Education in Nepal

A Study of Nepalese Teachers' Views on their School Situation

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Education in Nepal - A study of Nepalese Teachers' Views on their School Situation

Title
Utbildning i Nepal - En studie om nepalesiska lärares syn på deras skolsituation

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to find out what working procedures are used in Nepalese schools. We have also investigated teachers' views on how schools are organised and how the school system is structured in Nepal. Furthermore, we studied what kind of National Curriculum and other official documents that existed in Nepal, to support teachers when planning their teaching. In our study we used an ethnographic approach.

The literature review and our results show that the teachers in Nepal face several challenges in their profession. We believe that the central power of the government can in a future development be discussed in terms of de-centralisation of the school system. If so, it could be problematised how and what the teachers should teach and how the pupils' final School Leaving Certificate exam should look like.

Keyword
The Nepalese school system, Teachers' views, Ethnographic approach, Working procedures
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Moreover, we would like to express our sincere thanks to Sida, who made our journey to Nepal possible through their scholarship. Many thanks to Danida, who has helped us with information about the school we visited and with material about the Nepalese school system.

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Johanna Andersson & Johanna Lindkvist
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APPENDIX 1

Interview guide
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes.

Marcel Proust

Early in our education at the Department of Teacher Training we were informed about the possibility to do part of our education abroad and this was something both of us found exciting. We decided to combine our project work with our intention to study abroad. During our education we have attended lectures on international themes such as different cultures and religions, which have enriched us with deeper knowledge and understanding.

A major reason for our choice to carry out our study in a developing country is that we want to learn more about a culture which differs from our Western culture. Many studies that have been made about "the third world" seem to assume that 'our' way of looking upon things is the only right way and represents a standard for judging practice. This has made governments in developing countries disappointed because the reports have discredited them and described their realities in a way that they do not recognise. We do not want to make the same mistake, instead we hope that our study will be useful both for the school we visited and for our own understanding.

In September 1999 we left for a two month field work in Nepal. The reason why we went to Nepal was that, when we were in Sweden, we got in contact with a Swedish woman, Malin Grandin, who by that time lived in Nepal. She knew about a public school in Kathmandu, and recommended us to do our study there. Furthermore, Malin Grandin had a close contact with the deputy headmaster at the school, who became our supervisor during our field work.

Specifically, we hope that our project will illuminate the kind of working procedures that exist in classrooms in Nepal and teachers' opinions about the Nepalese school system. This might be a starting point for discussions about ways of arranging teacher-pupil interaction. We hope our study will make a contribution to the knowledge about teacher-pupil relations in an intercultural perspective.
Nepal is a very interesting country from a democratic point of view. The country received its first democratic constitution in 1959, but the year after their king dissolved the parliament. After hard struggle, the democratic movement succeeded in 1990 to force through a new democratic constitution, where the king's absolute power was cut down. Hence, Nepal is a young democracy and we think that it is very interesting to see if this can be seen in classroom work.

We firmly believe that this study will be a great asset for us as future teachers. Since Sweden nowadays is a multicultural society, it is important for us as teachers to develop knowledge and respect for other cultures. Also, when we now have returned to Sweden we think it is very important for us to share this knowledge with our fellow student teachers, future pupils and colleagues.

1.2 Purpose of the study and research questions

Traditionally, the schools in Sweden have worked in a way where pupils were passive and teachers structured knowledge in a pre-planned manner, (Carlgren, 1994). The policy today in the Swedish Curriculum (Lpo 94) is that education should take pupils' experiences, interests and needs as a point of departure. Also, pupils should take responsibility for their learning by being active and self-regulated. The role of the teacher has changed from being a transmitter of knowledge to being a leader and facilitator, guiding the children in their learning processes (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1934/1986). With this as a background we would like to investigate how classroom work is carried out in Nepalese schools.

Our purpose with the project is to find out what working procedures that are used in Nepalese schools. Moreover, we will examine how their schools are organised and how their school system is structured. We will investigate teachers' views on these matters. In our report we will compare their answers with our classroom observations and see if they correspond. Furthermore, it is also important to find out what kind of National Curriculum and other official documents there are in Nepal to support teachers when planning their teaching.

How schools are organised is likely to affect classroom procedures. Here are some examples of organisational matters which we would like to study; the number of years children have to attend compulsory school, the length of the pupils' and the teachers' school days, the number of pupils in each class, the schools' access to books and other materials etc.

With the above purpose of our project and the framing of the problem it is our intension to investigate the following more detailed research questions:

- What working procedures exist in the classroom?
• Are there opportunities for teachers to teach as they would like to do? How much freedom do teachers have in planning their teaching?

• What arguments are used when discussing pupils' influence over their school work?

• How do teachers experience the Nepalese school system of today?
2 LITERATURE

In our literature review we will start with a brief section which contains facts about Nepal. The purpose with this part of the literature review is to give the reader a background and some pre-knowledge about the field we have studied. Next we will present the education system in Nepal.

2.1 Facts about Nepal

2.1.1 Geography

Nepal is a small mountainous country, 1/3 of the area of Sweden. The country is squeezed in between the two powerful countries India and China. Nepal is divided into three geographical zones. In the south, there is the lowland area, the Terai, where most of the agriculture takes place. The climate in the Terai is tropical, and there is a rich wild-life with, for example, elephants, tigers, rhinos and crocodiles. In the central part of Nepal, the middle-hill area, is the area where most of the people live. The landscape consists of fruitful hills, where rice often is cultivated in terrasses. In the north, is the Himalayan mountain chain with eight of the world’s ten highest mountains, and highest of them all is Mount Everest (Utrikespolitiska institutet, 1998).

2.1.2 Population, language and religion

There are about 23 million inhabitants in Nepal, most of them live in the rural areas. Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world, and the population continuously increases. According to UN, in 1997, half of the population lived below poverty level. There are at least 70 different ethnic groups living in Nepal. All these ethnic groups can be divided into two major groups: Indo-Nepalese, and Tibet-Nepalese, with their origin from different countries, India and Tibet (Utrikespolitiska institutet, 1998, Sattaur, 1996).

The official language of the country is Nepali, which is closely related to Hindi. Over 50 per cent of the inhabitants have Nepali as their mother tongue, but there are 30 different minority languages spoken too (Utrikespolitiska institutet, 1998, Sattaur, 1996).

Religion is a very important part of Nepalese life. The Nepali people assume various gods to have a hand in every success or misfortune. The kingdom of Nepal is the only country in the world, which according to their fundamental

\[1\] United Nations
law is a Hindu state. According to the government, 90 per cent of the population belong to the Hindu religion (Reed, 1990). The most common religion among the Tibet-Nepalese, is Buddhism, which about 8 per cent of the population belong to. It is hard to separate these two groups, because Hinduism and Buddhism are often mixed (Reed, 1990).

2.1.3 The situation for women and girls in Nepal

Women in Nepal generally have a low status. Right from the beginning of infancy, girls have to wait to get food, till men and boys have got their share. Women and girls are also the last to get education and medical treatment etc. (Estvad, 1998a). But according to Utrikespolitiska institutet (1998) it is now more common that girls are able to attend school. Nepal is the only country in the world where the females' average length of life is shorter than the males', 54 years compared with 55 years (Estvad, 1998a).

In Nepal, women still do not have equal rights to own property and to decide about marriage and divorce (Estvad, 1998b). Outside Kathmandu, Hindu women have a long way to liberation. In the rural parts of the country women are considered to be their father's or husband's property. Women can be married off at the price of a buffalo. But women's situation differs according to which ethnic group they belong to. A minority group, Orthodox Hindus, reveal female subjugation. They believe that a woman during her menstruation is unclean and the same applies to childbirth, when she is unclean ten days after delivery. She should therefore keep to herself and drink cow urine to clean herself. Furthermore, male polygamy is common in the hill area of Nepal and if a woman cannot give birth to a son, another woman easily replaces her. Sherpanis and other Buddhist women are treated more equally (Reed, 1990). The importance to give birth to a son is also described by Bengtsson & Petersson (1996). They write that it is the boys who will take care of the parents when they get old and they will also take care of the important funeral rites. Estvad (1998a) points out that it is common that girls and women in the rural areas are responsible for heavy work, for example to collect and carry home firewood and water. People generally say:

...the average Nepali woman does the work of ten men. (David Reed, 1990, p. 27)
2.2 The Education System in Nepal

2.2.1 History and Background

In 1951 the right for every citizen to get education was adopted in Nepal, according to Sebaly (1988). Before this constitution was settled only the Royal Family and the ruling classes had access to education (Skar & Cederroth, 1997). The rulers feared that, if poor and lower cast people would get free education, they would be critical and dissatisfied. The people should therefore be kept ignorant, which was for the better (Estvad, 1998c). After 1951 "the dissemination of modern education concepts was slow" (Skar & Cederroth, 1997, p. 77). The education system was not formally centralised until 1971. At that time, a uniform curriculum was developed (ibid). This was Nepal's first national plan for educational development. The government also made a first attempt to look at education as an "investment in human resource development" (Sebali, 1988).

The next educational revolution occurred in 1990. It was connected to the new constitution in the society which was based upon democratic principles, a multiparty system. For a long time there were no political parties operating freely in Nepal, and there were no public debate on education. For this reason, the education report written by the Commission gave a rather generalist impression:

> Government's role in education is dominated by two issues: (a) its responsibility to improve access, equity, and quality of education, and (b) the increasing level of public expenditure needed even to maintain the present level of services (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994, p. 4061).

The report does not distinctly itemise the options and policy alternatives that are available to the government (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994).

At the World Conference on Education, held in Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990, Nepal decided to endorse the Jomtien Declaration. The main goal for education was agreed to be "Education for All". This year, the first really comprehensive National Education Plan, was created (Skar & Cederroth, 1997).

2.2.2 Structure of the Education System
In the Secondary Curriculum Introductory Training Booklet, English, the Curriculum Development Centre describes its opinions about education:

Education plays a very important role in the development of the individual personality, society and the nation. It plays a vital role in broadening the people's vision. It is said that education is the light of life. For the all round development of the country, human resource development is a must. It is education which helps to produce national heroes, disciplined citizens, industrious manpower and able and suitable human beings for society. It is said that educated skilled human resources are the backbone of the nation. In their absence, a country cannot progress (Secondary Curriculum, 1999, p. 11)

The education system in Nepal consists of three levels: primary, secondary and higher (Skar & Cederroth, 1997).

**Table 1: National educational structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Normal age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Primary Education</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lower Secondary Education</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Higher Secondary Education</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Higher Education (University)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>General, Professional,</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Technical, Sanskrit</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>22+</td>
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<tr>
<td>17+</td>
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**2.2.2.a Primary Education**
The primary education sector consists of grades 1-5. The children usually start primary school when they are 6 years old, and today the primary level is free of charge (Skar & Cederroth, 1997). Khaniya & Kiernan (1994) describe the goals in the curriculum of primary education as the following: basic literacy, numeracy and acquisition of basic life skills, but the external efficiency is poor all the same.

There has been a great increase in the number of primary schools. In 1950 there were less than 300 schools and in 1992 that figure had risen to 14,500 schools. The public pressure for education combined with the increasing population explains this progress (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994). By the year 2000, the government has committed itself to make primary education available to all children aged 6-10, according to Skar & Cederroth (1997).

2.2.2.b Secondary Education

The secondary education sector consists of grades 6-12, and is divided into three parts, lower secondary (grades 6-8), secondary (grades 9-10), and higher secondary (grades 11-12) (Skar & Cederroth, 1997). The Secondary Education Curriculum, English, (1998) states the aims for the secondary education sector:

The aims of secondary education are to produce healthy citizens who are:

- familiar with national traditions, culture and social environment and with democratic values
- able to use language in daily life
- aware of scientific issues
- creative, co-operative, industrious and independent
- able to contribute to economic development

Throughout the country, secondary schools are unevenly distributed in relation to the population. This situation depends partly on the topography, but the political motivation plays an important role, too. For example, in Kathmandu Valley, which is the centre of political power, the secondary schools have got the highest percentage of pupils in the whole country (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994).

When students have gone through 10 years in the educational system, they write an SLC-exam\textsuperscript{2}. If they pass the exam, they have been automatically qualified to work as primary school teachers, but this has recently been changed (see page 19). To pass the SLC-exam actually guaranteed a job, because there was a lack of teachers in Nepal. Students can receive further education in the higher secondary level, also called "10+2". The World Bank has helped to develop a new curriculum and texts for "10+2". The higher

\textsuperscript{2} School Leaving Certificate
secondary education takes place at private or public universities. There were about 75 "10+2" facilities in Nepal in 1997 (Skar & Cederroth, 1997).

**2.2.2.c Higher Education**

According to Skar & Cederroth (1997) the higher education system is mostly centered around Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu. Tribhuvan University was established in 1959, and during the years, the educational facilities have swiftly increased. In 1997, there were 150,000 students who studied at 61 campuses, 132 affiliated campuses and high schools, which all belong to Tribhuvan University. Degrees up to PhD level are offered by Tribhuvan University. They have nine faculties, and each faculty has a great number of institutes and fields:

- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Management
- Law
- Education
- Science and technology
- Engineering
- Forestry
- Agriculture & Animal Science, and
- Medicine (including university hospitals).

Khaniya & Kiernan (1994) point out that most of the students (80 per cent) are enrolled in humanities, social sciences, management, and law. Engineering, agriculture, forestry, and medicine have less than 10 per cent enrolled.

According to Skar & Cederroth (1997) there are also private universities, like Kathmandu University, which is a non-profit university, established in 1991. Just a few universities are both public and independent, which means they do not belong to Tribhuvan University. The government pays a basic grant to those universities.

**2.3 Private and Public Schools**

In Nepal there are two types of education: public, government schools, and private, boarding schools. A teacher, Mr Tika Ram Bhatta, who worked at the school we visited, wrote in the school magazine (1999) about the differences between government and boarding schools. Mr Ram Bhatta has worked as an English teacher at both boarding and government schools in Nepal. We will here summarise what he wrote about these different types of schools.

---

3 Doctor of Philosophy
2.3.1 Boarding schools

Boarding schools aim at producing quality education to the wealthy families only, and the students have to pay a high fee to attend the school.

Teachers who work in boarding schools are certified for both pre-school and primary school. They have no financial worries, so they can always think of ways of enhancing the children's development. English is taught from the beginning of school, in grade 1, and all subjects except Nepali are taught in English. Boarding schools are often English medium schools, and both students and teachers are forced to speak English within the school area. The students in this kind of school come from well-to-do homes, where they can hear and read English in various media. Over all, one can say that these children have a very good environment for developing their English.

The classes are quite small, maximum 30 students, so the teacher can give individual help to the students. Reward and punishment is a policy, which is well established. Teachers who are good and diligent are rewarded, but the opposite will be punished. This policy also concerns the students.

It is common in these schools that students are forced to rote learning and cramming. There is always a high number of students who pass the SLC-examination (Bhatta, 1999).

