LIVED EXPERIENCE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN NEPALI INSTITUTIONAL SCHOOLS: A DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

My Parents, My Sweet Family, My Gurus, and Educational Leaders at Different Levels in Nepali Schools

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of *Narayan Prasad Kafle* for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* in *Educational Leadership* presented on 22 November, 2013

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This study is meant for enhancing the understanding about being leaders at different levels in Nepali institutional schools from the perspectives of distributed leadership, a new 'theorem' of leadership that postulates the idea that school organizations at the current time of complexities and uncertainty require the leadership roles to be distributed or stretched over everyone in school organizations. In this hermeneutic phenomenological study, I explored the lived experiences of nine educational leaders from top, middle and bottom levels in Nepali institutional schools. My question for this investigation asked, 'What does it mean to be an educational leader?' I negotiated with the data I generated through interview and protocol writing by the participants using a rigorous six stage meaning making schema and there emerged seven themes to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at each level. Three metaphors emerged from my prolonged engagement and dialogue with nine research participants and from the textual artifacts they provided to me.

I used the metaphor 'accessing a labyrinth' to explicate the lived experience of being top level leaders as the leaders in the apex significance of school organization revealed that they felt confused, uncertain, and disorientated. It appeared to me that

they were indecisive and experienced the trauma of being at the top. Considering their traumatic feelings of being executive leaders and toxic work environments, they articulated that distributed leadership was yet to be internalized by them. I used the metaphor 'waiting for Godot' to explicate the lived experience of middle level leaders as they narrated their experience of being in the middle as an enigmatic undergoing with a sense of relegation having very little opportunity to grow due to their exclusion in the decision making. The middle level leaders signified the presence of leadership plus aspect only. They felt being marginalized and relegated to everyday administrative jobs. Likewise, I used the metaphor 'burning like a candle' to emulate the lived experience of being at bottom level where the teacher leaders, I understood, experiencing a sense of excessive exploitation, exclusion and marginalization with very minimal opportunities for growth and they were struggling for the existence.

It gave me the impression that being at the top was more a traumatic, being in the middle was an enigmatic and being at the bottom was a pathetic experience. However, there were occasions when they experienced a high sense of contentment, realized the possibilities for growth and felt proud of being in the noble profession. When I envisaged these lived experiences from distributed leadership perspective, I concluded that the institutional schools were not prepared to internalize the spirit of distributed leadership which I understood as a Utopian model of educational leadership that imagined a perfect harmony among leaders, followers and the situation. This conclusion suggested for various policy (need for recognition), practice (valuing each other), and future research implications (need for micro studies).

_____ 22 November, 2013

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…….
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ABBREVIATIONS

APA	American Psychological Association
APF	Armed Police Force
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BOD	Board of Directors
CCA	Co Curricular Activities
DEO	District Education Office
DL	Distributed Leadership
DOE	Department of Education
ECA	Extra Curricular Activities
EFA	Education for All
ELT	English Language Teaching
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KU	Kathmandu University
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
M PHIL	Master of Philosophy
MA	Master of Arts

MED	Master of Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committee
SSRP	School Sector Reform Program
TU	Tribhuvan University
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
VP	Vice Principal
WTO	World Trade Organization

CHAPTER I

THE PHENOMENON OF INTEREST

In this first chapter, I prepare the foreground to establish the phenomenon of interest by declaring my situatedness within this inquiry, clarifying my directedness towards the phenomenon, accounting my journey as a teacher at different levels, and introducing this inquiry as a metaphorical journey of dark and light and of fall and rise. Here I set the scene for other chapters to develop. I prepare the foundation of my inquiry and portray the existing scenario of educational leadership which I argue to be in crisis deserving a meaningful study. Then, I raise the phenomenon as an issue requiring a different outlook and propose the phenomenological research question(s) to facilitate my journey of research. I have designed this chapter as the preamble of my inquiry and articulated its scope, rationale, and delimitation.

My Positionality

People experience the world from differently personified, socially interacted, intellectually interpreted, and spatial locations. How we are situated within social spaces and locations, taken in combination with our personal and shared intellectual histories as well as our lived experiences, shapes each of our understandings of the world, our knowledge, and our actions. It refers to our context determines who we are and how we think. Positionality is about the situatedness of knowledge (Given, 2008). Humans perceive "self" and are perceived by others in relation to multiple, diverse, and dynamic social processes, including (but not limited to) gender, class, race/ethnicity, age, and sexuality. These social, geographic, and intellectual spaces that we hold individually and as members of multiple communities serve to position

us differently in well-established hierarchies of political power and social privilege. I mean to first clarify my situatedness that would have a role in the way I conceptualize phenomenon and understand its dynamics from my own vantage point. Moreover, my perspectives about the phenomenon of leadership would be as I see from my position.

Son of a teacher, a teacher myself, what I have been filled up right from the time I developed the rationality on me was to study first and find a job and sustain the life with the expense of the knowledge I was to gain from that. I was channeled for my study like a horse pulling the cart with his eyesight focused just on the way. I grew in academic set ups, and my life-world is shaped just influenced of it. For this research, I position myself as an insider aligning with what Chavez (2008) maintained as being a co-participant where I learn from my participants and let my participants learn from me.

Positionality also refers to the embodied presence of the researcher and the participants' responses to the dynamic interplay in their social world. Knowledge, facts, truths, and understandings are social constructions marked by the continual processes of life as it has been lived. This concentration on positionality and situated ways of knowing calls for research that plays with the short-lived, vernacular, and dynamic performances of thought and action (Given, 2008). The declaration of one's positionality right at the outset amply justifies the method taken and the way of narrative applied. Being a teacher myself and researching on the lived experience of teachers perhaps placed me in a continuum of similar identity. My positionality of being a teacher for about two decades provided me with the necessary insights (also biasness) to illumine the lived experiences of teachers who are situated in similar contexts like me.

Positionality describes the relationship between the researcher and his or her participants and the researcher and his or her topic. Research paradigm, theoretical perspective, and methodology all influence those relationships (Jones, Torres, & Jan, 2006). I am no exception to it. My foundation for arriving to this stage of getting involved into the world of academia has given me this positionality as/of a researcher and paved my way for researching on teacher leaders' life-world that is what I have been experiencing for around two decades by now. This declaration of positionality prepares the ground to mention my directedness for this inquiry.

My Intentionality

As a qualitative reseacher my focus is unique. It is unique in a sense that my situatedness (I discussed in previous section) is unique. My directedness towards the phenomenon of educational leadership is consious as my vantage point to make meaning of being an educational leader is not second hand. It comes direct from my own experience. Given (2008) argues that a research must stand for something or have a focus. This directedness or conscious focus in connection to phenomenological inquiry is termed as intentionality (Freeman, 1999; Sokolowski, 2000; Embree, 2002; Given, 2008; McGregor, 2010; Monticelli, 2011; Oberg & Bell, 2012). The holiest of the intentions I hold about my research endeavors is to contribute to the process of knowledge building through bringing fore the essences of the experiences the teacher leaders of different levels have been experiencing in Nepalese educational enterprises.

This intentionality suggests a focus on the intentional relationship between the person and the meaning(s) that they attribute to their experience(s), which could, be either aligned or misaligned with other learners, tutors, resources, associated technologies or the broader learning environment (Bell, 2012). And my alignment with the phenomenon of study is first hand, close and to the point because I have been

a teacher throughout. My aim of bending curved like a bow in this typical area of concern is to explore whether the teacher leaders of other institutions did experience as I did and do or not.

Intentionality refers to how the processes that go on in subjectivity are intentional, i.e., are directed at objects of inquiry (, 2002). My directedness is towards the phenomena of being leader(s) at different levels of school organization. Here the directedness or the focus is on being leaders. Similarly, Freeman (1999) argued that knowledge is gained through the intentional learning process. It is the intention that prepares the foundation for being consious or aware which contributes in making knowledge. To gaze the potential of 'distributed leadership' as a useful model in our context, I intend to squeeze the phenomenon till it releases all its juice and the only way to be able to do it so is to negotiate with the teacher levels of different levels and extract the information from them as in depth as possible.

Intentionality in philosophy has a very abstract and multiple indications relating to the consciousness of mind but from a very practical and simplest form intentionality as argued by McGregor (2010) is deciding what one wishes to do and doing it. My intention is to unearth the shared and unique experience of being educational leaders at different levels. Further revelation about my development as a teacher in the next section of discussion would further clarify both my positionality and intentionality.

Being a Teacher Leader: My Journey

'Born to be a Teacher' can be the metaphor that represents my journey at the core. The course of events modeled me in such a way that I remained the teacher forever. Taught my younger brother throughout the school period when I was one class senior to him, assisted him doing his SLC as I was the school topper, followed

the footsteps of my father who retired after teaching in schools for more than 40 years but never received any promotions. After my intermediate, I was envied by the college lecturers as the volume of students coming to me for the tuition used to be larger than what they had. Taking tuitions to intermediate level students made me popular at one hand whereas provided me the resources to feed myself and my younger brother who was studying taking Law as a major.

After writing the examination of Bachelor level, I was invited to take class in a college as a paid volunteer lecturer but the local politics forced me to pull myself back and I again took up tuitions. My formal teaching career began in the year 1994 when I joined the then crown prince named school of Nepal Police as a lower secondary level teacher. I always propelled my studies parallel to my work and collected Master's Degrees in English Literature, Sociology and English Education. On the other hand, perhaps it was my better luck or it was the reward of my work, I received multi-layer promotions from lower secondary to secondary level teacher, from teacher to coordinator, from coordinator to vice principal, from third class to second class, and from second class to first class. I should rather say that my father could not receive promotion once in his teaching career of 40 years. As the destiny had predetermined that I remained a teacher for ever, I could not be the government officer even if I had passed the public service commission exam for the section officer in the diplomatic service right in my first attempt. I was there as the candidate number one for the second class officer there at Nepal Tourism Board but the one in the last of the list was selected and at both occasions I remained the best alternative number one. Like the popular African quotes ' a prisoner does not choose his task' and ' a slave does not choose his master' I am made to be a teacher with little or no other choice at all.

My journey as a teacher has been prosperous in a sense I received multiple promotions, established myself as a proficient administrator and enjoyed the privileges of being a Vice Principal, Coordinator and Principal for more than a decade. This journey allowed me to experience the feelings of different levels of leadership roles. This journey has contributed and shaped my perceptions and prejudices about being a teacher in general and being a teacher leader in particular. As I reflect back today, the panorama seems crystal clear but very hard to pinpoint how and why everything happened that much quick that took me to the summit and where I lay now. Probably I am reflected in the poem of Hernry Wardswarth Longfellow (1807-1882) who wrote in his classical poem 'The Arrow and the Song'

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where.

I am as I am destined to be. The eminent motivation man Maslow (1943) in his classic theory of human motivation writes “A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What one can be, one must be” (p. 380). For me, it is the teacher I am defined to be made and this is what I am for around a score of years. My journey of being a teacher evolved like an adventure and I often reflect my being of teacher with the metaphor 'born to be a teacher'. If I could label myself as a 'born teacher' I would like to discuss some metaphors used for describing the teachers by others in the next section.

Metaphors for Teacher Leaders

The metahporical narrative of my journey as a teacher would possibly give vantage point for me to dissuss the lived experience of teacher leaders at different levels. Before disucssing about metaphors for teacher leaders, I attempt to defend the use of metaphor in qualitative research. My understanding about metaphor in reference to the inquiry like this is simple. As I wish to explicate the lived experience

of teacher leaders at different level, my inquiry is directed towards capturing the experience of being leader(s). The point here is how to express the experiences shared by others. Experience being a complex phenomenon require a typical strategy for its illumination. And I argue, in order to explicate the experience metaphors work as the trope, a ploy and a strategy. I find my argument credible as may authors also made the similar arguments. Shank (2002) maintains that in its most basic form, metaphor is a rhetorical trope, or figure of speech. As a trope, it is keenly related to two other tropes; simile and synecdoche. Shank further elaborates about that figurative approaches to meaning in general and metaphors in particular, have played an important role in qualitative research, both in terms of writing up results and in conceptualizing findings. Teaching as a profession and teacher as a professional have been both positively and negatively characterized over the years with numerous figurative speeches, implicit comparisons and symbols that attribute them differently in different contexts.

The metaphor constitutes another type of discovery. A metaphor is not intended to represent the phenomenon under study in the same way as resulting theory will (or at least should); rather, its purpose is preliminary to suggest, by deducing from premises of the metaphor, fruitful paths leading to discovery of the nature of that phenomenon. With a metaphor, this is accomplished by orienting thought and research using one or more of the concepts comprising the metaphor, in effect converting them into what Blumer (1964) labeled as sensitizing concepts that mean the ideas to provoke the thinking of the readers.

There is also a potentially fruitful interplay between qualitative research and semiotics in the area of metaphor (Given, 2008). In particular, metaphors are clear examples of abductive reasoning and can therefore be systematically linked with other

abductive endeavors dealing with the search for clues, patterns, omens, and hunches. It means metaphors effectively represent some phenomenon that the normal linguistic expressions may take a longer route to explain. Another important reason for using metaphors in the study like this is their root in folklore and local narratives.

As a profession associated with the play of words, it is natural that teachers themselves contribute in creating up numerous semiotic discourses that are much more powerful than everyday words. Batten (2012) maintains it that the metaphors highlight something to conceal others. He underscores the ambiguous characteristics of metaphors in the field of education and maintains that to understand the life-worlds of academia understanding the metaphors is imperative. Similarly, Umemoto (2012) categorically mentions that leadership success depends on metaphoric intelligence which refers to the inherent and underlying values and mores that can be expressed by the idiomatic expressions which lay the foundation of practical discourse. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) also highlight the high significance of metaphors in many cognitive science studies. In their classics entitled 'Metaphors We Live By' they elaborate the detailed significance the metaphors undertake in comprehending the inherent aspect of a phenomenon.

As far as the metaphors associated with teachers in particular are concerned there are the varieties of analogies used universally to depict different situations. Teacher as the educational leader is implicitly compared with varieties of notions giving a metaphorical analogy. According to Huber (2010), ‘good’ school leadership is strongly connected to the notion of ‘learning’. Doing so, leadership, regardless of its context, is not rigid, but like a ‘bamboo cane’ adaptable to different situations and flexible and at the same time, however, consistent and by no means unpredictable.

There are numerous analogies meant for teachers that relate them differently in different contexts. Some of the metaphors that explain the teacher leaders are: teachers as artist's kit, teachers as inoculation, teachers as conductor, teachers as lighthouse, teachers as candles, teachers as gardener, teachers as river's current, teachers as tour guide, teachers as student, and teachers as performer. These metaphors provide for the foundation to understand the central concern of this study that is to explore the underlying meaning of the question ' what does it mean to be a teacher leader?'

I find the Eastern tradition of viewing the teacher to be unique in its own. It is unique in a sense that a teacher in the East is respected as the source of knowledge and considered the form of 'god'. Guru has been considered as the highest form Karve and Damodar (2013) as praised in the following couplet that portrays a teacher as the creator, survivor and the eliminator.

"Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo, Maheshwarah,

Guru SaakshatParabrahma, Tasmay Shree GuruveNamah"

Since ancient times, Hindu gurus, as teachers and leaders, have continued a tradition of transforming learners through typical Gurukul system that concentrated in devotion, service and benevolence. By applying knowledge in a unique educational system that harmonized theory and practice, the leadership of Hindu gurus has guided learners toward inner change before serving or leading others. Gyan (1998) argues that as teachers and leaders, they communicated a lived experience in a powerful way. Epistemologically, they outlined new ways of understanding and experiencing consciousness, and ontologically, a new way of life and a new existence. However, it is ironic to note that such epistemic traditions are less explored.

Like metaphors, I consider that literary tradition can be a very useful means to dig out inherent notions of human existence at different times. It can express the analogies better than anything else. According to Khuman (2010), there are different narrative techniques for the narration of literature. From the rhetorical perspective, I find the quotes and references from English classical literary tradition useful in making meaning of the lived experiences of teacher leaders at different positions. Ahmad and Sheeraz (2013) argue that quotes from literature can provide a contextual representation of the experience that I hope can inform the essence of experience to a larger audience in a way through analogy. Quotations have strong alignment with the everyday experience of leaders in educational institutions. The idea here is to bring forth the issues of the leaders of educational institutions in line with the notion of realism that informs the issues not from the romantic and idealized lens but through the lens of realism and the referece from classical literature would support to this stance.

In this research I aim at observing and narrating the lived experience of the educational leaders as they have experienced it. Since pessimism has dominated my growth as a teacher and I confess it to the core of my understanding that I have been a dice of uncertainty and remained as one of the most indecisive characters for long. Two of the noted writers from English literature best describe my understanding of existence, struggle and being in the world as a whole. The first point of reference is Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), a Victorian realist (opposite to romanticist) who examined the social constraints that hindered the lives of his characters. Hardy's characters often encountered crossroads, which were symbolic of a point of opportunity and transition. The second one is William Shakespeare (1564-1616) widely regarded as the greatest writer in English language. Shakespeare exhibited his

tragic heroes from the high ranked social figures who suffered the change in fortune from happiness to misery because of a mistaken act whereas Hardy positioned his characters from the low rank of the society who met their fall due to some fatalistic reasons (Al-Asmar, 2012). The portrayal of Shakespeare and Hardy are meant to evaluate the lived experience of educational leaders of Nepali educational institutions. I mean use of metaphors and quotations from literature better describe the phenomenon of being leader(s) which constitutes the central concern of this inquiry. This declaration about my positionality, intentionality, my journey as a teacher and the significance of metaphoric explication of a phenomenon paves the foundation to enter the phenomenon of this inquiry (educational leadership) with focus to why and how it deserves to be explored in depth.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of inquiry in this study comes from my own positionality, intentionality and my journey as a teacher leader. My experience of being techer leader at different positions for a score of years and the existing situation of educational leadership in our context inticed me to think this notion of leadership from a different perspective that is more concenred with being a leader and iluuminating the experience of being leaders at different positions. Leadership for me is a different notion. I conceptualize leadership as an interactive process but I am bothered to notice a great discripancy in my conceptualization and the bulk of leadership literature that deal leadership from the individual perspective and prescribe a list of characteristics. Crevani, Lindgren, and Packendorff (2010) confirm to my proposition when they argue that traditionally leadership studies are individual focused and detached from the context with forceful contritization of an abstract notion. They emphasize the very ontological nature of leadership and underscore the

need for leadership studies to focus on process ontology and leadership practices as constructed in interactions. Another propopistion that I hold about leadership is its very nature of context sensitiveness. By context sensitiveness I mean significance of context in understanding the ontology of leadership and I find this proposition confirmed by Souba (2011). Therefore, I first present a contextual scenario of educational leadership practice not the individual leaders to explicate the issue of interest that underpins this study.

Standing at the fourth quarter of the year 2013 and reflecting on the overall education scenario, I feel quite disappointed to declare myself a teacher. I read the news stoires almost everyday finding the anomalies and pitfalls of education system. I find it very humiliating to talk about our educational faternity with foreign scholars who visit university where I work and exhibit interest to know about the educational situation of Nepal because I fail to find anything in our education system where I can feel proud about. I can boast about being a Nepali, I can enthusiastically talk about our glorious history but I can not find a single adjective to modify our educational system. It is right here I have a hunch, I have a chill and I question myself. I recall the policy, the education acts, rules, regulations and the sytem of ledership and I observe pitfalls everywhere. I feel discripancies everywhere. For example policy document like SSRP (2009-2013) remains mute about leadership model required to execute the very policy. So is the case of existing education acts and regualations where there is a long list of head teachers' roles and authorities but I find that the very nature of leadership is no where articulated in educational policy docucemtes of Nepal. Our educational policy documents do not recognize any other positions than headteacher (principal). I argue that it is errornous to identify headteachers alone as school leaders.

This very gulf between leadership policy and paractice germinites the foundation of this study.

We are at a time of political and social transition. It has been more than 14 years we have no elected government. Everything is running on ad hoc basis. The policy like SSRP is in limbo in the absence of mere act to execute it. I argue this to be a period of anarchy. It is a period sans responsibility. And it has its black evil spell over schools. Given the complexity of schools and the demands placed on principals, it is now erroneous to consider that school principals can single-handedly lead schools to greatness (Spillane, 2005). If what is articulated by Spillane is to be agreed, where do we stand in this connection? Are our schools really prepared to accommodate this notion that the leadership role is something to be shared or kept as one-man supremacy as we have it today? Then how do the leaders in the institutional schools of Nepal make meaning of their being? What does it mean to be a principal? What does it mean to be a vice principal or coordinator? What does it mean to be a teacher?

While studying the leadership practices in the school organizations of economically developed countries, I could find the emphasis being shifted from one person dominant leadership style to the shared leadership. This is what I am directed to unearth in this study. Currently, there is an evolving theory that leadership from a distributed perspective has the potential to improve teaching and increase students' learning (Harris, 2005). How do our teacher leaders think of this concept? How aware are they about it? Since educational leadership is all about achieving the excellence in the academic achievements of the students, sticking to a structured rigid pattern can be rather dysfunctional. But this is what happening around us.

Another pertinent concern that I perceive as the matter of problem is the influence of globalization in education and Nepal's formal accession in WTO

agreements. This entry demands that we reconstruct our educational policies and behaviors that enable us to compete with actors of global standard. It also leads to the problem to be probed that is how much prepared are our teacher leaders to give a try to a new model. What are the things that either support or obstruct them in applying new defenses that facilitate them combat against the encroaching influence of globalization?

In a context when we are bound to think a new way out because of both the internal (extended transition period) and external (globalization and accession to WTO agreements) reasons, the study on the current practices of distributed leadership is a timely affair. Since educational leadership is a collective phenomenon and demands a comprehensive integration of multiple aspects, through this research I have it in mind to see how the leaders of different levels perceive this phenomenon and what activities they perform to ensure that the leadership reaches to the target. At the same time by exploring the lived experience of being educational leaders, I attempt to assess the level of motivation and how this notion supports in enhancing the self actualization and promotes the organizational effectiveness as claimed by the 'motivation theory' (Maslow, 1943; McClelland,1965,1985) where the effect of distribution reaches.

If school success is to be attributed with leadership effectiveness, I argue that the ongoing one person focused leadership also contributes to our failure. In this connection, there is the need for a participative and bottom up approach of leading and managing a school system which does not only adopt the structural model but also constitutes the propositions of 'New Science' that acknowledges the significance of every individual and counts each as a meaningful unit (Wheatley, 2006). And I believe it is possible only when we first understand the ontology of leadership.

Therefore, I direct the focus of this study in exploring the lived experience of being teacher leader(s). I believe this revelation of the lived experience of being teacher leader(s) at different levels would contribute in widening the understanding about experiencing leadership from the ontological perspective. There is a need to explore the lived experience of the teacher leaders to weigh this notion as they experience it and trace its pattern in general. This foreground generates the research questions for this proposed study with the focus on the following themes. How the teacher leaders of our context perceive this idea, what pattern of distribution exists in our context and how it supports in leadership effectiveness ultimately help to originate the research questions that follow.

Purpose

The main purpose for conducting this study is to explore and interpret the lived experience of being teacher leader in different levels. In particular, I attempt to unearth the lived experience of top level leaders (school principals / chairmen / executives), middle level leaders (vice principals/coordinators/head of department) and bottom level leaders (class teachers / subject teachers) with special attention to their understanding about distributed leadership.

Research Questions

Since the major concern of this study is to explore in depth the experience of being leaders at different level with a distributed leadership perspective as understood and manifested by different levels of teacher leaders in Nepalese school set-ups, I frame the research questions so as to illicit the contextual meaning of being leaders at different positions. And these quires come from my experience and reflections and from the existing situation of educational horizon of Nepal that I argue to be anarchic. Flick (2009) substantiates my assumption when he mentions research questions origin

in the researcher's personal biographies and the social context. Confirming to my directedness towards the ontology of leadership, I frame a phenomenological research question with a single focus of understanding the being of leadership as perceived by the participants of this research.

The overarching research question and the emergent research questions I have designed to probe the ontology of being leaders at different levels with distributed leadership perspective are;

What does it mean to be an educational leader?

1. How do top level leaders experience being teacher leaders?
2. How do middle level leaders experience being teacher leaders?
3. How do bottom level leaders experience being teacher leaders?

I will use the overarching and emergent research questions with an intentionality (directedness) of exploring the lived experiences of principals, middle leaders (Vice-principals, coordinators, and HODs), and teachers and these research questions are important because they guide the interview questions in the collection of data and thus capture the views of the participants. These will also drive the literature review.

Scope of the Study

Through this qualitative research I hope to enrich the understanding of being leaders at different levels in Nepali institutional schools. This study has the potential to be useful to policymakers who develop principal preparation programs. Thereafter, I claim that this study has a practical significance of understanding the essence of being leaders and this understanding can possibly have a ripple effect in leadership studies of the future.

Researchers can use it to set the future agenda for research. As Harris (2005) notes ‘‘Distributed leadership has captured the imagination of those in educational leadership and is appealing to policymakers, researchers and practitioners alike’’ (p. 315). Whilst the literature on distributed leadership is abundant, we know less about distributed leadership in action. To date, there is little data to support the effects of distributed leadership on teaching and learning. By investigating the perceptions of principals, middle leaders and teachers in their school settings, I attempt to illuminate the phenomenon of distributed leadership as practiced in schools. I believe the findings from the study would contribute to knowledge as well as provide useful feedback to practitioners and policy-makers who are continuously seeking ways of school improvement and effective leadership. Practitioners, especially head teachers and teachers can use the study to identify how distributed leadership practices can contribute to school improvement. For this researcher who has been in school leadership for a long time, the study is important because it offers a chance to reflect on past practice and find new ideas on effective school leadership and teaching.

Rationale of the Study

The world has been a global village. The rapid growth in the ICT and the conversion of the world into a complex network of easy looking mechanism demands that we prepare ourselves in tandem with what is happening round the globe. We cannot, though we may not like to keep ourselves aloof from what is happening around, particularly in the global context. One of the rationales of selecting ontological understanding of distributed leadership in particular is because of this awareness for the part of this student researcher that we keep alert with the latest research trend happening in the subject of interest. As stated in the general background (my positionality), my uninterrupted involvement in the genre of

academics expects me to be alert with the latest development in this area and it inspired me to propose to explore this phenomenon in depth using the qualitative paradigm.

The in-depth exploration of this notion would also support to the leadership model that we require in urgency once we determine and go for the federal structuring as proclaimed by the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 that demands for a renegotiated leadership framework where the leadership practices cannot be centered into one person or individual focus policy as practiced till this date. Thereafter, I propose to make a link with the policy practice of our country in specific.

Another concern is the practical reality about the existence of this phenomenon almost in every educational establishment. Once a school starts growing, it begins being complex and automatically demands that the leadership role is shared among more than one. The distribution happens in continuum but happens for sure. These ideas make it a worth research topic independently in itself which naturally finds its link with numerous components like students' achievements, leadership effectiveness, overall school success and many more.

Delimitations

In this study about the lived experience of being educational leaders in the institutional schools, I attempt to explore the experiences of leaders as they feel it. Being a phenomenological inquiry, this study has some delimitation. As argued by Simon and Goes (2013), delimitations of a study are those characteristics that arise from limitations in the scope in the study and by conscious exclusionary and inclusionary decisions during the study design. Delimitations come off the specific choice of the researcher. The study is delimited to the inquiry about being educational leaders in three levels (top, middle, and bottom) at institutional schools of Nepal. And

this placement of leaders at institutional schools stemmed from my own experience of being a teacher that I assumed as being a leader at the bottom. My experience of working as a coordinator and vice principal gave me the experience of being a leader in middle. My being of principal and chief executive provided me the experience of being at the top. However, all these positions are relative and the intensity of being at different levels varies in different contexts. This study designs its theoretical construct based on the propositions of distributed leadership as proposed by Spillane (2006). The areas of investigation remained limited to the leadership structure of the schools understudy and the decision making process of the selected schools. It only considers the 'leadership plus aspect' and 'leadership practice aspect' to weigh the influence of the spread of the leadership phenomenon across these school set ups. Methodologically, this study is informed by the hermeneutic phenomenology.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I first disclosed my positionality (situatedness) and intentionality (directedness) and prepared the contextual foundation to proceed ahead with the study by declaring the scene where this study is rooted. I presented my journey as a teacher for around two decades and my experience and feelings of working in different positions. I proposed for the use of metaphors and quotations form literature as the means to generate thick description to illuminate the phenomenon under study. All these narratives I meant for setting the scene to draft the problem statement of this research that partly came from me myself and the context where I am i.e. the world of educational administration. Then I sketched the existing scenario of our educational administration and leadership that does not recognize any other leadership roles than head teacher. Amid the pressure and demand from both the internal and external ends, I argued that our policies need to address this issue of

educational leadership. After justifying the area to be an area deserving research like this, I articulated the purpose of the study, enlisted the phenomenological research questions to steer the entire research process and finally set the content delimitation of this study. I maintained this chapter as the preamble of my inquiry.

CHAPTER II

VISITING THE ISSUES IN LITERATURE

After declaring my situatedness in the inquiry, clarifying my directedness towards the phenomenon stemming from within myself and my surroundings and framing the tropes for the entire research now I move to reviewing the literature with focus to the phenomenon of my interest. In this chapter I attempt to evaluate the ontological perspective of leadership as a concept having its origin and interplay within human interaction. My situatedness as a teacher leader at different levels for about two decades and my directedness towards the phenomenon of being leader shape the perspective that I use while locating and discussing leadership issues in the literature. While presenting my discussion on literature review I attempt to apply the narrative review with a focus of not just reinventing the wheel but for developing my arguments (Bryman, 2008).

In the meantime, I am interested to see the metaphors, adages and idiomatic expressions that support to emulate the likeness of leadership concept I discuss. I begin this chapter with definitions of leadership in general and then trace the evolution of different eras of leadership with thematic concentration. Then after, I mean to clarify the constituents of educational leadership with focus to its urgency in educational enterprises. Here I focus on distributed leadership that informs the major theoretical base of this inquiry. I, then, relate the concept of distributed leadership with being leaders at the top, middle and bottom level in reference to school organizations. After discussing the concept of leadership, I even briefly sketch a portrayal of activity theory, motivation theory, new science perspective, and capitalist

theory that support in discussing the being of leadership in Nepali institutional schools. At the end of the discussion, I prepare a theoretical frame that informs the key concepts that inform this study. Now and again I use reflective understanding of reviewing the literature because my intentionality (directedness) here is not on only what others have said in the issue but also to reflect what that means to me.

Leadership: Concept and Evolution

Leadership is a common term but it has many diverse meanings. It is an abstract concept that I prefer comparing with 'beauty'. This means that leaders and leadership are defined in the eye of the beholder. If this is the case, then there is a multitude of definitions and understandings of what it means to be a leader or to witness leadership. My argument about leadership is that it is a process, an interaction, and a phenomenon that is contextually contingent. To understand leadership is to understand this interplay among leaders, followers and situations. Therefore, I argue that leadership is a phenomenon that deserves an inquiry from the ontological perspective.

The concept of leadership dates back to antiquity of the Western civilization. According to Bass (1985), the study of leadership is an ancient art. Discussions of leadership appear in the works of Plato, Caesar, and Plutarch. Additionally, leadership is a robust concept that “occurs universally among all people regardless of culture, whether they are isolated Indian villagers, Eurasian steppe nomads, or Polynesian fisher folk” (p. 5). This argument acknowledges the universality of leadership as a phenomenon and suffices to its being a pluralistic concept, a process available everywhere, having the foundation in historical writing, and has the potential to be inquired from multiple perspectives and paradigms. I opt for sticking with the interpretive paradigm considering its pluralistic ontology.

One thing very unique I could see about the leadership discourse is its being mainly Western-centric and the literature on leadership pay very little attention to the non-western concepts. I agree with Wang (2004) who argues that leadership being a contextual construct it requires a minute consideration of local concern. The eastern notion of leadership as argued by Ehrich (2000) is largely ethics based concept, servant in nature and more moral than corporate.

Extending ahead from the pervasiveness and universality of leadership discussed above another proposition assumes leadership to be a process orientation. I argue that process orientation about leadership further consolidates my argument of leadership being a phenomenon of diversity and requires an interpretive epistemology for investigation. As a process being a leader is to be able to exert influence over others. Form this process perspective, Yukl (2006) defines leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (p. 8). Similarly, Northouse (2007) defines leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Yukl's definition regards leadership as a process oriented affair to achieve shared objectives whereas Northouse prioritizes the role of an individual in this process of influencing. These two definitions I find complementary contradictory in a sense that the first definition regards the phenomenon open whereas the latter counts the individual and limits the idea of process with individuals. I align more with Yukl who leaves the process to be an open and everything possible concept and makes it more pluralistic.

In these definitions I find several components central to the phenomenon of leadership. Some of them are as follows: (a) Leadership is a process, (b) leadership

involves influencing others, (c) leadership happens within the context of a group, (d) leadership involves goal attainment, and (e) these goals are shared by leaders and their followers. Leadership as a process suggests that leadership is not a characteristic or trait with which only a few, certain people are endowed with at birth. Defining leadership as a process means that leadership is a transactional event that happens between leaders and their followers and thus, process orientation of leadership provides the solidarity to my argument for leadership being a pluralistic entity and requiring a qualitative epistemic worldview for better understanding it.

The area of leadership is very fertile for research endeavors primarily due to its interactive nature and pluralistic ontology. This is probably why leadership remains to be a very popular genre for researchers. However, no leadership studies can arrive to a declarative conclusion primarily because of its very intriguing nature. Confirming to this paradoxical nature of leadership, Bennis (1959) observes:

> Of all the hazy and confounding areas in social psychology, leadership theory undoubtedly contends for the top nomination. And ironically, probably more has been written and less known about leadership than about any other topic in the behavioral science. (p. 259)

In this quote of Bennis what I observe is the acceptance of leadership as one of the complex issues that demands inquiries from multiple perspectives as the studies on leadership (as a complex phenomenon) still remains inconclusive and I find every era coming with new model of leadership concept that I discuss in the next part of this very heading.

Conformity about the complex nature of leadership I noticed in Burns (1978) who remarked leadership as one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth. This say of Burns further inspired me to study leadership from a

perspective that has been hardly used in the Nepalese context. Adding to the uncertainty associated with understanding of leadership, Stogdill (1974) claims that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as those who have attempted to define the concept. Yet we persist in trying to explain the key question regarding the leadership which conjures up powerful and romantic images. In fact in these times of rapid change and environmental complexity, leadership has taken on greater importance than ever before. The evolution of leadership studies and the research volumes have by now made a remarkable departure from the focus to individualism towards in the favor of more than one person leadership with different synonyms such as team leadership, shared leadership, participatory leadership, collaborative leadership and so forth.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) also express similar opinion as of above when they mention that decades of analysis of the literature and plethora of empirical investigations have given us at least 350 differing definitions of leadership still with no clear view of what distinguishes an effective leader from an ineffective leader. One of their definitions was: "…the capacity to translate intention into reality and sustain it" (p. 17). They went on to say what leadership can transform organizations from a current state to a future state, and instill new cultures, strategies, and changes. Collins (2005) gave a powerful description of leadership when he said, "True leadership only exists if people follow when they have the freedom not to" (p. 13). For me these wisdom quotations on leadership further make the phenomenon more complicated and demand for a unique outlook to investigate upon the issue.

However, this discussion of leadership grounded on process ontology (Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2010) is not a free from criticism. For me the strengths of this line of conceptualizing leadership are its extension beyond

individualism in terms of scope and stress on process, practice and interaction. At the same time, it would be too idealistic to assume that leadership all the time extends beyond individual and reaches to the group and the process, practice and interaction happens mechanically. I consider this conceptualization to be rather utopian. This idea of process ontology of leadership resulted into leadership discourse when Drath et al. (2008) proposed an alternative of leadership study with focus to direction, alignment, and commitment. Nevertheless, the point where I agree in these competing elaborations of leadership is in their shared focus on the nature of leadership research and its acknowledgement for the need of ontological perspective to better illuminate the idea of leadership.

