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Master Thesis

An exploration on inequality

(Through teachers' perceptions)

Existing in the secondary level classroom in Nepal

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I was surprised because I think we hear more about promising attempts to close the gap and we hear a lot about school systems in states that are focused on closing the achieving gap, and yet the progress is so disappointingly slow.

-Hanushek

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Loka Nath Sharma

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Content

Abstract

This research was conducted to explore on the issue of inequality existing in the secondary level classroom in Nepal through teachers' perceptions of the same level intending to identify some practical ideas and activities that may contribute for equality. It is designed under the thematic framework of qualitative phenomenological approach getting the insights of humanitarian approach of critical theory and conceptually framed with the concepts of 'conscientization' and 'critical consciousness', the two main concepts of critical pedagogy. And it results that the teachers' perceptions for equality were found hanging somewhere in between of adapted consciousness and critical consciousness focusing on renovation of oppressive structure including the experiences of the oppressed students and using the tools like love, sympathy and other measures of transitory gratification and satisfaction for the students of marginalized community, which may not yield sufficiency for social equality of the oppressed students.

Key words: Inequality, critical consciousness, conscientization, oppression, equality

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

Regarding the issue of inequality in Nepalese education, more often it is explained through the perceptions of access and attainment for marginalized groups rather than the inequality and the oppression existing in the educational framework itself since due to the different social factors like gender, economic factor, caste or ethnicity have created a vast gap between educational haves and haves not in Nepalese society (Witenstein & Palmer, 2013; Stash & Hannum, 2001; & Mathema, 2007).

The main contributing factor of inequality in Nepalese education system is economic factor. Because though the government has announced and implemented the slogan of 'education for all', the public education system has become almost failure to provide quality education due to the lack of enough qualified and trained teachers, appropriate school management and other facilities required to conduct teaching learning activities. In such context, the mushrooming private schools have been occupying the space as the agent of quality education. But they are beyond the access of the poor. As a result, the poor are obliged to join the public school (Mathema, 2007). Like this, the traditional assumptions regarding the daughter of the family: obligation to leave "the natal households through marriage rather than contributing for the parents in their old age like the sons, labeling them less capable for non-farming professions than males and traditionally created gender bias framework which assigns more routine works of households to women create the situation of educational stratification in Nepalese society where the daughters are less likely to get the attainment of education" (Stash & Hannum, 2001, p. 357). And the next factor, ethnicity also plays the great role in creating the situation of inequality in Nepalese education attainment. Mentioning the findings of Sharada (1977), Stash & Hannum (2001) wrote- "the caste stratification mirrored in patterns of educational attainment; illiteracy levels were observed to be low among high castes, high among mid-level castes and quite high among the lowest castes" (p.358).

Beyond the public-private dichotomy and educational access and attainment, there is the situation of inequality even in the environment of whole academic process of Nepalese public education system where the students from marginalized community feel oppressed since the teachers are found offering less attention to them, the curriculum materials are found bias because of the exclusion of their experiences and so on (Bista, 2004; Rothchild, 2006; CDRC,

2007; as cited in Witenstein & Palmer, 2013). The textbook materials are also found more bias to such community since even "female names were used infrequently in textbooks and even more infrequently in textbooks used in higher grades" (Joshi, 1994; as cited in Witenstein & Palmer 2013, p.166).

In my life, during secondary level education in Nepal, I could also get a chance to feel and bare the impacts of such social inequality lively since I was a poor farm boy struggling to overcome the situation. Particularly, I felt I was disadvantaged in various issues such as: making friends, selecting me as the participant for different activities conducted in school, completion of home assignment, teacher intimacy and distance to me than others, their internal evaluation, issue of paying tuition fee etc. due to my poor economic background. But during that period, I could not realized that even the curriculum and course materials might play the role to serve the haves better than haves not. Later, in my higher education period, I again begin to suffer from the same oppressions that I had faced before. And moreover, I began to realize the situation of inequality created by the education policy of the state since higher education was the junction of both of the products of public schools and private schools where the students from public schools were seemed to be disadvantaged in many issues such as: use of English as the medium of instruction, ability to purchase text books and other materials, time managing for study etc. On the other hand, the students from private schools used to be easily adjusted in every issues of the classroom because of their strong academic as well as socio-cultural and economic background.

On the enlightenment of this flashback of my life, I inspired to select the issue of inequality appeared in the classroom as the topic of this research because though some new practices such as: open education system, use of students centered method in teaching, life-long education, etc. are supposed to practice in Nepalese schools, the situation is still same. Moreover, the private-public dichotomy in school education has created a vast gap of inequality between the ones who have the access to private schools and the others who do not have the access to them. It is the issue related with the access and quality which the private schools are supposed to hold (Mathema, 2007).

But my concern of the study is on inequality existing in the public education system, the education system which is supposed to implement by the state for the citizens. Mainly, the situation of oppression in Nepalese current society has been existing due to poverty, exclusion

and inequality which overlap in many ways, however it is true that all women are not poor and vice versa. Like this all poor are not excluded in the society or all ethnic groups/ religious communities excluded from the main stream of the state are not poor. But it is true that poverty, exclusion and inequality overlap in many ways and they contribute to make the human condition worst (UNFPA, 2007). Therefore, the Nepalese education system should contribute for empowerment and inclusion of poor, dominated ethnic groups, religious communities and women by increasing their access to economic opportunities, raising social consciousness in them and increasing their political power (UNFPA, 2007). To liberate such communities and ensure the sense of equality in the classroom, it is important to develop the sense of critical consciousness in the people of such communities through humanitarian educational approach which is designed in the participation of the all stock holders and implemented with the dialogue of students and teacher in the classroom (Freire, 2005). This theoretical perspective of critical theory gives the theoretical enlightenment for this research.

1.2 Research question

As I have mentioned above, my area of the study is about social inequality existing in secondary level classroom of Nepal. Specially, it is concentrated to explore findings on the basis of the experiences of the teachers on the subject matter, so that the findings can help somehow to maintain the equality in among the students of different social status in the classroom. Therefore, in this sense I formulated my research question as follow:

What experiences and reflections do the teachers have regarding the inequality existing in the secondary level classroom in Nepal? How do they contribute for equality in their classroom?

In the first part of this research question, the participants are supposed to reflect their experiences on the current situation of inequality that they face in every moment of their classroom period and in the second part of the research question, they are required to expose their contributions for equality in the past, as well as their claims or actions or ideas that they think contributory for equality in future.

1.3 Conceptual perspective

Inequality is one of the broadly viewed and observed areas of the research in social science. "Rousseau's discourse on the origins of inequality, Marx's critique of capitalism, Weber's analysis of class, status and party, Pareto's theory of elites, Keynes's general theory of

employment and others are classical examples of the centrality of the interest in this subject" (Martinell, 2016, p. 5). Recently the subject of inequality is observed as multi-dimensional phenomenon which is supposed to co-exist with various economic, social, religious and cultural discriminations and exclusions as well as power relation (ISSC, ISD & UNESCO, 2016). Therefore, for social equality of the oppressed communities, it is important to make them empowered by ensuring their participation from policy making level to its implementation level (UNFPA, 2007).

Though, I attempted to study and observe the inequality existing in the classroom by analyzing the teachers' perception, it is clear that the area of my research is not only limited in pedagogical boundary of the classroom, moreover it is political and social matter, and the search of equality is only possible by radical education which can contribute for the social transformation (Freire, 2005). In this sense, this research project falls in the realm of the critical paradigm. Therefore, the main concepts of critical theory: critical consciousness and conscientization build the conceptual framework of my study.

Inequality is the socially constructed ill-tradition. To avoid such tradition, the marginalized or disadvantaged groups are supposed to become critically conscious. Critical consciousness is a type of awareness on oppressive social structure which makes the oppressed community be ready to take action against the oppressive social structure so that they can participate in the movement for their rights through socio-cultural as well as socio-historical transformation (Crotty, 1998). Therefore critical consciousness includes being "aware of power relations, analyzing habits of thinking, challenging discursive and ideological formations, and taking initiative which is developed in student-centered dialogue that problematizes generative themes from everyday life, tropical issues from society and academic subject matter from specific disciplines" (Shor, 1992; as cited by Kaufmamn, 2010, p. 458).

The next and most important concept that contributes to underpin the conceptual schema of this study is conscientization, the core concept of critical pedagogy introduced by Paulo Freire. Conscientization is simply the process of being conscious or being educated. But it is beyond the traditional way of educating and/or being educated the people where the people are supposed to copy the realities of the world being the patient objects in order to get easy adjustment in the world like the animal. In the conscientization process, the agent should be conscious being as Freire said- "men are not merely in the world, but with the world together

with other man. Only men as open beings are able to achieve the complex operation of simultaneous transforming the world by their action and grasping and expressing the world's reality in their creative language" (Freire, 1970, p. 30).

Human being is different than animal since the animals are unable to objectify the reality of the world, they struggle merely to acquire the world and live with it. They do not have temporal awareness, speaking power and creativity. They live in the world but not with the world since they cannot prove their existence with their creativity, interchangeability and transformation . But human beings are only the beings in the world they can reflect on the facts of the world and transform them according to their needs and prove their existence. And ultimately they liberate the life. It means that human beings can destroy the bonds of socio-cultural and economic bonds of oppression and inequality if they can get critical consciousness about it. Therefore, the education should contribute to develop the sense of consciousness in the people who are in oppression (Freire, 1970; 2005).

In this research, I have analyzed the Nepalese teachers' perceptions collecting through the interview on the conceptual base of conscientization and critical consciousness. Specifically, I have observed to what extent their strategies, perceptions and claims are evocative to build the sense of critical consciousness and conscientization in the oppressed students so that they can overcome the various oppressions of inequality.

1.4 Research design and method

Thematically, this research is designed under the outline of qualitative phenomenological research method since the aim of the research is to explore some practical `concepts which can be fruitful for equality in the secondary level classroom in Nepal on the basis of the experiences and reflections of the participants of the interview. In the view of Holloway (1997), "qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live" (p. 2). And phenomenology is a kind of research approach which investigates the human experiences on social phenomenon through fundamental lance to explore the new concepts (Polkinghorne, 1989).

The participants were selected on the basis of some guidelines, like: gender inclusiveness, geographical representation, ethnic representation, representation of marginalized communities and inclusiveness regarding the language use as the mother tongue, experience of teaching for more than ten years etc. The interview was conducted under the guidance of

semi-structured interview guide which was divided in two broad categories. The first part of interview guide was concentrated to sketch the overall scenario of the topic, inequality existing in the secondary level classroom, and then the second part of the interview was concentrated on exploring some practical strategies that may be fruitful to create the situation of equality in the classroom.

1.5 Contribution of this research

In Nepalese education system there are still various oppressions and discriminations to the poor, women and other marginalized communities. The distinction between educational haves and haves not is increasing day to day due to the lack of quality in the public school, and due to inability of the poor and other oppressed students up to the door of private schools, and in this sense the quality and access are becoming the great challenges of secondary education (Mathema, 2007). Like this, "in education sector, the basic challenges are to ensure inclusive education for all women, and children of all castes/ ethnicities, sensitize teachers regarding gender, remove stereotypes completely from the curriculum and text books, and break the gender barrier in education in Terai areas" (UNFPA, 2009,p. 3).

In such context, this research conducted to explore the practical findings seeking equality obviously contributes in effective way. The fundamental situation of the Nepalese contemporary society containing extreme poverty, different types of political and social oppressions is identical to the fundamental circumstance of the critical pedagogy proposed by Freire. In this sense, the findings of this research constructing on the basis of the teachers' perceptions analyzing through the view of conscientization and critical consciousness, the core concepts of critical pedagogy play the influential role for creating harmonious relationship between/among the stock holders of educational system in Nepal. Specifically, the findings of the research may be fruitful in three different aspects of public education system of Nepal. First, the inputs of the system: students, teachers, aims of education etc. can be benefited since it recommends the students to be independent in the learning process, to be the counterpart of the teacher in dialogue and to hold the authority to authenticate the knowledge presented by the teachers. Like this the teacher can cut off the burden since he/she is not supposed to present the solution of the problem like the traditional teacher, more than that it helps them to be more democratic. Second, the process of education system may have the role of the findings of this research if they are practiced since they recommend using

student centered techniques so that the teacher and the students both remain refreshing, active, creative and productive throughout the teaching learning process. Moreover, the research can be helpful for the teachers to ensure the participation of all the students in pedagogical as well as social or political activities by ensuring all of their spaces and identities. Third, the research may contribute for the effective educational product also since it encourages for liberation, social justice and equality. At the same time, the research refers to practice the conscious effort while learning that makes the products of education system to be more reflective to the situation what they face in their future career, so that they can modify it in their own way ahead.

1.6 Structure of this research

This study is organized into six chapters, introduction, literature review, methods, data presentation and analysis, discussion and conclusion.

Literature review chapter presents the wide and in-depth review of literatures related with critical theory which consists of brief historical backgrounds, different factors and concepts of critical pedagogy (praxis, critical consciousness and conscientization), roles of the students and the teachers, aims of the education assumed by critical theory, and some other developments such as critical postmodern theory, critical race theory and critical human resource development theory. This chapter also includes the justification of conceptual framework of the study.

Methods chapter is concerned with the practical aspects of the overall research design. Mainly, this chapter includes epistemological assumptions of qualitative phenomenological research design, research design in relation to conceptual framework, scopes and boundaries and ethical considerations. Under the title of ethical considerations, participants of the interview, process of maintaining ethical consideration while taking interview, formulation of interview guide and maintaining ethical issues during the process of data processing, analysis and reaching to findings have been presented.

And the chapter data presentation and analysis, deals with the empirical data that were collected conducting the interview on the research topic. Specifically, it creates an overall account of data presentation and analysis in two broad categories. The first category is related with experiences of the teachers on inequality which has different concepts, such as: economic inequality, gender inequality, caste based inequality, cultural and religious

inequality, content based inequality, language based inequality, learning speed and learning achievement based inequality, body structure of the student as the cause of inequality and geographical inequality. Like this, the next category of this chapter is related with the reflections of the participants contributing for equality, and these are sub-titled as: classroom activities for equality, role of the teacher, role of the students and aims of education.

Discussion chapter presents the exclusive discussion on the data viewing them through the lance of critical perspective and dividing them into two broad categories as they were in presentation chapter. At first the discussion is concentrated to detect inequality from different angles which are: inequality as a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon, inequality as an inherent factor of whole education system (school-access based inequality and internal factor based inequality), inequality as the factor of natural phenomenon and inequality as the construction of individual features as well as uniqueness. And the second part of the discussion is concentrated to identify the ways of contribution for equality from the side of the teachers. Here, the role of the teachers are subtitled under four concepts which are: creating environment, building awareness, modeling to encourage the participation of the students in the movement of transformation and leading the students in real movement of transformation.

Conclusion chapter mainly consists of different findings of this research, which contains five sub-topics: findings of the research, limitations of it, relevance, recommendations and areas for further research. And the finding part is sub-titled with six different topics: inequality due to the diversity in economic, socio-cultural and ethnical status, inequality due to prescription and ascription rather than participation and acquisition of knowledge, inequality due to educational inability for addressing needs and identities of the minorities, teachers' role democratic verses autocratic, teachers' belief on compensation, gradual development and adapted awareness for equality rather than radical transformation and critical consciousness and teachers' reflections contrastive verses complementary to social transformation.

2. Literature Review

Literature review is the main part of the research process since it provides the wide and depth knowledge of the field on which the researcher is going to study. The literature review has different roles in the different design of research project. In qualitative research project, the literature review provides the different views of different persons on the research topic; provides the points and concepts of other research that can be useful for the running project and provides the points that indicate how the research project is distinctive from others. Moreover, the literature review contributes for the theoretical and conceptual framework of the research project. The literature review is not only a descriptive piece of accumulated literatures but also the analytical and argumentative well-designed piece of the research on the basis of which the theoretical base and conceptual framework of the research project is created. Therefore, the part of the literature review is needed to be well organized, having accurate referencing, analytical, based on a critical stance towards the literature, should have a comprehensive coverage, contextual understanding, and a balance between delineating an area of debate and advocating a particular approach (Pan, 2009, Major & Savin-Baden 2013 & Trafford & Lesher, 2008).

The research area of my project is critical theory therefore I have presented the literature review on the critical theory below:

Critical theory

Critical theory is one of the major sociological theories based on the enlightenment of the philosophical writings of Kant, Hegel and Marx. Though it is taken as the reincarnation of the "classical Greek thought on autonomy and democracy to be considered, as well as the thinking of Nietzsche and Weber, in the twentieth century critical theory became most closely associated with a distinct body of thought known as the Frankfurt School and became a different emblem of philosophy due to the philosophical contributions of Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Leo Lowenthal and Jürgen Habermas" (Devetak 1996, p.146).

Critical theory developed out of the work of the Frankfurt School of thought. Frankfurt school was active in Germany during the period of 1920s and 1930s. Just after that period Nazi came in power in Germany. The founding scholars of the school, Max Horkheimer,

Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse were the left wing German Jews who had a great influence of Marxism; as a result they were exiled. Such situation made them to develop a new thought in the field of sociology. The same thought is critical theory which is highly based on the Marxist theory of social development. However, there are some distinct points between Marxism and critical theory. The classical Marxist theory focuses its attention on economic factor; as a vehicle of social development, more than that critical theory is "almost entirely super structural since it concerns with culture, bureaucracy, the social basis and nature of authoritarianism, the structure of the family, and on exploring such concepts as reason and rationality as well as theories of knowledge" (Hobden & Jones, 2008, p. 153). Another key concept of critical theory is emancipation; it is also a main concern of classical Marxism. But we can find different perceptions regarding emancipation between these two theories. Marxism regards emancipation in terms of 'reconciliation with the nature' as the contrast of it; the critical theory defines emancipation in connection of communication, social interaction, different roles of human beings and power relations. The critical theorists say, "emancipation lies through radical democracy, that is, it is through a system in which the widest possible participation is encouraged not only in word but also in deed, by actively identifying barriers to participation – be they social, economic or cultural – and overcoming them" (Hobden & Jones, 2008, p. 154).

According to Ashley and Orenstein (2001; as citied in Chen, 2005) critical theory is one of the major social theories out of the three main orientations that are positivism, hermeneutics and critical theory. Critical theory is distinct from positivism and hermeneutics since the former one, views social elements in holistic sense whereas the later ones are reductionist in their nature. To study about individual behavior, critical theory views the whole social structure, community and family where the individual concerned.

In the words of Devetak (1996),

> Critical theory was a concern to comprehend the central features of contemporary society by understanding its historical and social development, and tracing contradictions in the present which may open up the possibility of transcending contemporary society and, it's built in pathologies and forms of domination. Critical theory intended not simply to eliminate one or other abuse but to analyze the underlying social structures which result in these abuses, with the intention of overcoming them. (p.146)

It means that the critical theory of sociology views the existing social structure, culture, community, social norms and values, and different roles and power relations and makes the subordinate groups aware on how they are dominated, and how their identities, culture and ways of living are on the verge of extinction due to the oppressors. This theory assumes that if the oppressed are recognized about the oppressive social structure, culture, social norms and values, they are empowered to face hegemonic force, as a result they can defense for the development of their cultural identity (Chen, 2005).

In such a way, critical theory holds Marxist theoretical practice in its spirit as well as its nature of social study methodology and the structure of the human society. Specially, it presents "critiques on social practices and ideologies that mask systematically distorted accounts of reality which attempt conceal and legitimate asymmetrical power relations" (Bottomore, 2001; as citied in Stinson &Bullock, 2012, p. 46). Its chief aim is to emancipate people in the society. For that, it presents the detailed interpretation of the social structures constructed within the hegemonic power which creates a vast discrimination between/among the people in the society. "Hegemony constructs people as objects - those who are acted upon rather than subjects, those who act - who become so entrenched in their own oppressive condition that they do not realize their own subjugation or their complicity in the perpetuation of unjust social and economic systems" (Freire, 2005; as quoted in Stinson &Bullock, 2012, p. 46).

As mentioning the view of Crotty (1998), Stinson &Bullock (2012) say that to work with critical theory means to hit against social problem having the intention of changing it rather than simply evoking it as a matter of discussion. So, critical theory aims to transfer unjust cultural norms and values, social relations created on the basis of oppression to create equality in the society. According to critical theorists, the situation of equality and equity is the base of the authentic liberation of the individuals. For this, the individuals are basically required to be critically aware. When they have got critical awareness, they can obstruct hegemonic structures of their societies. In other words, being conscious they exercise their human rights in the movements of socio-cultural and historical transformation of their society.

The destination of critical theory is authentic liberation of the individuals in the society. To complete the journey from oppression to liberation, the individuals should go through certain procedures with certain requirements including 'praxis' through which the individuals commit

themselves on the way of social transformation after they have unveiled the oppressive structures of their society. And in the next step, they confront and destroy the oppressive social structure and establish the new social structures. Throughout this whole process of praxis (reflection+ action) - critical consciousness and liberation, the individuals are guided by some sort of pedagogical theory based on critical theory, is called critical pedagogy. The theory of critical pedagogy is also called pedagogy of the oppressed. However, the pedagogy of the oppressed becomes the pedagogy of all when the process of getting authentic liberation is completed (Freire, 2005).

