a Constitutional Monarchy was established, it is likely that fatalism and caste continued to play a strong role socially and politically in Nepali society.

Since 1990 several changes in government have occurred. A strong vote for the National Democratic Party (RPP) in November 1994 suggested that a large section of the Nepali community still supports autocratic rule. However, a significant minority represented by the Nepali Communist Party, and to some extent followers of the Nepali Congress Party, have been prepared to challenge the long established patterns and advocate popular participation in development programs (H. and M. Reed 1968; Vir 1988; Khadka 1991; Bista 1991, 45, 94; Raeper and Hoftun 1993, 22; fieldtrip interviews 1991-94). Political and social conflict continues to affect stability in Nepal as no party has a workable majority. During the research period

much dissatisfaction with lack of educational achievement of past and present governments was evident.

Political repression and instability has affected development. Prior to each election, or change of government, energies focus on politics so that even Western programme workers without political affiliations find it difficult to proceed with development schedules. For instance, Western consultants working with the PEDP in 1994 complained that the development process almost ground to a halt over a period of five months preceding the November 1994 elections (fieldtrip interview, Nov. 1994). Since the civil uprising in February 1990 succeeding governments have altered the leadership positions in government departments, appointing personnel according to their political affiliation. After the November 1994 election the head of BPEP and the Vice Chancellor of TU were among the positions to change in accordance with political allegiance. Additional changes in government power structure have seen more changes in BPEP since 1994. The ensuing disruption and cost means that each successive plan starts without many of the previous plans' aims being fulfilled.

### **Educational innovations in Nepal**

As noted in Chapter Two, many plans and innovations attempted in Nepal have proven culturally and practically inappropriate. Recently, computer aided instruction has been introduced into Nepal. According to Lockheed (1991, 40), computer aided instruction, although acknowledged as an effective intervention in improving learning, is not regarded as cost effective, or practical, in a developing country. He emphasised this in the following summary statement given to the World Bank on the most effective way of improving the standard of primary education in developing countries:

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The educational system in most developing countries needs a substantial overhaul of the curriculum: that is a coherent, appropriately paced and sequenced instructional program for each subject taught. The most promising avenue for improving learning materials is to increase the quality and availability of textbooks and teacher guides. At this point, computers are not a sound investment in most developing countries given their high cost (86).

During late 1994 computers were introduced into schools in Nepal. Private schools in particular were purchasing obsolete computers, in lots of three or four, and Y9 and Y10 students were seen working on these. Although this could be interpreted as a move towards more flexible methods of instruction, discussions with principals indicated that computers were installed in schools for reasons of commercial 'window dressing'.

The private school system was becoming more competitive, especially in Kathmandu Valley, and guardians were being attracted by what they saw as the acquisition of a skill which would enable their child to obtain a better job. When interviewed, the fact that computer aided learning implied more progressive teaching methods was irrelevant to both guardians and many commercially motivated principals (fieldtrips 1994).

Lockheed's statement alludes to further problems regarding computers (cf. p. 110 above). Shedding of electric power - common in developing countries - affects Nepal. Without surge protection and back-up battery support loss of data and damage to equipment could occur. Lockheed was also aware that the cost and maintenance of such equipment was beyond the scope of most schools. Repairs to computers in developing countries are also restricted by a lack of skilled technicians, and the difficulties in obtaining spare parts. If Bista's claim is correct that in Nepal maintenance is not given high priority because people are fatalistic, this constitutes a further problem

for keeping computers operational. Illustrations of Nepal's problems with technology experienced in the field include: the inability of Budhanilkantha to maintain its computer (cf. p. 136 below), Kshitiz Secondary English Boarding school's inability to repair its video recorder and television set (fieldtrip Jan.-Feb. 1994), St Xavier's School needing to rely on the combined effort of ten guardians for the supply of a television (fieldtrip observations Jan.-Feb. 1994), the need for The Everest English Boarding school to borrow a small obsolete slide projector (fieldtrip Nov. 1994), and the inability of a team of Nepali teacher trainers to obtain sufficient power to operate a video during an IST session (fieldtrip March 1997). These experiences lead one to conclude that the computer programs commencing in many Nepali private schools during 1994 may be precarious as well as limited.

Pigg claims that some of Nepal's problems are related to the fact that the Nepali ruling elite has resisted any equitable distribution of power and assets (cf. p. 6 above), with the result of a lack of equitable development. Speth claims that 'the new theory now being promulgated by the UNDP', is founded on the belief that 'equity is a necessary condition for sustained growth'. Speth states that the new paradigm placed 'equity at the centre-stage of the economic growth-human development nexus' (Speth 1996); however, a caste-bound society like Nepal's, intent on maintaining the status quo, is unlikely to accept the new paradigm even as it barely keeps pace with growth in basic requirements.

In 1995<sup>9</sup> Nepal was due to implement its ninth development plan, but the political situation was so unstable that it was unclear what goals of the

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<sup>9</sup>Recent information (1998) from Ram Ashish Giri indicates that due to the political instability implementation date was delayed until 1997.

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Eighth Plan had been achieved. Planners continued to be confronted with many problems, which included:

- (i) a population of over twenty million, 36-40 percent of which was under fifteen years of age in 1993 (calculated from data from *Statistical Pocketbook* 1994, 12; Subedi 1993, 6);
- (ii) an official literacy rate of 40 percent, (*Statistical Pocketbook* 1994, 24).

Many UN and aid staff, working closely with the people, believe this rate to be much lower, at around 26 percent (UNICEF 1992, 72; fieldtrip interviews 1994). Still, UNICEF believes if the current trends continue there will be 10 million illiterates in Nepal by the year 2000 (*Master Plan of Operations*, 1992-1996, unpublished).

### Conclusion

Although the period of planned development (1971-1994) brought about changes in the infrastructure of initial education in Nepal, the basic model established during the 1950s remained largely in place. However, despite considerable ambivalence from all levels of society regarding the relevance of the curriculum to the nation's needs and those of the Nepali people, the absolute number of children enrolling in primary schools, due in part to the escalating population, continued to rise. Despite sporadic attendance, the increased enrolments added to the pre-existing problem of a lack of trained teachers. This caused the government to remove the requirement for teachers to be trained, an action which further placed the quality of education at risk. In addition, Nepal faced problems from political instability, erratic climate, difficult terrain, social resistance to change and, despite the variety of aid donors, continual economic difficulties.

The aid donors and lending agencies influenced development priorities, which Nepali planners did not adjust to suit the basic human needs of the general public. Consequently, improvement continued to be sporadic, and uneven. Part of this condition can be attributed to a development philosophy that relegated people to the level of economic capital, an approach that did not adapt well to Nepali cultural values. In addition, there are indications that the Nepali ruling elite was selective regarding social change.

Evidence of ambivalence and ambiguity is apparent when successive plans for the development of education are matched against the prevailing paradigms. On the one hand, Nepali planners seem to have lagged behind or been out of touch with some aspects of the development paradigms. One example of this is the ten year delay in linking ministry portfolios to maximise development. On the other hand, Nepali planners accepted parts of paradigms even when they appeared inappropriate to Nepali culture - the persistent plans for the development of technical schools, and the initial plan of the NESP for primary schools to cover only Y1-3 are cases in point. Further, while claiming to embrace the concept of localisation, the government centralised the PEP and failed to adapt the materials and methods of the successful ERDP, thus wasting money in a country lacking funds. Against the background of a paradigm of localisation, the PEP was a contrary example of the quest for rapid centralised development of educational projects. Similarly, successful projects and programs have been cancelled, rescheduled, or altered to their detriment, as was the case with the magistrate's ruling regarding the timing of women's literacy classes.

In compliance with the development paradigms of the 1980s and 1990s the localisation policy spawned a number of projects. But, with the

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exception of the ERDP, many did not achieve their stated aims and/or overstated their achievements. In addition, the personnel involved in the proliferation of plans and projects appear to have been uncoordinated, and operated either in opposition to each other or, at best, with only a superficial understanding of the projects they were trying to introduce. Hence plans were thwarted in the implementation process.

As this chapter has indicated, social mores like caste and fatalism have impacted on equity aims of various projects. The holistic approach to development of the 1990s, which suggested that 'development projects should respond to local needs and have a human face' (Grant 1994), is likely to encounter difficulties in an uncoordinated, politically unstable environment such as Nepal's.

This chapter has also indicated that Nepal had a number of unstated goals related to pre-schools, private schools and English language teaching. This led to a lack of understanding of the aims and nature of pre-school education, a proliferation and variable standard amongst private schools and, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Seven, a poor standard of English language teaching. Meanwhile the quality of education and facilities in Nepal between 1990 and 1995 remained poor with many issues still to be addressed. The following chapter will describe the conditions which prevailed in the research area in Nepali schools 1990-1995.



## **Chapter Five**

### **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

#### **Introduction.**

As indicated in Chapters Three and Four, the number of schools providing initial education in Nepal expanded enormously between 1950 and 1995. This chapter considers the quality of both government and private schools observed in the geographic research area in the period between 1990 and 1995. The descriptions are based on a sample of schools - some selected because of their status, others because of their accessibility and availability. Together they illustrate the material conditions observed in the research area between 1990 and 1995. The descriptions and observations are particularly relevant to assessing the achievements of the eight successive Five Year Plans (cf. p. 9 above) for the development of initial education in Nepal in the area of facilities and staff.

In order to assess the type and quality of the selected schools, I asked the following questions:

What is the condition and style of the school buildings?

What equipment and facilities does the school possess?

Does the school have a safe drinking water supply and adequate sanitation?

Does the school have an electricity supply?

Is there playground equipment?

What style of uniform do the children wear?

How is the school organised and administered?

What are the major influences, cultural, political and economic upon the conditions and administration of schools?

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

What is the community's attitude towards the school?

Is the school equitable in its admission of pupils?

What criteria govern the appointment of staff?

Owing to the exigencies of the research it was not always possible to address every question in every school. Nor was it possible to verify every claim made by principals, who were sometimes evasive in their answers lest competitors should gain access to the research. However, the lack of triangulation in every case does not negate the descriptions which follow: observations were consistent with anecdotal evidence and together they provide a reasonable overview of the conditions existing in the geographic research area in Nepal between 1990 and 1995. In addition to the descriptive studies of schools, observation of a small community meeting, called by a Project Officer for Plan International on 3 December 1994, is included to provide insight into one community's attitudes to a range of issues concerning the provision of facilities for education.

### **The System**

During 1990-95 the initial education system in Nepal was based on a combination of government-run Nepali language<sup>1</sup> medium schools for the lower castes and classes, and privately-run English medium schools, chiefly for elite groups. This dual system was said to function under the supervision of Nepali Government inspectors. The system which developed from 1952-53 remained largely unchanged. However, the range of years in higher secondary schooling was extended to include Y11-12 in

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<sup>1</sup>The initial planning aimed for a system of government run vernacular schools. However, the vernacular schools were changed to Nepali medium in the 1962 Education Act.

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1992-93 in some specially chosen schools. In addition, HMGN was in the process of planning a pre-school system to feed into the primary level.

From 1990-95 the primary school section included Y1-5, lower secondary Y6-8 and higher secondary Y9 and Y10. Most private schools covered a range from kindergarten level to Y10. According to Bajracharya, Thapa and Chitrakar (1998, 19), owing to a shortfall in infrastructure and resources, government schools were unable to cater for the addition of the Y11-12 courses, and as a result the Y11-12 option was mainly allocated to private schools. As the aim of the MOEC/SW was gradually to eliminate the Intermediate Certificate from TU campuses (cf. p. 118 below), if government schools continued to be unable to cater for Y11-12, those attending a government school to Y10 could find it necessary to attend a private school in order to obtain an Intermediate Certificate.

As was the case with government schools, the private school system in theory operated under the supervision of government inspectors who, according to one senior District Education Officer, rarely visited (fieldtrip interview, Nasgendra Prasad Singh, Dec. 12, 1992).<sup>2</sup> Although the government and private systems based their teaching on a different set of texts, the curriculums converged at Y5 for District examinations, and at Y10 for the nationally held School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination.

According to Father Lawrence, principal of St Xavier's School for Boys in Kathmandu, the motivation for the change of government policy regarding Y11-12 was to relieve the pressure on TU, where Y11-12 were commonly catered for until 1993. He also claimed the government was not able to expand the university system at this stage and HMGN was

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<sup>2</sup>The problems of the supervisory system were confirmed in the review on the education system undertaken by the Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development in 1998.

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

depending on the construction of a private university commenced in Kathmandu during 1991 for further relief of TU's overcrowding (fieldtrip interview, Fr. Lawrence, Feb. 1994).

Sanskrit schools were retained as part of the First Plan. However, during 1990-95, Sanskrit schools were few in number. Sanskrit is not part of the government primary school curriculum, but it is included as a subject at lower secondary and higher secondary level (cf. fig. iii and iv, p. 99 above). Mahendra Sanskrit University was established in 1986. A Sanskrit secondary college shares the building and grounds of Durbur High School in Kathmandu. When visited in 1994 the Sanskrit secondary college had a staff of eighteen teachers and an average class size of between forty and fifty (fieldtrip interview, staff member, Feb. 10, 1994).

### **Teachers' Salaries**

In 1994, salaries of teachers were given by several government school principals as NRS1500 (USD43) per month for teachers with SLC; Intermediate Education (IEd) NRS 2,000 (USD57); Bachelor of Education (BEd), secondary trained, NRS3,100 (USD90); and bachelor degree, untrained, NRS2,700 (USD77). Some exceptions were made according to demand, an example being at Shree Krishna Secondary School, Kharipati, where a science teacher who had no teacher training received a salary of 3,100 NRS (USD 90) (fieldtrip notes, Jan. 20, 1994).

Until mid-1994 the government was responsible for the full salary of primary school teachers, 85% of the salary for lower secondary and 65% of the salary for higher secondary. The remaining portion had to be met by students' guardians and frequently their share was not forthcoming. The government now takes full responsibility for teachers' salaries up to the

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level of a designated number of staff allotted for each school. If staff are needed beyond the government number, external funding has to be found.

Many families did not meet the school expenses of their children nor did they pay a share of teachers' salaries under the pre-1994 arrangement. This neglect may be related to a generally-held belief amongst guardians, especially in rural areas, that the course content and delivery was irrelevant to their life and needs (Khaladmi 1994; Wood 1995; Bajracharya; Thapa and Chitrakar 1998). Undoubtedly it was also related to the great poverty that existed amongst lower classes especially in rural areas, where education received a low priority and teachers were perceived as low in status (Seddon 1993; Macfarlane 1993; H. and M. Reed 1968; N. R. Shrestha 1993). As Macfarlane has noted, in 1993 a day's hard work in the fields produced grain worth between 15-20 rupees (55-65 US cents) and this was certainly not enough to feed a family, let alone clothe, house, marry, bury, nurse and educate (1993, 108). In addition, Stiller argues that historically Nepalis have demonstrated a pattern of skilled avoidance of government expenses they consider unfair (1993, 38). Apparently the people resented making their contribution as they felt it was the government's responsibility to provide the money for initial education. Between 1990-95 the government was also responsible for the teachers' provident fund, but in some districts teachers took strike action, believing that this responsibility was not being honoured (fieldtrip, Gaur, January 1994, cf. p. 119 above).

### **Case studies of Nepali government schools**

*The following descriptions are of a group of Nepali schools observed between 1991 and 1995. They are a sample of the schools visited and*

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

*appear typical of the schools found in Kathmandu Valley and other relatively accessible parts of the research area. The basis for selection is indicated beside the name of each school. As stated in the methodology (cf. p. 23 above), most of these schools were part of an opportunistic sample, but some schools were specially selected because of their importance and status within Nepali society. Descriptions of six government schools are included here, but five other schools were visited, of which one was a Buddhist bihar (temple) and one was in the grounds of a Hindu temple. These have not been included as the information would have been repetitious. Unless otherwise noted, the method of instruction in the schools described was by rote.*

### **Durbur High School. February 1994.**

Durbur High School was especially selected as it represents the beginning of HMGN's interest in the field of education. It commenced in the palace grounds during 1853-4. and instruction was originally in English medium. It was moved into central Kathmandu in 1858.

When visited in 1994, the school building, an old style Rana palace reflecting the influence of the Raj, was poorly maintained and in disrepair. In 1994 the school was open to children of all castes and class and covered Y5-10. It had a staff of thirty-four teachers and classes varied in size from forty to fifty. Instruction was in Nepali medium. The school occupied only the upper floor of the two storey building, the lower section being occupied by a Sanskrit secondary school.

Although the school had better facilities than most other government schools, the science laboratory and library were inadequately equipped, and stocks of chemicals, books and other teaching materials were

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scarce. Furniture, in the form of benches, was old. The school had no playground equipment. Sanitation and drinking water were inadequate.

### **Shree Krishna Secondary School, Kharipati, Bhaktapur District. January, February and November 1994.**

Shree Krishna School was visited twice in 1994. It received INGO assistance 1992-1995. The kind of behaviour of teachers observed at this school was witnessed many times during the research period at other schools.

Shree Krishna is situated twenty kilometres from Kathmandu city on the lower slope of a mountain range and popular tourist area near Nagarkot. The area contained a number of ethnic groups, the largest being Tamang. Ten percent of those in the area were Brahmin caste (Plan International). The Tamang ethnic group are known to be very poor. Shree Krishna secondary school included Y1-10, and the area included three other government primary schools. In 1993 one of these schools was closed when part of the building collapsed during a severe monsoon.

After Y5, children from the primary schools wishing to continue their schooling walked to Shree Krishna Secondary School, on the lower slope of the mountain. Owing to distance, reasons allied with family poverty and the need for child labour in the fields or home, many children dropped out. Despite government laws against child marriage, it was reported by the staff that four female students aged between fourteen and sixteen were unable to sit their SLC exams due to their early marriage.

The building was characteristic of modern Nepal: constructed from brick and cement the style is box-shaped, with a flat or shallow-gabled roof. The total number of students was 800. The children sat on long seats behind bench-topped tables. There were eighteen teachers, three of whom were

## Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994

English language teachers. One of these ELTs was allocated to the primary school level. Seven teachers had a general level of education of SLC, four had a BEd, one had BSc, one had BCom and the remainder had IEd. Teachers were not prompt in commencing classes.

The teacher pupil ratio in this school was one to sixty. The school catered for children from Y1-10. Education is free for Y1-7 but to assist with the running of the school the guardians of the children in Y8-10 are required to pay USD1.25 (NRS 50) per month plus USD7.50 (NRS300) per year.

When this school was first observed in January 1994 the INGO, Plan International and a local NGO were engaged in improving facilities. Two thousand five hundred US dollars (ten lakhs NRS)<sup>3</sup> had been advanced for building extensions. In February 1994, a combined library meeting room was being built as part of the extensions. The school staff indicated a need for magazines and books in English and Nepali.

When this school was revisited in November 1994 it had set up a small room as a Resource Centre. Some senior students were working on a set assignment using a science book written in English. The publication date was 1938. The classrooms under construction in January had been completed to a basic standard and the staffroom, which had previously been sparsely furnished with broken furniture, was now furnished with smart new chairs.

Although during January 1994 the principal and staff were anxious to receive in-service training, when offered this training in November they declined it, claiming it was too close to the examinations and would disrupt

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<sup>3</sup>One lakh is NRS10,000, or USD250, so 10 lakhs is USD2500 (at a notional rate of NRS40 to the USD).



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their scheduled examination preparation. However, during the visit it was observed that most teachers were remaining for lengthy periods in the staffroom and neglecting their set classes, so that unsupervised children were running in and out of the rooms. In fact, very few children were doing anything that resembled schoolwork. Another request, made earlier that year for sister school sponsorship, was also withdrawn when a sponsor was found for them. Pressed by an INGO fieldworker, the principal reasoned that the staff had more than enough to cope with, given Plan International's expectations, and wanted no extra commitments. Information from the field in the following year indicated that no further development had taken place in the district or the school since a field officer with strong leadership qualities had been transferred to the Terai (interview, Binu Rana, Melbourne, May 1995).

While the principal's and staff's explanations for their reluctance to participate in any additional training or demands might be accepted as reasonable, the information passed on by Binu Rana in May 1995 might be interpreted as an example of what Said (1978) refers to as Orientalist resistance to the imposition of Western initiatives. It is also possible that changes were starting to threaten the status quo of the staff and the local community, and that the staff felt they were being forced into an area where their inadequacy might be exposed and they might lose what little status they had (cf. p. 177 below). The response may also have reflected the effects of the fatalist attitude already discussed in Chapters One to Four. However, it is very difficult to distinguish fatalism from slackness, or to establish the relationship between both these factors, together with low morale and poor leadership.

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

The school had few materials for concrete learning experiences. Although there were some battered maps and a small selection of science equipment, the school staff claimed they could not use the science equipment due to insufficient chemicals and facilities. Discussion and observation revealed that no attempts were made to refer to the natural environment to make learning more relevant.

In November 1994 students and staff faced many practical problems. For example, this school of 800 pupils only had three toilets, one of which was reserved for staff use. The water supply was extremely poor, preventing even manual flushing. There were no playground facilities.

### **Mahadvestan Primary/Secondary School, February 1990, February 1991, December 1991 and December 1994.**

Observations of this school took place on four occasions. Mahadvestan School received ten years' assistance from the INGO, Plan International Nepal, but this assistance ceased after the INGO was phased out in February 1994.

Situated on the main trunk road to Birganj and the Indian border, this government school is in the south-eastern section of Kathmandu Valley. The mother tongue for the district is Nepali, which is the language of instruction in the school. English was officially commenced as a subject at Y4. All children were required to wear a British-style cotton uniform.

The style of the building was typical of that of modern Nepali buildings. When first observed in February 1990 the school was a single storey structure made from brick and cement. It had grey concrete floors, ceilings and walls. There were no doors or windows, no display or storage areas, and there was no equipment, except for small blackboards and poor quality white chalk. As this was the dry season, the floors were heavily

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coated with dust, which in turn changes to mud in the wet. School-work, when finished, was dropped on the dusty floor beneath the blackboard, as the teachers rarely had a table or shelf where the work could be placed. Desks were in disrepair. Children, sharing a text, were crowded four to a desk. This forced them into extraordinary positions when trying to write. As rote learning was the method of instruction, the noise level was high and discipline problems were noticeable. When this school was revisited in February 1991, a second storey had been added and a teacher aid<sup>4</sup> had been employed, through the sponsorship of the INGO. This development had given some relief to class sizes, but children were still squashed into the few desks available.

Children had one small exercise book and a black lead pencil (coloured pencils and felt tip pens were too expensive to be considered for use either by teacher or pupil). Some basic texts had been supplied by the government; however the handbooks to guide their use had not been supplied. When questioned on this, officials at the government publications unit at Sanothimi claimed that there were insufficient funds to produce the teachers' handbooks and argued that the teachers were unable to purchase materials and guides (fieldtrip interview, Lokesh Raj Dali, Sanothimi, February, 1994). Because teachers in Nepal were largely untrained, lack of instruction on how to use and obtain the best results out of their set texts was a major problem throughout the system. At Mahadvestan the children took their books, texts and pencils home each night and teachers complained of further difficulties when the children did not bring them to school.

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<sup>4</sup>In Nepal the term *teacher aid* refers to an additional teacher supplied to a school and financed by an INGO.

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

A third visit during December 1991 showed this school had added a latrine for the use of the 500 children attending. It consisted of two cubicles and a urinal trough. The plumbing system had not been properly installed and hygiene was not good. A building designated as a library was under construction but no arrangement had been made to provide books or equipment. The stairway was open with no railing and the brick treads were uneven and broken. Windows remained unglazed, the opening being filled by iron bars. Doors had been attached. A teachers' staffroom had been created, but it was sparsely furnished and few aids or books existed.

Unfortunately, during my fourth visit in December 1994, the school was closed for a religious holiday. Shutters had been added to the school's windows and the construction of the library building had been completed. The INGO had phased out of the area ten months earlier. Many shops and houses were being built in Mahadvestan in December 1994, but household rubbish littered the area and the entire district appeared to have deteriorated.

### **Gorkhana, December 26-27 1991**

Gorkhana is in an area where Plan International had begun to work early in 1991. Plan wanted the conditions to be observed at an early stage of their involvement and organised a training/observation workshop on the dates noted. Gorkhana reflected the conditions of schools and teachers that had only had support from the MOEC/SW of HMGN.

Gorkhana is a government school situated in the north western section of Kathmandu Valley in a long-established hand-woven carpet manufacturing centre. This area employed vast numbers of women and children in very primitive conditions. The mother tongue is Newari.

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One section of the school was in the village street. This section, built in an old Newari style, consisted of four small earthen floored rooms with barred and shuttered windows. What furniture was available was in disrepair. The blackboards were small and badly surfaced. The school staffroom, also used as a classroom, displayed a few battered charts, said to



Gorkhana school in village street

Photo: R. Kerr

have been obtained in India. One toilet, badly fouled, catered for teachers and could only be entered by obtaining the key from the principal. There were no toilets for the children.

Another section of the school had recently been built by the government in a style now common to modern Nepal. It was situated two kilometres from the main school. This part of the school was built on a clean picturesque plateau. The L-shaped building appeared to have been constructed by unskilled and unsupervised labour. An open structure at

## Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994



This new school was built at Gorkhana in December 1991. The materials required to build the school, along with the labour force, had apparently vanished. The school was later finished by an INGO.

Photo: R. Kerr



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right angles to the 'completed classrooms' consisted of concrete uprights and roof. Construction had ceased apparently because the building was unsound and money and materials were no longer available. A Plan fieldworker claimed that it was expected the building, including the classrooms, needed to be demolished.<sup>5</sup> Three classrooms, sized approximately 12 feet square, were walled and roofed. One room had no blackboard. The floors were earthen and the concrete roof leaked profusely. There was no covering on the windows and the doors were sheets of corrugated iron. The wind blew in a freezing stream off the snow coated hills. Discomfort made learning and teaching difficult, yet motivation was high amongst the group of untrained teachers who presented for in-service training (training workshop, December 26th-27th, 1991). The desks consisted of roughsawn timber attached to termite eaten uprights. The timber tops were no more than five inches wide, giving little support for writing. The seats, no wider than four inches, were constructed in the same way. There was no toilet and no drinking water available at this site. No play ground equipment existed at either site.

### **Mani Jyoti Primary School, Sarankot (Pokhara Valley), January 1992.**

Mani Jyoti was one of the least accessible schools visited: the village required a trek of two hours on foot from the sealed road in the Pokhara valley. Its inclusion allows conditions to be compared with those observed in the more populous Kathmandu Valley. The school received government assistance only.

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<sup>5</sup>In 1995 I learned that INGO intervention had enabled the poor construction to be rectified and the building has been completed to an acceptable standard.

## Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994

This stone, skillion-roofed school, consisting of six small rooms, had been established on a small plateau on the side of a steep hill called Sarankot in Pokhara Valley. Situated on a popular trekking track, it was only accessible on foot. In January 1992 the school had an enrolment of two hundred and forty pupils.



Mani Jyoti Primary School

Photo: R. Kerr

Groups of forty children were housed in classrooms averaging 10 feet square. Some of the classroom floors were of stone, while others were earthen. A few rough planks in one room passed for furniture. The building had two levels. The upper level contained one small room divided into two parts. Its floor consisted of a platform of rough tree-trunks suspended precariously over the principal's office which was ten feet below. The few small blackboards that existed were poorly surfaced. The school had no books or equipment of any sort. The unequipped, unfenced playground had a sheer drop of many hundreds of feet to the Seti River valley below. There were no toilet facilities and no drinking water available.

Only one young teacher was available for interview. His qualifications consisted of Y8 schooling. He had no teacher-training. He claimed that he was the school's Geography/English specialist. His spoken



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English was between basic survival stage and minimal social survival stage (Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating, cf. Appendix C, p. 302).

### **Tri Juddha Mahabir Gopal Ladas, Birganj, January 1994.**

This school was selected by a fieldtrip assistant on the grounds that it had been established for many years and was situated in a large industrial town in the Terai region. It had no source of funding other than government.

The building and the school were both fifty-six years old. Additional buildings were being constructed, depleting the already small grounds. Fifteen hundred students were enrolled in classes, which ranged from Y1-10. There were two groups at Y1, one of which was a Preparatory group. The average class size was sixty-five. The principal claimed that given some classrooms were smaller (12 ft. x 10 ft. as distinct from 16 ft. x 12 ft.),<sup>6</sup> some class numbers were lowered to sixty. Classroom furniture was in the form of old desks and benches.