As the concept of leadership is complex and there exists more definitions than the authors, it would be a very tough task to exactly pinpoint what leadership is. In such a situation I argue conceptualization of leadership would be relatively more convincing using metaphors. Metaphor can be used to facilitate the grasp of an abstract concept by concretizing it (Singh, 2010) . I see the metaphors as the tools that facilitate understanding of abstract concepts like leadership by creating a new mental picture or comparing something unknown with known. There exist multiple metaphors to signify educational institutions and educational leaders. Some of such metaphors as identified by Huber (2010) for educational institutions are: learning center, organism, an orchestra, life itself, a playground, a garden for schools. These metaphors I find acknowledging the very existence of school as an organization of all bright values. Similarly, to represent the educational leaders he further enlists the metaphors like a gardener who supervises the growth of all plants, conductor of the orchestra who knows all the notes but does not necessarily play all the instruments, and loop of the collar of jacket. This representation of leadership issue with some

other relational entity makes it easier for the readers to conceptualize the abstract ideas in a concrete way. This narrative about leadership concept, its being abstract in nature and the requirement to use the metaphors to concretize it and the conceptual debate on leadership focused on process and direction generate the foundation to discuss the evolution of leadership.

Given the above, I find it logical to return to the historical foundations of leadership theory and review the progress that has been made. Being a concept with rare agreement among the scholars, for me it is a daunting task to track the route of development of leadership in a coherent way. Leadership today is a product of evolutionary development. According to van Sesters and Field (1990), the leadership has evolved through different eras that he identifies as personality, influence, behaviour, situation, contingency, transactional, anti- leadership, cultural, and transformational. They maintain that each new era evolved after a realization that existing era of understanding was inadequate to explain the leadership phenomenon, and poorly adapted to serve useful practical application. (A table of evolution of leadership era as developed by Van Sester & Field, 1990 is annexed at ANNEX VIII). By the time we have arrived to the first quarter of 21st century, there has come a remarkable shift in the way the leadership as a phenomenon is understood. With numerous investigations and practices in the field specialized leadership for different areas has been developed. For me the strength of this model of evolution is its systematic categorization of different eras whereas the cross placement of some models in ambiguity is the major flaw of it. Similarly, I could notice no coherent description of each era. Likewise, Northouse (2007) mentions trait, skills, behavior, situational, contingency, and process theories in his chronological elaboration of different leadership concepts. However, I observe some apparent flaws in this

classification which further complexes the concept of leadership rather than simplifying it. His main logic to present this evolutionary list is based on the dimensional entity where the early theories are one dimensional and conceptualize leadership as a construct characterized in terms of leader qualities and skills treating leadership to be a quality possessed by inborn leaders. Another movement that came along with behavior era initiate the two dimensional theory of leadership assuming the task and human orientation of the leaders. The major departure of this model is the acknowledgement of leadership as a construct that can be developed through efforts or leadership then became a quality that could be developed through interventions. The third moment can be understood as multi-dimensional where the interaction among leaders, followers and situation is considered central.

From this brief discussion on the concept and evolution of leadership what I mean to indicate is the bygone are the days when leadership meant for just an organizational set ups or focused on the polity aspects more than anything else. What I could find in the review of literature and its evolution so far is the change in orientation, the change in the focus and the indication for the need to apply a different outlook in order to investigate the complex world of leadership transcending from the traditional monolithic individual focus dimension. The

> As I was reading for this section and writing my final version about it, I was doubtful about the worth of doing research in such a vague issue with very little agreement among the scholars. At the same time, I could realize the very beauty inherent in the phenomenon of leadership, its pluralism and the possibility of bringing in forth something new and appealing that speak of our context. (Reflection, August, 2013)

result is the specialized field of educational leadership which I discuss in the next section.

Educational Leadership as a Pluralistic Concept

It has not been very long that educational leadership found space as a separate field of study. The evolution of educational leadership as a distinct genre of studies started taking acceleration with a focus to school reform as major agenda. Its literature has grown at an accelerating rate along with the professionalization of educational management (Oldroyd, 2003). This means that educational leadership is emergent to the need of professionalization of education. As a concept of leadership I find the underlying assumptions of educational leadership having the intent to improve the educational institutions in terms of its effectiveness with focus to students' learning. This focus, I argue as pedagogic focus, and claim that conceptualization of educational leadership builds upon various perspectives and chief among them are sociological and management perspectives. The importance given to the idea of leadership has grown enormously in virtually all sectors, and education has been no exception (Harris, 2004). I conceptualize the idea of educational leadership as an emergent construct with concentration in educational life-worlds. In the following text I highlight the fundamental premises of educational leadership and deal with different educational leadership theories like servant leadership, ethical leadership, instructional leadership and transformational leadership in brief to prepare the foundation to discuss distributed leadership in detail.

There are different views about the origin and development of educational leadership as a separate genre of studies. Slater (1995) declares that educational leadership is rooted in sociology with four different paradigms viz. structural functional perspective, politico-conflict perspective, constructivist perspectives and

critical humanist perspectives. These four perspectives define educational leadership from the sociological point of view and attempt to establish it as a social construct. I find these four sociological paradigms in a continuum of positivism and post-positivism where the structural functional approach sees the roles of leaders in ensuring the functional efficiency of educational institutions and limits the leadership roles in finding and fixing errors. Politico-conflict perspectives see an educational institution from the power and resource dynamics and prescribe way forwards for the educational leaders. Constructivist perspectives analyze educational organizations as meaningful interactions between and among stakeholders making it an interpretive construct. Critical humanist perspectives consider educational institutions from a postmodern lens and take the new science perspective. I find this sociological perspective of educational leadership a very convincing construct and provide a solid foundation for educational leadership to grow as an independent discipline. Another argument about the theoretical base of educational leadership comes off management perspective which I deal in the next segment of discussion.

The management perspective of educational leadership claim educational leadership as an extension of management principles. I find this perspective evaluating educational management from the managerial and bureaucratic lens and seeking its connection in management and organization theories. Sergiovanni (1984) argues that relationships with staff, pupils and parents, are quite literally at the heart of education. This idea of relationship among multiple layers of stakeholders constitutes the very idea of educational leadership and justifies its emergence. He traces the origin of educational leadership in management theory. For me this proposition is also convincing as educational leadership uses the fundamental concepts about the structure and coordination of schools, rules and regulation within a

school and how it works from organizational theory which itself if derived from management theory.

On the other hand, Bush (2007) holds a slight different perspective and argues that the field of educational leadership and management to be a field of pluralist nature where there are many competing perspectives and there is lack of agreement on the exact nature of the discipline. This notion of pluralist nature and presence of competing perspectives make educational leadership a construct which is ontologically more aligned with post-positivism. Specifying the great critical role of educational leaders in ensuring the success of learners, Bush distinguishes between management and leadership with an argument that these two have clear different footage the first focusing on maintenance whereas the later interested for change. I find this argument credible when he further claims that a school as an organization requires a blend of management and leadership way of conceptualization. Both these perspectives (sociological and management) have the pedagogic intent that I claimed to have at the onset of this discussion. Besides these two major schools of thought that prepare the foundation for educational leadership there are many other theorists who provide different logics to synthesize the discussion on educational leadership. Busher (2006) discusses the contrasting differences between school and other organizations on different grounds such as age difference of leader and being led unlike any other organizations (e.g. bank vs. schools), prolonged attachment (my school feeling never dies), multifaceted outcomes (it is not only the transcripts a school provides), and wide range of stakeholders and claims an educational leader requires more competencies than leaders in other organizations. Huber (2010) consolidates the competence requirement in all round affairs as he notes that an educational leader

needs to be capable to deal in diversity, maintain the emotional balance, create a facilitative culture for learning and more than that be responsible to the entire society.

Through this discussion, I mean to further clarify my claim of educational leadership being a concept of pluralist ontology and a construct of pedagogic intent. Based on this foreground now I move to discuss some theories are typically focused in educational management in particular that include servant leadership, ethical leadership, transformational leadership and instructional leadership. These different variants of educational leadership theories emerged to fill the gap explained and exhibited the pedagogic focus differently.

One of the theories that I find taking tag of educational leadership is servant leadership. A servant leader is servant first. It is possibly due to its process orientation regarding how to lead Northouse (2007) categorizes it under process theories of leadership. I find the very quote 'a servant leader is a servant first' by Greenleaf (1991) as the major thesis of servant leadership. Laub (1999) develops six categories to measure the presence of servant leadership that include valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership and sharing leadership. I observe all these concerns of servant leadership having focus on process and interaction between the leaders and the led. Some authors have explored the concept of servant Leadership as it relates to education (Bowman, 2004; Van Brummelen, 2005; Herman & Marlowe, 2005; Crippen, 2005).

For example, Marlow (2005) relates teachers as servant leaders and recommends the teachers to 'shift from classroom mindset to community mindset where leaders stress helping others (p. 175). This say means that the focus of servant leadership is on helping others or serving others. Cripen (2005) highlights the benefit of servant leadership practice to promote democratic school system that builds a

larger community and the novelty of voluntarism in helping others. I consider this serving and helping others attribution of servant leadership to be one of the typical characteristics that wins the tag of educational leadership. Yet, the problem I observe with servant leadership is its inability to address the concerns of such school set ups that have the business motifs. Not all the schools in our context are service oriented organisms. The leaders in institutional schools are bound to think of investment and profit. Likewise, servant leadership assumes the follower to be many but conceptualizes leader to be just one. Another similar model of educational leadership with servant leadership but having different premise is ethical leadership.

The concept of ethical leadership I find having its root in moral obligation towards the society. The leaders with ethical leadership perspective concentrate on doing the right things for the welfare of the entire society (Greenfield, 1991). For me this concept of having moral obligations to society is not something very straight forward. However, I cannot disagree with the idea that schools are moral institutions, designed to promote social norms, and the leaders at schools are moral agents who must often make decisions that favor one moral value over another. Moreover, although schools are dedicated to the well-being of children, students have virtually no voice in what happens there. For all these reasons, the leader's conduct must be deliberately moral. To be an ethical school leader, then, is not a matter of following a few simple rules. The leader's responsibility is complex and multi-dimensional, rooted less in technical expertise than in simple human integrity. Again I observe the very focus on leader as individual even in ethical leadership. It represents ‘principal’ as the total agent of school leadership. Another theory of leadership that I find articulating the life worlds of education is transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership is characterized by an explicit focus on role of the leaders in the development of followers. Transformational leadership takes place when leaders interact with followers in ways that enhance their creativity and motivation in the organization (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders engage with followers, focusing on their intrinsic motivation and confidence. As the primary concern of the educational enterprises is to develop the children into capable adults with life-skills that can enable them to lead meaning lives, transformational leadership is the hub of all academic activities. The idea of change and transformation is the key business of educational enterprises. Nevertheless, I observe that leader means an individual person. Instructional or curriculum leadership is the pure educational leadership model that only talks about education and students' achievements.

The instructional leadership concept is defined in terms of principal behaviors that lead a school to educate all students to high student achievement (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003). Instructional leadership incorporates behaviors which define and communicate shared goals, monitor and provide feedback on the teaching and learning process, and promote school-wide professional development. The premise of instructional leadership is to lead teachers and students to reach their full potentials by creating climates characterized by high academic press, defining and communicating shared goals, monitoring the teaching and learning process, and promoting life-long learning of stakeholders and the organization. This strong alignment of instructional leadership with enhanced learning makes it a pure educational leadership theory but the problem of this model of leadership is its extreme emphasis on one person supremacy and amidst the growing complexity the doubt poised upon the principal leader alone regarding his/her capability to lead an academic institution with perfection. I find convincing criticism on this continuous focus in an individual as leader bearing all the

responsibility of educational organization. This major flaw of assuming an individual as a leader necessitated the emergence of another model of leadership that considers leadership to be a matter of concern for all and it can be effective only when leadership roles are distributed with more than one.

My discussion on different models of educational leadership, their focus on leadership as a concept on interaction and process orientation further consolidate my claim of leadership being a pluralistic concept and deserve an epistemic lens of interpretivism. Servant leadership, ethical leadership, transformational leadership and instructional leadership model I found all having the interactive models with process orientation. However, all these models assumed leadership as an individual specific. The model that addresses this concern is by non-other than distributed leadership which I discuss on detail as the major perspective this inquiry adopts.

Distributed Leadership: Concept, Genesis and Pluralism

I argue that distributed leadership as a model of educational leadership is a concept that attempts to incorporate the dynamics of school organization from an interactive perspective and acknowledges the existence of multifaceted relationships among various stakeholders. Grenda (2006) elaborates the concepts of distributed leadership as the requirements of new complexities. He further states "the complex nature of instructional practice requires individuals to function in networks of shared and complementary expertise" (p. 6). This variety of leadership is based on the assumption that a school system is a complex system and it requires performing in manner where the hierarchical division of labor cannot work. The most convincing point about distributed leadership for me is the idea that it declared the idea of single 'hero' leader as an obsolete. The task of leading today's schools has become so multifaceted and complex that a single person cannot be expected to accomplish this

alone. The basic premise of distributed leadership as proposed by Spillane (2001, 2002, 2005, 2006) is primarily about leadership practice rather than leaders on their roles, functions, and structures. A distributed perspective on leadership argues that school leadership practice is distributed in the interactions of school leaders, followers and their situations. Characterized as the most vibrant and potential model of educational leadership of the recent times, this variety of leadership has been able to lure the attention of numerous scholars across the continents. The detour this variety has taken is its stress on the idea of distributed leadership shared by multiple individuals at different levels of school organization.

Until recently, most research and leadership theories (like servant leadership, ethical leadership, transformational leadership, and instructional leadership) assumed that leadership must come from school principal. For decades, studies on leadership have documented specific leadership traits and behaviors, focusing on the top of the hierarchical organization- the principal. But in the recent days, the practice of one person supremacy has been questioned and a different process focused model rather than person focused one has been in the vogue with the name of ‘distributed leadership’. In other terms, the inability of other models of educational leadership

> At the start when I first came across this idea of distributed leadership as an alternative model of educational, I was pretty fascinated by the media jargons like 'has currency' (Hartley, 2007), 'in vogue' (Harris, 2004) 'new kid on the block' (Gronn, 2006) 'attracting growing attention' (Hoyle& Wallace, 2005). As I went on exploring more and reflecting the very context of leadership here, I started realizing that the model is very convincing but too idealistic. I found it assuming a perfect harmonization among leaders, followers and the situation. Yet, I was quite convinced about the potential of this model for leading a new policy. I wish SSRP envisioned a specific leadership model to ensure its execution.
>
> (Reflection, April, 2013)

to address the complexities prevailing within educational set ups necessitated the emergence of this form of distributed leadership. Thus, the conceptual foreground of distributed leadership rests on the failure of other leadership models to incorporate the complexities of school organizations primarily due to their emphasis on principal alone as the leader. The following discussion on the genesis of distributed leadership would further clarify the conceptual premise of distributed leadership.

The idea of distributed leadership is not a new one. Murgatroyd and Reynolds (1984) state "leadership can occur at a variety of levels in response to a variety of situations and is not necessarily tied to possession of a formal organizational role" (as cited in Law & Glover, 2003, p. 37). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the idea of distributed leadership was taking shape. This was a wide-ranging concept, incorporating ideas such as teachers working together in teams and teachers taking a variety of responsibilities within the school. On the positive side, it was considered beneficial to students if teachers discussed their practice with colleagues, gave and accepted critiques of their work and they were open to learning from each other. However, on the other side this interaction between and among the teachers was not always easy to achieve neither it was articulated concretely. Compared to other theories of leadership, the emergence of research on distributed leadership applied to education is a recent phenomenon and investigations of distributed leadership developed between 1990 and 1999 (Timperley, 2005).

Gronn (2000) provides a historical perspective on the emergence of distributed leadership with an argument to the study of leadership as group quality. Copland (2003) takes the linage of distributed leadership back to 1960 and asserts that the essence of distributed leadership emerged with Douglas McGregor’s Theory X and Y. He argues that 'shared purpose' is a critical attribute of distributed leadership, which

emanates from Theory Y believing on the positive side of human nature of being interested to perform and achieve contrasted with Theory X that assumes human beings to be basically indolent.

Distributed leadership is one of the most ancient leadership notions recommended for fulfilling organizational goals through people (Oduro, 2004). This notion has long been reflected in adages associated with decision making in societies. Example of this is the English adage ‘two heads are better than one’ and such notions even exist in our society in multiple forms and we have numerous legends of such.

While observing its genesis, what I find is this notion of distributed leadership has its roots in management fraternity but these days it is one of the most frequently discussed and researched topics in academia. Though there are contesting ideas about the origin and development of distributed leadership, there is no debate on the fact that it is emerging as one of the most researched topics among the researchers of modern times and it has been able to cast a very positive spell in the educational leadership research across the continents. Leaders, followers, and the contexts constitute the foundation where the interactions among different individuals occur in school organization. This proposition of distributed leadership I argue to be a pluralist concept which acknowledges the differences in persons and situations.

In the following text I attempt to evaluate the theoretical and empirical premises of distributed leadership and draw the conceptual or the theoretical framework for the investigation of this phenomenon in Nepalese context in the form it exists through the narratives of lived experiences of the teacher leaders of different levels.

Distributed Leadership: Theoretical Premises

From among these contesting ideas, I claim that the concept of distributed leadership emerged of the failure of one person centered leadership phenomenon with an emphasis to the need that leading is always two- way traffic and involves both the leaders and followers in a given context. The modern concept of distributed leadership has a link to the ideas propositioned by the New Science approach (Wheately, 2006) that value the critical humanist perspective and pay high attention to the human sentiments as well.

Another theoretical base for distributed leadership is the constructivist perspective, suggesting that leadership is constructed by multiple individuals, which means the relationship between leaders and followers is important (Printy, 2008). This notion of constructivist perspective positively aligns with the idea of new science that favors for the creation of new order in collaboration with others. Distributed leadership is an aspect of leadership that recognizes leading and managing schools as involving multiple individuals including those who are not formally designated leaders (Spillane et al., 2008). The efforts of the multiple individuals create an organizational culture where hierarchical control gives way to shared collaboration (Hargreaves & Fink, 2008). Spillane (2006) describes distributed leadership as a practice that is "a product of the joint interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situations such as tools and routines" (p. 3). Distributed leadership as leadership practice is located in the webs of relationships or networked interactions between leaders and followers that define the organization's culture (Hargreaves & Fink, 2008; Spillane, 2006). Distributed leadership does not mean that everyone in the organization leads, but that decision making is governed by the interaction of

individuals rather than individual directions (Harris, 2008). In the following sections, I discuss the theoretical assumptions of distributed leadership,

Spillane (2001) looks at leadership through a lens that goes beyond the function of "an individual's ability, skill, charisma, and/or cognition" (p. 11). Spillane's (2001) conception of distributed leadership expands leadership beyond one individual to a practice that included many. This new perspective changed the orientation to leadership as a practice rather than a study of a leader's role, traits, ability, and cognition. Here leadership is defined as the product of the interactive web of school actors' interactions, their use of artifacts, and their situation. Spillane (2006) argues leadership practice takes shape in the interactions between leaders, followers in their situation. It is a perspective that provides a lens for generating insight into how leadership is practiced. He shows how leadership happens in everyday practices in schools, through formal routines and informal interactions. He examines the distribution of leadership among administrators, specialists, and teachers in the school, and explains the ways in which leadership practice is stretched over leaders, followers, and aspects of the situation, including routines and tools of various sorts in the organization such as memos, scheduling procedures, and evaluation protocols.

Spillane's work on distributed leadership prompts recognition that multiple individuals or actors take part in school leadership to include formal leaders, informal leaders, and their followers. To enrich his theoretical propositions about distributed leadership he explains it in terms of three Cs viz. *collaboration, coordination* and *collectivity*. He opines that the distribution of leadership can be visualized and measured through 'leader plus aspect' and 'leadership practice aspect'. Leadership plus aspect means the expansion of leadership roles to more than one individual and leadership practice refers to the inclusion of all acknowledged leaders in the process

of decision making. This idea of leadership performing in harmony among leaders, followers and situations for me seems to be idealistic as it overlooks other organizational dynamics like group behaviour, organizational politics and the legislative and policy provisions. At the same time, I doubt if the principals who have been entertaining the sole authority are easily ready to practice this model of leadership.

Another widely accepted conception of distributed leadership is proposed by Gronn (2002). Gronn, like Spillane, argues that the study of leadership consisting of a solo or stand alone leader is contradictory to what actually happens at the school house. Gronn explains distributed leadership using the term additive action (multiple leadership approach that redefines leadership to mean the aggregated leadership of an organization that is dispersed among some, many, or maybe all of the members). This distributed leadership framework necessitates a division of labor that Gronn defines as the totality of the tasks and the technological capability used for the completion of those tasks by workers.

Gronn (2002) includes an additive concept to distributed leadership by introducing a philosophy of "concertive action," which means people are working in concert to pool their initiatives and expertise so that the outcome is greater than the sum of their individual actions. He outlines three forms of concertive action that can be observed in the practice of distributed leadership that he identified as *spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations,* and *institutionalized practices.* This concept of distributed leadership further strengthens the concept of Spillane (2006) by specifying the purpose of sharing leadership that is to create synergy. Here I think the assumption that a school organization is that much smooth where everything happens as mentioned in a theory book is the very limitation. I find it too idealistic to assume

such a situation of perfection and harmony in a school at a time we characterize as complex organism.

Another concept I find supports to the very idea of distributed leadership is proposed by Elmore (2000) who connects it to the improvement of instruction and school performance. Using the standards-based reform movement as a guide, Elmore suggests that leadership must be refined. He indicates that the theory of leadership must move beyond the trait theories into a broader term that he interpreted to mean guiding and directing. Elmore advances the definition of distributed leadership to mean 'multiple sources of guidance and direction following the contours of expertise in an organization made coherent through a *common culture*' for the purpose of improving instruction and school performance (p. 15). He explains this in his framework by articulating that guidance and direction imply some degree of shared expertise and some degree of difference in the level and kind of expertise among individuals. This idea I find complementary in understanding distributed leadership from the purpose perspective. His focus is in the creation of common culture. However, to claim that an organizational cultural at modern times can be uniform itself is an idea to doubt. This assumption makes it an ideal claim.

The foundation of each model (Spillane, Gronn, and Elmore) is grounded in the belief that the theory of leadership is much more complex than the traits, characteristics, and knowledge of one person. They also share principles of distributed leadership that value individual expertise, skill, and knowledge to work collaboratively with other members of the organization to solve a problem or complete a task. I observe that Gronn (2002) and Elmore (2000) are complementary for Spillane (2006) to draw the leadership plus and leadership practice aspects. This discussion is not to mean that distributed leadership is a Utopian model with all

perfection. The extent to which the situation is favourable, how much motivated and ready are the principal leaders to execute this model, how hospitable is the existing social order and the political dynamics and many other contextual determinants decide the success of this model. The scanty availability empirical support is another major limitation of this model to be discussed in the next section.

Distributed Leadership: Empirical Support

As a relatively new idea in the field of educational leadership, I find distributed leadership lacking robust empirical support. This does not mean that there are no empirical studies in it, there are, but they are limited in number and as the concept itself is in the process of maturation, I mean to underscore the need to go for more studies applying both quantitative and qualitative dimensions to make this idea an uncontested theory of educational fraternity. Hopefully, this study would contribute in the micro studies in the Eastern soil and see its potential for the global application.

The first decade of twenty first century has been the decade of 'distributed leadership research'. Distributed leadership also popularly known as this 'new kid in the block' in the genre of leadership literature has got a quantum leap in the research arena. Here I discuss few available empirical studies that support the claims of the virtues about this model of leadership In order to facilitate the review of empirical literature I have considered a literature summary guidelines prepared by Parnish and Lefoe (2008). I find the periodic reports published by National College for School Leadership (NCSL) that conducts and calls empirical research on school leadership very helpful in this reference.

The empirical perspectives on 'distributed leadership' have been a matter of high interest among both the positivist and post positivist researchers. Some of the

major concerns of the researchers of this area are to see the connection of distributed leadership with instructional change (Camburn & Han, 2005) relating it with the comprehensive school reform programs. In their study in thirty elementary schools where the comprehensive school reform program with the delegation of responsibilities to the classroom teachers' level, they have reported a positive remarkable correlation between the distribution of leadership authorities and the instructional change.

Likewise, Spillane et al. (2006) have studied the relation between distributed perspective of school leadership and school management and have identified numerous entities in the schools across which including people and aspects of the situation such as routines and tools. Their study has identified a strong positive impact of distributed leadership with overall school management signifying the potential that this model possesses in the quality enhancement of the schools. Leithwood et al. (2007) have measured up the relationship between 'distributed leadership' and teachers' academic optimism and they have concluded that the practice of 'distributed leadership' positively contributes in optimizing the morale and overall performance of the teachers. Hallinger and Heck (1996) have related the concept of 'distributed leadership' with policy system and found that the system wide initiation of the practice of distributed leadership in the American context have yielded very progressive results. These studies though very small in number I find very encouraging to promote the presence of distributed leadership, however, there still requires many more studies in this genre. Now I move to the discussion of different levels of leadership in institutional schools that informs this study and attempt to locate their existence in the world of educational leadership.

Leadership in Institutional Schools

The notion of institution has acquired a number of different meanings in academic debate. Oosterhout (2002) argues that what an institution is understood differently in different disciplines. I found this notion of institution a complex phenomenon like the concept of leadership itself and its meaning determined by the very context where we mean it. Oostrechout (2002) further identifies some salient features of institution that I found relevant to consider schools as institutions. He argues that institutions are not only physical and the ontology of institution constitutes the virtues of collective human interaction, they have regulative pillars enacted with intentional desire through sanctioning and coercion and they operate on rational assumption and thus are consequential. The main point here is the interaction that forms the very existence (ontology) of an institution. Thereafter, the leadership in institutional schools is the manifestation of the intentional interaction. This means being a leader in institutional schools is largely determined by the very requirement in the context and is unique in its own. Now I move on to briefly discuss how literature conceptualizes the notion of being at different positions in schools with focus to being at the top, middle and bottom not for the hierarchical shake but for understanding their ontological existence. This conceptualization of leadership being stretched in three levels comes off my own experience of being teacher leader in different positions that I disclosed in the preamble of this inquiry.

Principals as Top Level Educational Leaders

As I discussed and critiqued in the previous section, most of the literature focusing to educational leadership assume and deal principal as the one and only leader in reference to school operation. The different variants of educational leadership except distributed leadership discussed above prioritized principal as the most key person and elaborated the principal leader behaviour as a synonym of educational leadership. However, lately there has been a strong realization from the research findings that the role of a school head has changed substantially from being everything to being a part of school system. Mendick (2003) argues that in the new role in a school organization no single person alone can claim to be knowledgeable and underscores the need for the principal to recognize the potential of each staff member and the need to tap such potential for the improvement in teaching learning in the school. Pinpointing the difficulties to translate the policies in the actual practice, Mumford (2003) elaborates that the practical hindrances in implementing the decentralization policy that has come to the system but failed to actualize in the school governance meaning though there is the realization has the role of principal has changed over years, principals still continue to act as the sole source of knowledge in the school operation. Despite the emergence of new imperatives to

> I included this section of literature review where I consulted the literature that are specific to principal, vice principal and subject teacher as leaders emerged off the need after I started explicating the lived experience of being leaders at different levels. Thus, this is a product of iteration. As the data demanded me to revisit the literature which was earlier generic to educational leadership to more specific, I reviewed different literatures that typically speak about being leaders at different levels. (Reflection, April, 2013)

convert school organization as a platform for shared or distributed leadership practices, the instructional leadership roles of principals is still the dominant one.

Lunenburg (2010) opens his article with a gist for principal as an instructional leader when he mentions, "The principal's primary responsibility is to promote the learning and success of all students" (p. 1). In order to achieve this it is imperative that the principal applies the mode of collaboration, an enthusiasm of providing support and a strict adherence to the evidence based and data informed assessment system. This is to mean that the effective instructional leadership is possible when a principal works in closer proximity with all the stakeholders. Institute for Educational Leadership (2000) gives the entire credit of school success to the school leaders and attributes the scarcity of capable educational leaders ranking among the most sever of the problems for the failure of school improvement initiatives. I argue that without strong leaders it is virtually impossible to combat with the new emerging challenges. In this study I mean to underscore the need to empower the school principals as strong leaders who possess the strong sense of collective professionalism that can safely navigate the school in crisis toward the safe zone.

This discussion acknowledging the role of school principal as the most crucial yet reminding the fact that to achieve the ultimate intent of student success a principal alone is never sufficient is the foundation that builds the need for different approach and process in terms of school leadership practices. This notion of an improved team oriented approach is substantiated by Fullan (2002) when he argues "pricnipal as an instructional leader has been a valuable but, too narrow a solution" (p. 1). For the solution to this shortcoming, Fullan (2002) proposes for principal as a leader in culture of change with a deeper understanding about the culturally embedded practices that can ensure sustanibale leadership practices.

The Wallace Foundation (2013) states that the school principal remains as the central source for leadership influence. This is to mean that despite many diverse arguments, the role of school principal in managing the school effectively is unquestioned.

This discussion on principal as educational leader remains inconclusive and is still going on. However, with the shift in policy measures, educators have started realizing that principal needs to adopt the collaborative and shared approaches rather than self-centric one person supermacy for the effectiveness of school management. As far as the study on principal(s) in Nepali context is concernered, I could find many academic studies about principal leadership styles, principal behaviours, role of principals, and challenges of principals etc., but none of the studies I found took the interpretive perspective and focused what it meant to be school principal or leader at the top.

Vice Principals/Coordinators as Middle Level Leaders

The roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders positioned at different levels are frequently changing as the impact of change is quickly realized in school organizations (Cranston, 2007). There have been many studies in the area of school leadership particularly focusing on the principal leaders but the research typically conducted taking the assistant principals, deputy principals or vice principals is very scanty and the available researches on school leadership overlooked the roles and responsibilities of other leaders including the vice principals and other middle level leaders (Marshall & Greenfield, 1985; Ribbins, 1997; Muijs & Harris, 2002; Gunter, 2005; Weller & Weller, 2002). Nevertheless, with the emergence of distributed leadership and the growing criticism for one person supremacy has paved new foundations for the researchers to explore more on this area. Here I discuss some

prominent studies regarding middle level leaders in the form of vice principal, coordinator or in-charge.

Out of few studies conducted taking assistant principals or middle level educational leaders in school organization Mertz and McNelly (1999) and Cranston (2007) attribute the emergence of studies on middle level leaders not because of any planned and careful practice but fundamentally due to the growing school population and principals' failure to oversee the entire activities alone.

Confirming the focus on principal as school leaders despite the recognition of shared leadership for school success and effectiveness Kwan (2009) mentions it to be paradox not to pay extensive attention to middle level leaders who are the actual recipients of distributed model of leadership. Marshall (1992) traces the reasons for the presence of middle level leaders in the form of assistance principals or vice principals by pointing out two primary reasons. First, "it is frequent entry-level position for administrative careers" and the second, "assistant principals maintain the norms and rules of the school culture" (p. 2). This declaration for the emergence of vice principals seems valid even in our context too where now it has been a common tendency to give space to different middle level leaders like vice principal, coordinator, in-charge and head of the department in organogram of institutional schools in particular.

Glanz (2004) maintains the towering significance of vice-principals when he states assistant principalship as a vital resource for instructional improvement and overall school success but at the same time indicates the paradoxical reality of middle level leaders who are bound to be confined within the limited functions of every day administration rather than practicing instructional side of leadership roles.

Marshall (1992) makes a very realistic interpretation of the designation assistant principal roles when he mentions "assistant principals do what the principals don‘t want to do" (p. 16), it refers to a very pathetic condition of vice principals who are subject to carry out the tasks that the principals normally do not prefer doing. As the adjective ‘assistant’ itself connotes a meaning of ‘one that assists’, ‘the helper’, ‘the aide’ it is basically generalized that the vice principals are not meant to do anything on their own but to work as asked by the principal. Hartzell (1993) also considers it natural to exhibit the gap in being a principal leader and vice principal or middle level leader in reference to organizational theory that automatically places vice principals in the lower strata in the organizational design. Agreeing with Marshall's (1992) etymological interpretation of assistant principals and Hartzelle's (1993) organizational design perspective of assistant principals, Cranston, Tormans, and Reugebrink (2004) observe "assistant’ is a job title that simply implies ‘a subordinate, relational and dependent role to another individual, and may not fully acknowledge the qualifications, expertise and experience held by those in such positions" (p. 230).

Some researchers view and elaborate the position of middle level leaders as a potential position for career growth to the principalship and made some recommendations for the middle level leadership position holders to utilize this opportunity for future shake. Weller and Weller (2002) elaborate the position of middle level leaders like assistant principals to be a position of plenty of opportunities and recommend that the existing middle level leaders used their leadership roles for the future preparation of principalship roles. Pounder and Crow (2005) state that the latest developments in leadership theory in education call for school leaders to pursue the distributive approach by creating collaborative leadership teams where there is no one superior as such and the principal delegates her/his authority to her/his

subordinates and leads the school as a team. In this approach, the serving principal needs to involve assistant principals in other aspects of school operations beyond just oversight of student discipline. Bolman and Deal (2002) also partly agree with this proposition of 'middle level leadership as an opportunity for future' and maintained that although the current existence of being vice principals is of quite tough and unrewarding confined to everyday petty tasks like supervising, managing disciplines, and doing regular fix up jobs. But it ultimately ends up with positive pay off when it becomes the foundation for future preparation of principalship.

Another important facet of literature that discusses the notion and practice of being vice principal is about the job position of vice principals and the level and intensity of motivation attached to it. In a research conducted on 331 vice principals of Hong Kong, Yu-kwong and Walker (2010) conclude that the vice principals who were the aspirants of principalship exhibited a higher level of professional commitment, a better sense of efficacy, and experienced a lower level of stress about the job complexity they performed in comparison to those who were not the aspiring candidates or had not anticipated the possibility of being the principal.

From the above discussion what I can argue is leadership roles of vice principal is quite blurred and they are limited to everyday activities of the school affairs with little or almost nil chance of being positively credited for their tasks. I find vice principalship is one of the least preferred job titles. From the positive side, being a vice principal is the preparation for future principal leadership, an opportunity to learn and know the pitfalls and ditches of school leadership practices firsthand.

Subject Teachers as Bottom Level Leaders

It is not an easy task to define teacher leadership because it is a new concept and is still in the process of being conceptualized. Murphy (2005) elaborates teacher

leadership as a teacher with responsibility, having a sense of vision and working towards it but a principal has a critical role in supporting teacher leadership. Whether a teacher is allowed to be trusted with a responsibility depends on the principal. Similarly, Reil and Becker (2008) identify teacher leadership as a concept emerging from professional development strategy. They argue that the emergence of www stuff enabled ICT informed teachers to make networks and alliances and gave a sense that they belonged to a community of innovators at the leading age of change. They distinguish between teachers with private practice and teachers with leadership orientation. The first types of teachers see their roles limited to classroom activities and the latter view their roles as extending beyond classroom to include participation in the larger community. Teacher leadership behaviour is identified as the roles teachers play in knowledge building, professional networking, collaborating and learning from adaptive practice and ultimately making contribution to teaching profession. This argument clearly specifies that the teacher leaders are those who extend their roles beyond classrooms.

Similar argument is made by Herman and Marlowe (2005) when they remark that teachers need to shift from classroom mindset to community mindset with an intention of service first. Meant for criticizing the teachers for their confinement within the classrooms and their feeling of inferiority, it sounds like an appeal for the teachers to build a community which laid the foundation for professional teacher leadership practices.

The idea of teachers as leaders don't remain confined within the classrooms but exhibit a greater participation is further consolidated by Akert and Martin (2012) when they term teacher leaders as educators who work with fellow collegues for the purpose of improving teaching and learning whether in a formal or informal capacity.

This idea of teachers working in collaboration with larger community for the overall progress of the school and the achievement stanadards of students is widely recognized as the impetus of teacher leadership.

Mulford (2003) provides little twist to teacher leadership as he remarks that leadership is embedded in various organizational contexts within school communities, not centrally vested in a person or in an office. This argument opens the way for every teacher to be a leader on their own. Headteachers then are the leaders of leaders. It is this very notion that every teacher is responsible in leading their students towards the direction they wish and for this they need to get involved into a wider collaboration with the school leadership structure and even need to make allainces with the professional organizations to share the knowledge is the core idea that paves the ground for acknowledging teachers as leaders.