In the view of Fischer (1980) critical theorists take science is only one form of getting knowledge because "perception is structured by the linguistic categories, mental attitudes, and interests of observes/ the categories that define truth and validity reflect different values and interests at different points in history/ and reality is no apprehend directly, but must be interpreted, mediated, or constructed by conceptual schema, such as paradigms" (Reid, Robinson & Bunsen, 1980, p. 132).

1. Critical pedagogy

Though the phrase 'critical pedagogy' was first appeared in Giroux's work entitled 'Theory and Resistance in Education' in 1983, Paulo Freire was regarded as the inaugural scholar of critical pedagogy since he presented a detailed description of recognizing the connection of education and politics, and mentioned the way of preventing schools from imperialism to limit the authentic liberation in his famous book 'Pedagogy of the oppressed' (Chen, 2005 & Breuning, 2005). McLaren (1998) used the phrases 'new sociology of education' and 'critical theory of education' for critical pedagogy. In McLaren's view, critical pedagogy is a "means to empower the powerless and transform existing social inequalities and injustice'' (McLaren, 1998, pp. 163-164; as quoted in Chen, 2005).

Critical pedagogy presupposes that school and other political and social frameworks constitute with the features and values of dominant groups of the society, so the minorities, low class or the subordinate groups of people do not have a good access up to them. Always they are suppressed under such frameworks. Therefore, critical pedagogy aims to uproot such social relations or frameworks created by power and to create a just world for all (Kincheloe, 2004; as citied in Breuning, 2005). To achieve this aim, critical pedagogy includes different aspects in education such as: political economy of schooling, the representation of texts and construction of student subjectivity.

In other words, critical pedagogy can be taken as a "practice of schooling to democratic principles of society and to transfer social actions in the interest of oppressed communities." (Darder et al., 2003; as quoted in Chen, 2005)

Breuning (2005), views that the transformation of education is possible only in connection of social transformation. Regarding this, he says:

> This form of critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about negotiating and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relation of the wider community and society. It explores how the project of schooling may be recast in ways that focus teaching on the development of moral project(s) for education as social transformation. It encourages critical thinking, promotes practices that have potential to transfer oppressive institutions or social relations. (p.109)

Critical pedagogy, a progressive pedagogy, pedagogy based on Hegelian dialectics, Marxism and Catholicism, so as directed with its fundamental ideologies; it is concentrated to uproot the social injustice and inequalities. According to Freire (2005) the task of critical pedagogy is to liberate oppressed from the oppressor and the oppressors themselves in the society, therefore the critical pedagogy is full of humanitarian pedagogy. It is full of justice to every groups or classes existed in the society. In this regards, Freire (2005) says:

> To surmount the situation of the oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity. But the struggle to be more fully human has already begun in the authentic struggle to transform the situation. Although the situation of oppression is a dehumanized and dehumanizing totality affects both oppressors and those whom they oppress, it is the latter who must from their stifled humanity, wage for both the struggle for fuller humanity; the oppressor, who is himself dehumanized because he dehumanizes others , is unable to lead this struggle. (p.47)

To enlighten the importance of critical pedagogy, Freire (2005) adds that the struggle for freedom begins with human's recognition which can encounter the different forms of unjust, impartiality, propaganda, management, manipulation and colonization created by the oppressors. For this "the only effective instrument is a humanizing pedagogy in which the revolutionary leadership established permanent relationship of dialogue with the oppressed. In a humanizing pedagogy, the method ceases to be an instrument by which the teachers can

manipulate the students because it expresses the consciousness of the students themselves" (Freire, 2005, pp. 68- 69).

In the words of Giroux (1994; as quoted by Scott, Pyne & Means, 2015) critical pedagogy is concerned with the issue related with "audience, voice, power and evaluation actively work to construct particular relations between teachers and students, institutions and society, and classrooms and communities. …..it illuminates the relationship between knowledge, authority and power" (p. 140). As Freire (2005) presented in "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" to apply critical pedagogy in school power and politics plays the role. But the poor, the disadvantaged and the minorities do not have the authority; and schools are under the social frameworks created by the oppressors. So, schools also become the agent of oppression in oppressive society (Freire, 2005). Apple (1990), Delpit (1995), Gay (1995), Shor (1992) and McLaren (2007) also label school as a main source of the oppressors (Scott, Pyne & Means, 2015). And, they claim critical pedagogy is the means to overcome it. Regarding this Scott, Pyne & Means (2015) present their views in the following ways:

> Critical pedagogy challenges the apparent political and cultural neutrality of human values and institutions especially educational systems, recognizing that schools are sites where social and economic ideologies often come into conflict with each other and with official values and practices. Schools create, enforce, and normalize stratification in larger society both by overtly creating educational haves and have-nots and covertly investing in a hidden curriculum that privilegescertain cultural ways of knowing over others…… Schools help maintain unequal power relations rather than serving as a means for individual and social improvement. (pp. 140- 141)

However, Gay (1995), Giroux (2001) and Duncan-Andrade & Morrell (2008) are not ready to accept school entirely as an agent of social imperialism or oppression because even though schools are under the guidance of oppressors, they can also serve "to empower, transform and provide access to advantages previously unavailable especially when coupled with a critical approach to knowledge and practice" (Scott, Pyne & Means, 2015 p. 141).

The important concepts in critical pedagogy are presented below

1.1 Praxis

Praxis is an identity of human being which distinct the human from other animals in the world. The other animals live in the world since they can adjust themselves to the context

whatever they have. If they cannot adjust to the context, it is sure that they die and all the spices of them extinct from the world. However, "human beings emerge from the world, objectify it, and in so doing can understand it and transform it with their labor" (Freire, 2005, p. 125). It is possible for human beings to encounter the context and the world around them because the contexts are open to them since they can transform them as their desire using the activities like reflections and actions, called praxis. Therefore praxis is human specific feature created with the appearance of reflections and actions simultaneously on the way of social transformation. In other words, Praxis is a way of critical analysis where reflections and actions contribute for critical consciousness which is the foundation for authentic liberation of the individuals in the society (Freire, 2005).

"Transformation is a type of revolution which is achieved with neither verbalism nor activism, but rather praxis, that is, with reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed" (Freire, 2005, p. 126).

Here, the designation of the efforts needed to transform the social structures is not designated by the leaders or its thinkers. Instead of that it is created by the oppressed themselves therefore it is fully participatory. Instead of manipulation of the leaders, they are manipulated. Therefore such movements never fail (Freire, 2005).

Regarding the leadership of the revolution, Freire (2005) says that if the leaders coordinate the movements of individuals towards transformation, they cannot accept the praxis from oppressed, instead of that they impose their own words and invalidate their praxis. Such movements cannot reach at the point of real liberation though the leaders assume so. In this context Freire (2005) mentions various categories of praxis as follows:

> Revolutionary praxis must stand opposed to the praxis of the dominant elites, for they are by nature antithetical. Revolutionary praxis cannot tolerate an absurd dichotomy in which the praxis of the people is merely that of following the leaders' decisions- a dichotomy reflecting the prescript methods of the dominant elites. Revolutionary praxis is a unity, and the leaders cannot treat the oppressed as their oppression. (p.126)

In classroom, the practice of praxis begins through the dialogue between students and teachers about the cognizable objects which mediates them for critical awareness about the reality of the objects. Praxis makes student a critical participator of the discussion of the subject matters which the teacher presents in the classroom where the role of the student is the complement

and counterpart of the teacher. It means not an object being manipulated, but the subject who can perform for transformation of the knowledge presented in the class. It means that praxis provides right to the students to authenticate the knowledge presented in the classroom (Freire, 2005).

Hall (2015) mentions the works of praxis beyond the class room since he takes praxis as the realization of one's own identity in the connection of the culture and a type of political struggle for human liberation. It means both reflections and actions are connected with civic action rather than the mere classroom activities (p.41).

But the view regarding praxis can be found different in the perceptions of classical philosophers to the view of critical theorists. Aristotle defined praxis as action which means the activities by which people can reach a particular goal using their own efforts. He takes praxis as a means to get knowledge on the basis of social norms and values (Ax & Ponte, 2008).

Riedel (1977; as mentioned in Ax & Ponte, 2008), defines praxis as a means to develop knowledge: theoretical as well as practical. Both of them are systematic knowledge. Theory means the knowledge of interconnection of different factors in certain situation and 'techne' or practical knowledge means the knowledge that individual uses when the situation demands. He takes praxis as natural condition of human being, and "pedagogical praxis is socially and culturally embedded situation in which the up bringer purposefully tries to help the child to become an adult… upbringing is always praxis and that praxis can be evaluated as good or bad rather it is a concept that enables human beings to criticize existing ways of seeing, doing and structuring social life" (pp. 2-3).

Praxis is the basis of emancipatory as well as scientific knowledge in critical pedagogy which distinguishes critical pedagogy/ theory from other different social paradigms like positivism, empiricism and postmodernism. "It refers to the actual application of knowledge to the transformation of society…... It moves the curriculum beyond the classroom and connects critical reflections to action in the community. It distinguishes itself from service learning or community- based volunteerism with a more explicit on collective efforts at social transformation" (Braa & Callero, 2006, p. 359)

1.2 Critical consciousness

"Critical consciousness involves the ability to reflect on one's personal biases in working collaboratively with individuals and community stakeholders to take action and transform existing obstacles to a satisfactory quality of life." (Freire, 2000; quoted in Goodman & West-Oltaunji, 2009, p. 458) It is useful for educational training, community development, fostering awareness and empowerment. The process of being critically conscious begins with the deep understanding of existing social structures, social inequalities and other different type of social injustices. Simply, at this stage, a critical person gets reflection and develops his awareness to such social phenomena. This awareness developed in the critical person leads him towards the transformation of such unjust forms of the society. In other words, "the process of increasing awareness through reflection is critical in the development of cultural competence because it can liberate individuals from socially embedded and often unconscious hegemonic views" (D' Andrea, 2005; Ivey & Collins, 2003; as quoted in Goodman & West-Oltaunji, 2009, p. 459).

Regarding this Kumagai & Lypson (2009) present their view taking Freire's words in following way:

> The development of critical consciousness involves a reflective awareness of the differences in power and privilege and the inequalities that are embedded in social relationship - an act that Freire calls 'reading the world' – and fostering of a reorientation of perspective towards a commitment to social justice. The development of this type of consciousness – a process that Freire calls 'conscientization' – is both cognitive and effective and leads to engaged discourse, collaborative problem solving and a 're humanization' of human relationship. (p. 783)

Freire mentions three different stages that a human being should go to get critical consciousness. These are:

A. The period of naïve, in this period the person foster with "adapted consciousness- state where a person accommodates to conditions imposed on them, and acquires an authoritarian and acritical frame of mind" (Freire, 1993b, p. 23).

B. Transitive thoughts: In this stage, the persons "lack insight into the way in which their social conditions undermine their wellbeing, and do not see their own actions as capable of changing their conditions" (Campbell & Mac. Phail, 2002, p. 8).

C. Critical transitivity: In this stage-

> There is a dynamic interaction between critical thought and critical action triggered by the ability to think holistically and critically about one's condition. A critically transitive thinker is empowered to critically reflect on the conditions that shape his/her life, and to work collectively to change these conditions on the basis of such critical insights. (Campbell & Mac. Phail, 2002, p. 8)

Critical consciousness is a continuous attempt to build awareness reflecting on social structures, power relation, and other social entities and phenomena. It is a process of fostering knowledge on these social conditions by using individual own biases or perceptions. Lyotard (1984) calls it as a self-interrogative process, which is the most effective way of gaining deep knowledge. According to Sakamoto & Pitner (2005), critical consciousness can be achieved in three practical steps: "Formation of power/oppression issues in terms of target/agent groups, the training of social work so that the students should utilize classroom exercises that challenge individuals to develop critical consciousness and empowerment." (pp. 443-447)

1.3 Conscientization

Conscientization means the way of practicing to engage oneself in an environment which provides an opportunity to individuals to develop the critical awareness about their social environment or social structure through the action and critical reflection. Though it emphasizes on individual identity and unique features, the main approach to get conscientization is by conducting participatory approach and activities which make the individuals feel that their individual experiences, opinions and ideas have an important role for social transformation. And the beginning point towards conscientization is the conscientization of the situation which is accompanied with action which "prepares individuals for the struggle against the obstacles to their humanization" (Friere, 2005, p. 119).

Consentization is not simply an understanding the social situation. The understanding means only taking the information from the world in mechanistic or objective way. Such assumption of informing people about the reality of the world regards an individual as a thing to receive readymade information made by others since it assumes that the world is a static reality, and the human being as a part of the world. But beyond this, the critical theory regards human being as a counterpart of the world. The human being lives with the world not in it because the human being interacts with the world continuously and gains the new consciousness in

each and every moment with the intention of transforming the reality existing in it. Therefore, in radical sense a human being is not an adaptive, passive object but a creative subject who has occupied with the critical dimensions of consciousness who can transfer the world. Such creativity and productivity gained by human being through the continuous process of action and reflection is conscentization which is human specific feature (Freire, 2005).

Regarding this Freire (1970) says "Conscientization means the process in which men not as recipients but as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transfer that reality." (p.493)

To get conscientization, an individual should have a radical denunciation of dehumanization. He should have the experience of social unjust and inequality. In this sense, the Right are supposed to unable to get conscientization. Regarding this Freire says:

> Conscientization is an unrealizable project for the Right. The Right is by its nature incapable of being utopian and hence it cannot develop a form of cultural action that would bring about conscientization. There can be no conscientization of the people without a radical denunciation of dehumanizing structures, accompanied by the proclamation of a new reality to be created by man. …………. There can be no conscientization without denunciation of unjust structures, a thing that cannot be expected of the right. Nor can there be popular conscientization for domination. The Right invents new forms of cultural action for domination. (Freire, 1970, p.59)

Getting conscientization is not simply a sudden awakening. It is achieved after a long intellectual processing –

> It is a process with multiple avenues of insightful moments as well as difficult times to denial and pain. The process might be characterized by gradual as well as revolutionary changes at multiple levels ranging from alienation to liberation. Conscientization about one's actual reality takes place by submersion and intervention in it; hence, the necessity of doing inquiry mediated by reflective dialogue. (Sleeter, Torres & Laughlin, 2004, p. 83)

Hence, conscientization begins with the action and the action should not be merely physical effort, but it also should encompass with "the consciousness of the agent, his/her possibility of programming action, creating tools and using them to mediate between himself/herself and the object of his/her action, purposes, anticipating results, result in significant products and his/her conditioning to become the object of his/her reflections" (Freire, 1970, p.43), it

prepares an individual to encounter the obstacles on the way to humanization. It is participatory and fully inclusive approach in radical pedagogy where an individual's actions, perceptions and reflections to the world can play an effective role for radical change in the society. According to Freire (2005), it starts with the dialogical education which begins with thematic investigation. Thematic investigation is the effort to find meaningful thematic which are concerned with the world views and necessities of the students. At the stage of thematic investigation, the team of the students is required to find and select the meaningful themes on the basis of the general content which is made for them. But there may be the gap between the general content made to student by other and a thematic content prepared on the basis of the participation of the students. To maintain this gap Freire (2005) proposes 'hinged themes' which "clarify the peoples that the world is trans-formative thing rather than the adaptive one" (p. 121).

When the process of thematic investigation completed, the process of codification begins. Codification means "choosing the best channel of communication for each theme and its representation". Codification can be either simple or compound. In simple codification either we use simply a single mode of communication out of visual, tactile and auditive ones. But in compound codification various channels of communication are used simultaneously. After that the didactic materials are prepared based on the codification of the thematic. Such didactic materials may be like the recorded interview of specialists, newspapers articles, intellectual discussion, etc. Then, such materials are presented in the classroom/ cultural circles so that the participants can get opportunity to discuss and react on them. If the teacher can present a general program in the classroom following these procedures, the students can find themselves with it since it has originated from them. Consequently, the students can get critical consciousness heading towards consentization (Freire, 2005).

1.4. Pedagogical activities (Dialogue)

To create the foundation of his problem posing method of education, Freire points out the weaknesses of the traditional approach of teaching method which he calls banking concept of education because while teaching with this method, the teacher deposits the alienated reality on the students. "Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat" (Freire, 2005, p.72). There is no scope of two way communication, dialogue, and praxis. But in Freire's view "for

apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis individual cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other" (Freire, 2005, P.72).

Problem posing method of pedagogy ensures rights and access of students during the whole process of education. For this, teacher is supposed to be like a partner of the students. Regarding this Freire (2005) says the teacher's "efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. His efforts must be imbedded with the profound trust in people and their creative power. To achieve this, they must be partners of the students in their relations with them" (p. 75) .

Human life is meaningful since the human beings can communicate with each other. So, in the classroom, the teacher should create a good and warm environment of discussion. The contradiction between students and teacher is required on the subject matters because it is required for common consciousness. The common consciousness is the authentic knowledge which leads individuals to authentic liberation. But the teacher cannot think in behalf of the students. Only the teacher's thought get authenticity when the students approve it through the classroom dialogue. Therefore, the role of the teacher in problem posing classroom is like a counterpart of the student. Both teacher and students have dialogical relationship and they reflect on the matters presented by the teachers. The teacher and students have horizontal relationship rather than the vertical one. The teacher does not teach in classroom, instead of it, he himself being taught in dialogue with the students. In Freire's words, "through dialogue, the teacher- of- the- students and the students- of- the teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher- student with students- teachers" (Freire, 2005, p. 80).

As an important pedagogical activity, the critical pedagogues take dialogue as the first and final instrument. Because it gives critical awareness to the students, critical awareness means the knowledge on how the social institution including school play role as the oppressor in the name of making good students. In the words of Barr & Callero (2006), critique is the "systematic analysis of both self and society with a focus on inequality, exploitation, oppression and domination" (p. 359). Critical awareness is the basic quality of critical pedagogy, such awareness makes the students empowered, and consequently they can present

themselves to the way of counter hegemonic insights. Then they can transform such structures (Breunig, 2005).

If we study the framework of critical pedagogy, we find the components like critique, counter hegemony and praxis as the core components. These all components are dynamic due to the effectiveness of the dialogue in the classroom. These elements are not in traditional way of teaching because the traditional approach of teaching does not accept dialogue as the most important factor of teaching learning process (Barr & Callero, 2006).

> Dialogue refers to the active participation of the students and teacher in discussion and analysis. By transcending the conventional culture of silence, students gain a sense of empowerment, especially when interaction is directed toward a critical examination of actual student experiences. Dialogue seeks not only to increase active student participation in the classroom but also to develop a critical social consciousness among students. (Barr & Callero, 2006, p.359)

Freire (1971; as quoted in Kaufmann 2010), "dialogue as an educational practice can facilitates learning to read and write the word and the world, and thus it has the potential to transform the world" (p. 457). Critical consciousness in individuals is encompassed with different factors like getting the knowledge of social power relations, analyzing habits of thinking, challenging discursive and ideological formations and taking initiative are developed in student centered dialogue that problematized generative themes from everyday life, topical issues from society, and academic subject matter from specific disciplines (Shor. 1992; as citied in Kaufmann, 2010).

Problem posing method is distinct from traditional teaching approach since it does not dichotomize the activities of the teacher and the student. The teacher can be cognitive rather than narrative while engaging in dialogue with the students. Here, the teacher does not think such cognizable objects as his own property but as the objects of reflections upon which the teacher and the students reflect and re-reflect until and unless they reach at the common consciousness. Therefore the students are the critical co-investigators in the dialogue with the teacher. Hence, the students are free to express their views on the objects of reflection. And "the role of the problem posing educator is to create, together with the students" (Freire 2005, pp. 81-82).

Dialogue in the classroom creates the situation of presenting the live experiences of the students and the teacher to the cognizable object which is beyond the dead silent traditional

class. Therefore dialogue, in this context diverts the classroom from imperialist mode and converts it in the dialogical one where the students are regarded as an active agent of the knowledge rather than a passive listener, and they contribute as the counter part of the teacher in the process of co-creating the knowledge (Hall, 2015). Freire holds that dialogue is "a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake it…. through dialogue reflecting together on what we know and do not know, we can than act critically to transform reality" (Hall, 2015, p. 41).

According to Kaufmann (2010) the central point of critical pedagogy is dialogue through which students come to know and to act, therefore Freirian dialogical practice becomes a form of social praxis within the classroom. But he mentions two issues in dialogical practice in the classroom. One is that dialogue is a cultural practice, therefore it is difficult to make is independent from the hegemonic social norms and values. And the next matter is on how to translate dialogue into critical democracy. In the words of Brookfield, "dialogue is an engagement of situated participants. It is not an abstract, neutral practice, instead it is constructed according to (among other things) race, class, and gender of its participants, the institutional and cultural location of the speech acts that compose discussion and the ways in which the facilitator's behavior is interpreted" (Brookfield, 2001, p. 212; as quoted in Kaufmann, 2010). "Genuine dialogue arising from true dialectical approaches that allow students analyze and respond to spectrum of positions of thought" (Mclaren, 2007, pp. 31-32).

On the basis of the all above views mentioned about dialogue, it can be taken as a human phenomenon which makes easier to get knowledge ensuring the liberation on the process of getting it. The dialogue in the critical classroom is not simply a discussion, but is a radical interaction containing reflections and actions. It means that to take part in dialogue in critical class means to get counter hegemonic potentiality to encounter the inequality existed in the society. Therefore, here to speak means to get praxis for transformation of the knowledge and the society. "Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming- between those who deny others the right to speak their words" (Freire, 2005, p. 88).