There was a staff of thirty-five teachers. One senior female staff member was aged in her forties, while the remaining female members of staff were in their twenties and early thirties. Only three spoke English and the others didn't appear to understand it. Although there were some men in their late twenties and early thirties, the most common age for the male teachers was in the early fifties, which was unusual in Nepal.

The children were in attendance long before the principal arrived at his desk at 11am. On arrival he set about taking new enrolments. He explained that classes had ceased for two days due to pressure of taking enrolments and the need to complete other administrative tasks (fieldtrip interview, Nadan P. Adhikari, Birganj, January 1994). This pressure did not

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<sup>6</sup>Estimate only.

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

prevent a group of male teachers from sitting in the grounds chatting for a long period of time in the weak winter sun. However, the women teachers in the staff room appeared to be busy discussing and adjusting class lists.

The principal indicated that he had been a member of the first group of teacher trainees of the 1950s. He claimed to know Hugh Wood and other members of the NEPC 1952 through their involvement in the implementation of teacher training in the 1950s. He had also worked in HMGN's MOEC/SW for two years. He was very excited at the prospect of installing two obsolete computers in a room being converted for this purpose. They were to be in use and available for teaching within the month.

American Peace Corps workers were present in the school's science laboratory conducting a science training workshop for secondary teachers. The government was paying a training allowance to the Nepalis from the surrounding district of NRS105 (USD2.55) per day for expenses to participate in this workshop. When interviewed, the Peace Corps workers said that it was difficult to use the small amount of science equipment regularly, because the supply of chemicals was inadequate.

### **Case studies of Nepali private schools**

*In the private sector, the classroom facilities in many instances were inadequate by Western standards. However, over the five year period of the research many principals responded to the increasing competition between private schools by improving classroom appearance and equipment in their schools. In the course of the fieldtrips, in addition to the eight private schools described, six other were visited.*

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### Budhanilkantha, January 1994

Situated in Kathmandu Valley, Budhanilkantha possibly is the most prestigious school in Nepal. Until recently it has had royal patronage and had been supervised by a joint trust of HMGN, the British Council, Overseas Development Administration (ODA), and South East Asian Development Corporation (SEAD).



The entrance to Budhanilkuntha. Even though this school has royal patronage, there is no maintenance budget for equipment

The grounds and location for Budhanilkantha were superb. Modelled on Eton, it was planned as a centre for four satellite schools in the four major districts of Nepal. Its curriculum was designed to suit O levels and A levels as in the British system. According to Mr Thomas Thomas, the retiring British principal, the official reason for establishing this school in 1972 was to train the future leaders of Nepal. He claimed that in 1993 the school drew 60 percent of its students from 'the middle class' and 40 percent from 'the upper class'.<sup>7</sup> Budhanilkantha included economically disadvantaged students from remote areas of Nepal. If, as Thomas said, 40 percent of the the total student intake in 1994 were on a scholarship, the 40 percent of scholarship holders must have belonged to

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<sup>7</sup>The term 'class' used in the interview appeared to mean the strata within a caste.

## Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994

either 'middle' or 'upper' class families for the total not to exceed 100 percent, suggesting that selection for economic disadvantage may not have been seriously pursued. The remaining pupils' fees received no direct subsidy. However, SEAD provided and monitored the money for the running of the school in conjunction with the Nepali government, which contributed 30 percent of the full budget of fees for all children. All children were required to wear a British-style uniform.

The school had a Board of Governors but the daily administrative responsibility policy rested with the British principal. He, in turn, was required to report to the British Embassy. Thomas claimed the school had no caste problems. However, he indicated that there had recently been an incident when several of the main windows of the principal's house had been smashed in retaliation for the expulsion of three boys who had been involved in 'unspeakable behaviour'.<sup>8</sup>

Until December 1993 the school's principal was British, but following a joint decision of the Nepali and British governments the first Nepali principal was appointed in December 1993. The position of principal was advertised nationally in Nepal but the School Council had waived its right to make the final decision for the post and had, as a courtesy, requested the MOEC/SW to make the appointment. This decision could be interpreted as avoiding responsibility, or as an attempt to flatter the minister. Whatever the reason, such a step placed the appointment in the political domain.

The appointment went to a long-time staff member of Budhanilkantha. Mr Thomas spoke of it as contentious and typical of the way

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<sup>8</sup> The Principal Mr Thomas revealed this in interview January 1994. He was not prepared to state what this behaviour was but the Principal of GBS later suggested the problem was related to homosexual behaviour.

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Nepalis gain positions. By so stating, Mr Thomas suggested the new appointee had obtained the position through the direct operation of the social mores of *afno manchhe* and *chakari*. Thomas Thomas feared that a Nepali principal, appointed in such a way, would be very vulnerable to social and political pressure. He pointed out that in the past, despite extreme pressure from Nepalis in high positions, the British principals had strictly required every candidate to pass an entrance exam before admission. He felt the new principal would not demand this. Thomas was required to remain in Nepal a further six months to 'groom' the new Nepali principal, a requirement which could be interpreted as an Orientalist attitude amongst both the Nepali elite and the British government officials, though it also points to the lack of more systematic induction infrastructure.

In 1994 Budhanilkantha had 740 pupils. It had an average class size of twenty-six. There were fifty-six teachers. Ten were female. The British paid all salaries until 1991. In January 1994 only one teacher, a female, was British. With the exception of the expatriate teacher, all had Masters degrees obtained in either Nepal or India. Most teachers at this school had no teacher training at all. Those who did received locally based in-service training, usually provided by the principal. According to Thomas, staff members spoke 'fairly good' English.

Amongst its facilities Budhanilkantha had a clinic, clothing store and mini-bus. All computers were being replaced because parts were difficult to obtain and no money was set aside in the budget for repairs. In fact the principal complained that the school had no maintenance budget at all.

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

### **St Xavier's School for Boys, February 1994.**

St Xavier's School, administered by the Jesuit order, is situated near Patan, the twin city to Kathmandu in Kathmandu Valley. It is a single sex school for boys of all faiths with a sister school for girls, St Mary's, in close proximity. It is renowned throughout Nepal for its extremely high standards and SLC results. It is an exceptional example of a successful private school in Nepal and was specifically chosen for the research for this reason.

In 1994 St Xavier's had a staff of fifty-five, consisting of the principal, seven Jesuit priests, forty-two lay teachers (some of whom were part-time), and five administrative staff. The principal, Father Lawrence, estimated fifteen members of staff were female and claimed most of the staff had no formal teacher training. He stated that the school did not demand that staff had teacher training as teacher training had not been compulsory for teachers in Nepal since 1979. Nevertheless, teachers were encouraged to participate in informal training. Those participating in in-service training outside the school were required to share the knowledge gained with other staff members.

Since 1993 the school had not been exempt from the formal requirements of the government's scrutiny and was required to follow the government syllabus for annual school accreditation. The school catered for boys from Y1-10. In January 1994 Father Lawrence claimed to be resisting the current policy of the Nepali government to include Y11-12 on the school campus near Patan. He reasoned that the school was not equipped with adequate facilities or teaching staff to cope with the requirements at this level. He reported that only ten staff had Masters degrees which, in his opinion, the inclusion of Y11-12 students required, and he didn't have the money to employ more staff with this qualification. He explained that in 1992 the school finished the year USD14,500 (NRS 700,000) in arrears and had struggled to balance the budget in 1993.

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St Xavier's had opened in 1954 in an old Raj style palace. Subsequent building extensions and equipment were financed by money from Germany and friends located outside Nepal. This enabled St Xavier's to have a large well-stocked library and well-maintained facilities for many subjects. A new TV and video had just been donated to the school through the combined efforts of ten guardians

Father Lawrence explained that the Catholic pupils had regular catechism lessons while non Catholics had 'values' education. In the case of poor behaviour or academic performance, parent-teacher meetings were called. If guardians failed to attend these meetings the child was likely to be expelled or suspended.

### **Gandaki Boarding School (GBS) Pokhara, November 1994**

GBS is one of the most highly regarded schools in Nepal. Situated in Pokhara Valley in the village of Lamachaur, it is not typical of private schools within Nepal. During the research period no other example of a school of such status was found outside Kathmandu Valley. GBS was especially selected for this study.

As was the case with Budhanilkantha, GBS was situated in picturesque surroundings. It was one of the few schools in Nepal that had large grounds, sporting facilities and some playground equipment. The Australian principal, John Barclay, stated that the school began as an English medium school in December 1965 in response to talks between local community members, the International Nepal Fellowship (INF) and UMN. It was originally known as Nepal Adarasha Vidhyalaya (NAV). It opened as a boarding school with forty-five boarders, sixteen day students and a teaching staff of five, in June 1966. The first buildings were of mud, bamboo and thatch but subsequently extensive, high quality, well

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

maintained buildings constructed in stone and cement were provided with assistance from UMN.

For the first fifteen years of the school's life, UMN took sole responsibility for the school. Under the Nepalization policy of 1981, it became Nepali managed and introduced Nepali medium.<sup>9</sup> However, in 1984, in response to HMGN's proposal for the development of regional schools to be feeder schools for Budhanilkantha, the UMN was approached once more to assist. GBS became part of the Regional School Scheme. Operating as a regional school, it phased back into English medium and prepared children to sit for Cambridge O level exams in 1984.

In 1994 the MOEC/SW was responsible for the appointment of the school council and UMN assisted with personnel. At the time of interview five positions were filled by staff from UMN - one male, four female. There were forty-five teachers on staff, with only 20 percent of the staff female. One UMN representative, and the principal, held positions on the Council. One Nepali female had recently been nominated as a parent's representative on the council, but the council had chosen to elect a man instead.

Financially, the school was profitable. But because one third of the school enrolment was taken up with scholarship holders, the school required UMN as well as government funding to sustain its viability. There were significantly more boys than girls on scholarships. In 1994, 20 percent of the 600 students, one third of whom were girls, were day pupils. Although there is no discrimination regarding the entrance test, fewer girls report for the examination.

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<sup>9</sup> In the early eighties HMGN made a policy of placing all schools under the control of the MOEC/SW in order to minimise foreign influence.



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In 1993 the school experienced discipline problems involving violence (including a threatened knifing) and, despite external pressure, the staff and council united to expel eleven pupils. John Barclay also reported that he had experienced harassment for several months from a high caste Brahmin who previously held a senior administrative position in the school and desired the bursar's job. The Brahmin's services had been terminated when he reacted strongly to the appointment of a Magar tribal man as bursar. The Brahmin became involved in a letter writing campaign to the newspapers, the Australian Ambassador, government officials and the prime minister. Although the school council and principal were cleared by an official investigation, letters continued to be written and circulated throughout the community accusing the principal of proselytising,<sup>10</sup> mismanagement of funds, sexual misconduct and favouritism.

### **Mitre Mirra Secondary Boarding School, Gaur, January 1994.**

This school is included here as it was a newly opened private school operating in a remote region of the Terai, Gaur, which had only recently been exposed to development. Mitre Mirra was an example of the way some private owners had expanded their interests beyond the schools they already operated in Kathmandu Valley.

Mitre Mirra Secondary Boarding School was family-owned and run. It was a sister school to, and an expansion of, Kshitiz Secondary English Boarding School, Dilli Bazaar, Kathmandu. The area near the Indian border in which Mitre Mirra is situated was ravaged by floods during the excessive monsoon of July 1993.<sup>11</sup> The school building was a multi-storey, flat-roofed construction in brick and cement.

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<sup>10</sup>Proselytising in Nepal is a criminal offence which incurs a gaol sentence of 3 years.

<sup>11</sup>A crocodile that was marooned when the flood receded, now lives in the town's pond that is used for drinking water and bathing.

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

The school consisted of seven small rooms and catered for Nursery to Y7. In January 1994 it had been in operation for only one year. The school had an enrolment of two hundred students. Four extra rooms were under construction but work had ceased. The building and surrounds were very clean and the children appeared happy. The compound, although extremely small, contained a couple of swings, a see-saw and a small games area. The school was attractive with external wall paintings. Internal walls featured charts, many of which had been made by the teachers under instruction from the principal.

The female owner of this school encouraged her staff to use a variety of teaching methods. Twenty-eight of the children were in hostel accommodation under the care of three teachers. Four other teachers were housed nearby.

Children wore a British-style uniform. All children and staff rose and washed at 5.30am. Exercises started at 6am, followed by morning tuition at 6.30am and breakfast at 8am. The children then had a one hour rest, after which they changed and came to school. The day's classes commenced at 9.30am. Lunch was from 12.30pm to 1pm. The children then rested until 4.30pm, when they had a snack and free time until a quarter to six. This was followed by a study time. After dinner at 6.30pm the children practised meditation. Lights out, after a glass of milk, was set for ten past eight. The principal stressed that the program was flexible to allow for the extreme weather conditions experienced in this part of Nepal.

At the time of the fieldwork, the status of this school was being compromised by the instability of its sister school, Kshitiz Secondary Boarding School. Members of PABSON claimed that the school in Kathmandu was in financial difficulty due to mismanagement of its funds.

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In 1992 Kshitiz School was located in Dilli Bazaar.<sup>12</sup> The principal of Kshitiz, in interview in 1994, claimed that the landlord was waging a campaign to force the school's removal by continually raising the rent and terminating the electricity supply. The reason given for the landlord's behaviour was that property values had increased astronomically in Kathmandu and the property would bring a large sum of money if sold to developers.

### **Chitwan Secondary English Medium Boarding School, Narayanghat, January 1994.**

This school is located in an important town in the Terai. It is an example of a school operated jointly by a husband and wife.

The principal had founded the school, which he operated with his wife's assistance. The school's land and buildings were rented. The principal claimed that tenure was insecure, as landlords tend to raise the rental if they believe a school is successful economically. (The principal owned land but claimed he could not yet afford to build his own school.) The rental at Chitwan Secondary school was NRS20,000 (USD555) per month in 1994.

The buildings were box shaped, some single storey. The grounds and buildings were well maintained and spotlessly clean. There was a reasonable amount of playground equipment available. The school had a small, moderately stocked library. However, while the principal claimed he received no subsidy from either the government or an international group,

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<sup>12</sup>During a visit in 1997 it was suggested that this school had moved its premises to another area of Kathmandu Valley to escape the wrath of unpaid creditors.

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

unsubstantiated information suggested the school received some assistance from benefactors associated with Chitwan National Park.

The school had an average intake of 500 pupils, all wearing British-style uniforms. The principal had taught for twenty-two years in government schools in Nepal but had become dissatisfied with the pupils' lack of achievement, and the poor learning conditions. Originally he had been educated in a government village school and had majored in English and Education at TU. The staff consisted of twenty-four teachers and ten non-teaching staff. Of the teachers five were studying BEd. Six others had not received any sort of pre-service or in-service training.

The qualities the senior students exhibited at this school were impressive. They were observed confidently asking challenging and stimulating questions using very clear English. The confidence and ability in English language displayed by these children was a rare experience in Nepal. An English lesson incorporating sophisticated formal grammar was observed in one classroom. The level of grammar being analysed was equal to a tertiary level language function and analysis lecture for native speakers of English in the West. (This lesson was an example of the requirements of the Nepali curriculum as dictated by the SLC examination questions.)

### **Shree Star Boarding School, Nagdanda, Pokhara Valley, January 1994.**

This school is similar to other small private English medium schools in Nepal in both Kathmandu Valley and Pokhara.

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In 1992 this school had twelve staff and 230 students. The headmaster had been educated in Pokhara and had completed his BEd at TU (Pokhara campus). At the time of interview, he was studying for a Masters degree at Pokhara. His practical teacher training was limited to a few days spent at GBS. He had taught at a private school in Pokhara for two years before commencing at Shree Star in 1987. Six staff members, four men and two women with bachelor degrees in commerce, were from Darjeeling. Of the remaining six, one had SLC obtained in Kathmandu and one had Intermediate Commerce (IC) from TU Pokhara. The other four members of staff, including the headmaster, had degrees from TU Pokhara campus. Teachers' training was limited to IST in Nepal. All teachers had studied English in school - those from Darjeeling generally being more fluent than those who learned English in Nepal. All had been learning English from the time they began school. The school planned to expand in 1994.

Shree Star has received assistance from Mowbray Private School in Melton, Australia, to establish a science laboratory and a library. Shree Star appeared to be well run and, according to sources at GBS, it was growing in quality. Even though the visit took place during the holidays, the teachers were conducting classes for less able and undisciplined students who had failed term tests, as well as those needing holiday supervision. This involved additional expense for the guardians.

### **Saraswati Adarsha Vidhyashram School Lamachaur, Pokhara Valley, January 1994.**

This school is similar to other small private English medium schools in Nepal in both Kathmandu Valley and Pokhara Valley.

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

This school opened in January 1992 with ninety pupils and by July 1993 it had 150 pupils. Including the principal, the school had seven staff members, four male and three female. The grades consisted of Kindergarten level 1 (Kg1), Kg2, Y1-3. This school aimed to be a feeder school for GBS and, as the schools were situated opposite each other, it had no plans to offer classes above Y4 as GBS commenced at this level.

The headmaster and owner of the school is Nepali, educated in Kathmandu and India. He had two Nepali degrees, one in commerce and another in social health. He appeared to have useful political contacts and to be quite wealthy by Nepali standards. His wife was a teacher on the staff. She had a degree in history from TU (Pokhara) and was studying for her MA at TU (Pokhara) where she also lectured. Of the male teachers, one had intermediate standard from TU (Pokhara) and was studying for a BEd. One, whose father was a Ghurka soldier, had O levels from Singapore. This staff member was also studying a BEd at TU (Pokhara). Of the remaining teachers, one had SLC from GBS and IC from TU (Pokhara). One female teacher had SLC from Kathmandu and was studying IC at TU (Pokhara), and the other had IC from TU (Pokhara) and was studying BEd at the campus. The teachers were hired on the standard of their spoken English and recommendations from the Pokhara campus. No member of staff had completed any pre-service teacher training. The school had the services of a trainer from the Education Faculty at Pokhara campus. Those interviewed at this school claimed there were five teacher-trainers in Pokhara whose job it was to hold training seminars for teachers and come into schools to offer suggestions and ideas, but only when invited.

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All teachers claimed to have learned English at school but, compared to teachers at Shree Star Boarding School, Nagdanda, their spoken English was considerably weaker. The teachers were also younger and less experienced. However, they were all studying to obtain higher qualifications. School commenced at 7am and went until 9.30am, and commenced again at 5pm and ran until 7pm. All teachers attended morning sessions and some attended evening sessions as well. All did other teaching or jobs between sessions. The school was planning to expand during 1994.

### **Community Meeting, Kharipati, Kathmandu Valley, December 3 1994, convened by Plan International Project Officer, Binu Rana.**

*The meeting outlined below was poorly attended and, as one example, no general conclusions may be drawn from it. However, it is included for the first-hand insight it provides into community attitudes. When combined with accounts and observations drawn from other observers (Davies 1983-4, Bambach 1993, Wood 1995), and the descriptions and analysis of the schools described above, some useful insights may be gained.*

The purpose of this meeting was to provide members of the local community and guardians with an opportunity to discuss their attitudes to, and problems concerning, the education of their children. The meeting was informal and was conducted with the aid of a Nepali interpreter. The main aim of the meeting was to ascertain whether this community believed that the initial school system was providing an education relevant to their needs. The major occupations of those attending were rural or domestic in nature. One man was an accountant and another was a shop trader. This small local



## Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994



The beginning of a small community meeting in 1994. As the discussion got under way the numbers increased to sixteen. The district had been receiving INGO assistance for two years when the INGO meeting took place. The houses shown were built with loans from the INGO.

Photos: Binu Rana



## Chapter Five

community was within a kilometre of Shree Krishna Secondary School.

Only sixteen people attended the meeting, twelve women and four men - a very small number considering the population of the area. The ages of the group varied from late teens to middle age. One man was a retired Ghurka soldier. A larger group of men, including the school's principal, were reported to be playing a popular Nepali gambling game at a nearby temple. During the one and a half hour discussion conducted in the winter sunshine in front of the home of a middle class member of the community, people came, left and returned. In Nepal, community meetings tend to be conducted on a discussion/consensus basis, following which any decisions for action are generally left to community leaders.

Those attending were unanimous in expressing the view that literacy and numeracy skills were important. Two of the men believed that literacy and numeracy skills would enable their sons to be better farmers. Of the women present, all but two were illiterate. The illiterate women all expressed the desire to be literate but felt that they were too occupied with housework, farmwork and childcare to attend literacy classes during the day.

The women were united in the view that vocational subjects should be included in the curriculum in primary school and that these subjects should include domestic skills, nutrition, hygiene, health, child care and even how to do the housework better. Three women expressed the view that had these skills been included at primary school they would have been better wives and mothers and that their parents may also have been in favour of them attending school more regularly, since the traditional pattern in Nepal is that girls are required at home for domestic duties, including

## Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994

care of siblings. Eight women suggested that income generating skills such as knitting and sewing should also be part of the curriculum.

The men expressed the view that livestock management, bamboo growing and other relevant local needs should also be included in the primary school curriculum. Vocational subjects did not commence until lower secondary level and only a small section of the community had opportunity for access to a lower secondary school.<sup>13</sup> The consensus was that vocational subjects should be included in the primary school curriculum.

During the discussion, the women revealed that in this district access to literacy lessons was a problem. Classes held during the evenings had been abandoned when a local magistrate refused to remonstrate against a few men who, suffering from an excess of alcohol, regularly disrupted classes at the behest of some Brahmins. Since women were becoming more involved in cottage industry, and needed to be literate and numerate to be eligible for a World Bank or INGO loan, the denial of an opportunity to attend night literacy classes concerned the women (cf. p. 87 above).

A consensus of those present indicated that Nepali, mathematics and English were considered the most important subjects. But the belief was that they should be taught in practical ways. The view was expressed that learning Nepali facilitated communication outside the home district, while learning English was important for those who aspired to a professional occupation.

It was claimed by those attending that community members and guardians rarely visited the school. Sometimes men affected by alcohol also

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<sup>13</sup>In 1996 it was estimated that 3,363,000 children attended government primary schools while the numbers dropped to 726,300 at lower secondary level (Bajracharya, Thapa, and Chitrakar 1998, 2).

## **Chapter Five**

disrupted school classes, but the women rarely went to talk to a teacher to discuss their child. However, the women admitted they frequently gossiped about the teachers. One man present claimed that this was destructive of teachers' morale and the overall learning process.

The Nepali translator stressed that the strongest opinions were that education ought to help students achieve a better job, and that there was a need for vocational skills to be taught at primary school. In addition, all recognised that the increased access to television was changing the way people felt towards education.

### **Further observations**

During the research period eleven other schools were observed in detail, and others were observed informally. When these additional observations are considered alongside secondary source material, a more comprehensive picture of school buildings, facilities, school administration (government and private), and the issue of equity, emerges.

### **Buildings and Facilities**

Between 1990 and 1995 Nepali school buildings included huts in the mountain districts, Buddhist bihars, Hindu temples and old colonial-style palaces and mansions. Beginning in the 1950s the government built many basic flat or skillion roof structures, with roofing held in place with large stones. Between 1991 and 1994 buildings were often incomplete, as well as inadequate for the numbers of children attending. Many schools had earthen floors, no window covering, make-shift doors, and badly-leaking roofs, so that the students were exposed to the elements. Nothing could be safely stored in the insecure school buildings.



An example of the skillion roof weighted down with stones

Photo: R. Kerr

While acknowledging the impressive expansion in the number of schools in Nepal, Macfarlane noted that, in 1993, 'the average village school is very badly equipped, often not even having benches or blackboards' (109). The thesis research supports his generalisation: in all government and most private schools, the blackboard, where it existed, was small and poorly-surfaced; where there was seating it was often unsuitable and inadequate, with children sitting as many as four to a desk; many schools were without toilets, safe drinking water or electricity and very few had any storage facilities.

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Kshitiz Boarding School in old Rana palace, Kathmandu, 1992      Photo: R. Kerr

The condition of most schools described in the case studies, and Macfarlane's observations, reflect the general poverty of Nepal. The detailed studies noted in this chapter indicate that even in the most well-known government school, Durbur High School, the facilities were poor and maintenance was not attended to. In the newer buildings, exemplified by Mahadvestan, Tri Juddha and a section of Gorkana, many parts of the school still remained incomplete. In some cases, where stairwells remained unfinished, and in the case of Mani Jyoti where one classroom had a floor precariously balanced on sapling supports above the principal's office, the safety of teachers and children was at risk.

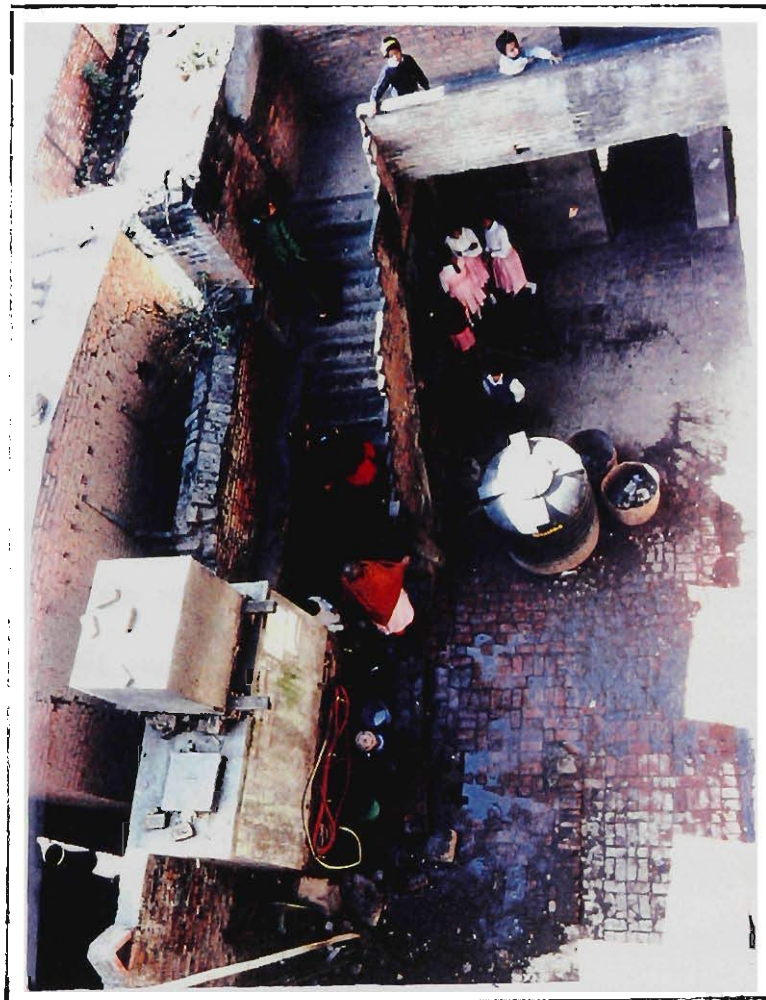
Sanitation was almost non-existent in government schools, and there was only minimal safe water available. Of the government schools



### **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

visited, only three had toilets, and these were unsanitary and inadequate for the number of pupils. Playground equipment was non-existent in government schools. With the exception of Durbur High School and Tri Juddha Mahabir Gopal Ladas, no school had a compound wall. Safe drinking water and toilets were available in most private schools, but these were not adequate for the numbers of children attending, and in most cases playground equipment was non-existent.

Most schools in Nepal had no teaching aids or equipment other than the government texts. Even in those government schools supplied with science equipment, insufficient chemicals limited their use. Teachers in the



Most Nepali schools have inadequate drinking water and sanitation. Approximately 1000 children attend this school. The girls standing to the right of the stairs are waiting to use the only toilet. This toilet is situated near a water supply for hand washing and drinking. December 1994.

Photo: R. Kerr

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Government System showed a marked reluctance to use materials from their local environment in their teaching. Durbur High School, Shree Krishna Primary/Secondary, Tri Judda and Mahadvestan Primary/Secondary all reported class sizes ranging from 40 - 60, placing a greater limitation on the use of their meagre equipment. Class sizes in most private schools were reported to be between thirty and forty, apparently owing to fluctuations in demand year by year. Some schools, sponsored or supervised by multilateral or bilateral agencies, were better constructed but still had stairways, windows and doors unfinished. In 1991, Marten Van der Kraan, then Field Director of Plan International in Nepal, claimed that buildings often remained unfinished because the local community had defaulted on their agreement to assist with a school's construction (fieldtrip interview Dec. 1991).

Peter Hilary, who does extensive philanthropic work in Nepal, claimed that The Himalayan Trust still found it necessary to physically maintain schools in the Sagarmatha Zone in the 1990s (interview, Flemington 1994). Many aid workers believed that the reluctance to help maintain buildings resulted from the perceived lack of relevance of the curriculum and the rote learning method (fieldtrip interviews 1991-94), while Bista (1991, *passim*) and Macfarlane (1993, 19) suggest the influence of fatalism upon the Nepali psyche is a major contributing factor to their apparent lack of responsibility .