What Murphy (2005) mentions about the complexities of teacher leadership as a devilishly complicated and the phrase itself being frustratingly ambigious is clarified when one relates the teachers role being very sensitive and acknowledges the ground reality that it is a teacher in fact who truly leads the students.

In refernce to the distributed leadership theory which constitutes the foundation of this study, there is a greater significance of teachers who are the true receipent of leadership practice opporutnities in the school administration. Leadership is "a phenomenon 'stretched over multiple leaders' and is a construct embedded in the interaction with leaders, follower and situations" (Spillane, 2006, p. 15). This notion of everyone sharing the leadership roles to a smaller or greater extent makes it possible to consider the teachers as true educational leaders who are placed at the bottom starta of school leadership structure yet have a very responsible role to play.

In the recent literarure about teacher leadership the very idea of classroom teachers having a profound impact on students' learning is highlighted. Grant (2005), Harris and Mujis, (2005), and Handler (2010) all unanimously agree on the significance of teacher leadership for school improvement and attribute leadership as a fluid and emergent rather then as a fixed phenomenon. From the above discussion about teacher as educational leader, what I can understand is that the idea of teacher as leader did not emerge from the political and trade union perspective, rather came from the motif of improving school improvement and students' learning through collaborative efforts and a networked initiation that created the teachers to develop themeselves so that they can improve their teaching learning processes.

Theoretical Linkage

After going through the detailed excavation of the literature in and around the concept of leadership with focus to distributed leadership, leadership at different layers on school organization, I find different theoretical concepts emerging for automatic consideration. Since the matter of leadership is a normative affair and aims at designing a holistic parameter for the educational affairs, it has to do with many theoretical assumptions. In the following lines I briefly relate the theoretical linkages that come in action while exploring the lived meaning of leadership through literature.

Activity Theory

The basic assumption of activity theory as simplified by Printy (2008) is that individuals are engaged in some activity and, through this engagement, certain individuals are able to influence others. A researcher is able to study the activity and those engaged in it to understand how meaning is constructed, learning is undertaken, or leadership influence is exerted. This assumption demands that the everyday activity of the leaders and follower behaviour are the areas to examine to see to it that

the leadership is distributed in a particular situation. Here I find the notion of activity theory being closer with the everyday life world. It paid attention to the very interaction of the actors with the other fellow actors and the situation. Thus, I considered this idea to be theoretically very closer to the idea of distributed leadership.

Activity theory investigates human interaction with others through an activity, which is a basic unit of analysis for understanding human behavior. Activity theorists have argued that human activity is not an isolated entity (Bannon, 1997). Rather it has the structure composed of three basic elements: a subject, an object and a tool. An agent who engages in an activity is called a "subject". A subject can be an individual or a group of people. More than one subject constitutes a community when they share an object. All human activities are driven by a certain purpose or motive, which is called "object". Vygotsky (1981) has emphasized that a human being does not directly react to others, but interacts with others through the use of tools and signs.

In reference to the notion of distribution of leadership practice, the subject, object and tool are the micro elements and their closer examination only helps a researcher to find this phenomenon in depth. I pay careful attention to observe the micro aspects of human interaction in lieu with this activity theory while carrying out the research in the field.

Motivation Theory

Another important theoretical orientation, which I find relevant while discussing lived experience of being leaders at different levels is motivation theory which plays a central role in optimizing an individual performance. Motivation is the driving force behind human behavior. Since the proper distribution of role and responsibilities appeal to the inner self of the recipients of the responsibilities what

Maslow (1943) and McClelland (1965, 1985) propose under the self esteem and need for affiliation would prove very helpful to discuss lived experiences.

New Science Approach

I consider new science approach is a probable theoretical linkage that has the close affinity with the phenomenon of leadership. New science approach accounts the significance of every individual and emphasizes on collectivity and synergy generation. Exploring leadership through emerging discoveries in systems theory, chaos theory, and quantum mechanics, Wheatley (2006) argues that traditional leadership models are ineffective in complex and dynamic social systems of the 21st century. To Wheatley, the clockwork universe presented by Newtonian physics is an adequate model in a static world that thrives on predictability. The hierarchical structures of modern organizations and contemporary models of leadership tend to reflect a mechanical Newtonian perspective.

Wheatley (2006) further argues that the turbulence of global society and culture is forcing organizations to realize that the models and habits developed for a stable environment may not work in a dynamic world. Imposing static and mechanical processes on an organization in a turbulent environment can submerge the organization until it implodes under pressure. To survive in a turbulent environment, the complexity perspective holds that organizations must continuously change and adapt with their environments. Imposing a model on an organization stifles change. Reality exists only in the context, and reality changes with the context. One expert interpretation or best practice does not apply in all situations. This means that organizations and their members must continuously adapt with or "co-evolve" (p. 163) by interacting with the environment. Where the Newtonian perspective attempts to understand the system by isolating its parts, the new science takes a holistic

perspective that attempts to understand the system by seeing the relationships within the networks. Therefore, I consider new science approach as a potential theoretical lens to explore the lived experience of being leaders at different levels.

Capitalistic Theory

Another theoretical perspective that I consider to be pragmatic in discussing the lived experience of being educational leaders at different levels is capitalistic theory. As this study revolves around the institutions and the people who came into existence as the result of free market policy that enabled the educational institution grow as enterprises, their experience was obviously influenced by the principles of capitalism. Scott (2006) defines capitalism as,

> …an economic system where private actors are allowed to own and control the use of property in accord with their own interests, and where the invisible hand of the pricing mechanism coordinates supply and demand in markets in a way that is automatically in the best interests of society. (p. 1)

Scott (2011) further argues indicating the complexities associated with capitalism as "an indirect system of governance for economic relationships" (p. 27). As an indirect system of governance capitalism allows economic actors to exercise power to develop and produce new products as well as trade existing products, but their actions are subject to a set of laws and regulations provided by a political authority, and typically a state. Nepali institutional schools do fall under this very definition where education has been commoditized and traded in accordance to the state law.

I aim to make this study thick and interweaved with these different theoretical lenses that support in adding to the depth of this project from the academic

perspectives. These theoretical links, apart from policy linkage that I discuss in the next section, would add to the quality dimension of this entire endeavor.

Policy Linkage

Apart from the theoretical linkage that help to enrich the conceptual foreground of the existence of distributed leadership, this research also evaluated the policy aspect of Nepalese educational leadership practices as envisaged in the policy documents with a critical review of the ongoing practices on school leadership. For this purpose this research indicated the policy provision as manifested in the Education Act and School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) in particular.

In a report commissioned by IIEP (International Institute for Educational Planning) Kandasamy and Balton (2004) evaluate that from the perspective of decentralization of governance, the schools of Nepal are better positioned than other schools of Asia with its innovative practice of School Management Committee however from the school organization structure Nepal is the only country among Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Malaysia, Philippines and Korea where there is only the head teacher in the leadership role. They further criticize the absence of policy regarding the criteria for selecting the head teachers in the schools of Nepal. It means there are no specific criteria in the educational policy regarding the recruitment policy of head teachers in our context. In the case of institutional schools, there is no policy at all to govern and regulate the head teachers.

Bajracharya, Thapa, and Tamrakar (2004) mention the roles and responsibilities of school head head teachers limited to everyday adminsitration of the school and indicate that in Nepali educational administration there is the acute lack of distribution of leadership roles and there are many gaps in policy documents about the selection, development and preparation of head teachers in Nepali context. It means

being educational leadership in Nepali context is quite confusing in the absence of clear policies and roles specified to them. Moreover, they indicate it that even if there are specific roles for public (community schools) there is no clear policy about the governance system of institutional (private) schools in the country.

Ministry of Education (1971) in its first education act for Nepal simply articulates headmaster as the one and only leader for school organizations and in its successive amendment over years too there have been no change in this proposition. It again justifies my claim of Nepali policy documents failing to recognize other positions than head teachers. It signifies the lack of attention our policy is paying towards the need of distributed leadership practice even in terms of leadership plus aspect. The act is mute about the institutional schools and the provision of leadership structure there.

Ministry of Education (2002) through Eduation Rules in its Chapter 17 provisons the conditions about the appointment, functions, duties and powers of headmasters. However, this provision is limited for the headmasters of community schools. It means yet the principles of institituional schools of the country are not recognized in the policy document of Government of Nepal. Here too there is no provision of other positions than headmaster as the educational leader for a school organization.

Ministry of Education (2009) in its current policy document identifies the educational leader as head teacher and provisions for a separate head teacher for a full fledged school. For the first time it has articulted the word separate indicating there would be other leadership postions probably the coordinators to oversee the everyday activity. However, it is not clear yet. Still SSRP (2009-2015) is also mute about the leadership structure for instituional schools.

The point that is clear from the review of different existing policy documents about the educational leadership provision which is not only blur but quite confusing as well. Though policy has come, it has failed to acknowledge the role of educational leaders in executing the policy to the desired end. I argue that it is the very problem in our educational administration.

The new policy measures inacted globally and locally demanded for a new outlook in terms of leadership practices so as to successfully execute such policies. The examples come from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in the US and National College of School Leadership (NCSL) in the UK. These new policies have left a strong influence in the eudcation management of entire globe and to lead such initiatives, there requires a considerable change in the traditional instructional leadership practice as well. This issue is quite pertinent in our context. At a time we have designed School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) but this policy document is mute about the desired leadership model. This study attempted to provide some poilicy implications in reference to leadership model for the successful execution of SSRP.

The Gap

In an attempt to find what has been studied in the area of being educational leaders in reference to distributed leadership practices, many concepts, ideas and theories were found to be developed. The first most notable aspect was that most of the literature attempted to generalize the idea and focused more on what aspect. Like in classical non-fiction manner, the literature attempted to pinpoint the origin, the development and content aspects of leadership and attempted to provide new models, new constructs and kept on adding the variables in the list. The second striking aspect of most of the literature in the area of leadership, both theoretical and empirical, was

found to be influenced by the positivist ideology. The existence of interpretive literature attempting to unearth the lived reality of being teachers and leaders at different levels was limited to the academic research only. An acute dearth was observed in the Nepali academia about the literature that dealt with the lived experience of being leaders. So, this research would be a unique one of its type and hopefully would open the avenues for future research.

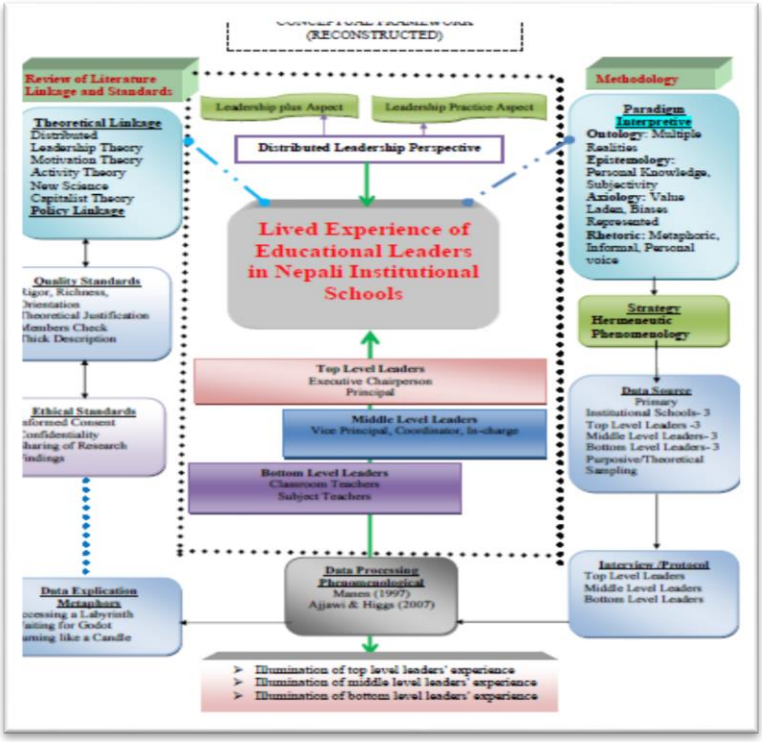
Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is the network or the plane of interlinked concepts that provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon understudy and possess ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that underpin the study (Jabareen, 2009). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), "A conceptual framework explains either graphically or in narrative the main things to be studied; the key factors, constructs or variables and the presumed relationships among them" (p. 18). A conceptual framework is an articulation about the entire research project and a flexible plan that can be revisited during the iterative process. It basically helps us to understand the phenomenon rather than to predict them.

This study attempts to explicate the contextually embedded meaning of being leaders at different levels in Nepali institutional schools and is informed by the interpretive paradigm of knowledge making. The leaders of institutional schools are categorized into three layers and hermeneutic phenomenology guides the entire process of researching. This study has been designed as manifested in the conceptual framework sketched below. The conceptual framework sketched below is a reconstructed frame which depicts the blueprint of this study in graphic form by mentioning the key components of this study. I mean it to indicate the blend of theory I use and the method I employed are meant for enriching the understanding about

being leaders in Nepali institutional schools. The strategies used in this inquiry all focus on illuminating the phenomenon of being leaders in contextually embedded situations of the schools understudy. A life size frame has been annexed at the end.

Figure1 1 Conceptual Framework



Exhibition 1 displays the key aspects of this entire research process. As displayed in the exhibit, the very issue of research is the lived experience of being educational leaders in Nepali institutional schools and to unearth this experience this study primarily used the distributed leadership perspective. From distributed leadership perspective also, it focused on leadership plus and leadership practice action. The methodology employed for this research was hermeneutic phenomenology and the quality and ethical standards were to be maintained in consonance with phenomenological research. The ultimate intention of this research is to find answers of three research questions that seek the lived experience of being leaders at different levels of school organizations.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I first defined the concept of leadership, provided the historical development of the idea and located the position of educational leadership in leadership literature. After briefly introducing the key variants of educational leadership, here I attempted to explore the notion of distributed leadership as an educational leadership variety, discussed the leadership behaviour at different levels and extracted the theoretical framework for investigating this phenomenon. I strived to go for a reflective review of literature rather than just retelling what others said. I accommodated the emergent ideas right in this chapter. From the review of this chapter what I understood further was the very beauty about the phenomenon of educational leadership and its pluralistic ontology. I used three attached texts to reflect my understanding for doing the review of literature in the particular area. As a process of iteration, this review of literature included the reviews that I did in the very early part of my study and the way it was presented in this section was as per the emergent need.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I highlight the methods I used to explore the lived experience of being leaders at different levels in Nepali institutional schools with a distributed leadership perspective. In an attempt to justify my endeavor of being a qualitative researcher, I discuss phenomenology as an interpretive paradigm and state its ontology, epistemology, axiology and rhetoric and declare my positionality in each of these metaphysical entities. I present my logic regarding why and how phenomenology is one of the most appropriate ways for researching the lived experience of educational leaders. Then I discuss the very way I explored the lived experience of being leaders at different levels. Beginning from how I selected the field, decided the participants, maintained prolonged relationship with my participants and began the process of generating the data I discuss all the methodological steps and stages that I adapted while conducting this study. I state the model of data analysis and clarify hermeneutic and phenomenological strategies I used to explore the experience of being leaders at different levels in Nepali institutional schools. Towards the end of this chapter I claim the quality standards I have maintained throughout the research process with an elaboration of how this study maintained the quality imperatives deemed appropriate to interpretive phenomenology in particular was observed. Towards the very end of this chapter, I specify and elaborate the ethical considerations I paid attention to while researching the phenomenon of being educational leader in Nepali institutional schools.

Phenomenology as an Interpretive Paradigm/Inquiry

I chose to apply several philosophical perspectives of phenomenology to my methodology because they fit strongly with my intention to inquire into the lived experience of the phenomenon of being leaders at different levels in Nepali institutional schools. I deemed phenomenological approach appropriate, as the research question sought to explore what the experiences of a teacher leader were like, and how teacher leaders constructed meaning of their being teacher leaders at different levels. To understand the essence of being educational leaders it was useful to know their experience of being leaders at different levels. The exploration of lived experiences required the use of a research paradigm which would be able to obtain data that was rich in contextual information and deep in understanding. Therefore, this study used the interpretive paradigm. Taylor, Taylor, and Luitel (2012) simplify the term paradigm as the framework for scholarly inquiry and clarifying the very basics of interpretive paradigm as;

> This paradigm is concerned primarily with generating context-based understanding of people's thoughts, beliefs, values and associated social actions. Its social constructivist epistemology foregrounds the researcher's unfolding subjectivity in shaping the process of the inquiry; especially the act of interpretation of the other's meaning perspective. (p. 375)

I found this quote clarifying the basics of interpretive paradigm as a set of assumptions that is supportive in understanding the feelings, experiences and social relationships of the research participants in the context they meant it and friendly for the researcher to open up his/her subjectivity in the process of inquiry. Likewise, I found Subedi (1993) praising the notion of interpretive stance to be useful in understanding the meanings of human behavior. As my study too aimed at giving

more prominence to human experience, this interpretive stance of phenomenology, I found appropriate for my inquiry. Interpretive paradigm would be useful to me as a researcher because of my interest to explore the meaning of being educational leaders as experienced by the participants in their own contexts and it gave me space to reflect my own experience (subjectivity) during the process of meaning making.

Phenomenology as a research method and philosophy exhibits a clear stance with interpretive paradigm because the aim of phenomenological inquiry is to understand the subjective nature of 'lived experience' from the perspective of those who experience it, by exploring the subjective meanings and explanations that individuals attribute to their experiences (Cope, 2003). Thus phenomenology provided ample groundwork for researching the complex and contextual issue like being educational leaders which as discussed in Chapter II of this study is a phenomenon having a pluralist ontology and requires interpretation to illuminate the complexity of experiencing it. A phenomenological inquiry is grounded in different metaphysical assumptions that determine its paradigm, hallmarks and ethical considerations.

Each researcher has his or her own philosophical assumptions that ultimately determine the route they adapt for their research endeavors. As a phenomenological researcher, the metaphysical stance I possess is compatible with interpretive paradigm of researching. Here I discuss four major components (ontology, epistemology, axiology and rhetoric) that clarify my position as a researcher.

In reference to the metaphysical ground of a researcher, Greenbank (2003) argues that "When researchers are deciding what research methods to adopt they will inevitably be influenced by their underlying ontological and epistemological position. This, in turn, will be influenced by their values" (p. 92).

Similarly, this researcher is also influenced by his ontological and epistemological stance in deciding the research design of this thesis in terms of methodology and methods. Here follows a brief account of that with a brief description of the concept followed by the clarification about my positionality in this connection.

Ontology

Ontology is concerned with reality. It is the science of study of being. The reality can be external to individuals or produced by individual consciousness (Cohen et al., 2000). There are two extremes of reality: reality as the individual's own making and external reality lend themselves to subjective/interpretive and objective/positivist approaches to research respectively. As Ribbins and Gunter (2002) note, in subjective/interpretive paradigm, reality and the truth are the products of individual perception and there are multiple realities shared by a group of people. In this domain reality is normally researched through qualitative methods. And I am strongly align with this notion of reality and discard the existence of a single truth but believe that truth is something created or constructed differently by different individuals at different contexts. In other words, I subscribe to the view that reality and truth are the products of individual perception. This ontological position, I claim it to be not only compatible but also an urgent for doing a phenomenological inquiry.

Epistemology

Another important concern within the metaphysics is termed as epistemology which is concerned with 'how we know what we know'. It refers knowledge and the notion that the research work is supposed to make contribution to knowledge itself. Epistemology is the process through which the researcher makes the knowledge claim. To clarify the concept of epistemology, Hartley (2006) defines it as "the

philosophical study of the nature, limits, grounds and production of knowledge…it is concerned with what distinguishes different kinds of knowledge claims – what are the criteria that allow distinctions to be made and how what exists can be known" (p. 2).

Hartley (2006) further notes that like ontology, epistemology has two extremes. On one hand, there is the argument that knowledge is based on experience and insight. On the other hand the opposite argument is that knowledge is hard, real and capable of being transmitted in a tangible form. In the first domain knowledge is normally researched using qualitative methods. In the second form knowledge is normally researched using quantitative methods. This study adopted the first argument on epistemological stance because it is thought that knowledge about being educational leaders can better be obtained through the experiences and insights of heads, middle leaders and teachers. I bear the epistemological stance that knowledge is subjective and can be constructed through experience and insight.

Axiology

Etymologically, axiology refers to the study of values, its nature, types and the criteria governing value judgment. Ontology and epistemology deal with truth however axiology is about values and ethics (Mingers, 2003). Axiology is also called value theory, and includes the disciplines of ethics, pragmatics and aesthetics. Values provide the standard for the evaluation of epistemological and ontological claims. In reference to research literature, axiology also refers to the involvement of the researcher's values and opinion in the process of knowledge generation.

My stance on this affair of metaphysics aligns positively with the non-positivists who favor the inclusion of researcher's values in the work through reflexivity and many other practices. Here I belong to the applied knowledge school

because first I believe knowledge is actually information in action and therefore is already being applied to a situation.

Rhetoric

Rhetoric refers to the writing or reporting style of the research work. According to Firestone (1987) rhetoric is the art of speaking and writing effectively. It refers generally to how language is employed. Here too exist two contrasting attitudes among the quantitative and qualitative researchers. The positivists think that the language of reporting should be just and just objective, no presence of the researcher. On the other axis, the constructivists enjoy reporting in metaphorical pattern and think that the complexities cannot be all the time reported in third person narrative.

I stand in the realm of constructivist researchers and I do favor the use of personal, informal and metaphoric narration of my research finding that is linguistically also rich in description and lures the readers to go through the text.

Phenomenology as a Philosophical Inquiry

McPahil (1995) argues that phenomenology as a philosophical movement differs drastically as compared to logical positivist method of researching from the perspective it possess a very different outlook to the study of human beings and their culture. The typicality with phenomenology is that it privileges the nature of the meanings that people construct in their lives and that guide their actions.

Creswell (2009) observed that phenomenology has a strong philosophical constituent to it (p. 58). Both (Creswell, 2009) and van Manen (1997) emphasized the importance of understanding the philosophical assumptions of a phenomenological study before boarding on it. Creswell (2009) summarized the philosophical assumptions of a phenomenological study: (a) the focus of the study is on the lived experiences of the participants; (b) the experiences of the participants are conscious

experiences; and (c) the essence of these experiences is the focus of the research, and the experiences are described and interpreted rather than explained or analyzed. In my study this meant focusing on the lived experience of educational leaders of different layers. This inspiration of mining the experience of different level came off my own journey as a teacher leader where I worked in different positions at different times. Using a phenomenological research design in my research allowed me to better describe the experiences of the study participants.

Another important construct that guided me to adopt phenomenology as a method is its attachment with human science in particular and its contribution in pedagogic excellence as enlisted by van Manen (1984) where he categorically mentioned four key concerns of any phenomenological research: (a) turning to the phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world; (b) investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it; (c) reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon; and (d) desribing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting (pp. 2-3). As a teacher with experiencing different levels and being a teacher myself for around two decades I do have a natural interest in the phenomenon I investigate and my interest in not to produce a theory of being leaders at different levels but is to unearth the lived experience as experienced by my participants in their contextual settings. For this purpose I played with the data and generated themes that could reflect the being of my participants as they experiened it not as I expected them to experience and used a metaphorical language to describe the phenomenon.

Based on aforementioned metaphysical orientation, the research strategy selected for the purpose of exploring the lived experience of leaders at different levels will be non-other than phenomenology. Phenomenology as a research strategy is a

very rich model and it has been very often used in qualitative research practices. Finaly (2009) states that "the central concern of phenomenologist is to return to embodied, experiential meanings aiming for a fresh, complex and rich description of a phenomenon" (p. 6).

As a method of qualitative research, phenomenological methods have been modified time and again. From Edmund Husserl (1964) to Heidegger (1962) to Linda Finlay (2009) and Max van Manen (1990, 1991, 2007), to (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007), there are different varieties of this method in practice. The special school or branch of phenomenology proposed for this study will be hermeneutic phenomenology conceptualized by Heidegger and later elaborated by Gadamar and Ricoeur in particular. The rational for taking this model is its inherent strength of excavating the underlying meanings with the psychological approaches.

Phenomenology in the East

Phenomenology as the philosophical inquiry focusing on the understanding ontological issue is observable even in the literatures of eastern origin. Though the basics for the difference in eastern and western mode of thinking lies in the primacy of 'being' in the west and primacy of 'ethics' in the east, the idea about the existence of different forms of truth is quite similar in the eastern tradition as well. Here I briefly discuss the conceptual foundations associated with phenomenology by referencing that with Hinduism and Buddhism.

Hinduism considers Brahman meaning the infinite truth and Atman meaning the individual one. von Eckartsberg and Valle (1981) in their famous writing 'Hiedeggerian Thinking and the Eastern Mind' make a very convincing comparison of phenomenology with the eastern notion of the highest form of consciousness where an individual remains unattached to any preoccupations and sets oneself free from all

desires called 'liberation', Samadhi or Mokshya. This notion of Mokshya is the very impetus of Eastern philosophies like Sankhya Darshana that inspires for the liberation (Mokshya) by the eradication of three miseries (Adhyatmika, Adhibhoutika, and Adhidaivika) caused due to the physical, environmental and the acts of God, Sankhya believes that Tatva Jnana (knowledge of the elements) is the only way to get rid of these three Dukhas (miseries) and to get Moksha (salvation). However, as argued by I, Kumar and Vyas (2013) Sankhya Darshan rests in dualistic principles of Prakriti (unmanifest) and Purusha (primordial cosmic soul).

In the Buddhist scriptures there is the mentioning of Parmartha Satya meaning the real and Samvriti Satya meaning the individual or the practiced truth. Barendrest (1996) in his article 'Buddhist Phenomenology' mentions that Buddhism is for first lessening and in the end the elimination of human sufferings and this goal is to be reached by the path of experiential phenomenology that refers to the investigation of our consciousness as it is presented to us by means of self observation. In Buddhism it is the meditation that paves this path for Samyak (right) living.

According to Wilberg (2006), it is Advaita Vedanta in the East that marks a pause like Heidegger in the west that ultimately focuses on the 'principle of awareness' as the single route to all forms of reality. As clarified by Wilberg (2006) 'the awareness principle' is the sole possible theory of everything. It roots to the Non-dual or Advaita schools of Hindu philosophy which sets primacy of Chit (Awareness) over Sat (Being).

From this discussion on the philosophical nature of phenomenology in the East I understood that phenomenology is a universal philosophy, however, the Eastern notion of phenomenology is comparatively less explored. Now I discuss about the

qualitative nature of phenomenology terming it to be a naturalistic inquiry in the next section.

Phenomenological as a Naturalistic Inquiry

As a research method phenomenology adheres with the principles of naturalistic inquiry that is often termed as qualitative study. Qualitative research broadly defined means "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss & Cobrin, 1990, p. 17). Cronbach (1975) claims that statistical research is not able to take full account of the many interaction effects that take place in social settings and to illustrate his points gives examples of several empirical laws that do not hold true in actual setting (p. 124). Qualitative research, according to Denzin and Linclon (2000), is interpretative and naturalistic, which means that those who engage in this type of research:

- Study things in their natural settings (e.g. schools), attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of their meanings people bring to then; and
- Stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.

As this research aimed at exploring the lived experience of different levels of leaders in reference to their practice of distributing the leadership roles and attempted to see the pattern of distribution, the choice of naturalistic method of inquiry was the appropriate one. As the matter of experiencing the being of leaders was determined by the leadership roles and the decision making processes and varied from place to place, I adopted the subjective method of inquiry to penetrate the issue in depth that helped illuminate the lived experiences of being leaders at different levels.

This discussion about the phenomenological research paradigm, the philosophical aspects and methodological briefs about phenomenology as an interpretive way of researching which fits to my problem narrative, my research question and the orientation I have developed for my inquiry justify the selection of my issue and the method I have taken for this study. Now on I discuss different procedural aspects of my inquiry like how and why I selected the field, the participants, how I generated data, how I processed my data, how I planned to explicate my data and make meaning out of it.

Phenomenology as a Metaphoric Inquiry

I understood phenomenology as a metaphoric inquiry. It is through the analogy the interpretation in phenomenology becomes universal. Manen (1997) argues that "by way of metaphor language can take us beyond the content' toward the original region where language speaks through silence" (p. 49). He further claims that it is the metaphoric description that makes the textual interpretation hermeneutic. Manen (1997) warns the phenomenological researcher that mere words cannot reveal the true nature of experience. Living the phenomenon deeply, through experience, reaches far beyond the scope of language. In such a situation it is the metaphor that can help in un-layering the process something like peeling an onion. Because of this orientation of phenomenology, I argue as it as a metaphorical inquiry. And for this study about being educational leader(s) I use three different metaphors to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at different leaders. The metaphors I used for interpreting the lived experience did not come from method; rather they came from the data itself.

I understood the essence of being leader at the top to be an enigmatic experience with more confusions than clarities, and therefore conceptualized the

metaphor 'accessing a labyrinth' to explicate what it meant to be top level leaders. Likewise, the participants representing the middle level expressed their absurdities, meaninglessness and nothingness of being in neither at the top nor at the bottom, and therefore, I used 'waiting for Godot' as a metaphor to explicate their lived experiences. Similarly, the participants of bottom level (teachers) expressed their experience in a pathetic tone meaning their being was more sacrificing than earning one, I conceptualized the metaphor 'burning like a candle' to explicate their lived experience of being positioned at the bottom level.

I used other metaphors that emerged during the data analysis in an attempt to portray the lived experience of being educational leaders at different levels. Internalizing the notion of phenomenology as a metaphoric inquiry, I even brought instances from classical English literary texts if and when the experience I found having resemblance with typical characters and their being. For this I used the characters and quotes of William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) and Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) in different occasions.

Study Site Selection

The study site of this study was in Kathmandu Valley. I selected three institutional schools as the study site. The reason to select the schools from Kathmandu Valley had two purposes. The first was my convenience to make frequent visits to the field and the selection of study site from Kathmandu provided me that opportunity to make frequent visits to the field. The second reason for purposively selecting the schools from Kathmandu district alone was due to access I had on these schools. I self selected three institutional schools of Kathmandu where I was sure to get the unconditional access. I have masked the name of the schools and their locations for the ethical reasons and assigned the generic names School I, School II

and School III to denote each of these three schools. All the schools I selected were higher secondary schools with population ranging from a minimum of 300 to 500 students. I prepared a different form to create the profile of the schools under study. The form designed to collect the information about the school has is available in Annex VI.

Participants

I selected the research participants representing the teachers and leaders of top, middle and lower level. For the purpose of this study, leadership levels I categorized my participants into three levels naming, top level, middle level and bottom level. I interviewed a total of three teacher leaders from each level counting the total interview to be nine. For each school selected for the study whoever was one at the top level leadership automatically qualified as the participant as top level leader. Out of three top level leaders, two were school principals and one was the executive chairperson. The executive chairperson represented the top level leader as the school did not have the official position of principal.

I had a little choice to select the middle level leaders as each school had the presence of more than one middle level leader with different designations like vice principal, coordinator and in-charge. The three middle level leaders of this study comprised of two vice principals and a coordinator.

The subject or classroom teachers constituted the leaders on bottom level for the purpose of this study I selected as advised by the top level leaders with an assumption that they were the most information rich cases. Here I actually applied the snowball sampling method.

Out of nine participants, eight were male participants and just one participant representing the teacher leader or bottom level leader is a female. I found all the nine

participants of the study very cooperative and I had an uninterrupted access with all these in the field and even could contact them through email and telephone. The data explication chapters begin with a small profile narrative of each participant which they filled along with the consent forms. They were quite happy to participate in the study and expected that they got the final report.

Participants Selection

I used purposeful sampling to select study participants. According to Merriam (1998) purposeful sampling is an appropriate sampling strategy in qualitative research, and is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (p. 61). To ensure the purposeful sampling a prior permission was received. First, the potential schools were identified where the researcher could get the unconditional access. As the study required to be immersed with the participants a prolonged time for interview, and required support from the school establishment, going for the purposive sampling was the right option. Furthermore, qualitative samples as noted by Miles and Huberman (1994) tend to be purposive rather than random partly because with small numbers of cases, random sampling can be biased.

Another reason for opting for a small sample is the philosophical positioning of phenomenology as a method that prefers richness and depth over number and breadth. According to Hycner (1999), "the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa) including even the type of participants" (p. 156). With a small sample only it was possible for the researcher to get engaged with the participants. Likewise, Englander (2012) argues that it is irrelevant to ask 'how many?' in qualitative research like phenomenology but the question to be asked is whether the participant has the experience of the phenomenon under study or not. The phenomenological method in

human science recommends that one uses at least three participants, obviously not because that the number three corresponds with a statistical analysis but because one or two subjects would be too difficult for the researcher to handle in terms of their own imagination (Giorgi, 2009). As my participants represent three different levels, a total of nine participants, three from each level, is justified for this study.

Data Collection

In phenomenological studies, data collection usually included conducting in-depth interviews with participants (Creswell, 2009). Manen(1984) enlisted a series of procedure of conducting phenomenological research where he mentioned the need for phenomenological research to contribute to the pedagogical improvements. I carried out this study employing three different data generation tools that were compatible with the phenomenological research tradition as described as below.

Interview

I interviewed all nine research participants. In addition, I contacted them through e-mail and telephone contacts if and when I had any confusion about the information they provided. After the transcription of the data I visited them again to confirm their say in the issue and all the participants confirmed to what they said during the interview. I conducted the interviews for this research at a location of the participant‘s choice and I recorded all the interview sessions in audio and video. All the interviews actually happened at the participants’ schools. Moustakas (1994) advised, the interviewer is responsible for creating a climate in which the research participant will feel comfortable and will respond honestly and comprehensively (p. 114). Regardless of the location, I observed a great care to ensure that participants feel safe and comfortable in their surroundings. It was a one-o-one interview with each participant and lasted for a minimum of 45 minutes to a maximum of 75 minutes. All

the interviews were taken during December 2011 to August 2012 with prior consent and appointment with the participants. Participants shared their experiences as teacher leaders.

I designed semi-structured interview schedules and piloted beforehand with mock participants before conducting the actual interview sessions with research participants. There were different interview schedules for the top, middle and lower level teacher leaders. All the interview questions attempted to unearth the lived experience of being leaders at different levels and every question was considered as a guiding question and interview sessions were very open and discussion oriented. One participant could not appear for interview session and he provided with the information by filling the form that was designed especially for him. The interview schedule for each level of participants has been annexed with in ANNEX 3.

Observation

At the same time, to explore the actual distribution practices of the leadership tasks, I observed at least one decision making meeting session from each school. The observation was a non-participant observation and a prior consent was taken for the observation. I developed an observation per-forma to make points for such observation setting. I could not record the observation session in audio and video due to ethical reasons. I conducted all these observation sessions during August to September 2012 after the interview process was all over. The observation per-forma applied for this research has been annexed with in Annex V.

Protocol Writing

Another very useful tool to gather the lived experience of the participants is the protocol writing. Protocol writing is the generating of original texts from which the researcher can work (van Manen, 1997, p. 63). The text is a direct account of a

personal experience as the writer lived through it. Each participant was provided with a protocol sheet during the time of interview. The protocol writing prompt sheet constituted a free open ended question where the participant was asked to narrate his or her experience of being leader in the school from within, like a spontaneous flow with focus to particular event(s). I collected the written protocol was collected from the participants at the time when I visited the school after transcribing the interviews for their verification. So, each participant received a time of around a month to write the protocols. The original texts that came allowed me to further understand the lived experience of being teacher leaders in different contexts. The protocol sheet, I gave to the participants to express their experience of being teacher leaders has been annexed with in Annex IV.

To sum up I followed the data generation procedure observing the phenomenological tradition and used the tools like semi-structured interviews, observation, and protocols.

Data Transcription, Verification, and Recording

I created separate files to record the interview, protocol and observation data. First I created three folders dedicating one for each school. I transcribed the interview data using Microsoft Word listening to it from my Sony Audio recorder. It was a very monotonous time consuming task and I was quite shocked to see that the responses from the participants was meaningful but the statements they articulated were not grammatically accurate. The responses came in broken statements and I was afraid about their quality for representation later on during the process of reporting my research. I typed the protocols given by the participants. The protocols were relatively more accurate in terms of grammatical accuracy.