Freire takes reality as a relative entity which is created and recreated on the basis of the dialogue between/ among the people in the world. So, to find the common consciousness

about the object the teacher should create a good environment in the classroom. For true dialogue -

> The dialoguers should engage in critical thinking, the thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them – thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity – thinking which does not separate itself from action but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved, counting transformation of reality in behalf of continuing humanization of men. (Freire, 2005, p.92)

According to Freire (2005), the critical dialogue in class room requires love, humility and faith among the dialoguers; such features help to maintain horizontal relationship among the members as well. Such relationship helps to build mutual trust among them. Along with these features, the most essentially they should have critical thinking. In the absence of critical thinking, no dialogue is possible. If there is no dialogue, there is no communication (two way communication) and in the absence of communication, getting true education is not possible. Regarding this Freire,(2005) says, "Education which is able to resolve the contradiction between teacher and student takes place in a situation in which both address their act of cognition to the object by which they are mediated" (p.93).

In such a way, the problem posing method of teaching regards education or the knowledge as the practice of liberation which is gained through the long dialogical process, where dialogical and anti- dialogical views confront and finally have a common consciousness. So, it takes reality as the common identity of the world and human beings since it regards human consciousness and the process of the development of the world as simultaneous and dynamic entities (Freire, 2005).

1.5 Role of teacher

Teacher as a potentially powerful force for social change (Giroux, 1997) develops pedagogical techniques in problem posing approach. While developing the theories of teaching the teacher as a critical educator connects his self-reflections and students reflections and understandings to the common anti hegemonic force to change the existing nature of the society since critical teaching is not merely an intellectual and artistic act, more than that it is political. Teacher cannot ascribe and prescribe any classroom activities and knowledge to the students, instead of it, he can build coherence and consistency in classroom works. However,

the teacher is free to reflect his self- reflection on the matter of discussion as a student. Like students, he should be critical to the institution that has hold power (Breunig, 2005).

According to McLaren (2007), teacher as a social justice educator should provide student a 'language of critique' and 'language of possibility'. The former one is related with the awareness of the students to the existing socio- economic situation and the later one deals finding their relationship with/in the world. "Resonating with constructive perspectives on education, critical pedagogues began with student- centered critical dialogue, respect for the multiple ways of knowing brought by all participants and deliberate attention to real world issues to facilitate critical thinking and agency among students about their own lives" (Scott, Pyne &Means, 2014, p. 141).

Regarding the pedagogical activities in the class room, we do not find any particular activities since the critical pedagogy focuses on the immediate situation and creation of appropriate techniques of teaching. However, some critical pedagogues have shared their views about the certain activities. Breunig (2005) shares his ideas as follows: Divide groups/ dialogue on particular content and curriculum/ students' reflections including teacher's also/ searching the source of knowledge/ preparing a hierarchical lists of knowledge on the basis of their consideration from most valid to less valid/ searching and finding reading materials/ critical dialogue. Moreover, to involve students in the creation of goals, choosing inclusive and representative materials collaborating with students and co-creation of methodologies are the feature of critical teaching approach. And experimental activities, small group works, seminar, short lecture from teacher, student presentation, discussion and creative expression are some fruitful actives in problem posing classroom (Breunig, 2005).

1.6 Role of students

Regarding the role of the students, Freire (2005) says that the process of getting education begins with the solution of teacher- students' contradiction where the points of contrast among the teacher and students are addressed through the dialogue. So, the students perform the role of the teacher's counterpart locating at the same status as the teacher, and they become teachers and students simultaneously. It means a student in critical classroom is not only a passive listener like an object but an active participant like a teacher. This assumption regarding the roles of the students is extremely progressive than the traditional assumption which behaves students as empty vessels to be filled with the knowledge suited as for their

own culture, society, class, race and gender, in other words students are fed with the ascribed and prescribed knowledge which cultivates the oppression existed in the contemporary society. In critical class, the learners are taken as the source of individual expectations, hopes, dreams, diverse, backgrounds and life experiences including a long history of previous schooling and educational hegemony (Breuning, 2005 &Freire, 2005). However, we may locate some points of distinct role of the critical teacher and the critical students in the critical classroom since the teacher has greater presumed maturity of the experience than the students (Dewey, 1983; as mentioned in Breuning, 2005).

> Educator creates classroom condition that offers students the opportunity to work toward social change, to have a voice in the educational process, to have the knowledge and courage to be critical and to be interested in and committed to this process, but the students have a responsibility to critically commit themselves to this process. This affords students the opportunity to fulfill their prescribed role (within the critical process) as agents of social change. (Breuning, 2005, p.118)

1.7 Aims of the education

The aim of critical pedagogy is to lead the individuals to the point of authentic liberation through praxis, reflecting and acting against the existing structures of power relation with the intention of transformation. Therefore the objective of critical education is to build critical consciousness in the oppressed people, so that they can encounter and break down the hegemonic or the oppressive socio-cultural norms and values, dominated rules of different institutions including schools, oppression, domination, inequality and discrimination (Freire, 2005, Scott, Pyne &Means 2014, Giroux 1994, Hall, 2015, Kaufmann, 2010, Braa & Callero, 2006 & Breunig 2005).

The critical pedagogues assume that education creates and recreates the reality. The process of creating and recreating the reality never ends. It means that knowledge is dynamic as well as contextual. The mostly fruitful knowledge in one context becomes useless in different context. Therefore no one can be the source of the knowledge, neither anyone can control it to be the master. Therefore, the aim of critical education is to evoke the learner eager to learn the context which they face. Therefore, the aim of education is to "motivate human beings in the process of becoming as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality" (Freire, 2005, p. 84).

2. Developments in Critical Theory

During the periods of development, critical theory has developed in different new theories, such as critical human resource development theory, critical postmodern theory and critical race theory. I would like to present some literatures on them because they may be fruitful to underpin my conceptual framework:

2.1 Critical postmodern theory

Postmodernism is such view spreading in every fields of the social life in recent world which influences all social theories including critical theory. The postmodern view of critical theory holds that the critique of knowledge is unmanageable under postmodernism because of including multiple voices of various cultures and contexts which are in various in their interrelation such as negotiable, conflicting, emerging, and continual and soon (Derrida, 1978; Clifford & Marcus, 1986; as mentioned in Watkins, 1994). Postmodernism is itself a heterogeneous since it includes interpretation of the history after the second world war, different forms of capitalisms, movements of visual arts and different social theories like positivist theory, critical theory and interpretative theory. Though, postmodernism is taken as the common and more recent offshoot of different theories, it is an independent and distinct social ideology. It regards social reality as an abstraction constructed due to context and discourses, such feature make it distinct from positivism and other contemporary social theories but critical theory shares this feature of postmodernism (Reid, Robinson & Bunsen, 1995).

Postmodernism is a theory of critique which rejects any type of static fundamental concepts that are claimed to base or create knowledge. It claims for the fluidity and uncertainty of the knowledge. It regards knowledge as in multiple forms created and recreated by socio-cultural, historical and political factors. It does not accept any type of reductionist and discursive binaries like black/ white, man/women which create various social gaps like discriminations. There is no any static subject since it assumes that the subject is dynamic which is created and recreated by the social discourses (Derrida, 1997, Seidman, 1994, Ernest, 1997 & Foucault, 1996b; as quoted in Stinson & Bullock, 2012).

Critical postmodern theory is a recently developed theory sharing the features of critical theory and postmodernism. Stinson & Bullock (2012) call it a 'hybrid theory'. Postmodern theory and critical theory both share a common feature that is social change. But their

assumptions towards change are contrastive with each other. Postmodern theory conceptualizes the process of change "through continual and uncertain deconstruction and, in turn, hesitantly, it at all, act, claiming that attempts to permanently reconstruct that which has been deconstructed only establish yet another regime of truth" (p. 49). On the other hand, critical theory "conceptualizes change through reflective action, that is praxis on behalf of the oppressed and, in turn, forcefully and purposefully act, claiming that humanization actions transfer society for the greater good" (Stinson & Bullock, 2012, p. 49).

In such a way, postmodernism is the movement for change, however; the process of change is directionless and destination to reach is uncertain. But in critical theory, the process of change is certain and purposeful because it is based on praxis and critique and aims to reach individual liberation. As the perfect combination of these two theories, critical postmodern theory has recently emerged as a perfect synergic theory which conceptualizes "praxis of uncertainty which opens up inquiry to empowering and humanizing yet containing uncertain possibilities" (Stinson & Bullock, 2012, p. 50).

2.2 Critical race theory

Critical race theory was originally used in the legal field in the USA in mid 1970s, after 1995, it was applied in the field of pedagogy and education to create counter attack against widely rooted racism in American contemporary society (Dikson, 2007; Schartz, 2015 & Closson, 2010).

Critical race theory regards race as a social construct and presents critique for racial reform efforts. It shares theoretical strategies and premises with critical theories but has straight connection only with racism with the intention of transformation. According to Bernstein, the most important aspect of critical race theory is critical aspects which "critiques social structures and forms which have been constructed on the basis of the color of minorities with the intention of legitimization of them and to make just and systematic change" (Closson, 2010, p. 265). "Critical race theory attempts to deconstruct race related paradigms while simultaneously challenging prior research that deemphasizes the importance of race, which is accomplished by demonstrating how the social construct of race affects marginalized racial groups" (Solórzano, 1997, Solórzano et al., 2000; as quoted in Trahan & Lemberger, 2014, p.116).

Critical race theorists address racial inequalities interpreting the telling of the oppressed people's / color's lived experiences. "These counter stories challenge pervading American narratives that inform majority perceptions about racial minorities" (Solórzano &Yosso, 2002; as quoted in Schwartz, 2015, p.52). Such counter stories are important for dominated blacks to encourage them to encounter stereotypical rules and traditions. Such stories from them create counter- spaces which is the room for marginalized individuals (Schwartz, 2015).

Critical race theory includes four dimensions: "Place- the proxemics or physical spaces where the group meets/ temporal- mental space and the connection between personal conflict and global issues/ intrapersonal- self-reflection/ interpersonal- community space" (Schwartz, 2015, p.52). where people feel their identity and existence with the sense of equality.

> Critical race theorists in education- seek to explain the continued inequalities that
>
> people of color in education experience. It encourages instructors and students in self –examination of their cultural identity, however; critical race theory when applied to the classroom is more concerned with directly highlighting racism- its pervasiveness and how it shapes much of the American perspective. Moreover, critical race theory attempts to transfer the current inequitable education system to one that contributes to the success of color. (Closson, 2010, p. 265)

2.3 Critical human resource development theory

According to Antonacopoulou (1999) as mentioned by Fenwick (2004) critical theory assists individuals "providing voice for the repressed and marginalized, exposing assumptions and values, revealing of the power and control, and challenging inequalities and scarifies made in the name of efficiency, effectiveness, and profitability through a self-reflexive critique of rhetoric, tradition, authority and objectivity" (pp. 195- 196). And Critical human development theory is based on the premises of critical theory therefore; it "challenges fundamental inequalities, oppression and violence in organizations wrought through the apolitical, economically focused, instrumental and unitary reasoning of mainstream management science" (Fenwick, 2004, p.197).

Critical human resource development studies has a wide-range of conceptual developments since it challenges different social inequalities existed on the basis of the power relations, such as racism, class oppression, gender bias etc. however, it directly connects with economic empowerment of the individuals ensuring authentic liberation and political freedom. Mainly

Critical human resource development theory has two basic principles and four dimensions, which are as follows:

- A critical human resource development fundamentally opposes the subjugation of human knowledge, skills, relationships, and education to organizational gain and goals that are primarily economic or instrumental.

- A CHRD is devoted to the transformation of organizations and HRD practice toward, in Kincheloe's (1999) view, a more just, equitable, life giving and sustainable work place. (Fenwick, 2004, p.197)

Critical human resource development theory has four dimensions which are its sites to apply in the practical life. These are: 'political purpose', related with the organizational reformation focusing on maintaining justice, equity and participation of all; 'epistemology', work place as the place of study where all kinds of social dichotomies such as worker/manager, male/ female etc. are examined with the intention of uprooting them, moreover, the different capacities and identities of individuals are cultivated equally as the source of both organizational ingenuity and sustainability; 'inquiry', process of getting knowledge on the development of organization, focusing on its structures created on the basis of power and interpretation of its history as well; and the fourth one is 'methodology', which is based on exposure, pedagogical activities and reflexivity for the developments, individual development, organizational development as well as career development within work place (Fenwick, 2004, pp. 197-198).

3. Limitations of critical theory.

Though critical pedagogy has an invaluable and distinct contribution in the field of education, it still becomes a theory of pedagogy rather than a practical means to overcome the challenge of inequality in the actual classroom since it has not given more of its attention on the uses of the principles (Osborne, 1990, Estes, 2004 & Keesing- Styles, 2003; as citied in Breunig 2005). Regarding this, Giroux (1998) says that "critical theory has been unable to posit a theoretical discourse and set of categories for constructing forms of knowledge, classroom social relationships and visions of the future that give substance to the meaning of critical pedagogy"(pp. 37- 38; as quoted in Breunig 2005, p. 110). There seems a vast gap between critical theory/ pedagogy and its real practice, to maintain that, it is needed greater collaboration between critical scholars and school teachers (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery &Taubman, 2002). Regarding this, taking the view of White (1988), Premfors (1992) says that even if critical theory is supposed to assist for the

emancipation of people from the modern rule-governed pathology like world, it does not have any practical strategies for that. Some so-called "revolutionary political strategies" for "new social movements" are potentially negative for social as well as individual development.

The main concepts of critical theory are equality, justice and participation. But in the view of Fenwick (2004) such practices in social organizational life and work place create dilemma. To run any system well it should have different parts and their different functions which are different status and hierarchies in organization. If all are workers and not manager or guide, there creates confusion for the good guidance of the whole team and system. Consequently, there are either poor or no production and development. The unitary groups in work place is almost impossible, following lines of Fenwick (2004) open the idea about that:

> Perhaps worse, critical practice may be subverted by being domesticated through management declarations of support for nonhierarchical structures and continuous learning to explain reengineering efforts. This is most evident in populist management literature positioning itself as resistant to rationalization, hierarchical authority, and control- and- complete models but advocating instrumental reengineering that in fact reifies the old problems of inequality and undemocratic power relations. Radical calls for change are lost when confined to spaces for so-called worker voice without substantive avenues for change or used as yet another tool to subjugate workers. …… Further, empowerment as a concept has long been co- opted in popular management literature for purposes of building human capital. Those exercising empowerment outside core values and prescribed procedures soon discover the tight leashes and potential black lashes undergirding rhetoric calling for organizational transformation. (p. 200)

Regarding the interpretation of the positioning of the people in the society, the view of critical theory is complex because the categorization of the people either in oppressed group or in oppressor group is confusing. An individual becomes a dominant or oppressor in one context and the same person may be in marginalized group in the next context. Such confusion happens in the classroom as well and a critical teacher's pedagogical attempts become meaningless until and unless he/ she concerns this matter contextually. Context, the important factor of understanding of the positioning of students and facilitator is missing in critical pedagogy (Lather & Ellsworth, 1996 and Choules, 2007).

The next thing of criticism on critical theory is its subjectivity on value judgment, which lacks neutrality and impartiality in the point of critique. And it rejects the objective and universal

understanding. If so, "how can a universal understanding be manipulated for power or gain? Nor can it develop from a purely interpretive view. Here again, for different reasons, there is no ground on which to explore the relative merit of evidence or the interests underlying it." Therefore it is important to build critical theory with 'critical realist perspective' (Watkins, 1994, p. 60).

> Critical realism, as opposed to relativism argues first that there is a reality. But because of the nature of both perception and cognition, we can neither perceive nor understand reality directly. We assemble constructs of it that are approximate, but that forcibly distort phenomena, by putting artificial boundaries around them, by simplifying them, by misunderstanding them, and this is by the mere process of approximation. Those distortions lead, paradoxically to conceptual systems that are coherent, orderly and meaningfully to us; they literally constitute our knowledge of the world. The creation, maintenance, acquisition, transmission and use of the constructions constitute what we know of as culture. (Watkins, 1994, p. 60)

Watkins, (1994) proposes postmodern critical theory to complete the missing aspects of classical critical theory. He concludes that the critical postmodern theory "helps to move beyond un-problematized views of knowledge creation and use, to address conceptual confusions based on cognitive psychology and interpretive traditions, helps directing dialogue about the critique of the field providing theoretical and pragmatic framework, and offers a way to move forward a critical praxis through an inquiry in action" (pp. 74-75).

4. Justification of conceptual framework

"Theoretical framework is a lens through which the researcher views the world."(Merriam, 1989, p. 24) In qualitative research, the conceptual or theoretical framework consists with certain concepts and perspectives which are relevant with the field of research. And, it is used to structure and guide the whole research process since it instructs the researcher through the process of designing the research, selecting the method, data collection and presentation (Smyth, 2004; as cited in Adenusi, 2014). For this research, I have chosen critical paradigm as a conceptual framework because critical theory is concerned with social transformation by uplifting the social and academic status of the marginalized groups, and focusing the authentic liberation of the individuals (Freire, 2005). Specially, critical theory includes three aspects of knowledge: technical, practical and emancipatory which are related with the different epistemologies like positivism, interpretivism and critical realism (Watkins 1994).

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On the basis of the literature mentioned above, critical theory can be taken as a social theory that uses education as a tool of social transformation and individual liberation. First, it makes people free to learn; as a result they build awareness themselves understanding their own social and cultural structure. If they are motivated for their identities, then they get some sort of potentialities for change. Such potentiality, called praxis leads the learners from disadvantaged groups to the situation of academic freedom. All the learners in the classrooms learn in their own way, and later all of them reach to a common consensus and understanding through the dialogue (Frere, 2005).

In the context of Nepal, a teacher has to deal different groups of students in a single class room. The different disadvantaged groups of students such as Dalit, Janajati, Madhesi and women are still oppressed in the classroom. Moreover, a poor student is really obliged to imitate of learning with the rich students. The poor students in classroom is really oppressed ones because- though stomach is growling for feed, they have to be in class and do like others, their parents cannot afford them time and money, instead of that they themselves have to support them- and the knowledge gain in their level do not meet their needs and interests.

In such context, as a pedagogical leading participator, how a teacher can contribute for the good academic performance of poor and marginalized students of higher secondary level, what experiences and reflections do they have regarding the inequalities that they faced in the classroom? And how they attempt to make their classes having the senses of equality where all the students are physically, mentally and emotionally freed to learn? These concerns of my study are around the periphery of critical theory/ pedagogy. Therefore, I will base on it for the further process of my research.

The main concepts of critical theory are praxis, critical consciousness and conscientization. Praxis is the cycle of action and reflection contributes to develop critical consciousness in people. Critical consciousness is simply a process of gaining knowledge and awareness on socio-cultural and economic structures existing in the society. Gaining critical consciousness means interacting with the social realities intending to find the points of injustice and change them. In this sense, critical consciousness is the output of the striving attempts of the individual, it is person specific. Moreover, conscientization is inclusive concepts of the critical theory since it covers all the activities and moments from alienation to the liberation. But the point of conscientization is actually the stage of getting deep awareness where an

individual has dived in authentic liberation and gain the awareness. Though the awareness gained by the learners at the stage of coscientization is individual, the process of getting awareness is participatory and the applied field of such awareness is also the society. Therefore, conscientization is more participatory achievement.

These concepts of critical theory contribute for the conceptual framework my research since my research question "What experiences and reflections do the teachers have regarding the inequality existing in the secondary level classroom in Nepal? How do they contribute for equality in their classroom?" is concerned with building awareness in students about the existing socio-cultural and economic structure of the Nepalese society. Therefore, they can find out the points of unjust and inequality with the intention of uprooting them.

But the teachers and the students in a classroom are under the guidance of the curriculum prescribed by the government. They have to follow it. In such context, it is clear that the teachers and students cannot change or deny the curriculum, but they accommodate and acquire it according to their needs and desires using dialogical method of teaching and learning which is fully humanistic way in the field of pedagogy. The dialogical method begins with the participation of students and teacher in thematic investigation over the general content. The thematic investigation is the process where the students and teacher recognize their needs, on the basis of the needs they select some fundamental themes from the general content. Then, thematic content on the basis of the view of participants is prepared. When the codification, the medium of presentation has completed, it is presented to the classroom and opened for discussion where all the participants can have the opportunity to hear and criticize. In this method, the students can have the sense of ownership, freedom and equality since it begins with them.

In such a way, the concepts of critical theory like dialogical pedagogy, praxis, critical consciousness, conscientization and authentic liberation can contribute to maintain the equality in the classroom which is the main concern of this research project. Therefore, I would design this research project under the guidance of these concepts.

3. Methodology/ Methods

Methodology concerns with the techniques of conducting research which are guided by the specific assumptions and types of the research. This research is a qualitative project therefore it is guided by the certain assumptions of qualitative study. There is not a unitary approach regarding the understanding of qualitative research since it concerns with diverse methods, approaches and strategies. However, a qualitative research is a "social research aimed at investigating the way in which people make sense of their ideas and experiences" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p.11). A qualitative project specially concerned with the naturalistic inquiry in social and human science. It uses different theories on interpretation of human experiences and reflections, textual materials and the data based on observation. "They include various strategies for systematic collection, organization and interpretation of textual material obtained while talking with people or through observation. The aim of such research is to investigate the meaning of social phenomena as experienced by the people themselves" (Malterud, 2001a, p. 398). This research project is also a qualitative one because its aim is to explore the teachers' experiences and reflections on the pedagogical assistance that a teacher can adopt in his/her classroom to avoid the impacts of inequality for the equal access of learning. It means to find out how the poor and other marginalized students become oppressed in a normal classroom of formal education of the secondary level in Nepal, and in such context what ideas and techniques the teacher can apply to maintain the equality in learning achievement. Therefore the qualitative research design is consider a suitable design for this research.