While substantial physical development could be discerned in multilateral and bilateral funded schools, the experience at Shree Krishna Primary/Secondary school and Mahadvestan Primary/Secondary was discouraging to donor bodies. The explanation given for Shree Krishna staff's refusal of IST, and the sponsorship they had requested, was

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

unconvincing. But it was evident that the limited improvements to the school had satisfied the staff at that point. Fatalism, as discussed by Bista (1991), could be a factor influencing the refusal and, as the assistance from the INGO and the sister school sponsorship were Western in origin, there may be elements of Orientalist resistance (Said 1978). Additional reasons for their reluctance for further assistance could be attributed to the background of the teachers which the thesis research suggests is likely to be from middle to lower sections of Nepali society - the lower strata of society, according to Vir (1988, 158) being less responsive to change. However, the community's lack of commitment to completing the school at Mahadvestan appears to be more likely attributed to fatalism noted by Bista (1991, *passim*).

### **Private Schools**

Private sector schools varied greatly in quality, size and numbers of students. Conditions in the longer established private schools were considerably better than smaller private schools. Other criticisms of privately-owned schools have been levelled by Shreedar Kanal, an investigative journalist. He claims:

The principals are mostly unqualified. They appoint teachers from family members and relatives. Accountants, storekeepers and other staff as well were appointed the same way ... fifty percent of them can neither speak or write English. Despite the exorbitant tuition and hostel fees, guardians are advised by Principals to spend lavishly on private coaching classes run by the staff. The administration of such schools is strictly totalitarian and the Principal is a dictator. The management board is a sham. A qualified and dedicated teacher has no voice outside the



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classroom. The teacher can be kicked out at any time without any kind of charge (*The Rising Nepal*, February 1, 1994).

Although this assessment may seem exaggerated, the general thrust is plausible. The three major private schools in the case studies received international sponsorship and two were jointly administered with HMGN. They were universally regarded in Nepal as the nation's foremost schools. In contrast to these three, two of the eight schools included in the case studies of private schools, and one not included in the detailed studies, were in rented premises.<sup>14</sup> Almost all small private schools visited during the research period had building extensions in progress and some expanded into other campuses and districts during the research period.

### School Administration and Organisation

During interviews teachers at both the private and government level often claimed that the private school system was Nepal's greatest growth industry (fieldtrips 1990-95). In 1991 (unsubstantiated) estimates of the number of private schools in Nepal were in the vicinity of 1500 (P. B. Shrestha, interview, Dec. 12, 1993). During the research period it was noted that almost every street had one or more banners advertising the availability of student places at some private school. Fieldtrip observations showed a continuing growth in the number of private schools in 1994.

Staff at private schools claimed that the growth of the private sector was due to dissatisfaction with both the government schools and some of the private schools. However, the education reporter for *The Rising Nepal* wrote that a number of these private schools closed as rapidly as they

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<sup>14</sup> The latter subsequently relocated into purpose-built premises by the husband and wife managers in 1997.

### **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

opened and guardians were often deprived of a refund for fees already paid (February 12, 1994). While this research did not investigate the validity of claims regarding growth and closure of private schools, their growth and standard is worthy of further research. However, other accusations regarding the quality of some private schools were investigated and it appeared that some of the small private schools did not have much better facilities than Government schools.

Between 1990 and 1995 private schools in Nepal fell into different management categories. As demonstrated by the case studies, the most influential schools were jointly administered by HMGN and an INGO, or were run by the Roman Catholic Church. Some were administered by trusts of various types. Many were owned and run by a private founder while others were run on behalf of a private founder. Some were managed by a husband and wife working together. As noted in the descriptions, some private schools were run by people with no educational experience or qualifications. Most privately-owned schools provided for boarders.

Despite the claims of PABSON that the private sector provided a better product than the government's, and constituted a service to the nation, the variation in quality of private schools and their uncontrolled growth were major problems. Although PABSON membership was open to all privately owned and run schools, its members mainly belonged to the large group of smaller private schools. The organisation, which was active mainly in the Kathmandu Valley, had commenced as an *ad hoc* committee shortly after democracy was declared in 1990. It produced a bulletin for its members, ran regular meetings to discuss matters of common interest, sponsored teacher training workshops, distributed certificates of appreciation for services to education, awarded medals for high scholastic achievement to outstanding

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pupils and ran competitions in essay writing and creative arts. The group retained a fund for hardship relief both at the public and personal level. By 1993 it had grown to a fully constituted group with an affiliation of 240 schools in Kathmandu Valley (PABSON Bulletin 1993). Throughout the research period, PABSON pressured the government for financial assistance. They claimed that they provided a number of additional school places which saved the government 45 billion rupees per year in tuition fees (PABSON Conference, Yak and Yeti Hotel, Dec. 15, 1991), and employed at least 13,000 teachers (fieldtrip interview, P. B. Shrestha, Dec. 12, 1991).

The government acknowledged that it was unable either to meet the need for expansion or increase the quality of government schools. Successive governments felt their efforts to improve the situation were frequently impeded by the difficult political and economic situation<sup>15</sup>, but the governments justified their lack of assistance to the private sector by claiming that the private sector was motivated to make a profit. Further government concerns regarding the private sector were expressed in 1991 by Krishna Prasad Bhattari (an ex-Prime Minister). Replying to PABSON, he complained:

The fees that the private and boarding schools at present are charging are inordinately high when compared to those of the government financed primary and secondary schools. But the question remains, are these schools in the private sector really giving quality education? While it is conceded that the type and amount of facilities and pay-scales that some of them are offering, attract better qualified teachers, and impart quality education as their SLC performances indicate, the majority are undoubtedly far short of the quality education mark. Furthermore, with a

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<sup>15</sup>The Nepali government has changed several times since the general election of November 1994 and in a country where positions are dependent on political and familial connections this means constant changes in goals, leadership and administration.

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

marked bias amongst these schools towards 'English' medium and the frequent inability of the teachers to impart a thorough grounding in the subject, it is not unusual for products of such schools to be neither fluent in English nor Nepali (*The Rising Nepal*, December 20th, 1991).

The successive governments since then have expressed no change in this attitude. The case studies support Bhattari's argument that private schools were variable in their conditions, standard of teaching and provision of equipment.

### **Influences on the private and government systems**

From the schools visited, it is clear that the influence of nineteenth and early twentieth century British education has remained strong in Nepal, as evidenced in the style of dress in both systems. All schools encouraged children to wear a British-style uniform (cf. photographs over page). The private schools had a variety of colours in their uniform, while girls in the government sector were usually limited to a faded blue, brown or green cotton box pleated tunic with white or grey shirt. Footwear for government school children was often only rubber thongs, as most Nepali families could not afford canvas or leather shoes. Although Nepali women teachers working in some private schools wore a sari of uniform pattern, there was no sign of any school advocating a uniform designed along the lines of Nepali national dress for the children.

British influence was also exhibited in the day to day administration and organisation of private schools. It was especially evident in the private sector, as many schools like Mittre Mirra emulated the British boarding school routine.

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A private school in Bhaktapur, 1994. The uniform shows British influence.

Photo: Carol Andrew

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

The government school system started between 10.00am and 10.15am with Tiffin (lunch) from 1.15pm to 1.45pm. Children went home at 4pm. Secondary classes operated on forty-five minute periods, six periods per day.

### **Equity**

The three major private schools in Nepal, Budhanilkantha, GBS and St Xavier's, all claim to have large numbers of students on scholarships which suggests that these schools were addressing issues of social equity. However, all three schools maintained their academic standards by admitting only pupils who had passed a stringent entrance test. As government schools officially did not commence ELT until Y4, and Chapters Seven and Eight will demonstrate that the standard of English taught in government schools is poorer than that of private schools, these entrance tests for the three premier schools are likely to be difficult for lower class or rural children whose learning opportunities are restricted. This calls into question the equity and justice of awarding of scholarships and places using entrance tests. However, there is no doubt these tests served a purpose, as the principals of all three schools stated that they came under intense pressure from guardians to admit children according to caste, class and family affiliations.

While it is generally accepted that the claims of Bhattari and Khanal (quoted earlier in this chapter) regarding high fees, autocratic leadership and poorly qualified unreliable teachers are accurate, it must be remembered that, with the exception of scholarship holders, the clientele of privately owned schools is drawn from sections of the population who are in a better financial position than those attending government schools.

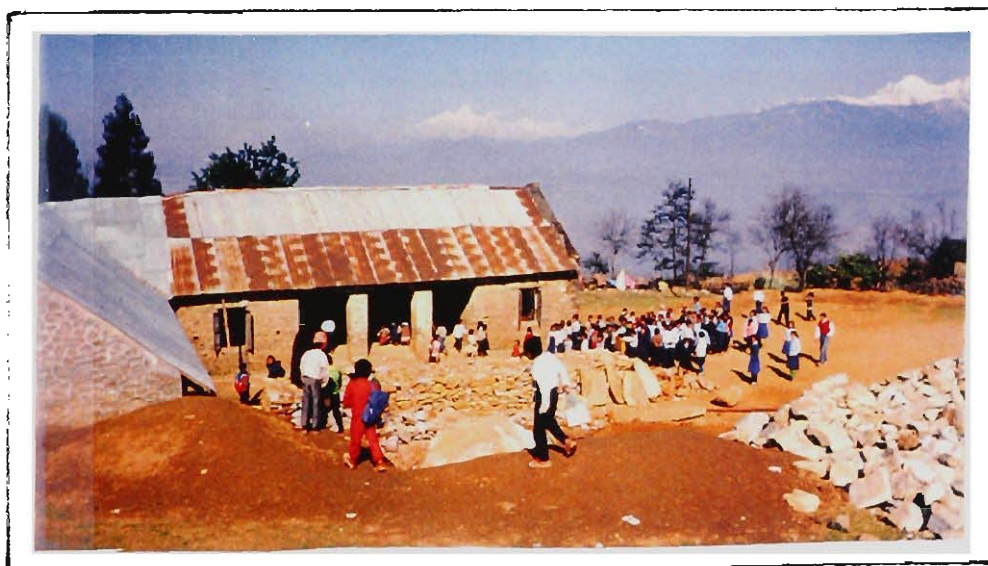


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Despite criticisms of the smaller private schools, on the whole their facilities were better than those found in the government schools, their class sizes were smaller, and many schools produced very good SLC results.

### Conclusions

This chapter has described how, during the research period, the Nepali private schools for the elite replicated the nineteenth century British education system. Evidence of Said's Orientalism and what N. R. Shrestha described as the 'colonisation of the Nepali mind' (cf. p. 62 above) was apparent in the British-influenced structure of the day's activities and the content of the curriculum in the private school system. In addition, organisation in government schools also replicated the nineteenth century colonial model similar to that found in India and uniform and curriculum content displayed the British influence.



This school was on the edge of Trisuli district, 1994. Despite the assistance of a Japanese INGO there were no desks and no playground facilities. Although representative of government schools described in the text, it is not included among the descriptions.

Photo: R. Kerr

## **Material Conditions in Schools: 1991-1994**

While the growth in the numbers of government and private schools have, with very few exceptions, increased, unless a school having had INGO or international assistance, successive Nepali governments have been unable from their meagre resources to achieve the goal of providing quality buildings and basic equipment. Although the buildings housing private schools were generally better, private schools also needed international assistance to enable them to provide more than basic equipment. Drawing on the case studies, a comparison between government and private schools shows that in many cases there was a demonstrable gap between the material quality of schools and the government's planning goals. The chapter has also suggested there may be a significant problem with teachers having a poor general education and inadequate teacher training - an issue to be taken up in the following chapter.



## Nepali Teachers, 1991-94

### Introduction

Although there was considerable growth in the numbers of both government and private schools between 1950 and the early 1990s, evidence presented in Chapter Five indicated that the provision of educational facilities and equipment was generally quite inadequate within the research area. Fieldwork also suggested that the standard of general education of teachers was poor and that a number of teachers had no teacher training. This chapter analyses field research on the standard of teachers in Nepal between 1991 and 1994 and examines the influences on teachers' ability to perform their job. Using information based on teachers' perceptions of their own needs combined with an examination of secondary data collected in the research area between 1991 and 1995, the chapter also discusses the morale and status of Nepali teachers and their day-to-day problems.

As noted in the methodology section (cf. p. 3 above) field data were collected during:

February 10-20, 1991;

December 3, 1991 and January 30, 1992;

January 3 and February 25, 1994;

November 1 and December 14, 1994.<sup>1</sup>

The data were collected from both government and private school teachers who attended in-service training workshops organised by Plan International, Nepal, PABSON and NELTA. In addition, data were collected from some schools visited on the Terai. The bulk of the survey data was collected during

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to my first visit to Nepal in February 1990, a further research trip, not part of this thesis, was made to Nepal in March 1997.

1994 as part of a survey of ELT. The methodology for collection is listed in the introduction to the thesis.

The findings are analysed using the frameworks of Beeby (1966 and 1980), whose taxonomy on Third World education - although, in that it assumes developing countries will follow Western patterns, orientalist in nature - provides a useful reference point for discussions; Schon (1983), who writes on professionalism in a Western context; and Joyce and Showers (1988). Even though Joyce and Showers' work is based on the effects of training and general education on the work and morale of the teacher in the USA, it nevertheless provides helpful insights and comparisons when analysing the Nepali data.

### **Government Data**

Nepali government statistics count a teacher as trained if the teacher has a recognised form of basic training. Basic training differs from pre-service training, which refers to courses such as IEd and BEd. Basic training courses vary from 1 to 300 hours and are sponsored from various sources (*Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance* 1996). It is according to this broad definition of training that HMGN figures for 1992 indicate that 47 percent of government primary school teachers, 34 percent of lower secondary teachers, and 44 percent of higher secondary teachers, were trained (*Statistical Pocket Book of Nepal* 1994, 125, 126, 127). The total trained across all divisions is 45 percent (cf. Table 5.1 p. 166 below). Later statistics, published during 1996, compiled by HMGN and UNICEF (*Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance* 1996) indicated that 68 percent of primary school teachers had some form of training, but of the 68 percent only 25 percent of primary school teachers had received what was defined as 'basic training'. The HMGN and UNICEF figures also indicate 61 percent of

primary school teachers had a general educational level of SLC [Y10] (1996, 41-43).

Table 5.1 Government Statistics of Teacher Training 1992				
Division	Trained	%	Untrained	%
Primary	36359	46.6	41589	53.4
Lower Secondary	4490	34	8735	66.0
Upper Secondary	5339	44.0	6793	56
Total	46188	44.7	57117	55.3
Source: Statistical Pocketbook (Nepal) 1994				

During fieldtrips a commonly heard claim was that the private school system was Nepal's greatest growth industry, but government statistics exclude private school staff. As a result, the available data regarding the training and education of teachers must be viewed as incomplete. According to Lockheed (1991, 39) this is not unusual in developing countries. Furthermore, interviews conducted during the research period showed that many politicians and academics were poorly informed regarding standard of staff and the daily needs of teachers and pupils in schools in both private and government sectors. Exacerbating the apparent ignorance regarding standards and needs was that those program planners, who were aware of the problems, often did not acknowledge the extent to which inadequate teaching standards were likely to adversely affect projects. Thus a focus of fieldwork 1991-94 was to survey the difficulties facing the development of a professional teaching service in Nepal. Only a small number of teachers were surveyed: 98 between February 1991 and January 1992 and 196 in 1994, making a combined total of 294. Although this group is small, where possible it is compared with figures contained in the larger government

surveys quoted in the *Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance* (cf. p. 165 above).

Between 1991 and 1994, information was gathered from private and government teachers within the research area (cf. Map 3, p. 21 above). These data are compared with the national figure to explore whether the balance between trained and untrained teachers is altered when private school teachers are included. The thesis survey sought information regarding age, gender, socio-economic background, teaching experience, general education and teacher training, teaching methodology (including lesson planning and assessment), appointment, morale, career structure, and occupation in addition to teaching. This provided a basis for comparison of the differences in the educational standards and teaching qualifications between government and private school teachers.

### **Training Qualifications**

Data collected in the research area between 1991-94 from two hundred and ninety-one<sup>2</sup> government and private school teachers indicated that many teachers in Nepal were untrained or undertrained. Table 5.2 indicates 47 government teachers out of 134 had some training (35 percent), while 61 private school teachers out of 157 (38 percent) claimed some training. This made an overall total of 37 percent [108 out of 291] who had some form of training.

But as noted earlier (cf. p. 165 above), this training varied greatly in standard, duration and focus. Table 5.3 shows that, in 1994, 11 percent of government and private school teachers surveyed across primary and secondary divisions had pre-service training. In the smaller groups surveyed

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<sup>2</sup>Although 294 teachers participated in the workshops, three teachers did not give individual details in the February 1991 workshop.

**Table 5.2 Consolidated Statistics for Teacher Training (1991-94)  
In-Service and Pre-Service combined**

Table	Government			Private		
	Trained	Untrained	Total Govt.	Trained	Untrained	Total Private
5.12	3	9	12	1	0	1
5.3	4	12	16	0	3	3
5.4	4	12	16	2	0	2
5.9				2	23	25
5.10				5	15	20
1.1	36	54	90	51	55	106
TOTAL	47	87	134	61	96	157
291						
%	35%	65%	100%	38%	62%	100%

No of respondents: Govt. 134 Private 157 Total 291  
(drawn from all respondents 1991-94)

Percentages in this table are separately calculated for government and private school teachers

Percentage with teacher training, Government and Private Schools: 108 from 291=37%

**Table 5.3 Teacher Training of Private and Government School Teachers (1994)**

Teacher Training Status	Number with no pre-service training	Number in col. 1 with in-service training	Number with pre-service training	Total
Private Schools	102 (96%)	47 (46%)	4 (3.7%)	106
Government Schools	72 (80%)	18 (20%)	18 (20%)	90
TOTAL	174 (89%)	65 (33%)	22 (11%)	196

Places: Kathmandu Valley, Gaur, Janakpur, Birganj, Narayanghat

Times: Feb. -March 1994

Total of respondents: 196

Systems: Government and Private

Organisers: PLAN, NELTA and PABSON

Columns 1+3=100%

N. B. Percentages refer separately to private and government teachers to facilitate comparison.

in 1991-92 (cf. Tables 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6, pp. 171-173 below), the combined 1991-92 figure was 8.7 percent (5 from 57). Table 5.3 shows pre-service training in private schools as a low 3.7 percent, but there was a greater proportion with some form of IST. Nevertheless 46 percent of private school teachers claimed IST (which did not necessarily include basic training) compared with 20 percent of government teachers. However the number of teachers surveyed in 1991-92 was too small and limited in scope (cf. methodology phases 1 and 2, above pp. 31ff.) from which to draw definitive conclusions or comparisons.

IST in Nepal is largely uncoordinated. Between 1991 and 1994 the government did not provide in-service training for private school teachers. HMGN and UNICEF sponsored basic training, delivered in-service for government school teachers through the BPEP and the PEDP, while private organizations such as PABSON and NELTA used their limited resources to provide non-accredited in-service training of the private sector. In addition, government schools involved with multilateral and INGO sponsorship also received non-accredited training sessions of one or two days duration from the sponsoring organization. However, there was no follow-up to any of the training sessions to ensure that the teachers understood and implemented the training, or found it of practical assistance.

During 1994 this was also found to be the case with the government training sessions in progress for the implementation of new curricula at the Y1-3 levels.<sup>3</sup> The training for teaching new curricula being introduced involved teachers in between six and ten consecutive days of workshops. During a field visit with UNICEF and a staff member from the BPEP in December 1994, some results of the training became apparent. The observer

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<sup>3</sup>Although the official intention was to provide follow-up no evidence was found in the research area that this had occurred.

from the BPEP was shocked at the problems and the resistance to the use of the new curricula and teaching methodology. It transpired that until this point the BPEP had simply taken the successful implementation of the training for granted and had paid little attention to making sure 'those at the base of the system' had the resources and commitment to implement the program (cf. p. 73 above). Of the two schools visited with UNICEF and BPEP, one was on the outer edge of Kathmandu Valley while the other was within one kilometre of UNICEF's national office. In both these schools the teachers claimed the training had been enjoyable but totally inadequate. They complained no supporting material had been produced and no follow-up had taken place to assess or help overcome problems. At these schools teachers were observed teaching by rote directly from the new text which had not been designed for this teaching method. While in one school a fifty minute search failed to produce the new curriculum document, the second school had the curriculum document available but it was kept locked in a cupboard.

The field experience with BPEP suggests both a mismatch between training and practice and a lack of follow-up to the training (Schon 1983, 307). Joyce and Showers stress the latter is necessary, as the 'introduction of new procedures into an existing setting of instructional behaviours generally creates dislocation and discomfort, and considerable practice is required' (1988, 72). They also argue that 'feedback and coaching are important in the facilitation of skill development, and that these should occur as soon as possible after practice to enable collegial support and assistance for problems' (1988, 68-69). The lack of follow-up and support was clearly causing problems in Nepal.

Further evidence of a mismatch between training and classroom implementation was indicated when the few teachers who had the government

**Table 5.4 Length of Service and Qualifications of Teachers  
Kiritipur (1991)**

No.	Years of Service	Training	Type	Qualifications	Govt. /Priv.
1	None	no		IA (equiv. Y12)	G
2	None	no		BSc	G
3	5 mths	no		reading BLaw	G
4	10 mths	no		IA	G
5	I	no		IA	G
6	1	yes	workshops	Bachelor studies 1 <sup>st</sup> yr, adult literacy	G
7	2	no		SLC	G
8	2	yes	primary skills 110 hrs	SLC	G
9	2	no		SLC	G
10	2	no		reading BLaw	G
11	2	no		not listed	G
12	2	no		IA	G
13	3	no		IA	G
14	3	yes	primary skills	IA	G
15	3	no		IA	G
16	3	yes	primary skills	BEd	P
17	4	no		SLC	P
18	9	no		Studying for Masters degree	P
19	10	yes	primary skills	not listed	P

Place: Kiritipur  
Date: 18, 19 Dec 1991 (see Table 2)  
Organisers: PLAN  
No. of participants: 19  
System: Government

Key: IA = Intermediate Arts.(equiv. Y12) SLC = School Leaving Certificate (equiv. Y10)  
IST = in-service training G = government school teacher P = private school teacher

Proportion with pre-service training: 5.2% i.e. 1/19  
Proportion with IST: 21% i.e. 4/19



**Table 5.5 Length of Service and Qualifications of Teachers - Gorkhana**

No.	Age	Gender	Years of service	Qualifications	Type of Training	Division	Govt/ Private
1	19	M	1	no		P	Govt
2	20	F	1	yes	adult literacy	P	Govt
3	21	M	1	no		P	Govt
4	21	F	3	no		P	Govt
5	24	M	2	no		P	Govt
6	25	M	3	no		P	Govt
7	25	M	7	no		P	Govt
8	26	M	7	no		P	Govt
9	26	F	12	yes	IS Montessori Kindergarten	P	Private
10	27	F	10	yes	BSc No teacher training English training	P	Govt
11	28	M	8	yes	BEd (in progress)	S	Govt
12	28	M	7	yes	150 hrs	P	Govt
13	28	F	7	no		S	Govt
14	29	M	5	yes	adult literacy	P	Govt
15	32	F	19	yes	BEd studying MEd.	P (Principal)	Private
16	33	M	6	no		P	INGO/ govt
17	34	F	18	yes	some govt. training	P	Govt
18	47	M	30	no		P	Govt

Place: Gorkhana  
Date: Dec 26, 27 1991  
Organiser: PLAN  
No. of participants: 18  
System: 16 Government 2 Private

Key: P = Primary S = Secondary INGO = Plan worker

**Table 5.6 Qualifications of Teachers and Period of Service -  
Kathmandu Central**

No.	Years of Service	Teacher Training	Type of Training	Qualifications
1	0	no	IST	BSc
2	5 months	no		reading in Law
3	10 months	no		IA
4	1	yes		BEd first year
5	1	no		IA
6	2	no	150 hours IST	reading in Law
7	2	no		SLC
8	2	yes		SLC
9	2	no		IA
10	2	no		IA
11	2	undecided	150 hrs IST	BEd*
12	2	no		SLC
13	3	no		IA
14	3	no		IA
15	3	yes		IA first year
16	3	no	150 hrs IST	IA
17	3	no		IA
18	4	no		SLC
19	9	no		studying for MA
20	10	yes		SLC

Place: Kathmandu Central

Date: January 1992

Organiser: School Principal

No. of participants: 20

System: Private

Proportion with pre-service training: 5%

Proportion with IST: 20%

\* The respondent did not claim pre-service training, despite having a BEd

accredited pre-service training of IEd or BEd all claimed that they had never received any teacher training. Inquiry into these claims revealed that teachers felt that IEd and BEd courses were inadequate to the daily classroom challenges. In response to the teachers' claims, Teachers' College instructors complained training teachers in Nepal was too complex a task. Most significantly, they admitted that most of their time was spent raising the trainee's knowledge of general subjects and that there was insufficient time available for teaching pedagogy (fieldtrip Feb. 1991; Feb. 1994). Given the low pass of teachers at SLC level this was probably a valid complaint. However, with the exception of ELTs, Nepali teachers did not admit that they saw their own low standard of education as an impediment in the execution of their of role.

### **General education and teacher growth**

Between 1991 and 1994 the Nepalis used the term 'qualified' to refer to those primary school teachers who had passed at least SLC. For lower secondary, 'qualified' refers to Intermediate Certificate, and for higher secondary a bachelor degree is required. The SLC examination taken at Y10 is little more than a test of memorised facts learned at school and, as will be shown in Chapter Seven (cf. p. 230 below), these 'facts' are sometimes meaningless and incorrect. The examination can be passed at three levels, the lowest pass level being a score of 33 percent. Davies' claim that teachers were reputed to come overwhelmingly from the third level of pass of 33 percent (1984, npn), indicates the general standard of education of primary school teachers in Nepal was likely to be very low. Similarly the standard of education of lower secondary teachers was also likely to be low, especially

## Nepali Teachers; 1991-1994

when compared to the developed world where all teachers are expected to have completed Y12 and possess a four year teaching degree.

The data in Table 5.7 (cf. p. 175 below) includes all teachers in the primary and secondary divisions who responded to this question concerning their level of general education. Of these, 41 percent of government teachers had a minimum level of general education of SLC, 23 percent had passed intermediate level Y11-12, and 32 percent had completed a degree. While the sample in this table was limited to 93 government teachers it should be noted that it tends to conform with statistics in the *Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance* which show that a large proportion of government primary school teachers had no more than SLC standard (1996, 41).

<b>Table 5.7 Education Level of Teachers Surveyed</b> statistics consolidated						
Qualification Level	Government	%	Private	%	All	%
SLC equivalent Y 10	38	41.5	16	18	54	29
IA (part) Y11	0		1	1	1	0.5
Intermediate Arts etc Y12	22	23	38	42	60	33
U.G degree commenced Y13	2	2	5	6	7	3.8
U.G. degree	29	31.5	27	30	56	31
P.G. (in progress)	2	2	2	2	4	2.2
P.G.	0		1	1	1	0.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100</b>
Notes: These statistics draw together the information gathered on educational qualifications of all teachers who responded to this question. Percentages are given of government and private school teachers separately, then combined in the last column.						

Given the lack of evidence from elsewhere in Nepal regarding the general education of private school teachers, the data in Table 5.7 provide a valuable comparison between government and private schools. The table shows that of the private schools surveyed, 18 percent of teachers had a

general education level of Y10 (23 percent lower than in government schools). When those teachers educated to SLC and Intermediate level are grouped together, the data indicate that slightly fewer private school teachers (60 percent) are at this level, compared with the government (63.5 percent). Similarly, 30 percent of private school teachers and 32 percent of government teachers had tertiary qualifications. Two government teachers indicated studying for a post-graduate degree and one private school teacher was qualified MA (cf. Table 5.11, p. 187 below). Most secondary school teachers claimed to have Bachelor degrees in Arts or Science. Seventy-eight teachers failed to list their general educational level, thus reducing the sample size from 261 to 183<sup>4</sup>, and there were no other data available incorporating the private schools sector with which to compare and substantiate the thesis findings. However, the thesis data suggest that private school teachers may have a slightly higher level of general education to that of government teachers. Nevertheless, as very few teachers in the private school system had any pre-service or basic teacher training, this raises doubts about the general claim by private school principals that private schools are superior in every way to the government school system.