2.3.2 Government schools

Since Nepal is a country with a large number of low-income inhabitants, many people cannot afford to pay the school fee. Therefore, the government has invested money in the project "Education for All". The government provides schools with money so that the parents do not have to pay school fees.

The teachers who work at government schools are not well educated. If you have passed the SLC-exam, you can work as a primary teacher. According to Mr Ram Bhatta, such teachers should not be allowed to teach English, because they cannot speak and write English fluently. With uneducated teachers, how could English be improved? Students in government schools start to learn English in grade 4. Forty minutes, once a day, they learn to speak, read and write English. Their home environment contains no English media, so they will neither hear nor see English outside school.

Government schools cannot afford to employ enough teachers, so the classes are overcrowded, between 60 to 80 pupils in each class. That will lead to the students not getting any individual attention from the teachers. A large number of students in government schools fail their SLC-exam. They do not have the same qualifications as students in boarding schools, their results cannot be compared.
Further, Mr Ram Bhatta claims that to make government schools achieve better results, changes have to be made. English teachers need to continuously develop their English teaching. The local school should provide them with in-service courses, like workshops and conferences. Government schools have to implement the policy of reward and punishment, and also use the English language more, as a medium. Maybe some books in other subjects could be in English. If these problems will not be solved, the English education will be ruined (Bhatta, 1999).

Skar & Cederroth (1997) say that the gap in academic results between private and public schools is one of the largest problems today in the Nepalese education system. More than 100 000 students write the SLC-examination every year. Around 80 per cent of those who pass, come from Boarding schools, most of whom are male students from Kathmandu Valley.

The rural areas have twice as many boarding schools as government schools. This shows the difficulties the government has to give education for all. Khaniya & Kiernan (1994) also say that there has been an increase in private primary schools in the urban areas. This is due to the growing dissatisfaction with the quality of public primary schools. Estvad (1998c) points out that the school standard in the country differs between the town areas and the countryside. In the mountain area where two thirds of the population live, the conditions are even worse than in the countryside. Moreover she says "the further up in the mountain areas you get, the worse the school conditions are" (Estvad, 1998c, p. 22, our translation).
2.4 Problems in the Nepalese School System

There are many different types of problems in the Nepalese school system of today. Some of them are discussed in Inge Estvad's article "Småt med skolgang" ("Poor schooling", 1998). The article is based on an interview with Mr Eric Winther-Schmidt, who is chief counsellor for Danida in Nepal. One problem, which is pointed out, is the large number of drop-outs in schools. According to Estvad (ibid), only 47 per cent of the children in the country who are enrolled actually attend school, and out of these only 39 per cent finish grade five. Many pupils have to repeat and there are a lot of drop-outs every year. More than one-third of the pupils repeats grade one and one-fourth quit school after their first year. According to Skar & Cederroth (1997), children in rural areas tend to drop-out after 2 to 3 years in school. Winther Schmidt (in Estvad, 1998c) points out that the reasons for the frequent drop-out are:

1) There are many children in the classes that should not be there at all. One reason for this is that some pupils have to bring their younger brothers or sisters to school because there are no parents at home, otherwise the child has to stay home too.

2) It is hard to control how many of the children who actually attend the class.

3) Teachers are uneducated.

4) There is no national standard for what the pupils should learn.

Furthermore he mentions poverty, climate, distances and geographical circumstances as factors which influence the school system. Winther-Schmidt mentions another reason for children's low attendance in school. He says that parents often need their children for labour and to earn money for the family. Furthermore, he claims that some parents just do not think it is important for their children to attend school. Estvad's article "Moderne middelalder" ("Modern middle-ages", 1998) also discusses that parents think school is a waste of time. Parents want their children to stay at home to work and earn money. But there can also be other reasons for children's non-attendance in school. She gives an example of a boy who had to stay at home and help his mother to support the family. The boy's father went to India to find a job and after that they have not heard from him. Estvad also met children who had to quit school because their parents could not afford to buy them schoolbooks. According to Sebaly (1988), children start school late because they have to work at home and in the fields. A normal age to start school, according to him, is nine or ten.

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4 Danish international development authority
There has been very few studies made on why pupils drop-out, but there is one, CERID\(^5\) (1984, in Khaniya and Kiernan, 1994), which investigated pupils' school participation in rural areas in Nepal. The study came up with three different variables to look at in relation to the problem with drop-outs:

(a) child-related variables such as the gender of the child and the extent to which the child contributes to household activities and earnings; (b) the child's immediate cultural environment as represented by father's level of education, household occupational and economic status; and (c) school-related variables such as teacher and school characteristics (Khaniya, & Kiernan, 1994, p. 4062).

Sebaly (1988) describes an example of a school-related variable. He has found that the gap between primary school and secondary school is too great for the pupils. Many pupils drop-out for this reason.

Similar problems as those discussed by Winther-Schmidt (in Estvad, 1998c) are also mentioned by Khaniya & Kiernan (1994); poor teaching, there is no supervision, no evaluation of the students, poor or non-existent relationships between school and home, as well as poor and irrelevant teaching and learning. They point out that the reasons for the problems in Nepal's school system are multiple. Moreover they say that there have been few studies looking into these explanations.

Teir (1994) discusses other problems with the Nepalese school system. She thinks that the main problem is the serious lack of educated teachers and teaching materials. Furthermore, she claims that the classes are too big and that the classrooms are unsuitable. She also mentions that the education is sporadic and that the pupils, who do not understand, do not get any help, as if they have themselves to blame. Another problem, which Teir brings up, is brain drain, which means that highly educated people move out from their country. The principal of St. Xavier School (private school for boys), which Teir visited in Kathmandu said:

No highly educated or even worse, intelligent Nepalese feels happy in his homeland (Teir, 1994, p 17, our translation).

### 2.4.1 Education for women and girls

One third of the Nepalese population is illiterate. The problem is worst among women, only 15-20 per cent of the women can read and write, while 40-50 per cent of the men is literate. Children's attendance in Primary schools was, according to Skar & Cederroth (1997), 82 per cent in 1990. Almost all boys went to school but only 47 per cent of the girls did. Furthermore, Sebaly (1988) points out that 57 per cent of the females in primary schools are studying in

\(^5\) Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
grade one, and in secondary school only 6 per cent study in grade ten. Later on at university level only 25 per cent of the students are female (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994).

It is evident that there are many problems with girls' and women's education in Nepal. But, as can be read in the following section, people in Nepal are aware of the problem and are trying to improve this matter. We will finish this part with a quotation from the School Magazine (1997), where a pupil, Miss Sabita Luitel, writes about education for girls:

Education for girls is as necessary as it is for boys ... This fact is gradually accepted by all people nowadays. If we visit a house where a young girl is present we hear a mother is saying “you must know how to cook, sew, knit, wash etc.” It is quite true that a girl should have knowledge of these domestic or household works but in the same time it is also necessary for a girl to know how to read and write. There is no doubt that there was a time when more consideration was given to the boys but today girls should be given equal consideration because they deserve it ... If every woman is educated she will know how to fight for her rights, she will stand on her own feet, earn her living and will not depend on anybody (Sabita Luitel, in grade 9, 1998).

Finally, in spite of the difficulties there has been progress in the Nepalese school system over the years. Since the school system started to develop in 1961, the number of primary schools has increased five times and there are ten times more teachers. However, the number of students has also increased eighteen times, which explains some of the problems in the Nepalese school system of today. The educational system on primary and secondary level is still weak. There is a need for more schools and to improve the quality of education (Udenrigsministeriet, 1996).

There is a close link between all the problems in the education sector and financial problems of the state. Khaniya & Kiernan (1994) claim that if the goal of the Government is to improve the quality of education in Nepal, it has to increase the investments in non-salary categories, that is, instructional materials, books, school buildings and equipment. Furthermore, they point out that it is important to change the view of education...

...to focus more on the acquisition of thinking and application of knowledge skills and to bring the education system more into line with the needs of rural, agricultural sectors of Nepal (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994, p 4067)

Khaniya & Kiernan, (1994) believe that “Education For All by the Year 2000” is an impossible goal. Nepal should therefore concentrate on a “functioning, cost-effective and cost-beneficent educational system in place by the year 2000, capable of serving Nepal in the twenty-first century” (ibid, p.4067).
2.5 Donor Assistance in the Education System

Nepal's educational financing sources are grants supplied by the government, local communities support and foreign assistance. The majority of foreign aid is "soft" credit-loans from the World Bank (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994). The largest bilateral donor is Japan but there are many other countries, which support Nepal's Education System, for example Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, the USA and Switzerland. To the list India and China can be added as Nepal's traditional and very important co-operation partners. Among the multilateral donors the World Bank is the largest followed by the Asian Development Bank, UNDP6 and UNICEF7 (Udenrigsministeriet, 1996).

In spite of the fact that educational aid to Nepal started in 1971, more systematic large-scale development started only in 1981. One of the projects from those days was the Primary Education Project (PEP) which went on for ten years. The aim of the project was to develop curricula, textbooks, teacher training and to construct schools. One more recent project is the Basic Primary Education Project (BPEP) which is structured as a national programme rather than a project (Skar & Cederroth, 1997). The programme started in 1992 and the aim is to help the government to reach the goal "Education for All". The Nepalese government finances two-thirds of the project and the rest is sponsored by foreign assistance. The programme comprises the general school system, but also children who cannot come to school, because they have to work. The programme provides these children with education outside regular school hours, in the mornings and in the evenings. The purpose is that these children later will join the general school programme. BPEP also aims at developing women's literacy, outside working hours. This education is built on workday activities and the aim is not only literacy. They can also choose courses about their domestic animals and domestic science. The programme co-operates with banks in order to give women small loans. The money will make it possible for women to start collectives to manufacture things they can sell. The course construction will motivate women to learn and to attend the courses. One of them said:

We want to be able to read on the seed packets and thereby be able to earn money on what we learn here. (Estvad, 1998c, p. 24, our translation)

The programme has also provided in-service courses for teachers. The main idea with the programme is that schools should work together in groups and help each other. In practice, there are so called resource centres, which are

6 United Nations Development Programme
7 United Nations Children's Fund
meant to work as inspiration sources for schools. Each group contains 10-25 schools. The ultimate purpose is that the resource centres should function as a driving force for teacher education and the development of teaching (Estvad, 1998c).

The BPEP is divided into two phases. The first phase concentrated on more qualified and educated teachers, to educate female teachers especially for the first grades and to help schools with facilities like benches to sit on and other material. The goal of the second phase is to concentrate on the disadvantaged people:

1) Get parents to understand how necessary it is that their children get education.
2) Raise the quality of education in general.
3) Prepare decentralisation in the whole country, which also includes the school sector.

The programme concentrates on local politicians and parents to make them a part of school development. Teachers should report back to the parents about their child's development in school, something which rarely happens today. In other words, schools should be more responsible for the quality of the education (Estvad, 1998c).

The BPEP has been a very successful programme in a short time period, for example, it has provided 300,000 pupils with education and 170,000 adults and children have received non-formal education. The project has also educated 2,750 female teachers, but still there is a lack of 70 per cent of female teachers in the schools today (Skar & Cederroth, 1997).

Recently, another project called Higher Secondary School Project ("10+2") has caused a hot debate in Nepal. The debate is about university teachers who are required to leave the university for five years and instead participate in the "10+2" programme. After five years, they can return to their old positions. According to the Director of "10+2", Dr. T. R. Khamia, this is only possible if the university teachers are offered higher salary than they get at the university (Skar & Cederroth, 1997).

2.6 Teacher education

There are 85,000 primary school teachers in Nepal. Only 34,000 of them are qualified and only a few of these have received extra education, after the SLC-exam (Skar & Cederroth, 1997). The qualification, that one should have a school-leaving certificate to work as a primary teacher, was introduced as late
as 1989. The policy decision, not to make teacher training mandatory, is the reason why so many teachers are uneducated (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994).

To increase the teachers' educational level, the quality of education has to be improved. The Primary Education Development Project (PEDP) was established to supply teachers with both training opportunities and chances to improve aspects like content and pedagogics. Another mission was to train and raise the competence and skills of untrained teachers. After a while it came through that these efforts had not been successful at all. A new one, who put his efforts on the Primary Teacher Training Centres, replaced the director of this project. These were built to educate and support schoolteachers in their profession. According to the new regulations teachers need the Higher Secondary School Project, "10+2", to get a position, that is 12 years of education. The largest mission, after all, is to upgrade the educational level of those who have only got an SLC-pass, and those who do not even have that qualification (Skar & Cederroth, 1997).

Inge Estvad (1998c) claims that BPEP tries to help in this matter, by arranging extra education for practising unqualified teachers. The teachers in the BPEP have to attend teacher training for 10 months up to 1 year. Estvad continues by saying that teachers' motivation is low because the salary is so low. The basic salary for a teacher is about $25 per month and that is not enough to live on in Nepal.

### 2.7 Curriculum and Teaching Methods

The Ministry of Education's CTSDC\(^8\) is responsible for primary and secondary level curriculum development. They decide the structure of the curricula. The official school textbooks are written by appointed writers, and CTSDC subject experts check for mistakes in the manuscripts. After that procedure, the final document is sent for mass production (Kansakar, 1991). In Shiksha, (1991), Kansakar discusses curriculum changes and here is an example of how these changes occur:

> Thus, someone thinks that students need "more science" (after all many fail Science in SLC) and the decisions is taken to introduce Science in Grade 1. A writer is then asked to write a Grade 1 Science Book. What is missing here is the development process. This looks at the needs of the children, not of the SLC. In the process approach we look at what is going on in schools, what are the pre-requisites for Science, what in fact, is Science? (Kansakar, 1991, p. 3)

Khaniya & Kiernan (1994) claim that Nepal's curricula are centrally settled and most parts of the official school textbooks are embodied by the curricula. There

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\(^8\)Curriculum, Textbook and Supervision Development Centre
is one official textbook per core subject, and the students are not likely to read anything but these books, during their school attendance. The students' needs have not been provided for in Nepal's curricula. The curricula are often outmoded and they have not gone through any major development. Two of the main reasons in Nepal's "qualitative decline of education" are: the defective official curricula and the poor standard of the textbooks. The problems that occur during the curriculum development are described like this:

The major problems stem from the absence of the process approach to curriculum development: no needs assessments are carried out, materials are not pretested, curriculum planners and designers are exceedingly few and where available are mostly self-taught. There is an almost total absence of editorial design, and publishing skills. (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994, p. 4066)

Kansakar (1991) thinks that the teachers should ask themselves, what they think a student who leaves school should know, and not ask the ones who develop the curriculum. The process approach should be advocated to curriculum development. She continues to tell about the problems facing curriculum developers, and how these problems are reflected in the curriculum:

As long as we have untrained staff, no facilities for developing, testing, and trialling materials, no funds for researching and evaluating how can we act as curriculum developers? This is why the curriculum we have in our schools today is almost 20 years old. This is why our curriculum is overloaded, badly designed, unsuited to the needs of the children, and the like. We spend millions of rupees every year giving free textbooks to our children but we never try to find out just what they are learning from them (Kansakar, 1991, p. 3).