After I transcribed all the data, I got them printed and started making appointments with the research participants for the verification of interview responses in particular. As the participants themselves had written the protocols, I did not think it necessary to verify the protocol. However, I even printed the protocols and visited the schools and verified the data with the participants. No participant rejected or disowned what was there in the transcription. They read it and made very minor remarks (in the grammatical part that was erroneous) but they made no substantive change in their interview transcription. They read their protocol and simply answered that it was their own wording. I felt I moved one step ahead with my endeavor.

I created back up files and stored that in different three devices (laptop, desktop and mass storage hard disk) to ensure their safety. I even stored a copy of transcribed and typed data in the cloud computing device and even mailed it to myself.

Data Processing and Explication

I used the data processing method reflecting the features of the works of and van Manen (1990, 1997) and Ajjawi and Higgs (2007) in particular. Data analysis of phenomenology is primarily an exercise in reflective writing (van Manen, 1997). The textual activity is the descriptive study of lived experience (phenomena) in the attempt to enrich lived experience by mining its meaning (van Manen, 1997, p. 38). However, I found the Ajjawi and Higgs model to be very practical and systemic as it provided a very clear articulation about conducting a hermeneutic phenomenological data analysis.

Table 11

Data Analysis Method (Adopted from Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007)

Stages	Tasks Completed
1. Immersion	Organizing the data set into texts Iterative reading of the texts Preliminary reading of the text to facilitate coding
2. Understanding	Identifying first order (participant) constructs Coding of data
3. Abstraction	Identifying second order (researcher) constructs Grouping second order constructs into sub-themes
4. Synthesis and theme development	Grouping sub-themes into themes Further elaboration of themes Comparing themes across sub-discipline groups
5. Illumination and illustration of phenomena	Linking the literature to the themes identified above Reconstructing interpretations
6. Integration and critique	Critique of the themes by the researchers and externally Reporting final interpretation of the research findings

Table 1 exhibits the very detail about how the data was treated from the very beginning till the end. I do not mean to say that I stuck to this model mechanically, however I reflected to it now and again and it helped me to find a systemic way of analyzing and interpreting the data I had. This model of data analysis though looked a bit structural was very helpful to me at a time I was struggling with finding a systemic way of dealing with my data. At the same time I never deviated from the van Manen model of phenomenological researching (discussed in phenomenology as a philosophical research) and I found these two models complementing each other.

Blending Method and Theory: Illuminating the Phenomenon

The very question to be contested at this juncture is the interconnection among the phenomenon of educational leadership, the hermeneutic procedure of meaning making as proposed by van Manen (1997) and Ajjawi and Higgs (2007) and my desire to illuminate the lived experience of educational leaders in Nepali institutional schools using distributed leadership as the main window and other emergent worldviews like activity theory, motivation theory, new science approach and, capitalistic theory. I realized that the inquiry on pluralist notion like educational leadership in a fluid context like ours where the influence of western practices are very rapid and rampant needed a method that grounds on micro perspective. Considering the philosophical underpinning of interpretive phenomenology and my prolonged engagement and firsthand experience of the phenomenon of educational leadership, the method I selected gave me the vantage point through which I could illumine what others felt using my own reflection. The historicity of this inquiry lies on the current (first quarter of 21st century) time frame and I reflect the popular quote of Anais Nin (1903-1977) who remarked;

'We see the world as 'we' are, not as 'it' is; because it is the 'I' behind the 'eye' that does the seeing.'

The themes that emerged off my prolonged engagement with the data reflect the world I saw, the life-world experience of my participants of what they experienced. It is thus the essence of the phenomenon this inquiry would draw embedded in the social context and the theories I use as the widow to peep how they experience and in an attempt to better portray the experience being influenced by the hermeneutic phenomenology I use the metaphors which act as the trope of my

discussion. These metaphors also serve the purpose of semiotic significance to make this inquiry comprehensible g/locally.

Themes Development

The themes I discuss in the forthcoming chapter emerged from my multi-stage data analysis process. I term this process of theme development to be one of the most critical and sensitive steps of researching lived experience of being educational leaders with distributed leadership perspective. I dialogued with the text to sense the hidden meaning inherent in the large volume of texts I had. Thus I adopted the explicit (easily revealed) and implicit (hidden) model (van Manen, 1997) to decide the themes that emerged off the combination of many subthemes together. At the same time, I carefully went through the process of synthesis (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007) to incorporate multiple subthemes to make a coherent theme that better captured the experience of being leaders at different levels.

Phenomenological Strategies

The fundamental aim of phenomenological data analysis is to transform lived experience as experienced by the participants into a textual expression of its essence (van Manen,1997). Text acts as both data and product in phenomenological research and it is this very reason that language plays a key role in meaning making. As phenomenology has the dual purpose of being a philosophy and a research method, it is imperative that the resercher employes a careful attention and orientation during the process of data analysis and meaning making. This further makes the entire research process an iterative one where there requires frequent visits and revisits to the research questions, literature and the themes. In this study I maintained the phenomenological strategies right from the beginning with the elaboration of intentionality and the positionality of the researcher,and the research questions have

been designed reflecting typical to phenomenological investigation. I paid a careful attention to interpret the data and make meaning out of it. The intent is not to complexize the themes but to explicate it straight forward taking the evidence from the texual narratives that comes off the research participants themselves, yet has sufficient space for the inclusion of contextual limitations and researcher's own reflexivity. The blending of van Manen (1987, 1990, 1997) and Ajjawi and Higgs (2007) models of data analyis helped me to observe the phenomenologial strategies through out.

Hermeneutic Strategy

According to Langdridge (2007), the hermeneutic turn of phenomenology resulted of the opinions that our experiences can be best understood through stories we tell of that experience. To understand the life world we need to explore the stories people tell of their experiences, often with the help of some specific hermeneutic or method of interpretation. The hermeneutic circle is a metaphor for understanding and interpretation which is viewed as moment between parts and whole each giving meaning to other (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). It allows for the understanding to develop from the dialogic engagement between the data and the researcher. In this study I strongly applied this hermeneutic tradition of meaning making by a very closer interplay with the data, considering both the parts and whole and making meaning with due consideration to the contextual reality and finally defining that as an integrative process. One interview question to each participant was specially designed to let them narrate the event of happiness and distress as an educational leader which resulted into many short narratives of their experiences. Reading the data, reflective writing of the data and interpretation happened in iteration to ensure the hermeneutic strategy for this research. The reflexivity of the researcher provided an ample

opportunity to practice the intent of hermeneutic because the positionality of the researcher was quite suitable for this concept. Through the iteration, the treatment with the data from multiple perspectives, the use of perspectival writing, and the insertion of my reflections, I claim to maintain the hermeneutic strategies for this research.

Quality Standards

I claim to maintain the quality hallmarks for this research by observing the decision trail imperatives considered fit for phenomenological research. Guba and Lincoln (1999) acknowledged that naturalistic research (like this study) is sometimes deemed untrustworthy on the ground of allegations posed by the positivists who preferred weighing the quality of research endeavor in terms of reliability and validity. As the shield in this debate the qualitative methodologists counter proposed the terms like credibility and trustworthiness. This study being a phenomenological one required a bit different orientation that extended from the observation of normal quality standards considered suitable for generic qualitative researches. Therefore, along with the aforementioned propositions, this research thoroughly maintained the rigor criteria generally agreed by noted phenomenologists like van Manen (1997) and Langdridge (2007).

van Manen (1997) enlists orientation, strength, richness and depth as the major quality concerns. According to him, orientation is the involvement of the researcher with the world of the research participants and their stories. I maintained this orientation towards the phenomenon with the prolonged engagement in the area of study. I was engaged in the field of research and my own positionality of being a teacher leader at different levels for around two decades contributed in making my orientation towards the phenomenon more convincing. Strength refers to the

convincing capacity of the text to represent the core intention of the understanding of the inherent meanings as expressed by the research participants through their stories. To maintain the strength of the narrative, I employed the metaphoric language and attempted to capture the experience of the participants by likening that with something known to many in the form of metaphor like 'being a teacher was like a candle'. Richness is intended to serve the aesthetic quality of the text that narrates the meanings as perceived by the participants. Through the quotes from literature and the use of adages, I generated quality narratives of experiencing the teacher leadership at different levels. Depth is the ability of the research text to penetrate down and express the best of the intentions of the participants. I maintained the depth of my reporting by cross checking the experience of being leader with one position with the other and even did a cross analysis of being leader at one position across three different leaders.

Langdridge (2007) proposes for analytical rigor, persuasive account, and participant feedback as the major components that determine the quality of a hermeneutic phenomenological research. Analytical rigor refers to the attitude displayed by the researcher to pay attention to every case that either confirms or disconfirms the theme. No taken for granted attitude is permitted during the hermeneutic analysis. Persuasive account refers to the quality of convincing the reader and its appeal to think about the personal experience for the reader on the light of what he/she has read. Participant feedback is another quality trail that a hermeneutic phenomenological research has to pass before reaching to its audience since it helps to best represent what is intended by the participants. I observed and practice the quality standards stated by Langdridge (2007) with an account that binds the readers and kept on writing the accounts till it satisfied me as a reader. I maintained the part and whole relationship throughout the process of research by considering it an iterative process

and revisiting my problem statements and the research questions every time I was informed something new by my data. It required me to revisit the literature review section many times. I displayed the transcribed data and began its analysis and interpretation only after it was agreed by the participants. While doing this study, I was that much occupied with the world of research and my participants that I even took classes as I went to visit the schools and maintained a very close relationship with the participants of my study and this behaviour I claim added to the overall rigor as expected in a phenomenological study.

Another quality measure typically employed to enhance the quality thrust of this research was the application of standard rhetoric. Rhetoric refers to the writing or reporting style of the research work. According to Firestone (1987) rhetoric is the art of speaking and writing effectively. A language mode with informal tone having idiographic expressions full of adages and maxims is considered suitable for reporting this type of research and I did my every best by writing and rewriting the text, editing it many times, ensuring that I am available in the text right from the start to the end.

I paid every effort to ensure that the research employed all quality measures through the processes like, the extension of research process over a period of time sufficient to reveal the phenomenon, peer debriefing, use of other texts and artifacts, member checks, enhancement of verisimilitude through proper contextualization, consistency in the process of data collection and analysis, proper documentation and recording of the responses of the research participants, and going through a rigorous process of phenomenological researching along with thick description and metaphoric narration during reporting using the adages.

Ethical Considerations

This study I followed the ethical considerations particular to phenomenology and relevant. To protect the confidentiality of the research participants, in this study I followed Creswell's (2009) suggested procedures: (a) participants were assigned aliases; (b) the purpose and procedures of the study was fully disclosed to participants; (c) informed consent was obtained; and d) identities, locations, and events were given aliases in the raw data. I maintained all these ethical considerations during my research. I masked the identities of the participants and the schools with School I, II, III and Participants I, II, III. Before interviewing the participants, I made it all clear to them about the purpose of my study and ensured to maintain their confidentiality. I developed the participants' consent form and all the participants signed to it and then only I negotiated with them about the concern of my study.

Hammersley and Goldsmiths (2012) categorically specify five general principles of ethical consideration for educational research viz. (a) minimizing harm; (b) respecting autonomy; (c) protecting privacy; (d) offering reciprocity; and (e) treating people equitably. I observed all these five general principles of ethical consideration by causing no harm to my participants from any angle, I respected their autonomy of participation and did not force anybody rather each participant voluntarily agreed to take part in the research by signing the consent form willingly. Similarly, I assigned aliases to protect the privacy of the participants and met them with prior appointment so that I did not disturb their normal work schedule and for me every participant was equal regardless of the position he/she had and treated them with proper courtesy and respect every time I saw them.

At the same time, this study strictly adhered to the ethics of care, ethics of confidentiality and other ethical considerations as required by the research guidelines of Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discussed the methodological premise underpinning this study. I began the discussion with a justification of phenomenology as an interpretive inquiry and elaborated its positioning in terms of ontology, epistemology, axiology and rhetoric and clarified my own stance on these paradigmatic issues. Then I discussed how phenomenology serves the interests of naturalistic method of inquiry. Then after I discussed phenomenology as a philosophical inquiry and presented how this genre of knowledge making has evolved over the years and articulated the conceptual premise of hermeneutic phenomenology. The next perspective I presented was about the metaphoric way of representing in phenomenology that I discussed under phenomenology as a metaphorical inquiry. After clarifying phenomenology from four different perspectives, I narrated the way I did this very research by mentioning in detail about the way I selected the study site, determined the participants, the tools I employed to generate data, obtaining the data, transcribing and recording, the model of data analysis and my scheme for data presentation. Then I claimed the way I maintained the quality standards for this inquiry and finally elaborated the ethical considerations I paid attention to while researching the lived experience of being educational leaders.

CHAPTER IV

BEING AT THE TOP: ACCESSING A LABYRINTH

In this chapter, I explicate the lived experience of being top level leaders in the embedded contexts in institutional schools under study. First I present a concise profile of each participant to inform their physical, cognitive, and contextual life worlds. I conceptualize the metaphor 'accessing a labyrinth' to express the experiences of being leaders at the top.

Labyrinth

A Labyrinth is a complicated irregular network of passages or paths in which it is difficult to find one's way; a maze. In the literature on education research, the word labyrinth is often employed to refer to complexity in processes and/or contexts, most commonly with negative connotations: a place of dead-ends and frustrations. (Midgely & Trimmer, 2013, p. 1)

Through this chapter, I answer first emergent research question that wants to unearth the very experience of being top level leaders in the form ' how do the teachers at top level experience being leaders?' I illuminate the experience of being at the apex level of school management with support of seven themes that I identified from data analysis. I framed these seven themes with support of the data as provided by the three participants at top level (one executive chairperson and two principals) through the interviews and protocols. Meantime, I also used the research journal that I maintained throughout to reflect the being of leaders at the zenith strata of school administration. I deal with each of these

seven phenomenological themes and evaluate their worth through the lens of distributed leadership and other theoretical perspectives emergent to the context. Throughout this chapter, I draw the analogical essence that being leaders at the top means to attempt accessing a labyrinth full of complications, confusions and thus making this experience quite enigmatic like trying to navigate the center of a deadly maze.

Profile of Top Level Leaders

Here I present a short profile of three participants who represent being educational leaders at the top strata of school organization. The purpose of this profile is to sketch the personal portrayal of the participants and to give a short context of the school where they work.

School I Leader I

Leader I School I is an energetic gentleman in his early forties and a person in educational fraternity for around two decades. He has the experience of leading academic institutions in different capacities like coordinator, head of the department, principal and executive chairperson. In school I this leader was leading the school of 400+ students and 30+ teaching and non-teaching staff in the capacity of executive chairperson. A master's degree graduate in management and a post graduate diploma in education, this leader elicited a unique experience of being the top level leader through his interview discussion and even in protocol writing.

School II Leader I

Leader I School II is an associate professor of management in his early fifties with around three decades of ripen experience in leading academic institutions in different capacities. He had been leading the school with 389 students and 28 teaching and non-teaching staff as the principal for last two years. He is a permanent faculty of

one of the university campuses in the valley where he takes the classes in the morning and works as the principal of School II because he is one of the investors and the only one among the board of directors who has a PhD degree in management. His experience of being the top leader in particular is expressed as a peculiar one by this participant.

School III Leader I

A man who claimed himself born for leading schools this top level leader of School III appears to be a very passionate person who initiated the present school with more staff members than students. He is quite cool in his attitudes and never gets upset with any kind of difficulty since he possesses a host of both sweet and bitter experiences while leading the school. A man in his late fifties, a master's degree graduate in humanities with sociology as major is a man of words and admits that being the top level leader in institutional school is a typical experience. He perceives and elaborates his experience as a problem solver, a soother, a healer and a bridge. He has been leading this school with 280 students and 20 staff members for last 14 years.

Lived Experience of Being Top Level Leader

Researching the lived experience of leaders at the apex level at institutional schools was a cumbersome job but it was very illuminating than I expected it to be. The information that I could collect from my research participants was quite different than my own experience of leading school as a top level leader. Possibly the differences were due to the varying nature of organizations that I worked and I researched upon. For example resource was never a barrier for me when I worked as a principal leader but it was the central crux in the schools I investigated. I found that the experience of top level leader of a school hardly matched with the other one signifying the value of difference in context. Nevertheless, I could observe and read

that they shared similar painstaking moments, the anxiety, the fear of failure, and the never ending dilemma as the top level leaders of their respective schools. I represent this experience of anxiety, fear, and dilemma with a labyrinth; a complex structure where people might get lost if they lack passion, focus, and feel similar situation of being abandoned amid a deadly maze from where they find it hard to find the center and even to exit from it. The following texts detail the dynamics of being the chairperson or principal leaders in the institutional schools of Nepal and Kathmandu in particular by quoting themselves as the source of explicating their lived experiences of being leaders at the top level. .

A Position of Extreme Contradiction and Controversy

The first theme that I developed from the data to explicate the lived experience of being leader at the top level of school organization is about the ontology of being at the top. It might sound ironic to read that being at the top position was contradictory and controversial but for me it reflects the experience of being a top level leader. What I could find from my participants was the idea that in an institutional school the executive leader was often perplexed to find his/her identity. Whether he was an educational leader committed for the students' learning or he was an entrepreneur there ensuring the investment return of himself and his team of investors. This was as expressed by the participants of this study an identity of being executive leader(s) of institutional school. This experience of being the top level leader was acknowledged by all the participants in one way or the other. It was contradictory in a sense that they could not actually utilize their time in thinking about the instructional activities as their whole attention was deviated towards the investment issue and other political issues refraining these leaders to be pedagogic leaders as postulated by (Evans, 1999) who elaborated the role of principals in schools to be more administrative than

instructional and questioned on a principal to be ‘pedagogic’ considering the need for a principal to get involved into multiple activities with much focus on administrative roles than in instructional aspects. Right in this connection, Leader I School I mentioned;

> *The prevailing forms of the schools – private and public – themselves are controversial enough to create contradiction in the educational leadership. It is difficult to lead a private school. The roles and responsibilities of the leaders of these two different forms of schools are not alike. The former is very much guided by the profit motif and the latter service motif. Therefore, the leader leading a private school has to handle two-fold responsibility whereas the public school principals have the sole responsibility of proving the worth in the pan of social justice. It is a bitter reality of educational leadership situation in the nation.* (Protocol: August, 2012)

The issue raised by School I Leader I, for me, seemed plausible as it attracted different social theories. As he mentioned this position with dual identity, probably he was indicating to the requirement of performing tasks of double standard. In reference to the activity theory of Banon (1997) to be a top leader was to be ready to do anything or interact with every context regardless of his or her preference. He seemed resentful for doing what he was bound to do. For him too it was probably more than being a pedagogic principal to what Evans (1999) characterized as the administrative overload to the school principals. The activities and the interactions that he made were of varied levels. It was the ultimate tussle of profit and service. By this he probably wanted to refer his needs of ensuring the profit of the investment and his profession of education where the service was in the center of all. He seemed dissatisfied with the need to divert the attention to what he preferred rather not to

perform. It occurred to me that the participant was like a dice in the hand of those unseen forces that determined the pricing in the market that Scott (2006) identified as the key aspect of capitalistic theory. From this perspective of capitalism, the experience of being the leaders at the top level possibly indicated the ironic status of being a leader at the top level. I considered it ironic in a sense that the activities this participant had to perform were controlled by the capitalistic needs of ensuring the profit against his desire of providing the service. The question here I see rising is how far it is possible to take service and profit together. It probably leads to the discussion regarding the debate about education as commodity or service.

I found this experience of feeling or experiencing the position to be contradictory and controversial represented by the metaphor of accessing a labyrinth. Being a leader at the top was like attempting to access a complex labyrinth where the entry was one but there were several distracters, complexities and confusions to find the very center. I understood this experience like walking a labyrinth in a sense that this participant was in a conflict with his inner desire of serving with actions where he had to work to ensure the monitory profit of his organization. I see this conflict further generating doubts regarding what to do and what not to do which I relate with walking the labyrinth where a person is confused and indecisive about alley to take and which one to leave. In the context of this participant it meant what should he focus; the profit or the service. It appeared me like a riddle.

Practice of Distributed Leadership: A Consequence of Compulsion

The second theme I developed to explicate the experience of being leaders at the apex level of school organization was about the practice of distributed leadership. What I found from the narratives of lived experience information given by my participants was about the resource scarcity which stood as another major concern that

prevented the leaders at institutional schools to find time sufficient for the instructional improvement. Moreover, this was possibly one of the reasons why they created middle level leadership roles and distributed some tasks to others. So the presence of multiple middle level leaders in institutional schools seemed to be the byproduct of the top level leaders' inability to provide time in the everyday affairs of the school due to their compulsion of arranging for resources. Resource on the other hand came from nowhere but from the students themselves. Hereafter, the chain of stability for these top level leaders in institutional schools seemed dependent on the cycle of number of students, resources, and the investors' satisfaction. This experience of being the principal leader of a school with many investors was shared by School III Leader I as;

> *I distribute leadership roles to middle level not because I like it but due to my failure of giving time. I need to pay attention in resource collection, coordinating among large pool of investors. Then I don't have time to allocate for everyday affairs. Yes, distributing roles is my compulsion.* (Interview: January, 2012)

For me, this confession of compulsion to distribute the leadership roles, as articulated by a founder principal of a school with a history of 16 years made it clear how hollow the internal dynamics of an institutional school was. I could see this idea resembling with the notion of ‘false clarity' that means people’s habit of oversimplifying the change perspective or interpreting things from too simplistic manner (Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2007). Perhaps people often possessed this notion of false clarity about the institutional schools and probably thought that just creating more posts would make it distributed leadership in action. From the perspective of distributed leadership (Spillane, 2001, 2002, 2006) I could see the presence of

leadership plus aspect (leadership roles distributed to more than one person i.e. having other posts live VP, Coordinator, HoD and In-charges) in the schools under study but leadership practice aspect was quite underestimated as it resulted not as steamed from the deliberate effort but as expressed above from the failure of top level leader to give time. From this discourse what I could see was the existence of a paradoxical connection between the notion of distributed leadership and its main two constituents of leadership plus and leadership practice aspects.

In this articulation about the practice of distributed leadership from the false clarity notion too I observed the analogy of labyrinth in action in a sense that the practice of distributed leadership was happening with no identified path but as if it was just imitating what others had done something like following somebody in the maze rather than using intuitions and logics to find the right trail to the destination. This labyrinth in the distributed leadership plus aspect appeared to me to be prevalent in our context due to many reasons. Firstly, I could not see any policy directives for the creation of other posts than principals and it was just limited as the individual practice of specific school. Secondly, who will assume the post and what one needed to perform was not clearly identified. This uncertainty about the legal existence of the post would further create confusions and doubts to the leaders of top level regarding what to delegate and what not to.

Leadership Style: A Matter of Different Strokes for Different Folks

The third theme I developed to explicate the experience of being leader at the top is about their understanding about the leadership style. It was a matter of time or the spirit of 'cometh the hour cometh the man' a proverb as articulated by Warrilow (2009) in reference with situational leadership theory meaning leadership was all about the demand of time. Written in Middle English dialects what this proverb means

is leadership is contingent to time. However, the way one leads is quite different from the other. Warrilow (2009) expresses these pluralistic styles of performing leadership roles using the proverb 'different strokes for different folks'. It means how a leader influences the others (followers) is contingent to the nature, need and level of the followers. During my conversation with the leaders at top level I could find no rigid one style leadership practice. Aligning positively with the principle of situational leadership these leaders, I could observe exhibiting and expressing their style as flexible since different leadership styles are applicable to different situations. However, when asked about the particular model of leadership they adopt and practice in reference to distributed leadership two of the top level leaders preferred to be called democratic as they used the term 'shared' and 'collaborative' leadership whereas the chairman leader out rightly rejected the notion of leading with democratic norms and did declare that he practiced an autocratic style and justified his being of autocratic as (School I Leader I);

> *I want to have strong hold on all the actions that happen in the school and having them supervised and monitored through immediate subordinates' accountability to be reported to me directly. I feel freedom to be illusive term in our context as for them 'liberty' means 'to do what they like to do within their full capacity'. In fact, freedom is something that needs more attention and consciousness in the process of exercising it. On the contrary, when you let loose you rein in the name of freedom; you will find the harmony lost, misunderstanding created and coexistence threatened. Therefore, I hope, you might have found the ground on calling myself a dictator.* (Protocol: August, 2012)

I found this expression very unique as this leader with a comparatively better performing school declared him to be a dictator and advocated for the least preferred leadership style. But as I reflected on his texts and expressions, I could see logics to justify his declaration when he meant ‘freedom needs more attention and consciousnesses. In reference to Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) model of leadership typology top level leaders of School II and School III claimed to be democratic on the ground they shared the role and believed in team work where as School I Leader I flatly rejected this notion of being democratic as such. The question that struck me as an investigator was about how people could determine their style of leading and what enticed them to declare themselves to be either democratic or autocratic as such. Claiming one being democratic for me was regular whereas someone bluntly labeling oneself autocratic was something unique. This made me revisit his interview texts and the protocol, make an assessment of his background (personal profile) and what I could speculate was his experience of failure in earlier ventures and the lessons he learnt from it.

This is possibly what School I Leader I termed to be the 'contradiction' of leading a private school. As three participants of top level portrayed their leadership style differently, I could find the emergence of varieties of possible experiences framing their declaration about the leadership style of their choice and practice. Since the intent of leading was maximizing profit it was probably a mere hypocrisy to claim that one leads democratically. I saw this theme of varied leadership style having a representation with ‘accessing the labyrinth’ metaphor. Since leading institutional schools as expressed by the top leaders of this study was a task full of confusions, dilemmas, and absurdities as if someone was attempting to access a crooked maze

being leaders at the top attempted different styles in an attempt to find the center of such a labyrinth.

The Psychological Side of Leadership

The fourth theme I framed to represent the experience of being leaders at the pinnacle of school organization was about the psychic sphere of their being. I believe this theme reflected the centrality of inherent experience of being leaders at the top level. Human instinct as propagated by the psycho-analytics constitutes of multiple layers. I found that Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) described human being inspired and operated through two sets of desires; latent and manifest. And there always went on the dialectical conflict between these two. I found this conflict in two levels of human identity in operation when a participant recalling a very tough time possessing and exhibiting a dual identity of true and fictitious self School I Leader I mentioned this as;

> *During this time, as a leader, I had worked with two 'selves' – a real self which hardly worked on the professional ground giving me unpleasant experience and a fictitious self which was at play all the time there giving me pleasant experience.* (Protocol: August, 2012)

I find the participant here talking about the existence of two identities within oneself. One identity this participant identified as the professional one which made him behave like a school executive and abided him to do even the unpleasant things like laying off the staff, rusticating the students which are naturally unpleasant and contrary to his fictitious self that he used to consol himself to justify that each of his bitter deeds are expecting better results. In terms of psychoanalysis, the manifested deeds are the products of immediate surroundings but the latent deeds are the willingness of this executive not to get involved into any harm to any human being. I

consider this to be his portrayal of inner self in the form of this beautiful poetry that he wrote in his protocol writing in Nepali language. Here follows his poetry in both versions:

घोटिएर चनौटामा चन्दन, शिरको ताज बन्दछ ।
पिसिएर नै मेहन्दी पनि हत्केलामा रङ भर्दछ ।
जित्न नै के छ र यहाँ मान्छेले मान्छे कज्याएर
जीउँ बरु हामी सगै मानव सेवा मै रमाएर ॥

Sandalwood decorates the forehead after rubbed in the stone plate,
Henna colors the palms after grinned only,
What is left here to win for people persuading people to work?
Let's rather live together by serving the mankind.

(Protocol: August, 2012)

I interpreted this poem as the desire of the participant to serve the mankind through the service of education. For me the call for others to participate in the sector of serving mankind as he said ' let's rather live together' constituted the latent or the hidden desire this participant had. Probably this dialectical conflict happening with the self made him think differently. This is possibly what he terms to be 'contradictory' a word of Latin origin that implies the inconsistent and logically opposite status to explicate his experience of being a leader at the top.

I anticipated rest of two top level leaders too experienced the similar psychic status. However, they explained this idea with a bit low intensity and indirectly. In School II Leader I experienced the dilemma of whether continuing or leaving the position. I found him expressing his resentment with spouse of an investor who attempted to exhibit as if she was the leader there. With this participant too, I observed the two layer symptoms as of human psychology as he communicated with me realizing that what he intended to do was probably never going to get

accomplished. Even during the offline conversation he clearly indicated that he was not going to work there anymore from next session onwards (Field Note, 2012). I think it was this point where he was reflecting his latent desire of better quitting than remaining helpless.

On the other hand, I could see the principal of School III was all the time worried about how to pay the rent of the month and how to provide salary to the staff that resulted into his exercise of adding more investors, making the pool of many people and inviting many foreseen and unseen conflicts (Field Note, 2012). As I could easily read from the example that the house owner had already notified that he was not going to extend the rental contact next year and was constructing the house in the middle of the play ground, this participant was hopefully not in a jubilant mood. Apparently, he was worried about where to go the next and how to tackle with the ongoing and forthcoming issues in particular.

Thus, even if the context varied and the top level leaders under this study had different builds, attitudes and aptitudes and they went through different psychic states of mind where they seemed to be either getting lost or entangled. This fear of getting lost and entanglement was, in my opinion, the most negative of the attributes a person could ever think of. Such experiences of psychic dilemma and the conflict within oneself could be possibly represented again by the metaphor of 'accessing the labyrinth' where the person attempting to access it (here the top level leaders) might have gone with a conflict regarding which alley to take and which one to leave as if standing in a crossroad with no signpost.

The Organizational Structure: A Major Determinant of Leadership Experience

The fifth theme that I found prominent in explicating lived experience of being a top level leader was associated with the design of the organization where he/she

worked. I mean to argue that how a leader at the top does (applies to other positions as well) feel and experience the phenomenon of being something is contingent to the very structure of the organization. Another reason for presenting this theme about organizational structure and its impact on leaders at different level is my understanding that organizational structure is the major determinant of distributed leadership theory. How a leader feels to work in a particular work station largely depends on the organizational structure of the very organization where he or she works. In all the three schools under investigation, the most striking common thing I found was the organization structure. The organizational structure of the schools under study I present in the following exhibit.

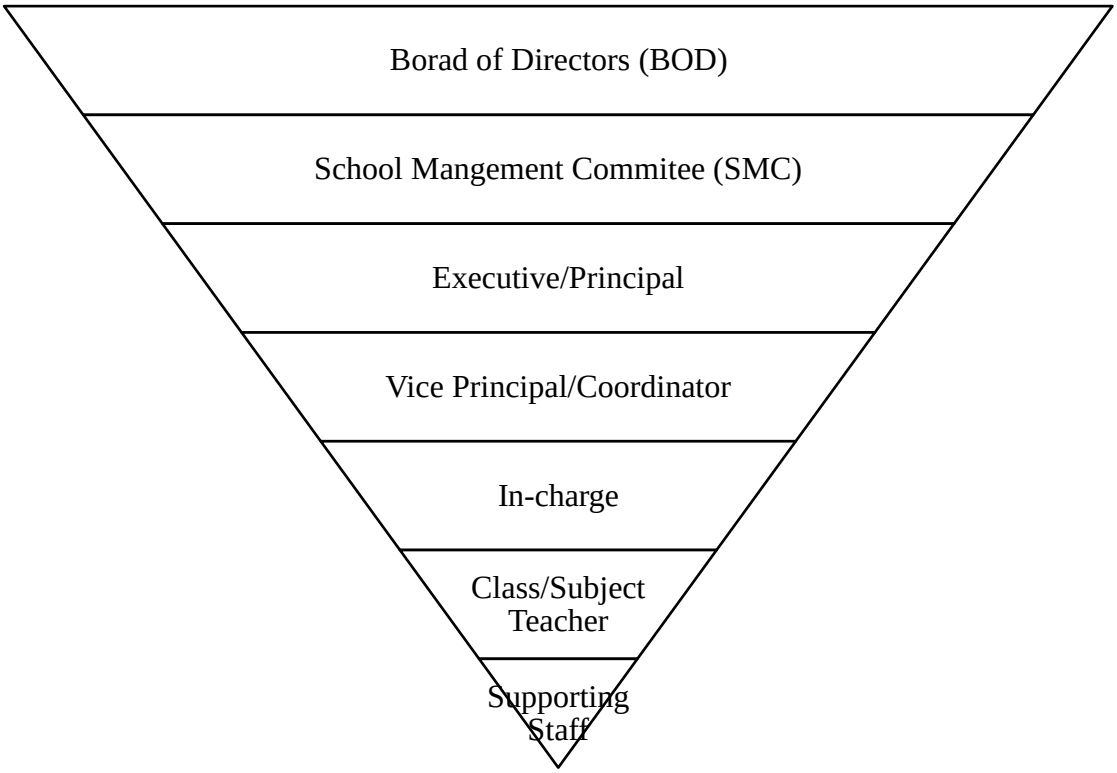


Figure*2* 2 Organization structure.

All three schools followed the leadership structure beginning with the Board of Directors (BOD) followed by the School Management Committee (SMC), Principal or Executive, Vice Principal, Coordinator(s), In-charge(s), Class/Subject

Teacher(s) and the Supporting Staff. This organizational structure has two different implications for the principal or executive leaders. And it was very interesting to see whether the principal or the executive leader was a BOD member or not. BOD constituted of the investors with either the largest investor or an honorary person chairing it. In the informal communication with the stakeholders of these schools, they admitted that it is the BOD that ultimately decides the fate of the entire institutions. There were instances when the school set up is sold to another party without a single hint to its teachers and other staff (Field Note, 2012). I understood this governance structure representing the spirit of education as commodity. SMC, on the other hand, was nothing more than an endorsement body to ratify the mind map as thought by the BOD. For the consumption value, SMC was also created having salable name in the market as the chair. This governance structure was responsible in losing the hold of state command in the administration of institutional schools. Furthermore, what I could see was if the principal and executive leader was one of the investors and had a considerable chunk of share in the institution, he/she would entertain a strong leadership hold. Otherwise, he would be treated just as an employee by the BOD and would have no strong command even to lead the students forget about teachers. Another problem as experienced and shared by the principal leader of School II is the problem of either BOD member or spouse of BOD member within the school in different capacity as teacher or accountant or administrator, a major hurdle for him. School II Leader I indicated this problem when he remarked;

> *Leadership structure of the school is theoretically vertical but practically mixed or flat or better says no shape at all. It is difficult to map the leadership and decision making structure due to the presence of some of the promoters in*

the school in bottom or middle level responsibilities who attempt to make interventions with everybody's work. (Interview: January, 2012)

This observation did not only implicate the meaningless organizational design but also practically suggested the very crux of the challenge in leading an institutional school. As clearly articulated by this participant, I found that the presence of BOD members or their nominees challenged the existence of the principal and impeded in effective execution of the role. From the perspective of organizational theory this was an example of dysfunctional organizational design or structure (Robbins & Judge, 2008; Luthans, 2005; Mullins, 2006). When I analyzed the organizational structure, I found it to be dysfunctional in a sense that the structure was for structure shake not for smoothening the process of organizational performance. Amid such a mess, what the leaders at the top experienced would of course be messy.

Another painful experience associated with organizational structure was the size of BOD or the number of investors. The top level leaders of School II and III faced this problem as a major concern. Whenever the BOD was too large, it failed to come to a common decision and as it was difficult to even organize the meetings, many of the decisions remained pending. Furthermore, aligning with the proverb 'too many cooks spoil the broth[1]' the BOD with large numbers failed to give a proper direction to the improvement of the school. This situation was not available in School I where the BOD constituted of just five members and two of the BOD members were in the school as executive chairperson and vice principal.

From the lens of distributed leadership, what I could say was that the organizational structure had directly to do with the leadership practice action meaning how the decisions were reached in the school set ups (Spillane, 2006). In these three

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[1] *A British proverb meaning the destruction of things with unnecessarily more people's involvement*

schools, in reference to the leadership plus aspect it was quite excellent since every school had a leadership structural design with more than one leadership present. However, the fundamental problem was with the leadership practice action and again the organizational make up was dysfunctional in this regard.