Applying Beeby's taxonomy to the assembled data (cf. p. 31 above), most government school teachers appeared to be in the category of 'Dame School', which suggests teachers were in a low-growth state (1966, 68). This growth state equates with Schon's classification of the 'traditional model' in which the teacher, cast in the role of the guru of the past, assumes the facade of the 'expert' and, not confident in dropping the facade, adheres to the familiar model. Schon argues that adherence to this traditional model inhibits capacity to 'be reflective-in-action' (1983, 300-4). However,

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<sup>4</sup>Owing to the exigencies of some workshops not all teachers were in a position to respond to this question (cf. methodology p. 21 ff. above).

amongst the teachers surveyed there are indications that some elements of 'reflection-in-action' (cf. p. 173 above) may have begun to develop in some government teachers who had experienced prolonged assistance from an INGO. Such reflectiveness suggests that some teachers were approaching the second professional growth stage identified by Beeby as 'The Stage of Formalism' (cf. p. 31 above).

However, despite the indications of a developing reflectiveness, no program of daily work was ever mentioned or evident amongst government school teachers, and there didn't seem to be any awareness amongst teachers that this was necessary. Many teachers in both systems claimed in interview that they had never seen a curriculum. Those who had were unaware of its importance. The word syllabus was rarely mentioned by teachers and the relationship between curriculum, syllabus and daily work program was generally not known. Similarly, the relationship between the text and the teaching points noted in the curriculum was not known even by those teachers who had been introduced to the new curriculum (Y1-3) (cf. p. 169 above) through the government in-service training programs. Observation of lessons showed the teachers continued to be textbook-bound and hence committed to an extremely narrow content, delivered through rote learning (fieldtrip, November 1994).

In many instances private school teachers demonstrated greater organisational skills in that they kept brief records of the lessons taught, but often these were little more than a precis of a page in the text. They often had a rigid syllabus which had been developed from the government curriculum by the principal and some members of staff. However, despite a greater variety of texts being used in private schools, the lesson content remained textbook bound and in Y10 dominated by the SLC. Furthermore, private

school teachers shared with government teachers a lack of any knowledge of the relationship between teaching points, and the work in the text. Their attitudes to evaluation were also identical to those of government teachers.

The data suggest that, in the private system, some teachers had a slightly better general education but few had any substantial training in teaching practice. The fact that some teachers, in both government and private sectors, desired more training and understanding of child development, and were anxious to know how to assist children with learning difficulties, suggests that these teachers at least were reaching a point where they would like to vary the way in which they taught (cf. Tables 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10, pp. 179-181 below). This gives further evidence that some 'reflection-in-action' may be developing amongst teachers in both systems.

Both the data collected for the thesis and subjective observation during fieldtrips indicated that very few teachers in either system showed any signs of having moved into Beeby's 'stage of transition' (cf. p. 31 above), where teachers were better-educated and trained. Those who had, still claimed they felt intimidated by the methods of the restrictive district examinations and SLC examinations, and these examinations were often used as a justification by teachers for their lack of professional growth. In addition, the national policy of memory testing, typified in the SLC, was a major influence on teacher attitudes to evaluation.

Further, rote learning stresses aural/oral responses, frequently ignoring visual stimuli. While some teachers were aware of the value of a visual presentation, the visual and concrete in the natural environment, as well as simple objects or pictures, remained unused teaching resources. The Nepali teacher's perception of audio-visual media was limited to electronic equipment, not often practical in Nepal where fieldtrip observations and

*Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance* indicated that 85 percent of government schools were without electricity (1996, 40).

<p align="center"><b>Table 5.8 Workshop Survey - Thankot</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Teachers' Perceptions of their Daily Problems</b></p> <p align="center">Place: Thankot Date: February 1991 No. of participants: 16 School system: Government Organisers: PLAN</p> <p>Participants were divided into four groups and were asked to nominate difficulties they encountered in performing their teaching duties, in order of priority.</p> <p><b>PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS</b></p> <p>Lack of finances for equipment Need for visual aids, charts Need for building improvements and additions (doors and even windows) Lack of furniture (cupboards, storage rooms, desks) Library materials required Teacher training inadequate Need for in-service training Trained consultants needed ( especially English language, science) Teacher/pupil ratio too high (1:40 or more) Difficulties with remedial students Consulting period, staff meetings inadequate Guardians, Board members (interference, misunderstandings)</p> <p><b>SOCIAL CONCERNS</b></p> <p>Inadequate drinking water Health check ups for children Absence of students (detained by family for economic reasons) Inadequate toilet facilities, children unaware how to use toilets hygienically Erosion Children need school compound wall for safety</p>	
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**Table 5.9 Workshop Survey**

**Teachers' Perceptions of their Professional Needs and Daily Problems**

Places: Kiritipur, Gorkana, Thapatali  
 Dates: Dec. 1991, Dec. 1991, Jan. 1992  
 School system: Government and Private  
 Organiser: PLAN, Headmaster  
 Total number of participants: 62

Groups listed a range of concerns in order of frequency of mention  
 List not rank ordered

PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS		Groups listing problem
Lack of knowledge of student evaluation methods		PG
Difficulties with guardians (lack of support)		PG
Lack of games materials		PG
Inadequate training		PG
No evaluation system of teachers		PG
Problems teaching in Nepali / children w. different mother tongue		PG
No unity among teachers, no discussion/sharing		PG
Lack of lesson plan		PG
No teacher reference book for teaching materials		PG
Poor salary		PG
Lack of supervision, support from DEO, and inaccessibility to & from DEO		G
School building inadequate or non-existent		G
Furniture inadequate or non-existent		G
Lack of blackboard and chalk		G
Library inadequate or non-existent		G
Poor teaching environment		G
Late arrival of text books		G
Lack of career structure		G
Teacher centred curriculum		G
SOCIAL CONCERNS		
Lack of sanitation and hygiene, inadequate toilets		G
Poor student attendance, punctuality		G
Lack of drinking water		G
<p>Responses according to teacher's employing authority            G = Government, P = Private, PG = both Government and Private</p>		

Table 5.10 Workshop Survey

**Teachers' Perceptions of their Professional Needs and Daily Problems**

Places: Kathmandu Valley, Gaur, Janakpur, Birganj, Narayanghat

Dates: Feb. March 1994

Organisers: PLAN, PABSON and NELTA

Systems: Government and Private

**PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS**

Teachers poorly paid	PG
Lack of discipline	PG
Lack of sporting equipment	PG
Problems handling upset parents	PG
Lack of knowledge in evaluating academic performance	PG
Problems setting up classroom displays	PG
Don't know how to teach non-achieving student	PG
Lack of parental support (parents believe teaching the responsibility of the teacher)	PG
Large classes (no limit)	PG
Teachers required to double up to cover other teachers' absence	PG
Expectation that children should all perform the same	PG
Variable standards	PG
Lack of patience amongst colleagues in dealing with children	PG
Lack of commitment amongst colleagues	PG
No training in child development or psychology	PG
Lack of teaching materials (aids, audio-visual, etc)	PG
Lack of supervision by the District Education Office	G
No proper syllabus, curriculum teacher centred	G
Poor physical facilities (buildings, playground)	G
Children lack general knowledge	G
Texts not issued in time by the government	G
Lack of chalk and dusters (some schools)	G
Students do not bring books back to school	G
Homework not done	G
Lack compound wall	G
Children not given the chance to learn in 'mother tongue'	G
Lack knowledge of interesting games for pre-primary	P
Problems with large mount of homework correction	P
Lack knowledge of how to teach science	P

**SOCIAL CONCERNS**

Poverty	G
Lack of health and sanitation	G

Key: G = government teachers P = private school teachers  
PG = teachers from both government and private schools

Although some Nepali teachers indicated a desire to adapt their teaching methods, they argued that a lack of support and assistance from guardians was an impediment to change. A principal of a Nepali private school confessed that she was experiencing difficulty with a group of guardians because she had introduced a conceptual notion to the learning of counting the numbers one to ten. Place value, and one to one relations, are not widely known concepts in Nepal (cf. p. 73 above). The guardians know only that their child could count to no more than ten, whereas a child in the same year level from another school could parrot their way to one hundred. This indicated that guardians regarded the traditional role of the teacher as not open to modification. Schon's argument supports that of Weiler's (cf. p. 73 above). Schon highlights the difficulties in such a situation where one group, in this case guardians, does not want change. He claims movement is governed by 'how far the "client" may wish to participate in change' (1983, 307), and argues that movement into a new category is difficult unless the decision to change is made jointly by 'client' and 'professional practitioner' (300-6). Acknowledging the difficulty of change, Beeby contends that in some societies Stage 4, the 'Stage of Meaning', may not be acceptable. Certainly Bista's premise that the Hindu culture of Nepal, with its subtle and pervading resistance to change, suggests Nepalis may not find the overall goals of Beeby's Stage of Meaning - which promote in the learner understanding, individual value judgements, problem solving and active thinking - desirable in a traditional society which values the hierarchical status quo (Beeby 1966 and 1980).

Even at Budhanilkantha, teachers had not attained growth Stage 4. This concurs with Adam Curle's claim that 'education, often closely associated with religion, has tended rather to hallow antiquity than to promote

innovation' (1964, np). In the Western world, religion is a compartment of life for most people, but in countries like Nepal it remains the way of life and, as Curle implies, this brings into question 'the spiritual' cost of modernisation.

### **Appointment Procedures and the Career Structure of Teachers**

As indicated in Chapter Three, in 1950 Nepal had a very limited personnel base upon which to develop its educational sector. The need for personnel escalated with the increased desire for formal schooling between 1950 and 1970, and the implementation of the NESP in 1971 added to the demand. As noted in Chapter Four, in an attempt to address the staffing needs in schools in 1979, the Nepali government removed the requirement for a teacher to be trained. Another result of the government's decision to dispense with the requirement of teacher training was that inappropriate criteria developed for the selection of teachers. These criteria included family relationships, social and political relationships, and the standard of spoken English.

The decision to dispense with a pre-service training requirement exaggerated a situation already noted by many researchers (Bennett 1981, Davies 1984, B. L. Shrestha 1990 and Bambach 1993b), that there was a connection between the leakage of the best teachers from the primary division to other divisions of the service resulting in a weakening of the standard of primary education. In 1991-94 the career path for a primary school teacher necessitated a further year of training to become a lower secondary teacher, which gained them a 30 percent increase in salary, and an additional three years of training to 'advance' to being a secondary school teacher, where a teacher could earn more than twice as much as a primary school teacher.

Bennett (1981), Davies (1984), B. L. Shrestha (1990) and Bambach (1993) claimed that such an inadequate career structure contributed to low morale throughout the teaching service. As seen in Table 5.9 (cf. p. 180 above) teachers listed the lack of a career structure prominently amongst their professional concerns.

In 1992, the Nepali government initiated a project involving the PEDP which sought to develop a career structure for primary school teachers. The major issues to be addressed in the project were:

- (a) ongoing problems of low status and morale of primary teachers;
- (b) a lack of adequate incentives for teachers to enter and remain in the primary sector;
- (c) few opportunities for career progression within the sector;
- (d) an enormous disparity between the number of male and female teachers and a minor role played by women in the sector;
- (e) difficult teaching conditions; and
- (f) a lack of support (community or professional) for primary teachers (Bambach 1993a, 3).

A program of in-service training was also introduced during 1992 in an attempt to upgrade the teaching skills of government teachers. However, the implementation of the project was severely impeded by:

- \*financial constraints;
- \*the country's political instability (which affected job stability within the MOEC/SW;
- \* the lack of a tradition of keeping records in Nepal; and
- \*a lack of co-ordination and co-operation between the PEDP and the BPEP.

The lack of co-ordination between the PEDP and the BPEP was evident in interviews during fieldtrips in November 1994. Interviews were

characterised by accusations and counter-accusations of corruption, and personality clashes between the PEDP and the BPEP staff. As a result, the Education Regulations, promulgated in 1992-93, were only partly implemented.

As can be seen in Tables 5.9 and 5.10 (cf. p. 180-81 above), a problem (related to a lack of supervision), involving assessment, was listed amongst teachers' professional concerns. Bambach confirms that this concern regarding supervision and assessment is valid. He claims 'there was no standard system for the monitoring, or rating, of teacher efficiency'. He argues that rating teachers in Nepal was made difficult because, apart from official job descriptions for Head Teachers, no criteria existed for the role of a classroom teacher (1993, 19). Lack of definition caused confusion and contributed to problems with morale for, as Schon notes, 'although professionals can be counted on to do their job they can not necessarily define their job' (1983, 14).

### **Experience**

During fieldtrips in 1991-94, Western consultants often claimed the Western definition of the term 'teaching experience' was misleading in a developing country like Nepal, which offered limited teacher training and a tradition of rote learning. The consultants claimed statistics regarding teaching experience were likely to give no more than an indication of the number of years that teachers had been employed. Although the claim is an overstatement, and indicative of Orientalism, it is important to acknowledge the restricted opportunities for a Nepali teacher to develop. Sirotnik (1983), Medly (1977), Goodlad and Klein (1970) (all in Joyce and Showers 1988) suggest the significance of training in teacher development is undervalued.

Joyce and Showers indicate that these researchers claim they are frequently surprised to find that policy-makers believe that somehow, without training, teachers and administrators have developed a wide range of practices. Conversely, Joyce and Showers themselves argue that, in reality, 'most teachers use a narrow range of practices and expand that repertoire only when substantial and carefully designed training is provided' (1988, 56). As already noted (cf. p. 169 above) in Nepal in-service training was limited in availability and range, and lacked follow-up. During the research the range of practice observed in Nepal was largely limited to a teaching methodology fundamentally unchanged from the time of the Hindu, Buddhist and British colonial schools. Between 1950-71 neither the curriculum nor texts were changed. After curriculum changes were made during the NESP (1971), apart from some minor revisions in the early eighties, no further changes were implemented until 1992, when the Nepali government commenced progressive revision of its curriculum. These long periods of stagnation in curriculum development further restricted the opportunity for diverse educational experience in Nepal .

During the 1991-94 research period only one teacher interviewed<sup>5</sup> had been employed in the teaching service since the mid-1950s. Otherwise, teachers' experience ranged from less than one year to twenty-two years. Only one-seventh of the total survey group had more than ten years experience. Slightly less than half (47 percent) had three years' or less experience. Tables 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.11 and 5.12 (cf. pp. 171-73 above, and 187-88 below) indicate that in 1991-92, of the group of ninety-eight teachers

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<sup>5</sup>Although this teacher was interviewed, he was not part of the tabled surveyed group.

Table 5.11 Qualifications of Teachers and Period of Service - Thapatali

No.	Age	Yrs of service	Teacher Training	Education	Division
1	22	nil	no	BSc	P
2	23	nil	no	IC	P
3	18	1 mth	no	Baccalaur	P
4	22	1 mth	no	BA	S
5	24	6 mths	no	IA	Kg
6	20	1	no	IC	P
7	22	1	no	BA	P
8	23	1	no	BMusic	LS
9	35	1	no	BA	S
10	22	2	no	IA	P
11	18	2	no	IA	P
12	22	2	no	BSc Dip Computing	S
13	19	2	no	IA	P
14	19	2	no	IA	Kg
15	20	2	no	IA	Kg
16	21	2	no	SLC	P
17	19	3	no	IE	P
18	21	4	no	Baccalaur.	P
19	21	4	no	IC	P
20	24	5	no	BA	P
21	33	5	no	IA	LKg
22	22	6	no	IA	P
23	32	12	2 yrs pre- service	BMaths	S
24	35	10	no	IA	P
25	36	22	several years not formal	MA MPA BEd (Lit)* BLaw	S (Principal English Medium School)

Place: Thapatali  
Date: January 1992  
No of participants: 25  
Organiser: The Principal  
System: Private

Proportion with pre-service training: 3/25 (32%)

\*This participant did not claim BEd as teacher training

Key:

IA = Intermediate Arts (Y 12) IE = Intermediate Education (Y 12)  
SLC = Y10

P = Primary S = Secondary LS = Lower Secondary

Kg = Kindergarten LKg = Lower Kindergarten

Note: BEd (Lit) is counted as pre-service, though not claimed by respondent.



**Table 5.12 Workshop Survey**  
**Length of Service and Main Interests of Teachers**

No.	Age	Years of Service	Training	Type	Division	Govt/ Private	Main Interests
1	18	7 mths	yes	150 hrs govt	P	govt	reading writing
2	19	1	no		P	govt	reading
3	20	1	yes	adult literacy training	P	govt	social welfare
4	21	3	no		P	govt	reading writing
5	24	2	no		P	govt	teaching
6	25	3	yes	adult literacy training	P	govt	social welfare
7	25	1	no		P	govt	reading
8	25	7	no		P	govt	reading writing
9	26	7	no		P	govt	football
10	27	10	yes	Steiner informal training	Pre Prim	private	reading writing
11	29	5	no		P	govt	teaching
12	34	18	yes	150 hrs govt	P	govt	reading
13	56	18	yes	150 hrs govt	P Principal	govt	smoking reading writing

Place: Thankot  
Date: February 1991  
No. of participants: 13  
Organisers: PLAN  
School system: Government (1 Private)  
Listed according to age

Key: P=Primary

Proportion with pre-service training: 0%

Proportion with IST: 6/13 or 46%

surveyed, thirteen had less than one year' service, fifty-nine had between one and five years' service, sixteen had between six and ten years' service, and ten had more than ten years' service. That is, seventy-two teachers (73

percent) had served as teachers for five years or less. These data suggest that teachers probably did not remain in the service for long periods, consistent with Khanal's claim (cf. p. 198 below) that in Nepal teaching was used by many as a preliminary step to a better position.

However, one should also allow for the rapidly increasing number of teachers in employment. Whatever the reasons for the short length of service, the indications are that that most Nepali teachers are inexperienced.

## Age

In the 1991-92 sample, of the fifty-six teachers asked to reveal their age, forty-five claimed to be aged between eighteen and thirty. Nine were aged between thirty-one and forty, and only two were over forty. This suggests that the Nepali teaching service was quite youthful at this time. Field observations suggested that this was likely to be an accurate representation.

During 1994, the thesis research incorporated an investigation of English language teaching in Nepal. Amongst those surveyed during this

Table 5.13 Age of Teachers - 1994 survey

Responses	Age range 18-30 (N)	(%)	Age range 31-40 (N)	(%)	Age Range 41+ (N)	(%)	All (N)	All (%)
Male	28	26	12	11	6	5.7	46	43.5
Female	36	34	8	7.5	5	4.7	49	46.5
Gender not stated	6	6	2	1.8	3	2.9	11	10
	70	66%	22	20.7%	14	13.3%	106	100%

Statistics from 1994: only 1/3 of group asked to state their age

Table 5.14 Age of Teachers, surveyed in 1991-92

Table	Age range 18-30	%	Age range 31-40	%	Age range 41+	%	All (N)	All (%)
Table 5. 12	11	19.6	1	1.8	1	1.8	13	23.2
Table 5. 5	14	25	3	5.4	1	1.7	18	32.1
Table 5. 11	20	35.8	5	8.9	0	0	25	44.7
TOTAL	45	80%	9	16%	2	3.5%	56	100%
Statistics from Tables 5.5, and 5.11, and 5.12 (1991-2 only)								

period, 106 teachers were asked to indicate their age. Table 5.13 shows that within this group there was a wide range in the age of teachers surveyed but, with few exceptions, teachers were aged between eighteen and forty. Seventy out of the 106 were aged between eighteen and thirty (66 percent). Ninety-two teachers were aged under forty (87 percent), supporting the indication of youthfulness of the smaller sample of teachers surveyed in 1991-92 (cf. Table 5.12, p. 188 above). Field observations suggest the combined sample in Tables 5.12 and 5.13 were representative of the 291 teachers surveyed during the research period.

The 1994 research data, which shows 65 percent of teachers were under thirty, appear reliable, but because government figures do not include private schools and adopt a different age range, comparisons with the 1995 government statistics, which claimed that 78 percent of teachers were below thirty-five-years of age, demand caution. Nevertheless, both the thesis data and the *Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance* (1996, 41) data indicate that the majority of Nepali teachers in both government and private schools are relatively young.

### Gender in the Service

Government statistics for 1995 indicate that men teachers outnumbered women teachers by three to one (*Nepal Multiple Surveillance Indicator* 1996, 41). In the thesis research females predominated in the age group eighteen to thirty. Of the teachers surveyed, the imbalance between men and women was not as great as anticipated. Table 5.5 (cf. p. 172 above) shows men outnumbering women by a little less than two to one (seven women to eleven men) but the sample is too small to draw general conclusions.

Since 1990 the Nepali government had tried to address the gender imbalance in the teaching service. Policies already in place included: free schooling of all girls from Y1-10, free textbooks Y1-5 and scholarships to assist with additional needs such as uniform. Bambach noted that the 1991 Master Plan for Nepal recommended that in government schools at least 30% of Nepal's primary teachers should be female by the year 2001. He also noted that if the 1992 regulations stating that one female per school could be enforced around the country it would amount to 33% of teaching positions in schools being occupied by women (1993b, 42). Quoting a 1992 World Bank Draft Working Paper on Nepal, Bambach observed:

despite a considerable increase in the number of girls in the secondary school system, and in those passing the SLC examination (200% increase since 1988), there had not been a proportionate increase in the number of women hired to teach (1993b, 43).

Bambach argues that although the government is in favour of an increase in the employment of women, in practice this was not taking place. Whether this was due to lack of cultural acceptability was not researched, but it is possible a career path taking account of the current cultural mores would have to be

designed to enable women to participate equally. Bambach implied that the existing factors which facilitated employment of some women as teachers and worked against others were:

- having social connections,
- being of high caste,
- living in or near a District Centre,
- having family support, and
- having access to training and job information (1993b, 44).

Fieldtrip observations (1991-94) appeared to bear this out, especially in urban areas where more women had been employed. Bambach argued for an attempt to aid those socially disadvantaged by reducing the importance of social connections, the effects of caste and gender discrimination, increasing access to information for rural women and encouraging family support for women's employment (1993b, 45).

Evidence based on field observations in February 1994 and November 1994 indicates that the gender balance was uneven between schools. Government schools did not exhibit consistency in following the affirmative policy regarding women, and schools in both systems showed no sign of realising that a policy of affirmative action required promotional opportunities available for, and attainable by, women. Noting the lack of promotional positions Bambach observed:

The proportion of women headmasters among the total number of headmasters is not known, but it is observed to be very low. Senior teachers who generally occupy headmaster's positions are mostly males. Supervisory positions that require extensive travel are also occupied usually by males. The creation of leadership opportunities for women is an issue that must be addressed urgently (1993a, 6).

Only one woman in the survey group occupied the position of principal in a government school. However, private school principals' wives often filled the position of deputy principal and it was not uncommon for women to be the principal in a family owned and run English medium school. Even though this power may only have been nominal, these women were in a position to provide role models for girls in their school.

### **Socio-economic Background of the Service**

As the social traditions of the community appeared to have an impact on the issue of gender in the education service, additional features of the socio-economic background of teachers were explored. Nepal is a caste society but, as noted in the methodology section (cf. p. 26 above), during the research period Nepali research facilitators advised against any direct question on caste origins. Instead, questions involving the occupation and literacy status of the participant teachers' parents were included. However, very few participants chose to answer the question on parental literacy so no conclusions could be drawn as to whether the teachers were first or second generation literates.

Although many occupations in Nepali society are Hindu caste designated, according to Bista (1991, 22) socio-economic class within a caste also plays an important social role. This further complicated the research into the socio-economic background of Nepali teachers. In addition, although occupations are mainly caste designated, broad general categories like 'business' and 'agriculture' cross caste barriers. Some Brahmins earn their living from the land while many people from the poorer classes of their caste engage in agricultural pursuits, either on their own small plot or as employed labourers of higher castes. Similarly, teaching, army and office work also

cross caste barriers. Many Ranas had a father in the Nepali army as did the Chetris. Further, the Gorkhalis were often in the British and Indian army. Conversely, while 'business' was generally caste designated, in Kathmandu Valley business was also largely a Newari occupation and many Newars were Buddhist, outside the caste system. So, although the data suggest that the bulk of teachers had parents with a business or agricultural background, no conclusions can be drawn regarding a teacher's status within the Hindu hierarchy.

The data indicated that the occupational background of government teachers' parents generally fell into the categories of agriculture (farming), business, service industries (teaching, army officers, office work) and housework. In government schools, teachers whose parents worked the land were the dominant group - double the number claiming to have parents in business (cf. Table 5.15). The situation was different for private schools, where the distribution was more even and there was a higher proportion of teachers with parents who were involved in service industries.

The socio-economic background of the teachers is easier to understand in the context of a comparison. More private school teachers

Table 5.15 Survey of Teachers' Backgrounds						
Occupation of Teachers Parents	Private (N)	(%)	Government (N)	(%)	All	(%)
agricultural workers	43	40.5	54	60	97	49.5
business	48	45.5	27	30	75	38.5
government service	15	14	9	10	24	12
Total respondents	106	100	90	100	196	100
Compiled from surveys taken during Feb. March 1994 Respondents: Private Schools 106, Government schools 90 Total: 196						

stated their parents' occupation as business or army. In Nepal these occupations generally denote a higher economic and educational status, therefore it may be that more private school teachers were drawn from the economically better off, and socially higher, section of Nepali society than teachers in government schools. (However, this conclusion may be partly corrupted by the fact that a small, but unspecified, number of Anglo-Indian teachers took part in the survey involving private school teachers.) Nevertheless, when fieldtrip observations are considered with the survey data, there is a strong indication that government school teachers were from more varied ethnic backgrounds and this in itself often indicates a lower economic status.

### **Occupation in Addition to Teaching**

Bambach claims it is common in Nepal 'for teachers to seek other jobs such as private tuition, or teaching in other schools in mornings and evenings to supplement their incomes' (1993b, 16). This claim is difficult to prove from the results of the data collected for the thesis. Few teachers were prepared to admit to additional occupations even in the anonymous questionnaire. Those who did admit to an extra job claimed that they worked part-time in agriculture, business, tuition and adult literacy. One stated he did extra work as a musician. Despite the lack of statistical data, fieldtrip experiences indicated that Bambach was correct.

Furthermore, an additional occupation sometimes took precedence over teaching. It was not uncommon during the research period to visit a school and find one or more teachers absent without notice and to be told they were engaged in some other occupation. On one occasion a head teacher was absent for several days working on his own land. Stories of teachers making



reciprocal arrangements, to take particular days off were common: it was claimed by an INGO field worker that at one three-teacher school the teachers had organised a roster allowing for only two teachers to be on duty at a time. Of course, this was not recorded officially, so the teachers were all paid their full salary. Furthermore, during the research period, it was not uncommon in Kathmandu to find a hotel's night clerk was a teacher supplementing his income (cf. p. 11 above). As Bambach has observed, this situation is understandable and likely to continue 'until Nepal is in a position to compensate teachers to an adequate level.' (1993b, 17). Another factor likely to impact on teachers' ability to direct the bulk of their energy into teaching is evidence is demonstrated in Chapter Five, supported by Tables 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7 (cf. pp. 171-178 above) where there are indications that some Nepali teachers were studying for extra qualifications.

### **Morale in the Service**

The comparatively low status and poor financial reward for teachers impacts on morale. Vir (1988), Bista (1991) and N. R. Shrestha (1993) all argue that low morale is complicated by a number of cultural attitudes, which promote an ambivalence toward formal education and ensure the teaching profession is not highly regarded. Despite the fact that teachers who attended teacher training workshops conducted during the research period displayed enthusiasm for their role, in general low morale amongst teachers was observed during fieldtrips. For example, in the government schools it was common to find that teachers arrived late at school, were tardy in attending classroom lessons, or were simply absent without notice (fieldtrip observations 1991-94). Davies (1984, np), G. M. Shrestha (1990) and Bambach (1993b, 3, 5) discerned a link between low status of teachers,

teacher quality and low morale, especially in the primary division. G. M. Shrestha claimed major causes for low morale were that:

Teaching conditions are difficult, and parental concern and community support are minimal. Professional support to the teachers in improving teachers' skill and commitment is a major, challenging task (1990, 3).

The teachers themselves suggest this to be so. Tables 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10 (cf. pp.179-181 above) indicate teachers' desire for support and supervision, and suggest on-going dissatisfaction with the role of staff from the DEO. Joyce and Showers suggest that problems associated with the role of DEOs are universal. A study by Joyce, Bush and McKibbin in Joyce and Showers (1988, 22) indicated the relationship between a school and a DEO's personnel must emphasise school improvement in a focussed manner, as shared understanding is necessary for collective action to occur. During fieldtrips, disjunction between the DEOs and schools in Nepal was frequently cited as an impediment to improvement of teacher performance (cf. pp. 95-6 above). While field interviews in November 1994 elicited a common positive response from teachers who had attended training sessions with the BPEP, many teachers stated that they relished the opportunity to share problems with colleagues and gain some additional skills, and often expressed the desire for support, supervision and extra training. Even though there are positive factors which, if encouraged, could improve teacher morale and teaching standards, DEO supervision and assistance was not taking place.