According to Kansakar (1991), the curriculum development process is not a matter of subjects or contents. It is an on-going process, which is much more complicated.

The lower primary curriculum focuses on basic literacy and numeracy and also social studies. In the upper primary curriculum some more subjects have been added. English, science, moral education, work education, physical education, and arts and craft. Out of all these subjects only those tested in exams are most likely to be taught in the schools, that means: languages, mathematics, science and social studies. The secondary curriculum presents optional subjects that are available to the students. The problem is that there are no teachers who can teach those subjects, so most of them are not offered (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994).

Secondary Curriculum Introductory Training Booklet, English, (1999) states that, according to the changes in the social, national and international context that have taken place, the government has decided to reconstruct and revise the
secondary level curriculum. An example from the book shows how the subject English has changed:

The English curriculum has been revised and reconstructed to meet learners' needs and to produce skilled manpower to lead the nation in the face of the world. The new English curriculum differs from old one in that it emphasises the teaching and learning of English in a social context - whereas the old curriculum emphasised the teaching/learning of English in isolation and grammatical structures and their uses were given more importance rather than the language functions (Secondary Curriculum Introductory Training Booklet, English, 1999, p. 12).

When the curriculum is being changed it is important that the people who live in the country participate, both parents, educationalist, teachers, etc. These people know how their society and their school system work. To borrow an educational system from another country seems misleading (Kansakar, 1991).

The textbooks control what teaching methodologies the teacher should use. They are content overloaded and not written by curriculum developers but academics. Methods that are most common are rote memorisation, note copying and lecturing. The shortage of teacher training, in particular in pedagogics, makes this situation even worse (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994).

Secondary Education Curriculum, English, (1998) enumerates certain teaching methods, techniques and activities that should be used in the English teaching:

1. demonstration and dramatisation
2. question and answer
3. guessing the meaning of new words from their context
4. role play and simulation
5. group and pair work (information-gap activities)
6. silent reading preceded by pre-questions and use of picture cues
7. inquiry and discovery

(Secondary Education Curriculum, English, 1998, p. 13)

The book also explains the principles that one should follow when teaching English:

- Teaching and learning in the classroom should be learner-centred. Children learn by doing. Language learners learn to speak by speaking, listen by listening, and so on. Teachers should give students every opportunity to use language.
- The teacher's role should be that of a manager, guide and a facilitator, not that of an authority. Teachers should provide
students with the materials and opportunities to use the language.

- English should be the main medium of communication in the classroom and should be used as much as possible.

- Students should be encouraged to guess the meaning of, and to predict, the content of texts. Even when students don't guess correctly, they will have been encouraged to think about possible answers. They will then be able to understand the meaning better when it is explained to them.

- Teaching and learning English should be fun. Games, puzzles and other fun activities should be encouraged. Anything that brings life and laughter to the classroom is to be welcomed.

(Secondary Education Curriculum, English, 1998, p. 13)
3 METHOD

3.1 Qualitative method

It is important to make the aim and the problem clear to oneself before one decides which method to use. The method should never decide the content of the study (Bell, 1995). We find it meaningful to get a deeper understanding of teachers' working procedures in school and to get knowledge about the Nepalese school system. Moreover, we are interested in getting the teachers' own views on these matters. We will also investigate how the Nepalese curriculum and other official documents influence the teaching in the classrooms. Therefore, we have decided to use a qualitative method. The goal of the qualitative method is to "identify phenomena, characteristics and meanings, that are unknown or not known well enough" (Starrin & Svensson, 1994, p. 21). According to Bell (1995) the aim of the qualitative method is to gain a better insight into how people experience their world rather than analysing it statistically, which is the purpose of the quantitative method.

Something that is important to bear in mind when carrying out a qualitative study is to be as objective as possible. One's preconceived opinions and prejudices about what is going to be studied should be put in brackets, so called bracketing. The weakness of the method is considered to be the subjectiveness, because this can lead to distortion of data, called bias. The great advantage of the qualitative method is that it is inductive, this means that the researcher is open-minded towards his/ her research objects. This way of acting decreases the risk to miss valuable information (Kullberg, 1996). It is generally believed that the quantitative method has got a rather deductive character, which makes new discoveries impossible because the researcher has decided beforehand what should be investigated (Starrin & Svensson, 1994).

3.2 Ethnographic method

There are plenty of qualitative methods and we chose to use the ethnographic method, above all when it comes to the data collection. Kullberg (1996) mentions that the ethnographic method is used when a researcher wants to investigate a specific culture, for example the classroom culture. The researcher takes the research group's perspective and tries to look at the world through their eyes. The research group teaches the researcher how they think and act concerning what the researcher is studying. The ethnographer investigates a process in as natural an environment as possible. He or she stays in the field where the informants live during a longer period, where data are produced as
well as collected. We have not spent enough time in Nepal to carry out the ethnographic method fully, instead we have decided to have an ethnographic approach to our research.
3.3 Pilot study

During our teacher training, we attended a course, 'The Teacher as Researcher - the School as a Field of Research'. The course gave us deeper knowledge and skills about research methods and theories about educational research. The examination task was to carry out a minor study, where we should use one of the methods we had studied. Since we were going to Nepal and thought that the ethnographic method suited our study, we chose to practise this method in our minor study, too. Our study took place in a compulsory school in Linköping, Sweden, and lasted for three days. In the pilot study we practised the ethnographic methods: observations, formal and informal interviews, and we studied official documents. The study was based on children's ideas about their responsibility and influence in school, and, thus, had the same main focus as the study reported here.

3.4 Data collection

Our facilitator at the school in Nepal was the deputy headmaster, who helped us to arrange all the interviews and observations and answered all our questions that arose during our stay. What is more, the deputy headmaster helped us to contact other schools we wanted to visit, and always stood by us. According to Kullberg (1996), the person the ethnographer meets in the beginning of the data collection is called a gatekeeper. The gatekeeper is a very important person when it comes to getting access to the field. The gatekeeper in our study was the deputy headmaster at the school we visited and there were never any problems that could not be solved.

During the ethnographic data collection it is significant that the researcher gradually develops a theoretical sensitivity. This implies that the researcher should have as few preconceived opinions as possible, during the data collection (Kullberg, 1996). To make theoretical sensitivity possible, while one collects the data, there are three principles to follow. The first is the multisensory principle which implies "that one shall use as many senses as possible in the data collection phase. Keep one's eyes open, listen, feel, smell and taste" (Starrin et al., 1991, p. 35). Since the report in the ethnographic method should be both descriptive and narrative with analytical elements, we chose to use the multisensory principle. The second principle is considered to be the principle of æsthetical distance, which points out how the researcher should relate to what he or she observes. This means that the distance between the researcher and what is to be investigated should neither be too great or too small. In other words, the researcher is both observer and participant. The final principle is the multimethod principle, which points out that one should use different methods for data collection. This is something which strengthens the method's reliability and credibility and it is the strength of ethnography (Kullberg, 1996). The data
collection methods we have used in our study are formal interviews, informal interviews (conversations), observations and document examination.

The documents we examined were mostly various curricula. Unfortunately, the only curricula written in English, are the ones which concern the subject English, other subjects are written in Nepali. Therefore, we could only examine curricula for the subject English, and some general goals for education, which were mentioned there, too.
3.4.1 Observations

During our stay in Nepal, we made general observations and classroom observations in a public school. The general observations went on during the entire data collection. We started to observe lessons in the beginning of our stay and we tried to be as objective as possible. Bell (1995) discusses the problem of being an objective observer, the better the researcher knows the people to be observed, the harder it is to be objective.

In our observations we aimed at studying teaching methods, the relationship between teachers and students, the school environment and various activities that appeared during the lessons. We observed different teachers and pupils in different subjects. Mostly we attended the English lessons, however, because the other subjects were taught in Nepali, their mother tongue. When we performed the observations we both took notes at all times. We did so to avoid misconstructions and not to miss any valuable information. In many ways observations are not easy to carry out. The method demands careful planning and experience, which is something that Bell (1995) also points out. Using the combination interview and observation, increases the reliability of the study. Furthermore, observations can also reconfirm if the information one has received, in for example interviews, agrees with what happens in reality. We have chosen this combination in our study, because we wanted to see if the teachers' intentions are followed.

There are many different ways to act as an observer. Gold (1958) (in Kullberg, 1996) describes four different master roles. There are two extreme roles, the complete participant, who is an active participant in the research group, and, on the opposite side the complete observer, who does not take part in any way, instead he or she only observes. Between those two roles there are two other participant-as-observer and observer-as-participant (Kullberg, 1996). Out of these four different roles we have taken on the role as observer-as-participant in our study. According to Kullberg (1996) this role implies that the researcher has informed the research group about what is going to be investigated and also who he or she is. The researcher does not participate in any activities.

When we observed lessons we chose to aim at important and differing events, that were interesting to our study. This is a strategy that Kullberg (1996) calls 'the critical incident strategy'. She used this strategy to find the right focus during her observations:

I carried through this strategy in a way that I was always on my toes during my observations, and moreover, I was always there with my notebook and my pencil. I waited for situations and occasions that were out of the ordinary. On such occasions, which occurred several times a day, I was always there, taking notes on what was said and what was done and the tasks, which were at hand. (Kullberg, 1996, p. 76, our translation)
3.4.2 Interviews

In the ethnographic research great importance is attached to the formal interviews. In the ethnographic formal interview the main purpose is to learn about the surrounding world through the informants. Spradley & McCurdy (in Kullberg, 1996) point out how the interviewer should proceed:

In order to reach a deeper understanding of people's system of understanding, the ethnographic interviewer learns from her/his informants and tries to discover how they organise their behaviour. The method suggests that the researcher asks her/his informants to become teachers and teach her/him ways of living, which they find meaningful. (Kullberg, 1996, p.89, our translation)

We chose to do the formal interviews at the end of our data-collection period. This procedure proved to be very advantageous, because by that time we had come to know our research group. The teachers had accepted our presence and the formal interviews could proceed in a natural and relaxed way. All our interviews started with some simple questions, in other words, everyone could easily answer them. Our purpose was to make the interview situation confident and safe. Furthermore, the teacher interviews contained seven open-ended questions. At first sight some of these questions might appear to be close-ended, but we always asked the informants to motivate their answers (appendix 1). Kullberg (1996) says that the use of open-ended questions leads to more valuable information, because the informants have to find arguments for their answers. This is probably not going to happen, if the interviewer uses close-ended questions, which either generate yes- and no-answers or have fixed answers.

To avoid bias one of us interviewed all the teachers and the other one took notes. According to Bell (1995) serious bias can appear if there are different interviewers in the study. Moreover, she points out that it is difficult to completely avoid bias, but if the interviewer is aware of the problem with bias and if he or she also tries to control him- or herself in the interview situation, this can minimise the effects of bias.

All formal interviews were tape-recorded and later on they were transcribed verbatim. The main reason for this was that we later could investigate the answers carefully. It was also very advantageous to record the interviews because the person who took notes could never get everything written down. By tape-recording the risk to miss valuable information decreases. Before we started our interviews we asked the informants if it was all right that we taped the interviews. We also informed them that we were the only ones who were going to listen to the recorded interviews and that they were absolutely
anonymous in our study. During the interviews we also asked the informants individual and spontaneous follow-up questions, depending on what they told us.

The informal interview (conversation) is the most common type of interviews in the ethnographic method. Conversations grew continually and spontaneously during the data collection process. Hammersley & Atkinson (in Kullberg 1996) suggest how the interviewer should act in an informal interview:

> The role of the interviewer in non-directive interviewing appears to be passive. This is misleading though. The interviewer must be an active listener, he or she must be listening to what is being said in order to assess how it relates to the research focus and how it may reflect the circumstances of the interview. (Kullberg, 1996, p.83)

Situations and different events continuously generate questions in the ethnographic informal interview (Kullberg, 1996). The informal interviews in our study started from the first day and continued to the last. The more we got to know the teachers and their school environment, the better our conversations turned out to be. All our recently acquired experiences and impressions contributed to constantly new questions.

### 3.5 Data analysis

Kullberg (1996) points out that each ethnographical study is unique. The constellation between researchers and informants differ, depending on what kind of process is studied. Therefore, there are no general rules concerning how to make an ethnographical analysis. This is something that Trost (1997) also brings up, that, in general, qualitative methods do not have certain rules for the analysing process, as the quantitative methods have. But he stresses the importance of following the ethical rules. The interviewer must always remember the importance of the informants' integrity and dignity.

When the data are collected the aim of the analysis is, according to Patel & Davidson (1994), to find patterns, themes and categories. These patterns, themes and categories later become the foundation in the written report, where the work is described. We have chosen to categorise each question separately, because our questions concern various areas and we could not find a common factor among these questions.

We started the analysis by reading the transcribed interviews several times. While we read, we searched for patterns, similarities and differences within each question. We did not strictly categorise each question, if the informants talked about something that suited another question better, we moved that part. We went through this procedure separately and after that we compared
our different categories. We continued our work by discussing and motivating our different categories and after hard debate we agreed on the final categories. To get clearness and structure in our interview material, we used pencils in various colours. We found this procedure very useful and it made our analysing easier. Our first categorisation resulted in a large number of categories. After this first general categorising, we tried to find similarities between the categories and thereby reduce their number. When we were satisfied with the different categories, we summarised the content of each category and continued to interpret the answers.

We started by summarising the general observations of the school environment. The analysis of the classroom observations began with both of us reading our notes from the different lessons, several times. We separately marked out, what we thought reflected the different classroom procedures, and we also looked for observations about the physical and psychological environment. Later we compared our markings and discussed what we thought was of importance. In our result section, we have chosen to present some of the classroom observations, which represent various situations. After each extract we make some comments.
Something that is emphasised in the ethnographic analysis is the conception triangulation, which means that the researcher in the analysing process should look upon the problem from different perspectives. This increases the reliability of the result, if the different data materials agree with each other (Kullberg, 1996). In our study we have used three different triangulations, to get a reliable result:

1) We have used different methods during our data collection, i.e., observations, interviews and document analyses.

2) Different sources and situations are the basis of our study. This is in order to get a representative and true picture of the situation.

3) Both of us took part in collecting the data, which gave us more than one view of the data.

Using the ethnographic approach, means that analysing is something that goes on from day one in the data collection until the report is finished (Kullberg, 1996). The advantage of making continuous analyses during the data collection is that it creates ideas about how to proceed in the study. The data collection can in this way be enriched (Patel & Davidson, 1994). During our study we made continuous analyses each day, when our impressions were fresh. After that, we compared and analysed our impressions and data together. As a researcher one strives to find “total saturation” (Starrin et al., 1991). According to Kullberg (1996) this means that all data should fit into the final analysis.