This research project adopts the phenomenological approach to qualitative research. In the words of Creswell (2007) phenomenology is a type of research approach which attempts to explore the experiences of different people on the same social phenomena. Moreover, the phenomenological researchers attempt to uncover how the individuals experience the social phenomena (Savin- Baden & Major 2013). Like the same way, this research project is concerned with exploring the experiences of the teachers regarding the inequality which they daily face and encounter in their classroom. More over this research project is designed under hermeneutic phenomenological guidelines since the teachers who experience the situation of inequality are themselves the part of phenomenon, and they are who live with it.

Therefore for the purpose of this research project, the experiences and reflections are collected through semi- structured interview with three teachers of higher secondary level in Nepal. Specially, the teachers who are well-trained, having the experience of teaching in secondary level for more than ten years and still teaching in the same level are selected for interview.

3.1 Epistemological assumption

The founding contribution of phenomenology goes to Husserl and Heidegger. Specially, Husserl began this approach in research methodology with arguing against the view of positivism which was flourishing at the beginning of 20th century. Positivism was the approach in the field of human science which regards human as a matter like other things found in the world, therefore it assumes to study the human being as adopting the objective methods of testing like other sciences. It refers laboratory methods for human study as well. But refuting such idea in human study, Husserl argued for the well combination of body and mind for the human study, it means that taking consciousness as an important concept, he proposed the study of "lived experience and the life world". Heidgger contributed to make it more practical by adopting holistic approach to interpret and understand humanity. But, there are some points of complements and contradictions between the views of these founding scholars regarding some factors related with the nature of phenomenological research approach. Husserl focused on phenomena, and his concentration was on how people perceive and thought about the world, at the same time Heidegger concentrated on comprehending phenomena and focused on the value of being human for interpretation. Their main point of opposition is on bracketing the view of the researcher in the interpretation because Husserl speaks for bracketing every presuppositions and ideologies of the researcher. He regards researcher's role as a neutral one, and does not allow him to influence the data and their interpretation. But in contrast, Heidegger thinks that it is impossible to bracketing the presuppositions of the researcher during the process of doing research (Savin-Baden & Major 2013).

Husserl believes that the objects in the external world are the illusions because these objects cannot exist in the world independently, and the information that is taken from them is not absolute and reliable, in his perception, to maintain the certainty of these objects the individual perception and consciousness plays role. He thinks that the information in external

world is not judged on the basis of the outward experiences and circumstances, instead of that, it is reduced and evaluated to the contents of personal consciousness. "Realities are thus treated as pure phenomena and the only absolute data from where begin. Husserl named his philosophical method phenomenology, the science of pure phenomena" (Eagleton, 1983, p. 55; as cited in Groenewald, 2004).

The following quotation of Van den Berg, translated by Van Manen (1997) enlightens the meaning of phenomena:

> Phenomena have something to say us- this is common knowledge among poets and painters. Therefore, poets and painters are born phenomenologists. Or rather, we are all born phenomenologists: the poets and painters among us however, understand very well their task of sharing by means of the word and image, their insight with others- an artfulness that is also laboriously practiced by the professional phenomenologist. (p.14)

According to Holloway (1997), Husserl introduced intentional nature of consciousness/ internal experience of being consciousness of something and later Heidegger introduced the concept of 'Dasein' or 'Being there', it means the interaction between a person and the world around him.

The operative function in phenomenology is to describe phenomena as accurately as possible by refraining from different presuppositions and frameworks, but it is important to be true to the facts. Mainly its concern is with the understanding of social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved therefore, the phenomenological study concerns with the live experiences of the people (Green, 1997; Holloway, 1997 & Groenewald, 2004).

The aim of phenomenological study is to find the possibilities of objective thoughts on the basis of interpreting, describing and reducing the experiences and views of different participants on the same phenomena. Therefore the phenomenologists attempt to uncover not only what the individuals experience on the certain phenomena but also how they experience the phenomena such as love, care, hate. The phenomenologists study such concepts in outward form and inward form. They take consideration of objects and their actions outwardly, and inwardly they study about different thoughts, feelings and images therefore a phenomenological study completes in three different successive steps, these are phenomenological reduction, description and the search for essence. However, different phenomenologists have different views regarding the steps of phenomenological research

design. And moreover, they have different points of contrast regarding the steps of phenomenological reduction (Savin-Baden & Major 2013).

3.2 Research Design in relation to conceptual framework

This research project is a qualitative phenomenological project guided by enlightenments and concepts of critical theory mainly concerned with education. The main mission of critical theory is "to empower the powerless and transform existing social inequalities and injustice" (Mclaren, 1998, pp. 163- 164). For that, critical pedagogues first recognize the different barriers related with race, class and gender, then they interpret these barriers hoping with surmount them completely for the social transformation (Chen, 2005). In specific terms, critical pedagogy advocates the notions and processes of teaching and learning for social justice (Giroux 1997).

On the basis of these concepts of critical theory, I have underpinned the conceptual framework for this research project because:

- My research question "What experiences and reflections do the teachers have regarding the inequality existing in the secondary level classroom in Nepal? How do they contribute for equality in their classroom?" is a qualitative research question since it is concerned with a natural inquiry about a social phenomenon that is inequality that the teachers encounter every day. Moreover, the research project is qualitative since it gets the factual concepts on the basis of analysis of the data collected from the interviews based on the experiences and reflections of the experienced teachers of secondary level in Nepal.

- Moreover, it is a phenomenological project since the findings are generated on the basis of collecting views of different participants (teachers) on the same social phenomenon that is social inequality that they encounter every day in their own classrooms, where the teachers are not only the onlookers of the phenomenon of inequality but also the ones who live with it.

- The third point is that the teacher in critical classroom is the leader who guides the students and being guided as well. He is supposed to facilitate the students to understand the points of social injustice, social inequalities and different discriminations existing in their society. As a result, the students get consciousness that evoke praxis in them. Praxis is a continuous series of action and reflection

heading towards social equality and justice. Therefore, the concern of my research, the role of the teacher to improve the learning achievement of the disadvantaged students is concerned with the social justice of them. Its main concerned is the authentic liberation of disadvantaged students is also the main theme of critical theory. Therefore, the critical theory has been adopted as a conceptual framework of this research project.

3.3 Scopes and boundaries

This research project is concerned with the secondary level education of Nepal. Specially, it concerns with public education system of secondary level but in Nepal the students of the same level can get education in private schools also. But the private secondary schools are very expensive therefore these schools are beyond the access of the poor and such marginalized students. If we regard this issue, such students are seemingly disadvantaged and oppressed since they do not have access to every types of school. But, the concern of this research is not on the oppression caused by such private- public issue. More specifically, the economically poor and other marginalized students in Nepal are still disadvantaged and oppressed regarding their access and success even in public education. In such context, as a real field practitioner, a pedagogical guide and a leader of whole class room activities, what roles a teacher can play, as a result the disadvantaged students can have the sense of justice. As a result they can feel free and take part in all pedagogical activities and perform equally like the rest of the students. So, the scopes of the research will be:

- The public secondary level education and the inequality existing in its access due to different socio-economic factor.
- The live experiences, reflections and feelings of the teacher regarding such inequality.
- The roles of the teachers for equality in class room especially, how they can build consciousness on students.
- Generating some critical concepts which can be fruitful to surmount the inequality existing in the secondary level classroom in Nepal.

This research project had the following boundaries:

- The field of research was Nepalese public education of secondary level and the inequality existing in the classroom, more specifically the concern of study was related to the inequality caused by economic factor.
- The critical solutions of addressing the issue of inequality was generated on the basis of data analysis collected conducting the interview with the teachers.
- The number of the participants of the interviews was four experienced teachers of the same level. They were selected according to the general norms of inclusiveness based on gender, social and economic status, geographical locations, ethnicity and castes, language community etc.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Though there is a wide variation regarding the definition of the word 'ethics' it simply means the correctness of particular behavior (Savin-Baden & Major 2013). In the words of Bogdan and Biklen (1992) ethics are the moral principles which the people accept as either right or wrong. On the basis of these literatures, it can be concluded that ethics and ethical considerations are these guidelines which makes the people follow the right way to the destination. In research project, ethical considerations mainly include the matters related with selection of participation, privacy and confidentiality and the letter of consent.

In this sub-chapter, I present some moral principles that I followed during the process of selecting the participation of the interview, taking interview, transcription and presentation of data on the basis of the interview and finally reaching conclusion and its generalizations.

3.4.1 Participants of the interview

In qualitative research project, interview is taken as an important tool of data collection. The interview can be defined as a propose-oriented conversation between or among the persons. The interview can be of different types on the basis of its different purposes and the structures. But the exploratory interview with semi-structured type can be the best means for the purpose of qualitative research. Therefore, I based my interview on these factors. More than that, I had almost of the open-ended questions which helped me to get the reflection of the interviewees on the subject matter.

The participants of the interview were selected on the basis of research purpose. Therefore, they were the experienced teachers of public secondary schools in Nepal. And, the

participants were consented before the time of interview. During that period, they were informed about the purpose of the interview, duration of interview time, place where interview was conducted and subject matter of the interview. Moreover, they were made aware about their voluntary participation and the confidentiality and secrecy of the matters of interview.

To maintain the anonymity as well as to make the process of presentation, analysis, discussion and the use of data in other parts of the research easier, I have given four typical Nepalese names as the nicknames (Ram, Manisha, Shiva and Hari) to four participants of the interview.

Regarding the selection of the participants of the interview, I had attempted to follow the general assumption of inclusiveness. However, I became unsuccessful to maintain the norms of inclusiveness regarding the gender issue because out of four participants of the interview, three were male teachers and one female. Though I had tried to get two male and two female teachers of secondary level, I could not do so because: to get female teacher was difficult / even I got them, it was more difficult to get the female teachers of secondary level/ if I got the female teacher of secondary level, it was almost impossible to get the experienced ones/ moreover, even if I could found female, experienced secondary level teacher, it was impossible to get their time for the interview since apart from their professional works; they have to do almost of their household works in Nepalese context. Anyway I could have been able to address   other issues like, ethnicity, geographical location, language etc.

All of the participants of the interview have the teaching experienced of more than ten years. They are the permanent secondary level teachers of public schools. They teach different subjects. Regarding the geographical locations, two are from very remote parts of Nepal and two are from urban area. All of them are from different districts (Baglung, Kavrepalanchok, Palpa and Sindhupalchok) of Nepal. Regarding ethnicity, they are from different castes also. Out of four participants, one is from Magar community (Marginalized group) which has its own language as the first language therefore all most of the children from Magar community feel difficulty during their beginning school stage, since they have to go under the instruction of Nepali language.

3.4.2 Process of maintaining ethical considerations while taking interview

The interview was taken to four experienced teachers of public secondary level in Nepal. The participants of the interview were notified about the ethical considerations of the taking

interview for the research. Under this task, they were informed about their voluntary participation, their right to withdraw the content of the interview anytime when they wanted, maintaining the anonymity of them and the purpose of the interview. Then, the participants of the interview were signed on the letter of the consent. After that, the interview was conducted on the basis of semi-structured interview guide. The nature of the interview questions was open-ended and they were asked at slow speed so that it would be easier for deep reflections on the subject matters. For confirmation and deep understanding, the follow up questions were asked, which depended on the context of the interview. The whole content of the interview was recorded.

3.4.3 Formulation of interview guide

As I mentioned above, my research project is theoretically based on critical theory and thematically based on phenomenological research framework. Therefore, while preparing the interview guide I concerned with these two backbones of my project. As it is under the thematic framework of phenomenology, the questions were designed for the exposition of experiences and reflections of the participants of the interview to the same social phenomenon that is inequality existing in the secondary level classroom and their roles for maintaining equality. Then, theoretically and logically, the project is based on the critical theory of education. Therefore, I concerned with different concepts like socio-cultural interpretation, understanding hegemonic structure of the society, conflict between oppressor and oppressed ones, continuous effort for action- reflections- and new creation, building critical consciousness, coscientization and authentic liberation. To be concrete, the questions of interview were designed to get the perceptions of the teachers on their role to maintain equality in their classroom building the critical consciousness in the students of minor groups in their classroom.

The interview guide was divided into two parts on the basis of the formulation of the research question which requires the experiences and reflections of the participants on inequality in their classrooms as its first portion. And in the second part, it concerns with the role of the participants for the equality. Therefore, the interview guide was formulated to fulfill these two requirements of the research questions.

Altogether, there were eight open-ended questions in the interview guide. The first five questions were concerned with the reflections of the participants on different classes of the

students in their classrooms, explanation of socio-cultural and economic background of the students, the impacts of socio-cultural and economic background in the students and their studies, explanation of inequality and various causative factors of it, the participants explanation with real event happened in their life on how the economically, socially and ethnically underprivileged students were disadvantaged in the general classroom. And the remaining, three questions, question number six, seven and eight were concerned with the second requirement of the research question, that is the role of the participants for equality. In that portion, specifically they were asked for their reflections on their role for equality in their classroom, what activities they can conduct, what role they want except in their students and what they want to enhance in them.

3.4.4 Maintaining ethicality during the process of data processing, analysis and reaching to finding.

The process of data presentation started with the transcription of the content of the interview. While transcribing the content of the interview, I prepared the exact visual (graphic) copy of the content. Then I read it deeply for the coding of important information.

Coding is an examination of the data before their presentation. Specially, it includes the process of taking consideration about the things that "stand out in the data set, such as behaviors, events, activities, strategies, and states of mind, meanings, patterns, relationships, interactions or consequences" (Savin-Baden & Major 2013, p 421). And these labels are more often nouns but sometime adjectives and adverbs also. Such labels are the underlying properties of the concepts (Savin-Baden & Major 2013).

The next step was categorization of the data. The process of categorization of the codes accumulated from the process of the coding helps the researcher to generate the new concepts, therefore the categorization is known as a critical component for data analysis. Though there are various techniques of categorization of data, I used the hierarchical coding categorization because it helped me to focus the more frequent and important concepts of the empirical material during the process of data analysis. Then, I generated the themes on the basis of the codes and concepts got from the categorization. The themes which I generated occupied with the dominant ideas that the data convey in the text.

The process of data analysis was guided with the list of the codes. But the attempt was given to construct the meaning on the basis of the concepts derived from conceptual framework as

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well as the concepts derived from empirical data. The effort was given to generate new concepts which could address the problem of inequality caused by various factors in secondary level education of Nepal.

4 Data presentation and analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents my analysis based on the experiences and reflections of the secondary level teachers on the inequality that they face in their everyday life of classroom teaching and their attempts to ensure the sense of equality to the students also. It has been derived from the interview conducted with the selected participants (the secondary level teachers) that provided them the opportunity to communicate their live experiences regarding the phenomenon.

School is a form of organization which practices the social activities, follows social norms and values. And the school practices educational policies targeted different ideologies. Nepalese society is constituted with the people of various economic status, various castes, cultures, languages, religions and geographical locations which obviously reflect in the secondary level classroom. Due to the lack of the policy to address such diversities in the whole education system of the school level, it is sure that the people from minorities are disadvantaged. Even if the schools practice the same methods and activities for all, it is not reasonable for social justice. It is clear that the teacher who practices the curriculum is the one who can conduct different activities in the classroom to ensure the sense of equality to all the groups of students. Therefore, taking consideration of this reality, I have collected the experiences of the teachers regarding the inequality and their attempts for social justice to their students through the interview. Though the findings and the themes of the interviews are presented under different concepts mentioned below, there is no watertight demarcation between and among them since they are interconnected with each other to make the whole sense:

a. **Experiences and reflections with inequality**: economic inequality, gender inequality, caste based inequality, cultural inequality, religious inequality, content based inequality, language based inequality, physical structure based inequality, geographical inequality, and learning speed and learning achievement based inequality.

b. **Reflections of the participants for equality**: different classroom activities, role of the teacher, role of the students and aims of education

4.2 Experiences and Reflections with inequality

4.2.1 Economic inequality

In the experiences of the participants of the interview, the main cause of inequality that existing in the classroom of secondary level is economic factor. In their experience there is a vast gap between economically underprivileged and the students from other classes. The economically low background students are really disadvantaged and oppressed ones in general classroom in comparison to the standard level students. In the words of Ram,

> *Due to poverty the children have to be busy in their domestic and other activities, they are not able to give time for school and the parents cannot invest in education also. I have one example of it, we have one student named Sangit Rokka, he is from Dalit community, his family background is weak, economically he is in very poor condition, and ethnically he is from low caste background. Though he was very smart and talent in his study during the beginning days of his school, his level of learning achievement is decreasing these days since he cannot attend the class regularly, he cannot expense for uniform and stationeries*

On the basis of the above mentioned view of Ram, it can be said that though in Nepal secondary education is announced free, the children are not socially secured. They have to work for food and even for other basic needs. Even for the school uniform and stationeries their parents have to do great struggle. In Ram's perception, the learning achievement of the economically underprivileged students' decreases continuously, as such students go to upper level since they begin to understand their situation. And they begin to compare themselves to others; they find them in weak condition and begin to be psychologically frustrated.

Other three participants' experiences are similar with the experience of Ram. Manisha says that there is a vast gap between the students from higher class and the students from lower class regarding their access to use stationeries, dresses, shoes, bags and even their school tiffin. And she feels that the poor children in her classroom seem to regard themselves inferior to other students since they do not get chance to use the facilities like the rest of their friends therefore such poor students feel dominated and oppressed, and they are not as privilege as other students. Regarding this context Manisha says:

> *One and the most important cause of inequality is socio- economic factor. In our society, there are haves and haves not, haves can do whatever they want; therefore they have everything of standard level in the classroom also. But the haves not should struggle on how and where to earn the bread for their lives.*

Such distinction is clearly seen in the classroom, which is very challenging to the teacher for equality.

……..such poor economic condition results bad sanitation, passiveness in learning, and they are found sitting being one sided. When I find a child sitting with very sad face and being one sided, I go near him and ask him about the matter, then the child startles and replies that he is getting hungry because he has not eaten food since his mother has not returned home from the field to cook the food. At that situation, I do not have any option except to feed him. Therefore some time I provide food either by cutting my own food or begging the little from the other children.

For the equality in the classroom, the basic prerequisites for the children should be fulfilled before they enter their school and classroom. But in Nepalese context, specifically in remote area, it is not possible.

Regarding the students' socio-economic and cultural background Manisha experiences that due to the lack of technology in farming, the farmers have to use more time and energy in farming, and their children are left alone at home even from their very early ages. And almost of the farmers in Nepal are from lower class because one thing is that they are not the owner of the land, if they have their land which is not enough to live, and the next thing is that they do not have technologies which support to cut off their labor and increase the products. The next concept is that the society is male dominated society, only mother is supposed to cook food at home, care children and work in the farm. If there is the absence of mother at home, there is no food for children, even if there is father at home. The line "…..he has not eaten food since his mother has not return home from the field to cook the food'' clears that. Though that concept has been changed recently, it still exists in the remote area.

In Shiva's words, a teacher can find various types of students in his classroom. He finds some of them coming from higher class with full of satisfaction, they only spend their time in their studies related activities but the students from such poor family can be found below than that since they have to struggle for their physical and biological needs. But both of them have to go under the same course of teaching learning, which creates a vast demarcation of the inequality in the classroom.

In Shiva's classroom, he has the students having the parents' earnings from 19 Euro to 137 Euro per month. This indicator suggests that there is the very vast gap between and among the students regarding their economic background, and the next indication is that the whole

community of his school is the poor community because there are more people in other Nepalese communities who have the monthly income more than 137 Euro.

Like Manish, Shiva also expresses his perceptions on inequality in his classroom, he says:

> *.... Really very vast differences they have. Some students who have economically very high standard level, they bring a lot of books and reference materials, they come with very relax level and they come with joyful condition, they come and they read and they study but the people who are unearned ...then they come without any books, they come without any materials also. ..... I think in my reading they feel in presence of standard student, they feel very sad and nervous and even they don't like to sit together also.*

In the same way, Hari adds:

> *.....they have to work at home and when they come to school they have tired, they are not ready to learn but the privileged groups are fresh and they are ready to learn. On the other hand they don't have enough stationeries and other equipment that also hinder them, and the most important thing, I think is their feeling of inferiority. They think that we are from the lower class, we can't do as much as the privileged people. So, that kind of inferiority/ concept also has a great contribution in their learning.*

Shiva's experience about his student Deepa, is also relevant to the context. According to him, Deepa is the girl from poor family who has left the school because her family could not pay the expenses of her school.

Hari also has given the example as similar as Shiva. Once he had half orphan and poor boy in his school, due to his inability to pay the school expenses, he was almost to quit his study, but later the school decided to contribute for his education and manage him every necessary materials, that thing inspires him, he got some sort of inspiration and did very well in his career later.