This organizational structure also demanded attention from the policy level. The issue of BOD and its supremacy over SMC was the issue that required to be addressed from the policy level if the state wanted a strong grip in the operation of the institutional schools. This concern from the perspective of lived experiences of top level leaders for me again deserved the metaphoric representation of 'accessing a labyrinth' in a sense that the top level leaders were struggling to find the right direction as the organizational structure itself was like a maze with confusing strata and layers which probably demanded the top level leaders to exert additional efforts even for a smallest thing to be done.

Unionism: A Major Worry for Top Leaders

The sixth theme I framed to explicate the lived experience of educational leaders at the top position was associated with the political dynamics of school organization. Here the participants shared about their experience of being leaders at the top depended on the presence or absence of political activities within the school organization from the teachers' side. The issue of collective bargaining I could see emerging as one of the major hurdles for the executive leaders of institutional schools. The presence of defiance here and there in the name of affiliation to a particular creed I suppose made it virtually a tough place to lead. It was one of the common experiences shared by all the top level leaders except by School I Leader I. From the teaching to no-teaching staff, everyone seemed to have an affiliation with a union and that was exhibited in the form of defiance and many instances of school closure had

been seen and heard around. Though none of these three schools had ever reached to the extent of closure, I found all the top level leaders having a serious concern to it as one the major fear factors for today's principal leaders to lead their schools. This interaction of people with external agencies gave a different dimension to the activities of being the leader at top level. And this idea related with the interaction is what Printy (2008) argued to be the engagement in activities meant to influence as the key notion behind activity theory. Right in this connection School II Leader I states;

> *Being a principal leader is challenging job in the present context of the nation where the political environment is not stable. Everyone attempts to attack on private schools. This has resulted into the teachers' involvement in a group or other and they are emerging to be defiant and are not punishable. There is no chance of reward and punishment.* (Interview: January, 2011)

This voice of the deteriorating political dynamics within the school organization was probably a matter of great concern for everyone in our context. School as a part of entire social system could not remain aloof from whatever it was going in the national politics and the long period of political transition appeared to be blight for all the common people in general. When the teachers started behaving the cadres of political groups, I think it would further worsen the worries of the principal and this political dimension contributed in determining how they experienced. I found this political concern of school organization as identified by Bush (2007) to be one of major concerns leading school management toward fragmentation. And I think this fragmentation results into the creation of multiple loops, alleys and pathways making a school organization a complex labyrinth.

This notion of party politics as one of the major challenges of institutional school management, I observed being experienced by other two top level leaders from

School I and III. Just what differed with these principals was the matter of frequency of such political activities and the persistence and intensity of the teachers' involvement to it; it was the area that all the top level leaders unanimously agreed as the most challenging issue and the most problematic and sometimes even traumatic event for them. This challenge, I assumed, within the context of this research, to be one of the major determinants of top level leaders' lived experience. This context of power wrangling I believed represented in the metaphor of 'accessing the labyrinth' that left the person attempting to explore it in a complex maze of indecisiveness causing major worry for the top level leaders.

Anecdotal Experience: A Mix of Sweets and Sours

The seventh and last theme that I framed to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at the top level was about their anecdotal memories of events that they characterized as either happy or sad. So as to explore deep on the experience of being top level leaders in institutional schools, I included a question in the interview schedule and I asked all the research participants to recall and narrate an event that they termed as the most satisfying, rewarding or happy one and an event that they termed to be the least satisfying, disgusting or the sad one. What I found in their response was they characterized the success events as the happiest and the failure events as the saddest ones. I assumed this interview probe very useful in unearthing the 'being' component of the leaders in the schools where this study was conducted. Here follows a short snapshot captured for their preferred and disliked moments.

School I Leader I maintained that the time he was to sign the notice to the parents threatening not to let their wards write the exam in case the due fee is not settled is the most disgusting moment where as the time when he allowed the students with fees due write their examination was the most satisfying (Field Note, 2012). This

experience of the executive chairman was quite in line with his earlier stance where he strongly claimed that an entrepreneur leader could not be service oriented (Theme 1). I observed his ideas of conflict, controversy and haphazardness of being a top level leader of institutional school justified in terms of psychoanalysis, conflict theory, and activity theories.

School II Leader I recalled his bitter memory of facing the politically motivated groups of students in his previous work station where there had been a time of an attempted arsenic crime with a demand of writing the board exam without paying the fees and he recalled how tense the moment was making him to think whether he was in the right profession. When the things went as he desired, those were the moments that this principal leader reckoned as satisfying one and he termed that in overall there were plenty happy moments in surplus than the bitter ones (Field Note, 2012). Dysfunctional organizational politics was disgusting to this leader whereas the compliance to his leadership was the encouraging one. I drew this conclusion about the anecdotal experiences based on his long narratives of his happy and sad moments.

School III Leader I on the other hand, I observed exhibiting his sentiments to answer this particular question and replied that the visits of high ranking people like the national poet, the then prime minister, the then chairperson of Constitution Assembly, noted educators and many other people in different walks of life were what he regarded satisfying and further claimed that the school was worth visiting so they did. At the same time, he found himself worthy when the underperforming students reached at the stage of celebrating their success. On the other hand it gave him pain when he was interrogated by the landlord about the monthly rent of the hired school premises, his failure to pay his staff on time and the limitation of the existing

infrastructure were the matters that made him feel very upset and sometimes down as well (Field Note, 2012).

These everyday experiences of being the top level leaders for me constituted the reflective snaps of being the top level leaders in Nepali institutional schools. The conflict, the irony, the paradox, the scarcity, the desires, the wishes, the hopes, the fights, the reconciliations, the humility, the pride, and service at the very end was what the top level leaders experienced during the course of discharging their leadership roles. It meant I could observe no uniformity in the way they experienced. However, this variance in their anecdotal recalls enticed me to liken this theme in reference to 'accessing the labyrinth' metaphor in a sense that being at the top was like attempting to access a complex, irregular, hazy, confusing, and uncertain labyrinth where there were more chances for being mislead than being navigated safely.

Key Expressions Characterizing Top Level Leaders

I designed this section to make meaning of being leaders at top level by identifying the key expressions the leaders at this level used during their interview and protocol writing. I identified these key expressions as I read the responses they provided with the selective reading approach where I read a text several times and asked what word(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or disclose about the phenomenon (van Manen, 1997). My logic to explicate the key expressions in data presentation chapter was to establish my argument that the key expressions also supported in making point that being leaders at the top was an enigmatic experience that I preferred comparing with a labyrinth. I found sufficient evidence to substantiate my argument that being at the top was primarily a task of pressure and required the leaders to be ready to face with different expected and unexpected challenges. But this

did not mean that it was all time a difficult task. As elaborated in the seventh theme earlier, it was a mixed experience. It meant there were occasions that gave smiles to those leaders at the top. Neither I meant to say that it was all the time enigmatic as there were occasions when the expressed of being blessed. The key expressions that I believed captured the essence of being leaders at the apex level as articulated by the participants of this research were of both negative and positive connotations. But the list was dominated by the negative connotations to the positive ones. Three top level leaders who participated in this research expressed their lived experience of being leaders using the following key expressions.

Table 2 2

Key Expressions to Characterize the Top Level Leadership

Participants	Key Expressions
School I Leader II	Controversial, contradictory, suspend, chaotic, haphazard, autocratic, co-existence
School II Leader II	Discipline, morality, academic environment, satisfaction, challenging
School III Leader II	Satisfaction, challenge, like a candle lighting others, investors

(Sources: Protocol and Interview, 2011/ 2012)

The terminologies I enlisted in Table 2 were very representative in a sense they expressed the underlying meaning of what it meant to be leaders at top level. The use of varieties of expressions also meant that being leader at the top of school organization meant different to different people and how one made meaning of being a top level leader was contingent to the very context. For School I Leader I it seemed to be an ironic position with paradoxical experience where he preferred to remain autocratic probably he was much more worried about the survival of the institution. School II Leader I seemed more focused on maintaining the academic discipline from

among the teachers and for the creation of conducive teaching learning environment which was a very difficult task at a time when the nation itself was in transition. School III Leader I sounded more sentimental who considered his endeavors rather satisfying considering the creation he was able to set up. Though these leaders expressed their being with different dictions, the shared experience they largely maintained was about the complexities of being in the position and these very complexities for me were like 'accessing the labyrinth' that I conceptualized to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at the top level of school management.

Essence of Being Top Level Leader(s)

Based on the discussion made under seven different themes of being the top level leaders in Nepali institutional schools and taking from my own experience of being principal leader of a school and based on the reflective notes that I maintained throughout the process of research, now here I attempt to draw the essence of being the top level leaders.

School I Leader I preferred to identify himself as a leader of institutional school as 'a deviated manager' because he elaborated the experience as ironic and controversial. It was somehow like the popular Shakespearean soliloquy of 'to be or not be[2]'. The position for him was full of dilemma and required double standard identity of a profit maker cum a service provider.

School II Leader I related being a top level leader of an institutional school as very challenging and risky job that required carefulness and cautiousness in every step. He used the typical proverb 'walking in a two-edged sword' (दोहोरो धारको तरवारमा हिड्नु जस्तो) to explain his experience of being a top level leader. Since it was to involve in risky acts of dealing with creed inflicted staff and battle with external pressure that

[2] *In Hamlet by Shakespeare the lead character in soliloquy **Act 3 Scene 1***

were in existence in private schools as the center of focus, the failure of reward and punishment based management principles and unprofessional behavior possibly made him think so.

School III Leader I identified and explained his experience of being the founder top level leader of institutional school as a rewarding experience. Despite many hurdles and still the limping situation of the school, he claimed it to be his huge success to arrive to the sate the school is at that moment. He probably took it for granted and explained that to be a leader for him was 'self created and self earned' task. It was not a position to regret. Even though it was tough, the pleasure to see the students' success erased all those exhaustion. As it was his own personal choice to plunge into this profession, he probably attempted to highlight the beautiful aspects of leadership experience.

I would like to conclude this discussion on what did it mean to be leaders at the top level with justification of metaphor that I conceptualized to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at the top. What I observed and what my participants expressed from one way or the other substantiated the metaphor 'accessing a labyrinth' often explicitly and sometimes implicitly. I found these leaders making meaning of their being reflecting the very context where they worked. I observed that the investment determined who would be leader and the leadership effectiveness. Based on the lived experience accounts of the participants and my own reflection for me the money determined the very essence of being leader at the top. Considering the profit making, investment assurance, the impact of capitalistic and political dynamics as the major catalysts in shaping the lived experience of being leaders at the top what I feel is it is the money that makes the leader in the existing context of institutional schools of the country. I argue 'money makes leaders'. It is not the leadership competencies,

the educational qualifications required for leading schools but the investment. It referred to anyone could be a school chairperson or principal provided that he/she had the capital enough to open a school or buy the share of an existing school. The more the investment the more powerful the leader was. After all it was what capitalism meant. From the perspective of capitalistic theory it was a justified endeavor.

Chapter Summary

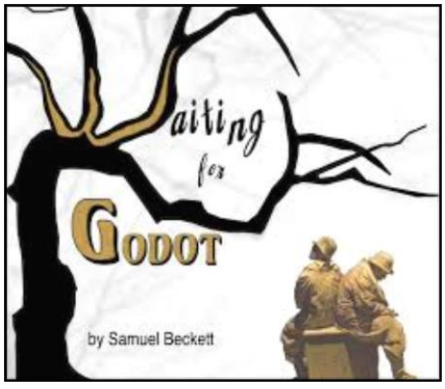
In this chapter I first conceptualized the analogy of 'accessing a labyrinth' to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at the top level of school organization. First, I presented a short profile of each participant to contextualize my discussion. Then, I presented and discussed the lived experience of being executive leaders in the schools under study with support of seven themes that I developed after rigorously analyzing the data that I received through interviews, protocol writing, field notes, and with my own reflection of being leader at the top for around 28 months. I even presented the key expressions to substantiate my point of argument that being leader at the top was more a matter of negative connotation than the positive. During the entire discussion, I strived to be as reflective as possible and attempted to evaluate the expressions of my participants from different perspectives with a focus to why each participant meant so. I was informed by the phenomenological research method throughout my discussion. My focus towards the phenomenon of being the leader at the top position provided me the vantage point for my discussion and I concluded that being leader at the top meant different to each participant contingent to the context where they were situated. However, in the capitalistic mode of economy, I concluded the discussion of this chapter with my reflective observation that 'money made leaders'.

CHAPTER V

BEING AT THE MIDDLE: WAITING FOR GODOT

After discussing about the lived experience of being at the top in the previous chapter, now I move to the explication of lived experience of the educational leaders who are in the middle positions. In this chapter I explicate the lived experiences of being educational leaders in the middle levels of school organization. By middle level I mean different positions like vice principal, coordinator, HOD (Head of the Department) and in-charge. Out of three middle level leaders whose lived experience I discuss within this chapter, two are vice principals and one is coordinator. I open the chapter with brief profile of my participants with a purpose

Waiting for Godot (1953) is an absurdist play by Samuel Backett (1906-1989) who received Nobel prize for literature in 1969. Waiting for Godot captures the Cold War Era uncertainty through philosophical questionings and ambiguous dialogue between and among a total of five characters in solitude countryside under a tree where they wait for someone who never arrives. It questions and confronts its contextual paradigms; existentialism and nihilism. It is one of highly critiqued plays and labeled as a drama where nothing happens. Waiting for Godot is representative of the 'Theatre of the Absurd', which implies that it is meant to be irrational. Here Beckett often focused on the idea of 'the suffering of being'. (Beckett, 1956; Gordon, 2002; Hooti & Torkamaneh, 2011)



of clarifying the personal, educational, and contextual position. In order to present vivid description and to answer my second emergent research question 'how do leaders at middle level experience being leaders?' I conceptualize the metaphor 'Waiting for Godot' that I use as a trope throughout this chapter. I could come up with a set of seven themes from my data analysis to lead this discussion and I discussed the lived experience of being leaders from distributed leadership and other theoretical lens emergent to the need. My argument about the experience of being a leader in the middle level is as represented in the metaphor (i.e., waiting for Godot), a futile endeavor. It is a position where one waits and waits but fails to see what he/she is waiting for. While discussing the themes that emerged of the data I use the expressions of the participants in an attempt to support my propositions, different theories attracted to the very idea of discussion and using my reflexive field note that I maintained throughout my research journey. At the end I draw the essence of being leaders at the middle level.

Profile of Middle Level Leaders

Here I present a short profile of three participants who represent being educational leaders in the middle positions of school organization. The purpose of this profile is to sketch the personal portrayal of the participants and to give a short context of the school where they work.

School I Leader II

School I Leader II was in his late thirties. He was an MPhil graduate in Education. This research participant exhibited and expressed a very illuminating experience of being a middle level leader. He was in the profession of education for almost twenty years as he started teaching immediately after his School Leaving Certificate Examination. This participant was the person available in the school all the

time I went for appointed and non-appointed visits. Working with the children, working in the office, taking the classes, dealing with parents, assisting the staff, were the buzz works of this middle level leader with the designation of Vice Principal in a school of 492 students and 37 teaching and non-teaching staff. He was working in this capacity in this school for last six years.

School II Leader II

The middle level leader in School II of my study was a male participant in his late twenties. He was a master's degree graduate in humanities with English Literature as major. He was working in the capacity of Vice Principal in the school for one and half years. It was his new experience of being a middle level leader. He was also the all time available and focal contact person of the school and is available for the service of students, fellow teachers and communicated with parents / guardians and even to give time to the visitors like the researchers. As a busy leader who was responsible to oversee the everyday administration of a school with 439 students and 28 teaching and non-teaching staff, he felt that he did learn quite a many things from his experience of being the Vice Principal.

School III Leader II

The middle level leader in School III of my study bearing the designation of coordinator was responsible in operating the secondary school wing (there was separate coordinator for +2 section). He was in his early thirties and was a master's degree graduate in English Literature. He was in the profession of teaching learning for more than 10 years and worked in different middle level positions like exam coordinator, ECA in-charge, subjective committee chair (English) and even as discipline in-charge. He was working in the school for last six years and he was assigned this responsibility of coordinator since previous academic session. As a

middle level leader of a school with 310 students and 25 staff, he too remained busy all the time and acted as the focal contact person of the school. He elaborated and exhibited very rich and persuading accounts of being the middle level leader.

Lived Experience of Middle Level Leaders

I present here the lived experience accounts of those middle level leaders of Nepalese educational organizations whose brief profile was presented in this chapter. The major question I posed for the participants of this study to reflect upon was ‘What does it mean to be a middle level leader?’ Therefore, through this chapter I propose to answer second emergent research question of this study. Researching lived experience (van Manen, 1997) of middle level leaders was something that I had desired earlier. In my academic career of two decades, middle level leadership position was the position where I worked for the longest time. I worked as coordinator, and vice principal (middle level positions) for more than ten years in different educational organizations. While working as a middle level, I had a very tough time. My observation regarding middle level leadership was very pessimistic. For me this position was like 'waiting for Godot' or a wait for nothing. Even though the context of the schools where I assumed this role and the contexts of the participants of this study did have little similarities, I could see many of the experiential narratives were alike. Corresponding to multiple determinants like contextual dynamics, potential for future growth, organizational structure and the participation in decision making what I argue is being a leader at the middle was largely a painful and torturous experience except few occasional moments of exhilaration. With support of seven themes to be discussed the next, here I explicate the lived experience of being leaders at the swinging (middle) position.

A Position Ubiquitous to All the School Stakeholders

The first theme I developed to explicate the being of a middle level leader was about the nature and scope of the position of middle level leadership. I characterized this position to be the position of everybody's reach. To be leader in the middle meant to be a person in touch with all stakeholders including the management, teachers, students, parents and guardians, and visitors all at the same time. This idea of being a ubiquitous was somehow authenticated by all three participants from different perspectives. Some of the representative expressions that supported in making a middle level position a position of omnipresence nature I proposed to discuss briefly. To confirm the notion mentioned in theme one School III Leader II metaphorically expressed it to be a position of 3D vision or relationship when he remarked;

> *For me being a coordinator is a post having a rectangular relationship with administrators, students, teachers and parents/guardians. It is a post requiring 3D eyesight where one should be able to see all the directions at the same time. Balancing the role is key to being a coordinator, a proper balance among and between the administrator, teachers, students, and parents.* (Interview: April, 2012)

Defining the job from a relational perspective, School III Leader II maintatined that being a middle level leader was all about having a balanced relationship with three major domains of school organizations i.e. the administration, the students/teachers and the parents/guardians. This relationhisp he termed to be 3D as it had three major conponents. Characterized as 'the tricky traingle' by Winter (2006) the notion of this traingualar relationship among the key stakeholders of educational life worlds was the area of major concern for the middle level leader. Transcending from the two dimensional outlook of school affair, this participant

advocated that a middle level leader required to possess multi-dimensional outlook and required to be very cautious and attentive to all aspects of school administration. As a coordinator he identified that his entire focus remained in maintianing this 3D relationship.

Confirming to the notion of middle level leadership position to be a focul point and a postion of neither top nor of bottom, School I Leader II mentioned:

> *VP (i.e. Vice Principal) is partly a teacher and partly an administrator, first point of contact for all the stakeholders, a source of information about each and every aspects of school affairs.* (Interview: December, 2011)

For School I Leader II middle level leadership was a position of neither top nor of bottom but of everyone. His narrative of being a vice principal leader was to be the first point of contact for all and this position required to possess information about every aspect of school system that meant, know the teachers, know the students, know the parents / guardians made this position a ubiquitous one. From the lens of activity theory (Banon, 1997; Printey, 2008) that interprets the events an interaction among, persons, events and situations, the degree and intensity of the interaction a leader of middle level perform ultimately shaped the perception and experience of being a leader at that level. Further consolidating middle level position as a position of vital significance where one required dealing with all School I Leader II mentioned;

> *When I perceive my role in this post, it appears to me that I am like a middle manager maintaining link between teachers and students, in-charges and teachers and teachers, students and the management.* (Protocol: March, 2012)

According to this participant, being a vice principal was like maintaining the link between and among several stakeholders all at a same time. This nature of

assistant principalship made it a position of ubiquitous status. This need to participate in a multi-level of interaction if observed from activity theory (Banon, 1997; Printey, 2008) indicated that the middle level leaders were the people who had the maximum of interaction with many internal and external actors of school organization and that interaction would contribute in attributing meaning to their existence.

School II Leader II with a bit different tone and diction admitted to the fact that being a middle level leader was a challenging one as it required to work with all sorts of things whether that was academic or non-academic when he said;

> *Being a VP is to perform hosts of roles at a time both academic and non academic. It is really an arduous job.* (Protocol: March, 2012)

This comparison of vice principal roles to be an arduous job referred to its interaction with all the levels and the requirement to be ready to perform all types of tasks whether academic or non-academic where one need to come in contact with multiple stakeholders. In reference to school organization, the middle level position like vice principal required to deal not only with teachers and students but also with parents / guardians, and other stakeholders.

After discussing these different expressions that I considered somehow confirming first theme about the characteristics of the middle level leadership position in school organization, I came to realize this omnipresence or everywhere nature of the position having a kind of absurdity inherent to it. I mean it a kind of absurdity in a sense that there is no preciseness and exactness about the concrete identity of being in the middle position. According to the narratives of my participants, to be a vice principal meant to be everything. And I argue meaning everything leads to meaning nothing when it lacks exactness and preciseness. Therefore, I understood this position

as the situation like that of the two characters of ' Waiting for Godot' where they kept waiting but had no clear idea who they were waiting for.

A Bridge, a Ladder as well as a Sandwich in Between

The second theme that emerged from the data was about the analogy of their role with bridge, ladder and sandwich. They repeatedly mentioned as the role of bridge and ladder. As they had to remain in the grey zone of neither top nor of bottom sometimes they felt being sandwiched among and between the expectations of the lower level leaders and the pressure of the top level authorities and thus finding themselves sandwiched between two opposite forces.

To support their claims of middle level leadership being a position of a bridge, a ladder, as well as a sandwich sometimes, they expressed their takes with different words. Some of the representative narratives they made in this connection I present quoting themselves.

School II Leader II elaborated his analogy of being vice principal as he mentioned;

> *I call my position as a bridge between teachers and management. I am mandated to coordinate all the academic activities of the school and more concerned with conduction day to day administration at the school, reporting all the activities to the principal. I channel all the concerns to the desk of the principal.* (Interview: January, 2012)

This proposition of comparing the role of middle level leader with the bridge makes it a connecting task that establishes the relationships among different stakeholders. The participant here used the metaphors of 'bridge' to reflect his being a vice principal. As a bridge he claimed his position to link the opposite ends. At the same time, the participant also narrated his position to be just a medium of channeling

the concerns toward the principal. This expression I found expressing the limitations of being in middle. As he was there just to 'report' the principal, he was there for nothing particular. I understood his position lacking the purpose.

Another participant also used the analogy of 'bridge' to reflect the being of middle level leadership from a different perspective than what the previous participant expressed as School I Leader II mentioned;

> *When I perform this job as vice-principal in this school what I feel is I am acting as a bridge between the management and the subordinates. Whenever there is a problem the problem directly doesn't go to our chairman it comes to me. I analyze whether those problems are meant to be taken to the chairman or that should be dismissed over there. For me it is easy as well because you are a bridge if you can negotiate between two parties then you are always in winning position.* (Interview: December, 2011)

This participant too characterized his position to be a linking position like that of a bridge that linked the management with the other people. However, this participant had the opportunity to filter the problem there and took this position as an opportunity to connect two ends. The difference between middle level leaders of school II and I was apparent in the very way they understood their position. School II Leader II expressed the same role with a tone of frustration whereas School I Leader II considered that to be an opportunity. The difference was clear in the way they acted the first was not in a position of making any decision on his own whereas the second could decide which of the things to be forwarded to the upper authority or which of them could be dismissed right at the point.

School III Leader II also considered his being a coordinator there like a bridge but in a bit different sense as he relates that as *'a stepping stone'* to reach to higher position. The bridge for him was a link for him to cross the current position.

Attached with the idea of middle level leadership being a position of a bridge, a link and a medium, the thing attached with it was its being a position of tension and was not pleasant all the times. School II Leader II mentioned;

> *Sometimes, I feel this post is like a zone of tension because the teachers pressure to table certain issues of their interest and then they want to get their proposal to be implemented through me and again I get pressure from the upper body to have a compromise on the teachers proposal.* (Interview: January, 2012)

For School II Leader II it is a 'zone of tension' where he was at pressure from both sides. The teachers wanted that their concerns addressed through him but the management too wanted to make compromise in the proposal they floated through him. This situation he further elaborated;

> *At times I feel my posting is a zone of tension as it locates me in the middle space as if I am a motorist in the middle of the road with busy traffics on my both sides. There are occasions when I feel sandwiched between two strong forces; teachers on the one hand and SMC on the other.* (Protocol: March, 2012)

Comparing the position with a motorist in a busy traffic he characterized the being a vice principal a cumbersome job where he felt being pressurized and sandwiched within the tussle between teachers and management. From the theoretical lens of activity theory (Printey, 2008) that evaluates the interactions, the middle level

position was a role that required active interactions with different stakeholders. It was a position that demanded to remain active all the times.

I came across many absurdities inherent in the position of middle level. As they expressed their roles with different analogies like 'bridge', 'ladder', 'sandwich', and 'zone of tension', I could see the conflicting understandings about being leaders at the middle. The question to ponder was the inherent reasons that gave different experiences of being leaders at the middle. However, I could see the 'Waiting for Godot' analogy in action in a sense that experience of being at middle level was something very absurd to capture as its purpose of existence meant different in different contexts.

A Jack of All Trades

The third theme that emerged to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at middle level was about the skills and competencies required to perform this role. As the earlier discussions led to consider the middle level role to be abstract and confusing, I could anticipate the competencies required would be also vague. Here I discuss some the representative expressions that three middle level participants expressed regarding the competency and skills required to perform their role of being leaders in the middle positions.

School II Leader II understood his position requiring a multitude of skills when he stated;

> *It's indeed a painstaking job to take up a host of roles as a good teacher, academic monitor, motivator, counselor, evaluator, administrator and rapporteur, to mention a few. I have trying to be a jack of all trades in running the daily academic activities of the school as the second-man in the school's driving seat.* (Protocol: March, 2012)

This expression meant it that being a leader at middle was to be able to everything as there was no activity he did not have to do. He articulated a list of activities that he had to perform. This participant elaborated the requirement to perform the host of roles beginning from a teacher to rapporteur. It raised a very important issue regarding the competency requirements for being a middle level leader. Probably, this type of endless list of tasks forced the leaders at these middle level positions feel more pressured and exploited. This experience of being the leaders at middle level with a 'know it all' attitude made this position a position that many people viewed with certain prejudices like in a short story by William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) entitled 'Mr. Know All' where the narrator had a set of multiple prejudices before encountering the lead character. My argument of middle level roles lack of precision and exactness was further confirmed by this expression.

School II Leader II further clarified the list of things he had to do all at a same time when he mentioned;

> *I get lots of pressure to handle, most of things all at once like dealing with parents, switching immediately with the students' problem, again go for monitoring the day to day classes of the teachers, and other academic activities. So I feel under pressure to do all the works in a short span of time.* (Interview: January, 2012)

This expression I could see further supporting the requirement to be able to do everything and the pressure caused out of it. Working in a school organization where there had been blur demarcation of responsibilities demanded the middle level leaders to feel panicked and frustrated.

Similar pessimistic opinion regarding the requirement to be the jack of all trades was expressed School III Leader II when he characterized his being a coordinator as;

I teach like other teachers, do all other tasks, even look after the administration. (Protocol, August, 2012)

In the similar tone like that of middle level leader of School II, the coordinator leader of School II also experienced it to be an *'extra burden'* in a sense that it was an additional task that he was performing as if this identity was the secondary one which came only after being a teacher and where he was required to do all other tasks. This skills and competency requirement for being leaders at the middle level I found positively confirming with skills theory who mentioned that a person at middle level of management required a perfect blend of technical, human and conceptual skills (Katz, 1955). However, I doubt on the human fallibility and limitation to possess all skills equally and perfectly.

This discussion about the competencies and skills required in the position of being situated at the middle level, I found the lead trope ' Waiting for Godot' in action from the perspective that the absurdity prevailed due to the need to possess all skills which probably an individual could hardly master. My argument is an attempt to acquire everything leads to acquiring nothing.

A Position Requiring Multiple Intelligences

The fourth theme I constructed to explicate the lived experience was about the intelligence required to perform the multitudes of competencies elaborated in the third theme. Considering the versatile nature of middle level leadership position that required a range of diverse competencies and switching between different skills demanded the leaders to apply multiple intelligences. This theme was built from the common experience of all three participants. Middle level leadership being an omnipresent position, required bridging different stakeholders and even being a type of Mr. Know All position demanded that the person decorated with this designation

was laced with multiple intelligences. Some of the representative expressions that provide evidence to establish this idea as a thematic expression of the lived experience of being middle level leaders are as mentioned below.

School I Leader II underscored the need for possessing set of skills comprising both interpersonal and communication skills as quite essential in executing the role of middle level leadership. With an interest to dignify his being of a vice principal School I Leader II mentioned;

> *One must have very good interpersonal skills and negotiation skill because he is the middle man and does the work of bridging. Many incidents have happened in different schools this is because of lack of skills with the vice-principal. A vice-principal has is in most difficult situations. He neither belongs to management nor belongs to the other staff. He is in the middle and sometimes he has to bear the blow from the management and on the other hand from the teachers as well.* (Interview: December, 2011)

This expression elaborated the need for possessing multiple skills that ultimately determined the success of vice principal as a middle level leader. He attributed different failure cases in other schools primarily because of the vice principal's lack of interpersonal and negotiation skills. He further explained to the underlying reason of being skilled with different competencies because of the very nature of being placed in the middle where blows were possible from both ends i.e. from the management and form the teachers. This saying of participant was positively versed with the contextual multiple intelligence theory in which Cheng (2000) mentioned that an educational leader in the current time of complexities needed to possess a set of social, technological, social, political and cultural intelligences.

School I Leader II elaborated the virtues of being leader at the middle level as he mentioned;

> *The essence of being the vice-principal is interpersonal skill and negotiation skill in the sense that vice principal is a bridge between the management and other parties. And yes, qualification obviously matters, without having qualification how can one become the vice-principal but these two (interpersonal skills and negotiation skills) are the two major qualities that a vice principal requires.* (Interview: December, 2011)

This idea of evaluating the middle level leadership position as a position requiring the skills to do everything was prevalent in other participants but they took it from the darker side as a need to know everything whereas School I Leader II saw this as an opportunity to further improve his skills. To consolidate the requirement to apply different perspectives to solve the problems with different way outs School II Leader II mentioned;

> *I resort to multiple ways to deal with everyday problems and find a way out. When interests differ, it creates ways for conflict; either with students or teachers. The best thing to do under such situation is a tactful application of intellect and wisdom.* (Protocol: March, 2012)

This participant readily agreed to the fact that middle level leadership was prone to facing conflicts and managing conflicts required a tactful application of both intellect and wisdom and would be possible not only with prescribed rules and system but needed to be innovative to find solutions that were amicable to the particular context. This expression added to what School I Leader II propositioned and further strengthened to the claim of middle level leadership required to possess a set of skills from all three skills domain viz. conceptual, human and technical as elaborated in the

skills theory of leadership by Katz (1955) and contextual multiple intelligence theory of Cheng (2000) where he mentioned a set of five intelligences (technological, social, cultural, economic, and political intelligences) to be imperative for an educational leader of modern time of complexities.

Further clarifying the need to frequent switching between the tasks that required while working as a vice principal School II Leader II expressed;

> *I sometimes feel trapped in a complex web of works that happen together all of a sudden. To cite one incident, once I had to deal with parents on their wards' academic status, resolve a fight case among students, arrange substitution classes, draft a notice to parents ahead of power cut, monitor the classes and so on simultaneously.* (Protocol: March, 2012)

This lived experience narratives of the participant further confirmed the need to possess multiple intelligences all at a same time. It required to switching between the tasks and demanded that a leader at this level needed to be quick like a spark. The owner of this position needed to be a master of multi-tasking which expected to the application of multiple intelligences all at same time. This expectation probably exerted high pressure to the persons on middle level to experience the very absurdity, nothingness and added to the pessimism of their being.

I observed this claim of requiring multiple intelligences making this position further absurd. And this absurdity I compared using the analogy 'Waiting for Godot' in a sense being leaders at middle exhibited the relative absence of exactness, preciseness and this resulted into their experience of pessimism, uncertainty and nothingness giving them more pain than ecstasy.

A Few Privileges but Abundant Burden; a Herculean Task

The fifth theme I created to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at middle level primarily emerged from the narratives of middle level leaders of School II and III who experienced and interpreted being a middle level position an enigmatic one elaborating the vice principalship as an experience where the privileges were minimum compared to the burden the bearer of his designation had to carry. I found this 'darker side' of being middle level leaders more prevalent in their discourse. School II Leader II used the term Herculean task when the mentioned;

> *The worrying matter in my leadership role is that I can exercise limited authority. At a time when teachers turn up disobedient to implement my decisions, albeit good, I am left helpless. Managing conflict at school is a Herculean task.* (Protocol: March, 2012)

Considering the ongoing practice of the very school where managing conflict was a key responsibility what this participant perceived was convincing to me. This was probably the very feeling of being helplessness that made the position of vice principals a relegated, an unwanted and limited it to the aid to the principal where one was not allowed to think creatively rather bound to do just what was asked. This idea of School II Leader II is similar to what Marshal (1992) mentioned as assistant principals being just assistant to the principal.

School III Leader II also expressed that he had to do more than what he was entitled to do. I found him expressing his resentment for his requirement to bear all the responsibilities primarily due to the absence of main leader most of the time (Field Note, 2012). He seemed unhappy to teach like a full time subject teacher and work as the coordinator with just a little more incentive that he received as coordinator. Here I found motivation theory in action which stated the hierarchy of needs from

physiological to self esteem from lower to higher level (Maslow, 1943) and the leaders here in middle level complained about the fulfillment of the basics of the need.

This attribution of being leader at middle level for me was equal to nothingness. Nothingness in the sense that comparing the privileges they received the responsibilities they bore was heavier. From this perspective, I found the analogy ' Waiting for Godot' prevalent in the leaders at middle level as they were waiting for something that would possibly never arrive meaning they were hanging with nothingness.

A Position Grown of Compulsion

The sixth theme I developed to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at middle level was about the need for middle level position in school organizations. Through this theme I attempted to question the existence of middle level positions. My argument about the absence of preciseness and exactness of middle level position was further consolidated by this theme. Some of the representative expressions justifying the theme of middle level leadership position as a result not of need but of compulsion were as discussed below.

At the level of realization middle level leaders of School II and III made some bold expressions in this connection. One of the most direct expressions supporting this theme was from School III Leader II who said;

> *As a middle man with a very limited authority I am the leader because of the absence of main leader. I teach like other teachers, do all other tasks, even look after the administration but both sides that is the teachers and management just make more demands of me. So, I feel I am hanging on a rope looking the garbage down, neither can I leave the rope nor I can move ahead.*

Pity on me! I don't know I am teacher or a middle level leader! (Protocol: August, 2012)

I understood this expression manifesting the state of mind of being a coordinator leader who considered himself metaphorically in a state of neither here nor there. He was in such an entanglement that he could neither leave nor move ahead. With limited authority, he could hardly feel that he was a leader. This made him doubt whether he was a teacher or a leader. He just represented the leadership role from what (Spillane, 2006) termed to be the leadership plus aspect. As the top leader of the school remained most of the time out of school, he was a supposed leader there. He regretted for being termed to be a leader considering the works he had to do there. This fatalistic thinking prevailed and even heavily influenced this participant who all the time referred to the strong and powerful leader with clear-cut instructions only could lead a school successfully. This feeling of utter pessimism expressed by the coordinator leader confirmed to what Mertz and McNelly (1999) and Cranston (2007) attributed the emergence of studies on middle level leaders not because of any planned and careful practice but fundamentally due to the growing school population and principals' failure to oversee the entire activities alone.