### 3.6 Setting and participants

The school we spent most of our time at was a public school. Both primary and secondary education was given at the school, grades 1 to 10.

During our stay at the school we visited, we interviewed 10 teachers, out of whom six were males and four were females. The teachers who participated were teaching in different grades, from grade 4 up to grade 10. They taught different subjects and had worked for various numbers of years, 2 to 31, as teachers. The length of the interviews varied between 14 and 46 minutes. This large diversity may be due to several things: their attitude to conversation, their knowledge of English, and whether the questions in our interview brought up something that was interesting to them.

The deputy headmaster selected the teachers who took part in our interviews. The deputy headmaster picked out teachers who were available and did not have lessons and also teachers who wanted to participate.

The interviews took place at the school in a small room, where we could be undisturbed. Kullberg (1996) points out that the researcher should look up the
informants in their natural environment. We consider this important, because their natural environment contributes to create a safe and peaceful atmosphere.

The classroom observations we performed took place at the school we visited, and we made 17 observations. At the school, we were able to choose what lessons we wanted to observe. We observed different grades, subjects and teachers to get a wider perspective. The most common lessons were English classes, because the other subjects were mostly taught in Nepali. When we observed in the classes we sat together with the pupils, and we tried to find a seat at the back of the classroom, this was to get a general view of the classroom situation.
In this chapter we will show the results of our general observations taken together with the informal interviews, the classroom observations and finally the formal interviews. The ethical aspects have been important, during our work. We believe that those who take part in a study, have a right to integrity, this is something that Trost (1997) emphasises. Therefore, we have tried to avoid mentioning information that makes it possible to identify specific persons in the study. We have also, tried to neutralise gender by saying "the teacher" in most cases. Below we start with our general observations and the informal interviews, to give the reader an overall picture of how a Nepalese school operates.

4.1 Observations

We have divided our observation section into two parts, general observations and classroom observation. In both parts we have integrated our informal interviews. When we observed various phenomena, we usually asked the teachers about it. Our main informant in the informal interviews was our facilitator, the deputy headmaster at the school we visited. We have chosen to use italics, when we present extracts from our log-books.

4.1.1 General observations and facts about the organisation of the school we visited

At present there are 1 400 students and 45 teachers out of whom 28 are females and 17 are males. In each class the average number of students are more than 60, in some classes there are even more, up to 80 students. The classes are not homogeneous according to age and there are large age differences in each class. One teacher told us about the age differences in the Nepalese schools:

The students' ages vary a lot in the classes. You can even find teenagers who study in very low grades. In grade 10 the average age is 18, this means that there are students who are 22 years old in the class too. The age of the students in grade 10 should be 15, but this is very rare in government schools nowadays. In boarding schools though, it is more common.
Many of the children at the school come from underprivileged families. Some of them are orphans, street children, and children at some kind of risk. The school has offered these children educational opportunities. Danida and other organisations pay these poor children's school fee, and they also help them with living expenses, like hostel and food. The government does not help poor children with the school fee, but the school offers the top five students in each grade free education for the next year. Danida has also helped the school with renovation and construction of the school building, and supported the school with facilities like computers, library and science laboratory.
The school is a large four-storey building, shaped as a horseshoe, and recently the whole school was painted. Each storey of the building has got external galleries, which are decorated with flowerpots. In the middle there is a quite small asphalt schoolyard and around the school a high wall with barbed wire on top and an iron school-gate in the middle. We were told that the school-gate was kept closed during schooldays, otherwise the students might run home and the barbed wire is also to prevent this. The wall and the barbed wire are also to prevent burglary. When entering the schoolyard, one sees the slogans of the school:

- The child's right - our responsibility
- Discipline is the first ladder of education
- Equal rights for disabled
- Disability is not inability

The school year consists of 10 months, two months they are on leave. The school week begins on Mondays and an end on Fridays but it has not always been like this. Previously, the school week consisted of six days, and Saturday was their day off. Every schoolday starts with an assembly at 9:30 a.m.

The school yard is alive with pupils and the air is full of voices and laughter. After a while we notice that some pupils start to place themselves in certain positions for the assembly. At 9:30, all of them stand in straight lines in strict attention. The headmaster enters one of the external galleries and instruct the pupils to perform something that looks like 'military steps' which all the pupils do with exact and symmetrical precision. After this procedure the children sing out loud, the national anthem.

When the assembly, which went on for 10 minutes, was finished, all lessons began at 9:45 a.m. The length of each lesson is 40 minutes, and there are nine periods every day. The school day finishes at 3:05 p.m. for pupils in grades 1 to 3 and at 4:25 p.m. for pupils in grades 4 to 10. The working day for the teachers lasts as long as the pupils have lessons, sometimes the teachers have conferences in the afternoon, where they talk about the pupils. Lunch break is half an hour per day, and it is the only break the pupils have. During lunch break some pupils ate the lunch packet they had brought with them, which mostly consisted of rice. Other students who lived nearby went home to eat. The school yard was full of activity during lunch break. Some pupils skipped, played with rubber balls and others just sat down and relaxed. All students wear school uniforms; they have two different combinations of blue and white uniforms. The girls wear skirts and blouses and the boys have trousers and shirts. The school decides which day the students should wear each combination. This is to give the pupils time in between to wash their uniforms, and to make sure that they keep the clothes nice and tidy.
In grades 1 to 3 there are two teachers in each class who teach all subjects, in grades 4 to 10 the pupils have different teachers. Subjects that the students study are: English, Nepali, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Home Science (sewing, cooking etc.), Physical Education (football, athletics, volleyball, badminton etc.), Creative Arts (e.g. drawing), Sanskrit and Computer Science. All subjects except English are taught in Nepali. The English education starts in grade 1 instead of grade 4, as is stated in the curriculum. At this school students are offered special education in grades 1 and 2 and in grades 9 and 10, they get it in English, Mathematics and Science. These lessons are before the assembly, between 8:30 and 9:30 a.m. Some optional subjects are offered in the higher grades, for example: Mathematics, Economics, and Industrial Education.

Three times a year the students do exams in all subjects. They do their exams two hours per day, for two weeks. The final exam decides if a pupil can start a higher grade or not. If they fail they will have to stay for one more year in the same grade. In grade 10 the students do their final exam, the SLC-exam.

4.1.2 Classroom observations

Physical and psychological environment

The size of the classrooms differs, some are quite small but there are also larger ones. In all classrooms there are steel desks (table and seats attached). The desks are made for three to four students and we thought they were rather uncomfortable. There is no electric lighting in the classrooms, the only light comes through the windows and trough the door, which is usually kept open. The windows do not have any glass but decorative gratings cover the windows, this is to prevent burglary. Since there were no glass in the windows, a lot of sounds from the outside road entered the classroom. If you sat at the back of the classroom, it was sometimes hard to hear what the teacher said. Every classroom had a blackboard and in some classrooms there were handmade, coloured posters on the wall. The wall was newly painted in a light green colour.

Discipline is something that is important at the school; the students show great respect for their teachers. When the teacher enters the classroom, the students sit quiet in their desks, but immediately rise and greet their teacher by saying for example: 'Good Morning Sir/ Miss!' Moreover, students always rise when they answer a question in the classroom, and they stand up until the teacher tells them to sit down. When the lesson is finished, the students wait in their desks and do not rise until the teacher leaves the classroom. In some classes we noticed that it was all right for boys to wear caps during the lesson, and the teacher did not even pay any attention to it. Students can also be kicked out of school if they have misbehaved. Before this is happening, the teacher talks with the student and if that does not help, the teacher talks to the student's parents.
Furthermore, the students can be punished in school, both corporal and psychological punishment exist. The only punishment we experienced was psychological, we never saw any corporal punishment. One reason for this may be our presence, the pupils may sharpen up or the teacher did not want to give corporal punishment in front of us. Another reason might be that the teachers simply do not use it at all or that they use it very seldom. When we talked with the teachers about punishment, a common answer we got was that they often threaten the younger pupils with thrash. Pupils who do not show enough interest or respect towards their teachers, can be exposed to various punishments like: being hit by a stick on their fingers, the teachers pull the student's ears, or the students have to stand up and be ashamed in front of the class.

The teacher asks a girl a question, she rises but doesn't know the answer, still the teacher pressures the girl hard to get an answer. She stares down at the bench and, we can see that she finds the whole situation unpleasant. The teacher finally gives the question to another pupil, who knows the answer, and gets highly praised, 'very good!'. The girl who couldn't answer the question, still stands up, now with tears in her eyes. After a while the teacher shows with a hand gesture that the girl is allowed to sit down. The lesson continues with the teacher giving questions to the pupils. Those who don't know the answer, get a long look filled with despise.

Comments:
The teacher seemed to be dissatisfied with the performance of the pupils, maybe she thought that they had not done their home work properly. We experienced the climate of the classroom to be very uncomfortable. We think that this way of acting does not encourage learning, further we do not believe it is good for the pupils' self esteem. Of course, this classroom climate does not represent a general view of the classroom climate at the school, although, generally, the students and the teachers do not have a close relation to each other. We believe that the pupils show great respect for the teachers, but many of the teachers did not respect the pupils. However, in most of the classrooms, we observed, the classroom climate was comfortable with a friendly atmosphere.

Working procedures

In this part we illustrate different kinds of working procedures, as we observed in the classes during our stay. We will give comments to each extract.

An English lesson at the end of primary education

The teacher tells the pupils not to look in the books, and exhorts them to be quiet. The teacher reads a paragraph aloud, and after that she asks the pupils some
questions, the pupils answer in chorus. The teacher reads a new paragraph, twice, and now she asks them individual questions. If a pupil can not answer, another one is asked. If the pupils give a correct answer, she praises them and gives them a friendly tap. When the teacher notices that the pupils find something difficult, she lets them practise it in chorus, many times. The teacher gives the pupils an individual assignment, and when the pupils are finished they stand up behind their desks. The teacher walks around checking and correcting those who have finished, but no new assignment is given. Many students stand up and wait for a long time, until the teacher comes. And when the teacher has approved their work, the pupils just have to sit and wait for the others to finish.

Comments:

This extract represents a rather common lesson. The teacher is the one who leads the activities, and the pupils are active when answering the teacher’s questions and when they work with their assignment. The method, to read in chorus, is very common at this school. We think that this method makes it possible for all pupils, in these large classes, to at least participate and say something in the lesson. Furthermore, we think it is good that the teacher encourages the pupils and gives them positive response. One negative thing, which we have noticed in many other lessons too, is that the teacher does not give the pupils a new assignment when they are finished. The waiting time which arises, must for the pupils be very boring, and can hardly encourage “the fast” students’ motivation to study. We asked some teachers about this way of working and some of them thought it was impossible to give the pupils different assignments. But if 75 to 90 per cent are finished, one teacher says that the pupils will be given more assignments. If only 10 to 15 per cent should be given a new assignment, the teacher believes that the rest of the class would be disturbed, and might feel stupid, and that is why the teachers have to wait for all the pupils to finish. The teachers also felt it would be harder to control them, because of the large number of students, and they wanted the students to be kept together, so they could begin the next assignment at the same time. One teacher thought it was boring for the pupils, who had to sit and wait, but had no solution to the problem. Some teachers do not let the pupils sit and wait, instead they give them new assignments, and this often occurred during the Mathematics lessons.

A science lesson at secondary level

The teacher stands in front of the class and talks about the topic of the lesson. Furthermore, the teacher writes important facts on the blackboard, and explains these. Some questions are now and then asked to the pupils, which they answer in chorus. The pupils just sit and listen, we can see only one or two pupils who take notes. The teacher continues by reading out loud, from the pupil’s textbook, occasionally he stops and summarises the content. After that, the teacher writes some concepts on the blackboard, in both Nepali and English.
Comments:
This lesson was mostly taught in Nepali, but the teacher also used English during the lesson, maybe so that we could understand what they were talking about. The level of pupil activity was low and we experienced most of the pupils to be quite bored. The lesson was arranged in a rather traditional way, where the teacher used the lecturing method.

An English lesson at secondary level

The lesson begins with the teacher checking if the students have done their homework (a text). The teacher walks around in the classroom and checks if they have understood the homework. Before the lesson continues, the pupils get some time to silently read their homework. It is very calm in the classroom and the pupils seem to respect the teacher a lot. The teacher asks the pupils if they have any questions, and one girl rises and asks about a difficult word. The teacher writes the word on the blackboard and then explains it, then another pupil is asked to use the word in a sentence. The other pupil manages to do that, and gets a lot of praise. All the pupils repeat the difficult word in chorus. The lesson continues with the pupils reading the text aloud, the pupils take of their own free will initiative to read. All through the lesson the teacher is very careful to encourage the girls and the boys in the same way. The teacher discusses together with the pupils the content of the text.

Comments:
The climate in the classroom was peaceful and friendly, and it seemed like the pupils enjoyed the lesson and liked their teacher. The pupils dared to ask the teacher about things they did not understand in the homework, and this we have not seen before. The teacher used a lot of discussing and had constantly dialogues during the lesson, and it seemed like the teacher thought that it was of great importance that the students understood the content of the text. The teacher respected the pupils and listened attentively to what they had to say. We think that this teacher considered it important with mutual respect. Something that occurred to us was that the teacher encouraged the boys and the girls in the same way. Most of the girls we observed were rather quiet and shy, but this teacher was successful in encouraging them and challenging them to speak, in a friendly way.

An English lesson at lower secondary level

There is about 50 pupils in the classroom, boys and girls are not mixed, instead the girls sit together on one side of the classroom, and the boys on the other. During this lesson the pupils practise to write a letter. The teacher invites the pupils to put themselves in the situation of a certain character. Further, the teacher decides the topic of the letter and to whom the pupils should write. The pupils should imagine what the character would write in the letter. In the book there is an example of a letter, the teacher tells the pupils not to copy it, but if they find the assignment difficult they can look in the book for ideas. When the pupils are finished they stand up, they do not raise their hands. The teacher
goes around in the classroom and reads the letter aloud, for the pupil who is finished, and gives feedback. After a while the teacher asks the pupils, if they are finished, and everyone says that they are, but we noticed that many were not finished.

**Comments:**
At secondary level, girls and boys often sat separately in the classroom, this was something we never saw in primary level. We asked one of the teachers, why they sat like this, and got the answer that the pupils decided themselves where to sit. We believe that this may be due to the way women and men are socialised in the society. According to Nepalese culture, relationships among girls and boys are not aloud to be shown in public. Physical contact between girls and boys is not permitted, but within each gender it is common. We often saw boys walking hand in hand in the city area, but never in the school. This is an expression of friendship and not a homosexual behaviour.