On the basis of these lines and references of Hari, it can be said that though in Nepal up to secondary level the education was announced free, it has not been practiced in reality. No tuition fee, no money for textbooks are not sufficient for the equal right in education until and unless the children are socially secured by the government. Until and unless, they cannot get social securities, they cannot have the sense of equality in their learning process of the classroom.

4.2.2 Gender inequality

In Nepalese classes of secondary level, the teachers more often face the issue of gender inequality, and sometimes they are themselves become the cause of such inequality because of the social and cultural impact on them. While managing the seat for the students, they separate the girl from the boy, they usually call first boy to the first student even if the first student is girl, and these some examples of gender biases indicate that the girls in the Nepalese classrooms are in oppressed group and are disadvantaged with the gender inequality. In the teachers' experiences there are many cultural and social bonds for the girls, such bonds hamper their studies.

In the view of Ram, during the period of menstruation the girls are limited in certain boundaries which really hamper their studies. Manisha has many live experiences of such gender inequality since she is a woman, she remembers that her teachers used to think her inferior and physically weak than her male classmates therefore she was given the different work than her male class mates. Now she is teacher, she tries to change such issue. But her reflections on this issue reflect existing gender discrimination, out of some of her examples, one is here:

> *There was one student called Sambida. She was admitted school a bit late; therefore she was put in the class with the students of junior age. She had a bigger body shape than other student; as a result she could not adjust herself in her friends' group. Though she had a good performance in the subject matter, she left the school late due to the lack of adjustment with her friends.*

This experience clears how the Nepalese girls in society and in school are disadvantaged. There are many queries which are at the ground of this experience, such as why was Sambida admitted late in school? What's the matter to force her in junior class though she had good performance in the content and she was well matured for further classes? Why her body structure is pointed out? Why could she not adjust herself in her class? The answer of all these queries is the same that is she was woman; she experienced domination. Her body structure may have become the matter of laugh to other in her class therefore she might have fear and shyness rather than confidence. These all factors made her leave the school.

4.2.3 Caste based inequality

In ethnical point of view, Nepalese people are categorized in different castes, out of them some of the castes are regarded as the upper castes, such as Brahmin, Thakuri etc. and rest of the castes are labeled as lower castes, such as different castes of Dalit community and the different castes of Janajati community (It is only in traditional practice but it is taken as the confidential illegal work according to the constitution of Nepal). But in practice of everyday life in ruler area, the discrimination to the people of Dalit and Janajati community still exits. Such discrimination is also reflected in the classroom also therefore it is obvious to these students to struggle against such discrimination in their classroom. Regarding this context Manish says:

> *In the past, there was caste based discrimination in our class also. There was no facility of drinking water, children used to bring water themselves. Among all the children there was a wrong concept that they should not have drunk the water carried by the children from Dalit community, so they didn't use to drink the water carried by their friends of Dalit community. And the children from upper castes used to be told that they shouldn't have carried the food at school because the students of Dalit community might have touched it, and they shouldn't have eaten anything sitting together with their friends of Dalit community (lower castes)*

> *……. We have 50% students from Dalit community, their parents don't have concept to provide stationeries and other materials to their children…*

The expressions of the participant of the interview here, declares that the wrong concept of untouched ability or the caste based discrimination is the cause of inequality in the secondary level class room. Even if the students cannot touch the food, and they are not touched by other as well, how can they get adjusted in such classroom? And how can they be as privileged as other students in teaching learning process? It is very impossible and very difficult for them; as a result we can find their rate of dropout is very high in Nepalese secondary school. The most terrible thing is that even some teachers are not practically fair in this issue, because the above mentioned statement of Manish, "We have 50% students from Dalit community, their parents do not have concept to provide stationeries and other materials to their children…" indirectly indicates that she is bias to this community because she blames to all the parents to the Dalit community as the group of the parents who do not care for the studies of their

children. But in my perception, it is neither due to their negligence over the studies of their children nor the result of their ethnicity, it happens due to their economic crisis.

In Shiva's perception, Nepalese content is bias to the students of minorities as well because when the students of Dalit and Janajati communities start their school education in public school, they have to go through the instruction of Nepali language even if it is the national language, it is not the mother tongue of the Janajati community because they have their own first languages. In such context, a student from such community cannot be as facilitated as the students from upper castes who use Nepali language as their first language. Such factor also creates inequality during learning process. More than that, Shiva claims that most of the texts of the content are selected on the basis of the higher castes' identities, culture, religions and festivals that also make the student from other castes disadvantaged. To verify his claim, Shiva remembers his teaching content Dashain and Tihar (festival celebrated by higher caste people) more frequently appeared during his teaching learning process than Lohsar (festival celebrated by different castes of Janajati community).

As the solution of such situation of inequality in the classroom, Shiva argues as follows:

> *The main factor is we have to make them that well learned everything. And we have something misconceptions, misunderstandings. I find somewhere that Hindus and Brahmins are bad, some people say, and some people say Magars, Gurungs are fraud. But some people say that Brahmins, Kshetries are bad and some people say Sherpas and Rais are bad. These are misunderstandings; we have to make them that realization of that is good, that is bad. Every caste, every culture, every society has their own type of thinking, own type of conception. We have to make them understand each other. That's why we can mutualize them and we can develop them.*

4.2.4 Cultural and religious inequality

The concepts presented under caste based inequality and gender based inequality are somehow identical to the cultural and religious inequality because the issue of gender and caste are measured under the cultural norms and values. Under this topic I would like to present some reflections of the participants of the interview on how their cultural and religious habits of different groups of the students play the role in inequality in the classroom. Regarding this topic, Shiva has a good example, he expresses it as follows:

> *Four or may be five years ago, Christian um…. I used to teach in a Christian*

school. All the people were talking about Christian culture and Christianity, and few were Muslim people. The Muslim people were irritated and finally they left the school……………and they joined the next school. And later the guardians came and complaint that, and we didn't have any good answers. It was very serious question.

In this context, the students from Muslim community are the oppressed ones since they cannot get the chance to expose their identity. They are seemed to be dominated by Christianity, and they regard it as the matter of injustice to them. As the revolt of it, they left the school and joined the new one which may have been suitable for them. Here the teacher could not satisfy their parents because they could not have supported the student of Muslim community by providing the alternative matters of discussion to them.

According to Ram, during the period of menstruation, Nepalese women are traditionally not allowed to live and touch with the males. They have to stay and live in separate places. Such cultural assumption creates problem for the normal schooling of the teenager girls since they are culturally not allowed to go to school for at least four days of menstruation of each month. Therefore such students are disadvantaged ones; however, recently it is existed in the few families of the few remote villages.

Regarding the culture and its impact in the classroom, Manisha presents the example of un-touch ability, an ill-tradition existing in Nepalese culture which contributes for inequality in the classroom. In her words:

….. Among all the children there was a wrong concept that they should not have drunk the water carried by the children from Dalit community, so they didn't use to drink the water carried by their friends of Dalit community. And the children from upper castes used to be told that they shouldn't have carried the food at school because the students of Dalit community might have touched it, and they shouldn't have eaten anything sitting together with their friends of Dalit community (lower castes)

On the basis of her expression, it can be found that the concept of un-touch-ability is the cultural practice of Nepalese society which is practiced by the students even in their classroom between/ among their friends, as a result the students from Dalit or marginalized communities are made oppressed because they do not have easy and bondless access to the facilities and services provided by the school as easy as for the students from other communities.

Regarding the cultural and religious inequality, Shiva's quotation is also mentionable here:

.....Muslim people, they come in the class, when we are teaching the part of the festival, always we teach about Dashain and Tihar and everything in Hindu culture, they feel very poor. .... They feel hesitated.

Shiva says that though there are Muslim and other religious communities along with Hindus in his classroom, while talking about the festivals; he starts to talk about Dashain and Tihar, the two greatest festivals of Hindus. He never talks about Christmas, Id and soon. In such context, it is sure that the students apart from Hindu community are sure to be oppressed. They cannot get as good learning achievement as the students from Hindu community. And that creates the situation of inequality in the classroom.

4.2.5 Content based inequality

Regarding the content based inequality, I would like to mention Shiva's experience here:

> *.....they are from poor family, minority family, and their culture, their castes, their celebrating style, their traditions are very poor. For example, when I come Muslim people, they come in the class, when we are teaching the part of the festival, always we teach about Dashain and Tihar and everything in Hindu culture, they feel very poor. .... They hesitate. This is the minority class even when they start talking about their languages, and they feel little bit difficulties. Another also, there are a lot of factors in. It is strange. I try to strengthen them. I tell them tell about your religion, tell about your traditions, tell about your self-enthusiasm in your class, I said and they tell and do the same.*

In the above mentioned experience of Shiva, in secondary level content there are the chapters on different festivals celebrated in Nepal. While teaching these chapters the students from other communities or minorities feel very difficult since almost of the part of the content of the festival are related with the Hindus' festivals like Dashain, Tihar and soon. Therefore, the minorities like Christian and Muslim students are oppressed because the content is bias to them. They feel hesitated to talk even if the teacher encourages them to tell about their own languages and cultures.

Behind the hesitation of the students from minorities to tell about their culture, religion, festivals and language in their classes, there are various reasons, the main reason is that their identities, cultures, religion, language etc. are regarded as the matter of inferior in the society and in the class as well. And the next point is that they may have almost forgotten them due to

the lack of exposure on them. More than that they may be taken either as the matter of laugh in the class among other students, or it may be the matter of confidential for other. For example, while teaching Tihar, the teacher may explain the assumption of Hindu people to the cow as the symbol of God, and he may clear that people are not allowed eating beef but that may be very contrastive point for the students of Muslim community.

In this context, Hari's point is mentionable:

> *I didn't in so much in urban areas but in ruler areas where I taught earlier, many of the content are irrelevant to their situation. For example, in grade 10, there is a text about computer, it was put in the course from 15 years ago when most of the villages had no computer and the children in the villages didn't understand what computer was. ……… and nowadays in urban areas there are some ethnic things, these are included in the text books and the curriculum that are difficult to understand for the students. For example, when they um…. we have to teach about the ethnic festival or may be some local technologies for example 'Theki', 'Madani'….*

It means that if the content does not fit for the need of specific students including time and place, it creates some sort of problem in learning which leads to inequality.

The following expression of Hari discloses the bitter reality of Nepalese context:

> *…..recently the curriculum is revised and this revised curriculum has incorporated more things from the lower class or under privileged group as well. Some of the names, some of the places where they live, they are included in the text book and nowadays the teachers are trained in such a way that they should respect the local culture, they should respect the local language, and the diversity as well. So, I think the things are changing now but still there is domination from upper class people. The text book and the curriculum are designed from the people in Kathmandu; they just look around them and designed the curriculum and the text book.*

4.2.6 Language based inequality

Regarding the concept of language inequality, all of the participants of the interview have almost the same view since they have accepted that the students from different language groups are the oppressed. According to the Census report of 2011, there are 123 different mother tongues in Nepal, but as the medium of instruction in class only Nepali language is used, which is spoken by only 44.6% people of the total population. In such context, the

students except this 44.6% are the disadvantaged ones regarding the language. Such factor creates the situation of inequality in the classroom (National Population and Housing Census, 2011).

Shiva has presented his view on this matter like this:

> *I feel they are from even the teacher, our teaching style; they are very badly cheated sir. We have something teaching methods that have very.....deductive method, then owner guided form, own culture, when the marginalized people come there and they try to learn something, they have to learn first day Nepali language and they have to learn Nepali culture and when they go to English school they feel a lot of difficulties. I feel that minorities people are always feel uneasy even from us, they are not well privileged.*

Here, Shiva exposes that the normal schooling of the public education in Nepal is not very friendly to the students of minorities because even at the beginning stage of their school life they have to go through the instruction of Nepali language which is not their mother tongue. In comparison to the students who speak Nepali, such students are disadvantaged in the class since they have to spend their time to learn language than the content. More than that they can feel some sort of domination in the classroom because they cannot find anything (like language and culture) that reflects and represents their identities. They have the feeling of inferiority. So, they begin to be slow regarding the command over the subject matter from the beginning. As a result, they want to hide themselves at the back of the class, they remain silent and they feel hesitation with the teachers and even with other friends.

 Again, Shiva adds something here:

> *.....they hesitate. This is the minority class and even when they start talking about their language, and they feel little bit difficulties. ....It is strange. I try to strengthen them. I tell them, "Tell about your religion, tell about your traditions, tell about your self- enthusiasm in your class" I said and they tell and do the same.*

4.2.7 Learning speed and learning achievement based inequality

All of the participants express that in a single classroom, there are many students. All of them have their own learning speed which determines their learning achievements. The more people the more different learning outputs. It means learning speed and the outcome of it also creates the different groups in a classroom. In the traditional classroom like in Nepal, the

whole teaching learning activities are guided by the teacher on the basis of his judgment over some students who are supposed to be well-learnt. In this situation, the other students are disadvantaged. Regarding this context, Manisha says:

> *....there was the system of sitting talent student at the front side of the classroom whereas the weak students used to sit at the back; we changed that system and made the rule to sit according to their role numbers.*

On the basis of Manisha's expression, it can be concluded that if the teacher does not take concern about the seat planning of the students, the weak students or the students with low performance are always at the back of the classroom, where there is no effective access of the teacher and the classroom activities. As a result, the learning achievement rate of such students decreases continuously. In such a way, such students are disadvantaged.

In the experience of Shiva, the standard level students have come acquiring and learning enough basic concepts and pre-knowledge to the secondary level classroom so that they can get easy adjustment in the classroom but the students from underprivileged class cannot get adjustment easily. Such factor also creates the situation of inequality in the classroom. Shiva says:

> *Um…. standard level students first of all, they studied in boarding classes, and they have well performed in Nursery, LKG, one, two, three…..levels. They have passed and they are well commanded in English. But when the people from poor family come, they are much hesitated and even they are confusing in speaking and in reading also, and they feel hesitated in pronunciation. They hide themselves very back side of the classes………..*

4.2.8 Body structure of the student as the cause of inequality

In Nepalese secondary level, the students who have either bigger size of the body or smaller size of the body than the normal size also feel disadvantaged. Specially, the bigger sized of the girl and the smaller size of the boy is the matter of the hate and laugh in the classroom among the students. Therefore, such students are rarely got adjustment in the classroom. When presenting her experiences Manisha has given the example of her one student, Samida who cannot get adjusted in her class due to her bigger body shape. Her quotation was like that:

> *There was one student called Sambida. She was admitted school a bit late; therefore she was put in the class with the students of junior age. She had a bigger*

body shape than other student; as a result she could not adjust herself in her friends' group

4.2.9. Geographical inequality

On the basis of the reflections of the participants of the interview, the geographical distance of the students' home from school also creates the situation of inequality in the classroom since the students who have to walk for long distance are not as privileged as the other students. More than that in the view of Hari, while designing curriculum and text book, the designers base on around the centers from Kathmandu, not on the situation of the schools of the remote areas. As a result, the students from remote areas feel difficulties during the learning process in the classroom, which creates inequality among the students of different places of the same level. Here, I would like to mention one quotation from Hari:

> *.....I think the things are changing now but still there is the domination from upper class people. The text book and the curriculum are designed from the people in Kathmandu; they just look around them and designed the curriculum and text book.*

4.3 Reflections of the participants for equality

Under this chapter, I would present the different concepts on the basis of the participants of the interview which are directed for the equality in their classroom.

Though the causes of the inequality are out of the control of a teacher, the teacher can create the environment of equality in the classroom. Its meaning is not that either a teacher can buy the needed thing for the students and can satisfy the hunger of the students or change the educational system as well as policy of the nation. Beyond that a teacher can develop some sort of spirit, enthusiasm, consciousness, self-confidence in such oppressed students which make them to fight against such oppressions. Here, in this section I am going to present such attempts of the teachers.

4.3.1 Classroom activities for equality

All the participants of the interview have common assumptions regarding the classroom activities which are supposed to be helpful to ensure the sense of equality in the classroom. Ram tells that he tries to conduct student centered teaching learning activities on the basis of the interest of the students. His attempt is always to learn the students, their capacities and

interests. For that, he gives more time for the special care and counseling of the disadvantaged students in his class. His attempt is to ensure the equal participation of such students in each and every activity in the classroom as well as in the school. While conducting group work, he tries to include the students of every class and status in team work.

Manish has attempted differently to deal the issue of inequality. She proposed the seat planning according to the roll number of the students in rotation; as a result she could avoid two wrong trends sitting the girls and the boys in the different and separate rows of the classroom, and sitting the talent students in the front and special seats of the classroom. It helps for gender equality and also secures the right of weak students to sit on the front and special seat in the classroom. In Manish's perception, if she mixes the girls and the boys together in sitting and other activities in the classroom, both of them begin to understand each other, gradually they are enhanced with the sense of respect to their friends which leads to the equality in the classroom. Moreover, in her perceptions the poor and the under-privileged castes students used to be ill- treated in the classroom because of their problem with sanitation. When she began some activities related with personal neat and cleanliness along with the lecture on important of healthy and hygienic life, and individual counseling to the students from such communities, she could minimize that, which helps for social equality in her classroom. To maintain equality in teaching learning processes, Manish prefers to adopt problem solving method including the techniques like group discussion, report writing and presentation. She has an experience that the students who cannot speak and present their view in the whole class, begin to discuss in the group, and get exposure in the group. And later they have to present their report individually, so that even the disadvantaged students can be privileged during the process of learning as equally as other students.

The next participant, Shiva focuses his attention to understand the background of the students and their social status. He says:

> …… the teacher should be very initiative in their social status. We have to understand their internal part of economic condition. We have to understand their culture also, even we have to understand their culture also, even we have to understand their psychology according to their culture and status and we have to manage them in making seat plan, routine and teaching them collaboratively, and asking them every problems and difficulties, and we have to make them play a role even the poor people should be made the rich man……… we have to give equal chance to them and impartiality is the main role in that condition.

On the basis of the above mentioned view of Shiva, we know that his point of focus is to understand the every aspect of the students, because if the teacher finds out the real situation of the students, he can treat them impartially, impartiality is the main factor for equity and equality in the classroom.

Moreover, Shiva prefers to set up the real life context in the classroom to present the content for teaching. He wants to teach the students by presenting the context, during that time he problematizes the matter, as a result the students can get the chance for dialogue. After discussion among them they realize the matter and the content, they conclude something as their mutual idea and the common identity. As the main technique of teaching, he prefers to adopt role play. He says:

> .....*Some are from well status family, and some are from poor families, our role is*
> *...... to make understand them by realization of them, the rich people can learn*
> *from the poor and the poor people can learn from the rich.*

To make realization about the situation of each other's context Shiva wants to use role play technique where he gives the role to the students as opposite to their social status, such as to the poor students the role of the rich and vice versa. The marginalized and disadvantaged students are designed to act as the standard level students so that they could get enthusiasm for fight against their oppression being confident, on the other hand the privileged students can feel that how life would be inhospitable if they were from such communities.

Shiva has the focus on context based learning as well.

Hari, the fourth participant of the interview claims that the most important thing is our feeling of equality. He always keeps that in mind while teaching and gives more attention to the children from under privileged class. He also focuses on group discussion as the main technique of teaching learning activity where groups are formed heterogeneously including the students of every caste, class, religion and so on.

Regarding the techniques to ensure the equality for teaching content, Hari has the following view:

> *First thing we do is we have some freedom to include some local things in the*
> *curriculum, so we do that. We collect rare things (things related with the*
> *identities of oppressed community) and include in the curriculum and the text*
> *books one thing, and another thing is we can modify the content according to the*

need of the students. Some times in the group, we give two or three different content and they can choose from the given content whatever they like or whatever they are ready to read. In this way, we can give the variety of the content at the same time. And other thing is, our school is now well-equipped with internet and digital classes. So most of the time I praise for them to search from the internet about certain topic and look at the internet and find thing about themselves and compare with what other people are like in the same thing. So, in this way, we can promote their identities in general with the identities of the whole.

In the above quoted paragraph, Hari gives some techniques for equality regarding the use of teaching content during the process of teaching learning. His techniques, such as including the local content as the teaching content, providing the alternative learning matters so that the students become free to choose whatever they like and use of technologies in teaching learning process are very helpful to ensure the equality in the classroom. By using such techniques, Hari wants to promote the identities of the oppressed one along with the identities of the all students in the classroom.

4.3.2 Role of the teacher

Though all the participants of the interview take inequality, they face in their classroom is beyond their control, they are found taking different steps to minimize the impacts of it in their classrooms. For that they present themselves as the catalyst to evoke the sense of equality in the students. More than that, they define the role of the teacher as a facilitator of the discussion, manager of the subject matter, guide of the students, counter part of the students and so on.

Regarding the role of the teacher, Manish has lots of the experiences. To avoid the ethnical inequality in the classroom she functioned as a revolutionary character since some years before there was an ill tradition in the society, and the people from lower castes (thought in that society) were not allowed to touch any eatable things of the so called higher castes. When she found the same trend while drinking water in the school among the students, she drank the water carried by the students of such oppressed group, though she was from the higher caste to clarify the students that all humans are the same, the concept of un-touch-ability is a kind of human discrimination. Later on, she could establish an environment of social equality regarding this phenomenon. In this context, Manish, a teacher can be defined as a leader of social revolution.