Even the most satisfying participant (School I Leader II) sometimes felt that he had no role and part to play as if this position itself was as such not coming off the need but of the trend or compulsion when he said;

Being vice principal is not completely devoid of unpleasant experiences, either. Many a time, I have found a person in this post to be a mute spectator having little or no access to managerial part. (Protocol: March, 2012)

This metaphoric confession of being a 'mute spectator' would be a strong indication to be a sign of that the middle level leadership roles were the byproducts of

the system rather than something carefully designed. All three participants of middle level leaders claimed that at certain stage they felt that they lacked the minimum required authority. The presence of positions but the absence of the very authority meant that middle level leadership positions came off compulsion from the internal force and external trends, The internal forces could be to what Cranston (2007) termed to be the growing school population and the principal's failure to oversee all the matters alone. The external agency could be the trend that every school had this role so it needed to be there as well. Here I found all three participants admitting to the lack of authority as the major hurdle for obstructing the performance of their middle level positions. Some typical expressions that supported this proposition were as mentioned.

> *The worrying matter in my leadership role is that I can exercise limited authority. I usually forward my action plans to the principal's desk before I switch to its execution. This is not because of my weak decision making capacity but because of restricted authority. I am entitled to authority, neither less or more.* (Protocol: March, 2012) School II Leader II
>
> *I am not the authority to make financial decisions.* (Interview: December, 2011) School I Leader II
>
> *Here my role of the teacher leader in this position is a helpless, neither I can mediate appropriately nor I am empowered to lead strongly. I am a middle man with a very limited authority.* (Protocol: March, 2012) School II Leader II

All these expressions articulated by the middle level leaders under discussion supported in speculating the understanding they experienced being leaders at the middle level. For all three participants 'limited authority' was one of the barriers of their position that restricted them to perform to the best of their capacity. Form one

way or other every participant was found to entertain the limited authority that resulted into their 'dark side' of being middle level leaders.

There lacked the sense of purpose for creating middle level leadership positions. They came either to follow the trends of other schools or due to the failure of the top level leaders to oversee the school activities. This absence of purpose for me made these positions absurd and making these positions meaningless as meant by the metaphoric trope 'Waiting for Godot' in a sense that middle level positions in the absence of precision and purposefulness were like the characters in Waiting for Godot expecting someone or something that would never come.

Anecdotal Memories: A Mixed Bag

The seventh or the last theme I developed to explicate the lived experience of being middle level leader emerged from the collection of their anecdotal memories during the interview in particular. The specific events that made their memory recalls were different but the message I found was quite coherent and straight forward. The moment that pleased them the most was the moment of success which varied from person to person. For School I Leader II the happiest moments he felt were the times when he could see the empowered and responsible staff and he was really upset when there had been a misunderstanding that caused his students to suffer (Field Note, 2012).

School II Leader II felt very sad when the teachers pretended and did not attend a program that was scheduled with their consent and his moments of joys were the times when he could achieve the results from the planned activities (Filed Note, 2012). Similarly one guardian's blame to him for being dishonest in releasing the fund of scholarship or the doubt in his integrity was the saddest moment for School III

Leader II whereas the time he was proposed for the coordinator by accepting his conditions was the most jubilant (Filed Note, 2012).

I observed the life-worlds of middle level leaders created amid the uncertainty, meaninglessness, relegation, purposelessness, and few moments of happiness. I could see that their anecdotal memories were different to each in events but unique in a sense that they desired to experience the happiness even though their positions gave them more doubts, confusions and bewilderment. This bafflement, perplexity and mystification I preferred comparing with 'Waiting for Godot' a representation of meaninglessness, and futility.

Key Expressions Characterizing Middle Level Leaders

Like in previous chapter, being informed by the methods of researching lived experience (Manen, 1997), I prepared a list of key expressions that came from the interview responses and protocol (written by three middle level leaders) to help further explicate the experience of being leaders at the middle level positions in school organizations. I found the key expressions articulated by the participants of this research were of both negative and positive connotations. But the list was dominated by the negative connotations to the positive ones. Three middle level leaders who participated in this research expressed their lived experience of being leaders using the following key expressions.

Table 3 3

Key Expressions to Characterize the Middle Level Leadership

Participant	Key Expressions
School I Leader II	Collaboration, coordination, noble, hark back, peep into, nostalgia, creativity, managerial, accountable, innovation, sole actor, mute spectator.
School II Leader II	Sandwiched, zone of tension, bossy, test of diplomacy, jack of all trades, privileges and immunities, hard on problem soft on people, Herculean task
School III Leader II	Biasness, absence, flourishes, empowered, helpless, finance, personality, motivation, rectangular, meritocracy, empowered

(Sources: Protocol and Interview, 2011/ 2012)

I found this list of key expression very informative to estimate what and how the leaders in middle layer felt about their own being. As the participant from School I was relatively more comfortable with his being of vice principal, he used majority of the expressions that were of positive intensity like that of collaboration, coordination, noble, creativity, innovation and accountable whereas mentioned very few terms that were somehow with negative intensity like sole actor and mute spectator. Whereas the participants of School II and III as expressed in their key dictions were rather upset and felt distressed about their being.

The Essence of Being Middle Level Leader(s)

The essence is the final product of explication, illumination, disclosure and clarification of the phenomenon under discussion (Dahlberg, 2006). Based on discussion of being leaders at middle positions under seven different themes that I explicated using the metaphor 'Waiting for Godot' as the trope for discussion, I found

that being leaders at middle level was quite an enigmatic experience characterized more with the sense of relegation and purposelessness than . However, I could see three participants understanding and expressing their feelings differently.

School I Leader I, unlike other participants, expressed his exhilaration of being a middle level leader and expressed the charm of being a middle level leader who could connect like a bridge, support like a ladder and moreover he underscored the beauty of being a middle level leader as a position that is accessible to all.

School II Leader II of this study desired and attempted to do his very best but the school leadership structure did not seem favourable for him as he experienced being sandwiched between the pressure of the management to compromise and the expectations of his fellow teachers to make some meaningful difference during his tenure. He felt like walking on a double-edged sword where he had to encounter the defying teachers and irresponsive management all at the same time. He felt really helpless to be a middle level leader with no authentic decision making capacity.

School III Leader II experienced an enigma of being a coordinator but continued gaining experience of it expecting this understanding and experience of being a coordinator would help him prepare to assume leadership roles for the future days. He felt like a disabled person to be in such a hanging position with responsibility without authority.

All the participants, in my observation, highlighted the significance of being the middle level leaders for a school organization. They characterized the position of middle level leaders like vice principal and coordinator to be an omnipresent one. This notion of being significant for school organization constituted the shared experience of being the middle level leaders. On the contrary, the actual experience of being the middle level leaders was contingent to the school culture, the leadership

structure and their say in decision making process. Two of the participants felt relegated and marginalized and just kept on hanging around as they had no immediate alternative in the absence of favorable school culture and leadership structure whereas one of the middle level leaders expressed being motivated probably because the work environment was favorable to him. Except one vice principal (School I Leader II) who experienced quite high exhilaration and profound sense of contentment in being what he was, rest of others experienced high level of stress and were not in the mood of elaborating the feats of being the middle level leaders. The thing that haunted them all the time ever was the sense of marginalization. They had to confine themselves with the routine sort of job. They had either very little or no role in decision making process. Thus, the experience of being the middle level leader as of vice principal, coordinator and wing in-charges, in my understanding, morphed into a ‘jack of all trades’ who must deal with multiple responsibilities simultaneously. It was probably due to this haziness that the middle level leaders find themselves pulled in many directions. They expressed of being entangled in enigmatic situations. This enigma and lack of preciseness, purposefulness and exactness I compared with 'Waiting for Godot'.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter first I conceptualized the metaphor 'Waiting for Godot' to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at middle levels. I began the chapter with brief profile sketch of each three participants in order to contextualize my discussion. Then I elucidated the lived experiences of being leaders at middle level in school organizations under study with the help of seven different themes which I developed from the data that I collected primarily through interviews and protocols. I discussed each theme in detail with a focus to how and why the participants

experienced as they expressed with support of my reflective field notes and theoretical lens like activity theory, motivation theory, skills theory and other literature from different authors. I also explicated the key expressions that came from the interview and protocol texts to consolidate my argument of being leaders at middle position was an experience lacking preciseness, purposefulness and exactness giving them a sense of relegation and marginalization. Throughout the chapter, I maintained the phenomenological tradition of researching with focus to the phenomenon of being leaders at middle and remained subjective during my discussion. Contingent to the work environment and the autonomy granted to them, I concluded that being leader at the middle level was an enigmatic experience with a sense of relegation and marginalization as the dominant force.

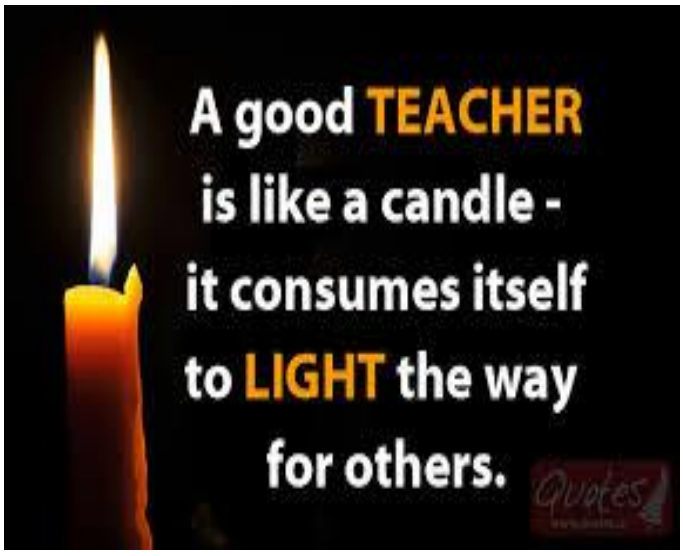
CHAPTER VI

BEING AT THE BOTTOM: BURNING LIKE A CANDLE

In this chapter I explicate the lived experience of being leaders at the bottom strata of school organization in the form of classroom teachers. I assume and argue the teachers as the leaders in a sense that they are the actual people who are directly associated with delivering the inputs to the students. In order to illumine the lived experience of being teacher leaders I conceptualize the metaphor 'burning like a candle'. I use this trope to metaphoric understanding of being at the bottom level of school organization. I begin this chapter with a brief profile sketch of three participants (a female and two male teachers) in order to contextualize the setting where they work with an assumption that what they

The Sanskrit word guru stems from the verbal root gri, which means 'to invoke' or 'to praise'. (Lowitz & Datta, 2004: 84)

Guru: *Teacher. The letter 'gu' stands for darkness and 'ru' stands for that which removes darkness. 'Guru' implies one who removes darkness of ignorance. T*he *term is a combination of the two words gu (darkness) and ru (light), so together they mean 'divine light that dispels all darkness. Guru is the light that disperses the darkness of ignorance.* (Murray, 1997:231)



mean by being at middle level largely depends on the context where they work. This chapter is meant to answer the third emergent research question that aims to answer the ontological meaning of being educational leaders at the ground level of school organization. Throughout this chapter I maintain my argument that being leaders at the bottom level of institutional organization is largely a bitter experience with very little opportunities to grow something like a burning candle; lighting others but finishing oneself. I have developed seven themes to illumine lived experience of being leaders at the bottom and substantiated each theme with live data generated through interview, protocol, reflective field notes that I discuss with support to different literature about teacher leadership and theoretical lens (motivation theory, activity theory, new science approach, and distributed leadership). At the end, I draw the very essence of being leaders at the bottom level of school organization.

Profile of Bottom Level Leaders

Here I present a short profile of three participants who represent being educational leaders at the bottom strata of school organization. The purpose of this profile is to sketch the personal portrayal of the participants and to give a short context of the school where they work.

School I Leader III

The only female participant of this study was a young lady in her twenties. She was in this profession for seven years and was a bachelor's degree graduate in humanities with English and Sociology as major subjects. She took the classes in middle school where she conducts classes for English language and Social Studies. She considered subject teachers to be the most crucial persons in terms of actual delivery of school mission and philosophy. She was working in that school for last 5 years. She aspired to be a good teacher in the future and gave continuation to her own

studies as she had enrolled for the master's degree in Sociology. I found her possessing unique experience of being a subject teacher and shared narratives of her joys and satisfaction, woes and agonies.

School II Leader III

A male research participant of 33 years of age, the subject teacher leader of school II was a master's degree graduate in English Literature. He was in this profession of teaching learning for more than 10 years and he had been teaching in that school as an English teacher for last seven years. He considered subject teachers to be the key in terms of school success and student achievement which ultimately resulted into school effectiveness. Instructing the SLC level students, he thought to be the most critical of the responsibilities that he had been bearing. He aspired to bear the formal leadership roles and attributed the school success as the collective effort of all the people involved. For me his narratives of being a teacher were illuminating.

School III Leader III

A secondary level teacher of 35 years of age, this research participant was rather a shy person who was quite hesitant to provide his experiences of being a bottom level leader. At the start he was not ready to admit the fact that he was a leader when he said ' I am a teacher, I am not a leader'. He was a bachelor's degree graduate in humanities taking sociology as major and had been in this profession for last 10 years. It had been five years he was working in the school where he began as a lower secondary level and later got promoted to secondary level. At the time of data collection, he instructed social studies to the students of grades VIII, IX and X. He shared his experience of being a teacher uniquely.

Lived Experience of Being Bottom Level Leader

I found researching the lived experience of the teachers who were placed at the bottom of the hierarchy of school management as one of the most action sensitive tasks of pedagogical value as referred by van Manen (1997). It was of pedagogical significance in the sense the teachers were the most responsible people to actualize the entire process of teaching learning. However, from the interaction with three different teachers with no typical position word attached to them, there emerged many new ideas that were quite different and even sometimes contradicted with each other. I understood the contradiction a natural and resulted primarily due to the difference in context from one to another. Nevertheless, for me the essence what those teachers at the foundational level of school management commonly experienced was uniquely regular.

During the discourse with these participants, they univocally asserted that being teacher was the most sensitive profession but the irony I found was that they were almost non-existent in the view of the administration. In the following texts I explicate the lived experience of being the bottom leader leaders as expressed by three different subject teachers of institutional schools clustered under seven different themes and discuss each theme from different perspectives and relate each with the trope of discussion I proposed right at the outset of this chapter i.e. burning like a candle.

From 'Leader of Leaders' to 'a Teacher not a Leader'

The first theme I framed to explicate the lived experience of bottom level leaders was about the ontology of being teacher in an institutional school. One of the striking experiences that formed the character of subject teacher in institutional schools under study was the confronting idea of 'who am I?'. The notion of identity

regarding the subject teacher leadership at institutional schools varied from the idea of just being a teacher to that of being a super-leader meaning leader of leaders. This paradoxical identity articulated the tension in the identity of the operational level people there at the foundational status of institutional school structures. I understood this identity crisis begetting the germs of frustration and taking the form of epidemic resulting into the struggle for identity. Signifying the sensitivity of being a teacher School III Leader III stated;

> *Being a teacher is such a responsible post in itself that you don't require any additional posts to work as we are the leaders of leaders of tomorrow. Actually, a teacher knows more about the child than anybody else. As a teacher I am a very responsible person over here, an important person in terms of guiding students. This is the source of inspiration for me to work and provide the best of what I have to the students.* (Protocol: August, 2012)

This participant's acknowledgement of a teacher being the most responsible position in terms of guiding students, I found injecting the very positive source of inspiration enabling him to consider the 'leader of leaders'. By terming oneself 'leader of leaders' he was probably indicating the fact that his students were going to lead the nation in the future from their respective fields of achievement and as the teacher of those students he was the leader of leaders. This notion of teachers as the actual leaders is confirmed by Leithwood (2003) who mentioned that being visible in the school was an important dimension of leadership. This mode of thinking of this participant I understood so holy that it deserved terming the most fundamental objective of selecting the profession of teaching. Here I found the teacher as candle metaphor in better harmony. This idea of teaching position to be a position of giving

rather than anything else was expressed by School I Leader III in a form of a witty Biblical saying when she said;

> *The only joy of living is joy of giving. And I am very happy that I am able to give something to my students.* (Protocol: August, 2012)

These lines as expressed by the teacher leader were very appealing to me. I considered these statements to be appealing in a sense that she considered the teaching profession to be a profession of high moral and ethical value that rested on the principle of giving as the source of earthly happiness. Her contentment in being able to give something to others was what teaching profession has been characterized historically and compared with a burning candle that enlightens others but finishes oneself. Unlike other professional trades, teaching as a profession is inspired and guided by this notion of serving the mankind. I observed these lines confirming to our conventional wisdom that preferred giving with thousand hands whereas receiving with hundred. However, as a profession and it required ensuring the subsistence of its practitioners. And right here there came the concerns of doubting oneself regarding one's identity. This is what School III Leader III questioned as;

> *I feel I hardly get an opportunity to innovate, rather I feel I am like a robotics just bound to follow the programmed instructions. Here I think I am not a leader, I am teacher. But I understand it very clear that a subject teacher is the most important persona in a school leadership hierarchy and if this fact is recognized, the institution progresses.* (Interview: April, 2012)

This remark of School III Leader III I found articulating the entirety of being a teacher in an institutional school set up. This participant I found to be very ironic to the existing culture of setting boundaries to the subject teachers and making them do just what the establishment wanted to happen through different said and unsaid rules

and procedures. In the expressions above I could see the resentment of this participant for his roles where he felt he had no autonomy to innovate. He seemed very critical to the existing system of the school that treated him like a machine to perform the instructed programs only. I understood him criticizing the school culture where a subject teacher was made to perform just as desired by the so called expert leaders made them think and feel that they were not the leaders but just the teachers. This was probably an expression of utter dissatisfaction resulted due to the toxic school culture (Peterson & Deal, 1998). It was possibly the byproducts of the poor leadership practice where the leadership plus aspect could be seen in number but the practice aspect was abscond from the scene if it were observed from the lens of distributed leadership as elaborated by Spillane (2006).

This ontological understanding of teaching position to be a position of holiest motifs of giving others and the articulation of the presence of joy of giving I observed in consonance with the metaphor of ‘ burning like a candle’ that symbolized the sense of sacrifice and the desire to serve others; a move from dark to light.

Appetite for Appreciation, Recognition and Value

The second theme that emerged off my data was about the discrepancies between what the teachers expected and what they actually received. All three teacher participants of this study raised the issue of appreciation, recognition and value. Though whatever happened in schools, it happened through the teachers, these teacher leaders at the bottom level hardly got recognition of their selfless contribution. It was paradoxical to note that the credit of success went to the leaders of higher strata whereas the debit of failure was poured upon the subject teachers in particular. During the process of collecting information regarding the lived experience of the leaders at the bottom of school structure, the participants expected their desire to be valued

through recognition and appreciation. However, not all three schools had that climate enabling them to feel as they expected. This concern of teachers could be possibly interpreted in terms of the theoretical lens of new science as explained by Wheately (2006) where she discusses that human beings want to be treated like humans not like machines. Here follow some of the representative expressions as articulated by these teacher leaders through the protocol and the interview.

This notion of appetite for being valued as a responsible school member I found positively experienced by the teacher leader of School I whereas the leaders of school II and III though did not mention explicitly but they expressed it symbolically that the school culture was not conducive enough for them to feel so. School I Leader III who claimed the school culture and climate to be very friendly with a vibrating work environment mentioned;

> *Here we meet with the management, administration & the board members and all hear our voice. We are really heard here. Every one is a part of family and every person has right to say these things which is in their mind and thought and for the progress of the school. Everyone has right to come and share the past come and share with the board members. I am valuable in same way from the prospective of the management and academic field and so from my side as well. I am very satisfied with my management and academic field and I take me myself a valuable person in this school.* (Interview: December, 2011)

This idea of being valued by giving space to the voice of every teacher, the ease of access with the management team and the opportunity of expressing ideas freely for the progress of the school organization as experienced by this leader level III of the institutional school sounded like in the book of healthy school culture (Peterson & Deal, 1998). The concept of learning organization where everyone

received the opportunity to grow as advocated by Senge (1990) could be anticipated in the expression of School I Leader III. This was what Wheately (2006) emphasized to be the desired impact of leadership behavior in the followers from the new science perspective that paid attention to human sentiments in particular. This was what Spillane (2006) justified to be the potential benefits of distributed leadership practice aspect; coordination, collaboration and collectivity. This elaboration of envious work environment available in School I left many questions to ponder. However, School I Leader III I found answering that as she indicated that she was allowed the autonomy, she was valued as a teacher and she was recognized there as an important persona.

School II Leader III indicating the work environment where there were occasional differences also assumed that everyone wanted to be valued and appreciated when he stated;

> *It happens, sometimes it happens. We have to go to ask something and if they don't listen to us of if they don't take it seriously. That time makes us feel little aghast. Even we say something good but they are not taking seriously then what is the use of going them and suggesting them? That is the bitter experience or truth of any private institution where everybody goes and suggest them but they hardly take it seriously.* (Interview: January, 2012)

This opinion forwarded by the research participant probably reflected the underestimation the top level management in particular exhibited upon the teachers. It hurt to them and potentially resulted into the defiance in the long run. Therefore, I considered it convincing that the new sience perspective of management as elaborated by Wheatley (2006) emphasized the need to value, recognize and appreciate the human endeavors.

School III Leader III also maintained the similar concern indicating that the enviornment there in School III was somehow missing in terms of recognizing, appreciating and valueing the teacher as human beings when he says;

> *For a teacher to be valued as a teacher leader he/she must be granted enough freedom and the teacher's personal concerns should be also addressed.*
>
> (Interview: April, 2012)

This participant articulated his desire of receiving enough freedom for being a productive personnel there in the school organization. This I think was the true spirit of the new science perspective (Wheatly, 2006) and learing organizations (Senge, 1990) that emphasized the need for the recognization and appreciation of the activities of the teachers would result into better productivity since it provoked the self actualization needs as elaborated in theoery of motivation (Maslow, 1943).

This desire of being appreciated, recognized and valued therefore made a common experience of being a bottom level leader. The school where the teacher leaders felt and experienced that they were appreciated for their efforts, recognized as an integral part of system and valued for being an active contributor to the school objectives, they were found to be in high spirit indicating the positive work climate there in the school whereas the teachers experienced the effects of toxic culture and exihibited low morale where the situation was reverse.

Here too I found the trope ‘burning like candle’ in execution in a sense that the teachers were all aware about their being, their value and significance. The only expectation they had with the school management and the people in higher level in particular was the recognition of their significance. They expressed their desire of being valued as teacher who were like the canlde burning for others but finishing onself.

School Leadership Structure: A Key Determinant of Teachers' Performance

The third theme I framed to illumine the lived experience of being leaders at the bottom level of school organization was about the leadership structure of the school and its effect on teachers' performance. The main argument of this theme was how a teacher experienced being at operational level largely depended on the leadership strucuter of that particular school. This thematic concern of leadership structure consitituted a major component of the theory of distributed leadership as propelled by Spillane (2006) who discussed distributed leadership in terms of leadership plus ascpect and leadership practice aspect. I observed all three research participants exhibiting an agreement on the significance of leadership structure in influecing their experience of being there. Here I discuss some representative expressions in reference to leadership structure and its effect on teachers' being there.

I found the participants expressing critical areas within the school leadership strutcture that directly influenced their being there. One of such areas was the matter of who assumed the leadership role. It referred to whether the top and middle level leaders were from the BODs or outsiders. They probably meant to say that the school where the leadersip role was performed by the active participation by the BOD members, it had a better work environment and the bottom level leaders or teachers got an opportunity to be evaluated in terms of their strengths and weaknessess. In this connection one of the remarks made by School I Leader III I considered noteworthy as she highlighted the postive part of leadership structure of the school indicating its positive influcence on the teachers as a whole. She mentioned;

> *We have a friendly leadership structure for everyone working there. Here is no sense of hierarchy. It is not a school with an individual ownership but of a group and two representatives are all the time present here as chairman and*

VP. A team of two members that is what we know about the management. So, it is not an institution of a single individual. (Interview: December, 2011)

School I Leader III emphasized two important highlights about the leadership structure in the school. The first matter she mentioned was that the school was not of a particular single individual or just of few individuals. It was run by a group. She was porbably meaning it to be a brand. As a result, the teachers did not suffer from the possible conflicts within the school owners. It also helped to run the school with a sense of better security feeling. Similary the regular presence of two people from the group in the top and middle levels of leadership possibly made it a credible institution in terms of leadership plus and practice aspects as mentioned by Spillane (2006). Furthermore, it positively contributed in enhancing the motivation standard of the workers by satisfying their higher order needs as argumented by motivation theory (Maslow, 1943). However, I observed the bottom level leaders of School II and III unaware about the group dynamics of the school establishment or they had no clear idea regarding who were the founders, investers, and who actualy hold the command of school operation. For them it was the middle level leader in particular who was the nearest authority to communicate with. But as detailed in the lived experience narratives of middle level leaders who were promoted from among the teachers or did have no share in the school establishment fund or were not the BOD members, it was the sense of relegation that prevailed dominantly. For the bottom level leaders of School II and III, they had no first hand experience of dealing with the founder members or BODs that resulted into their differences with the middle level leader in particular. That was probably why both the teacher leaders of these schools strongly maintained for having a strong hold of the main leader. This was articulated when School II Leader III expressed;

> *The main leader must be a strong one. Frequent change of people in administration makes it difficult and it is a reality here. In the absence of good working environment and the presence of many authorities, it is really a very difficult task working in a private school.* (Protocol: February, 2012)

School III Leader III expressed his distress in working in an environment where there were too many people to instruct as authority rather than to motivate as leaders. This probably exerted undue pressures on the teachers and with the absence of clear chain of command, it made really difficult to work in a private school. This experience of Leader III made him desire for the main leader as a strong one. His referral for a strong main leader hopefully indicated for a leader who could both instruct and motivate. This expression in terms of theoretical link can be seen from the work culture (Peterson & Deal, 1998) who underscored the need to maintatin a positive work culture by eliminating the toxic culture and motivation theory of (Maslow, 1943) who indicated for the need to pay attention to different needs positioned at different hierachy.

I found this articulation acknowledging the leadership structure leaving an effect on teachers' performance. I found similar concern raised by School II Leader III when he mentioned;

> *While selecting the authorities, the administration should know the voice of the teachers to find the right man for right place. Just having many posts alone won't solve the problem rather they would generate further new problems but what is required is the strong leader who is commanding and who can decide immediately.* (Interview: January, 2012)

For the stability and system maintenance in a school School II Leader III expressed against the idea of having many posts alone but stressed the need to opt for

a strong leadership and the strict adherence to the management formula of 'right man in right place'. It was rather ironical to note that this leader wanted to have an autocratic leader with democratic principle. From the perspective of distributed leadership, the focus here was on the practice aspect of leadership than in the plus aspect (Spillane, 2006). This participant might have probably expressed such desire because of his realization that the school lacked an authentic leader who could not only instruct but also help the teachers in their efforts of educating the children.

Here too I find the analogy of ‘teachers like burning candles’ in execution in a sense that probably they considered their sacrifice getting void in the absence of purposeful leadership behavior in the schools where they worked. From this discourse I understood that the teachers in schools were worried about their efforts to be recognized by the leaders and managers. In the presence of strong and committed leaders, they experienced being motivated whereas they expressed being expoited and devalued where the leadership paid no attention to their efforts.

A Sensitive Profession With Overarching Impact

The fourth theme I designed to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at the bottom level was about their understanding about the sensitivity of teaching profession. From the expressions and narratives of three teachers I found it that all the participants understood and characterized teaching to be a profession not for immediate return only but having a long run infuence and they acknowledged that teaching profession was most sensitive considering its long run effect. From this perspective it was the most critical and the most accountable profession that required a great sense of sensitivity. Being a teacher in a school required multilayer accountability; towards the students, the management, the society and after all it is not to be forgotten that being a teacher was a matter of bread earning for the family as

well. Some of the representative voices that carried this thematic concern are exhibited and discussed in brief.

School I Leader III expressed her salient observation of being a teacher relating it not only to an individual but also terming it to be a matter of greater social significance. To elaborate her understanding of being a teacher she mentioned;

> *A teacher in fact is a very different personality in the society. S/he has got very different duties and responsibilities in comparison to others. Human being by nature is different to every individual in every aspect. So, a teacher has to take care of every individual in the class along with the accomplishment of the work as well. A teacher not only teaches and guides the students but learns many things self also. S/he not only shares the knowledge with the students but also gets an opportunity to grab lots of things for own self as well.* (Protocol: April, 2012)

Her observation of being a teacher was sensitive in a sense that as a teacher she needed to learn many things. She maintained it that being a teacher was not just doing the job of teaching but it was all time a learning process. My reflection of being in this profession for two decades also gave me the similar feelings and I think that I learnt more by teaching others than by learning myself and being a teacherwas to restrict onself within the boundries of social mores and customs and all the time be cautious and aware. Taking care of children of different builds and learning apptitudes was a challenging task. This notion of bearing a different social identity as a teacher reflected the social identity of being a teacher. Social identity is a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership(s) (McLeod, 2008). School II Leader III also expressed teaching profession as a sensitive one in the sense of possessing some serious concerns unlike others when he stated;

> *'Learning by doing' is a universally accepted doctrine so as to make teaching a successful profession. One has to guide the learners so impressively that the learners are enforced to follow the quality of the leader.* (Protocol: February, 2012)

This idea of learning by doing was very pertinent and I found it acknowledging the severity of teaching profession that required learning attitude all the time. Since the teacher needed to prepare onself and stand as a role model to exert influence over the students, this profession required a sense of high sensitivity. It was probably this sensitivity that maintained the significance of this profession. It was the source of motivation, and insiration and related with the self actualization or higher order needs as per the hierachy of needs continuum of Maslow (1943).

School III Leader III also observed and shared the similar notion when when stated;

> *The teachers who are lighting (guiding) the students are the main persons or they should play very important role. They should think about the future of the students. It is a kind of leadership role because we are leading the children. Being a teacher is also one of the responsible positions. To teach is to learn.* (Protocol: August, 2012)

School III Leader III maintained his sensitive understanding of being a teacher as a leader as well as a learner. They had to remain sensitive all the times because they had to think about the future of the students. This understanding itself I understood to be quite sensitive in a sense that it had a farreaching impact and demanded that to act as a teacher was not just to think and act on the basis of immediate concern but to keep learning and delivering thinking the future of the students.

This elaboration of teaching as a sensitive profession and required a sense of learning justifies the theme of teaching profession to be matter of greater sensitivity, like a burning candle itself which can be put off with small puff of wind . Unlike in many other trades, a teaching trade required all time learning attitude as propositioned by Senge (1990), and pedagogical sensitivity that referred to the orientedness towards teaching and learning as the central thrust of the people in educational institutions (Manen,1997). Right in this reference too I could see the analogy of 'teacher like burning canlde' in opertion in a sense that their profession demanded them to be all the time worried about the concerns of teaching and learning and they were supposed to perfrom their tasks altruistically with more focus on giving like a candle lighting others but finishing oneself.

A Platform Position With Little Opportunities for Career Growth

The fifth theme I generated to explicate the lived experience of being teacher leader was about the trend of dropout in the schools understudy. I found this emergent theme helpful in understanding the being of teachers in the institutional schools. Teacher turnover was a very frequent phenomenon in all three schools under study. Alhough all the teacher leaders mentioned that they had more than five years of teaching experiences but none of them had passed their all five years in a particular school. This meant a great deal of affairs associated with teachers' experience and perception about different aspects of the school like that of work environment, school leadership effectiveness, incentives and benefits, teachers' satisfaction and other work opportuinities.

The absence of career grwoth was probably the key aspect that contributed in teacher turnover making the work station just like a platform, a place for wait and go. All the participants aspried to assume leadership roles, get promoted, find better

opportunities for their career grwoth. But due to the absence of all these opportunities in the school hopping was a common phenomenon. All these expreiences were not explicitly articulated by the research participants but their existence in a school for a shorter period of time and their dissatisfaction about the ongoing affairs could indicate about their intention of waiting for the things to change. This expression of frustration is exhibited when School III Leader III meantioned:

> *If there is single administration, there will be quick and bold decision and the work will be fast as well as easy. But most of the private institutions are not running in this way. In such school it is very difficult to work as a teacher leader. The teacher leaders working in private institutions are not feeling easy and I am also having the similar feelings.* (Interview: April, 2012)

The participant here related the teacher satisfaction that ultimately supported for teacher retention with the administration and he articulated that he had been like many other teachers of private schools he had a deep sense of difficult feeling. This sense of frustration was a clear indicator of his desire to find a better place and he even inquired with the reseaercher out of line about the possibility of finding a job in a school where I worked for him (Field Note, 2012).

On the other hand the teacher of School I where the work condition and the leadership structure were comparitively more conducive expressed relatively better sense of security and felt to be more settled there than in her previous two schools where she worked. School II Leader III too expressed his desire to find a better and more paying place with possibility of enhancing the career and inquired with the researcher if I coould do any favour to him in finding a better placement for him (Field Note, 2012).

This area of teachers' lived expreince was not recorded but during the informal conversation with all the research participants it ws quite evident that the current school was a place of wait till they found other place better paid and with better potential to have the career growth. This notion of teachers' turnover was a crtical one and had a farraching impact in school management system and could be analyzed from different management theories and perspectives. Ingersoll (2001) identified a list of different factors that caused the high turnover of teachers like low salaries, inadequate support from the school administration, student discipline problems, and limited faculty input into school decision-making. Smithers and Robinson (2005) revealed seven components underpinning the reasons for switiching schools that included the aspects like career development, the characteristics of the new school, dissatisfaction with the present school, location, time, pupils and parents and remarked this tendency to be a matter of severe concern.

This discussion anout the attrition status of teachers I understood having an affinity with the metaphorical trope of ‘burning like a candle’ in a sense that it exhibited the sense of being exahausted, finishing up and the fear and anxiety of finding a relative better place always gave a traumatic (burning) experience to the teachers understudy.

Collective Bargaining for Job Security

The penultimate theme that I proposed to explicate the lived experience of being leaders or teachers at the bottom level was about the political dimension of being a teacher. This was another emeregent theme I considered having greater significance in a sense that this very issue was raised by the top level leaders as the matter of their concern. It was another pertinent area that the research participants did not entertain to be recorded but shared offline and during informal communication.

During the informal communication, the teachers expressed it very clear that it was a sort of compulsion for them to be a part of teacher related organizations fundamentally because of the sense of security. There were many evidences during past few years that the teachers were fired from the school and with the support of teacher union either they were reappointed or compensated. So, it was a type of strong sheild for the teachers to find a protection under the flagship of political party affiliated teacher organizations (Field Note, 2012).

This trend of teachers' affiliation in political party based organization has been even criticised by the teacher union leaders but it had been a fashion that to be a teacher was to be a member of teachers' organization automatically. This notion of teachers' affiliation with unions I found based on job security aspect and I found this concept articulated in the literature of organizational behavior theory of collective barganining as a process of behaviour at group level (Luthans, 2005).

I understood this trend of being affiliated with political party influenced trade unions further adding to the miseries of being teachers. I did not find this affiliation adding to the professional worth of being teacher rather it promoted the conflict and created a situation for teachers to find a union that protects them at the time of need. This compulsion for the teachers to find a flag further aggravated to their experinece of being burnt up. This burning, I argue, can be compared with the metahor ‘ burning like a candle’ in a sense that it contributed in their finishing up.

Anecdotal Memories: Success and Failure

The seventh theme that I designed to explicate the lived experience of being leaders in the bottom of school organization was about their anecdotal memories that they recalled as happy and sad. Like the educational leaders at the top and middle level expressed I found that the teacher leaders at the bottom level of school

organization were jubiliant when they experienced success whereas the failure gave them the sad experience. However, the specific event they preferred recallling as the happy and sad was different. For School I Leader III it was the memories of her privious school where she organized an even successfully and got awarded as the best teacher most jubiliant one and she recalled that moment as:

> *We had a program & I was given the job of organizing the programme and I really did a good job. And the program was really a success. I was given award. I was given a good certificate and I was awarded as best teacher and I really feel that I'm really a good teacher. That was my very sweet experience.* (Interview: December, 2011)

The most motivating factor for this teacher leader was the time when she was awarded as the best teacher for her successful organization of the program. The trust bestowed on her by the establishement for her to organize the program and her devotion enabled her to win the award meaning people work hard when they are valued aligns with what new scicence perspective (Wheatly, 2006) highlights about the people factor.