There was a good atmosphere in the classroom, and the teacher constantly encouraged the pupils. The method the teacher used was to provide the pupils with a situation, which they should put themselves into. The teacher worked hard to engage and motivate the pupils, while they were doing their assignment. Many pupils had difficulties to get started and it took some time for them to begin their writing. We believe that the pupils are not used to this kind of working procedure, where they have some freedom to think for themselves. A phenomenon we observed several times at different lessons and teachers was that the teacher asked the pupils if they were finished, and they always said they were. The teacher then continued the lesson, but we noticed that not all pupils were finished. We asked one teacher, if the students sometimes said that they were not finished, and the teacher said that they did. This was something we never observed, maybe because of our presence. It might also depend on the climate of the classroom. Pupils, who do not keep up with the rest of the class, do not dare to say that they are not finished. They do not want to show that they are worse than the others.

An English lesson at the beginning of Primary school

There are two teachers in the classroom, one of them is occupied with correcting the pupils’ books and the other one is teaching the pupils. Today’s lesson is about fruits and the teacher starts by showing pictures of different fruits and saying their names. The pupils repeat many times in chorus and this activity lasts for almost 10 minutes. After that the teacher shows the pupils artificial fruits and once more asks the pupils for their names, but also how they are spelled, the pupils answer in chorus. When they do this, the sound level in the classroom is very high:

T: What is this?
P: GRAPES! (in chorus)
T: Spell it!
P: G-R-A-P-E-S, GRAPES! (in chorus with rhythm)
After this repetition, the teacher walks around and asks the pupils individually about the names of the fruits and their spelling. The lesson continues by the teacher drawing the fruits on the blackboard and some appointed pupils write the names of the fruits. Under the blackboard there is a bench which the pupils climb up on to reach. One pupil corrects the spelling on the blackboard and when it is finished all the pupils applaud. The pupils now start to work individually. They draw the fruits in their books and write their names. Some of the pupils beside us work with the alphabet instead of the fruits.

Comments:

We experienced that the pupils really enjoyed the lesson. All the pupils were very active and engaged when they answered the teacher's questions. They were shouting at the top of their voices, and the sound level was ear-splitting. The teacher began by asking the pupils to repeat the names of the fruits several times, in chorus. We believe that in this way, the pupils get secure, before the teacher asks them individually. The teacher used various materials in the teaching, the concrete material, the artificial fruits, really caught the interest of the pupils. The lesson was carried out in a playful way and the teacher joked with the pupils. Furthermore, we found it interesting that the pupils were the ones who corrected the answers on the blackboard. This shows that the teacher gives the pupils some responsibility and that the teacher is not the only one who knows the right answer. It also points out that it is all right to learn from another pupil.

4.2 Results of the formal interviews

In the answers to the main questions in our interview guide, we found different categories, which represented the opinions of all the informants. The different categories are illustrated with quotations, selected from the interviews (Patel & Davidson, 1994). We have made minor touch ups of some quotations (like e.g. repetitions), without changing or twisting the meaning and content. We did this, to make it easier to read, and as Trost (1997) points out, the spoken language can, for the informants, be experienced as insulting. After each quotation, there is an identification code, which represents the teachers (e.g. T1). Finally, we make comments to each category. The comments consist of a short summary of all the answers we got to each question, and in most cases we have reflected upon and interpreted the answers.

A) Describe what you think is the most important task for you as a teacher?

This question created many different thoughts about their most important task as teachers. We found four different categories, and most of them show a variety of aspects of the teacher's role.
A:1 The teacher’s role in the classroom

T: First, ehh, teachers should be sensitive, teachers should be sensitive, dedicated, polite. These are the most important things! (T 7)

T: I have to share my, I guess, my knowledge to the students on their level. And make them encourage to learn science, and I always try to make them curious in science activities. (T 8)

T: Yes, it is a very interesting question! The main task of the teacher is to teach well! Means, he should be a guide, he should be a facilitator, right! He should work even as a friend to the students. There should be a close relationship between the teacher and the students! But actually what you find in Nepal, it is not! The students are not motivated from teaching to study and the teachers are not also motivated to teach! (T 9)

T: Aah, regularity, punctuality as most important, for the teacher, If we are not regular, that maybe they copy us, the students. That's why the students should be, not only students but teachers also, be punctual and regular and good knowledge and command. (T 6)

Comments:
The first things most of the teachers in this category mention are that teachers must work hard and teach the students well. Moreover, many of the teachers brought up how they thought teachers should behave in the classroom. Important is that the teacher should serve as a model to the pupils. Some of them also described which role the teachers should hold in relation to the pupils. Maybe the different answers reflect a wish and an ambition as to how the teacher and the teaching should be performed and not how it actually is. This is something that (T 9) mentions when he talks about the current situation in Nepal.

A:2 Subject knowledge

T: One is that we should have a deep knowledge in our subjects.
I: Hm.
T: We have to consult so many reference books, so we can give more information, more knowledge to the students.
I: OK. (T 10)

T: ... good knowledge in their subject. Teachers should have good knowledge in English. If I teach in Nepali I should have a good knowledge in Nepali. In every subject, in their subject, they should be the command! (T 6)

Comments:
To have knowledge in one's subject is for some teachers the main thing, but also to be prepared and to set goals for what pupils should learn. We believe
that those teachers emphasise what the pupils should learn instead of concentrating on how they learn (methodology). The role of the teacher is to be a transmitter of knowledge.

A:3 Educate the people

T: Most important thing ... I think in our country most people are not educated.
I: Mm.
T: That’s why they don’t know whether the students, their children, want to read or not. They don’t know, they don’t care about that.
I: OK ... so what is your most important task, is it to educate the children?
T: To educate the children, all families must educate their children because, without education they cannot do anything. They don’t know how to improve their lives.
I: No.
T: They don’t know, now, to do things. They can’t judge what is right without education. The most part of life is education. (T 5)

Comments:
The teachers in this category find the most important task to be to influence parents and children, about the importance of education. This aspect describes the role of the teacher in a more national perspective - to educate the people. The goal is to increase Nepal’s education level and in this way improve the life of the people and thereby develop the country. The most important thing is that all people get education. This is a very wide perspective, which does not describe ‘details’ such as methodology.

A:4 To be educated

T: That is, it is teacher training...
I: Mm...
T: It is the most important thing.
I: It is the most ...
T: Eh, ... if the training is not given during teaching, the teaching will not ...
I: You will not develop your teaching?
I: Yes. (T 2)

T: Teachers must be educated. (T 4)

Comments:
Some teachers believe that the most important thing for them as teachers is to be educated. One reason for this answer might be that they are educated and feel that many teachers are not educated and therefore have a lack of knowledge in teaching. Since the number of educated teachers is low in Nepal, and this is seen as a large problem, it is not surprising that they mention this as very important. Furthermore, if the teachers are not educated it is very hard to give quality education to the pupils. The reason why some teachers gave us
this answer could also be that they have skipped the word "task" in the question. Instead they have answered the question; describe what you think is most important for you as a teacher? The teachers may also have been influenced by the previous question, where they told us about what kind of education they had.
B) Do you feel that you have the possibility to teach like you want to do?

We think this question is of major importance, because it shows how the teachers look upon their teaching. Furthermore, it illuminates the obstacles many of the teachers’ experience. We found five various categories, which illustrate the answers to this question. The first category shows that some teachers feel that they can teach as they want to do, and the other four categories show different obstacles.

B:1 Can teach the subject they like

T: Yes
I: You think so, in what way?
T: You see, I like to teach English, and it's possible to teach English.
I: It's possible, yes!
T: If not possible I can't come here. (T 6)

T: Yes.
I: You think so?
T: I want to teach in my interesting subject you know. English is my interesting subject, I always like to teach.
I: You like it! And you think you can use the teaching methods, that you want to use?
T: In the whole, I can teach anything in the world except Mathematics! (T 7)

Comments:
Many teachers feel that they can teach, as they want to do, because they can teach in the subject which they have knowledge in and which they like. Maybe not all teachers are allowed to do this. The teachers in this category might not have reflected on this type of questions before, or they are just grateful to have a job and are satisfied with the current situation.

B:2 Crowded classes

T: No, no because it's too crowded classes. Because of the crowded classes we cannot teach.
I: How do you feel about it? That you can't teach as you want to do?
T: It is not possible. If the classes were small, then it would be possible, the lessons are possible to do. (T 2)

Comments:
The crowded classes were a problem that many of the teachers brought up and they considered it to be the largest obstacle for their way of teaching. Furthermore, the small and narrow classrooms complicated the situation for them. As we understood, the teachers felt insufficient to be alone with all the pupils, without any assistance. They did not have time to help all of them and
felt out of control. We asked the teachers if they would teach in the same way if the circumstances were different, like if the classes were smaller. Some of the teachers told us that they would use other methods, if that was the case, for example, discussions. We interpret these answers as indicating that the teachers do not teach the way they actually want to, because they would change their teaching methods if conditions were different.

**B:3 Family background**

T: Here in this school the students are from different family background.
I: Mm.
T: The level is not the same.
I: No, you mean like they are from, eeh, some parents, families are educated?
T: Educated and others are not.
I: Aaa.
T: So, that is one of the problems for us. And we cannot teach them well in a class because of their level. That is the main problem to me to teach English.
I: OK.
T: We have no homely environment to speak English, listen even or talk it.
I: Aaa.
T: In their houses, so we cannot teach them in a class, all full. We cannot teach them whether they cannot understand and they cannot read well, very difficult. ... I always tell them to speak English in the classes. But they are unable to speak. They do not want to speak English. When I tell them to speak English they are silent.
I: OK, it is hard to make them speak.
T: Yes, they can write but cannot speak. They can write, but cannot speak. (T 1)

**Comments:**

The pupils' different family background hinders the teachers' way of teaching. Some students are from educated families and some of them are not. Furthermore, the teachers feel that the students in general do not have any basic knowledge. We believe that the various levels of attainment among the students, together with the large classes, make it hard for the teachers to individualise their teaching. The teacher must adapt to the whole group, which results in mainstream teaching.

**B:4 Bad salary and no facilities**

T: Not at all!
I: Why? Why not?
T: We have not so many facilities and we have not so good salary. Our salary is very minimum, and we cannot concentrate on the school only.
I: Mmm.
T: We have to do other tasks also, outside this school.
I: You have to do other jobs?
T: Yes!
I: Because the salary is so low?
T: Minimum.
I: Aa, so what do you do?
T: We should ... they do some class, or part time jobs ... we cannot concentrate our whole time in teaching. And after the school time we should do other jobs too. (T 3)

Comments:
Lack of facilities and low salary is reasons for teachers not teaching the way they would like to. Firstly, we believe that without adequate schoolbooks, material and equipment, it is difficult to teach as you want to do and the possibility to vary your teaching decreases. Secondly, we think higher salary would motivate the teachers and they would not need to work extra. More time would then likely be spent on planning their lessons and the quality of education would probably be improved.

B: 5 Risk of loosing the job

T: NO!!!
I: No! Why?
T: It's not possible, you see, actually what happens truly speaking, right, I speak truly everywhere! Nothing is secret, I don't like to hide it!... (reads the question once more) Yes, it should be here! I want to have that! But it is impossible to get!
I: OK, and why?
T: I'm speaking about government school right! See what happens in the government school, suppose I like to teach in a very nice and interesting way. I want to work hard, right! as a teacher. I want to make my students work hard, this way, then the whole colleague of the teachers in the government school are not like that. Then I will be the point of target, then I will be kicked out, from the job!
I: They don't want motivated teachers?
T: No, so I don't like it!
I: Why will they be upset if you are a good teacher?
T: Yes, actually, many teachers are not qualified, they don't know the meaning of teaching, they don't know what a teacher is. And for this reason they do this! (T 9)

Comments:
Some of the answers we got show that there is an ambition among teachers to teach in an interesting way, but the obstacle here is that they are afraid of loosing their job. This circumstance might appear because the other teachers, who are uneducated, see the educated teachers as a threat and therefore become afraid of being driven out of competition. The majority of teachers in Nepal are uneducated, and together they grow strong. This group makes it difficult for minority groups with new ideas about teaching development to proceed.

C) What kind of working procedures do you use in your classroom?
In the answers to this question, we found a various amount of teaching methods, which reflects the approach the teachers have towards teaching. We have divided the different responses in three categories.

**C:1 Different methods:**

T: First of all I use the listening.
I: Listening.
T: Listening, and then speaking and reading and writing. (T 1)

T: Question-answer method, I use
I: You use.
T: I use it mostly
I: Mostly, OK, do you use any other methods?
T: Other methods, situational method also, Do you know the situational method?
I: No
T: The school provide the situation, and we draw some words and some situation. It's very active. It's very good situation, if I provide some situation, they have to think about the situation, they have to say something in English! Everything in the English language.
I: OK, hmm
T: Question - answer method, substitution method, I drill, we drill ... In lower classes, we have to drill them different. Substitutional drill and everything. Without drilling it's not possible in English. Because English is the second language, we are not native speakers.

T: I use discussion, questioning and sometimes brainstorming. And sometimes I organise debate, quiz-contests, and sometimes I demonstrate them and sometimes I take them into the lab. and show them some pictures. (T 8)

**Comments:**
The teachers in this category bring up various teaching methods. One teacher is aware of many methods but does not apply them because of the crowded classes. Furthermore, the teachers point out that they use some methods, which they think are poor, but because of the classroom situation they have to use these. Some of the methods that are brought up are teacher-centred, that means, methods ruled by the teacher, for example, question-answer method. Other teachers describe more learner-centred methods, where students are active and take part in their learning process, for example, brainstorming.

**C:2 Active students:**

T: We should do different teaching methods, in mathematics particularly.
I: Mm.
T: Problemsolving methods.
I: Mm.
T: Teaching guided methods and other student oriented methods.
I2: In what way are the methods student oriented?
T: The student oriented method is teachers should guide them and they should be more active, than the teachers.
I2: OK.
T: The teachers should make the students very active and teachers only should guide the students and teachers should not be more active than the students. (T 3)

Comments:
In this category the teachers attach great importance to the fact that the pupils must be active in the learning process. The pupils must think and experiment by themselves when they solve problems and not just copy the teacher, otherwise they do not learn. These teachers also prefer to use laboratory material in order to achieve activity in the classroom but when that is not possible they use the blackboard as an instrument.

C:3 The book decides

T: It depends upon the students I teach, right! Students and the type of book the students are using. 10 years ago, means in my first teaching right. I have to teach the students following some lecture method, following some situational method, it depends upon topic I teach also, right! But nowadays the curriculum and the textbooks have been revised. And for this revised textbooks we have to follow another method. That is to say exactly, group work, pair work, right! And they said the book said discovery, aa, this is all we have to follow, for this new course. There is a new curriculum, and not all teachers can teach!
I: No, they don't have the education?
T: No, no, no
I: OK!
T: They can't.
I2: Are the teachers doing this group work and discussions, and so and...
T: Yes, I'm teaching only in one class for this new curriculum, new textbook. Not for the class ten students because they are reading their old textbooks. And that old textbook does not demand this kind of method. That demands only the lecture method. When the teacher comes and writes and he speaks, and he speaks, and he speaks, the students listen, they are the passive listeners. Only they make certain notes, right! And then I ask them questions and they answer me, if they can't then I will help them. This is how question-answer method works. It is for the examination only, not for anything else! Means, the goal means whatever we do is not to make them able, to make them pass the exam. That's the goal! Every teacher follow this! (T 9)

Comments:
These teachers strictly follow the curriculum authorised by the government. They do not only follow the specified content but also the methods, which are advocated by the curriculum. The reason why these teachers use this approach is only to make the pupils pass the SLC-examination, which pupils are to take in grade 10. The teaching methods are different depending on what grade the
teachers are teaching. This is because in some grades they use the old curriculum and in others they use the new curriculum.