In Manish's perceptions, a teacher should be a child psychologist, who can read and describe all the moods, moments and the feelings of the students. Moreover, she adds that the teacher should be a resource person to satisfy the students' needs and desires. In her view, a teacher should attempt to address even physical needs of the students. For that a teacher cannot do anything directly. Though he can buy a book, some food one/ two times, it is not the permanent solutions. For the permanent solution of such problems, a teacher can coordinate with the parents and other social organizations. Therefore, a teacher is also the coordinator of the whole mechanism of teaching learning system where his role is as the lubricant to move all different parts of the system like inputs, process and outputs in well-balanced.

Manisha says:

> *A teacher is an initiator of social change, who lives in the village as a representative of the government. So, the teacher has understood each and every incidents, traditions, norms and values of the society. Therefore, we can make the oppressed communities' identities and traditions as the social traditions along with the identities of privileged class. We, the teacher should do that.*

Regarding the role of the teacher, Shiva expresses:

> *….I am the teacher and like me there are a lot of teachers in Nepal, and some people complaint that text book is not good, curriculum is not good, and we are not also very well with the students but we have to feel first what type of thing we have been, and we have to feel the current real situation and we have to make them develop and we are the teachers, we can do everything by internalizing all the things and growing further….*

Shiva says that as a teacher, there is no meaning of complaining about text book, curriculum and so on. Beyond that a teacher can feel the current situation and try to develop the student on the basis of its real understanding. Here, the main focus of Shiva is to make the students understand the current reality. For that as a role of a teacher, the teacher should create a good environment for the students where they can develop themselves on the basis of deep interpretation of the context, and by internalizing the factors inherent in the context comparing its past, present and future.

Shiva exposes that if he finds someone who sits at the back of classes with sad face, rarely speaking with hesitation and almost voiceless, he declares that such student is the oppressed

on, and he has to help him . So, he goes near such students and begins to build intimacy with them by talking about the different matters little by little. He tries to strengthen them. He prefers to give equal chance to each and every student in the classroom activities. He mentions impartiality as the weapon for equality in the classroom.

In conclusion of his view, Shiva says that teaching the students according to situation in real life, role playing to develop the mutual understanding between and among the different castes, classes, ethnic groups, language communities etc. in the classroom, make student realize of the current real situation by interpreting its background and evoking enthusiasm for future and conducting student centered teaching learning activities being impartial are the some vital role of the teacher.

In the perception of Hari, the role of the teacher is to provide all information to the students so that they can internalize whatever they want. He wants to create student friendly environment where they are exposed with all kinds of information, and they can manage the information themselves. He focuses on learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together as the four pillars of education. Out of them, he claims that learning to know and learning to live together are the most important ones since they contribute for the awareness in the students and equality respectively.

4.3.3 Role of the students

All the participants are agreed to create the appropriate learning environment in the classroom. For that they want to conduct student centered teaching learning activities to build self-confidence, learning enthusiasm, analytical and interpretative power and different life supportive skills as well. For that they want to regard their students as their counter-part and complementary resources. They define a student as an active participant of the whole academic process who is independent to get all types of information provided by the teacher.

Though the participants express the above mentioned view regarding the roles of the students some points of contrast can be found in their view, which I present below.

> Ram*: At first, we should develop self-confidence in all the students……… we should develop the sense in all students like "we can do, we should participate in every work''. We should develop the sense of enthusiasm……..*
>
> *We should develop the positive sense towards education in the students. We should develop the sense like: I should do hard labor in my study to gain the*

knowledge of everything.

In the above mentioned two quotations of Ram, he has presented the role of the teacher to regard a student as the critical student, however the phrase 'develop the positive sense towards education' is contrastive here since a critical students may take the education system of his/ her country either in positive way or in negative way. If we, teachers tell them to take it only in positive sense, there is no space for the student's freedom.

Manisha gets pleasure when she finds her students leading in different fields of the society. She also takes the student as the capable and active part of teaching learning process. However, she seems more ideal than critical regarding to some specific issues because she more frequently focuses the issue of discipline. She wants to make the students discipline. She thinks that a good student is aware for his rights, and bares his duties. In one context, she says:

> *A child is like the immature clay, like the potter a teacher can give it different shapes using the tools like moral education and other education.*

This view of Manisha is contrastive to the overall theme of her interview since a critical teacher cannot imagine his students: 1, as nonliving object like clay 2, less capable and immature than her and 3, as creation of her art.

In Shiva's view, a student is the one who make the whole academic system alive since he is the actor in role play, he is the real person of the different status, fields, and professions of the society according to the situation demands to be in the classroom and a very dynamic subject of the study for the teacher.

Hari also advocates for the freedom of the students. He takes the students as the co-operative part of him in the classroom. He regards them as his complement. He wants to develop enthusiasm in them as a result they can do whatever they like. His focus is to make them aware to the contemporary context so that they can encounter it, they can avoid the bonds of social inequality and live together. He pays attention on to make them able to choose what they think right.

4.3.4. Aims of education

On the basis of the overall experiences and reflections of the participants of the interview, I have listed some aims of education here (They are tentative concepts that I find in their view, however some of the aims are identical to all of the participants):

Shiva

To ensure the sense of impartiality, to avoid different forms of inequality, to provide good learning environment, to provide special support for the oppressed groups/ students, to cultivate and promote the identities of every ethnic groups, castes and language communities, to ensure religious secularism, to make student aware about the current real situation, to encourage them to go ahead for their social justice.

Hari

To develop the feeling that creates enthusiasm to do something, to get the sense of four pillars of education, learning to know/ learning to be/ learning to do and learning to live together, to develop their inner capacities, to make the student be able to choose the right one as they think, to cut off the vast gap of inequality existing in the society.

Manisha

To maintain equally harmonious environment in the classroom, to clarify the students about the ill-traditions of their societies, to empower the oppressed and marginalized students so that they could struggle against the barriers on the way of their career, to make learning sustainable conducting student centered teaching learning activities in the classroom, to make the students self-dependent, disciplined and laborious, to make them able to take leadership in the different fields of the society, to provide them the life needed skills so that they can use the skills for their economic empowerment, to make the oppressed, marginalized and voiceless students aware about the social and traditional oppression over them so that they can go ahead encountering them for their social justice.

Ram

To develop positive attitude towards education, to build self-confidence in them, to provide equal opportunity to all the students, to provide special rights to the students of oppressed and marginalized communities.

4.4 Summing up

On the basis of the experiences and reflections of the participants of the interview, it can be concluded that more often, the situation of inequality appeared in the classroom of secondary level is the reflection of socio-cultural as well as economical nature of the contemporary society. However, some factors inherent in existing educational policy, curriculum and course of study and content of the text books also contribute for inequality but these internal factors have less impact in comparison to the socio-cultural and economic factors.

As the concluding ideas of the participants of the interview, it can be said that due to different causes such as economic status, ethnicity, gender, culture, religion, language, content of teaching learning activities, medium of instruction in the classroom, natural and geographical diversities and complications etc. create the situation of inequality in the classroom. In this sense, the nature of inequality appears in the Nepalese secondary level classroom can be generalized as the socially and culturally constructed phenomenon therefore beyond the classroom, it is important to make people aware about the causes of inequality so that they can fight against such causes to establish social equality. In the view of the participants, the inequality appeared in their classroom is the reflection of the contemporary society therefore they cannot hit the causes of inequality directly for equality in their classroom, instead of it they can function as the facilitator to build awareness in the oppressed or marginalized students as a result they can themselves unite for their social justice. However, more than creating environment for social justice, building awareness in students and modeling to encourage for their participation on the movement of social justice, a critical teacher is supposed to be leading the oppressed students or community in actual movement for social transformation to ensure equality (Freire, 2005).

The data presented and analyzed in this section are related with the view of the participants of the interview conducted on the basis of the research question "What experiences and reflections do the teachers have regarding the inequality existing in the secondary level classroom in Nepal? And how do they contribute for equality in their classroom?" The overall concern of this research is to redefine the situation of inequality existing in the secondary

level classroom in Nepal on the basis of the experiences and perceptions of the teachers set on the enlightenment of critical theory intending to collect the measures for equality. Therefore, the ultimate aim of this study is to identify the measures that can be fruitful for social justice in secondary education in Nepal.

As I mentioned earlier, the conceptual framework of this study is underpinned with the critical pedagogy which consists the concepts like praxis, critical consciousness and conscientization. These concepts are related with the democratic values in education. Therefore in coming chapter, I will present the discussion by correlating the empirical materials which I present in this chapter with my conceptual framework to search the democratic values in Nepalese secondary education.

5. Discussion

The main intention of this chapter is to generate new concepts on the basis of the finding concepts or empirical themes of data analysis and the theoretical concepts derived from reviewing the literature. More specifically, I will evaluate the empirical data under the theoretical enlightenment of critical theory. To maintain the logical sequence or coherence and grammatical or thematic symmetry of the chapter, I will present the discussion under the following sub-headings:

1. Discussion on the perceptions of the participants on inequality
    - Inequality as a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon
    - Inequality as an inherent factor of whole education system
    - Inequality as the factor of natural phenomenon
    - Inequality as the construction of individual features as well as uniqueness
2. Discussion on the perceptions of the participants of interview for equality in the classroom
    - Creating environment
    - Building awareness
    - Modeling to encourage for the participation of the students in the movement of transformation
    - Leading them in real movement of transformation

5.1 Discussion on the perceptions of the participants of the interview on inequality

5.1.1 Inequality as a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon

Inequality is a social phenomenon which creates the situation of injustice. The situation of injustice results the oppressed or disadvantaged group in the society. Therefore, the issue of inequality is the concern of critical theory since the main aim of critical theory is to analyze and interpret the social phenomenon of injustice with the intention of liberating the oppressed group by uprooting its causes (Devetak, 1996). In the view of Chen (2005), the function of critical theory is to make the subordinate groups (oppressed in inequality) aware on how they are dominated and how their rights are grasped from the oppressors. In Freire's word, the situation of developing the new conscience in oppressed people is called conscientization.

"Conscientization means the process in which men not as recipients but as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transfer that reality" (Frere, 1970, p. 493). In such sense, the experiences and the reflections of the teachers on inequality can be taken as the process of building awareness about social reality existing in Nepalese society. In critical pedagogy, it is important for the critical teacher to get the deep understanding about the social phenomenon of oppression like inequality to inform the oppressed ones for their social right. Here, the oppressed ones should be motivated to be self-interrogative so that they can be self-reflective. Through the means of questioning on established structure of injustice, they get some sort of awareness and then they devote themselves on the way of transforming such unjust structure as they think that is good for them (Freire, 2005). But the perceptions of the participants of the interview are not perfectly identical as Freire assumed the role of the critical teacher to be in the process of conscientization; however they are liberal and progressive on the way of equality. Because the main ideology that guides them is that they want to make the current education system complete through renovation in its weak and unjust issues what they think bias for the minorities such as: religious and language issue raised by Shiva, Manish's view on ethnical identity, Hari's attempt to support his poor student, view to include the local matter in curriculum etc. They just want to renovate the same system including little part that is supposed as the representative of the oppressed ones. But the renovation and inclusion for betterment is different than radical change followed by authentic liberation where the individuals create the new ones for them in their own way and perhaps, they may take guidance and feedback from existing education system as well as from the teacher (Freire, 2005). In this sense, the perceptions of the participants can be labeled as the perceptions aiming to facilitate the oppressed students to come out of the oppression contributing for compensation on them rather than developing critical consciousness.

The critical theory presents the detailed interpretation of social structure which is constructed with the hegemonic power. The hegemonic power regards the oppressed people as the object and facilitates the oppressor to rule over them. It creates a vast situation of inequality between the oppressor and the oppressed (Freire, 2005). And such hegemonic power which results the situation of inequality in the society as well as in the classroom is caused by various social factors inherent in the structure of the contemporary society. As the participants expressed,

such factors are: economic status of the people in the society, assumption towards their gender, cultural norms and values and ethnicity.

According to the view of the participants, they have to encounter different types of inequalities such as economic inequality, gender inequality, ethnical or caste-based inequality, cultural and religious inequality, language-based inequality etc. According to them the main contributing factor of inequality in Nepalese secondary level classroom is the situation of low economic social status. The economically underprivileged students are in the situation of oppression since they cannot satisfy their different needs as other students can do. Specially, as the participants experienced, the low economic background of the students in classroom creates four misfortunes in them, such as: scarcity of biological satisfaction, lack of physical facilities, psychological depression and lack of time for academic preparation. The scarcity of biological satisfaction creates the situation of hunger, bad health and malnutrition in the students. The situation of lack of physical facilities indicates: shortage of books and other reference materials, school uniforms, bags, shoes and the facility of reading space and reading environment at home. The fulfillment of such basic requirements is the thing of beyond their access for the poor children in the society. More than that the Nepalese poor students are commonly the children of the poor farmers and the low class workers, their parents' income does not support for the expenditure of the whole family. As the result, the children of such poor parents are engaged either in supporting them or do some other works to earn bread for the family. In such context, such children cannot get freedom like the other children, consequently they are psychologically depressed. They cannot compete with other children and there appears the situation of inequality in the classroom. And in the perception of critical pedagogy, these inequalities are due to different forms of domination existing in the contemporary society, and for the teacher as well as for the students it is important to understand and interpret such social oppressions and abuses in depth so that they can identify the underlying social structures that result in such oppressions intending to overcome them (Devetak, 1996).

 As the participants reflect, gender based inequality appearing in the secondary level classroom is the next aspect of socially constructed inequality. In Nepalese context, the female students are oppressed since culturally and religiously they are regarded as the object to serve their husband and children. According to Manish's experience, her female student Samida was admitted late in school, her body structure was different in the sense of being

obese in comparison to rest of the students. Therefore, she could not adjust herself in her class. Then, she eventually dropped out. If we interpret Samida's case mentioned by Manisha, we can generalize some ideas that existing in Nepalese society and how these social ideas contribute for gender inequality in Nepalese classroom. 1. In Nepalese traditional society women are supposed to involve in domestic work rather than other academic and social activities. To come out from the bond of the home, they should struggle hard. 2. If they can get success in such struggle, they may get chance to join only public schools because private schools are very expensive. 3. Until they have come across these barriers, they have spent long period of their life, as a result they get admitted in schools very late in comparison to other students. In such context they have to either join higher class on the basis of their age or sit in lower class since they do not have prior knowledge for higher class of the school. Both situations are horrible and inhospitable for them. Even if they are admitted in higher class, they are oppressed since they cannot compete with other students who have come through many previous classes. And, on the other hand if they are admitted in lower class, they also become disadvantaged because they cannot get the appropriate environment to adjust their maturity in the classroom of other junior aged students. Their activities and manners are fully different than other students'; as a result they cannot feel free among other friends in the classroom and finally dropped out.

Moreover, so far I know the Nepalese marriage tradition and assumptions in which male is regarded as the superior one and female is taken as the object to be acted, assumption of linage focusing to male, the traditional bonds to bind them in the periphery of home also contribute for gender inequality in Nepalese secondary level classroom.

Like this, as the findings of the data analysis I have presented ethnicity, language and religion also as the social factors that contribute for inequality in the classroom. The factors ethnicity, language and religion are the factors that reflect the identity of the certain community in the society. They represent the common sentiment of the particular community in different social institutions like school. If such institution is guided by certain assumptions of selective caste, religion and language, it is sure that the other people of different castes, religions and languages are oppressed. In such context, if the schools adopt the certain social and cultural ideologies and practices, it is sure that the school serves as the agent of the oppression and create the situation of stratification resulted as educational haves and haves-not (Scott, Pyne & Means, 2015). Here, the haves-not is forced to manipulate the educational haves since the

haves have got the official status in the institution. And creates the situation of dichotomy in the classroom where the oppressed merely follow the decisions of the teacher which is democratic for the selective students of the selective community but prescriptive to the oppressed group (Freire, 2005).

The participants of the interview express that due to the impacts of various aspects of inequality existing in the Nepalese societies, the curriculum of the secondary level also resounds some sorts of biasness to the marginalized communities. And its impact also reaches to its implementation in the actual classroom teaching. However, the participants of the interview claim that they are trying their best to use their teaching techniques to bring some elements of equality in a rather unequal environment of the classroom. According to them if they conduct the teaching learning activities in student centered way adopting the techniques like role play, dialogue, discussion, group work, pair work etc. they can somehow address the issue of inequality. Regarding this Freire (2005) proposes problem posing teaching method for the social justice of all the students while teaching and learning in the classroom and dialogue as the best classroom activity since it ensures the participation of all the students in teaching learning process.

The above mentioned different aspects of social inequality appeared in the secondary level classroom in Nepal are caused by the socio-cultural and economic structure of the Nepalese society. Such inequalities seen in the classroom are the symptoms of injustice to the marginalized students. As the humanitarian pedagogue, a teacher should know about such obstructions of humanism, and they let their students know the social structure and culture (structure of hegemonic construction), so that they can interpret them and find the facts on how their identities are suppressed and, they are made oppressed. As a result, the oppressed students go ahead for their social justice that is authentic liberation (Freire, 2005). But the finding of the empirical data is more limited than the assumption of conscientization since the data focus on inclusion and renovation of the established system of Nepalese education for equality. In my view, inclusion means to include small part in the already established system and renovation means repairing some parts of the system. These are different from radical change since both of them are ascribed works, however they facilitate the oppressed in progressive way.

5.1.2 Inequality as an inherent factor of whole education system

Generally it is assumed that the educational policy implemented by the government of any state is to educate the people of whole state, to build awareness in them, to support them to overcome the challenges that they face in their daily life, to ensure the sense of equality and equity in the whole state and to develop individual capacities of the citizens for the development of the nation. But in practicality, the education system of each country can be found beyond that sense since it is guided by the certain principles of the leading party of such nation. More specifically, according to critical pedagogues the education system of any nation is guided by the hegemonic power which is held by the elite, consequently the weak and minorities are disadvantaged with such education system.

In the view of Freire (2005) the nature of education selected for the citizens of any country is guided by power and politics. But the poor, the disadvantaged and the minorities are in powerless situation. In such context, the schools are under the social frameworks created by the people who are in power (oppressors). In such a way, critical theory dichotomizes the situation of injustice as the interplay between two different and opposite social communities, oppressed and oppressor, these are supposed to be created with the hegemonic construction. Using the hegemonic power, the oppressor is supposed to rule over the oppressed. And hegemony is socially, culturally and politically granted authority to the selected people of the society. Therefore, in the oppressive society, schools also become the agent of oppression since they are guided by the principles and policies followed by the people who are in power. Apple (1990), Delpit (1995), Gay (1995) Short (1992), McLaren (2007) also label school as a main source of the oppressors (Scott, Pyne & Means, 2015).

On the basis of the analysis of empirical data, it can be said that the nature of inequality is complicated in Nepalese secondary level classroom since it does not merely exist in relation to income and wealth, moreover it results interacting across different factors such as: economic, political, social, cultural, environmental etc. In such context, the critical dichotomy, oppressed/ oppressor can be found a bit narrow to address such different types of social intersectional groups and communities. However, these entire social inter-parts can be dichotomized under two broad categories either in oppressed group or in oppressor since they are either privileged or under privileged regarding specific issue. And Freire claims that only developing of critical consciousness, a reflective awareness regarding such inequalities embedded in social relationship helps to foster the social justice. And the process of

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developing such consciousness is called conscientization. Conscientization involves both cognitive and practical orientations that foster transformation in human relationships i.e. re-humanization of human relationships (Kumagai & Lypson, 2009). And the participants can also be found reflecting on this issue. In case of re-humanization of human relationships in their classroom, the participants can be found contributing in two ways: one is re-structuring the relationships among the students, and the next one is redefining the relationship between students and teacher. In both cases, they can be found attempting to follow the assumption of equality and social justice. As the example of re-building the relationships among the students, we can take their attempts of seat planning on the basis of rotation which can break the established tradition of their relations created by the assumptions like: sitting boys and girls separately and sitting talented students together according to their choice etc. Like this, the attempt to uproot un-touch-ability among students also contributes for re-humanization of relationships among students. And the teachers' attempt to conduct activities based on sharing roles between teachers and students equally in the classroom can somehow contribute for re-structuring the relationship between them also. But such reflections of the participants are much limited and narrowed than the assumption of conscientization where the individuals exercise and redefine their relationships to other people as well as to their world in the enlightenment of critical consciousness (Freire, 2005).

In the perceptions of the participants of the interview, in Nepalese context the education system of the school level is also injustice to the poor, marginalized, and for the people labeled as the lower ethnical background. Specially, the students from such communities are oppressed in the Nepalese school education system because the whole program is designed by other people and ascribed to them. The other people do not have the real experiences, obstacles, barriers of the life of such communities. Therefore, such ascribed program is not effective for the students from oppressed communities even if they reach up to the system (Freire, 2005). Below that, the more complex thing for the oppressed students in Nepalese context is to get access of the system. Due to various problems of everyday life such as scarcity of food, no availability of school uniform, lack of enough materials related with the course, lack of text books, poor health, involving in farming and other activities for bread, etc. the oppressed students cannot get even the easy access of education. In such context it is sure that the designed curriculum, content, textbooks, and the schools and the activities in the periphery of the schools become the cause of the inequality to such students. Such curriculum

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is named as hidden curriculum by critical pedagogues (Apple, 1990; Shor, 1992; McLaren, 2007).