Although poor salaries were regarded as a restraint on the improvement of morale, private schools, which routinely paid higher salaries to good teachers, also appeared to have morale problems among their staff. In 1994 there was a marked increase in Indian and Anglo-Indian staff in

Private English Medium Boarding schools. Although not part of the thesis research, it appeared that the Anglo-Indian teachers who participated in the surveys generally had a higher standard of education and were more fluent in English than many Nepali teachers. However, their employment was a culturally sensitive issue. It was claimed by principals and teachers that an oversupply of educated personnel in India, partly due to the Indian government's inability to pay for the required number of teaching staff in Indian schools, had forced numbers of teachers to seek positions in Nepali private schools (fieldtrips, January-February 1994 and November-December 1994). This claim was supported by an article in the national press in January 1994 which suggested that more Indian and Anglo-Indian teachers were being employed in the private sector in Nepal, because Nepali principals had found that,

Nepali teachers asked for leave more than they ought to and some of them occasionally absented themselves without notice. Some of them were highly qualified but untrained and some had made the school their springboard. They resigned immediately when they got the opportunity of joining government service or shifting to a position with a higher salary. In short most Nepali teachers did not make teaching their profession. They did not intend to pass all their lives as teachers so there was always a shortage of qualified teachers in Nepal (Khanal, *The Rising Nepal* January 20, 1994).

Khanal has identified two issues as worthy of note. First, his claims support field observations and the data indicating length of service (cf. Tables 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.11, and 5.12 cf.pp. 171-173 and 187-188 above). Second, it would seem from Khanal's 1994 report that when higher salaries were paid by Nepali private schools for teachers with higher qualifications, improved morale and dedication did not necessarily follow. This suggests additional

factors may be involved in the morale problems in private schools. Possibly teachers were adversely affected by lack of job security, and by the autocratic management style of some principals of private schools, witnessed during the research period (fieldtrips, 1991-94).

The various indications of poor physical conditions, and the range of problems and needs listed by teachers (cf. Tables 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10 (cf. pp.179-181) are supported by research from Bennett (1981 in Bambach 1993b, 5), Davies (1984), B.L.Shrestha (1990), G.M.Shrestha (1990), Bista (1991), Bambach (1993b) and N. R. Shrestha (1993). Combined with the thesis research, their claims confirm that the low morale has damaging effects. Until the situation is improved, it is unlikely that teachers will vary their style of curriculum delivery or show commitment to teaching as a long-term profession.

### **Curriculum**

The principals of both government and private school systems profess to follow the government curriculum. However, this claim is questionable. Requests, during fieldtrips 1991-92, to be shown a copy of the government curriculum invariably resulted in the production of a standard text book for the subject under discussion. Workshop participants also claimed not to have seen the government curriculum or to know what constituted a curriculum (workshop interviews 1991-94). Lokesh Raj Dali, manager of the government publications unit admitted that when the curriculum was initially promulgated in 1975 it was published in limited numbers and not widely distributed as the government had not supplied free copies and schools had failed to purchase their own copy (interview, Feb. 1994). Under these circumstances the text at all year levels, and the SLC

examination at Y10, became the de facto curriculum. As already noted (cf. p. 169 above), during the latter part of the research period new curricula were being introduced into schools on a year level basis with one copy of the new curriculum document supplied to each school. Consequently, teachers interviewed in December 1994 knew of the curriculum's existence although they were frequently unfamiliar with its content.

During interviews, some teachers and community members complained that both the old and new curriculum lacked relevance. While this was true in part - it may well be that subjects needed to be included which were more relevant to local needs and to the needs of women - it could also be that a solution to the problem of relevance could be found by teaching subjects in practical ways.<sup>6</sup>

### **Methodology, Lesson Planning and Evaluation**

As already noted, field observation showed little sign that teachers were delivering the curriculum in a practical manner. In fact there was little evidence of classroom organisation, other than the formal style used in nineteenth century Europe. Teaching methods were regularly based on rote learning and teachers were strict disciplinarians with corporal punishment common. Lesson planning, or pupil management techniques, particularly amongst government school teachers, was rarely in evidence.

Of the teachers surveyed during 1994, only three government school teachers stated that they wrote even brief notes to plan lessons or made any practice of planning and implementing a lesson in a systematic manner. Where there was a textbook available the lesson was text based and teacher

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<sup>6</sup>In a recent policy document of the Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development (CERID), Bajracharya and Chitrakar also acknowledged the problem of the curriculum's irrelevance to the needs of both the nation and the people (1998, *passim*).

centred. In 1995 it was indicated that of the teachers who had been exposed to the curriculum changes for Y1-2, one third made no preparation at all, one quarter read the lesson carefully, and one fifth made a lesson plan (*Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance* 1996, 45). Evaluation methods, where they existed, were oral memorisation tests. During fieldtrip interviews, teachers were unaware that set tasks might demonstrate whether a child had understood what they had been taught, which concepts were not understood, or that testing was multi-dimensional in that it could indicate flaws in the teachers' own presentation.

### **Teachers' Perceptions of their Own Needs and Problems**

*February 1991*

During an initial workshop, conducted at Thankot, a town on the edge of Kathmandu Valley on the main trunk road to India, with the assistance of the INGO Plan International, teachers working in groups were asked to list their daily needs and problems (cf. p. 32 above). When analysed, these needs fell broadly into two categories: professional and social (cf. Table 5.8, p.179 above). Most of the professional problems related to a lack of physical amenities, equipment and teacher training. However, the teachers were also concerned with their relationship with guardians, social organisation, and administration in the schools. The teachers' responses indicated they experienced a sense of inadequacy which may relate to a lack of teacher training, a lack of support through in-service training, and a lack of assistance from consultants. It could also be that all problems listed, including the social problems, were directly related to the level of poverty in Nepal.

However, the size of the group (16) involved in this initial workshop was too small and restricted to enable general conclusions to be drawn. Furthermore, those participating were drawn from an area where an INGO had been operating for ten years and the consequent exposure to a wider field of knowledge may have contributed to a rise in their expectations and awareness compared with others lacking INGO exposure.

### *December 1991 - January 1992*

During this fieldtrip 82 teachers were surveyed: 31 from government and 51 from private schools (cf. Tables 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.9, pp. 171-73, 180 above). The data were collected and collated from participants at workshops organised through Plan International and PABSON. The participants came from three different areas within Kathmandu Valley - central, western and southern (cf. Tables 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6, pp. 171-73 above). The southern group was from an area where Plan had been working for three years (Kirtipur, Table 5.4, p. 171 above). The western group was from an area where Plan had been present for four months (Gorkhana, Table 5.5, p. 172 above). The third group (Table 5.6, p. 173 above) belonged to a private school at Thapatali in central Kathmandu (cf. pp. 31ff. above).

Although surveys of the groups were largely based on opportunity, they were more diverse and their exposure to INGO influence was less than those involved in the small initial February 1991 sample (Table 5.8, p. 179 above). Significantly, they expressed concerns similar to the small group surveyed earlier in 1991. Although practical issues regarding the inadequacies of facilities continued to surface, the issues indicated a pressing need for professional standards to be developed and supported. The participants criticised teacher evaluation, complained of a lack of career structure, lack of

DEO support, and indicated low morale. Table 5.9 (cf. p. 180 above) also shows several overlapping concerns between government and private sectors. Both groups complained of a lack of communication and cooperation with guardians, a sense of professional isolation from colleagues, a lack of teaching aids, no teacher reference guides regarding the use of text books, and a lack of an assessment procedure for teacher performance. Government teachers also complained about inadequate administration of their school, and the teacher-centred curriculum. All teachers complained about poor salaries.

The lists indicate that the participating teachers felt vulnerable and inadequate to their task. Their vulnerability appears to be connected with a lack of teacher training. Brooks (1983 in Schon 1983, 14) indicates this is a situation which occurs when professionals are called upon to perform tasks for which they have not been educated. The limitations of experience are acknowledged by Joyce and Showers' (1988) who found that amongst US teachers:

Many teachers had to rely on their personal knowledge of teaching for most of their decisions. The products of formal research and study of teaching [were] unknown to them and few have had the opportunity either to study formal knowledge or learn how to make it work in the classroom (1988, 4).

Their commentary is even more applicable in Nepal where teachers not only had experience limited to rote instruction, but more than half of the teaching force had not had their knowledge of pedagogy extended further through teacher training. It is not surprising therefore that Nepali teachers felt vulnerable.



*January, February, November, December 1994*

During 1994 the 196 teachers who participated in workshops organised by Plan International, PABSON, and NELTA perceived their daily needs and problems as indicated in Table 5.10 (cf. p. 181 above). Workshops were held in Kathmandu Valley, urban towns on the Terai, and a remote region of the Terai (Gaur). The data were obtained from a larger and more diverse group of teachers which, like the December 1991-January 1992 data, also included private school teachers.

Table 5.10 (cf. p. 181 above) indicates that government school teachers were still concerned with the basic problems of physical facilities, teaching materials, a need for additional knowledge of how to evaluate student performance, and lack of guardian support. These data indicated that the concerns of teachers were similar across the research area and that they had remained unchanged over an intervening two year period (1992-94). However, it is worth noting that private school teachers had additional priorities - such as problems associated with the teaching of science, and a need for games and activities for pre-primary students. This may indicate that over a period of two years teachers in private schools had developed higher expectations, and were seeing their role from a broader perspective than simply teaching numeracy and literacy by rote.

When all sets of data in Tables 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10 (cf. pp. 179-81 above) are combined it is apparent that there is considerable consistency in teachers' perceptions of the needs and problems associated with their work. Many perceptions, such as a recognition of the need for remedial teaching, a general desire for training in child development, and an awareness that children cannot be expected to perform at a common level based on age, were common to both government and private school teachers. Some of the

problems listed by the teachers in 1994 continued to relate to their lack of training. Even the expressed need for teaching aids was related to inadequate knowledge of ways to use the environment, or to make and share low cost teaching materials.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has indicated that between 1991-94 Nepali government and private school teachers in the research area had a low general standard of education and were either untrained or inadequately trained. The addition of private school staff to the survey statistics indicated that, while private school staff had a slightly greater proportion of teachers with a higher general educational level than those teaching in government schools, fewer had any pre-service or basic training. When private school staff are included in statistical data it is difficult to ignore the implications of the number of untrained and undertrained teachers throughout Nepal. This is important as it means that facilities for providing pre-service and basic teacher training for Nepal need to be increased dramatically.

The chapter has shown that the majority of teachers were male, young, appeared to have been employed as teachers for a short time, and lacked a variety of educational experience. During the research period, attempts were under way to rectify the general problems associated with career structure, and specific problems associated with career opportunities relating to gender, but political instability was impeding progress. Teachers' perceptions of their daily professional needs indicated problems associated with the country's poverty and social traditions. Economic problems contributed to poor facilities, an almost total absence of material resources to support their work and the government's inability to train enough teachers.

The low general education and inadequate training of many teachers placed the teaching service as a profession in the area termed by Beeby (1966) as 'a low growth state', but elements of reflectiveness, displayed by some teachers, indicate that some members of the teaching service could move to a higher growth state if sufficient encouragement were given. However, the hierarchical social system in Nepal reinforced working in a traditional manner. In short, a major impediment to teacher development seems to be associated with the way in which teachers and community perceive the role of the teacher. In Nepal, the community has had so little exposure to other teaching methods that they do not understand or appreciate a conceptual style of learning.

Between 1991 and 1994 a consensus between government, teachers and guardians had not developed concerning changes in the way children should be taught. Exemplifying this is the perpetuation of the SLC, which sustains and promotes the entrenched style of teaching by rote.

Resistance, contradiction and confusion were evident when something new or unfamiliar was promulgated. This situation concurs with the findings of Beeby (1966), Schon (1983), Weiler (1983) and Joyce and Showers (1988), which suggest that change will only come when both teachers (professionals) and guardians (clients) make a shared decision to move into another 'model' in order to achieve educational goals and are given the necessary support to do so. Meanwhile, it is clear that study of the impact of the low general education and inadequate teacher training on the effectiveness of subject-teaching requires further study. Using ELT as a case study, the next chapter will examine the specific implications of the situation discussed in this and the last chapter for the implementation of a curriculum subject which requires a high level of knowledge and training.

### English Language Teaching in Nepal

#### Introduction

Data presented in Chapter Six indicated that between 1991 and 1994 many Nepali teachers lacked exposure to a variety of educational practices, and were inadequately educated and trained. This placed them in what Beeby (1966), and Schon (1983) have variously categorised as a 'low growth state' or 'non-reflective' stage, which Joyce and Showers (1988) claim is characterised by a reluctance to experiment with teaching styles. In particular, Beeby claims that a poor general education forces teachers to adhere to a few meagre facts and contributes to their reluctance to risk having students ask questions (1966, 85). Schon suggests that this reluctance occurs because the teacher wishes to continue to be regarded as the 'expert' (1983, 200). This chapter will discuss how a 'low growth state' amongst Nepali English language teachers (ELTs), combined with poor facilities and a lack of teaching materials, has impacted on the teaching of English and the nation's goal for universal education of quality.

As part of the case study, this chapter will examine the reasons why, despite HMGN excluding ELT from amongst its goals, English was chosen as the major foreign language in Nepal. In addition, aspects of the 1972 primary school curriculum and texts for ELT, the corresponding EL texts in use in English medium schools, and the new primary school curriculum and texts being promulgated in 1994/5 for Nepali government schools, will be discussed. On the basis of this examination, it will be argued that the teaching methodology for English language used prior to 1972 was restrictive and irrelevant to many Nepalis, and that the teaching methodology employed after this date remained unsuitable.

## The Place of English Language Teaching in Nepal

The reasons for choosing ELT as a case study of the effects of a 'low growth state' amongst teachers on the student learning process relate to issues of history, practice and policy:

### (a) History

Nepal was brought into a 'global' world by the colonial influences of the British Empire and it was through the establishment of an English medium school in Kathmandu in 1853/4 that the state began its entry into the development of education. Vir suggests the establishment of this school was directly connected to Jung Bahadur Rana's admiration for the British and to his view that to understand a culture you needed to know its language (1988, 32). Crystal claims the reasons for choosing a particular language as the favoured foreign language include historical tradition, political expediency, and the desire for commercial, cultural or technological contact (1997, 4). All of these factors contributed to Nepal's choice of English as the major foreign language.

Orientalism (Said, 1978), noted in earlier chapters, was evident in attitudes towards the acquisition of English language during the period of field research 1991-94. As noted in Chapter Four, when the ANEC (1962) removed the teaching of English from the primary school curriculum in 1971, there was a strong community backlash and ELT was returned to the official subject list in primary schools in 1976. This community reaction was in part caused by the fact that having access to ELT was recognised as 'a valued cultural, capital resource' - albeit symbolic (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, 126 in Collins 1993), and as a passport to an administrative job.

### (b) Practice

English was taught as the major foreign language more as the result of practice than planning. Between 1991 and 1995 Government schools were expected to teach English for forty-five minutes each day from Y4, and strong pressure was exerted by guardians for ELT to commence at Y1. From Y4 onwards English was rated at the maximum value of 100 points (cf. Figures iii and iv p. 99) and it was compulsory for EL to be passed at Y10 for the SLC to be awarded. Such a policy frequently denies students a pass in SLC, as English and mathematics are the subjects most commonly failed by students at this level. In addition, most private schools in Nepal are English medium.

### (c) Policy

There seemed to be a contradiction between the absence of government goals for ELT in most Nepali government planning documents, and the community's desire for EL to be taught. This had created a situation in Nepal where curriculum documents were produced for ELT by government officials in isolation from any national goal for its teaching or use. Responsibility for the practice of the teaching of English was left largely to private English medium schools, with only a daily, forty-five minute, under-resourced lesson in government schools commencing at Y4. This situation indicates a lack of active government involvement in its support of English as the nation's major foreign language, and Crystal claims a lack of government support, or a shortage of foreign aid, hinders the achievement of a nation's language teaching goals (1997, 4).

## Background

For the purpose of this thesis, the starting point for research into the background for ELT was the 'period of planned development' (1971-72), which introduced a new curriculum and a textbook change for ELT as part of the NESP 1971. Although this new curriculum retained a grammatical bias, and was delivered in a rote learning style, it purported to have content more relevant to Nepali needs. The change involved a radical departure from the 'grammar translate' method based on English literature that had prevailed in the past.

During the research period (1991-94), teachers debated whether the learning of English was better achieved through the 'grammar translate' method used prior to 1972, or the 'direct approach', based on communication, and taught via the *My English* text series used in government schools (fieldtrip interviews with members of NELTA, Feb. 1994, Nov. 1994). The debate was fuelled by the tension that came as Nepal began changing from a predominantly 'oral' society to a literate writing-based society, in terms of which the emphasis on oral learning in ELT may have appeared a regression in the eyes of those in favour of development.

The 'grammar translate' method of teaching involves the formal translation of the first language to the target language and back again - 'a time consuming and fairly unproductive exercise in the production of fluent communication' according to Richards and Rodgers (1986, 4); (cf. Celce-Murcia 1979, 3). Although the 1972 curriculum and texts evidenced a move towards a 'communicative approach', the main emphasis of the teaching was a version of the 'direct approach' or 'Berlitz method' delivered in a rote learning environment. This method emphasises oral interaction, spontaneous use of the target language, no translation between first and second language

and no grammatical analysis. But Brown (1994, 56) indicates the Berlitz method did not work well in large classes and, as indicated in Chapters Five and Six, large classes were prevalent in Nepal. Brown further suggests that success with the Berlitz method depends on the skill and personality of the teacher, and Nepali teachers had limited skills. Under these circumstances, the Berlitz method seemed an inappropriate choice for the Nepali environment (fieldtrip interviews and observations, 1991-94).

At the introduction of the NESP, ELT was removed from the primary school system which concluded at Y3, but as indicated in Chapter Five this structure proved impractical and the system was returned to its termination point of Y5. Also, as previously discussed (cf. p. 101 above) there was a strong community backlash when attempts were made to discontinue ELT at the Y3 to Y5 level in 1962. In 1994, even though ELT continued officially to commence at Y4 in the primary school, there was controversy as to when English Language teaching should commence in the Nepali environment. The arguments were partly activated by populist theories which claimed that the younger a child commenced learning a foreign language the more proficient the learning. Further controversy arose from general community dissatisfaction at the standard of English their children were able to achieve, as against the standard of the children of the elite who attended English medium schools.

There is a large body of research regarding the most suitable age for commencing ELT. Kerr (1975 in Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991) and Schumann (1975, in Richards and Nunan 1990) suggest that many factors besides the age at which the learning of a foreign or second language is commenced affect its acquisition. These include experience, self concept, motivation, culture, language aptitude, personality and learning style. A fact



relevant to Nepalis is that there is a body of research which indicates that in a formal classroom setting, like Nepal's, where opportunities to practise the target language (TL) are limited, teenagers acquire the TL more proficiently than young children or adults. However, acquisition during the teen years is not necessarily accent-free (Riddell 1996). The main point is that the optimum commencement time for the teaching of a foreign language is a complex matter.

Most significantly, determining what was actually wrong with the standard of ELT, what the national goals were for ELT, or how teachers could be better trained and supported, was rarely addressed at the official level. In addition to the academic debate was the expression in the Nepali press between 1991 and 1994 of dissatisfaction with the standard of English in the country. The letters and editorials suggested that the educated public (the elite) was dissatisfied with the standard of ELT (fieldtrips 1991-94).

Surveys undertaken in Nepal by Davies (1983/4) and Giri (1985 and 1986) indicated that considerable problems existed with the teaching of English. Giri's 1985 research, based on the English language performance skills of Public Certificate Level (PCL) students nearing the conclusion of their first year of compulsory English (Pokhara), confirmed Davies' assertion noted in Chapter Six that those who became teachers were among the poorest students at SLC, particularly in EL. However, Giri differed slightly from Davies, placing students in the Faculty of Law below those in the Faculty of Education. He found the best students went into the Faculty of Science (1985, 36).

Three factors are evident from Giri's 1985 research. First, even when using the three level standard of pass prevalent in Nepal, no students performed well. In particular, the students of education did not rate the

minimum level of 33 percent to pass in any section of the test. Second, the low percentage achieved by the first year PCL compulsory English students indicated that students of education were not likely to be equipped to teach English to others. Third, given that the teaching of English requires oral skills, and Giri (1985, 36) indicates, no PCL student of education attempted the spoken English section of the test; the results did not augur well for ELT standards in Nepal for the 1990s.

In 1984 Davies reported poor standards of English as widespread. In addition he noted that in 1983 only 39 percent of students passed compulsory English at SLC level (1984, 35); worse still, Narayan Uprety<sup>1</sup> claimed that in 1992/3 only 29.5 percent of Nepali students passed compulsory English at their first sitting of the SLC<sup>2</sup> (*The Sunday Post* Oct. 3, 1993). This indicated that the percentage of students passing SLC compulsory English had fallen 9.5 percent in nine years.

At the time of the NESP, the removal of English literature caused concern amongst the elite. One can only speculate as to why this was so. Possible reasons may have come in part from Orientalist attitudes, and factors which Bourdieu identifies as being embedded in material conditioning and symbolic power (1977, 126 in Collins 1993). However, influenced by the concern over the de-emphasising of English literature, English literature was introduced as a separate optional subject at lower and upper secondary levels in 1982. Examination of the results of students in 1992 indicated that students studying optional English were far more successful than those students who studied compulsory English (Uprety, *The Rising Nepal*, Dec.

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<sup>1</sup>Narayan Uprety was teacher in charge of ELT at Gandakhi Boarding School. This school was one of the most renowned schools in Nepal.

<sup>2</sup>In Nepal many students who do not pass SLC at the first sitting are coached for several weeks to assist them to a pass mark and then given a supplementary test.

1993 npn). Upreti states that 373 of 378 students passed the optional English exam at SLC level in 1992, and the average mark was 62 percent, whereas the average mark for compulsory English was 22 percent.

Such results added to the debate over the removal of English literature as a learning source, and the change of teaching methodology. But the contrast between the results of compulsory and optional English may be attributed more to the effect of extrinsic motivation on learning than on the change from the grammar-translate method of instruction. Extrinsic motivation had existed in the desire amongst some sections of the elite to relate to Western civilization since the Rana era (Stiller, 1993; Bista, 1991). Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, 172-3) cited Mowrer (1950), Gardner and Lambert (1959) and Spolsky (1969, 282), who found that second language learning was influenced by the integrative motivation stemming from social-psychological factors created by the learner wishing to identify with another ethnolinguistic group. In addition, Lukmani's suggestion that Indian students were highly motivated to learn English when there was a chance of furthering their career (1972, 261) is also valid; although it probably applies to a lesser degree in Nepal during the 1990s.

However, Harmer found that intrinsic motivation was difficult to achieve with students experiencing marked deficiencies in physical conditions, method of instruction and a general lack of success, especially when extrinsic motivation was absent (1991, 5). Harmer's findings are particularly relevant to Nepal, where teaching and learning conditions are extremely poor. When Harmer's claim is combined with Davies' (1984, 84) observation of a lack of extrinsic motivation with students of compulsory English, it becomes clearer why intrinsic motivation towards the learning of English in Nepal was difficult to achieve. Furthermore, Stradling indicates

that lack of clear goals, irrelevant course content, and the use of teaching methods not responsive to the learner, contribute to frustration and lack of motivation amongst learners (in Harmer et al, 1991). The contrasting results between compulsory English and optional English underline the ambiguity and confusion regarding the teaching and learning of ELT in Nepal. On the one hand, the community desired that ELT be taught as early as possible in the school curriculum, while on the other hand the motivation amongst learners was generally not high and the results in compulsory English at SLC and PC level were not encouraging.

The features constraining success and noted by Harmer were named by Nepali ELTs during interview but, unlike the generalist teachers (cf. p. 174 above), many Nepali ELTs expressed a lack of confidence in their own standard of English and felt that it impeded their successful teaching. They stressed that they had problems with the development of English sounds and were confused with English grammar and spelling which broke accepted and taught rules.

As already noted (cf. p. 100 above), although the government authorised the teaching of English, it gave no training, support or guidance to the ELTs. Furthermore, multinational organisations and INGOs concentrated on the improvement of the delivery of literacy and numeracy skills in the national tongue and gave ELT low priority. A spokesperson for the British Council (BC) in Kathmandu indicated that, although the BC operated some courses in English, admission was difficult because of availability of places; besides, they offered no training for ELTs. Private language institutes existed but they offered nothing in the way of teacher training either by course or lesson modelling. Their fees were beyond the means of most government and private school teachers - though during fieldtrip interviews

the participants complained of the lack of opportunity for further study and training in ELT. Teachers felt that evaluation of their work should be part of a career structure for ELTs that acknowledged qualifications, training and effort. In the absence of such a structure, little attempt had been made by the teachers to improve their own deficiencies. As a result, awareness of their inability to teach English had ensured that teachers were insecure and textbook reliant.

The ELTs' lack of confidence meant that they often relied solely on the content and structure of the text, and too frequently resorted to Nepali language during an English lesson (fieldtrips 1991-94). Furthermore, although a curriculum document had been published in 1972, very few copies were in existence in schools within the research area during 1994. In the absence of such a document, and given the teachers' lack of training and poor skill in English, *My English* became part of the de facto curriculum.

Of course, in a country where many teachers were without generalist teacher training it was not surprising that there was very little specialist training available for an ELT. A BEd taken at a university campus had an ELT component but, because of the lack of a career structure at the primary level, most BEd qualified teachers accepted jobs at the secondary level where both pay and prestige were better.

During 1994, through its Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University's English and Foreign Language Department operated on three campuses in Kathmandu Valley, on nine campuses in other parts of Nepal, and had twelve private campuses affiliated with it. IEd and BEd courses were available on all campuses, but the MEd course was only available on two campuses in Kathmandu Valley. All reference texts for these courses were published between 1967 and 1978 in England or India. The IEd course

included the subject of Language Functions. The BEd and MEd courses included applied and advanced linguistic theory, and offered a component of English Literature that concentrated on British and American writers from the Colonial period which bore little relevance to Nepalis (cf. Appendix D, p. 329 below). While in theory these courses offered a comprehensive knowledge of English language, they appear extremely ambitious in the light of Davies' (1984) and Giri's (1985 and 1986) research.

Although the courses included a unit on pedagogy, only two types of ELT methods were listed in the IEd course. These were Grammar-translate, which was no longer recommended in Nepal after 1972, and Oral Structural Situational Approach, which is a form of the Berlitz method (cf. p. 210 above). Teachers had no knowledge of alternative strategies (cf. Appendix E, p. 372 below). According to Willing (1989), Oxford (1990), Willing and Nunan (1993), Killen (1996, 9) and Reid (1998) (all cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991), for effective teaching to take place a teacher needs the knowledge and skill to present information clearly, using a variety of strategies. In addition, ignorant of classroom management techniques, teachers were unable to employ strategies when learning difficulties occurred, thus a sense of professional vulnerability was experienced (fieldtrip interviews 1991-94). Many teachers felt there should be an ELT support centre to facilitate group support and professional discussion.

Such a centre had been suggested by Davies in 1983-84, when he noted that, unlike India<sup>3</sup>, Nepal had no centre for English language teaching. He recommended consideration be given to the establishment of a centre but there was no response to this suggestion. When a response was sought

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<sup>3</sup>India has a large centre for the teaching of English and foreign languages in Hyderabad, in Andra Pradesh.

during the research period, a spokesperson for the BPEP attributed the government's lack of response to insufficient funds being available at government level. However, an association for ELTs, NELTA, was established through private initiative in 1992. NELTA attempts to provide assistance and encouragement for teachers and, although small, it was active and growing within Kathmandu valley in 1994. NELTA aimed to break down the sense of isolation that ELTs complained of in interviews - isolation which was linked to their lack of training, and exacerbated by limited opportunity for professional discussions.

### Curriculum and Texts

As already noted (cf. p. 177 above), there was considerable ignorance of curriculum content and goals, and Nepali teachers were text-book reliant. It is therefore necessary to examine what curriculum goals and texts there are for ELT. Following on from the NESP, a summary of general goals from the 1972 ELT curriculum stated the educational objectives as:

- the ability to communicate in speech and writing;
- the ability to follow directions and instructions; and
- the ability to read for pleasure and information (Primary

Education Curriculum document, MOEC/SW, classes 1-5:

81).