Similary, School II Leader III remarked his happiest moment as the time when his students who he instructed English scored highest marks in his subject and he remarked that even as the most jubiliant moment as;

> *Last year our students score 95 in English that particularly made me very happy. I was proud of that also.* (Interview: January, 2012)

This teacher related his happiest moment to the time when the achievement of students was the best one when his students scored 95 out of 100. By claiming that he was most jubiliant when his students succeeded, this leader justified himself to be a

true instructional leader as mentioned by Alig-Mielcarek (2003) who identified students learning to be one of the key indicators of instructional leadership.

For School III Leader III again it was the time when he was awarded the best teacher he felt extremely delighted that memory he expressed as;

> *I became very happy that yes before that day I didn't feel myself that I had done the great work I had done something contribution for the school and I hadn't expected so when I listened my name and I was called there in front to receive award at that time I became very happy. It was the happiest moment for me as a teacher here.* (Interview: April, 2012)

Rewards motivated people justifying what Y theory as postulated by McGregor (2005) who assumed that people are inherently active and are motivated when they are rewaded came into action here.

On the other hand the teacher leaders articulated their bitter memories as the times when they were demotivated or experienced something opposite to their expectation. In this regard School I Leader III mentioed her sad memory as:

> *One of the boys in the class, there in my previous school, though the first boy in the class, was very notorious. We teachers were tired of his misdoings. Being a good student we tried to counsel him a lot, we warned him, but nothing worked. So we called his parents for a talk. His mother came and we all were shocked to hear her words. As we tried to explain about her son's activities, she started crying bitterly saying we all dominated him because he belonged to a low caste. As he was from low level family, he was ignored a lot. At that time, I really felt very guilty from the core of my heart for her.*
>
> (Interview: December, 2011)

This moment when she was blamed to be an oppressor was really a sad moment for her. Besides this, for her another moment that gave her the pain was the time to quit her previous school. This probably referred to the human sentiment and attachment people develop and their selfless nature of being teacher as like a 'burning candle' they preferred being consumed up for the sake of lighting others.

School II Leader III mentioned his bad experience as the times when he put a serious concern but that concern remained unaddressed as he stated;

> *Once you go and demand some genuine concern if your concern is not addressed you know that discourages you. Next time you know you think to remain quiet.* (Protocol: February, 2012)

I analyzed this expression of the teacher leader indicative to the reaction of being not heard. It also contributed to the theme of appetite for being appreciated and valued and when it did not happen, it gave the pain to the teacher. This say reflected the new science or people focus (Wheatly, 2006) expectation and the requirement to appeal the higher order needs as of (Maslow, 1943).

School III Leader III narrated a typical event that he recalled as a sad one for him. He expressed that he was really worried and even afraid when he accidently tore the shirt of his student during the course he was attempting to remind him. He mentioned his memories of that event as;

> *It was the matter of three years back when there was one student who was little bit noisy in class. One day while I was teaching in the classroom, he was disturbing other students and I asked him not to make noise during class but he didn't obey me and he didn't listen my voice at all. Then I went near him and he was trying to go away from me. As I tried to catch him in his arms and I just got the sleeves of his shirt. I just pulled slightly but his shirt tore from*

here to there. I was shocked as well as very afraid as I was a new teacher then and I had no idea how to settle the issue. Ultimately what I did was first I convinced him and then talked to his parents. Even though the thing was settled, it still reminds me of the guilty feeling that I went through at the moment and I recall this as a very sad memory of mine while being a teacher. (Interview: April, 2012)

This recall of sad experience relates with the sensitiveness or the human side of being a teacher. Sometimes, the things went wrong even if one did not intend that to happen. In the above narratives, I could see the sincere efforts of a teacher who was so sensitive of an action like tearing the shirt of a student. In this narrative I could read the burning like candle nature of a teacher who felt guilty of his deed and exhorted his every effort to settle the issue.

From this discussion about different facets of anecdotal memories of teachers at institutional schools, what I understood was that the anecdotal memories are different to different contexts. However, those events reflected the experience of being teachers. And I saw the presence of sacrifice, the attitude of more giving and the sensitivity as in the metaphor 'burning like candle' prevalent in the anecdotal narratives as well.

Key Expressions Characterizing Being Leaders at the Bottom Level

Being informed by the method of researching lived experience as envisaged by van Manen (1997) I identified the key expressions during my intensive and iterative reading of the interview transcripts and the protocols expressed and written by the participants of this study. As it meant different to be teachers at different contexts, the dictions were different but I found those expressions representative in capturing the ontology of being leaders at bottom level and these expressions created

the ground to unearth lived experience of being leaders at bottom strata. Here I present and briefly discuss these key expressions that I considered supportive in unearthing the lived experience of being bottom level leaders.

Table 4 4

Key Expressions to Characterize Bottom Level Leadership

Participant	Key Expressions
School I Leader III	Fate, caste discrimination, emotional attachment, plot, hierarchy, trust, responsibility, freedom, satisfaction
School II Leader III	Democratic, autocratic, communication, channel, interference, distraction, defiance, leading, solving problems, empty vessels produce more sounds
School III Leader III	Prestigious, de-motivation, confusion, restriction, family, career, responsible, generate, contribute, leaders

(Source: Protocol and Interview, 2012)

I found the list of key expressions exhibited in Table 4 very informative to draw a portrait of being leaders at the bottom level of school organizations. Moreover, I found these key expressions further supporting my arguments for explicating the lived experience of those leaders under study. School I Leader III understood it as her fate to be a leader and then began searching the beauty within it. Her use of the dictions like plot, discrimination, hierarchy, and fate I considered meaning the negative or the darker side of being positioned at the bottom level of school organizational structure. For the teacher leader of School II being a leader at the foundation was very critical but the school establishment did hardly understand this reality which caused conflict. He expressed his resentment to the existing middle level leader to be a man of word not of action with an analogy of 'empty vessels give more

sound'. Similarly, School III Leader III expressed his being of teacher with different dictions that characterized the profession to be significant but the condition where he worked to be rather confusing. I evaluated the key expressions to be very helpful to explicate the lived experiences of being positioned in the bottom layer of school organization and supporting to my trope ‘burning like candle’ in a sense the teachers expressed their lived experiences using many words (exhibited in Table 5) having connotations of sacrifice, service, illumine, edify, and attributed the sensitiveness of teaching profession as a most serious of all the businesses.

Essence of Being Bottom Level Leader(s)

In the previous section I elaborated seven different thematic concerns of being leaders at bottom level. My involvement in the discourse with these participants, the analysis their interview transcripts, the reading of their gestures, movements and facial expressions during interview(s) I understood that the very idea of being at bottom level itself was not something they desired to be though it was a position to begin an academic career. I primarily identified two major ideas emerged as the essence of being the teachers at the foundational level of school organizations. The first one was about their desire or wish to be valued as human being and the second one was all about the compulsion of doing something. I understood that both of these ideas exhibited the pathetic experiences of being teachers. However, being a teacher in one school did not necessarily resemble with the experience of being teacher in another school. How one perceived being teacher at one school was contingent to different aspects of that particular school.

By virtue of being both teachers and leaders, teacher leaders had the opportunity to lead by example. They were the real influencer to bring meaningful change in students' behaviour by working closely with the students from within the

school system. The most critical aspect of teacher as leader was their close and first hand connection with the students and their communication with the parents. From this relational perspective, teacher leaders I found them to be uniquely positioned in a very closer proximity with the community of students and the parents. My discussion of the seven themes explicating the multiple facets of being leaders at bottom level with support of metaphoric trope 'burning like candle' reminded me the etymological meaning of the term 'guru' meaning from dark to light that I used as analogy of candle that meant showing light to others in the cost of oneself.

For School I Leader III, possibly understood it as her fate to be a teacher and she thought she had no other options but to enjoy being a teacher. She elaborated being teacher to be one of the holiest professions and metaphorically characterized being a teacher with 'joy of living was in joy of giving'.

For School II Leader III, it was rather a matter of prestige of being an experienced teacher and that is why even if he was having a so-so time, he seemed determined in maintaining the prestige of this profession through performance and did not tolerate any time of interference by anybody.

For School III Leader III, it was one of most hopeless experiences of being a teacher at that particular school even though he understood the profession to be very sensitive and having far-reaching impact on students and characterized the position of teacher to be a leader of leaders.

In brief I could read the feeling of being relegated, neglected, exploited and underestimated constituting the common experience of being leaders at the bottom levels. Therefore, I found the metaphoric expression 'burning like candle' reflecting the lived experience of being teacher leaders. However, the very experience of being a teacher could vary based on different determinants like the leadership structure, the

school culture, the way they were valued and recognized and their participation in trade related organizations.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I explicated the lived experience of being leaders at bottom level first by conceptualizing the metaphor 'burning like candle' that I used as a trope throughout. Then I presented concise profile of each three participants to contextualize their situation where they expressed their being in the way they did. I framed seven different themes to spell out the experiences of being at the bottom. Though it meant different for different participant, largely they expressed that being leader at the bottom was a pathetic experience and a leader in this position had a very little opportunity to grow and they felt being consumed or used up as if like a burning candle. The themes supported in making the point that to be leader at the ground level of school was void of motivation, they suffered in the sense of being appreciated and expressed their desire of being accepted as the most important people in the school organization. Along with seven different themes that I used to elucidate as they experienced their being, I presented a list of key expressions where I could read their line of meaning making in harmony with the metaphoric trope and my argument of this chapter that being leader at the bottom was a pathetic experience in a sense that they had very little opportunity to grow, they were not signified as teachers (that they deserved) and considered their position to be sensitive. At the end I presented a concise gist of being leaders at the bottom.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: ILLUMININATING THE PHENONENON

In this chapter I discuss the essence of being leaders at different levels and make an attempt to illuminate the phenomenon of being leader. I begin this discussion by clustering the themes that I used to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at different levels in my previous chapters. In this final chapter of the thesis I articulate the thesis of the thesis and consider how it resonates with other theoretical perspectives. While doing so I direct my focus to the Dasein what Hiedegger (1962) preferred to label as the central element of experiencing some phenomenon or the ontological and the existential meaning of a phenomenon. Arriving at essential meanings of being educational leaders at different levels for me is a deeply personal experience; as both teacher leader at different levels and doctoral student I have 'been the thing'. Being informed by the the sixth stage of data analysis or meaning making as devised by (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007), I discuss the meanings of being leaders at different levels with integration and critique where I critique the themes using external references of emergent theories (distributed leadership, capitalistic theory, motivation theory, and new science perspective) in particular and using my own personal reflection of being in that leadership position. I even make a cross discussion of being leaders at different level in an attempt to see how the lived experiecne of being leaders at different positons either confirm or vary with each other. Following the discussion on thematic clusters and cross discussion of the ontology of being leaders at different levels, I present the possible implication this researh might have to the policy, practice and further research.

Being at the Top

In explicating the lived experience of being leaders at the top level I conceptualized the metaphor of accessing a labyrinth. By this analogy I meant to argue that assuming the executive posts principal and chairman was a very complex experience with more illusions than clarities. As the experience of being was very complex and difficult to express in straight words, I found the metaphor helpful to explicate the lived experience of being leader at the top position. Cerit (2006) maintained that metaphors were used as means of understanding human behaviors and the reasearchers in the area of schools, learning, teaching and teacher studies frequently use metaphors to represent the perceptions of the reseearch participants. Likewise, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) emphasized that the most important part of our perceptive system is formed by metaphorical relations. They highlighted that the essential part of a metaphor was to understand and experience a thing of a kind in comparison with a thing of another.

The ontology of being a leader at top level was contextually different and they made meaning of their being differently. However, they shared many similar experiences that contributed in understanding the existential reality of being the leaders at the top level. Like what Bennis (2007) articulated the laedership ontology in terms of a tripod participation of leaders, followers and the common goal they wanted to achieve, the leaders at the top level in school organization expressed their experience of leading their schools from different perspectives. This foundational concern of being a leader I foumd well matched with what Spillane (2006) termed as to be a leader is a traingular interaction of leaders, followers and the situation. To be a top level leader and express the nector of being it can be never an isolated task as the existence of top level leadership comes off the interaction with the leaders at other

levels and the context where they experience the notion of being the leaders at top. This idea of leadership as a phenoneon of complex interaction and the participants' lived experience of accessing a labyrinth I understood having posititve confirmation in a sense being a leader ontologically meant to be ready to face the complexities, the intrigues and the schemings.

The word principal came from Latin word *Principalis* meaning person in charge of a public school later understood as the head of a college or hall but basically referring to the ruler and governer or a person being first in importance. This etymological meaing, I found aligned to what it meant to be the principal or the position of first in importance. In table 6 I clustered the seven themes that emerged during the data analysis into three clusters of similar meanings.

Table 5 5

Themes Characterizing the Top Level Leaders

Cluster	Themes
1	A position of extreme contradiction and controversy
	The psychological side of leadership
	Unionism a major worry for top leaders
2	Practice of distributed leadership a consequence of compulsion
	Leadership style a matter of different strokes for different folks
	The organizational structure a major determinant of leadership experience
3	Anecdotal memories a mix of sweets and sours

The first cluster of themes was about the participants' experience of being leaders at the top level. Considering the policy provisions and the pressures from within the school organization and from the external agencies, the participants understood it to be a challenging task to lead an institutional school. The position of

extreme contradiction and controversy was the emergent theme that represents their actuality being the top level leaders. Like the conventional Nepali proverb ' अचानाको पीर खुकुरीले जान्दैन ' (the knife will never understand the pain that the chopping board or an inflictor does not know the pain of the wounded) I found them making an appeal to the others to try being top level leaders and realize the essence. This probably meant what they seemed to be from the general outlook was quite different than what they actually were. Internally, the political affiliation of the teachers in different trade union related organizations remains as a great headache to them and sometimes they are absolutely helpless. Externally, they were in the pressure to maintain their being the head of the school amid a fierce competition which were often unhealthy. This added further to their agonies. This notion of living with a dual identity of feeling the pain inside but the need to maintain their positional status depicted the psychological aspect of being the top level leaders. So, there I found a close interconnectedness in the in the first three themes as exhibited in Table 5.

Likewise second cluster of themes was interconnected from the perspective of performing the leadership roles. Like the English proverb 'cut your coat according to the cloth' it was perhaps the pragmatic imperative that the leadership style differed from person to person and situation to situation. The situation of uncertainty and indecisiveness manifested in the first cluster of themes prepared a different context to lead. As said by Spillane (2006) the matter of leadership was the interplay among leaders, followers and situations where all three aspects influenced each other and decided the leadership behaviour. The context of the practice of distributed leadership did not seem conducive because of the dominance of situational differences. There was the presence of leadership plus aspect with leadership roles distributed but the practice aspect was almost nil except in School I where the leadership structure itself

was viable for the execution of distributed leadership practices. This meant the actual application of distributed model of leadership was possible in an ideal state where things were near to perfection. It made one the key findings of this study in reference to the distributed leadership perspective that claims about distributed leadership and its effect in school improvement was conditional. The leadership plus aspect itself was practiced here as a matter of compulsion. There was no policy support like that of NCLB and NCLS for the proper and effective execution of distributed leadership.

The third cluster of themes constituted of the anecdotal memories and it depended and the touches to the human side of leadership as elaborated by Evans (1996). A school top level leader as a human being shared the basic instinct of being a human and felt happy to achieve the success and got distressed when the things did not turn out as he wanted to happen.

The activities that made him smile uplifted his morale whereas the ones those yielded no positive results gave him the sour taste. The mechanist activity theory (Banon, 1997) seemed in good harmony in relation with top level leaders. The hierarchy of needs theory of Maslow (1943) was well justified by the top level leaders when they were all time bent in achieving something of higher order from physiological needs to self actualization. Institutional schools as the products of capitalist economy were the enterprises where the investment determined the leadership or money made leaders. The appearance of capitalism was money and money which made more money in the form of interest-bearing capital, the rule of the market over people, the relation of person to person in the form of commodity-to-commodity, all appearances, real illusions**,** which had a real content (Scott, 2006).

My own reflection of being top level leader in a school for 28 months somehow resembled with how these leaders under study felt. The situation for me was

more favorable in a sense that resource was not the limitation I had to tackle with. I was better situated in terms of practicing distributed leadership in both plus and practice aspects. However, so many of the experiences what I felt were expressed by the top level leaders in different forms. The first of them was the matter of having a dual identity. I too faced that being a principal leader kept me under pressure all the time and I exerted additional efforts to maintain my being the principal. Like the top level leaders discussed here, I felt excited to get the things done whereas when the things did not turn as I wanted that infuriated me, I lost nerves, and I lost anger. In fact, I threatened to resign many time with the authorities if the things did not go my way many times. The thing differed was the matter of the context where I led and my participants are still leading. It was all about the harmonious interplay among leaders, followers and the situations that paved the foundation for the execution of not only distributed leadership but also any type of leadership.

Being in the Middle

I used the metaphor 'Waiting for Godot' to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at middle positions. Characterized as the omnipresent position that was accessible to all, the middle level leadership was quite unique in its own. By its very name it was a position of middle; neither of top nor or of bottom. What it meant to be a middle level leader and how they explicated their ontology solely depended on the very context where they worked and their say in the decision making process. The existence of middle level position was an indicator of the changing dynamics of school leadership and the gradual emergence of distributed leadership in school administration and management. However, I observed that the middle level leaders under discussion here were far from receiving the benefits conceptualized by the distributed leadership. It appeared to me that they were in a swinging position of

neither here nor there. This resulted into their feeling of being relegated to administrative roles only. At the same time, when the work environment was favorable and there was the potential to grow, the middle level leader exhibited the true skills and enjoyed the position as a stepping ladder for future growth. But this situation was limited to a particular school only where the middle level leader was one of the investors. Here again the capitalistic theory as clarified by Scott (2006) with money factor dominance came into strong influence. It refereed the significance of how the sense of ownership mattered when education is left in the open market as an enterprise.

Here I present seven themes I used to explicate the lived experience of middle level leaders clustered into three segments and critique their being using the external (theory) support and reflexive understanding myself. During the course of this discussion, the second research question of the study, 'what does it mean to be a middle level leader?' would be answered in a phenomenological orientation. The seven themes that elaborated the lived experience of being middle level leaders were:

Table 6 6

Themes Characterizing the Middle Level Leaders

Cluster	Themes
1	A leader ubiquitous to all the school stakeholders
	A position requiring multiple competencies and intelligences
	A jack of all trades
2	A few privileges but abundant burden; a Herculean task
	A bridge, a ladder as well as a sandwich in between
	A position grown off compulsion
3	Anecdotal memories a mixed bag

The three themes clustered in the first category were about the very roles and responsibilities the middle level leaders had to perform. As an assistant to the principal, as its very name suggested, I understood the middle level leaders being confined as an aid to the top level leader. It appeared to me that the very idea of being a jack of all trades meaning the need to know everything made the position very challenging. It demanded for a call of multiple task competencies. Something like in the skills theory of Katz (1955) a leader in middle level needed to be laced with all sets of technical, human and conceptual skills. However, it was unfortunate like what Kwan (2009) mentioned to be a paradox that the middle level leaders like vice principals, coordinators and in-charges were not recognized by the policy documents.

The second cluster of themes depicted the life size portrayal of the middle level leaders in a sense that despite their criticality to school operation they had little opportunities to use their creative faculties. Perhaps, it was the irony of being the middle level leader that the burden they bore excelled the privileges they entertained and thus made their task a Herculean[3], that demanded more but paid off less. I understood it was as ironic as the opening dialogue of Macbeth by Shakespeare (1564-1616) in Act I Scene I ' Fair is foul and foul is fair'. The opening scene establishes the play's mood and one of its main themes: things are not as they seem, a theme evidenced by the false sense of security enjoyed by the play is soon to be killed characters. The irony of being the middle level leadership also appeared to be a dual faced reality. What the participants experienced here was ironic to what they deserved. I could notice a huge gap in what was thought of them and what they had been doing and experiencing. The metaphors or bridge and ladder came together with the sense of being sandwiched between the pressure of management and the

[3] *A Greek mythical character who carried out a series of twelve impossible like tasks*

expectation of fellow teachers. Furthermore, in reference to the concept of distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006), they contributed in leadership plus aspect but in terms of leadership practice aspect except the vice principal of School I other two had no role at all.

The third cluster of theme that emerged off their anecdotal narratives justified the being of middle level leaders as human beings with mixed emotions of joy and pain. The moment their work was recognized and the time their voice was heard made them feel happy and the time when they were excluded, relegated, kept aloof from decision making system and they were charged for incompetence they felt de-motivated. The activity theory of Banon (1997), motivation theory of Maslow (1943) and the new science perspective of Wheatley (2006) I observed all positively confirmed by the participants who represented middle level leaders in this study.

My own experience of working as a middle level leader in different capacities like wing coordinator, program in-charge and vice principal for around a decade and the experience I had gathered out of that was quite similar to that of my participants. My observation of being the middle level leader was a position where all the debits rested whereas the credit was taken by the top level leaders. Something went wrong, as a middle level leader I was questioned. But something achieved bright, there was no acknowledgement. Like my participants of this study, I felt relegated when I was bypassed, just treated as an agency to carry out what the top level leadership wants to do. My experience of being the middle level leader was just being an instrument for the principal leader to achieve the mission. I felt being like a use and throw item whose destiny was on the mercy of the top level leader. I often compared my being of middle level leader with an extract from Shakespeare (1564-1616) in King Lear Act 4 Scene I (p. 32) where Gloucester says;

As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,
They kill us for their sport.

These are perhaps the most desperate lines in a desperate play, the Duke of Gloucester's speech culminates scene after scene of abject cruelty and senseless brutality. For the kindness he has shown the disgraced King Lear on a stormy Gloucester has been blinded by two of the king's enemies, Lear's daughter Regan and her husband. This analogy I made when I had the differences with a principal leader who I supported selflessly throughout but in a matter of personal difference, I was threatened to be sacked. This event had an overarching impact on my entire career and I relinquished that position for serving over six years.

The conversation with the middle level leaders during the process of study provided me with the opportunity to flashback my past days of being middle level leaders. Though the context where I served as the middle level leader and the context of my participants varied drastically, there were so many shared experiences. The sense of frustration was one of the most common experience that I could notice with my participants and I bore when I was in their positions earlier. While evaluating the whole of the affairs from the distributed leadership perspective, it appeared to me that the schools where this study was carried out were not fully prepared to practice this model of leadership which demanded for a very harmonious and conducive environment, a sense of trust between and among diverse stakeholders. Considering the situation expressed by the participants and reflecting my own experience, I doubted if the distributed leadership model was applicable in our school set ups because of its idealistic nature in reference to environmental requirements.

Being at the Bottom

I conceptualized the metaphor 'burning like a candle' to explicate the lived experience of being leaders at the bottom level of school organization. It appeared to me that teachers were the most underestimated people within institutional school organization. From the discussion of seven themes what I understood was the teachers were the actual instruments of accumulating resources in the capitalistic form of school organization. I could observe many components shaped ontology of being teachers. However, there were many similar striking experiences that possibly could represent the essence of being a teacher in an institutional school. Through this discussion I attempted to answer third emergent research question ' what does it mean to be a leader at bottom level?' In reference to school organization, I argued that the teachers were the true leaders in a sense the teachers were the actual persons who delivered, led and shaped the students. The acknowledgement of teachers as leaders was the fundamental premise of distributed leadership.

Here I first cluster the themes used to illuminate the ontology of being teachers into three segments and discuss that using the external literature and theory support and the reflective call of my experience of being a teacher. The set of seven themes that discussed the being of teachers as bottom level leaders were;

Table 7 7

Themes Characterizing the Bottom Level Leaders

Cluster	Themes
1	A sensitive profession with overarching impact
	Appetite for appreciation, recognition and value
2	School leadership structure a key determinant of teachers' performance
	A platform position with little opportunities of career growth
	Collective bargaining for job security
3	From 'leader of leaders' to 'a teacher not a leader'
	Anecdotal Memories; Success and Failure

The themes clustered in first category presented the most basics of the shared experience of being teachers where I could see all the participants invariably claiming the teaching profession to be the most sensitive from the perspective of shaping and molding the future citizens. I found this proposition agreed and confirmed by various literature that characterized teacher position as the most sensitive one. Though placed in bottom in school organogram, they were by no means in inferior status. This acknowledgement of the sensitivity of being the teacher filled them with an expectation that they need to be valued and appreciated. This expectation of being valued, appreciated and recognized probably found its footage in the new science perspective of thinking that signifies the role of human to be the most sensitive (Wheately, 2006). Furthermore, in conjugation with motivation theory (Maslow, 1943), I could see it was one of the higher order needs that teacher as human beings deserved to make. In terms of activity theory (Banon, 1997), the tasks the teachers performed had a systemic significance and thus need to be recognized.

The second cluster of the themes I found contextualized the teachers as leaders in Nepali educational institutions. How a teacher of a school perceived, understood and explicated his or her lived experience of being teacher was a matter contingent to

the internal dynamics of the school, where the leadership structure and style acted as the key determinant. Schools with effective leaders provided ample opportunities for the teachers to grow, valued them, recognized them that resulted into the stability of the teachers and provided them with the sense of security. In an opposite situation, teachers were in a mood of transition, just waiting a train in a platform that would navigate them safe to their destination. This could possibly lead to teacher dropout and that ultimately influenced the school performance and students learning. The transition platform metaphor provided many other indications as well. It referred to the actuality of teaching profession that people were bound to take not because they were interested in it but because they had no choice. In the capitalist mode of production that promotes individual freedom, people remained teachers till they found another job.

Another revelation that I could claim through this study was the underlying reasons for the teachers' attachment to trade union related organization which was dealt as a headache for the top level leaders. It was probably the sense of security more than any other elements like the political awareness that encouraged the teachers to find an affiliation with. And unfortunately in terms of practice, the teacher unions of Nepal were not found promoting the teacher leaders who could help improve the students' learning and this practice went all opposite to the very concept of teacher leaders discussed by various literature on teacher leadership that I found extension beyond classroom and the affiliation with the professional networks to be one of the features of teacher leadership. I understood this indication directed towards teacher unions need to be professional learning networks for teachers and this idea was consolidated as by Bhattarai (2013) with vehement criticism of teachers' entry into party politics influenced unions in the tag of professional organizations. However, the

involvement of institutional schools' teachers in collective bargaining resulted due to their understanding that unions supported and helped them in crisis.

The third cluster of themes supported in understanding the identity of teachers for their positions. And this experience was again contingent to where they worked. From the sensitivity perspective, they identified them as the leaders of leader in a sense that they were the actual person to prepare future leaders. But from the school operation and management perspective, they doubted if they were the leaders and questioned on their own identity as they felt excluded in the entire school operation procedure. This idea of exclusion indicated the actuality about the distributed leadership status and supported in deriving the conclusion that the environment and climate of Nepali institutional schools was not favorable yet for the productive execution of distributed leadership in reference to leadership practice aspect that required the inclusion of every stakeholder in decision making practices (Spillane, 2006). Like the leaders other levels, the anecdotal memories of the teacher leaders were shaped by the success and failure patterns. When they achieved rare success, they felt excited and happy whereas it gave them pain when they felt being oppressed, unheard, underestimated and excluded.

From the review of various literature on teacher leadership what I found was teachers were acknowledged as the most important elements for students' success and concentrated the idea of teacher leadership to be a construct with an intent of improving students' learning and the teachers' initiatives made by extending beyond the classroom with interest to professional growth (Mulford, 2003; Murphy, 2005; Herman & Marlow, 2005; Reil & Backer, 2008; Handler, 2010; Akert & Martin, 2012). However, I could not find any sign of extension beyond the classroom forming the teachers' experience in this study.

My own experiences of working as teacher for many years were no exception than what the teachers of this study shared. Though the context where I worked (I never worked in an institutional schools) was quite different from many perspectives, fundamentally, I too realized that being a teacher in a school was the least preferred job despite its severe sensitivity. I experienced the most traumatic situations when I was just questioned, all the time instructed for doing this and that by my supervisors, I felt as if I was caged and I always dreamt to get freedom out of it. Being a teacher was an experience similar to what the teachers of this study doubted as 'teacher, not a leader'. Moreover, the opportunity for growth was the key that I realized to be most important aspect. I was quite lucky in this regard as I got successive opportunities to be promoted from the lower secondary to secondary and to the higher secondary level and this opportunity always poked me to enhance my academic qualifications and performance. Being a teacher, I often compared with the pessimistic quote of Hardy (1886); *Happiness is but a mere episode in the general drama of pain* (p. 386)

While working as a teacher this line was quite true in a sense that being a teacher was a matter of more pain where the happiness was a very precious and rare thing came just occasionally. Like the Hardian tragic character, as a teacher the taste of happiness or exhilaration was mere an episodic event which was just momentary. Here I argue my trope of 'burning like candle' best represents the lived experience of being teachers as the bottom level leaders.

Thesis of Thesis: Being Across Top, Middle and Bottom

After discussing on the essence of being leaders at different levels, now I feel the foundation is prepared for a short cross discussion across different levels of leadership taking the thematic clusters of being leaders at different levels. In this section I focus on further consolidating my argument that Nepali institutional school

are not yet prepared for the effective execution of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership theory demands for a harmonious and collegial interaction among the leaders, followers and the situation (Spillane, 2006; Elmore, 2000; Gronn, 2000; Harris, 2008) or it requires an ideal state of being. But the situation as depicted in this study did not seem favorable due to the practical differences. Theoretically, all the participants univocally agreed that a school organization was typical where the top level alone could make no difference and welcomed the idea of distributed leadership in terms of leadership plus aspect. The schools provisioned for different leadership roles and attempted to make it a place for all. But in actual practice, I experienced myself as leader in different positions and I observed and understood from the discourse with nine participants of this research that the principal or the top level leader was forced to pay much of his or her attention in ensuring the resource aspect. The prime concern for the leaders at the top strata was to ensure the survival of the institution. They were the capitalist mangers. The middle level leaders like vice principals and coordinators were confined to the task of everyday administration with management function focus. They were more oriented towards doing the things right rather than doing right things. The teachers at the bottom were all filled with more worries of getting a new train that could safely navigate them from this chasm without bottom.

The most common shared experience of being educational leaders across all levels was about sustaining as the institutional schools were the representatives of capitalistic modes of production. Everyone felt anxious to ensure the existence. The top level leaders' anxiety was to ensure the survival of the institution, the middle level seemed all the time occupied with the sense of relegation and worried about the personal growth whereas it was quite natural for the bottom level leaders to find a

space that would give them an exit either to a better place or to another profession. This discussion of lived experience of being leaders across levels paves the foundation for me to make knowledge claim of this research.

As stated in the title of this study I had two clear focuses in my research. One was to unearth the lived experiences of the teacher leaders at different levels and the other was to evaluate their lived experience from the theoretical underpinnings of distributed leadership. While evaluating lived experience narratives of nine participants, I could find two important situations prevailing in the institutional schools understudy in reference to distributed leadership. They are;

a) There was the presence of leadership plus aspect (leadership roles shared to more than one) as articulated by Spillane (2006) as there existed different leadership positions like vice principal, coordinator, in-charge and HODs.
b) There was the minimum presence of leadership practice aspect (participation of leaders at different levels in decision making process) as articulated by Spillane (2006). I could not find the decision making process very transparent and the participants of this study confirmed to my argument from their expressions.

This revelation of the condition of distributed leadership as realized by my participants and as understood by me could possibly lead to the following explanations that I propose as the thesis of thesis.

Institutional schools were not found in the position of applying distributed leadership because of the absence of harmonious work culture, policy support, organizational design, and the distractions created from internal and external dynamics of school organization. I understood that as articulated by Spillane (2006) distributed leadership was meant to create a situation of coordination, collaboration, and collectivity with harmonious interaction among leaders, followers and situations.

And this required for an ideal state of being where the environment (both external and internal) required being supportive. However, after interpreting different expressions of my participants what I understood was the condition for the application of distributed leadership was yet not fully available in the environs of the institutional schools understudy. Neither I could see spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations, and institutionalized practices as articulated by Gronn (2002) nor could I read the presence of common culture as envisaged by Elmore (2000). Therefore, I argue the presence of leadership plus aspect alone could not ensure the proper execution of distributed leadership.

In the situation as articulated in previous point I argue that we need to first work to create conditions that are flourishing by first recognizing the distributed leadership model as a potential model of educational leadership for our educational management, acknowledging its significance in the creation in synergy that we require for our educational fraternity, including this model as the leadership model to lead the existing policies, working in collaboration to create healthy school culture, and preparing our educational leaders for the adaptation of this model in their everyday work. I find this change possible through leadership capacity development and moreover through the joint efforts of the people in educational institutions and educational governance.

Another important realization that deserves to be quoted as the thesis of this inquiry comes from the methodological stand point. From my prolonged negotiation with different orientations of phenomenology and interpretive phenomenology in particular, I came to realize that doing a phenomenological research requires an in-depth understanding of rhetoric. It is the metaphoric rhetoric that ultimately produces the very flavor and makes an inquiry phenomenological. Therefore, I argue that

rhetoric is one of the paradigmatic constituent for a phenomenological inquiry. In this light I propose to use rhetoric as an integral component of the philosophical consideration of conducting an interpretive phenomenological inquiry.

The next section that deals with the implications of this study would mention the policy, practice and further study potential of this model by bringing in light the understanding of this study.

Implications of the Study

This phenomenological study was conducted with intent of broadening the understanding about the lived experience of being educational leaders in Nepali institutional schools applying the theoretical model of distributed leadership. This research was not meant for making any generalization about the findings to a larger population. Neither the interest was on making any recommendations. However, as the issue was all about improving the schools and improving the teaching learning process as a whole, this study revealed many issues that might be of interest to different people and sectors. Here I discuss some plausible implications of this study in three segments titled policy, practice and further study implications.

Policy Implications

During the process of unearthing the lived experience of educational leaders, there came many issues that were associated with the policy imperatives. Harris and Spillane (2008) remarked that distributed leadership was not a panacea but a risk well worth taking for those genuinely seeking school transformations. Nepal is at the very process of applying the new policy in the education sector aiming to transform the current situation through the enactment of SSRP. And the findings from this research I observed indicating towards the situation that there was the poor harmony among the leaders, followers and the situation. For any transformation agenda to get

materialized, I argue, there requires a very strong leadership dimension and the idea of distributed leadership has this potential to implement the policy transformation as envisaged by SSRP. Furthermore, the in-depth understanding that this study narrated about the key actors in school set ups could be a matter of real worth for designing new policy that could provide direction to the entire institutional school fraternity. The lived experience narratives of leaders at different levels could be worth considering while improving the overall conditions of the teachers through teachers' professional development initiatives. Empowering the schools, principals, vice principals and the teachers would ultimately ensure the overall quality imperatives through policy interventions.

Practice Implications

The essence of this study would be of practical significance to the teacher leaders at different levels in institutional schools in particular to understand how the leaders at different level understand and express about their being. The revelations made by this study would help the top level leaders to understand the feelings and understandings of their subordinates about the top level leaders and it could help them change their perceptions and practices towards the better harmonized relationships among the leaders, followers and the situation. It would be of realistic support to middle and bottom level leaders in institutional schools in particular to find what other teachers and leaders of their own hierarchy make meaning of their being so that this understanding would provide them new directions for the overall improvements in their status. The middle level leaders might find this study significant in a sense that it might encourage them to initiate a professional learning community to share their experiences of being at the middle level leadership positions. This study would be of high significance to the teachers provided that they used their professional

networks to improve their teaching learning practices that would ultimately benefit their professional development.

Future Study Implications

The most important implication this study might make would be in the area of future research of both basic and applied in nature to further extend the understanding of being leaders at different levels. This study would hopefully open up new avenues for future researchers by providing the wider research scope that would not be limited in unearthing the lived experience of educational leaders alone. Not only the phenomenological study like this one but also the studies with wider coverage with quantitative designs would help to illuminate new findings that would make a substantive difference in the area of educational leadership and management. Similar study like this can be conducted to illuminate the lived experience of leaders of community schools where the situations are quite different and in other parts of the nation where different realities might exist.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I first discussed my understanding of being leaders at different levels with the support of seven themes that I identified during my data explication phase. I clustered the seven themes into three so as to understand the commonalities and difference among those themes. I could see that being at the top was enigmatic like walking a complex labyrinth, being in the middle was absurd like waiting for Godot and being at the bottom was sacrificing like burning a candle. Then I analyzed my understanding about the application of distributed leadership based on the lived experience narratives and remarked that the institutional schools under study were not prepared enough for the execution of distributed leadership primarily due to the absence of working culture, the minimal presence of coordination and collaboration

among diverse stakeholders of educational fraternity and elaborated conditions for the application of distributed leadership. At the end I proposed some implications of this study in the policy, practice and further study dimensions.