C:4 Group work

During our interviews we also asked the teachers about their opinions group work. We have chosen to briefly sum up the teachers' answers about this, because it was something they did not mention spontaneously. As we understood, all of the teachers knew about this method but the main obstacle to use it was, as they already have mentioned in question number 2, the crowded classes. Since they normally have over 60 pupils in each class, they would have to divide the pupils into about 15 groups. Further obstacles were the small and narrow classrooms and that they could not move the desks. One teacher believes that the group method is not effective enough, because the pupils do not pay their full attention to the schoolwork, instead they talk about other things like films, girl- or boyfriends and their spare time.

Some teachers told us that they used the method, i.e., pupils working in groups, but only when we asked them about it. One reason that they mentioned for using group work is that there is a lack of equipment in the school, for example computers. Another is that the curriculum in some grades advocates groupwork. Furthermore, one teacher points out that this method is advantageous since pupils find it easier because they dare to speak in front of their classmates.

D) When you plan your lessons, do you have total freedom to decide the content of the lessons?

In this question, we were interested to see if the teachers experience that they have freedom when they plan their lessons. We also thought it was essential to find out what factors govern the content in their lessons. Our final analysis resulted in three categories.

D:1 Curriculum and textbooks decide:

T: No.
I: No?, why not?
T: Because we have provided certain content and curriculum by government.
I: Mm.
T: And we cannot go outside that content.
I: No.
T: Because the examination, the SLC-examination, all the questions are given from them, and we should concentrate, we cannot go out from that content.
I: Because then the children will fail the SLC-exam?
T: Yes.
I: OK. What do you think about that?
T: Mm, that is true in the sense that the whole country can give the same education to the children.
I: Mm.
T: ... and we should teach the textbooks only. We cannot teach the other books, and we must teach the textbooks only. (T 3)

T: Then whenever we are teaching, we do not just teach for the students as I already told you. See what happens, we are bounded by the textbook, only. We cannot teach the students on our own. And if we do this, means there are no more teachers to do this also. The teachers are not able, means I want to make the curriculum from ourselves only. There is one curriculum from the national level, the government makes this. Then we teachers should develop another curriculum fit for our students. And the textbooks should be designed in that way also, but this is impossible in Nepal. Nowadays what we are doing, we don't teach anything more except this described in the book. Whatever is described in the book ... we teach only that! That is also too much for those students. Means, they cannot grasp all from the textbook.
I: So, you have almost no freedom to chose content?
T: No! (T 9)

Comments:
This category represents the majority of teachers and they do not feel that they have any freedom to decide as it concerns the content. The content is decided by the government in the form of curriculum and textbooks. Some of the teachers think it is good that the government decides, because then all pupils are offered the same education all over the nation. Others think it is bad, instead they want to adjust the content to the pupils.

D : Lesson plan:

T: Yes.
I: You can do that?
T: Everyday I make lesson plan.
I: Yes, but do you feel that you have the freedom to choose what you want to teach about or is it ...
T: It is freedom.
I: So the government doesn’t decide what you should teach?
T: Freedom means there is a topic, yes? And I will do the topic about the topic lesson plan.
I: OK, so the government choose the topic?
T: Topic, yes.
I: But you choose how to teach it?
T: How to teach it, yes. (T 4)

Comments:
The teachers think they have freedom since they do their own lesson plans. When they do their lesson plans they experience that they decide the content by themselves. After further discussions, we understood that in fact the government decides the content (topic). But the teachers could to some extent choose which methods they wanted to use and in which order they wanted to do the different parts in their lesson. One reason why they mention lesson plans might be that last year there was a man who visited the school, and who recommended the teachers to make lesson plans.

D:3 Students' limitation:

T: No there is no freedom to decide the content because of the limitation, how we can teach the students. If we give them more knowledge to this, they cannot grasp, so we have to make some certain limitations what we should give knowledge to the students. So, sometimes it is free but sometimes, ... it is difficult to describe the ..., give more knowledge to the students.
I: So you adjust the lesson plan to the students?
T: Yes, because some students are good and they can grasp immediately what we say, but some students are not so good, they are dull. Then we have to give basic knowledge, then we have to compromise for them. (T 10)

Comments:
In this category the students are those who hinder the teacher to use the content which he or she wants to use. The students' different level of knowledge is the main problem here and that why the teacher gives all pupils basic knowledge.

E) Do children have any influence on their schoolwork?

We believe that this question reflects the teachers' point of view when it comes to pupils' participation in decision-making in the classroom. Among the answers we got, we found two categories. Most of the teachers thought the children did not have any influence, and some of them thought they had.

E:1 No influence:

T: Whatever we say to do they do.
I: So, they don't decide much?
T: They don't decide.
I: Why not, why can't the children decide anything?
T: Especially in English they cannot eeh, do whatever they like.
I: Hm.
T: They cannot speak English, that may be the cause.
I: So that's why the teacher has to decide, because they can't any English, OK.
T: They can't. (T 1)
T: No.
I: Why not?
T: Our students are from very poor backgrounds.
I: Hm.
T: ... and they are not so serious about their study, because their family background is poor.
I: OK, so they don’t take their study seriously?
T: No. (T 3)

Comments:
There are many different causes why pupils do not have any influence on their schoolwork. One reason is that the pupils do not know anything about the subject and therefore cannot take part in deciding. Maybe, the teachers are not aware that pupils actually can influence, for example, ways of working. Another reason is that some of the pupils are from poor family backgrounds. The teachers believe that the pupils are not motivated and competent enough to take part and decide things. A third reason why pupils do not have influence is that the teachers think that pupils are not used to taking part in decision-making. The teacher is the one who decides everything, and the pupils just go along. One teacher says that to let the pupils have influence would be impossible and the pupils would be confused.

E:2 Yes, they have influence

I: Do you have any examples when the children decide?
T: Aa, if they want to study, yes? And if they want to play sometimes, I will play things and sometimes I will teach them, yes? Study things.
I: OK.
T: Teach them and which they want first, will they play or they will reading. (T 4)

T: Yes, but not only during the lesson, but they write about their daily life. In English we have essay and comprehension, and sometimes other activities. And they can do also not only in the related in this school, the regulation are in the textbook. Other can also, they can do other things also.
I: They can decide what they want to write about in essays or?
T: No, I will, we will give 2 or 3 choice.
I: Oh, and they can decide.
T: Decide, which one they like. Every time they have a choice. (T 6)

Comments:
The examples the teachers gave us in this category were of two kinds, but we think both of them reflect a rather low degree of influence. The first example is that the pupils have the possibility to choose in which order they want to do different parts in a lesson, for example, to play games or read first. In the second example the pupils can choose among a fixed selection decided by the teacher. To some extent pupils can decide minor things in school, but they are never allowed to decide the content or which method they want to use.
F) Do you think that children should have more or less influence over their schoolwork?

Whether the pupils could not influence their schoolwork, we were interested to see if the teachers thought that the children should have more or less influence in decision-making. We discovered two categories, most of the teachers want to give pupils more influence and some want it to be less.

F:1 More influence

T: Yes, that should be. If it is so, they will be motivated to their work, right! They would like to do, but here what happens, we just pursue to learn, all the students, learn, learn, learn. We pursue them, right! Means, if we provide them some chances to chose what to study, today, right! Or what to do, it depends … but not entirely, OK? Partly only, sometimes only. If we provide them such opportunities perhaps teaching and learning would be more effective, and they would think that it would be better and the teacher is our friend, right! And they would, their concept would be this.
I: OK! (T 9)

Comments:
Some teachers were of the opinion that pupils should have more influence. They thought pupils would learn easier and be more motivated towards learning if they could choose to study, to some extent, what they are interested in. Furthermore, they believed that the teaching and learning situation would be more effective in this way. One teacher mentions that nowadays the teachers force the pupils to learn but the teacher thinks it is not the right way to work.

F:2 Less influence

T: The school work, they should have less influence.
I: You think they should have less?
T: Yes.
I: OK, why do you think that?
T: In government schools most of the children are not interested in learning. Only they come to this school, some of them for their parents.
I: Aa.
T: They think they have to. (T 2)

Comments:
These teachers consider the pupils not to be interested and motivated to learn and that is why they should not have more influence. The teachers believe that the pupils do not take their education seriously enough and therefore it would not work. One teacher mentions that if the pupils could decide, then they would only play during the lessons and no learning would take place.
G) What do you think of the Nepalese school system of today?

This question really engaged the teachers and they had a great deal of information to share with us. The teachers give a rather negative picture of the Nepalese school system and the teachers give lots of suggestions how to change the system, and thereby improve it. The categories below are based on their statements about improvements rather than their actual answers to the questions.

G:1 Textbooks and Curriculum

T: One more thing is very much interesting here, you see if we talk of the textbook writers nowadays. The worst thing I find is, I don't like to tell the name here, right! The government has assigned some of the say, source, they call their source and they perhaps told them to write a book. They are the source of all subjects. If you, you see the books, you will find the name of the same person in English, same person in History, same person in Social studies, same person in Mathematics. How a man can be well in writing in all subjects, is this possible? The government is a part of everything, and so this facility affects the educational system of Nepal. But actually speaking, nowadays the revised textbook is not that capable in Nepal.
I: OK, it's not working in reality?
T: No, no. (T 9)
T: Our government changed this system, they change the curriculum also, day to day in one ticket, they change the courses also, that's good.
I: It's good?
T: Yes, for the students, when they learn the old thing everyday, they can't change their lives.
I: So they have changed the school books?
T: Yes, yes. They change them every 10 years.
I: Hm, every 10 years, and what do you think about that the government change the curriculum all the time is it good also or?
T: They have to change it every decade because the old mentality is not good they have to change.
I: Hm. (T 5)

T: Nowadays, you see, the new textbooks, the new curriculum that has been designed is to some extent very much better. And if proper training is provided to the teachers, and this should be, this can easily be carried out in many of the schools. And we can make the students also able. We can produce some efficient manpower, also. (T 9)

Comments:

The teachers claim that there are two main problems with the textbooks used in school. To begin with, the schools do not get the textbooks in time and this problem is even more common in the remote areas. This is a large problem for the teachers because, according to the curriculum, they must base their
teaching on the content of the textbooks. One teacher says that school has been running for three months and still they do not have the new textbooks. Instead they have to use the old ones, which do not agree with the content of the new curriculum. The second problem is that the government has sole right to provide the schools with textbooks. Furthermore, it has only employed one person, who writes the textbooks in many different subjects. We think this may reduce the quality of the textbooks. Our interpretation is that the government in this way wants to keep the control over content and what the students should learn, through the schoolbooks. It must also be a good source of income for the government that should benefit the development of government schools. Yet, many of the teachers are satisfied with the new curriculum. They think it is positive that the government continually changes the curriculum, because the old mentality was not good.

G:2 Teaching profession

I: Is there any other things you would like to change?
T: In our country the society doesn’t take the teaching profession as a good profession.
I: Oh, it is low status.
T: Low status and I think that the views must be changed in the society. And the teachers should be provided more facilities, otherwise it can't be attractive and because the more qualified men doesn’t want to come to education.
I: OK!
T: They want to do other services because the teaching profession is not attractive. And without being attractive, the system can't be changed.
I: No.
T: To change the education system, more qualified men should come to this. But in Nepal it is not so. (T 3)

T: Nepalese school system, not so good! There are so much to change, almost, teachers cannot get personal satisfaction from administration side, from management, they can't get such a salary that can fulfil their personal difficulties their household work. So, many teachers have to think for other jobs, part time jobs also. If they think that salary, that is fulfilled for me, that is sufficient for me, adequate for me. Then he also thinks, in his home also, how can I teach the students, how can I pro ward the students? They are regularly!
I: OK, so teachers must have another job so they can afford to have a family? It's not enough...
T: They have to be anxious about to earn money , how to fulfil my family? That are about money, but in this job, the teacher should always be worried about the students. He has too many, he has to plan, but it's not happening.(T 8)

T: Actually speaking in Nepal, teaching is the most hateful job, into sum up. Means, there are those who are not fit everywhere in their teaching!
I: So, it’s low status?
T: Yes. (T 9)
Comments:
The teacher profession in Nepal is associated with poor salary and low status. Many teachers must have extra jobs, beside their work as teachers, otherwise it is very hard for them to support their families. Examples of extra jobs can be to give private tuition or to run a travel agency. While many teachers have to devote themselves to extra work, they cannot spend enough time to plan and develop their teaching, as they would like to do. A further problem is that the educated people in the society do not want to work as teachers. This results in there being many uneducated people working as teachers, which decreases the quality and status of education.

G:3 Enhancement of local culture

T: Because our curriculum is not based in our country and our curriculum is designed and it is more influenced by the Western society.
I: It is influenced by the Western?
T: Our curriculum is designed by the American experts, British experts and not by Nepalese experts.
I: Aa, OK.
T: And it changes, because one time, one dollar country gives donation a curriculum design according to them, and after that another country gives donation and curriculum again changes ... and the curriculum design are not consorting with teachers, because the curriculum is implemented by teachers, and they are not facts in curriculum.
I: Hm.
T: And the curriculum, in the permission of, particular also the teachers should be participant. But in Nepal teachers are not participant in curriculum.
I: OK, so that you would change.
T: I mean if the curriculum is not according to the students it should be changed. It should be changed according to the society also.
I: OK.
T: But it should be changed when it is necessary to change it. But it should not be changed by other countries.(T 3)

T: And one more thing is also that the government seeks some of the experts from foreign countries, right! And these experts have seen the international level of the students only, right! They don't know the base level, the root level of our Nepalese society. And they don't know what type of students we have here, right! And what is the social background of the children. They don't know all these things. And they prescribe the textbook, they write the textbook or they design the curriculum in their own way. They don't know, they don't have these background. Just totally different textbook, different curriculum is found here in Nepal. This is very much bad. And I think that should be done by the teachers, by the local people, right! This should be done, but it is not so here in Nepal. This is a nationality only, but if you see such papers, in such papers, what you will read:
- Oh, we have consulted some teachers from different schools and so on and we did this and we have different seminars and so on. And prepared and come to this conclusions. So, we designed these books in this standards. They write such things in
paper and they show it to donating agency and bring the dollars and put in the pocket, that is the reality!