Although brief, the 1972 curriculum is clearly set out with sequentially outlined language items to be taught. These items generally related to the lessons in the government text as they arose, and the document included a brief section on linguistic problems that Nepalis were likely to encounter with English pronunciation. But, as already stated, this curriculum document was not freely available, and it is doubtful whether the teachers' own oral

language limitations and linguistic knowledge would have enabled them to understand and use the brief linguistic section.

The text in use in government schools was the *My English Book* series. Principals and teachers complained that there was a year's delay between ordering and receiving government texts (fieldtrip interviews with principals and teachers 1991-94). However, Plan International fieldworkers indicated many principals were unfamiliar with the procedure for ordering and, even though they knew that delays were common, they often did not order the materials in advance.

During interviews, many teachers complained that *My English Book* series was inadequate. This complaint was understandable given that they were untrained, and that their proficiency with, and knowledge of, English was limited. Had the handbook, accompanying the *My English Book* series, published in 1972, been distributed freely to schools and remained in publication, these problems may have been minimised. However, the handbook for the *My English* series had to be purchased by schools already short of funds. Consequently the handbooks were not purchased in sufficient numbers and production was discontinued. In 1994 no handbook existed. Lack of supporting materials proved a further constraint on expanding the use of the texts. A spokesperson for the BPEP indicated that financial constraints at HMGN level had prevented the publication and availability for purchase of a small amount of supplementary material, in the way of flash cards and a work book designed in the government materials centre.

Used as a base upon which to develop a lesson, *My English Book 1* was a good starting point for commencing the curriculum objectives of 'communication' and 'following directions and instructions'. Within the first



sixteen lessons it contains twenty-eight words (plus their tense variations) from what Kuzek and Coldwell (1994) identify as the 'One Hundred Words Most Used by Native Speakers of English'. The additional vocabulary in *My English Book* included English nouns relevant to a Nepali child. Theoretically, the correlation between the curriculum and text could have helped achieve the curriculum goals but, as indicated several times already, very few teachers were aware of the curriculum document's existence and the texts were used in large classes by inadequately prepared teachers, using the Berlitz method designed for use with small student numbers. Under such circumstances, with the texts being the sole curriculum resource, the *My English Book* series proved inadequate. During fieldtrip visits to schools in 1994, copies of the *Active English* series, commonly used in private schools, were seen in use in some government schools to supplement the *My English Book* series and texts.

Since neither the curriculum nor texts for ELT extended to the years prior to Y4, teachers who were text reliant experienced confusion as to how to commence ELT at the early levels when they received pressure from guardians to commence the teaching of English at Y1. The lack of guidance for the earlier years was also a major problem for ELTs in private English medium schools. These teachers experienced considerable confusion and difficulty because they were required to teach all subjects (except Nepali) in English from lower kindergarten level. As a result, private school teachers justified their frequent reliance upon Nepali language to explain subjects such as mathematics, science and history on the children's lack of English (fieldtrips 1991-94).

Most texts used in private English medium schools had been designed in England, adapted for India, and further modified for Nepal.

Despite this, all teachers complained that the texts were unsuitable for the Nepali environment. Further, problems arose because teachers were not aware of the curriculum objectives, or the teaching point contained in the texts. As a result, many teachers tended to hurry repetitively through large sections of the text with little class interaction except the children's parroting of teacher directed phrases.

The main series in use in private English medium schools were *Active English for Nepal*, and *Gul Mohar Graded English for Nepal*. The *Radiant Way*, *New Radiant Way*, and *Reading is Fun* series were used to supplement these texts. The *Active English for Nepal* was first published in 1971, and revised in 1973, 1987, 1990. Originally published with a corresponding work book and teachers' notes, the series purported to be suitable for children from kindergarten onwards. Between 1991 and 1994 no teachers' notes were available for *Active English for Nepal* in Nepal. A spokesperson for Oxford University Press (telephone interview, England, Feb. 1992) stated that no accompanying teachers' notes had been published for some time, and there was no intention to resume their publication.

*Gul Mohar Graded English Course for Nepal* was first published in 1985 and revised in 1988 and 1990. It claimed to be an integrative course of Primers, Readers and Practice books from kindergarten level to SLC (Gul Mohar 1992, Preface). The series never included a teachers' guide to usage, but included a half page explanatory note to teachers, and a further page which indicated the teaching points for each lesson at the beginning of each text.

A brief examination of these two main series showed that, while the level of usage was reasonable at each stage, the standard of knowledge of the English language needed was greater than that expected of the most

exceptional native speaker of a similar age. Neither series showed a strong relationship with the promotion of curriculum goals as set out in 1972. Along with these problems was a general complaint that *Gul Mohar's* level of difficulty was at least a year in advance of the *Active English* series, and that the *Gul Mohar* texts moved too rapidly from one aspect of English to another (fieldwork conversations and interviews, 1991-92). One teacher in Pokhara claimed that the *Gul Mohar* series was too difficult for children outside the Kathmandu Valley because they had less exposure to English (fieldtrip interview, 1992 ).

In 1994 the government authorised the drafting of a new curriculum, and in 1995 the progressive piloting of new texts for ELT commenced. However, problems with the 1993/5 reform of ELT existed from the outset. The new curriculum and texts promulgated by the BPEP emphasised a 'functional approach', with texts based on the likely experiences of a Nepali middle-class child, whereas the in-service training proposed by the PEDP was based on a 'thematic approach' and contained training modules which were inappropriate culturally and practically for Nepal. For instance, one training module was based on a circus. While circuses existed in Nepal, the theme presented in the training module was related to a Western style circus which involved performing seals, trapeze artists, lion tamers and western style ringmasters, none of which exist in Nepal. The accompanying vocabulary included unusual words such as somnambulist and hypnotist, neither of which would especially enhance a Nepali child's ability to communicate in everyday English. Several other culturally inappropriate and impractical activities existed within the PEDP training program, compounding the obvious lack of coordination between the curriculum planners and trainers (cf. Appendix F, p. 375).

Although the new curriculum claimed to have been ‘designed keeping in mind that teaching language is more important than teaching about it’ (*New Draft Curriculum for Primary Schools* 1994, Introduction), the draft being promulgated then set out a number of teaching points which emphasised the teaching of language knowledge. Yet, in spite of this emphasis on language knowledge, the curriculum gave no indication as to how to develop a series of sequential teaching points, and there was no assistance for teachers regarding how they could encourage the use of English as a form of communication (cf. Appendix G, p. 399). The absence of guidance for teachers who were new to the concept of how to construct a syllabus, regarding skills and concepts to be taught, increased the likelihood that lessons would continue to be delivered by rote.

Some features in the introduction to the draft curriculum could not be understood by Nepali teachers because the language used was outside their vocabulary knowledge and experience. Not surprisingly teachers who were inadequately educated and trained found statements like ‘to internalise the underlying system and function of the language and to develop functional performance skills in it’ (*New Draft Curriculum* 1994, introduction) mystifying. It was also a feature of Nepali ELT to teach using formal language knowledge terms which made little contribution to the child’s understanding of language usage. Instead of using terms like ‘interrogative’ it would have been more appropriate for Nepali educators to assign simple, culturally appropriate language descriptions such as ‘prasna china’, and ‘ardha biram’, which would then be given their counterpart names of ‘question mark’ and ‘semi-colon’. The draft primary school curriculum advocated that ‘listening and speaking should be taught before reading and writing’ (*New Draft Curriculum* 1994, Introduction). In Nepal this was

likely to create a special problem in view of the claims (cf. Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991) of Willing (1989) and Oxford (1990) that limiting the learning skills to what amounts to rote instruction ignores the variety of ways in which children learn, and increases the likelihood of students dropping out.

Compounding the problem of limited learning styles, the textual material produced to complement the curriculum in 1995 took the form of a series of small booklets which were designed around thematic units. These units did not have the comprehensive content of a basic text. Problems with these unit texts included:

1. There was clear conflict between the curriculum, which expressly aimed for a 'functional' approach<sup>4</sup>, and the texts, which were based on a 'thematic' approach<sup>5</sup>. While in a developed country the use of a thematic approach might not exclude the development of functionality, in a developing country where teachers had limited knowledge of the subject, inadequate or no training, and were conditioned by a rote learning methodology, this difference of approach was likely to cause confusion by teaching language inappropriate for daily communicative needs.

2. Although the texts were culturally appropriate, they were based around the experience of an urbanised Nepali middle class or upper class child. This exacerbated the problem of the relevance of teaching English in an isolated village. Furthermore, the story given for reading practice and appreciation was a Western fairy tale (*My*

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<sup>4</sup>A functional approach is based on communicative skills that would be used for social survival, such as, 'What is your name?' or 'Where do you live?'

<sup>5</sup>A thematic approach is used to build up a variety of vocabulary and understanding around a particular theme, such as the 'circus' already mentioned. In Nepal a more appropriate theme may be associated with a festival.

*Primary English* 1995, Book Two, Grade V, Part 1, 38, cf. p. 425 below).

3. Some of the illustrations showed Nepalis as having Western features. This was also a shortcoming of the *Active English* series used in private English medium schools.

4. Some glaring errors occurred in set tasks (for example, *My Primary English* 1995, Book One, Grade IV, Part 1, 14, 16). In addition errors occurred throughout the unit text with punctuation and grammar (*My Primary English* 1995, Book One, Grade IV, Part 1, 26). In one instance there was a vocabulary error when a skirt was listed as a frock (*My Primary English* 1995, Book One, Grade IV, Part 1, 24).<sup>6</sup>

5. Some tasks were clearly difficult to implement with large classes (*My Primary English*, Book One, Grade IV, Part 1 1995, 8) (cf. Appendix H, p. 409 below).

6. Some activities were impractical as they required equipment such as crayons which were never in evidence in the research area between 1994-95 (*My Primary English* 1995, Book One, Grade IV, Part 1, 8) (cf. p. Appendix H, p. 409 below).

7. There was no guidance given for pronunciation beyond single sounds.

An example of associated problems is contained in the first unit for Y5 with an illustration of a British Raj design building for a school. This design is not the style of a typical Nepali government school. Furthermore, the task set for the children on this page instructed the pupil to seek five true statements and two false sentences. In fact, there were only four true

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<sup>6</sup>These errors have been noted in Appendix H.

statements and three false ones (*My Primary English* 1995, Book One, Grade V, Part 1, 9) (cf. p. Appendix H, p. 429). The booklets gave no guidance towards further practice for appropriate usage or extension work and the books lacked the substance of the *My English* series.

The new unit texts were a break from past practice in Nepal where, until 1995, one basic text was given as the year's prescribed work. There was a strong possibility that teachers would defeat the purpose of the new format by trying to use the new material in the same way that they used the old texts, as had occurred with teachers who had received training on the new Y1 and Y2 general curriculum and texts (fieldtrip, Nov. 1994). This showed the effects Beeby (1966), Schon (1982) and Joyce and Showers (1988) indicated as not conducive to experimentation and, along with extremely large classes, acted as a deterrent to varying methodologies.

Between 1991 and 1995, class sizes were reported and observed to be between forty to sixty pupils, and it was claimed by some teachers that their classes were even larger. Investigation of claims of larger classes proved to be an estimate of all students studying English in a school (fieldtrips 1994), but in 1984 Davies stated the largest class reported to him was 134 pupils and that over half the English teachers in his sample had classes of more than 50 pupils. Given the size of classes, he noted: 'It is not surprising that the language teaching most on offer is a teacher monologue, passive repetition and memorization by pupils' (1984, 44). Class sizes during 1994 of 40-60 pupils were slightly lower but still too high for effective teaching to take place. The high numbers prevented pupils from receiving the opportunity to practice orally and further restricted the teacher's chance of giving prompt correction to written work (fieldtrips 1994).

In addition to the high teacher-pupil ratio, teachers regarded their poor teaching conditions as impediments to the learning process (fieldtrip interviews 1991-94) (cf. p. 214 above). They claimed that, in a situation where their own standards of oral English were extremely poor, and language models not commonly available, an absence of supporting materials was a major problem (fieldtrip interviews 1991-94).

In 1984 Davies noted that while the pronunciation of individual word stress, rhythm, and intonation were included in the secondary text books, many teachers omitted the speech sections. He was unclear as to whether this was because their own spoken English was poor or because oral English was not examined at SLC (1984, 34).

Davies went on to recommend that greater emphasis needed to be placed on linguistics, phonology, rhythm and intonation (1984, 34). This could only have been achieved through the use of appropriate role models or audio tapes. Giri also advised that audio tapes be produced (1986, 37) but nothing was done to meet this identified need. However, even in private schools in Kathmandu Valley the equipment on which to play these tapes was scarce.

Even visual materials were limited for ELT. Many Western objects such as lawn mowers, motorised launches, circus trapeze artists, seals, or whales are not familiar in the Nepali environment and pictorial representation was needed to explain these English language words. Manners and culture also differed and needed visual representation or demonstration to assist children to comprehend the cultural differences.

The teachers claimed they found their poor pay generally prevented the purchase of materials to make teaching aids. In addition to the cost, it was often difficult to procure construction materials outside the Kathmandu



Valley. These factors were not taken into account by the PEDP training modules, which advocated the teacher purchase paper and card (cf. Appendix F, p. 389 below). Even in the rare situation where materials had been brought from India several years before, an absence of suitable storage facilities in government schools presented further difficulties. The same applied to the preservation of book stock.

Nevertheless, the lack of supporting materials, combined with insufficient knowledge of curriculum goals and the teachers' dependence on texts, did not prevent teachers also complaining about a lack of time for preparation of lessons. This was surprising when very few Nepali teachers indicated any knowledge of what constituted lesson planning. Their inability to relate a particular page in the text to a teaching point made it difficult to coordinate or expand their teaching into a lesson plan. Were the teachers using claims of insufficient planning time, simply to justify their lack of planning? Certainly it was common during 1994 for teachers to justify not changing their teaching method on the grounds of having to prepare students for district level exams at Y5 and SLC exams at Y10.

### **Student Evaluation**

Great importance was placed on the passing of the SLC and it became a major determinant of the method of teaching and the standard of ELT. Results obtained in the SLC exams were seen as the final arbiter of a student's ability and largely dictated the student's future. While some examiners recognised the faults in the system, they persisted with a style of examination which dictated the method of teaching and content of courses without any apparent reference to, or awareness of, the general curriculum aims and goals. Although Nepalis acknowledge that teaching English is about

the acquisition of communicative skills, they continue to stress language knowledge in the national and district exams.

In 1984 Davies described the level of skills students should acquire from between seven and ten years of foreign language study as:

- Reading: the ability to read with understanding a passage of simplified English (word level at least 2200);
- Writing: the ability to combine information into a paragraph written in reasonably accurate English;
- Listening: the ability to understand simple English spoken by a competent Nepalese speaker of English; and
- Speaking: the ability to speak about himself, his family and locality and to ask others about the same topics;

He added, 'A student who goes on to tertiary education will need a higher level of performance in each skill, but especially in reading' (1984 np). However, these reasonable goals took second place to the skill demanded by the SLC - namely accurate memory. Skills such as listening and speaking were overlooked by the SLC. Far from encouraging the development of reading skills which can apply to any text, the student memorises 'information' which is of little cultural relevance. For example, an examination practice booklet posed the following question, 'When and where did captain Morehouse sight the Maryceleste?' (*Super Top SLC Test Answer Book* 2049 Nepali Calendar, 77). One immediately notices that this question includes two errors, one in the use of a proper noun ('Captain') and the other an error in fact - the 'Maryceleste' was the 'Marie Celeste'.

Comprehension questions on an unseen passage are included in the examination, but they generally only test the skill of locating information in a passage and the ability to understand a simple written question. Questions

which tested the student's ability to infer meaning from context were not included. For example, in one SLC 'answers' booklet the question 'How did the engine driver look at various experiences of life?' is answered thus:

He always looked [sic] on the bright side of things, and was fond of telling people who were in trouble that there was sure to be some good whether or whether they could see it or not. (*Question-Answer, Regular and Exempted, SLC Test Answer Book 1993, 55*)

This passage, which purported to offer a model answer to the examination question, contained several typographical and other errors. In terms of the cultural relevance, the man's occupation was largely irrelevant in Nepal, as the country has only one very short rail track near the Indian border. The expression 'whether or whether' is archaic and not used in communicative English in the twentieth century. A question requiring inference may have been, 'What view of life did the man have?'

Rote-learning the answer book was effectively encouraged, as questions were often recycled. Booklets containing previously used and likely to be repeated questions of SLC papers were freely on sale in the markets of Kathmandu. As a result, teachers, parents and students abandoned the class texts in the lead up to the national examination and concentrated on the memorisation of the answers to the potential examination questions. Prior to this concentrated tutoring, the Y10 lessons became practice sessions for the examination. What was not examined was not taught. The effect of this was that all English teaching in the final year of secondary school focussed on passing the SLC.

It was therefore not surprising that the requirements of the SLC tended to dominate all levels of teaching. Nepali teachers often claimed they

could not change teaching methodology or deviate from past practices as they feared results in SLC would be affected. Failure to produce a high pass rate at SLC level became not only a matter of personal shame, but it could also mean the loss of a job. In the case of private schools the world over, the enrolment rate was dependent on them being able to quote a high SLC (or equivalent) pass rate.

While, as a final examination, the SLC was not designed specifically to assist teachers in diagnosing pupils' weaknesses and developing their latent capacities, its form and style had a profoundly limiting effect on how teachers both taught and examined their students throughout the whole of their schooling (fieldtrips 1991-94). What the SLC required became far more important than the aims and objectives of the curriculum. In effect, the SLC had become the curriculum for Y10, and the controlling influence over what was taught for all other years, to the overall detriment of the educational process.

In 1984 Davies claimed that as long as the SLC exam remained unchanged, it would be difficult to improve the teaching of English in secondary schools (1984, 1). He felt that without a response-based examination, more flexible teaching methods would not be attempted, and that teachers would remain text-book bound (1984, np). Progressive educators understood the problems caused by the SLC, and knew that it acted as a barrier to a culturally relevant and localised curriculum (fieldtrip interviews 1991-4). Nevertheless, the Nepali people remained impressed by the status conferred by success at the SLC.

## Conclusion

The evidence suggests that the dominance of English language as the major foreign language to be taught in Nepal developed from an Orientalist perspective which influenced the Rana regime during the nineteenth century, with the acquisition of skills in English becoming an elitist symbol and a passport to a culturally desirable administrative occupation. Most levels of the community continue to believe ELT is an essential part of their child's education, to the extent that strong protest is elicited if there are recommendations to remove English from the government primary school curriculum. Global politics and economics consolidated the dominance of English language after Nepal's emergence into the wider world in 1950. Despite these attitudes and pressures, there is no evidence of specific national goals for the teaching of ELT in any of Nepal's development of initial education plans. Is the government's lack of official goals for the teaching of English linked with the fact that English is seen as a passport to employment generally reserved for the elite? Is English included in the curriculum of government schools simply to appease community demand (Kaplan 1990, 10)? Given that text and curriculum design continued to be inappropriate to the needs of the general community, and a detailed handbook recommending lessons and a variety of teaching strategies was not available to teachers, the suggestions do not seem unreasonable.

Yet it would seem from curriculum documents and the national SLC examination that the government acknowledges a pass in English as compulsory in order for this nationally respected certificate to be awarded. However, this examination, by its emphasis on inappropriate testing procedures, which tend to dominate content and teaching, may be a source for perpetuating teaching methods which result in poor communicative skills

in English. Compounding the problems created by the testing procedures were the poor facilities in schools and lack of teaching materials.

In addition, a lack of specific training for ELTs and ignorance of curriculum goals has lead to a sense of inadequacy. Further, there is evidence of a decline in the standard of compulsory English in the 1990s. Considered within the framework of the claims of Beeby (1968) and Schon (1983), the sense of inadequacy in their own skills in English language usage expressed by Nepali teachers, and verified by Davies (1983) and Giri (1985, 1986), is as important as their lack of training. Given the dearth of research into the standard of ELTs in the 1990s, the following chapter offers an assessment of the standard and ability of ELTs as a means of evaluating the general level of competency of teachers of English.

### **Nepali English Language Teachers: Standards and Problems, 1994**

The previous chapter indicated that although there was speculation regarding declining standards in the teaching of English, and controversy about the timing and way in which it should be taught, formal research was not available beyond 1986. To substantiate or refute the claims, more recent research was necessary, as there were no data available regarding the standard of Nepali ELTs 1986-94. Data collected in 1994 for this thesis not only throws light on the standard of some Nepali teachers of English, but also identifies certain areas of difficulty and provides a basis for more informed discussion on the teaching of English in Nepal during the 1990s. However, the data presented in this chapter are intended to describe, rather than tabulate, the standards and problems of ELTs in Nepal.

This chapter includes assessment strategies related to competency in all four facets of English language usage - listening, speaking, writing and reading - administered to a small group of teachers in the research area during 1994. Although there was no separate procedure for assessing listening skills, the assessment strategies were nevertheless multi-faceted, using procedures which tested both language use and knowledge. This necessitated the use of a number of strategies to ensure that a fair and accurate assessment of the language performance and demonstrated knowledge of the Nepali teachers of English, within the research area, could be made. The results from these assessments were compared with the research by Davies (1984) and Giri (1985, and 1986) referred to in Chapter Seven. This comparison provides confirmation of the level of English language knowledge and proficiency of the survey group. The results from these procedures were

assessed using subjective and objective criteria used in American Council on Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines (1986, cf. Appendix I, p. 470 below), the Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating (ASLPR, cf. Appendix C, p. 302 below), the First Steps language development continuums (1993, cf. Appendix J, p. 473 below), and the Victorian Learning Assessment Project for Writing (LAP) (1996 cf. Appendix K, p. 495 below), to ascertain the difficulties that the teaching of English might face throughout Nepal in the mid-nineteen nineties.<sup>1</sup>

In a series of two day workshops conducted during January and February 1994 seven approaches were used to assess the English proficiency and knowledge of the participating ELTs within the research area. As noted in the Introduction, (cf. p. 25 above) workshops were organised by PABSON and NELTA and the participants were voluntary - which meant they were opportunistically selected. The workshops were lead by the researcher with the assistance of a Nepali translator and the auspicing organisation. The procedures used for assessment were conducted individually (as in the case of interviews, questionnaires and Cloze tests) and in groups (as in the case of listing daily problems and professional needs of teachers).<sup>2</sup> The approaches involved the assessment of both productive and receptive skills (Harmer 1991, 16). These included three Cloze exercises. Although studies regarding language interference, such as Lado's (1957) and Buteaus' (1970) on 'contrastive analysis hypothesis' (cited in Larsen-

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<sup>1</sup>The aim of these strategies was to identify and describe some of the basic problems related to the level of competency of Nepali ELTs. At no stage has the aim been to give a detailed analysis of the deficiencies of Nepali ELTs; rather the research is intended as a basic indicator from which future research, aimed at improving the general situation of ELT in Nepal, may develop.

<sup>2</sup>The researcher has had forty years experience as a primary school teacher in Victoria, Australia. This experience included a number of years as an in-service teacher trainer, teacher of ESL and LAP assessor for the Victorian Board of Studies. In addition to this experience the researcher audited tertiary units in Language Function and Analysis, Applied Linguistics, and Teaching English to Students of Other Languages (TESOL) at Victoria University of Technology (VUT) for most of 1996.



Freeman and Long 1991, 57) have been called into question, language interference is still believed to be an inhibiting factor in second language acquisition. Schader and Rutherford (1979 in Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991) suggest that interference manifests itself in unexpected ways, and Sharwood-Smith (1983 in Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, 97) found problems associated with cross-linguistic influence. In view of these findings, and because the Nepali participants had had little exposure to English spoken with an Australian accent, it was felt that dictation, which relies heavily on aural skills and memory retention, could have been a problem if participants became confused with variations in pronunciation, and so dictation testing was excluded in an attempt to minimise 'language interference'.

A 'grammar translate' test was also excluded. While Ingram implies that 'grammar translate' overlaps the indirect categories of 'discrete-point' and 'integrative tests', which assume that a measure of knowledge of grammar or linguistic competence can serve to measure language proficiency, she notes they are often designed with the dual purpose of diagnosing learning problems and testing language knowledge, but are marked solely from the 'discrete point' (knowledge) perspective. In addition, Ingram claims that 'translations tend to be carried out by the learner on an isolated word by word basis, which ... destroys the exercise as an integrative test' (1982, 2). For these reasons, Grammar translate was excluded.

Cloze testing was selected because, as Ingram claims, it is semi-direct in that it incorporates each item into a language event, more closely involving all the sub-skills of a learner's total proficiency (1982, 3). Ingram suggests cloze has a capacity to show a large number of language skills at a variety of levels and provides some opportunity for rank ordering learners and, from

the rank ordering, proficiency levels can be obtained (ibid). Although it was not the purpose of the research to rank order the participants in the traditional normative sense, in the light of the burgeoning private English medium schools in Nepal some comparison of proficiency between government and private school ELTs was needed for practical purposes. Many guardians were investing in their children's education by enrolling them in private English medium schools in the belief that the child would obtain a better standard of education than was on offer in government schools.

Cloze testing was also selected because, according to Fotos, cloze tests are capable of assessing language skills ranging from basic to advanced . Fotos also determined that 'when the results of cloze tests are analysed with the results of other assessment procedures, such as essay writing, they exemplify an alternative functional measure' (1991, 313-35). Given that one of the purposes of the thesis research was to employ a variety of assessment of the communicative proficiency of a group of ELTs in Nepal, in order to provide a basis for discussion on how inadequate knowledge of a subject might affect a teacher's ability to teach that subject, cloze tests were an appropriate choice for assessing the proficiency and commonly shared errors of the ELTs.

The first assessment was through oral interview, to test the productive and receptive communicative skills of aural/oral understanding and to assess the teacher's ability to respond to questions asked in English. While note has been taken of Labov's and Tarone's warnings that 'the mere presence of an observer is likely to cause the subjects to pay more attention to their speech', (cf. Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, 32) because Giri's 1985 research indicated students of education were reluctant to participate in oral testing, the oral interviews for this thesis were structured to encourage a

response from the participant. Later, when the structured section of the interview was completed, the interviewee was encouraged to converse freely. This allowed for Johnston's (1985 in Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, 30) claim that an unstructured oral interview provides the more accurate measure of language usage.

Questions asked in this section were simple, and designed to produce information that could form part of statistical data for developing profiles of Nepali ELTs. Because of the dual purpose of this exercise, when it was evident that the participant was not coping with the level of questioning in English, an interpreter was used to present the question in Nepali and, when necessary, clarify the response to ensure that data relevant to other sections of the research related to age, qualifications and length of service were not corrupted by the interposition of the translator. Amongst the questions asked during the interview were, Are you married? Where do you live? [and] What are some of the problems you have teaching English?

The second method of assessment was a written questionnaire requiring a written response. The questionnaire was used in the light of Burt, Dulay and Hernandez's (1975 in Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, 29) finding that a question and answer format was useful for testing semantics and syntax, and Harmer's contention that questionnaires are a useful way of demonstrating specific language items (1991, 107). As this section was also designed as an anonymous form of data collection and also as a test of ability to read, understand and respond in writing to questions in English, questions were also explained orally in Nepali prior to the commencement of the test. Some questions had a multiple choice component in keeping with Benoussan and Ramaz's research (1984, 230) which suggests that second or foreign language speakers perform better on written tests if a multiple choice factor is

included. Other questions were in a simple two sentence sequence (cf. Appendix B1, p. 294).

As was noted in the Introduction to the thesis, a problem occurred during the research because some of these questions concerning qualifications were inappropriately worded (cf. p. 26 above), and adjustments were made when collating the data. Ironically, when participants indicated that they had passed IEd they almost universally claimed that they had no teacher training. Those with BEd responded similarly.

The third method of assessment was a Nepali Cloze test. The old style teaching exercise of 'fill the gap' was familiar to Nepalis but the analytical style of cloze was not known. In order to familiarize participants with the approach, a Cloze test was given in the national tongue to assist the participants with the style and use of the test. The test was designed to assess semantics and parts of speech in Nepali. The correct punctuation had to be supplied but the exact word was not required; the answer supplied was only required to make sense. This test was set at Nepali Y5 standard and was explained thoroughly by an experienced Nepali university lecturer and linguist, in Nepali. In addition, as Yorio (1976 cited by Riddell 1996) suggests that a person illiterate in their mother tongue was more likely to have great difficulty in achieving literacy in a second language, it was necessary to examine the participants' ability to manipulate their national language.