CHAPTER VIII

CODA: JOURNALING MY PHD JOURNEY

This chapter journals my feelings, reflections and understanding that I developed during the four years of being a PhD student in Kathmandu University School of Education till the time I completed my project. It is the reflective experience of perusing the PhD studies from the time I got enrolled to the time I successfully defended my creation.

> *There comes the mail from the University administration asking to submit the PhD progress report within a week stating my progress status in seven areas. My better half repeats the question, 'when are you going to finish?' at least twice a week. My daughters ask with high interest, 'Dad, can we write Dr. before your name in the school form that we have to submit today?' The department chair reminds, 'there is no option until you submit the work.' The dean moves around the chamber yelling 'must have the title to get recognized.' The cohort members envy saying 'just the formality remains for you'. Friends in abroad sarcastically drop message in Facebook and Twitter asking 'are you lost or..?'* (From my Research Journal, April, 2013)

Standing exactly at the fourth year of my enrollment in this research degree with concentration to 'educational leadership', I have no exact answers to all these qualms and spoofs pointed towards me. It is me who has to do it but I have no answer that can satisfy me alone if not others. Now I have stopped saying I am a PhD candidate anymore. This does not mean that I have dropped my plan of completing

my most dreamed degree but this is the silent promise that I have made with myself hoping to create a favourable climate for myself to get the task done.

This write up sketches the timeline events that I vividly recall that are all associated with my dream of doing a doctoral research. All the sources of data are my personal recall and the conversations have been created to give meaning. By treating the information as an action I am attempting to create the meaning of being a doctoral researcher. I outline this chapter to explicate my own experience of being a PhD researcher beginning from my enrollment, formal study period, doing the field, dealing with data, the zero hours, the pull and push factors, the writing hours, and the anxiety during defense stage.

The Enrollment: Wrong Person in the Right Place

As I reflect standing at the fourth year of being a PhD researcher, I think I was a wrong person in right place. I would rather say my enrollment here in KUSOED was coincidental. I term it coincidental in a sense that I happened to come here without much hope and without a clear plan. During 2009 as a lecturer there in St. Xavier's College, Maitighar where I worked for around 18 months coordinating MA English program and teaching to Masters and Bachelors level students, I came in contact with a PhD candidate there in Kathmandu University who always talked very high about KUSOED PhD program and we used to call him Dr. right then (he is yet to complete his degree). Probably he was the person who infused the desire to pursue PhD from KUSOED. As I read the admission call for PhD the same year I visited KUSOED with a friend of mine who had an acquaintance there at KUSOED and checked my eligibility for applying for PhD studies and wrote the entrance with very little preparation. I actually did not like the entrance questions simply because there was nothing that I knew concretely. May be the other candidates were weaker than

me. Ultimately I was selected as the candidate number one for the PhD degree in educational leadership for the batch 2010. Considering the way, I was selected I now feel that it was merely a coincidence I found a place here in KUSOED, either I was destined to it or I was made for it I do not know. Sometimes, I reflect that I was a wrong person in right place.

The Period of Formal Studies: Back to School Days

Many PhD candidates from other universities than KUSOED may find it peculiar to know that PhD study requires regular formal classes as if you are in your undergraduate course. You have to do the regular assignments, make presentations, and more than that feel scary of the professors who warn you more than tell you what to do. I did not have a sound beginning of my formal school like classes because I missed the orientation assuming it might be a babbling of the authorities about dos and don'ts but I was shocked to know next day that the orientation lasted for few minutes and they had the class straight forward. However, after then I did not miss any single class for next eighteen months (three semesters). The period of formal class took me back to my nostalgia, back to my school days, when I used to boast with friends about becoming a PhD Doctor and my friends would listen to me as if it were true. The bag (this time packed with laptop), the search for friends, the canteen guff, occasional but very careful backbiting of some professors (particularly after the examination results), the group mail where we received the reading slides, all took me back to my school days. Of course the difference was here. It was more digitalized, the relationships were more transactional, the classes more critical, I was once again back to my studentship. The assignments, presentation, paper writing deadlines and the cynic criticism for failing to answer the very answer the professors wanted sometimes gave me a hunch. I started reading as more as I could. I participated in

class discussions, started to express my disagreements, and made my claims based on my readings. Perhaps these defiance if seen from a bit rebellion perspective that meant for a student of higher education needed to defy those traditional and sluggish practices and should dare to defy them, gave me my identity and I found my friends and some of the professors eyeing at me on issues where there came some discussions.

However, I cannot still understand why so many formal classes. Perhaps a PhD researcher would develop better if he/she was immediately assigned with a supervisor and asked to plunge systematically deep into the potential area of research with some rigorous classes on methods in particular. When I was in second semester, the then dean offered me a class there in M.Ed. ELT where I taught Prose and Fiction. I developed good rapport with all the people there and special one with a professor of educational leadership (my area of concentration) in particular. He is not in the university anymore and I miss him a lot. He was assigned my supervisor and if he had been here, I would have completed my work much earlier. I felt really uncared for a long time in his absence. I felt that I could not get the mentoring; I was perhaps poorly groomed, exposed the least and doubted more than trusted. For me he was the mentor, my role model and a real inspirer who I never heard speaking loud with anybody. I noted every word he spoke in the class and I liked the way he prepared the foundation for discussion and let the discussion develop in the classroom. For me he was the master of appreciative inquiry who could see the lotus blooming amid the mud. He was the one who all the times inspired me to be in the university and focus on research, teaching and learning. Though I am in nobody's camp, I would have been in yours if you were here. Sir, I miss you ……..!

I knew you termed me a "Gem', saw the potential on me

I wish I could help you at the toughest time you are going through,
I wish I could pay the tribute of being my Guru
I dedicate this entire write up to YOU!

I was probably the first one of my batch to write and defend the proposal, fearlessly write the qualifying test and plunge into the field research with all formalities clear. I am very grateful to the then Dean who all the time filled me up with positive vibes and encouraged me to complete the mission. Though I was skeptic about my phase two of school days in the start, I gradually enjoyed it like a child and I acknowledge I learnt a lot no worries whether that helped me in my research or not. My school days officially ended as I received the recommendation letter from the admin that cleared my way to go to the field.

The Field and Data: From Book to Reality

It was not my first experience of being engaged in the field research. I had already written two field research based dissertations for my master's degree certificates and I did both of these with extensive field visits where I negotiated with the participants, observed their behaviours and prepared my report out of that. But I realized when I studied research methodology(s) here in KUSOED that I perhaps did the ethnographic research then. But I found this time doing the field was comparatively tougher than before. Probably we developed a bit more methodologist approach and tried to see everything in the pages of Linclon and Guba, Patton, Cresswell, Byrman, Best and Khan, or Wills. We hardly had any lived experience of actualizing the knowledge we learnt in books and Jstor (Journal portal available in KUSOED premises) fed articles or occasional leakages from Sage Publications. I realized how bookish we had been when I scheduled my field and had to wait for weeks to find a date where I could interview three people in a school. I came to

internalize the challenge of finding time that was practical to me and my participant to sit cool and discuss for an hour. Collecting just nine protocols back from the participants took me months. In academic research when some people including my close friends claim that they did a survey, collected responses from this and that number of participants, I did superior research, my findings can be generalized, for me they are either the 'false clarity' or mere hypocrisy. I argue that there prevails a huge gap in the academic life and cultural experiences.

I thought the collection of data will decrease my anxiety but I was wrong. The collection of all the intended data further troubled me due to its volume and the poor and illegible sentence structure of my participants. This I understood basically stemmed off the gap in the classroom knowledge and the actual practice. Observation of the decision making session was another impractical decision that I mentioned in the proposal but could not do as intended because no school was ready to let me record their proceedings and I was just allowed to sit in and take notes.

The Zero Hours: The Wait for Nothing

I had all the data I wanted but all raw. I could find no way to proceed with that. I was in a very absurd situation that I term as zero hours. I was feeling like a puppet doll everywhere. The entries in my diary note that period to be the most unproductive period during the journey of PhD studies. I attempted many times to open the data files and start playing with them but every time I tried I failed because I could not concentrate upon. Many pessimistic and negative thoughts overpowered me and I succumbed to these external and internal forces. Some of the sadistic and pessimist state of being that I went through were recorded in my personal diary as;

The storm does not cease	*Sometimes I crush my being*
The soul is sans ease	*Sometimes, I point myself wrong*
The destiny prolongs the cheat	*Unable to decide and think*
Fear of pessimism albeit!	*Feared to be declared a defunct!*
10th March, 2012 from my Personal Dairy	*21st April, 2012 from my Personal Dairy*

Amid all these uncertainties and zero productive hours when I had grown with a bit negativity, pessimism and frustration I was working with all my capacities in my work station there in Kirtipur and assisting to facilitate Educ-531 Principles of Educational Leadership to the students of M. Phil and PhD third semester. This zero hour and its butterfly effect would have a long effect. This absurdum I went through probably caused a long delay in accomplishing my feat. It sometimes gave me the feelings that probably I could never be able to do it.

The Pull and Push Factors: The Keepers and Throwers

It was not an even journey to pursue this dream studies for me. It was the dream that I visualized right from my school days. I had an aptitude for studies and always wanted to do something new and something higher in the academics. Due to my work station located in the outskirt of valley, I had been focusing in attaining the horizontal studies that enabled to earn me three masters' degrees and made me interdisciplinary. Still the desire for getting the qualifications and credential of the highest status remained active and made me join for this course. But once I began the journey, I realized that the journey of being a PhD candidate was thornier than I ever expected. There were more push factors that discouraged me than fewer pull factors.

University Support

I began my PhD studies in KUSOED as an outsider. I remained student with a full fee paying (Self finance) status throughout. I even did not apply for UGC grants. Neither had I requested for any subsidy or partial scholarship. It was not because I belonged to elite class or I had enough financing capacity with me but because I

wanted to make my study worth. As I paid for it I thought it would exert pressure to me to utilize my investment to the maximum extent possible. It would also give me dignity. But within the third year of studies (by then I had already completed the formal studies and even collected all the data I had planned to collect) I happened to be a full time faculty right there in KUSOED. A couple of reasons led me to be a member of KU. The first was my expectation that once I be in everyday proximity with the professors that would push me to do my work. The second was my [mis]understanding about the career prospects in Kathmandu University. I thought that later or sooner after completing the doctorate degree, I need some affiliation with the world of academia, an ideal place where I thought I could exhibit my caliber if any. Now standing on the verge of defending my work and my experience of working in KUSOED for more than a year I am quite unsure that I will be achieve to get what I desire. I do not mean to say that I did not receive support from the university people, I did, and probably I received more support than any other. However, I am unsure about my rights and limitations here as a PhD student. The dual identity of being a student and faculty are both pull and push factors for me. Again my inner self provokes ' I am the wrong person in right place' in a sense that probably I do not possess the necessary political skills to make my presence realizably felt here.

Family Pressure

Another issue that intervenes one while perusing rigorous studies like PhD is the matter of family. I am not only a PhD candidate. I have many roles at different places. The most important of all, I am father of two daughters and I have to shoulder the entire responsibility of funding not only my needs but of my four member family here in the capital city. To be practical, to run a family one needs resource and resources come of working. It was a matter of great trouble for me to make this

balance. I work I have no time for my studies. I don't work and just study, there will be difficulty in funding the family needs. So, realized that family is such a danger zone that presses to finish quick and also it makes the things linger. My understanding as a PhD researcher is and my advices for future students will be first collect resources for at least 5 years and then decide to take up PhD studies.

Peer Support

Peer support is another critical mention worthy topic while being a PhD researcher. In the cohort of 2010 there we were all together eight candidates who got enrolled for the first semester. Out of that two of the friends received scholarships in Australia and New Zealand and dropped their studies here from the second semester. It is always very productive to make discussion among the peer group so that one learns from each other. Here two of us sometimes do collaboration and motivate each other but rests of us are living in isolation. What I feel is we have been too individualistic and paying attention in an egocentric manner which is actually harming us. And yes, I feel the ones who are abroad probably thinking themselves superior and sometimes make some sarcastic remarks for being a PhD researcher here in Nepal. It is one of the bitterest experiences I felt in terms of peer supports.

Publications

Amid the confusion and pressure from all aspects two of my papers found the space in national and international journals the same day. Wudpecker Journal of Educational Research (WJER) published my paper entitle ' Classroom Management: A Concern for Educational Leaders' and Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal published my paper entitled ' Hermeneutic Research Methodology Simplified'. The second one was the writing that elaborated the philosophical and methodological aspects of phenomenology. Chapter III of this thesis was the base for the second

article. Another article that has been published takes my field data on middle level leaders is entitled ' Lived Experience of Middle Level Leaders in Nepali Institutional Schools' in Journal of Educational Research (JER). This paper explicates the lived experience of being leaders in middle level and Chapter IV of this thesis provided the foundation for that paper. The publication of these papers was of course the push factors that uplifted my morale up to some extent.

The Writing Hours: Pain and Ecstasy

The most pain striking moment of being the researcher for me is the hours of writing. You write, you edit, and at the end you delete. The struggle for finding a good pattern of writing is a challenging task particularly for those taking the qualitative design like phenomenology. The first hurdle was finding a right time to write and giving a continuation to it. The second concern is the matter of environment where you have the chance of being creative. As a full time worker, the largest chuck of the time is given to the work where the piles of work never permitted me to do anything for my research writing. I worked throughout the day, took three to four classes in the evening every week and returned back home after 7 or 9 PM and took lunch. I felt so exhausted that opening the computer and beginning a single line itself would be so toxic that would make me yawn and sleep.

I also suffered in finding a coherent patter on writing. Having all the data I was in further confusion about how to proceed. What would it make phenomenological writing? Whether my writing would be strong enough to leave an impressions or not? These questions always haunted. Creative writing is not the cup of tea for everybody. I confess my writing has been metaphorical but not that much creative. After adapting the method of Manen (1997), and Ajjawi and Higgs (2007), I found the way out and methodologically, I am in a position of defending my work but

creativity has remained absent. It is original and of its own type, not duplicated from anybody else but I failed to give it a poetic flow, which I think is expected from me by my professors. I confess I became more classical then creative in my writing. I agree with the notion of writing as performative art and the more I have written and the more I have edited I have found my writing improved. The actual push factor or the thrower was the problem I faced in making my writing phenomenological. After I prepared my first draft and consulted an expert (associate professor here in KUSOED) only I knew some fundamental arts of writing phenomenologically. The conceptualization of metaphors like 'accessing a labyrinth' (Chapter IV), 'Waiting for Godot' (Chapter V) and 'burning like candle' (Chapter VI) supported me in making my reporting more phenomenological. By now I feel much satisfied with the way I developed. However, writing phenomenologically was a challenge for me and I confess teaching others is easier than doing something own self. Therefore, I went through the stages of pain at times when I could not find a clue for developing my writing, finding a coherent style of reporting, or writing without knowing what I was doing were the moments that gave me pain. When I could locate the metaphors, I mentioned above suddenly I realized that writing also could be an endeavor that gave me some joys. As I started playing with the data again in the light of the metaphors, those moments were most delightful for me and I enjoyed those moments as ecstasy.

Draft I: The Icebreaker

I realized that the preparation and submission of first draft transfers some of the tensions from the researchers to the supervisors or works like an icebreaker. My draft one that I prepared during the end semester break of July-August 2013 worked like an icebreaker. It brought me fore in the scene. Draft I let me dream about the completion. This is the first benefit of being able to sketch a first draft. But the

preparation of draft one was a very time consuming and iterative process. So far I was just working in the individual sections and getting occupied with one type of idea. But here I realized while making the first draft, it matters each and every word you have written somewhere sounds contradictory and it requires that you rework on it. I realized this process of finalizing the first draft demanded very much from the author. The forward and backward linkage is the key thing to consider while preparing the first draft. For me APA was another tension because I am not fully versed to it and I know this would be one of the areas where I am going to be criticized but some criticisms are very nutritious and I take them easy since my plan is to give the final APA shape with the support of an expert. Likewise, I think draft one served the purpose of making leap. It gave me immense hope, new enthusiasm and the preliminary remarks from my professors further filled me with recharged energies. It was a catalyst, like the icebreaker of a training session; it energized me for another round of work.

The Preliminary Viva: More Than a Ritual

The circulation of notice for the preliminary viva injected a thrill inside me. The professor advised me to make a twenty slide presentation beginning from the gap, the problem, the literature visited, the method, the explication and the essence. At the start I thought it to be an easy go. As I started working on the slides, the anxiety began. The jokes we made of preliminary viva being an event of creating a whim and informing the people about the candidate is about to finish his studies gradually started turning wrong. From a big volume of 250 pages what to keep what not to keep was the major problem. I tried my best, used all the energies, took support from the friends in designing and animating the slides and as a rehearsal I gave a mock presentation where I received valuable inputs and possible areas where I might be

questioned. On the very day of viva I was quite anxious and a bit nervous too. I presented some five minutes longer than the time I was allowed and noted all the remarks carefully. I had just a couple of minutes to respond to the floor and I utilized that time in thanking the audience and experts present there. As I reflected the experience of doing the public defense, I found more appreciations than criticisms. It was more than a ritual, a productive session where I learnt many new things even if I think I will not be able to address all the concerns raised there like findings, theorization, coda, and the inclusion of oriental literature.

The Final Viva: Being at the Peak

There came the final viva like a bullet in speed immediately after three weeks of facing the preliminary viva. I could hardly realize this event as a whole because it was too momentary for me. What I could recall was the presentation I made by paying cautious attention in the areas like Eastern concept, negative connotation, the phenomenology as method, the problem with finding and theorizing and the tradition of having the epilogue. What I remember vividly is the unanimous appraisal of my work and language skills in particular. The excitement of being congratulated was so much intoxicated that I termed this experience as if I were on top of Everest but I could not wait there for long due to safety reasons and need to return leaving the ecstasy before orgasm.

The Lived Experience of Being a PhD Researcher

My experience of being a PhD researcher was unique in its own. It was unique in a sense that I got this opportunity with comparative little efforts and my persistence factors ranging from personal to social and institutional (Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapk, 2012) were friendly towards my endeavors. As I was practically aware that the accomplishment would not be possible without paying price to it, I think I took right

decisions at right times. From switching the job from a busy schedule to a relative comfortable place that contributed in my studies was one of the examples of what I term to be right decision. Similarly, my decision to join KUSOED as a faculty member with a drastic fall in my facilities and immunities I claim to be another right decision. I do agree with the experiences that can be anticipated in the successful pursuit of a doctoral degree in the form of sacrifice, intervening life experiences, and dissertation challenges (ibid.).

For me this journey of doctoral studies was an expedition to what Callary, Werthner, and Trudel (2012) mentioned as the process of learning and becoming. It was a wonderful errand for me where I failed many times but each failure made me learn new things. Making the data speak was the most challenging thing for me. It demanded me to go back and forth many a times. Here I recalled the powerful assertion of Chenail (2012) who stated qualitative data analysis to be evidentially recursive act must be made overtly because in qualitative data analysis, "the data do not speak for themselves" (p. 248). This act of recursion posed quite a many challenges regarding where to adjust and where not to. It tested my nerves and many times I almost succumbed and like the Phoenix I had to again rise from zero.

Though I was pretty impressed by the recommendation of (Denzin, 2013) to imagine the world without data, without method, and without hegemonies I kept on playing myself with the data I had, with the method I had, and kept on finding a space to fit within the hegemonic university structure where I worked. Neither I could employ my creative faculties and treat the data like the verb or action. Though I was impressed with what (Amatucci, 2013) maintained as post qualitative work and devised the idea to use data themselves as stories, I confess I failed to materialize this notion and got stuck with classical faculty and considered my data as my world.

The Beginning

My doctoral journey was a mix for me. I failed in many places but I learnt from each failure. I could not do many things but what I could do was not less. This journey made me further matured and I considered learning as a process of becoming and I think this is not the end but the beginning of yet another journey. I completed my journey with the gracious support of many people and my professors deserve the first hand credit for leading me to this stage. I feel my journey has not ended; it has just begun. It is the beginning.

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ANNEXES

Annex I: Demographic Sheet for the Research Participants

Be assured that all responses will be considered confidential and will be totally anonymous. Confidentiality is guaranteed to all study participants.

1. Name of School _____
2. Designation _____

2. Gender:

___ 1. Male _____ 2. Female _____ 3. Other

3. What is your age? _____

4. What is the highest degree you have earned?

_____ 1. Bachelor's

_____ 2. Master's

_____ 3. Doctorate

5. In what year did you earn your highest degree? _____ (year degree conferred)

6. Number of years in current position including this year _____.

7. Total years you have been a principal, including this year _____.

Annex II: Research Interview Consent Form

Interviewer …….

Interviewee …….

Purpose of interview

This interview is part of my research for the award of PhD at Kathmandu University

Confidentiality

Research ethics will be observed at all times in the analysis and use to which the data may be put. The data from the interview will only be available to the research committee on the PhD programme at Kathmandu University and, possibly, to the External for my thesis. Excerpts from the interview may be included as part of the final thesis, but your name will be excluded, and any identifying characteristics will be removed. The interview may also be used as part of written paper or books, but without your name and excluding any identifying characteristics, and subject to research ethics.

Acknowledgement

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

Signed (interviewee) ……

Signed (Interviewer) …….

Date ……

Annex III: Interview Prompts for Top, Middle, and Bottom Level Leaders

General Guidelines

These are the guiding questions to be used to explore the perception about the distributed leadership, the model of leadership distribution practice and an inquiry of the effectiveness of the model under discussion among top, middle and bottom level leaders of the school understudy. The questions are just initiating prompts and much attention will be paid to elicit the 'lived experience' of the research participants.

1. What do you understand by distributed leadership?
2. How and why might leadership be distributed?
3. How much power and authority do the middle leaders and teachers have when responsibilities are distributed?
4. How far is leadership distributed in your school?
5. How is leadership distributed in your school? Is there any model that is followed?
6. To what extent would you say distributed leadership enhances capacity building among the staff?
7. What would you say are the benefits of distributing leadership for (a) the head (b) the teachers (c) the pupils?
8. How does distributed leadership contribute to effective school leadership?
9. What would you say is the overall effect of distributed leadership on teaching and learning?
10. Are there any problems that you have encountered with distributed leadership?
11. What have been your experiences as a top/middle/bottom level leader? Please tell me your story.

Interview Probes for Principal (Top Level Leader)

1. Leadership exists everywhere, so is in your school right? Would you please elaborate how the pattern of leadership in your school is? नेतृत्व सवै स्थानमा हुन्छ, यहाँको स्कूलमा पनि पक्कै छ । यहाँको स्कूलमा कस्तो प्रकारको नेतृत्व संरचना विद्यमान छ, कृपया उल्लेख गरिदिनुहुन्छ कि .....
2. How do you evaluate your position of the school principal as a leader? स्कूल प्रिन्सिपलको हैसियतमा यहाँले आफ्नो भूमिकालाई कसरी हेर्नुहुन्छ?
3. How do you distribute the tasks in your team? तपाई आफ्नो समूहलाई काम कसरी विभाजन गर्नुहुन्छ ?
4. Would you please clarify the claims that there are benefits of distributing the tasks in the team? कार्य विभाजन तथा सामूहिक कार्य पद्धतीबाट फाईदा पुग्छ भन्नुका आधारहरु प्रष्ट वनाइदिनुहोस न ।
5. As a principal of this school, how do you feel to be a principal leader, or what does it mean to be a principal for you? एउटा प्रिन्सिपलकोरुपमा विद्यालयको प्रमुख हुनुलाई तपाई कसरी बुझ्नुहुन्छ?
6. Would you please narrate an event or story where you have experienced something typical about the idea that working in team (distributing leadership) really matters? Any event that is in your memory.....नेतृत्वको विस्तार सम्बन्धमा कुनै एक घटना जुन यहाँको स्मृतीमा छ, कृपया बताई दिनुहोस न ।

Interview Probes for V. Principal/ Co-coordinators/ HOD (Middle Level Leader)

1. Leadership exists everywhere, so is in your school right? Would you please elaborate how the pattern of leadership in your school is? नेतृत्व सवै स्थानमा हुन्छ,

यहाँको स्कूलमा पनि पक्कै छ । यहाँको स्कूलमा कस्तो प्रकारको नेतृत्व संरचना विद्यमान छ, कृपया उल्लेख गरिदिनुहुन्छ कि .....

2. How do you evaluate your position of the V.Principal/Coordinator/HOD as a leader? स्कूल सहायक प्रिन्सिपल । संयोजक । विभाग प्रमुख को हैसियतमा यहाँले आफ्नो भूमिकालाई कसरी हेर्नुहुन्छ?
3. How do you distribute the tasks in your team? तपाई आफ्नो समूहलाई काम कसरी विभाजन गर्नुहुन्छ ?
4. Would you please clarify the claims that there are benefits of distributing the tasks in the team? कार्य विभाजन तथा सामूहिक कार्य पद्धतीबाट फाईदा पुग्छ भन्नुका आधारहरु प्रष्ट वनाइदिनुहोस न ।
5. As a vice principal/coordinator/HOD of this school, how do you feel to be a middle level leader, or what does it mean to be a principal for you? एउटा सहायक प्रिन्सिपल । संयोजक । विभाग प्रमुख को रुपमा विद्यालयको नेतृत्वमा हुनुलाई तपाई कसरी बुझ्नुहुन्छ?
6. Would you please narrate an event or story where you have experienced something typical about the idea that working in team (distributing leadership) really matters? Any event that is in your memory.....नेतृत्वको विस्तार सम्बन्धमा कुनै एक घटना जुन यहाँको स्मृतीमा छ, कृपया बताई दिनुहोस न ।

Interview Probes for Teacher (Bottom Level Leader)

1. Leadership exists everywhere, so is in your school right? Would you please elaborate how the pattern of leadership in your school is? नेतृत्व सवै स्थानमा हुन्छ,

यहाँको स्कूलमा पनि पक्कै छ । यहाँको स्कूलमा कस्तो प्रकारको नेतृत्व संरचना विद्यमान छ, कृपया उल्लेख गरिदिनुहुन्छ कि .....

2. How do you evaluate your position of teacher as a leader? विद्यालयको शिक्षकको (नेतृत्व) हैसियतमा यहाँले आफ्नो भूमिकालाई कसरी हेर्नुहुन्छ?
3. Would you please clarify the claims that there are benefits of distributing the tasks in the team? कार्य विभाजन तथा सामूहिक कार्य पद्धतीबाट फाईदा पुग्छ भन्नुका आधारहरु प्रष्ट वनाइदिनुहोस न ।
4. As a teacher of this school, how do you feel to be a bottom level leader, or what does it mean to be a teacher leader for you? एउटा शिक्षक को रुपमा विद्यालयको नेतृत्वमा हुनुलाई तपाई कसरी बुझ्नुहुन्छ?
5. Would you please narrate an event or story where you have experienced something typical about the idea that working in team (distributing leadership) really matters? Any event that is in your memory.....नेतृत्वको विस्तार सम्बन्धमा कुनै एक घटना जुन यहाँको स्मृतीमा छ, कृपया बताई दिनुहोस न ।

Annex IV: Protocol Writing

Protocol Writing Instructions

Protocol writing is the generating of original texts from which the researcher can work (Manen, 1990, p. 63). The text is a direct account of a personal experience as the writer lived through it. You are kindly requested to write a protocol narrating the experience of your own. The prompts below will help you write the protocol.

Writing Prompt

Please write a description of the major thoughts on an experience you have had as a teacher leader. Describe the experience from the inside, as it happened; almost like a state of mind account. This could be a positive or a negative experience, but should be something you can recall vividly. Include the feelings, the mood, the emotions, etc.

(Please attach extra sheet if required)

Annex V: Observation Performa

Date: Time: Duration:

Name of the School: Meeting Type:

Number of Participants:

Chaired by:

Major Agendas:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Procedural Account:

Participation:

Conclusion:

Analysis:

Annex VI: School Profile

School Profile

1. General Information

Name of the School:

Location Address:

Year of Establishment:

Level: Secondary ☐ Higher Secondary ☐ Other

…….....

Total Number of Students:

……Boys:……..Girls:…….

Total Number of Teachers: …….. Male: …….

Female:……

Contact Person for Information: ……..

Telephone:…….

2. School Leadership Structure:

(Tick if available, cross otherwise, mention if different in the left and state the numbers in the right).

Board of Directors
School Management Committee
Principal
Vice Principal(s)
Coordinator(s)
Head of Department (HOD)
Class Teachers
Subject Teachers
Administration
Accounts
Security

3. **Decision Making Processes:** (Please Specify the Frequency)

Board Meetings:

SMC Meeting:

Staff Meeting:

PTA Meetings:

Other (Please Specify):

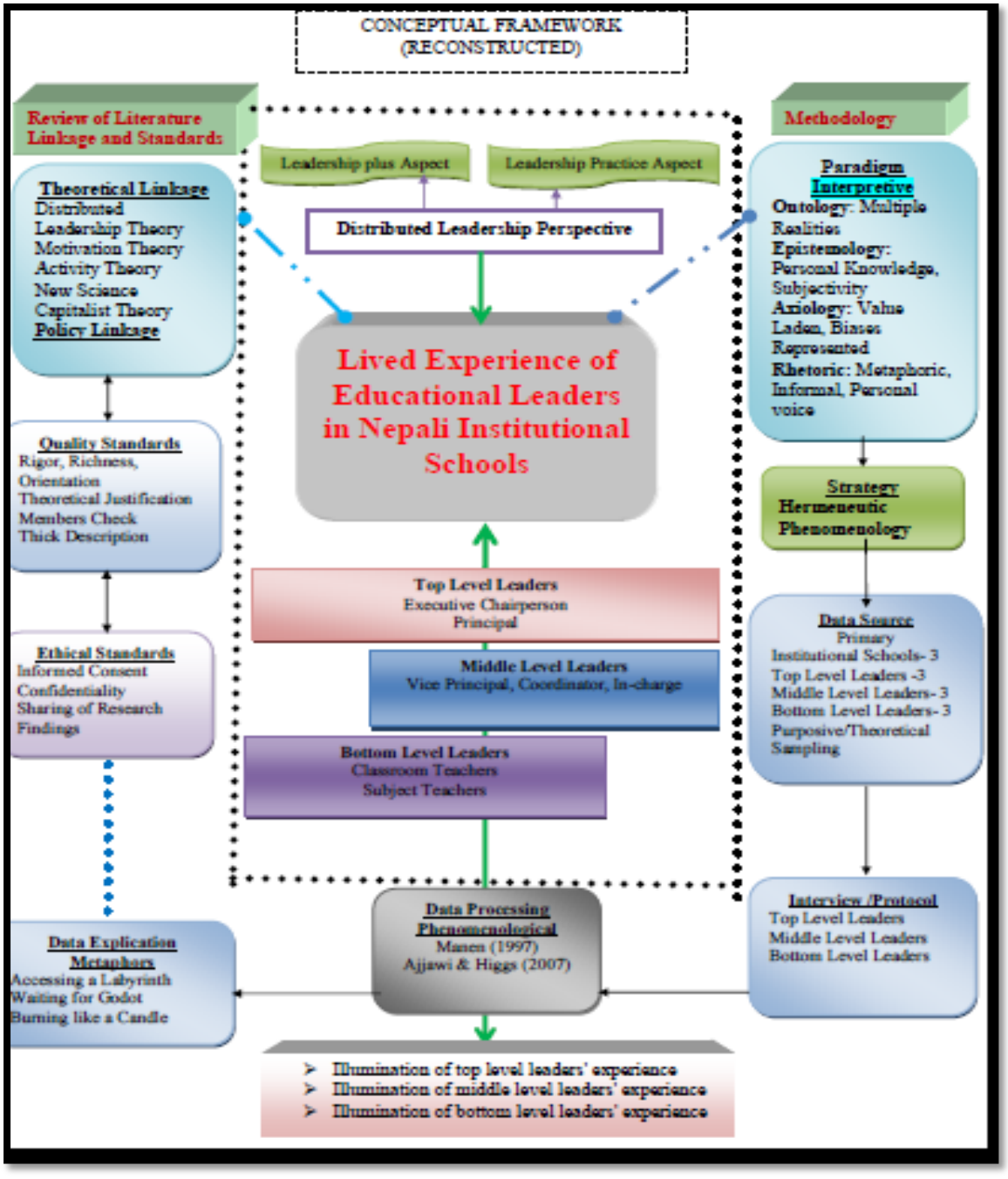
4. **Performance Parameters**

   SLC Results of Last 3 Years:

Year	Distinction	First	Second	Third	Fail	Remarks
2065						
2066						
2067						

5. **The story behind the establishment of the school (From the top level leader).**

Annex VII: Conceptual Framework



Annex VIII: The Leadership Era

Era	Period/Authors
Personality Era	Great Man Period: Great Man Theory (Bowden, 1927; Carlyle, 1841;Galton, 1896)
	Trait Period: Trait Theory (Bingham. 1927)
Influence Era	Power Relations Period: Five Bases of Power Approach (French,1956; French & Raven, 1959)
	Persuasion Period: Leader Dominance Approach (Schenk,1928)
Behavior Era	Early Behavior Period:
	Reinforced Change Thoery (Bass, 1960)
	Ohio State Studies (Fleishman, Harris & Burtt, 1955)
	Michigan State Studies (Likert, 1961)
	Late Behavior Period:
	Managerial Grid Model (Blake and Mouton, 1964)
	Four Factor Theory (Bowers and Seashore, 1966)
	Action Theory of Leadership (Argyris, 1976)
	Theory X and Y (McGregor, 1960/1966)
	Operant Period (Sims, 1977; Ashour & Johns, 1983)
Situation Era	Environment Period:
	Environment Approach (Hook, 1943)
	Open-System Model (Katz & Kahn. 1978)
	Social Status Period:
	Role Attainment Theory (Stogdill. 1959)
	Leader Role Theory (Homans, 1959)
	Socio-technical Period:
	Socio-technical systems (Trist and Bamforth, 1951)
Contingency Era	Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1964)
	Path-Goal Theory (Evans, 1970; House,1971)
	Situational Theory (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969;1977)
	Multiple Linkage Model (Yukl, 1971;1989)
	Normative Theory (Vroom and Yetton, 1973;Vroom and Jago, 1988)

Transactional	Exchange Period:
Era	Vertical Dyad Linkage/Leader Member Exchange Theory
	(Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975)
	Reciprocal Influence Approach (Greene, 1975)
	Emergent Leadership (Hollander, 1958)
	Role Development Period:
	Social Exchange Theory (Hollander, 1979; Jacobs, 1970)
	Role Making Model (Graen and Cashman, 1975)
Anti-Leadership	Ambiguity Period:
Era	Attribution Approach (Pteffer, 1977)
	Substitute Period
	Leadership Substitute Theory (Kerr & Jermier, 1978)
Culture Era	McKinsey 7-S Framework (Pascale & Athos, 1981)
	Theory Z (Ouchi and Jaeger, 1978)
	In Search of Excellence Approach (Peters and Waterman, 1982)
	Self-Leadership (Manz and Sims, 1987)
Transformational	Charisma Period:
Era	Charismatic Theory (House, 1977)
	Transforming Leadership Theory (burns, 1978)
	Self-fulfilling Prophecy Period
	SFP Leader Theory (Filed, 1989. Eden. 1984)
	Performance Beyond Expectations Approach (Bass,1985)
21st Century Era	*Servant Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Visionary Leadership, Post Modern Leadership, Strategic Leadership, Spiritual Leadership, Ethical Leadership,* ***Distributed Leadership****, Shared Leadership, Value Based Leadership, Collaborative Leadership, Teacher Leadership, Moral Leadership, etc.*

(Adapted from: Van Seters &Field, 1990)