I: Another teacher said the same thing that the government doesn't ask the teachers...
T. No, never, never the government ask! (T 9)

Comments:
Several teachers bring up the fact that foreign experts come to Nepal and design their curriculum. The experts do not design the curriculum according to the Nepalese society, instead it is based on curricula of the foreign countries. Moreover, the curriculum repeatedly changes according to the country, which donates money to the education sector. The teachers feel that they never get time to learn the curriculum, before it is changed again. Furthermore, it is common that the government claims that they have used local knowledge, in different school developing projects. But it is not correct, that is just a way to make donors give them money. The teachers feel frustrated and completely disregarded by the government and the donating countries. Teachers think it is strange that they are not a part in this process, and that they have no influence at all.

G:4 Education for all
G:4a Boarding/Government schools

T: And the students who study in private schools they are intelligent. But the students who study in government schools they are not like that. That means we can't compare. The system should be the same.
I: It should be the same system.
T: Only government schools but they have to change.
I: So, all children should go in government schools.
T: All children should get the same education.
I: Yes, OK, is there anything else you would like to change?
T: If I was director?
I: Yes.
T: The system that is totally change, there should be only government schools and teachers, should be provided more facilities. (T 2)

T: I don't like the system that is followed here. Actually the first thing I don't like is the two types of schools, boarding and private schools. I like to have only government schools! Nowadays, in boarding schools the fees are very high. But the people in Nepal are all poor, then how can they afford! It's very difficult, right! I was teaching in a private school before.
I: So what do you think about this school then?
T: There is a great variation, great difference, big difference.
I: It is, what kind of differences?
T: So many differences, see, eeh, in administrative level or teaching level or the students performance, what ever is so ...
I: OK.
T: Everything, everything is different. The system that is there in the private schools is entirely different, with the system in the government school.
I: Ahh, which one is the best? Do you think?
T: Actually, the best should be the government schools, right?
I: Ahh.
T: It should be.
I: It should be.
T: But it is not here. Nowadays we find private schools are very much better than the government schools. (T 9)

G:4b Free education?

T: If I were the Education Minister, (laughing). According to our system education is free. But only in paper, not in the practical, and this is also the government school, we take some money from the students, this is not good. We got money who can take too, but he government only gives the salary of the teachers. The teachers are sufficient, we have to get other teachers also, that's what we need. We have to give the salary to them, and how? Without the government says: "free", what to them is free education, the slogan is 'free education', it's a slogan, but it not good!
I: It's not working in reality?
T: Not in reality. Schoolbooks, should be free, dress should be free also they have to build the building. Otherwise it's not possible. In boarding schools, they took money in school fee 3 600 Rupies ($45) in a month, my school only 168 Rupies ($2). There is not enough money left to take, to develop this school. (T 6)

G:4c Rural areas

I: OK, is there anything else you would like to change?
T: I think the boys and the girls should get the opportunity to read in a school, but I am from a limited area, in my village, least of the girls goes to school.
I: Aa, the boys and the girls should have the same rights?
T: Most of the girls don't go to school.
I: Mm.
T: Here in Kathmandu in big city, they do.
I: They do, but not ...
T: They have the opportunity to go to school.
I: But not in the countryside?
T: No, in the countryside the girls are not allowed to go to school, so ...
I: Aa, because of their parents?
T: Because of their parents, because of their social customs, because of their poverty. So many things are different. (T 1)

Comments:
Most of the teachers think that it is wrong that there are two types of schools, government and boarding schools. They only want to have government schools, but these have to change for the better. One of the teachers points out that there should be a pre-primary level in government schools like these generally is in boarding schools. The children should be given a certain
environment, which would encourage them to learn. What is more, the teachers consider the boarding schools of today to be much better than the government schools. Then they aim at for example, their organisation, the students' higher performance, smaller size of the classes and higher teacher salaries. We believe that the teachers want all pupils to have the same right to get quality education. Furthermore, we think that the two types of school system that exist, increase the gap between rich and poor in the society.

Moreover, the teachers want the school to be free of charge, which the government claims that it is, but in reality it is not. The pupils have to pay school fees, books, and school uniforms. The children's right to attend school and the standard of education, differ a lot between the city area and the rural area. First of all, girls do not have the same opportunities as the boys to get education, because of social customs and poverty. Secondly, schools in the rural area have poor facilities and the teachers are often responsible for lots of pupils. One teacher told us that in some village schools, one single teacher was responsible for five classes.

G:5 Politics

T: Actually speaking, there is nothing that satisfies me.
I: OK! What would you like to change?
T: There should be a complete change, that is an Educational Revolution. And so I think it will take more than 50 years for this revolution, unless there is no quality education, no efficient manpower, nothing else. This should be here, maybe if politics would not interfere education. If it is so, than it should be better. And one more thing, more and more money should be spent of the government's money, should be spent on education, means here many of the politicians are totally ignorant. They don't even know to write their name also. Then, what do you call this bribery system, say putting dollars in the pocket. This should be stopped!
I: Corruption?
T: Yes, corruption should be stopped here, then the school, education would be better, otherwise no! But if we talk of our school, right! Actually here is no politics, no politics interferes in this school. I think very, very rare schools are found where politics does not interferes, only few schools! But many schools nearly 90 per cent perhaps 99 per cent of the schools are such schools. That's difficult. Quality education can never be found here in Nepal, that is very sad! (T 9)

Comments:

Many of the teachers are very upset over the fact that politics interferes with the Nepalese school system of today. They believe that this is a major obstacle for the development of the schools. As we understood, this problem is more common in the rural areas in Nepal. In the schools two different camps have arisen, those who are involved in politics and those who are not. We believe that those teachers who are involved only do what the politicians tell them to do, and the opinions of those who are not involved in politics, will not be
heard. Moreover, this can give a false picture of the current school situation in Nepal, because the negative opinions will not be delivered.

**G:6 Future**

T: I think the students should be given useful education, aah, which will be useful in their, for their lives.
I: Mm.
T: But there is the problem of unemployment for the students who has passed the examination. Many students pass examinations but they cannot get a job.
I: OK.
T: We have to provide such kind of education for them. (T 1)

T: Yes, we have to study, first of all, what is the situation of the education system. Curriculum, education system, aah, there is a gap between the school level and the higher education level now. Then we have to minimise that gap, because if they finish the SLC-exam then they take higher education also and some people cannot get the admission, and there are a lot of ‘10 +2’ which is private college, which is very expensive. But we cannot afford that education.
I: So most people will finish their SLC-exam but wont go any further?
T: Yes, because of their economic conditions, and the education is more costly. (T 10)

**Comments:**

The teachers in this category claim that the Nepalese school system of today provides the pupils with poor opportunities to continue studying or working, after finishing general school. They told us that the future for many of the pupils is unemployment, even though they have passed the SLC-examination. Moreover, the ones who continue to study on higher level have problems with the high fees, and they have lack of knowledge. The teachers want to change this by giving the pupils education, useful for them and their future.
In this part we will start by discussing our choice of method and how we experienced the method to work in this context. We will also point out advantages and difficulties with this method. After that, we will discuss the results, and compare them with the literature we found concerning this area.

5.1 Choice of method

We believe the use of an ethnographic approach has suited our study very well. To use the combination interviews, observations and inspection of documents, gave us different aspects to look upon our research questions. Both of us thought that there were some difficulties to perform the interviews and the observations, something which Bell (1995) also mentions. The experiences we received from our pilot study was a good help when we collected our data, but one needs more practice than that to develop interview and observation techniques. Mistakes we made during the interview situation were that we sometimes did not follow up the answers carefully enough and that we did not always give the informants enough time to think. However, the more interviews we carried out, the better the quality of the interviews became. As a beginner one continuously learns from one's mistakes and develops one's skills. One difficulty that occurred during our classroom observations was that we found it hard to fit into the classroom environment. Since we were foreigners from another culture, we attracted attention and many pupils were curious about us. Moreover, during our first observations we found it tough to concentrate on what we had decided to observe, because everything was new and interesting.

During our data collection, the informants and we sometimes found it hard to understand each other. This was because of our different accents, and for both side English is the second language. This language problem mostly occurred during our informal and formal interviews. When this problem appeared we felt that we had to reformulate the questions and there was a risk that we asked them leading questions. This incorrect way of acting is very likely to affect the result, and therefore, we have tried to remove these answers during our analysing work.

To perform the interviews in the end of the data collection was advantageous, because by that time the informants were familiar with our presence. Most of the informants were talkative and found it pleasant to talk. Only very few were nervous, but they talked a lot anyway. Furthermore, we felt that the informants
could talk squarely and fairly with us, maybe because they knew that they were anonymous and that we did not work at the school or for the government.

5.2 Discussion of the results

Our results of this study illuminate what kind of working procedures that exist in Nepalese schools. Furthermore, we will try to demonstrate how schools are organised and how the teachers experience their school system. The teachers' views on these matters will here be compared with our classroom observations and the literature survey. The result will be discussed with our research questions as point of departure.

5.2.1 What working procedures exist in the classroom?

The teachers we interviewed had various ideas about what working procedures that existed in the classroom. Many of the teachers answered that they used the four basic skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. One teacher-centred method that they often mentioned was the Question-answer method, where the teacher asks the pupils questions, which they answer. We believe that our observations correspond with what the teachers told us in the interviews, because the most common method we observed was the lecturing method, mixed with the Question-answer method. Moreover, the lecturing method is something that Khaniya & Kiernan (1994) mention as one of the most common methods, used in the Nepalese classrooms. We believe that the reason why teachers use these working procedures is because they are time effective. The teachers want to finish as much as possible of the overloaded textbooks, so the pupils will pass the SLC-exam. Out of all methods and activities, recommended in the Secondary Education Curriculum, English (1998), we only found one during our observations in English classes, the Question-answer method. For example we did not see dramatisation and group-work, but since we only observed 17 lessons, we do not want say that these methods do not exist in the school.

During the interviews, some teachers mentioned that they used more learner-centred methods, and stressed the importance of active pupils. The use of learner-centred methods is something that is emphasised in the Secondary Education Curriculum (1998). This also points out that children learn by doing. A few lessons we observed contained more pupil-active methods, such as discussions and dialogues between the pupils and the teacher. Another example was when pupils actively participated during laboratory work. To sum up, those lessons we observed which were learner centred, correspond with the number of teachers who thought that they worked learner-centred in the interviews.

Before we went to Nepal we were interested in finding out if the teachers used the group-work method, because we think this method reflects a learner-
centred view. The pupils are active in their learning process, and the method also allows the pupils to learn from each other, and not from the teacher alone. The Secondary Curriculum Introduction Booklet, English (1999), points out the importance that pupils should learn in a social context, and not as before, isolated. In our observations we never saw pupils work together, neither in groups nor in pairs. But according to some teachers, they do use the group-work method, but not always for the reasons, we have mentioned above. In most cases the lack of equipment was the reason to use group-work.

We understand that there are obstacles for the teachers to use group-work, such as the crowded classes and the narrow classrooms, which they mentioned. Yet, we think there are ways to use group-work despite of these problems. The pupils can easily turn around in their desks, and group with the pupils behind. Another method, we can recommend to the school, which make the pupils active during the lesson is pair work. It can work like this; the teacher gives the pupils an open-ended question, and encourages them to discuss it in pairs. After a while, when the teacher feels that the pupils are finished, the teacher asks some of them, what they have found out. The various answers can work as a starting-point for discussions between the teacher and the pupils. Moreover, it is important that the different answers are not judged as right or wrong, instead they should be seen as different views of the problem. This is also something that is emphasised in the Secondary Education Curriculum, English (1998), the teacher should encourage pupils even if they have not guessed correctly.

In conclusion, we believe that many of the teachers have a wish and the ambition to work in a learner-centred way. Some of them work hard to reach this goal despite all obstacles.

5.2.2 Are there opportunities for teachers to teach as they would like to do? How much freedom do teachers have in planning their teaching?

Generally, we believe that the teachers in Nepal have almost no freedom at all, when they plan their lessons. According to our results, there are three main causes why most teachers experience that they have no freedom, something that we will discuss below.

Variables related to the school organisation

We consider the first main cause to be a school organisation problem. In our results we found two interesting aspects with a school organisational character, the crowded classes and the risk of loosing one's job.

Almost all teachers considered the crowded classes to be a big hindrance for them to teach as they would like to do. They cannot use the method they would like to use. Further, they feel that they do not have time to give the
pupils the individual help they actually need. During our observations, we felt that there were too many pupils in each class for one teacher to manage. The large size of the classes contributed to many problems such as, long waiting-time for pupils who needed help and for those who were finished. Teir (1994) also points out the problem with crowded classes and unsuitable classrooms. Further, she mentions that pupils who do not understand do not get any help. We believe that one reason for this might be that the teachers do not have time to help all pupils, because the classes are overcrowded. Moreover, we think the most exposed group consists of pupils who have learning difficulties. Bhatta (1999) gives an explanation to why the classes in government schools are overcrowded. He claims that the reason is that the schools cannot afford to employ as many teachers as needed.

The second aspect shows that there are teachers who do not dare to teach as they would like to do, because then they would loose their jobs. The reason for this might be, that the other teachers at the school feel threatened if a teacher uses a totally different and maybe better approach in his or her teaching. Those who teach differently become unpopular and maybe run the risk of being fired. We have not found this aspect in the literature we studied, but we think it reflects how the school, as an organisation can hinder teachers' freedom as concerns teaching.

**Pupil-related variables**

The second cause why teachers cannot teach, as they would like to do is, according to us, pupil-related. The teachers here mention two aspects of importance, the family background of the pupils and their different levels of knowledge.

Pupils in government schools often come from families with poor educational background. Few of the pupils have parents, who can help and encourage them with their schoolwork at home. In our formal interviews many teachers mention that pupils are not motivated to learn because of their parents' deficient interest to educate their children. According to Estvd (1998c) and Khaniya & Kiernan (1994), the relationship between home and school is badly developed. Estvd (1998c) further points out that this is something that the BPEP-project tries to improve. We believe it is important to develop this relationship, otherwise it is hard for the schools to convince parents about the advantages of education.

The pupils' different level of knowledge is also an obstacle for some teachers to teach as they would like to do. According to them, this is the reason why they can only teach basic knowledge. We consider the various ages of the pupils, which exist in each class, to complicate the teaching situation even more. The pupils then have different interests and life experiences that might not correspond with each other. In one of our informal interviews we discussed the age differences among the pupils in each grade. As we wrote in our results...
section, the average age in grade 10 is 18 and that it is very rare that pupils in government schools are 15 years old nowadays. This shows that the table 1 in Skar & Cederroth (1997, here exposed on p. 11), which concerns the national educational structure, is incorrect. According to the table the normal age for pupils in grade 10 is 15. We believe that the authorities, from whom the table is adopted, want to show the uninitiated people "a better" picture of the school ages. They want to hide the actual picture that exists in the reality, or they do not know about it.