The fourth method of assessment was an English multiple choice Cloze test. Multiple choice was chosen since research suggests that this assists second language learners' performance (Benoussan and Ramaz 1984, 230). Ingram indicates that Cloze tests, provided they are not used to normative test or give a specific score of the participants, achievement, are

acceptable as an assessment procedure (1982, 3). The vocabulary for this test was chosen from *Active English Book 4*.<sup>3</sup> In keeping with Bachman's assertion that fixed ratio deletion was more difficult than random deletions (1985, 535), different types of deletions were chosen randomly to test for meaning, syntax, the use of definite and indefinite articles, plural agreement of subject and complement, and irregular word plural. It also assessed awareness of basic punctuation: question marks, commas, full stops, and use of capital letters.

Method five took the form of another written questionnaire developed to provide an opportunity for descriptive writing and creative expression. In this way a second aspect of productive skills, as distinct from those designated by Harmer as receptive skills (1991, 16), could be gauged.

The sixth method employed was another English Cloze test, designed on the system of random deletions but without multiple choice responses. Answers were required only to make sense. Punctuation was also required and the test looked at similar aspects of English as the first cloze test. The vocabulary for the exercise was taken from the *Gul Mohar* Series Book 3, and was used to construct a paragraph on the well known Nepali Legend pertaining to the origin of Kathmandu. The lower level in the *Gul Mohar* series was preferred to that of the *Active English* series as some Nepali ELTs claimed *Gul Mohar* was more difficult (cf. p. 222 above).

The final method of assessment was in the form of a group exercise where teachers discussed, collated and recorded problems they felt they were experiencing in teaching English. This encompassed both receptive and productive skills and revealed the teachers' own skills in discussion,

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<sup>3</sup>Active English is one of the main texts used in English medium schools in Nepal and is also occasionally used in some government schools as a supplementary text.

recording, presentation and ability to express themselves in written and spoken English. It also provided valuable factual data of perceived problems and showed whether the ELTs had the experience or the ability to correct each other or self-correct.

As can be seen from the tests outlined, there was no separate procedure undertaken for testing listening skills. This area of language was assessed subjectively and incorporated into a combined heading of Speaking and Listening. The main common errors noted in the performances of the participants have been collated and listed under three headings, Listening and Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The various types of problems indicated in both usage and knowledge have been matched against criteria used in the four separate performance and developmental scales noted earlier (cf. p. 234 above).

### **Analysis of Common Errors and an Assessment of Language Knowledge and Proficiency.**

Before giving an analysis of the results, it is worth noting from the outset that out of the 196 ELTs surveyed, on one occasion a principal of long standing was unable to respond when asked for the name of his village in English and on another occasion two young females about to be employed as primary school teachers - and said to have recently passed SLC - had great difficulty responding to any of the four language components.

Apart from those involved in international commerce and politics, most Nepalis have had limited experience with native speakers of English. Role models are limited. The dominant sources of Nepalis' exposure to English language speakers between 1991 and 1995 were Indians and

tourists, with the result they have difficulty reproducing the sounds of standard English.

Tate (1967, 1), writing on problems associated with teaching Australian aboriginal students English, has claimed that insufficient practice in the target language (English) takes place when learners live in an environment where the mother or national tongue is constantly used whenever the learner is away from the formal learning environment. He claims this has been responsible for the development of a creole. However, although Nepali, like other Indian languages, does have loan words from English, creole is not evident in Nepal. Nevertheless, the frequent use of Nepali during English lessons may have been a factor in the poor syntactic knowledge exhibited in Nepali use of English. As Nepal is a multi-lingual society, further problems arose with pronunciation because of the difference in origin of mother-tongue languages. Nepali, the national language, has its origins in Sanskrit, whereas several other local languages have a Tibeto-Burmese origin. While it is not the intention of this chapter to produce a detailed analysis of the differences and similarities between Sanskrit based or Tibeto-Burmese languages, it is noteworthy that two workshop groups which had a language of Tibeto-Burmese origin, and were from a closely knit ethnic group, had difficulty with the Nepali cloze. These groups were from Gorkhana and Bhaktapur where the language, Newari, was Tibeto-Burmese based. In contrast, a group of teachers from the Terai, whose mother tongue was Magar, also of Tibeto-Burmese origin, did not demonstrate any difficulty. Whether this difference was due to dialect, educational background, type of ethnic society or location was not apparent.

Shackle (1985, 170) notes that, unlike English, Tibeto-Burmese languages often have no central vowel sound and as tonal languages they

have no syllable stress. He claims that, although languages of Tibeto-Burmese origin generally have more of the consonant sounds of English than other Asian languages, they do not have the fricative /f/ /v/ /d/. Speakers will hear 'pin' for 'fin', 'pine' for 'vine' and pronounce 'pleasure' as 'pledges'. Shackle also notes that: (1) In Burmese /r/ is fairly rare and difficulty will be experienced when saying words like 'Russia' and 'America'; (2) nasal phonemes may cause difficulty and all except initial consonants will cause problems; and (3) vowels such as /æ/ in 'man' will be confused with /e/ in /men/ and /maît/ (might) for /meît/ (mate). Sanskrit and Tibeto-Burmese languages have many features in common, however. Notably, they follow the basic pattern of Subject/Object/Verb and they have no articles. Nevertheless, the differences between the two need to be considered, as speech problems of a different nature from that of Nepali may take place when English is being taught (cf. p. 235 above).

### *Listening and Speaking*

Davies noted that pronunciation was a problem in 1984 and recommended that 'greater emphasis be placed on the application of linguistics to language teaching' (1984, 34). He further noted that, although pronunciation, word stress, rhythm and intonation were included in the secondary textbooks, many teachers omitted the speech sections, either because their own spoken English was poor or because oral English was not examined at SLC (34).

During 1994 interviews, the participating teachers demonstrated severe problems with pronunciation. Some of these problems were:



- (a) Difficulty with short vowels such as / ə / / ɪ / / e / / æ / o / ʊ.
- (b) Major problems occur with semi-vowels, or glides, such as /y/ and /w/. Both these sounds are regularly omitted. The difficulty occurs in 'yellow' which is always pronounced as / ɛləʊ /; /w/ in 'world' where the initial glide is ignored, producing /zild/ or /zld / on occasions when the /w/ is attempted the sound produced is the phoneme in the national language which makes no distinction between /v/ and /w/.
- (c) Nepalis find difficulty with voicing distinction so another major difficulty is with /d / /b/ /p/ /t/. In addition, Fiji is pronounced /fīzi/, because the Nepali language also lacks the correct phoneme to produce the /dʒ/. Reproduction of other English sounds that also cause difficulty through voicing distinction - largely because they are similar but different - are /k/ /t/ /v/ /g/ /th/ /ee/. Double consonants or initial blends, / ʃ / (sh) / tʃ / (ch), / ð / (as in the) and / θ / (as in thong) cause difficulty.
- (d) Further problems are experienced with words such as 'mate' / mɛt / which comes out very close to the pronunciation of the word 'might'. (This I was mentioned earlier - cf, p. 242).
- (e) In addition to, and possibly as a result of, pronunciation problems, spelling difficulty (discussed in detail below, in the writing section), and syntactic problems were prevalent. In his research amongst Australian Aboriginal people, Tate claimed there was a link between punctuation, spelling and syntax. Examples given by him appear similar to Nepali ones. Tate suggests errors such as, 'He jump to the ground' may be due less to carelessness than to the fact that, in saying 'He jumped to the ground' in a normal manner, the 't' sound of the verb is not exploded, even though there is usually an observance of its existence by means of a stop. He claims that in quick speech few people would be aware of any difference in pronunciation

between the two given sentences (1967, 28). However, in the Nepali context this still needs to be checked via written samples to see whether they portray the same error; this was not done as part of this research.

Further confusions were displayed in Nepali conversation when participants tried to use plural nouns. 'People' becomes 'peoples' and 'information' is spoken of as 'informations'. Here the problem seems to be a misunderstanding of collective nouns. Further analysis showed additional confusion of verb/noun plural in the case of collective nouns: 'My topics is ...' instead of either 'My topic is ...' or 'My topics are ...', 'the people wants to know', instead of 'the people want to know.'

Another example involved the failure to use prepositional verbs correctly: 'Today I will explain you about my ...' Here, the syntactic problems displayed a failure to handle verb tenses and match direct and indirect objects. The misuse of prepositions also showed up as a problem area, since 'of' was consistently neglected. The necessary use of personal pronouns was another problem, 'The man he walked along the road.' Poor syntactic understanding was further demonstrated in the written work of the participants. These errors generally indicate a misapplication of known English grammar rules.

Problems in the use of past and present tense were also evident: 'The children complete the work last week', instead of 'The children completed the work last week'; 'I feel myself ...' as opposed to 'I felt ...,' and statements such as, 'The children are coming from the village', in place of the correct 'The children come from the village', all showed confusion in the use of present continuous tense. (This problem is probably due to the use of particles in the Nepali national tongue.) Also, while Nepali language has past, present and future tense they are not always used in informal speech.

### *Writing*

During the testing in 1994 most participants appeared to enjoy the opportunity to write creatively and descriptively in English. Many participants shared personal feelings and experiences in the descriptive and free writing sections (cf. Appendix L, p. 498 below). But often the participants were unable to construct simple grammatically correct sentences following the basic pattern of subject/verb/object. However, as noted in the introduction to this thesis the assessment conditions were not always ideal. Copying was a recognised problem in Nepal and this was reflected in some of the writing samples (cf. Appendix L, p. 502 below). Despite supervision of these procedures, the researcher was mindful that the participants were volunteers and this made the control of the habit of copying difficult. Copying was seen to be most prevalent during some creative writing sessions where observations, made while the procedures were in progress, suggested that many participants were limited in their ability to write in English because of poor vocabulary, syntactic knowledge and confidence. Despite anonymity and guarantees of confidentiality, participants in some private school workshops frequently wrote sycophantic responses when describing the school in which they were working. While this did not affect their skill in written expression, it was a social response no doubt connected to the lack of job security (cf. p. 199 above). Responses to the descriptive and creative writing tasks showed that participants from the Terai generally produced written work suggestive of a more advanced level of language development than government teachers from Kathmandu Valley .

Several teachers demonstrated a lack of syntactic understanding, some examples being, 'First of all I have teach in Baradayani School,' 'There

were many teachers and they helped to me for studied hard,' and 'I have been teaching since three years'. Poor use of conjunctions such as 'but' were another feature of participants' writing. Pronunciation problems were also reflected in the participants' written responses. The letter 'e' was frequently written in place of 'i'. In free writing examples the position of the verb often caused confusion - a common error among some native speakers of English during the first two years of primary school. Many spelling mistakes occurred, these included metreals/ materials, lak/lack, enveroment/ environment. Other spelling problems such as lebel/label and meny/many showed a deficient knowledge of phonics where / a / can produce the softer sound of /eɪ/ and any can be pronounced as /eny/. Some of these showed a direct link to pronunciation problems. The use of definite and indefinite articles was a major problem in the writing exercises, and to a lesser degree in the cloze exercises.

Nepali language is constructed around subject/ object/ verb whereas English is structured on the pattern of subject/ verb/ object. When writing, the participants appeared to fall back on mother tongue sentence structure, for example, 'You will come with me Yes?' In general the sentences reflected a mixture of Nepali and English patterns, meaning that the sentence structure did not fit either language, an example being 'You like Nepali food (?)', the question mark being omitted. These results are consistent with Giri's more detailed research of 1985, where he analysed the writing performance of participants in PCL in terms of quality, form and length. He observed a particular difficulty with clauses, adverbs and indirect questions. He felt that the errors seemed to have been committed due to cross association between the Nepali language and the target language. Giri argued that, although patterns of sentence construction were evident, the participants' sentences

showed an insecurity in allotting patterns according to the English model. He also claimed that translation of thoughts was a problem (1986, 3). His 1986 results suggested severe problems of confusion and interference in sentence patterns between national, mother tongue and English at PC level.

While Shackle claims it is generally believed that the English writing system poses no problems for most learners whose mother tongue has an Indo-Aryan origin (1985, 171), during the 1994 research the handwriting of Nepali teachers clearly demonstrated difficulties. There was a mixture of English cursive and print script in their writing, the latter mainly upper case. Punctuation was frequently ignored or incomplete, despite its being stressed by instructors in both Nepali and English when the procedure was presented (cf. p. 254 below and Appendix L, p. 498). In many cases use of capital letters was a problem. This may have stemmed from many participants having been taught to write English in upper case letters. Hand writing was generally a mixture of upper case print and cursive script. Spelling in most cases was done with phonetic accuracy throughout level one. Neglect of commas, question marks and full stops are generally referred to as 'fullish stops', was also much in evidence (cf. p. 252 below). An inability to handle the use of definite and indefinite articles showed most strongly in their creative writing, despite most participants handling them better in the cloze situation. However, even in the cloze situation, there were still a number of errors.

### *Reading and Language Comprehension*

The Cloze test showed many Nepalis had prediction and comprehension problems, despite the decision made to assess using a multiple choice strategy (cf. p. 238 above). The agreement of subject and

complement with plurals was almost universally answered incorrectly, as in 'Elephants have very long noses/ nose.' Many had problems with irregular plurals (e.g. tooth/teeth, leaf/leaves), though this difficulty with English plurals may have been due to language interference, as Nepali language has a particular code for handling plurals. In everyday speech, the plural is often understood without being stated, while in formal speech the word 'haru' is used at the end of the sentence.

The test also revealed that most participants could not read for meaning, infer, or understand the semantics of English. None exhibited prediction skills. This may have been due to the emphasis in the SLC exams on the reproduction of the written statement. This style of questioning discourages the desire to read for meaning or infer from the text. Many participants were observed sub-vocalising and reading one word at a time both in Nepali language and English.

In school-based workshops conducted during the field research (cf. p. 24 above) it was apparent after discussions with Nepali translators and conversations with participants that very few Nepali teachers of English could follow a simple written two question sequence in English, even with a multiple choice component. 'The school I attended was a \_\_\_\_\_ government / private school. Its name was \_\_\_\_\_ .', showed the participants coped easily with the first sentence but the second sentence in the sequence was almost universally misunderstood since the teachers gave the name of the school in which they were currently teaching.

In both reading and writing, participants showed confusion between words like 'every' and 'very', 'saw' and 'was'. In the West, experienced primary school teachers, dealing with English as a native language, know these words often cause confusion in word recognition for native English

speakers. The difficulty is given special treatment and the teachers develop strategies to eradicate the problem. However, most ELTs in Nepal were not aware of this need and those who were lacked the necessary remedial strategies. This situation arises because of their own poor standard of English as well as their lack of teacher training.

### *Listening and Speaking*

The subjective evaluation schedule of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (1986) combined with the thesis data suggests that there were some teachers in Nepali government schools whose speaking ability was no higher than the Novice-Mid level (Brown 1994, 102, cf. Appendix I, p. 470 below). Their vocabulary was limited to isolated, simple words and phrases within areas of probable need. Utterances consisted of no more than two or three words and the speakers could only be understood with difficulty. However, the majority of government school teachers were in a range between Intermediate-Low to Intermediate-Mid with a small number reaching Intermediate-High. One or two notable exceptions had reached Advanced-Plus. This indicates that the majority of government school teachers demonstrated that they could successfully handle a variety of uncomplicated, basic communicative tasks and social situations within the range expected between Intermediate-Low-Mid, could make simple statements about themselves and family members, and could participate in simple conversations about their families and leisure activities. Their speech was characterised by frequent pauses and their pronunciation and fluency appeared to be strongly influenced by their first language. Although misunderstandings still arose they could be understood by a sympathetic listener (Brown 1994, 102).

The second measurement scale used was the ASLPR (cf. Appendix C, p. 302 below). This rating scale deals with all four facets of language. This scale is meant to be used with less formal assessment procedures than some of the tests used for the research. However the interviews, conversations and writing tasks come within the ambit of assessment strategies used by ASLPR assessors. Further, ASLPR offered criteria for guidance at each level which ACTFL did not. Using ASLPR criteria as a guideline, the indications were that the levels of English of the Nepali government school teachers participating in the research varied from 0+ (Initial Proficiency - where they were able to satisfy immediate needs using rehearsed utterances), to level 2 (Minimum Social Proficiency - Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements), with the largest group at level 1+ (Survival Proficiency - Able to satisfy all survival needs and limited social needs). In the case of government school teachers only one or two notable exceptions reached level 3 (Minimum Professional Proficiency) with their spoken English. In the case of listening skills, the range was similar. However, because of the human capacity to take a calculated guess within a practical listening/speaking framework, the largest group was more difficult to assess. Nevertheless, the level appeared to be below that of spoken English, with the main grouping between level 1- (Elementary Proficiency) and level 1+ (Survival Proficiency). By contrast, the higher level performers indicated by their response that their listening/comprehension levels were between levels 3 and 4.

On the First Steps continuum for oral language (cf. Appendix J, p. 473 below) most Nepali teachers appear to have progressed to a range between Early and Exploratory Language (phase two and three of the seven phase continuum). As indicated by the errors listed (cf. p. 244 above), there



were many problems with pronunciation, and continual evidence of a mix of grammatical styles, suggesting simply an approximation of correct grammar. There were many errors based on assumptions how language 'always' functions: e.g. in forming plurals (sheeps for sheep), in forming verb tenses (goed for went), and in using auxiliary verbs ('The children are coming from the village' referring to a past event - instead of 'The children came from the village').

### *Writing*

Using the ASLPR criteria as a guide, the participants' written work extended from level 0+ to level 1+ (cf. Appendix C, p. 302 below). Only one participant demonstrated writing skills beyond the upper levels of level 2. Most participants fell between level 1 and 1+ in the area of written English.

Using the key indicators of The First Step Series Language Six Phased Development Continuum for writing, most teachers were struggling with the third phase of writing in English. This phase is known as 'Early Writing'. Very few had reached phase four, 'Conventional Writing'. Only one participant could be listed as attaining the fifth phase, 'Proficient Writing'. According to key indicators for spelling, government teachers performed in phases three, four and five. These phases include phonetic spelling, transitional spelling and independent spelling.

Matching the category descriptions and performance indicators used in the Victorian Learning Assessment Project for Writing (1996) with the Nepali participants' descriptive and creative writing performance, suggested that very few government school teachers could add polish to a basic text or produce a simple text with a natural development. Most wrote only basic texts consisting of brief sentences with little development or shape. Most

texts were readily interpretable; others showed a developing control over basic forms and the one who had reached the level of being able to polish a basic text showed variation of sentence beginnings in addition to control over basic form and the use of conjunctions (cf. Appendix L, p. 503 below).

### *Reading*

Although some aspects of the assessment of reading skills recommended for the ASLPR, such as skimming, scanning, reading for information and taking notes, were not used directly, the objective tests combined with field observations suggested that the participants' skills in reading ranged between level 1- and level 2. The reading test indicated that, although words were recognised individually, there were problems with the meaning of the phrase or instruction. In many instances poor comprehension inhibited 'clozing' gaps.

Comparison with the First Steps Six Phase Development Continuum revealed that the participants commenced at phase two (Experimental Reading), with the majority demonstrating features consistent with phase three (Early Reading) and a minority reaching phase four (Transitional Reading). In phase two, readers use memory of familiar texts to match written words and sub-vocalise when reading silently. While they realise that print contains a message they seldom question what is written. In phase three, sub-vocalisation decreases, but the reader still reads word by word and has limited prediction skills. It is not until a reader attains phase four that the integration of a variety of reading strategies becomes evident and the reader is able to adapt to different types of text. Critical skills become possible with teacher encouragement.

### Private school teachers

Amongst private school teachers the standard of English language was higher. However, the performances of the participants varied between private schools. In some of the smaller private schools the general assessment of teachers' English language performance was not much higher than level 1+ on the ASLPR, which meant that they were performing at the standard of government teachers. Using ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for spoken English, the range covered was from Intermediate-Low to Advanced-Plus, with the main grouping around Intermediate-High. This meant that they were able to handle successfully most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations but on occasion understanding was hampered by variations in pronunciation and colloquial expressions.

When assessing the listening, reading and writing skills using ASLPR, The First Steps Development Continuums and the Learning Assessment Project for Writing (1996), the standards demonstrated by private school teachers were:

#### *Listening and Speaking:*

ASLPR levels 1 - 4, with the main grouping on level 3 (Minimum Vocational Proficiency). This means the participants were 'able to speak in English with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and vocational topics.'

Although the achievement of this level of competency in speaking suggests that with this group of teachers the government's curriculum goal as set out in ASLPR level 3 had been achieved, this is not necessarily the case. First the data - not included in Chapter Seven - collected from teachers

indicated that, with very few exceptions, teachers taught in the system in which they had been educated themselves. Therefore it is likely that these private school teachers exhibited a higher standard than government teachers because they had been educated in private English medium schools. Second, as indicated in Chapter Seven, there was a growing number of private school teachers who were either Indian or Anglo-Indian, and their English was of a higher standard than that of many Nepali teachers.

With respect to the First Steps Development Continuum (phases 4, 5 and 6), the main grouping was in phase 5, where they were 'able to use a variety of language forms and manipulate language to suit many situations'.

### *Writing:*

The participants exhibited skills at ASLPR levels 1- 3. No participant performed at level 4. Most of the participants performed around level 2, where they were able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements.

On The First Steps Development Continuums, participants demonstrated a range from Phase 3-5 for writing and Phases 4-5 for spelling. In the spelling category the majority performed in the middle phase, but their writing performance was generally at the early writing phase where they had difficulty using punctuation correctly. (Still, several participants were familiar with, and competent in, most aspects of writing.)

When the writing samples were matched against the Learning Assessment Project for Writing (1996), their assessment for content encompassed a wide range - from 2.1 to 4.2. At the lower register, where most of the teachers performed, the participants could manage only basic and brief texts. Very few could sustain writing a detailed text. However, their use

of language appeared to be in a narrower range which commenced at a higher base, 2.2 - 3.2 (cf. Appendix L, p. 498 below).

### *Reading:*

The assessment of reading performance skills suggested that the participants were in a range between 1+ and 3 on the ASLPR, with most participants indicating in their cloze performance that they may not be much higher than 1+. When subjective observation was combined with criteria used in The First Steps Development Continuum for reading, it indicated that the private school teachers were approaching unfamiliar text constructed from familiar vocabulary by sub-vocalising and reading one word at a time.

### **Conclusion**

The evidence obtained from within the research area in 1994 indicated that many untrained and underqualified teachers continued to be employed to teach English. Using a variety of language function criteria as the basis of assessment of communicative performance, most government school teachers functioned on a level between Minimum Survival Proficiency and Minimum Social Proficiency (Levels 1-2, ASLPR). In the case of private school teachers the levels were higher and broader, but variable from school to school. At level 2 ASLPR, where the majority of private school teachers performed overall, the standard of English generally demonstrated by the teachers was inadequate for them to teach communicative English successfully. These 1994 results confirm the reports of Davies (1984) and Giri (1985 and 1986). In addition, the lack of competence, when combined with insufficient and inadequate teacher training, made it impossible for the

aims of the 1972 primary school English curriculum, or of the one being piloted in 1994, to be achieved.

The result of the testing done in the research area indicated that years of teaching, based on grammatical rote, had given some memorised knowledge of the grammatical rules of English but had not enabled the learner to apply the rule in a communicative situation. Further, the continued neglect of phonics and accompanying guides that promote understanding of the various letter combinations which form the sounds have often produced a version of English that is an impediment to communicative understanding. From the level of difficulty it was obvious pronunciation remained an uncatered-for problem. Ironically, with the country's reliance on rote learning, speech training would have been likely to have found favour with teachers used to this teaching style. However, the teachers themselves needed to have their own speech improved. The unfortunate and all too evident fact was that the inadequately educated and poorly-trained teachers were not competent to develop much-needed procedures for improvement.

It is apparent from the assessment of the ELTs in the research area that, if the results applied across the nation, the standard of ELTs in Nepal would be an area of concern. The fact that some government primary school teachers in the research area which covered accessible highly populated districts were barely able to function at anything other than a basic communicative standard, suggests it is likely that inclusion of teachers in less accessible areas would produce results of an even poorer average standard.

The limited amount of pedagogy in the TU courses and lack of training in foreign language teaching left most teachers unable to address the students' learning needs at even the most basic level. The fact that, apart from

the courses at TU, the government had no policy, training courses, or standards for ELTs, and yet continued an official program of commencing English at Y4, could almost be construed as deliberate obstruction towards the teaching of EL.

The evidence in this chapter shows not only that the frequently proclaimed poor standard of English language spoken, written and taught in Nepal was not a myth, but, importantly, that the reality of the problem is not being addressed. The political response from government ministers, found in newspaper articles and reports between 1991 and 1994, points to rhetorical concern without constructive analysis or plan of action. On the basis of the evidence there would appear to be a tension between the nation's need for ELT, as dictated by the globalisation of world society, and the Nepali government's lack of a policy regarding ELT, whether by neglect or omission.

### Conclusion

#### Introduction

This thesis set out to examine the factors impacting on planning and practice of the goals for the development of initial education in Nepal 1950-95, especially as exemplified by ELT. During this period HMGN set goals for the development of initial education in Nepal through a series of eight five year plans. The goals selected for the development of initial education 1950-95 consistently included a goal of education for all. This goal reflects the difficulty Nepal has had. Originally set in 1952 to be achieved by 1985, its achievement has now been delayed until the year 2000. Other consistent goals for the development of initial education contained in successive plans have been equity of access, qualitative improvement of material conditions in schools, universal availability of quality texts, the development of a system of technical education, and the provision of a fully trained teaching force. While these goals were featured throughout the eight plans, there were some notable omissions from the goals, including a policy for standardising private English medium schools and a plan for the effective teaching of English. The thesis examined both the impact of the government's failure to obtain satisfactory material conditions and adequate teaching staff in the government system in Nepal's initial education, as well as the conditions and staffing in the private school system. In addition, the thesis examined the effects that the lack of planning for ELT had on the standard of teachers and the teaching of English.



### **The Context for Educational Development in Nepal**

A review of the educational context in which the development of initial education was introduced indicated two main social influences impacting on education in Nepal prior to 1950: the hierarchical structure and beliefs of Hinduism and, from the mid-nineteenth century, an Orientalist attitude amongst the ruling elite (Said 1978, 3). As defined by Said, Orientalism is an attitude which justified Western powers in believing in their right to describe, teach, settle, restructure and rule the non-Western world. Said's argument includes the suggestion that over a period of time some sections of colonised populations concluded that their own culture was inferior to that of the West leading them to copy Western ways. As H. and M. Reed (1968), Vir (1988), Khadka (1991), Bista (1991), Stiller (1993), N. R. Shrestha (1993) and Pigg (1993) have indicated, this occurred in Nepal despite its never having been physically colonised. N. R. Shrestha (1993) and Stiller (1993) suggest that Nepal was psychologically affected by the British rule in India and the presence of British Residents in Nepal during the colonial era. As far as education is concerned, their argument is plausible and indications of the impact of Western influence can be traced in the development of initial education in Nepal throughout the period 1950-95.

As argued in Chapter One, the influence of Orientalism on education in Nepal was evident from the commencement of Durbar School in 1853. Even so, the state's involvement in education was slow, and the role of religious institutions remained dominant in the early twentieth century. Vir (1988) claims some educational innovations which took place in 1912 were in response to a need to please or acquiesce in the wishes of the British. Amongst these were the establishment of schools to give literacy and numeracy skills to lower caste Nepalis entering the British army. Further international

expertise was sought by the government when sponsorship was given to selected Nepalis to study in Japan and India. As Stiller (1993) and Vir (1988) note, the Nepali elite controlled who had access to education and selected innovations which they believed would strengthen their own position. This ensured the perpetuation of the existing value system and the interdependency of the caste system. (Epstein's study of a South Indian village suggests that such a response may not be unusual in a caste society.) As outlined in Chapter One, prior to 1950 access to education was limited to high caste males who could enter one of the few schools available. Amongst these were a small, select number of English medium schools established mainly for the Ranas. The limitation on who could be educated resulted in low literacy rates, and only a small number of schools and personnel with which a system of initial education could be established. When Nepal embarked on its program of development in the early 1950s there was virtually no educational infrastructure. It was within this context of selective Orientalism and largely Hindu socio-religious tradition that Nepal introduced its development program for initial education.

### **Influences on the Development Process 1950-70**

Chapter Two indicated that, despite the problems facing the development of an initial education system, Nepal accepted the principle of universal education and originally set a goal to provide five years of free and compulsory education for all by 1985. The period 1950-70 saw the formation of the MOE (later to become the MOEC, then the MOEC/SW) and a national board of education.