If we go through the findings of the data analysis, we can find such hidden oppression of curriculum in the Nepalese classroom also. The content based inequality, religious and cultural inequality and language based inequality that appeared in the classroom can also be found as the outputs of the curriculum, since the participants express like that. Shiva one of the participant says the first topic of writing essay in language class becomes 'Dashain', a festival of Hindu not Christmas or Id. And the small children of Magar community in the first day of their school have to go through the instruction of Nepali language (not their mother tongue) like the other children who speak Nepali as their mother tongue. Like this they also experience the situation of disadvantaged in the matter of the content as well as to implement the different aspects of curriculum in the classroom, particularly due to the lack of technology and lack of ownership of the stock holders. As the solution of it, the participants wonder to prepare the inclusive curriculum in the participation of the stockholders along with the curriculum designers. They prefer to include local matter in the curriculum. On the basis of the analysis of this view, it can be said that they refer to practice the assumption of 'think globally and act locally' in the process of curriculum designing. Such concept of the participants of the interview is related with the identity and participation of the oppressed community up to the policy making and curriculum designing. Regarding this Freire (2005) introduces the concept of hinged themes, the pedagogical themes prepared by the students themselves on the basis of general content which is designed for them.

If we observe the view of the participants of the interview, regarding oppressive behavior of public education and schools in Nepal, their views can be interpreted in two categories: a. School- access based inequality b. Internal factor based inequality

5.1.2.1 School-access based inequality

As the participants of the interview expressed, all most of the Nepalese students from oppressed communities are disadvantaged due to the lack of the easy access of the basic requirements needed for their schooling, such as food to satisfy their hunger on time, school uniform, shoes, bags, books and other reference materials, reading environment in home, separate room to read at home, time to do their home assignments, enough time to play and take rest and so on. The example of Sangit Rokka who is one of the most talented students of

Ram at the beginning of his school life, eventually becomes very weak in his study because of above mentioned causes. Like this, the example of Bam Bahadur and Gum Bahadur presented by Manisha is also remarkable here since these two students are found so sad and unhappy throughout the classroom time because they do not possess the playing materials and other materials, nice clothes and even the good tiffin in school like their other friends. More than that at home, they are always in terrific situation since their father drinks alcohol and beats them and their mother very badly. According to Shiva, his student Deepa gets dropout from the school due to her inability to pay the school fee. When, Hari and his colleagues contribute for the expenditures of one of their poor student of their school he can do very well in his study. These all references mentioned by the participants clear that the factors or requirements needed for the schooling or for the easy access of the school are also the cause of oppression to the poor and marginalized students. They play role to create a vast gap between the oppressed students and other ones. I find such aspect of oppression is still below from even the foundation of critical pedagogy since the critical pedagogy assumed that all students can get easy fulfillment of these physical requirements. But they are oppressed since their identities in content; space in teaching learning activities, their participation in selecting learning experiences etc. are hijacked.

5.1.2.2 Internal factor based inequality

Under this topic, I would like to present the discussion related with the experiences of the participants regarding on inequalities appeared in classroom due to the internal factors of education system. Specially, the issues like how the selection of content for teaching, teaching learning activities, language of instruction, etc. make the poor and marginalized students oppressed and create the situation of inequality in the Nepalese classroom of secondary level.

In Freire's view knowledge is open ended matter. The learner is not an object to acquire as it is, what and how is exposed to him/ her. More than that, he/she is an active agent like the teacher who can accommodate and transfer the knowledge with praxis a continuous series of action and reflection based on the real life situation of the learner. Therefore, it is important for the students to use their own efforts for the designation of the pedagogical program. As a result they are not oppressed in the whole academic program (2005).

The participants of the interview expressed that the inequality that they face in their classroom of secondary level is also caused by the internal factors of the education system of the

country. They express that the curriculum is designed by the selected people who live in Kathmandu. Therefore, while preparing the curriculum they look around nearby them, they evaluate the situation of certain schools of certain urban areas; they take the policy of the government as the core factor and try to reflect it in the curriculum. It means that there is no access of the students in the process of curriculum designation, selecting teaching learning experiences, teaching learning activities and formulation of educational aims and objectives. In such context, it is clear that the ascribed educational system make the students oppressed. And "the schools help maintain unequal power relations rather than serving as a means for individual and social improvement" (Scott, Pyne & Means, p. 140). Moreover, the schools create the situation of stratification where there is the vast gap of inequality between educational haves and haves not.

In the perceptions of the participants of the interview, there are some internal factors that create the situation of inequality in the secondary education system because they help to promote the identities of certain major classes of the societies, but these factors exclude the identities of the students of marginalized communities such as: the poor, the female, the Dalit, the Janajati, the Muslims, the Madhesi, and the disadvantaged communities due to the geographical locations. The identities of such communities are almost in the verge of extinction because the schools are serving to promote the identities and cultures of the people of major class. Like this, the issues of language selection as the medium of instruction, content based on the assumptions of selective religion, caste, and culture are also the internal factors which result the situation of inequality in the classroom.

Here, I would like to mention that the language used as the means to teach should be the language of good access of all students; otherwise it creates problems in teaching learning process. Therefore, in Nepalese context to maintain the equality regarding the use of teaching language in classroom, the government is planning to use local language as the medium of instruction in primary level.

Less frequently the participants can be found reflecting the contradictory views of critical paradigm. And such views may promote the situation of inequality rather than equality in the classroom. Manisha's comparison of the student to the immature clay of the hand of the potter (the teacher) is contradictorily related with critical assumption. Here, the student is compared with the immature clay to which the potter can change into different shapes of the pots. This

judges the teacher as the merely an active aspect of the teaching learning process. The role of the students is to be ready to go through the whole designed and proposed program for them. Here the role of the teacher is not to create the framework of the program but to hire it from others (curriculum designers) and just to use it to put the materials (students) to make them as the shapes of the framework (proposed educational aims). This assumption of Manisha is advocating and promoting the hegemonic construction, it is sure that it neglects the active participation of students in academic program and creates the situation of inequality between and among the different aspects of whole academic program.

Ram's one quotation, 'I want to develop the positive attitude towards education in my students' also the quotation expressing the autocratic view since it grasp the sense of critical creativity of the students. It means that it forces the students to take the existing education system only in positive sense that the critical pedagogy rejects because in critical pedagogy the students are fully freed to take the existing education of their country either in positive or in negative way. Like this, Hari has also some contradictory views, he exposes that a student is assumed to be act as the good citizen of the society. Here, his view lacks the assumption of critical theory that a student is not only to fit for the existing world but also to change the world around him as his assumptions. More than that the traditional assumption of Nepalese society to teacher as 'Guru', the one who knows everything, also plays the role to make the students just as the passive listeners rather than as the active participants and counterparts of the teachers in teaching learning process. Such covertly and overtly presented views somehow promote the subjective roles and subjective judgments of the teachers towards the students which also become the causes of inequality not only between teacher and students but also among the students in the classroom of the secondary level in Nepal. But beyond this assumption, conscientization assumes that teaching is not merely informing the people about the world as the static reality rather than that it is the process to make them able to transfer the reality existing in the world. For that, it regards teacher not as the one who knows everything, but as the counter part of the students and accepts the multiple and infinitive findings on the way of transformation. Therefore, he/she travels himself/herself on the way of transformation as the learners throughout his/her life. The next aspect is that, such situation of inequality creates the situation of oppression for the students, therefore in critical sense it is the starting point of the conscientization from here the oppressed/ students begin their journey to the destination of critical consciousness (Freire, 2005). But to reach the summit of critical

consciousness/ means of authentic liberation the oppressed should complete the whole process of conscientization with three different steps: getting adapted consciousness means acquisition of authoritative knowledge (as Nepalese teachers assume in this context); transitive thought, desire to change but undermining the self-potentiality and critical transitivity, the situation of interaction between critical thought and critical action and taking part in the movement of transformation (Campbell &Mac. Phail, 2002).

5.1.3 Inequality as the factor of natural phenomenon

In the perceptions of the participants of the interview, the matter of natural diversities, geographical locations, distance of school form the students' communities, the situation of the development around the location of the school catchment area, the natural disasters like floods; earthquake also create the situation of inequality in the classroom of secondary level of Nepal. According to Ram, the earthquake has greatly affected his school these days since his school is in Sindhupalchok district of Nepal, which was greatly affected by earthquake. As a result, his school remained closed for long time but other schools in other districts were not affected. Due to the same evaluation system for the students of whole country, his students could not do well in examination in comparison to the students of other districts because they are disadvantaged with the earthquake. Here, it is important that to ensure the sense of social justice to the students of each and every locations, the sense of equality should be accompanied with the sense of equity as well.

 Like this, there are many references which clarify that Nepalese students of remote areas are more oppressed and disadvantaged than the students of urban areas. According to Hari, the policy maker of education system are the oppressors themselves to the students of remote areas because without doing the value judgment of each and every Nepalese society, they do planning sitting at one corner of the capital city. Here, the situation mentioned by Hari indicates that there is the lack of general communication between/ among the curriculum designers and its implementing agents, students and teachers. In critical sense, such situation is created mainly by the power imbalance between/among such different aspects of whole educational system since the one who holds the power never wants to cooperate or interact with the one who is powerless. It can be entitled as the power-based inequality rather than spatial inequality.

The next aspect is that Nepalese secondary level students from remote area are highly victimized by various problems, such as: no availability of competent, experienced and trained teacher, no availability of text books on time, no appropriate physical facilities, no availability of enough reference materials, no transportation from home to schools as a result the students are obliged to walk for hours etc. Such issues related with the geographical locations and natural disasters also hinder the active participation of the students in teaching learning process and make them disadvantaged and create the situation of inequality in the classroom; however they may not fall in the realm of critical paradigm since the critical theory concerns with the oppressions which are created by various power relations existing in the society (Freire, 2005).

5.1.4 Inequality as the construction of individual features as well as uniqueness

Though the individual features and uniqueness do not directly play the role for social injustice, the perceptions of the people towards them create the situation of inequality in the society as well as in the classroom. In Nepalese academic context the achievement of the students are categorized either in the category of success or in failure. In the perceptions of the participants of the interview, the teacher in the classroom is found to be concentrated to only the student who can do well in the study. Such students more frequently get chance to take participation in each and every activity conducted in and out of the classroom, and they can get more facilities of the schools. They feel the sense of freedom in the classroom. On the other hand, the rest of the students are in oppressive situation since they are labeled as weak and incapable students. Such students cannot get the chance to participate in different activities like the talented students. Moreover, they have various problems which are behind the curtain such as their physical weaknesses and disabilities, economic and social backwardness, etc. which are not realized and understood. As a result they are always in backwardness and oppression. Such situation contributes for the inequality in the classroom also.

5.2 Discussion on the perceptions of the participants of the interview for equality in the classroom

In this section, I will present the discussion on the experiences and perceptions of the participants of the interview regarding their roles to ensure equality in the classroom under the direction of the enlightenment of the theoretical concepts derived from the literature review.

On the basis of the empirical data derived from the interview and the theoretical concepts generated on the basis of the literature review, the role of the teacher can be presented under the following themes:

- Creating environment
- Building awareness
- Modeling to encourage the participation of the students in the movement of transformation
- Leading them in real movement of transformation

5.2.1 Creating environment

As a critical educator, the teacher is supposed to create an appropriate environment of social transformation for the authentic liberation of the individuals in the society. For that he/she is supposed to play the role to arouse the sense of praxis, an active motivation that leads the oppressed ones to the series of actions and reflections for social transformation. Moreover, praxis is related with the realization of one's own identity in connection of the cultural and a type of political struggle for human liberation. Therefore in the sense of critical pedagogy, teaching is taken as the civic action rather than more classroom activities (Freire, 2005 & Hall, 2015). It is political affair rather than intellectual and artistic work. Therefore, the teacher should play the role of a political leader to evoke the critical enthusiasm in the oppressed ones. In the words of Giroux (1997), teacher is taken as the potentially powerful force for social transformation. In the classroom, the teacher's role is to provide 'the language of critique' and 'the language of possibility' where the former one is related with building the awareness to the students and the later on is related with finding the way of relationship with/in the world. Both of the aspects of the role of the teacher are related with the creation of the appropriate environment that helps to promote critical consciousness in the students. As the leader of the whole pedagogical activities it is an obligation for the critical teacher to inform the oppressed students about the causes of the oppression. The teacher is supposed to be assumed to facilitate the students to know about their culture which is guided by the hegemonic construct. For that he should create the good environment for the dialogue between and among the students and the teacher where the role of the teacher is like the catalyst to evoke critical enthusiasm in the students. For that in the dialogue, the teacher can reflect his view but he is not allowed to ascribe his conclusion (Freire, 2005). The reflections

of the teacher about the subject during the dialogue help the students to be strong in their opinions further. That evokes some sort of spirit in the students to be strong and unified for the social transformation. It is the stage of warming up the students. It functions as the base of critical consciousness and conscientization.

The experiences of the participants of the interview can also be viewed through the eye-screen of the above mentioned concepts related to critical pedagogy. If we evaluate the views of the participants of the interview, they present the role of the teacher in five important concepts, these are: compensation for oppressed and minorities for equality, manager of subject matter for discussion, overall guide of the students, the facilitator in classroom discussion, and sometimes prescription of knowledge to the students also. These all the concepts related with the role of the teacher may contribute to create the progressive environment for equality in the classroom. But the main thing is that though the teacher becomes able to create environment for betterment of the oppressed, these attempts may not yield critical enthusiasm in the learner. Since in my view, critical enthusiasm is the motivating factor for conscientization and critical consciousness. It is the basic situation which warms up the oppressed to the movement of their social justice and which is possible through the hot dialogue and discussion between/ among the teachers and the students on the unjust social constructions or structures in fully autonomous environment (Freire, 2005). Though these concepts are in the line of critical pedagogy, they are not enough to lead the learners throughout the whole process of conscientization. Here I would like to present some references of reflections of participants that may justify my claim:

In the view of Ram, the teacher should give more attention to oppressed learners as a result they can feel that their teacher is in their side to bare the pain of oppression. Moreover, such nature of the teacher can help him/her to get detailed information about such students as a result it is easier to make further strategies for his pedagogic career. In his perceptions, it is important to ensure their equal participation in each and every activity of the classroom like the other students. Manisha views that the problem solving method of teaching may be the best methods of teaching for the creation of equality in the classroom because all of the students have the same target to get the solution of the problem presented by the teacher for that it is important to take the help of each other. But to ensure the sense of equality in problem solving, the problem should be designed in such a way that it requires the role of all the participants of the group, the group should be awarded rather than a specific person, after

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the solution of the problem, all the students should be given the chance to reflect their view. Shiva, the next participant also advocates like the same way. His focus points are: to understand students' psychology interpreting their socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, collaborative teaching, bringing real life context in teaching, problematize the matter to ensure their dialogue, realization of matter or content of teaching and conclusion on the basis of common idea and common identity, role playing on the basis of mutual exchanging of the real status of the students so that they can get the sense of mutual understanding, and to conduct the context and culture based teaching learning activities. Hari prefers to include the local matters of identity in the content of teaching, modify the content to make need-based; use of technology in teaching so that he can lift up his oppressed students.

As the conclusion of this topic, it can be said that critical enthusiasm is the basic concept enhancing in the oppressed after the realization of the situation of the oppression. And such concept can be enhanced in the students using the teaching tools like problem solving activities, group discussion, collaborative teaching, context and culture based teaching learning activities, dialogue, role play and simulation, teaching based on real life context etc. Though Friere (2005) mentions only problem-posing method of teaching with dialogue technique for conscientization, these all the classroom activities mentioned here may contribute for dialogue in the classroom to some extent. And they may contribute for positive awareness for equality since they advocate for inclusion, participation and creation in the students. But they are still limited for conscientization since the socio-cultural, economic and political context of the contemporary society limit them in adaptive consciousness.

5.2.2 Building awareness

After creating the environment, a critical teacher goes to build awareness in the students. Building awareness is possible on the base of the scaffolding of appropriate environment. In this sense, the process of creating environment can be compared with the process of preparing the meadow to plant the seed, and the process of planting the seed is like building awareness. In other words, readiness of the students with critical enthusiasm in the mind is related with creating environment where they can cultivate the seeds of critical consciousness to harvest the authentic liberation, social justice and equality.

On the basis of the theoretical concepts derived from the literature review, in this stage the critical teacher should be able to fill up the mind of the students with the sense of critical consciousness through conscientization.

Conscientization is the process of practicing to engage the individuals in an environment which provides an opportunity to the individuals to develop critical awareness about their social environment or social structure through the action and critical reflection intending to transform it. It is the participatory approach; however there is the most important role of individuals' experiences and reflections since its destination is individual liberation. It begins with taking awareness about the situation of the obstacles of humanization to surmount them. Therefore, it is supposed that the state of conscientization is only acquired and held by the oppressed ones who have been experiencing the agony of dehumanization and it is achieved with the real struggle of daily life (Freire, 2005).

Like conscientization, critical consciousness also contributes to build awareness reflecting on social structure, power relation and other social entities and phenomena. It is a process of fostering knowledge on these social conditions by using individual own biases or perceptions (Freire, 2005). In the words of Lyotard (1984), it is a self-interrogative process which is the most effective way of gaining deep knowledge. Manisha's experience to make the students aware on ethnical discrimination and un-touch-ability can be taken as the example of conscientization where the students can understand the unjust social construct and propaganda and react it and maintain harmonious relationship among them in their classroom. But it takes long time to them to do so. Though, Manish expresses only the product of her effort, it is obviously due to a continuous process containing the actions and reflections of her students since it is an example of critical consciousness, an output of the continuous effort of actions and reflections over the social phenomenon which leads the individuals in the movement of transformation. The process of transformation is never ending entity therefore the critical consciousness is supposed as the activity of gaining knowledge containing multiple possibilities, multiple means and multiple ends (open-ended). It rejects any kind of static, ascribed and established knowledge (Freire, 2005).

Mainly, at the end of this stage of critical pedagogy the students are supposed to be ready to act and hit against the hegemonic constructions since they have gained the strategies and knowledge needed for that.

Like the concepts mentioned above, the participants of the interview are also found to help their students for building the awareness in their students to fight against the inequality existing in their classroom. Mainly, as the means of teaching they use the techniques like role play, problem solving, and dialogue. All of these techniques respect the multiple actions, multiple feelings and multiple reflections and common and open-ended conclusion. Here, the Shiva's technique of conducting role play is mentionable. To develop the awareness regarding the social oppression to the other students, he design and conduct role play assigning the role of oppressed to the students from other social status and vice versa. Such technique makes them able to understand the oppression. It develops the sense of cooperation among them. As a result, the students have a good unity which makes them strong to fight against the traditional bonds of inequality.

In my opinion, in Nepalese context, the teaching tools like role play, discussion and dialogue are the best techniques to conduct the teaching learning activities in the classroom since they ensure the students' liberty while teaching learning. More than that, the most important thing is the content of teaching since all of the participants of the interview can be found worried about the content, course of study and the curriculum. The content is the source of knowledge, subject matter of discussion and plot of role playing. If the content does not have the good connection with the identities of the students/ and their communities and cannot address the burning needs of the students it becomes useless. According to the participants, in Nepal the content selected for the students of secondary level is not the common identities of the all students and the communities. As a result the content results inequality rather than social justice in students. The situation is more horrible because all the evaluation system is based on the matter of the content, even the students cannot get the chance to reflect on them since they cannot accept that as their own matter.

In such context, it is almost impossible to develop the attitude of anti-hegemonic potentiality in the students. So, they can merely acquire authoritative knowledge or adapted consciousness (Freire, 2005) rather than critical consciousness. Regarding this issue, all of the participants present themselves in the opposition of the policy makers and curriculum designers. Hari tells that the curriculum and content of the secondary level education serves only the elite nearby Kathmandu. Shiva expresses that the content is bias for the marginalized religious communities and oppressed ethnic communities. He thinks that the poor and the oppressed communities are badly cheated by the content and curriculum. These expressions of the

teacher signify three things: One is that the content of teaching learning activities is important because it provides the chance of reflections to the students; the second one is that, reflecting on the content the students can get critical awareness therefore it should be connected with the common identity of the students; and the third point is that, the content should be designed in the participation of all its stockholders focusing the context and culture (Freire, 2005).

To ensure the students identity and ownership, Hari proposes the concept of including the local matter in the curriculum. In Nepal, such concept is being practiced in primary school but it has not been applied in secondary level yet. This view regarding to designing the curriculum and its implementation is based on the assumption of "think globally and act locally''. Such assumption of curriculum designing leads to the designation of need based curriculum, identity reflected and generally accepted curriculum since it secures the space for all stock holders. And it is identical with Freire's concept of 'hinged themes' in critical pedagogy. The hinged themes are the themes prepared by the students and the teachers on the basis of their needs and overall content designed for their level. Such themes bridge the gaps existing between the students and the curriculum and content designed for them (Freire, 2005).

As the conclusion of this topic, it can be said that critical theory assumes the role of the teachers as the agent who regards students as their own counterparts, and mentions their joint venture to avoid any types of inequality, injustice and oppression existing in the society developing the sense of critical consciousness throughout the process of conscientization. It means that to develop the awareness on the oppression. But on the basis of the data analysis and discussion mentioned above, the perceptions of the participants of the interview cannot be found as radical as what critical theory assumes the role of the teacher since they can be founded compensating the oppressed students thinking that they are weak and conducting classroom activities bearing that thing in the mind. But in critical sense, such behave of positive biasness makes the oppressed students always depend on others even to get their rights. Though the oppressed get relief transitorily, ultimately they have to bare the oppression due to the lack of radical destruction of the structure of the oppression. However, in some issues like caste discrimination/ un-touch-ability and religious secularism they can be found critical since they reflects as they have really attempted to develop critical consciousness in their oppressed students. Their perceptions on teaching activities, curriculum

designation, content selection are also somehow resonates with the assumptions of critical theory.