Government-related variables

As we understood, both from our interviews and in our literature, a major obstacle for teachers to teach as they want to do is government-related. We have found two different aspects in our results, documents that hinder the teachers' freedom and lack of money in the school sector.

Most of the teachers feel that they cannot decide the content of the lesson. The content is fully decided by the government, both through the curriculum and the textbooks. Khaniya & Kiernan (1994) point out how severely the teachers are ruled by the government, both when it comes to content and teaching methods. According to our observations, the teachers do not usually follow the methods in the curriculum. Some teachers though, thought it was good that there was a national standard for what pupils should learn. The reason for this opinion was that all pupils should have the right to get the same education. Winther-Smith (in Estvad, 1998c) says that there are no national standard for what pupils should learn, but he did not explain what he meant by that.

The teachers claim that the SLC-exam, which the pupils perform in grade 10, influence their way of teaching to a great extent throughout the pupils' whole schooling. The SLC-exam is based on the content brought up in the textbooks. The teachers are much concerned about that their pupils passing the final exam, and therefore they strictly follow the textbooks, each and every page. We believe that there are two reasons why teachers want pupils to pass the exam. Firstly, it is important for the pupils' future, and secondly it is good for the reputation of the school and for teachers personally.

According to our interviews, the lack of money in the school sector leads to the teachers not being able to buy the material and the equipment, which they would like to use in their teaching. Only few teachers at the school we visited saw this as a problem at their school, but most of the teachers were satisfied and proud of the facilities they had. They thought this problem was more common in other schools, and above all in the rural areas.

Lack of facilities and low salary is reasons for teachers not teaching, as they want to do. We believe that without adequate schoolbooks, material and
equipment, it is difficult to teach as one wants to do, and the possibility to vary one's teaching decreases.

5.2.3 What arguments are used when discussing pupils' influence over their schoolwork?

When we asked the teachers if they thought that the pupils had influence over their schoolwork, many of the teachers had difficulties to understand what we meant by influence. We believe this has effected our results, since there were a decline of relevant answers. Moreover, this can also show that pupils' influence is not seen as important, and it is nothing teachers usually discuss. We noticed that the teachers felt unfamiliar with the question, and that they experienced it as strange. When we had explained the question to them, most of the teachers understood. We received two different opinions, those who thought pupils had influence and those who thought they did not.

The teachers who thought pupils had influence, mentioned that pupils could decide, for example, in what order they wanted to do different assignments. Another example is that pupils choose among a fixed selection decided by the teacher. We think these examples reflect influence, but to a very low degree, at least according to our measures.

The teachers who thought pupils had no influence, motivated why they did not think the pupils should have influence. The teachers considered the pupils themselves to be the obstacles for them to use influence, and they pointed out three reasons for this. Firstly, the pupils' lack of knowledge in the different subjects prevented this. Secondly, the pupils' poor family background made them unmotivated towards school, and incompetent to have influence. Thirdly, pupils are not used to having influence and therefore could not handle the situation. Pupils' influence was something we hardly saw during our observations. But, during one lesson the pupils were able to compose a letter on their own and thereby have some influence. We noticed that the pupils were not used to this kind of freedom, and many of them were rather confused and were at a loss what to do. We think this observation reflects the teachers' apprehension of pupils' influence. Pupils' influence is something, we believe, that has to be practised for a longer period before it works. Moreover, we think it is important to start with this in early age, to begin with minor influence and then gradually increase the level of influence.

Further, we were interested to find out, if the teachers thought the pupils should be able to influence more or less in their schoolwork. Some thought that the pupils should have more influence, because then they would learn easier and be more motivated to learn. Furthermore, the teachers believed that the teaching and learning situation would be more effective. The teachers, who thought that pupils should have less influence, mentioned the same reasons, as those who said that pupils had no influence, that is to say, that the pupils
themselves were the obstacles for more influence. The teachers who answered that pupils do not have influence were not always those who thought pupils should have less and vice versa.

5.2.4 How do teachers experience the Nepalese school system of today?

The teachers' experiences of the Nepalese school system of today are unfortunately mostly negative. We would like to point out that when we asked the teachers this question we also asked for positive things with the school system (appendix 1), but there was almost nothing that they were satisfied with. The only positive thing some teachers mentioned was that the curriculum nowadays has changed for the better. We have received really comprehensive answers to this question, which we have divided into six categories: These different categories reflect the various problems in the school system.

Textbooks and Curriculum

Many teachers in our interviews told us that there were problems with the textbooks. The largest problem is that the government has control over the textbooks. According to one teacher, one person writes many of the textbooks in different subjects. Kansakar (1991), explains how this procedure works; writers are appointed by the government to write the official schoolbooks, and when they are finished, CTSDC (Curriculum, Textbook and Supervision Development Centre) subject experts check the content. After that, the textbooks are put into mass production. Khaniya & Kiernan (1994) points out another problem with the textbooks that they are content overloaded and written by academics instead of curriculum developers. Some of the teachers we interviewed also mentioned the overloaded textbooks, and that they never had time to finish them.

As we mentioned above, some teachers were satisfied with the fact that the curriculum has changed. Because according to Kansakar (1991) the curriculum she refers to be content overloaded and had not been changed for 20 years.

Teacher profession

It is generally believed that the teacher profession in Nepal is associated with low status. There are mostly two factors which contribute to this, poor salary and uneducated teachers. Those factors are mentioned both in our teacher interviews and in the literature review.

The low salary of the teachers, is something that Estvad (1998c) points out. She believes that the low salary makes the teachers unmotivated towards their work. Moreover, she claims that the basic salary for a teacher is not enough to live on in Nepal. We believe this corresponds with the opinions of the teachers
we interviewed. One teacher told us that he earned $60 per month and that he could not manage on that salary. According to Estvad (1998c), the basic salary for a teacher is about $25 per month. We believe this different information about teachers' salary may depend on several things. Examples of such things can be if the teacher works in the city area or in the rural area, the educational level of the teacher, and if there has been inflation in the country. Many teachers have to work extra outside school, otherwise they cannot afford to support their families. According to Bhatta (1999), the low salary mostly concerns teachers who work at government schools. Furthermore, he points out that those who work at boarding schools do not have these financial worries. Therefore, they have time to think of ways of improving their teaching. The salary for boarding school teachers varies between $60 and $200 per month.

The problem with uneducated teachers is often mentioned in our literature study. Khaniya & Kiernan (1994) explain why there are many uneducated teachers. They consider the reason for this to be the latest decision introduced in 1989. This involved that to work as a teacher one needed to have an SLC-exam, but teacher training was not mandatory. As Bhatta (1999) and Khaniya & Kiernan (1994) points out, uneducated teachers will lead to poor and irrelevant teaching. Further, we believe that this can also influence the high drop-out rate that exists in many Nepalese schools according to Estvad (1998c). If the teachers do not have knowledge about children's learning and various learning strategies, it is difficult to provide the pupils with knowledge, which they can acquire and understand. According to Estvad (1998c), the problem with uneducated teachers is something BPEP tries to solve. The project provides the uneducated teachers with in-service courses to raise the educational standard in the society.

Enhancement of local culture

According to our interviews, foreign experts design Nepal's curricula. The teachers think it is wrong, that experts from other countries with another cultural background decide and design their curricula. The experts do not have the Nepalese background and existing circumstances in mind, instead they base the curricula on conditions in their own country. Furthermore, the teachers want to participate more when it comes to school development questions. This is something that Kansakar (1991) also discusses. She points out the importance of teachers, parents and educationalists, who know their society and how the school system work, being participants. Moreover, she claims that it is misleading to borrow an educational system from another country. The importance of using local knowledge and regarding it as a resource, was something we discussed a lot during our preparatory course at Sida Sandö. According to Sundin (1999), former foreign aid programmes in developing countries often had a top-down approach, but nowadays the aid organisations advocate that local knowledge should be looked after. What we found in our interviews concerning teachers' thoughts about their participation
in curriculum development is that they reflect a top-down approach. Unfortunately, the idea of using local knowledge has not reached the developers of the school system, and therefore many teachers feel completely disregarded.

Education for all

The decision to give education for all in Nepal was taken at the World Conference on Education, in Thailand in 1990 (Skar & Cederroth, 1997).

One obstacle for everyone to get education is that the school is not free of charge. According to Skar & Cederroth (1997), the primary education is free of charge. Also, Bhatta (1999) claims that the government has provided public schools with money, so that the parents do not need to pay school fees. The school we visited received grants from the government. That money was spent on teachers' salaries, but it was not enough to pay all the teachers they needed. Therefore, the school had to collect school fees from the pupils, at the school we visited this amount was $2 per month. In boarding schools the school fee usually was between $20 and $25 per month. The money they received was spent on teachers' salaries, restoring of buildings and equipment. The teachers we interviewed also told us that pupils, throughout compulsory school, have many expenses, such as school fees, schoolbooks and school uniforms. Estvad (1998a), also mentions that the parents' school expenses, like books, sometimes is the reason why their children cannot attend school. We think it is wrong to claim that the school is free in Nepal, because in most cases, this is not the reality.

The fact that there are two types of schools in Nepal, government and boarding schools, is a major obstacle when it comes to giving the same education to all. Many of the teachers we interviewed only wanted there to be government schools, but those would have to change for the better. Boarding schools are generally believed to be better than government schools. According to Skar & Cederroth (1997), the pupils at boarding schools achieve better results, on their SLC-exam. The result gap that exists between the two different schools types is according to them one of the largest problems in the Nepalese education system.

In the rural areas of Nepal the difficulties for the government to provide education for all is even worse than in the city area. According to Khaniya & Kiernan (1994), outside the city area there are twice as many boarding schools as government schools. That is because of the growing dissatisfaction with the quality of government schools. According to some people we met in Nepal, some boarding schools can be seen as a business, where the owner can earn a lot of money. Therefore, there are many people who run boarding schools, who do not have knowledge about education and the school system. Estvad (1998c) further claims that the school standard in the countryside is very low. The
conditions are even worse in the hill area, where two thirds of the population live. The bad school standard in the rural areas was something the teachers in our interviews also mentioned. We experienced the teachers at the school to be glad that they did not have to work there. Something they also mentioned was that girls in rural areas did not have the same rights as boys, to get education. This was due to social customs and poverty. The fact that girls do not get the same opportunities to get education is shown in the rate of literacy. Only 15-20 per cent of the women is literate, compared to 40-50 per cent of the men (Skar & Cederroth, 1997).

In our literature survey we found that the most common problem in the Nepalese school system was that pupils dropped out of compulsory school. This problem also existed at the school we visited, where about 200 pupils (14 per cent) dropped out each year. According to the deputy headmaster, there were many reasons for this. Firstly, pupils' and parents' lack of knowledge, secondly, because of bad company and thirdly, that the pupils have to work at home. The reasons that were mentioned as to why pupils drop-out are very similar to what we found in our literature (Estvad, 1998ac, Khaniya & Kiernan, 1994). The problem with drop-outs was nothing the teachers we interviewed talked about. This may be due to the fact that this problem does not affect and obstruct their teaching, instead it can be seen as a social problem.

Politics

The fact that politics interfere with the school system is something many teachers were upset about. They wanted education to be free from politics. According to Khaniya & Kiernan (1994), politics also contribute to the uneven distribution of secondary schools. Most of the schools are situated in Kathmandu Valley, which is also the centre of political power.

Future

According to the teachers, pupils are offered a poor future, after finishing the SLC-exam. The unemployment rate is very high, and it is difficult for the pupils to get a job. Skar & Cederroth (1997) mention that pupils before were guaranteed a job after the SLC-exam, since there was a lack of teachers. But according to the new regulations, the pupils need 12 years of education to become teachers. We believe that there recently have been changes in the society. More and more pupils pass the SLC-exam, which increases the demand for a higher educational level in the society. Moreover, the teachers point out that many pupils do not continue to study on higher levels after they have passed the SLC-exam. One reason is that the schools do not provide the pupils with enough knowledge to manage studying on higher levels. The gap between secondary school and higher secondary school is too big. Another reason is the high fees, many families cannot afford to pay further education for their children.
6 CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, the teachers in Nepal face several challenges in their profession. We believe that the central power of the government can in a future development be discussed in terms of de-centralisation of the school system. If so, it could be problematised how and what the teachers should teach and how the pupils' final SLC-exam should look like. The whole teaching situation is based upon the fact that pupils should pass the SLC-exam. How can the government let the teachers participate in decisions concerning the development of the school system? As one can read in our report, the teachers we interviewed had plenty of good and wise ideas of how to improve the current education system. Moreover, we believe the teachers and the local school should be given more responsibility and freedom in their work.

It is important to bear in mind that the history of the Nepalese education system is not old. Not until 1951 the right for everyone to get education was adopted and the system was not formally centralised until 1971 (Skar & Cederroth, 1997). The school system has been totally changed during the last decade. Several of teachers we interviewed thought these recent changes in the curriculum were good, but they claim that they are not suited for the Nepalese society. We believe that this is one reason why the new curriculum has not been established in the schools.

We carried out our study in a government school in the city area. It would be interesting to compare the results we found with a study carried out in a boarding school or in a school, which is situated in the rural areas.

Now that we have examined teachers' opinions and thoughts about the education in Nepal, we would find it interesting to get the pupils' views on these matters. For us it would be meaningful to find out how pupils experience the Nepalese school. We would also like to find out the opinions of the headmasters. Since we already have collected data about pupils' and headmasters' opinions, we will probably continue our work with the Nepalese school system next term.

The possibility to do a minor field study in a developing country has for us personally meant a lot. We believe it has been very interesting to achieve deeper knowledge about the Nepalese school system, which differs from our Swedish school system. Moreover, it was of great interest to study teachers' thoughts about their situation. Through discussions with teachers from another culture we have started to look upon our culture and our school system with
different eyes. We both feel that we have received a lot of valuable experiences, which will be very useful for us as future teachers.
REFERENCES


a) Moderne middelalder. (Modern middle-ages)
b) Att laere att styre. (Learning to rule)
c) Småt med skolgang. (Poor schooling)


Appendix 1

Interview guide

• Information: - For how many years have you been a teacher?
  - What subject do you teach?
  - How many children do you teach in each class?
  - How old are the children that you teach?
  - What kind of education do you have?

• Describe what you think is the most important task for you as a teacher?

• Do you feel that you have the possibility to teach like you want to do?
  - in what way?/ Why not?

• What kind of working procedures/ teaching methods do you use in your classroom? (group/ individual work, discuss or monologue, teacher centred vs learner centred)
  - Why these?, what is good about them?
  - Do you know any other working procedures?
  - Are there any obstacles for your not using these?

• When you plan your lessons, do you have total freedom to decide the content of the lessons? (principal, curriculum, other documents)

• Do children have any influence on their schoolwork?
  - In what way?/ Why not?

• Do you think that children should have more or less influence over their schoolwork? Why?

• What do you think of the Nepalese school system of today?
  - What are you satisfied with, what do you want to / preserve?
  - What would you like to change, if you could decide?