As the country did not have sufficient resources of its own, in 1953 a National Education Planning Commission was formed to take advantage of

the external financing of educational development. However, as the evidence detailed in Chapters Three and Four suggests, Nepal did not take sufficient advantage of, nor select and adapt enough from, the diverse ideas introduced. In addition, as Wood (1977), referring to the early sixties, and H. and M. Reed (1968) have argued, the influence of the funding agencies produced inappropriate goals which did not suit the Nepali culture. As a result, duplication of projects, many of which were not suited to Nepal's needs, occurred. Pigg (1993) and Khadka (1991) claim that this happened because of the strong Nepali desire to modernise. Weiler (1982) claims aid donors become 'powerful conditioning agents' (cf. p. 17 above) as the economic vulnerability of countries like Nepal meant development projects were controlled by the political and economic agendas of the financing agencies.

However, as acknowledged in Chapter Three, some benefits did accrue. During the period 1950-70 a national system of education was established. In addition, the number of schools expanded considerably, and a tertiary institution for girls, a university and a policy for adult education were commenced. But, as argued throughout the thesis, the selection of the British colonial model of education, however, is evidence of a dependence on Orientalism, particularly amongst planners. The choice to model Nepal's single system of initial education on the nineteenth century colonial model did not suit the government's goal for economic development, nor was the choice appropriate for rural communities. In addition, the difficulty of achieving the desired standard and quality of education through the model of a single system of vernacular schools impacted on the Nepali elite and as a result a separate system of private English medium schools developed. As described in Chapter Three, this situation resulted in the planned single system of government-funded vernacular schools becoming a dual system of public and

private education. The proliferation of English medium schools, combined with the choice of the British colonial model for Nepal's system of education, is taken as evidence of the strength of British influence in Nepal between 1950 and 1970, despite the fact that during this period Britain was not the largest aid donor.

As Chapter Four demonstrated, Nepal continues to experience economic difficulties caused partly by extreme climatic conditions, an increasing population, and an insufficient amount of raw materials. Bista (1991) and N. R. Shrestha (1993) suggest that the problem has been exacerbated by the Nepali elite's use of the development process to benefit themselves rather than all Nepalis. Furthermore, most Nepalis accepted this inequity because of their religious beliefs. In addition to the factors listed, Chapter Four indicated that, until the 1990s, development problems were exacerbated by a lack of coordination and communication resulting from inadequate transport and communications infrastructure - the product of Nepal's geographical position and topography. When these factors combined with Nepal's cultural mores of nepotism and sycophancy, it seems educationists were constrained in selecting and adapting ideas from the various donors to suit Nepali needs.

As indicated in Chapter Four, while a study of the material achievements of the eight plans reveals that between 1950 and 1995 the number of schools throughout Nepal increased considerably to meet community demand, Nepal had a severe problem with students 'dropping out' of the system. Community ambivalence towards initial education, partly due to the entrenched poverty which requires child labour in the fields and partly due to the attitude that the formal curriculum was irrelevant to the community's needs, was not addressed until 1992. In that year, as Chapter

Four documents, the NEC 1992 accepted that the nation's needs could not be addressed by importing solutions from Western environments. The NEC 1992 proposed an interlocking of formal and non-formal education by giving credits for skills obtained through the non-formal teaching methods used throughout Nepal's history. As argued in Chapter Four, had the unstable political situation of the 1990s not impeded the Eighth Plan's implementation, this proposal might have allowed more people to access the formal system, as well as having a positive effect in modifying the continuing ambivalence of the general population towards initial education.

### **Educational planning 1971-1995**

The content of Chapters Three and Four, makes a case that planning goals were inadequately implemented from 1971-95 because Nepalis remained selective with respect to social changes. The selectivity and lack of adaptation of projects resulted in sporadic and uneven development, supporting the arguments of Bista (1991) and N. R. Shrestha (1993) regarding the misuse of aid by the elite. The situation was worsened by a development philosophy, or paradigm, which saw people as economic capital for whom education should play a role as a domesticating force, partly through training technical manpower. This objective created conflict in Nepali society, where many people accepted that skills were caste-designated and saw education as a means to free one from the need to work.

While at times HMGN planners appeared to accept parts of the development philosophy or paradigms which were culturally inappropriate (such as attempts to develop technical education without reference to caste), on other occasions they failed to implement ideas which would have maximised development opportunities. The failure to coordinate ministerial

portfolios (discussed on page 115) is an example of this. Again, although the HMGN planners embraced the concept of localisation of which the ERDP was a successful example, they took an opposite course soon after, when they centralised the structure of the PEP. The centralising of the PEP's administration in Kathmandu not only led to the expenditure of USD8,000,000 for the PEP administration and materials production in Kathmandu Valley, but it also meant that project officers were often ignorant of local needs and exposed the PEP to manipulation by pressure groups. Further examples of inconsistencies were indicated in Chapter Six. These inconsistencies included a goal to train teachers in remote areas through radio without ensuring that participants had access to a radio, and the suggestion that teachers should use electronic media to enhance their teaching when many schools did not have access to electricity. In addition to these kinds of inconsistencies the thesis has shown that, during the 1990s, successful projects which were responsive to needs were inexplicably cancelled, rescheduled or altered, to their detriment. The interference in women's literacy classes and the cancellation of a successful mathematics program are examples of inconsistencies that continued well into the 1990s. Further examples are found in the number of goals remaining unstated in various plans which left aspects of initial education, such as pre-school, ELT and private schools, uncoordinated and without guidelines.

The holistic approach to development advocated in the 1990s (Grant 1994, Speth 1996), was introduced into the already inconsistent educational environment of Nepal, and its success has since been impeded by a succession of unstable governments. In such an environment it is likely that coordination and equity, which have been problems for projects in the past, will be even more difficult to achieve.

As outlined in Chapter Four, the NESP (1971) brought about changes in the infrastructure and financing of education but, despite the establishment of some American-style multi-purpose secondary schools, it did not alter the basic colonial model of education established in the 1950s. Due in part to a rapidly rising population, the number of children enrolling in Nepali schools continued to increase dramatically, although community ambivalence regarding the curriculum and its delivery brought with it sporadic attendance. As a result of the apparent increase in demand, the need for teachers grew, placing pressure on the pre-existing problem of insufficient trained personnel. As noted in Chapter Four, in response to this the Nepali government removed the requirement for teachers to be trained.

### **Fieldtrips 1991-95**

Overall, the first four chapters of this thesis indicated considerable inconsistency between the planning and implementation of goals for the development of education in Nepal, both before and after 1950. Later chapters recording the data from a succession of fieldtrips (Feb. 1991, Dec. 1991, Jan. 1992, Jan.-Feb. 1994, Nov.-Dec. 1994), confirmed educational facilities and staffing in Nepali schools continued to be inadequate well into the 1990s, with many issues regarding quality still needing to be addressed. As Chapters Five and Six document, the multiplicity of constraining factors in Nepal resulted in poor material conditions of government schools within the research area in the 1990s. While it is acknowledged that only a sample of schools were surveyed, and that opportunity-based selection increases the risk of bias (Burns 1994, 86), the schools described appear representative of other schools in the research area. The descriptions of schools in Chapter Five suggest that Nepal had not been able to achieve its goal of providing a

reasonable standard of quality working and learning conditions for children and teachers in government schools. In addition, the fact that only government schools, with multilateral or INGO assistance, were able to upgrade their facilities indicates that government schools will continue to require financial and administrative assistance from outside sources in order to provide necessary improvements and equipment.

Descriptions of Nepali private schools demonstrate that their material conditions were generally better than those of government schools. However, it was evident that there was a considerable disparity in standards. The three major schools included amongst those described, Budhanilkantha, St Xaviers and GBS, all received international assistance to enable them to provide more than basic equipment. Chapter Five suggested that some other privately-owned schools also benefited from minor international benefactors. While Budhanilkantha, St Xaviers and GBS were non profit institutions, this was not the case for most of the other privately owned schools. During the research period, there were accusations from government sources and the press regarding unethical practices by some private schools, the truth of which was not researched for this thesis. Nevertheless, the research descriptions indicate that private schools generally were superior to those of government schools.

### **School Management and Administration**

As indicated in Chapter Five, the daily routine, curriculum, teaching methodology and uniform used in private schools suggest that schools continued to replicate the nineteenth century British education model. School organisation was also modelled on the British colonial model of India. As the thesis argues, despite the diversity of aid donors and ideas, the bias of the



Orientalist attitude in Nepal was definitely British. Chapter Seven also indicated how the texts in use in Nepali private schools were versions of texts produced originally in England for India and modified for Nepali use. In private schools instruction was largely in English medium, but as indicated in Chapters Seven and Eight, although skills in English language usage amongst private school staff were superior to those of government school teachers, the ability of teachers in the private school system was still poor, placing at risk the successful teaching of communicative English. A curriculum was rarely in evidence in government schools and teachers relied on rote delivery of a Nepali language text designed and produced in Nepal. However, as Chapter Seven demonstrated, even the texts promulgated in 1995 displayed a distinct Western influence.

As indicated in Chapter Five, fieldtrip observations suggest that many private school owners and administrators had inadequate understanding of curriculum and pedagogy. Some principals were tertiary qualified but their qualification was rarely in the area of education. As outlined, while some private school principals were keen to avail their staff of private IST organised by PABSON or NELTA, fieldtrip observations also suggested that private schools were often managed autocratically and that there was considerable difficulty in maintaining continuity in staffing a school. The autocracy in evidence in school management caused tension between teachers and principals, as teachers felt they had no job security or autonomy within their class or area of responsibility. Adding to the tensions, private school principals claimed Nepali personnel were unreliable. Selection criteria for teacher employment were also unsatisfactory and, as a result, private schools varied widely in teaching standard. Consequently Chapters Six and Seven concluded that these schools did not always offer a superior education.

### **The 'growth state' of Nepali Teachers**

Information recorded in Chapter Five also suggested that the Nepali government had failed in its continuing aim to produce a well-qualified teaching service. As noted in Chapter Six, examination of the data indicated that teachers in Nepali government schools had a poor level of general education, with 41 percent of teachers at Y10 standard. Private school teachers had 82 percent at Y12 and above, compared to 58 percent for government teachers, but their teacher training qualifications appear weaker (cf. p. 168-169 above). Less than half of the teachers in government schools had teacher training of any sort, and the proportion of teachers with pre-service training to teachers with no pre-service training was significantly worse when private school teachers were included in the official statistics. As far as can be ascertained, private school teachers have never been included in a survey of teachers in Nepal. Their inclusion in the thesis research indicates there is a considerable increase in the number of teachers requiring training in the education system when private school teachers are included in the statistics. In addition, government claims regarding the training standard of teachers in Nepal give a false impression, especially given that those teachers classed as trained have received only between 5 and 300 hours of training. Furthermore, the fact that the government has difficulty providing adequate IST for teachers in government schools, and makes no concession to assist teachers in private schools towards obtaining any IST, remains an unaddressed area of need in meeting Nepal's goal for availability and access of teacher training as the foundation for a quality teaching service. An additional implication of the data collected for this thesis is that claims of superior teaching in private schools may not be justified, and a minimum standard of training may need to be implemented for all teachers in Nepal.

While the government's decision to remove pre-service training as a requirement for a teaching position enabled more people to be employed as teachers, the low standard of their general education, and personal experience limited to rote learning, left many teachers feeling vulnerable to criticism. On the basis of Joyce and Showers' (1988) argument that teachers draw upon their own experience for their teaching technique, it is reasonable to assume that teachers with a low general education and experience limited to a rote learning methodology would benefit from some training in pedagogy designed to broaden their background and to encourage them to vary their teaching. While it is difficult to say at this stage what else the Nepali government could have done when faced with the pressing need for teachers in schools, the decision taken in 1979 to dispense with the need for a Nepali teacher to be trained appears to have undermined the thrust of the NESP for improvement in the quality of education. Chapter Six demonstrated that the government's decision contributed to the 'low growth state' of teachers as well as their low professional status between 1991 and 1995.

As noted above, prior to 1993, in the absence of a curriculum being available in schools, the text became the de facto curriculum. As a result, the reliance on text-based learning without any practical application prompted the belief amongst the general population that the system of initial education offered a curriculum which was largely irrelevant to their needs. Furthermore, as Chapter Six suggests, by basing teaching on memorisation of set texts and questions in the national examination system, teachers endeavoured to maintain a false image of themselves as 'the expert'. Despite these attempts to bolster their status, evidence in Chapter Six indicates that teacher morale was very low, and that the profession was not sought after by the highest graduates or classes within the castes. Restricted by their limited

experience of education and lack of guidelines regarding their role, teachers were not encouraged to change.

As Chapter Six noted, apart from some criteria set down for head teachers, there was no job description for teachers. This made credible monitoring of teacher performance difficult. The problem as outlined in Chapter Six was compounded by underpaid and inadequately skilled supervisors, whose role it was to visit schools to encourage and evaluate performance. These supervisors were not, however, inclined to leave the DEO. While a new career structure, which was promulgated in 1993, in theory might have helped set guidelines and expectations for teachers and communities, in practice the continually changing political situation caused the plans to lose momentum, thus increasing the gap between planning and practice.

### **Assessment**

While monitoring of teachers was a problem, the method used to evaluate student performance also impacted negatively throughout the system. As noted in Chapters Six and Seven, the examination system in Nepal, particularly the structure of the district exams and the SLC, impeded change in classroom practice. Observations made during the course of the research indicate these content-focussed national tests misled teachers into believing that the sole purpose of an examination was to achieve a percentage score as an index of a student's ability to memorise. Neither the SLC nor the district examination taken at Y5 encouraged testing for comprehension, analytic observation, creativity or original thought. As a result, changes in teaching method, and the introduction of evaluative testing and criterion referencing, could not be implemented and maintained at the classroom level. Not only did

the examination system restrict teaching style, it consigned many students with analytic and reasoning skills to failure, and deprived the nation of a valuable resource. A change in the focus of the examination system from content to context was needed both to encourage teachers to confront and explore the multiple reasons for testing and release them from the constraint of teaching children to memorise facts. However, though there were consistent calls between 1991 and 1995 from many levels of the community (including government planners) for teachers to change their teaching methodology, no plans were made to alter the structure of the major exams. Such a situation gave rise to a feeling of impotency amongst teachers regarding the possibility of a change in pedagogy, and ensured that content and educational theory contained in both pre-service and in-service training programs continued to be perceived by trainees as irrelevant to their needs. As interviews with teachers indicated, these tensions undermined morale.

A further problem noted in Chapter Six is that the current examinations do not indicate to teachers that testing demonstrates deficiencies in their teaching. However, as only a small number of Nepali teachers were reflective about their teaching, it is unlikely that the opportunity for a teacher to amend their teaching style would have been taken. Schon (1982) indicates successful change occurs only when all parties are in agreement, and such agreement was not evident in Nepal. Untrained teachers who had no knowledge of curriculum, or conceptual grasp as to how children learn, were not likely to face issues unless they were supported. As a result, teachers were reluctant to practise the changes that were suggested as necessary because of peer and community pressure against change.

Although the thesis research did not attempt to measure teachers' attitudes towards their job, a considerable degree of ambivalence was

observed in teacher behaviour during fieldtrips. As evidenced in Chapter Six, government teachers were tardy at attending classes, late arriving at school, and reluctant to implement skills. In addition, the refusal of extra training at Shree Krishna School, and teacher complaints about the attitudes of principals, guardians and peers forcing adherence to the known teaching method, were noteworthy. Bambach claims that the poor salary available to teachers compounds the problems caused by their low socio-economic status and, while it was not admitted officially by many teachers, causes some to seek additional employment. As interviews indicated, an additional factor which contributed to low morale was that many saw their teaching role as a temporary occupation until they could achieve a better position. This attitude applied to government and private school teachers, even though private school teachers were generally better paid. Chapter Six also presented evidence of ambivalence when these negative behaviours were juxtaposed with more positive factors such as enthusiasm and enjoyment demonstrated in training workshops, persistent requests for more training and equipment, and the indications (although small) that some teachers were becoming reflective about their work.

### **Curriculum and presentation**

As suggested during the community meeting at Kharipati (cf. p. 145 above) the primary school curriculum as it was presented during the research period created problems for women as within the family unit education for females was perceived as irrelevant. As noted in Chapter Five, some women felt they would have had greater access to literacy if the curriculum was delivered in a more practical manner. Educated Nepali women (like Subedi) claim that women should also have access to an academic education. Field

observations, recorded in Chapter Six, noted a marked strengthening in the responsibilities, influence and confidence of women involved as principals and deputy principals in privately-owned schools between 1991 and 1995. Moreover, these women provided role models for other women to aspire to. However, although Chapter Six indicated the government's goal to increase the number of women employed as teachers was having some impact, it was evident that the effect was uneven between schools. In addition, there were few career opportunities for women.

### **English Language Teaching**

Chapter Four indicated that many of the goals for the development of initial education in Nepal had not been met, and Chapters Five and Six demonstrated that material conditions in Nepali schools were generally poor, with teachers in both government and private school systems inadequately trained. As argued throughout the thesis, it would appear that Nepalis had a disposition towards Orientalism which ensured the government's continuance of a British colonial model of initial education, and the elite's preference for English medium schools. To demonstrate the impact of such factors on the practice of initial education in Nepal, Chapters Seven and Eight examined the teaching of English language, a subject revealed during the research to be important to all Nepalis.

Chapter Seven indicated that ELT in Nepal had a long history, with skills in English being seen as a passport to employment usually reserved for the elite. However, it is unclear whether the fact that skills in English could unsettle the status quo by challenging the elite's right to a particular job caused the government to overlook formulating a national goal for the teaching of English. Certainly the evidence contained in Chapters Seven and

Eight indicates that the teaching of English is a prime example of the disparity between planning and practice in initial education (as well as an example of inequity).

Nevertheless, the evidence also confirms that English is regarded as an important part of the curriculum. For example, in response to community pressure, the government began English as a subject in government schools at Y4. Indeed, social and political pressures made it difficult for successive Nepali governments to accept advice (Davies 1983) to concentrate the limited learning resources for ELT at Y8, Y9 and Y10. Possibly the problem was compounded by the elite's access to English instruction in the private schools from Kindergarten onwards, and by the fact that the SLC cannot be awarded without a pass in English. Yet, as this thesis emphasised, there is no national goal for the teaching of English and no attempt to see that it is taught by teachers whose skills and training are adequate to the task.

Resources for ELT were demonstrably inadequate and, apart from the inclusion of a unit of ELT in the BEd taught at TU, there was no provision for the training of ELTs in Nepal (cf. p. 215 above). Curriculum, teaching methodology, texts and materials in use did not address the basic areas demonstrated in Chapter Eight as serious problems for Nepalis learning English. Chapters Seven and Eight indicate the present system of introducing English as a subject at Y4 in government schools has achieved only limited success in advancing communication in English. While self-help groups such as NELTA and PABSON have provided support and training for English teachers, these groups have been limited by their own expertise and finance.

Chapters Seven and Eight demonstrate the seriousness of Nepal's problems vis-a-vis the teaching of English. Assessment and analysis



provided in these chapters indicate that, in terms of language use, past learning based on language knowledge has been unproductive, and it was suggested that the standard of English in Nepal may in fact be declining. The standard of communicative English demonstrated by ELTs, and outlined in Chapter Eight, was extremely limited and in most cases inadequate. The poor standard demonstrated by the ELTs has serious ramifications when it is considered that Nepal promulgated new ELT curricula and texts in schools in 1995. Common errors made by ELTs, as analysed in Chapter Eight, are not catered for in the new texts for Y4 and Y5 and it is doubtful whether teachers will be able to cope with the new curriculum, particularly the oral section. In view of the general demand for skills in English and the proliferation of the high fee English medium schools, it would appear that a number of areas require further research. These include exploring better organisational strategies (including time of commencement), teaching materials, the most cost effective manner in which English should be taught, and how ELTs should be trained.

This thesis has raised several other areas in need of inquiry. One of the most important of these is the need for changes in the examination system in Nepal. For instance, there is the question of whether teaching methodology would change if the examination system were to shift its emphasis from content to context. One of the implications of this thesis is that if such a change were introduced in Nepal, planners would need to develop an approach designed to minimise the anxiety of the guardians and forestall a negative reaction to a perceived threat to the interdependency structure of caste and class as it operates in Nepal. While contemplating such a change, the low growth state of teachers highlighted by the thesis would also need to be considered until the country had passed through 'a period of

educational transition'. Research into the ways in which teachers could best be supported to make the transition into new teaching methods would appear to be a high priority. Research is also required into which methods would be most suitable and most acceptable to Nepalis.

Such research is also necessary in order to arrest the continuing 'drop-out' problem amongst both teachers and students noted in this thesis. These two issues appear both separate and connected. Bambach (1993a and b) indicated that investigation is already in progress regarding the implementation of a career structure for primary school teachers in Nepal. However, as the thesis has demonstrated, there is a long history of disparity between planning and the implementation process in Nepal which suggests that a program of 'action research' may be necessary to make adjustments to the new structure as it is implemented. Such a process of 'on the spot' adjustment is claimed to be the strength of the ERDP. But, as Chapter Six indicated, a lack of a career structure is not the only problem affecting teachers in Nepal. Poor salary and working conditions, together with inadequate guidance and support from trainers and supervisors, also constitute problems. Such problems require further investigation to establish the most beneficial and cost effective manner in which teachers can be assisted in their classroom work. Other factors contributing to student drop-out need to be investigated. Chapter Six suggested that a major problem connected with dropping out is family poverty, which involves the need for children to work in the fields or, as is the case with girls, care for siblings. Seasonal adjustment of the school year (as happens in Bangladesh), designed to maximise attendance, requires investigation. Sporadic attendance is also linked with the irrelevant way the curriculum is presented, as noted above (cf. p. 120 above). More relevant teaching methods that engage with the

pupils' real needs should be investigated to make the initial education system more acceptable to the population at large.

In addition to the teaching problems, it has been indicated throughout the thesis that Nepal has aspired to produce a trained manpower force through the provision of technical schools. As the thesis has demonstrated, this goal has met with almost no success. The NEC 1992 appeared to acknowledge the failure of this goal through a proposal of flexible entry into the initial system of education related to credits for skills learned outside the formal system, and it remains as a valuable area for informed experimentation or 'action research'.

Future research should not be limited to the government sector. Throughout the research period 1991-95 there was controversy regarding the standard of education provided by the private sector in Nepal, particularly in cases of private school closure. The research has shown that the standard of private schools varied greatly throughout the research area and has indicated a need for the adoption of minimum standards.

Overall, this thesis has demonstrated that, within the research area, there was a pronounced disparity between the planning and practice of goals for the development of initial education in Nepal, and that there were several influences on the choice of goals, including the elite's predisposition to Orientalism. Furthermore, despite community demand and the proliferation of English medium schools, the thesis has demonstrated that the teaching of English in Nepal has contributed little to the development of communicative skills in the English language. As the research took place in areas which were relatively central and accessible to the seat of administration in the capital city, Kathmandu, it is argued that conditions in other areas are likely to be considerably worse.

The combined evidence of the thesis suggests that Nepal has assumed a 'mendicant' position as regards the development of initial education, and that this position is not just apparent amongst the elite. However, while a mendicant position is a strong contributing factor to the disparity between the planning and practice of the goals for the development of initial education, the thesis has indicated a range of other factors which inhibit educational development in Nepal. Additional research needs to be undertaken to ascertain the ways in which socio-religious attitudes (including Orientalism and the desire to preserve the status quo), the economic situation, and Nepal's geographic position and topography, interact to restrain development.

### Section A. Interviews

Adhikari Dr. Head of Department of English and Foreign Language, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University. Kathmandu, December 1994.

Adhikari, Nandan P. Principal, Tri Juddha Mahabir Gopal Laldas, Government school. Birganj, January 1994.

Awasthi, Dr. Raj. Senior Lecturer, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, and member of the ODA team for surveying English language in 1983-4. Kathmandu, February 1994 and December 1994.

Bambach, Rev'd Dr David. Member of the Technical Assessment Team reviewing the career structure of primary school teachers, 1993. Former Principal of GBS, Pokhara. Perth, Australia, by telephone October 1995.

Barclay, John. Principal Gandaki Boarding School. Pokhara, November 1994.

Bista, Keshar Bahadur. Former Minister for Education (1977-87 implemented NESP). Kathmandu, February 1994.

Cowell, Dr Nick. International adviser, teacher training, Cambridge Consultants. Kathmandu, January 1994 and December 1994.

Dali, Lokesh Raj. Deputy General Manager, Jemek Publications and Materials Centre. Sanathimi, February 1994.

Davies, Professor Alan. Melbourne, August 1995.

Dhungel, Diwakar. Chief, Primary Curriculum Textbook Development Unit. Kathmandu, February 1995.

Fatema, Kaniz. Director, NFPE, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). Dhaka, March, 1994.

Giri, Ram Ashish. Senior Lecturer, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, Secretary of NELTA, Translator, Interpreter and workshop coordinator. Kathmandu, ongoing from February, 1994.

Glendinning, Eric H. Director, Institute for Applied Language Studies, University of Edinburgh. Kathmandu, December 1994.

Hasan, Shamse, Ara. Director, Gonoshashajjo Sangstha (GSS). Dhaka, March 1994.

Huk, Afreen. UNICEF, Nepal, National Project Officer, Education. Kathmandu, November 1994 and December 1994

Irvine, Dr James. Regional Adviser, UNICEF, South Asia. Kathmandu, November, December, 1994.

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Kelly, Dr George. International adviser, teacher training, Cambridge Consultants. Kathmandu, January and December, 1994.

Khalahdina, Dr. Margaret. UNICEF, Consultant; Early Childhood Education. Janakpur, January 1994.

Khaniya, Dr T. R. Director, BPEP. Kathmandu, November 1994.

Kraan, Marten van der. Field Director, Plan International, Nepal. Kathmandu, February 1990, February 1991, December 1991, January 1992.

Llanos, Dr Martha. UNICEF, National Adviser, Education, Nepal. Kathmandu, December 1994.

Lawrence, Father. Principal St Xaviers school. Kathmandu, February 1994.

Malla Hasta Bahadur. HMGN Assistant Minister for Education and Social Welfare. Kathmandu, January 1994.

Malik, Dr. Birindra. Primary Education Development Project. Kathmandu, January 1994.

Mathema, Kedar B. Vice-Chancellor, Tribhuvan University. Kathmandu, December 1994

Pathak, Alka. Project Manager, Plan International, Delhi, February 1991. National Director, Plan International, Nepal. Kathmandu, November 1994.

Pant, Dr. Yagya. PEDP, Kathmandu, February 1994.

Pokharel, B.P. Principal, V. S. Niketan High School, Thapatoli. Kathmandu, December 1992, January 1993, January-February 1994, December 1994.

Pradhan, Professor G. S. CERID, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, January 1994.

Rana, Binu. Project Manager, Rautahat district, Plan International, Nepal, adviser, interpreter, translator, workshop co-ordinator. Kathmandu and Melbourne, February 1990, ongoing.

Sakya, T.M. Coordinator, APPEAL, UNESCO Regional Office. Bangkok, December 1991, March 1994, Melbourne, March 1995.

Shakya, Siddhi Ratna. English Lecturer, Sanothimi Campus, Tribhuvan University. Kathmandu, January, February, November, December 1994.

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Shrestha, Keshav. Principal, Chitwan Secondary English Boarding School. Narayanghat, January 1994.

Shiwakoti, Sharada, Principal, Kshitiz Secondary English Boarding School, Dilli Bazaar. Kathmandu, December 1991, 1994.

Singh, Nagendra Prasad. District Education Officer, Bhote Bahal. Kathmandu, December 1991.

Stone, Christine. Curriculum and Materials designer, UMN. Kathmandu, January 1994, February 1994, November 1994.

Strobach, Stephen K. Field Director, Rautahat District, Plan International, Nepal. Kathmandu, November 1994.

Thakuri, Raj Kumar. Principal, Banubahktur Memorial School. Kathmandu, February and December 1994.

Thapa, Jeet B. Program Officer, BPEP/DANIDA. Kathmandu, December 1991, January 1992, October 1994, November 1994.

Thomas, Thomas. Principal, Budhanilkantha. Kathmandu, January 1994.

Tripathy, Laba Prasad. PEDP, MOEC/SW, HMGN. Kathmandu, January and February 1994.

Uprety, Dr Trailokya Nath. Vice-Chancellor Tribhuvan University Vice-Chair NEC 1992, Ambassador (retired). Kathmandu, January 1992, November 1994.

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