5.2.3 Modeling to encourage the participation of the students in the movement of transformation

In this stage, a critical teacher functions as a model to clarify the students about the phenomenon. Here, the teacher performs the action in artificial and controlled environment so that the students can perform like this in the real life. This is the process of connecting the knowledge gained in classroom to the practicality in social context. Such knowledge becomes more practical rather than theoretical. And such activities of the teacher are not merely limited in pedagogical boundary, beyond that they are oriented to political as well as social angle (Hall, 2015).

Regarding their role, the participants of the interview also present themselves as the model to encourage their students on the way of equality and social justice. Here the reference of Manisha regarding her modeling against un-touch-ability is remarkable. To clarify the students that un-touch-ability is an ill tradition and propaganda created by the so-called upper caste people to make them superior than the oppressed castes of the society, she drinks the water brought by the students labeled as the lower caste, and explains the students that there is nothing wrong with the people of any castes, the caste system had been created for years by the oppressors to divide the marginalized community so that they could rule over them easily. Such attempt of her can be taken as a model revolutionary attempt that motivates the students to uproot such ill-traditions from the society. In this sense, her attempt of modeling in front of the students can be taken as the modeling for social transformation. And such attempt of her is like the attempt of the critical teacher since it is more political and social not merely pedagogical. It is a great threat to the conventional law of the contemporary society as well.

5.2.4 Leading the students in real movement of transformation

As the participants of the interview express, as the teachers they should have the role for implementation of academic achievement for social transformation. For that, they should lead the students in the real field. Such function of the teacher is known as revolutionary function which is related with the political movement based on the society beyond merely modeling in the classroom. Here, a teacher can be defined as social worker as well as politician (Hall, 2015). In critical perception, at this point the teacher is obviously in opposition of the

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established ill-traditions of the society. And the teacher may have the contradictory relation with the policy makers and the curriculum designers as well, since they may not easily accept the movement until and unless it can uproot the whole system of autocracy (Freire, 2005). If we observe the reflections of the participants of the interview, all of them cannot be found reaching at this stage. However, it is true that they are on the way of progression since they can be found encouraging the students towards the social transformation against many established dead habits or ill-traditions, such as: against wrong concepts existing between or among the people of different ethnic backgrounds, standing against un-touch-ability, standing against gender discrimination etc. But Manisha's attempt to uproot the sense of un-touch-ability among the students can be taken as an activity of conscientization where she leads the students in practical field against the oppressive social construction of un-touch-ability.

Regarding the role of initiator of social transformation, as a teacher Manish expresses:

> *A teacher is an initiator of social change, who lives in the village as a representative of the government. So, the teacher has understood each and every incidents, traditions, norms and values of the society. Therefore, we can make the oppressed communities' identities and traditions as the social traditions along with the identities of privileged class. We, the teacher should do that.*

In the quotation mentioned above, Manish expresses a view of contradiction between the teachers with the policy makers who make the policy for the whole education system of the country. She claims that only the teachers have the experiences about the facts and realities of the society where the curriculum is implemented. Only the teachers have the idea of different communities and the different matters of their identities in the society. Therefore, the teachers can address the difficulties and the identities of the oppressed communities. In this sense, it is important to be the participation of the teacher in the process of educational policy making and curriculum designing. And along with that the teacher can maintain the justice to all the people also since they do not have any intention to suppress to privileged communities as well. Because after the completion of the process of social movement, the pedagogy of the oppressed becomes the pedagogy of all since all the communities in the society are in same status or on the level of equality (Freire, 2005).

5.3. Summing up

On the basis of the discussion mentioned in this chapter, it can be concluded that in Nepalese secondary level classroom there is the situation of inequality between and among the students

of different communities. Inequality mainly results either due to socially constructed factors or the inherent factors of the education system. Though, the participants of the interview can be found attempting to compensate the oppressed students, their roles seem to be less effective for equality in the classroom since the causes of inequality are beyond their access, the teachers are not in power of the state to implement their vision, and even the teacher have some sort of impact of established traditions of the society. Anyway they can be found more progressive than the traditional teachers and trying to contribute to lead the students in the movement of social justice in their classroom. And their reflections related to their roles are like creating the environment, building awareness, modeling for actual movement, and leading the movement of social transformation. However, all of their reflections are not perfectly identical and fitted with these categories.

In nutshell, it can be said that the overall view of participants can be found believing on gradual transformation for justice and equality in their classroom through renovation of unjust part of the existing system and inclusion of marginalized communities in the system. Though both of the attempts of renovation and inclusion are little bit progressive in nature, they are beyond the sense of radical transformation since renovation and inclusion are also based on the established framework of the system. But as Freire (2005) assumes the real result of critical consciousness is radical change which is possible through conscientization, conducting dialogue on related issue of oppression. Anyway, the reflections of them related with classroom activities, curriculum designing, selection of the content, educational aims what they proposed somehow resound with the assumption of critical pedagogy.

6. Conclusion

This research project has analyzed the matter of inequality that appears in Nepalese secondary level classroom on the basis of the data based on the experiences of the teachers of the same context viewing through the eye-screen of critical theory.

The data obtained from the interview was analyzed in two broad categories (as the requirements of the research question): the experiences and reflections of the participants on the situation of the inequality and their experiences for equality. Though there was no clear-cut demarcation among the different themes related with the experiences on inequality, they were categorized in nine themes, these were: economic inequality, gender inequality, caste-based/ ethnical inequality, cultural and religious inequality, content based inequality, language based inequality, learning speed and learning achievement based inequality, body structure of the students as the cause of inequality and geographical inequality. And the data related with their experiences to contributing for the situation of equality are analyzed under four different themes such as: classroom activities for equality, role of the teacher, role of the students and aims of education.

Like this while observing the data through the eye-lance of critical theory in discussion, I have analyzed the themes generated in data analysis from the different angles. At first I viewed their perceptions on inequality and formulated different themes, these were: inequality as a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon, inequality as an inherent factor of whole education system (school accessed based inequality, internal factor based inequality), inequality as the factor of natural phenomenon and inequality as the construction of individual features as well as uniqueness. And the data categorized in the category of their experiences for equality were viewed in four different themes, such as: creating environment, building awareness, modeling to encourage the participation of the students in the movement of transformation and leading the students in real movement of transformation.

The conclusion of this research project will be presented in five subtitles: findings of this research, limitations of this research, the relevance of the project, recommendations and the areas for further research.

6.1 Findings of this research

On the basis of the data analysis and the discussion on inequality existing in the secondary level classroom in Nepal, through the screening of the conceptual framework formulated with the different concepts (such as: critical consciousness, conscientization, praxis and power relation) of critical theory the following findings can be generated:

- Inequality due to the diversity in economic, socio- cultural and ethnical status
- Inequality due to prescription and ascription rather than participation and acquisition of knowledge
- Inequality due to educational inability for addressing needs and identities of the minorities
- Teachers' role: democratic verses autocratic.
- Teachers' believes on compensation, gradual development and adapted awareness for equality rather than radical transformation and critical consciousness
- Teachers' reflections contrastive verses complementary to social transformation

6.1.1 Inequality due to the diversity in economic, socio-cultural and ethnical status

As the finding of this research project it can be said that the situation of inequality in the secondary level classroom in Nepal is caused by the diversity in economic, socio-cultural and ethnical status of the students. The economic inability of the students prevents such students to get the easy access of quality education and hampers to fulfill the requirements needed for good learning environment. Like this, as the participants reflected the Nepalese society has diversified cultural groups, religious groups and ethnical groups, but some few cultural, religious and ethnical groups have the domination over other marginalized groups. And such situation is reflected in the classroom.

6.1.2 Inequality due to prescription and ascription rather than participation and acquisition of knowledge

On the basis of the perceptions of the participants of the interview, it can be concluded that the Nepalese education system has the impact of structural functionalism, positivism, conservatism and neo-colonialism where the students are assumed to follow the teachers (system) to learn, learn bit by bit to reach the whole, regard what the curriculum prescribed as the precious thing and the duty of the students is to preserve and conserve it, and learn to be

like other. Such assumptions of education regard the students as the object to be acted rather than the subject who acts (Freire, 2005). And the teacher is taken as only the agent who is supposed to deliver the prescribed content to the students. And learning becomes merely the process to receive the static reality rather than "achieving a deep awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transfer that reality" (Freire, 1970, p. 493). It leads them to the adapted consciousness rather than critical consciousness (Freire, 1993b). It means that the students are fully indifferent with the whole academic system except to act like others in the classroom. In this context though the prescribed and ascribed knowledge and content is fruitful as well as connected with the identities of certain group of the students, it is clear that it does not represent the identity of oppressed groups since there is no access of their representative in policy making and curriculum designing level. Such situation clarifies that there is oppression and biasness to the minorities due to the lack of their participation.

6.1.3 Inequality due to educational inability for addressing needs and identities of the minorities

In the view of the participants, the inequality in the classroom is also caused by some factors of weakness inherent in the curriculum and the education system. On the basis of their reflections it can be said that the ascribed curriculum, course of study, and the content of the secondary level cannot represent the needs and the identities of the minorities in the society since they are in powerless condition. In such context, though overtly school is supposed to function as the agent to aware the people, covertly the school functions as the agent of the oppression (McLaren, 2007). If the minorities are dislocated in the educational program in the sense of their identity and needs, such situation promotes the gap between the educational haves and the educational haves not (minorities). As the solution of that the participants suggests to include the local matter in the curriculum. In my view, this concept is related with the assumption of 'think globally and act locally', if it is implemented throughout the whole academic process, it can help to promote local identities by connecting the local matters to the global issues. At the same time, the participants focus on the participation of all stock holders including minorities in all academic activities from policy making to its implementation in the real ground.

6.1.4 Teachers' role: democratic verses autocratic.

The perceptions and reflections of the participants of the interview are found claiming democratic since they claim that they are trying to minimize the situation of inequality and oppression during the process of teaching learning period in the classroom. For that, they claim to conduct student centered activities such as dialogue, discussion, role playing, project work, group discussion, pair discussion, teaching in the real context, including local matters in the teaching content etc. And the participants believe that if they adopt such techniques or activities all the students can get the chance to express their view in the classroom. Such assumptions of the participants are somehow identical with Freire's (2005) assumption of dialogue included in problem posing approach of teaching which ensures the emancipation in classroom. However, regarding some issues the reflections of the participants can be found more autocratic rather than democratic such as, presenting the students as the immature clay Manisha neutralizes the role of the students in teaching learning process, Ram assumes to develop positive sense towards existing education system in his students etc. Such assumptions may have been reflected by the participants because of the impact of socio-cultural factor of the contemporary society.

6.1.5 Teachers' belief on compensation, gradual development and adapted awareness for equality rather than radical transformation and critical consciousness

As the next finding of this research project it can be claimed that the participants can be found functioning as the assistance of the oppressed students by providing them transitory relief. They can be found encouraging the oppressed students to do struggle with in the criteria of the same educational system, assuming that their inspiration helps the students to learn better, and get success in their future raising their socio-economic status. In this sense, some of the reflections of the participants can be found compensational which desire to enhance adapted consciousness in the students. Such reflections believe on gradual development of social structure for social justice and humanity rather than radical transformation caused by critical consciousness as assumed by Freire (2005).

6.1.6 Teachers' reflections contrastive verses complementary to social transformation

On the basis of some of the reflections of the participants, they can be found functioning as the initiator of the social transformation since they present themselves as the counter force of established ill-traditions of the society, for example Manisha's act of leading the students against the established tradition of un-touch-ability, Shiva's advocating for religious secularism etc. Here, their reflections can be found attempting to develop the sense of critical awareness in their students by providing the knowledge to them about the oppression of hegemonic construction of the traditional society. At that point the reflections of the participants can be found in opposition of some ill and established educational policies as well as ill socio-cultural values of Nepalese society and advocating for social justice in education, individual liberation, multiple finding with open-endedness, dynamic reality and transformation of knowledge. However, more of the reflections of them are concentrated on how to compensate the students who are in inequality. Compensation is a kind of first-aid act that believes on repairing the old structure rather than its radical change. In this sense, such reflections of the participants are in opposition of social transformation.

6.2 Limitations of this research

This research project was conducted to explore some findings regarding the recently burning issue of inequality in the field of school education of secondary level in Nepal on the basis of the perceptions and reflections of the teachers of the same level having the intention to get some practical findings to maintain equality. Since the social justice in education is as the theme of this research, as the theoretical lance critical theory was used. And since it is the study generating the findings on the basis of the experiences and the perceptions of the participants of the interview, thematically it is the phenomenological study. In this sense, in general the limitations of critical theory as well as phenomenological approach of designing research are also the limitations of this research project. More than that this research project has the following limitations:

1. The findings are generated on the basis of the participants of the interview who were selected among the teachers of the secondary level in Nepal since the requirement of the research question was related with their experiences of inequality appeared in the classroom of the same level. Therefore, the findings of the research may not be

practical as well as applicable in other levels' classrooms in the same country and in the same or different level of other countries as well.

2. The research reflects its limitation to measure the level of the oppression or inequality. It only identifies the oppressed and attempts to uplift them. But in Nepalese context, there are many ethnic groups, religions, language communities and economic classes of the people, but on the top to bottom line of privileged to under- privileged they may be in different points of the line, in this sense the dichotomy of oppressed or oppressor, privileged or under-privileged or haves or haves not may not be sufficient to reflect the real situation of inequality.

3. The research is not concentrated with the inequality and oppression faced by the students of special needs.

4. Regarding the selection of the participants of the interview, this research would have been sexually balanced selecting the equal number of male as well as female participants. Though the matter was taken seriously and tried to equal the number of the male and female participants, due to the unavailability of the female participants, it happened. Regarding this I have given clarification in methodological section.

5. Though I have tried my best to bracket my predispositions regarding some issues in discussion, there may be little presence of them regarding the discussion of some issues. However, I have clearly mentioned them.

6.3. Relevance of this research

As the participants of the interview accepted, there is the vast gap of haves and haves not regarding the access of quality education, economic status and the access of other social facilities in Nepal. At the same time, there are different types of oppressions such as ethnical oppression, gender oppression, economic oppression, political oppression, academic oppression, religious oppression in Nepalese society. In such context, it is clear that this research is highly relevant. Since, it attempts to generalize the causes of social oppression and inequality in order to surmount them.

Recently, Nepal has a very hot discussion of restructuring of the state to ensure the access, identity and participation of the poor, the indigenous, the disadvantaged and minorities. Like this, the Nepalese education sector is regressively affected with the problems of disparities across social, gender, regional and income groups; lack of physical, instructional and human

resources, over political corruption in education, lack of professional supports, poor school management, shortage of resources, ineffective leadership, lack of technical and vocational skills in products, unjust private-public dichotomy based on economic ability etc. (Mathema, 2007). In this situation, the research conducted to explore the ways of ensuring the equal access of minorities, searching their identities, and advocating for their participation in education has obvious relevancy with the contemporary socio-cultural, economic, and political context.

If we observe the current situation of the public school in Nepal, we can find the public schools struggling with many challenges: such as dropouts, low academic achievement, lack of creativity even in succeed products, bookish knowledge ineffective for life, teacher controlled classroom since due to the high teacher- students ratio, recitation rather than application of the knowledge, students always following the teacher as the guide but never functioning as counter-part and complementary part of the teacher, ascription and prescription of teacher to choose what the teacher supposes good for the students instead of encourage them to choose what they think good, both of the teacher and students feeling tired and irritating after teaching learning activities, very low and ineffective participation of the students from marginalized communities, no learning sustainability, impacts of conservatism, positivism, structural-functionalism etc. In such context, the critical pedagogy can play an effective role to overcome such challenges. At the same time, this research conceptualized and directed with critical theory is obviously relevant. And it may somehow help the teachers and the students to come out from the vicious circle of these challenges.

6.4 Recommendations

The main concentration of this research is to explore the ways of ensuring the sense of social justice in Nepalese secondary level education by avoiding the different types of oppressions. In this sense, this research is directed to all the stock holders of education system. Therefore, as the first recommendation, I would like to request to all the Nepalese teachers of the secondary level to encourage their oppressed students to understand and realize the cause and structure of the social and other types of oppressions which bind them and make them oppressed. For that I would like to request them to conduct open-ended dialogue in the classroom where as an active participant of the dialogue, the teacher can express his view as a result the students can get some guidelines for further reflections. However, the teacher is not

allowed to interferer the students' exposition (Freire, 2005). And it would be better to make them critically aware about the oppressions rather than to compensate for transitory satisfaction in them. In this context a Chinese proverb "Give a man a fish and you will feed him for one day. But if you teach him how to fish, he will be fed over his lifetime." is mentionable since compensation means like the feeding for one day, but developing critical consciousness makes the oppressed students independent through ought their lifetime.

Then I would like to throw my second recommendation at the educational policy makers and the curriculum designers to include the identities of minorities or marginalized communities in the curriculum and to reflect them as equally as the identities of other communities in the teaching content. Furthermore, I would like to recommend for ensuring the participatory approach in each and every levels of education system. And here I would like to recommend them to follow the modern assumptions of education, such as: education for all, education for social justice, education for equality, education for social transformation, lifelong education, education for sustainability etc.

As the final recommendation, I would like to suggest all the oppressed students to act as the independent learner who can learn performing active role in dialogue like a teacher. And I would like to recommend them to be self-reflective also. Such nature helps them to understand the unjust hegemony existing in education as well as in society. Then they are motivated against that hegemony, developing critical consciousness which leads them to authentic liberation (Freire, 2005).

Like this, I have some recommendations for critical paradigm which are as follows:

1. In Nepalese context, the oppressed and oppressor dichotomy of critical theory seems to be limited to measure the different levels of oppression and inequality, so it is recommended to measure the oppression in certain scale of measurement as a result different communities may fall in different level of oppression in scale which is easier for developing critical consciousness to them.

2. The Nepalese society is very completed since it is formed with various ethnic groups, language communities, religious communities with various cultures therefore it would be better if the matter of oppression and inequality could be studied as the inter-sectional issue rather than intra-sectional one. It means that poverty, religious oppression, gender oppression etc. should be studied simultaneously.

3. In my view, on the way of movement of social transformation to assume the equal status of every participants is almost impossible, therefore I would like to recommend to redefine the role of teacher and students because in the absent of strong , dedicated and target-oriented leadership it is almost impossible to overcome the various challenges. And it is obvious that the person who leads the movement can exercise more power than the ones who merely take part in the movement.

4. In the process of conscientization, it would be better to make some sorts of criteria or code of conducts in agreement of all participants because it may help to regulate the chain of action and reflection to critical consciousness regarding the issue of dialogue by preventing from displacement.

5. As the final recommendation, I would like to raise the issue of practicality of critical theory in the classroom environment. It is important to encompass the specific tools in the critical pedagogy that can be implemented in classroom to develop the sense of critical consciousness and conscientization in the learners.

6.5 Areas for further research

During the process of conducting this research to explore the findings on the basis of the experiences and reflections of teachers regarding inequality existing in the secondary level classroom of Nepal, I have stumbled at some points that may be interesting for further studies, some of them are here:

- One interesting topic relevant with this study is to observe the experiences and reflections of the students on inequality who undergo through the oppression every day in their classroom. In my view, this study can be more lived, reliable and valid since it bases on the reflections of real oppressed ones.

- And then, it may be interesting to do comparative studies of the experiences and the reflections of the teachers and the students of the same level on the same issue.

- The next point I am eager to explore is that to what extent the Nepalese secondary level teachers can practice the critical pedagogy in their real teaching environment.

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Appendix

1. Interview guide

- What different classes of the students do you find in your classroom?

- How could you explain the inequality that you face in your classroom?

- What are the contributing factors of it?

- Would you think the students from minorities or marginalized classes are not privileged as much as the students from other social classes in the general classroom?

- Would you have some of the real instances in your life that really made you feel disadvantaged due to the issue of inequality?

- What role could you play to ensure the sense of equality in your classroom?

- What methods or techniques or activities would you like to adopt?

- What roles do you except in the students? What do you want to develop in them?

2. Letter of consent

<div align="center">

Rudolf Steiner University College

Oslo

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Date: 03/12/2016

Dear, -----------------------

    You are being invited to participate in a research study on the experiences and reflections of the teachers on inequality existing in the secondary level classroom in Nepal. Specifically, the study is concentered to explore the strategies that contribute to create the situation of equality in the classroom on the basis of the participants' experiences and reflections. And this research project is conducted to submit to Rudolf Steiner University College, Oslo to fulfill the partial requirement of Master Degree program.

    An interview will be conducted with you to get your experiences on the subject. It will take about one hour. During this time, you will be interviewed about your experiences on inequality in your teaching career. Moreover, you will reflect about the classroom activities or other activities that you have applied or are applying or are planning to apply to create the situation of equality in the classroom.

To protect anonymity, several steps will be taken. First, the recorded interview will be destroyed when it will have been transcribed. In the copy of transcription, your identification will be hidden. The transcribed copy will be destroyed after six months of the submission of this research project to the university. And the nick name will be given to you so that it will be easier during the process of data use throughout the research process.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. And you may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason.

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Signature of the participant   Signature of the researcher